Dear NEA Members:

For this 20th year of Read Across America we are focusing on the diversity of authors, the diversity of stories, and the diversity of the characters in a book. We connect with our students when they can see their lives reflected in the stories that they love. With NEA's Read Across America 2017-18 resources, we invite you to celebrate and grow your community of diverse readers.

This year, we’re building on the theme of “a nation of diverse readers,” and it’s reflected in the variety of books we’ve chosen. All of the suggested activities and outreach ideas are designed to drive home this message: It is the diversity of America’s people, ideas, and perspectives that make our nation both strong and exceptional.

The books reflect a diversity of culture, history, and experiences through the characters they portray, as well as the authors and illustrators who created them. Use the stories and the lives they depict to celebrate your diverse community of readers and embark on exciting reading and learning adventures with your students. These engaging titles can help teach your community to appreciate and benefit from the experiences of others. The books also cultivate a lifelong love of learning while encouraging readers to ask questions, seek out new knowledge, and discover what they’re passionate about.

When you cultivate a respect for diversity, you create a welcoming environment. Read Across America can promote the message every day that there is room in our community for ALL readers. The world is filled with many different kinds of people. Getting to know them is interesting, exciting, and fun. Bring all of these people into your classrooms and communities through the magic and wonder of books.

Lily Eskelsen García
President
National Education Association