



Mississippi High School Does What It Takes to Bring Technology to the Classroom

When Russell Keene became principal of Southeast Lauderdale High School in 2015, each teacher had a computer, some classrooms were equipped with student computers and a projector, and the small number of interactive whiteboards weren't working properly.

Keene comes from a technology background and has seen how much of an impact the right solutions can have on lesson delivery and engagement. "When I came to Southeast Lauderdale, I knew I wanted [teachers] to start incorporating more educational technology solutions." However, since significant technology

upgrades weren't in the school's budget, he had to come up with creative ways to fund a more robust technology implementation, while getting teacher buy-in for upcoming change.

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Finding Creative Ways To Fund Technology

It all started with a proposition to the school board. If the school raised \$10,000 for technology, the district would match it dollar for dollar. Shortly after Keene's technology match challenge, he started fundraising efforts, including a sponsored golf scramble with area businesses and a community day crawfish cookout run by school employees and volunteers.

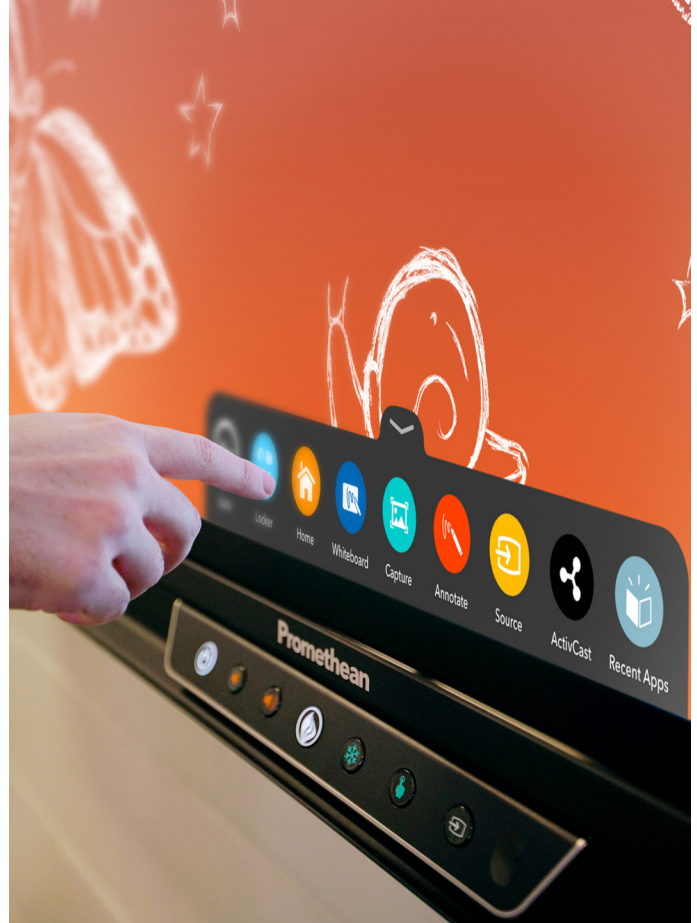
After nearly two years of the fundraising push, Keene went back to the school board with \$10,000 and received his requested match. With \$20,000 on the table, he turned to a local organization that awarded his school a \$20,000 matching grant - for a grand total of \$40,000. "I knew we were more likely to receive the grant if we had skin in the game," said Keene.

With the successful fundraising behind him, Keene contacted several vendors for demonstrations and examples of how their solutions improved classroom engagement.

One company's projector wasn't durable and was hard to integrate with other technology, while another's software lacked interactivity and integrability. However, the third time was the charm when Promethean arrived on-site to showcase its interactive panels and software.

"With Promethean, we have built-in integration and the ability to easily add applications that teachers love - plus teachers can use their interactive boards without tying up their computers. It has better functionality and sustainability than anything else we could find."

So, in January 2018, the district installed ActivPanels in all of Southeast Lauderdale's math, English, biology, U.S. history and Spanish classes. (Keene is hoping to outfit the remaining seven classrooms with ActivPanels once the school has



enough funds to purchase them.) "I've had such positive feedback, even from those who aren't necessarily comfortable with technology. With the training provided by Promethean, they're even getting past the comfort stage and on to our next phase, which is finding new ways to use the technology."

Creating An Interactive Learning Environment

Kameron Burnham, who teaches 10th-grade English II, has experienced numerous benefits from the classroom technology. Her previous high school, also in the same district, only had an overhead projector and a transparency sheet to write on and erase.

"The technology we have at Southeast has made a world of difference in my classroom as far as student participation and interest in general," said Burnham. "Today's kids are growing up in a digital world, so any time we can use technology in the classroom, they love it. Having technology has really allowed the students to interact with

each other and with me, instead of learning in a lecture-based classroom.” Burnham’s classroom environment includes Chromebook™ notebook computers for the students, a Promethean ActivPanel at the front of the class, and Promethean’s ClassFlow and ActivInspire software to bring lessons to life with activities that grab students’ attention. One of her favorite uses of ActivInspire involves helping students improve their test-taking skills, particularly with multiple choice questions. Too often, students will skim content, jump to the answer choices, guess, and get it wrong because they hurried through the questions. Burnham uses the software to cover up answer choices, which forces students to spend time comprehending the question before Burnham uncovers them.

“When we first implemented all the new technology, it felt like Christmas,” she said.

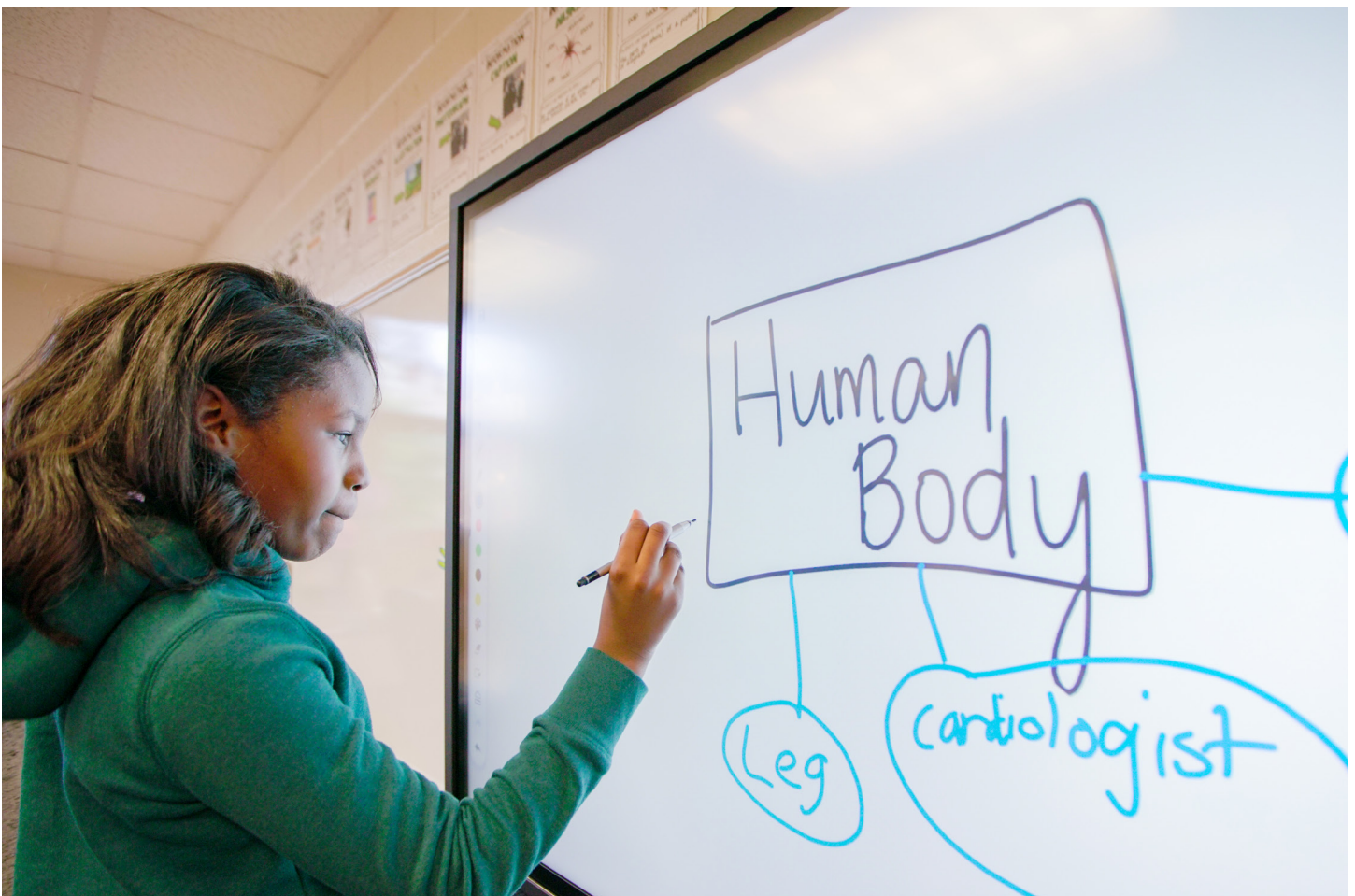
“When we [teachers] stepped into the hallway and

realized our ActivPanels were sitting in the halls, just waiting to be opened and set up, I think every teacher on campus squealed and had tears of joy.”

Setting A Districtwide Trend

Southeast Lauderdale teachers have embraced the new technology in their lessons – even those who started out feeling uncomfortable with technology. They’re trading tips on what works well and learning from Promethean coaches who regularly come on site to help them. Many are even learning from their students, who enjoy showing off their technology skills.

“Our district is very supportive, and since we operate under site-based management, the principal has a lot of say about funding in each school,” said Keene. “If the principal is pro-technology and wants it used in the classroom, it trickles down to the teachers. We’re hoping to be a trendsetter for our district.”



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