

## The Technology Of Teaching

(NAPSA)—PCs have long been used in the classroom to help children learn, but when it comes to cost, many teachers say that desktops and laptops simply do not compute. The U.S. Department of Education found schools have an average of only one computer for every five students. As a result, teachers are often limited in how much they can actually integrate computers into their curriculum.

Handheld computers may offer a solution. Schools can outfit an entire class of 30 students for the cost of three or four laptops, making it possible for every student to have a computing device. Companies such as Palm, Inc., the leading provider of handheld computers, already has thousands of handhelds in classrooms across the nation. Compact and powerful, Palm handhelds run more than 200 curriculum applications. The multi-functional, multimedia handhelds can be used alone or connected to peripherals such as keyboards, science probes and digital cameras. Today's Palm handhelds are used across the curriculum in language arts, math, science, social studies, music and art. They are also used for quizzes, test preparation, and assessment. Weighing in at about five ounces, these mobile computers often accompany students on field trips. They have enough functionality and storage to replace much of the 20 pounds of learning materials, reference books, study guides, worksheet organizers and graphing calculators that the average student carries.

Educators in favor of the hand-



**A number of school districts consider handheld computers to be economically smart educational tools.**

helds say the devices can lead to classrooms where students access the Internet wirelessly, take notes, calculate, sketch ideas, collect data, access resources, manage activities and courses and instantly beam information to each other.

Educators also say a sometimes overlooked advantage of handhelds is that students like to use them. One independent study from SRI International found that nearly 90 percent of the teachers reported that handhelds are an effective instructional tool; and teachers who let their students have 24-hour access to their Palm handhelds reported increased time spent on schoolwork outside of school time and an increase in homework completion.

Nearly 100 percent of elementary school teachers and 77 percent of high school teachers reported the handhelds had a positive effect on their teaching practices.

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