

THE RIDGE SCHOOL
RIDGEWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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February 14, 2017

Dear Ridge Students and Parents:

We recently passed the halfway point in our school year and I am pleased to report that we have continued to work on being a kind, mindful community of learners and friends. This month we are reading two special books: *Nerdy Birdy* is our read aloud of the month about a little bird who stands out because he is different. Similarly, *Oggie Cooder*, the main character in our One School One Book, also stands out. He is unique and happy. It's not always easy to be different. Sometimes children will tease others who are different because the difference makes them feel uncomfortable. I applaud *Nerdy Birdy* and *Oggie Cooder* and anyone who embraces who they are! I would love to think all Ridge students are being kind, compassionate, and inclusive towards every student in our school.

Speaking of being kind and inclusive, the annual Lip Sync night is coming up on March 10 and is a perfect opportunity to practice kindness and inclusion. Lip Sync is meant to be a fun event for all children who want to participate, but sadly there have been many situations in the past when children have had hurt feelings and felt left out. I believe if, as a community, we approach Lip Sync with an attitude of kindness and inclusion it can truly be a fun event for all. If there is a question about whether or not to invite or include another student, I hope the answer will be, "Yes! Include him/her!"

Parents, please remember that this is an event for children. As much as possible, I ask that you step back and let students be in charge. Let them choreograph and run the group. It may not be perfect but that's okay.

I'd like you to think beyond Lip Sync night, too. There are opportunities every single day at Ridge School for us to reach out and extend friendship and kindness to others. We need to think about it and act purposely.

Thank you for helping me make Ridge School an inclusive place to learn and play.

With kindness,

Jean Schoenlank
Principal