

Celebrating Diversity Throughout the Year Elementary Classroom Community

“Books can make a difference in dispelling prejudice and building community: not with role models and recipes, not with noble messages, but with stories that make us imagine the lives of others.” ~Hazel Rochman, *Against Borders: Promoting Books for a Multicultural World*

About Equity & Diversity within the Classroom Community: We believe that the inclusion of multiple voices is multi-pronged. As we revise Shared Literacy, we seek to include titles within each unit that represent the myriad of voices that make up our global society. In addition, we believe that we can also celebrate diversity through the nationally designated months to shine a spotlight on the contributions that have often been left out.

As an educational institution, we value curiosity around cultures, celebrations, and traditions that make up the complexity of our global society. As a public education institution, we are mindful that we want learners to be well-rounded and aware of the complexity of our global society. Because of this, the equity team has designed the following principles to guide decision-making around activities within the learning environment and school community. We are also mindful that the celebration of any one tradition should not outweigh the traditions and celebrations of others. We want every person in the organization to feel welcomed, seen, and safe at school. All belong here; when we embrace the diversity of our community, we add to the collective experience, thus creating joyful learning opportunities for all.

In District 129, we are guided by the following principles when deciding on activities:

- We believe that all learners have the right to and deserve to be included, accepted, and to contribute unique perspectives and experiences.
- We value the creation of a school community where each individual is accepted and embraced for who and what they bring to the learning space.
- We believe that a sense of belonging involves the acceptance, care for the needs, and growth of all learners.
- We believe that every individual is shaped and influenced by multiple factors that add to an educational community's rich tapestry.

“Let's invite one another in. Maybe then we can begin to fear less, to make fewer wrong assumptions, to let go of the biases and stereotypes that unnecessarily divide us.”

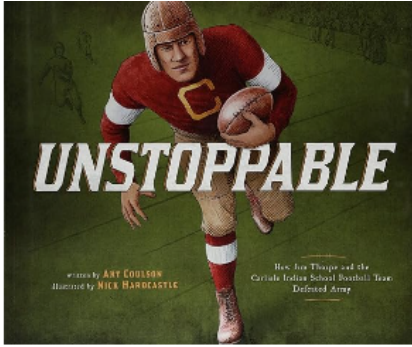
~Michelle Obama, *Becoming*

“In diversity there is beauty and there is strength.” ~Maya Angelou

Native American Heritage Month - November

[Unstoppable](#)

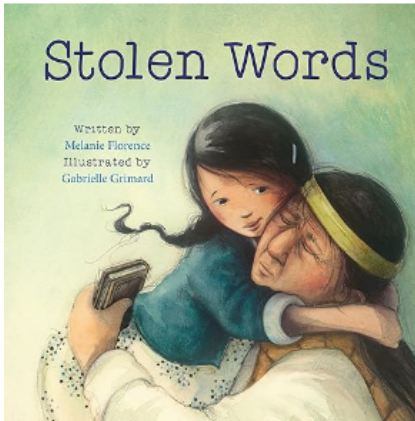
By Art Coulson
978-1543504132



In the autumn of 1912, the football team from Carlisle Indian Industrial School took the field at the U.S. Military Academy, home to the bigger, stronger, and better-equipped West Points Cadets. Sportswriters billed the game as a sort of rematch, pitting against each other the descendants of U.S. soldiers and American Indians who fought on the battlefield only 20 years earlier. But for lightning-fast Jim Thorpe and the other Carlisle players, that day's game was about skill, strategy, and determination. Known for unusual formations and innovative plays, the Carlisle squad was out to prove just one thing -- that it was the best football team in all the land.

[Stolen Words](#)

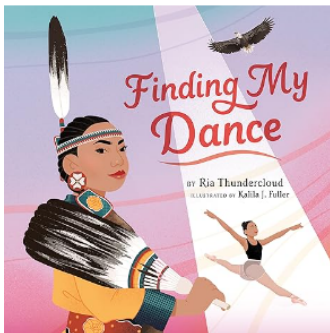
By Melanie Florence
978-1772600377



The story of the beautiful relationship between a little girl and her grandfather. When she asks her grandfather how to say something in his language – Cree – he admits that his language was stolen from him when he was a boy. The little girl then sets out to help her grandfather find his language again. This sensitive and warmly illustrated picture book explores the intergenerational impact of the residential school system that separated young Indigenous children from their families. The story recognizes the pain of those whose culture and language were taken from them, how that pain is passed down, and how healing can also be shared.

[Finding My Dance](#)

By Ria Thundercloud
978-0593093894



In her debut picture book, professional Indigenous dancer Ria Thundercloud tells the true story of her path to dance and how it helped her take pride in her Native American heritage.

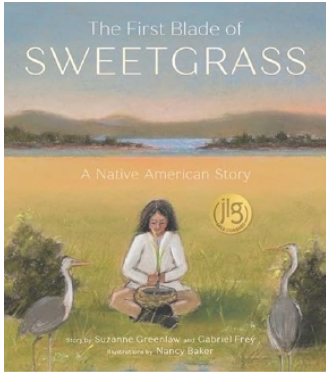
At four years old, Ria Thundercloud was brought into the powwow circle, ready to dance in the special jingle dress her mother made for her. As she grew up, she danced with her brothers all over Indian country. Then Ria learned more styles--tap, jazz, ballet--but still loved the expressiveness of Indigenous dance. And despite feeling different as one of the only Native American kids in her school, she always knew she could turn to dance to cheer herself up.

Follow along as Ria shares her dance journey--from dreaming of her future to performing as a professional--accompanied by striking illustrations that depict it while bringing her graceful movements to life.

[First Blade of Sweetgrass](#)

By Suzanne Greenlaw
978-0884487609

In this Own Voices Native American picture book story, a modern Wabanaki girl is excited to accompany her grandmother for the first time to harvest sweetgrass for basket making. Musquon must overcome her impatience while learning to distinguish sweetgrass from other salt marsh grasses, but slowly the spirit and peace of her surroundings speak to her, and she gathers sweetgrass as her ancestors have done for centuries, leaving the first blade she sees to grow for future generations. This sweet, authentic story from a Maliseet



mother and her Passamaquoddy husband includes backmatter about traditional basket making and a Wabanaki glossary. color throughout