Dear Rising 6th Grade Families,

Welcome to 6th grade! We are eagerly awaiting your arrival and are excited to start learning! We are sure that you have many activities planned over the summer, and we look forward to hearing all about them in the fall! Reading is a perfect complement to any adventure, as it allows us to keep our minds growing as we take a break from school. These books are awesome and really set up one of the big guiding themes of 6th grade, perspective taking. Over the summer, we'd like you to select one of the following and come prepared to share out your awesome ideas and findings from the read:

Front Desk: Mia Tang has a lot of secrets. Number 1: She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests. Number 2: Her parents hide immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds out they’ve been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed. Number 3: She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language? It will take all of Mia’s courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao, and go for her dreams?

Blended: If you’re only seen as half of this and half of that—how can you ever feel whole? Eleven-year old Isabella lives in two worlds. She’s a double-backpack-carrying child of divorce, so she lives with her mom one week, and her dad the next. In addition, she’s bi-racial, and she sees herself as the caramel swirl milkshake that resulted from her mom’s vanilla and her dad’s chocolate ice cream. Izzy is an accomplished pianist, and as she practices for a crucial recital, the black keys and the white keys of her life combine to create an unexpected symphony of race, terror, and finally peace.

Merci Suarez Changes Gears: Merci Suárez knew that sixth grade would be different, but she had no idea just how different. For starters, she’s not exactly like the other kids at Seaward Pines because she and her older brother, Roli, are scholarship students. At home, Merci’s most trusted ally, Lolo, has been acting strangely and no one in her family will tell her anything about what’s going on with her grandfather. In a coming of age story that features family, friends, frenemies — and ripped off eyebrows — we look at the confusion and constant change that define middle school and the steadfast connection that defines family.

Unidentified Suburban Object: The next person who compares Chloe Cho with famous violinist Abigail Yang is going to HEAR it. Chloe has just about had it with people not knowing the difference between someone who’s Chinese, Japanese, or Korean. She’s had it with people thinking that everything she does well — getting good grades, winning first chair in the orchestra, et Cetera — are because she’s ASIAN. Of course, her own parents don’t want to have anything to DO with their Korean background. Any time Chloe asks them a question they
change the subject. They seem perfectly happy to be the only Asian family in town. It’s only when Chloe’s with her best friend, Shelly, that she doesn’t feel like a total alien. Then a new teacher comes to town: Ms. Lee. She’s Korean American, and for the first time Chloe has a person to talk to who seems to understand completely. For Ms. Lee’s class, Chloe finally gets to explore her family history. But what she unearths is light years away from what she expected.

*The Other Boy:* Twelve-year-old Shane Woods is just a regular boy. He loves pitching for his baseball team, working on his graphic novel, and hanging out with his best friend, Josh. But Shane is keeping something private, something that might make a difference to his friends and teammates, even Josh. And when a classmate threatens to reveal his secret, Shane’s whole world comes crashing down. It will take a lot of courage for Shane to ignore the hate and show the world that he’s still the same boy he was before. And in the end, those who stand beside him may surprise everyone, including Shane.

In addition, we ask that you read two additional books of your choice. In fact, we encourage everyone to read as much as you can. Why, you ask? Well, in addition to being excellent free entertainment, reading improves your life. Seriously! Studies have shown that staying mentally stimulated and engaged prevents your brain from losing power as you age. Just like any other muscle in the body, the brain requires exercise to keep it strong and healthy, so the phrase “use it or lose it” is particularly apt when it comes to your mind. Reading has also been proven to reduce stress, expand your vocabulary, improve memory function, strengthen your analytical thinking skills, improve focus and concentration, and enhance your writing skills. Reading is amazing! To find even more great titles, be sure to check out the awesome reading guide our Middle School Librarian Ms. Hartley-Maneri created on the Berkeley Carroll library website! Type this link into your search bar and start exploring:

https://libguides.berkeleycarroll.org/mssummer2019

We look forward to meeting all of you and having a fantastic year! Have a great summer!

Sincerely,
Ms. Bach and Mr. Guidry