

Michigan Celebrates

BLACKHISTORYMONTH

with Literature

WEEK 3

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 of February features a recommendation from a Michigan student.

February

13

The Watsons Go to Birmingham

Christopher Paul Curtis

Grade: 3 – 8

ISBN: 978-0440414124

Nominator: Dr. Corinne Edwards

School/District/Institution:

OES Director, Michigan Department of Education

Incorporation in Curriculum:

“Supports children of color in reflecting on and validating their feelings of self-discovery, fear, anger, celebration of culture, and

hope as the semi-autobiographical story is told through the eyes of a middle school boy from Flint, MI who joins his family on a vacation as they travel to Birmingham, AL during the 1960’s US Civil Rights Movement.”

Additional Information: “Mr. Curtis is a Newberry Award winning author of several books. For years he has taken time out of his busy schedule to visit schools and classroom across Michigan speaking with children about the joys of writing and finding their voice through literature.”



February

14

Change Sings: A Children's Anthem

Amanda Gorman

Grades: Elementary

ISBN: 978-0593203224

Nominator: Tricia Zeman

School/District/Institution:

Instruction Coach, Holt Public Schools

Favorite Quote: "I can hear change humming In its loudest, proudest song. I don't fear change coming, And so I sing along."

Incorporation in Curriculum:

"This text can be used to teach students how we can take action to make a difference for ourselves and those around us. In this picture book by presidential inaugural poet and activist Amanda Gorman, anything is possible when voices join together. As a young girl leads a cast of characters on a musical journey, they learn that they have the power to make changes—big or small—in the world, in their communities, and most importantly, in themselves."

From Penguin

February

15

The Skin I'm In

Sharon G. Flake

Grades: 6 – 7

ISBN: 978-0786813070

Nominator: Kathee Lamberies

School/District/Institution:

Instructional Coach, Roscommon Area Public Schools

Favorite Quote: "I took a lot of wrong turns to find out who I really was. You will, too."

Incorporation in Curriculum:

"This text explores how people's own insecurities can affect how they are treated along with how they behave. The story follows 13-year-old Maleeka Madison III and her struggle with self-confidence while being bullied for her dark complexion. Guided by the new and "unusual" English teacher, Miss Saunders, Maleeka hones her talent for creative writing and develops self-love. The text explores such themes as bullying, poverty, grief, and beauty standards."

Additional Information: "This is a powerful text for students, especially for students who are bullying others for being different, as the student in the story is bullied and then a teacher comes to the school who has a skin disorder and the kids learn a powerful lesson about how they treat others."



February

16

Speech: “I have a Dream”

Martin Luther King Jr.

Grades: 3 – 8

ISBN: [Transcript and Audio](#)

Nominator: Dawn Perez

School/District/Institution:
Business/Computer Teacher (CTE)
Career and Technical Education,
Swan Valley School District

Favorite Quote: “I have a dream
that my four children will one day

live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.”

Incorporation in Curriculum:

“This speech can be used with all grades 3 and up. Martin Luther King, Jr. has powerful words which have changed society for the better. With hope, Dr. King wanted to instill this power in our future generations to dream and follow those dreams; you can do anything to which you put your mind.”

February

17

Their Eyes Were Watching God

Zora Neale Hurston

Grades: 7 – 12

ISBN: 978-0060838676

Nominator: Jessyca Mathews

School/District/Institution:
Language Arts Teacher, Carman-
Ainsworth Community Schools

Favorite Quote: “Ships at a
distance have every man’s wish
on board. For some they come in
with the tide. For others they sail
forever on the same horizon, never
out of sight, never landing until the
Watcher turns his eyes away in

resignation, his dreams mocked to death by Time. That is the life of men.

Now, women forget all those things they don’t want to remember, and remember everything they don’t want to forget. The dream is the truth. Then they act and do things accordingly.”

Incorporation in Curriculum: “Educators can use this book for independent reading and studying Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop’s work with windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors. Strong and independent narration of this story leads to an inspiring historical fiction that is a great addition to any diverse bookshelf.”

February

18
&
19

**The Other Wes Moore:
One Name, Two Fates**
Wes Moore

Grades: 9 – 12

ISBN: 978-0385528207

Student Nominator: Faith

[Watch the Student Interview
Online](#)

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 17, 2023.

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