

*I am pleased to announce the titles for next year's Battle of the Books along with a short summary of each. 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 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

2017 – 2018

A Long Way from Chicago by Richard Peck

Joey, and his younger sister, Mary Alice, live in the Windy city during the reign of Al Capone and Bugs Moran. Most of their adventures occur "a long way from Chicago" during their annual down-state visits with Grandma Dowdel. She continually astounds her citified grandchildren by stretching the boundaries of truth. In eight hilarious episodes spanning the years 1929-1942, Grandma Dowdel plots outlandish schemes to even the score with various colorful members of her community, including a teenaged vandal, a drunken sheriff and a well-to-do banker.

Out of my Mind by Sharon Draper

Eleven-year-old Melody has a photographic memory. Her head is like a video camera that is always recording. Always. And there's no delete button. She's the smartest kid in her whole school—but no one knows it. Most people—her teachers and doctors included—don't think she's capable of learning, and up until recently her school days consisted of listening to the same preschool-level alphabet lessons again and again and again. If only she could speak up, if only she could tell people what she thinks and knows . . . but she can't, because Melody can't talk. She can't walk. She can't write. Being stuck inside her head is making Melody go out of her mind—that is, until she discovers something that will allow her to speak for the first time ever. At last Melody has a voice . . . but not everyone around her is ready to hear it.

Wild River by P.J. Peterson

Twelve-year-old Ryan goes kayaking and fishing on a California river with his older brother, Tanner. As the boys shoot down rocky rapids, a jagged log in the chute slices into their kayak, toppling them into freezing water, injuring Tanner and leaving him unconscious. Using what he learned from his video games, Ryan is able to stay calm and survive some harrowing situations, and ultimately save both of their lives.

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.

The Mighty Miss Malone by Christopher Paul Curtis

Deza Malone's family is on a journey "to a place called wonderful." Deza is the smartest girl in her class in Gary, Indiana, singled out by teachers for a special path in life. But it's 1936, and the Great Depression has hit Gary hard, and there are no jobs for black men. When her beloved father leaves to find work, Deza, her mother, and her older brother, Jimmie, go in search of him, and end up in a Hooverville outside Flint, Michigan. Jimmie's beautiful voice inspires him to leave the camp to be a performer, while Deza and her mother find a new home and cling to the hope that they will find Father.

All the Answers by Kate Messner

What if your pencil had all the answers? Would you ace every test? Would you know what your teachers were thinking? When Ava Anderson finds a scratched up pencil, she doodles like she would with any other pencil. But when she writes a question in the margin of her math quiz, she hears a clear answer in a voice no one else seems to hear. With the help of her friend Sophie, Ava figures out that the pencil will answer factual questions only – those with definite right or wrong answers – but won't predict the future. Ava and Sophie discover all kinds of uses for the pencil, and Ava's confidence grows with each answer. But it's getting shorter with every sharpening, and when the pencil reveals a scary truth about Ava's family, she realizes that sometimes the bravest people are the ones who live without all the answers.

Crenshaw by Katherine Applegate

Jackson and his family have fallen on hard times. There's no more money for rent – and not much for food either. His parents, his little sister, and their dog may have to live in their minivan – again. Crenshaw is a cat. He's large, he's outspoken, and he's imaginary. He has come back into Jackson's life to help him. But is an imaginary friend enough to save this family from losing everything?

The last kids on Earth by Max Brallier

Ever since the monster apocalypse hit town, average thirteen-year-old Jack Sullivan has been living in his tree house, which he's armed to the teeth with catapults and a moat – not to mention video games and an endless supply of Oreos and Mountain Dew scavenged from abandoned stores. But Jack alone is no match for the hordes of Zombies and Winged Wretches and Vine Thingies – and *especially* not for the eerily intelligent monster known only as *Blarg*. So Jack builds a team: his dorky best friend, Quint; the reformed middle school bully, Dirk; Jack's loyal pet monster, Rover; and Jack's crush, June. With their help, Jack is going to slay Blarg, achieve the ultimate Feat of Apocalyptic Success, and be average no longer! Can he do it?

Moving Target by Christina Diaz Gonzalez

Cassie Arroyo, an American studying in Rome, has her world ripped apart when someone tries to kill her father, an art history professor at an Italian university. Is she their next target? Cassie sets out to uncover what is happening, only to learn that she is a member of an ancient bloodline that enables her to use the Spear of Destiny – a legendary object that can shape the future. Now running from a secret organization intent on killing those from her bloodline, Cassie must – with the help of some friends – decipher the clues that will lead her to the Spear. Her life – and the fate of the world – depends on it.

Serafina and the Black Cloak by Robert Beatty

A brave and unusual girl named Serafina lives secretly in the basement of the grand **Biltmore Estate** amidst the splendor of the Gilded Age. Serafina's pa, the estate's maintenance man, has warned her to keep herself hidden from the fancy folk who live on the floors above, but when children at the estate start disappearing, Serafina and her friend Braeden Vanderbilt must work together to solve a dark and dangerous mystery.