This Is a School

AUTHOR

JOHN SCHU

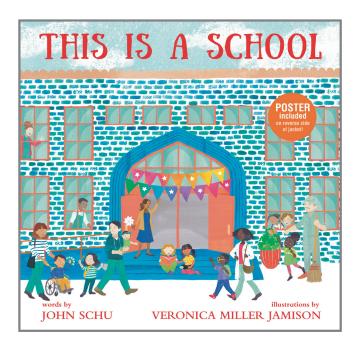
ILLUSTRATOR

VERONICA MILLER JAMISON

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SYNOPSIS

A school isn't just a building; it is all the people who work and learn together. It is a place for discovery and asking questions. A place for sharing, for helping, and for community. It is a place of hope and healing, even when that community can't be together in the same room.

John Schu, a librarian and former Ambassador of School Libraries for Scholastic, crafts a loving letter to schools and the people who make up the communities within them in a picture book debut beautifully illustrated by Veronica Miller Jamison.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Schu is the creator of the popular blog Mr. Schu Reads (mrschureads.blogspot.com) and a part-time lecturer at Rutgers University. He was formerly a classroom teacher and school librarian. He has visited schools all over the world and has met with more than 130,000 students, teachers and administrators as he advocates for the people and things he cares about most: kids, books, schools and the libraries—and librarians—that connect them. John Schu lives in Naperville, Illinois. You can find him at www.JohnSchu.com and on social media @MrSchuReads.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Veronica Miller Jamison is an illustrator and surface pattern designer who was trained as a fashion designer. She has created art and patterns for Hallmark, *Essence* magazine, and Lilly Pulitzer and is the illustrator of *A Computer Called Katherine*. Veronica Miller Jamison lives in Philadelphia.

STUDY NOTES

- What makes a school special?
- Looking at the cover, what do you notice about the school?
- Which character(s) from the book would you like to get to know better? What is it about them that makes you curious?
- How is this school similar to and different from your school?
- What are your favorite things about your school? If you could change one thing about your school, what would you change? Write a persuasive letter to a school leader suggesting one thing you would like to change, and why that

- change would make the school a better place.
- In one scene in the book, a child accidentally breaks a fishbowl. Tell us about a time when you made a choice that you regretted later. What did you learn from that situation?
- 'Some people see what we're good at, and that helps us to know it, too.' What does this sentence from the book mean to you?
- What things make you feel welcomed at school? How do you make others feel welcomed?
- If you started attending a new school, what questions would you want answered before your first day?

ACTIVITIES

- Create a book about your school, with each member of your class given the task of creating a page. Have each student (or pair of students or small group of students) sign up to share something that makes their school special (for example, the cafeteria, gym, library, office, or playground) and use the template to create their page. When the book is complete, add it to your classroom library, school library, or the lobby of your school.
- It takes a lot of people to make a school run smoothly. Write a thank-you letter to someone in the school you appreciate. Place your letter in a decorated envelope and then deliver it to the recipient.
- Brainstorm with your students what their dream school, classroom, library, playground or other school space would look like. Have each student draw their dream space and describe what makes it so wonderful.
- A school or classroom needs many individuals to make it successful. Using corrugated cardboard, cut out pieces that fit together into a large jigsaw puzzle. Give each child a puzzle piece to decorate with objects, words and pictures that show their own uniqueness. Then have your students construct the puzzle and display it in the hallway or on a bulletin board to show how each person is special and brings different qualities to your classroom community.
- The staff and students in the book work hard to make their school beautiful. Can you and your students find examples of this throughout the book? (Hint: pinwheels.) Discuss whether these efforts seem significant and if so, how. Then, using instructions you can find online that work best for your students, make pinwheels to decorate your classroom or school. Or determine other ways the school in *This Is a School* is beautified, and try one of those projects in your school.