



Sunshine State Young Readers Award Books 2023-24 List for Grades 3-5



The Area 51 Files by Julie Buxbaum

After a mysterious disappearance in Area 51, suspicion falls on the new residence, Sky. Ky and her new friend Elvis (Alien) work together to prove her Uncle Anish's innocence. Cute, goofy fun mystery!



Bedhead Ted by Scott SanGiacomo

A graphic novel about wanting to fit in when you stand out, friendships, and uncovering the truth of a local urban legend - the elusive giant raccoon known as the Brookside Beast! For the first time, Ted wonders if his unruly hair is a gift rather than a curse.



Better with Butter by Victoria Piontek

Afraid of everything, Marvel, finds an unlikely friend -- and emotional support animal -- in the form of an adorable fainting goat. Everything is easier for her with Butter by her side. But what will happen to Marvel when Butter's owner shows up to take her back? Will Marvel find a way to keep her friend?



The Curse on Spectacle Key by Chantel Acevedo

A Cuban American boy who befriends a pair of spirits and tries to break the curse on his island home . . . only to discover a seemingly lost piece of his family's history in the process.



Glitch by Laura Martin

Regan and Elliott, enemies since they started training to become Glitchers, must break all the rules of time travel. Will they be able to set aside their past in order to save the future?



Good Dogs on a Bad Day by Rachel Wenitsky and David Sidorov

A group of Very Good doggie daycare buddies, meet the Naughty Dog and try following a few of their wilder instincts leading to hilarious chaos. Do good dogs have to be good all the time?



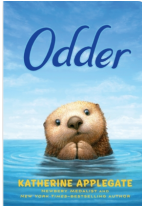
Honestly Elliott by Gillian McDunn

With a best friend that moved away, Elliott starts school amid personal turmoil only to be partnered with popular and smart Maribel for a class project that really counts. Sometimes the least likely friends help you see a new side to things... and sometimes you have to make a few mistakes before you figure out what's right.



Night Frights: The Haunted Mustach by Jo McGee

Parker and Lucas, out to debunk one of Wolver Hollow’s creepiest legends, of the ghostly mustache that returns every year seeking a lip to claim as its own, find more than they bargained for.



Odder by Katherine Applegate

Inspired by the true story of a Monterey Bay Aquarium program that pairs orphaned otter pups with surrogate mothers, this poignant and humorous tale told in free verse examines bravery and healing through the eyes of one of nature’s most beloved and charming animals.



The Raven Heir by Stephanie Burgis

Deep within an enchanted forest lies a castle where a set of triplets and their sorceress mother have safely lived for years. But one day, the world comes calling and her family is captured, it’s up to Cordelia to use her powers to keep her siblings hidden and discover the truth about the Raven Heir – before it’s too late.



Secondhand Dogs by Carolyn Crimi

When she adopted Gus, Roo, Tank, and Moon Pie, Miss Lottie rescued each member of the pack and turned them into a family. But when a new dog, Decker, arrives and tries to hoard Miss Lottie’s heart and home for himself, the pack’s future is threatened.



Solimar - The Sword of the Monarchs by Pam Muñoz Ryan

On the brink of her Quinceañera, Solimar is given a gift and a curse; she can predict the future. Can this princess-to-be save her family, the kingdom, and the future of the monarch butterflies from a greedy and dangerous king?



Strangeville School is Totally Normal by Darcy Miller

Harvey Hill wants the kids at his new school to think he is normal, but the school is anything but normal. His guide, and a new friend? Stella Cho goes missing and it's up to Harvey to solve the secret of the supply closet. Harvey must embrace what makes him unique to save his new friend and his new school.



Stuck by Jennifer Swender

Austin, a boy used to flying under the radar, wants to keep his secret: he struggles to read. Enter larger-than-life Bertie, who excites Austin to join the Safety Patrol and finally speak up, finding he may not be that different after all.



Swim Team by Johnie Christmas

Excited for her first day of school, Bree finds herself stuck with the dreaded Swim 101. She's forced to dive headfirst into one of her greatest fears. Lucky for her, Etta, an elderly occupant of her apartment building and former swim team captain, is willing to help.



SSYRA Jr. 2023-2024 Annotated List



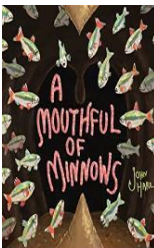
The Three Billy Goats Gruff by Mac Barnett

Once there was a bridge and a terrible and VERY hungry troll lived underneath it. When the three Billy Goats Gruff decide to clip-clop across the bridge to get to the grassy ridge, the troll is already imagining all the way to prepare a delicious goat dinner. But the troll underestimates those seemingly sweet but oh-so-savvy goats! High-stakes page turns will have readers on the edge of their seats and giggling along, as they join each goat and anticipate the arrival of the hungry and terrible troll living under the bridge.



Knight Owl by Christopher Denise

A determined Owl builds strength and confidence in this medieval picture book about the real mettle of a hero: wits, humor, and heart. Since the day he hatched, Owl dreamed of becoming a real knight. He may not be the biggest or the strongest, but his sharp nocturnal instincts can help protect the castle, especially since many knights have recently gone missing. While holding guard during Knight Night Watch, Owl is faced with the ultimate trial—a frightening intruder. It's a daunting duel by any measure. But what Owl lacks in size, he makes



A Mouthful of Minnows by John Hare

At the bottom of the pond, Alphonso the snapping turtle opens his mouth wide, wiggles his worm-like tongue, and waits patiently for breakfast. He barely notices a measly minnow, but he's thrilled when the entire school shows up. Alphonso's perseverance has paid off! But when a whole family of minnows arrives to celebrate together, Alphonso's true character emerges, and he has second thoughts about the breakfast he's been waiting for.



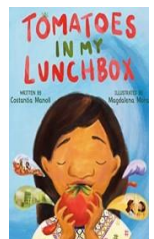
Bug on the Rug by Sophia Cholz

Pug is snug on his rug. But what happens when along comes BUG?! With a claim to the rug?! The two engage in a hysterical, rhyming battle of wits and strength until Slug asks the necessary questions and helps them find common ground. Rhyming is an important developmental reading skill. It teaches phonics (decodable text) and helps young readers infer content. This is a fun story to build those skills--and is an epic read aloud!



Maybe... by Chris Haughton

Three little monkeys and their big monkey are sitting high on a branch in the forest canopy. "OK, monkeys! I'm off," says the big monkey. "Remember . . . Whatever you do, do NOT go down to the mango tree. There are tigers down there." Mmm . . . mangoes! think the little monkeys. They LOVE mangoes. Hmm . . . Maybe . . . maybe they could just look at the mangoes. That would be OK, right? With vivid colors, bold shapes, and his trademark visual humor, Chris Haughton is back with a deliciously suspenseful cautionary tale about pushing boundaries—and indulging your more impish side (when nobody is looking).



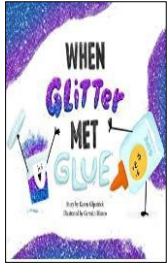
Tomatoes In My Lunchbox by Costantia Manoli

A child, newly arrived in another country, feels displaced, lonely, and a little scared on her first day of school. Her name doesn't sound the way she's used to hearing it. She knows she doesn't fit in. And when she eats her whole tomato for lunch, she can feel her classmates observing her--and not quite understanding her. But sometimes all it takes is one friend, one connection, to bring two worlds together, and gradually the girl, her tomato, and her full name, start to feel at home with her new friends and community.



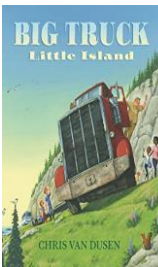
Not That Pet by Smriti Prasadam-Hall

Mabel's family is letting her pick what kind of pet to get, and she is determined to find the very BEST one. "Any pet you like delivered to your door," promises the sign. But what if the ants are too tiny, the hyenas too giggly, the owl too loud? What if the snake almost strangles Granddad and the skunk wants to spray the baby? None of the pets she tries out seems like the right fit. Readers will love following through several comical reveals until Mabel meets her furry match (not what you might guess!). Best-selling author Smriti Prasadam-Halls's hilarious rhyming read-aloud and Rosalind Beardshaw's charming illustrations will have kids laughing--and dreaming of their own quirky pets.



When Glitter Met Glue by Karen Kilpatrick

Glue loves making art with her friends—especially pasting on googly eyes!—but sometimes she feels invisible. Instead of always being stuck in the background, Glue wants to be noticed like Pencil and colorful like the Markers! How can she find a way to stand out? When a new friend named Glitter arrives in a swirl of sparkles, Glue and Glitter team up to make something completely original and help Glue shine like the star she truly is.



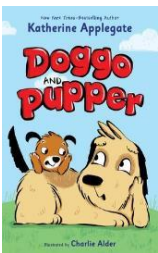
Big Truck, Little Island by Chris Van Dusen

When a big truck and its big load get stuck on a narrow road, traffic on the little island comes to a halt. Some cars need to go south and some have to travel north. How will Meg get to her swim meet? What about Barry's ballet class? Luckily, the kids come up with an ingenious solution: why not just swap cars? Inspired by an incident that happened in Vinalhaven, Maine, Chris Van Dusen tells a fun tale of resourcefulness and community through clever, rhyming wordplay and whimsical illustrations, sprinkled with plenty of cars and trucks for transportation-loving readers.



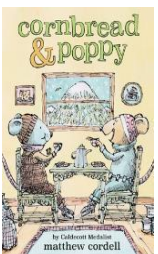
Chickadee Criminal Mastermind by Monica Silvie

A flying masked bandit (code name: Chickadee) discovers he isn't quite who he thinks he is in this fresh and delightful tale about discovering one's true nature. Meet Chickadee. Criminal. Rapscaillon. All-around bad seed. Sure, he started out obeying the rules, following his parents' advice about finding things to eat and staying away from houses. But then . . . winter arrives. And it's so much harder to find food in winter! So when Chickadee spies a "vault" full of "gold" near a house by the park (Wait, wasn't there something to remember about houses?), he cleverly devises a plan to snatch the "vault full of treasure" without getting caught! He is the King of Thieves! Only, hmm, the humans near the vault seem to want him to visit. Maybe Chickadee's not a criminal after all?



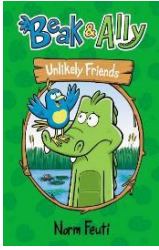
Doggo and Pupper by Katherine Applegate

Doggo is used to things being a certain way in his family. He likes routine. Cat says he's become boring. That is, until Pupper shows up! Pupper is playful and messy, and turns the house upside down. Soon, the humans realize that Pupper needs some training, and off he goes to puppy school. When Pupper comes back, he's well-behaved. He's not playful. He's not messy. But Doggo soon realizes that Pupper also isn't happy. So Doggo steps in to help, and rediscovers what it means to have fun.



Cornbread and Poppy by Matthew Cordell

Cornbread LOVES planning. Poppy does not. Cornbread ADORES preparing. Poppy does not. Cornbread IS ready for winter. Poppy...is not. But Cornbread and Poppy are the best of friends, so when Poppy is left without any food for the long winter, Cornbread volunteers to help her out. Their search leads them up, up, up Holler Mountain, where these mice might find a new friend...and an old one. Celebrating both partnership and the value of what makes us individuals, young readers will find this classic odd-couple irresistible as they encounter relatable issues with humor and heart.



Beak and Ally by Norm Feuti

CeCe dreams of being a pirate. When the neighborhood boys tell her that she can't, she wonders where to begin. Luckily, she suspects her grandpa must know something about being a pirate--why else would he have all those tattoos? Cornbread LOVES planning. Poppy does not. Cornbread ADORES preparing. Poppy does not. Cornbread IS ready for winter. Poppy...is not. But Cornbread and Poppy are the best of friends, so when Poppy is left without any food for the long winter, Cornbread volunteers to help her out. Their search leads them up, up, up Holler Mountain, where these mice might find a new friend...and an old one. Celebrating both partnership and the value of what makes us individuals, young readers will find this classic odd-couple irresistible as they encounter relatable issues with humor and heart.



Sir Ladybug by Corey Tabor

Ladies and gentlebugs, presenting the duke of the dandelion patch, champion of truth and justice, the one, the only—Sir Ladybug! Sir Ladybug never shies away from a quest, even when he'd rather be playing a video game or baking a cake. So when a caterpillar needs rescuing from a “monster” (a hungry chickadee), Sir Ladybug and his trusty friends—his herald, a roly-poly named Pell, and his squire, a snail named Sterling—hatch the perfect (delicious) plan. This is the first in a new graphic novel series for newly independent readers, following the adventures of a ladybug knight and his pals in the dandelion patch. Woven seamlessly into this funny and surprising story are the themes of friendship, bravery, teamwork, creative thinking, and helping others. With warmth and heart, surprising and delightful asides, and memorable cast of characters, this new series will appeal to avid and reluctant readers alike.



Bibbidi Bobbidi Academy Rory and the Magical Mix-Ups by Kallie George

Rory Spellington is fluttering with excitement as she begins her first year at the prestigious Bibbidi Bobbidi Academy! But fairy godmothering might not be as easy as she thought, especially because Rory has always struggled with spelling--magic spelling that is. During her first week at the academy, Rory discovers there is more to being a good fairy godmother than magic, and she will learn she has her own set of talents that set her apart.