



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

One Island, One Book

Something special has been happening in classrooms and homes across Okinawa – a community-wide shared reading event coined “One Island, One Book” (OIOB).

Every elementary school student in grades K-5 received a copy of the book “J.D. and the Great Barber Battle,” written by J. Dillard. Parents were encouraged to read along at home with their child.

“Reading aloud at home is not only a fantastic way to prepare your child to be an effective reader, but it’s also a fun and rewarding family activity,” said Dr. Melissa Hayes, Pacific South District Superintendent. “With this program, we aim to build a community of readers on Okinawa. Imagine everyone – students, parents, teachers, even administrative staff – all diving into the same story together.”

Schools engaged in a variety of fun activities during OIOB, including daily trivia questions about the details of the story, schoolwide assemblies to celebrate the collective reading experience, and even a virtual author visit with J. Dillard.

Amelia Earhart Intermediate School (AEIS) kicked off OIOB with an assembly where they shared the title of the book with students – with some staff donning wigs and fun hairstyles to pique student interest and spark conversations around what the book might be about. In keeping with the plot of the story, a barber attended and spoke with students about his career and answer student questions.

To close out its OIOB activities, AEIS invited local barbers Mr. Porter, Mr. G, and Mr. Rick to cut the hair of three students who received parent permission, creating its very own “barber battle” in the school gymnasium. As Micah, Matthew, and Omar received their new haircuts, their fellow students watched while completing book-themed mental math equations and celebrating reading challenge award winners.

Remote video URL

“Once I started reading it, I knew I was going to love it,” Omar said of the OIOB read while preparing to get his haircut. “What I liked about it was the barber competition. It looked pretty intense, but J.D. won! He had pretty cool hair, too.

“I learned from the book that you can work together, even with the enemy that wants to shut you down,” he continued.

Students shared they looked forward to reading with their parents each night, with many admitting they “broke the rules” to read ahead because they couldn’t handle the suspense of waiting to read what would happen next.

At the end of the assembly, AEIS Principal Dr. Cheri Hayes presented Ms. Connie Thompson, reading teacher, with a school coin for all of her work in organizing the events and activities that made OIOB such a success at their school.

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