



**PTO GIFTS PROGRAM Submitted by:** Meghan Gullen Moorman

## **Requests for PTO Funding 2020-21**

Any teacher, parent, or student who has a request for funds from the PTO must fill out this form. Please answer these questions as thoroughly as possible, providing supporting detail and information. When completed, please return to the administration at either school by **Friday, November 13, 2020**. Previous proposed and accepted gifts can be found at the PTO webpage, [district29pto.org/pto-teacher-gifts/](http://district29pto.org/pto-teacher-gifts/).

### **1. Define your request:**

The SLE (Structured Learning Environment) program currently supports five students with a variety of disabilities and diagnosis. Learners in this program use vocal language in conjunction with Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) supports or communicate solely through the use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication supports. Current research suggests Aided Language Stimulation is an appropriate practice to support students in acquiring communication skills (Dada, S. & Alant, E., 2009). Aided Language Stimulation is a communication strategy, where a communication partner teaches symbol meaning and models language by combining his or her own verbal input with the selection of vocabulary on the Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) system. This is done through modeling on the child's specific device across the school day. It is through this frequent modeling of communication using communication devices that students develop strong communication skills themselves.

In addition to expressive and receptive language needs, the students in the SLE program present with needs in the area of social communication. One of the ways that social language needs are addressed in the SLE program is through the Buddy Snack Program. This program gives SLE students an opportunity to eat snack and engage in shared play activities with 2 peers from their general education homeroom class. In addition to reverse-inclusion opportunities, students from SLE also participate heavily in general education alongside their peers. This time often includes small group and partner work during centers-based activities as well as play-based rotations including recess and structured choice time. Recently, a variety of literature has promoted Peer-Mediated Aided Language Stimulation. This is a form of aided language stimulation in which typically developing peers use a communication device to communicate with the device users. This approach has been shown to increase the intentional communication of both general education students and students with language needs. Students with language needs were also shown to maintain gained communication skills following peer modeling (Thiemann-Bourque, K., et. al, 2016).

My intention, if awarded this grant, would be to implement Peer-Mediated Aided-Language Stimulation during both inclusion and reverse inclusion activities. General education students in inclusion classes will receive training and coaching from the classroom teacher and speech-language pathologist in communicating with students using "Buddy Devices" (iPads loaded with communication software

similar to the devices used by students in the SLE program). Students will learn the principles of “Stay, Play, Talk” and other communication partner strategies in order to support mutual interactions. Throughout these opportunities, all students will communicate using communication devices to increase modeling on the devices and in return, increase student engagement. My hope is that as a result of increased peer modeling using the “Buddy Communication Devices”, learners with communication needs will gain general communication skills and also increase their engagement and participation with peers, as measured by an increase in eye contact, physical interactions, and commenting and requesting.

**2. Amount requested:**

[TouchChat HD- AAC with Word Power](#) \$299.99 (The communication App/ Software to be loaded onto Buddy Device iPads)

[iPad Case](#) \$15.99

[Apple iPad](#) \$329 (There is a possibility that the district has an iPad readily available we could use for this purpose in which case all we would need is the software and protective case)

Total without district iPad: \$315.98

Total purchasing new iPad: \$644.98

**3. Can this project be funded in stages? If yes, what timetable is involved? If no, please explain your due date for funds.**

Absolutely! We are flexible.

**4. Has this request been reviewed by the school administration? What was their response as to its merit and priority?**

**5. Number of Students that will be impacted or benefit from your request:** 18 currently - and all future classmates of students using AAC devices for years to come!

**6. Is this a one-time request? Do you envision needing additional PTO funds in the future or long range? If you will require additional PTO funds, please explain why this cannot be added into your annual budget.**

Yes- one time request.

**7. / 8. What is the intended goal of your request? Would it have any other uses or applications? Is this a start up program, or is it enhancing an existing program? Please use additional paper if needed. What are the long-range benefits?**

See above

**9. If you are requesting a capital asset/investment, please provide a minimum of two options/pricing quotes on the item and attach to this form. Please identify your first choice and why.**

**10. Have you exhausted all other funding options before coming to the PTO Gifts Program? This is my first shot :)**

