

Michigan Celebrates

BLACKHISTORYMONTH

with Literature

WEEK 2

February 2023

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

Student literacy engagement increases as students see themselves (mirrors) and others (windows) portrayed accurately in their reading as presented in the work of [Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop](#). By raising the consciousness about great Black authors and lifting up their works, we seek to create conditions for greater engagement with literature among Michigan students.

In celebration of Black History Month, the Michigan Department of Education and the Library of Michigan are excited to showcase Black authors and their literary works during each week in the month of February as featured below. The weekday recommendations were selected from nominations submitted by Michigan Teachers of the Year, Michigan Regional Teachers of the Year, and MDE educators and are intended for use by educators. Additionally, each weekend in February features a recommendation from a Michigan student.

February

06

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters

John Steptoe

Grade: Early Elementary

ISBN: 978-0140559460

Nominator: Shelly Proebstle

School/District/Institution:

Literacy Manager, Michigan Department of Education

Favorite Quote: "Because I have been all of these, I know you to be the most worthy and most beautiful daughter in the land."

Incorporation in Curriculum: "This African tale teaches that kindness wins, and beauty comes from within."

This book has been used this to teach how folktales appear in all cultures and are stories handed down from generations by word of mouth. Folktales are told by ordinary people in all cultures. The story comes from an African country, Zimbabwe. Mufaro's two daughters react in different ways to the King's search for a wife - one is aggressive and selfish, the other kind and dignified. The king disguises himself to learn the true nature of both girls. This story holds all of the characteristics of a folktale."

Additional Information: "This is great to use in a unit with The Rough-Face Girl by Rafe Martin, Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China by Ai-Ling Louie and many other Cinderella tales from other cultures."

February

07

Shirley Chisholm Dared

Alicia D. Williams and April Harrison

Grades: 3 – 6

ISBN: 978-0593123683

Nominator: Leah Porter

School/District/Institution: 3rd grade teacher, 2021-22 Michigan Teacher of the Year, Wilcox Elementary, Holt Public Schools

Favorite Quote: “A seat in the New York State Assembly opens - but there’s one problem; it has *always*

been made up of daring, rebellious, persistent *white men*. Shirley is deterred. During the campaign, words, words and more words are thrown at her. Shirley hears only the most important words, from her father long ago: *Make something of yourself.*”

Incorporation in Curriculum:

“This book shares the story of Shirley Chisholm, and her determination to fight and speak out against injustices. As the first African American woman elected to congress, she is a champion for strong, outspoken women.”

February

08

Locomotion

Jacqueline Woodson

Grades: 4 – 8

ISBN: 978-0142415528

Nominator: Kacie Lyn Hook

School/District/Institution: 6/7 Mathematics Teacher, Roscommon Middle School, Roscommon Area Public Schools

Favorite Quote: “Some days, like today and yesterday and probably tomorrow- all my missing gets jumbled up inside of me. You know honeysuckle talc powder? Mama used to smell like that. She told me honeysuckle’s really a flower but all I know is the powder that smells like Mama. Sometimes when the

missing gets real bad I go to the drugstore and before the guard starts following me around like I’m gonna steal something I go to the cosmetics lady and ask her if she has it. When she says yeah, I say Can I smell it to see if it’s the right one? Even though the cosmetics ladies roll their eyes at me they let me smell it. And for those few seconds, Mama’s alive again.”

Incorporation in Curriculum:

“This book can be used to teach poetry, along with teaching students about life experiences different than their own. There is also a great connection to grit, resiliency, and social-emotional learning.”

Additional Information: “The entire book is written in poem form, and the sequel Peace, Locomotion is another incredible poetry book too.”



February

09

Ghost

Jason Reynolds

Grades: 6 – 7

ISBN: 978-1481450164

Nominator: Kathee Lamberies

School/District/Institution:
Instructional Coach, Roscommon
Area Public Schools

Favorite Quote: “Trouble is, you
can’t run away from yourself.”
Coach snatched the towel from his

shoulder, folded into a perfect square, and set it in
the space between us. “Unfortunately,” he said, “ain’t
nobody that fast.”

Incorporation in Curriculum:
“Facing your fears, overcoming difficulties.”

Additional Information: “This is a great book
for middle school students. Boys and girls alike
enjoy this story and can relate to the problems the
characters are going through.”

February

10

The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration

Isabel Wilkerson

Grades: 10 – 12

ISBN: 978-0688154714

Nominator: James T. Johnson

School/District/Institution:
Teacher, Kalamazoo Public Schools

Favorite Quote: “Over the decades,
perhaps the wrong questions
have been asked about the Great
Migration. Perhaps it is not a
question of whether the migrants
brought good or ill to the cities they

fled to or were pushed or pulled to their destinations,
but a question of how they summoned the courage
to leave in the first place or how they found the will
to press beyond the forces against them and the
faith in a country that had rejected them for so long.”

Incorporation in Curriculum: “This text has stories
from people who lived through the Great Migration.
The book is 640 pages, and can be used as a whole
text, or as excerpts to highlight some of the people
interviewed in the book to show the many different
experiences people had during and after WWI.”

February

11
&
12

The Poet X

Elizabeth Acevedo

Grades: 8 – 9

ISBN: 978-0062662811

Student Nominator: Ela
The Poet X won the 2018
National Book Award for Young
People’s Literature.

Thank you to all of the Michigan teachers
of the year, regional teachers of the year,
and MDE educators who nominated Black
authors, their literary works, and shared how
they used them with students. Thank you also
to the students for sharing their perspectives.
Look for the next set of authors and titles on
Friday, February 10, 2023.

For additional diverse literature recommendations
please visit MDE’s [Equity in Literacy webpage](#).