



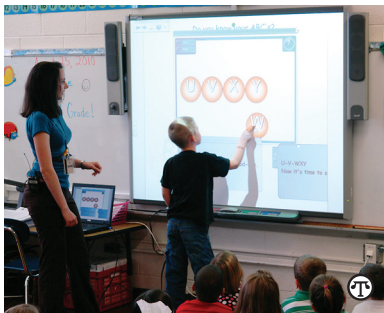
Giving—To Help Education

(NAPSA)—Forty years ago, the U.S. high school graduation rate was the highest in the world. Today, it's 19th, with just 70 percent of students successfully completing their high school education. But there are organizations and individuals across the country trying to change that. And they believe classroom technology can help.

What Others Are Doing

One such person is Ron Harper, who, along with his wife Katherine, founded the Harper Corporation in Charlotte, North Carolina. Harper believes ignoring the decline in education is akin to what he calls a “silent disease”—something that will slowly but surely damage the nation's future. He believes more has to be done to keep children interested and engaged in their schoolwork, so Harper made a commitment to placing interactive whiteboards in classrooms.

In the spring of 2010, working with Gaston County Schools Superintendent L. Reeves McGlohon, Harper launched the SMART Board in Every Classroom campaign. The SMART Board has always been the most popular brand of interactive whiteboard in the U.S. Combining the simplicity of a whiteboard with the power of a computer, SMART Boards let teachers deliver dynamic lessons, write notes in digital ink and save their work—all with the simple touch of a finger. The goal of



A first-grader at work at an interactive whiteboard.

Harper and McGlohon's campaign was to raise \$4 million so that all 2,000 classrooms in Gaston County would be equipped with a SMART Board interactive whiteboard. The campaign reached its goal in March 2011.

Ron Harper is not alone in his efforts. In Boston, the Lynch Foundation, which counts education as one of its main goals, has an ongoing program of matching grants designed to place SMART Boards in Boston-area Catholic schools.

“Technology has influenced and affected all major industries; it must be a central focus in our educational system,” said Katie Everett, executive director. “The interactive whiteboards are one vehicle we can use to integrate technology to a vast audience, tailor lessons and approaches, allow teachers to identify their students' understanding of curriculum content and make

adjustments based on real-time fact and student evaluation.”

SMART Board interactive whiteboards have also impressed Jessica Flores, president of The Riordan Foundation, of Los Angeles. The Foundation, launched 30 years ago by former Los Angeles mayor Richard Riordan, aims to provide all students, especially in low-income communities, with a high-quality education.

Each year, the Riordan Foundation provides anywhere from \$2–5 million in grants to schools, with some of that going to technology, including SMART Boards. “Technology has changed the way society operates; in order to succeed, children are now required to develop not only literacy skills but familiarity with technology,” Flores explained. “Technology today permeates every aspect of life. It is crucial that classroom instruction be delivered in a manner that is engaging and that prepares students to function in modern society. SMART Boards facilitate the development of these skills.”

How You Can Help

Parents, teachers and anyone concerned about education in America today can be a part of the solution by encouraging school districts to invest in this kind of technology and by donating to these and other organizations that can help them do so. For more information, visit www.smarttech.com or call 403-407-5128.