

Dear Representatives,

I am one of the lucky teachers who received equipment for visually impaired/blind students with BVIS funding. My class has been particularly challenging this year because I have one student (girl) who is visually impaired and another student (boy) who is blind. I teach in a self-contained classroom for student who are learning functional academics and life skills. We typically use visual schedules, and adult/peer modeling to cue students for learning. I was frustrated with finding appropriate ways to meet the needs of these two students. How could I reach these students and motivate them to learn without the proper tools? Our vision specialist from Northwest Regional ESD, Sue Schimmelpfennig came to the rescue. She was able to order a variety of materials for our students to use in class. We now have an ipad for our "girl" and a variety of entertaining educational switch toys for our "boy" Not only does this equipment make learning fun, the equipment makes it possible for these students to learn concepts we teach daily to non-visually impaired students. Our "girl" student is actively participating in learning activities, reaching out from her wheel chair to make choices and demonstrate understanding of concepts using the ipad. Our "boy" student is also able to demonstrate understanding of concepts using switches, and pushing buttons to activate educational toys. Removing this funding essentially takes away my ability to teach these children.

Thank you for taking time to read my email and for understanding my concerns. I invite you to come visit our room any time that fits into your busy schedule. Come see the difference this funding makes.

Sincerely,

Megan Gilbert

Independent Skills Center

Beaver Acres Elementary, Beaverton School District