Parents and Freshman Students, Class of 2023:

We are pleased to continue with the district summer reading expectations for students entering grades nine through twelve which was introduced four years ago. The list of recommended reading selections accounts for a broad range of student choices that are representative of multiple genres and cover topics of current interest to high school students. Additionally, the related summer reading assignment was restructured. Students will be expected to present a “digital book talk” to a group of their peers some time during the first several weeks of the school year. While all students must read at least two books, we are hopeful that the expanded lists will encourage students to read more and look forward to the luxury of time that summer will provide and allow them to experience the joy of reading books they will love.

Current research on summer reading largely exposes the extent to which a several month gap in literacy activities can hinder reading growth. Our efforts in this revision process were focused upon seeking out titles and activities that are motivating to current high school students and offer them a greater incentive to pick up a few good books to help pass the summer months. The intention of the summer reading expectation is to foster continued application of the valuable reading strategies and skills that students have learned during the school year. We invite students to fall in love with marvelous characters, open the door to new worlds, and embark on wild adventures.

We encourage parents and guardians of students entering 9th grade to be actively involved in the book selection process to approve the genre, topic and age-level appropriateness of selected books. Please take some time to review the grade level recommendations together with your child in an effort to support reading choices that best meet his/her interests and reading ability. Common Sense Media (commonsensemedia.org) is an excellent resource to review your child’s selections. Books can be borrowed from Middletown Township Public Library or shared with a friend. Students can also purchase new or used books from Barnes & Noble, or online bookstores like amazon.com and alibris.com.

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Students are required to read 2 books from the appropriate list with parent approval and signed consent. The consent form below must be presented to the teacher on the first day of school.

We understand that students have a variety of interests and strengths when it comes to reading, therefore, we support student choice. By signing below, you are granting permission for your child to read the selected book(s).

Student Name: ____________________________________________  Author: _______________________

Title: ____________________________________________  Author: _______________________

Parent/Guardian Signature: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________

Student Signature: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________

Students entering 9th Grade may select from the following list of books:
Boy 21 by Matthew Quick  
Genre: Fiction

You can lose yourself in repetition—quiet your thoughts; I learned the value of this at a very young age. Basketball has always been an escape for Finley. He lives in broken-down Bellmont, a town ruled by the Irish mob, drugs, violence, and racially charged rivalries. At home, his dad works nights, and Finley is left to take care of his disabled grandfather alone. He's always dreamed of getting out someday, but until he can, putting on that number 21 jersey makes everything seem okay. Russ has just moved to the neighborhood, and the life of this teen basketball phenom has been turned upside down by tragedy. Cut off from everyone he knows, he won't pick up a basketball, but answers only to the name Boy21--taken from his former jersey number. As their final year of high school brings these two boys together, a unique friendship may turn out to be the answer they both need.

Stiff by Mary Roach  
Genre: Non-Fiction

"One of the funniest and most unusual books of the year....Gross, educational, and unexpectedly sidesplitting." —Entertainment Weekly
Stiff is an oddly compelling, often hilarious exploration of the strange lives of our bodies postmortem. For two thousand years, cadavers—some willingly, some unwittingly—have been involved in science's boldest strides and weirdest undertakings. In this fascinating account, Mary Roach visits the good deeds of cadavers over the centuries and tells the engrossing story of our bodies when we are no longer with them.

The Knife of Never Letting Go by Patrick Ness  
Genre: Science Fiction

Todd Hewitt is the only boy in a town of men. Ever since the settlers were infected with the Noise germ, Todd can hear everything the men think, and they hear everything he thinks. Todd is just a month away from becoming a man, but in the midst of the cacophony, he knows that the town is hiding something from him — something so awful Todd is forced to flee with only his dog, whose simple, loyal voice he hears too. With hostile men from the town in pursuit, the two stumble upon a strange and eerily silent creature: a girl. Who is she? Why wasn't she killed by the germ like all the females on New World? Propelled by Todd's gritty narration, readers are in for a white-knuckle journey in which a boy on the cusp of manhood must unlearn everything he knows in order to figure out who he truly is.

Ship Breaker by Paolo Bacigalupi  
Genre: Young Adult Fiction

A gritty, high-stakes adventure set in a futuristic world where oil is scarce, but loyalty is scarcer. In America's Gulf Coast region, grounded oil tankers are being broken down for parts by crews of young people. Nailer, a teenage boy, works the light crew, scavenging for copper wiring just to make quota--and hopefully live to see another day. But when, by luck or by chance, he discovers an exquisite clipper ship beached during a recent hurricane, Nailer faces the most important decision of his life: Strip the ship for all it's worth or rescue its lone survivor, a beautiful and wealthy girl who could lead him to a better life. In this powerful novel, Paolo Bacigalupi delivers a thrilling, fast-paced adventure set in a vivid and raw, uncertain future.

The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau Banks by E. Lockhart  
Genre: Young Adult Fiction

Over the course of one summer, Frankie Landau-Banks, a somewhat geeky girl with an unassuming nature, has developed into a 15-year-old with an attention-grabbing figure, a new attitude, and sights set on making changes at her elite boarding school in this novel. The teenager also has a new boyfriend, a gorgeous senior who belongs to a long-standing secret society on campus—The Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds, known mostly for silly pranks and a history of male-only membership. With a witty, sharp, and intelligently scheming mind, Frankie manipulates the Loyal Order to do her bidding with pranks meant to make a political statement about the male-dominated and classist nature of the school. Readers will feel that they are a part of the teen's disreputable and humorous history.

The Adoration of Jenna Fox by Mary E. Pearson  
Genre: Science Fiction
Who is Jenna Fox? Seventeen-year-old Jenna has been told that is her name. She has just awoken from a coma, they tell her, and she is still recovering from a terrible accident in which she was involved a year ago. But what happened before that? Jenna doesn't remember her life. Or does she? And are the memories really hers? This fascinating novel represents a stunning new direction for acclaimed author Mary Pearson. Set in a near future America, it takes readers on an unforgettable journey through questions of bio-medical ethics and the nature of humanity. Mary Pearson's vividly drawn characters and masterful writing soar to a new level of sophistication. *The Adoration of Jenna Fox* is a 2009 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

**Nothing by Martin Aitken**  
**Genre: Contemporary Young Adult Fiction**

This modern-day *Lord of the Flies* is a haunting existential novel, both award-winning and and provocative. Now in paperback as part of the Atheneum Collection!

"Nothing matters."

"From the moment you are born, you start to die."

"The Earth is 4.6 billion years old. You'll live to be a maximum of one hundred. Life isn’t worth the bother!"

So says Pierre Anthon when he decides there is no meaning to life, leaves his seventh-grade classroom, climbs a plum tree, and stays there. His friends and classmates cannot get him to come down, not even by pelting him with rocks. So to prove to him that there is a meaning to life, they set out to give up things of importance, challenging one another to make increasingly serious sacrifices. The pile is started with a lifetime’s collection of Dungeons & Dragons books, a fishing rod, a pair of green sandals, a pet hamster—but then, as each demand becomes more extreme, events take a morbid twist. And what if, after all these sacrifices, the pile is still not meaningful enough to bring Pierre Anthon down?

**Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson**  
**Genre: Fiction**

The first ten lies they tell you in high school. "Speak up for yourself--we want to know what you have to say."

From the first moment of her freshman year at Merryweather High, Melinda knows this is a big fat lie, part of the nonsense of high school. She is friendless, outcast, because she busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops, so now nobody will talk to her, let alone listen to her. As time passes, she becomes increasingly isolated and practically stops talking altogether. Only her art class offers any solace, and it is through her work on an art project that she is finally able to face what really happened at that terrible party: she was raped by an upperclassman, a guy who still attends Merryweather and is still a threat to her. Her healing process has just begun when she has another violent encounter with him. But this time Melinda fights back, refuses to be silent, and thereby achieves a measure of vindication. In Laurie Halse Anderson's powerful novel, an utterly believable heroine with a bitterly ironic voice delivers a blow to the hypocritical world of high school. She speaks for many a disenfranchised teenager while demonstrating the importance of speaking up for oneself. *Speak* was a 1999 National Book Award Finalist for Young People's Literature.

**Orbiting Jupiter by Gary D. Schmidt**  
**Genre: Realistic Fiction**

"The two-time Newbery Honor winner Gary D. Schmidt delivers the shattering story of Joseph, a father at thirteen, who has never seen his daughter, Jupiter. After spending time in a juvenile facility, he’s placed with a foster family on a farm in rural Maine. Here Joseph, damaged and withdrawn, meets twelve-year-old Jack, who narrates the account of the troubled, passionate teen who wants to find his baby at any cost. In this riveting novel, two boys discover the true meaning of family and the sacrifices it requires. “-Amazon

**Eyes Wide Open: Going Behind the Environmental Headlines by Paul Fleischman**  
**Genre: Nonfiction**
Paul Fleischman offers teens an environmental wake-up call and a tool kit for decoding the barrage of conflicting information confronting them. We're living in an Ah-Ha moment. Take 250 years of human ingenuity. Add abundant fossil fuels. The result: a population and lifestyle never before seen. The downsides weren't visible for centuries, but now they are. Suddenly everything needs rethinking – suburbs, cars, fast food, cheap prices. It's a changed world. This book explains it. Not with isolated facts, but the principles driving attitudes and events, from vested interests to denial to big-country syndrome. Because money is as important as molecules in the environment, science is joined with politics, history, and psychology to provide the briefing needed to comprehend the 21st century.

--Amazon

**Ida Tarbell: The Woman Who Challenged Big Business-and Won!** By Emily A. McCully

**Genre:** Biography

“Born in 1857 and raised in oil country, Ida M. Tarbell was one of the first investigative journalists and probably the most influential in her time. Her series of articles on the Standard Oil Trust, a complicated business empire run by John D. Rockefeller, revealed to readers the underhanded, even illegal practices that had led to Rockefeller's success. Rejecting the term "muckraker" to describe her profession, she went on to achieve remarkable prominence for a woman of her generation as a writer and shaper of public opinion. This biography offers an engaging portrait of a trailblazer in a man's world who left her mark on the American consciousness.” -Amazon

**The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind** by William Kamkwamba

**Genre:** Nonfiction

“William Kamkwamba was born in Malawi, a country where magic ruled and modern science was mystery. It was also a land withered by drought and hunger. But William had read about windmills, and he dreamed of building one that would bring to his small village a set of luxuries that only 2 percent of Malawians could enjoy: electricity and running water. His neighbors called him misala—crazy—but William refused to let go of his dreams. With a small pile of once-forgetten science textbooks; some scrap metal, tractor parts, and bicycle halves; and an armory of curiosity and determination, he embarked on a daring plan to forge an unlikely contraption and small miracle that would change the lives around him. *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* is a remarkable true story about human inventiveness and its power to overcome crippling adversity. It will inspire anyone who doubts the power of one individual's ability to change his community and better the lives of those around him.” -Amazon

**Six of Crows** by Leigh Bardugo

**Genre:** Fantasy

“Ketterdam: a bustling hub of international trade where anything can be had for the right price--and no one knows that better than criminal prodigy Kaz Brekker. Kaz is offered a chance at a deadly heist that could make him rich beyond his wildest dreams. But he can't pull it off alone...A convict with a thirst for revenge. A sharpshooter who can't walk away from a wager. A runaway with a privileged past. A spy known as the Wraith. A Heartrender using her magic to survive the slums. A thief with a gift for unlikely escapes. Six dangerous outcasts. One impossible heist. Kaz's crew is the only thing that might stand between the world and destruction—if they don't kill each other first.” -Amazon

**I Am Princess X** by Cherie Priest

**Genre:** Mystery/Thriller

Libby and May created their own comic, Princess X. Libby draws and May writes the stories. On a stormy night, Libby and her mother die in a car accident. Supposedly. But then May begins to see Princess X online, and receives clues to the mystery surrounding Libby’s death. And she begins to wonder...is Libby still alive?

**Camp So-And-So** by Mary McCoy

**Genre:** Mystery/Thriller
“Twenty-five campers. One very dangerous summer camp. Cabin 1 must face off against their ultimate rivals, the posh campers across the lake—who may be more dangerous than they seem. Cabin 2 is being stalked by a murderous former camper. Cabin 3 sets off on a quest to break an age-old curse. Cabin 4 will meet their soulmates—who also pose a deadly threat. And Cabin 5...well, it might already be too late for Cabin 5. This is no ordinary camp. Survival will require courage, cunning, and perhaps even magic. And the hot dogs are terrible. “ (publisher)

**Salt to the Sea** by Ruta Sepetys  
*Genre: Historical Fiction*

World War II is drawing to a close in East Prussia and thousands of refugees are on a desperate trek toward freedom, many with something to hide. Among them are Joana, Emilia, and Florian, whose paths converge en route to the ship that promises salvation, the *Wilhelm Gustloff*. Forced by circumstance to unite, the three find their strength, courage, and trust in each other tested with each step closer to safety. Just when it seems freedom is within their grasp, tragedy strikes. Not country, nor culture, nor status matter as all ten thousand people—adults and children alike—aboard must fight for the same thing: survival. This masterful work of historical fiction is inspired by the real-life tragedy that was the sinking of the *Wilhelm Gustloff*—the greatest maritime disaster in history.

**Outrun the Moon** by Stacy Lee  
*Genre: Historical Fiction*

“San Francisco, 1906: On April 18, a historic earthquake rocks San Francisco, destroying Mercy’s home and school. Now she’s forced to wait with her classmates for their families in a temporary park encampment. Though fires might rage, and the city may be in shambles, Mercy can’t sit by while they wait for the army to bring help—she still has the “bossy” cheeks that mark her as someone who gets things done. But what can one teenage girl do to heal so many suffering in her broken city? “ —Goodreads

**Scarlett Undercover** by Jennifer Latham  
*Genre: Historical Fiction*

“Meet Scarlett, a smart, sarcastic, kick-butt, Muslim American heroine, ready to take on crime in her hometown of Las Almas. When a new case finds the private eye caught up in a centuries-old battle of evil genies and ancient curses, Scarlett discovers that her own family secrets may have more to do with the situation than she thinks -- and that cracking the case could lead to solving her father's murder. Jennifer Latham delivers a compelling story and a character to remember in this one-of-a-kind debut novel. “

**Will & Whit** by Laura Lee Gulledge  
*Genre: Graphic Novel*

“Wilhelmina “Will” Huxstep is a creative soul struggling to come to terms with a family tragedy. She crafts whimsical lamps, in part to deal with her fear of the dark. As she wraps up another summer in her mountain town, she longs for unplugged adventures with her fellow creative friends, Autumn, Noel, and Reese. Little does she know that she will get her wish in the form of an arts carnival and a blackout, courtesy of a hurricane named Whitney, which forces Will to face her fear of darkness.”

**The Shadow Hero** by Gene Luen Yang  
*Genre: Graphic Novel*
“An unlikely 19-year-old young man, Hank, is the son of Chinese immigrants who own a grocery store in 1940s America. When his mother is rescued by a superhero, (she) ...decides that it's Hank's fate to become a hero himself...Though Hank initially shies away from assuming the role of caped crusader, when tragedy strikes, he's eventually inspired to call himself the Green Turtle, and fight back against gangsters who have been intimidating his family and many others in Chinatown. ...”-Mahnaz Dar, School Library Journal

**Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie by David Lubar**  
Genre: Comedy

“Starting high school is never easy. Seniors take your lunch money. Girls you’ve known forever are suddenly beautiful and unattainable. And you can never get enough sleep. Could there be a worse time for Scott’s mother to announce she’s pregnant? Scott decides high school would be a lot less overwhelming if it came with a survival manual, so he begins to write down tips for his new sibling. Meanwhile, he’s trying his best to capture the attention of Julia, the freshman goddess. In the process, Scott manages to become involved in nearly everything the school has to offer. So while he tries to find his place in the confusing world of high school, win Julia’s heart, and keep his sanity, Scott will be recording all the details for his sibling’s—and your—enjoyment.

**Elon Musk and the Quest for the Fantastic Future by Ashlee Vance**  
Genre: Biography

“There are few people in history who could match Elon Musk’s relentless drive and vision. A modern combination of famous inventors and industrialists like Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Steve Jobs, Elon is the man behind companies such as Space X, Tesla Motors, Solar City, and PayPal that are transforming the way we live. Written with exclusive access to Elon, his family, and his friends, this book traces Elon’s journey from a kid in South Africa to a young man in the United States, his dramatic technical inventions, and his world-changing companies. Elon has sparked new levels of innovation in the world, and this book gives young readers a detailed but fast-paced look at his story.

**Leadership: In Turbulent Times by Doris Kearns Goodwin**  
Genre: Nonfiction

Are leaders born or made? Where does ambition come from? How does adversity affect the growth of leadership? Does the leader make the times or do the times make the leader? In Leadership, Goodwin draws upon the four presidents she has studied most closely—Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Lyndon B. Johnson (in civil rights)—to show how they recognized leadership qualities within themselves and were recognized as leaders by others. By looking back to their first entries into public life, we encounter them at a time when their paths were filled with confusion, fear, and hope.

*Books can be borrowed from Middletown Township Public Library or shared with a friend. Students can also purchase new or used books from Barnes & Noble, or online bookstores like Amazon.com and Alibris.com.*
Summer Reading Assignment for Students Entering Grades 9-12

- Students will be **required** to read a minimum of 2 books from the above list, however, more are encouraged.
- Students will complete a digital book talk on one of the books they have read when they return to school in September.
- **Students are required to provide a written list of the books they read including the name of each author.**
- When they return to school in September the student and teacher will collaborate to decide which book they will use for their digital book talk.

Students should follow the guidelines listed below as they prepare for their digital book talks.

**Components of a Digital Book Talk:**

- The digital book talk involves various options of technology based programs for students to select from. Options will be presented upon return to school. To prepare for the book talk, students may take notes on the following suggested components.
  - Briefly summarize the plot of the book and identify the genre, but **do not** give away the ending. Think about what you would and would not have wanted to know before reading.
  - Prepare what you are going to say about the book. You don't need to memorize, but you need to know the points you are going to make. Practice until you are comfortable with your material.
  - Optional topics to focus on:
    - The theme of the book
    - The major conflict
    - A brief description of the main characters and their relationships
    - Setting and how it relates to the plot and characters
    - Mention if the book reminds you of another book you have read or a movie you have seen
    - Identify what you think the author would have wanted readers to take from the experience of reading the book
    - Tell the audience if you recommend the book and why or why not. Remember, even if the book was not one of your favorites, does not mean that someone else may not enjoy reading the book.
    - Point out a significant or powerful passage from your book. This should be short and leave the listener wanting more.