

Sugar Creek's new 'One Book' title is "The Lemonade War"

By Jenny Overman

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FORT MILL — For weeks, the hallways and classrooms of Sugar Creek Elementary School have been filled with rumors about a secret that Media Specialist Kimberly Nees has been keeping from students.

On Monday, she gathered the students in the cafeteria to reveal the secret at last – which book she had chosen for the school to read during the One School, One Book program.

The students patted their knees, making an ad hoc drumroll, as Nees presented the book that students, parents, faculty and staff would be reading for the next three weeks, "The Lemonade War," by Jacqueline Davies.

On stage, two lemonade stands were set up. Several teachers and Principal Scott Frattaroli, with help from kindergartner Emmy Fuller, took the stage dressed as characters from the book and performed a short skit to show kids what "The Lemonade War" is all about. In the book, a brother and sister open competing lemonade stands, inciting a lemonade "war."

The book has a unique marketing and mathematics component to it, including charts and mathematics problems.

The math component was part of what drew her to "The Lemonade War" when she was choosing a book for the One School, One Book program this year, Nees said.

"It was the clincher," she added.

Each book has a schedule on the inside cover with a date and a chapter, to help parents, students, faculty and staff keep track of which parts of the book they are to read on what date.

"Everyone will read the same chapter on the same night. The entire school," said Nees.

Reading together is part of the fun," she added.

Each day, Nees will ask students questions about what they read the previous night. Students will be able to submit their answers for the chance to win prizes.

The books for the students and faculty were funded by a Winthrop University NetSCOPE partnership grant. As part of the grant, Nees and other staff members will be collecting data on the impact the One School, One Book program has on at-home reading. They surveyed students and parents before the program began, asking questions about whether they read at home and how they felt about reading. They will repeat that survey again when the group is in the middle of reading "The Lemonade War" and again at the end.

This is the second year Sugar Creek has participated in the One School, One Book program. Last year, they read "The World According to Humphrey," by Betty G. Birney. A grant from the Foundation for Fort Mill Schools allowed

Sugar Creek to start the program last year by funding a membership to the Read to Them foundation, which supplied her with ideas and discounted materials.

Last year's books were donated to a school in Cherokee County, which will participate in the program this year and also take part in the at-home reading survey.

Nees encouraged Sugar Creek students to go home every night and say one thing to their parents.

"Will you read to me? That's what you're going to say to your parents and brothers and sisters every night, right?" she asked students.

Based on last year's response to the program, Nees has every reason to think that this year's One School, One Book will be a success.

"The response from parents was so great. I got notes from parents and they would stop me to talk about the book. And the kids were really talking about it," she said.