**KINESTHETIC CLASSROOM PILOT – PROPOSAL** *-submitted 10-2-14*

**FINANCIAL REQUEST: $25,545.50**

[**http://www.youthfit.com/default.aspx**](http://www.youthfit.com/default.aspx)

**TEAM:**

Dr. Rachel Jones, Principal

Mrs. Stephanie Malley, 1st Grade Teacher

Mrs. Carol Ripley, Paraprofessional

Mrs. Gloria Goshe, Occupational Therapist

Mrs. Molly Edwards, School Psychologist

**GOALS:**

Generally, our goal in piloting this equipment is to determine the benefits in primary school classrooms and the amount and type that would be most effective to offer in all classrooms. More specifically these are our targeted goals and methods of evaluation:

1. To determine the best combination of kinesthetic opportunities in an elementary classroom for a heterogeneous group of students.

* *Observation by team members and interviews with teacher and paraprofessional are methods for collecting this information.*

1. To determine the best pairing of kinesthetic activities with academic activities.

* *Observation by team members and interviews with teacher and paraprofessional are methods for collecting this information.*

1. To determine if the addition of kinesthetic activity with academic learning will increase students’ ability to independently initiate and complete tasks and to attend to a speaker with decreased need for prompting from paraprofessional.

* *This will be measured with specific time interval data taken through observations.*

1. To determine if the implementation of kinesthetic opportunities in the classroom impacts student health as demonstrated in less absences due to illness per month when compared to other 1st grade classes.

* *This will be measured by simple absence comparisons among 1st grade classrooms.*

1. To determine if the implementation of kinesthetic opportunities in the classroom impacts student academic growth.

* *This will be demonstrated in STAR reading and math growth reports from winter to spring and compared to other 1st grade classes.*

**RESEARCH BASE:**

Attached are several research-based articles (there are so many, we chose a sample) supporting kinesthetic activity in classrooms as a proven strategy for stimulating the greatest cognitive effect. Research tells us that movement stimulates the brain and therefore:

* -Increases ability to pay attention
* -Concentration span extended
* -Improves short and long-term memory
* -Forms positive moods
* -Supplies brain with energy and nutrients
* -Infuses the brain with BDNF for growth of new cells

**PREPARATION:**

1. **CHOOSING CLASS AND STAFF:**

We have chosen Mrs. Malley’s 1st grade class for this pilot. Mrs. Malley is a veteran teacher of 17 years. She has a master’s degree in education and has served in leadership positions such as grade level chair and mentor teacher, worked on committees for curriculum adoption, participated in technology academy, and has demonstrated effective work with students who have significant, special needs as well as with students performing at very high levels. Mrs. Malley has been trained in Responsive Classroom and utilizes the programming in her classroom daily. Mrs. Ripley is a paraprofessional that has been assigned to Mrs. Malley’s class for most of the day. She is with this class because of the known academic, social, and motor needs of several students.

There are 20 students, 10 boys and 10 girls. At the start of the year, diagnostic assessment results placed 7 students in tier 2 reading intervention, 5 students in tier 2 math intervention, and 1 student in tier 3 reading intervention. The occupational therapist has designed a morning exercise program that 2 students do daily with the paraprofessional in an attempt to have their bodies regulated and ready to learn. There is 1 student that the teacher and occupational therapist recommend for fine motor intervention work and 2 recommended for social skills group. Mrs. Malley describes 4 students as atypical in their lack of attention/off-task activity; 2 are outwardly active and off task while the other 2 are quietly distracted and not attending.

Mrs. Malley is currently utilizing physioball chairs for most students in her classroom. She regularly incorporates breaks for yoga and utilizes movement breaks from HopSports and Adventures to Fitness quite often. The classroom has an established library area with comfy spaces to read, a whole class area on the floor for activities such as morning meeting and read alouds, a whole class area with their individual desks, small group areas that are academic specific for stations such as iPads/laptops, math games, writer’s workshop, etc., and a small group table for teacher-directed instruction. The classroom is wired for Mrs. Malley to utilize a microphone and amplification system during whole class instruction. The environment is rich in visuals as cues for students to encourage their independence.

We would not move forward implementing any type of equipment such as these desks from KidsFit without the guidance and direct involvement of our occupational therapist, Mrs. Goshe. She has 28 years of experience in a variety of settings with a variety of age groups. She has worked in clinics for rehab, skilled nursing, acute care, and for the past 18 years, in preK-12 in schools. Currently, she solely a preK-3rd grade occupational therapist in our school all day, every day. In her time at Gurney Mrs. Goshe has initiated social/emotional skills programming such as SuperFlex and the Unthinkables and the Zones of Regulation. She has been integral in training our staff in these programs so that strategies are used school-wide. As a member of our Gurney SmartKids Move Committee, she helped to design our kinesthetic kits for every classroom with yoga, Brain Gym, Fit Decks, and physioball chairs. She has also provided whole-staff training in the use of these tools, models whole class lessons with these tools and assists teachers with fitting the physioball chairs to students’ sizes.

Mrs. Edwards is our school psychologist and is works at Gurney for 50% or more of her week. Beyond evaluating students with special needs, Mrs. Edwards supports all staff with analyzing their student data regularly, providing functional behavior assessments of students in classrooms, assists teachers in developing behavior plans for students, conducts observations of students to provide teachers with additional classroom strategies, and guides all staff in our response to intervention procedures. She has 11 years of experience in PreK-12 schools.

1. **ROOM DESIGN/TEAM TASKS:**

* All team members took time individually to study the variety of equipment offered by KidsFit. At our first meeting, we brainstormed ideas related to types of activities to offer, number of students at desks, desks for center work, desks for small group instruction, etc. We discussed standing versus sitting desks. After agreeing that we wanted to be offer a variety of movements with these desks, we listed our questions for KidsFit and assigned tasks for us each to complete. Mrs. Goshe measured the classroom and different areas so that we could submit accurate numbers to the company for their 3D design. Mrs. Malley researched classroom furniture and tools that would provide students a location for their supplies, journals, and folders since the KidsFit desks don’t allow student storage. Dr. Jones called the consultant from KidsFit to make contact, express interest, ask all questions the team had generated about equipment, etc.
* At the second meeting, the team shared the outcome of their individual tasks and made the choices of equipment that would best suit whole class lessons, center work, and small group, direct instruction. Dr. Jones would be contacting the consultant at KidsFit to submit the list of equipment and room measurements as well as discuss discounts available for schools.
* A 3rd meeting with Dr. Jones and Mrs. Edwards focused on designing methods to collect data on the impact of these new kinesthetic desks. Targets for data collection are: academic performance growth, students initiating/completing tasks, attending to a speaker, attendance/decreasing sick days. Qualitative information will be collected as well in the form of student interviews, teacher and paraprofessional interviews, and outside staff observations.

1. **CONCLUSION**

This proposal to pilot the KidsFit desks in one classroom was put together by the whole team. We are prepared to carry out the evaluation methods listed with the goals documented on the first page and would plan to have a recommendation for further use of these KidsFit desks by June, 2015 if we can have them in place in January, 2015. The timing of this pilot is exceptional because Mrs. Malley and Dr. Jones are also both on the committee consulting to design a new primary school building for CFEVSD. Depending on the results of our pilot, decisions related to the design, size, materials, etc. in a new school building could be impacted.

We are requesting $ 25,545.50 to outfit this 1st grade classroom with 4 variety desks for 6 students each, 1 small group instruction pedal desk, 3 individual kneel-and-spin desks for an academic center, 3 stand-and-sway desks for an academic center. (See attached quote) This variety will allow our occupational therapist and classroom teacher to assess which exercises work best with which students and academic work. The opportunity to utilize different, individual desks while at academic centers will allow us to assess the impact of the movement on students’ independent work. The small group pedal desk for the teacher’s small reading and math groups will allow us to assess the impact of the movement when the instruction is more intense.

The KidsFit quote includes a 10% discount as a start-up program. They have also offered us 2 individual strider desks free of charge if we are sponsored by a private donor. These two desks may be used for short periods of time in different classrooms to offer additional teachers and students the opportunity to experience the benefits. Additionally, we do have 2 students in 3rd grade who are receiving designed exercise programs throughout the day to help regulate their bodies for learning and these two additional desks may be utilized for them to keep them from having to leave their classrooms frequently.