

ISABELLA TEJADA



Isabella Tejada is an all-star student. She came to School in the Square from a “highly progressive” elementary school and, though she previously had a “bad point of view about charter schools”, she reluctantly attended an open house and it completely changed her mind. She loved the idea of S2 and was “lucky enough to get in”. S2 is lucky too.

Having transitioned from a school with a similar philosophy, Isabella was keenly aware that, at first, most of her peers didn’t know what to make of their new school:

So at the beginning of the year... they weren't really fond of the school and they were really confused with how they run it... And also with teamwork and meditation, and like, actually them caring for you on a personal level... I'm so used to being in a loving and caring environment, but in traditional schools, I've been to many of their schools... there's a lot of fighting and no one really cares about you, you're just another person in that school... But more and more, they got used to this environment. I can just really tell. And even their learning has improved. A few of them told me that they really hated school and now they absolutely love it. It really just made me happy, seeing how far the school has gone.

When asked about bullying in the school, she reported, “To be honest, I’ve never seen any bullying.” Isabella really cares about the wellbeing of her fellow students and is proud to be part of the student leadership group as an LIT (Leader in Training). She looks forward to using that training to help her peers and incoming classes with emotional problems and conflict resolution, as well as “encouraging people to do good in the school”.

Isabella read over 35 books this year, far exceeding the school goal of 25, and when asked which one was her favorite, she said “All of them!” She is partial to realistic fiction and Japanese comic books, and it’s no surprise that she excels in her Fantasy Writing class. When she grows up, Isabella wants to be an architectural engineer. She explained: “I like to be very picky in how I design different things, I’m very organized in some cases -- outside of my bedroom. And, I just really want to be in that league, because it has, I think, almost every single subject: math, science, you have a little bit of everything. And I like to be very meticulous.”

When asked if she would change anything about the school, “lunch” was the obvious answer. Isabella will be happy to know that the school is hiring a private food vendor for next year. Otherwise, she said: “Everything is really what I wished for, there isn’t really anything that I can change. Well I *can* change things, and the whole school can change things, but there’s just nothing that I would want to change.”