



Oradell Public School District

Our children, our hope, our future

September 29, 2021

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 latest New Jersey State curriculum initiative 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

Freckleface Strawberry: Best Friends Forever by Julianne Moore

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 Mother's 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.

Sincerely,

Megan N. Bozios

Superintendent