

One District



+ One School



+ (many) Partners



= Hundreds of Dreamers



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Executive Summary

Introduction

Our district is big by Oregon standards, small by California standards. We are not quite rural, not quite metro. We have success stories, kids off to Harvard, and sad stories, kids on the streets. We have dedicated teachers and budget shortfalls. In short, we have the full spectrum of issues of any school district in America.

But what we don't have is excuses. We don't brag about our successes and we don't make excuses for our failures. The students are with us for at least six hours a day and that's when we change lives.

Can we do it alone? Well that depends on what *it* is. Is *it* teaching math? Teaching reading? Walk don't run. Yes Sir and Thank You Mam – absolutely we can.

But, can we offer everything that we know, and that research confirms, students need? From family dinners provided by the Presbyterian Church to 4H to child-care for parent conferences, we know how to engage and support our learning community.

What's lacking is an ongoing relationship with a **single organization** that can leverage **additional resources** and serve as a **unifying hub** for an entire suite of services. It is with this in mind that Hillsboro School District aspires to partner with I Have A Dream Oregon.

Our dream is to create an academic version of the Harlem Children's Zone - a community where there is such a culture of learning and a premium on education that college success is an expectation. Within this culture, students would look to one another for knowledge inspiration. Our schools would have so much collateral intellectualism that every student would think of herself as the next valedictorian or next Pulitzer Prize winner or Supreme Court Justice.

I Have A Dream's new all-school endeavor is a paradigm changer and we are committed to being there right from the beginning. Patient people and patient organizations rarely make history - and that's what this partnership will do - make history – let's get started.

Executive Summary

Why Hillsboro School District

Hillsboro School District is a data-driven district. We use data not just for public relations or to satisfy state requirements. Rather, we use **data regularly throughout the year** to fine-tune instruction to the current needs of the current students. As I Have A Dream embarks on its new “birth-to-college framework,” data will be key to insure that students are on the optimum trajectory as detailed in the STRIVE model.

Equally important is our commitment to **vertical integration** of services and interventions from the primary grades through high school. Just one of many examples is Advancement via Individual Determination. AVID is a nationwide program designed to provide tutoring, resources and mentoring for middle and high school students who live in poverty, are limited English proficient, and would be first generation college graduates. AVID students successfully enroll in Advanced Placement courses and earn scholarships to four year colleges. Thirty students participated in AVID in our ninth grade at Century High School this year. In 2010, those students will continue along with another sixty new ninth graders and in 2011 we begin a cohort in Brown Middle School.

We have monthly comprehensive reviews of our k-12 program, which requires participation of teachers and administrators from all three levels (lower, middle, and high school). In addition, like a teaching hospital, our teachers and administrators go on Instructional Rounds across all schools to insure implementation of coherent and intentional curricula. As a transparent organization, the Instructional Rounds Model provides an opportunity to examine our practice and allows us to replicate successful pedagogies and improve those that are not producing results.

Incorporating the I Have Dream framework and Director into this **vertically integrated** district will be natural, welcome, and straightforward.

Executive Summary

Why Reedville Elementary

It was with much enthusiasm that we chose Reedville as the partner school for I Have A Dream. Reedville has 80% of the students school eligible for free or reduced lunch, 25% children of farm workers, and 50% English Language Learners.

Gina Baez, Reedville's bilingual principal, was the first in her extended Latino family to attend college. She and her administrative team are committed to the expectation of college for all Reedville students.

Reedville has an AYP Status of Outstanding for Attendance but only Satisfactory for Achievement. This disconnect is indicative of the well-known challenges facing students from low-income families.

A key aspect in our choice of Reedville, was the school's existing partnership with Bienestar. **Bienestar** is a well-established local non-profit with an annual budget of \$450,000. They specialize in building housing for farm workers and their children. Those children live around the corner at Bienestar's Reedville Apartments and attend Reedville Elementary.

We are fortunate to have Bienestar as a partner. They provide stable homes and support services for these vulnerable children. In fact, Bienestar has paid bilingual staff, called Promotores, living and working in Reedville Apartments. The "promoters" are integral to the resolution of school related issues.

Bienestar offers a host of programs that benefit our students (Summer Reading Safari, Science Club, Explorer Camp). We are especially proud of our partnership with Bienestar on **homework club**. Homework club occurs twice a week, throughout the entire year, with student volunteers from **Catlin Gabel** High School. Catlin Gabel students are highly academic and have 100% university matriculation. They serve as both tutors and as positive role models. Data reveals that homework club has yielded letter grade improvements across the board for the farm worker children at Reedville.

Bienestar and Catlin Gabel are just two of the many partnerships Reedville embraces (see below for additional examples). In collaboration with I Have A Dream, we are prepared to leverage all partnerships, services, and interventions into a single coalesced support system for college-bound students.



“A vertically integrated, data driven, community aiming high.”

District Information

Mission

The mission of the Hillsboro School District, a partnership of schools, families, and community, is to ensure each student graduates prepared to succeed and contribute in a global society by engaging our diverse learners in a challenging, personalized program of educational excellence.

Guiding Principles

There is nothing more important to us than making sure our students graduate from our schools with the skills to succeed in and contribute to a global society. The Hillsboro School District’s Strategic Plan is the roadmap that provides the guiding principles for achieving our mission and our students’ success. Our strategies are to:

- Build a world-class school system
- Make sure all students are prepared for college and work
- Require good teaching practices
- Prepare for future student population growth

Largest Enrollment Trends

| Year | Students | Latino | Caucasian | Poverty |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1996 | 16,000 | 15% | 78% | 28% |
| 2000 | 18,000 | 20% | 72% | 28% |
| 2009 | 21,000 | 31% | 58% | 44% |

District Information Funding Challenges

District cut \$18 million last year and will cut an additional \$2 million this year. We raised average class size from 26 to 27 and reduced four days for staff. With the passage of Measure 66 and 67, we restored the four days this year.

Because our district has been fiscally responsible, we were able to sustain current programs. However no new curricula or initiatives were added.

Relationship with Teachers Union

Hillsboro School District has a strong collaborative relationship with the Hillsboro Education Association and Hillsboro Classified United. The Union Presidents participate in monthly meetings with the executive team and luncheons with school board members. Additionally, they are invited and often participate in district committee projects and staff development.

When faced with an economic deficit, the Hillsboro teacher and certified unions united their efforts with Hillsboro School District to promote and successfully pass measures 66 and 67. Additionally, both organizations agreed to freeze salaries, significantly minimizing cuts to personnel and schools.

Out-Of-School-Time

Response to Intervention research indicates that providing a double or triple dose of curricular concepts leads to greater academic gains. Each of the following programs has been successful in extending the learning day.

All of these programs are effective because they provide the necessary resources, people and programs, for us to target students who need extra time, specific interventions in Literacy, and engagement in the school. Looking at achievement and attendance data validates the effectiveness of these programs.

- Migrant Summer School: Pre K-12
- Nike Summer Literacy Academy K-3
- Title I Schools fund after School academies - K-6
- BLAST provided by Tualatin Parks and Recreation - middle school
- Camp Fire provides after school program at some K-6 schools

District Information

Out-Of-School-Time (con't)

The following programs provide individualized and enriched learning:

- Nike Literacy Academy at some K-6 schools
- Tutoring of elementary students by older students
- BLAST provided by Tualatin Parks – middle schools
- Camp Fire after school program for K-6 schools
- NWRESD Outdoor School - 6th grade

Partnerships

Our community and business partners are vital. They provide leadership training, professional development, parent education, and family Services. Employees of these organizations volunteer in our schools as tutors and mentors.

- Nike – Literacy Program
- Intel – Funding for science and math curricula
- Solar World
- Pacific University
- Portland Community College – college credit for high school students
- Washington County Sheriff, & Mental Health Services
- Hillsboro Police

Board of Directors

Carolyn Ortman, John Peterson, Adriana Cañas, Rebecca Lantz, Patti McLeod, Hugh O'Donnell, Janeen Sollman

Superintendent

Mike Scott

Primary District Contact

Patricia Book, Executive Director, Office for School Performance
3083 N.E. 49th Place
Hillsboro, OR 97124
503-844-1757



Reedville Elementary
"We change lives all day long."

**School Information
 Statistics**

Reedville Elementary
 2695 SW 209th Avenue
 Aloha, OR 97006

Principal – Gina Baez

26:1 Student - Teacher Ratio
 School-wide Title I status

63% Latino
 24% Caucasian
 13% Other

25% Farm worker Children
 81% Free or Reduced Lunch
 50% English Language Learners

K-6
 285 students
 Kindergarten (1/2 & full day)
 Blended grades 1&2, 3&4, 5&6

AYP Status:
 Achievement – **Satisfactory**
 Attendance – **Outstanding**
 Participation – Outstanding
 Overall – Satisfactory

Historic building with some
 improvements: library, music room,
 health room, and portable classrooms

Stable Enrollment

| 2007-08 and 2008-09 Combined | Reading | Math |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| % Meets | 45.2 | 42.7 |
| % Exceeds | 20.5 | 16.6 |
| % Meets or Exceeds | 65.7 | 59.3 |
| % Meets, Exceeds, or Meets Growth | 73.7 | 67.6 |

School Information Out-of-School-Time

Shown below are Reedville's existing and proposed partners.



Homework Club: Twice Weekly, 20 students
 Summer Reading Safari: 6 weeks, 20 students
 Financial Fitness: 5 weeks, 20 students
 Explorer Camp: 1 week, 30 students
 AKA Science Club: 6 weeks, 15 students
 Children Creating Arte: 6 weeks, 12 students
 Summer Lunches: 55 days, 60 students
 Adelante Chicas: ongoing, 12 students
 Mental Health Counseling for families,
 ongoing



Homework Club: Twice Weekly, 20 Students,
 8 Volunteers from Catlin Gabel



Nike Schools Foundation provides
 Consulting in Support of Literacy Programs
 for 285 students

Latino Mentors Proposed: Nike Latino
 Network would provide volunteers for
 Summer Camp and After-School programs
 for over 100 students.



Reedville Presbyterian: Supporting 285
 students, throughout the year:

- Child care during school events
- Dinners
- Haircuts, clothes, food pantry



Outdoor Education Proposed:
 Explorer Post 58 would provide mentors and
 high-school students as guides on Saturday
 outdoor experiences. Weekly, 20 students.

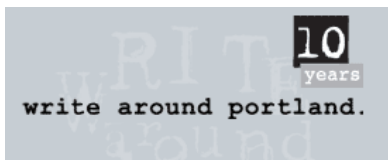
School Information Out-of-School-Time (con't)



Graffiti & Gang Prevention
Street Safety for latch key kids



OSU Extension / 4-H: Supporting 285
Students
Community Garden
Professional Development For Teachers
4-H Fair



Writing Workshops Proposed:

Write Around Portland would provide intense 10-week writing workshops to empower students and their families in search of their individual and collective voice. Weekly, 20 students.



Robotics Club Proposed:

Oregon FIRST would provide mentors, consulting, and know-how to allow Reedville Elementary to create its first robotics course. Weekly, 50 students.

Computer Literacy Grant for students and their parents. Three six-week bilingual courses. 40 Families



Latino High Tech Mentors Proposed:

Mentors would make a long-term, 20 year, commitment to keeping cohorts of ten students, on the leading edge of technology.

School Information

Feeder Schools - Relationships

All Reedville students continue on and attend Brown Middle School and then Century High School. As mentioned above, there is extensive collaboration and vertical integration amongst the schools. Of particular note are the following four systemic mechanisms that insure a coordinated approach.

One - Our district is a member of a consortium of schools supported by Northwest Regional Education Service District. NWRES D funds our data driven approach to tracking the progress of our students. Moving beyond state requirements, we collect data throughout the year to improve teaching and learning. Systems and techniques are identical at all three schools.

Two - We have a Care Coordinator who provides wrap-around services for families utilizing district and community resources in Washington County. The same approaches are used throughout Reedville Elementary, Brown Middle School, and Century High School.

The Care Coordinator is also responsible for truancy intervention. Too often, truancy is seen as a matter of collecting and tracking data because of financial implications. Our Care Coordinator's mandate is to probe into and solve the root causes of truancy. Elementary, Middle and High School counselors meet monthly to review data, articulate practice and insure vertical alignment of counseling and guidance services based on the National Model.

Three – The three schools collectively implemented a K-12 Literacy Plan as well as a Math Plan. These plans support schools by carefully evaluating student progress. They utilize a bank of resources for students needing additional support as well as those that are advanced. Representatives from all three schools meet regularly to revise and improve the plan as well as to track progress. In addition, specialists from all schools meet monthly to coordinate services and interventions for families under duress.

Four – All three schools use a standardized model for classroom and school decorum. The system relies upon Positive Behavior Supports. Students blossom with this consistent sent of expectations.

School Information Feeder Schools - Statistics

Brown Middle School

860 students

27-1 Student - Teacher Ratio
No Title I status

20% of students at Brown are from
Reedville Elementary

23% Latino
54% Caucasian
12% Asian
11% Other

4% Farm worker Children
46% Free or Reduced Lunch
7% English Language Learners

AYP Status

Achievement – **Satisfactory**
Attendance – **Outstanding**
Participation – Outstanding
Overall – Satisfactory

Building established in 1963 with a
major expansion in 2008.

Stable Enrollment

Century High School

1550 students

27-1 Student - Teacher Ratio
No Title I status

14% of students at Century are from
Reedville Elementary

20% Latino
60% Caucasian
14% Asian
6% Other

4% Farm worker Children
41% Free or Reduced Lunch
7% English Language Learners

AYP Status

Achievement – **Satisfactory**
Attendance – **Outstanding**
Participation – Outstanding
Overall – Satisfactory

Building opened in 1997

Stable Enrollment

School Information
 Feeder Schools - Academic Achievement

Brown Middle School

| 2007-08 and 2008-09 Combined | Reading | Math |
|--|----------------|-------------|
| % Meets | 47.3 | 40.3 |
| % Exceeds | 28.2 | 34.2 |
| % Meets or Exceeds | 75.5 | 74.5 |
| % Meets, Exceeds, or Meets Growth | 78.2 | 78.9 |

Century High School

| 2007-08 and 2008-09 Combined | Reading | Math |
|--|----------------|-------------|
| % Meets | 49.4 | 46.0 |
| % Exceeds | 16.5 | 21.6 |
| % Meets or Exceeds | 66.0 | 67.6 |
| % Meets, Exceeds, or Meets Growth | 66.0 | 67.6 |

School Information

About The Neighborhood

Reedville Elementary is a small school in a historic building. We are surrounded by the homes, mostly apartments, of our students. Their parents are hard-working, but very much economically disadvantaged. At least two of the surrounding apartment complexes are designated low-income and one is Section 8.

Just a mile away is Intel's world-class manufacturing plant. Along the Tualatin-Valley Highway there are myriad businesses from pawnshops to barbershops to mortgage brokers and bankers. Some deserve steering towards and others swerving away.

In many ways, our neighborhood is an island in the midst of businesses hustling to stay afloat and not far from the economic super-powers of Intel and Nike. All of these represent opportunities for partnerships, fundraising, jobs, internships, and mentors.

School Information

My Story, by Gina Baez, Principal

In *Brown vs. Brown*, 1954, Chief Justice Warren wrote *“In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education.”* The Justice didn’t refer to opportunities for the children of the affluent. He worried on behalf of the kids like those at my school, Reedville Elementary - those for whom education is a ladder, with some broken rungs, not the express elevator to the executive suite. I know – I was the first in my family to make it to the top of that ladder.

A farm worker and a cannery worker – those are my roots. They worked ten hours a day with their hands. I’m teaching my students to change the world with their minds.

Two hundred of us entered the University of Oregon. Just ten percent of us walked the stage with diploma in hand. Fifteen years later, the graduation rate remains stagnant.

The data shows, and my personal experiences confirm, that once a child goes to college, her children will too. The students at Reedville are my children – all 285 of them.

As principal, my job is simple. I ask the right questions and demand data-supported answers. In what areas does Jessica struggle most? What else do we know about Jose that can determine why he is stymied? Which multi-disciplinary interventions have worked for Maria before?

Most of all, I am committed to professional learning communities. Parents, businesses, and non-profits are essential in our ongoing quest to support students. No excuses, no elephants in the room – just courage to put students first.

School Information

Principal Baez Writes About Her Staff

Reedville has remained relatively stable over the last three years. One of the eleven classroom teachers, two ESL teachers, three instructional assistants and I speak Spanish. Our twenty-one teachers have an average of 16 years of experience totaling 332 years.

Thirty-five adults share their hearts and passions with students daily. I am humbled and honored to work with each of them...

Counselor Lopez, works with families to support students with social and self-management challenges. Using a strong and encouraging tone, her students problem solve to overcome personal obstacles.

Miss Megan fills wish lists for three families each holiday – clothing, toys, a frozen turkey, and the fixings. She gave a family a new mattress so the children could sleep comfortably.

Mrs. Schlegel's passion brings her to tears. In our last data meeting, she reported inconsistent progress with fluency. Without hesitation, she changed course and committed additional instruction and practice to fluency. Her enthusiasm and encouragement ignites students' creativity and intellect every day.

Anonymity is a kind of purity. I mention this because my proudest moments as Principal have come when I see the progress of our students in enrichment activities such as Mad Science, BLAST, and Migrant summer school. Many kids are able to attend only because our staff sponsors them. Teachers are unrelenting in their support of students and they show it by giving financial support anonymously. They make it easy to be principal.

Partnership Proposal Commitment

True Story - In a recent twelve-day period, an affluent girl from a local high school went on a humanitarian trip to Cuba, participated in mock-trial where she was the defense attorney, studied with a private tutor for the ACT, played soccer for her premiere soccer club, and served as a teaching assistant for younger students studying geometry.

Imagine the learning that takes place for this girl - all outside the classroom. She's had access to these types of resources and opportunities from birth and will continue to have them through college graduation. Some of us call this front-loading – that is, she comes to school hyper-predisposed to learning. Classroom knowledge weaves in seamlessly with personal experience and personal knowledge.

While we'll never be able to send all our students on international trips, our North Star is a culture of learning and outside experience that makes our students also hyper-predisposed to learning.

This has to begin at infancy and the quality of experiences has to endure and grow with the child for more than twenty-years. In essence, each student needs the richness of experience and services of the affluent student.

The Homework Club volunteers from Catlin Gabel serve as role models for our younger students. They're all bound for college and the little ones know it – they observe, mimic, and step onto that same path.

Hillsboro District & Reedville Elementary envision our collaboration with I Have A Dream as the means to create a mosaic of experiences, like Homework Club, that constantly drive students towards college.

There is no single program that will make the difference – students must be immersed in an adult-rich environment continuously, with consistency, and without compromise – that is our commitment.

Partnership Proposal

Inside The Dreamer Classroom

Five Key Ideas – Building connections towards graduation

One – A systemized culture of learning. Each student grade K-12 will be assigned to be a mentor for younger students. An 8th grader, for example, taking Algebra will help his 6th grader with adding and subtracting fractions. In turn, he will get help from a senior studying Calculus. **Students will serve as mentors** to other students throughout their K-12 experience.

Two – Inside / Out. All outside-the-classroom experiences will be **tied to** lessons inside-the-classroom. For example, when I Have A Dream implements a collaboration with Intel for a robotics club, they will schedule it to coincide with the existing science unit on the mechanics of motion. In this way, the three-way partnership grows and reinforces itself.

Three – Proactive Agents. Students will work with their teachers and I Have A Dream staff to determine which programs best support their academic progress. An ongoing activity for students will be reflecting on how I Have A Dream has helped them progress intellectually. Students will have a K-12 trajectory that they help design and upon which they reflect. When Johnny can articulate that his choice of the creative writing club made him a better reader, he will become a lifelong reader. Johnny and his peers will be **proactive agents** in the I Have A Dream / Reedville partnership.

Four – Team Cole. Imagine a 5th grader, Cole. Cole is the captain of his own “team” of adults. His team includes a manager at US Bank, a Nike shoe designer, a principal, and his Jiu-Jitsu coach. They help him and guide him as he grows, for twenty years, from a child to a young man. Team Cole will provide resources and opportunities. Each will work with Cole in the classroom and **collectively** they will make dozens of presentations for Cole’s peers. By college, all his peers will think of Cole’s adults as on their team also.

Partnership Proposal

Inside The Dreamer Classroom

Five Key Ideas – Building connections towards graduation (con't)

Five – Service Learning

Community service at most schools is a checkbox of good deeds. Do your 30 hours of stuffing envelopes, feeding the homeless, or cleaning a park and your done. Students seldom learn the causes, issues, and policies behind a societal problem. In our dreamer classrooms, students will work with mentors to develop a deep understanding of the causes of an issue such as homelessness. Mentors will help students create and implement meaningful, and at-times, **profoundly** moving service learning projects. The most competitive colleges expect students to be not only engaged in their communities, but to affect change. I Have A Dream is the necessary pathway for our students.

Four Services We Dream Of From I Have A Dream

One – Early Childhood Education. Currently we are a K-12 district. We know the importance the first four years have on preparing kids for success. Yet, we are not currently set up to provide those services. We are eager to collaborate with I Have A Dream to implement an **extensive early childhood program** that integrates seamlessly into our K-12 curriculum.

Two – High Tech, High Tech, High Tech

You, as a reader of this grant, are probably well versed in the humanities. Nonetheless, you learned enough along the way to be savvy with technology. You can create and manipulate spreadsheets, upload documents, upgrade to a new laptop.

As educators, we're in the same position. While we don't work in high-tech, we are comfortable using it, we can think critically about it – pros and cons, analyze its effect on society, and we understand how it drives economic prosperity (and disparity).

Unfortunately, most of our families are on the losing side of the digital divide. Ironically, some of them actually work for high-tech companies like Intel. But they work in service positions such as custodians. Even though Intel is just a

mile away from our school, it's a long distance cultural commute, long distance intellectual commute, and long distance economic commute.

High Tech will continue to be the engine of the global economy. To be competitive all students should have high acumen as users and consumers of technology. More importantly, they should be able to create technology – that is, write software and build hardware.

We are looking forward to partnering with I Have A Dream to bring the high tech world closer to all of our students – especially those where family background is just as much of an impediment as finances.

A mile should be a short commute.

Three – Adults, Adults, Adults

If you want a child to become a responsible adult, she needs to be around responsible adults. The adults in our community are responsible. They work hard (too hard), pay their taxes, and love their kids.

The challenge for our students is that the adults in their world are too isolated from other responsible adults. Our students lack exposure to the museum curator, the executive director of a non-profit, the doctor, the lawyer, and the research scientist.

A partnership with I Have A Dream will require high-energy and high-efficacy outreach to different adult communities. Equally successful support services are needed to help those adults connect in meaningful and lasting ways with our students. I Have A Dream has the necessary expertise to bring responsible adults into our community for the long run.

Four – College, College, College

Creating a culture of college is a step up, maybe a staircase up, from creating a culture of learning. We are especially intrigued with working with I Have a Dream to develop the college culture as young as the third grade. How does this happen? What works? What doesn't work? We have our own models (field trips, speakers, special projects) and certainly our AVID program (see above) creates the college culture for older students; but, I Have Dream has the expertise for the younger grades and we are eager to leverage it.

Partnership Proposal Collaboration

There's a television series in which CEO's of Fortune 500 determine how to improve their organizations by spending months working alongside employees at every level of their organization. The CEO of a Carnival Cruises works as a deckhand, skipper, cook and engine mechanic to learn what happens in the "trenches".

Our collaboration with I Have A Dream would start the same way. We envision the I Have A Dream Director working alongside our teachers, our principal, the district office, parents and volunteers right from the beginning. The Director will have open and ongoing access to meetings at any level from Kindergarten to the Superintendent's office.

At the same time, our teachers and staff will make visits to other Dreamer Schools to learn what has and hasn't worked in the past.

As mentioned earlier, our district is data driven. We are accustomed to having data at our fingertips at every meeting and it is a part of the ongoing conversation. As an integral part of this discourse, the I Have A Dream Director will be immersed in data as well. And, of course, the Director will have access to computer systems from his or her office at Reedville and from home.

Fundraising is as much about telling one's story as it is about finding key donors. We already have many donors and partners. What we don't have is experience telling the Dreamer School story and how funding yields results in dreamer schools. Nadine Zimmerlund is the director of Hillsboro Education Foundation. She is responsible for fundraising and will work side-by-side with the I Have A Dream Director. The Director will become a part of the fundraising team and the two will develop strategies to leverage our network of existing donors as well cultivate new relationships.

A partnership is like a marriage – it gets better over time as long as both partners are looking in the same direction.

Partnership Proposal Obstacles

One of our biggest challenges is providing the resources to implement the K-12 Math Framework based on the new State Core Standards with an outdated curriculum. We look forward to working with I Have A Dream to update our curriculum.

Closing Thoughts

Sometimes running a school district feels like all tunnel with no light. We create programs that succeed but don't have time to fully blossom. We have brush fires that need water. Most kids turn out great, others don't. The I Have Dream partnership is the light we've been looking for. We look forward to turning a strong partnership between the school, the district, the foundation, Bienestar, and our many other partners into a national model.

A Poem by Taylor Mali:

What Teachers Make

or

Objection Overruled, or

If things don't work out, you can always go to law school

He says the problem with teachers is, "What's a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?"

He reminds the other dinner guests that it's true what they say about teachers:

Those who can, do; those who can't, teach.

I decide to bite my tongue instead of his
and resist the temptation to remind the other dinner guests
that it's also true what they say about lawyers.

Because we're eating, after all, and this is polite company.

"I mean, you're a teacher, Taylor," he says.

"Be honest. What do you make?"

And I wish he hadn't done that
(asked me to be honest)
because, you see, I have a policy
about honesty and ass-kicking:
if you ask for it, I have to let you have it.

You want to know what I make?

I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could.
I can make a C+ feel like a Congressional medal of honor
and an A- feel like a slap in the face.
How dare you waste my time with anything less than your very best.

I make kids sit through 40 minutes of study hall
in absolute silence. No, you may not work in groups.
No, you may not ask a question.
Why won't I let you get a drink of water?
Because you're not thirsty, you're bored, that's why.

I make parents tremble in fear when I call home:
I hope I haven't called at a bad time,
I just wanted to talk to you about something Billy said today.
Billy said, "Leave the kid alone. I still cry sometimes, don't you?"
And it was the noblest act of courage I have ever seen.

I make parents see their children for who they are
and what they can be.

You want to know what I make?

I make kids wonder,
I make them question.
I make them criticize.
I make them apologize and mean it.
I make them write, write, write.
And then I make them read.
I make them spell definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful, definitely
beautiful
over and over and over again until they will never misspell
either one of those words again.
I make them show all their work in math.

And hide it on their final drafts in English.
I make them understand that if you got this (brains)
then you follow this (heart) and if someone ever tries to judge you
by what you make, you give them this (the finger).

Let me break it down for you, so you know what I say is true:
I make a difference! What about you?