Dear Students and Parents,

The English department at Sturgis has created a new summer reading list that we hope will get our students excited about reading and will provide a starting point for the curriculum in the fall. Works were chosen for their literary merit, their thematic relevance, their global perspectives, their interest level, and their fit with our I.B. curriculum.

Our primary goals are for students to read and enjoy good literature and to begin the school year with a common experience and the background for discussion. Therefore, it is important that students in grades 9-11 complete both the required book and at least one choice book from the list provided. Students entering grade 12 do not have a summer reading requirement due to the expectation that they will be working on extended essays and CAS requirements over the summer.

During the first two weeks of school in the fall, students will be assessed on the books read. A test will be given on each required book, and an in-class essay and/or oral presentation will assess the choice books read. Additionally, it is recommended that students keep up a reading journal. Students might record quotations of interest or significance and personal response to them or make notes on plot, characterization, technique, structure, and meaning.

At each grade level, students must read the required book and at least one book from the choice list. In the spirit of intellectual and academic pursuit, it is expected that students will NOT use reading aids such as *Spark Notes* and that any outside sources, including movies, which are consulted will be acknowledged in reading journals.

Enjoy the summer and enjoy your reading!

Sturgis Charter Public School
SUMMER READING LIST 2011

Ninth Grade:

All entering freshmen must read ***The Bean Trees*** **by Barbara Kingsolver**

Missy Greer leaves home one day to escape her fears: poverty, pregnancy, and exploding tires. On a quest to find herself, she changes her name to Taylor, ironically acquires an abandoned infant and lands a job at a garage. Taylor's story is light-hearted and heart-breaking all at once as she comes face-to-face with some of the more unsettling realities of our world, makes and loses friends, and tries to define "home" for herself in a strange new land.

Freshmen must also choose one additional text from the following:

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time **by Mark Haddon**
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime by Mark Haddon is a great, short, easy read about a young boy with Asperger's Syndrome (though he is never identified directly as such and the author himself shuns the term for fear of being perceived as an expert on Autism…). The story is told in the first person by Christopher John Francis Boone, a 15 year old British boy who describes himself as "a mathematician with some behavioral difficulties." One day, Christopher stumbles upon the body of his neighbor's brutally murdered poodle, and he immediately sets out to unravel the mystery of the dog's death. In the process of solving the case, Christopher comes to learn a lot more than he expected. Not only does he find the dog's killer, but he uncovers many secrets about his neighbors and his own family. Christopher proves to be a delightfully quirky narrator with a unique perspective of the world around him.

Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian **by Sherman Alexie**
An absolutely enthralling page turner, The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian will leave readers gasping for more. Best selling author Sherman Alexie writes a gripping novel for young readers about the awkward, funny, and poignant moments in a young indian boy's life living on a reservation. This wannabe cartoonist is in the thralls of adolescence, trying to understand the world of his home, as compared to the white-bred upper middle class of his high school. He encounters bullies, love, friendship and eventually, a deeper understanding of self. This is a must read for high schoolers, and has been known to change lives.

Ender's Game **by Orson Scott Card**
Follow Andrew, nicknamed Ender, as he navigates through life after Earth has been attacked - and human life has nearly been wiped out - by an alien species. Anyone who has ever felt "different" will easilly identify with Ender as he works to survive and thrive in a world of tortured political, academic, and family dynamics. A young genius, Ender draws the attention of

global leadership and begins training to command Earth's forces in the fight against the aliens. Did we mention that Ender is only 6 years old?! Pick up a copy today to discover why Ender's Game has won both the Hugo and Nebula Awards for best novel in science fiction.

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Tenth Grade:

All rising sophomores must read ***Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi**

Persepolis is a prize-winning graphic novel about a young girl in Iran in the early years of the Islamic Revolution in that country. It is a biographical work based on Satrapi's own experiences growing up in Iran in a time of great social change. We follow her life from the ages of six to fourteen when her outspoken personality gets her in trouble with the new Islamic authorities. A vivid picture of daily life in Iran is presented as are the problems of trying to be true to one's self in a climate of political repression. You think growing up on Cape is hard? Try this book out for a new perspective.

Sophomores must also choose one additional text from the following:

***Caucasia* by Danzy Senna**
The 1970s was a time of civil unrest in Boston. In Danzy Senna's *Caucasia,* Birdie, a bi-racial teen who "passes" as white, is physically torn from her father and sister, both of whom fit into the black community. On the run from the Feds, Birdie and her white mother go into hiding and Birdie faces a difficult challenge: she must hide her black identity and assume a Jewish persona in a racist New Hampshire community to protect her mother. Although Birdie's situation is unique, students will find the familiar as Birdie copes with divorce, family, love, and identity

***The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls**
Walls chronicles her upbringing at the hands of eccentric, nomadic parents who repeatedly uprooted their children and left them largely to their own devices and eventually landed the family on the streets. Without complaint or playing the victim, Walls reveals what it was like to live in this family dynamic and finds positives amidst the crazy, embarrassing, shocking, and loving reality that was her life.

***This Boy's Life* by Tobias Wolff**
Teenaged Wolff moves with his divorced mother from Florida to Utah to Washington state to escape her violent boyfriend. Deception, disguise, and illusion are the weapons the young man learns to employ as he grows up.

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Eleventh Grade:

All rising juniors enrolled in Higher Level IB English must read ***One flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey.**

Ken Kesey's tragicomic novel, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, takes place in a mental hospital during the late 1950s. The book can be read on two levels; if one looks on the surface, there is the story of how a highly individualistic, near-superman named McMurphy becomes a patient and for a time overturns the senseless and dehumanizing routines of the ward. If one looks deeper, however, there is a commentary on U.S. society, which the Beat generation of the late 1950s viewed as so hopelessly conformist as to stifle individuality and creativity.

All rising juniors enrolled in Standard Level IB English must read ***Beatrice and Virgil* by Yann Martel.**

Part novel, part play, part autobiography, and part essay, Beatrice and Virgil explores as many genres as it does topics. The main character, an author named Henry, struggles with writer's block and depression after his second novel is brutally rejected. Things begin to look up when Henry meets a taxidermist (also named Henry) who may have succeeded artistically where Henry-the-author failed. The taxidermist has written a play about the Holocaust in which the two main characters are... a donkey and a monkey?! This book will challenge every idea you've ever had about reading and writing.

All rising juniors must choose one additional text from the following:

***Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi**
Persepolis is a prize-winning graphic novel about a young girl in Iran in the early years of the Islamic Revolution in that country. It is a biographical work based on Satrapi's own experiences growing up in Iran in a time of great social change. We follow her life from the ages of six to fourteen when her outspoken personality gets her in trouble with the new Islamic authorities. A vivid picture of daily life in Iran is presented as are the problems of trying to be true to one's self in a climate of political repression. You think growing up on Cape is hard? Try this book out for a new perspective.

***The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini**
This novel follows the story of Amir, the privileged son of a wealthy businessman in Kabul, and Hassan, the son of Amir's father's servant. As children the boys are inseparable until an unspeakable event changes the nature of their relationship forever. Hosseini manages to provide an educational and eye-opening account of Afghanistan's political turmoil while making the reader forget this is a novel rather than a memoir.

***The Tortilla Curtain* by T.C. Boyle**

"Tortilla Curtain" is the phrase used to describe the thin borders between Mexico and the United States which immigrants cross over in their attempt to live better lives. In Boyle's novel, Candido and his wife America are illegal aliens living in the canyons and brush areas of Southern California. When the novel opens Candido is hit by a car driven by Delaney a "yuppie" writer for an environmental magazine. The story is told through the alternating voices of Candido and Delaney and juxtaposes the lives of these very different people and their very different experiences.