# *Education Software Company Again Targeting Families*

**Local News**

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**OLYMPIA—**The Attorney General’s Office today warned parents to be careful about educational companies who claim to be affiliated with their child’s school as a way to sell their wares.

The office recently received information from representatives of the Lake Washington School District that at least four families received solicitations from salespeople with Brainstorm USA, an educational software company, claiming to be affiliated with their child’s school.

The primarily Spanish-speaking families, including one officially classified as homeless, reported being asked to pay as much as $2,400 for the software—only to learn it was not recommended or required by their child’s school at all.

“Education is a fundamental gateway to future success—and many parents will do anything to help their child succeed,” said Attorney General Bob Ferguson. “These salespeople deserve an “F” for their deceptive sales practices.”

The AGO issued a similar alert in December 2006 when the Yakima School District notified the office that a salesperson associated with Brainstorm USA had obtained a list of student phone numbers and parent names. The salesperson then contacted Spanish-speaking families and falsely indicated he was affiliated with the district in order to gain access to their homes. Neither the Lake Washington

School District nor the Yakima School District have any affiliation with Brainstorm USA or its merchandise.

Consumers who have purchased items from Brainstorm USA and believe they may have been deceived should file a complaint with the Attorney General’s Office. Complaints can be filed in English or Spanish online at www.atg.wa.gov or call 1-800-551-4636 to request a form by mail.

• Link to Spanish complaint form: https://fortress.wa.gov/atg/formhandle ... mplaintForm_es.aspx 

• Link to English complaint form: https://fortress.wa.gov/atg/formhandler/ago/ComplaintForm.aspx

A representative of Brainstorm USA said salespeople should never claim to be from the school district when selling their product and urged families to contact Brainstorm USA at 1-800-595-5561 with the name of the salesperson so they could take further action.

The Attorney General’s Office investigated a similar scam in 2003 that targeted Hispanic families with limited English language fluency in Wenatchee and Tri-Cities. Sales representatives of A+ Computer Program USA claimed to be associated with local schools and knew the names of children in the families, which schools they attended and what grade they were in. About two dozen families who purchased defective computers and educational software from the company received refunds.

Parents can protect themselves from deceptive sales practices by always checking with their child’s teacher before spending money on educational software or other products, Ferguson said.