

# **PILOT PROPOSAL: Comfortable Classrooms for Students with Sensory Sensitivities**

Lisa Jeanne Graf, written Sept. 2018

I am proposing that one classroom with fluorescent lights has those lights removed and replaced with warm white LED light bulbs from Ikea. If the classroom has good natural light that could be used as well. This classroom would be a sub-separate classroom for autistic students.

After the lights are changed there would be a study to learn if the change helped with educational outcomes, and happiness. If the study shows good results, then it could be replicated in other classrooms and any new buildings that are built with the Build BPS initiative. In addition, there could be a focus on allowing more rooms to have natural light as the main lighting source as that is the most comfortable light source, and also a green lighting source.

## **Additional suggestions**

- Remove any air hand dryers (too loud) and replace with paper hand dryers.
- Deactivate the sensor on any automatic flush toilets that are in bathrooms as they can be too startling.
- Allow for quiet spaces in classrooms where students can take a break if they are overstimulated.

## **References**

### **Fluorescent Light Sensitivity: Causes, Symptoms & Solutions**

Posted by Greg Bullock on 18th Apr 2018

<https://www.theraspecs.com/blog/fluorescent-light-sensitivity-causes-symptoms-solutions/>

“Lastly, there are certain properties associated with fluorescent lighting that affect an individual’s tolerance levels. They include:

- High amount of blue light which is known to increase eye strain, general light sensitivity, headaches and migraines.
- Low-frequency flicker which is absorbed by the brain even though it is often imperceptible to the naked eye.
- Overall brightness can trigger light-sensitive conditions and also bring about other symptoms of fluorescent light sensitivity.”

“Although sunlight can lead to headaches and light sensitivity, it is still a much preferred alternative to artificial fluorescent lighting inside. Otherwise you may want to at least utilize warm-colored interior lighting through desk or floor lamps and/or swapping out the bright white light bulbs.”

“...Nine out every ten autistic individuals have environmental sensitivities, and fluorescents are often reported to worsen their sensory stress...”

### **What light bulbs are best for someone who is sensitive to light?**

Posted by Kerrie Smyres on 19th Jan 2015

<https://www.theraspecs.com/blog/light-bulbs-best-someone-sensitive-light/>

“After extensive tests, we use warm white LED light bulbs from Ikea at TheraSpecs headquarters and at home. They do not hum or whine, the light is pleasing to the eyes and low in blue-green emissions, and, at less than \$5 a bulb, are the least expensive LEDs we’ve found. Although we don’t know for sure whether or not they have an invisible flicker, we personally don’t have trouble with them. Ikea’s bulbs are available in different sizes and brightness levels and can be used in standard light bulb sockets. A drawback for some might be that they don’t dim, but this is a plus in our eyes because dimming an LED bulb will cause it to pulse.”