

**2017 – 2018 Barings/Springfield School Volunteers**  
**Read Aloud Book Summaries and Tips**

<i><b>Grade</b></i>	<i><b>Month</b></i>	<i><b>Title</b></i>	<i><b>Author</b></i>
Pre-K/K	October	Leo the Late Bloomer	Robert Kraus
	November	The Little Red Hen (Makes a Pizza)	Philemon Sturges
	December	The Doorbell Rang	Pat Hutchins
	January	Cool Dog, School Dog	Deborah Heiligman
	February	Over in the Meadow	Ezra Jack Keats
Grade 1	October	Chato and the Party Animals	Gary Soto
	November	Wolf's Coming	Joe Kulka
	December	Adventures of Taxi Dog	Debra Barracca
	January	Widget	Lyn Rossiter McFarland
	February	Betty Bunny Loves Chocolate Cake	Michael Kaplan
Grade 2	October	Thank You, Miss Doover	Robin Pulver
	November	Bringing Asha Home	Uma Krishnaswami
	December	My Lucky Day	Keiko Kasza
	January	The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash	Trinka Hakes Noble
	February	Keepers	Jeri Hanel Watts & Felicia
Grade 3	October	Each Kindness	Jacqueline Woodson
	November	Nothing Ever Happens on 90 <sup>th</sup> Street	Roni Schotter
	December	I Wished for You: An Adoption Story	Marianne Richmond
	January	Thunder Cake	Patricia Polacco
	February	Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky	Faith Ringgold
Grade 4	October	Martina the Beautiful Cockroach: A Cuban Folktale	Carmen Agra Deedy
	November	The Recess Queen	Alexis O'Neil
	December	Peppe the Lamplighter	Elisa Bartone
	January	Rosa	Nikki Giovanni
	February	Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story From the Underground Railroad	Ellen Levine
Grade 5	October	Escape from Pompeii	Christina Balit
	November	Uncle Jed's Barbershop (B&N)	Margaret King Mitchell
	December	Sam and the Lucky Money	Karen Chinn
	January	Brick by Brick	Charles R. Smith Jr.
	February	Richard Wright and the Library Card	Gregory Christie

## Pre K-K

**Leo the Late Bloomer** - Leo is a young tiger that just can't seem to keep up with his friends. Leo wonders if he'll ever be able to read, write, draw, eat neatly, and speak as clearly as his friends do. (*What do you wish you could do better?*) Leo's dad is a bit concerned, but his mom reassures him that Leo is just a late bloomer. With the love and support of his parents Leo learns to do everything his friends can do. (*What do your families help you do better?*)

**The Little Red Hen (Makes a Pizza)** - The familiar tale of the hard-working Little Red Hen takes on a new twist. This time when Hen finds a can of tomato sauce in her cupboard she decides to make a pizza. (*What else do you need to make a pizza?*) Hen's friends aren't much help in the beginning, but as readers follow Hen on her journey to buy supplies for her pizza they'll see her friends pull through in a refreshing yet surprising way. (*Have you ever helped someone make a pizza?*)

**The Doorbell Rang** - Victoria and Sam couldn't be more thrilled to share the dozen cookies Ma just baked, (*Explain how many are in a dozen*) but then the doorbell rings. Some friends have come for a visit and the 12 cookies now have to be shared. The doorbell rings repeatedly until there are 12 children in the house. (*How many cookies will each child receive?*) The real question is...what happens if the doorbell rings again?

**Cool Dog, School Dog** - (*How many of you have a dog/pet?*) This is a modernized version of the timeless story of a dog who wants to go to school. Tinka, the sandy golden retriever, hates the feeling of being left all alone each day when her owner leaves for school. One day Tinka sneaks away from home and finds her owner at school. (*Does your dog ever follow you around?*) On her surprise visit to the school Tinka proves to be a "cool dog, school dog, a breaking all the rules dog." Leaving trouble in her wake, Tinka unexpectedly teaches the class to read. (*How do you know this is a fictional story?*)

**Over in the Meadow** - (*To introduce this book you might count to ten with the class and ask if anyone can give an example of a rhyming word.*) This classic cross-curriculum nursery poem combines rhyming with counting – it introduces mother animals and their babies and the numbers 1 - 10. Children can identify the different types of animals, count the babies, and point out the rhyming words. (*What do you like to do what your mommy?*) \*Note: The page about crickets uses the word *gay*...if you anticipate giggles or confusion from students you may want to substitute *gay* with *happy*.

## Grade 1

**Chato and the Party Animals** - When Chato the cat finds out his friend Novio Boy has never celebrated his birthday, he decides to throw a surprise *pachanga* (party). Chato gathers party favors, cooks special dishes and invites all the animals from *el barrio* (the neighborhood), but in all his excitement forgets to invite the guest of honor. (*Have you ever been so excited that you forgot something important?*) Everyone begins to search for Novio Boy and just when they had given up hope he shows up to the party with two new friends. They dance, throw water balloons, open presents, and celebrate *la familia del barrio* (the family of the neighborhood). (*What kinds of parties do you have with your family?*)

**Wolf's Coming** - (*Do you know of any stories with a wolf?*) Things are not what they seem in this suspenseful yet fun children's story. Someone is in for a big surprise – a surprise birthday party for wolf that is! On the wolf's journey through the woods his howl echoes through the forest and the news that Wolf is coming spreads quickly. As he gets closer, all the forest animals go into hiding. Wolf peeks through the window and creaks open the door. (*Who can make a prediction about what the wolf is coming to do? What clues were in the illustrations that there was going to be a party? – Balloons*)

**Adventures of Taxi Dog** - (*Has anyone ever been to New York City?*) In the Big Apple it's a dog-eat-dog world. Maxi has no place to call home, but he's always managed to take care of himself. One day he meets a kind-hearted taxi driver named Jim who offers him friendship, a home and a seat in the front of his cab. Maxi and Jim become the best of friends. (*Do any of you have a dog?*) They enjoy taking in the sights and sounds of the city. Some of their adventures include, rushing two clowns and a chimp to the circus and singing duets with an opera diva! (*What fun things would you like to do with your pet?*)

**Widget** - When Widget wanders through Mrs. Diggs flap door he's confronted by six cats that aren't very happy to see him. (*Why do you think the cats were unhappy to see Widget?*) Desperate for a place to stay Widget thinks quickly on his paws and decides to act like a cat. He becomes so good at it that not only does he convince the cats, but he forgets his true nature. (*Why did Widget pretend to be a cat?*) When Mrs. Diggs has an accident his canine instincts quickly come back.

**Betty Bunny Loves Chocolate Cake** - Although she's never had chocolate before Betty Bunny proclaims to not like it. (*Have you ever said no to something before trying it?*) From the first bite, Betty realizes that she absolutely loves chocolate cake! She loves it so much that she wants to marry it, take it in her pocket, and eat nothing else. (*Is there anything that you like to eat now that you once would not eat?*) This is a fun story about a picky eater who discovers the frustrations and rewards of a little patience and moderation! (*Provide a kid-friendly explanation of patience and moderation.*)

## Grade 2

**Bringing Asha Home** - Rakhi is a Hindu holiday special to brothers and sisters. Young Arun wishes he had a sister to celebrate with. *(What are some things you like doing with your siblings?)* His parents are trying to adopt a baby named Asha who lives in India. Almost a year passes before they receive approval to bring Asha home. Arun's patience is wearing thin, but as time passes he finds his own special ways to build a bond with his sister. Readers will find reassurance knowing there is more than one way to become part of a loving family. *(What are other ways to be part of a family?)*

**The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash** - *(Have you ever been on a field trip?)* In this wildly funny story a little girl returns home from a school field trip to the farm with more than earful for her mom. When Jimmy, one of the boy's in her class, decided to bring his pet to the farm it was bound to be a disaster. The animals went crazy and caused chaos amongst the entire farm and Jimmy ended up taking home a pig instead of his boa. *(What is the most excitement you've ever had on a field trip?)*

**Keepers** - Kenyon loves listening to his Grandma's stories almost as much as he loves playing baseball. When she tells him that the honor of being the "Keeper" of the family stories is only for girls he is disappointed. *(Do you think it's fair for girls and boys to have different privileges?)* When setting out to buy his grandma a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday present Kenyon doesn't know what to do and buys himself something instead. *(What special things have you bought or made for your grandmother?)* Eventually he thinks up an idea for a present that just might change his grandmother's mind about who can be a "keeper."

**Thank You Miss Doover** - When Jack's teacher begins a lesson on how to write thank-you notes Jack knows exactly who the recipient of his letter will be. *(Why does Jack want to write the thank you note to Great Aunt Gertie? Have you ever written a thank-you note?)* Jack thinks the assignment will be pretty easy until he realizes all of the rules Miss Doover has given them. *(Do you know any of the steps of the writing process? - brainstorm, pre-write, draft, revise, edit and publish.)*

**My Lucky Day** - Mr. Fox believes it's his lucky day when what he thinks will be his dinner (a delicious looking piglet) shows up at his door. *(What might make you have a lucky day?)* Unfortunately for Mr. Fox, he has met his match. This little pig is as sly as a fox and manages to manipulate Mr. Fox into giving him a meal, a warm bath, and a massage. It appears it was the pig's lucky day after all. *(When did you know the pig was tricking the fox? What do you think will happen at the bear's house?)*

## Grade 3

**Each Kindness** - Maya is the new girl at school and Chloe and her friends refuse to play with her. *(How do you think Maya felt when they wouldn't play with her?)* After their repeated rejection Maya decides to play alone and eventually stops coming to school altogether. When the teacher does a lesson on kindness Chloe regrets not showing kindness to Maya and reflects on the lost opportunity for friendship. *(Have you ever treated anyone unfairly or been treated unfairly because of being a new student?)* Even small acts of kindness can change the world. *(What are some ways to show kindness?)*

**I Wished for You** - A little bear named Barley and his Mama cuddle up in their favorite spot and share stories. *(Do you ever cuddle up with someone at home and share stories?)* Mama has told Barley many stories, but his favorite is the one about how he became a part of Mama Bear's family. Barley has wished for many things, but realizes he's never wished for a somebody the way his Mama wished for him. *(Have any of you ever wished for somebody...like a new brother or sister?)*

**Nothing Ever Happens on 90<sup>th</sup> Street** - Eva's homework is to write about her neighborhood. She sits on her front stoop but realizes she's only getting useless writing tips from her neighbors so she decides to take matters into her own hands. Exciting things begin to happen! Eva knows she has enough to write a great story and understands that inspiration can be found if you observe carefully enough. *(What inspires you to write? What could you write about your neighborhood?)*

**Thunder Cake** - *(Who's afraid of thunderstorms?)* When the atmosphere surrounding Grandma's farm looks favorable for a storm her terrified granddaughter hides beneath her bed. In order to coax her out, grandma tells her this is the perfect weather to make Thunder Cake. *(What might be in a thunder cake?)* The thought of a treat gets her crawling out to help Grandma find the ingredients and get the cake in the oven before the storm begins. *(What do you do when you're afraid?)*

**Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky** - *(Have you heard of Harriet Tubman?)* Cassie and her brother BeBe encounter a mysterious train with Harriet Tubman as its conductor. Tubman sends the children on separate re-creations of a journey from slavery to freedom on the Underground Railroad. *(What do you know about the Underground Railroad?)* As Cassie makes her way north, she relies on Tubman's advice to stay safe and takes comfort in notes from BeBe, who is always one step ahead. When the children are reunited they celebrate freedom with newly opened eyes. BeBe now understands, "... what our great-great-grandparents survived when they were children."

#### Grade 4

**Martina the Beautiful Cockroach: A Cuban Folktale** - Martina Josefina Catalina Cucaracha is a beautiful cockroach who is ready to get married. To help her pick the perfect mate Martina's *abuela* (grandmother) tells her to spill coffee on each of her suitor's shoes to see if he will lose his temper. *(Do you think that was good advice? Why or why not?)* Many potential husbands come, but only one special creature passes the coffee test. *(Why do you think Perez was the perfect match?)*

**Peppe the Lamplighter** - *(Before electric street lights people had to physically light the gas street lamps.)* Peppe's family has just moved to New York and although he is a boy Peppe has to take a job as a lamplighter to help his poor, immigrant family. Peppe is proud of his job, but Papa does not approve. When Peppe's job helps save his lost little sister, his family changes their view.

**The Recess Queen** - *(Why is being a bully wrong?)* In this story a bully learns that kindness and friendship may be more powerful than her mean routine. Mean Jean, the Recess Queen pushes through the playground so she can be the first to have fun. Unaware of the playground hierarchy, the new girl Katie Sue rushes to play before Jean. Just as Jean is about to get upset Katie Sue invites Jean to play with her. *(Why do you think Jean may have been a bully?)*

**Rosa** - *(Raise your hand if you know Rosa Parks?)* Rosa is a tribute to an important civil rights figure who refused to give up her seat on a city bus. *(Why do you think she may have been asked to give up her seat?)* Rosa calls for discussion about courage and standing up for what you believe in. Ask students what they think is meant by, "She had not sought this moment..." (She didn't plan to stage a protest.), and how the phrase "all the strength of all the people through all those many years joined in her," may explain how she became ready for that moment. (She drew strength from them.)

**Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story From the Underground Railroad** - *(Do you all know how old you are/when your birthday is?)* Nobody kept records of slaves' birthdays so Henry Brown doesn't know how old he is. Henry has dreamed about freedom for as long as he can remember, but after he is torn from his family and put to work in a warehouse that dream seems unreachable. Henry grows up and has his own family, but when they are sold away his world crumbles again. One day while working Henry lifts a crate and knows what he must do. *(Who can predict what he will do?)* After an arduous journey in the crate Henry finally has a birthday - his first day of freedom. *(If you didn't know your own birthday what special day would you choose for yourself?)*

#### Grade 5

**Sam and the Lucky Money** - Chinese New Year is an important celebration in Chinese culture. Sam receives a traditional gift from his grandparents, a red envelope called *lasees* (lay-sees), and for the first time he can spend it on whatever he wants. He decides to spend it in his favorite place, Chinatown, but when he realizes he doesn't have enough to buy what he wants his excitement quickly turns to disappointment. *(What do you think will happen when he encounters a homeless man?)*

**Brick by Brick** - *(Who has seen the White House in person?)* A piece of nonfiction that details the building of the White House, the title reflects how this symbol of America was created by human hands, brick by brick. The home of the president was built by many hands - slaves who undertook this amazing achievement long before there were machines to do it. Many slaves were able to purchase their freedom by earning money after learning a trade through this work. The author's note provides a historical context. The illustrations bring to life the faces of those who endured hard, brutal work to create this iconic emblem of America.

**Escape from Pompeii** - *(Has anyone ever hear of Pompeii or Mt. Vesuvius?)* Pompeii is an ancient city in Campania, Italy that was destroyed when a volcano erupted at Mt Vesuvius. In this story we get to see the thriving city through the eyes of a young boy named Tranio. As he looks from his window at Mt. Vesuvius, which ironically is called Pompeii's "greatest protector...the Gentle Mountain." *(What does ironic mean? Why is that an ironic nickname?)* When Tranio begins to feel tremors he and his friend run to escape and from a safe distance they see the mountain erupt and their once beautiful city covered in molten liquid.

**Richard Wright and the Library Card** - *(How many of you enjoy hearing or reading stories?)* Richard loved to hear family stories and could not wait to learn to read the words on the pages of books. Unfortunately, his family moved often in search of work and he didn't have the opportunity to go to school to learn to read. Eventually his mother taught him to read but they still could not afford books. *(Where do you think he could go to read books instead?)* Sadly in the 1900's most libraries didn't allow African American patrons. Listen to find out how Richard was finally able to obtain a library card and read the pages of many books that he sees as "tickets to freedom." *(Why should everyone be able to read? Why did Richard see books as tickets to freedom?)*

**Uncle Jed's Barber Shop** - *(How would you feel if you couldn't have your dream job just because of the color of your skin?)* Sarah Jean's Uncle Jed dreamed of being a barber, but living in the segregated south during the 1920's along with many other setbacks such as the Great Depression made that difficult. He had to travel far and wide to cut his customers' hair and longed for the day he could have a shop of his own. *(Do you think he'll ever get his own shop?)*