



Waterbury Public Schools

236 Grand Street □ Waterbury, Connecticut 06702 □ (203) 574-8000 □ Fax (203) 574-8010

June 25, 2020

Dear High School Students, Parents and Families:

Waterbury Public Schools is delighted to announce that the District has received 6,000 copies of three culturally-relevant books for our high school students. The generous donation stems from a collaboration between U.S. Senator Chris Murphy, Madison-based RJ Julia Booksellers, Read to Grow and hundreds of individual donors.

The three books that students can choose from are: I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter, All American Boys and Dear Martin. All of the selections address current relevant topics that impact our nation and students. Please be aware that all three texts have explicit language. Although the books are not mandatory reading, we highly recommend you select a book of interest and go to your high school to pick one up. All three texts are available, but limited! Students who show up early will have a greater chance of receiving the text of their choice. Books will be available for pick up at your high school every **Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. beginning next Tuesday, June 30.**

Please find a brief description of each book below:

Dear Martin by Nic Stone

Justyce McAllister is a good kid, an honor student, and always there to help a friend—but none of that matters to the police officer who just put him in handcuffs. Despite leaving his rough neighborhood behind, he can't escape the scorn of his former peers or the ridicule of his new classmates.

Justyce looks to the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for answers. But do they hold up anymore? He starts a journal to Dr. King to find out.

Then comes the day Justyce goes driving with his best friend, Manny, windows rolled down, music turned up—way up, sparking the fury of a white off-duty cop beside them. Words fly. Shots are fired. Justyce and Manny are caught in the crosshairs. In the media fallout, it's Justyce who is under attack.



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I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter by Erika Sánchez

Perfect Mexican daughters do not go away to college. And they do not move out of their parents' house after high school graduation. Perfect Mexican daughters never *abandon* their family.

But Julia is not your perfect Mexican daughter. That was Olga's role.

Then a tragic accident on the busiest street in Chicago leaves Olga dead and Julia left behind to reassemble the shattered pieces of her family. And no one seems to acknowledge that Julia is broken, too. Instead, her mother seems to channel her grief into pointing out *every possible way* Julia has failed.

But it's not long before Julia discovers that Olga might not have been as perfect as everyone thought. With the help of her best friend, Lorena, and her first love (first everything), Connor, Julia is determined to find out. Was Olga really what she seemed? Or was there more to her sister's story? And either way, how can Julia even attempt to live up to a seemingly impossible ideal.

All American Boys by Jason Reynolds and Brenden Kiely

Critically acclaimed authors Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely have joined forces to write an explosive new novel, All American Boys, inspired by recent events and the national debate over police brutality.

Rashad Butler and Quinn Collins are two young men, one black and one white, whose lives are forever changed by an act of extreme police brutality. Rashad wakes up in a hospital. Quinn saw how he got there. And so did the video camera that taped the cop beating Rashad senseless into the pavement. Thus begins All American Boys, written in tandem by two of our great literary talents, Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely. The story is told in Rashad and Quinn's alternating perspectives, as they grapple with the complications that spin out of this violent moment and reverberate in their families, school, and town. Over the course of one week, Rashad tries to find the strength to accept his role as the symbolic figure of the community's response to police brutality, and Quinn tries to decide where he belongs in a town bitterly divided by racial tension.



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Ultimately, the two narratives weave back together, in the moment in which the two boys, now changed, can actually see each other—the first step for healing and understanding in a country still deeply sick with racial injustice. Reynolds pens the voice of Rashad, and Kiely has taken the voice of Quinn.

We are excited to offer this opportunity to engage in critical thinking and reading to our students. If you have any further questions regarding accessing the books, please contact your school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Verna D. Ruffin". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Verna D. Ruffin
Superintendent of Schools

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darren M. Schwartz". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Darren M. Schwartz
Chief Academic Officer