

Report  
from the  
Task Force on the Inclusion of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade in the Texas Bluebonnet Award



Presented to the Executive Boards of the  
Texas Library Association  
Texas Association of School Librarians  
and  
Children's Round Table

March 1, 2009

In June 2007, the Executive Board of the Texas Library Association voted to form a Task Force on the Inclusion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade in the Texas Bluebonnet Award. The Task Force members were selected during the summer of 2008 and included a variety of librarians from both public and school libraries as well as two nationally known consultants from outside the state. The boards of the Texas Association of School Librarians and the Children's Round Table each appointed a member to the Task Force. Members were:

Sharon Amastae, Camino Real Middle School, El Paso, Chair  
Cynthia Baker, Wetmore Elementary School, San Antonio  
Thomas J. Barthelmess, Austin Public Library  
Mary C. Christmas, Corpus Christi ISD  
Eliza T. Dresang, Information School, University of Washington  
Marinanne C. Follis, Lewisville Public Library, CRT Representative  
Carlyn Gray, Round Rock ISD, TLA Executive Board Liaison  
Sue W. McGown, Retired from St. John's School, Houston, TASL Representative  
Carolyn Reynolds, TLA Liaison  
Pat Scales, President, Association for Library Service to Children  
David W. Schuster, Plano ISD  
Rose V. Treviño, Houston Public Library

Our first meeting was held in Austin on September 11, 2008, with subsequent meetings on November 3, 2008 and February 9, 2009. In addition to these three all-day meetings, two surveys of the Texas library community were conducted.

After evaluating the question and allowing for all types of input listed above, the Task Force on the Inclusion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade in the Texas Bluebonnet Award unanimously recommends that 6<sup>th</sup> grade students should continue to be included in the program.

The initial charge from the TLA Executive Board asked the Task Force to:

1. Analyze the current level of involvement of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in the program.
2. Identify issues, if any, related to including 6<sup>th</sup> graders on the composition of the reading list and on overlap with other reading lists such as sponsored by the Young Adult Round Table.
3. Recommend whether 6<sup>th</sup> grade should continue to be targeted with the program and, if so, what strategies should be implemented to increase their participation
4. Recommend whether the TBA lists should be balanced by grade level or in any other ways.
5. Solicit input from the library community.

This report will respond to these expectations and explain how the Task Force carried out its charge and arrived at its recommendations.

### A Brief History

From the beginning of the Texas Bluebonnet Award, 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students have been included. The proposal for a children's book award sponsored jointly by the Texas Library Association's Children's Round Table and the Texas Association of School Librarians was presented and accepted by both Executive Boards on April 5, 1979. The first Texas Bluebonnet Award was given in 1981 to *Ramona and Her Father* by Beverly Cleary. During the ensuing years, two Ad Hoc Committees were formed to examine and review the Texas Bluebonnet Award, first in 1988 and then in 1999. Neither group made any recommendations about the grades participating in the program. Our Task Force was the first to examine the participation of the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade.

### Current Level of Involvement of 6<sup>th</sup> Graders in TBA

In examining TBA voting records from 2001 through 2009, we noted that while the number of students voting has dropped overall, the percentage of 6<sup>th</sup> graders voting has remained consistent. The total number of TBA student votes ranged from a low of 151,107 (2008) to a high of 220,364 (2003) during the nine years we studied. The percentage of 6<sup>th</sup> grade voters ranged from a low of 8.0% (2009) to a high of 10.1% (2005). In the 2009 voting which concluded on February 6, 2009, 151,631 students voted, including 12,111 6<sup>th</sup> graders, or 8.0%. (See Appendix I for complete voting data from 2001-2009.)

### Solicitation of Input from the Library Community

We reviewed the results of the February 2008 survey of TBA participating librarians that had 590 responses. Using this survey as a starting point, the Task Force wrote and conducted two extensive online surveys.

In the first, we surveyed past and current TBA Selection and Program Committee members and Coordinators from the past five years. From the 44 committee members to whom the survey was submitted, 22 responses were received. Most committee members serve for three years, with overlapping terms of service. (See Appendix II for survey results.)

We asked for reasons to include and not include 6<sup>th</sup> graders in the TBA program. Basically, reasons to include were child-centered, emphasizing that children enjoy participating in the program. The following comments summarize this point of view: "I think that 6<sup>th</sup> grade readers are developmentally closer to 5<sup>th</sup> grade readers than they are to 7<sup>th</sup> grade readers, and it therefore makes sense for them to be included in the TBA program rather than left to another program." "There are many elementary schools

that contain 6<sup>th</sup> grade and those kids might well be left out of a reading program.” (Question #4, Committee Survey)

On the other hand, opinions favoring the exclusion of 6<sup>th</sup> graders from TBA focused on the perception that most 6<sup>th</sup> grade students are in middle school and including them in the list changes the books that are on the list. This comment was typical: “In many TX schools, 6<sup>th</sup> grade is a middle school grade level and the Lone Star reading list better fits their school. Librarians do NOT have enough \$ to purchase two different reading lists in middle school. The readability of titles varies greatly from grade 3 to grade 6 and the list is often too difficult in my school for independent reading by the students.” (Question #5, Committee Survey)

Because our committee had read the 2008 survey comments indicating that including 6<sup>th</sup> graders made the TBA list too “advanced” or “difficult,” we asked the librarians we surveyed (who were actually involved in the selection and promotion of the lists) to indicate which of the 100 books from the 2004-2008 lists would not have “made the list” if 6<sup>th</sup> grade were excluded. Interestingly, only seven books were marked by 50% or more of the respondents.

Since the TBA program has surveyed librarians in the past several years, we decided to combine our survey questions with this program evaluation. Although this survey is normally sent out in February after the TBA voting, this year we surveyed librarians—both past and current TBA participants—in December. The survey was conducted online and sponsored by Mackin Library Media Services. To encourage responses, we included a raffle for tickets to the 2009 Bluebonnet Luncheon. We had 914 respondents (compared to 590 the previous year). Many respondents commented on the various questions, so much so that the printed results, with comments, totaled 112 pages. (See Appendix III.) The questions were similar to our earlier survey of TBA committee members, though we did not ask about individual titles on the lists. Of those responding to this survey, 86% had registered and participated in the 2008-2009 TBA program.

Looking at the overall program, 47% commented on the strengths of the program: variety, quality, promotion of reading, tradition. It was felt that a state-wide program creates a bond among students. The 44% of the respondents who suggested areas for improvement cited concerns about the difficulty of reading levels, the “appropriateness” of subjects and language, and the need for more bilingual materials.

We also asked librarians the same questions posed to the Selection and Program Committee Members and Coordinators about reasons for including and not including 6<sup>th</sup> graders in TBA. About half of the respondents answered these questions, basically mirroring the comments from the TBA committee’s survey. Speaking in favor of including 6<sup>th</sup> grade, about 26% mentioned that their school included 6<sup>th</sup> grade, or some schools in Texas include 6<sup>th</sup> grade. About 19% mentioned that at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade age students need to be encouraged to read more because they begin to lose interest and the TBA program motivates and maintains 6<sup>th</sup> graders’ interest in reading. Those

who commented on reasons for excluding the 6<sup>th</sup> grade mentioned that the spread of ability, interest, and appropriateness of the books on the TBA list is much too great (27%) and that they believed that most 6<sup>th</sup> graders in the state are in a middle or junior high school and should be served by the Lone Star list (25%). Some of the comments from these sections are included, as appropriate, in other parts of this report.

In addition to these two surveys, the Task Force also looked at data on grade level configurations from the Texas Education Agency. The Task Force also examined children's choice award programs in other states.

### Identification of Issues

Many issues concerning 6<sup>th</sup> graders and their relation to the composition of the TBA list surfaced in our discussions and in the comments sections of the survey. Of those who suggested improvements or provided reasons for excluding 6<sup>th</sup> grade from TBA, there was substantial perception that inclusion of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade makes the list too difficult and/or mature. For example, "The list is still geared toward the top level of readers and some of the topics/content make my teachers, parents, and students uncomfortable." (Question #12, Participants' survey)

Comments about reading levels (whether ATOS, Lexile, or other programs similar to Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts) were common and frequently combined with questions about content and language. A handful of titles has caused dissatisfaction among some librarians; these books were often linked to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, with the implication that these books were too mature.

The TBA selection criteria states that nominated books should "include a fairly equal distribution for each grade level 3, 4, 5, and 6" and "reflect a variety of difficulty levels for children in these grades, with at least one easy and one mature title." (Appendix A, *Texas Bluebonnet Award Policy and Procedures Manual*) While the selection committee may have a grade in mind when a book is selected (and various committees have interpreted "fairly equal distribution" more or less strictly), it is evident from TBA voting results that children in Texas choose and enjoy books from many "levels" of the list. Some choose to read "up" and some "down". Since the program requires only that five books be read before voting ("Read five, then decide."), the list supports this goal and accommodates children with a wide span of reading abilities and interests. However, since many librarians and schools seem to encourage and reward the reading of all twenty titles on the list, a need for re-explanation of the program's objectives is evident.

We recognize that the Texas Bluebonnet Award and the Texas Lone Star Reading List both target the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, a fact that troubles some librarians. The American Library Association has a similar overlap between the targeted ages for the Newbery Award (ages 8-14) and the Michael Printz Award (ages 12-18). ALA has

examined this situation just as TLA has, and has decided, in the words of a committee member, to “live with the overlap.”

### Balance in the TBA List

The TBA selection criteria mention both a distribution of books by grade level and also the inclusion of titles from all major genres. We wondered which was considered more important and included this question on both surveys. 79% of the library participants felt that equal attention should be paid to grade and genre. In the survey of TBA committee members, 59% chose both grade and genre, with 32% choosing “Other.” Perhaps their involvement with the actual selection of the list made them more aware of the challenges involved in choosing a “balanced” list. Some discussed the need for “kid appeal,” pointing out that the TBA was a children’s choice award, not for adults. However, it was also noted that TBA introduces children to books and genres they might never have read otherwise. Connecting books and children is indeed an important role of the librarian.

The Task Force feels that because the Texas Bluebonnet Award program is used by many different children, it should attempt to include something for everyone. We live in an increasingly diverse state with a multitude of ideas, and the list must reflect this. As a result, the list--and the children who read from it--are best served by avoiding rigid criteria. Indeed, the confusion and arguments over balancing “grade levels” might be lessened by not using “level” and referring simply to grades and ages. The Task Force acknowledges that children’s interest levels and their reading abilities vary widely within each grade and at different ages. It is difficult to assign an exact grade level to a book. The lack of such assignments acknowledges that books overlap grades and ages of children.

The Task Force recognizes the need to include bilingual titles when possible, and to be open to new genres, such as graphic novels.

### The Task Force’s Recommendation

As stated previously, we have unanimously recommended continuing to include 6<sup>th</sup> graders in the Texas Bluebonnet Award program. Although we realize that their voting numbers are much smaller than the other grades, the 12,111 6<sup>th</sup> graders who voted in January, 2009, would be a significant number to exclude. Texas schools come in many varied configurations. (See TEA data in Appendix IV.) While many 6<sup>th</sup> graders are in middle/junior high schools (1067 out of 1614 middle or junior high schools include 6<sup>th</sup> grade), many Texas 6<sup>th</sup> graders are still in elementary school, where 938 out of 4,500 elementary schools include 6<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition, we have 288 Elementary/Secondary schools, all of which would include 6<sup>th</sup> grade. These are all “Regular Instructional” schools. We also have many “Alternative Instructional” schools not included here, many of which include 6<sup>th</sup> graders. As one librarian pointed out,

“Sixth graders should not be punished because different districts decide to place sixth graders in different type school settings. (Example: K-6, 4, 5, & 6, 5-6, 6 alone, 6-8) The overlap of TBA and Lone Star speaks to this issue very well. Do not cheat sixth graders!” (Question #16, Participants’ Survey)

The Task Force feels that the library community needs to trust the professionalism of the TBA Selection Committee. We also believe that the list is developmentally-sound and that it is providing a bridge or link to middle school for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. The members of the Task Force also believe that students must remain our primary concern. This Task Force could not justify eliminating the 6<sup>th</sup> grade from a program that promotes and encourages quality reading. Students will continue to read at various levels. Having 6<sup>th</sup> grade as part of the TBA program ensures a larger variety of books for all participants. Sixth grade participation also serves as a persuasive model for younger participants, who will follow the powerful example of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students reading and voting on and enjoying books.

### Strategies to Increase Participation in TBA

While our charge was to develop strategies to increase the participation of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the Task Force feels that all grades could benefit from such strategies.

The Task Force recommends that TLA remarket the program to all librarians. A “Bluebonnet 101” program should be offered at all TLA conferences and at fall district meetings. We should especially target new librarians who are unaware of the program. While the TBA website has an abundance of information, the Task Force suggests that an easily-located link to a one-page tutorial about initiating the program would assist librarians.

The Task Force further believes that the TBA program should be promoted in other venues and to other groups outside the library community, such as PTA, the Texas State Reading Association, and school administrators’ associations. Within TLA, we recommend that the Texas Association of School Librarians and the Children’s Round Table work with the Young Adult Round Table to demonstrate ways to use the TBA program to transition 6<sup>th</sup> graders to the Lone Star Reading List. The Task Force maintains that the 6<sup>th</sup> grade presence in both programs will continue to benefit our students.

Marketing to “tweens” is a fairly recent phenomenon, and TBA targets this age group exactly. We recommend that the TBA Committees interview the student participants at this year’s TLA Conference to obtain their feedback about the program.

A need for increased funding to purchase Bluebonnet books provides a great opportunity for public and school librarians to collaborate and work together to encourage reading in their communities. Students and school librarians, for instance,

can booktalk Bluebonnet books at their local public library. Public librarians can visit school libraries to promote the Bluebonnet books in their collections.

Finally, the Task Force encourages participating librarians to create opportunities for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to act as “Book Buddies” and who would read Bluebonnet books to younger 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students.

In conclusion, the Task Force would like to thank the Executive Boards of the Texas Library Association, the Children’s Round Table, and the Texas Association of School Librarians for this opportunity to examine and study the excellent reading program that they sponsor. We can be proud of the Texas Bluebonnet Award and all that it offers to the children of our state.

## Appendix I

### Texas Bluebonnet Award Voting Report 2001-2009

**2001** Registered Schools: 1,931

Number of votes by grade level:

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade: | 56,857 |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 58,906 |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 54,526 |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 17,439 |

**2002** Registered Schools: 2, 174

Number of votes by grade level:

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade: | 63,594 |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 66,834 |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 60,276 |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 21,217 |

**2003** Registered Schools: 2,407

Number of votes by grade level:

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade: | 68,581 |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 71,925 |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 60,254 |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 19,604 |

**2004** Registered Schools; 2,443

Number of votes by grade level:

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade: | 64,431 |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 64,762 |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 57,284 |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 18,484 |

**2005** Registered Schools: 2,208

Number of votes by grade level:

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade: | 62,667 |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 60,019 |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 49,689 |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 18,940 |

**2006** Registered Schools: 2,281

Number of votes by grade level:

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade: | 47,652 |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 46,844 |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 39,901 |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 14,188 |

**2007** Registered Schools: 2,209

Number of votes by grade level:

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade: | 53,244 |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 54,064 |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 47,746 |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 14,098 |

**2008** Registered Schools: 2,135

Number of votes by grade level:

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade: | 46,863 |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 47,661 |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 43,867 |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 12,716 |

**2009** Registered Schools: 2,154

Number of votes by grade level:

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade: | 47,012 |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 48,395 |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 44,113 |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade: | 12,111 |

## Appendix II

This online survey was taken during the fall of 2008.

### 6th Grade in TBA Survey Summary Survey of Past TBA Committee Members and Coordinators

Total number of respondents: 22

1. Please indicate in what capacity you served (or are serving) the Texas Bluebonnet Award. (check all that apply)

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Coordinator                               | 2 (4%)  |
| TBA Selection Committee Member: 2004-2005 | 2 (4%)  |
| TBA Selection Committee Member: 2005-2006 | 4 (9%)  |
| TBA Selection Committee Member: 2006-2007 | 5 (11%) |
| TBA Selection Committee Member: 2007-2008 | 4 (9%)  |
| TBA Selection Committee Member: 2008-2009 | 6 (13%) |
| TBA Selection Committee Member: Other     | 2 (4%)  |
| TBA Program Committee Member: 2004-2005   | 2 (4%)  |
| TBA Program Committee Member: 2005-2006   | 5 (11%) |
| TBA Program Committee Member: 2006-2007   | 5 (11%) |
| TBA Program Committee Member: 2007-2008   | 4 (9%)  |
| TBA Program Committee Member: 2008-2009   | 4 (9%)  |
| TBA Program Committee Member: Other       | 0 (0%)  |

2. Over the past several years, the number of participating students has decreased in each grade level. How would you explain this decline? (please check the top 3 reasons, in your opinion).

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Librarians are too busy.  | 6 (10%)  |
| Participating in the program costs too much.                              | 1 (2%)   |
| Purchasing multiple copies of the titles is too expensive.                | 8 (14%)  |
| The titles on the TBA list are too advanced.                              | 10 (17%) |
| The titles on the TBA list are too basic.                                 | 0 (0%)   |
| The titles on the TBA list don't match the reading interests of students. | 2 (3%)   |
| The content of some of the titles on the TBA lists is objectionable.      | 2 (3%)   |
| An increased emphasis on TAKS testing.                                    | 18 (31%) |
| Librarians need more programming ideas and support.                       | 1 (2%)   |
| Librarians do not have the cooperation of the teachers.                   | 7 (12%)  |
| Students participate in other reading incentive programs.                 | 3 (5%)   |
| The web posting of program resources is too late to participate.          | 0 (0%)   |
| Librarians do not believe in reading award programs of any kind.          | 0 (0%)   |
| Librarians are unaware of the program.                                    | 0 (0%)   |
| TLA won't take purchase orders.   | 0 (0%)   |
| Other   | 1 (2%)   |

3. If you checked "other" in the previous question, please list a reason which has contributed to the decline in participation.

Total responses: 1

4. What are the reasons to include 6th grade students in the program?

Total responses: 19

5. What are the reasons for not including 6th grade students in the program?

Total responses: 22

6. If the 6th grade had been excluded, which books would not have been on the reading list?

\*Due to space restrictions, the list of 100 titles from 2004-2008 is broken into five parts. Please review the ENTIRE list of 100 titles and check all that apply.

\*Authors and annotations for these books can be found on the TBA website under Past Master Lists.

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| All the Way Home                          | 1 (2%)  |
| Amber Was Brave, Essie Was Smart          | 0 (0%)  |
| Any Small Goodness: A Novel of the Barrio | 3 (7%)  |
| Arctic Lights, Arctic Nights              | 2 (5%)  |
| Ballet of the Elephants                   | 0 (0%)  |
| Bella At Midnight                         | 9 (21%) |
| The Big House                             | 0 (0%)  |
| The Blue Ghost                            | 0 (0%)  |
| The Boy on Fairfield St: Dr Seuss         | 0 (0%)  |
| The Buffalo Nickel                        | 1 (2%)  |
| Bull's-Eye: Annie Oakley                  | 3 (7%)  |
| Chasing Vermeer                           | 6 (14%) |
| Chicken Boy                               | 6 (14%) |
| Chocolate: Riches from the Rainforest     | 2 (5%)  |
| Christopher Mouse                         | 0 (0%)  |
| Circle Unbroken                           | 0 (0%)  |
| The Conch Bearer                          | 9 (21%) |
| Coyote School News                        | 0 (0%)  |
| Danitra Brown Leaves Town                 | 0 (0%)  |
| Dirty Laundry Pile: Poems                 | 0 (0%)  |

7. Master list, continued (check all that apply):

|                                      |          |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Double Identity                      | 14 (30%) |
| Down Girl and Sit                    | 0 (0%)   |
| Each Little Bird That Sings          | 3 (7%)   |
| The Earth Dragon Awakes              | 1 (2%)   |
| Empire State Building                | 5 (11%)  |
| Encyclopedia Prehistorica: Dinosaurs | 1 (2%)   |
| Fair Weather                         | 4 (9%)   |
| Fame & Glory in Freedom, Georgia     | 0 (0%)   |
| Firegirl                             | 5 (11%)  |
| Flipped                              | 10 (22%) |
| Follow the Trail                     | 0 (0%)   |
| The Forging of the Blade             | 0 (0%)   |
| George Crum & the Saratoga Chip      | 0 (0%)   |
| George Washington's Teeth            | 0 (0%)   |
| Ghost Fever/Mal de Fantasma          | 0 (0%)   |
| The Ghost's Grave                    | 0 (0%)   |
| The Giant Rat of Sumatra             | 2 (4%)   |
| Goin' Someplace Special              | 0 (0%)   |
| Good Dog                             | 0 (0%)   |
| The Gorillas of Gill Park            | 1 (2%)   |

8. Master list, continued (check all that apply):

|                                      |        |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| The Greatest Skating Race            | 1 (2%) |
| Gregor the Overlander                | 1 (2%) |
| Harvesting Hope: Cesar Chavez        | 0 (0%) |
| How Tia Lola Came to Stay            | 0 (0%) |
| Hubert Invents the Wheel             | 3 (6%) |
| Hummingbird Nest: A Journal of Poems | 0 (0%) |
| Ida B.....                           | 0 (0%) |

- |   |          |  |
|---|----------|--|
| In Your Face: Facts About Features      | 12 (24%) |  |
| Juan Verdades: The Man Who Couldn't Lie | 0 (0%)   |  |
| The Kite Fighters                       | 1 (2%)   |  |
| The Last Treasure                       | 6 (12%)  |  |
| Leonardo's Horse                        | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Leven Thumps & the Gateway to Foo       | 9 (18%)  |  |
| Lewis & Clark & Me: A Dog's Tale        | 0 (0%)   |  |
| The Lightning Thief                     | 2 (4%)   |  |
| Locomotion                              | 2 (4%)   |  |
| Lord of the Deep                        | 12 (24%) |  |
| Mack Made Movies                        | 0 (0%)   |  |
| The Magician's Boy                      | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot        | 0 (0%)   |  |
9. Master list, continued (check all that apply):
- |  |          |  |
|--|----------|--|
| The Misadventures of Maude March             | 4 (10%)  |  |
| Mosquito Bite                                | 2 (5%)   |  |
| My Chimp Friday: The Nana Bannana Chronicles | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Olive's Ocean                                | 12 (29%) |  |
| Outside and Inside Mummies                   | 2 (5%)   |  |
| The Penderwicks                              | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Phineas Gage: A Story About Brain Science    | 10 (24%) |  |
| Pompeii: Lost and Found                      | 1 (2%)   |  |
| The Pot That Juan Built                      | 1 (2%)   |  |
| Project Mulberry                             | 2 (5%)   |  |
| Roxie and the Hooligans                      | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Runaway Radish                               | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Sailing for Gold: The Klondike Kid           | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Sea Clocks: The Story of Longitude           | 2 (5%)   |  |
| Seadogs: An Epic Ocean Operetta              | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Selavi, That Is Life: A Haitian Story        | 1 (2%)   |  |
| Shoeless Joe & Black Betsy                   | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Silk Umbrellas                               | 2 (5%)   |  |
| Sixteen Years in Sixteen Seconds             | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Smokejumpers                                 | 2 (5%)   |  |
10. Master list, continued (check all that apply):
- |  |          |  |
|--|----------|--|
| So B, It: A Novel                          | 11 (26%) |  |
| The SOS File                               | 1 (2%)   |  |
| A Strong Right Arm: Mamie "Peanut Johnson" | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Sure As Sunrise: Stories Bruh Rabbit       | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Surviving Antarctica: Reality TV           | 15 (35%) |  |
| The Tarantula Scientist                    | 3 (7%)   |  |
| Tippy Lemmey                               | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Toasting Marshmallows: Camping Poems       | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Togo                                       | 0 (0%)   |  |
| The Toughest Cowboy                        | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Walking to the Bus-Rider Blues             | 1 (2%)   |  |
| Weedflower                                 | 10 (23%) |  |
| When Marian Sang                           | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Where I'd Like To Be                       | 2 (5%)   |  |
| Who Stole Halloween                        | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Wildfire!                                  | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Wingwalker                                 | 0 (0%)   |  |
| Wishes, Kisses, and Pigs                   | 0 (0%)   |  |
| A Year in Poems & Quilts                   | 0 (0%)   |  |

The Year of the Dog

0 (0%)

11. If 6th grade is eliminated from the TBA program, how would the selection criteria be different from the current criteria? The current criteria is below.

Seven points to consider when suggesting a book for consideration by the Texas Bluebonnet Selection Committee:

1. Books must have a copyright date within the last three years.
2. The book must have been published in the U.S. and must have been written by a living U.S. citizen or an individual presently living in the United States.
3. The book must have received a favorable review in a review tool.
4. The book must have literary merit and potential appeal to young readers.
5. The content of the book must be relevant to children in grades 3, 4, 5, or 6.
6. Ineligible categories of materials are textbooks and new editions of existing titles.
7. Individual portions of a book, such as poems and short stories, may have been published previously, but the book, in its entirety must not have been.

Total responses: 21

12. How does a "6th Grade Book" differ from a "5th" or "7th Grade Book"?

Total responses: 20

13. If the 6th grade is eliminated, how many titles should be on the TBA list?

|              |          |
|--------------|----------|
| 20 titles    | 19 (86%) |
| 18-19 titles | 0 (0%)   |
| 16-17 titles | 0 (0%)   |
| 14-15 titles | 1 (5%)   |
| Other        | 2 (9%)   |

14. If you listed "other" in the question above, please explain.

Total responses: 2

15. What suggestions do you have for encouraging 6th Graders to read if they aren't part of TBA?

Total responses: 19

16. In creating a balanced list, which is more important?

|                                    |          |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| Genre                              | 1 (5%)   |
| Grade                              | 1 (5%)   |
| Equal attention to grade and genre | 13 (59%) |
| Other                              | 7 (32%)  |

17. If you listed "other" in the question above, please explain.

Total responses: 7

18. Please add any additional comments.

Total responses: 14

## Appendix III

Results of this survey will be available on the Texas Bluebonnet Award page of the Texas Library Association website.

### Texas 2009 Bluebonnet Award Survey Sponsored by Mackin

Total number of respondents: 914

1. With which type of library do you work?

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| Public school  | 816 (89%) |
| Private school | 48 (5%)   |
| Public library | 40 (4%)   |
| Other          | 4 (0%)    |
  
2. In which TLA District do you work? See TLA District Map to locate your district. (map opens in a new window)

|             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| District 1  | 29 (3%)   |
| District 2  | 26 (2%)   |
| District 3  | 103 (11%) |
| District 4  | 88 (9%)   |
| District 5  | 194 (21%) |
| District 6  | 18 (1%)   |
| District 7  | 109 (12%) |
| District 8  | 209 (23%) |
| District 9  | 25 (2%)   |
| District 10 | 101 (11%) |
  
3. If you are in a school library, which grade levels does your campus cover?

|       |           |
|-------|-----------|
| K-3   | 6 (0%)    |
| K-4   | 53 (6%)   |
| K-5   | 401 (46%) |
| K-6   | 75 (8%)   |
| K-8   | 25 (2%)   |
| K-12  | 38 (4%)   |
| 3-5   | 10 (1%)   |
| 3-6   | 2 (0%)    |
| 4-5   | 10 (1%)   |
| 4-6   | 9 (1%)    |
| 5-6   | 23 (2%)   |
| 6-7   | 1 (0%)    |
| 6-8   | 33 (3%)   |
| Other | 181 (20%) |
  
- 3a. If you answered "other" in the question above, please identify your school's grade levels.  
187 (20%)
  
4. Did you register and participate in the 2008-2009 Texas Bluebonnet Award(TBA) program?

|     |           |
|-----|-----------|
| Yes | 775 (86%) |
| No  | 124 (13%) |
  
5. If you responded "Yes" to question 4, why did you participate in the 2008-2009 TBA program?  
(Check all that apply)  
Promotes reading in grades 3-6 743 (12%)

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Introduces children to a variety of quality books | 715 (12%) |
| Helps children develop critical reading skills    | 375 (6%)  |
| Honors and encourages imaginative authors         | 380 (6%)  |
| Increases library circulation                     | 300 (5%)  |
| Enhances library programming                      | 545 (9%)  |
| Provides rich resources                           | 329 (5%)  |
| Inspires participation of readers                 | 612 (10%) |
| Gives readers a voice in choosing winners         | 672 (11%) |
| Administrative expectation                        | 91 (1%)   |
| Strong book titles                                | 289 (4%)  |
| Support from the teachers                         | 168 (2%)  |
| Reasonable cost                                   | 180 (3%)  |
| Student expectation                               | 242 (4%)  |
| Teacher expectation                               | 161 (2%)  |
| Other   | 40 (0%)   |

5a. If you answered "other" in the question above, please identify your reason for participating.  
42 (4%)

6. If you responded "No" to question 4, why did you not participate in the 2008-2009 TBA Program?  
(Check all that apply)

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Not enough time                                   | 24 (8%)  |
| Participation costs too much                      | 17 (6%)  |
| Purchasing multiple copies too expensive          | 26 (9%)  |
| Titles on the 2008-2009 TBA list too difficult    | 22 (8%)  |
| Titles on the 2008-2009 TBA list too basic        | 3 (1%)   |
| Titles don't match reading interests of students  | 18 (6%)  |
| Content of titles                                 | 10 (3%)  |
| Insufficient programming ideas and support        | 3 (1%)   |
| Lack of cooperation from teachers                 | 22 (8%)  |
| Participation in other reading incentive programs | 31 (11%) |
| Web posting of program resources too late         | 1 (0%)   |
| Insufficient knowledge of program                 | 11 (4%)  |
| TLA won't take purchase orders                    | 13 (4%)  |
| Increased emphasis on TAKS testing                | 27 (9%)  |
| Other   | 45 (16%) |

6a. If you answered "other" in the question above, please identify your reason for not participating.  
51 (5%)

7. How well did the 2008-2009 TBA program meet its goal to promote reading in grades 3-6?

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 40 (4%)   |
| Not at All      | 13 (1%)   |
| Somewhat Well   | 126 (14%) |
| Moderately Well | 205 (22%) |
| Well            | 367 (41%) |
| Extremely Well  | 141 (15%) |

8. How well did the 2008-2009 TBA program meet its goal to introduce children to a variety of quality books?

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 37 (4%)   |
| Not at All      | 4 (0%)    |
| Somewhat Well   | 107 (11%) |
| Moderately Well | 188 (21%) |

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| Well           | 382 (42%) |
| Extremely Well | 174 (19%) |

9. How well did the 2008-2009 TBA program meet its goal to help children develop critical reading skills?

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 74 (8%)   |
| Not at All      | 18 (2%)   |
| Somewhat Well   | 156 (17%) |
| Moderately Well | 259 (29%) |
| Well            | 298 (33%) |
| Extremely Well  | 81 (9%)   |

10. How well did the 2008-2009 TBA program honor/encourage imaginative authors?

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 67 (7%)   |
| Not at All      | 16 (1%)   |
| Somewhat Well   | 104 (11%) |
| Moderately Well | 223 (25%) |
| Well            | 362 (40%) |
| Extremely Well  | 117 (13%) |

11. What do you see as strengths of the program in meeting its goals, which are stated in questions 7-10?

436 (47%)

12. What do you see as areas for improvement in how the program could better meet its goals, which are stated in questions 7-10?

409 (44%)

13. There is no requirement to purchase all 20 of the titles on the 2008-2009 TBA list. Of the 20 titles which of the following did you purchase?

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| I purchased all the titles  | 760 (27%) |
| One-Handed Catch  | 105 (3%)  |
| Atherton: the House of Power  | 89 (3%)   |
| The Middle of Somewhere   | 81 (2%)   |
| Tall Tales  | 81 (2%)   |
| One Potato, Two Potato  | 113 (4%)  |
| Comets, Stars, the Moon, and Mars: Space Poems and Paintings  | 112 (4%)  |
| The Thing About Georgie   | 98 (3%)   |
| Just Grace  | 111 (3%)  |
| Gabriel's Horses  | 103 (3%)  |
| Toys Go Out: Being the Adventures of a Knowledgable stingray, a Toughy Little Buffalo, and Someone Called Plastic | 104 (3%)  |
| What You Never Knew About Beds, Bedrooms, and Pajamas   | 101 (3%)  |
| Marvelous Mattie: How Margaret E. Knight Became an Inventor   | 107 (3%)  |
| How to Steal a Dog  | 116 (4%)  |
| The Winner's Walk   | 104 (3%)  |
| Lawn Boy  | 119 (4%)  |
| The Invention of Hugo Cabret: A Novel in Words and Picturast  | 118 (4%)  |
| This is Just to Say: Poems of Apology and Forgiveness   | 82 (2%)   |
| Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon  | 98 (3%)   |
| Crossing Bok Chitto: A Choctaw Tale of Friendship and Freedom   | 107 (3%)  |
| Way Down Deep   | 91 (3%)   |

14. How well were you satisfied with the following?

#### Registration process

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 95 (10%)  |
| Not at All      | 6 (0%)    |
| Somewhat Well   | 20 (2%)   |
| Moderately Well | 50 (5%)   |
| Well            | 299 (34%) |
| Extremely Well  | 401 (46%) |

#### Communication between TBA & registered librarians

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 69 (7%)   |
| Not at All      | 7 (0%)    |
| Somewhat Well   | 29 (3%)   |
| Moderately Well | 71 (8%)   |
| Well            | 300 (34%) |
| Extremely Well  | 389 (44%) |

#### Opportunities to suggest a title for the list

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 172 (20%) |
| Not at All      | 18 (2%)   |
| Somewhat Well   | 54 (6%)   |
| Moderately Well | 89 (10%)  |
| Well            | 309 (36%) |
| Extremely Well  | 216 (25%) |

#### Voting procedures

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 110 (12%) |
| Not at All      | 2 (0%)    |
| Somewhat Well   | 22 (2%)   |
| Moderately Well | 57 (6%)   |
| Well            | 308 (36%) |
| Extremely Well  | 354 (41%) |

#### Award luncheon presentation at conference

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 297 (35%) |
| Not at All      | 5 (0%)    |
| Somewhat Well   | 18 (2%)   |
| Moderately Well | 44 (5%)   |
| Well            | 225 (26%) |
| Extremely Well  | 253 (30%) |

#### Selection of youth participants at the awards presentation luncheon

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 278 (32%) |
| Not at All      | 12 (1%)   |
| Somewhat Well   | 38 (4%)   |
| Moderately Well | 70 (8%)   |
| Well            | 231 (27%) |
| Extremely Well  | 219 (25%) |

15. How well were you satisfied with the following?

#### Website

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 67 (7%)   |
| Not at All      | 4 (0%)    |
| Somewhat Well   | 42 (4%)   |
| Moderately Well | 94 (10%)  |
| Well            | 379 (43%) |
| Extremely Well  | 287 (32%) |

#### DVD/Videostreaming

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 338 (40%) |
| Not at All      | 32 (3%)   |
| Somewhat Well   | 38 (4%)   |
| Moderately Well | 73 (8%)   |
| Well            | 199 (23%) |
| Extremely Well  | 165 (19%) |

#### eNewsletter

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 196 (23%) |
| Not at All      | 5 (0%)    |
| Somewhat Well   | 36 (4%)   |
| Moderately Well | 81 (9%)   |
| Well            | 343 (40%) |
| Extremely Well  | 184 (21%) |

#### Readers advisory list

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 201 (23%) |
| Not at All      | 6 (0%)    |
| Somewhat Well   | 31 (3%)   |
| Moderately Well | 67 (7%)   |
| Well            | 330 (39%) |
| Extremely Well  | 203 (24%) |

#### Reviews on the TBA website

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 121 (14%) |
| Not at All      | 6 (0%)    |
| Somewhat Well   | 32 (3%)   |
| Moderately Well | 80 (9%)   |
| Well            | 355 (41%) |
| Extremely Well  | 242 (29%) |

#### "Book Talk" link

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| N/A             | 154 (17%) |
| Not at All      | 4 (0%)    |
| Somewhat Well   | 29 (3%)   |
| Moderately Well | 74 (8%)   |
| Well            | 294 (34%) |
| Extremely Well  | 301 (35%) |

16. A TLA Taskforce has been established to study the participation of 6th grade students in the TBA program.

What are reasons for including 6th grade students in the program?  
425 (46%)

17. What are reasons for not including 6th grade students in the program?  
473 (51%)

18. In creating a balanced list, which is more important in selecting the TBA list?

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Genre                              | 42 (4%)   |
| Grade                              | 97 (11%)  |
| Equal attention to grade and genre | 699 (79%) |
| Other                              | 43 (4%)   |

18a. If you answered "other" in the question above, please explain.  
49 (5%)

19. How has the TBA program impacted students? Do you have a story to share?  
258 (28%)

20. If you wish to be included in the drawing for a ticket to the TBA Author Luncheon with reserved seating please provide your contact information. (Three tickets will be awarded)

Note: survey results remain anonymous, even if contact information is entered below.  
484 (52%)

Appendix IV

**School Types**  
Counts of Schools for Each Low and High Grade Combination

High Grade →

↓ Low Grade

|    | EE | PK | K  | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7  | 8   | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|-------|
| EE | 16 | 41 | 46 | 50 | 76 | 72 | 139 | 776 | 214 | 2  | 14  | 4  | 1  | 2  | 50    |
| PK |    | 18 | 14 | 11 | 21 | 47 | 116 | 699 | 284 | 8  | 34  | 3  | 2  | 5  | 75    |
| K  |    |    | 1  | 1  | 12 | 20 | 118 | 381 | 243 | 9  | 31  | 6  | 0  | 1  | 66    |
| 1  |    |    |    | 3  | 13 | 10 | 22  | 45  | 9   | 1  | 2   | 3  | 5  | 8  | 10    |
| 2  |    |    |    |    | 1  | 24 | 12  | 19  | 6   | 0  | 3   | 0  | 4  | 9  | 6     |
| 3  |    |    |    |    |    | 4  | 25  | 76  | 12  | 1  | 0   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 5     |
| 4  |    |    |    |    |    |    | 4   | 58  | 65  | 1  | 7   | 2  | 1  | 6  | 13    |
| 5  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | 7   | 123 | 5  | 76  | 4  | 8  | 11 | 22    |
| 6  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     | 28  | 7  | 795 | 21 | 30 | 31 | 98    |
| 7  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     | 14 | 300 | 48 | 26 | 38 | 191   |
| 8  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    | 16  | 6  | 10 | 20 | 48    |
| 9  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     | 46 | 26 | 29 | 1,128 |
| 10 |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |    | 10 | 5  | 27    |
| 11 |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |    |    | 7  | 21    |
| 12 |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |    |     |    |    |    | 12    |

  
Elementary

  
Junior High

  
Middle School

  
Elementary/Secondary

  
High School