Dear Sewanhaka CHSD Students and Families:

Over the years, the English Departments in all five of our buildings have taken great pride in developing solid summer reading programs in grades 7-12 that address the following goals:

- Sharpen reading skills and combat the “summer slide!”
- Foster life-long reading habits.
- Expose students to a broader range of works not covered in our curriculum.
- Enable students to make literary connections with contemporary texts.

Our five English Departments have carefully reviewed our respective programs, and we have decided to offer students in all grade levels a choice of books. We sincerely hope that our book selections will provide students with the opportunity to foster a love of reading while enjoying the relaxation and fun that summer brings. We also encourage parents to accompany their children along this reading journey.

The Summer Reading Book List, organized by grade levels, can be found following this letter. This information, as well as any pertinent information specific to your individual high school, will be posted on each high school’s main webpage and the library website. In addition, this information will be distributed to the local elementary schools and to our local public libraries.

In September, teachers will engage in book discussions and review the novel(s) focusing on the skills incorporated within the context of the work(s). Students will be expected to demonstrate their understanding of the novel(s) they chose to read.

If you have any questions regarding any aspect of this program, please feel free to contact me or your high school’s English Department Chairperson listed below.

Respectfully yours,

Mrs. Gina M. Rodriguez
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District English Coordinator, Sewanhaka Central High School District
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Chairperson, Floral Park Memorial High School
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Mrs. Jessica Stillman
Chairperson, Sewanhaka High School
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To All Sewanhaka CHSD Students:

The English Departments invite students in grades 7 through 12 to select one book of their choice from the appropriate grade-level reading lists organized below.

Happy Reading and Feel Free to Read More than One Book! 😊

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7th Grade:

*New Kid* by Jerry Craft

Winner of the Newbery Medal, Coretta Scott King Author Award, and Kirkus Prize for Young Readers’ Literature

Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, where Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—and not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?

*Dry* by Neal Shusterman and Jarrod Shusterman

The drought—or the Tap-Out, as everyone calls it—has been going on for a while now. Everyone’s lives have become an endless list of don’ts: don’t water the lawn, don’t fill up your pool, don’t take long showers.

Until the taps run dry.

Suddenly, Alyssa’s quiet suburban street spirals into a warzone of desperation; neighbors and families turned against each other on the hunt for water. And when her parents don’t return and her life—and the life of her brother—is threatened, Alyssa has to make impossible choices if she’s going to survive.
7th Grade (continued):

**Counting by 7s** by Holly Goldberg Sloan

Willow Chance is a twelve-year-old genius, obsessed with nature and diagnosing medical conditions, who finds it comforting to count by 7s. It has never been easy for her to connect with anyone other than her adoptive parents, but that hasn't kept her from leading a quietly happy life... until now.

Suddenly Willow's world is tragically changed when her parents both die in a car crash, leaving her alone in a baffling world. The triumph of this book is that it is not a tragedy. This extraordinarily odd, but extraordinarily endearing, girl manages to push through her grief. Her journey to find a fascinatingly diverse and fully believable surrogate family is a joy and a revelation to read.

**The Benefits of Being an Octopus** by Ann Braden

Some people can do their homework. Some people get to have crushes on boys. Some people have other things they've got to do.

Seventh-grader Zoey has her hands full as she takes care of her much younger siblings after school every day while her mom works her shift at the pizza parlor. Not that her mom seems to appreciate it. At least there's Lenny, her mom's boyfriend—they all get to live in his nice, clean trailer.

At school, Zoey tries to stay under the radar. Her only friend Fuchsia has her own issues, and since they're in an entirely different world than the rich kids, it's best if no one notices them.

Zoey thinks how much easier everything would be if she were an octopus: eight arms to do eight things at once. Incredible camouflage ability and steady, unblinking vision. Powerful protective defenses.

Unfortunately, she's not totally invisible, and one of her teachers forces her to join the debate club. Even though Zoey resists participating, debate ultimately leads her to see things in a new way: her mom's relationship with Lenny, Fuchsia's situation, and her own place in this town of people who think they're better than her. Can Zoey find the courage to speak up, even if it means risking the most stable home she's ever had?

This moving debut novel explores the cultural divides around class and the gun debate through the eyes of one girl, living on the edges of society, trying to find her way forward.
8th Grade:

*Look Both Ways* by Jason Reynolds

A National Book Award Finalist!
Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book

This story was going to begin like all the best stories. With a school bus falling from the sky. But no one saw it happen. They were all too busy—

Talking about boogers.
Stealing pocket change.
Skateboarding.
Wiping out.
Braving up.
Executing complicated handshakes.
Planning an escape.
Making jokes.
Lotioning up.
Finding comfort.
But mostly, too busy walking home.

Jason Reynolds conjures ten tales (one per block) about what happens after the dismissal bell rings, and brilliantly weaves them into one wickedly funny, piercingly poignant look at the detours we face on the walk home, and in life.

*Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson

National Book Award and Newbery Honor winner

Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement. Touching and powerful, each poem is both accessible and emotionally charged, each line a glimpse into a child’s soul as she searches for her place in the world. Woodson’s eloquent poetry also reflects the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, despite the fact that she struggled with reading as a child. Her love of stories inspired her and stayed with her, creating the first sparks of the gifted writer she was to become.
8th Grade (continued):

Inside out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai

#1 New York Times bestseller, a Newbery Honor Book, and a winner of the National Book Award

Hà has only ever known Saigon: the thrills of its markets, the joy of its traditions, and the warmth of her friends close by. But now the Vietnam War has reached her home. Hà and her family are forced to flee as Saigon falls, and they board a ship headed toward hope—toward America.

This moving story of one girl's year of change, dreams, grief, and healing received four starred reviews, including one from Kirkus which proclaimed it "enlightening, poignant, and unexpectedly funny."

Kira-Kira by Cynthia Kadohata

Winner of the Newberry Medal

kira-kira (kee ra kee ra): glittering; shining Glittering. That's how Katie Takeshima's sister, Lynn, makes everything seem. The sky is kira-kira because its color is deep but see-through at the same time. The sea is kira-kira for the same reason. And so are people's eyes. When Katie and her family move from a Japanese community in Iowa to the Deep South of Georgia, it's Lynn who explains to her why people stop on the street to stare. And it's Lynn who, with her special way of viewing the world, teaches Katie to look beyond tomorrow. But when Lynn becomes desperately ill, and the whole family begins to fall apart, it is up to Katie to find a way to remind them all that there is always something glittering -- kira-kira -- in the future.

The Crossover by Kwame Alexander

Newbery Medal Winner - Coretta Scott King Honor Award

"With a bolt of lightning on my kicks...The court is SIZZLING. My sweat is DRIZZLING. Stop all that quivering. Cuz tonight I'm delivering," announces dread-locked, 12-year old Josh Bell. He and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood, he's got mad beats, too, that tell his family's story in verse, in this fast and furious middle grade novel of family and brotherhood from Kwame Alexander.
Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story’s heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.

*American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang

Jin Wang starts at a new school where he's the only Chinese-American student. When a boy from Taiwan joins his class, Jin doesn't want to be associated with an FOB like him. Jin just wants to be an all-American boy, because he's in love with an all-American girl. Danny is an all-American boy: great at basketball, popular with the girls. But his obnoxious Chinese cousin Chin-Kee's annual visit is such a disaster that it ruins Danny's reputation at school, leaving him with no choice but to transfer somewhere he can start all over again. The Monkey King has lived for thousands of years and mastered the arts of kung fu and the heavenly disciplines. He's ready to join the ranks of the immortal gods in heaven. But there's no place in heaven for a monkey. Each of these characters cannot help himself alone, but how can they possibly help each other? They're going to have to find a way—if they want to fix the disasters their lives have become.

*Dear America: Young Readers' Edition: The Story of an Undocumented Citizen* by Jose Antonio Vargas

In this young readers' adaptation of his adult memoir *Dear America*, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and undocumented immigrant Jose Antonio Vargas tells his story, in light of the 12 million undocumented immigrants currently in the United States.

Jose Antonio Vargas was only twelve years old when he was brought to the United States from the Philippines to live with his grandparents. He didn’t know it, but he was sent to the U.S. illegally.

When he applied for a learner’s permit, he learned the truth, and he spent the next almost twenty years keeping his immigration status a secret. Hiding in plain sight, he was writing for some of the most prestigious news organizations in the country. Only after publicly admitting his undocumented status—risking his career and personal safety—was Vargas able to live his truth.

This book asks questions including, How do you define who is an American? How do we decide who gets to be a citizen? What happens to those who enter the U.S. without documentation?

By telling his personal story and presenting facts without easy answers, Jose Antonio Vargas sheds light on an issue that couldn't be more relevant.
8th Grade (continued):

Dry by Neal Shusterman and Jarrod Shusterman

The drought—or the Tap-Out, as everyone calls it—has been going on for a while now. Everyone’s lives have become an endless list of don’ts: don’t water the lawn, don’t fill up your pool, don’t take long showers.

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Willow Chance is a twelve-year-old genius, obsessed with nature and diagnosing medical conditions, who finds it comforting to count by 7s. It has never been easy for her to connect with anyone other than her adoptive parents, but that hasn’t kept her from leading a quietly happy life . . . until now.

Suddenly Willow’s world is tragically changed when her parents both die in a car crash, leaving her alone in a baffling world. The triumph of this book is that it is not a tragedy. This extraordinarily odd, but extraordinarily endearing, girl manages to push through her grief. Her journey to find a fascinatingly diverse and fully believable surrogate family is a joy and a revelation to read.

The Benefits of Being an Octopus by Ann Braden

NPR Best Book of 2018, Bank Street List for Best Children’s Books of 2019

Some people can do their homework. Some people get to have crushes on boys. Some people have other things they’ve got to do.

Seventh-grader Zoey has her hands full as she takes care of her much younger siblings after school every day while her mom works her shift at the pizza parlor. Not that her mom seems to appreciate it. At least there’s Lenny, her mom’s boyfriend—they all get to live in his nice, clean trailer.

At school, Zoey tries to stay under the radar. Her only friend Fuchsia has her own issues, and since they’re in an entirely different world than the rich kids, it’s best if no one notices them.

Zoey thinks how much easier everything would be if she were an octopus: eight arms to do eight things at once. Incredible camouflage ability and steady, unblinking vision. Powerful protective defenses.
Unfortunately, she’s not totally invisible, and one of her teachers forces her to join the debate club. Even though Zoey resists participating, debate ultimately leads her to see things in a new way: her mom’s relationship with Lenny, Fuchsia’s situation, and her own place in this town of people who think they’re better than her. Can Zoey find the courage to speak up, even if it means risking the most stable home she’s ever had?

This moving debut novel explores the cultural divides around class and the gun debate through the eyes of one girl, living on the edges of society, trying to find her way forward.
9th and 10th Grade:

**Dear Martin** by Nic Stone

Justyce McAllister is a good kid, an honor student, and always there to help a friend—but none of that matters to the police officer who just put him in handcuffs. Despite leaving his rough neighborhood behind, he can’t escape the scorn of his former peers or the ridicule of his new classmates.

Justyce looks to the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for answers. But do they hold up anymore? He starts a journal to Dr. King to find out.

Then comes the day Justyce goes driving with his best friend, Manny, windows rolled down, music turned up—way up, sparking the fury of a white off-duty cop beside them. Words fly. Shots are fired. Justyce and Manny are caught in the crosshairs. In the media fallout, it’s Justyce who is under attack.

**Darius the Great is Not Okay** by Adib Khorram

Darius Kellner speaks better Klingon than Farsi, and he knows more about Hobbit social cues than Persian ones. He’s a Fractional Persian—half, his mom’s side—and his first-ever trip to Iran is about to change his life.

Darius has never really fit in at home, and he’s sure things are going to be the same in Iran. His clinical depression doesn’t exactly help matters, and trying to explain his medication to his grandparents only makes things harder. Then Darius meets Sohrab, the boy next door, and everything changes. Soon, they’re spending their days together, playing soccer, eating faludeh, and talking for hours on a secret rooftop overlooking the city’s skyline. Sohrab calls him Darioush—the original Persian version of his name—and Darius has never felt more like himself than he does now that he’s Darioush to Sohrab.

Adib Khorram’s brilliant debut is for anyone who’s ever felt not good enough—then met a friend who makes them feel so much better than okay.

**Backfield Boys** by John Feinstein

“*The best writer of sports books in America today*” *(The Boston Globe)* tells a thrilling story of friendship, football, and a fight for justice.

Renowned sports journalist and *New York Times*-bestselling author John Feinstein’s young adult novel *Backfield Boys* follows best friends and football stars Jason Roddin and Tom Jefferson, a perfect, though unconventional, pair: Jason, the Jewish kid, is lightning fast and a natural wide-receiver, while African-American Tom has an amazing arm and a quarterback’s feel for the game. After summer football camp at an elite sports-focused boarding school, the boys are thrilled to enroll on scholarship for their freshman year—despite their mothers’ fears of injury and especially CTE.
9th and 10th Grade (continued):

All American Boys by Jason Reynolds

In this New York Times bestselling novel, two teens—one black, one white—grapple with the repercussions of a single violent act that leaves their school, their community, and, ultimately, the country bitterly divided by racial tension.

A bag of chips. That’s all sixteen-year-old Rashad is looking for at the corner bodega. What he finds instead is a fist-happy cop, Paul Galluzzo, who mistakes Rashad for a shoplifter, mistakes Rashad’s pleadings that he’s stolen nothing for belligerence, mistakes Rashad’s resistance to leave the bodega as resisting arrest, mistakes Rashad’s every flinch at every punch the cop throws as further resistance and refusal to STAY STILL as ordered. But how can you stay still when someone is pounding your face into the concrete pavement?

There were witnesses: Quinn Collins—a varsity basketball player and Rashad’s classmate who has been raised by Paul since his own father died in Afghanistan—and a video camera. Soon the beating is all over the news and Paul is getting threatened with accusations of prejudice and racial brutality. Quinn refuses to believe that the man who has basically been his savior could possibly be guilty. But then Rashad is absent. And absent again. And again. And the basketball team—half of whom are Rashad’s best friends—start to take sides. As does the school. And the town. Simmering tensions threaten to explode as Rashad and Quinn are forced to face decisions and consequences they had never considered before.

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Alire Sáenz

This Printz Honor Book is a “tender, honest exploration of identity” (Publishers Weekly) that distills lyrical truths about family and friendship.

Aristotle is an angry teen with a brother in prison. Dante is a know-it-all who has an unusual way of looking at the world. When the two meet at the swimming pool, they seem to have nothing in common. But as the loners start spending time together, they discover that they share a special friendship—the kind that changes lives and lasts a lifetime. And it is through this friendship that Ari and Dante will learn the most important truths about themselves and the kind of people they want to be.
9th and 10th Grade (continued):

*Marcelo in the Real World* by Matt Berman

The term "cognitive disorder" implies there is something wrong with the way I think or the way I perceive reality. I perceive reality just fine. Sometimes I perceive more of reality than others.

Marcelo Sandoval hears music that nobody else can hear — part of an autism-like condition that no doctor has been able to identify. But his father has never fully believed in the music or Marcelo's differences, and he challenges Marcelo to work in the mailroom of his law firm for the summer... to join "the real world."

There Marcelo meets Jasmine, his beautiful and surprising coworker, and Wendell, the son of another partner in the firm. He learns about competition and jealousy, anger and desire. But it's a picture he finds in a file a picture of a girl with half a face that truly connects him with the real world: its suffering, its injustice, and what he can do to fight.

*The Sun is Also a Star* by Nicola Yoon

Natasha is a girl who believes in science and facts. Not fate. Not destiny. Or dreams that will never come true. She's definitely not the kind of girl who meets a cute boy on a crowded New York City street and falls in love with him. Not when her family is 12 hours away from being deported to Jamaica. Falling in love with him will definitely not be her story.

Daniel has always been the good son, the good student, living up to his parents' high expectations. Never the poet. Definitely not the dreamer. But when he sees Natasha, he forgets about all that. Something about Natasha makes him think that fate has something much more extraordinary in store, for both of them.
**9th and 10th Grade (continued):**

*Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* by Becky Albertalli

Sixteen-year-old and not-so-openly gay Simon Spier prefers to save his drama for the school musical. But when an email falls into the wrong hands, his secret is at risk of being thrust into the spotlight. Now change-averse Simon has to find a way to step out of his comfort zone before he’s pushed out—without alienating his friends, compromising himself, or fumbling a shot at happiness with the most confusing, adorable guy he’s never met.

Incredibly funny and poignant, this twenty-first-century coming-of-age, coming out story—wrapped in a geek romance—is a knockout of a debut novel by Becky Albertalli.

*It’s Kind of a Funny Story* by Ned Vizzini

Like many ambitious New York City teenagers, Craig Gilner sees entry into Manhattan’s Executive Pre-Professional High School as the ticket to his future. Determined to succeed at life—which means getting into the right high school to get into the right college to get the right job—Craig studies night and day to ace the entrance exam, and does. That’s when things start to get crazy.

At his new school, Craig realizes that he isn’t brilliant compared to the other kids; he’s just average, and maybe not even that. He soon sees his once-perfect future crumbling away. The stress becomes unbearable and Craig stops eating and sleeping—until, one night, he nearly kills himself.

Craig’s suicidal episode gets him checked into a mental hospital, where his new neighbors include a transsexual sex addict, a girl who has scarred her own face with scissors, and the self-elected President Armelio. There, isolated from the crushing pressures of school and friends, Craig is finally able to confront the sources of his anxiety.
9th and 10th Grade (continued):

A Heart in a Body in the World by Deb Caletti
A Printz Honor Book

Each step in Annabelle’s 2,700-mile cross-country run brings her closer to facing a trauma from her past in National Book Award finalist Deb Caletti’s novel about the heart, all the ways it breaks, and its journey to healing. Because sometimes against our will, against all odds, we go forward.

Then...
Annabelle’s life wasn’t perfect, but it was full—full of friends, family, love. And a boy...whose attention Annabelle found flattering and unsettling all at once.

Until that attention intensified.

Now...
Annabelle is running. Running from the pain and the tragedy from the past year. With only Grandpa Ed and the journal she fills with words she can’t speak out loud, Annabelle runs from Seattle to Washington, DC and toward a destination she doesn’t understand but is determined to reach. With every beat of her heart, every stride of her feet, Annabelle steps closer to healing—and the strength she discovers within herself to let love and hope back into her life.

Annabelle's journey is the ultimate testament to the human heart, and how it goes on after being broken.
11th and 12th Grade:

**How it Went Down by Kekla Magoon**

A Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book

When sixteen-year-old Tariq Johnson dies from two gunshot wounds, his community is thrown into an uproar. Tariq was black. The shooter, Jack Franklin, is white.

In the aftermath of Tariq’s death, everyone has something to say, but no two accounts of the events line up. Day by day, new twists further obscure the truth.

Tariq’s friends, family, and community struggle to make sense of the tragedy, and to cope with the hole left behind when a life is cut short. In their own words, they grapple for a way to say with certainty: This is how it went down.

**The Hate You Give by Angie Thomas**

National Book Award Longlist · Printz Honor Book · Coretta Scott King Honor Book · #1 New York Times Bestseller!

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil’s name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

**How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents by Julia Alvarez**

Acclaimed writer Julia Alvarez’s beloved first novel gives voice to four sisters as they grow up in two cultures. The García sisters—Carla, Sandra, Yolanda, and Sofía—and their family must flee their home in the Dominican Republic after their father’s role in an attempt to overthrow brutal dictator Rafael Trujillo is discovered. They arrive in New York City in 1960 to a life far removed from their existence in the Caribbean. In the wondrous but not always welcoming U.S.A., their parents try to hold on to their old ways as the girls try find new lives: by straightening their hair and wearing American fashions, and by forgetting their Spanish. For them, it is at once liberating and excruciating to be caught between the old world and the new. Here they tell their stories about being at home—and not at home—in America.
11th and 12th Grade (continued):

**Ordinary Hazards: A Memoir** by Nikki Grimes

Grimes’ verse memoir traces her development through a tumultuous childhood as she finds her voice as a powerful storyteller. Themes of family, belonging, and identity combine to tell a story of faith and resilience.

**The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime That Changed Their Lives** by Dashka Slater

YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Finalist

One teenager in a skirt.
One teenager with a lighter.
One moment that changes both of their lives forever.

If it weren’t for the 57 bus, Sasha and Richard never would have met. Both were high school students from Oakland, California, one of the most diverse cities in the country, but they inhabited different worlds. Sasha, a white teen, lived in the middle-class foothills and attended a small private school. Richard, a black teen, lived in the crime-plagued flatlands and attended a large public one. Each day, their paths overlapped for a mere eight minutes. But one afternoon on the bus ride home from school, a single reckless act left Sasha severely burned, and Richard charged with two hate crimes and facing life imprisonment. The case garnered international attention, thrusting both teenagers into the spotlight.

**I am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter** by Erika L. Sánchez

National Book Award Finalist

Perfect Mexican daughters do not go away to college. And they do not move out of their parents’ house after high school graduation. Perfect Mexican daughters never abandon their family.

But Julia is not your perfect Mexican daughter. That was Olga’s role.

Then a tragic accident on the busiest street in Chicago leaves Olga dead and Julia left behind to reassemble the shattered pieces of her family. And no one seems to acknowledge that Julia is broken, too. Instead, her mother seems to channel her grief into pointing out every possible way Julia has failed.

But it’s not long before Julia discovers that Olga might not have been as perfect as everyone thought. With the help of her best friend, Lorena, and her first love (first everything), Connor, Julia is determined to find
out. Was Olga really what she seemed? Or was there more to her sister’s story? And either way, how can Julia even attempt to live up to a seemingly impossible ideal?

Second Impact by David Klass

Kendall is football town, and Jerry Downing is the high school’s star quarterback, working to redeem himself after he nearly killed a girl in a drunk driving accident last year. Carla Jenson, lead reporter for the school newspaper’s sports section, has recruited Jerry to co-author a blog chronicling the season from each of their perspectives. When Jerry’s best friend on the team takes a hit too hard and gets hurt, Carla wonders publicly if injury in the game comes at too high a cost in a player’s life—but not everyone in Kendall wants to hear it...

David Klass and Perri Klass’s Second Impact is an action-packed story that will resonate with readers who have been following recent news stories are football injuries.

Mexican White Boy by Matt de la Peña

Danny is tall and skinny. Even though he’s not built, his arms are long enough to give his pitch a power so fierce any college scout would sign him on the spot. Ninety-five mile an hour fastball, but the boy’s not even on a team. Every time he gets up on the mound, he loses it.

But at his private school, they don’t expect much else from him. Danny is brown. Half-Mexican brown. And growing up in San Diego that close to the border means everyone else knows exactly who he is before he even opens his mouth. Before they find out he can’t speak Spanish, and before they realize his mom has blond hair and blue eyes, they’ve got him pegged. But it works the other way too. And Danny’s convinced it’s his whiteness that sent his father back to Mexico.

That’s why he’s spending the summer with his dad’s family. But to find himself, he may just have to face the demons he refuses to see—the demons that are right in front of his face. And open up to a friendship he never saw coming.

Matt de la Peña’s critically acclaimed novel is an intimate and moving story that offers hope to those who least expect it.
11th and 12th Grade (continued):

The Other Wes Moore by Wes Moore

Two kids named Wes Moore were born blocks apart within a year of each other. Both grew up fatherless in similar Baltimore neighborhoods and had difficult childhoods; both hung out on street corners with their crews; both ran into trouble with the police. How, then, did one grow up to be a Rhodes Scholar, decorated veteran, White House Fellow, and business leader, while the other ended up a convicted murderer serving a life sentence? Wes Moore, the author of this fascinating book, sets out to answer this profound question. In alternating narratives that take readers from heart-wrenching losses to moments of surprising redemption, The Other Wes Moore tells the story of a generation of boys trying to find their way in a hostile world.

"The chilling truth is that his story could have been mine. The tragedy is that my story could have been his."

We Are Okay by Nina LaCour

Winner of the Michael L. Printz Award

You go through life thinking there's so much you need. . . . Until you leave with only your phone, your wallet, and a picture of your mother. Marin hasn't spoken to anyone from her old life since the day she left everything behind. No one knows the truth about those final weeks. Not even her best friend Mabel. But even thousands of miles away from the California coast, at college in New York, Marin still feels the pull of the life and tragedy she's tried to outrun. Now, months later, alone in an emptied dorm for winter break, Marin waits. Mabel is coming to visit and Marin will be forced to face everything that's been left unsaid and finally confront the loneliness that has made a home in her heart.
11th and 12th Grade (continued):

*All the Bright Places* by Jennifer Niven

The New York Times bestselling love story about two teens who find each other while standing on the edge.

Theodore Finch is fascinated by death. Every day he thinks of ways he might kill himself, but every day he also searches for—and manages to find—something to keep him here, and alive, and awake.

Violet Markey lives for the future, counting the days until graduation, when she can escape her small Indiana town and her aching grief in the wake of her sister's recent death.

When Finch and Violet meet on the ledge of the bell tower at school—six stories above the ground—it’s unclear who saves whom. Soon it’s only with Violet that Finch can be himself. And it’s only with Finch that Violet can forget to count away the days and start living them. But as Violet’s world grows, Finch’s begins to shrink.

*Educated: A Memoir* by Tara Westover

An unforgettable memoir about a young girl who, kept out of school, leaves her survivalist family and goes on to earn a PhD from Cambridge University

Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Her family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when one of Tara’s older brothers became violent. When another brother got himself into college, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University. Only then would she wonder if she’d traveled too far, if there was still a way home.

*Book descriptions from Amazon.com*