



College for Certain Newsletter | April 2016

Dear Aspire Friends,

April has been full of student achievement and exciting stories from across our regions that give us great momentum as we head into the final stretch of the school year. This month has been especially full of others recognizing the work that we are doing at Aspire to catalyze change.

First, I want to highlight the significant accomplishment of Aspire Lionel Wilson College Preparatory Academy being the top-ranked school in Oakland according to [US News and World Report](#). Congratulations to all our staff and students who deserve this tremendous honor!

This month, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's "Impatient Optimists" blog featured our Co-Founder, Don Shalvey, highlighting our new "Many Mini Model" of teacher observations where teachers get shorter feedback more often throughout the year. We are also so proud that this month saw the release of *Achieving College Dreams: How a University-Charter District Partnership Created an Early College High School*. This edited book by Rhona S. Weinstein and Frank C. Worrell, gives an in-depth look at the successful collaboration between University of California Berkeley and Aspire Richmond California College Preparatory Academy (Cal Prep).

Internally, we are thrilled to showcase some of our best and brightest students through our Shining Stars luncheon at the end of May, and spotlight one of our generous donors below. Our Shining Stars this year hail from each of our Aspire regions, and have gone above and beyond in their dedication to Aspire values and truly exemplify our Qualities for Success. They have worked hard throughout their Aspire journey, and we are excited to celebrate their many achievements.

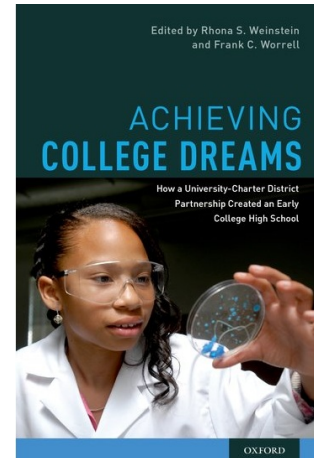
Thank you again to everyone - staff, students and parents - for working so hard this month to help our students achieve *College for Certain*. Whether it was through helping your child with math homework, staying late with a student after school, or preparing your child every day for success

in the classroom, we appreciate your hard work. It is our entire community coming together that helps our students to succeed at Aspire and beyond.

Carolyn Hack
CEO, Aspire Public Schools

Achieving College Dreams: How a University-Charter District Partnership Created an Early College High School

Aspire Public Schools partnered with the University of California Berkeley (UCB) more than ten years ago to launch Aspire California College Preparatory Academy (Cal Prep) and this month a book comes out celebrating this partnership. *Achieving College Dreams: How a University-Charter District Partnership Created an Early College High School* captures the struggle, improvement and success the partnership found in Cal Prep. This book shows others how to put the pieces together, align them and improve to best serve students.



Aspire is working with higher education partners to collaborate on educating the whole child and to prepare students for the rigors of college. Through this innovative approach to high school, Aspire is creating college experiences for students, making the transition to a four-year college easier and thus the odds of students succeeding in college even greater. Publication will be followed by a launch event on the UC Berkeley campus on May 12th.

[Read more >](#)

Living our Mission: Aspire Shining Stars Honored

This is the second year of Aspire's Shining Star Program, which recognizes Aspire seniors on their path to *College for Certain* - most notably, those who have persevered and gone above and beyond in their pursuit of a high school degree, while also exemplifying Aspire values and our Qualities for Success. We are proud to announce this year's Shining Stars, who have impressed us with their tenacity in striving toward their own bright futures as well as their consistent dedication to the larger community. The 2016 Shining Stars are Nathaly Romero, Brenda Gutierrez, Sahar Musaid, Rebekah Chavrin, Elizabeth Nava, Karen Arroyo, Jorge Avelar-Lopez, Iran Bernal, and Rodolfo Gallegos.

Jorge Avelar-Lopez, a senior at Aspire Lionel Wilson College Preparatory Academy, was recently named a Coca-Cola Scholar as well as a Dell Scholar, and will attend University of California Berkeley in the fall. Our other Shining Stars are interested in studying biology, computer science, astrophysics and business, and pursuing careers such as psychology, neurobiology, city development, radiology, filmmaking, and pediatrics. Like all of our students at Aspire, each Shining Star has a compelling story to tell, and we are excited to hear them all at our celebratory luncheon in May.



Donor Spotlight: Bob and Joyce Wisner

Bob and Joyce Wisner expected an uneventful flight home from Southern California after visiting their son in 2012. Joyce Wisner struck up a conversation with her seat neighbor, an enthusiastic young Aspire teacher by the name of Kawika Chun. It so happened that Kawika along with several other of his colleagues were on their way to Sacramento to attend Aspire's annual summer leadership retreat. According to Bob, by the time the plane had landed, Joyce had learned a great deal about Aspire and its mission to help children from low-income communities receive a quality education and prepare every student to earn a college degree.



[Read more >](#)

News Spotlight: Why "Many Mini" Observations Are Catching On Among Teachers

Aspire founder Don Shalvey wrote a piece on the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation blog "Impatient Optimists" about how Aspire is changing teacher observation and feedback. In response to teacher feedback asking for more consistent observation to be more representative of their teaching throughout the year, "Aspire piloted a new evaluation option-the "Many Mini Model"-during the 2014-15 school year. The Many Mini Model consists of five short (15- to 20-minute) classroom observations and one lesson plan observation over the course of the year. At least four of the observations are followed by an in-person debrief between the teacher and the observer."



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Where will **YOU** thrive?

APPLY NOW to make a difference in the future.



From the Press Room

The Expectancy Effect in Action

Jessica Cohen | UTNE Reader

Investing in California: A smart choice

Don Shalvey | EdSource

Silver Creek Industries Wins 2016 MBI of Distinction

Digital Journal



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Founded in 1998, Aspire Public Schools is one of the nation's largest highest-performing, college-preparatory public school systems. Aspire delivers a rigorous K-12 *College for Certain* education to 15,000 students in 38 open-enrollment public schools in California and Memphis, Tenn. Currently in our 17th academic year, Aspire is one of the nation's first charter school systems.

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