

Curriculum Resource Consideration  
English/Language Arts Trade Books  
June 2023

Background:

The mission of Albemarle County Public Schools is to end the predictive value of race, class, gender, and special capacities of students; to know all of our students; and to build relationships with our families and communities that foster success. Literature is not only a fundamental part of the SOL curriculum, it is also an entrypoint to genuine connection with our students, their identities, communities, and lived experiences. As the student population of Albemarle County Public Schools continues to evolve, our English/Language Arts teachers search for learning resources that reflect the students we currently serve and materials that also allow teachers to achieve the objectives of the Virginia Standards of Learning. In the words of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop, students need to explore literature through “windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors (Reading Rockets, 2015).” By this, we mean it is important for all students to access literature that serves as a window into another culture and read about experiences different from one’s own. It is equally important to experience literature that serves as a window mirroring back one’s own identity and affirming one’s lived experiences. Quality literature can also provide an encounter with something new that allows a reader to go beyond the window and enter a new perspective of empathy and understanding. The following fifteen proposed middle and high school level texts continue to build on diverse and important themes of race, economic advantage, gender, age, ability, and allow our students to discuss real world issues in accessible ways.

A team of ten educators met to review and discuss the fifteen proposed texts. They included one assistant principal, five librarians, one middle school teacher, two high school teachers, one instructional coach, and one learning technology integrator. Numerous classroom teachers were involved in different stages of proposing, piloting, and/or reviewing these titles with multiple classes of students. In reference to the four high school level texts, teachers at this level showed interest in teaching all four texts with the most interest in *Persepolis*, *The Best We Could*, and *All the Light We Cannot See*. One teacher commented, “Piloted *Persepolis* with my 10th graders and they overwhelmingly loved it. It offered some diversity in terms of the medium/genre. Moreover, students were able to draw meaningful parallels between other 10th grade texts such as *Night* and *Animal Farm*.” In regards to middle school texts, ten of the twelve titles showed greater than 75% interest in being used in the curriculum. A teacher who previewed the titles in hopes of it becoming an approved text wrote, “I read *Ghost Boys* in one sitting...sensitively handled, and manages to imbue a sense of hope despite the grimly realistic and tragic topic. I think I would start small group[s] with that title.”

Source:

Reading Rockets. (2015). Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors [YouTube Video]. In *YouTube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAu58SNSyc>

*Title:* Long Way Down

*Author:* Jason Reynolds

*Illustrator:* N/A

*Genre:* Novel in verse - Young adult

*Publishing date:* 2017

*Summary:* *Long Way Down* is a novel in verse that follows Will, a 15-year-old boy, who embarks on an emotional journey after his older brother, Shawn, is shot and killed. The entire story unfolds during the 60-second elevator ride to the ground floor of their building, where Will is determined to follow a community code and avenge his brother's death. As he descends, the elevator stops on several floors, revealing characters from Will's past, each with their own story and connection to the outcome of violence in their community. Reynolds leaves Will with the final decision at the end metaphorical elevator ride. The book is set in a predominantly African American neighborhood and addresses themes of gun violence, gang culture, grief, social justice, and the complexity and consequence of personal choice.

*Highlights from review team:* Teachers should be prepared to have conversations with students about death/loss of a family member and the meaning of justice. The introspective scenes with apparitions make this work a parallel to *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens (another 7th grade ACPS approved title).

*Awards and Recommendations:*

ALA Notable Children's Book (2018)

Coretta Scott King Author Honor (2018)

Margaret A. Edwards Award (2023)

Michael L. Printz Honor (2018)

Booklist starred, 07/01/17

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books starred, 10/01/17

Horn Book Guide starred, 04/01/18

Horn Book Magazine starred, 07/01/17

Kirkus Reviews starred, 07/15/17

Newbery Honor, 2018

Publishers Weekly starred, 07/31/17

School Library Connection starred, 11/01/17

School Library Journal starred, 07/01/17

Teacher Librarian, 02/01/18

Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA), 02/01/18

*Recommended Age(s):* 8th grade and up

*Recommended purpose:* Whole class or small group/literature circle instruction. Supports

*Essential Questions:* How is an individual changed by hearing the stories of others?

This could be used as a text-to-text comparison with Dickens vs. Reynolds (see above).

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Timeliness</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Readability</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>4</i>

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* Out of My Mind

*Author:* Sharon Draper

*Illustrator:* N/A

*Genre:* Realistic fiction

*Publishing date:* 2010

*Summary:* *Out of My Mind* is a novel that follows the story of Melody Brooks, an eleven-year-old girl with cerebral palsy. Unable to walk, talk, or communicate her thoughts, Melody possesses a brilliant mind trapped within her body. The plot takes place in both Melody's home and her inclusive school, where she faces numerous challenges and prejudices due to her disability. However, a computer soon helps her communicate her thoughts more accurately and allows her to participate in a student competition that pushes others to regard her differently.

*Highlights from review team:* This novel provides an opportunity to challenge stereotypes around disabilities and shows the impact of advocacy. Draper explores themes of friendship, perseverance, and the power of finding one's voice in a society that is largely ableist. Each of these topics lend themselves to research and writing activities. Online instructional resources are available.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

Booklist starred, 01/01/10

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, 03/01/10

Horn Book Magazine, 03/01/10

Horn Book Magazine, 10/01/10

Kirkus Reviews starred, 02/15/10

Library Media Connection, 05/01/10

Multicultural Review, 06/01/10

Parents' Choice Silver Honor, 2010

Publishers Weekly, 02/15/10

School Library Journal starred, 03/01/10

Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA), 08/01/10

Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA) starred, 08/01/10

Wilson's Children, 10/01/10

*Recommended Age(s):* Grade 6

*Recommended purpose:* Whole class or small group/literature circle instruction.

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Timeliness</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Readability</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>4</i>

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* We Are Not Free

*Author:* Traci Chee

*Illustrator:* N/A

*Genre:* Historical fiction

*Publishing date:* 2020

*Summary:* *We Are Not Free* is a historical fiction novel that tells the story of fourteen Japanese American teenagers living in San Francisco during World War II. Set against the backdrop of the internment of Japanese Americans following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the book explores their personal experiences and the impact of forced relocation. Unique formatting of telegrams, maps, articles and multiple viewpoints bring the intensity of the teens to life. The characters grapple with loss, discrimination, and struggle to maintain their cultural identity. At times, life in the camp causes friendships to rise above traditional structures of the family unit. Each interned person must make difficult choices from joining the military, refusing to pledge allegiance to the U.S. and continuing life in a camp to leaving with permission to resettle somewhere else in the states. The narrative paints a clear picture of the disrupted adolescence of the teenagers and the numerous reasons for them to feel unjustly treated.

*Highlights from review team:* Be prepared to have conversations about war with your students. The narrative sheds light on themes of resilience, friendship, and family. At the same time, the writer speaks to the responsibility of knowing one's history and the challenge of working to shape it.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature Honor, 2022

Booklist starred, 04/01/20

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, 09/01/20

Horn Book Magazine, 09/01/20

Kirkus Reviews starred, 07/15/20

Michael L. Printz Honor, 2021

Publishers Weekly starred, 07/06/20

School Library Connection starred, 05/01/20

School Library Journal starred, 04/01/20

*Recommended Age(s):* Grade 11 and up

*Recommended purpose:* Whole class, small group/literature circle instruction. Aligns with small group/literature circle instruction. Aligns with U.S. History and ELA.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i>	<i>3.5</i>

<i>Timeliness</i>	3.5
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	3.5
<i>Readability</i>	3
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	4
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	3.5
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	4
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	4
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	3

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* Rebound

*Author:* Kwame Alexander

*Illustrator:* N/A

*Genre:* Sports novel in verse

*Publishing date:* 2018

*Summary:* *Rebound* is a novel that serves as a prequel to Alexander's earlier work, *The Crossover*. The story follows the character of Charlie Bell, also known as Chuck "Da Man" Bell. Set in the 1980s, the book takes place in the neighborhood of Washington Heights, where a younger version of Charlie spends the summer with his grandparents after the tragic loss of a family member. At this point in his life, the reader sees a Charlie who is much more invested in superheroes and comic books than the game of basketball. However, his cousin, Roxie is the star of her basketball team and puts him to work. Ultimately, his effort in the sport teaches him to refocus and not give up. Basketball becomes the vehicle for healing and growth in this novel of verse.

*Highlights from review team:* The high readability of this poetic format provides greater access to content for students. Featuring an African American male protagonist and female sports fiction protagonist strengthens the ELA offerings for students. This title explores themes of grief, family dynamics, friendship, and the transformative power of sports. Supplemental instructional resources available online.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

ALA Notable Children's Books, 2019

Booklist starred, 03/15/18

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, 05/01/18

Horn Book Guide starred, 11/01/18

Horn Book Magazine starred, 07/01/18

Kirkus Reviews starred, 03/15/18

New York Times, 04/22/18

Publishers Weekly Annex, 04/16/18

School Library Journal starred, 04/01/18

Teacher Librarian, 06/01/19

Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA), 04/01/18

*Recommended Age(s):* Grade 6

*Recommended purpose:* Whole class or small group/literature circle instruction. Aligns with poetry and fiction English/Language Arts standards. *The Crossover* (companion text) is already approved for this grade level so keeping both titles together helps students build an author relationship and work on an author study project if there is interest.



The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Timeliness</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Readability</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>4</i>

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* El Deafo

*Author:* Cece Bell

*Illustrator:* Cece Bell, David Lasky

*Genre:* Memoir, Graphic novel

*Publishing date:* 2014

*Summary:* *El Deafo* is an graphic memoir that chronicles the author's childhood experiences with hearing loss. After contracting meningitis at the age of four, the main character, Cece, develops a severe hearing impairment. The book takes place in the 1970s and follows Cece's journey as she navigates the challenges of attending a mainstream school and forms friendships while using a hearing aid. Through her alter ego, "El Deafo," Cece learns to embrace her differences and find her own superpowers.

*Highlights from review team:* The story addresses themes of disability, identity, and self-acceptance. Graphic novel format provides greater access to content for students. Learning connections can be made to sign language. Memoir writing can be used for mentor text writing in lessons and within advisory lessons on identity.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

ALA Notable Children's Books, 2015

Booklist, 08/01/14

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, 10/01/14

Christian Library Journal, 09/01/15

Horn Book Guide starred, 04/01/15

Horn Book Magazine, 03/01/21

Horn Book Magazine starred, 11/01/14

Kirkus Reviews starred, 09/01/14

New York Times, 08/24/14

Newbery Honor, 2015

Publishers Weekly starred, 07/07/14

School Library Journal starred, 09/01/14

*Recommended Age(s):* Grade 6

*Recommended purpose:* Small group instruction leading up to less support as teacher reinforces and scaffolds writing workshop procedures.

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of</i>	<i>4</i>

<i>subject matter</i>	
<i>Timeliness</i>	3
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	4
<i>Readability</i>	4
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	4
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	4
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	4
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	4
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	4

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* Just Mercy: adapted for Young Adults: a True Story of the Fight for Justice

*Author:* Bryan Stevenson

*Illustrator:* N/A

*Genre:* Memoir

*Publishing date:* 2020

*Summary:* *Just Mercy* (Young adult version) is a memoir that follows the author's experiences as a lawyer and activist fighting against racial injustice in the American criminal justice system. The book is set in the United States and primarily focuses on Stevenson's work in Alabama. The central character is Stevenson himself, who founded the Equal Justice Initiative to provide legal representation to individuals who have been wrongly convicted or unfairly sentenced, particularly those on death row. Filled with stories of young teenagers who are sentenced unfairly and prisoners who are abused, Stevenson asks readers to consider reasonable sentences and reforms.

*Highlights from review team:* Teachers should be prepared to have conversations about issues of systemic racism, poverty, and inequality within the criminal justice system with students.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

American Library Association Notable Book (2015)

NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work – Nonfiction (2015)

Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction (2015)

Dayton Literary Peace Prize for Nonfiction (2015)

Warwick Prize for Writing Nominee for Longlist (2015),

NAIBA Book of the Year for Nonfiction (2015)

Alabama Author Award for Nonfiction (2016)

ALCS Dagger for Non-fiction Nominee (2015)

Booklist starred, 10/15/14

Kirkus Reviews starred, 09/01/14

Library Journal, 10/01/14, Library Journal starred, 07/01/16

New York Times, 10/19/14

Publishers Weekly, 09/29/14

School Library Journal starred, 02/01/15

Michael L. Printz honor

Newbery Honor

Coretta Scott King Author Honor

Walter Dean Myers Award winner

Horn Book Best Book of the Year

*Recommended Age(s):* 8th grade and up

*Recommended purpose:* Whole class or small group/literature circle instruction. The recommended title also draws connections to the Advisory lessons and the Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) component, with the book serving as a large-scale, real world model.

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i>	<i>3.5</i>
<i>Timeliness</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>3.5</i>
<i>Readability</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>4</i>

*Recommendation:*

*Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.*

*Title:* Front Desk

*Author:* Kelly Yang

*Illustrator:* N/A

*Genre:* Realistic fiction

*Publishing date:* 2018

*Summary:* *Front Desk* is a novel centered on Mia Tang, a ten-year-old Chinese immigrant living in California in the 1990s. Mia's family manages a motel, and she finds solace in writing as she faces the challenges of discrimination, poverty, and the constant fear of deportation. The story takes place in the motel where Mia and her parents live and work, and it follows her efforts to help the motel's guests while confronting racism and standing up for justice. Despite her mother's criticism of her imperfect English, she pursues her love of writing and participates in a contest to win a motel. Her writing gives voice to the injustices that some of the motel inhabitants face and shed light on the experience of others in the community.

*Highlights from the review team:* This title connects with themes of social justice, immigration, discrimination, and culture. It is an engaging and readable novel with an accessible entry point into social justice topics. *Front Desk* also provides an important Asian American perspective that is needed in our curriculum. The author, Kelly Yang, based many aspects of the novel on her own life experience. *Front Desk* is now a four book series that is highly sought after by students and helps students build long standing reader relationships with an author.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature

ALA Notable Children's Book

2019 Virginia Readers Choice

*Recommended Age(s):* Grades 7

*Recommended purpose:* Whole class novel or literature circles. As noted above in the review team highlights, this title discusses themes of social justice and the author's immigration experience from China to the U.S. in the 1990s. These two aspects connect with our Advisory lessons. 7th graders spend a considerable number of lessons exploring identity as both a window and a mirror. Then as they move on to 8th grade they create a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) activity that often centers on topics connected to civics and social justice. Additionally, Yang's authorship fits with the unit *Essential Question: How can strong communication give us power and agency in our lives?* as readers see Mia use writing to amplify her voice in the novel.

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Timeliness</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Readability</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>4</i>

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* Sal and Gabi Break the Universe

*Author:* Carlos Alberto Hernandez

*Illustrator:* N/A

*Genre:* Fantasy/science fiction

*Publishing date:* 2019

*Summary:* *Sal and Gabi Break the Universe* is a novel that follows the adventures of Sal Vidón, a young Cuban-American boy with a unique ability to manipulate reality. The story is set in Miami and primarily takes place at Miami's Culeco Academy of the Arts. Alongside Sal, the main characters include his new friend Gabi Real, a fiercely intelligent and resourceful girl, and Yasmany, a bully-turned-ally. As Sal navigates school life, he unintentionally breaks the boundaries of the multiverse, leading to unpredictable consequences. His attempts to help Gabi's sick younger brother only cause more chaos. Sal's adventure includes time travel that allows him to see his dead mother who lives on in other universes and is referred to as, "Mami Muerte." Filled with robot parents, moments of grief, time travel, and magical realism, this title is a solid work of both fantasy and science fiction.

*Highlights from review team:*

An amazing representation of Cuban culture, lovable and quirky characters, with lots of joy in the book. Readers will also have to consider the ethical implications of wielding immense power. Students/teachers should be prepared to navigate length and readability in the form of untranslated Spanish, and a complex science fiction plot. Audio support available.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

2020 Pura Belpré Award

Favorable reviews: Kirkus Reviews, School Library Journal

*Recommended Age(s):* 6th Grade

*Recommended purpose:* Small group/literature circles or whole group instruction as appropriate. This title works with the *Essential Question: How can I influence the world and create change?*

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<b><i>Category</i></b>	<b><i>Score</i></b>
<b><i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i></b>	<b><i>3.5</i></b>
<b><i>Timeliness</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>
<b><i>Quality of Writing/Production</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>



<i>Readability</i>	2
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	3
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	4
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	4
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	4
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	3

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* *Unsung Hero of Birdsong, USA*

*Author:* Brenda Woods

*Illustrator:* N/A

*Genre:* Historical fiction

*Publishing date:* 2019

*Summary:* *Unsung Hero of Birdsong, USA* is a novel set in the Jim Crow South. The story centers around Gabriel, a young white boy, and Meriwether, a Black World War II veteran who has recently returned to Birdsong. When Gabriel is saved from a car accident while riding his bicycle, Meriwether is given a job at Gabriel's family auto shop even though the other mechanic in the shop clearly holds racist feelings towards him. Readers soon learn of Meriwether's experience in the military service that made him so skilled with mechanical repair. While Meriwether continues to endure the slights of Lucas, Gabriel becomes keenly aware of a divide between Black soldiers returning from the war and white soldiers. This divide comes to a head when Meriwether becomes the target of a white supremacist and must flee Birdsong. Gabriel's perspective of his town, the experience of an African American man living in the south during this time, and life's fairness are forever altered.

*Highlights from review team:* This title highlights themes of racial inequality and the challenges faced by Black veterans in a segregated society. Be prepared to have conversations about race and inequality with your students.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People, 2015-2020.

History, Life, Culture in the Americas Selection, 2020

Kirkus Reviews 2019

*Recommended Age(s):* Grade 7

*Recommended purpose:* Whole class or small group/literature circle instruction. Recommend partnering with History as content aligns with US History II standards. This also supports ELA *Essential Question: How does knowledge of multiple perspectives help us understand the world?* This book could be paired with a brief research experience on a variety of aspects tied to World War II or even post WWII life in the South.

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i>	<i>4</i>

<i>Timeliness</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Readability</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>4</i>

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* Ghost

*Author:* Jason Reynolds

*Illustrator:* N/A

*Genre:* Realistic fiction

*Publishing date:* 2016

*Summary:* *Ghost* is a novel that follows the story of Castle Cranshaw, nicknamed Ghost, a young African American boy with a troubled past. The book is set in a low-income neighborhood in America. After a traumatic event involving his father, Ghost discovers his talent for running and joins a local track team coached by a former Olympic medalist. The plot delves into Ghost's journey of self-discovery, as he learns discipline, teamwork, and resilience through the sport of track and field. At one point, Ghost almost loses the opportunity by stealing a pair of sneakers. However, his coach is right there to help him get right on track and work towards making things right again. Readers see how the traumatic family event mentioned earlier in the plot bleeds into Ghost's behaviors at home and school, and his initial interactions with the team. However, he soon learns to grow with his peers and trust in the safety of the relationships he has with his mother, his coach, and his skill in his running.

*Highlights from the review team:* The book addresses themes of race, poverty, friendship, and the power of determination. The title lends itself to an extended metaphor of running through life. It is a series students can continue to engage with and develop an author relationship. Other titles go on to focus on different members of the track team.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Literature  
Virginia Readers Choice Award (2017)  
ALA Notable Children's Books  
Kirkus

*Recommended Age(s):* Grade 6

*Recommended purpose:* Whole Class Novel Study, Small Group Reading (Literature Circles)

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<b><i>Category</i></b>	<b><i>Score</i></b>
<b><i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>
<b><i>Timeliness</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>

<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Readability</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>4</i>

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* The Best We Could Do

*Author:* Thi Bui

*Illustrator:* Thi Bui

*Genre:* Memoir graphic novel

*Publishing date:* 2017

*Summary:* *The Best We Could Do* is a graphic memoir that begins with the birth of her first child and traces the author's journey to understand her family's history and the impact of war on their lives. Bui, a Vietnamese-American, delves into her parents' experiences during the Vietnam War, their escape as refugees, and their struggles to rebuild their lives in a new country. Through illustrations, Bui explores themes of identity, intergenerational trauma, and the complexities of family relationships. She weaves together personal anecdotes, historical context, and reflections on parenthood to create a narrative that examines the universal quest for belonging and understanding.

*Highlights from review team:* It is recommended that this book be taught in the middle to end of the year once student-teacher relationships have been developed. While not explicit, the book begins with Thi Bui giving birth to her first child. Be prepared to have conversations with your students about issues surrounding war and life as a refugee.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

American Book Award winner

National Book Critics Circle finalist in autobiography

Eisner Award finalist in reality-based comics

*Recommended Age(s):* 11th grade and up

*Recommended purpose:* Whole class or small group/literature circle instruction. Aligns with U.S. History standards along topics of immigration policies, refugees, colonization, and the Vietnam War.

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Timeliness</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>4</i>

<i>Readability</i>	4
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	3
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	3
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	4
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	4
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	4

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood

*Author:* Marjane Satrapi

*Illustrator:* Marjane Satrapi

*Genre:* Memoir Graphic novel

*Publishing date:* 2004

*Summary:* *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* is a graphic memoir about growing up during the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The story is from the perspective of Marjane, a young girl from a liberal and politically active family, as she navigates the complexities of a changing society under the oppressive regime. Through vivid illustrations and candid storytelling, Satrapi depicts young Marjane's experiences of rebellion, loss, and resilience as she witnesses the transformation of her country and confronts the challenges of identity, freedom, and social conformity. *Persepolis* offers a first person narrative of Iran's changing government and culture and the universal struggle for self-discovery in the face of adversity.

*Highlights from review team:* This novel provides the backdrop to discuss identity and growth, and resilience in a world one cannot control.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

American Library Association Best Books for Young Adults Award (2004)

Angouleme Coup de Coeur Award (2001)

Angouleme Prize for Scenario- Book 2 (2002)

*Recommended Age(s):* 10th grade and up

*Recommended purpose:* Whole class or small group/literature circle instruction. Connects with identity, growth, and resilience themes discussed in Freshman Seminar and World History concepts.

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i>	<i>3.5</i>
<i>Timeliness</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Readability</i>	<i>3.5</i>



<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>3.5</i>
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>4</i>

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* Ghost Boys

*Author:* Jewell Rhodes Parker

*Illustrator:* N/A

*Genre:* Realistic fiction

*Publishing date:* 2018

*Summary:* *Ghost Boys* is a middle school novel that follows twelve-year-old Jerome, a black boy who is tragically shot and killed by a white police officer while playing with a toy gun. Jerome's story is reminiscent of the 2014 case resulting in Tamir Rice's death. After the incident in the book, Jerome becomes a ghost and befriends the spirit of Emmett Till, a historical figure who was lynched in the 1950s. Through their encounters, Jerome gains a deeper understanding of the racial injustices that persist in society and learns the importance of seeking justice and promoting change. The only person who can see both ghosts is the daughter of the police officer in the shooting. Rhodes creates a story that connects historical with social and political context.

*Highlights from review team:* Provides the opportunity to focus instruction on anti-racism, diverse characters, and historical importance. Multiple online teaching resources.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

ALA Notable Children's Books (2019)

Walter Award, Young Readers Category (We Need Diverse Books, 2019)

*Recommended Age(s):* Grade 6 and up

*Recommended purpose:* Whole class or small group/literature circle instruction. Aligns with U.S. History II standards (if used in 7th grade), Advisory lessons on identity, current event discussions, and humanities electives (only offered in some buildings).

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<b><i>Category</i></b>	<b><i>Score</i></b>
<b><i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>
<b><i>Timeliness</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>
<b><i>Quality of Writing/Production</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>
<b><i>Readability</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>

<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>4</i>

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* Booked

*Author:* Kwame Alexander

*Illustrator:* N/A

*Genre:* Novel in verse

*Publishing date:* 2016

*Summary:*

*Booked* is a sports novel in verse that focuses on soccer to tell the story of twelve-year-old Nick Hall. Nick is an avid player who finds solace in books and words when life gets tough. In an abrupt twist of events, Nick's world turns upside down. He finds out his mother is leaving home for a new job, and he needs to be rushed to the hospital for his appendix. As he navigates his parents' rocky relationship, bullying at school, and his own insecurities, Nick discovers the power of literature and the importance of staying true to oneself. With the help of his best friend and his favorite librarian, Nick learns valuable life lessons about friendship, family, and the courage to pursue his dreams.

*Highlights from review team:*

Teachers and students will enjoy that this is part of *The Crossover* series (*The Crossover*, *Rebound*, *Booked*) providing expanded choice in reading options. \**The Crossover* is already on the ACPS approved list. *Rebound* is included in this proposal with *Booked*.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

Kirkus Reviews' Best Books of 2016

New York Times Bestseller

Longlist, National Book Awards 2016 for Young People's Literature

*Recommended Age(s):* Grade 6 and up

*Recommended purpose:* Whole class or small group/literature circle instruction. Can be used with writing units as a mentor text for writing. Builds on previous 6th grade texts by Kwame Alexander for extended reading or author study.

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<b><i>Category</i></b>	<b><i>Score</i></b>
<b><i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>
<b><i>Timeliness</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>

<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Readability</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>4</i>

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* All the Light We Cannot See

*Author:* Anthony Doerr

*Illustrator:* N/A

*Genre:* Historical fiction

*Publishing date:* 2014

*Summary:* *All the Light We Cannot See* is a historical fiction novel set during World War II. The story revolves around two main characters: Marie-Laure, a blind French girl, and Werner, a German orphan with a talent for engineering. Werner is sent to a training camp while Marie-Laure is sent to live with an uncle who is part of the Resistance. Her uncle is said to have a diamond that another German officer is relentlessly targeting. As the war ravages Europe, their paths eventually intersect in occupied France and they both endure tragic losses of war.

*Highlights from review team:*

This novel challenges stereotypes by providing students an opportunity to read about a person with a visual disability who is not limited by it.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

Pulitzer Prize for Fiction (2015)

Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction (2015)

*Recommended Age(s):* Grade 12

*Recommended purpose:* Whole class or small group/literature circle instruction.

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member's review.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Timeliness</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Readability</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>4</i>

<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>4</i>

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***

*Title:* They Called Us Enemy

*Author:* George Takei, Justin Eisinger, Steven Scott

*Illustrator:* Harmony Becker

*Genre:* Graphic memoir

*Publishing date:* 2019

*Summary:* *They Called Us Enemy, a memoir*, recounts Takei’s experience as a child during World War II. During this time, he and his family were unjustly interned in American camps along with thousands of other Japanese-Americans. Takei provides a deeply personal account of the emotional toll, loss of freedom, and discrimination faced by his family and community. Through his story, Takei sheds light on the systemic racism and the infringement of civil liberties that occurred during that era, while also highlighting the resilience and strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity. Illustrated with stark black and white panels, Takei explains the amount of incredible stress his family endured as they persevered to maintain their sense of identity and safety during a period of great injustice. Takei shares some of the family tensions and discussions held about what it means to be a citizen and American. He also shares his early interests in Hollywood and how he decided to use his platform to advocate for others.

*Highlights from review team:* Teachers should be prepared to discuss America’s role in the unjust internment of Japanese Americans and racism with your students.

*Awards and Recommendations:*

Cybils Award for Young Adult Graphic Novel finalist (2019)

VLA Graphic Novel Diversity Award for Youth (2019)

American Book Award (2020)

Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature for Young Adult Literature (2020)

Eisner Award for Best Reality-Based Work (2020)

Rebecca Caudill Young Readers’ Book Award (2022)

Kirkus Reviews Best Books of 2019

*Recommended Age(s):* Grade 7 and up

*Recommended purpose:* Whole class or small group/literature circle instruction. Aligns with U.S. History II standards.

The review of each resource using the IIAA-F2 Form (scored 0-4) is included below; numbers reflect the average score collected from each team member’s review.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Score</i>
<i>Educational Suitability and age appropriateness as related to accuracy of subject matter</i>	<i>4</i>



<i>Timeliness</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Quality of Writing/Production</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Readability</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Authoritativeness Reputation and significance of the author/artist, composer/producer etc.</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Supplemental Sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable Recommendation based on preview and examination of resource by professional personnel</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>High Degree of potential user appeal</i>	<i>4</i>

***Recommendation:***

***Given this review, the Office of Instruction recommends this resource be added to the ACPS Adopted Learning Resource list.***