

Dear Elementary Families,

As we head into the springtime, we would like to update all families on the work that we continue to do around the elementary goal that **all students (PreK-5) will engage in multiple culturally responsive learning opportunities throughout the school year.**



The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) defines "culturally responsive" as utilizing teaching that considers "the multifaceted identities of your students and the need to provide windows (I see into the lives of others), mirrors (I see myself reflected) and doors (I can access new experiences) for all students" (MA Acceleration Framework). DESE has identified that, "*An effective history and social science education incorporates diverse perspectives and acknowledges that perceptions of events are affected by race, ethnicity, culture, religion, education, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and personal experience*" (Massachusetts History and Social Science Framework).

Over the course of the school year, we have chosen themes that include a variety of cultural identities, gender identities, family structures, languages, beliefs, interests, and abilities. We have selected culturally accurate and affirming texts that equitably represent diverse groups and do not perpetuate stereotypes or bias.

During the week before April Break, all of our students (PreK-5) will engage in a read aloud around the topics of gender expression, gender stereotypes or gender identity. The texts listed below have been carefully selected to provide students with an experience of either windows (looking into someone else's experience) or mirrors (seeing your own experience reflected).

Preschool & Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What Riley Wore</i>• <i>Teddy's Favorite Toy</i>
Grade 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Lucia the Luchadora</i>• <i>Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress</i>
Grade 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Julian is a Mermaid</i>• <i>Ho'onani: Hula Warrior</i>
Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>When Aidan Became a Brother</i>• <i>Calvin</i>
Grade 4 & 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Born Ready: The True Story of a Boy Named Penelope</i>• <i>Call Me Max</i>

As we move forward with care and consideration around these complex topics, please know that our elementary teachers recently participated in training through the *Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students*, a joint initiative between the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the MA Commission on LGBTQ Youth. In addition, we would like to provide you with the following resources to support conversations at home.

-  [Common Understandings for March Culturally Responsive Read Alouds](#)
-  [Gender Spectrum- Talking to Young Children About Gender.pdf](#)

As we continue to engage in this work, we are keeping in mind the lenses of **affirmation** (to feel seen and valued; to feel that you matter) and **awareness** (to become aware of our own environment, including people, surroundings and conditions). This work supports one of the goals of the District's Strategic Plan, **By June 2023, Provide professional learning for all educators to use instructional techniques that support student learning for all learners in an inclusive, emotionally supportive and culturally responsive way. (Strategic Plan 2018-2023)**

If you have any questions, please reach out to your building principal.