1. Anti-bullying campaigns

“This boy in my class went to the bathroom during class the other day. No one knew that he went, because he had to cry. Someone called him stupid and other mean names at lunch.”

My friend was constantly picked on and called mean names during 6th grade. None of her friends ever said anything or told anyone, because they were afraid of the same thing happening to them. She started hurting herself, so I finally had to tell someone. Then I started being the victim, because I was the rat and tattle tale.

1. The backpack program

The school puts food in my locker on Friday, and that’s the only food I get all weekend. The other day, one of my friends called me skinny. It’s not cool to be skinny as an 8th grade guy. But I can’t help it that I don’t get food at home.

They were teaching us about how to eat healthy in health class. I get food from the backpack program at school. But I don’t necessarily get healthy food. I don’t care. I just want to have something to eat, but I also know that my body isn’t as healthy as it should be, because all I get to eat are canned foods and macaroni.

The only meals I get to eat are when I’m at school.

1. Family Resource and Youth Services Center

I’m tired. I can’t stay awake. I live in a one room hotel with my baby brother and I have to sleep on the floor.

I haven’t taken a shower in three days, because we can’t pay our water bill.

Look at my shoes. Do they look bad? These are the only shoes I have and it makes me uncomfortable when other kids where a different pair every day.

The clothes you don’t like or think aren’t cool are the clothes that I need.

All my shoes and clothes are used before I get them.

You have your own room. But I sleep on the couch in my house.

In the winter, I get cold, because my family can’t afford a coat for me to wear.

1. Beautiful Minds

Sometimes I get so sad that I want to hurt myself. I feel like I have no one to talk to.

I told my mom that I had suicidal thoughts the other day. She talked to me about it and tried to help. But this is a problem I have all the time. I asked her if I could get help from someone, but she said it’s too expensive to go to a therapist and she doesn’t want me to share our personal family issues.

School is my safe place. Sometimes I’m afraid to go home.

1. Maintenance Support/ School Grounds Beautification

Sometimes I look outside and am sad that our school grounds are so boring to look at. I love planting plants and helping my mom with gardening. I wish our school had a gardening club.

One time I was working in the hallway on a test. I saw a piece of trash in the hall that someone dropped after lunch. I watched 5 classes of students walk by before one teacher finally picked it up. It really bothered me that no one cared about the fact that there was trash on the ground.

It’s hard enough to clean up after almost 900 students. I am a janitor and that’s my job. But students go out of their way to trash the bathrooms or dump things on the floor, just for fun. It’s hard to do my job like that. I wish that students would understand how hard it is to pick up their messes all the time.

1. More social/active times built into the schedule

Sometimes I just want to run and jump and scream at the top of my lungs. It’s so hard to stay quiet and seated all day. I wish we had recess like in elementary school, but I know we have to grow up at some point.

In the halls we’re quiet. In the classroom we’re quiet. Even at lunch we can only sit with a certain class. I wish I had just a little bit of time in my day to be social and hang out with my friends.

1. Peer Buddies

There’s this student that sits around my table at lunch. He clearly has severe disabilities, because he can barely eat by himself. Sometimes he needs help wiping his face. The other day my friends laughed at him, because there was food on his nose and no one wiped it off for him. It made me sad.

There’s a student in a wheelchair at school. He goes through the hallways a lot and no one bothers to say hi to him, because he’s different.

There’s a student who does the announcements every morning. He says the pledge and sometimes messes it up, but you can tell that he’s trying really hard. My friends sometimes laugh at him if he really messes up. It bothers me so much.

1. Homework Club/ Peer Tutoring

“My home is dysfunctional, chaotic & loud. It’s hard for me to focus in that environment to be able to study or get homework done.”

Sometimes my homework doesn’t get completed, because there’s no one there to help me.

“My entire family shares a hotel room that we live in. There’s no place for me to do my homework.”

1. More Student Choice in Curriculum

Sometimes it feels like all I do is sit and stare at textbooks all day. I wish there were more options for students like me who like to learn with a hands on approach.

I feel like my teacher knows me well. We even took a learning styles quiz to learn about ourselves more. But sometimes we just sit in class and the lessons are all the same.