

June 10, 2024

Dear Parents,

Students' success in high school and college depends on their thoughtful, critical reading. During the school year, we monitor students' reading through various means (quizzes, exams, essays, oral presentations, and other activities).

During the summer, we ask you to encourage your children to read. Just as all artists and athletes need to practice year-round if they are to excel, so too do our students need to stay intellectually in shape and in training over the summer if their transition back to school in September is to be smooth. Beyond the academic benefits, of course, we hope our students enjoy reading on many levels--as adventure, enlightenment, self-discovery, playful escape, etc. The highest value of reading is its ability to nourish the soul.

Accompanying this letter you will find a list of titles which we in the English department believe students may enjoy over the summer. While none of the books is specifically required, we strongly recommend that students read one or more of the titles suggested for their year. We also invite *you* to read one or more of the books. In doing so you would be sharing a significant experience with your child, while demonstrating how important you feel reading is. As with most worthwhile pursuits, the habit and pleasure of independent reading need to be cultivated.

Thanks for giving your thoughtful consideration to this request. If you have any questions don't hesitate to email me at jsheehan@molloys.org. Happy Summer!

Sincerely,
James P. Sheehan
English Department Chair

RECOMMENDED FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 9:

Doctorow, Cody. *Little Brother*. Computer geek bypasses school's security system, is mistaken for a terrorist, and fights a battle against surveillance.

Han, Jenny. *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*.

Sixteen-year-old Lara Jean Song keeps the love letters she's written in a hatbox her mother gave her—five in all. When she writes, she pours out her heart and soul, because her letters are for her eyes only—until the day her secret letters are accidentally mailed and Lara Jean's life leaps from imaginary to out of control.

Lue, Marie. *Legend*.

In a nation perpetually at war with its neighbors, fifteen-year-old June is a prodigy being groomed for success in the Republic's highest military circles. Born into the slums, fifteen year-old Day is the country's most wanted criminal. A shocking murder brings these two together on a suspenseful adventure.

Meyer, Marissa. *Cinder: Book One of the Lunar Chronicles*

Set in futuristic China, this book offers a terrific and unusual retelling of the Cinderella story.

Yousafzai, Malala. *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*

On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, at age fifteen, riding the bus home from school Malala was shot in the head by the Taliban. Her book provides a remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, and of brave parents who love their daughter fiercely in a society that prizes sons.

RECOMMENDED FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 10:

Charbonneau, Joelle. *The Testing*.

All Cia can think about—hope for—is whether she'll be chosen for The Testing, a United Commonwealth program that selects the best and brightest new graduates to become possible leaders of the slowly revitalizing post-war civilization. When Cia is chosen, her father finally tells her about his own nightmarish half-memories of The Testing—just before she herself bravely heads off to Tosu City, far away from friends and family, perhaps forever.

Gong, Chloe. *These Violent Delights*.

A blood feud between two gangs runs the streets red, leaving the city helpless in the grip of chaos. At the heart of it all is eighteen-year-old Juliette Cai, who has returned to assume her role as the proud heir of the Scarlet Gang. Their only rivals in power are the White Flowers, who have fought the Scarlets for generations. Behind every move is their heir, Roma Montagov, Juliette's first love...and first betrayal. As deaths stack up, Juliette and Roma must set their guns and grudges aside and work together. If they can't stop this mayhem, there will be no city left for either to rule.

McManus, Karen. *One of Us Is Next*. (sequel to *One of Us Is Lying*)

A ton of copycat gossip apps have popped up since Simon died, but in the year since the Bayview four were cleared of his shocking death, no one's been able to fill the gossip void quite as he could. The problem is that no one has the facts—until now. This time it's not an app, though—it's a game. Truth or Dare.

Shusterman, Neal. *Unwholly*. (sequel to *Unwind*)

Thanks to Connor, Lev, and Risa and their high-profile revolt at Happy Jack Harvest Camp—people can no longer turn a blind eye to unwinding. However, unwinding has become big business, and there are powerful political and corporate interests that want to see it continue. Will these three friends be successful this time?

RECOMMENDED FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 11:

Carriger, Gail. *Etiquette & Espionage*.

It's one thing to learn to curtsy properly. It's quite another to learn to curtsy and throw a knife at the same time. Welcome to Finishing School.

Dickey, R. A. *Throwing Strikes*.

The inspiring story of how knuckleballer R. A. Dickey became one of the game's best pitchers. He had humble beginnings, and as a child kept a terrible secret. Dickey went on to pitch in the Olympics while at the University of Tennessee, but his Major League hopes took a downturn when an X-ray revealed a major problem with his throwing arm. It seemed his future in baseball was over before it even began.

Shusterman, Neal. *Thunderhead*. (sequel to *Scythe*)

Rowan and Citra continue their respective journeys into the Scythedom tackling its problems in different ways. Unexpected corruption and deception undermine the scythe's abilities to glean with compassion.

Stockett, Kathryn. *The Help*.

Aibileen, a black maid in 1962 Jackson, Mississippi, has always taken orders quietly, but lately she's unable to hold back her bitterness. Aibileen's friend Minny has never held her tongue but now must somehow keep secrets about her employer that leave her speechless. White socialite Skeeter has just graduated from college. She's full of ambition, but without a husband, she's considered a failure. Together, these seemingly different women join forces to write a tell-all book about work as a black maid in the South, an effort that could forever alter their destinies and the life of a small town.

Thomas, Angie. *The Hate U Give*.

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that question is Starr. But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

Zusak, Markus. *The Book Thief*.

During World War II, a young European girl finds comfort for her nightmares in the books she steals. This work offers engaging, compelling storytelling from the first word to the last!

RECOMMENDED FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 12:

Danticat, Edwidge. *Eyes, Breath, Memory*.

Girl leaves Haiti to live in New York City where she grows into womanhood while struggling with her traditional mother.

Lewis, Michael. *The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game*.

An examination of professional football—its players, its strategies, its significance in American culture.

Westover, Tara. *Educated*.

In this memoir Tara Westover tells her story. At seventeen she set foot in a classroom for the first time. Her family was so isolated from mainstream society that there had been no one to ensure that the children received an education, and no one to intervene when Tara faced violence at home. When one of her brothers got himself into college, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Her thirst for knowledge transformed her, leading her to places she could never have dreamed of.

Williams, Terrance “Munch.” *Our PSA*.

The author offers his life experiences as a blueprint for African-American males on their journey toward emotional, physical and intellectual health in today’s society. Williams rejects stereotypical narratives and tropes and instead offers choices that will guide the reader on the path of success and happiness.

Wingate, Lisa. *Before We Were Yours*.

Based on one of America’s most notorious real-life scandals—in which Georgia Tann, director of a Memphis-based adoption organization, kidnapped and sold poor children to wealthy families all over the country—Lisa Wingate’s riveting, wrenching, and ultimately uplifting tale reminds us that, even though the paths we travel can lead to many places, the heart never forgets where we belong.

Molloy’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee enthusiastically recommends the following books and other resources:

Nonfiction:

1. Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*
2. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States for Young People*
3. Michael Eric Dyson, *Long Time Coming: Reckoning with Race in America*
4. Anthony Ray Hinton, *The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row*
5. Tiffany Jewel, *This Book Is Anti-Racist*
6. Ibram Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*
7. Patrisse Khan-Cullors, *When They Call You A Terrorist*
8. Jonathan Kozol, *Amazing Grace*

9. John Lewis, *Walking with the Wind* .
10. John Lewis and Andrew Aydin, *March Trilogy* [graphic book series]
11. James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*
12. Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy*
13. Beverly Daniel Tatum, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*
14. Isabel Wilkerson, *Caste*

Fiction:

15. Tomi Adeyemi, *Children of Blood and Bone*
16. Elizabeth Acevedo, *The Poet X*
17. Echo Brown, *Black Girl Unlimited*
18. Brandy Colbert, *The Voting Booth*
19. Bernardine Evaristo *Girl, Woman, Other*
20. George M. Johnson, *All Boys Aren't Blue*
21. Kim Johnson, *This is My America*