

# **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization/PTO Principal's Report, April 11, 2017 Mrs. Dionne Webster**

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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School will focus on the importance of college and career readiness in May. We are going to connect this to leadership, May's character trait. We will also connect this activity to our district focus on goal setting.

**Leadership:** guiding, inspiring, and helping others grow and be successful

**College and Career Readiness Week:** May 1-5<sup>th</sup> at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School

**The purpose of College Week at King School is to:**

1. Encourage our students to set long and short term goals for themselves.
2. Inform our students that college can be an option for all of them.
3. Expose our students to a variety of colleges and universities around the world.
4. Focus on how leadership connects to college and career readiness.

**Things to Instill in King School Students:**

1. You can go to college!
2. You can have an important career!
3. You are smart in your own way!

## **“Four Reasons Why College and Career Conversations Matter in Elementary School”**

### **1. They Expand Students' Vision of the Future**

Talking to students early can help them become familiar with a wider variety of postsecondary options. Not every household is knowledgeable of college or career certification programs. “Our job as educators is to open doors. To make sure that kids know all the options that are out there,” said Deborah Leser, Director of Student Services at Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS). It is important to expand what children may view as possible for their future. When children are informed early they can begin to grasp the information and talk about it. IPS has graduation coaches in elementary school to help students with these conversations. Talking to students early can help them make informed decisions later.

## **2. They Empower Teachers to Connect Lessons to the Real-world**

Elementary school teachers should play a role in these conversations too because they see first hand what areas their students are excelling in. Incorporating career lessons and videos into their curriculum can help students connect their work in the classroom to real-world careers. Brooke Nova, Coordinator of College and Career Pathways for Hillsboro School District in Oregon, believes that getting teacher buy-in for incorporating college and career conversations in the classroom means having meetings with the community, teachers, and parents throughout the year to discuss initiatives, collaborate, and gather feedback.

## **3. They Help Students Connect the Dots Early**

As students move up in the student lifecycle their level of engagement can drastically decrease. Research from a [Gallup Student Poll](#) demonstrated that nearly eight in 10 elementary students are engaged with school, but by middle school; engagement decreases to about six in 10 students. Having college and career conversations with students before they reach middle school can help them make connections earlier in the lifecycle. More school districts are having students create individualized learning plans or pathways as early as elementary school, to help students visualize the steps they need to take in each grade. Hillsboro School District has a College and Career Readiness Road Map that spans K-12. The map includes expectations of readiness for each grade level. For example, a first grade student should be able to explain what college is. These plans can help with engagement because students can see that they need to pass certain courses and meet expectations in order to achieve their goals.

## **4. They Help Include Parents in Conversations Early**

In some cases, parents want their children to begin thinking of plans for their future at an early age. School districts like IPS take advantage of this and find ways to include parents in college and career conversations with students, particularly around the topic of financial planning for college. IPS starts college funding conversations with parents of sixth grade students so they can understand costs, all their options, and how to save. When schools help parents understand all the options early, it gives parents more time to learn the processes and plan ahead. This is especially important for students with families that did not attend college. Having college knowledge and career awareness conversations early on can help build a culture of self-discovery and ensure an equal starting place for all students to achieve future life goals.

Source: <https://www.naviance.com/resources/entry/four-reasons-why-college-and-career-conversations-matter-in-elementary-scho>