

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Biggam	School:	Shanahan
Book Title:	The Wednesday Wars	Genre:	Historical Fiction
Author:	Gary Schmidt	Pages:	264
Publisher:	Clarion Books	Copyright:	2007

*In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.*

**Book Summary and summary citation:** (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

From the book flap of the hardcover edition: In this Newbery Honor-winning novel, Gary D. Schmidt offers an unforgettable antihero. *The Wednesday Wars* is a wonderfully witty and compelling story about a teenage boy's mishaps and adventures over the course of the 1967–68 school year in Long Island, New York. Meet Holling Hoodhood, a seventh-grader at Camillo Junior High, who must spend Wednesday afternoons with his teacher, Mrs. Baker, while the rest of the class has religious instruction. Mrs. Baker doesn't like Holling—he's sure of it. Why else would she make him read the plays of William Shakespeare outside class? But everyone has bigger things to worry about, like Vietnam. His father wants Holling and his sister to be on their best behavior: the success of his business depends on it. But how can Holling stay out of trouble when he has so much to contend with? A bully demanding cream puffs; angry rats; and a baseball hero signing autographs the very same night Holling has to appear in a play in yellow tights! As fate sneaks up on him again and again, Holling finds Motivation—the Big M—in the most unexpected places and musters up the courage to embrace his destiny, in spite of himself.

**Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s):** (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

RL.7.10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

\*Students will continue to work on reading fluency and expression as well.

**Include two professional reviews of this title:** (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be “cut and pasted” (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

### Review #1

From VOYA: Seventh grader Holling Hoodhood lives in the Long Island suburbs in the Perfect House with his less-than-perfect, architect father, his subservient mother, and his flower-child sister. On Wednesday afternoon, half of his class leaves for Hebrew School at Temple Beth-El while the other half goes to catechism. Holling is the lone Presbyterian so he stays behind with his teacher,

Ms. Baker, whom Holling knows hates him. She introduces him to the plays of William Shakespeare, an assignment that Holling assumes is punishment but which actually enhances his life. There is a lot going on in this novel not all related to the politics of the turbulent 1960s. The assassinations of Martin Luther King, Bobby Kennedy, and the unpopular Vietnam War play a part in Holling's seventh grade year but so do two rats, Sycorax and Calliban, with their clacking yellow teeth; a part as Ariel in yellow tights; a track team; bullying and racism; a camping trip; and disappointment in a first love. Ms. Baker gently guides him through everything even as she brokenheartedly deals with the news that her husband is MIA. This novel is funny, warm, sad, and touching all at the same time. Holling Hoodhood will live with the reader for a very long time after he finishes seventh grade and learns "to thine self be true."-Kathie Fitch

### Review #2

From Kirkus Reviews: It's 1967, and on Wednesdays, every Jewish kid in Holling Hoodhood's class goes to Hebrew School, and every Catholic kid goes to Catechism. Holling is Presbyterian, which means that he and Mrs. Baker are alone together every Wednesday-and she hates it just as much as he does. What unfolds is a year of Wednesday Shakespeare study, which, says Mrs. Baker, "is never boring to the true soul." Holling is dubious, but trapped. Schmidt plaits world events into the drama being played out at Camillo Junior High School, as well as plenty of comedy, as Holling and Mrs. Baker work their way from open hostility to a sweetly realized friendship. Holling navigates the multitudinous snares set for seventh-graders-parental expectations, sisters, bullies, girls-with wry wit and the knowledge that the world will always be a step or two ahead of him. Schmidt has a way of getting to the emotional heart of every scene without overstatement, allowing the reader and Holling to understand the great truths swirling around them on their own terms. It's another virtuoso turn by the author of *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy* (2005). (Fiction. 10-14)

### **What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?**

<u>Title:</u> <b>Being Me</b>	<u>Author:</u> <b>Lori Williams</b>
<u>Title:</u> <b>Don't You Dare Read This, Mrs. Dunphrey</b>	<u>Author:</u> <b>Margaret Peterson Haddix</b>
<u>Title:</u> <b>Pay It Forward: Young Reader's Edition</b>	<u>Author:</u> <b>Catherine Ryan Hyde</b>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>

### **Document any potentially controversial content:**

The novel is set during the Vietnam War and contains numerous references to incidents during the war, racism towards a Vietnamese refugee, as well as references to the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy. There are also incidents of bullying at school, students smoking cigarettes, and disrespectful conduct towards teachers and staff.

### **Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)**

Gifted/Accelerated  Regular  At Risk

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

**Reading level of this title (if applicable):** 990L

**Date Submitted to Department Chair: 5.29.2015**

**Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:**

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults