

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

Black History Month - February

[Fancy Party Gowns: The Story of Fashion Designer Ann Cole Lowe](#)

By Deborah Blumenthal
978-1499802399



As soon as Ann Cole Lowe could walk, her momma and grandma taught her to sew. She worked near her momma in their Alabama family shop in the early 1900s, making glorious dresses for women who went to fancy parties. When Ann was 16, her momma died, and Ann continued sewing dresses. It wasn't easy, especially when she went to design school and had to learn alone, segregated from the rest of the class. But the work she did set her spirit soaring, as evidenced in the clothes she made, including Jackie Kennedy's wedding dress and Olivia de Havilland's dress at the Oscars when she won for Best Actress in *To Each His Own*. Rarely credited, Ann Cole Lowe became "society's best kept secret." This beautiful picture book shines the spotlight on a little-known visionary who persevered in times of hardship, always doing what she was passionate about: making elegant gowns for the women who loved to wear them.

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