

# The Review Crew



## Early Elementary Fiction

### Sleepy Bee

By: John Hutton

Illus. by: Sandra Gross

Blue Manatee Press, 2014

ISBN: 9781936669271

Curriculum: *Bees; Pollination; Food*

Good morning Sleepy Bee! Off to the strawberry field for breakfast, stop for a sweet pea snack, have an apple lunch, and visit the pumpkin patch before snuggling in the hive for a good night's rest. This board book for young students introduces bees and a few of the foods they pollinate.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



### Animal Music

By: Julia Donaldson

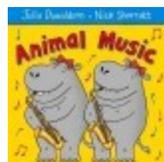
Illus. by: Nick Sharratt

MacMillan Children's Books, 2013

ISBN: 9781447210955

Curriculum: *Music; Animals; Musical instruments; Stories in rhyme*

Bulldogs, bison, hippos, and more play along to the music with a variety of instruments. This is a fun book in rhyme featuring many animals and different musical instruments. It would be a good read aloud for young students in a unit on music, musical instru-



ments, and rhythm.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni

### Little Red Riding Hood

Translated by Anthea Bell

Illus. by: Sybille Schenker

Minedition, 2014

ISBN: 9789888240791

Curriculum: *Wolves; Grandmothers; Fairy tales; Grimm fairy tales*

The story is classic Little Red Riding Hood. What sets this book apart is the amazing artwork. Each page is filled with bold colors, patterns, and textures offset by solid black lines or backgrounds. Schenker then uses die-cut paper design techniques to highlight and emphasize portions of each illustration to create a specific mood for each. The result is a captivating piece of art that retells a well-known fairy tale.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen

Thomas Jefferson H.S.



### The Storm Whale

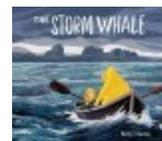
Written and illus. by: Benji Davies

Henry Holt and Co., 2013

ISBN: 9780805099676

Curriculum: *Whales; Friendship; Family*

Every day, a little boy named Noi watches his father leave for a long day of work at sea. One morning, he discovers that a storm has washed a baby whale ashore. The whale needs help, so Noi takes him home and keeps him in the bathtub to



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### Who are we?

- ☺ We are DPS teacher librarians from elementary, middle and high school.
- ☺ We know DPS students and the DPS curriculum.

### What we do!

- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least fifteen recently published books.
- ☺ This publication consists of the best books we review each month.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ETL5, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

help him survive. Noi tells him stories, plays sea sounds on his record player and brings him nourishment. When his father returns home Noi is surprised to find that he is not angry with him. As the two help the whale return to the sea, father and son form closer ties. Both story and full-page illustrations in this picture book are heartwarming.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer  
South H.S.

### Kid Sheriff and the Terrible Toads

By: Bob Shea

Illus. by: Lane Smith

Roaring Brook Press,  
2014

ISBN: 9781596439757

*Curriculum: Outlaws; Sheriffs; Toads*

The town of Drywater Gulch has a thievin', hootin' and hollerin' toad problem and Mayor McMuffin needs help. Fortunately young Sheriff Ryan shows up (slowly) on a tortoise and calmly proceeds to tell him all his troubles are caused by dinosaurs, not toads. As the sheriff continues to give all the criminal credit to T-Rexes and other prehistoric creatures, the toad gang is so furious that they demand to be locked up. Problem solved! Sly humor and dynamic illustrations make this a treat for read aloud time.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Alumni



## Super Elemental Fiction

### Meet the Bigfeet

Written and illus. by:  
Kevin Sherry

Scholastic, 2014

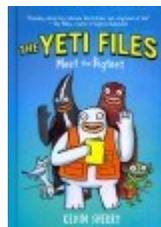
ISBN:  
9780545556170

*Curriculum: Yeti; Mythical creatures; Crytozoology*

Blizz Richards, a yeti, gets good news of a family reunion but is sad his cousin Brian won't be there. Brian went into hiding after a photograph of him went viral. Yetis and other such cryptids have all taken oaths to never be seen. Read this fun book to see if Blizz and his buddies can avoid further detection, find Brian, and have a fun family reunion. Limited text and entertaining black and white illustrations on every page make this a great book for 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade independent readers not quite ready for *Captain Underpants*.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas

JFK H.S.



### Night Sky Dragons

By: Mal Peet and  
Elspeth Graham

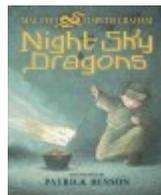
Illus. by: Patrick  
Benson

Candlewick Press, 2014

ISBN: 9780763661441

*Curriculum: Silk Road; Fathers and sons; Kites*

Young Yazul lives in a walled fortress that serves to protect and shelter merchants as they travel along the Silk Road. Yazul spends his days making kites with his grandfather, de-



spite his father's disapproval. But when raiders attack, it is Yazul's kite making skills and an ingenious solution that will save the people of the fortress. Rich watercolor illustrations complement this enthralling adventure by provide historical and cultural details.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen

Thomas Jefferson H.S.

### Princess Wannabe

Written and Illus. by:  
Leslie Lammler

Harper Collins, 2014

ISBN: 9780061251979

*Curriculum: Princesses; Books; Reading*

Fern wanted to be a princess. One magical evening, she fell into her fairy tale book and set out to find the princess. She encountered the Frog Prince and the Big Bad Wolf, who were nothing like their story book selves. Fern followed the path to the castle, ran by the guard and searched for the princess. When Fern found the princess, she was reading a bedtime story to many of the story time characters. After the story, Fern was finally able to ask the princess what it was like to be a princess. After listening to all the princess had to be and do during the day, it was sitting down and reading a good book that was the most enjoyable. Fern decided that she had everything she needed back in her own room.

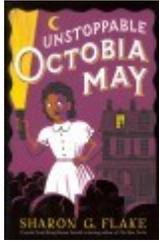
Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy



**Unstoppable Octobia May**

By: Sharon G. Flake  
Scholastic, 2014  
ISBN:  
9780545609609



*Curriculum: African-American girls; Racism; Secrecy*  
Octobia May is living at her aunt's boarding house where she is convinced mysterious Mr. Davenport is a vampire. As she and her friend Jonah investigate, they uncover something worse; Mr. Davenport and the local bank owner have killed someone to cover up a racial secret from World War II. She bravely confronts the bad guys and all comes out. The author skillfully weaves in historical events from 1953 as Octobia May seeks for freedom to be herself, reflecting the desire for civil rights for all. Good for students who understand the background of the era.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert  
Alumni

***Super Elementary***  
**Nonfiction**

**Super Simple Scandinavian Art: Fun and Easy Art from around the World**

By: Alex Kuskowski  
Abdo, 2015  
ISBN:  
9781624032837



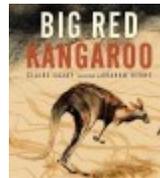
*Curriculum: Art and culture; Europe; Scandinavian*  
This title offers seven art projects based on the Scandinavian culture. Children learn how to make Swedish Dala horse stamps, Lapland headbands, Viking sailing ships, and more. Reviewed titles in the *Super Simple Cultural Art Set* series are appropriate for K-5 students requiring vary-

ing degrees of adult supervision depending upon the child's age and the project. A complete materials list (pictures included) for all the projects is included at the beginning of the book as is a brief cultural note on each project. Clear step-by-step instructions are provided for each activity.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

**Big Red Kangaroo**

By: Claire Saxby  
Illus. by: Graham Byrne  
Candlewick Press,  
2015



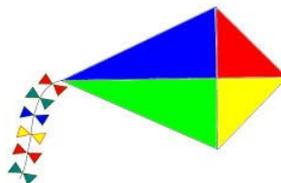
ISBN: 9780763670757

*Curriculum: Kangaroos; Australia; Survival*

This interesting picture book shows the life of a Red Kangaroo. Set in the wilds of Australia, the reader follows the kangaroos through an average day. Red kangaroos live in families called mobs. There is one dominant male who watches out for the safety of his mob and must watch for any other males who might challenge his position. The story is told on one page, and interesting facts about kangaroos are in a different text on the opposite page. The illustrations are a strong addition to the story. This is a non-fiction book that reads like a picture book, and could be used for middle school readers as well as elementary.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place  
Bridge  
Academy



**Middle School Fiction**

**Rain Reign**

By: Ann M. Martin  
Feiwel & Friends, 2014  
ISBN: 9780312643003



*Curriculum: Celebrating differences; Pets; Friendship; Coming-of-age*

Rose doesn't fit in with her other classmates. She loves homonyms, prime numbers, and her dog, Rain. When she's feeling frustrated, she often recites prime numbers, which elicits stares and giggles from her classmates. With the help of her loving uncle and her best friend, Rain, she keeps a positive attitude, until a large storm rips through their small town and Rain ends up missing. Can Rose track down her dog amidst all the devastation? Equal parts heartbreaking, uplifting, and humorous, Rose's narration gives the reader a sense of empathy for those who struggle when routines change, obsess over things that seem trivial to the rest of us, and have a unique way of viewing the world.

Reviewed by: Jonathan Almon  
Steck Elem.

**First Team**

By: Tim Green  
Harper, 2014  
ISBN: 9780062208750



*Curriculum: Football; School; Conduct of life*

Brock and his dad are on the run again. Actually they have been running all of Brock's life, so this isn't

all that different. This time, his dad promises, will be the last. So in the small town of Calhoun, where football is everything, Brock is determined to make the First Team. In Calhoun there is a dividing line between two social classes. If you are a "flattie", you will never make First Team if any of the rich coaches have anything to say about it, no matter how good you are. This is a great action and sports story for upper elementary, middle and even high school readers.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
CEC Middle College

## High School Fiction

### The Black Butterfly

By: Shirley Reva Vernick

Cinco Puntos Press,  
2014

ISBN: 9781935955801

*Curriculum: Love; Family; Friendship; Ghosts*

Penny's mom has done it again; she is off in Iowa for the Christmas holidays hunting ghosts. for a documentary. And 17-year-old Penny must spend her holidays with an old friend of her mom who happens to own an old inn - the Black Butterfly - on the coast of Maine. Life seems dreadful until Penny begins to make friends with her mother's friend Bubbles, her son George, and two ghosts who roam the rooms of the inn. And Rita the cook makes the most tantalizing meals. While exploring the Black Butterfly with her ghosts, Penny learns a lot more about her kooky mother. And when Penny and George become an item, Penny doesn't want to leave Maine at all!



Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer  
South HS

### A Thousand Pieces of You

By: Claudia Gray

HarperTeen, 2014

ISBN: 9780062278968

*Curriculum: Adventure; Mystery; Science fiction; Series*

Marguerite Caine's parents reached world fame with their latest invention, the Firebird, which allows someone to jump into different dimensions. After Marguerite's father is murdered, she must follow her father's killer, her parent's assistant Paul, through multiple dimensions to discover the truth. Will she survive long enough to discover what happened to her father? Older readers who enjoyed the Divergent series will love this fast-paced, futuristic adventure from New York Times bestselling novelist, Claudia Gray.

Reviewed by: Jonathan Almon  
Steck Elem.

### I Love I Hate I Miss My Sister

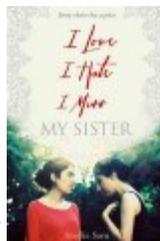
By Steve Sheinkin

Delacorte Press, 2014

ISBN: 9780385743761

*Curriculum: World literature; Cultural identity; Civil liberties*

This is the coming of age story of two sisters and the choices they make to assert their freedom and independence at home, at school, and in their community. As young Muslim women of Algerian descent Djelilia and Sohane encounter religious and cultural persecution daily growing up in the housing projects of Lilac, France. Their story alternates between the past and the



present with reserved but introspective Sohane serving as the narrator. She vividly details their struggles as they traverse the two worlds they live in. As a result tragedy ensues. A must read for those interested in French culture, Muslim culture, family relationships, civil liberties and women's rights.

Reviewed by: Sarah Martinez  
North H.S.

### Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe

By: Benjamin Alire Sáenz

Simon & Schuster,  
2012

ISBN: 9781442408920

*Curriculum: Coming of age; Friendship; Mexican Americans; Homosexuality*

Mexican-American teens Dante and Aristotle meet during the summer of 1987. Over the course of a year, they develop a strong friendship that gradually turns to romance -- a romance that Ari embraces, but that Dante tries to reject. Realistically thoughtful and mature, this is a solid addition to GLBT literature.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco  
Skinner M.S

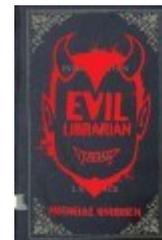
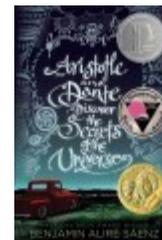
### Evil Librarian

By: Michelle Knudsen  
Candlewick, 2014

ISBN:  
9780763660383

*Curriculum: Demons; High school; Drama club; Romance*

Cynthia's best friend Annie is head



over heels for the new librarian. He is totally hot and has the most mesmerizing eyes. Soon Cyn realizes that his eyes really are mesmerizing and he is somehow draining power from the entire student body. Annie becomes his student assistant and he uses her to help drain power. Sometimes, when he lets his guard down, Cyn sees that he really has huge bat wings and horns: he's a demon. Cyn and the boy she is crushing on are the only two people who seem to realize what is really going on. Can the two of them face down the growing number of demons and save their friends as well as their school?

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
CEC Middle College

## High School Nonfiction

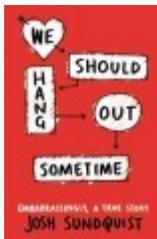
### We Should Hang Out Sometime: Embarrassingly, a True Story

By: Josh Sundquist  
Little, Brown and Company, 2014

ISBN: 9780316251020

*Curriculum: Memoirs; Disabilities; Coming-of-Age*

Josh Sundquist is twenty-five years old and has never had a girlfriend. Although he has had plenty of *girlfriends* and he's been on a number of dates he cannot seem to move out of the friend zone. After his most recent rejection he decides to conduct a semi scientific investigation as to why. Is it his opening line "we should hang out sometime," his prosthetic leg or is something else wrong with him?



Josh contacts all of his previous *girl friends* from middle school to the present day with enlightening and surprising results. Josh's voice is relatable for young adults embarking on personal relationships as well as those overcoming disabilities. Full of hilarious dating anecdotes and other stories.

Reviewed by: Sarah Martinez  
North H.S.

In  
sight,  
watch flight.

Soar high, in sky.

Hear sound. Twist round.

String tangle. Neck strangle.

Break free. Rush, flee.

Slip, trip, lose grip.

Let go. Oh, no!

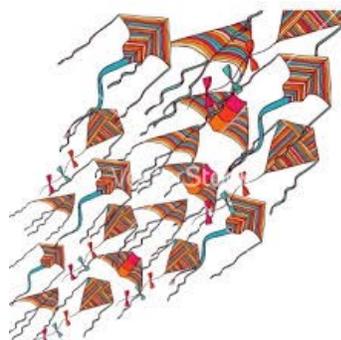
Fly high, in  
sky.

Watch  
flight,

out  
sight.

Bye,  
bye,

kite.



## Review Crew Staff

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JFK High School

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