

BUDDY TAYLOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

*As seen in the News Tribune
Serving Palm Coast, Bunnell & Flagler Beach Florida*

PALM COAST – An educational version of Nintendo’s Game Boy has hit Buddy Taylor Middle School and the principal is reporting that pupils love to learn. The School Board has approved a purchase of 50 hand-held computers dubbed “Brainchild.” The purchase includes 50 carrying cases, 150 cartridges, and 50 AC adapters.

Inserting cartridges for various programs operates the portable computers. Pupils using the units are able to practice everything from math and reading skills and other subjects. The units also can be used in preparation for SAT exams and for GED preparation.

The computers, the first of their kind to be introduced in to the school district, will be used for a year as school officials review their effectiveness. Buddy Taylor Middle Principal Kathy DePalma was excited when she presented the purchase request to the School Board. “We had demonstration models which we introduced to the students and parents and we had a wonderful response,” DePalma said.

The “Brainchild” units will be used for a variety of tasks. At the middle school, teachers will be targeting pupils who need remediation in special areas. Depalma explained that the cartridges are programmed so that pupils start at their current level in a subject area and then work up to more challenging levels.

“These units also can be used for enrichment,” DePalma told the board. While pupils work through the various levels, the computer also assists them in coming up with the right answers.

“The thing about these computers is that they do not give the students the answers. If they get a question, such as a reading question wrong, the computer will come back and ask them the same question again, but this time in a different way. That’s because the student obviously didn’t understand the question the first time, so the computer is not going to ask the same question over and over,” she said.

Pupils will be able to access the computers by checking them out through the school library. “How are you going to keep track of them?” asked School Board member Theda Wilson. DePalma said the library will track the units using the same method of tracking books. “There is no street value. These computers have no application anywhere else. They have educational value,” she said.



Board member Eddie Herrera spent several minutes working on it. “They are fun,” Herrera said, in supporting the purchase request. School Board Chairman Jim Guines was particularly pleased that the computers would be used by pupils at home. “I like having the technology going home,” he said. DePalma said the computers also will be utilized during summer school.