Creating Gender Inclusive Schools Booklist
for Secondary

Across a Field of Starlight. Blue Delliquanti. (7-9) Lu and Fassen are from different worlds and separate solar systems. But their friendship keeps them in each other’s orbit as they grow up. They stay in contact in secret as their communities are increasingly threatened by the omnipresent, ever-expanding empire. As the empire begins a new attack against Fassen’s people—and discovers Lu’s in the process—the two of them have the chance to reunite at last. They finally are able to be together...but at what cost?

Beyond the Gender Binary. Alok Vaid-Menon. (7-12) Alok Vaid-Menon challenges the world to see gender not in black and white, but in full color. Taking from their own experiences as a gender-nonconforming artist, they show us that gender is a malleable and creative form of expression. The only limit is your imagination.

The Boy in the Dress. David Walliams. (6 – 10) Twelve-year-old Dennis is fascinated by fashion. When he lets his appreciation for Vogue magazine slip out to Lisa, an older girl and aspiring fashion designer at his school, she invites him over to see her designs. It doesn’t take too much urging from Lisa for Dennis to try on her most recent creation. He finds out that when you open your mind, life becomes anything but boring.

Girl Mans Up. M-E Girard. (9 – 12) All Pen wants is to be the kind of girl she’s always been. So why does everyone have a problem with it? They think the way she looks and acts means she’s trying to be a boy—that she should quit trying to be something she’s not. If she dresses like a girl, and does what her folks want, it will show respect. Old-world parents, disintegrating friendships, and strong feelings for other girls drive Pen to see the truth—that in order to be who she truly wants to be, she’ll have to man up.

Girl, Unframed. Deb Caletti. (9 – 12) Sydney learns the hard way what it’s like to be a girl in a man’s world while spending the summer with her celebrity mother and her mother’s controlling new boyfriend in a situation that spins dangerously out of control.

The Life and Medieval Times of Kit Sweetly. Jamie Pacton. (10 – 12) Kit wants to be a knight at her medieval-themed workplace, but outdated sexist corporate policy has relegated her to “serving wench.” Kit must prove that gender inequality should stay in the Middle Ages—if she doesn’t get fired first. A feminist fairy tale that takes on modern poverty and the power of community.

Lizard Radio. Pat Schmatz. (9 – 12) Fifteen-year-old bender Kivali has had a rough time in a gender-rigid culture. Abandoned as a baby and raised by Sheila, an ardent nonconformist, Kivali has always been surrounded by uncertainty. Where did she come from? Is it true what Sheila says, that she was deposited on Earth by the mysterious saurians? What are you? people ask, and Kivali isn’t sure. Strange occurrences and complicated relationships raise questions Kivali has never before had to consider. But she has a gift—the power to enter a trancelike state to harness the “knowings” inside her. She has Lizard Radio. Will it be enough to save her?
The Pants Project. Cat Clarke. (4 – 9) Liv knows he was always meant to be a boy, but with his new school’s terrible dress code, he can’t even wear pants. Only skirts. Operation: Pants Project begins! The only way for Liv to get what he wants is to go after it himself. But to Liv, this isn’t just a mission to change the policy—it’s a mission to change his life. And that’s a pretty big deal.

The Prince and the Dressmaker. Jen Wang. (7 – 9) Sebastian’s secret weapon (and best friend) is the brilliant dressmaker Frances—one of only two people who know the truth: sometimes this boy wears dresses. But Frances dreams of greatness, and being someone’s secret weapon means being a secret. Forever. How long can Frances defer her dreams to protect a friend? Spanish Edition: El príncipe y la modista

A Snake Falls to Earth. Darcie Little Badger. (7-12) Nina is a Lipan girl in our world. She’s always felt there was something more out there. She still believes in the old stories. Oli is a cottonmouth kid, from the land of spirits and monsters. Like all cottonmouths, he’s been cast from home. He’s found a new one on the banks of the bottomless lake. Nina and Oli have no idea the other exists. But a catastrophic event on Earth, and a strange sickness that befalls Oli’s best friend, will drive their worlds together in ways they haven’t been in centuries.

Symptoms of Being Human. Jeff Garvin. (9 – 12) Riley Cavanaugh is many things: Punk rock. Snarky. Rebellious. And gender fluid. Some days Riley identifies as a boy, and others as a girl. But Riley isn't exactly out yet. And between starting a new school and having a congressman father running for reelection in über-conservative Orange County, the pressure—media and otherwise—is building up in Riley's life.

Tomboy: A Graphic Memoir. Liz Prince. (8 – 12) Growing up, Liz Prince wasn’t a girly girl, but she wasn’t exactly one of the guys either (as she learned when her little league baseball coach exiled her to the distant outfield). She was somewhere in between. But with the forces of middle school, high school, parents, friendship, and romance pulling her this way and that, the middle wasn’t an easy place to be.

Voices: The Final Hours of Joan of Arc. David Elliot. (9 – 12) Told through medieval poetic forms and in the voices of the people and objects in Joan of Arc’s life, (including her family and even the trees, clothes, cows, and candles of her childhood), Voices offers an unforgettable perspective on an extraordinary young woman. Along the way it explores timely issues such as gender, misogyny, and the peril of speaking truth to power. Before Joan of Arc became a saint, she was a girl inspired. It is that girl we come to know in Voices.

The Witch Boy: A Graphic Novel (The Witch Boy Trilogy #1). Molly Knox Ostertag. (3 – 7) In thirteen-year-old Aster’s family, all the girls are raised to be witches, while boys grow up to be shapeshifters. Anyone who dares cross those lines is exiled. Unfortunately for Aster, he still hasn't shifted . . . and he’s still fascinated by witchery, no matter how forbidden it might be. When a mysterious danger threatens the other boys, Aster knows he can help -- as a witch.

Unscripted. Nicole Kronzer. (9 – 12) When Zelda Bailey-Cho attends improv comedy camp, she little expects the culture of toxic masculinity that overwhelms the five girls (out of 200 campers) in Gilda Radner cabin. Everyone seems determined to make her the butt of all their jokes, but Zelda is done laughing along.