**Unnecessary Necessities:**

**What's so Smart about Smartboards?**

            Smart Boards have been the new hype in the local school system during the past few years. They are mounted on the wall of most classrooms in Barlow, and projectors hang from the ceilings to make the whole system work. These digital interactive white boards seem to amaze most people; lord knows why. Eight out of ten students at Joel Barlow High School agreed that Smart Boards are unnecessary. They are a burden to our learning environment.

            Smart boards are a waste of money. They are just essentially white board with a projector except much more expensive. Smart boards cost anywhere from $3,000 to $5,000 (Smart Technologies). Along with Smart boards come other accessories like projectors and computer software. That can range anywhere from $3,450 to $10,050 (Smart Technologies).  Our school has been given grants for this; however, it is still money that could be put to better use. Even taking the lesser price, the 40 classrooms in Barlow with Smart boards, have cost $120,000 to $260,000 including accessories. There are better ways for this money to be spent. For example, there is a girl’s bathroom in E-hallway where you can barely get a drip of water to wash your hands. Also, some classrooms during the winter do not get enough heat. I’m not the only one bringing my ski jacket to school just to be warm in class. These are obvious things that need to be taken care of before we go to buying 40 new pointless Smart Boards.

            Smart boards make learning more difficult. When we had white boards, we could clearly read most of the teachers’ handwriting and copy the notes into our notebooks. Now, the handwriting is illegible. If a complete stranger walked into a classroom with notes written on the Smart boards, they would guess that a five year old wrote it. Not only does the messy handwriting make it harder for the students, it also disrupts the flow of the class. There are numerous questions asked throughout class regarding to the illegible notes on the board. Heather Rohde, Barlow junior said, “Smart boards just make note taking more complicated.”

           Smart Boards also waste a lot of class time. In my French class, the teacher planned to show a PowerPoint for the entire class. However, the Smart Board began to malfunction. She had to call the tech guy, and get him to fix it. After struggling with the Smart Board for a good ten minutes, we all thought the Smart Board was fixed. We left for lunch and then came back again, and the same thing happened; the Smart Board began to malfunction. All together the Smart Board wasted at least a half hour of our class time and we barely got anything done.

And soon, Smart Boards will become outdated. Just like we went from cassette tapes to CDs to iPods, things will change. Soon we will have to get the newest and coolest Smart Board. The $120,000 we spent on our previous Smart Boards will go to waste. Is it practical to invest so much money into a new technology that will not even last?

There is a simple solution. Go back to white boards. Save money, learn easily, and waste less class time. Both teachers and students will be happier. Oscar Wilde once said, “We live in an age when unnecessary thing are our only necessities.” (Thinkexist.com) We have to learn to put our necessities in place, and get rid of all these unnecessary boards.

**Works Cited**

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