



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Meredith Spence
Bay Elementary School Principal
Tel: 850-622-5051
Email: SpenceM@walton.k12.fl.us

LOCAL SCHOOL AND PARENTS TAKE ON TECHNOLOGY – AND ARE WINNING!

Bay Elementary and Bay Boosters have formed a partnership to commit their fundraising efforts to fulfilling their technology needs and are exceeding expectations!

Santa Rosa Beach, Fla. - February 10, 2016 - Bay Elementary School and its parent/teacher organization Bay Boosters, have committed their fundraising efforts to help the school exceed its technology needs and in just a few short months are steps away from success.

When Mrs. Meredith Spence, Bay Elementary Principal, and Chairpersons of Bay Boosters met in July 2015 to identify the needs of the school, it was clear a massive partnership and focus on boosting the school's technology was the answer. Fast forward just one semester and that partnership has generated three very successful fundraisers which raised more than \$30,000 for technology funds and resulted in the purchased 85 brand new personal devices for student use.

"Technology can be a tricky item to budget," states Bay Elementary Principal, Meredith Spence. "Our student population is growing weekly and our students use a variety of technology mediums daily whether for classroom learning, group breakout learning or state-level testing. Though our school has technology funds for school upgrades, it's not as much as we would like to stay in line with technological advances for our students. To put it simply, we needed parent support to help meet the variety of our school's needs."

On Wednesday, February 10th, at 8:30 a.m. CST, Bay Elementary and Bay Boosters presented the 85 brand new devices that have been purchased as a result of these fundraisers. The devices were purchased jointly between Bay Elementary and Bay Boosters and within the guidelines of the Walton County School District and their platform's needs. Once unboxed, they will be ready for student use.

"We could not be more proud to share this moment with our parents, students, teachers, our community, and of course the school's administration," says Bay Boosters Chairwoman, Mary Brandman. "Their support during these fundraisers whether through volunteer hours or donation items has made a huge impact on our school and our kids' ability to learn."

Bay Elementary is a K-4 school and maintains a smaller population which, like much of Walton County, has experienced rapid student growth. In just a single school year, enrollment has increased 18% from 312 students during the 2014/15 school year to 380 in the current school year.

In addition to the 85 devices purchased in partnership with Bay Elementary and Bay Boosters, private school donors have provided 22 Kindle Fire devices to the Media Center. Children will be able to check out these devices to read and use them for classroom learning.

“Children are technologically savvy and we really have to recognize that as educators,” says Spence. “Many of our Kindergartners have never even used a mouse to control a computer so asking them to use that during a test creates a disadvantage and may result in invalid test results. These new devices will be more familiar to our students in usage which will allow them to reach their full potential!”

The 85 new devices will be implemented into the school’s kindergarten, first and second grades immediately. Bay Elementary and Bay Boosters will host a final fundraiser, their Spring Fling, with a goal to raise the remainder of the funds needed purchase devices for third and fourth grades.

“We’ve come so far,” says Brandman. “We are already planning our Spring Fling event with hopes to generate these remaining funds.”

Kindergarten registration begins March 7, 2016. Bay Elementary School will hold a Kindergarten Registration Open House on Tuesday, March 8, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. to provide parents and future students with information on Bay’s Kindergarten program, meet the Kindergarten Team, and tour the school. Registration forms and information will be available at the school March 7-18, 2016 in the school office.

For more information about Bay Elementary visit <https://bes.walton.k12.fl.us/>.

For more information about Bay Boosters visit www.bayboosters.com.

XX