

Springfield Public Schools

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Florence M. Gaudineer Suggested Summer Reading List (2020/21) Incoming 6th Grade

***Better Nate Than Ever* by Tim Federle**

Eighth-grader Nate Foster is a boy in love with Broadway but stuck in small-town western Pennsylvania, a misfit in a family that values sports and God. While his parents spend a weekend away to try to save their marriage, Nate's best friend Libby helps him execute a crazy plan: to sneak off to New York City to try out for E.T.: The Musical and return home before his parents notice. New York City is more amazing than he dreamed -- and the auditions more excruciating. Through heartache, joy, fear, and wild hope, Nate takes the biggest chance of his young life and has an adventure that changes his life in ways he didn't expect.

***The Bridge Home* by Padma Venkatraman**

This middle grade novel follows two sisters, Viji and Rukku, who are living on the streets of the Indian city of Chennai. They form a family with other street children and learn the pleasures and pitfalls of growing up without adult supervision.

***Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis**

Bud, Not Buddy is the story of 10-year-old orphan Bud Calloway trying to find his family in the Great Depression. Bud runs away from abusive foster parents, tries and fails to ride the rails, and walks for miles and miles to get to Grand Rapids, where he believes his father lives.

***Crash* by Jerry Spinelli**

Crash Coogan, is a seventh grader who is good at sports and being aggressive. His best friend is Mike Deluca. The story opens with Crash, a bully, tormenting his neighbor, Penn, a vegetarian and pacifist. As Crash evolves into a more compassionate person, he realizes that friends can come in many forms and bullying hurts yourself as well as others.

***It's Trevor Noah: Born a Crime (Young Readers)* by Trevor Noah**

Trevor Noah, the funny guy who hosts The Daily Show on Comedy Central, shares his remarkable story of growing up in South Africa with a black South African mother and a white European father at a time when it was against the law for a mixed-race child to exist. But he did exist--and from the beginning, the often-misbehaved Trevor used his keen smarts and humor to navigate a harsh life under a racist government.

***Jacob's Rescue* by Malka Druker & Michael Halperin**

Based on a true story that takes place in Warsaw, Poland during the Holocaust, Jacob's Rescue is a tale of righteous courage during a dark time in history. A poor Polish family rescues Jacob and his brothers from the danger of the Nazis where they face the reality of life under the harshest conditions.

***Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli**

Jeffrey is an orphan whose parents died in a trolley accident when he was three. Without a home, he moves in with his aunt and uncle who dislike each other to the point of not communicating. While living with them in their sad, lonely house, Maniac runs away during a school musical never to return. His adventures take him to a new town and some lovely and surprising discoveries about where he is from and that families come in all shapes and sizes.

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***Song for a Whale* by Lynee Kelly**

Twelve-year-old Iris has always felt different because she was born deaf. When she finds out about Blue 55, a whale who is unable to communicate with other whales, she becomes determined to find a way to connect with the lonely sea mammal.

***The Unsung Hero of Birdsong, USA* by Brenda Woods**

Woods is a Coretta Scott King Honor-winning author and might be the perfect person to tell this emotional story of a young boy befriending an African American World War II veteran in the segregated American South.

***The Young Landlords* by Walter Dean Myers**

In this story of a group of young friends who come into possession of a rundown apartment building. These devoted buddies try to make their Harlam neighborhood a better place to live.

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Florence M. Gaudineer Suggested Summer Reading List (2020/21) Incoming 7th Grade

Rules by Cynthia Lord

Twelve-year-old Catherine just wants a normal life. Which is near impossible when you have a brother with autism and a family that revolves around his disability. She's spent years trying to teach David the rules from "a peach is not a funny-looking apple" to "keep your pants on in public"—in order to head off David's embarrassing behaviors. But the summer Catherine meets Jason, a surprising, new sort-of friend, and Kristi, the next-door friend she's always wished for, it's her own shocking behavior that turns everything upside down and forces her to ask: What is normal?

Nothing But the Truth by Avi

In this thought-provoking examination of freedom, patriotism, and respect, ninth-grader, Philip Malloy, is kept from joining the track team by his failing grades in English class. Convinced that the teacher just doesn't like him, Philip concocts a plan to get transferred out of her class. Breaking the school's policy of silence during the national anthem, he hums along, and ends up in a crisis at the center of the nation's attention.

Finding Perfect by Elly Swartz

To twelve year-old Molly Nathans, perfect is: the number four, the tip of a newly sharpened No.2 pencil, a Crisp white pad of paper, her neatly aligned glass animal figurines. What's not perfect is Molly's mother leaving the family to take a faraway job with the promise to return in one year. Molly knows that promises are sometimes broken, so she hatches a plan to bring her mother home: Win the Lakeville Middle School Poetry Slam Contest.

Lisa, Bright and Dark by John Neufeld

Hailed as a "work of art" by the New York Times, this best-selling classic brings a deft touch and understanding spirit to the story of a teenage girl's descent into madness—and the three friends who are determined to walk with her where adults fear to tread.

One True Way by Shannon Hitchcock

Welcome to Daniel Boone Middle School in the 1970's, where teachers and coaches must hide who they are, and girls who like girls are forced to question their own choices. Presented in the voice of a premier storyteller, One True Way sheds exquisite light on what it means to be different while, at the same time, being wholly true to oneself. Through the lives and influences of two girls, readers come to see that love is love is love. Set against the backdrop of history and politics that surrounded gay rights in the 1970s South, this novel is a thoughtful, eye-opening look at tolerance, acceptance, and change, and will widen the hearts of all readers.

Out of My Mind by Sharon M. Draper

Melody is not like most people. She cannot walk or talk, but she has a photographic memory; she can remember every detail of everything she has ever experienced. She is smarter than most of the adults who try to diagnose her and smarter than her classmates in her integrated classroom - the very same classmates who dismiss her as mentally challenged because she cannot tell them otherwise. But Melody refuses to be defined by cerebral palsy. And she's determined to let everyone know it...somehow.

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***Stella by Starlight* by Sharon M. Draper**

Stella lives in the segregated South - in Bumblebee, North Carolina, to be exact about it. Some stores she can go into. Some stores she can't. Some folks are right pleasant. Others are a lot less so. To Stella, it sort of evens out, and heck, the Klan hasn't bothered them for years. But one late night, later than she should ever be up, much less wandering around outside, Stella and her little brother see something they're never supposed to see, something that is the first flicker of change to come, unwelcome change by any stretch of the imagination. As Stella's community—her world—is upended, she decides to fight fire with fire. And she learns that ashes don't necessarily signify an end.

***A Very Large Expanse of Sea* by Tahereh Mahi**

It's 2002, a year after 9/11. It's an extremely turbulent time politically, but especially so for someone like Shirin, a 16-year-old Muslim girl who's tired of being stereotyped. Shirin is never surprised by how horrible people can be. She's tired of the rude stares, the degrading comments—even the physical violence—she endures as a result of her race, her religion, and the hijab she wears every day. So she's built up protective walls and refuses to let anyone close enough to hurt her. Instead, she drowns her frustrations in music and spends her afternoons break-dancing with her brother.

But then she meets Ocean James. He's the first person in forever who really seems to want to get to know Shirin. It terrifies her - they seem to come from two irreconcilable worlds - and Shirin has had her guard up for so long that she's not sure she'll ever be able to let it down. Shirin's words and actions are an inspiration to anyone who feels the need to defend themselves against ignorance.

***The Wave* by Todd Strasser**

The Wave is based on a true incident that occurred in a high school history class in Palo Alto, CA, in 1969. The powerful forces of group pressure that pervaded many historic movements such as Nazism are recreated in the classroom when history teacher Burt Ross introduces a "new" system to his students. And before long "The Wave", with its rules of "strength through discipline, community, and action," sweeps from the classroom through the entire school. And as most of the students join the movement, Laurie Saunders and David Collins recognize the frightening momentum of "The Wave" and realize they must stop it before it's too late.

*All summary blurbs taken from Amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com

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Florence M. Gaudineer Suggested Summer Reading List (2020/21) Incoming 8th Grade

***Anything But Typical* by Nora Raleigh Baskin**

Jason Blake is an autistic twelve-year-old living in a neurotypical world. Most days it's just a matter of time before something goes wrong. But Jason finds a glimmer of understanding when he comes across PhoenixBird, who posts stories to the same online site as he does. Jason can be himself when he writes and he thinks that PhoenixBird--her name is Rebecca--could be his first real friend. But as desperate as Jason is to meet her, he's terrified that if they do meet, Rebecca will only see his autism and not who Jason really is.

***Believe: The Victorious Story of Eric LeGrand (Young Readers)* by Eric LeGrand with Mike Yorkey**

Believe is the profoundly moving story of Eric LeGrand, the former defensive tackle for the Rutgers University Scarlet Knights football team, who suffered a severe spinal cord injury and was left paralyzed by a crushing on-field tackle during a heated game with Army.

***Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson**

As the Revolutionary War begins, thirteen-year-old Isabel wages her own fight...for freedom. Promised freedom upon the death of their owner, she and her sister, Ruth, in a cruel twist of fate become the property of a malicious New York City couple, the Locktons, who have no sympathy for the American Revolution and even less for Ruth and Isabel. When Isabel meets Curzon, a slave with ties to the Patriots, he encourages her to spy on her owners, who know details of British plans for invasion. She is reluctant at first, but when the unthinkable happens to Ruth, Isabel realizes her loyalty is available to the bidder who can provide her with freedom.

***The Emperor's Riddle* by Kat Zhang**

A "fast-paced mystery adventure" about a girl who embarks on a hunt for a long-lost treasure while on a summer trip to China. Mia Chen is on what her mother calls a Grand Adventure. She's not sure what to make of this family trip to China, and didn't want to leave her friends for the summer, but she's excited about the prospect of exploring with her Aunt Lin, the only adult who truly understands her.

***George* by Alex Gino**

When people look at George, they think they see a boy. But she knows she's not a boy. She knows she's a girl. George thinks she'll have to keep this a secret forever. Then her teacher announces that their class play is going to be Charlotte's Web. George really, really, REALLY wants to play Charlotte. But the teacher says she can't even try out for the part . . . because she's a boy. With the help of her best friend, Kelly, George comes up with a plan. Not just so she can be Charlotte -- but so everyone can know who she is, once and for all.

***Ghost (Track)* by Jason Reynolds**

Running. That's all Ghost (real name Castle Cranshaw) has ever known. But Ghost has been running for the wrong reasons—it all started with running away from his father, who, when Ghost was a very little boy, chased him and his mother through their apartment, then down the street, with a loaded gun, aiming to kill. Since then, Ghost has been the one causing problems—and running away from them—until he meets Coach, an ex-Olympic Medalist who sees something in Ghost: crazy natural talent.

If Ghost can stay on track, literally and figuratively, he could be the best sprinter in the city. Can Ghost harness his raw talent for speed, or will his past finally catch up to him?

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***Hidden Roots* by Joseph Bruchac**

Eleven-year-old Sonny and his mother can't predict his father's sudden abusive rages. Jake's anger only gets worse after long days at the paper mill -- and when Uncle Louis appears. Louis seems to show up when Sonny and his mother need help most, but there is something about his quiet wisdom that only fuels Jake's rage. Through an unexpected friendship with a new school librarian, Sonny gains the strength to stand up to his father, and to finally confront his mother and uncle about a secret family heritage that may be the key to his father's self-hatred.

***Hours of the Bees* by Lindsay Eagar**

While her friends are spending their summers having pool parties and sleepovers, twelve-year-old Carolina—Carol—is spending hers in the New Mexico desert, helping her parents move her grandfather into a home for people with dementia. At first, Carol avoids prickly Grandpa Serge. But as the summer wears on, Carol finds herself drawn to him, fascinated by the crazy stories he tells her about a healing tree, a green-glass lake, and the bees that will bring back the rain and end a hundred years of drought. As the line between magic and reality starts to blur, Carol must decide for herself what is possible—and what it means to be true to her roots.

***I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World (Young Readers Edition)* by Malala Yousafzai with Patricia McCormick**

Malala Yousafzai was only ten years old when the Taliban took control of her region. They said music was a crime. They said women weren't allowed to go to the market. They said girls couldn't go to school. Raised in a once-peaceful area of Pakistan transformed by terrorism, Malala was taught to stand up for what she believes. So she fought for her right to be educated. And on October 9, 2012, she nearly lost her life for the cause: She was shot point-blank while riding the bus on her way home from school. No one expected her to survive. Now Malala is an international symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest ever Nobel Peace Prize winner.

***King and the Dragonflies* by Kacen Callender**

Twelve-year-old Kingston James is sure his brother Khalid has turned into a dragonfly. When Khalid unexpectedly passed away, he shed what was his first skin for another to live down by the bayou in their small Louisiana town. Khalid still visits in dreams, and King must keep these secrets to himself as he watches grief transform his family.

It would be easier if King could talk with his best friend, Sandy Sanders. But just days before he died, Khalid told King to end their friendship, after overhearing a secret about Sandy—that he thinks he might be gay. But when Sandy goes missing, sparking a town-wide search, and King finds his former best friend hiding in a tent in his backyard, he agrees to help Sandy escape from his abusive father, and the two begin an adventure as they build their own private paradise down by the bayou and among the dragonflies. As King's friendship with Sandy is reignited, he's forced to confront questions about himself and the reality of his brother's death.

***Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Pattillo Beals**

In 1957, well before Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, Melba Pattillo Beals and eight other teenagers became iconic symbols for the Civil Rights Movement and the dismantling of Jim Crow in the American South as they integrated Little Rock's Central High School in the wake of the landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education*. Throughout her harrowing ordeal, Melba was taunted by her schoolmates and their parents, threatened by a lynch mob's rope, attacked with lighted sticks of dynamite, and injured by acid sprayed in her eyes. But through it all, she acted with dignity and courage, and refused to back down.