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Hitachi StarBoard® Inspires Teachers And Students To Become Educational Explorers

CHULA VISTA, California, July 12, 2010 – Hitachi Software is delighted to highlight the award-winning Norman Bridge Elementary School located in Chicago, Illinois. Hitachi will take an in-depth look at the school’s use of Hitachi StarBoard® Interactive Whiteboards as the centerpiece for its interactive learning environment and how it has changed the lives of teachers and students.

The Norman Bridge Elementary School, once a low performing school, has risen to be a shining star in Chicago under the visionary leadership of principal, Dr. Christopher Brake. Dr. Brake’s commitment to excellence, along with the support of an outstanding staff, has led to the creation of an engaging school culture, and outstanding teacher and student performance.

Today, Norman Bridge Elementary is an award winning school at the local, state and national level. Over the last eight years the school has been recognized with the following awards:

- Illinois State Honor Roll of Schools “Academic Improvement Award”
- Illinois State Honor Roll of Schools “Spotlight School Award”
- “Chicago Exemplary Achievement Award”
- “Chicago Rising Star School”
- “Chicago School of Distinction”
- “Chicago Autonomous Management Performance School”

Currently, the school is going through the systematic installation and integration of Hitachi StarBoards and projectors in all classrooms. Teachers unanimously agree that as they work with the StarBoard they find students more engaged and focused than ever before. Additionally, they find themselves inspired as “Educational Explorers” to create a more interactive classroom environment.

Leading Norman Bridge Elementary School is its principal, Dr. Christopher Brake. A veteran teacher turned administrator, Dr. Brake was the driving force behind the decision to bring

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interactive whiteboard technology to the school. His understanding of the positive effect the technology has on students and teachers alike is now being fully realized in the classroom.

“The StarBoard is dynamic and it allows our teachers to bring learning to life,” stated Dr. Brake. “Our teachers are learning to do more with the board each day and they have become educational explorers as a result.”

While Dr. Brake gives all the credit to his dedicated faculty, which includes six National Board Certified Teachers and one Kohl-McCormick Early Childhood Teacher Award Winner, it cannot be overlooked that he has created a culture of educational excellence which is a source of pride thought out the community.

“When you have the best teachers in the field, you need to provide them with the best resources. For technology that meant making sure we had a Hitachi StarBoard in every classroom in the building,” added Dr. Brake.

During the current academic school year, Dr. Brake directed a milestone expansion for the school which included adding a junior high school branch at a local former Catholic school, a 120-student “Pre-School for All” program and a 90 student all-day Kindergarten program.

This year, the Bridge Elementary School embarked on an educational journey with technology, with the Hitachi StarBoard as the ‘guiding light’. Fourth grade teacher Juan Cardona, one of the school’s earliest users of the StarBoard, enthusiastically speaks about the multiple ways in which the dynamic of his classroom has changed since he began using the technology everyday. He points to concrete examples that show a positive difference in his students’ classroom behavior.

“My students’ attention span has certainly widened; they are more engaged and more focused. I’m finding that the desire use to the board has made all of my students more likely to participate – and to ask for help,” stated Mr. Cardona.

Mr. Cardona uses the StarBoard in all subject areas. He has greatly enhanced mathematical learning through a number of tools and features that are offered as part of Hitachi’s StarBoard Software.

With the Hitachi StarBoard Software, teachers and students can manipulate representations of concrete objects to help students master math concepts. Students can easily see the connection between the concrete, the representational, and the symbolic. Mr. Cardoza is able to model angles of any size and help his students visualize how angles are measured. He can then incorporate use of the digital protractor to have students measure the angles.

“Mathematics teaching can now be highly interactive. Math now comes alive for students, whether they are studying 3-dimensional shapes or doing long division. With multi-touch, students can demonstrate their capabilities with long division and play competitive games. Learning math becomes enjoyable, and knowledge of math becomes a game,” added Cardona.

For other teachers at Bridge Elementary, the StarBoard hasn't just aided in their lessons, it has changed the way they teach and conduct their classes. Mary Louise, a 2nd grade teacher enthusiastically explained how using the StarBoard has allowed her teaching style to evolve.

"It's changed my life as a teacher! I find I'm speaking less and my classroom has become much more interactive. When we use the board it makes for a more student - centered approach. I'm using it for lessons in geography, vocabulary and math. Concepts can now be developed visually for all students, especially English Language Learners. The ability to associate the content with visual representations has tremendously increased comprehension," stated Ms. Louise.

Teachers at the Bridge Elementary School all describe unique experiences of how the StarBoard has opened up new worlds for them and their students. With StarBoard's intuitive, easy-to-use software, it has taken just a short time for teachers to become comfortable with integrating the technology to enhance and enrich their curriculum.

Heather Madden, a pre-school teacher at Bridge Elementary, has found the StarBoard to be the best interactive whiteboard for her classes. Her pre-school students can manipulate the board effortlessly with their fingers with no need to use a stylus or pen.

"At the pre-school level, we want the students to learn with their hands and through their own experiences. With the StarBoard, we are easily able to implement project-based learning. We've brought NASA into the classroom. There are no limits to where you can go. Students can see, touch and move representations so that they become larger than life. The StarBoard is making an enormous difference by providing a multi-sensory approach that enables even the youngest of students to better understand concepts. Ultimately this will help their long-term learning," stated Ms. Madden.

Through the grades, teachers have discovered distinct advantages only offered on the Hitachi StarBoards. 3rd grade teacher Eileen Schmeisser believes the StarBoard is a major asset that empowers her to make conceptual and abstract concepts more concrete for her students. The board gives her the capability to navigate between a lesson and the Internet, having all resources available with just a few clicks.

"At the third grade level, there are multiple subject areas where we are dealing with topics that can be challenging for students to conceptualize. At any time I can go to the Internet and bring visual representations into the lesson to help students understand new concepts. In science, we might have a lesson where we are looking at the core of the earth, and I can use multiple visual images to motivate and engage my students," stated Ms. Schmeisser.

Kindergarten teacher Jackie Grimaldi especially enjoys using the board during reading and writing time. The StarBoard Intellipen, a feature that gives the user 'one click' ability to convert their handwriting to text, is a wonderful tool for Ms. Grimaldi and her students.

"In class we will do shared writing exercises where we all brainstorm a topic and then put together sentences about that topic. Students are able to first write and practice in their journal,

and then we are able to transfer their work to the board. As teachers, we are helping all students to become active participants in the learning process,” added Ms. Grimaldi.

With StarBoards in every classroom within the school, the long-term goal is to incorporate the StarBoard into all subject areas as well as to use the boards for testing and formative and summative assessments. Eventually, the school would like to eliminate the use of textbooks, replacing them with up-to-date online curriculum products.

“Parents are talking about the StarBoards. The community is talking about them as well. It’s an exciting time,” added Ms. Schmeisser.

For Dr. Brake, the StarBoard is a tool that will aid the award-winning Bridge Elementary in its continued quest for educational excellence.

“This is a tool that allows us to bring learning to life. I firmly believe we have a dynamic educational system, and the StarBoard is the tool our outstanding staff is embracing as they help our students grow and develop,” stated Dr. Christopher Brake.

Outstanding early success with the StarBoards has been clearly seen throughout the Norman Bridge Elementary School, as teachers explore the many ways in which the technology can serve as the centerpiece for their interactive classroom environments. Hitachi Software will be chronicling the growth of Bridge Elementary teachers and students on their journey with the StarBoard.

ABOUT HITACHI

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Hitachi America Ltd., Business Solutions Group markets LCD projectors, interactive panels and whiteboards and security and observation system products through value added resellers, system integrators, distributors and OEM.

About Hitachi, Ltd.

Hitachi, Ltd., (NYSE: HIT / TSE: 6501), headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, is a leading global electronics company with approximately 360,000 employees worldwide. Fiscal 2009 (ended March 31, 2010) consolidated revenues totaled 8,968 billion yen (\$96.4 billion). Hitachi will focus more than ever on the Social Innovation Business, which includes information and telecommunication systems, power systems, environmental, industrial and transportation systems, and social and urban systems, as well as the sophisticated materials and key devices that support them. For more information on Hitachi, please visit the company's website at www.hitachi.com.

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