

Donations fund new technology

Students at Fayetteville Street Elementary get new educational tools

By Zakiya Scott

UNC Staff Writer

The Durham VOICE

thedurhamvoice@gmail.com

Not every class has the opportunity to learn science through a game of Jeopardy.

But for students in Harry Leak's class at Fayetteville Street Elementary, thanks to a new technology initiative, it is possible.

"Simple machines for 500! Here is your question..." Leak says to an eager group of fifth-graders gazing up at the projected screen in front of them.

Take a walk down the school's hallways, and you will notice that each classroom incorporates a new technology in its daily routine. Peer into a first-grade classroom and see a teacher pulling up a lesson plan on a new Dell notebook. Pass a class of fourth-graders gathered around a Promethean board, a type of interactive white board, and see the enthusiasm in the students' faces.

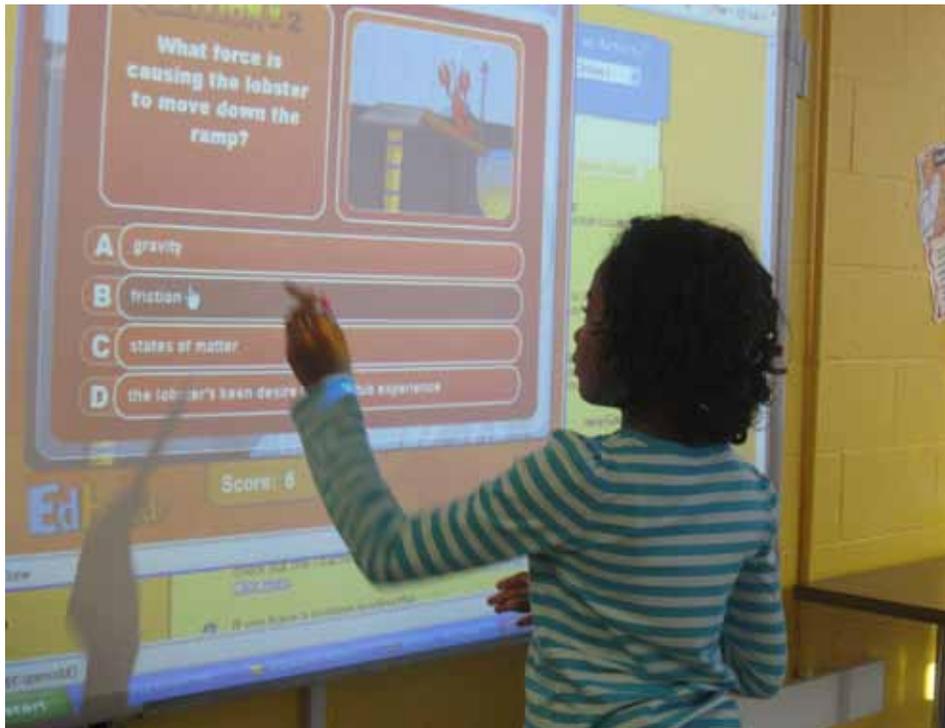
Just this month, a final donation of \$2,500 from North Carolina Mutual to the school makes all of this possible. This business, along with Mechanics and Farmers Bank and Semrad and Associates, donated funds for the purchase of much-needed computers and new technology equipment for the entire school.

This new technology initiative, which began in January 2011, places new Dell Latitude 2010 Notebook computers in each teacher's classroom. In addition, Promethean boards were installed in each third-, fourth- and fifth-grade classroom, replacing old blackboards and dry-erase boards.

Lorette Beck, a third-grade math teacher at Fayetteville, uses ACTIVote pods to give students an interactive form of learning with the Promethean board in her classroom.

Students eagerly use the pods to click and chime in on group questions, then the answers are projected on the Promethean board. Each student can see if he answered correctly and what percentage of the class got the question right.

"They use the pods to practice their



Staff photo by Zakiya Scott

Amaia Lunsford, a student at Fayetteville Street Elementary, uses the pen on a Promethean board (a type of interactive white board) to answer a question in class. The Promethean boards are among several technological tools provided by the recent initiative.

testing on classcave.org," Leak says. "We didn't have things like this before because of the cuts."

Leak, a fourth- and fifth-grade intervention teacher at Fayetteville, says the recent loss in funding cut the nationwide Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program that he taught at Fayetteville. Leak used AVID to prepare his students for success in middle school, high school and even college.

"Now they can have programs like that back," Leak says. "It gives them at least a level playing field with other students."

The technology initiative has allowed teachers like Leak to reintroduce computer-based learning programs like Study Island, which helps students master study and test skills with quizzes and subject-specific activities.

"There is a direct correlation in their work on sites like thatquiz.org, a rise in their interest and in their state test scores," Leak says.

The donations have also allowed the school to rebuild its 25-computer media lab, which hosts daily technology class-

MORE ONLINE

Fayetteville Street Elementary: <http://fayettevillest.dpsnc.net>

AVID: <http://www.pac.dodea.edu/edservices/educationprograms/avid.htm>

es for all grade levels and is open to students before and after school.

"We're giving as much computer time to each child as we can," Leak says. "Many of these students don't have computers at home. And of those that do, very few have Internet access."

The efforts of North Carolina Mutual, Mechanics and Farmers Bank and Semrad and Associates are measures of community involvement in the Durham Public School District.

The monetary value of all of the Dell Notebooks, computers and Promethean boards put together is incomparable to the value of an engaged and educated classroom.