



# Building Capacity: A Research Driven Approach to Teaching & Learning

A SMART Implementation story with Michelle Harris and Luke Bilger, the School District of Philadelphia



## Motivation:

With the increasing number of available educational technology tools, school divisions are faced with designing professional development that will prepare instructional staff to effectively integrate the tools within core content classrooms. Understanding this, the School District of Philadelphia aimed to act more strategically with their technology integration plan in order to increase awareness and meaningful usage of the SMART Board. During the 2018-2019 school year as they increased the presence of SMART Boards in classrooms across the District, they focused their attention on teachers training and coaching.

The Office of Information Technology and SMART's Efficacy and Implementation team knew the impact of technology on student achievement depended on how teachers used the SMART Board in the classroom. They believed increasing teachers' effective use requires a more intentional approach that considers the interconnections of pedagogy, curriculum and technology hardware and software.

## Leveraging the Partnership & Building On The Previous Years Success

Using lessons learned from 2017-2018 school year implementation, the partnership began to plan for the upcoming school year. The focus for implementation was to improve classroom instruction. In order to achieve the overall goal of increasing student outcomes, the Office of Information Technology started by building a support system for teachers.

### School District of Philadelphia

Melanie Harris, Chief Information Officer  
 Fran Newberg, Ed.D. Deputy Chief  
 Michelle Harris - Director of Educational Technology  
 Luke Bilger - Senior Project Manager

### Challenge

How to shift teacher practice in using educational technology to engage students in learning in order to meet instructional goals.

### SMART Solution

SMART Board 6000 series  
 SMART Learning Suite

### Result

Increased teacher confidence when integrating technology aligned to district goals using existing content and instructional strategies.



The implementation shifted to an intensive job-embedded coaching model rooted in pedagogy and curriculum. This shift was based on research around large positive effects of coaching and multiple approaches to professional development on teachers' instructional practice and student achievement. The partnership (School District of Philadelphia, Visual Sound Inc, & SMART Technologies) expanded their team of highly qualified coaches that would provide job-embedded teacher coaching and varied professional learning opportunities.

Working with Visual Sound Inc., the Office of Information Technology interviewed and contracted coaches with expertise in coaching, pedagogy, and content. Each coach also had a strong understanding of the value of technology in the classroom. These coaches complemented an existing team.

Working with SMART's Efficacy & Implementation team and Visual Sound, the Office of Information Technology developed their implementation plan to include intensive training of all coaches on SMART Solutions aligned to the School District of Philadelphia's Mission, Vision, and Core Values. With an intentional plan in place, the coaches began their work supporting teachers and schools.

Each of the coaches worked with cohorts of teachers who received new SMART Boards throughout the school year. The goal of working with these assigned teachers was to build teacher capacity to effectively use the SMART Board to increase student engagement and provide more opportunities for student-centered learning. To reach that goal, each teacher was provided a minimum of 6 hours of professional development and a minimum of 6 coaching sessions (collaborative planning sessions and modeling/co-teaching opportunities).

The robust resources available via the SMART Board easily align with any grade level or content area. The school district team approached working with teachers through the lens of enhancing what teachers were already doing. SMART Boards were flexible enough to support any instructional model used in the district, such as center-based and whole class instruction or teacher and student-directed instruction.

## Outcome:

The Office of Informational Technology along with its partners created feedback surveys to gather information from teachers, at the beginning and end of the school year. End of year data showed an increase in teacher confidence in using SMART Boards in their classrooms.

- **34%** Increase in teachers who felt confident in integrating technology in instruction.
- **27%** Increase in teachers who felt confident in using the SMART Interactive Flat Panel.
- **80%** Teachers who felt very well supported by their coach.

*Our coaches had the incredible task of providing differentiated, intentional and job-embedded coaching to 1600+ teachers on integrating all technology, including SMART Boards. They rose to the challenge and our teachers now feel more confident in using technology in their instruction in a more meaningful way.*

-Michelle Harris, Director of Educational Technology

### 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](http://smarttech.com).

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