

From: Michael Estok on behalf of Michael Estok <michael [REDACTED]>
To: Tricia Barry
Subject: Re: a couple of things...
Date: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 8:55:58 AM

Thanks for your detailed response. All of that sounds fine; I was just wondering what was discussed so I could follow up as necessary with Amy. It is a non-issue with her anyway as both of our kids dislike Dr. Seuss's books "on the merits".

On a somewhat related note, I have heard noises about student "walk-outs" and the like about gun control, etc. I assume that would not apply to elementary school grades, but if it potentially does, would you be agreeable to sending out advance notice of it to parents so that we aren't blindsided by it? Much appreciated!
Michael

On Mon, Feb 26, 2018 at 5:22 PM, Tricia Barry <tbarry@pps.net <<mailto:tbarry@pps.net>> > wrote:

Hi Michael ~ By 'many conversations' I meant is that this is a topic that is being written about extensively lately and that the media, parents, teachers and also students are talking about it and trying to determine if Read Across America needs to be detached from Dr. Seuss (it's always been celebrated around Dr. Seuss' birthday).

Obviously, this looks different if we're talking about a kindergarten perspective vs. a middle school perspective. But interestingly, the reason the issue was brought up today was because a 2nd grader with a kindergarten sibling said the kindergarteners aren't celebrating Dr. Seuss because of these racial images. Some in our class were wondering if and why we still were. I was not aware of the kindergarten decision around this and don't know much about their decision other than what the student brought up.

With the class, I did not go into specifics about the images - only that, as this student pointed out, many believe the images are unfair to the groups they portrayed. As we've talked about race and equity in class this year, we've learned about many different people who went through transformations in their own lives and perspectives. This has also related to racial language that was once acceptable/normalized and now is not (such as indians vs. native americans). It was from this point of view - that as people learn and are able to understand different perspectives they can progress - that we were having a conversation.

It does seem early to talk about these big ideas - especially since I never did as a kid. While sometimes I have an specific lesson in mind, other times these conversations happen naturally as someone wonders something aloud in the group. That's kind of what happened today. If you're interested in looking at the Social Justice standards that our school is using, there is a link on my website under 'Links for Parents' and then 'Teaching Tolerance'. I think these offer a clear and age appropriate way to talk about these complicated issues.

Thanks for your wondering and let me know if you have any other questions. ~ Tricia

From: Michael Estok <michael [REDACTED]> <[mailto:michael \[REDACTED\]](mailto:michael [REDACTED])>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2018 3:55:17 PM
To: Tricia Barry
Subject: Re: a couple of things...

Thanks Ms. Barry. Quick question: when you say that there are many conversations about whether to celebrate Dr. Seuss, do you mean conversations among teachers/parents, or do you mean conversations with the schoolkids? If the latter, it seems the kids are a little young for that conversation.

Best,
Michael

On Mon, Feb 26, 2018 at 3:43 PM, Tricia Barry <tbarry@pps.net <mailto:tbarry@pps.net>>
<mailto:tbarry@pps.net >> wrote:

Hello everybody ~ I just wanted to mention a couple of things about our week

Our spirit week is a bit different than the one sent out by the school last week.

Tuesday - hats

Wednesday - wacky day

Thursday - Pj day

Friday - Color day

Since we are going to the Hollywood Senior Center on Friday, I thought it best to switch our pajama day to Thursday. I told the kids they may bring 1 stuffed animal. That means that Friday will be our Color Day. We have not yet chosen a color and may just make it a rainbow day.

There are many conversations happening about Dr. Seuss and whether or not we should be celebrating him. Though his children's books teach inclusion, standing up for others, caring for the earth and being proud of who you are - some of his earlier comics also show what many consider hurtful racial stereotypes. For the moment, I'm choosing to focus on Dr. Seuss' own story of growth, just as we continue to grow and learn about others' perspectives and our own place in this world. I find this a teachable moment for kids. How do we grow from these experiences? How did Dr. Seuss grow from his experiences? It's interesting to think about the way we judge people in the past based on what we now know/understand.

All of that said, I let the kids know that if they choose not to read a Dr. Seuss book on Friday, they may bring another simple picture book. No matter the book they choose to bring, please put their name in the book(s). Also, it might be a good idea to send books in waterproof bag for our walk. I appreciate if you are able to send an extra book or two for those who may not have one.

Ok! Thanks so much and please let me know if you have any questions or would like to further the conversation. I value your kids' and your perspectives and points of view. ~Tricia