The North Carolina Young Adult Book Award was started in 2008 to encourage reading at the middle and high school levels by involving students in the process of selecting and voting on the best books for their age group.
The Process

- Each year the committee selects (at least) ten books for middle school and ten books for high school readers published within three years of the award year to make up the two NC YA Book Award lists.
- The titles are chosen from nominations submitted by students (and media coordinators) across the state.
Throughout the school year students are encouraged to read from the lists and think critically about what they read.

Then in March, they vote for their favorite book. After tallying the student votes, a winner is announced in April and the new book lists are published.
High School Nominees

Contact info: ncyabookaward@gmail.com or rejordan@gaston.k12.nc.us
When Sasha, who identifies as agender, gets on Oakland’s 57 bus, they never thought that wearing a skirt to school might make them the victim of a hate crime. They never suspected that Richard, a fellow passenger, would light their skirt on fire, leaving Sasha’s legs covered with severe second and third degree burns. Even though Richard is only sixteen, he is charged with two felonies and faced with the possibility of life imprisonment. Based on real events in 2013, *The 57 Bus* is a poignant nonfiction piece that stirs you to sympathy for Sasha and Richard.
Sorina is the first true illusionist born in over a hundred years. Her creations are almost real, people can see, feel, and hear them. They are her family. Traveling in the Gomorrah Festival is all these creations and Sorina know. She knows they aren’t real but they are a comfort to her until, one of them is actually murdered. But, how is it possible to kill something that’s not real?

Come with Sorina and her beau, Luca, as she hunts a killer, while trying to save her creations and protect her family.
Eliza has tried to drown herself in Monstrous Seas, her well-established webcomic. As Lady Constellation, she is a force to be reckoned with. The only problem is that Eliza holds her identity secret. In the real world, she’s shy, unassuming and a true introvert, that it until she meets Wallace. Eventually, the truth comes out about the Lady Constellation and Eliza has a tremendous amount of trouble putting her monsters back in the closet.

Wallace is the first person that Eliza has felt she can come out of her shell to but he has a secret of his own.
Goodbye Days by Jeff Zentner

“Where are you guys? Text me back?” Seven words high school Senior Carver Briggs can never take back and can never forget. His three best friends never make it to pick him up, their lives cut short in a terrible car accident. Burdened by guilt, dealing with blame, and facing criminal charges, Carver embarks on a series of “goodbye” days to share the memories of his friends with their families. Can Carver make peace with his loss, take responsibility for his actions, and somehow move forward in his own life?

Ultimately, this wonderful and tragic novel compels us to examine the intricacies of friendship and the way we experience grief, guilt, and hope.
Although we try to, we don’t always see what’s right in front of us; we see what we want to see and that’s often due to fear. And, it’s fear that ultimately takes Khalil’s life the night he offers to drive Starr Carter home. What looks like a gun in Khalil’s hand is actually a hair brush, so when he is mistakenly shot by a police officer, it’s also fear that threatens to keep Starr from standing up and telling the truth about what happened. Don’t wait to see the movie, read *The Hate U Give* first!
Julia Reyes has never been the perfect Mexican daughter, not like her older sister, Olga, that is. And after 15 years of being compared to Olga, Julia still struggles with wanting a different life. Instead of working a boring job and never leaving Chicago, Julia dreams of attending college in New York and even becoming a writer. After Olga is accidentally killed crossing a busy street, Julia learns that Olga really wasn’t the perfect daughter... at all. Join Julia on her emotional quest to find out the truth in *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*. 

Trailer by Jennifer Ludford
A masterful, powerful story delivered in verse. A boy gets on an elevator with a gun, ready to deliver revenge for the death of his brother.

As the elevator stops at each floor, someone new gets on to add to the story of what happened to the boy’s brother. What does he do in the end?

Jason reading from Long Way Down. Produced by Faber & Faber,

Click here to see Jason Reynolds on the Daily Show where he was interviewed as to how he came to writing.
“Whole families, whole countries, whole worlds. Isn’t it strange how a whole life can begin with a little spark.”

Adri is an orphan, who has just been given the chance of a lifetime. She has been chosen as a Colonist. To leave Earth, she must travel “nowhere” Kansas for training for a one-way trip to Mars. A DNA match has found a cousin living close to Wichita and The Center has arranged lodging with her cousin. Adri isn’t much of a people person, so when she meets her aged cousin, Lily, sparks don’t fly. It’s not until Adri finds the post card from Lenore that things take off. Adri asks questions, finds letters and journals in the old house where Lily lives. The story of three intertwined lives is revealed, all sparked by defining moments in seemingly simple lives. Through these moments is Galapagos, the tortoise who has weathered it all. Adri reads the journal of Cathy from the Kansas Dust bowl, who relates letters from Lenore to Beth, Cathy’s mom. Spanning from just after the 1st World War to the near future, this Ferris Wheel ride will leave you guessing. “I hope you will love her, as much as I do.”
In a future where natural death has been eradicated, professional reapers called Scythes are chosen to glean the souls of humans. Revered, or rather feared, Scythes operate according to a code of honor and choose apprentices to carry on this crucial service for society. Teens Citra and Rowen are forcibly entered into apprenticeship and encounter the dark side to the “art” of gleaning. They must face the challenges and responsibilities of their new role, including the need to learn to take the lives of others in order to save their own.

A fast-paced, thought-provoking novel, *Scythe* will challenge your views on utopian ideals and morality.

Look for the sequel, *Thunderhead*, out now!
Cassie is trying to explain herself. She is coming to grips with herself, with her mental illness, with her inability to be with a boy whose heart she broke. She desperately wants and needs his forgiveness. She wants love to make it all better, to bring all things together.

Her writings explain what has happened, why she has acted in the manner that she has, why she refuses to remember what happened on the boardwalk.

“It’s not for us to find people. Or to make them pay. You take revenge, all you do is throw away your soul. Sometimes things happen that you can’t control. Sometimes we lose things we can’t get back. And there are some things we just can’t ever know.”
How can you promote the NCYA Book Award Program in your school?

- Have book clubs with the books
- Bribe students to write and post reviews
- Get ELA teachers to help you promote-- give them posters to hang; ask them to offer incentives
- Links to posters: [Middle](#) [High](#)
- Links to bookmarks: [Middle](#) [High](#)

Other ideas?
Middle School Nominees

Contact info:
ncyabookaward@gmail.com or rwilcox@wsfcs.k12.nc.us
Timeline
Sept. - Feb.: Promote the books and get students to read them
By the end of March-- Collect votes
April-- Send in your nominations
May-- New List comes out
Alexander Hamilton, an orphaned immigrant, desired to become a prominent war hero. Although he never achieved that status, he did work his way through the ranks to become one of George Washington’s most trusted advisors during the Revolutionary War. The relationship he formed with Washington put him in the perfect sphere to influence the early development of our nation. Often lost in the shadows of the other Founding Fathers, Hamilton was a man who envisioned the strength of our new nation as one built upon a centralized government and bank, fueled by mercantilism. His life was filled with adventure and heroism, although not in ways he could predict, earning him the right to a more prominent place in our nation’s history. Kanefield’s *Making of America: Alexander Hamilton* expertly weaves Hamilton’s life story with the birth of our nation, providing just enough of both to thoroughly engage middle school readers.
When siblings Susan, Max, Nell, Kate and Jean tumble one by one through a glowing cobalt window, they find themselves outside their cozy home -- and in a completely unfamiliar world where everything looks wrong and nothing makes sense. Soon, an ancient prophecy leads them into battle with mysterious forces that threaten to break the siblings apart, even as they try desperately to remain united and find their way home. Thirteen-year-old twins Max and Susan and their younger siblings take turns narrating the events of their story in unique perspectives as each of the children try to comprehend their stunning predicament -- and their extraordinary new powers -- in his or her own way. Like C.S. Lewis and E. Nesbit, this book is full of nuanced questions about morality, family and the meaning of home.
The Last Cherry Blossom is a WWII historical fiction told from the perspective of a twelve-year-old Japanese girl named Yuriko. There are many aspects of Yuriko’s life that readers will find relatable, including an array of family struggles, difficulties at school, and the relief of being able to confide in her best friend. However, in the throws of WWII, Yuriko must also endure daily air raids and the grief of neighbors who fail to return from the frontlines. Paying attention to the quotes at the beginning of each chapter helps to set the stage for the progression of WWII leading to the dropping of “pika don,” the atomic bomb, on Hiroshima. The joys and sorrows of Yuriko remind us that we are not so different from those that we perceive to be our enemies.  Discussion Questions
Ghost’s father is in prison because, in a drunken rage, he tried to shoot Ghost and his mother. Ghost’s mother struggles to support them by working in the hospital cafeteria while also attending an online nursing program. With too much time on his hands, Castle “Ghost” Crenshaw is sitting across from the track at the park, eating his usual sunflower seeds, when he observes a community track team at their first spring practice. Knowing he can run as fast as any of them, Ghost just stands next to the track in his high tops and blue jeans. When the coach gives the signal, Ghost smokes them all. After much persuading by Coach Brody, Ghost agrees to join the track team, where he eventually finds a place he belongs. Reynolds lets Ghost to tell his own story, allowing readers to sometimes want to shake some sense into him while still cheering him on.

Jason Reynolds reads from Ghost
Korean-American Desi Lee is a driven, self-aware high school senior who finds that as long as she has “a plan--all’s well.” But when she ‘crushes’ on handsome transfer student Luca Drakos, she quickly lets him know that she’s “school president, on varsity soccer and tennis, in five different clubs,” and “pretty much slated to be valedictorian.” Desi’s confidence is limitless--except when it comes to the opposite sex. Repeated attempts at wooing would-be suitors having backfired, Desi finds Luca too good to lose, so she turns to an unlikely mainstay of her home for help: the Korean dramas (soap operas?) her widower father has watched obsessively for years, where it always appears that ‘love conquers all.’ (A starter guide is helpfully appended.)

Previously dismissing the formulaic K dramas as the “white noise” of her life, Desi begins to study their plotlines intently, going so far as to craft 24 “K Drama Steps to True Love.” Desi’s implementation of such measures as “Be Caught in an Obviously Lopsided Love Triangle,” yields hilarious, at times unintended, results, lending this teen rom-com a surprisingly thoughtful conclusion. As ‘life imitates art’ in this novel, powerful messages of inclusion and acceptance also pervade the funny, engaging narrative.

www.maurenegoo.com   Official site
In 1960’s New York City, Ruthie Mizrahi, a young Jewish Cuban immigrant, spends almost a year observing her family and friends from her bed.

Lucky Broken Girl

She has many goals and dreams, but a serious auto accident in which her leg is severely broken leaves her immobilized in a body cast, and feeling lonely. “Broken,” yet lucky to be alive, Ruthie collects stories from many sources, gleaning insights from many cultures. Behar, a cultural anthropologist and poet, based this story on her own childhood experience.
It’s been happening since Min was eight. Every two years, on her birthday, a strange man finds her and murders her in cold blood. But hours later, she wakes up in a clearing just outside her tiny Idaho hometown—alone, unhurt, and with all evidence of the horrifying crime erased.

Across the valley, Noah just wants to be like everyone else. But he’s not. Nightmares of murder and death plague him, though he does his best to hide the signs. But when the world around him begins to spiral toward panic and destruction, Noah discovers that people have been lying to him his whole life. Everything changes in an eye blink.

For the planet has a bigger problem. The Anvil, an enormous asteroid threatening all life on Earth, leaves little room for two troubled teens. Yet on her sixteenth birthday, as she cowers in her bedroom, hoping not to die for the fifth time, Min has had enough. She vows to discover what is happening in Fire Lake and uncovers a lifetime of lies: a vast conspiracy involving the sixty-four students of her sophomore class, one that may be even more sinister than the murders.

Brendan Reichs official site
Shane Woods is a typical twelve-year-old boy—pitcher for his baseball team, loves to draw, and is even creating his own graphic novel. He also enjoys spending time with Josh, his best friend and teammate. But Shane has a secret, one that may make a difference to his friends, teammates, and maybe even to Josh. When a classmate threatens to expose Shane’s secret, his carefully guarded world falls apart. It will take tremendous courage to ignore the hatred surrounding him, and show the world that he is still the same boy he was before. And in the end, those who stand beside him may surprise everyone, even Shane himself.

Discussion Guide
Prince Sebastian’s parents would love for him to select a suitable bride, but the prince cannot bring himself to commit to marriage as he struggles to keep a secret from his parents. Prince Sebastian likes to wear dresses and the struggle to keep his true self hidden nearly destroys him, until he meets Frances, an incredibly talented dressmaker, whose creations allow Sebastian to express part of his authentic self as Lady Crystallia. Their working partnership helps propel both Prince Sebastian and Frances to live their dreams and in the process they each uncover truths that are worthy of a fairytale ending. *The Prince and the Dressmaker* is a modern fairytale for a new generation that will delight graphic novel readers with a story that is both new and timeless.

*An interview with Jen Wang*
Lolly has made the decision not to join a gang cause, look how his big brother ended up—shot. But now he has to hide from the gangbangers who eventually beat him up and steal his new phone. Angry and depressed, Lolly finds solace in a very surprising way. His mother’s girlfriend brings him garbage bags full of Legos. The counselor in Lolly’s after school program lets him use an empty storage room where Lolly, and an autistic girl he eventually befriends, build an amazing imaginary city that fills the room. David Barclay Moore’s debut novel provides a very real look into issues of gang violence, along with a message of hope for young people who face that reality.
Ripped from his home in Kyiv, forced to work in a labor camp for the Nazis, Luka escapes by pretending to be one of a pile of dead bodies heaped in the back of a truck. With help, Luka reaches the mountains where he becomes part of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, a well-organized guerilla network fighting against the Nazis and the Soviets for a free Ukraine. Through the next 2 years of the war, healing others with his knowledge of folk medicine, and struggling to survive, Luka never forgets Lida, the dear friend who encouraged his escape from the work camp. Is she still alive? Will he ever see her again? Not for the faint of heart, Luka’s story is a brutal, yet poignant, description of lesser-known, but important heroes of WWII.
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Other ideas?