

“That’s ~~Not~~ Fair!”

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Background

Mathematics in children's picture books is rare. When there is math involved in a picture book, the numbers are used in ways that students already see math as (money, shapes, etc...) and often adhere to standards. Students don't have a chance to see all the beautiful and complex ways math is integrated in every part of our lives- especially as related to social justice issues. What if we combined mathematics and social justice in a way that empowered students to use mathematics as a tool to investigate real world problems?

Synopsis

The mayor of Lavender Town wants to make steps towards a healthier town so she decides to ban "cookies, cupcakes, and chips" from the school. The students are outraged, not because of the soon to be lack of junk food at their school, but rather because healthier foods are not accessible in Lavender Town to begin with. Their teacher suggests they investigate the problem further using mathematics. At first, they are stumped but then...

It was the first day back from Spring Break at Lavender Elementary and 2nd graders in Miss Luna's class were working on three digit addition.

“Miss Luna, Why do we have to work on adding three digit numbers.”

“I'm SO bored.”

“When are we ever going to do this in ...”

All of a sudden the intercom started talking.

This is a message from the mayor: Lavender Elementary is heading towards a healthier school and therefore, we are banning cupcakes, cookies, and chips for the rest of the year from our school. The only days these items are allowed are on Birthdays and the Last Day of School. Students will be encouraged to bring rainbow colored fruits and veggies instead.

The class looked around at each other and were confused.

“Do Taki’s count as chips?” “Well I’ll just eat extra at home.” “What about crackers?”

Miss Luna tried getting the class to get back to their addition worksheets.

Her class revolted, “That’s not fair!”

“What’s not fair about it?”

“Cupcakes taste so good!”

“Chips help me when I am hungry.”

While everyone was chattering, Crystal quietly raised her hand.

“Miss Luna... the closest grocery store in Lavender Town is 20 miles away. Sometimes we can't get to the grocery shop when it snows. But the closest gas station is a 5 minute walk from school which is where we get all our cupcakes, cookies, and chips. I don't think this is fair because we can't drive.”

“Sometimes our parents are working and what if we need snacks to eat. That's not fair.” Brandon said.

Her students brought up good questions especially about what fairness meant.

“Hmm...well what is a way we can be fair here and build a healthier school?”

What if we investigated this problem using math, 2nd graders?”

“What?!”

“Math can’t solve problems.”

“Math is just numbers!”

“Yeah we are dealing with real life here!”

“How can you make equations about cupcakes?”

“Well, what do we know about the number 254?”
Miss Luna asked.

“It’s even!”

“It has 2 hundreds, 5 tens, 4 ones!”

“That’s how many students are at our school.”

“So it means 254 students need a healthy
snack....” “And five days a week!”

Second grade brains start turning...

They start drawing....

And measuring...

And planning...

And....

Kara and Nora figured out that it would take five times as long to get to the grocery store....

[blue print and sketch of Kara and Nora's work]

Paige and Sol drew a map to show where a market could go so everyone was equal distance from it...

[blue print and sketch of Paige and Maddy's work]

Crystal and Raj figured out that out of the 554 students, 200 students had parents who were farmers that made deliveries far away...

[blue print and sketch of Crystal and Raj's work]

Michelle and Ari decided to figure out how many healthy snacks would be needed to replace their current chip vending machine....

[blue print and sketch of Michelle & Ari's work]

Kaleb and Eri figured out how they would decide if something counted as healthy according to the rainbow wheel...

[blue print and sketch of Kaleb & Eri's work]

Lindsey and Yolanda figured out what fruits and vegetables grow best in their town so they could have local deliveries.

[blue print and sketch of Lindsey and Joy's work]

Kris and Will figured out why mayor Elizabeth might have made this decision...

[blue print and sketch of Yolanda and Wanda's work]

While they were all working so hard on their ideas. Miss Luna called the mayor and asked him/her if they had a moment to come to their classroom.

The students were still hard at work.
When all of a sudden Mayor Elizabeth showed up
at their classroom....

“I heard you weren’t too happy with the new
rule...”

“I also heard that instead of complaining, you used your math skills to investigate the problem.”

“WE WANT A FRUIT AND VEGGIE MARKET”

they all said.

1 (Every pair shares one sentence about their conclusion from their blue print as a summary)

2 (Every pair shares one sentence about their conclusion from their blue print as a summary)

Mayor Elizabeth smiled.

“Because of your hard work during math the last few days. I will call the county and make a petition....

But you will have to help me.”

Second grade cheered.

All of a sudden, not having cupcakes, cookies, and chips in school didn't seem like a big deal when they could have a different rainbow veggie every day AND they investigated a problem by themselves using mathematics.

[3 months later]

Mayor Elizabeth asks second grade if they'll volunteer and help at the new saturday market because it was their idea...

[last page

Just illustration of farmer's market with kid
volunteers at each booth]

(not part of page numbers for book)