

SMART helping transform classrooms and learning in SA

The Ministry of Education for Gauteng province in South Africa has chosen the global provider of collaboration solutions, SMART Technologies Inc. for the initial installation of 1,800 SMART Board 6065 interactive displays and equivalent licenses for SMART Notebook collaborative learning software.



VastraTech, the authorized SMART distributor in South Africa, is leading the implementation, which will initially see Grade 12 classrooms in 375 government schools across Gauteng province transformed into collaborative learning environments that enhance student understanding and boost student achievement.

In December 2014, the Gauteng Ministry of Education worked with VastraTech and SMART on a pilot project in which 100 classrooms were equipped with the SMART Board 6065 interactive flat panel and SMART Notebook software. The project was considered by the Ministry to be so successful that it ultimately chose SMART as its main provider of interactive classroom technology.

The installation of the 1,800 SMART Board interactive flat panels and Notebook software is the first phase of an initiative to create 80,000 ICT-enabled, "paperless classrooms" in Gauteng province over the next five years. That, in turn, is part of a US\$5.7 billion effort to revamp government schools in Gauteng, which encompasses the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Provideing not just technology but training

"We chose SMART because we feel they offer the latest leading-edge technology in interactive displays and because Notebook software will be effective in getting teachers and students more engaged in their lessons," says Panyaza Lesufi, member of the Executive Council for Education in Gauteng province. "The technology will help us make our schools centers of excellence, putting more emphasis on mathematics and science, while providing our students with the tools they will need to transform them into the next generation of entrepreneurs, ready to compete with anyone, anywhere in the world."

As part of the implementation plan, SMART and VastraTech will provide educators with professional development and training that aligns with the Ministry of Education's objectives to enhance pedagogy in ways that lead to increased learning outcomes. Educators will create, deliver and manage interactive lessons using SMART Notebook, the world's most popular collaborative learning software, which has been downloaded more than 6.5 million times over the past three years and is used by nearly 70 million teachers and students around the world each school day.

"As Nelson Mandela once said, Education is the most powerful weapon to use in order to change the world and we are very pleased to be a part of Mr. Lesufi's vision to bring about that change" says Gary Bekker, chief executive officer, VastraTech.

Neil Gaydon, president and CEO, SMART Technologies said "Our education solutions are intuitive and easy-to-use, enabling students to learn in natural ways - making them a perfect fit for the goals of the Ministry. SMART looks forward to a long-term relationship with educators in Gauteng."

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