Dear Parent/Guardian:

Today in your child's classroom, I read the book, **René Has Two Last Names** by René Colato Laínez. This book promotes assets 34-Cultural Competence and 41-Positive Cultural Identity. The author tells the story of René, who moves from El Salvador to the United States. René has two last names which represent his mother and father's families. His classmates make fun of him for having such a long name. René is proud of his names and intentionally uses his family tree homework assignment to stand up to the *bucket dipping* and explain the significance of his family names.

We discussed how each of us has a personal identify filled with feelings, beliefs, and cultural traditions and customs. There are many cultures represented in our community. When we learn about other cultures, it promotes understanding of others. When we explain our culture to others, it also promotes understanding of differences. So like René, we need to learn about others, as a way to build empathy and tolerance.

We hope you will talk with your child tonight about your cultural heritage:

- Discuss with your child where his/her name originated from. Does it have a meaning? Does your child have a second last name?
- Share or explore the origin of your family's last names with your child.
- Ask your child if someone has made fun of his/her name or cultural traditions? If so, explore ways to handle such situations.
- Look at family pictures with your child while discussing your family's heritage or cultural background.
- Help your child make a family tree.
- Enjoy eating foods from other countries. Learn about the country-its location, traditions, and customs. (Pupusas and horchata were mentioned in the book. Eating Salvadorian food from a local restaurant might be a good place to start.)

By teaching our children the importance of accepting others and sharing our cultural heritage, we create a stronger community where all students feel safe and know that they belong.

Sincerely,