

Communication PRinciples for Principals

FEBRUARY 2010

READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY



IDEA

On the day of your school's event, invite the local public affairs office to cover the activities for the installation newspaper.

Building a Nation of Readers

Observing Read Across America at Your School!

The National Education Association (NEA) annually sponsors Read Across America. This observance is a reading motivation and awareness program that calls for every child in every community to celebrate reading on March 2, the birthday of beloved children's author Dr. Seuss. Now in its 13th year, Read Across America is an important factor in student achievement and creating lifelong successful readers. The observance has grown over the years and at the national level, the NEA sponsors and spearheads the program with support from national nonprofit and association partners. Locally, everyone—from schools to libraries to community centers to churches to hospitals to bookstores—is invited to host local events to celebrate and promote children's reading. If you choose to participate, how can you help make your school the hub of activities in your community for this observance? Read on to get tips and helpful advice for building your Reading Community!

- » Make sure your staff, students, parents, and community know that Read Across America is important to you and why it is important! Your support and emphasis of this programs builds motivation and energy among your staff and students and encourages participation by parents and other members of your community!
- » Look at your school's calendar and choose a date to celebrate. The official day is March 2. If this conflicts with another event, feel free to pick a different day. Some schools celebrate the week before or after. Check your school calendar as early as possible to avoid any last minute problems.
- » Check the NEA's website - <http://www.nea.org/grants/13023.htm> - for ideas on activities, obtaining parent and community support, and downloading event materials.
- » Read the copyright and licensing agreements the NEA has posted on their Read Across America website (<http://www.nea.org/grants/13150.htm>). It's important to honor agreements with Dr. Seuss Enterprises in order to maintain our special relationship.
- » Consult with your school information specialist. It's likely that he or she is already familiar with Read Across America and may have ideas to offer. Reserve books in advance—there may be a run on Dr. Seuss titles!



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- » Ask other teachers if they are making plans. Consider coordinating your efforts for a school-wide event.
- » *Invite guest readers* to come to your class on March 2 and read to your students. By far, this is the most popular activity. There is something powerful about a policeman, firefighter, mayor, radio personality, pastor, high school quarterback, or grandmother sharing their love for reading. Be sure and ask your guests to talk about why reading is important in their lives, and about their favorite books when they were kids. Afterwards, have your students write thank-you notes.
- » *Make arrangements for a birthday cake.* You might want to have it decorated with “Happy Birthday Dr. Seuss.” Ask if any parents are enthusiastic bakers. Easy alternatives are cupcakes or cookies. Add fruit punch or juice for a beverage.
- » *Get some hats!* Everyone wants the famous Cat in the Hat hat, available at discount from the *NEA Cat-alog*, or make your own from red and white construction paper. A 39 oz. coffee can has a good diameter for the crown, and you can trace a large dinner plate for the brim. This makes a fun class project.
- » Reproduce *Certificates of Participation and Appreciation*. Children love receiving tangible acknowledgement of their efforts, and your adult helpers will appreciate being thanked. *You can download a pre-designed certificate from the NEA Materials area*, plus other fun things.
- » *Send information home to parents*, along with parent reading tips. Some parents may offer to help, and a few may volunteer to be guest readers.
- » Let the world know about your plans by taking the NEA’s Pledge to Participate.

Make sure your staff, students, parents, and community know that Read Across America is important to you and why it is important!

TIPS



GET PUBLICITY SUPPORT FOR YOUR EVENT!

- » Publish information about the observance and events at your school in school and parent newsletters and on your school’s website
- » Work with your installation public affairs office to publish information about Read Across America celebrations and events upcoming at your school.
- » On the day of your school’s event, invite the local public affairs office to cover the activities for the installation newspaper.
- » Work with your District Superintendent’s Public Affairs Office and your Area Director’s Public Affairs Office if you want to invite local news media coverage. If you’ve got a particularly visual appealing celebration, you might want to get AFN coverage if possible.
- » Get key military and civilian leaders in your community involved and invite them to be guest readers!
- » Keep track of your publicity efforts and coverage and send the results to your District Superintendent’s Office so your school’s participation can be provided to DoDEA Headquarters Communications Office.