



Dear Supporters and Friends of STRIVE Prep,

On June 9th, 2014, Jacob Sarinana, a Federal STRIVE Prep alumnus, gave a speech to our network faculty at our closing ceremony. Describing the course of his education, he shared:

I was transformed into a leader. That bird that couldn't fly at first is now a falcon ruling the skies. I not only became a leader and a mentor opening the path for the next generation, but I also won...a little something called... the Daniels Scholarship. I learned how to be the person I am today and how to value myself. Now I stand here, in front of you, sharing my journey that took me great effort and dedication to complete. I have fallen many times, but the same number of times I fell, I stood up again. If you have a dream, chase it down and grab it by the throat until you have it safely in your hands. If you want success, fight for it and you will achieve your goal.

A high school valedictorian and Daniels Scholar, Jacob represents the success we envision for each one of our students. I write you today to share honestly, and urgently, about the need for us to achieve such success much faster.

STRIVE Prep was founded in 2006 with a single campus in Southwest Denver serving 100, 6th grade students. Today, we are a network of nine schools that will welcome 3,000 students through our doors on Monday. Then, and now, 90 percent of the students we serve qualify for free/reduced price lunch, 95 percent are students of color, and we commit to operating neighborhood schools in our communities with a history of low-performance, creating high-quality options where our families live. We make two promises to our students and their families:

- You will be safe.
- You will go to college prepared to succeed.

We are disappointed and humbled by the TCAP results released today. To realize the community vision which we have crafted together and that our families and scholars deserve, we must do better. We expect more of ourselves as a network and know that our students are capable of much more than is reflected in this year's results.

As a network we saw TCAP proficiency declines of approximately 10 points in math and 5 points in reading. Overall, our proficiency scores matched the district average, and our growth scores matched the district average and exceeded the state average, with one school posting high

growth and one school posting low growth. TCAP scores are reported as both growth and proficiency. Growth tells us how much progress they make over the course of the school year. Proficiency measures where our students are relative to their current grade level.

The network also uses two other assessments to measure academic progress as it relates to college readiness - the NWEA MAPS and pre-ACT series. Network-wide, students averaged 1.9 years of growth on NWEA MAPS and 83 percent of sophomores exceeded typical growth on the ACT Plan.

While there remain some bright spots in academic growth, with many of our schools posting high growth in several subjects, we believe it is time to focus our attention squarely on our students' proficiency - the measure by which we assess their readiness for college - and a measure on which we have much work to do.

Our reflections and plans to improve will target three main areas- staff recruitment and support, academic program, and organizational focus.

The rapid growth of our network requires hiring a significant number of new staff, and we found this especially challenging in the spring prior to this academic year. While our veteran teachers are staying with us in record numbers, we experienced higher turnover among those who joined STRIVE Prep in the fall of 2013. We've expanded our talent team, enhanced recruitment efforts, and look forward to even stronger partnerships with our colleagues to continue to attract great people. And, we've invested in improved and individualized training to better support the exceptional staff who are staying with us from year to year.

Last year, we purposefully changed our curriculum and assessments across the network to align to the Colorado Academic Standards, a year in advance of the planned new state assessments. We knew that a full transition, rather than a phased in approach, would be risky and challenging, which has proven true. We also believe we are now well positioned to make the appropriate adjustments for this school year.

One of the strengths of our network is its innovative spirit and entrepreneurial leadership. I believe that in some ways, those aspects have driven projects and initiatives that have caused us to stray too far from our core program. Moving forward, I commit to keeping us intensely focused on a smaller number of key priorities. This year, we will simplify our work around the two priorities we believe will best impact student achievement: great data-driven instruction and strong school culture in every building.

I share these with you not as excuses, but rather as key points of reflection, and the priority areas where we are taking immediate action to ensure greater success for our students.

And, we will need your help. We are grateful for your continued support of our vision that all students, regardless of background, deserve a safe, successful school in their own community that prepares them for college success.

I'm deeply inspired by the resolve of the STRIVE Prep community. We've got a great deal of work to do, on behalf of each of the students like Jacob, who will arrive on Monday morning.

We're on it.



Chris Gibbons
CEO, STRIVE Prep

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