

WRITE Program Grant through Friends Office Supply

Enhancing Mindfulness with Flexible Seating

My name is Candace Bundren and I am a third grade teacher at Wilson Vance Intermediate in Findlay City Schools. This is my seventeenth year teaching, and my eleventh year in third grade. Each year I get the honor of meeting a brand new bunch of children and learning their likes and dislikes. This year especially I have noticed students need a bit more flexibility in their day; whether that's choices in activities or choices in their seating.

Over the past year my classroom has begun to focus more on mindfulness and how to understand our emotions. Each year I see more and more students coming with some form of trauma in their lives. Learning about mindfulness can help a child understand certain emotions and how to handle themselves when they feel their emotions taking over. Last summer I was fortunate enough to travel to Boston for the BLC (Building Leadership Conference) with a small group of teachers. During this conference I listened to keynote speakers and went to numerous sessions that discussed emotions and trauma. After attending the conference I started digging into research around mindfulness within a classroom. I found amazing resources that I could use within my classroom. I wrote a grant that incorporated mindfulness, growth mindset, and STEM within the classroom. We were able to get numerous books and STEM tools to help us grow our brains and work through frustrations. This summer I am fortunate enough to attend the ISTE conference in Philadelphia and hopefully learn even more about incorporating growth mindset, mindfulness, and STEM into my classroom.

At the start of the year I introduced mindfulness along with growth mindset. As a class we read numerous picture books, such as Your Fantastic Elastic Brain and What Do You Do With a Problem, and completed activities that helped us understand our emotions. We started doing mindful breathing after recess to refocus ourselves. As a class we tried numerous mindfulness apps such as Head Space and Mind Yeti. I purchased a year subscription to Mind Yeti after we voted on this app. I purchased numerous yoga mats to use during our yoga sessions and breathing sessions. We have a classroom yogi who chooses yoga poses and/or mindful strategies each day. Students also brought in their own yoga mats. We learned strategies to use when our emotions started to take over. Class Dojo is one of our favorites. Mojo, the main little monster, talked about our inner beasts and what happens when that inner beast takes over. Helping us understand that all emotions are part of us and what to do if negative emotions start to take over has really helped us become better learners and well-rounded people this year!

Flexible seating is one way we help control our emotions. Students know that if they are feeling energetic or frustrated or upset they can venture off to our standing desk, use clipboards and work on the carpet, sit on the beanbags and cushions I've purchased, ride our exercise bike that was donated by a family, or travel to our recovery center. I would love more choices for my students in regards to flexible seating. I recently ordered a wobbly stool for them to try out. With more flexible seating I feel I can help my students gain control of their emotions and focus more

during the school day. All students learn better when they have choice, but my special education students really benefit from flexible seating. Many of their Individual Education Plans (IEP) have flexible seating written as accommodations. I feel every child should have a choice and learn to make decisions that will help them grow as learners. Taking responsibility for their learning helps them feel more in control and work harder throughout the entire day. Ideally I would love to get rid of all my desks and just have flexible seating but I'm working on one part of the room at a time. This grant would really help to kick start my ultimate goal! I would use the grant money to purchase more stools and cushions for the classroom from the Friends Office site. Thank you for your consideration in regards to this grant application.