



Expanding the Middle School Novel Collection

June 15, 2022

Guiding Questions

1 Why is CUSD 200 updating the middle school approved novel collection?

2 How will the recommended novels expand our collection?

3 How will novels continue to be recommended for approval?

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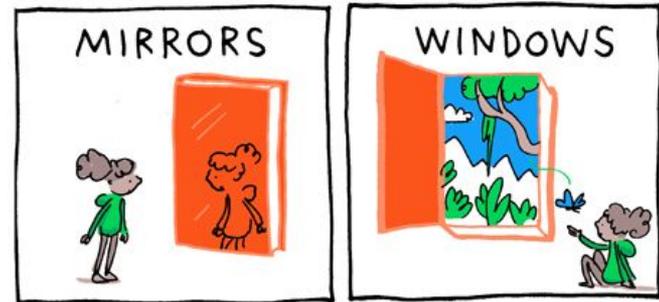
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Background

In 2020, the Educational Services Department began working with the middle schools to expand the collection of diverse texts.

This was because Vision 2022 included the goal, “Provide experience and instruction to develop students’ appreciation of cultures and diversity”.

Best practice in reading instruction recommends providing texts that serve as Windows and Mirrors. Texts can serve as a window and allow students to connect with perspectives different from their own. Texts can serve as a mirror to allow students to see their experiences reflected.



Background

The Fast Paced Language Arts novel list was last approved by the Board of Education in 2004.

There are 35 books on the list.

1 title has a copyright date of 2000 or later.

The Language Arts novel list was last approved by the Board of Education in 2006.

There are 72 books on the list.

16 titles have a copyright date of 2000 or later.

Background

In 2010 the Illinois State Board of Education adopted the New Illinois Learning Standards.

Curriculum work associated with the New Illinois Learning Standards was a challenge at the middle school level due to the limited leadership for instructional projects. Middle schools do not have Department Chairs, a Director, Reading Coaches, or Assistant Principals for Curriculum. At the elementary and high school level these positions have supported instructional work.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at each school worked collaboratively to develop curricula and identify texts to match the requirements of the standards.

Buildings funds were used to purchase new novels. The team considered expanding the collection to include diverse texts through this work.

The novels being proposed tonight for public review are those that were purchased and subsequently used in middle school classrooms.

Approving these novels will allow for additional copies to be purchased for student usage across the four buildings.

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Novels Recommended

The novels recommended for public review expand our approved collection

- by location to include stories set in Africa and India;
- by time period to include stories set during WWII, the Great Depression, and the Civil Rights movement;
- by genre, to include additional nonfiction texts;
- by topic, to include more current events;
- by characters, to include books that involve diverse populations;
- by author, to include more diversity.

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Novels Recommended for Public Review

Through this work we have recognized the need for a better system for recommending novels for approval.

We have created a new procedure to allow staff to recommend novels yearly for approval.

This includes a review of the text, description of how the text support ELA standards, and unit themes.

The approval process is layered and includes multiple readers, building level approval, and district level approval.

This process will follow a similar timeframe as high school textbooks with recommendations coming to the Board of Education in January - March.

Tonight's Recommendation

Approval to post the middle school novels for 30 days of public review.

Feedback from the public will be shared with the Board of Education.

