

GCBA Grades 4-8 Committee (2017-2018 Book Selection)



Committee Chairperson:

Denise Davila, Ph.D. – Graduate Faculty

Literacies and Children’s Literature Program

Department of Language and Literacy Education - The University of Georgia



Committee Assistant:

Adam Crawley – Graduate Assistant

Literacies and Children’s Literature Program

Department of Language and Literacy Education - The University of Georgia

I am excited to serve as the assistant for the GCBA committees and annual conference. I’m entering my third year as a doctoral student in the Department of Language and Literacy Education. I have a B.S.Ed. in Early Childhood Education and M.Ed. in Children’s Literature and Language Arts from the University of Georgia. Prior to my doctoral work, I was an elementary teacher for twelve years in various Georgia public school districts. My research interests include culturally diverse children’s literature, censorship, and digital literacy.

Committee Members:



Traci Blackstock

Media Specialist – Scoggins Middle School, Paulding County

Second-term committee member

I will begin a new adventure in the fall as the Media Specialist at Scoggins Middle School in Paulding County. I previously worked at P.B. Ritch Middle, Hutchens Elementary and P.B. Ritch Elementary. I taught reading and math for 6th grade and 7th grade in the beginning of my career. I am beginning my 21st year in education. I love to share books with my students as well as get recommendations from them. I am married with three children. I love to travel and spend time with family and friends and of course read.



Melanie C. Duncan

*Branch Manager/Librarian – West Bibb Branch, Middle Georgia Regional Library System, Bibb County
First-term committee member*

My mother first took me to the library when I was barely six months old, and I've never left. I've worked in libraries with all age groups for 20+ years, and I recently completed a three-year term on the Georgia Peach Book Award for Teen Readers. In addition to managing the daily activities at my branch, I've reviewed books for Library Journal and other publications since 1993 and judged several adult book awards in recent years. When not reading (which is rare), I can be usually be found discussing books online, hunting for books to read, or gaming on my X-Box.



Terrie Gribanow

*Media Specialist - Dearing Elementary, McDuffie County
Third-term committee member*

I am the mother of two, wife of one, and the media specialist of 500+. I have been the media specialist at Dearing Elementary (a PK-5 elementary school) for the past 15 years, and I LOVE my job. I love teaching my students how to read and how to enjoy reading. I help the students at Dearing Elementary learn how to develop healthy reading habits and find books that interest them. I help my students know how to decide what they like to read. I can do these things because I read all of the time, and I take the time to get to know my students...yes, all 500+ of them. I feel it is my duty to provide, via my school's media center, books of all genres, topics, interests, and walks of life to the students at DES. It is that sense of duty that I bring to this committee. I am on a mission to find the best that is out there, not only for my students, but also for the 2017-2018 GCBA Gr. 4-8 nominee list. I look forward to the journey this mission will bring.



Roy Jackson

*Media Specialist – Springdale Park Elementary, Atlanta Public Schools
First-term committee member*

I have a BA in English and Philosophy, a MEd in Early Childhood Education, and an EdS in Instructional Technology with an emphasis in School Library Media. I am endorsed in over 8 content areas including reading and gifted. I have taught grades K, 1, 2, and 3. I also have taught self-contained EIP, and science lab to grades K-5. Currently I am the library media specialist at Springdale Park Elementary for the last three years. In my spare time I enjoy writing, reading, playing tennis, and traveling.



Donna Jones

Media Specialist – Avondale Elementary, Dekalb County

Second-term committee member / Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl Representative

I have been a media specialist for ten years, and I love working with children. It is because of my love for reading that I began to work in the media center where I would have access to as many books as possible. Reading can take you anywhere in the world without leaving home. I have been a member of the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl (HRRB) for eight years. I was the East Regional Coordinator for four years, and I am currently the Co-Chair of the DeKalb Steering Committee. This is my second year on the GCBA Gr. 4-8 nominating committee representing the HRRB. I am excited and look forward to the challenge of selecting the best books for our students to read.



Bev Kodak

Sixth Grade Teacher - Ola Middle School, Henry County

Third-term committee member

I am a sixth grade Language Arts teacher in Henry County. I've been teaching for 21 years, and I've been a voracious reader my entire life. I've coached a Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl team for a number of years, and I help run one of the largest science fiction and fantasy conventions in the U.S. in my spare time. This is my third year on the committee, and I've enjoyed every bit of it. Connecting readers with books is my passion, and I'm ready to get started finding great books that the kids of Georgia will enjoy!



Leslie Olig

Media Specialist – Euchee Creek Elementary, Columbia County

Second-term committee member

I am the media specialist for Euchee Creek Elementary School in Grovetown, Georgia and have the privilege of having the Euchee Creek Public Library next door to my school. I previously served as a media specialist in two Richmond County Schools and coached two Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl teams. It was working with students on the teams that made me interested in serving on the committee. I taught high school English for 15 years and started a monthly book club at Greenbrier High School with community speakers who shared their love of books. Last year, I served on the steering committee for the Georgia Literary Festival held in Augusta, GA – which has sparked a movement to begin an annual literary festival in our city.



Julie Stokes

*Media Coordinator Gr. 6-8 – Dalton Middle School, Whitfield County
Second-term committee member*

I am the Literacy Coordinator at Dalton Middle School, and I actually get paid to work with teachers in connecting students to books and authors. What a blessing! We have over 1,800 students, and I am always reading and looking for new titles to hook our students. I LOVE books, and I LOVE sharing new books with students and teachers and igniting a fire that can never be extinguished.



LaRita Wiggins

*Assistant Principal – Austin Road Middle School, Henry County
First-term committee member*

I am currently an Assistant Principal at Austin Road Middle School (ARMS) in Henry County, and I have over 16 years of experience as an educator. Prior to my current administrator role, I was a middle school language arts and reading teacher for gifted scholars. I earned a B.A. degree from The University of Georgia, an MBA from Brenau University, and a Specialist in Educational Leadership from Walden University. I was honored by the Georgia Department of Education in 2013 for my leadership on effective practice with CCRPI. Most recently, I was honored with the 2016 Jaguar Pride Award for continued dedication to the scholars of Austin Road Middle School. I have presented multiple professional learning workshops, such as “Technology Tools for the Common Core Language Arts Classroom” at the 2013 GaETC Conference and at several other conferences and Metro-Atlanta area schools. I’m a wife and the mother of three children: Shelby, Mariah and Sean. Reading with my children is my favorite activity, and I believe in leaving a Literacy Legacy!