

Comments about *Neema* from students and teachers:

- The book was really great because it taught me that you must believe in yourself and never give up on your dreams.
- The book taught me that you should always give yourself a chance to succeed.
- At first, Neema was the girl who wanted to go to school. At the end, Neema helps a different girl go to school.
- I am always in awe of the focus and determination when students put their heart into making something meaningful to them. When I finished reading the book, the whole class made their own dream baskets using African prints. It almost felt as if they did not want the book to finish. I hope all their dreams come true, just like Neema's.
- Reading Neema's Reason to Smile to our students made them think about the world around them. They were moved and interested to learn about the lives of Kenyan children and the Jambo Jipya School. Thank you to Reason2Smile for making the world a little kinder.
- Neema opened the eyes of my third-grade students while also being a call to action. It sparked many lively discussions about the inequality of education around the world.
- A satisfying and enlightening story of a child's thirst for an education.
- The story within this hardcover book shows the determination of a young girl to not give up on her dreams.
- This is a work of fiction but one based on the real dreams and aspirations of children around the world. The writing is full of heart, love and hope. The illustrations are full of color and come alive.
- Neema's Reason to Smile will delight independent and lap readers alike. The story is set in Kenya and addresses themes of education and social mobility. I especially liked the glossary available to assist early readers with the text and its key terms. The text and illustrations make for an excellent learning opportunity for young readers.
- The colorful patchwork of illustrations are visually appealing. The images pop and the visual metaphors are present to help younger readers follow the text.

- The story is simple, but delivers a powerful message on the value of education. It provides a solid introduction to discussing more complex issues such as global opportunity and children's rights.
- The story wraps up on a heartwarming circular conclusion with our protagonist now in the position to help another potential student find their way to her school as she did.
- This book is encouraging and truly inspirational. Neema is a wonderful role-model showing the reader that hard work and perseverance pay off. The book has a glossary and information about the school it is modelled after and even instructions for kids to make their own dream baskets. The illustrations are detailed, vibrantly colored and I love all the patterns and textures that are portrayed.
- This is such a beautifully written and illustrated book. Discussion questions, activities, and a glossary round out this not-to-be-missed book. Go to <http://www.reason2smile.org/> to learn more about Reason2Smile and the Jambo Jipya School.
- The beautiful and colorful illustrations give us a glimpse in to Neema's world, taking us on the journey with her and her mother as she dreams of an education. The book is simple enough for young readers to appreciate, even though it tackles a serious topic.
- The writing is full of heart and love and hope. The illustrations are infused with color and texture. It is a beautiful, moving book that is important to share.
- This is a great book. My class loved it and really understood its message. We used it as an introduction when discussing the international declaration of children's rights and in particular the right to an education.
- The dream basket of hopes and dreams, is such a wonderful concept. The great dream is education.
- Award-winning children's author Patricia Newman's newest picture book is a lyrical journey. Neema wants to go to school, saves her money and dreams big dreams. The back matter includes primary source interviews from students in Kenya. In addition to being a lovely read-aloud, NEEMA'S REASON TO SMILE is a great discussion springboard for #EducationForAll or a unit on students around the world.
- Another wonderful book by Patricia Newman! Beautiful illustrations perfectly match the lyrical language. This would be a great way to introduce elementary kids to big issues of disparity in the world in a warm story form. A great celebration of education and dreams.

- This energetic little picture book about Neema is an excellent addition to a unit on social issues!
- At the heart of this story is the importance of education and the opportunities it gives to children.
- Neema's Reason to Smile is an amazing book that has a place in all classrooms, libraries and homes. Seeing school from a different perspective, for children, can be incredibly profound. Newman does a beautiful job winding a tale of family, needs, and desires into the story of Neema's dream to attend school.
- I loved reading about Neema and her desire to attend school! Such a heartfelt story! A story that reminds us of the importance and value of an education, and that yet education is still not so easily accessible to all children throughout the world! Neema shows the strength and determination of a young girl who knows what she wants, goes after it and makes it happen!
- There is so much to love about this beautiful story! Little Neema dreams of going to school and growing up to be a nurse, a scientist, a teacher, and so much more. She is a determined little girl who works hard to achieve her dream.
- This story will teach children that with hard work and dedication to your dreams, it is possible to achieve anything! The illustrations in this book are a wonderful asset to an already beautiful story! This book would make a wonderful addition to any home or school library.