New Tech East High School is a CMSD high school, serving grades 9-12. After attending a human rights summit last school year, our American Studies class, which is an integrated course of 10th graders in English II and US History, and Political Studies class, which is an integrated course of 11th graders in English III and US Government; wanted to show students that a movement can begin with one person’s idea: that they can affect change.

Our goal was to create a year-long project regarding Human Rights issues and have the students participate in the legislative process by addressing human rights violations that are occurring both domestically and internationally.

This project had the students doing the actual work of legislators and grassroots organizers. Students in American Studies were asked to examine domestic human rights violations and Political Studies students examined international human rights violations.

To increase Authenticity and Adult Connections, we decided to create a 3 tiered approach to creating the bills. We examined the process at the local, state, and federal levels. In addition to ensuring authenticity, we also sought the assistance from critical partnerships to help extend learning. Reading RAMM, an organization that specializes in embedding technical assistance into core curriculum, agreed to create a year-long documentary of the entire process, integrating videography, editing, sound engineering, and movie making.

We are proud of the high quality of work that has developed from this project. We are confident that New Tech East students have received an important glimpse into the importance of the legislative process and the effect that citizens can have on human rights issues.

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