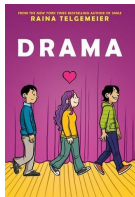




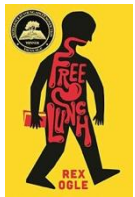
Top Diverse Middle Grade Books for a Welcoming School



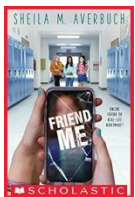
Drama. Raina Telgemeier. (5 – 8) Through drama—a play—and drama between characters, this graphic novel explores middle school feelings with girlfriends and girlfriends and boyfriends and boyfriends. Diverse characters.



For Black Girls Like Me. Mariama J. Lockington. (4 – 7) Makeda is eleven years old, adopted, and black. She wonders: What would it feel like to grow up with a family that looks like me? In this coming-of-age story, the author draws on some of the emotional truths from her own experiences growing up with an adoptive white family.



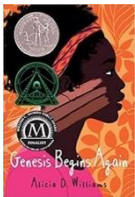
Free Lunch. Rex Ogle. (5 – 9) Based on his own experience as a poor kid in a wealthy school district, Rex vividly tells of his first semester of sixth grade as he tries to hide that he doesn't have much money while classmates and a teacher take one look at him and decide he's trouble. Life at home is punctuated by outbursts of violence. 2020 YALSA Excellence in Nonfiction Award.



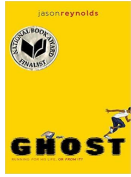
Friend Me. Sheila M. Averbuch. (3 – 7) Roisin hasn't made a single friend since moving to Massachusetts. In fact, she is falling apart under constant abuse from Zara, who torments her in person and on social media. Finally, Roisin bonds with Haley online. But, what happens when an online friend becomes a real-life nightmare?



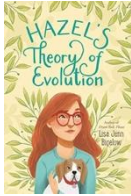
Front Desk. Kelly Yang. (4 –6) Mia Tang has a lot of secrets. She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk. Her parents hide immigrants. She wants to be a writer. But how can she when English is not her first language? Winner Asian / Pacific American Award for Children's Literature.



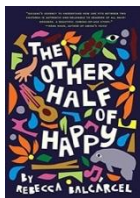
Genesis Begins Again. Alicia D. Williams. (4 – 8) There are ninety-six things Genesis hates about herself. She knows the exact number because she keeps a list. This deeply sensitive and powerful debut novel tells the story of a thirteen-year-old who must overcome internalized racism and a verbally abusive family to finally learn to love herself.



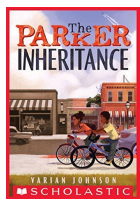
Ghost. Lu. Patina. Sunny. Jason Reynolds. (4 – 8) A series of books with four kids from very different backgrounds with personalities that are explosive when they clash. All are a part of an elite middle school track team that goes to the state championships. They all have a lot to lose, but they also have a lot to prove, not only to each other, but to themselves.



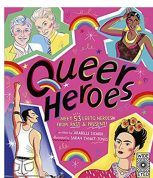
Hazel's Theory of Evolution. Lisa Jenn Bigelow. (5 – 7) As Hazel enters eighth grade she wonders: Will she be teased again about her two moms and their goat farm? Her friends, Carina who is a transgender girl and Yosh who has a disability, help her navigate all the changes. Winner of the Lambda Literary Award.



The Other Half of Happy. Rebecca Balcárcel. (5 – 9) One-half Guatemalan, one-half American: One-half crush, one-half buddy: Quijana found a buddy in Jayden, but she can't help the growing feelings she has for him while he has growing feelings for Seth. Quijana must figure out which parts of her identities are most important and how they fit together. 2020 Pura Belpré Honor Book.



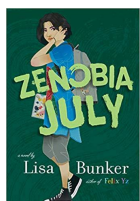
The Parker Inheritance. Varian Johnson. (3 – 6) Candice discovers a mysterious old letter about an injustice from decades ago. With the help of Brandon, she begins to decipher the clues to a story that leads them deep into their South Carolina town's history—a history full of ugly deeds and forgotten heroes. Good historical detail and LGBTQ characters included.



Queer Heroes: Meet 53 LGBTQ Heroes From Past and Present! Arabelle Sicardi. (4 – 6) Discover the inspiring stories of a diverse selection of LGBTQ artists, writers, innovators, athletes and activists who have made great contributions to culture, from ancient times to present day. Full-color portraits accompanied by short biographies.



Riding Freedom. Pam Muñoz Ryan. (4 – 6) A fictionalized account of the true story of Charley (Charlotte) Parkhurst, who ran away from an orphanage, lived as a boy, moved to California, drove stagecoaches and continued to live as a man. Spanish edition: **Un caballo llamado Libertad.**



Zenobia July. Lisa Bunker. (5 – 9) Zenobia July is starting a new life in Maine with her aunts. People used to tell her she was a boy; now she's able to live openly as the girl she always knew she was. When someone anonymously posts hateful memes on her school's website, Zenobia knows she's the one with the hacking skills to solve the mystery.