

2/15/2024

Dear Amherst Central Alumni Foundation, Inc,

We are writing to request funding for a grant to support our kindergarten integrated classroom here at Smallwood Drive Elementary School. In our integrated classroom we promote the importance of all students are welcome. We celebrate our differences, similarities and creative, brilliant brains. This year we have 17 students. Some of these students have a variety of needs which we spend our year finding creative solutions and ways to build their independence and self advocacy skills to allow them to feel like their peers.

A time of the day that we have observed all students engaged and able to participate together regardless of their cognitive or physical abilities, is during recess. We call this time, "friend time" in our classroom as we encourage students to engage in conversations, problem solve and practice social skills such as taking turns, sharing and collaborative play. Another time of the day that we see similar behaviors is during our dramatic play center in the morning during our Reading Block. Research shows that children learn best through play and hands-on learning opportunities. We always include a play based, hands on center during our reading group block when they are not working directly with a teacher. This center tends to be our dramatic play center with themes such as Polar Region, Bakery, Flower Shop, and Veterinarian Clinic.

We are requesting additional organizational systems that we have currently in place in our room that helps foster independence for all students. You will see a picture of these systems below and how they are organized and utilized in our classroom on a daily basis. These systems are currently used during our "WIN" time of the day (What I Need) as students enter the classroom. This system was purchased by us last year to assist a student with a physical/mobility disability who had limitations with their arm and leg. These systems have a track that allowed this student to independently put the bin successfully away and take it out without teacher assistance. The bins are also very easy to carry and transport around the room. In addition to immensely helping this particular student, we observed the benefit of how it assisted all students in the room which made transitions into our day smoother, quicker and allowed for more learning time to occur. Such success has caused us to request these new systems for our friend time and dramatic play centers each day.



We currently have various size and style bins during Friend Time and the Dramatic Play Center that at times are a struggle to snap and close. Many times while cleaning up, a bin is spilled due to the lid not being secure. These requested bins are either open or come with a simple lid for easy access and independence of the skill. These bins are shallow and wide enough to make it easy for clean up and also for all students to see what belongs in each bin which allows for fostering organizational skills.

The requested total amount for the organization systems and the bins with delivery comes to an estimated cost of \$817.73. We have attached the links for each part of the grant request along with a screenshot of the entire grant request.

We thank you for your consideration for our request.

Sincerely,

Molly Evarts and Lindsay Klose
Kindergarten Integrated Teachers at Smallwood Drive Elementary