PS 39 Diversity and Inclusion Book of the Month: September
Theme: Multiculturalism

Book Title: My Name is María Isabel
         By Alma Flor Ada

Grade Level: 4th / 5th

Book Summary:
For María Isabel Salazar López, the hardest thing about being the new girl in school is that the teacher doesn't call her by her real name. "We already have two Marías in this class," says her teacher. "Why don't we call you Mary instead?"
But María Isabel has been named for her Papá's mother and for Chabela, her beloved Puerto Rican grandmother. Can she find a way to make her teacher see that if she loses her name, she's lost the most important part of herself?

Discussion Questions:
- Have you ever started at a new school? What did it feel like? What were you nervous about? What about the first day you started at PS 39?
- Why did María's teacher call her Mary? Why do you think being called Mary bothered María so much? In what ways does this affect María Isabel in the class and outside? What would you have done if you were in María's situation?
- Have you read the book Charlotte's Web? What is it about? Did you like it? How does María Isabel feel about the book?
- How does María Isabel feel about not being included in the winter pageant? How would you feel if this happened to you?
- How does María Isabel finally let the teacher know how she feels? What is the teacher's response?
- Based on the cover, what did you think this book was about?
- There aren't many pictures in this book, so the few pictures there are must be important. What scenes from the book do the pictures show? Why do you think the artist chose those scenes?
- Is your name important to you? Why or why not? Were you named after someone special or is your name connected in another way to your family's history?
- Have you ever had someone call you by a name that isn't yours? How did you feel about that? What did you do?
- Pretend a new student is joining your class. How would you welcome them? What information might you share about your school, classroom, daily schedule and students?