

# Dr. Seuss's Birthday Celebration

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*Lincolnshire Elementary School  
Hagerstown, Maryland*

*The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.*

—Dr. Seuss, *I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!* (1978)

To inspire this love of reading, Lincolnshire Elementary celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday with a schoolwide reading party. Fifty-two guest readers from the community were invited to come in and read their favorite books to classes. The celebration continued into the evening, when families also joined in the fun.

As a Title I school, Lincolnshire recognizes that continued and sustained involvement by family and community members is vital to the success of students. The Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) got the idea for this practice from a discontinued National Education Association event called "Read Across America Day." The activity was coordinated by the school's two student achievement specialists. It cost only \$200, which came from school funds.

The students listened to a variety of genres, including poems, plays, short stories, and fables read by their guests. Following the readings, the students discussed the pieces. The event continued with an evening celebration. More than 250 students and family members listened to a former member of the Pittsburgh Steelers football team read Dr. Seuss's *Hop on Pop*. Each child attending received a free book to take home. In conjunction with this activity, each grade level read a Dr. Seuss book, accompanied by a lesson plan of related activities and ideas.

The school publicized Dr. Seuss's Birthday Celebration through fliers, phone calls, and personal contact with families. Staff mailed invitations to potential guest readers in the community. In the classroom, Lincolnshire made announcements about the event for over a week on the televised morning announcements. One parent jokingly complained, "My child has bugged me for three days straight about making sure that we attend this evening!"

The school benefited from this practice in many ways. The guest reader program led to greater participation in the school, as these new faces laid the groundwork for additional volunteer activities. Students appreciated the books they received, and, by celebrating a beloved literary figure, the school showed students the importance of and fun that can be had with reading.

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