January 1, 2016

Valued member of the community,

The start of each New Year brings the hope of possibility, the joy of new circumstance, and a renewed zeal of purpose. As a teacher, I am given a “fresh start” like this each day that I look upon my students’ faces; however, there is only so much I can provide. My personal resolution for this 2016 is to give my classroom students with the means they need in order to learn to the best of their individual ability, which includes bringing stand-up desks to our room. We need your help to make our learning environment a more welcoming place!

I have been a Cobb County teacher since 2008, and before that I worked with children in several capacities, including swim coach, camp counselor, and pre-school instructor. No matter the age of child I’ve worked with, there is one thing that I have seen in common – kids need to MOVE! Research shows that people must get their blood pumping every 15 to 20 minutes to maintain appropriate brain function. Moving helps us all to stay focused, to stay motivated, and to stay healthy.

Unfortunately, our standard classroom desks do not cater to this need – the need to move more in support of active learning. Fortunately, stand-up desks do allow for movement! Below are several reasons to support the need for stand-up desks in the classroom:

* HEALTH – allow students to remain healthy by safely moving their bodies in the classroom setting.
* ATTENTION – allow students who struggle to remain focused the opportunity to move as needed, including a fidget bar for those students with ADHD.
* BEHAVIOR – allow students who like to move while learning the place to do this in a safe spot without distracting surrounding learners.

We are looking for devoted community members to sponsor our classroom, thereby investing in the future of Cobb County Schools. Our initial request is to raise $10,500, which is enough to sponsor 34 desks. We are asking for charitable donations in the following increments:

* Bronze: $50
* Silver: $150
* Gold: $300 \*This amount sponsors one stand-up desk!
* Platinum: $350 +

We hope you’ll consider supporting the Healthy HABITs movement as it begins its journey at Lost Mountain Middle School!

Please make checks payable to:  
 Lost Mountain Middle School  
 memo: **Healthy HABITs** (Jaime Williams’ classroom)  
 700 Old Mountain Road  
 Kennesaw, GA 30152

Or donate directly to our Go Fund Me page: <https://www.gofundme.com/akkxy68k>

Sincerely,

Jaime Williams; Educator at Lost Mountain Middle School (Cobb County School District)

Julie Galich, Olga Mueller, and Jennifer Simcox; Healthy HABITs co-chairs

I think that stand-up desks would really help students and teachers at Lost Mountain Middle School because they would let us choose to sit or stand when we want to without getting in trouble. These desks also have fidget bars, which would let you do something while still paying attention and learning. It would keep you less distracted.

-Lucas M., 2015

6th grade student at Lost Mountain Middle School

Stand up desks may reduce the risk of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer if you spend more of your day standing than sitting. James Levine, an endocrinologist at the Mayo Clinic, said “The way we live now is to sit all day occasionally punctuated by a walk from the parking lot to the office.” He also said “The default has become to sit. We need the default to be standing.” There is a new phrase that may be somewhat exaggerated, but helpful none the less. This new phrase is “Sitting is the new smoking.”

Levine started research that was based upon how some people gain weight and others don’t. He had a group of workers who engaged in little routine exercise and put them all on the same diet and forbid them from changing their exercise habits. He and the other researchers discovered that the ones who weren't gaining weight were standing and walking around, on average, 2.25 more hours per day, even though they all worked at sitting desks. Levine stated

“During all of our days, there are opportunities to move around and substantially more.” as he told how he now walks into a colleagues office rather than emailing them, or takes the stairs instead of the elevator. A 2013 study found that standers burn, on average, 50 more calories per hour.

Scientists have researched that in 2013, there has been about 37,200 cases of lung cancer, 30,600 cases of prostate cancer, 12,000 cases of ovarian cancer, 49,000 cases of breast cancer, and 43,000 cases of colon cancer just in the U.S. all because of excessive sitting. They have said that extended periods of sitting creates a higher risk of many forms of cancer.

- Sam S., 2015

6th grade student at Lost Mountain Middle School

Information found on Smithsonian.com

http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/five-health-benefits-standing-desks-180950259/?no-ist

I like being active so I find it difficult to sometimes sit still and focus on a lesson in class. I’m eager to finish a task and find myself tapping my foot or a pencil, and even wanting to get up during class and walk around the room. I know I’m not supposed to do these things, and it’s frustrating to know I need to pay attention but my body likes activity.

I like to do my homework standing up at home. It helps me take in the information I need to study and not be restless. Sometimes I rock from one foot to the other just to figure out a question. It works for me. I would like to be able to do the same thing at school. I would be willing to test out any alternate learning environments that would help me stay focused and excel in school. I think it would help others in my class too.

* Grayson G., 2015

6th grade student at Lost Mountain Middle School.