

Back to School Booklist, Grades 6 - 9

Absent by Katie Williams , 180 pages

Paige dies during physics class and is stuck haunting her high school. When popular Kelsey speculates that Paige's death was suicide, Paige possesses other students in order to dispute the rumor. A compelling blend of ghost story, mystery, and unconventional romance.

Colin Fischer by Ashley Edward Miller and Zack Stentz, 226 pages

After a gun goes off in the cafeteria, Colin is convinced the cops suspect the wrong guy. He's determined to find out who really brought the gun to school; having Asperger's proves both help and hindrance to the young detective.

Eleanor & Park by Rainbow Rowell, 328 pages

Eleanor is the new girl in town, an ostracized, bullied "big girl"; Park is a skinny half-Korean townie who tries to stay out of the spotlight. After meeting on the school bus, the two slowly develop an intense relationship — authentic in its awkwardness and life-changing for them both.

Etiquette & Espionage [Finishing School] by Gail Carriger, 307 pages

In a parallel Victorian England, Sophronia is recruited by Mademoiselle Geraldine's Finishing Academy for Young Ladies of Quality. Students aboard the academy dirigible learn the fine arts of espionage from a faculty boasting a werewolf and a vampire.

Friends with Boys by Faith Erin Hicks, 222 pages

Maggie starts high school after having been homeschooled her entire life. Her mother— her only teacher and the only other female in her home—left the family the year before.

Griff Carver, Hallway Patrol by Jim Krieg, 226 pages

Griffin Carver, new boy at Rampart Middle School, joins the hallway patrol and exposes a fake-hall-pass production ring in this hilarious parody of the hard-boiled detective genre.

If I Ever Get Out of Here by Eric Gansworth, 360 pages

Lewis, a brainiac from the Tuscarora Indian Reservation, begins his second year in a mostly white junior high. The arrival of newcomer George — who shares Lewis's love of the Beatles — allows Lewis to make a friend and cope with the extreme bullying he faces.

Middle School Confidential 1: Be Confident in Who You Are by Annie Fox, 92 pages

Meet Jack, Jen, Chris, Abby, Mateo, and Michelle—7th graders who are just trying to figure out what the heck middle school is all about. But standing in their way are some serious

challenges—bullies putting them down, blowups that threaten friendships, and real doubts about whether they measure up in looks, popularity, smarts, or athletic ability.

Middle School Confidential 2: Real Friends vs. the Other Kind by Annie Fox, 96 pages
Jack, Jen, Chris, Abby, Mateo, and Michelle are back. But their tight circle of friends looks like it's breaking apart. What's going on?

My Big Mouth: 10 Songs I Wrote That Almost Got Me Killed by Peter Hannan, 235 pages
After his mother's death, Davis Delaware's new rock band, the Amazing Dweebs, gets him through his ninth-grade year. Davis's lively first-person narrative is driven by dialogue, cartoons and doodles, and song lyrics.

OCD, the Dude, and Me by Lauren Roedy Vaughn, 236 pages
Journal entries, emails, and school essays document Danielle's senior year. A protagonist with a wicked sense of humor and a barrel of insecurities, Danielle drops hints about a traumatic event in her past she is no longer able to ignore, but ultimately reaches a feel-good conclusion.

Openly Straight by Bill Konigsberg, 328 pages
Rafe, sick of being the poster child for all things gay at his uber-liberal high school, reinvents himself as "openly straight" when he transfers to boarding school. Konigsberg slyly demonstrates how thoroughly assumptions of straightness are embedded in everyday interactions.

Pinned by Sharon Flake, 231 pages
Ninth-grader Autumn is great at wrestling and cooking, but not reading. Her classmate, Adonis, who was born without legs, manages the school wrestling team, and Autumn loves him despite his prickly superiority. Their distinctive alternating voices enhance the story's complexity.

Ten Miles Past Normal by Frances O'Roark Dowell, 211 pages
When Janie was little, she convinced her parents to start a goat farm. Now a ninth-grader, Janie narrates her first year in high school — including joining a jam band and interviewing aging civil rights activists — in her sure, smart, and sarcastic voice.

Winger by Andrew Smith, 439 pages
Ryan Dean plays rugby at Pine Mountain, a school for "the rich deviants of tomorrow." At first Ryan Dean seems like a nice kid, but as he takes readers on a tour of circles of hellish boarding-school life, he becomes more and more like the "jerks" around him.