Summer 2021 Reading Suggestions from Rowley Middle School Library

The Middle School Library is pleased to present this year’s summer reading list—we think you’ll find something appealing here, no matter what kind of reader you are! Books with a Young Adult designator may contain some more intense themes or language and are intended for older middle school readers.

**Acampora, Paul.** *Danny Constantino’s First (and Maybe Last?) Date.*
Danny’s best friend when he was little, Natalie, is now a famous Hollywood star—and he decides to ask her to the seventh-grade dance. His mom’s running for mayor of their town. And Danny is so not ready for time in the spotlight!

**Aleman, Daniel.** *Indivisible. (Young Adult)*
Mateo’s parents have taught him to fear one word: deportation. His dreams of becoming a Broadway star seem crushed when the worst happens—his mom and dad are being forced to Mexico, leaving Mateo alone with his younger sister. What will he do?

**Ali, S.K. and Aisha Saeed, editors.** *Once Upon an Eid: Stories of Hope and Joy by 15 Muslim Voices.*
Maybe it’s waking up to the sound of frying samosas or the comfort of bean pie, maybe it’s the pleasure of putting on a new outfit for Eid prayers, or maybe it’s the gift giving and holiday parties to come that day—each story in this collection celebrates this joyful time of year!

**Bashardoust, Melissa.** *Girl, Serpent, Thorn.*
Soraya, a princess cursed to be poisonous to the touch, has lived eighteen years in the shadows. Her twin brother’s wedding day is coming up, and she finds herself caught between a demon who might hold the answer to her freedom and a dashing young man who isn’t afraid of her. A breathtaking fantasy based on Persian legend.

**Brockenbrough, Martha.** *Alexander Hamilton: Revolutionary.*
Love the musical? Then this biography by one of our greatest YA nonfiction writers is a must-read. You’ll learn all about this brilliant, complex, passionate, and flawed man in this story from his youth in the Caribbean to his role shaping in our government.

**Bruchac, Joseph.** *Peacemaker.*
Okwaho’s best friend has been kidnapped. He wants revenge...or does he? A vision of the Peacemaker, a figure from Iroquois oral tradition, convinces Okwaho that the violence between nations must stop. This thrilling adventure is based on the true story of the founding of the Iroquois Confederacy, which was the inspiration for the U.S. government.
Carr, Cathy. *365 Days to Alaska.*
Rigel is a survival genius, given her off-the-grid life in Alaska. She goes to school by mail, and spends her days hunting rabbits and playing dominoes with her family. But now, her parents are divorcing, and she has to move to Connecticut to live with a grandmother she’s never met. And start middle school in a building with other kids for the very first time. How will she survive *that?*

Chee, Traci. *We Are Not Free.* (Young Adult)
Follow fourteen Japanese-American teens whose lives are turned upside down in the wake of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. With incredible writing and unforgettable characters who each share their point of view as they rally together to fight racism and injustice, this is a must-read!

In the Night Realm, vampires, shifters, and weirns prowl the streets...but they still have to go to school! Ailis and Na'ya are pretty average students (NOT losers), but when a shadow starts looming and a classmate gets all weird, they are the first to notice. It gets personal, though, when Na'ya's little brother D'esh disappears—it's time to confront the secrets of the forbidden mansion in the Silent Woods!

Chokshi, Roshani. *Aru Shah and the City of Gold.*
Aru Shah and her sisters—including one who also claims to be the Sleeper's daughter—must find their mentors Hanuman and Urvashi in Lanka, the city of gold, before war breaks out between the devas and asuras.

Cohen, Tziporah. *No Vacancy.*
Buying and moving into the run-down Jewel Motor Inn in upstate New York wasn't Miriam's dream, but at least it's an adventure. But when it's clear than only a miracle will save the Jewel from closing, Miriam will have to rely on her new friend Kate to come up with a plan to save her family!

Cuevas, Adriana. *The Total Eclipse of Nestor Lopez.*
Thanks to his dad’s career in the armed forces, Nestor Lopez can pack up his belongings in five minutes flat when it’s time to move to a new military base. But this time he and his mom are moving in with his abuela in New Haven, Texas, a tiny town under threat from an evil bruja with her sights on people’s pets. When the neighbors begin to suspect the witch is his grandmother, Nestor must use his ability to talk to animals to clear her name—and save the town!

Millie McGonigle lives in sunny California, but times are tough. Hitler is attacking Europe and it looks like the United States may go to war. Food is rationed and money is tight.
And Millie’s sickly little sister gets all the attention and couldn’t be more of a pain if she tried. It’s all Millie can do to stay calm and feel in control. Will Millie be able to find her way in her family, and keep her balance as the world around her loses its own?

**Deuker, Carl. Golden Arm. (Young Adult)**
When Lazarus “Laz” Weathers gets an opportunity to pitch for the rich kids across town, he has a chance to get drafted by the major leagues and escape a world of poverty and drugs. But this means leaving behind his family, including his younger brother, who seems to be drawn to the dark world of the local drug ring. Laz will have to choose between being a star and being there for his family.

**Diaz, Alexandra. Santiago’s Road Home.**
The coins in Santiago’s hand are meant for the bus fare back to his abusive abuela’s house—except he refuses to return. When he meets the kind María Dolores and her young daughter, Alegría, he decides to accompany them as they travel to the U.S., carrying only backpacks with water and a bit of food. When he’s detained by ICE while crossing the border, Santiago will need all the strength and courage he has to survive the hardest part of his journey.

**Eliopoulos, Christopher. Monster Mayhem. (Graphic Novel)**
When a science-obsessed girl finds herself in the middle of one of her favorite monster movies, can she invent her way out of disaster while also saving the monster who has become her friend?

**Fipps, Lisa. Starfish. (Novel in Verse)**
Ellie tries to live by the Fat Girl Rules—like “don’t move so fast that your body jiggles.” But in the water, she can stretch herself out like a starfish and take up all the room she wants. Fortunately, Ellie has allies in her dad, her therapist, and her new neighbor, Catalina, who loves Ellie for who she is. With this support buoying her, Ellie might finally be able to starfish in real life.

**Firestone, Carrie. Dress Coded.**
Molly Frost is FED UP. Because Olivia was yelled at for wearing a tank top. Because when Jessica was pulled over by the principal and missed a math quiz, her teacher gave her an F. Because girls’ bodies are not a distraction. Because middle school is hard enough. So Molly starts a podcast where girls can tell their stories...before long, her small rebellion swells into a revolution. Because now the girls are standing up for what’s right, and they’re not backing down.

**Frances, Peter, editor. How the Brain Works: The Facts Visually Explained.**
Have you ever asked yourself why you can't remember anything from before the age of three, why people experience déjà vu, or how a bundle of cells in our heads can
produce the remarkable phenomenon that is human consciousness? Drawing on the latest neuroscience research, this visual guide makes the hidden workings of the human brain simple to understand.

**Garber, Romina. Lobizona. (Young Adult)**
An undocumented immigrant on the run from her father's Argentinian crime family, Manuela Azul is confined to a small apartment and a small life in Miami, Florida. When Manu's protective bubble shatters, she investigates the only clue she has about her past—a mysterious "Z" emblem—which leads her to a secret world buried within our own. As Manu uncovers her own story and traces her real heritage all the way back to a cursed city in Argentina, she learns it's not just her U.S. residency that's illegal...it's her entire existence.

**Giles, Chrystal D. Take Back the Block.**
Hanging out with his friends and playing video games is all Wes wants to be thinking about, not the protests his parents drag him to. But when a real estate developer makes an offer to buy the neighborhood Wes has lived in his whole life, everything changes. The grownups are supposed to have all the answers, but all they're doing is arguing. Even Wes's best friends are fighting. And some of them may be moving. But Wes isn't about to give up the only home he's ever known.

**Giles, Lamar. The Last Mirror on the Left: A Legendary Alston Boys Adventure.**
Unlike the majority of Logan County's residents, Missus Nedraw of the Rorrim Mirror Emporium remembers how Otto and Sheed took her mirrors without permission in order to fix their mess. Usually that's punishable by a million-year sentence. However, she's willing to overlook the cousins' misdeeds if they help her: one of her worst prisoners has escaped, and only the Legendary Alston Boys of Logan County can help bring the fugitive to justice.

**Haydu, Corey Ann. One Jar of Magic.**
The whole town has been waiting for Rose to turn twelve, when she can join them in their annual capturing of magic and become the person she was born to be. But when that special day finally comes, Rose barely captures one tiny jar of magic. So when she hears whispers that there are people who aren’t meant for magic at all, she begins to wonder if that’s who she belongs with. Maybe if she’s away from all the magic, away from her dad telling her who she’s meant to be, who she has to be, Rose can begin to piece together what’s truly real in a world full of magic.

**Higuera, Donna Barba. Lupe Wong Won’t Dance.**
Lupe needs an A in all her classes in order to meet her favorite pitcher, Fu Li Hernandez, who's Chinacan/Mexinese just like her. So when the horror that is square dancing rears its head in gym class? Obviously, she's not gonna let that slide.

**Hoang, Van. Girl Giant and the Monkey King.**
Thom Ngho is keeping a secret: she's freakishly strong. And it's making it impossible for her to fit in at her new middle school. Desperate to get rid of her super strength, Thom
makes a deal with the Monkey King, a legendary trickster she accidentally released from his 500-year prison sentence. Soon, Thom is swept up in an ancient and fantastical world where she quickly discovers that magic can’t cure everything, and dealing with the trickster god might be more trouble than it’s worth.

**Holm, Jennifer. The Lion of Mars.**
Bell has spent his whole life—all eleven years of it—on Mars. But he’s still just a regular kid—he loves cats, any kind of cake, and is curious about the secrets the adults in the U.S. colony are keeping. Like, why don’t they have contact with anyone on the other Mars colonies? Why are they so isolated? When a virus breaks out and the grown-ups all fall ill, Bell and the other children are the only ones who can help. It’s up to Bell to uncover the truth and save his family—and possibly unite an entire planet.

**Jung, Mike. The Boys in the Back Row.**
Best friends Matt and Eric are hatching a plan for one big final adventure together before Eric moves away: during the marching band competition at a Giant Amusement Park, they will sneak away to a nearby comics convention and meet their idol—a famous comic creator. Without cell phones. Or transportation. Or permission.

**Kim, Jessica. Stand Up, Yumi Chung.**
On the outside, Yumi Chung suffers from #shygirlproblems. On the inside, Yumi is ready for her Netflix stand-up special. All she needs is a stage and courage. Instead of spending the summer studying her favorite comedians, Yumi is enrolled in test-prep tutoring. One day after class, she stumbles on a comedy camp for kids taught by one of her favorite YouTube stars. The only problem is that everyone thinks she’s a girl named Kay Nakamura. As this case of mistaken identity unravels, Yumi must decide to stand up and reveal the truth or risk losing her dreams and disappointing everyone she cares about.

**Korman, Gordon. Unplugged.**
As the son of the world’s most famous tech billionaire, Jett Baranov has always gotten exactly what he wanted. So, when his father’s private jet drops him in the middle of Little Rock, Arkansas, at a wellness camp called the Oasis, Jett can’t believe it. As the weeks go on, Jett starts to get used to the unplugged life. But he can’t help noticing that the adults at the Oasis are acting really strange. He’s determined to get to the bottom of things, but can he convince everybody that he is no longer just a spoiled brat who is making trouble?

**Krensky, Stephen. The Book of Mythical Beasts and Magical Creatures.**
Say hello to Bigfoot in the forests of North America and learn about the Native American traditions that inspired its story. Voyage to Japan to meet kitsune, supernatural nine-tailed foxes that can turn into humans. And jump onboard an ancient storm-battered ship to learn why mermaids were the last thing a sailor wanted to see. Learn about the societies that spawned these legendary creatures, from Ancient Greece to the
indigenous peoples of Australia, and find out what the beasts tell us about the people who created them.

**Lang, Heidi. *Whispering Pines*.**
A year after Rae’s father vanished, her mother moves them to a new town in the hope that life can return to normal. But there is nothing normal about the town of Whispering Pines. No one knows this better than Caden, who’s seen more than his fair share of weird. When several kids go missing and then return with their eyes removed, many locals dismiss it as another day in Whispering Pines. Can Caden and Rae make it right? It’s *Stranger Things* meets *The X-Files*!

**Lendler, Ian. *The First Dinosaur: How Science Solved the Greatest Mystery on Earth*.**
Not so long ago, people thought what we know as dinosaur bones were the bones of giant humans. Of large elephants. Of angels, even. So, how did we get from angel wings to the T-Rex? This book tells the story of the idea of dinosaurs, and the chain of fossil discoveries and advances in science that led to that idea. Be prepared to meet eccentric men and overlooked women who uncovered the pieces to a puzzle so much bigger than themselves, a puzzle far stranger than they could have ever imagined.

**Levithan, David. *The Mysterious Disappearance of Aiden S.* (as told to his brother).**
Aidan disappeared for six agonizing days of searches and police and questions and constant vigils. Then, just as suddenly as he vanished, Aidan reappears. The story he tells is simply impossible. His brother, Lucas, wants to believe him. But how can you believe in the impossible when everything and everybody is telling you not to?

**Lucas, Chad. *Thanks a Lot, Universe*.**
Brian has always been anxious, and now that he and his brother have been placed in foster care, he’s having panic attacks. Ezra’s always been popular. He’s friends with most of the kids on his basketball team—even Brian. But now some of his friends are acting differently, and Brian seems to be pulling away. Ezra wants to help, but worries if he’s too nice to Brian, his friends will realize he has a crush on him. But when Brian and his brother run away, Ezra has to take the leap and reach out. Both boys have to decide if they’re willing to risk sharing parts of themselves they’d rather hide. But if they can be brave, they might just find the best in themselves—and in each other.

**Lukoff, Kyle. *Too Bright to See*.**
It’s the summer before middle school and eleven-year-old Bug’s best friend Moira has decided the two of them need to prepare. But Bug has bigger issues than Moira’s concerns about what to wear or how to do their hair. Bug’s house is haunted. And there’s a ghost with a really important message for Bug.
McDunn, Gillian. *The Queen Bee and Me.*
Meg has always found comfort in her confident friend Beatrix's shadow. When quirky new girl Hazel becomes Meg's science partner, Beatrix sets her sights on Hazel. Meg is taken aback at how mean Beatrix can be—and how difficult it is to stand up to her friend. Is being Beatrix's friend worth turning down the possibility of finding her own voice?

McGovern, Cammie. *Just Breathe.* (Young Adult)
David is the popular president of his senior class, battling cystic fibrosis. Jamie is a quiet sophomore, struggling with depression. The pair soon realizes that they're able to be more themselves with each other than they can be with anyone else, and their unlikely friendship starts to turn into something so much more. But neither Jamie nor David can bring themselves to reveal the secrets that weigh most heavily on their hearts...and their time for honesty may be running out.

Melleby, Nicole. *How to Become a Planet.*
After an entire summer trying to figure out how to go back to being the person she was before her depression and anxiety diagnosis, twelve-year-old Pluto finds out—with the help of the Hayden Planetarium hotline, a new tutor, and a new friend—that there is no old or new Pluto, there's just Pluto, growing up.

Nagai, Marko. *Under the Broken Sky.*
Natsu and her family live a quiet farm life in Manchuria, near the border of the Soviet Union. But the life they’ve known begins to unravel when her father is recruited to the Japanese army, and Natsu and her little sister, Cricket, are left orphaned and destitute. In a desperate move to keep her sister alive, Natsu sells Cricket to a Russian family following the 1945 Soviet occupation. The journey to redemption for Natsu's broken family is rife with struggles, but Natsu is tenacious and will stop at nothing to get her little sister back.

Oliver, Lauren. *The Magnificent Monsters of Cedar Street.*
Cordelia loves her home on Cedar Street, where she and her father heal dragons, squelches, and diggles. One morning, Cordelia discovers her father has disappeared—along with nearly all the monsters. With only a handful of clues and a cryptic note to guide her, Cordelia must find out what happened to her father, with the help of her new friend Gregory, Iggy the farting filch, a baby dragon, and a small zuppy (zombie puppy, that is).

Pacton, Jamie. *Lucky Girl.* (Young Adult)
58,643,129. That's how many dollars seventeen-year-old Fortuna Jane Belleweather just won in the lotto jackpot. It's also about how many reasons she has for not coming forward to claim her prize. As suspicion and jealousy turn neighbor against neighbor,
and no good options for cashing the ticket come forward, Jane begins to wonder: Could this much money actually be a bad thing?

**Patrick, Cat. *Tornado Brain.***
Frankie has a hard time making friends, with her neurodivergence meaning that it’s hard to change her routine and she can’t stand to be touched. She did have one—Colette—but they’re not friends anymore. It’s complicated. Then, just weeks before the end of seventh grade, Colette unexpectedly shows up at Frankie’s door. The next morning, Colette vanishes. Can Frankie find out what happened?

**Paulsen, Gary. *Gone to the Woods: Surviving a Lost Childhood.***
Beloved author Gary Paulsen portrays a series of life-altering moments from his turbulent childhood as his own original survival story. If not for his summer escape from a shockingly neglectful Chicago upbringing at age five, there never would have been a *Hatchet.* And without his desperate teenage enlistment in the Army, he would not have discovered his true calling as a storyteller. An entrancing account of grit and growing up, this is the famed author at his rawest and most real.

**Royce, Eden. *Root Magic.***
It's 1963, and things are changing for Jezebel Turner, but the biggest is that her Uncle Doc, tells her and her brother that he's going to train them in rootwork, an African American folk magic that has been the legacy of their family for generations. But Jez soon finds out that her family's true power goes far beyond small charms and elixirs, and not a moment too soon. Because when evil both natural and supernatural comes to show itself in town, it's going to take every bit of the magic she has inside her to see her through!

**Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Mañanaland.***
If Max could see the future, he’d have all his questions answered—whether he’d make Santa María’s celebrated fútbol team or whether he’ll ever meet his mother who disappeared when he was a baby. Instead, he only has his abuelo's stories...and the discovery of an underground network that leads “brave souls into tomorrow.” Now he wonders if he is brave enough to take that journey.

**Schlitz, Laura Amy. *Amber and Clay.***
Rhaskos is a Thracian slave in a Greek household. He knows his life is worth less than a donkey. Melisto is a spoiled aristocrat, fearing the day that she’ll be married, but willing to risk her life to serve Artemis for a year as a huntress. Their fates are intertwined, but they won’t meet in-person until one of them is a ghost. It'll take an army of snarky gods to keep the world from collapsing.
For centuries, the Chieftain of Wakanda (the Black Panther) has gained his powers through the juices of the Heart-Shaped Herb. But something is wrong. The plants are dying. It’s up to Shuri to travel away from Wakanda in order to discover what is killing the Herb, and how she can save it!

Thomas, Angie. Concrete Rose. (Young Adult)
Maverick Carter knows that a real man takes care of his family, and his father was the one who taught him that—his father was legendary in the King Lords gang. Life turns upside-down for Mav, though, when he finds out that he’s about to be a father. The long-anticipated prequel to The Hate U Give.

VanderMeer, Jeff. A Peculiar Peril. (Young Adult)
Jonathan Lambshead inherits his grandfather’s mansion and all of its contents. What he doesn’t bargain for are the secret portals to other worlds in the basement...one of which leads to an alternate earth led by an occult dictator who wants to take over our world!

Warga, Jasmine. The Shape of Thunder.
Cora’s sister died in a devastating school shooting. Her former best friend, Quinn, feels guilty because her brother was the shooter. They haven’t spoken in a year, until Quinn leaves a note on Cora’s doorstep on her twelfth birthday with her plan: to go back in time and stop it from ever happening.

Yohalem, Eve. The Truth According to Blue.
Blue Broen is on the hunt for a legendary ship of gold, lost centuries ago when her ancestors sailed to New York. She knows her overprotective parents won't approve of the mission to find their family's long-lost fortune, so she keeps it a secret from everyone except her constant companion, Otis, an 80-pound diabetic alert dog. Enter Jules, the brainy but bratty daughter of a vacationing movie star who arrives on the scene and won't leave Blue alone!

Yoo, Paula. From a Whisper to a Rallying Cry: The Killing of Vincent Chin and the Trial that Galvanized the Asian American Movement. (Young Adult)
It’s 1982. Autoworkers are angry that they’re losing jobs due to the Japanese automotive industry. Vincent Chin is a Chinese American man living in Michigan. Two white men, mistaking him for Japanese, murder him. They get a $3000 fine and three years probation. The injustice angers thousands of Asian Americans and inspires them to rise up. A searing look at the Vincent Chin tragedy and a blueprint for movement-making—an essential read.
MLAB Recommends

Looking for more? The Middle School Library Advisory Board put together a list of their favorite summer reads for you, too—take a look at this list of quick picks from your classmates and friends!

**Augarde, Steve. The Various.**
While staying on her uncle's rundown farm in the Somerset countryside, twelve-year-old Midge discovers that she has a special connection to the Various, a tribe of "strange, wild—and sometimes deadly" fairies struggling to maintain their existence in the nearby woods.

**Bayron, Kalynn. Cinderella Is Dead.**
It’s 200 years after Cinderella found her prince, but the fairy tale is over. Teen girls are now required to appear at the Annual Ball, where the men of the kingdom select wives based on a girl's display of finery. If a suitable match is not found, the girls not chosen are never heard from again. Sixteen-year-old Sophia would much rather marry Erin, her childhood best friend, than parade in front of suitors. At the ball, Sophia makes the desperate decision to flee, and finds herself hiding in Cinderella's mausoleum. There, she meets Constance, the last known descendant of Cinderella and her step sisters. Together they vow to bring down the king once and for all—and in the process, they learn that there’s more to Cinderella’s story than they ever knew . . .

**Brogsol, Vera. Be Prepared. (Graphic Novel)**
All Vera wants to do is fit in—but that's not easy for a Russian girl in the suburbs. Her friends live in fancy houses and their parents can afford to send them to the best summer camps. Vera’s single mother can’t afford that sort of luxury, but there's one summer camp in her price range—Russian summer camp. Vera is sure she's found the one place she can fit in, but camp is far from what she imagined. And nothing could prepare her for all the "cool girl" drama, endless Russian history lessons, and outhouses straight out of nightmares!

**Cabot, Meg. All-American Girl. (Young Adult)**
Sam thought things couldn't get worse when the President's hot son turned out to be in her art class. Then she sort of accidentally stopped an assassination attempt on his dad. Now she's an All American hero. Sam just wants things to go back to normal...and to go out with David without the Secret Service tagging along.

**Hale, Nathan. Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales: One Dead Spy. (Graphic Novel)**
"I regret that I have but one life to give for my country." These are the famous last words of Nathan Hale, a spy for the American rebels in the Revolutionary War. But who was this Nathan Hale? And how did the rebels defeat an army that was bigger, better, stronger, and more heavily armed than they were? One Dead Spy has answers
to these questions, as well as stories of ingenuity, close calls with danger, and acts of heroism in the American War of Independence.

Larson, Hope. All Summer Long. (Graphic Novel)
Thirteen-year-old Bina has a long summer ahead of her. She and her best friend, Austin, usually do everything together, but he's off to soccer camp for a month, and he's been acting kind of weird lately anyway. So it's up to Bina to see how much fun she can have on her own. At first it's a lot of guitar playing, boredom, and bad TV, but things look up when she finds an unlikely companion in Austin's older sister, who enjoys music just as much as Bina. But then Austin comes home from camp, and he's acting even weirder than when he left. How Bina and Austin rise above their growing pains and reestablish their friendship and respect for their differences makes for a touching and funny coming-of-age story.

Littlewood, Kathryn. Bliss (Bliss Bakery Trilogy #1).
Rosemary Bliss's family has a secret. It's the Bliss Cookery Booke—an ancient, leather-bound volume of enchanted recipes like Singing Gingersnaps. Rose and her siblings are supposed to keep the Cookery Booke locked away while their parents are out of town, but then a mysterious stranger shows up. "Aunt" Lily rides a motorcycle and also whips up exotic (but delicious) dishes for dinner. Soon boring, non-magical recipes feel like life before Aunt Lily—a lot less fun. So Rose and her siblings experiment with just a couple of recipes from the forbidden Cookery Booke. A few Love Muffins and Cookies of Truth couldn't cause too much trouble . . . could they?

Finally, we’ve attached next year’s Caudill list, in case you want to get a head start! Happy reading!