

Dreamers Academy



Dreamers Academy Biblioteca Tech Center

Dreamers Academy, Sarasota's Title 1 dual language public charter school, develops bilingual, biliterate, and cross-cultural leaders of character within a caring environment that encourages family engagement and celebrates America. Dreamers Academy is relocating to a building in Sarasota's Newtown community, to be open in August, 2023. Their initiative, the Dreamers Academy Biblioteca Tech Center, will create an inviting haven where students, faculty, and families relate and learn together.

Access to books and parental reading skills are primary determinants of childhood literacy, which in turn is a determinant of academic success. The majority of the Impact100 SRQ grant, \$81,760, is to purchase 5,100 books for the new Biblioteca. The library will include collections of authentic texts that are age- and language-appropriate and reflect the students' diversity, fostering a lifelong love of reading. The \$28,740 balance of the grant will be applied to the \$60,000 library furniture budget, designed to provide maximum literacy engagement. Of the remainder of the \$217,500 total initiative budget, Dreamers Academy will fund \$60,000 for a literacy/media center specialist. The furniture balance, technology, and library/space planner consultant costs will be funded by alternative sources.

In its second operating year, The Dreamers Academy program is rigorous, attainable, and dependent upon students reading at grade level as they master academic content in both English and Spanish. The pedagogy requires relevant texts that serve as mirrors where students see themselves represented and windows to access worlds with perspectives and experiences different from their own. The need is overwhelming. Sixty-one percent of Sarasota's minority students overall and nine out of ten English Language Learners enter middle school reading below grade level. Access to a well-stocked and curated library exponentially increases the ability to affect students' academic outcomes and engage parents as partners. In addition to students' use, texts will be available to families through the Biblioteca lending library, and the Librarian/Reading Specialist will offer adult literacy and programming to enhance parents' and guardians' roles in the literacy development process.

This initiative would accelerate the Dreamers timeline by four years, reaching over 450 students and their families immediately and 650 by 2025. Access to books that represent students in their native language will create a transformational learning environment, with sustainable benefits as part of the Dreamers Academy Biblioteca Tech Center. The success of the immersive literary experience will prove all children, regardless of economic background, race, ethnicity, or native language, can achieve grade-level reading.