



Office of the Superintendent

DATE: November 6th, 2025

AGENDA TOPICS: Supplementary Novels for WIS

PRESENTER: Michelle O'Dell

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Supplementary Novels

In accordance with all relevant Education Code and current Board Administrative Regulation 6161.1 and Board Policy 6161.11; following a review and selection process that included approval by the CIA Advisory Committee, and a period of public review; I am pleased to present our recommendation to the Board of the WUSD, the adoption of:

1) Grade Level: Guided Study English 7th-8th Grade (Willows Intermediate School)

Publisher: Rocky Pond Books, 2016

Text/Novel: *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer

"When a terrible drought struck William Kamkwamba's tiny village in Malawi, his family lost all of the season's crops, leaving them with nothing to eat and nothing to sell. William began to explore science books in his village library, looking for a solution. There, he came up with the idea that would change his family's life forever: he could build a windmill. Made out of scrap metal and old bicycle parts, William's windmill brought electricity to his home and helped his family pump the water they needed to farm the land.

Retold for a younger audience, this exciting memoir shows how, even in a desperate situation, one boy's brilliant idea can light up the world. Complete with photographs, illustrations, and an epilogue that will bring readers up to date on William's story, this is the perfect edition to read and share with the whole family."¹

2) Grade Level: ELD 5th-8th Grade (Willows Intermediate School)

Publisher: Clarion Books, 2002

Text/Novel: *Breaking Through* by Francisco Jimenez

"At the age of fourteen, Francisco Jiménez, together with his older brother Roberto and his mother, are caught by la migra. Forced to leave their home in California, the entire family travels all night for twenty hours by bus, arriving at the U.S. and Mexican border in Nogales, Arizona. In the months and years that follow during the late 1950s-early 1960s, Francisco, his mother and father, and his seven brothers and sister not only struggle to keep their family together, but also face crushing poverty, long hours of labor, and blatant prejudice."²

1

https://www.amazon.com/Boy-Harnessed-Wind-Young-Readers/dp/0147510422/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2C9HULY2D8CCB&dib=eyJ2IjoiaMSJ9.ansEpq6xrFNvWIB9UQwKb1xnY526tg0EgSRuGXlwE7kiCphypOX5f3_fq5xnl1nuAOYiM_N0XokqoyvedUw_WE5UO9Nfb2H9U-Jji5RZ6giNVdOdiagRZ1jTlZeJw-YA.2YxJo8TGvG3oOKgfYODKSPD85BRIOGs0aEXYEdivtEcq&dib_tag=se&keywords=The+Boy+Who+Harnessed+the+Wind+by+William+Kamkwamba+and+Bryan+Mealer&qid=1760404128&spreffix=the+boy+who+harnessed+the+wind+by+william+kamkwamba+and+bryan+mealer%2CCaps%2C242&sr=8-1

2

https://www.amazon.com/Breaking-Through-Francisco-Jim%C3%A9nez/dp/0618342486/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3VP8AO38P8OSL&dib=eyJ2IjoiaMSJ9.xpXtmUxH3PxBNuUR2kiCSMYwRfXRIJEzPTxOp2EJBaiOLV82nUHFxBfPnNO9813V2HKIqG0BEjHltz1CvUKY34qEO2e6d1mN6B662i_BfaMEbxZ-Vt4dNsWijF84o4Yn5powCVZVh7rLsfl.8AvDpbTmFfqUP8EiszOHbcZaoZmab5daE4cruyBIPniPFpZOe.cltDqi6QCHxsWoql9TYaieTgiqmDdQag3hoFzAfo08&dib_tag=se&keywords=breaking+throug+francisco+jimenez&qid=1760403800&spreffix=breaking+through+fr%2CCaps%2C265&sr=8-1



3) Grade Level: ELD 5th-8th Grade (Willows Intermediate School)

Publisher: University of New Mexico Press, 1997

Text/Novel: *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* by Francisco Jimenez

“After dark in a Mexican border town, a father holds open a hole in a wire fence as his wife and two small boys crawl through.

So begins life in the United States for many people every day. And so begins this collection of twelve autobiographical stories by Santa Clara University professor Francisco Jiménez, who at the age of four illegally crossed the border with his family in 1947. . . .

These independent but intertwined stories follow the family through their circuit, from picking cotton and strawberries to topping carrots--and back again--over a number of years. As it moves from one labor camp to the next, the little family of four grows into ten. Impermanence and poverty define their lives. But with faith, hope, and back-breaking work, the family endures.”³

4) Grade Level: ELD 5th-8th Grade (Willows Intermediate School)

Publisher: Penguin Random House, 2019

Text/Novel: *White Bird* by RJ Palacio

This is a graphic novel about “a young Jewish girl hidden by a family in a Nazi-occupied French village during World War II,” it tells of how “the boy she and her classmates once shunned became her savior and best friend.” ⁴

Dates of Review

- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Advisory (September 9th, 2025)
- Proposed Public Review (September 10th-October 13th, 2025)

RECOMMENDATION:

Adoption of supplemental novels:

1. *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer
2. *Breaking Through* by Francisco Jimenez
3. *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* by Francisco Jimenez
4. *White Bird* by RJ Palacio

Thank you!