

Action: School Library Advisory Council Recommendation for Library Materials Purchase

Belton ISD Board of Trustees
Regular Board Meeting
October 20, 2025



Purpose

Consider, discuss and take appropriate action on the Belton ISD School Library Advisory Council recommendation for library material purchases.



Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Legislative Implications- SB 13
3. BISD Collection Guidelines
4. Book Ordering/Donations Process
5. Book List
6. Q & A
7. Next Meeting



School Library Advisory Council

- Legislative Implications- SB 13
- Duties of SLAC
- BISD Collection Guidelines
- Review of Book List
- Book Ordering/Donations
- Looking Ahead



Belton ISD Collection Development Guidelines

Sources of Professional Reviews as Required by Our Guidelines

- Booklist
- Horn Book
- School Library Journal
- Kirkus Review
- Teaching Books
- Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books
- Book Link

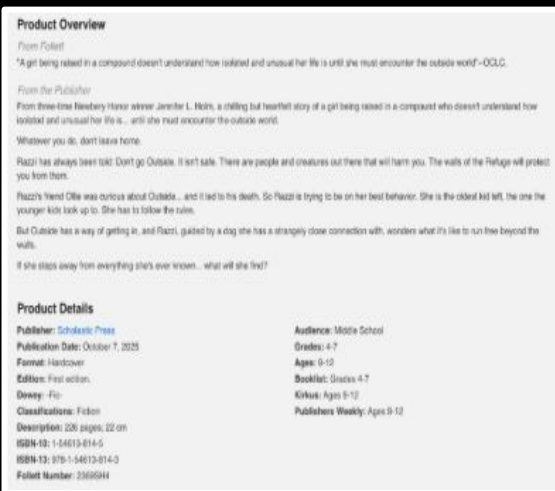


Consideration of New Books for BISD Libraries

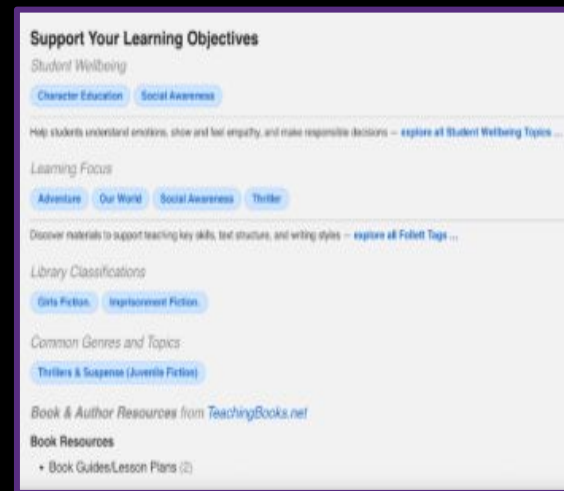
Example: *Outside* by Jennifer Holm



Why: New release from a favorite author



Criteria: age, interest level, maturity, content, learning & curriculum connections



Considerations: literary appreciation, learning styles, representation. Encourage discussion, critical thinking and curiosity.

Consideration of New Books for BSD Libraries

Example: *Outside* by Jennifer Holm

Full-Text Reviews

Booklist (July 2025 (Vol. 121, No. 21))

Grades 4-7. Life at the Refuge is strict, but that's exactly what keeps everyone alive. Since the Great Poisoning, exposed humans turned vicious and must be kept outside the compound walls at all costs. As a result, Razzi and the other children aren't allowed outdoors, but they make the most of the small, safe world their parents have made them. A pervasive sense of unease filters through the narrative as the kids move through their days and details are dropped that something is amiss with this whole setup. Razzi is known for being the responsible one, but after receiving a heart transplant, she begins pushing back on the rules and yearning to venture beyond the Refuge. Seen through Razzi's eyes, Holm's near-future world feels threatening and plausible, and when Razzi finally steps outside the Refuge's confines, her discoveries are viscerally shocking. The story's one questionable element is the supernatural connection Razzi feels with her heart donor—a greyhound named Wind. Whether or not readers buy into this part of the tale, they will find Razzi's journey thrilling and find comfort in its hopeful conclusion. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** Holm is a best seller with more than one Newbery Honor under her belt for a reason. She brings the goods, and readers know it.

Kirkus Reviews (August 1, 2025)

A spirited 12-year-old contends with her doctored life after an apocalypse. Over 10 years ago, the Great Poisoning killed most humans. Razzi lives in an old mansion named the Refuge with her parents, 7-year-old brother, Bing, and a handful of other adults and children. The kids are rarely allowed Outside, especially not since 12-year-old Ollie, a curious risk-taker, had a terrible accident and died while trying to explore. Razzi injures her knee during a game of Chase, which leads to a checkup and a serious diagnosis—she learns that she must have a heart transplant. Luckily, Refuge resident Saul is a Surgeon, and he successfully implants a greyhound's heart into Razzi. After the surgery, Razzi feels different: Her senses of hearing and smell are keener, and foods she used to love, like chocolate, now sicken her. When Razzi makes the momentous decision to run away, she learns that the world outside the Refuge is bigger than she could ever have imagined. Holm's adventure is riveting and appealing, featuring a reliable cast of characters and unfolding against a post-apocalyptic backdrop with zombie story vibes. Holm's mastery of pacing and her explorations of intergenerational trauma and forgiveness resonate, ensuring that they'll stay with readers long after the final pages. Razzi presents white, and names two ethnic diversity in the supporting cast. An ambitious and thrilling examination of survival, trauma, and connection. (author's note) (Speculative thriller: 9-12)

Publishers Weekly starred (July 14, 2025)

In this riveting survival novel by Newbery Honoree Holm, a white-cued 12-year-old ventures for the first time beyond her secluded doorstep. A decade before this book's start, "some stupid country decided to start a war" via venomous missile, prompting Razzi's parents to create an isolated compound called the Refuge. As the oldest, Razzi is expected to set an example for other kids, a responsibility she takes seriously. But the death of a peer, Ollie, a few months prior weighs heavy on her mind; desperate to see outside the Refuge's walls, Ollie scaled and fell from the building's roof. When a doctor's visit reveals that Razzi needs a heart transplant, she receives the heart of a greyhound named Wind, and she soon feels that the surgery has changed her, prompting her to forgo her typical rule-abiding tendencies. Upon stowing away on a Refuge truck bound for a supply run, she makes a discovery that changes everything. Fascinating, intimately detailed characterization and worldbuilding makes everything from Razzi's motivations and reactions to the children's carefree games to the community's fear of the outside world feel palpable across a white-knuckled adventure about autonomy and cultivating one's own inner strength. Ages 9-12. Agent: Jill Gribberg, Jill Gribberg Literary (Oct.) © Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

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Two Professional Reviews

High-Interest

Literary Merit

Overview of story

Representation

No violence/mature content

Belton ISD Library Services: Collection Development Guidelines

Guidelines align with board policy EFB (Local) and Mandatory TSLAC Collection Development Standards

Last Updated: 9/26/25

Purpose

Collection development is the ongoing evaluation, selection, acquisition, and deselection of library resources to meet the needs of users and potential users. As trained professional staff, certified librarians and digital information specialists analyze and evaluate their collections to identify collection goals and research materials for potential purchase.

Evaluation of the material is not based solely on an individual item but on the relationship between that item and other items in the collection. During this process, each title is vetted individually by a certified librarian or district information specialist to determine whether or not it meets the following library selection criteria outlined in Board Policy EFB Local.

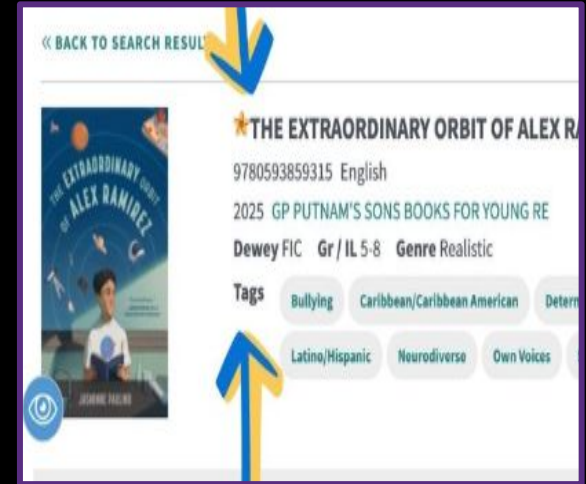
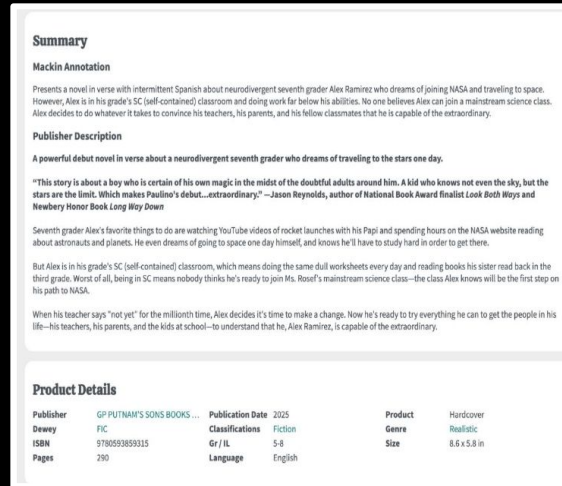
Responsibility

The Library as an Instructional Program

Books in the library are designed to support content knowledge, process skills, or both. Books whose main subjects do not appear directly in the TEKS are designed to support the development of reading and critical thinking skills. There is a correlation between interest-based reading selections and academic performance. Research shows that students who read books of interest read more often and perform better in reading than their counterparts. Library books are diverse in topics, themes, genres, formats, and characters, so all students can find books of interest to develop their reading skills and overall enjoyment of reading. The Belton ISD Libraries support students and staff by serving as a neutral medium, providing material that informs, promotes learning,

Consideration of New Books for BISD Libraries

Example: The Extraordinary Orbit of Alex Ramirez by Jasmine Paulino



Why: New release recommended by publisher.

Criteria: age, interest level, maturity, content, learning & curriculum connections

Considerations: literary appreciation, learning styles, representation. Encourage discussion, critical thinking and curiosity.

Consideration of New Books for BSD Libraries

Example: The Extraordinary Orbit of Alex Ramirez by Jasmine Paulino

Reviews & Awards

School Library Journal Starred, 04/30/2025
Booklist Starred Reviews, 04/30/2025

Kirkus Review, 04/14/2025
Publishers Weekly, 03/30/2025

Full-Text Reviews

School Library Journal Starred, 04/30/2025

Gr 5 Up—This compelling novel in verse gives readers an intimate look into the mind of Alex Ramirez, a neurodivergent seventh grader with an unshakable passion for outer space. Told in spare yet evocative poetry, Alex's story is both raw and determined as he fights to prove he's capable of more than the limits others place on him. The book's greatest strength lies in its ability to capture Alex's frustration and hope with equal weight and in his own voice. The verse format immerses readers in his emotions—his exhilaration at watching rocket launches, the sting of being underestimated, and the unwavering belief that he is meant for something greater. His relationship with Papi provides a beautiful counterpoint to the struggles he faces at school, adding warmth and depth to his journey. More than just a story about breaking barriers, this novel is a celebration of perseverance, intelligence in all its forms, and the importance of being seen for who one truly is. VERDICT This luminous, heartfelt debut reminds readers the sky is never the limit and will inspire any middle school student who reads it.—Jessica Siddharth Copyright 2025 Reed Business Information.

Booklist Starred Reviews, 04/30/2025

Grades 5-8 - "Starred Review" Seventh-grader Alex Ramirez is an "SC" (self-contained) student with unspecified neurodivergence, whose school places students with physical and emotional differences in their own classroom. Ever since he lost control with another student in third grade, he's been separated from the main class because he just can't make his brain and body work together. Frustrated, he keeps trying. As a young man with dreams of literally reaching the stars by working at NASA, he is driven to break through the restrictive barriers of his school and family to extend his opportunities. His immediate goal is to join Ms. Ross's regular science class and participate in the countywide science fair; after that, who knows where he'll go? Along the way he learns effective interpersonal and communication skills, with his SC cohort sharing his ups and downs, moving forward themselves through important conversations and revelations. Written in spare, authentic verse interspersed with naturally flowing Spanish that reflects Alex's roots, Paulino's debut captures one student's aspirations and climb to success as he becomes the hero of his own story. Readers will identify with Alex and his friends' desire to be seen, heard, and challenged for who they are rather than trapped by others' stereotype-informed views of their diagnoses. Targeted to middle-schoolers, this book will appeal beyond the age range, touching hearts and consciences. A must-read."

Kirkus Review, 04/14/2025

In this story told in verse, a seventh grader in special education classes aspires to take a mainstream science class and become an astronaut someday. Dominican American middle schooler Alex Ramirez is in SC, or the self-contained program, where he feels talked down to and treated like a much younger child. He has big ambitions of joining NASA, but his teachers don't encourage him to follow his dreams. Alex was placed in SC in fourth grade after losing control several times the previous year. But now that he takes medicine to help him focus, Alex wonders how long he'll be forced to stagnate, working on assignments far below his abilities and suffering the consequences of his behavior from years ago. The ways that others—teachers and even his own mother—try to limit Alex will tug on readers' heartstrings and have them cheering for him as he learns to advocate for himself. Even the simplest step toward taking a mainstream science class proves challenging for Alex when he's targeted by his old bully and his caregivers' doubts threaten to drain his confidence. But, inspired by the vast possibilities inherent in space exploration, he fights to find the courage to believe in his own limitless potential as well as to gain support from others. Paulino lays out her accessibly written verse in varied ways on the page, effectively adding visual interest. An uplifting debut about the importance of self-belief. (Verse fiction. 10-14)

Inspire any middle school
student
Transform the human experience
Celebration of perseverance,
intelligence in all its forms

SLJ Grade 5 & Up
BL Grades 5-8
Kirkus Ages 10-14
PW Ages: 10 & Up

4 Pro Reviews
2 Starred Reviews

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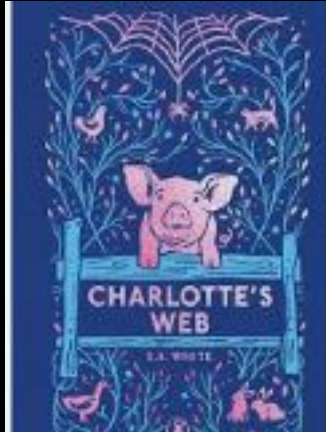
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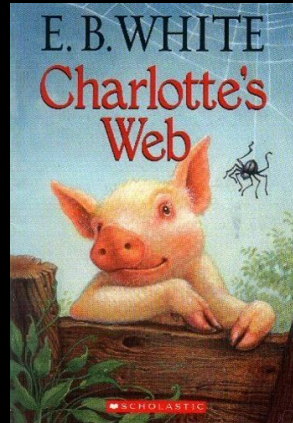
ISBN Numbers in the Review Process

SLAC Decision

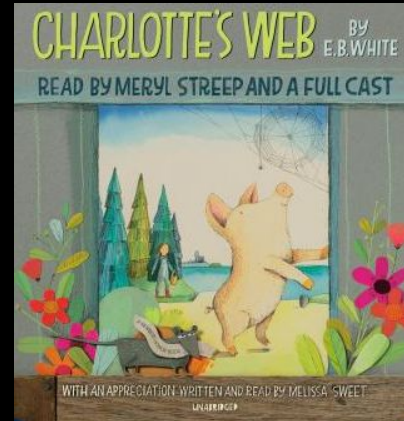
We approve this title and all ISBN numbers corresponding to this exact edition.



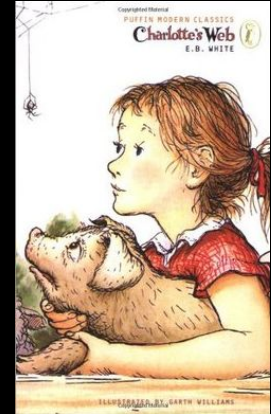
ISBN: 0241568811



ISBN: 9780439701877



ISBN: 9780063448155



ISBN: 97801403664491

Book List Recommendation

[illegible]

ISBN	Title	Author	Review #1	Review #2
978-1-936-20066-7	Incredibly Pretentious	Myrick, Lauren	Kirkus Reviews, The latest from a School Library Journal, 08/10/23, 4.5 stars	
978-1-738-83485-5	Mystery of the Haunted Dance Hall	Cori, Cohen	Starred Review ALA Booklist, Starred Review in Publishers Weekly	
978-0-305-64494-9	Passions	Passmans, Cassidy	Kirkus Reviews, 05/07/25, A new School Library Journal, 05/07/25, 4.5 stars	
978-0-306-13310-3	Old School	Korman, Gordon	Horn Book, 04/21/25, How weird! School Library Journal, 12/01/24, 4.5 stars	
978-1-366-14027-1	Samuel Chase	Hughes, Tracy	Horn Book, 05/01/25, Is this one Kirkus Reviews, "Sometimes a good thing is too good to be true"	
978-1-91-02717-1	Shadows	McDonald, Judith	Kirkus Reviews, The link here is all Kirkus Reviews, The unusual narrative	
978-0-306-69041-4	School Wars	Baughman, Sean	Kirkus Reviews, 06/10/25, 1 star School Library Journal, 07/01/25, 4.5 stars	
978-1-363-14244-7	Many Things Under the Sky: The Myriades of Octopuses	Schell, David	School Library Journal, 12/01/24, 5 stars	
978-1-305-200-18-1	Reverend	Brempt, Vieve	ALA Booklist, 05/12/25, How weird! Kirkus Reviews, 05/12/25, 4.5 stars	
978-0-313-79695-7	What Fell from the Sky	Kirkby, Adriana	School Library Journal, Starred Review ALA Booklist, 03/15/25, How weird!	
978-0-306-33581-5	Delicious Jaws and the Salt Tattos	Leathley, Phillip	Horn Book, 04/01/25, All the "Salt" School Library Journal, 01/01/25, 4.5 stars	
978-0-441-91572-1	The Time of Magic	Ortega, Elena	ALA Booklist, 05/12/25, Cousins! School Library Journal, 05/01/25, 4.5 stars	
978-1-544-844-84-5	Mooncake Jaws	Wheeler, Thomas	Kirkus Reviews, Can "12-year-old" School Library Journal, 01/01/25, 4.5 stars	
978-0-306-42318-2	Enemy's Daughter	Benjamin, Anne	Horn Book, 05/01/25, Close by! School Library Journal, 11/01/23, 4.5 stars	
978-1-363-140-12-0	How to Talk to Your Screenshot	Carpenter, Cynthia	ALA Booklist, After Andrew's mother! School Library Journal, 01/01/25, 4.5 stars	
978-0-601-81376-6	Cave of the Contraband Coast	Maldonado, David	Kirkus Reviews, Best selling YA! Starred Review in Publishers Weekly	
978-0-317-61763-3	Reverend	Winters, Justin	Starred Review for Kirkus Press! Starred Review in Publishers Weekly	
978-1-335-0183-3	Excavation's Guide to Monsters and Magic	Mendones, Sarah J.	Starred Review for Kirkus Reviews! ALA Booklist, 09/05/25, As an AI	
978-0-306-10380-0	Immune World (Young Readers Edition) How Animals Save Earth's Amazing Secrets	Anderson, AnnMarie and Yong, Ed	Starred Review ALA Booklist, 05/01/25, Starred Review in Publishers Weekly	
978-1-495-96110-2	Dragon's Oath	Quinn, Anne	Starred Review ALA Booklist, 05/01/25, Starred Review, 05/01/25, A YA	
978-1-506-24271-8	Female Wolf: Two Brothers and a Trillion's Forbidden Folklore	Quinn, Anne	Starred Review for Kirkus Press! Publishers Weekly, 05/01/25, In a YA	
978-1-250-41932-8	Phantom	Griffin, Justin	Horn Book, 04/21/25, As the first! Starred Review ALA Booklist, 03/15/25	
978-0-306-33364-1	At Home in a Fantasy Place	Parkins, Lynne Ray	ALA Booklist, 05/01/25, Bestselling YA! School Book, 04/01/25, 4.5 stars	



Discussion

