

The background features abstract, organic shapes in shades of purple and blue. A large, irregular shape on the right side transitions from light blue at the top to deep purple at the bottom. A smaller, circular shape is positioned above the main title. Another irregular purple shape is located in the bottom right corner.

Sensory Sensitive Spaces

A Presentation by Diara Hindle



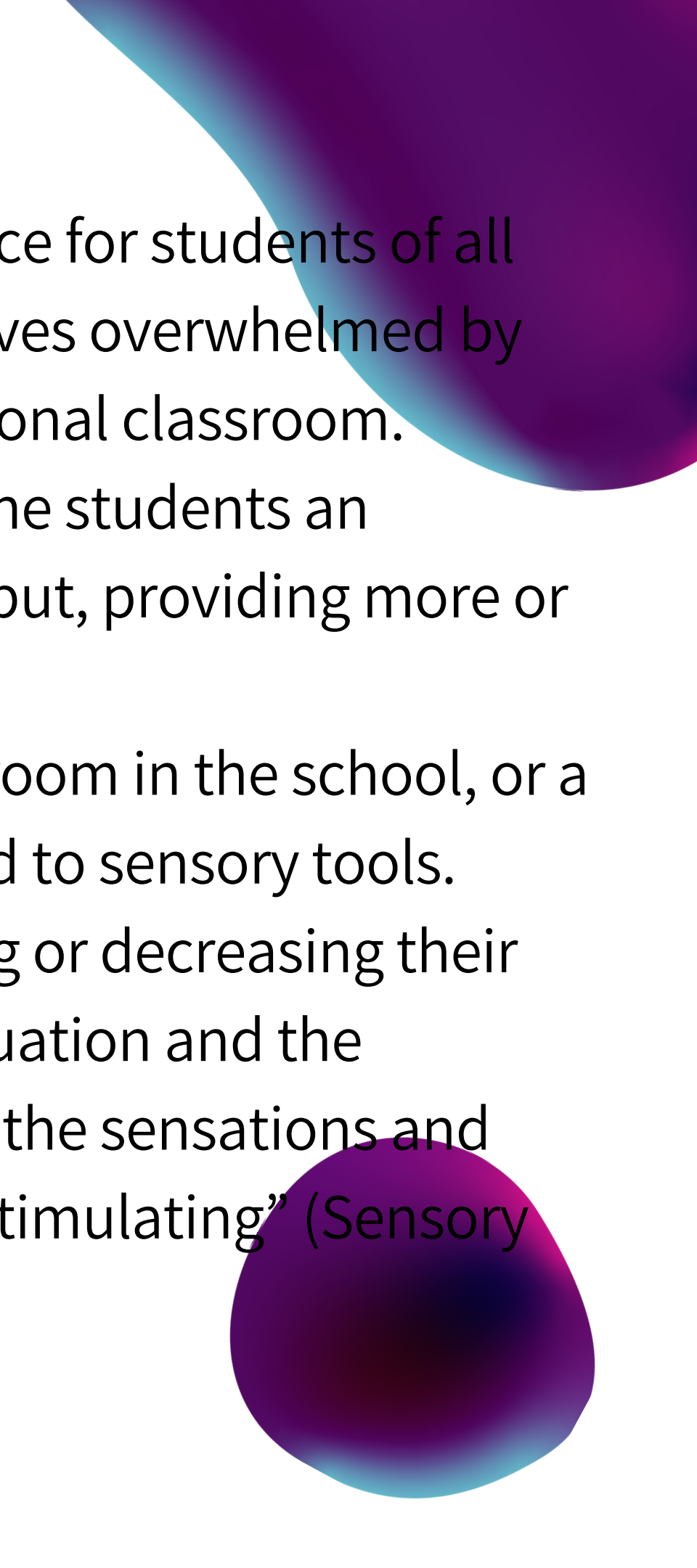
What is a Sensory Sensitive Space or Sensory Room?

A sensory sensitive space is a resource for students of all ages and abilities, who find themselves overwhelmed by the varied sensory inputs of a traditional classroom.

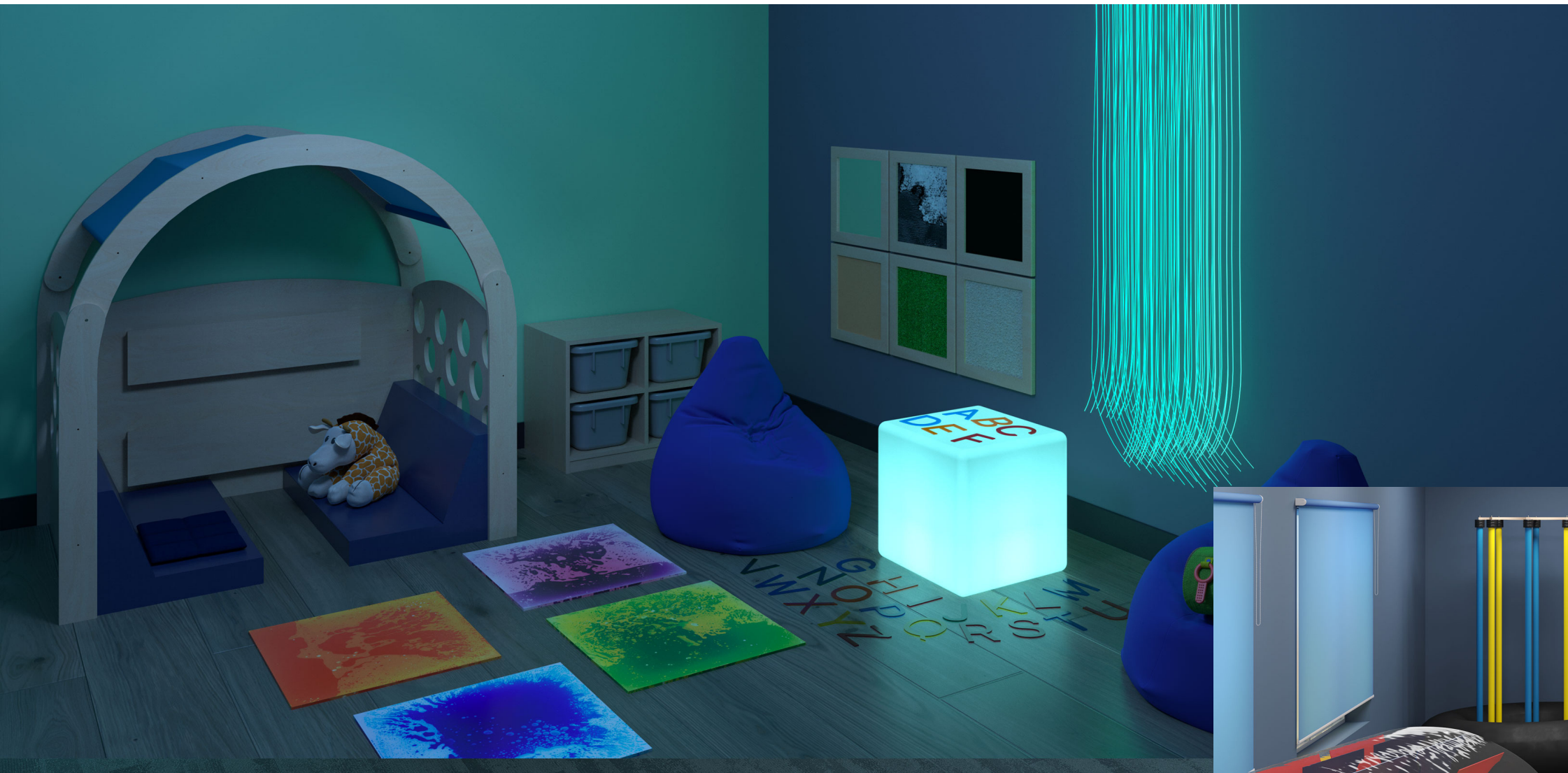
A sensory sensitive space provides the students an opportunity to alter their sensory input, providing more or less stimulation when necessary.

Sensory spaces can be a dedicated room in the school, or a specific corner of the class dedicated to sensory tools.

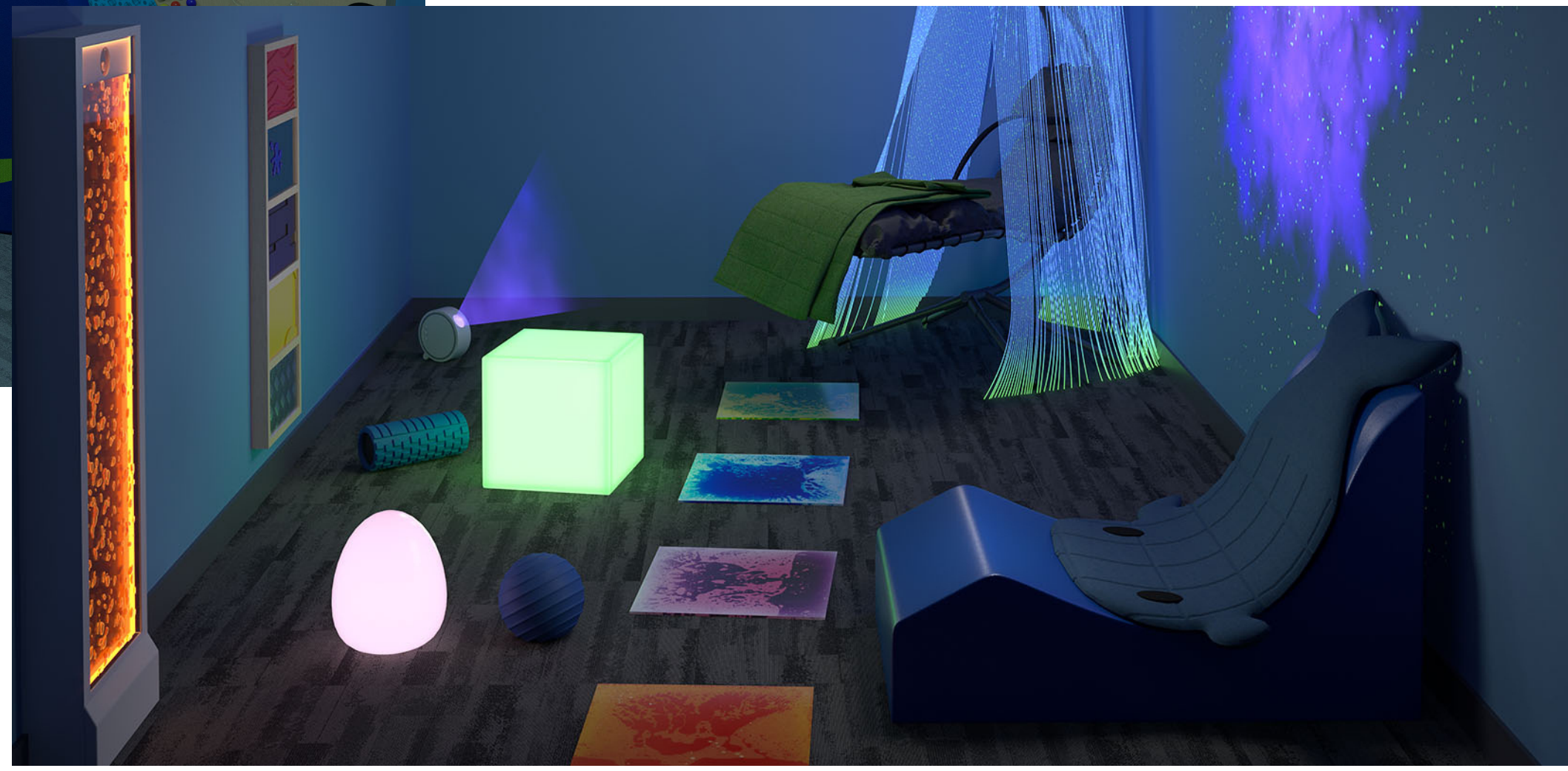
Students can benefit from increasing or decreasing their sensory input, dependent on the situation and the student, students “gravitate toward the sensations and environments they find calming or stimulating” (Sensory Processing Issues Explained)



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Who Benefits from a Sensory Sensitive Space?

While sensory processing issues are most commonly associated with ASD, “many children with sensory issues are not on the spectrum. They can also be found in those with ADHD, OCD, and other developmental delays - or with no other diagnosis at all” (Sensory Processing Issues Explained)

“Even high-functioning and well-adjusted children are prone to the occasional meltdown due to sensory sensitivity” (Sensory overload: Tips for helping Sensory Sensitive Children)
Any student experiencing Sensory Overload can benefit from a Sensory Sensitive Space



What is Sensory Overload?

Sensory overload is very common in children with special needs, but is experienced by children of all ages and abilities.

“Sensory stimuli like extreme odors, loud noise, fluorescent lights, learning to share and play, unfamiliar surroundings, and any change in daily routine can be sensory overload triggers and lead to tantrums and outbursts” (Sensory overload: Tips for helping Sensory Sensitive Children)

Why Implement a Sensory Sensitive Space



These spaces can benefit all students, especially the vulnerable learners in the classroom.

A dedicated sensory space in the school can benefit all classrooms and all teachers, it can be shared across grade levels, and can even work as a headquarters for additional supports in the school.

Curriculum Connections

The implementation of sensory sensitive spaces benefits students of all grade levels and in all classrooms of a school.

Content: PHE Grade 1: Identify and describe practices that promote mental well-being

Socials Grade 2: how people's needs and wants are met in communities

Big Ideas: PHE Grade 1: Good health comprises physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Socials Grade 1: Healthy communities recognize and respect the diversity of individuals and care for the local environment.

FPPoL: Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

- Sensory rooms support the wellbeing of sensory sensitive students, and thus support the wellbeing of the whole class

Background/History

The history of Multi-Sensory rooms goes back to the 1970s in the Netherlands, but became more popular more recently as we explore and accommodate mental health and learning differences.

Some schools in our district already have sensory rooms, including Summit Elementary, Bert Edwards, Juniper Ridge



Step by Step Process

1. Find a Space:
2. Find Funding:
3. Neutralize the Room:
4. Acquire Equipment:
5. Implement Plan:
6. Maintenance:



Cost of Implementation

Varies greatly dependent on the scale of the program.

For a full fledged dedicated sensory room I would request \$20,000, plus an annual upgrading and maintenance budget.

For a sensory corner in a classroom I would budget \$1,500 per classroom

For a sensory backpack for each students, with a complete tool kit for regulation would cost \$100 per student.

Indigenization

Additional funding may be available through local Indigenous support organizations, as Indigenous students may benefit from the sensory space. Sensory tools can also be Indigenously inspired, though these may be more expensive and harder to find.

The sensory space can be Indigenously supported, with a strong presence of AEWs or Elders available to the school

SD73 has an Indigenous Education Department that can guide in setting up a dedicated or part time elder schedule, as well as help to source resources.

Student Involvement

- Classes could have “sensory buddies” to accompany and assist students who require sensory intervention
- The arrival of new sensory equipment can be a school wide event, with classes making trips to the sensory room to experience the new tool
- Students can be involved in the choosing of the resources for the sensory space
- Students can help maintain the room, disinfecting and organizing



Literature Review: SPD

Howe et al.

"atypical sensory responses to be possible predictors of the severity of social impairment and that the more severe sensory issues were the more social problems the experienced"

"Sensory abnormalities are immediate subjective experiences and may include painful reactions to every day sensory stimuli such as light and sound"

childmind.org

"the majority of children and adults on the autism spectrum also have significant sensory issues. However, many children with sensory issues are not on the spectrum. They can also be found in those with ADHD, OCD, and other developmental delays - or with no diagnosis at all"

Unwin et al.

"the world is more surprising and less predictable, which could lead to increased cognitive load and feelings of 'sensory overload'"

"it is the uncontrollable nature of sensory stimuli that causes the most difficulty for their learning."

Literature Review: SPD and Learning

Kaiser et al.

This condition has been shown to have a negative impact on a child's participation in daily life activities, including negatively affecting a child's academic performance and their overall ability to fulfill their role as a student"

Vives–Vilarroig et al.

"Scientific literature has shown that there is a close relationship between sensory integration and learning"

"for some authors, these difficulties are presented as dysfunctions, for others they are considered as sensory experiences, as they are not all dysfunctional, but simply different"

Jones at al.

""disability' is seen to occur when there is a mismatch between an individual's functional ability and their environment. For example, a blind individual, although impaired, only becomes disabled when the environment has not been adjusted to meet his/her needs. In the case of sensory processing differences, a child with hypersensitivity may be able to fully function at home but may experience 'disability' when placed in a busy classroom with significant sensory inputs"

Literature Review: Sensory Rooms

Houston Independent School District

BeyondtheNews

"After having sensory rooms the past three years, school leaders note a significant drop in disruption in classrooms"

"Students with a disability who were at campuses with sensory rooms showed a lower mean rate of suspension (in school and out of school), a higher mean rate of attendance, and a higher mean cumulative GPA than students with disabilities at campuses without sensory rooms"

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