

SMART Showcase School

EDCompass newsletter

smarttech.com/EDCsubscribe

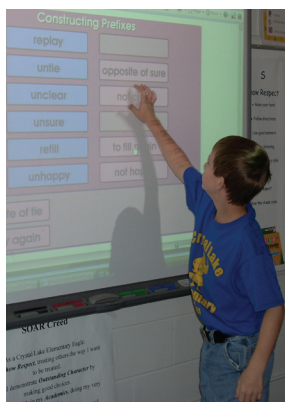
Taking a Title I School to New Levels with Classroom Technology

By **Wendy McMahon**

When Joe Griffin took the position of principal six years ago at [Crystal Lake Elementary School](#), a SMART Showcase School in Lakeland, Florida, this Title I school had very little classroom technology. Well aware of how technologically savvy today's students are, Griffin quickly set to creating an environment where interactive learning would be the norm for the school's students and teachers.

"You have to capture kids where their learning level is and where their interest is and that's why I decided to make this thrust for technology," explains Griffin.

With a strong belief that a school's leadership drives instruction and with a background in technology, Griffin had a vision for success for the staff and students at this Polk County School District school, and he took the necessary steps to attain that success.



"I find I have higher scores when I allow use of the SMART Response units. They're engaged. They think it's fun."

Shauna Bergwall

Third-Grade Teacher
Crystal Lake Elementary
Lakeland, Florida

Creating a plan

His plan for success began by using Title I funds to add wall-mounted [SMART Board™ interactive whiteboards](#) to five classrooms each year – and then continuing to do so each year thereafter. Six years later, all 30 classrooms in the school are now equipped with interactive whiteboards, along with complementary SMART products such as [SMART Response™ interactive response systems](#), [SMART Slate™ wireless slates](#), [SMART Sync™ classroom management software](#) and the [SMART Document Camera™](#).

Griffin ensures that all teachers receive training for the SMART products and works to find tech-savvy candidates when hiring new teachers. He encourages teachers to share the lessons they create with [SMART Notebook™ collaborative learning software](#) and requires that they document the use of technology products in all of their lesson plans.

Engaging students in learning

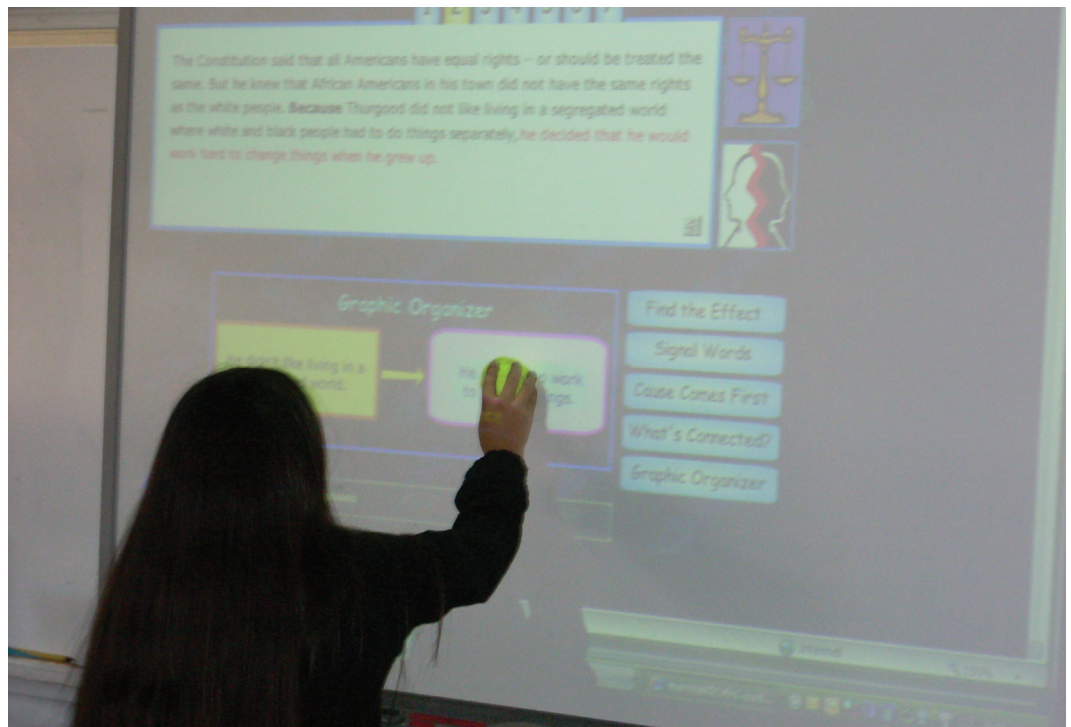
These steps have had a significant effect on students. "When a student approaches these boards and can solve problems by pointing and clicking and dragging and dropping applications, when a student leaves the board with the sense of accomplishment on his or her face, when this transfers into increased test scores – the purchase of these boards is worth it," says Griffin.

Shauna Bergwall, a third-grade teacher at Crystal Lake Elementary, has also witnessed the positive effects SMART products can have on students. "Students are able to take charge of their own learning by going up to the interactive whiteboard, instead of the teacher always standing up and lecturing or writing on a whiteboard," she explains. "Students interact with the content, take charge of their learning and get more engaged."

In fact, Bergwall has noticed that her students are even performing better on tests and quizzes. "I find I have higher scores when I allow use of the SMART Response units. They're engaged. They think it's fun. They know they're going to get their results immediately, instead of waiting for me to



If you would like to visit Crystal Lake Elementary to talk with educators about their success and see firsthand how they're putting SMART products to work, visit the [SMART Showcase School](#) section of our website. From this page, you can also find a Showcase School or District in your area.



grade it or waiting for state test results to come back. When they know they're going to get those results right now, they perform better," explains Bergwall.

Third-grade teacher and SMART Certified Trainer for the Polk County School District Carla Johnson agrees that SMART Board interactive whiteboards and complementary SMART products have made learning more interactive and engaging for students. "Instead of just sitting there at their desks watching the teacher write on a regular whiteboard, they can come and manipulate different things on the actual SMART Board," says Johnson.

Since standardizing on the SMART Board interactive whiteboards, Griffin says he has seen many positive changes in student engagement at his school. "I like to use the following example. One day there was a presentation done on the SMART Board at our school, and instead of kids being distracted or bored, they were really interested in the phases of the moon. In fact, there was a teacher blocking one student's view, and he moved to the other side of the room just to get close to the SMART Board. When you have kids that are that engaged in their learning, it really makes a difference. This piece of technology really works and keeps kids engaged."

And Crystal Lake Elementary staff and students can be proud. The school's performance grade improved from a "C" to a "B" during 2006–07 and to an "A" this year. Griffin believes classroom technology played an important role in the achievement.

"I think the biggest success that we have at our school is the fact that our technology is right on the cutting edge," says Griffin. "It took us a while to get to that point, but we're very proud of that fact." **EC**

Your school can now apply to become a SMART Showcase School and be recognized for using SMART education solutions to create exceptional learning environments. If selected, your school will receive exclusive membership benefits and opportunities. It will have an opportunity to share its success story and serve as a host site for other educators who want to learn more about the benefits of implementing SMART products. [Learn more.](#)

© 2011 SMART Technologies. All rights reserved. EDCompass, SMART Board, SMART Response, SMART Slate, SMART Sync, SMART Document Camera, SMART Notebook, smarttech, the SMART logo and all SMART taglines are trademarks or registered trademarks of SMART Technologies in the U.S. and/or other countries.