

*I am pleased to announce the titles for next year's Battle of the Books. These titles would make excellent summer reading choices if you plan to participate in Battle of the Books when we return to school in the fall; however, **reading them during your summer break is not a requirement for participation in Battle of the Books next school year.** I hope you enjoy your time out of school. I look forward to seeing you in August, and I hope that you will consider participating in this exciting reading competition for students in grades 4 and 5 at each of the Rock Hill School District's elementary schools. Please feel free to email me should you have any questions about the program. My email address is rbartles@rhmail.org.*

Battle of the Books

2019 – 2020

Confessions from a Principal's Kid by Robin Mellom

During the school day, fifth-grader Allie West is an outsider. Everyone knows the principal's kid might tattletale to her mom! But after school, Allie is an insider. She's friendly with the janitor, knows the shortest routes around the building, and hangs out with the Afters, a group of misfits whose parents are teachers at their school. Although Allie secretly loves her insider life, she's sick of being an outsider—so she vows to join the Pentagon, the popular math team led by her ex-best friend. But can Allie change her status without betraying where she really belongs?

Family Game Night and other Catastrophes by Mary E Lambert

Annabelle has a secret – a secret so big she won't allow friends within five miles of her home. Her mom collects things. Their house is overflowing with stuff. It gives Annabelle's sister nightmares. Her brother spends as much time as he can at friends' houses. Her dad buries himself in his work. So when a stack of newspapers falls on Annabelle's sister, it sparks a catastrophic fight between their parents – one that might tear them all apart. Annabelle starts to think that things at home finally need to change.

Let's Pretend We Never Met by Melissa Walker

If it were up to Mattie Markham, there would be a law that said your family wasn't allowed to move in the middle of the school year. After all, sixth grade is hard enough without wondering if you'll be able to make new friends or worrying that the kids in Pennsylvania won't like your North Carolina accent. But when Mattie meets her next-door neighbor and classmate, she begins to think maybe she was silly to fear being the "new girl." Agnes is like no one Mattie has ever met – she's curious, hilarious, smart, and makes up the best games. If winter break is anything to go by, the rest of the school year should be a breeze. Only it isn't, because when vacation ends and school starts, Mattie realizes something: At school Agnes is known as the weird girl who no one likes. All Mattie wants is to fit in (okay, and maybe be a little popular too), but is that worth ending her friendship with Agnes?

Masterminds by Gordon Korman

Eli Frieden lives in the most perfect town in the world – Serenity, New Mexico. Honesty and integrity are valued above all else. The thirty kids who live there never lie – they know it's a short leap from that to the awful problems of other, less fortunate places. Eli has never left Serenity. Why would he ever want to? Then one day, he bikes to the edge of the city limits and something so crazy and unexpected happens, it changes everything. Eli convinces his friends to help him investigate further, and soon it becomes clear that nothing is as it seems in Serenity. The clues mount to reveal a shocking discovery, connecting their ideal crime-free community to some of the greatest criminal masterminds ever known. The kids realize they can trust no one – least of all their own parents.

The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate

Inspired by the true story of a captive gorilla known as Ivan, this illustrated novel is told from the point of view of Ivan himself. Having spent twenty-seven years behind the glass walls of his enclosure in a shopping mall, Ivan has grown accustomed to humans watching him. He hardly ever thinks about his life in the jungle. Instead, Ivan occupies himself with television, his friends Stella and Bob, and painting. But when he meets Ruby, a baby elephant taken from the wild, he is forced to see their home, and his art, through new eyes.

Save Me a Seat by Sarah Weeks

Joe and Ravi might be from very different places, but they're both stuck in the same place – SCHOOL. Joe has lived in the same town all his life, and was doing just fine until his best friends moved away and left him on his own. Ravi's family just moved to America from India, and he's finding it pretty hard to figure out where he fits in. Joe and Ravi don't think they have anything in common – but soon enough they have a common enemy (the biggest bully in their class) and a common mission: to take control of their lives over the course of a single crazy week.

Stella by Starlight by Sharon M. Draper

Stella lives in the segregated South – in Bumblebee, North Carolina, to be exact about it. Some stores she can go into. Some stores she can't. Some folks are right pleasant. Others are a lot less so. To Stella, it sort of evens out, and heck, the Klan hasn't bothered them for years. But one late night, later than she should ever be up, much less wandering around outside, Stella and her little brother see something they're never supposed to see, something that is the first flicker of change to come, unwelcome change by any stretch of the imagination. As Stella's community - her world - is upended, she decides to fight fire with fire. And she learns that ashes don't necessarily signify an end.

Wishtree by Katherine Applegate

Red is an oak tree who is many rings old. Red is the neighborhood "wishtree" – people write their wishes on pieces of cloth and tie them to Red's branches. Along with her crow friend Bongo and other animals who seek refuge in Red's hollows, this "wishtree" watches over the neighborhood. You might say Red has seen it all...until a new family moves in. Not everyone is welcoming, and Red's experiences as a wishtree are more important than ever. Funny, deep, warm, and nuanced, this is Katherine Applegate at her very best – writing from the heart, and from a completely unexpected point of view.

Wonder by R. J. Palacio

August Pullman was born with a facial difference that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, he wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid – but his new classmates can't get past Auggie's extraordinary face. Or can they?

Zane and the Hurricane by Rodman Philbrick

Zane Dupree is a charismatic 12-year-old boy of mixed race visiting a relative in New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina hits. Unexpectedly separated from all family, Zane and his dog experience the terror of Katrina's wind, rain, and horrific flooding. Facing death, they are rescued from an attic air vent by a kind, elderly musician and a scrappy young girl – both African American. The chaos that ensues as storm water drowns the city, shelter and food vanish, and police contribute to a dangerous, frightening atmosphere, creates a page-turning tale that completely engrosses the reader. Based on the facts of the worst hurricane disaster in U.S. history, Philbrick includes the lawlessness and lack of government support during the disaster as well as the generosity and courage of those who risked their lives and safety to help others. Here is an unforgettable novel of heroism in the face of truly challenging circumstances.