

The I AM ME Project

Elevating student voice at
Oliver Ellsworth School in Windsor, CT

Taran Gruber - Principal of Oliver Ellsworth School

Marcia Ferreira - Literacy Coach at Oliver Ellsworth School

Stephen Higgins - former Vice Principal of Oliver Ellsworth School, current
Director of Equity and Inclusion for South Windsor Public Schools



I Am Me Project

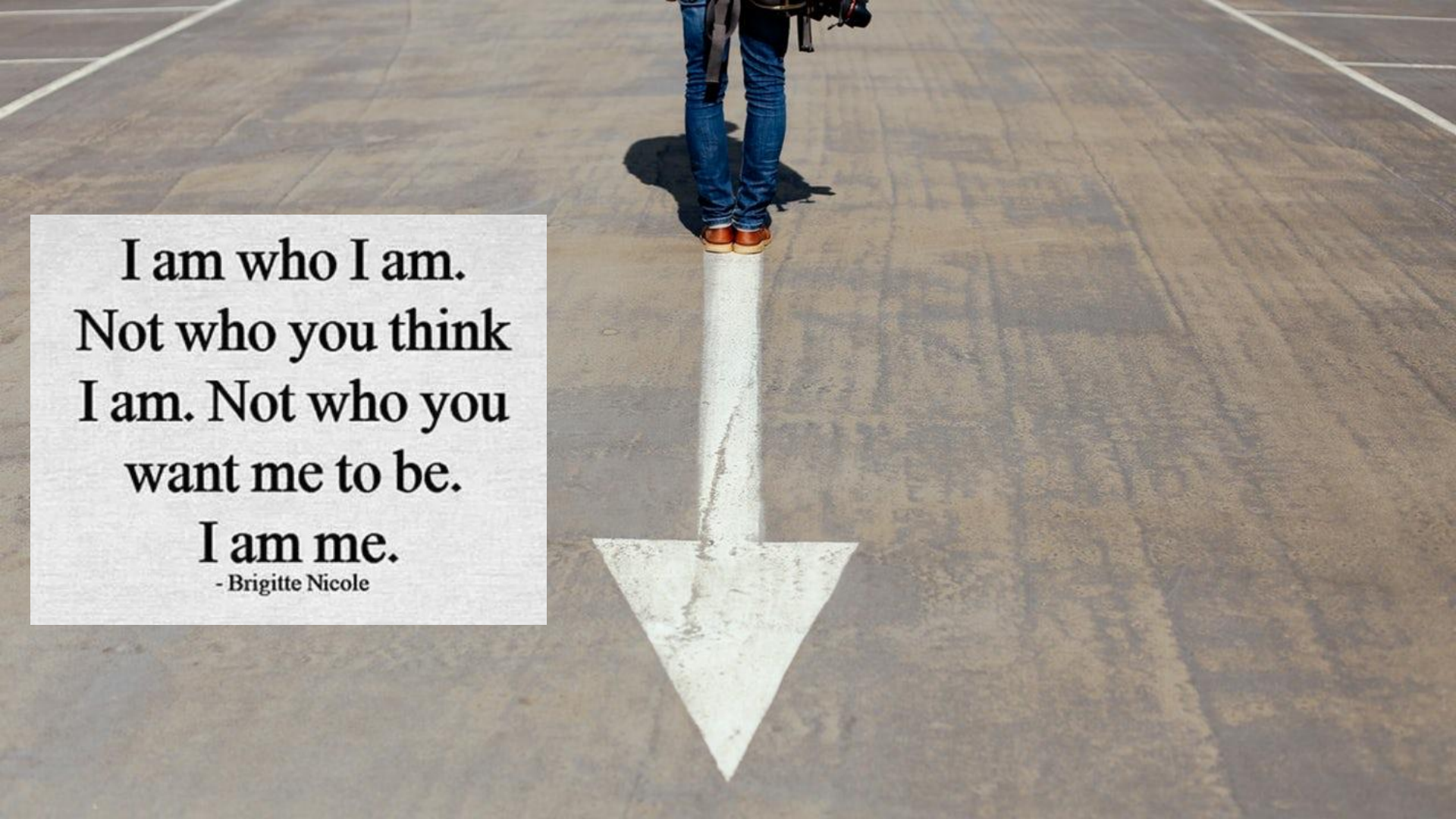
01 INCEPTION OF THE PROJECT
Who we are and the “why” behind the project

02 WRITING OUR STORIES
Parent writing workshops

03 PUBLISHING OUR BOOK
Amazon and beyond

04 SHARING OUR STORIES
Author events, curriculum, classrooms



A person wearing blue jeans and brown shoes stands on a large white arrow painted on asphalt. The arrow points downwards. The person's legs and feet are visible, and they are standing directly on the shaft of the arrow. The background is a vast, flat asphalt surface with some white lines, possibly a parking lot or a road.

**I am who I am.
Not who you think
I am. Not who you
want me to be.**

I am me.

- Brigitte Nicole

Oliver Ellsworth School

Who are we?

- ★ **Oliver Ellsworth School** is a pre-kindergarten through second grade school in Windsor, Connecticut, the state's first settled town.
- ★ Oliver Ellsworth School is rated in the top five percent of most diverse schools in Connecticut.

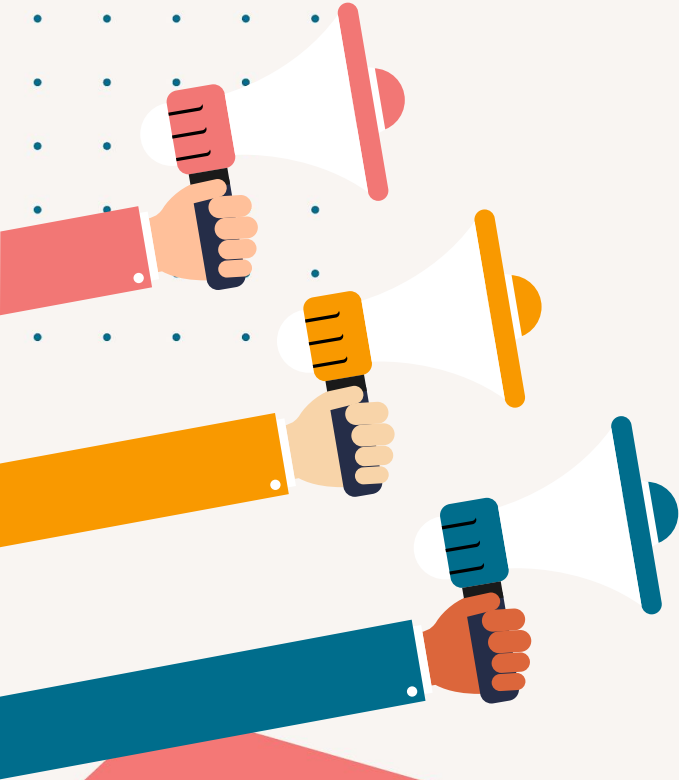
Inception of the Project

Diversity, equity, and **family** and **community** partnerships are the cornerstones of our success. We at Oliver Ellsworth are a family, devoted to “cultivating the genius of every child.”

We are here to ensure that every student has the **knowledge, independence,** and **self-confidence** to **succeed** as a **happy** and **productive member of society.**

We are so proud to share the **multitude** of **perspectives** our **families’ stories** present.

If students at such a young age can publish a book, we know they can grow to be whatever they want to be.



What is the I AM ME Project?

An initiative focused on elevating student voice and provides a space to love and appreciate one another.

- ★ Increase the sense of belonging of students
 - Positive identity
 - Bringing family together
- ★ Increase empathy by exploring similarities and differences
- ★ Builds understanding and increases accommodations





Book Introduction

We want change! We know that each student comes to us with a story and a voice; as educators, we strive to amplify those voices in safe and dynamic spaces. The I AM ME Project gives public schools back to the public, through the medium of family. How do we enhance school climate through the representation of those who have gone silent?

Use this book to supplement curriculum, increase engagement, and encourage dual-capacity thinking. Avoid the pitfall of the one-size-fits-all narrative. Give students the space to express their unique truths, values, and possibilities.

How do we move from institutions of oppression to empowerment? This book closes disparities between a student's actual experience and interpretation of their experience. How do you plan on enhancing school climate through the representation of those who have gone silent? We offer you one town's collection of stories.





02 WRITING OUR STORIES

Parent writing workshops

Parent Writing Workshops

We invited families to attend writing workshops with their child.

I Am Me PROJECT



Join us for the **I AM ME** Project Information Session

Monday, March
6:00 - 6:30

BONUS: Mr. Higgins will be reading a story. All are welcome!

What is it?	Why You Should Come!
<ul style="list-style-type: none">☆ Please join us for a Family Workshop to learn more about this amazing project.☆ Families will be able to write their own stories that will be published.☆ The book could be published and sold online!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">☆ Getting your child's story published will be FREE TO YOU!☆ Your stories have VALUE!☆ The story writing process will be fun for you and your family and our OE staff will be here to help you every step of the way!☆ If your child becomes a published author NOW, there is no telling what they can accomplish in the FUTURE!


Google Meet Link:

The "I AM ME" Project

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Date: Monday March 22nd
Time: 6:00pm - 6:30pm

Zoom Link:
<https://zoom.us/j/97370130371?pwd=UjJlUURvYUdhVzJuSk9FaDZZZFImdz09>



Writing Workshops

Oliver Ellsworth teachers volunteered to run writing workshops with families.

Teachers attended a professional development session prior to the workshop to learn how to walk families through the writing process.



Sign up for a workshop using the **form** in the **chat**!

Tuesday
March 30
○ 5:00

Wednesday
March 31
○ 4:30
○ 6:30



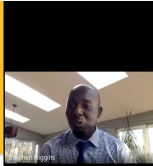
The Writing Process:
A Walkthrough for Families

Writing Workshop

Your stories have value!

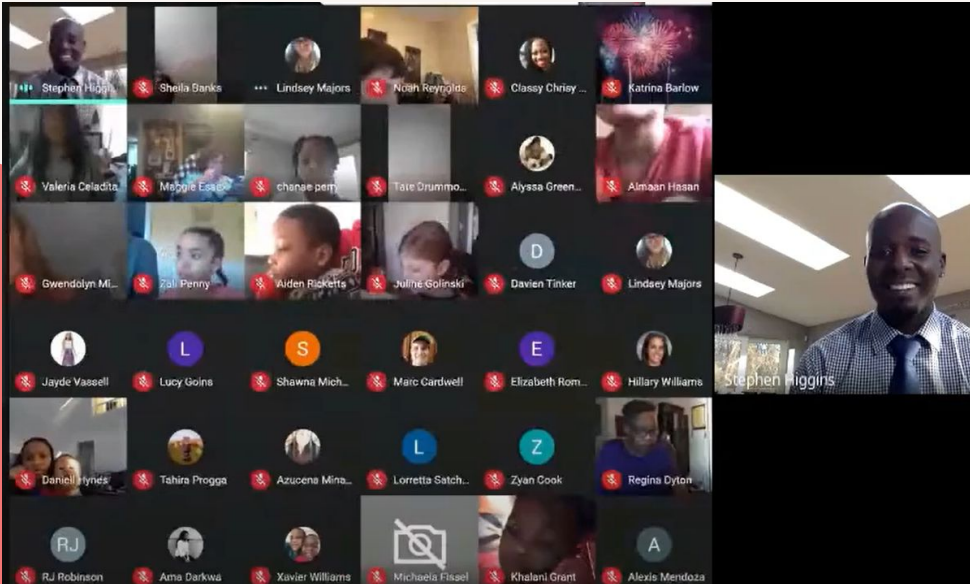
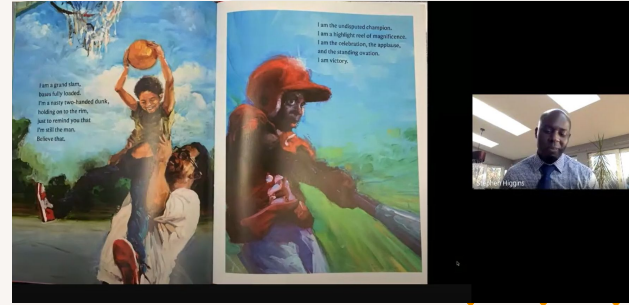
Thinking about our stories...

Our stories have value

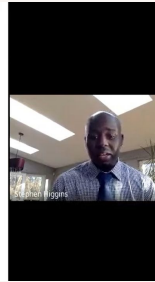


The Writing Process

1. Sign up for a workshop
2. Workshop
 - o Sample stories
 - o Guided writing with a teacher
 - o Draw/take a picture
 - o Submit
3. Publish & Celebrate!



Kids learning about themselves and their community.



Why tell our stories?

- o Myself
- o My school
- o My community
- o The future



Our Writing Process

- ★ Get inspiration
- ★ Sample stories
- ★ Story planning
- ★ Writing
 - Picture or photograph and caption
- ★ Submitting



Submitting Our Stories

Helping families and students submit their stories for publication.

This Could Be YOU!



I Am Me PROJECT

Submitting I Am Me Project

Please answer all questions below

mferreira@windsorct.org [Switch account](#)



The name and photo associated with your Google account will be recorded when you upload files and submit this form. Only the email you enter is part of your response.

Any files that are uploaded will be shared outside of the organization they belong to.

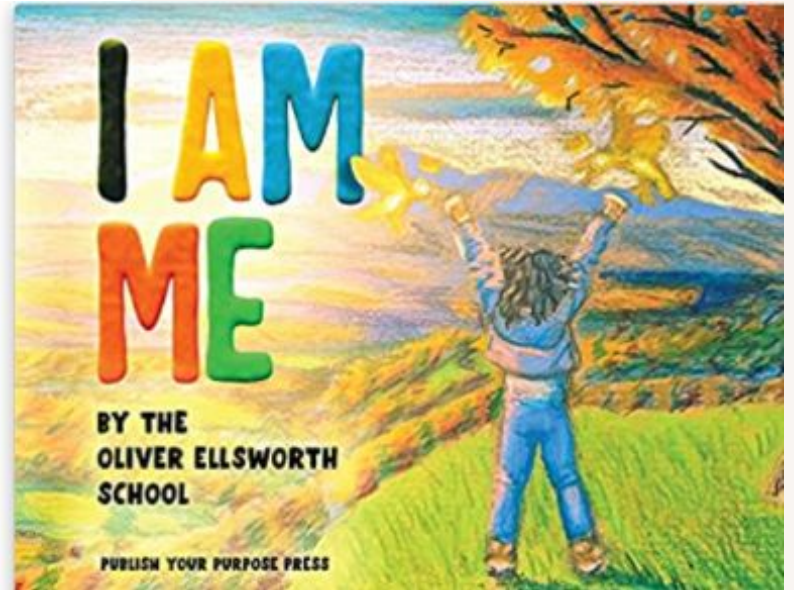
* Required

Email *

03

PUBLISHING OUR BOOK

Amazon and beyond



Challenges and Limitations

- Money
- Time
- People

Courageous people dedicated to a meaningful project.

Supportive administration and stakeholders.

Trusting relationships between school and families.

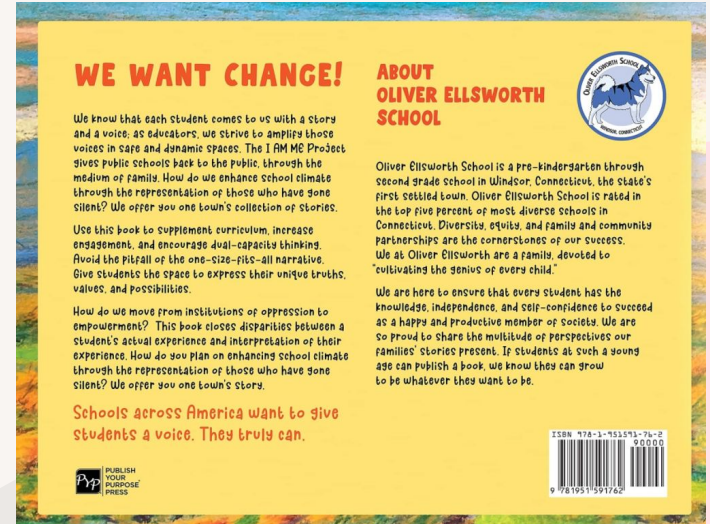
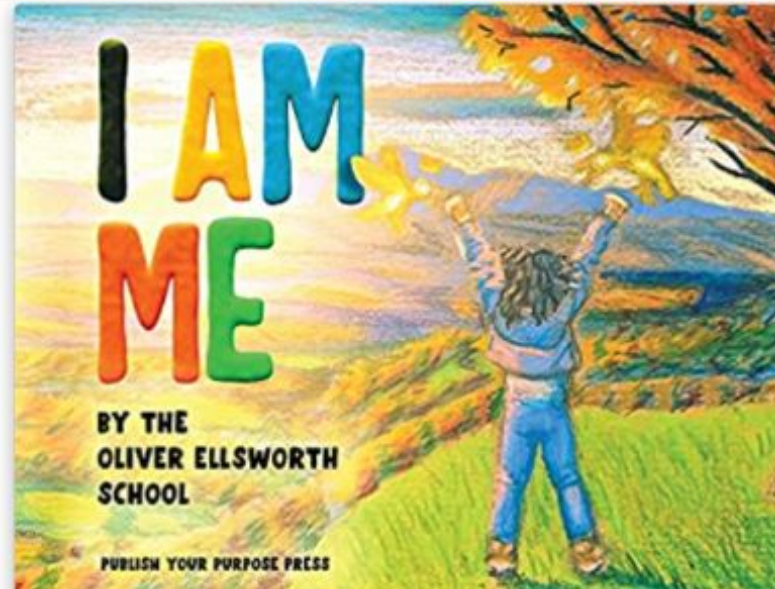
Our Students are PUBLISHED AUTHORS!

Oliver Ellsworth School published a book called, I Am Me. This book is available for purchase on Amazon. Proceeds should go back to our school.

Thank You:

Office of Family and Community Partnership

Thank you for helping us make our dream come true!



04

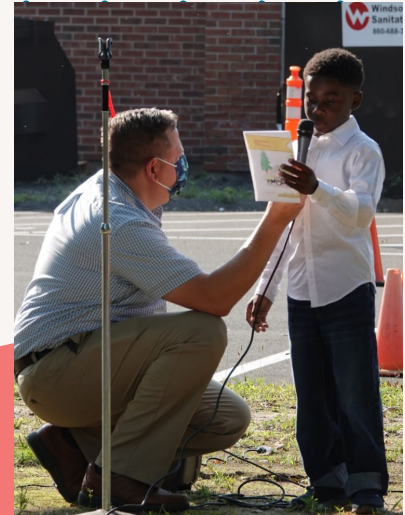
SHARING OUR STORIES

Author events, curriculum, classrooms



Oliver Ellsworth **STUDENTS** and **FAMILIES**

- ★ Celebrations and story reading



**Let's hear
some stories!**

VIDEO LINK



Contact Us

We are here to help!

i.am.me.project.team@gmail.com

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