

was planted first, and our church grew out of the school. As such, we are not a traditional “congregational” model where the congregation fills the school and financially supports the school. Instead, the community fills the school, and in turn, the school helps fill and financially support the church. As a ministry, COGLS is a school for the community. Our mission is to provide a Christ-centered community for all ages and stages. Through the school, the children/families come to find their way to the waters of baptism and membership at Child of God Lutheran Church. Financially, COGLS runs very frugally. Additional monies for new positions have been a hardship, as we have raised teacher and staff salaries to stay competitive and have taken a loss with major income generators such as summer camp due to worker shortages. COGLS is tuition-driven. Our families with diverse learners very much appreciate not only the part-time services we offer but also the dedication of our highly qualified Lutheran teachers, who are committed to serving all students. However, by not offering full-time specialized support, we are not fully supporting this population of students' full academic needs. As such, some parents who desperately want a Christian education for their child are advised to return to the public school system or a specialized non-Christian school, which provides full-time resource support. This grant would allow COGLS to continue providing a Christian education to our current diverse learners and those seeking a Christian option for their students with learning needs. Ideally, this grant would fund the first full year of salary and benefits for a full-time prek-4th grade resource teacher and half the salary and benefits for year two. This would allow Child of God to plan and budget accordingly to absorb the full cost by year three.

Adding a full-time special education teacher at Child of God would significantly enhance the school's ability to meet our community's diverse needs while embodying the love of Jesus Christ in several impactful ways. Explicitly ensuring that every child receives the necessary educational support in a nurturing Christian environment, regardless of their challenges or abilities. By incorporating a full-time special education teacher, the school can confidently demonstrate its commitment to welcoming and supporting students with diverse learning needs. This reflects Christ's teachings of acceptance and love for students of all abilities. Missionally this supports our focus on community impact and outreach. Many Christian parents of learners with special needs find themselves at a crossroads. They have to decide between providing their child with a Christ-centered education or an education that provides specialized education. This disheartening experience can lead parents and children away from the church. Meeting the needs of students with disabilities directly impacts families in the greater St. Louis, MO area, who may struggle to find a Christian educational setting for their children. The school becomes a beacon of hope and inclusion by offering specialized support, reflecting Christ's teachings of love and acceptance for all. Families seeking a Christian education for their children, including those with special educational needs, are often forced to choose a school that values and accommodates their child's unique requirements but does not match their spiritual beliefs. Enhancing the school's resources with a SPED teacher meets the moral imperative of supporting all learners and enhances the overall educational excellence of COGLS. It ensures that ALL students receive a well-rounded education addressing academic and spiritual development.

The recipient must be affiliated with one of the following. Please select the one that applies to this request:

LCMS District

Amount requested:

10,000

Project Goals and Objectives

The goal of this project is to establish a full-time certified special education teacher position at Child of God Lutheran School to enhance individualized support for students with diverse learning needs and to expand access to

Christian education for all learners.

Grant funding will provide 100% of the salary and benefits in Year 1 and 50% in Year 2, allowing the school to gradually assume full financial responsibility by Year 3. This phased model ensures sustainability within the school's long-term operating budget.

Through this initiative, Child of God Lutheran School anticipates continued growth in the number of special education students who will have access to Christian education. This investment will strengthen the school's ability to provide Christ-centered education that recognizes and supports the God-given potential of every child.

Budget Outline and Financial Plan

The projected salary + benefits for a full-time special education teacher for year one is \$56,751.89. The salary + benefit projection for year two at 50% is \$28,375.94. Child of God Lutheran School will assume full financial responsibility for the salary and benefits in year three. The total budget request is \$85,127.83.

Additional Comments or Information

Here are a few (of many) real success stories from the COGLS special education/resource program as shared by their homeroom teachers or parents:

Tristan came to our school in 2nd grade. He was reading and writing significantly below grade level. The resource teacher worked with his classroom teacher to provide interventions early on. In his last quarter of 8th grade, Tristan was on the honor roll and was reading at 97-100% accuracy. More importantly, Tristan asked his parents to have him baptized when he was in 3rd grade and is continuing his Christian education at Lutheran High School-St. Charles. This is the epitome of why it is so important to have resource services available at our Lutheran school so that all students, regardless of learning abilities, have access to God's word and promises.

Jackson desired to attend Child of God, just as his two older siblings did. As a preschooler, he received intensive intervention at his preschool for his speech and language delays. His teachers were concerned about his ability to thrive at COGLS without a speech-language therapist. His parents, however, deeply valued a Christian education (the family became members of the LCMS church through COGLS). Due to the care and commitment of the resource program, Jackson has graduated from his IEP goals. He became a member of the Lutheran Junior Honor Society member his 8th grade year and will followed his siblings to Lutheran High School-St. Charles.

An alumni Ethan, spent k-8th grades at COGLS. His teachers and the resource teacher spent the majority of his elementary years supporting him socially and emotionally. In 5th grade, he was diagnosed with autism. Together, the family and the resource teacher taught Ethan about his autism so he could better understand himself and his potential obstacles in and out of school. He recently earned his Eagle Scout while also teaching his troop about autism.

Chris came to Child of God in his 7th-grade year. The first few days of school showed Chris struggled in math and tested at a 3rd-grade level. The resource teacher modified his math class to close this gap. Led by the state standards and evidence-based interventions, Chris tested on a 6th-grade math level by the end of the school year. Chris integrated into the 8th-grade math class the following school year.

From a Child of God parent, "Our family chose to send our kids to COGLS because we place a high value on quality Christian education. When our daughter, Lily, started showing signs of reading struggles in 1st grade, it was with the help of the resource teacher that we had her tested and got a confirmed diagnosis of dyslexia. Since receiving the interventions needed, we have seen significant improvements in her reading scores. Lily would

have continued to struggle in the classroom without the resource support at COGLS. We would have been forced to search for options outside of COGLS to support her education, eliminating the opportunity for her to hear about God's grace daily solely because she learns "differently." Roughly 20% of children have some form of dyslexia, and having SPED resources available at COGLS is critical to keeping children in an environment where they can continue to grow in their faith freely."

CHILD OF GOD LUTHERAN SCHOOL

RESOURCE ROSTER

2019-current:

School Year	# of IEPs	# of 504s	# of consultations	# of evaluations	# of students impacted	% of COGLS serviced
2019-2020	17	8	9	17	38	26%
2020-2021	11	13	14	11	39	29%
2021-2022	20	4	13	11	49	35%
2022-2023	15	15	10	12	46	33%
2023-2024	14	19	20	10	69	49%
2024-2025	13	29	2	8	44	28%
2025-2026	11	28	1	6	40	28%