

Empowering 4th Graders to Be Agents of Change in Their Learning Space

“If we had Runtz Ball Chairs for 4th grade, we could...”

In the ever-changing world of education, I believe it is imperative that educators seek for new ways to not only challenge their students, but to also provide a learning environment that is conducive to these needs. Within our classroom, we are currently working on a project based learning activity to discover what the ultimate classroom might look like. During this investigation, it is my motto to challenge my students with our current content, provide rich opportunities for them to investigate their interests, model and promote taking action within the classroom, and create a learning space that truly meets the needs of every learner.

Upon learning of the W.R.I.T.E. Grant Program, I thought of who better to help you to understand why having the Runtz Ball Chairs from Friends Office would better our classroom than my students. Meet Anna, Bella, Annabelle, Sami, Kaylee, and Gabriella. I approached these ladies with the prospect of aiding me in writing this grant as a way to take action within our classroom and create more areas of flexible seating within our room. Ultimately, they are responsible for choosing the product, researching how it would aid our class, and sharing their findings with you through their writing below. I recognize that this is not a typical entry for a grant, but I felt that this would be an invaluable opportunity for them. The remainder of this entry was written by these young ladies with some conferencing and instruction on writing techniques during this time. I wholeheartedly agree with all they have to say and truly believe that the Runtz Ball Chairs would bring about the change in our classroom that they discuss below.

As a class, we think that the Runtz Ball Chairs would help our classroom in many ways. If we had Runtz Ball Chairs in our classroom, we could take action within our project based learning experience, have more flexible seating in our classroom, support students with different learning styles and disabilities, and create different and new ways to learn.

This project based learning experience came about when our teacher started to move everything in our classroom around. We started by doing some homework in a Padlet (<https://padlet.com/>) of what students wanted in the classroom, and how we could change our classroom to help learning. Throughout this process, we obtained some flexible seating in our classroom. With the addition of this seating, our class began making a wall of sticky notes with the class ideas and questions that we would have to answer and research later. While doing this, our class watched several TEDx (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5jwEyDaR-0> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5R68Yhd--RY>) videos to help with our research. During that week, our teacher showed us several really cool classrooms in other parts of the world in a post from Google+. After our winter break, we started researching and thinking of designs for the classroom. One thing that came to our mind was the Runtz Ball Chairs we found while looking through educational catalogs. Later, when Miss Burke proposed grant writing to us, we were happy that the Runtz Balls we had discovered earlier were a product from Friends Office. This entire experience has turned into a project based learning activity in our class. We are now incorporating guests speakers from around our community to help us in research and further our understanding of what an ultimate classroom might look like. Because of our guests and research, our classroom has been able to move around and begun to discover what a learning space that helps all children to succeed looks like.

Flexible seating has and will help our class in many ways. As a matter of fact, we have some flexible seating in our classroom right now. We currently have six small cushions, two black camping chairs, one standing desk, a mini whiteboard table, and several other choices. Although we have many flexible seating arrangements, we think that the Runtz Ball Chairs would be a great addition to our classroom. For students

that have ADHD/ADD, chairs like this would help them because they like to move around a lot. In fact, all students can move in the Runtz Ball Chairs to improve their learning. From our research, we learned that kinesthetic and tactile learners like to learn in similar ways because they both like to fidget. Students with autism could use the Runtz Ball Chairs to bounce up and down slightly and move back and forth. All students with different learning styles should have the chance to learn in a way that works for them.

As you can see, the Runtz Ball chairs allow students to move and work in a way that they learn best. This allows more flexible seating options in our classroom and allows students to be learn in different ways that work for them.

As I continue forward with my teaching career, I hope to not only build a learning environment that best supports their needs, but also to continue to empower them to take action in their own learning. It is only then, when we give students these opportunities, that we make learning memorable for them, and that should be the goal of education. Thank you for your consideration in this grant and for taking the time to read what my students had to say. I am grateful for companies such as yours that not only gives teachers the ability to advocate for their students, but to also allow students to be part of this process as well.

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