



## Oradell Public School District

*Our children, our hope, our future*

October 2023

Dear OPS Families,

At Oradell Public School, we strive to create an inclusive environment where all students feel accepted so they can succeed. Creating inclusive environments is also a core goal of the New Jersey State curriculum initiative, implemented in 2021, which calls for school curriculum to include instruction on diversity and inclusion in appropriate places in the curriculum. To meet this mandate, we have identified four books to be included as read aloud texts at each grade level. Many of the books being used are familiar as they have been included in our standing curriculum for years.

As we continue to foster an environment with kindness at the core, we will use these grade-level appropriate picture books to engage our students. Picture books allow us to provide mirrors for students to see themselves and their experiences in characters as well as windows into the lives of characters whose experiences may be different than their own. The four texts at each grade level fall under the following themes:

- Be kind to others, both in the past and present. One book at each grade level will have a historical setting, helping students learn about times in history when people were unkind to others. An additional text at the grade level will share stories of characters that encounter unkind behavior in a more contemporary setting. Classroom teachers will facilitate discussions about how to empower our students to model kindness and respect to all community members.
- Be kind to yourself, both individually and collectively. These books will highlight how our differences make us unique and how the differences of others, collectively, make us stronger. Again, teachers will facilitate discussions around embracing differences and learning about the strengths of others.

In case you would like to engage you child in conversations about text, the specific texts at each grade level are listed below and will be read across the year.

### **Kindergarten**

*The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson

*Same, Same but Different* by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw

*We're All Wonders* by R.J. Palacio

*Festival of Colors* by Kabir and Surishtha Sehgal

### **First Grade**

*Shark Lady* by Jess Keating

*The Sandwich Shop* by Kelly DiPucchio and Rania Al Abdullah

*One* by Kathryn Otoshi

*Zero* by Kathryn Otoshi

## **Second Grade**

*The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles

*Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson

*The Name Jar* by Yangsook-Choi

*The World Needs More Purple People* by Kristen Bell and Benjamin Hart

## **Third Grade**

*The Gold Cadillac* by Mildred D. Taylor

*The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson

*I Talk Like a River* by Jordan Scott

*Players in Pigtails* by Shana Corey

## **Fourth Grade**

*Teammates* by Peter Golenbock

*In Our Mothers' House\** by Patricia Polacco

*Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon* by Patty Lovell

*Eyes that Kiss in the Corners* by Joanna Ho

## **Fifth Grade**

*Brother's in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan* by Mary Luana Williams

*William aka Bill* by Tanya C. Sousa

*Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting

*Oliver Button is a Sissy* by Tomie dePaola

## **Sixth Grade**

*Girl Wonder* by Deborah Hopkinson

*Thank you, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco

*And Tango Makes Three\** by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell

*The Undefeated* by Kwame Alexander

Our teachers have worked collaboratively to both choose appropriate texts and on identifying strategies to develop conversation skills in the classroom. If you have any questions regarding this initiative, please don't hesitate to reach out to our Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Amy Brancato, at [brancatoa@oradellschool.org](mailto:brancatoa@oradellschool.org).

Sincerely,

*Megan N. Bozios*

Superintendent

\*These books will be read as part of the Comprehensive Physical Education and Health Curriculum which allows for the option to opt a child out because of a conflict of conscience. Please see the letter sent home regarding the health curriculum for protocols for opting-out.