Versatile Backpack for Handicap Students

I selected an accommodating bag for girls in school that have walking limitations, requiring them to ride a wheelchair or scooter throughout the school. I wanted to include features that make their day-to-day life easier as a student, athlete, musician, etc. The most important element is the buckles on the shoulder straps allowing the user to strap through the scooter handlebars or attach to the back of the wheelchair.

Mid-sized backpack made of a durable faux patent leather for a lux look that can withstand heavy books and medical equipment as needed. Another component is the chest strap that contains a whistle for emergency or hazardous situations.

The backpack has two color options that embrace femininity with the subtle ruffle element on the front pocket as well as the two-color options which allow a student to express herself in the most accessible way. The details of the contrasting buckles could be altered for an additional pop of color according to the wearer's choosing.
Tastefully Inclusive
By Payton Rigler

I was inspired by my fellow Oklahoman’s story for this conceptualized idea in hopes to provide convenience and compatibility for students living with disabilities. Sydney Rutz is a freshman in high school from Yukon, Oklahoma who was diagnosed with a disease so rare only 1 in 5 billion people have been impacted by, called Spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia. It took Sydney and her family years to discover what her medical related setbacks were stemmed from. This condition has required Sydney to wear a back brace and ride a scooter for ease of transportation throughout the school hallways. It has also impacted her growth so that she is about a foot shorter than the rest of her classmates. She has continued to persevere through these challenges and seems to remain positive through her circumstances with a smile.

Wheelchair/Scooter Setbacks for Students

- Minimal storage
- Large usage of space in a classroom
- Sense of feeling as an outsider, experiencing judgement or mistreatment from other students.
- High Prices/sometimes inaccessible for those of high need.
- Specific space in classroom assigned, leaving student feeling isolated and excluded.

I designed this backpack to address the market of female handicap students. Middle school, High school and College are challenging enough with societal pressure along with homework, athletics and clubs. Those that have a walking disability can experience immense societal exclusion, but I hope this accessory allows them to express their individuality in the most positive way. According to pewresearch.org, about 14% of the public school’s students live with a disability. There is a huge market for students that feel like outsiders or great limitations that society often disregards.

Students like Sydney should feel nothing close to an outsider but feel valued and important especially in a learning environment. As someone who did not go through high school with these setbacks, it is essentially my obligation to place myself in the shoes of Sydney. It must be considered how life may feel different from another perspective and how we as a society can empower students that walk-through life a bit differently.