

# Creating a Foundation for Student Success

By Stacy Kindopp



San Elijo Hills in San Marcos, California, is a beautiful, master-planned community designed with a small town atmosphere. Residents enjoy concerts in the square, picnics in the park, gorgeous walking trails and breathtaking ocean views.

The popularity and growth of this family-friendly community brought two new schools to the San Marcos Unified School District, including [San Elijo Middle School \(SEMS\)](#), a [SMART Elite Showcase School](#) located in the heart of the community.

Since the school's inception in 2004, SMART products have been an integral part of the teaching approach. "The vision I had coming to SEMS was to address the needs of the whole child – academic, social, emotional and physical – and to integrate technology into the curriculum," says Principal Douglas Hall. "SMART products were and continue to be the backbone for this journey."

Allen Brooks, a [SMART Exemplary Educator](#) and the technology teacher at SEMS, was still working on his teaching credential in the summer of 2004 when he volunteered to help the school prepare for the academic year. "I remember being surrounded by gigantic boxes from a company called SMART Technologies. I popped open a SMART Board and within a day I was addicted," says Brooks.

In its first year, the school had 15 [SMART Board interactive whiteboards](#). "We quickly saw the impact they were having – it became so apparent that SMART products not only measurably engaged students, but they also changed the way teachers taught," says Brooks.

Today, the school has SMART Board interactive whiteboards in each of its 54 classrooms. Throughout the school, there are also 40 [SMART Slate wireless slates](#), 2 [SMART Podium™ interactive pen displays](#), 10 [SMART Document Cameras](#) and 3 [SMART Response interactive response systems](#).

Teachers use [SMART Notebook collaborative learning software](#) daily. Complementary SMART products, including [SMART Classroom Suite™ interactive learning software](#), [SMART Sync™ classroom management software](#), [SMART Notebook Math Tools software](#), [SMART Ideas® concept-mapping software](#) and [Bridgit® conferencing software](#), play key roles in many of the school's learning environments.

"Students need to be engaged and have opportunities to actively participate in their learning. Our student-centric approach using SMART products is helping our students and staff thrive," explains Hall.

## SMART SHOWCASE SCHOOL PROFILE

Che Love, a history teacher at SEMS, moved his entire curriculum into SMART Notebook software. "It enables me to support my verbal instruction with visual materials and invite students up to the interactive whiteboard to manipulate information – I'm able to reach the learning styles of every student," says Love.

And SMART products have had a clear impact on student performance in Love's classroom. "Before using SMART products, 60 percent of my students scored proficient or advanced on California Standards testing. Since I began using SMART products, student scores have gone up every year. This past school year, 84 percent of my students scored proficient or advanced. That's a 25 percent change within four years of using SMART Boards and SMART Notebook software. It's amazing!" says Love.

With all of his curriculum materials in SMART Notebook software, Love feels more organized. "If I were to have an unexpected meeting and walk into my classroom cold, I can pull up my SMART Notebook lesson and I'm ready to go. My lessons include links to supplementary material, enabling me to seamlessly transition between a variety of resources, including audio, movies, worksheets, primary documents and historical pictures. I have a solid foundation to walk into every single day," says Love.

Allen Brooks teaches in the school's state-of-the-art computer lab, and he credits SMART Sync for his seamless classroom management. "I'm not wasting teaching time taking roll call and distributing or collecting files – I can start my class while the bell is

still vibrating. I have a 49-minute class and I give my students 48-and-a-half minutes of work," says Brooks.

As SMART products streamline the way teachers create and deliver lessons, they also are expanding students' potential. "When I look back at initial projects from when I began teaching and compare them to what students are doing now, it's amazing," says Brooks.

"When students can see minute details in audio editing, computer-aided drafting and computer programming on the interactive whiteboard and on their computer screens, their understanding is more rapid and performance increases," he adds.

The computer lab at SEMS has garnered worldwide attention, with visits by educators from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Europe, Japan and the United States. Former Governor Schwarzenegger has also visited the school.

SEMS will be one of the first schools in North America to feature a SMART Collaborative Classroom. The classroom will expand the boundaries of collaborative learning in a technology-rich setting and include a range of SMART products in unique configurations. The teachers at SEMS look forward to hosting educators and sharing their experiences using SMART products.

Brooks will be teaching live classroom sessions with his students at the ISTE conference and exposition in San Diego, California. From June 25 to June 27, he'll be teaching technology, math and science classes at SMART's booth, 3313.



Your school can 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 find out about the benefits of implementing SMART products. [Learn more.](#)