

To Whom It May Concern:

Reed Sumida of ISPG was, and is, an invaluable resource to our school. It is reasonable to say that if we had not hired him, our school would not be in existence right now.

Our school was in its 7th year. It had outgrown its space and had already attempted to move away from its formative space. It went poorly. We had come back to that space, but had to leave within the year.

We investigated leasing, but it was prohibitively expensive, risky, and had no long term sustainability. We investigated buying, but we had no idea how to raise the capital needed.

In the midst of all this, we discovered Reed. He explained what he could do for us and it sounded great. We consulted his references who had amazing things to say about him. He did a video interview with our school in which he candidly and good naturedly answered many of our questions.

We decided to hire him for the initial consultation and capital planning process. He came out and met with our families. He understood our very unconventional model pretty much immediately which is no small feat. The families very much felt he listened to them and he assessed them as having the capacity to do a capital purchase of the size that we needed.

We paused before executing the capital campaign. There was one last prospect of a possible leasing situation that we wanted to pursue. It was a property we had looked at that a developer had purchased before we could do so. Reed worked with us closely in pushing the deal as far as we could in our favor. With his help, we made tremendous progress in achieving improvements to the deal, but, in the end, leasing just did not make sense. We appreciated very much Reed's patience and guidance through that even though he knew in the end it would not work out.

And this is something we appreciated very much with working with Reed. He always took our suggestions and directions seriously. He would lead us through what a scenario might look like. He would detail the risks and help us to explore as far down the path of that direction as we chose. In the end, his warnings would be validated, but it was important for us to see that as well. His patience and understanding in this process was never exhausted.

We did hire him to execute the full capital campaign. He came back out again and set the stage for our families to find a path they were comfortable with. It took a couple of months of meetings and committees, but we finally executed on the capital plan and building purchase.

Reed helped to assemble a team of professionals, but, more importantly, he instructed us on how to use them effectively. He pointed out many potential traps in what the professionals may or may not do and helped us navigate that successfully.

Reed often warned us that it would be a roller coaster ride and he was right. His experience, skills, and confidence were absolutely critical to our eventual success.

But even beyond all that, what I valued most was simply his good nature and respectful gentleness. He treated everyone we dealt with in a very pleasant manner. We felt extremely comfortable with him talking on our behalf to others particularly as he also was amazingly accurate in his description of our school.

Reed helped us, and our whole community, come into our own strength. It is very much like the old story of stone soup except we had a master chef available in the form of Reed. We brought the resources, but he helped us understand that we had those resources and how to use them.

In the end, we bought the building we wanted and kept our tuition low. All the wondrous years to come is, in very large part, due to Reed and his steadfast guidance. None of us can imagine having done what we did without him and we know that if we ever need him, he is but a phone call away to offer great insight and advice.

Sincerely,  
James Taylor  
Arts & Ideas Sudbury School