

# The Review Crew



## Early Elementary Fiction

### Chu's First Day of School

By: Neil Gaiman

Illus. by: Adam Rex

Harper Collins, 2014

ISBN: 9780062223975

Curriculum: *Panda; School; Individuality*

Chu was worried about starting school. He wanted to know what would happen, and if the others would like him. His parents took him to school for his first day. The teacher showed them where to sit and asked each of them to give their name and say one thing that they loved to do. Each of his classmates said their name and explained what they could do. They ranged from climbing trees to singing. Chu just sat quietly. When they got to him, he said his name, then out came a gigantic sneeze. That's what Chu does best. Great fun and wonderful illustrations for new students and that first day of school.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy



### Run Like a Rabbit

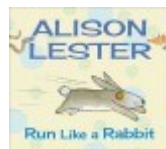
Written and illus. by: Alison Lester

Lester

Allen Unwin, 2012

ISBN: 9781743313275

Curriculum: *Animals; Exercise; Stories in rhyme*



"I can run like a rabbit, jump like a frog, lace like a lizard stretched out on a log." Cute animals wiggle, creep, prance, and sore in this board book, with its fun story in rhyme and encouragement of movement and interaction with the animals in the book.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni

### A Perfect Place for Ted

Written and illus. by: Leila Rudge

Candlewick Press, 2014

ISBN: 9780763667818

Curriculum: *Pets; Dogs; Friendship*

Ted has lived at the pet store for as long as he can remember. But no one ever chooses him and Ted thinks he will end up living at the shop forever. He decides to venture out and find a job in hopes that this will eventually lead to a new forever home. He joins the circus, enters a pet pageant, and briefly becomes a guard dog, but still no one notices Ted. He is depressed and heads back to the pet shop. There at the shop, he befriends a little girl looking for a dog just like him! She takes him home where they share a home with a houseful of cats who revere Ted, the only dog in the house. He is finally someone special!

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer

South H.S.



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Schools Book  
Review Committee.

Volume 11 Number 3

November, 2014

### 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.)

### My Red Balloon

Written and illus. by:  
Kazuaki Yamada  
Minedition, 2014



ISBN: 9789888240722

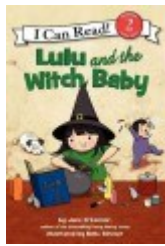
*Curriculum: Friendship; Sharing*

A cute little girl proudly carries her prized red balloon as she boards a big yellow bus. But then the balloon abruptly flies out the bus window. The girl is distraught but other passengers - including Bear, Rabbit, Penguin, Elephant, and Giraffe - all try to help by following the path of the balloon. In the end, no one can retrieve it. But then someone points excitedly an even more beautiful object in the sky - a glowing red sun which is setting over the horizon. This beautiful story of friendship and caring is complemented by colorful minimalist illustrations that children will enjoy.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer  
South H.S.

### Lulu and the Witch Baby

Written by: Jane  
O'Connor  
Illus. by: Bella Sinclair  
Harper Collins, 2014



ISBN: 9780062305176

*Curriculum: Siblings;  
Witches*

Lulu is less than enchanted with her sibling Witch Baby, who never seems to get in trouble, no matter how big a mess she makes. Resolved to get rid of her sister after she destroys Lulu's best drawing, Lulu performs a magic spell and thinks she is successful when she can't find Witch Baby. She has a change of heart after pondering the awful consequences, and is very relieved to find her mother had arrived home and taken her sister to the bathroom to wash off the spell ingredients. The most fun in this book for early readers is in the illustra-

tions that show a very witchy, but not too spooky, home. Use for discussions about sibling rivalry.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert  
Alumni

## Early Elementary Nonfiction

### United States Air Force

By: Julie Murray  
Abdo Kids, 2015



ISBN: 9781629700939

*Curriculum: Military; Planes*

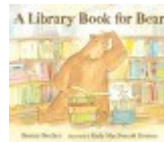
This title introduces young readers to the U.S. Air Force. It describes what officers, mechanics and air controllers do. It also discusses several of the air vehicles used by member of the U.S. Air Force. Titles in the ABDO Kids series are suitable for preliminary, basic K-2 research. Page spreads have 1-3 sentences and large, text-supportive pictures. A few additional facts, a glossary, an index, and a publisher-sponsored website offering additional information wrap up each book.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

## Upper Elementary Fiction

### A Library Book for Bear

By: Bonny Becker  
Illus. by: Kady Denton



Candlewick Press, 2014

ISBN: 9780763649241

*Curriculum: Bear; Books; Libraries*

Mouse came to Bear's house so they could go to the library. Bear doesn't

understand why. He has all the books he needs. He promised, however, so off he went with mouse. His first thought was there were too many books. He would like a book on pickles. Mouse brought him several books, but none to his liking. When Bear started yelling, he was told that only quiet voices were in the library. Then he overheard the story teller read about a brave bear. That got him interested. He found several books after that, and decided that libraries were fun.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Place Bridge Academy

### Sam Silver Undercover Pirate:

#### Dragon Fire

Written by: Jan Burchett and Sara Vogler  
Illus. by: Leo Hartas  
Orion Publishing, 2013

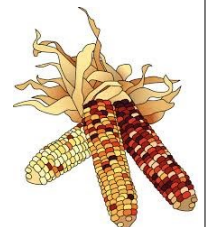


ISBN:  
97814444005882

*Curriculum: Adventure, Fiction, Character Study, Series*

Sam Silver loves to hangout with his friends and play football like many kids, except he occasionally travels back to the time when Captain Blade and his pirate crew roamed the oceans. On this adventure, Sam and the crew find themselves shipwrecked on Dragon Island where a real dragon roams. Can they survive being trapped on the island? Learn all about Sam Silver and his pirate friends on Dragon Island in this fast-paced, action-packed adventure.

Reviewed by: Jonathan Almon  
Steck Elem.



### The Selfish Giant

By: Oscar Wilde

Illus. by: Ritva Voutila

Allen & Unwin, 2012

ISBN:

9781742376509



*Curriculum: Giants; Fairy tales; Forgiveness*

While a giant is away from his estate visiting a friend, children play every day in his large, opulent garden. Upon his return the giant is displeased to find the children using his garden, so he builds a large wall and posts a sign proclaiming that trespassers will be prosecuted. The giant's selfishness infects the garden and causes winter to continue indefinitely. It is not until the giant realizes how selfish he has been and again allows the children into the garden that spring returns. *The Selfish Giant* is a classic story originally published in 1888. This version is notable because of the realistic, exquisitely detailed paintings.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen

TJ H.S.

### Alien Encounter

Written and illus. by:  
Cherise Mericle Harper

Henry Holt, 2014

ISBN:

9780805096217



*Curriculum: Friendship; Monsters*

After a funny introduction involving a wedgie in a tree, fourth graders Morgan and Lewis team up to solve the mystery of an alien who appears in the woods. Their parents and the local media are excited, but Morgan's neighbor, Mr. Lee, wants them to renounce their sighting because the "alien" is really his secret robot

creation. They are prepared to say they actually might have been mistaken when a Sasquatch shows up! Is it also Mr. Lee's? This is a new series boys will enjoy with a story enhanced by drawings, diagrams, and hilarious acrostic poems Morgan creates to reveal his feelings about what's happening.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Alumni

### Jo-Jo the Melon Donkey

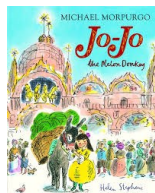
By: Michael Morpurgo

Illus. by: Helen Stephens

Egmont, 2013

ISBN:

9781405263535



*Curriculum: Compassion; Venice; Donkeys*

This is the story of how Jo-Jo the melon donkey and the daughter of the Doge saved Venice with not much more than the power of love. Pen and watercolor illustrations bring life to the story. This is a beautiful read aloud or independent read for middle elementary students.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble

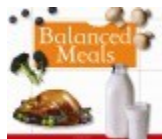
CEC Middle College

## Upper Elementary Nonfiction

### Healthy Eating With MyPlate: Balanced Meals

By: Katie Clark

The Child's World,  
2014



ISBN: 9781623235994

*Curriculum: Food; Nutrition;  
Healthy eating; Human body*

Having a healthy and balanced diet gives you the energy you need to get through the day. Each of the five food groups (fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy) play an important part in keeping your body healthy. One in a series on healthy food and eating, *Healthy Eating With MyPlate*, it is designed to support the "Let's Move" campaign headed by First Lady Michelle Obama.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni

### The History of Money: From Bartering to Banking

By: Martin Jenkins

Illus. by Satoshi Kitamura

Candlewick Press, 2014

ISBN: 9780763667634



*Curriculum: Money; Bartering*

Cartoon-like characters tell the story of money through an entertaining and engaging narrative that will keep young readers interested. Covered in the book are early bartering, taxes, precious metals, and other subtopics that will appeal to young spenders and savers as they begin to learn how our financial system works.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer

South H.S.

## Middle School Fiction

### The Twyning

By: Terence Blacker

Candlewick, 2031

ISBN: 9780763669027

*Curriculum: Orphans;  
Rats; Animal welfare*



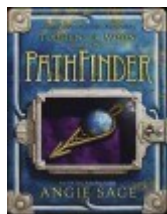
Street orphan Dogboy works as rat catcher and assistant to

mad scientist Dr. Ross-Gibbon--bent on destroying every rat in the city. Efren is a ratling thrust into the position of saving the rodent kingdom. Mutual survival depends on Dogboy and Efren crossing boundaries and working together. Gruesome scenes abound in this riveting tale.

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

### Pathfinder

By: Angie Sage  
HarperCollins, 2014  
ISBN:  
9780062272454



Curriculum: Family;  
Adventure; Magic

Alice TodHunter Moon is a Pathfinder. She lives in a Pathfinder village. After the death of her mother and the disappearance of her father, Tod, as she prefers to be known, lives with her aunt: a not very nice woman. When her friend Ferdie is taken by Garmin (extremely creepy monsters), she and Ferdie's twin brother set out to rescue her. This book will be eagerly received by upper elementary and middle school students, readers of the Septimus Heap series, and new, young readers looking for adventure.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
CEC Middle College

**High School Fiction**

### Nil

By: Lynne Matson  
Henry Holt, 2014  
ISBN: 9780805097719  
Curriculum: Survival;



### Islands; Love

One moment Charley's in Georgia. The next she's naked on an island. On day 12, she finds other teen refugees including Thad (day 267). She discovers that each teen has exactly 365 days to find a cosmic gate that will return them home or they die. As the clock ticks down and Thad and Charley fall in love, can they discover the island's secrets, return home, and find each other again? *Survivor* meets *Twilight Zone* in this entertaining read. Recommend to HS fans of Dashner, Collins, and Yancey.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas  
JFK H.S.

### To All The Boys I've Loved Before

By: Jenny Han  
Simon & Schuster, 2014  
ISBN: 9781442426702



Curriculum: Teens; Dating; Self-esteem; Peer Pressure; Diversity; Family

Lara Jean has never had a boyfriend. But she writes letters to boys she has had a crush on, seals them, and then saves them for herself in a little treasure box her late mother gave her. She never intends to send the letters, but somehow the letters are mysteriously sent. That's when everything starts to happen. She is suddenly pretend-dating a boy who is trying to make his ex-girlfriend jealous. Then all her other ex-crushes confront her as they begin receiving their respective letters. Lara Jean must react to each situation as best she can. In the process, she learns a lot about herself.

Reviewed by: Jutta Gebauer  
South H.S.

### Egg and Spoon

Written by: Gregory Maguire  
Candlewick, 2014  
ISBN:  
9780763672201



Curriculum: *Historical Fiction, Russian Folklore, Fantasy*

In early twentieth-century Russia, a starving peasant girl, Elena, struggles to care for her dying mother while a train carrying fortunes and a wealthy girl, Ekaterina, breaks down in Elena's village on the way to meet the Tsar in St Petersburg. Once the two girls meet, their lives will never be the same. Maguire expertly weaves characters from Russian folklore, humor, fantasy, and mistaken identity in this great adventure.

Reviewed by: Jonathan Almon  
Steck Elem.

### Tumble & Fall

By: Alexandra Coultts  
Farrar Straus Giroux, 2013  
ISBN:  
9780374378615



Curriculum: Asteroids; Interpersonal relationships; Conduct of life; family life; Islands

What would you do if you knew you only had a few days left to live? How would you spend your remaining days? How would you meet your end? For Sienna, Caden, and Zan these are questions they must face now, because a mile-wide asteroid is on a collision course with the earth. *Tumble & Fall* offers a look at the best of humanity and although the destruction of the earth is assured, the story ends on a positive note as the characters focus on relationships, finding forgiveness, and facing each moment with courage.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen  
TJ H.S.

## Nothing

By: Janne Teller  
Atheneum, 2010  
ISBN:  
9781416985792



*Curriculum: Meaning;*

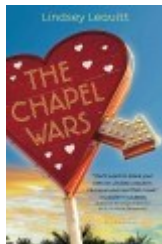
*Interpersonal relations; Schools*

Seventh grader Peter declares that life has no meaning, climbs a plum tree, and vows to stay there until his friends can prove otherwise. Desperate, the friends begin making a pile of meaningful things. As the heap grows, so do the sacrifices...until adults discover the horrifyingly morbid collection. Real conversation starter, but definitely not for the squeamish.

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

## The Chapel Wars

By: Lindsey Leavitt  
Bloomsbury, 2014  
ISBN:  
9781599907888



*Curriculum: Family;  
Business; Competition*

In Los Vegas there is no lack of chapels to get married in. Holly's grandfather has one of the nicer ones. When he dies suddenly not only is Holly overwhelmed with grief, but she is also the new owner of the chapel and that is really overwhelming. The chapel is deeply in debt and Holly puts everything she has into saving it from certain foreclosure. A bit of romance and a bit of angst fill out this novel of overcoming obstacles and family shortcomings.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
CEC Middle College



## Templar

By: Jordan Mechner;  
Illus. by LeUyen Pham &  
Alex Puvilland

First Second, 2013

ISBN: 9781596433939



*Curriculum: Templars; Buried treasure;  
France; Historical fiction; Adventure*

*Templar* is the story of a small band of Templars that escaped the arrests and ensuing massacre after the King of France ordered them all to be hauled before the Inquisition and charged with witchcraft, heresy, and sodomy in the early 1300's. Under the guidance of Martin, a Templar known to be a troublemaker, the band decides to steal the Templar treasure from its hiding place under the temple in Paris and spend it in a more secure location. This graphic novel is a raucous, rollicking adventure with detailed, atmospheric illustrations that highlights a period in history often overlooked.

Reviewed by Michelle Jensen  
TJ H.S.

## **November Comes**

**November comes  
And November goes,  
With the last red berries  
And the first white snows.**

**With night coming early,  
And dawn coming late,  
And ice in the bucket  
And frost by the gate.**

**The fires burn  
And the kettles sing,  
And earth sinks to rest  
Until next spring.**

**Clyde Watson**

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