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NYSED Contributing Editor: Kristen Driskill



Issues are published every month except for December-January and June-August combined issues. (Above image from GoogleImages.)

Don't forget, now you can become a friend to NYSRA on *Facebook*! Have you?
Thanks to all who contributed their time and expertise to our issue this month!

**** For all email addresses, please delete the space after the @ sign to email the recipient.**

Inside: **NYSRA & Legislative News** by Sandi Kurbiel; **NYSED News** by Kristen Driskill; & **Literacy News/Links of Interest** by Sandi Kurbiel

NYSRA and Legislative News

A Message from Mary Miller, Our New NYSRA President:

As we approach a new school year, I want all NYSRA members to know that the organization is here to help support you any way we can. To that end, we launched a new NYSRA website. If you haven't seen it, go to www.nysreading.org and explore.

And, while our annual professional development conference will not take place in person, there have been several people working hard to set up first-rate virtual professional development, FREE for all current NYSRA members.

The virtual trainings scheduled to date include the following:

- Donna Scanlon on October 15 @ 7:30PM
- Cornelius Minor on November 13 @ 7:30PM
- Zoi Philippakos on December 8 @7:30PM

All three sessions will be conducted via ZOOM. For details, or to register, go our website under the Professional Development tab. If your membership has lapsed, please renew before registering for these sessions. Non-members will be billed \$40 for each session.

Lastly, in response to teaching challenges during a global pandemic, and with issues of social justice and social/emotional learning, NYSRA members have collected and shared links to diversity, inclusion, and equity resources, as well as distance learning resources, which can also be found on the website. If you and your colleagues have anything you'd like us add to these resources, please let me know.

In this year full of changes, hang in there, and we'll get through this together!

Mary Miller
NYSRA President, 2020-2021

NYSRA Charlotte Award
by Sharon Kelly

Charlotte Award 2021 Ballot

Wants Readers



Read as many books from each ballot as you can. You do not need to read all the books on the ballot. Vote on one ballot or all the ballots, but you may only vote once on each ballot. Some upper grade titles contain adult issues. Please consider what is personally appropriate before reading. Voting ends April 15, 2021. Log onto this online survey and vote for your favorite:



<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1k6L7uGdi6XkTUFHfrIb3OrdhUicND7htLN-EM9InUuY>

Here is a list of the titles:

** denotes nonfiction titles

Primary Ballot

Can I Be Your Dog? by Troy Cummings

Crunch, the Shy Dinosaur by Ciroco Dunlap

Elmore by Holly Hobbie

Fruit Bowl by Mark Hoffmann

Grumpy Monkey by Suzanne Lang

Imagine That! Let Your Mind Run Wild by Yasmeen Ismail

Moon: A Peek-Through Picture Book by Britta Teckentrup**

No More Noisy Nights by Holly L. Niner

What Will Grow? by Jennifer Ward**

Windows by Julia Denos**

Intermediate Ballot

Annie's Life in Lists by Kristen Mahoney

Exact Location of Home by Kate Messner

The First Men Who Went to the Moon by Rhonda Gowler Greene**

The Heart and Mind of Frances Pauley by April Stevens

My Brigadista Year by Katherine Paterson

RA the Mighty Cat Detective by A.B. Greenfield

Rickety Stitch and the Gelatinous Goo by Ben Costa & James Parks

Sticky Notes by Dianne Touchell

Stuck in the Stone Age by Geoff Rodkey

Write on, Irving Berlin! by Leslie Kimmelman**



Middle School Ballot

The Gone Away Place by Christopher Barzak

Just Under the Clouds by Melissa Sarno

Life in a Fishbowl by Len Viahos

The Lifters by Dave Eggers

The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl by Stacy McAnulty

The Names They Gave Us by Emery Lord

Out of Wonder: Poems Celebrating Poets by Kwame Alexander

Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag by Rob Sanders**

The Science of Breakable Things by Tae Keller

Slider by Pete Hautman

High School Ballot

Ahgottahandleonit by Donovan Mixon

Americanized: Rebel Without a Green Card by Sara Saedi

The Beauty That Remains by Ashley Woodfolk

Fatal Throne: The Wives of Henry VII Tell All by M.T. Anderson, Jennifer Donnelly, Candace Fleming, Stephanie Hemphill, Deborah Hopkinson, Linda Sue Park, Lisa Ann Sandell

Jaya and Rasa: a Love Story by Sonia Patel

Neverworld Wake by Marisha Pessi

Second In Command by Sandi Van

Tess of the Road by Rachel Hartman

The Walls Have Ears: A Black Spy in the Confederate White House
by Hope Irvin Marston

The Window by Amelia Brunskill



So read these fantastic books and then vote which book in each category or in one category. Then vote at

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1k6L7uGdi6XkTUFHfrib3OrdhUicND7htLN-EM9lnUuY/viewform?edit_requested=true

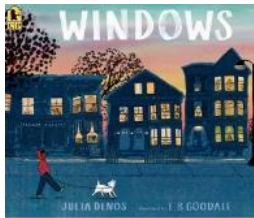
Charlotte Award Book Synopsis 2021

Here are a few more of the books that can be found on the Charlotte Award Ballot 2021. We hope that these synopses will pique your interest, and you will read a few of the books on the list. Some upper grade titles contain adult issues. Please consider what is personally appropriate before reading. You do not need to read all the books on the ballot. Vote on one ballot or all the ballots, but you may only vote once on each category. If you read them with your class and your teacher records your vote you will not be able to vote separately. I hope you will vote for your favorite book in each category that you have read from. The link to do this is at <https://www.nysreading.org/Charlotte-Awards>.

Please vote by April 15, 2021.

Have fun reading!

Primary Ballot Book



Windows by Julia Denos, Illustrated by E. B. Goodale

Windows is a quiet book that captures a moment in time, a moment in which a young boy takes his fluffy little dog out for a walk at dusk. While walking in his community, he happens to notice through the lighted windows the current happenings occurring in neighbor's homes. For example, he views a cat relaxing by the window, a woman painting, and a couple dancing. The little boy lives in a diverse neighborhood, filled with people who are happy and serene as the day is ending. The sweet ending takes the little boy back home to experience his own slice of happiness as well. The watercolor illustrations aid in the telling of this story as we witness the transition from dusk to dark. Readers get a sense that time has passed, with the use of various colors such as yellows, reds, and blues to highlight this. This story may lead children to contemplate what happens at dusk in their homes and neighborhoods.

Submitted by Salamah Mullin

Intermediate Ballot Book

Sticky Notes by Dianne Touchell

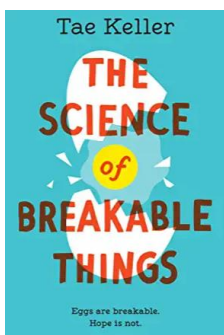


Sticky Notes is about a 10-year-old boy named Foster. Foster's father loved telling him great stories that he made up. His father has started to forget things, though, like while cooking bacon his father decides to fold the laundry and a fire starts. More and more Foster realizes that there is something wrong with his father's memory. His mother and Auntie try to help his father by getting help from professionals but doesn't really explain to Foster what is happening to his father. They decide to put notes around the house to help his father remember what room he is in and where things are. Some of the kids at school start to pick on Foster and he turns it around by telling them that his father is crazy.

The book is a heart-warming story about the dealings that a family faces, when one person in the family has Alzheimers, and how families need to stick together to get through the difficult times with laughter and tears.

Submitted by Sharon Kelly

Middle School Ballot Book



The Science of Breakable Things by Tae Keller

Middle Schooler Natalie is having a hard time in life. Her mom, who suffers from depression, has mainly disappeared from her life, and her dad is just trying to hold everything together. The only reprieve Natalie receives is when she is visiting her friend Twig, or when she is in science class. Natalie attempts to deal with her mom's depression, but as time goes on, she begins to suffer the consequences of living with someone who has a mental illness. One day, Mr. Neely, Natalie's science teacher, suggests she enters an egg drop contest. Natalie becomes excited about the contest, thinking if she wins the money, she would be able to take her mother to New Mexico to see her favorite plant and take her out of her depressed state. When things go awry for Natalie and her

friends, Twig comes up with a crazy idea that puts them in an unexpected situation. Told from Natalie's perspective, Keller does a wonderful job making Natalie's character come to life. She sounds and thinks like a middle schooler who is lost and just looking for a solution. In this book different science topics are discussed at some length making this a great pick for young people who love science. This is a good read about friendships and having hope, despite the circumstances.

Submitted by Salamah Mullin

High School Ballot Book

The Window by Amelia Brunskill



High Schooler Jess is called into the principal's office and is told the worst news of her young life. Her twin sister, Anna, is dead. Her death is ruled an accidental fall by police. A funeral is conducted, and her sister is laid to rest. Jess is immensely sad because even though her sister and she were opposites in personalities, Jess knew they were each other's best friend. Or so she thought. Jess begins to realize that something she noticed does not add up. On the day Jess viewed her sister's body at the morgue, her sister was wearing a dress and smelled like lavender. Wondering why, Jess starts to believe there must be more to the explanation that it was an accidental fall. Despite being hurt over the fact Anna kept things from her, Jess begins to piece together her clues and theories to find out what really happened to Anna. In turn, Jess grows up and changes to accept her own uniqueness and make friends in the process. The plot moves at a good pace and pulls the reader along as the short chapters explain a little more of the mystery each time, making the story hard to put down. Brunskill spins a good tale of teenage drama and explains how one mistake can lead someone to manipulate a person to their demise.

Submitted by Salamah Mullin

Advocacy News, September 2020 BOD

by Barbara Vokatis, Ph.D.
NYSRA Advocacy Chair

COVID-19 Outbreak Alternative Ways of Supporting Students

To help K-12 teachers incorporate remote learning during this time of emergency, SUNY Oneonta created a special website to provide this support. The website is <http://remoteEd.org/> The website has weekly events to help teachers, leaders, and school stay connected and support one another.

Other resources include the following:

- Webinars and resources on transition to returning to school:
<https://www.cognia.org>
- Virtual schooling options by either partnering with your local school or homeschooling: <https://michiganvirtual.org>
- PBS educational programming: <http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/state-education-department-and-new-yorks-public-television-stations-announce-expanded>
- a new [Continuity of Learning website](#) launched by NYSED, featuring resources to provide districts and teachers with increased options to keep students engaged in learning
- the New York State Museum for [Virtual Field Trips](#) every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 1:00 p.m. (EDT)
- Site about incorporating virtual field trips:
https://knilt.arcc.albany.edu/Incorporating_Virtual_Field_Trips?fbclid=IwAR0P5D6QsqMcifb_DcSB7YDI0JhqpDdUQcnT4qcr8ntPxewua5AzjIS-obU

School Districts' Reopening:

As of August 26, 39 of the 50 largest school districts are choosing remote learning only. This will affect over 6.1 million students.

Link to the CDC guidelines regarding opening schools:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/CDC-Activities-Initiatives-for-COVID-19-Response.pdf>

School Reopening and Students' Stress:

Lisa Damour, Ph.D., a psychologist and the author of [Under Pressure: Confronting the Epidemic of Stress and Anxiety in Girls](#), and [Untangled: Guiding Teenage Girls Through the Seven Transitions Into Adulthood](#), offers some important advice:

“Find ways to connect. Children learn best in the context of warm, authentic connections with their teachers. Powerful student-teacher relationships can be built in a pandemic, but it will take extra effort in online environments or in classrooms where safety protocols weigh heavily. Prioritize using time in class to check in with students about how they are feeling and to point them toward positive coping strategies—such as finding happy distractions or spending time with people they enjoy—for managing pandemic stress. Helping students understand that they are seen and cared for will put them at ease and open the door to learning.

Give students a sense of purpose. Having a sense of purpose - pursuing personally meaningful activities that have positive consequences for others—buffers the negative effects of chronic stress in children. Cultivate purpose to your classroom by helping students see the connections between the skills they are developing and their own immediate and long-term goals. Show students how they can apply what they are learning to improve their everyday worlds.

Offer predictability and control. Resilience grows when young people have ways to feel that not everything is beyond their control. An academic day with predictable patterns puts students at ease because they know what to expect. School also comes with opportunities for students to feel a sense of agency. By maintaining reliable classroom routines and giving students choices that let them steer their own learning—even online—you can provide them with stress-buffering structure and sense of control, even as the disruptions associated with COVID-19 persist.”

Dyslexia Legislation

Here is a link that includes the currently used definition of dyslexia:

<https://www.medicinenet.com/dyslexia/article.htm>

Both senate and assembly bills made it to the respective education committee, and have remained there, as matters related to Covid-19 are prioritized. We continue to encourage members to comment to their local legislators before the bill is introduced and voted in in the New York State.

Here is a link to the proposed legislation:

https://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?default_fld=&leg_video=&bn=A08697&term=2019&Summary=Y&Actions=Y&Committee%26nbspVotes=Y&Floor%26nbspVotes=Y&Memo=Y&Text=Y

Here is a link to the site listing assemblymen and senators:

<https://www.aqeny.org/find-your-new-york-state-legislators/>

The following points discussed in Dr. Donna Scanlon’s presentation on this topic at the NYSRA conference in November 2019 could be considered in comments to legislators. Dr. Donna Scanlon is a professor at the University at Albany and Director of Child Research and Study Center. Her research focuses on children who experience substantial difficulty in learning to read and on how to prevent and remediate these difficulties. She also leads “Early Literacy Leaders” (ELL) group. Currently, she considers a collaboration with NYSRA to write a letter to our legislators for consideration in connection to the proposed legislation.

Here are points on dyslexia legislation to consider:

- While dyslexia is defined as a disability with a neurobiological origin, it is impossible to determine whether a child’s reading difficulty is neurobiological or not (everything we do is neurobiological in origin – the question is whether the difficulties some children experience is due to underlying neurobiological differences or to experiential/instructional differences) .
- Word reading difficulties can occur for a variety of reasons, such as limited understanding of the workings of the alphabetic code, limited engagement in meaning making while reading, or limited oral language.
- Dyslexia screening is already required by many states but there is no broadly accepted way to identify someone as being at risk for or being dyslexic. In the research literature there is not a clear distinction between reading difficulties and dyslexia. The terms are used interchangeably.
- While there is no broadly accepted way to identify someone with dyslexia, the dyslexia legislation suggests that multi-sensory sequential phonics is the approach to choose for intervention. However, there is no evidence this approach is superior to other approaches to intervention for word reading difficulties. Research shows that improving in phonics skills alone does not result in improving comprehension (Torgesen et al., 2007).
- There are also potential risks associated with identifying children as dyslexic: lowered expectations and reduced sense of efficacy.

Here are further resources to consider regarding dyslexia legislation:

- A podcast interview Dr. Scanlon recorded several months ago: <https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/interview-dr-donna-scanlon-dyslexia-reading-difficulties/id1448225801?i=1000444024572>
- A link to a recording of Joe Elliot's (first author of The Dyslexia Debate) talk for ACARC from September 2019 (<https://vimeo.com/364608773/4b7d8db0c7>) – which is a powerful commentary on where things currently stand relative to dyslexia legislation and what we should be advocating for.
- It is also recommended to read the book by Elena Grigorenko entitled *The Dyslexia Debate*.

New York State Education News

by Kristen Driskill
NYSED Contributing Editor

Reopening Schools: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response

New York State has a dedicated website for school personnel and parents to access current information about reopening. You can access the website [here](#).

Webinar Series on Digital Equity Announced

NYSED has partnered with the METRO Library Council and the Northern New York Library Network to provide a series of webinars on Digital Equity beginning September 10. Intended for educators, librarians, and other stakeholders with an interest in bringing about digital equity, this webinar series attempts to establish a shared understanding of the challenges to digital equity to begin to develop a shared vision of how we can work together to achieve digital equity for all New Yorkers. The Board of Regents and the Department are working to bridge the digital divide through the development of various programs and resources, including the Teaching in Blended/Remote Learning Environments (TRLE) program. You can see the press release [here](#).

NYS Museum Launches Portal to Virtual Resources

On August 27, 2020, the New York State Museum launched the “Portal to Online Educational Resources & Activities. This resource was created to support teaching and learning through the pandemic. It brings together many of the museum’s resources, including links to the popular virtual “field trips,” digital collections, online resources, and many fun activities for kids derived from the museum’s research and collections. The Portal provides opportunities for educators, caregivers, and students to engage in educational activities that can be done from home. You can see the press release [here](#).

Betty A. Rosa Named Interim Commissioner

Dr. Betty A. Rosa has been named Interim Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York (USNY). In this role, she oversees the work of more than 700 school districts, with 3.2 million students; 7,000 libraries; 900 museums; and more than 50 professions encompassing nearly 900,000 licensees. Click [here](#) to see the commissioners’ full bio.

Literacy News and Links of Interest

by Sandi Kurbiel
ReAD Editor

[Distance Learning Resources](#)

Have you seen this amazing collection of distance learning resources that NYSRA has compiled on its website? Check it out!

[Celebrate Banned Books Week!](#)

Find some ideas to celebrate “Banned Books Week,” from September 27-October 3.

[Teaching in a Hybrid Classroom](#)

The keyword is “hybrid” for many classrooms this fall – a combination of remote and in-person learning. Read about what’s been working so far in many summer classrooms.

[Guided Reading in Distance Learning](#)

Find the latest ideas from literacy expert and blogger Timothy Shanahan.

"Fostering Collaboration in a Remote Learning Environment"

Wondering how to incorporate cooperative learning into a remote learning environment? Find some tips here.

Online Reading and Writing Apps

Find a list of 17 online reading and writing apps recommended by ILA's *ReadWriteThink* website.

Project Based Learning

Have some *really* reluctant readers? Discover how one literacy teacher “shakes up her Reading Workshop” with literary projects.

Family Bonding through Books

Check out the “Reading Through History Family Book Club”, a way for children and their parents to read and learn about various historical periods and interact virtually with artifacts in the museum at the NY Historical Society.

Motivation to Read during the Pandemic

COVID-19 has taken its toll on everyone to some extent; maybe you're just not in the mood to read right now. Here are some tips to help motivate you.