- All book summaries are provided by the publisher or written by committee members.

  Any available unabridged edition of a title is acceptable.
- Alexander, Kwame. *The Crossover*. Houghton Mifflin, 2014. Twins Josh and Jordan, both of whom love basketball, begin to grow apart in adolescence at the same time as their father, a former basketball star, begins to experience health issues. *Novel in verse, Sports fiction, Newbery Medal 2015, series*
- Alkaf, Hanna. **Queen of the Tiles.** Salaam Reads, 2022. A year after her best friend died at a Scrabble tournament, a flurry of social media posts from the dead girl's account prompts 15-year-old Najwa Bakri to investigate what happened to the "Queen of the Tiles." *Mystery, suspense*
- Anderson, John David. **Posted**. Walden Pond Press, 2017. Eighth graders thwart a phone ban at their school with a creative use of post-it notes, until the messaging gets harmful and a group of outsider teens take a stand to promote inclusiveness and kindness. *Realistic fiction*
- Anderson, M. T. *The Assassination of Brangwain Spurge*. Candlewick, 2018. This is a collaboration between Anderson and Eugene Yelchin about an inept and unlikely pair, an elf and a goblin, in which the stiff and snobby historian elf is catapulted into the goblin kingdom as a spy and unknowing assassin, and is hosted by a goblin archivist, who is anxious for cultural exchanges. *Fantasy*
- Asimov, Isaac. *The Stars, Like Dust*. First published in 1951. At the death of his father, Biron Farrill becomes involved in the plot to rebel against the Tyranni who have conquered many worlds. *Classic science fiction, mystery, series*
- Berry, Julie. *Lovely War*. Viking, 2019. The Greek goddess Aphrodite recounts two tales of tragic love during WWI at the height of World War II. She seeks to answer the age-old question: 'Why are Love and War eternally drawn to one another?' but her quest for a conclusion that will satisfy her jealous husband uncovers a multithreaded tale of prejudice, trauma, and music revealing that War is no match for the power of Love. *The audiobook version is highly recommended. Mythology, magical realism*
- Bishop, Jenn. *Free Throws, Friendship, and Other Things We Fouled Up.* Chronicle Books, 2023. Basketball player Rory has just moved to Cincinnati with her father, who is a Division 1 coach, when she hits it off with the rival college team's daughter, Abby, but their friendship is threatened when they realize their dads' rivalry goes deeper than on the court. *Sports fiction*
- Bowen, Fred. *Hardcourt: Stories from 75 Years of the National Basketball Association*. McElderry Books, 2022. This basketball history presents an exciting overview of the players that made NBA basketball such a success and includes a brief history of the origins of the game and its evolution. Action-packed, attractive art accompanies the text. *Nonfiction*
- Bowling, Dusti. *Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus*. Sterling, 2017. New friends, a mystery, and a lot of humor help Aven, thirteen, adjust to middle school

- and life at a dying western theme park, where her being born armless presents many challenges. *Mystery*, *series*
- Bruchac, Joseph. **Voices of the People.** Reycraft Books, 2022. This collection of poems dramatizes the lives of men and women who contributed to Native American and Indigenous Peoples' histories, and contemporary Native American artworks provide fascinating connections to the poems. *Poetry*, *Historical fiction*
- Culbertson, Kim. *The Wonder of Us.* Point, 2017. Riya and Abby were best friends in their small California town, but Riya and her family moved to Berlin for Riya's junior year, and it was hard to stay in touch. Now that the year has passed, Riya proposes that they take a two-week Grand Tour and travel around Europe to reconnect--but they have both been hiding secrets, and those secrets threaten to push them apart forever. *Realistic fiction.*
- Dee, Barbara. *Maybe He Just Likes You*. Aladdin, 2019. Mila isn't sure if the boys at school asking her for hugs are just flirting like her friend says, but it doesn't seem that way and makes her uncomfortable. When the boys won't leave her alone, Mila needs to find a solution before things get even worse. *Realistic fiction*.
- Donnelly, Jennifer. **Stepsister**. Scholastic, 2019. Ella's stepsister Isabelle is deemed ugly, wicked, and doomed to a life of misery until she decides to take action to change her fate. *Classic retelling/fantasy*.
- Elliott, David. **The Seventh Raven**. Clarion, 2021. A gripping retelling of the Grimms' fairy tale of seven brothers transformed into ravens and a young sister determined to find the brothers and break the spell. Told in verse, the rhythm of the storytelling takes on a haunting mood. *Novel in verse, fantasy*
- Esplin, J.L. **96 Miles.** Tom Doherty, 2020. Brothers John and Stewart find themselves on their own in a desert with no food or water after a massive blackout creates a crisis that tests their determination to survive. *Adventure*, *survival*
- Fleming, Candace. Crash from Outer Space: Unraveling the Mystery of Flying Saucers, Alien Beings, and Roswell. Scholastic, 2022. A strange explosion and scattered debris in the desert outside Roswell, New Mexico leads to a series of UFO stories that escalate into conspiracy tales of government secrecy. Nonfiction
- Freeman, Megan E. *Alone*. Aladdin, 2021. When she decides to have a secret sleepover, twelve-year-old Maddie is accidentally left behind when her whole town is evacuated, leaving her to fend for herself in a world without any other human beings. *Novel in verse, adventure, survival*
- Gonzalez, Christina Diaz. **Concealed.** Scholastic, 2021. In this mystery thriller, Katrina and her family have been on the run for years but with the help of a computer whiz named Parker, Katrina searches out the truth about her identity and the danger that has ensnared her family. *Mystery, science fiction*
- Hale, Shannon. *Friends Forever*. First Second, 2021. Based on the author's own experiences as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, this graphic novel shows the stress of trying to be a

- "perfect" teenager and the path to self-acceptance and focusing on one's strengths. *Graphic memoir, trilogy*
- Hardinge, Frances. *Unraveller*. Amulet Books, 2023. Suspenseful with a dash of horror, this story features a youth who has the power to "unravel" curses; when he links up with a girl who was once cursed, they try to foil a devious organization's plot to gain power by controlling curses. *Dark fantasy*
- Henry, April. *Girl Forgotten*. Little, Brown, 2023. When seventeen-year-old Piper Gray starts a true crime podcast investigating a seventeen-year-old murder case, she puts her life in danger as she digs deep into the mysteries of the past. *Mystery, suspense*
- Higuera, Donna Barba. *The Last Cuentista*. Levine Querido, 2021. When the destruction of Earth by a comet is imminent, Petra Peña and her scientist parents, along with other selected humans, escape via starship. After being put in stasis, they expect to be cared for by volunteer monitors until their arrival on habitable Sagan in 380 years, but things do not go as planned. *Science fiction, Newbery Medal 2022, Pura Belpré Author Award Winner 2022.*
- Hirsch, Rebecca E. *Where Have All the Birds Gone?: Nature in Crisis.* Twenty-First Century Books, 2022. The bird crisis is explained through stories of birds that became extinct as well as environmental hazards that endanger birds. *Nonfiction*
- Hood, Susan. *Alias Anna: A True Story of Outwitting the Nazis*. HarperCollins, 2022. The true story of how young Ukrainian Jewish piano prodigies Zhanna and her sister Frina outplayed their pursuers while hiding in plain sight during the Holocaust. *Novel in verse*, *biography*
- Hutton, Keely. **Secret Soldiers**. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019. It is the height of WWI, and although teenager Thomas Sullivan isn't old enough to enlist as a soldier, he finds himself participating in a secret mission in the brutal trenches of the Western Front, all the while seeking his brother who is missing in action. *Historical fiction*
- Jarrow, Gail. *Blood and Germs: The Civil War Battle Against Wounds and Disease.* Calkins Creek, 2020. Would you want to be a Civil War surgeon? Before modern medicine, injuries during the war were a grisly, life-and-death matter. Read about the heroes, leaders, and technology of the time in this colorful and surprising nonfiction title. *Nonfiction*
- Jarrow, Gail. **Spooked! How a Radio Broadcast and The War of the Worlds Sparked the 1938 Invasion of America**. Calkins Creek, 2018. Orson Welles led a group of talented performers in a 1938 radio production of *The War of the Worlds*, which created a panic across the nation. The story of this faked "alien invasion" is a fascinating mix of theater, history, and psychology. *Nonfiction*
- Johnson, Steven. How We Got to Now: Six Innovations that Made the Modern World. Viking, 2018. This fun survey describes how innovations, such as air

- conditioning and eyeglasses, evolved; these stories provide an appreciation of how ideas build upon each other. *Nonfiction*
- Kean, Sam. The Disappearing Spoon: And Other True Tales of Madness, Love, and the History of the World from the Periodic Table of the Elements. Little, Brown, 2019. In an amazing collection of stories surrounding the periodic elements, readers will see how art, society, and history have been influenced by the marvels of elements in our world. Nonfiction
- Kelly, Scott. *Endurance: My Year in Space and How I Got There*. Crown, 2018. Ever wonder what it is like to live in space? NASA astronaut, Scott Kelly details his journey from problem student to fighter pilot, Space Shuttle commander, and year-long inhabitant of the International Space Station. *Memoir*
- Kingfisher, T. **Thornhedge**. Tor Books, 2023. In this fractured fairytale, a knight sets out on a quest to find a princess trapped in a tower entranced by a curse. What if her curse was meant to keep something truly evil contained? *Fantasy*
- Klass, David. **Losers Take All: A Novel.** Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2015. At a sportscrazy New Jersey high school where all kids must play on a team, a group of rebels start a soccer team designed to undermine the jock culture of the school. Sports fiction
- Korman, Gordon. *Slugfest*. Balzer + Bray, 2024. Considering he is already playing on the high school's JV football team, 8th grader Yash can hardly believe that he's in summer school taking a PE class; soon, he bonds with other students over their slightly wacky former home-economics teacher turned coach as they compete in a city-wide flag football tournament. *Sports, humorous fiction*
- Langeland, Deirdre. *Meltdown: Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Disaster in Fukushima*. Roaring Brook, 2021. It is March 11, 2011, and the fourth largest earthquake ever measured creates a tsunami that not only hits northeast Japan but results in the meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, one of the worst nuclear disasters on record. *Nonfiction*
- Larsen, Mylisa. *Playing through the Turnaround.* Clarion, 2022. Can a handful of jazz band students take a stand to help save student clubs and enrichment classes that are threatened by school budget cuts? *Realistic fiction*
- Larson, Hope. **Salt Magic**. Margaret Ferguson Books, 2021. Twelve-year-old Vonceil Taggart, willing to risk everything to set things right, leaves her family's Oklahoma farm in 1919 seeking the salt witch who cast a spell that turned their spring to saltwater. Fantasy, historical fiction, 2023 Maverick Award
- Lee, Stacey. *The Downstairs Girl.* Putnam's, 2019. Jo is a Chinese girl living during the 1890s in Atlanta, a time in which the fight for women's rights is on the rise while segregation laws are also beginning to restrict the rights of Blacks and Asians. Jo masks her identity to become a popular and controversial "advice columnist" for the local paper, and she becomes immersed in the fight for rights. *Historical fiction*.

- Lim, Elizabeth. **Six Crimson Cranes**. Alfred A. Knopf, 2021. The exiled Princess Shiori must unravel the curse that turned her six brothers into cranes, and she is assisted by her spurned betrothed, a capricious dragon, and a paper bird brought to life by the power of her magic. *Fantasy, series*
- Marsh, Katherine. **The Lost Year.** Roaring Brook, 2023. Struggling with loneliness during the pandemic shutdown, 13-year-old Matthew finds an old photo of his grandmother and starts to uncover family secrets about her experiences during the Holodomor (Ukrainian famine). *Historical fiction, National Book Award Finalist*
- Messner, Kate. *Tracking Pythons: The Quest to Catch an Invasive Predator and Save an Ecosystem*. Millbrook, 2020. Wade through south Florida with scientists dedicated to finding and controlling the Burmese python population, an invasive species from Southeast Asia. This nonfiction title is full of photos and fascinating facts for snake and nature lovers as well as the just plain curious. *Nonfiction*
- Muhammad, Ibtihaj. **Proud: Living My American Dream**. Little, Brown, 2018. The inspiring and critically acclaimed all-American story of faith, family, hard work, and perseverance by Olympic fencer, activist, and one of *Time Magazine*'s "100 Most Influential People," Ibtihaj Muhammad. *Memoir*
- Neri, G. **Polo Cowboy.** Candlewick, 2021. Cole gets a job as a stable hand for a polo team at an elite military academy and begins to see an opportunity for himself at the academy but can Cole navigate the prejudice of the polo players and use his skills as a horseman to win a scholarship? *Realistic fiction*, *standalone sequel*
- Nott, Dan. Hidden Systems: Water, Electricity, the Internet, and the Secrets Behind Systems We Use Every Day. Random House Graphic, 2023. Discover the history, development, and engineering challenges posed by society's most essential infrastructures. Nonfiction, graphic novel
- Nunn, Malla. **When the Ground is Hard**. Putnam's, 2019. At Swaziland's Keziah Christian Academy, where the wealth and color of one's father determines one's station, once-popular Adele bonds with poor Lottie over a book and a series of disasters. *Historical fiction*
- Odhiambo, Eucabeth A. **Auma's Long Run**. Carolrhoda Books, 2017. When AIDS devastates thirteen-year-old Auma's village in Kenya during the 1980s, Auma must choose between staying to help her family and working toward a track scholarship that will take her away from home. *Historical fiction*
- Oh, Axie. **The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea**. Feiwel & Friends, 2022. In this retelling of a Korean folktale, Mina is swept away to the spirit realm to awaken the sleeping sea god to save her family and homeland from deadly storms. *Fantasy*
- Oliver, Mary. **Dog Songs: Thirty-five Dog Songs and One Essay.** Penguin, 2013. A collection of poems and one essay about dogs and their relationships with their owners. *Poetry*

- Oppel, Kenneth. *Bloom*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2020. Anaya, Petra, and Seth race to save their family, friends, and island community against a mysterious, deadly plant invasion only to discover that part of the mystery lies deep within themselves. *Science fiction, thriller, trilogy*
- Paulsen, Gary. **Gone to the Woods: Surviving a Lost Childhood**. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021. In this riveting and inspiring memoir, the author of *Hatchet* and other wilderness survival stories tells his own true-life survival story beginning at age five and continuing through young adulthood. *Memoir*
- Priest, Cherie. *I Am Princess X*. Arthur A. Levine, 2015. Years after writing stories about a superheroine character she created with a best friend who died in a tragic car accident, sixteen-year-old May is shocked to see stickers, patches, and graffiti images of the superheroine appearing around Seattle. *Mystery, thriller*
- Reynolds, Jason. **Long Way Down**. Atheneum, 2017. Fifteen-year-old Will faces questions of morality and justice as he considers murdering the man who shot his brother in this powerful, gripping novel-in-verse that takes place in sixty crucial seconds. *Novel in verse, realistic fiction*
- Reynolds, Jason, and Ibram X. Kendi. *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You.* Little, Brown, 2020. Preeminent author Jason Reynolds provides an exploration of what it means to be an antiracist in this fast-paced, conversational nonfiction title. *Nonfiction*
- Reynolds, Justin A. *Miles Morales Shock Waves: A Spider-Man Graphic Novel*. Graphix, 2021. Except for having special powers such as turning invisible and shooting webs from his wrists, Miles is a normal kid juggling typical teenage problems; but when an earthquake hits his mother's hometown in Puerto Rico and a classmate's father disappears, Miles must kick things into high gear. *Graphic novel*, *superheroes*, *series*.
- Rhodes, Jewell Parker. *Black Brother*, *Black Brother*. Little, Brown, 2020. Biracial Donte and his brother attend Middlefield Prep, and Donte presents as black while his brother Trey presents as white. Their school experiences couldn't be more different, especially when Donte gets unjustly arrested. *Realistic fiction*
- Roberts, Barbara Carroll. *Nikki on the Line*. Little, Brown, 2019. Middle schooler Nikki's passion is basketball, and she dreams of making the cut for a competitive club team. However, her non-sporty mom, the secret about her dad, changing friendships, and a new guy on the scene add up to things not going quite the way she planned. *Sports fiction*
- Sanderson, Brandon. **Skyward**. Delacorte, 2018. Branded as the daughter of a coward after her father abandons his team and is killed in battle, young Spensa sets her sights on claiming the stars by becoming a pilot and seeking retribution for her father's death by taking on their age-old enemy, the Krell. *Science fiction, trilogy, novellas*.
- Sandler, Martin W. **1919: The Year That Changed America**. Bloomsbury, 2019. Sandler shows the many shockwaves hitting the country in 1919: the end of

- World War I and the resulting race riots, The Great Molasses Flood, the Red Scare, labor unrest, and the temperance movement all made great changes in American society. He compares those trends with what is happening now to show how history affects the current situation. *Nonfiction*
- Sands, Kevin. *The Blackthorn Key.* Aladdin, 2015. In 1665 London, fourteen-year-old Christopher Rowe, apprentice to an apothecary, and his best friend Tom try to uncover the truth behind a mysterious cult, following a trail of puzzles, codes, pranks, and danger toward an unearthly secret with the power to tear the world apart. *Fantasy, series*
- Schmidt, Gary D. **The Labors of Hercules Beal.** Clarion Books, 2023. When Hercules Beal's teacher assigns him a project to explore the Twelve Labors of the mythological Hercules in real life, the seventh grader ends up learning a a lot about himself and his community. *Realistic fiction*
- Schwab, V.E. *Gallant*. Greenwillow, 2022. Olivia Prior has grown up in Merilance School for Girls with no past except for her one treasure, her mother's journal so when a letter arrives inviting her to come home to the ruinous manor, Gallant, she seizes the chance to find out about her family. *Dark fantasy*
- Sepetys, Ruta. *I Must Betray You.* Philomel, 2022. 17-year-old Cristian Florescu, is forced to spy on an American ambassador's teenage son but how does one survive in a Romanian society that is surrounded by suspicion and treachery? *Historical fiction*
- Sheinkin, Steve. **Bomb, Graphic Novel: The Race to Build and Steal the World's Most Dangerous Weapon.** Roaring Brook, 2023. Combining historical facts with the pacing of a thriller, this graphic novel adapts Sheinkin's awardwinning book Bomb using three storylines--spies, sabotage, and scientific breakthroughs--leading up to the historic creation of the atomic bomb in Los Alamos, New Mexico. *Graphic novel, nonfiction.*
- Sheinkin, Steve. *Undefeated: Jim Thorpe and the Carlisle Indian School Football Team.* Roaring Brook, 2017. Tells the fascinating story of the beginning of American collegiate football and the role that coach Pop Warner, football great Jim Thorpe, and the legendary Carlisle Indian Industrial School contributed to the development of the sport. *Nonfiction*
- Soontornvat, Christina. All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team. Candlewick, 2020. This gripping narrative of the 2018 Thai boys' rescue combines the technical details of the rescue operation with the inspiring human efforts to save these boys. Nonfiction, Newbery Honor Book 2021
- Spooner, Meagan. **Sherwood**. HarperTeen, 2019. When Lady Marian learns that her betrothed, Robin of Locksley has perished in the Crusades, she is faced with an uncertain future and finds herself caught between helping Will Scarlet, a fugitive, and keeping one step ahead of Sir Guy, the arm of the law. "The lady becomes the legend" is the perfect tagline for this reimagined classic. *Classic retelling, adventure*

- Springer, Nancy. *Enola Holmes and the Black Barouche*. Wednesday Books, 2021. The witty, independent, and clever Enola Holmes jumps on a case with her older brother Sherlock Holmes when Flossie, the wife of the Earl of Dunhench, is suspiciously reported dead. *Mystery, series*
- Stroud, Jonathan. *The Amulet of Samarkand*. Hyperion, 2003. This story is set in present-day London where Nathaniel, a young magician's apprentice, calls up the djinni Bartimaeus to steal the Amulet of Samarkand from another magician, and they both get caught up in a vast conspiracy of treason and murder. *Fantasy, series*
- Sundquist, Josh. *Love and First Sight.* Little, Brown, 2017. When Will decides to have surgery that can potentially restore his vision, he finds that those he cares about may be keeping secrets. *Romance*
- Thomas, Sherry. **The Magnolia Sword: A Ballad of Mulan.** Tu Books, 2019. This new telling of the Mulan story will captivate readers with scenes of sword duels and martial arts. Mulan, a young girl disguised as a boy, joins forces with a warrior team to search out a traitorous plot and prevent invading armies from overthrowing the Chinese royal empire. *Folklore, adventure*
- Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit, or, There and Back Again*. First published 1937. Bilbo Baggins, a respectable, well-to-do hobbit, lives comfortably in his hobbit-hole until the day the wandering wizard Gandalf chooses him to take part in an adventure from which he may never return. *Classic fantasy, series*
- Vail, Rachel. *Well, That Was Awkward.* Viking, 2017. Gracie has forgotten how to breathe, move, or do anything when confronted with A. J. who is suddenly so good-looking! Then to top things off her best friend Sienna wants Gracie to compose texts to send to A. J. as if it was from her... but the replies are weirdly unlike A. J. *Romance*
- Warga, Jasmine. *Other Words for Home*. Balzar + Bray, 2019. Jude and her mother flee Syria as violence erupts in neighboring towns. As Jude tries to navigate a new home, school, and friendships, she discovers inner courage as she becomes her own person. *Novel in verse, contemporary, historical fiction, Newbery Honor* 2020
- Watson, Renée. *Piecing Me Together*. Bloomsbury, 2017. Tired of being singled out at her mostly white private school as someone who needs support, high school junior Jade would rather participate in the school's amazing Study Abroad program than join Women to Women, a mentorship program for at-risk girls. *Realistic fiction, Coretta Scott King Award 2018*
- Wein, Elizabeth. *The Enigma Game*. Little, Brown, 2020. A small community in Scotland rallies in World War II when a young girl, Louisa, finds an Enigma machine. The descriptions of the air battles between German Messerschmitt planes and the ill-equipped English bombers will keep readers on the edge of their seats. *Historical fiction*, *adventure*

- Wilson, Kip. *White Rose.* Versify, 2019. Based on true events, this novel in verse tells the compelling story of Sophie Scholl, an activist in World War II Nazi Germany who refused to be a bystander and instead risked everything to stand up against injustice. *Novel in verse, historical fiction*
- Wolk, Lauren. **Wolf Hollow: A Novel.** Dutton, 2016. Twelve-year-old Annabelle must learn to stand up for what is right in the face of a manipulative and violent new bully who targets people Annabelle cares about, including a homeless World War I veteran. *Historical fiction*
- Wolkenstein, M. Evan. *Turtle Boy*. Delacorte, 2020. Seventh-grader Will's Bar Mitzvah community service project, visiting an incurably ill older boy in the hospital, leads to a friendship that is life-changing for both them and those around them. *Realistic fiction*
- Yelchin, Eugene. **Spy Runner.** Holt, 2019. Spy intrigue, FBI agents, Cold War paranoia, some blurry photos, and a sprinkling of wicked wit make this story a unique mystery. *Mystery*
- Young, Kristen. *Apprentice*. Enclave Escape, 2021. Even though she has a freakish photographic memory, Flick has no memory of her first five years of life. When recurring, intrusive nightmares morph into daytime hallucinations, she is propelled down a path that could endanger her lifelong dream of entering the Love Collective government's Elite Academy. *Science fiction, Realm Makers Book of the Year, Caleb Award, series*
- Ziegler, Jennifer. **Worser**. Holiday House, 2022. Worser's life is turned upside down after his mother has a stroke, but the awkward, word-loving twelve-year-old finds glimmers of hope when he discovers friends who share his love of wordplay and books. *Realistic fiction*

#### Compiled by:

Diana Armentor, Awty International School
Christina Bell, The Kinkaid School
Joan Lange (Chair), Annunciation Orthodox School
Laura Leib, Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart (retired)
Ashleigh Manion, Second Baptist School

Stephanie Penttila, *The John Cooper School*Aaryn Silva, *The Kinkaid School*Copyright © 2024 Houston Area Independent Schools Library Network