



Public Schools of Plainfield

New Jersey

Office of Community Engagement

Gloria Montealegre, MPA
1200 Myrtle Avenue
Plainfield, NJ 07063
(908) 731-4333 Fax: (908) 731-4336

Plainfield Public Schools Battle of the Books

May 23, 2019 6-8pm

Washington Community School

Plainfield, NJ – (May 21, 2019) - Plainfield Public Schools' district-wide Battle of the Books will be held on Thursday, May 23, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Washington Community School, 427 Darrow Avenue, Plainfield. The event is free and open to the public.

Battle of the Books is a reading competition for students in all Plainfield Public Schools in grades five through eighth. Students come together and form reading teams to demonstrate their knowledge of the books they have read. This is the seventh year of the competition, in which over 250 elementary and middle school students will participate this year.

According to Joan Cansdale, Director of Secondary Education (ELA and Social Studies) for Plainfield Public Schools, "The Battle of the Books program is one way of making reading visible in our district while providing a fun, social dimension to literacy. As students read and discuss books with their schoolmates over the course of several months in preparation for their school competition, reading becomes an important part of students' social and emotional experience at school."

The titles that are chosen each year are purposely selected to be the "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors" described by Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop that allow students to see themselves, view familiar and unfamiliar worlds, and use their imaginations to walk into the worlds created by authors (Sims Bishop, 1990). In this way, students stretch their thinking and experience stories of courage, compassion, and social awareness.

The winning team gets to keep the coveted trophy for an entire year and their school's name is engraved on the trophy. Students respond to questions posed by a group of judges. The team that answers the most correct answers based on details about each book, wins. Last year winners included Emerson School winning in the 5 to 6 grade level

and PAAAS winning the 7th to 8th grade level competition.

For more information, please email gmontealegre@plainfield.k12.nj.us

See below list and synopsis of the books the children read.

Grades 5 & 6

TITLE & AUTHOR

Amal Unbound by Aisha Saeed

Because of Winn-Dixie - by Kate DiCamillo

Fish in a Tree by Lynda Mullaly Hunt

Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes

Riding Freedom by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Sammy Keyes & the Hotel Thief by Wendelin Van Draanen

The Watsons Go to Birmingham by Christopher Paul Curtis

Ungifted by Gordon Korman

Grades 7 & 8

TITLE & AUTHOR

City of Orphans by Avi

I Am Princess X by Cherie Priest

Planet Middle School by Nikki Grimes

Powerless by Matthew Cody

Refugee by Alan Gratz

Tangerine by Edward Bloor

Uglies by Scott Westerfeld

When You Reach Me by Rebecca Stead

Synopsis of the Books

GRADES 5 &6

Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes

In Chicago, 12-year-old black youth Jerome is shot and killed by a police officer who mistakes a toy gun for a real one. As a ghost, Jerome witnesses the aftermath gripping both his family and that of the police officers. The only person who can see Jerome is the daughter of the police officer, Sarah, and through her eyes, he realizes that his family isn't the only one affected by the tragedy.

Fish in a Tree by Lynda Mullaly Hunt

Ally has been smart enough to fool a lot of smart people. Every time she lands in a new school, she hides her inability to read by creating clever yet disruptive distractions. However, her newest teacher Mr. Daniels sees the bright, creative kid underneath the trouble maker. With his help, Ally learns that dyslexia is nothing to be ashamed of and

that great minds don't always think alike.

Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate Di Camillo

One summer day, ten-year-old India Opal Buloni goes to the local supermarket for some groceries – and comes home with a dog. But Winn-Dixie is no ordinary dog. It's because of Winn-Dixie that Opal begins to make friends and finally dares to ask her father about her mother, who left when Opal was three.

Ungifted by Gordon Korman

When Donovan Curtis pulls a major prank at his middle school, he thinks he's finally gone too far. But thanks to a mix-up by one of the administrators, instead of getting in trouble, Donovan is sent to the Academy of Scholastic Distinction, a special program for gifted and talented students. It wasn't exactly what Donovan had intended, but he winds up showing that his gifts might be exactly what the ASD students never knew they needed.

Riding Freedom by Pam Munoz Ryan

Riding Freedom is based on the true story of Charlotte Parkhurst, who worked as a stable hand and stage-coach driver in the mid-1800s, posing as a man in order to enjoy an adventurous life that would not be available to her as a woman. .

Sammy Keyes & the Hotel Thief by Wendelin Van Draanen

Thirteen-year-old Samantha, who is not supposed to be living with her grandmother in senior citizen housing, sees a robbery and sets out to track down the thief. At first no one believes her and Sammy has to track down the thief to prove herself.

The Watsons Go to Birmingham by Christopher Paul Curtis

A wonderful middle-grade novel narrated by Kenny, 9, about his middle-class black family, the Weird Watsons of Flint, Michigan. When Kenny's 13-year-old brother, Byron, gets to be too much trouble, they head South to Birmingham to visit Grandma, the one person who can shape him up. And they happen to be in Birmingham when Grandma's church is blown up.

Amal Unbound by Aisha Saeed

Life is quiet and ordinary in Amal's Pakistani village, but she's busy pursuing her dream of becoming a teacher one day. One day, Amal's life changes completely when an accidental run-in with the son of her village's corrupt landlord results in Amal working as the landlord's servant to pay off her own family's debt.

GRADES 7 & 8

Planet Middle School by Nikki Grimes

Written in short poems that perfectly capture the crazy feelings of adolescence and first crushes, Nikki Grimes tells twelve-year-old Joylin Johnson's story as her life is suddenly changing.

City of Orphans by Avi

The streets of 1893 New York are crowded and filthy. For thirteen-year-old newsboy Maks Geless, they are also dangerous. Bruno, leader of the awful Plug Ugly Gang, has set his sights on Maks and orders his boys to track him down. This is a riveting, quickly paced adventure set against a backdrop alive with the sights and sounds of tenement New York.

When You Reach Me by Rebecca Stead

Shortly after sixth-grader Miranda and her best friend Sal part ways, her once familiar world turns upside down. Maybe it's because she's caught up in reading *A Wrinkle in Time* and trying to understand time travel, or perhaps it's because she's been receiving mysterious notes which accurately predict the future. Set in New York City in 1979

Uglies by Scott Westerfeld

Tally is about to turn sixteen, and she can't wait. In just a few weeks she'll have the operation that will turn her from an "ugly" into a "pretty". And as a pretty, she'll enjoy life in a high-tech paradise where her only job is to have fun. But Tally's new friend Shay isn't sure she wants to become a pretty. When Shay runs away, Tally learns about a whole new side of the pretty world—and it isn't very pretty.

Tangerine by Edward Bloor

Paul Fisher sees the world from behind glasses so thick he looks like a bug-eyed alien. But he's not so blind that he can't see there are some very unusual things about his family's new home in Tangerine County, Florida. Where else does a sinkhole swallow the local school, fire burn underground for years, and lightning strike at the same time every day? Adjusting to life in Tangerine isn't easy for Paul until he joins the soccer team at his middle school. With the help of his new teammates, Paul begins to discover what lies beneath the surface of his strange new hometown. In Tangerine, it seems, anything is possible.

I Am Princess X – Cherie Priest

Once upon a time, two best friends created a princess together. Libby drew the pictures, May wrote the tales, and their heroine, Princess X, slayed all the dragons and scaled all the mountains their imaginations could conjure. Then Libby dies when the car her mom was driving goes off the Ballard Bridge. Now, years later, May spots a sticker of the Princess X and discovers an entire underground culture, focused on I Am Princess X, a webcomic. Only one person could have started this phenomenon -- her best friend, Libby, who must be alive.

Powerless by Matthew Cody

Twelve-year-old Daniel, the new kid in town, soon learns the truth about his nice—but odd—new friends: one can fly, another can turn invisible, yet another controls electricity. Incredible. The superkids use their powers to secretly do good in the town, but they're haunted by the fact that the moment they turn thirteen, their abilities will disappear. Superhero kids meet comic book mystery in this action-filled story about the true meaning

of a hero.

Refugee by Alan Gratz

A tale about Josef, a Jewish boy in 1930s Germany, Isabel, a Cuban girl in 1994, and Mahmoud, a Syrian boy in 2015. All three kids go on harrowing journeys in search of refuge. All will face unimaginable dangers -- from drownings to bombings to betrayals. But there is always the hope of tomorrow. And although Josef, Isabel, and Mahmoud are separated by continents and decades, shocking connections will tie their stories together in the end.