

New York Times columnist Tom Friedman once said, “When I was growing up, my parents told me, ‘Finish your dinner. People in China and India are starving.’ I tell my daughters ‘Finish your homework. People in India and China are starving for your jobs.”

It is not new information to say that there is a large performance gap between U.S. and foreign students in math, science and engineering.

- In South Korea, 38% of all undergraduates receive their degrees in natural science or engineering. In France, the figure is 47%, in China, 50%, and in Singapore, 67%. In the U.S., the corresponding # is 15%
- Or to put it another way, the United States produces only 70,000 graduates in engineering annually versus 600,000 engineering graduates in China.

The impact of these statistics was highlighted this past year with the collapse of our financial systems. The financial collapse put the spotlight on the fact that America had somehow lost sight of the core importance of developing future leaders who can actually **design and create products**. We need educated, enabled people to lead in the creation of new technologies that ensure our nation can continue to compete and thrive in this new world.

While this seems like a tall order to some, as an educator and a principal, I am inspired by its call to action. I feel responsible to put into place the learning experiences that will motivate students to succeed in our global world. In my thinking, education needs a fundamental shift so that students know more than what is in a textbook. Our students need to be critical thinkers and problem solvers. This is where Project Lead the Way comes in.

Its hands-on curriculum gives students a taste of the variety, creativity, teamwork and possibilities engineering fields can offer.

Even for students who pursue other careers, they will learn how to work in a team and how to think pragmatically about abstract issues.

Teamwork, leadership and a sound understanding of these core disciplines will position our children to lead the charge in solving our biggest challenges. We as teachers and parents must encourage educational innovation and embrace the needs of our students.

I hope that you agree with me that creativity, talent diversity and global competences are what will make children successful and America strong in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By achieving this, American education will lead the way. THANK YOU in advance for helping us begin here at HKMS.