

## **From blackboards to whiteboards to SMART Boards....New technology enhances learning at Whittier Vo-Tech**

HAVERHILL – While some students in a math class at Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School work with the teacher in a small group, others string equations together using cues on a new SMART Board at the front of the room.



Freshmen Will Sweeney and Jeff Dalton work on a SMART Board

“It makes learning more fun,” said Jeff Dalton, a freshman. “It’s not bad,” agreed Freshmen Will Sweeney, and he tapped and dragged numbers into his equation until a large, green check appeared on the screen, signaling the correct answer. “I’m right!” he said with a grin. “It is fun to play with.”

Though it is a small class, Math Teacher Andy Pigeon instructs students in two grades with a variety of learning needs, and appreciates his new technological partner. “It engages students and allows them to all stay on task with different learning activities,” he said. “So, there is no lag time.”

More students and teachers at Whittier have the latest technology at their fingertips after 10 new SMART Boards were installed this month. There are plans to add 30 more by the end of the school year.

“We’re very excited about being able to implement them in classrooms throughout the building,” said Patricia Lowell, director of special education at Whittier. “SMART Boards allow teachers to engage the whole class in learning activities that appeal to a variety of learning styles simultaneously.”

The new touch-sensitive boards were installed in Title 1 and regular education classrooms, including history, math and English classes. New science labs that opened two years ago were already equipped with SMART Boards, as well as two computer labs at the school.

“We want to be as responsive and innovative as possible in reaching students that have grown up in a multi-media age,” said Ms. Lowell.

A SMART Board is a large whiteboard that uses touch technology rather than a mouse or keyboard. A projector is used to display a computer’s video output onto the whiteboard, which then acts as a huge touch screen. They also come 4 digital writing utensils that use digital ink to replace traditional whiteboard markers.

Federal and state grant money under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Title 1 grants, paid for the new SMART boards.