



## MNW Joins Skills Iowa Schools

Taking advantage of a federal grant made possible by Senator Tom Harkin, Manson Northwest Webster joins 100 other Iowa schools using Skills Iowa, a standards-driven, technology-based project aimed to help teachers and students raise achievement and exceed the requirements of NCLB. Providing technology tools, educational resources and hands-on support, Skills Iowa allows teachers to better address individual student needs and effectively communicate with everyone involved in a child's education. Skills Iowa is tailored to provide teachers with tools that have proven effective when used in conjunction with a school's curriculum. Skills Iowa consists of two parts, the Skills Tutor and the Assessment Center. The Skills Tutor is a Web-based program providing interactive lessons in math, reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, and language arts. Students can gain access to Skills Tutor from any Internet ready computer. Teachers can assign specific lessons to individual students or to a group of students. Reports allow teachers to see student scores, time on task, and skills improvement.

The Assessment Center provides multiple choice assessments in math, reading and language arts. These assessments are computer-created based upon the teacher's selection of student skills to be tested. Tests are corrected and reports are broken down by skill level and question detail. These assessments are also aligned with the Iowa tests and soon to be with the Iowa Core Curriculum. The addition of new schools through stimulus funding has made this possible for MNW. It will be a great addition to our at risk programming as well as for advanced students who need to move ahead at their own pace. The after school and summer programs will also find great benefit from Skills Iowa. Bridget Godwin is the Skills Iowa coordinating teacher.

## MNW Elementary Gets New Technology

Manson Northwest Webster Elementary has recently had a large infusion of technology. The district's Technology Committee, which gives input into determining technology integration into the classroom, helped to decide on the most appropriate technology for grades PreK-6. Following are some types of technology that were installed and are up and running in the classrooms.

**Smart Boards:** The **smart board** is a presentation device that interfaces with a computer. The computer images are displayed on the board by a digital projector, where they can be seen and manipulated. Users can control software both from the computer and from the smart board. Participants can add notations, and emphasis



by using a pen and or highlighter tool. By using his/her finger as a mouse, the teacher or student can run applications directly from the board. Another user at the computer can also have input. The interaction between the person at the computer, the users at the board, and the computer itself is a unique arrangement. Any notes

or drawings can then be saved within the board's memory or printed out and distributed to group members.

**Document cameras:** A document camera is a camera mounted on a stand, allowing for capture of text, graphic or 3-dimensional objects. The image is typically displayed through an LCD projector. Besides projecting a graphic or document, a chemistry teacher could demonstrate an experiment, or the foods teacher could prepare a recipe, while the class watches in real time on a screen rather than crowding around the table.



**Student Response Devices:** A student response system is a set of wireless hand-held pads or "clickers" that allows the teacher to request information and for students to respond. By pressing a button on the response pad, a signal is sent to a receiver on the computer. The computer records or displays the student responses. The teacher can determine whether students are grasping the concept being presented or whether further explanation may be needed. Students can also compare their own understanding to that of their classmates.

