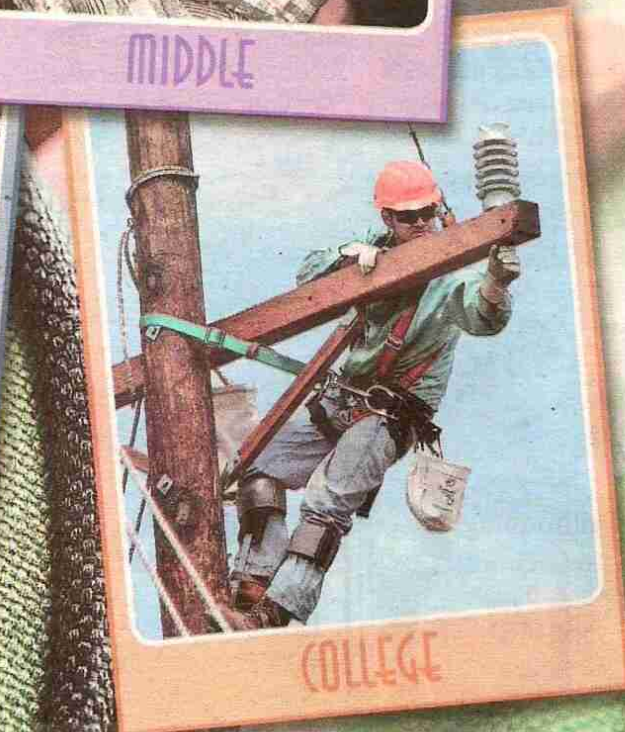
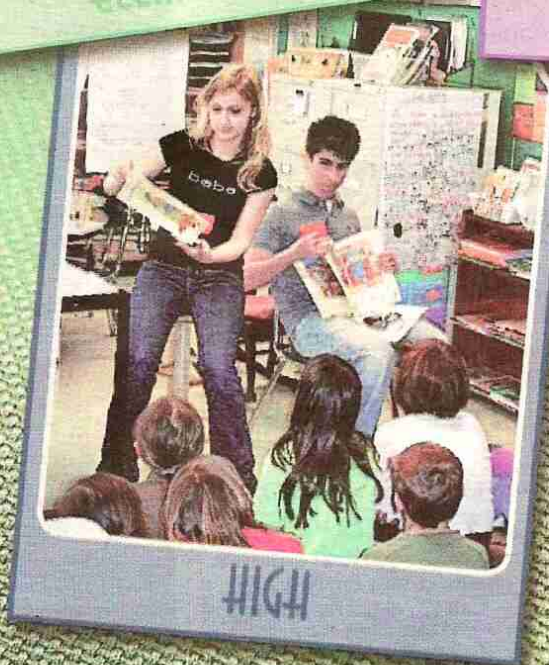
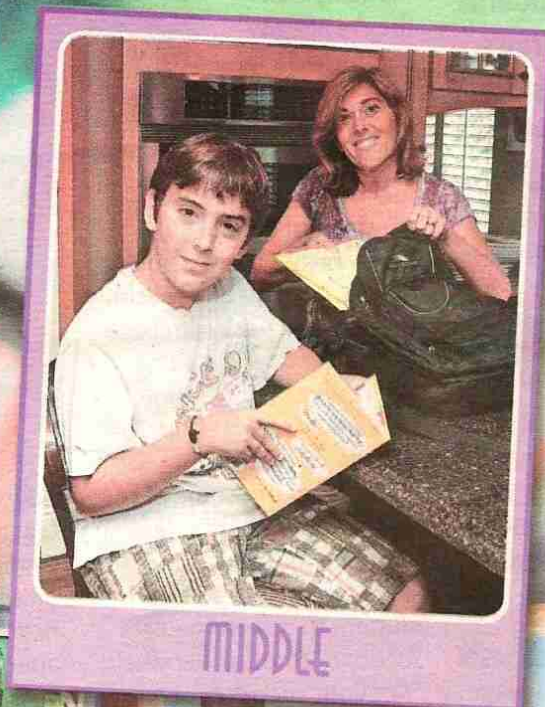
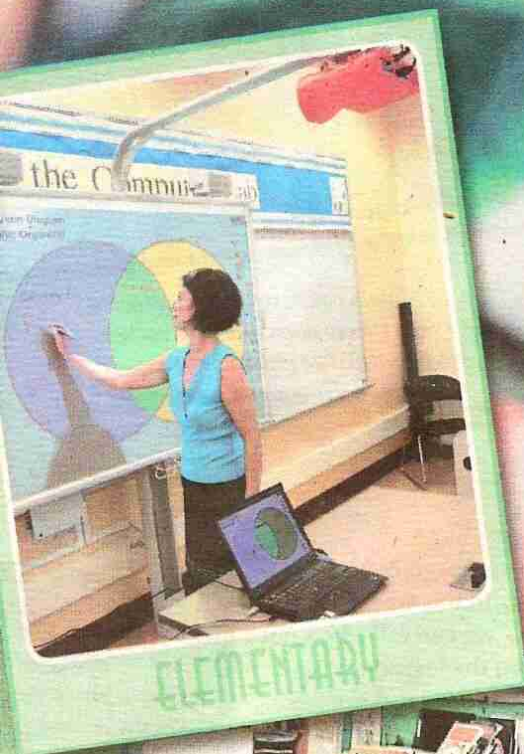


TODAY'S Education

Sunday, August 2, 2009



Inside the section:

High-tech learning in elementary schools

Page 2

Easing the transition to middle school

Page 3

The promise of high school academies

Page 4

News from local schools, colleges

Page 9

REVOLUTION IN LEARNING

From high-tech white boards to computers in the classroom, technology is changing the way children learn

The technology explosion that has revolutionized the way adults do business has also revolutionized the way children learn.

At Smallwood Elementary School in Amherst, for instance, first graders create some rudimentary PowerPoint presentations, and by second grade, they're doing PowerPoint presentations that would make any corporate executive proud.

"It's amazing what they're able to put together," said Smallwood Principal Margaret Hollstein. "And it's crucial. We're not being responsible if we don't prepare them for the computer technology skills that they'll need in the future to be a success in college or in the world of work."

In some of Smallwood's classrooms, teachers and students use "smart" white boards that allow teachers to display what's on their computers. The school also has at least five computers in each room, a library computer lab and a cart

with 30 laptops that can be moved from room to room.

"We've found it really helps tremendously with students with special needs who might need that extra support," said Hollstein, "and also with students who are just particularly motivated to learn via the computer or any type of technology.

An initiative in the Buffalo School District aims to replace all the traditional dry erase or chalkboards

"The high-tech boards grab the children's attention in ways that a traditional chalkboard never could."

— Shannon Grimes, teacher at School 89



throughout the school system with smart white boards. Half the classrooms already have the boards; the other half will be using them by 2011.

"We started to see immediate results," said Mary Jo Conrad, principal of School 89, where the pilot program was based. Teacher

Shannon Grimes said that the high-tech boards grab the children's attention in ways that a traditional chalkboard never could. "Children really respond to it because they're used to learning from television, from the computer, from computer games. It's a modality that they're already comfortable with."

Cheryl Hurd, the technology integration specialist at School 89, believes that the possibilities of smart boards as a teaching tool are practically limitless. "A teacher can run an interactive lesson about Benjamin Franklin from the Discovery Channel, for instance, or use some of the vast amount of other lesson software that's available."

The system allows each student to give immediate feedback through handheld "ActiVote" monitors at each desk, and to answer



By 2011, all Buffalo public schools are expected to have smart white boards, which teachers say students are responding to.

questions posed by the teacher. "In this way," said Grimes, "we can tell who's not grasping the lesson on the first try, and we can quickly alter our approach to make sure that no children are slipping through the cracks."

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