

# The Jackson Sun

## Students test mini notebooks

West Carroll students receive Brainchild to augment their classroom work.

In coming weeks, parents of West Carroll Primary School students might notice something different coming home with their kids along with homework, report cards and notes from the teacher.

Hand-held computers called Brainchild, designed to help students with a variety of subjects, were introduced to parents Monday night at the McLemoresville school. Beginning in about two weeks, after teachers and students get the hang of the gizmos, they will be sent home to provide high-tech tutoring.

“One of the things I really like about them is that they extend the school day, because they can use them at school and then take them home and continue to learn,” said Betty Wallace, supervisor of instruction for the 1,100 student West Carroll School District.

Using federal Goals Grant, the school purchased 120 Brainchild to be shared by the district’s 360 second, third and fourth graders. Teachers have already been trained on using the devices to supplement their classroom instruction. “The



children really seem to enjoy using them,” said fourth grade teacher Mollie Vann. “They were really excited when we brought them into the classroom.”

The school purchased 360 Brainchild curriculum cartridges that teach basic subjects such as reading, math and science, plus topics such as history and geography. They can be used to provide remedial help for students as well “enrichment” lessons for students who want to move beyond the usual studies according to Vann.

The approach seems to be working with third-grader Jalesa Wester. “It’s fun,” Jalesa said. “You play it just like a GameBoy, but you learn a lot.” Jalesa’s mother, Jackie Wester, said Brainchild seems to motivate her daughter to learn.

“I saw her work with the math, it gave her that ‘want to,’ instead of me having to make her do it,” Jackie Wester said. “She went and got paper and figured out the problems and asked me questions without me having to tell her to.”

Another third-grader, Whitney Foster, said she thinks Brainchild will give classroom teachers some serious competition. “I like my teacher, but I like Brainchild better,” Whitney said.

Though Brainchild are likely to be popular with students, Vann said she is not worried that the computers are encroaching on her turf. “As teachers, our goal is to give our students the skills they need to be successful citizens” she said. “Anything we have at our disposal to help us meet that goal is good. Why should we feel threatened?”