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New *Rising Voices* Classroom Library from Scholastic and David C. Banks Celebrates the Stories of Black and Latino Boys

Books and Instructional Materials for Grades K–5 Promote Positive Representation and Broaden the World for All Students Through Literature

New York, NY – October 24, 2019 – Today, Scholastic announced the ***Rising Voices Library***, a new collection of books for K–5 classrooms containing high-interest, authentic texts that celebrate the stories of Black and Latino boys—some of the historically most underrepresented people in children’s literature. The collection was curated with **David C. Banks, President and CEO of the Eagle Academy Foundation and Founding Principal of The Eagle Academy for Young Men**, an all-boys public school educating young men in grades 6–12 in New York City and Newark, New Jersey. The *Rising Voices Library* features nonfiction, biographical, and fiction titles paired with teaching materials designed to help foster rich classroom communities through deep discussions about social justice and identity development, helping students grow as leaders and independent thinkers.

To learn more about the *Rising Voices Library*, visit: <http://www.scholastic.com/RisingVoices>.

Findings from the Scholastic *Kids & Family Reading Report*™ show that only one-third of school-age children say they have a classroom library that has enough of the types of books they’d like to read. The same report shared that about half of kids ages 9–17 and parents overall agree, “I wish there were more books available that include diversity.” The *Rising Voices Library* is designed to provide equitable access to engaging texts that represent the cultures and identities of students. Using *Rising Voices* research-based instructional resources, teachers gain the tools to navigate difficult conversations in the classroom while helping students reflect on their feelings and the crucial historical and social contexts they need to understand the world around them.

“Classroom libraries set the tone for the types of learning experiences and conversations about books students will have throughout the school year, said **Michael Hagen, Chief Academic Officer, Scholastic Education**. “It’s essential that every child’s classroom library contains a wide breadth of stories, characters, and formats so that children see themselves reflected in the books they’re surrounded by and have opportunities to learn from the lives and experiences of others. We’re proud to collaborate with David C. Banks to curate the *Rising Voices Library* and change the scope of education by bringing positive role models into classrooms everywhere.”

“The success of the Eagle Academy Foundation model demonstrates that young men of color thrive in academic environments where their identities are uplifted. When I worked with Scholastic to curate the *Rising Voices Library* collection, I wanted to expand the reach of our educational philosophy to classrooms across America,” said **David C. Banks, President and CEO of the Eagle Academy Foundation**. “Positioning young men of color to succeed means teaching them that they can dream as big as the protagonists of their favorite novels. We owe it to all students to provide them with literature that can elevate their confidence, love of reading, and curiosity of the world.”

The complete *Rising Voices Library* for grades K–5 features:

- **Three hundred total books**, including two copies of 25 different titles per grade level, in addition to storage bins and book stickers for organization. All books are centered on the ***Rising Voices Framework***, which encompasses five key themes: Family, Culture, and Community; Someone Like Me/Memorable Characters; Heroes and Role Models; Strong and Resilient/Problem Solvers; and Thinking Beyond Today.
- **Teacher’s Guides**, which outline instructional support for educators of each grade level with implementation strategies for integrating the texts into book clubs, whole class, small group, and independent reading. The guide contains suggestions for supporting English learners and engaging discussion prompts, in addition to guides for building social-emotional awareness utilizing the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework, and ideas for conferring and connecting with families.
- **Teaching Cards** paired with each anchor text, including suggestions for exploring the text as an interactive read-aloud, building vocabulary, practicing reading strategies, and extending learning through writing, discussion, and art.

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