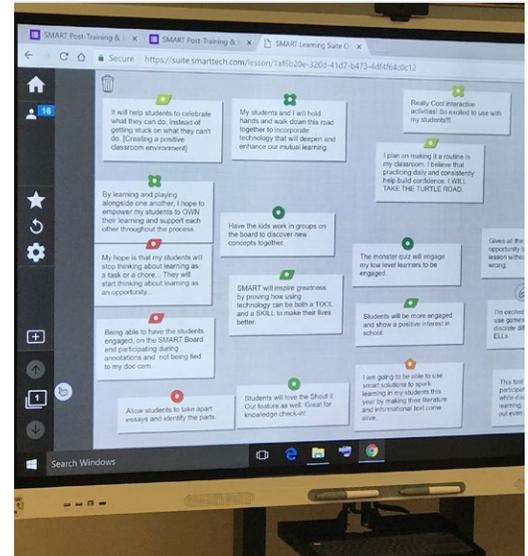




Trailblazing with Technology: Building Teacher Leadership Capacity for Effective SMART Implementation

A Professional Development Snapshot with the School District of Palm Beach County, Florida



Motivation

The School District of Palm Beach County located in Florida had a mission. They sought to provide customized instructional experiences for students in a blended learning environment that is engaging and promotes high expectations for all learners and teachers. In order to meet this need, the district initiated the Teaching with Technology Trailblazer program. Trailblazers are a select group of innovative teachers that were provided with the technology and training necessary to implement a cutting-edge 1:1 program that supports student-centered learning in their classroom. This professional development opportunity increased the capacity of Trailblazers to lead within their schools.

District leaders were excited to further enrich the learning environment after the initial success of the Trailblazer program by providing a more interactive experience through the deployment of SMART Interactive Flat Panels. Following the model of the Trailblazer program, teachers were given a prerequisite online SMART Digital Educator Certification Course followed by a SMART face-to-face training opportunity over the summer. The Trailblazers acted as a test group for the deployment of IFPs, establishing positive environments and support systems before integrating the SMART Solution with all teachers. After this initial phase Trailblazers could mentor other teachers. Each school will receive nine onsite, job-embedded training sessions on the integration of the SMART Interactive Flat Panels. These trainings are conducted over the course of a year and are intentionally designed to be delivered in small chunks over multiple points in time.

Teachers and School

The School District of Palm Beach County, Florida.
Educators, Kindergarten-Twelfth Grade

Challenge

To provide customized learning experiences for teachers and students in a blended learning environment that is engaging and promotes high expectations for all learners and teachers.

SMART Solution

SMART MX Interactive Flat Panels
SMART Learning Suite
SMART Learning Suite Online

Result

Teacher Trailblazers were well-prepared via an online course to participate in an in-person content focused, hands-on professional development experience. These sessions resulted in increased student-centered classroom instruction enhanced by the SMART Solution.

Why SMART?

The School District of Palm Beach County went through a rigorous evaluation process, reviewing many different panels and accompanying software according to specific criteria. The final decision to implement the SMART Solution was due to its ease of use, the availability of ongoing professional development and support, as well as the ability to integrate the SMART Solution seamlessly into the classrooms. Palm Beach believed the SMART Solution was the best choice to assist teachers in delivering lessons that engage students, foster collaboration, and promote creativity.

Constructing an Integrated Approach to Professional Development:

When organizing the summer professional development for the School District of Palm Beach County, participants were organized by instructional content areas and training rooms were equipped with 5 SMART Interactive Panels. One goal for the sessions was to provide interactive, hands-on experiences for teachers to utilize both individual devices and interactive panels for collaborative learning tasks and content creation. Teachers that had already completed the online certification arrived with the foundational knowledge of both the hardware and software and were, therefore, able to deepen their connections with instructional best practices utilizing the technology.

A secondary goal of the professional development was to create a practical “Day 1” experience with SMART hardware and software. By providing training for the integration of current instructional technologies, Trailblazers were able to build upon their current toolbox of teaching best practices.

“The School District of Palm Beach County’s investment in SMART solutions and its collaborative implementation plan supports our strategic initiatives to provide effective instructional programming customized to individual strengths, needs and aspirations of each learner, and to provide digital and blended learning opportunities.”

– Adam Miller, Director of Educational Technology SDPBC

Outcome

The SMART Digital Educator online course paired with hands-on summer professional development prepared the Palm Beach Trailblazers for “Day 1” student-centered instructional experiences. Throughout the summer, over 800 Trailblazer teachers were trained. To date, over 1300 Palm Beach instructional staff have completed the SMART Digital Educator online certification. Trailblazers have utilized new skills to enhance their instruction and create a student-centered learning environment incorporating the SMART Solution.

With over 1,000 and counting, Palm Beach County has the most certified SMART Digital Educators in the world!



SMART

“It’s rare when a manufacturer meets my team’s expectations yet SMART has surpassed my expectations and has gone way beyond and above, we couldn’t be happier!”

– Mark Howard, Chief of Performance Accountability SDPBC

About SMART

SMART Technologies Inc. is a world leader in simple and intuitive classroom technology solutions. We are an innovator in software and interactive technologies that enable natural collaboration, helping every student and teacher discover and develop their greatness. To learn more, visit smarttech.com.

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