



TO: Local Association Leaders and Staff

FROM: Kevin Pearson, GAE RAA Contact

RE: Changes to the Read Across America Program

This memo provides you with an update on changes to the Read Across America program that take effect for the 2019-2020 school year.

Key Things for Local Leaders and Staff to Know

- Effective August 31, 2019, NEA no longer has a licensing agreement with Dr. Seuss Enterprises. As a result, NEA Affiliates and Members may no longer use the old RAA logo with the Cat in the Hat leaning over U.S. map and the official mascot suits provided by Costume Specialties may no longer be used.
- A new Read Across America logo has been developed and is now available at: readacrossamerica.org. Web sites, social media, and other digital and print communications should be updated with the new logo.
- Focus of the program is on diverse books, and content will be driven by the Read Across America (print) Activity Calendar and digital version found at readacrossamerica.org (just launched)
- Affiliates and Members may still conduct Seuss-themed events, so long as they meet the above restrictions. Seuss-related materials purchased through retailers may still be used at events.
- Local leaders should promote and encourage Local leaders, staff, and Members to use the RAA Activity Calendar as their guide in planning RAA events. A copy of the print 2019-2020 calendar may be ordered at: readacrossamerica.org. Also on the new web site, you'll find a logo standards and usage guide.

Background and Overview

Since 1998, NEA's Read Across America program has generated enthusiasm for reading nationwide, raised public awareness for children's literacy, and supported educators, parents, and others in their ongoing efforts to motivate students to read. Since 2003, Read Across America has been the nation's largest reading event, with 45 million participants each year, due largely in part from member-driven events and activities on March 2nd, which is "NEA's Read Across America Day."

As NEA's Read Across America program has evolved since then, **NEA has taken steps to appeal to a more diverse student population and all grade levels.** Our student population

continues to grow and is more diverse. By next year, the time that the 2020 census is conducted, more than half of the nation's children are expected to be part of a minority race or ethnic group.

Our emphasis is now on books that students can see themselves reflected in, as well as books that allow readers to see a world or character that might be different than them.

NEA has expanded its work to "**Celebrate a Nation of Diverse Readers**" by providing members with a print and digital Read Across America resource calendar and poster, featuring 36 books to help guide them in planning Read Across America year-round events and activities. You can find out more at readacrossamerica.org.

To fully realize our goal of a nation of diverse readers, NEA has **re-branded** Read Across America to appeal to a wider audience (all grade levels, ages, and background) and, as a result, a **new logo and branded materials** have been implemented. The program has been re-branded with new materials available throughout the 2019-2020 school year, providing a more accurate brand identity for Read Across America, one that is independent of one particular book, publisher, or character.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does this mean we can no longer use Dr. Seuss related materials for our Read Across America events and activities?

Logo: NEA's licensing agreement with Dr. Seuss Enterprises ended August 31, 2019. As a result, NEA, NEA Affiliates, and NEA Members may no longer use the Cat in the Hat image in the jointly-owned Read Across America (RAA) logo (Cat in the Hat leaning over U.S. map.) The new logo, that NEA fully owns, is available at: readacrossmamerica.org.



Old Read Across America logo with the Cat in the Hat leaning over U.S. map expired on August 31, 2019 and **should no longer be used** by Members and Association staff and/or representatives.



New Read Across America logo, effective August 31, 2019. All uses of **the old RAA logo should be replaced with the new logo** or a variation. See logo standards and guidelines document for more information. (Logo files available at readacrossamerica.org)

Books: Members may still use Seuss books and decorations purchased in a store or online; However, we encourage them to take a look at the resource calendar and try something new, especially for older students.

Giveaways: All newly-branded Read Across America bookmarks, stickers, and other giveaways will be available online to download or purchase from the Read Across America store by October 2019. All items branded with the old RAA logo should not be used.

Decorations: Generally, home-made types of decorations are still allowed; however, the use of Seuss intellectual property (e.g. images copied from books and movies) cannot be used w/o prior approval from Seuss.

Cat in the Hat “mascot”: NEA and several state affiliates may no longer use either of the two “official” mascot costumes—the original gray Cat w/long neck and more recent black and white Cat implemented in 2007 that were purchased through Seuss’ vendor Costume Specialties. Members may still purchase costumes and other Seuss-approved items from retailers, if necessary.



The original gray Cat in the Hat mascot suit circa 1997 may not be used.



The newer Cat in the Hat (black and white cat) circa 2007 may not be used.



Costumes and other Seuss-related materials purchased through licensed vendors is still permitted. Members may purchase costumes and other Seuss-approved items from retailers, if they choose.

Q: Does this affect Read Across America Day on March 2 (which is also Dr. Seuss’s birthday)

NEA, its state and local affiliates, and members nationwide will celebrate Read Across America Day on Monday, March 2, 2020. NEA is also encouraging members to celebrate National Library Month, also in March, and International Literacy Day (September 8) with reading events and activities. The program will place a greater emphasis on year-round resources for Members.

Read Across America offers limitless opportunities for involvement in student reading throughout the year. The year-round program can fit reading fun into your calendar daily, weekly, or monthly and includes big celebrations of reading on March 2 and throughout the year.

Q: Which books will be featured for the 2019-2020 program?

Since 2007, the Read Across America resource calendar has featured hundreds of award-winning, newer children’s books. This year’s calendar and accompanying poster and online curriculum, features 36 recommended books (12 titles for young readers; 12 for middle grade readers; and 12 for teen readers) for year-long reading activities.

An expanded digital resource calendar is available at: readacrossamerica.com. We are asking all NEA members to use the resource calendar as a guide, but that they know best what works in their classrooms and libraries.

While “NEA’s Read Across America Day” often featured Seuss books and characters, the program has, for over 10 years, emphasized the need for diverse books and authors to inspire a growing diverse student population to read. The goal is to provide diverse books, authors, and themes.

The 2019-2020 Read Across America program officially started in August 2019 by featuring the book *All Are Welcome*, by Alexandra Penfold, to help educators start the school year off right by welcoming students and families with books and back to school reading fun!

Q: How do I get copies of the books featured in the RAA resource calendar?

NEA has partnered with First Book’s Marketplace to help NEA members obtain books featured by Read Across America. Visit the NEA page on the First Book Marketplace to find titles featured in the calendar and the poster, as well as other high-quality titles.

First Book makes these titles available at affordable prices to educators serving children in need. Sign up at firstbook.org/register. Several titles featured in the poster, not available from First Book, are available from Scholastic (scholastic.com/teachers/home/)

Q: How is the print RAA activity calendar different from the new digital RAA calendar?

This year, NEA also launched an expanded digital resources calendar, (readacrossamerica.org) making it easy for educators and other children’s literature lovers to find educator-recommended books that “Celebrate a Nation of Diverse Readers.” The digital calendar provides expanded content, such as classroom activities, videos, resources, and ideas based on the 36 books recommended for the 2019-2020 school year. It is available at: readacrossamerica.org. It’s a great resource to share with Members!

Q: Who Participates in Read Across America?

Each year, 45 million people—NEA members, librarians, parents, students, community leaders, politicians, actors, athletes, grandparents—develop Read Across America activities to bring reading excitement to children of all ages.

Q: I’ve never organized a Read Across America activity. Where do I start?

Use the book and activity suggestions in the RAA resource calendar and the resources at readacrossamerica.org to bring Read Across America to your community. Contact your local school, local affiliate, library, or bookstore about planning or participating in an event.

The October issue of *NEA Today* will also feature a member’s guide to the re-branded Read Across America.

Q: Where Do I Get Read Across America items with the new logo and additional copies of the print calendar?

The 2019-20 Read Across America Resource Calendar is a benefit of NEA membership. NEA members may order up to 5 print calendars each online while supplies last by visiting the Read Across America Online Store at <http://www.raastore.com/site/> (Postage and shipping not included.)

Local Affiliates may also order larger quantities by e-mailing Steven Grant at sgrant@nea.org with the quantity, date needed, and shipping address.

Also in the Read Across America store, starting in October, you'll find new logo items and additional low-cost items to use in your classroom, library or wherever you are reading.

Q: What is the role of the Read Across America "Advisory Committee?"

Since the program began in 1998, the Read Across America Advisory Committee has served as a committee of NEA members serving on the NEA Board. They review and provide feedback on member-focused content (such as the resource calendar, digital calendar, and web site) and the Association's work to "Celebrate a Nation of Diverse Readers" by highlighting diverse authors and books for an increasingly diverse student population across America.

Q: Where do I go for more information or if I have questions?

Please feel free to contact Steven Grant, sgrant@nea.org, 202-822-7272, associate director of NEA Communications.

Q: Where do I get the logo files?

The approved logo files will be uploaded to readacrossamerica.org and will be available to all NEA members and Affiliates.

State Communication Staff may access all of the logo files online at Creative Companion. [<http://www.creativecompanion.com/nea>]

RAA logo contacts are: Steven Grant, sgrant@nea.org, 202-822-7272 or Ashley Powell, apowell@nea.org, 202-822-7586. Feel free to contact them if you have any questions.

For more information:

Please feel free to contact Steven Grant, sgrant@nea.org, 202-822-7272, associate director of NEA Communications.

