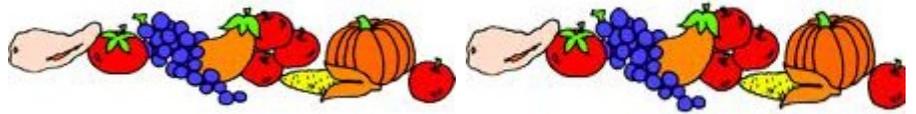


The Review Crew



What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

Brought to you by the Denver Public Schools Book Review Committee.

Volume 9 Number 3

November 2012

Fiction

A Home for Bird

Written and Illus. by: Philip C. Stead

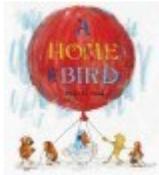
Roaring Brook Press, 2012

ISBN: 9781596437111

Curriculum: Birds; Toads; Home; Cuckoos; Clocks and watches

A foraging toad finds a silent blue bird and sets out to find him a home. Through a cleverly orchestrated series of adventures, he succeeds in reuniting Bird with his house, a cuckoo clock. This is a delightful tale of friendship and determination with appealing characters, touching sentiment and bold illustrations by the 2011 Caldecott winner.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose Alumni



Dinosaur Thunder

By: Marion Dane Bauer

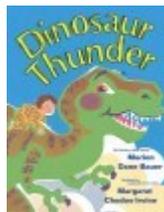
Illus. by: Margaret Chodos-Irvine

Scholastic, 2012

ISBN: 9780590452960

Curriculum: Thunderstorms; Fear; Dinosaurs

"When lightning flares in the faraway sky and clouds growl like lions waking," young Brannon heads for a hiding place. Big



brother Chad is excited by the coming storm and appeals to Chad's love of dinosaurs to help him overcome his fright. A great discussion starter with bold imagery and energetic lettering providing visual appeal.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose Alumni

Pig Has A Plan

Written and illus. by:

Ethan Long

Holiday House, 2012

ISBN: 9780823424283

Curriculum: Pigs; Farm animals; Surprise parties

Pig has a plan, and that is to take a nap. Except everyone in the barnyard is being too noisy; "Hen wants to saw. Cow wants to gab. Cat wants to pop." The full-paged, bright and simple illustrations will likely attract young eyes, and the simple sentences may encourage them to try reading the book on their own.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds Alumni

Pluto Visits Earth

By: Steve Metzger

Illus. by: Jared Lee

Orchard Books, 2012

ISBN: 9780545249348

Curriculum: Pluto; Solar system



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 ETLs, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

Just informed that he is no longer considered a planet, Pluto decides to come to earth to demand reinstatement, much to the dismay of its inhabitants. He is downcast after hearing the astronomers' explanation, until a little boy lets him know he is still special. Students with background about the solar system will appreciate the colorful and humorous portrayal of the solar system by the "Black Lagoon" illustrator. Notes in the back give more detail about dwarf planets. Reviewed by: Peggy Obert Waller K-8

The Schmutzy Family

By: Madelyn Rosenberg
 Illus. by: Paul Meisel
 Holiday House, 2012
 ISBN:
 9780823423712
 Curriculum: *Cleanliness; Family life; Sabbath; Jews*



The Schmutzy children delight in learning about the world through the hands-on approach of becoming as messy as possible. Whether they are creating mud pies in the kitchen or exploring the swamp and bringing home a few of its creatures, mom doesn't seem to mind. But when it is time to prepare for the Sabbath, mom insists that everyone and everything must be as clean as possible to celebrate the sacred day. Reviewed by Michelle Jensen TJ H.S.



Nonfiction

Basic Manners

By: Ann Ingalls
 Illus. by: Ronnie Rooney
 Child's World, 2013
 ISBN: 9781614732235



Curriculum: Etiquette; Manners
 This PreK-2 primer offers young children guidance in etiquette and being polite. It discusses how to greet people, why it's important to take turns, how to be a good sport, and more. All reviewed titles in the *Good Manners* series provide colorful multicultural illustrations. Several "Did You Know?" sidebars provide interesting facts about manners in other cultures. These titles provide a good opening for discussions on how to behave in various situations.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
 JFK H.S.

Count Me In!

By: Cynthia Weill
 Illus. by: the Aguilar Sisters
 Cinco Puntos Press,
 2012
 ISBN: 9781935955399



Curriculum: Counting; Parades
 "Here comes the parade! Count me in!" One man leads the parade with a balloon, two men light off the fireworks, and finally ten people have gathered to watch the parade. This simple counting book in both English and Spanish features the beautiful handcrafted ceramic figurines of Oaxaca's Aguilar sisters. Reviewed by: Leah Rounds Alumni



The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

Many of these books will work in middle school, too.!

Fiction

The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

Written and illus. by: Helen Ward
 Templar Books, 2012
 ISBN:
 9780763660987



Curriculum: Fables; Folklore
 Though enchanted with adventures proposed by his slick city cousin, a little country mouse quickly retreats to the simple pleasures of home when confronted with the harried pace and dangers of urban living. Luxurious watercolor paintings portray the animals, countryside and 30's era city tableaus in rich naturalistic detail. Ideal for read-alouds as well as individual appreciation. Reviewed by: Cat DeRose Alumni

Boxcar Children

Beginning

Patricia MacLachlan
Albert Whiteman &
Co., 2012

ISBN:

9780807566169

Curriculum: Families; Friendship
Times are hard. The Great Depression has a grip on the country. The Alden family is doing okay. Everyone has a job to do on the farm to keep things working. One day a blizzard strikes and the Clark family is stranded at the end of their road. The Alden's take them in and shelter them until the part for the automobile comes. Eventually the Clark's have to leave and shortly after disaster strikes the Alden family. Everyone knows the story of the Boxcar Children but who knows what came before? This heartwarming beginning is presented by famed author Patricia MacLachlan.
Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.



Nonfiction

The San Francisco 49ers

By: Mark Stewart
Norwood House,
2013

ISBN: 9781599535388

Curriculum: Football; Joe Montana; Jerry Rice

The San Francisco 49ers have been thrilling fans since their 1946 debut and have won 5 Super Bowls since 1981. This title traces their history highlighting games and players along the way. Special



mention is given to their stadium and uniforms. Reviewed titles in the *Team Spirit* series feature quotes from people related to the organization and team accomplishments. A publisher-sponsored website, updated throughout the season, is included. The local team will be the most requested, but rabid 3rd-5th grade football fans may enjoy the whole series.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Monsieur Marceau

By: Leda Schubert
Illus. by: Gérard
Dubois
Roaring Book Press,
2012

ISBN:

9781596435292

Curriculum: Marcel Marceau; Mimes; France

This biographic picture book tells the story of the world's most famous mime, Marcel Marceau who delighted audiences around the world with his ability to tell stories through gesture, expression, and movement while never uttering a word. But perhaps more impressive than his ability as a mime, were his exploits during World War II. As a young resistance fighter with the French underground, Marcel saved the lives of hundreds of Jewish children by leading them out of occupied France and to the safety of Switzerland. The expressive, beautiful illustrations capture the essence of the supremely talented Marcel Marceau.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen
TJ H.S.



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

**Many of these books will work
in high school, too.!**

Fiction

Kizzy Ann Stamps

By: Jeri Watts
Candlewick Press, 2012
ISBN:

9780763658953

Curriculum: Race relations; Desegregation; Historical fiction

It is 1963 and Kizzy Ann will no longer be attending the black school. Integration has come and Kizzy Ann and all her classmates will go to the white school in town. Kizzy is worried about this turn of events and writes to her new teacher about her worries. Her new teacher writes back to her and through a series of letters gives her strength to endure this monumental change. In addition, Kizzy has a Border Collie that is her best friend and helps her cope with prejudice that comes her way.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA



Chained

By: Lynne Kelly
Farrar Straus Giroux,
2012
ISBN:
9780374312374



Curriculum: *Animal treatment; Circuses; Child labor; India*

To pay for his sister's medical treatment, and to protect his widowed mother from a cruel employer, ten-year-old Hastin takes a job in the remote jungles of India as keeper to a young circus elephant he names Nandita. The boy soon discovers he has been duped by the cruel businessman, Timir, with no hope of escape for himself or the young elephant he has grown to love. With the help of elderly Burmese cook, Ne Min, Hastin undertakes a daring plan to win freedom for himself and Nandita. Kelly weaves an exciting tale of adventure and purpose while leaving young readers with much knowledge of life in India and the nature of elephants. Give this one to animal lovers and those who enjoy a good, suspenseful story.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco Skinner M.S.

Shadow

By: Michael Morpurgo
Feiweil and Friends,
2010
ISBN:
9780312606596



Curriculum: *Dogs in war; Afghanistan War*

Aman and his mother are Afghan refugees. Aman's only comfort during their struggles was the spaniel Shadow, whom they had to abandon when they escaped. After six years

in England, they are on the verge of being deported. Their friend Matt enlists his journalist grandfather's help to publicize their plight while Aman somehow hopes to be reunited with Shadow. A sympathetic treatment of a current topic for students who feel strongly about taking a stand for their beliefs.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert Waller K-8

The Cabinet of Earths

By: Anne Nesbet
Harper, 2012
ISBN: 9780061963131



Curriculum: *Fantasy; Family; Magic; Immortality*

Maya and her family move to Paris, France. She meets some very odd people there who seem to think she is special. She finds out that her family history has ties to some very ancient magic. The Cabinet of Earths is part of that magic that can grant immortality. The Cabinet is calling to Maya to be its next Keeper. As she tries to figure out the mystery she must delve into the past and understand the magic she didn't know she had.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

Magic Under Stone

By: Jaclyn Dolamore
Bloomsbury; 2012
ISBN: 9781599906430



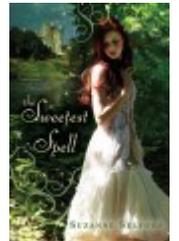
Curriculum: *Magic; Fairies; Friendships; Trust*

Erris, the Fairy Prince, was entrapped in a clockwork body. Nimira was able to awaken him in the first book, *Magic Under Glass*. This book

starts with him being part human and part mechanical. Nimira must wind him up every morning. They are looking for the magic that can restore him to a full person. Nimira is very much in love with her prince, but has doubts if the relationship will survive if they fail in their quest. To complicate things, there is a Jinn who is ordered to kill him. There is intrigue, magic and twists and turns in the plot. Readers will have to wait for book three to see if Erris succeeds. Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Place Bridge Academy

The Sweetest Spell

By: Suzanne Selfors Walker, 2012
ISBN: 978-0802723765



Curriculum: *Magic; Adventure; Fantasy;*

Strong female protagonist

Born with a club foot, Emmeline Thistle was abandoned in the woods on the night of her birth, but the cows of the village stood guard over her until she was found and rescued. When her village is washed away in a flood, Emmeline is forced into a world that hates her because of her red hair. When it is discovered that Emmaline has the lost ability to make chocolate, she is kidnapped and ransomed to the queen. Emmaline must decide between a life of servitude in the castle or as a leader for her people. Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

Someday Dancer

By: Sarah Rubin
ChickenHouse, 2012
ISBN:
9780545393782



Curriculum: Dancing; New York City - 1959; Martha Graham
Casey wants to be a dancer more than anything in the world. Casey lives in a small town in rural South Carolina and dreams of New York City. When Casey learns of a scholarship to a New York dance studio she starts to save every penny in order to afford the bus ticket to the tryouts. She doesn't make the tryouts she wanted but finds another dance studio where she does get accepted: The Martha Graham Center for Contemporary Dance. Teens who are attracted to dance of any kind will appreciate this well-written and historical look at dance and the New York City of the 1950's.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

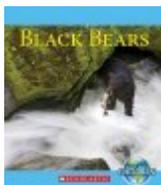
Nonfiction

Black Bears

By: Timothy M. Daly
Children's Press,
2013
ISBN:

9780531268315

Curriculum: Black bears; Bears



This thorough look at black bears, "among the largest mammals found in North America," gives readers a true appreciation for these incredible animals. Full-page photos and *Fun Fact* inserts provide visual appeal. Useful reference tools, including *Grolier Online* sites, make this and other volumes in the *Nature's Children* series (from bullfrogs to wolves) ideal for research.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Alumni



Young Adults Deserve the

Fiction

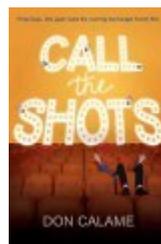
Call the Shots

By: Don Calame
Candlewick Press, 2012

ISBN:

97801763655563

Curriculum: High school; Movie making; Friendship; Adolescent boys



Sean, Matt, and Coop are back and their mission this time is to make a horror film and win at TerrorFest. With his parents expecting a baby, Sean needs this money to add a room to his house so he won't have to bunk with his twin sister. Add in a pot-smoking uncle holding the film's purse strings, a stalker girlfriend and her psycho brother, and tons of slang body-part references and you have a great book for humor seeking HS boys. Quite high on the raunch-o-meter, but the boys' actions and dialogue are authentic.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

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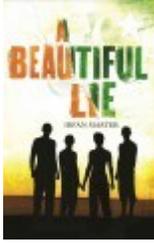
A Beautiful Lie

By: Irfan Master
Albert Whitman,
2011

ISBN:

9780807505977

*Curriculum: Partition;
India; Death; Family
life*



Partition will happen in 75 days when thirteen-year-old Balil finds out his widowed father only has a few months to live. As Partition draws nearer Balil can see change in the townspeople. Balil's father, loves a united India. Knowing that Partition will divide India into two countries, Balil decides to keep this information from him as he lies dying in his bed despite the mounting tension and violence happening in the town.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

Soonchild

By: Russell Hoban
Candlewick Press,
2012

ISBN:

978076365920

*Curriculum: Sham-
ans; Inuit; Father and child*



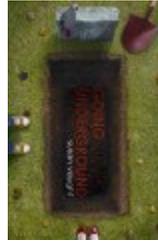
Sixteen-Face John is a shaman in the Great White North. His wife is expecting their child, Soonchild. When Soonchild refuses to come out of his wife's belly because she does not know the World of Songs. Sixteen-Face John decides to go on a Big-Dream Trip to reclaim World Songs for Soonchild.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley
MSLA

Going Underground

By: Susan Vaught
Bloomsbury, 2011
ISBN: 9781599906409

*Curriculum: Interper-
sonal relationships;
Gravediggers; Sex
crimes*



Readers are first introduced to seventeen-year-old parolee Del Hartwick in the cemetery as he digs graves - the only job he can get as a convicted sex offender. At first, he seems an unsympathetic character, but through flashbacks we learn that Del (age fourteen) and his girlfriend Cory (age thirteen) consensually exchanged nude pictures on their cell phones.

What follows is the story of a young man's attempt to find meaning and purpose in his life after an immature mistake seems to block all hope for a bright future. Teens will be curious enough to read this cautionary tale to the finish.

Reviewed by: Dr. Janice Pacheco
Skinner M.S.

Of Poseidon

By: Anna Banks
Fiewel & Friends, 2012
ISBN: 9781250003324

*Curriculum: Paranormal
romance; Mermaids;
Fantasy*



While on vacation, Emma's best friend is attacked by a shark. Emma fights back and wins without realizing it, and reveals herself to be Syrena - the underwater dwellers we call mermaids. Galen is a syrena prince who has been searching for her since his human friend saw her violet eyes. Now, Galen must convince Emma to train for a life underwater and to marry his brother, even though he is

falling for her himself.
Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

Heaven (Halo Trilogy #3)

By: Alexandra Ador-
netto

Feiwei & Friends, 2012

ISBN:

9780312656287

*Curriculum: Paranormal Romance;
Angels; Adventure*



The third book in the trilogy opens with Bethany and Xavier secretly getting married by Father Mel. This violates the laws of Heaven and brings the angel of death to the church to take the priest's life. The newlyweds have no time to grieve, however, as they are now outlaws and must remain hidden from the Sevens, who will kill them. The couple are eventually forced into a showdown that will kill one of them; the question is, who is willing to sacrifice everything to save the other?

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

"A book is like a key that fits into the tumbler of the soul. The two parts have to match in order for each to unlock. Then—click—a world opens."

Brad Kessler