



Ecolab Teacher Grants Narrative Form - Individual Application

Applications are peer reviewed – do not include details that identify staff or schools/programs

Project Title: Aquatic Accessibility for Everyone

Part One: Project Details

1. Describe your project. (1000 Characters max)

This project is a way to make our school pool accessible to all students regardless of physical ability level by acquiring a lift sling accessory. This will enable students with moderate to severe loss of trunk and head control a more supportive, comfortable and safe way to get into the pool to participate in the aquatic program.

This school provides 100% special education services to students with severe to profound disabilities. Many use wheelchairs as their primary mode of mobility. The school pool does not have a ramp so a chair lift is used to transfer students who can not walk from their wheelchair into the pool to participate in the school's aquatic pool program which is run by the adaptive physical education teacher and the assistant. The aquatic pool program is a recreationally based fitness program designed to meet the student at whatever ability level they are at; whether it be floating, water play, standing movement, doggy paddle or rudimentary swim strokes.

2. Describe what the money will purchase. (500 Characters max)

The money will be used to purchase a pool lift accessory: a sling lift hanger assembly and sling. Having this accessory will enhance our current pool lift system to provide safe support for all different body types and ability levels. This sling uses hammock type principles to conform to the shape of the person sitting in the sling no matter the deformity. Since our school works with K-12 grade, two different size slings are necessary to accommodate varying body sizes.

3. How will you specifically use those services/supplies? (1000 Characters max)

This lift sling accessory will be used with students who have a difficult time with transfers to the chair lift and those with weak trunk/necks. The sling can be easily placed under the student when they are prepping for the pool. The student does not have to transfer in the pool area. The sling is attached to the lift hoist and lifted directly out of the wheelchair into the pool. The process of using a sling for access makes it safer for all, especially with wet floors. This allows all students to enjoy the pool and participate to the best of their ability.

Our school pool is also used in the evenings by the Community Education program for community swim programs. It is one of the only warm water pools available in the metro area. The community program shares the equipment and provides aquatic classes for all age groups. This type of sling further enhances pool features for those that want to use the pool and participate in aquatic activities.

Reminder: Rename and save your completed form, including your last name in the title, before attaching to the online application.

Part Two: Project Justification

1. Describe the need for this project. (500 Characters max)

The pool lift chair alone does not provide adequate physical support for people with lack of neck and trunk strength to sit up independently. Our staff are put at risk of hurting themselves when transferring and supporting this type of student into the pool with the current chair system. However, a sling assembly can be placed underneath the student before the transfer and offers constant physical contact and support during the entire transfer. This takes the physical stress off the staff.

2. Describe why you chose the items/services listed above to fulfil this need. (500 Characters max)

This sling was chosen because it is made by the same manufacturer and compliments the current lift system. The sling will be able to provide optimal physical support while transferring the student from the wheelchair to the pool without additional velcro or supports. It will be more comfortable and safe for both students and assisting staff. I anticipate the sling lift will be utilized more than the current chair lift because it can accommodate a wider range of student physical disabilities.

Part Three: Relationship to Student Learning and SPPS Achieves

1. What classroom unit of study/lesson plan/[MN academic standard](#) does your project align with (e.g. aligns with calculus curriculum in preparation for AP STEM test)? (250 Characters max)

MN Phy Ed standard #5: Recognize the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self expression and social interaction. Swimming and aquatic activities promote a physically active lifestyle now and into adulthood.

2. How does your project support the classroom curriculum listed above? (600 Characters max)

The aquatic program is a center of the school, over half of the allotted physical education time. It is individualized to: 1) Progress and challenge physical skills 2) Promote movement and fitness. 3) Encourage student interaction in a playful, enjoyable way since whole classes are in the pool at the same time. 4) Promote emotional, sensory and behavior regulation. The effects of the pool are recognized throughout the day which help with overall learning. Safe and comfortable access is needed in order to be able to participate in physical education which aligns with PE standards.

3. Which [SPPS strategic focus area or long-term student outcome](#) does the project align with? (300 Characters max)

Our project aligns with three of the four Long Term Student Outcomes: Decreasing disparities of achievement based on identity (disabilities), increasing achievement of students receiving special education services and preparing all graduates for life.

4. How does your project support the focus area or long-term outcome listed above? (700 Characters max)

Our project supports the St Paul School Outcomes in the following ways: 1) Our school and aquatic program ensures a friendly, safe and welcoming environment. 2) It improves school culture by ensuring equitable access. Families have reported that they would like to have their students use the pool if it is safe to do so. 3) It ensures that all students have access to a well-rounded education including physical activity opportunities. 4) It creates and supports accessible family/ community aquatic programs for students at all points in their personal and academic development.

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Part Four: Measuring Project Success

1. What will success look like? (300 Characters max)

Success is when:

- 1) All students can safely get into the warm water pool to participate in aquatic programming, no matter the severity of their physical limitation.
- 2) Students, staff and parents feel safe and comfortable with this chair-to-pool transfer method.

2. How will you specifically measure that success after project implementation? What positive changes to you anticipate? (500 Characters max)

Success will be measured by:

- 1) All students who want to participate in aquatic programming, can participate regardless of physical limitations and feel comfortable/safe when lifted to/from the pool.
 - 2) Teacher survey showing better participation in class or other benefits from being able to have access to the pool via a safe method.
- Students will feel more welcome, safe and happy in their school programming and environment which sets them up for success throughout their lifetime.

Part Five: Additional

1. Will any groups or community organizations (nonprofits, foundations, etc.) work with SPPS for this project? (500 Characters max)

There are no other organizations working on this project currently.

2. Is there anything else you would like to share about your request/students/school? (Demographics, achievement scores, why this project can't be funded otherwise, etc.) (500 Characters max)

This school is a level IV setting serving 100% special education to 136 students with severe to profound disabilities, 68% on free and reduced lunch. The special needs of our student population requires extremely expensive adaptive equipment.

The adaptive physical education budget is too small to pay for this pool lift accessory. My department is not allowed to save money for specific items that cost more than my current annual budget.