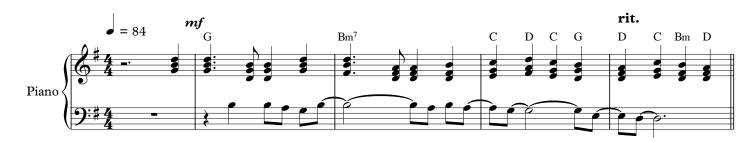
Two Schools

In honor of the parents of the Brook School in Hillburn, New York

David W. Haas

Two Schools







^{*}The young man referred to in these lyrics is Thurgood Marshall. More information is provided at the end of this score.

B.

to___ my

in___ my

town_

town_

to___ my

in___ my

town

town_

_ my

in___ my

to_

town___

town_____1.

to___ my town

2.

feels like























Two Schools

When I was a child there were two schools, two schools in my town, in my town, in my town, in my town. Keep children apart, keep them separate, desperate in my town, in my town, in my town. Feels like one step forward and then two steps back.

Then came a young man, an attorney on his journey to my town, to my town, to my town. Said separate's not fair, can't be two schools, can't be two schools in my town, in my town, in my town, in my town. Feels like one step forward and then two steps, one step forward and then two steps back.

We believe we can be better if we can summon the courage.

When I was a child there were two schools, two schools in my town, in my town.

America the possible, when will this dream come true?

We believe we can be better if we can summon the courage.

America the possible, let's make this dream come true.

We believe we can be better if we can summon the courage, no door we cannot open, no disgrace we can't erase. 'cause one man changed the world. He changed the world. He changed my world. He changed my world. We believe there is nothing we can't achieve.

America the possible, let's make this dream come true.

PERFORMANCE NOTES: The vocal style to be chosen when performing this piece may depend upon the lived and ancestral experiences of the performers.

BACKGROUND: Thirty miles northwest of New York City, in the town of Ramapo, lies the village of Hillburn. There were once two schools in Hillburn. The Brook School, for Black students, was unheated, had a small rocky playground, no library, and only outdoor latrines. The Main School, for White students, was well equipped with a gymnasium, library, and indoor toilets. In 1943, Brook School parents engaged the services of Thurgood Marshall, special counsel for the NAACP (the "young man" in this song). In September of 1943, to protest the separate and unequal school system, parents refused to send their children to the Brook School. By October, the New York State Commissioner of Education ordered that all children be admitted to the Main School. In an attempt to circumvent the law, Ramapo township leaders redrew district lines, assigning most Black families to the Brook School. White families withdrew their children from the Main Schoolm sending them to nearby parochial schools. Brook School ultimately closed. Thurgood Marshall's experience in Hillburn informed his strategy when, in 1954, he successfully argued Brown v Board of Education before the United States Supreme Court, which ruled that separating children in public schools based on race was unconstitutional. From 1967 until 1991, Thurgood Marshall served as the first Black Supreme Court justice. Students, including myself, who attended public schools in Ramapo were never taught about these historic events in our town. I first learned of this from the 2017 documentary film, "Two Schools in Hillburn", written and directed by Joe Allen (free to view on YouTube).