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*"Dare to Dream Again!"*

**LeaderLink**  
eNewsletter



March 2009

• FORWARD TO A FRIEND

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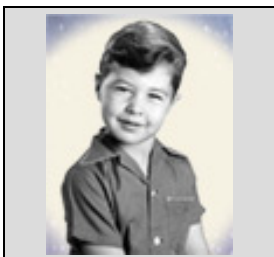
## Helping More Students Reach Their Potential

Yes, everyone is talking about the stimulus funding for special education, but what are we *really* celebrating? We're celebrating the fact that our federal government saw accessibility as a **top priority**. Not since Assistive Technology was written into IDEA have we had this much opportunity to make a difference for students with physical and learning disabilities. This could be the biggest thing to hit AT, ever!

Read Don's inspiring personal response to the stimulus below.

## Dare to Dream - an open letter from Don Johnston

**Right now, there are 12 billion reasons to dream...again.**



*This was me in 1955 before heading off to school. How would my education have been different today?*

Growing up with a learning disability in the 50s, I dreamed of what it would be like to be successful in school like the other kids. Now, I think about how my education would have been different if I was born in 2000 instead of 1950. Unless I was enrolled in a district with a strong assistive technology program, and happened to be in a well-funded school, **it may be no different**. Today, technology is part of daily life, and new advancements are being made every day, but how are we using technology to provide *equal access* to education?

**The technology common in school gives equal access to technology, but not to education.**

Even with today's technological advancements, I would have still struggled to write with Microsoft Word just as I did with paper and pencil. I would have still struggled to read online just as I did with my printed textbooks.

**But, now you have an *opportunity* to change this.**

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**\$12 Billion in Special Ed Stimulus Funding**

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The new administration is sending a clear message about education through the economic stimulus package. Education is a **top priority**... especially special education. Over the next two years, an additional \$80 billion of funding will be pumped into education with IDEA receiving \$12 billion—that's 50% more than the current funding level.

This is a **one-time burst of funding**. In the past, districts have used grants and other one-time funding influxes to add infrastructure and create system changes that they could believe in. Yet, the possibilities that this huge pool of funding affords are larger than was ever thought possible. Now *you* have an opportunity to dream—to reach out and create breakthroughs for more students than ever before. What *could* you make education look like to a kid like me, enrolled in our 2009 school system?

### What does equal access to education look like?

Picture it in your mind, and think about how you can make it happen. I am so passionate about this opportunity that I'm doing everything possible to make widespread access affordable for any student who can benefit. We have new whole-school pricing that makes it easy for you to install accessible technologies on **every** school computer, **and home computer**. Equal access to education is a civil right that we must give to our students!

So, what can you do? **Dream big**. Pull together your wish list and start dreaming with your colleagues and director. You have an opportunity to make breakthroughs in your school system, but you have to grasp this opportunity.

Together, we can make this opportunity into a new renaissance with accessible technologies. We cannot let another generation of students fail. We **must** give them the tools and the hope that prepares them for success. We must all learn to dream again for our students' future.

Thanks for all that you do for our students,

### Got Stimulus Questions?

- How much additional IDEA funding is my district getting?
- My state is in poor shape financially, won't this funding go to reducing this deficit?
- Why should this funding go to improving accessibility with assistive technology?

[Find answers to these and other questions](#)

**NEW! Review a Product, Get a Starbucks Card!**



top

Don launched his blog in February and it's getting tons of hits! He hopes it will facilitate informal conversations about world issues related to education. Check out recent posts from Don, Ruth, Ben and other Don Johnston personalities! We'd love to hear your comments.

[Join the conversation](#)

### NEO Speaks!



Update your [Co:Writer for NEO](#) to take advantage of the new Text2Speech box

**FACELAND** helps students with autism learn to recognize facial expression of emotions



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QUICK TIPS



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Look for this button on many of our product pages. For a limited time we'll be sending a complimentary Starbucks card to those who complete a short review form. [Check it out now!](#)

## USING TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

### WordMaker Demo is Here!

Be the first to watch our newest demo for the WordMaker phonics program. Our other demos have been very popular! [Check it out.](#)



### Recent Support Topics

Visit our [Product Resources Section](#) and [Technical Support](#) page. FAQs are listed as Support Topics under each product.

[Wondering if your favorite programs are compatible with Macintosh OS 10.5 \(Leopard\)?](#) Keyword search: intel mac

[If you are using AlphaSmart 3000 or Co:Writer for NEO, be sure you are using the correct Co:Writer SmartApplet.](#) Keyword search: smartapplet support

## More Resources

### New Co:Writer Topic Dictionaries

[Beethoven Matter](#)

[American English](#)  
[British English](#)

### Special Topics for April:

[Earth Day](#)  
[Easter Story](#)  
[Easter Eggs](#)  
[Passover](#)

[AE-Holidays](#)  
[BE - Religious](#)  
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