



# The Taft School

May 2016

Dear Taft Parents & Students,

The Taft School Summer Reading Committee has selected authors Jason Reynolds and Brandon Kiely's novel *All American Boys* as our summer reading book. Awarded the 2016 Coretta Scott King Honor and the Walter Dean Myers Award, *All American Boys* is a powerful novel of two teens—one black, one white—grappling with the repercussions of a single violent act that leaves their school, their community, and, ultimately, the country bitterly divided by racial tension. Receiving prestigious awards and national acclaim, *All American Boys* has been hailed by author Matt de la Pena as “a first rate exploration of one of the most important issues of the day...But it is more than just a timely novel. Reynolds and Kiely have produced a layered thoughtful, literary work of art.” Author Laurie Halse Anderson said of *All American Boys*, “this life-changing, nation-changing book is written with fire and love and courage. Read it, weep, and then share its power with everyone you know.”

Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Kiely will visit Taft as Morning Meeting speakers on October 4, 2016, to continue discussion of the book and its themes with Taft students and faculty.

After earning a B.A. in English from The University of Maryland, Mr. Reynolds received critical acclaim for his novel, *When I Was the Greatest*, for which he was the recipient of the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent.

Mr. Kiely received his M.F.A. from the City College of New York. His debut novel, *The Gospel of Winter*, was selected as one of the American Library Association's Top Ten Best Fiction for Young Adults titles of 2015 and was a Kirkus Reviews selection for Best Teen Books of 2014.

In addition to reading *All American Boys*, each Taft student is asked to read a second book chosen from a list of more than thirty-five selections offered by individual Taft faculty and staff; this list may be found at <http://www.taftschool.org/students/readinglist.aspx>. Because there is a limit to the number of students who may sign up for each book, students should choose two books (a first choice and a second choice) and reply as soon as possible to [summerreading@taftschool.org](mailto:summerreading@taftschool.org) with both titles. We will respond promptly with the title of the book the student should read. We will gather for discussions of the books early in the new school year.

Students can purchase *All American Boys* through any online bookseller or through any “brick and mortar” store. For further information about our summer reading program, please consult the Taft School website: <http://www.taftschool.org/students/readinglist.aspx>.

Sincerely,

Stuart Guthrie & Megan Valenti  
Co-Chairs, Summer Reading Committee