

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Amanda Sweeney

School: OHS/CDL

Book Title: The Nickel Boys

Genre: Fiction

Author: Colson Whitehead

Pages: 224

Publisher: Doubleday

Copyright: 2019

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.

This text was a Pulitzer Prize winner; it focuses on an adolescent boy and explores racial issues that are relevant to the present day. The writing is profound for students who will likely be in AP English classes in the next year.

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

Set in the 1960s, the novel follows Elwood Curtis, a studious African American from [Tallahassee](#) with a sense of justice, who is adjudicated delinquent and sent to Nickel Academy, a juvenile reformatory in Eleanor, Florida, after riding in a stolen vehicle to attend university classes. He befriends Jack Turner, who goes by his [family name](#) and who has a less optimistic viewpoint. Elwood attempts to serve his time without incident, but is seriously beaten on two occasions, once for intervening to help a boy being attacked by sexual predators and once after writing a letter complaining of poor conditions. The time at the school is interspersed with accounts of an older Elwood in New York City. After Turner overhears of a plan to have Elwood killed by the administration, the two attempt an escape. Elwood is shot dead while Turner escapes; the latter had in fact falsely adopted Elwood's name to live up to his ideals and had established a business in New York City. When an investigation in the 2010s finally begins to expose the now shuttered school's secrets, Turner flies to Tallahassee to give testimony to his friend's fate.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum blueprints and/or State standards.

The focus of the first semester of CPH10/CP10 is literary analysis. This is a profound piece of literature that would be perfect for fostering these skills.

Include two professional review 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). Reviews should suggest an appropriate grade-level or grade-band.

Review #1

<https://www.npr.org/2019/07/18/740901819/for-the-nickel-boys-life-isnt-worth-five-cents>

Review #2

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-385-53707-0>

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

Title: The Underground Railroad

Author: Colson Whitehead

Title: To Kill a Mockingbird

Author: Harper Lee

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

The adolescent goes to a reformatory school; the text alludes to the fact that one student in this reformatory school is being sexually abused.

The n word appears in this text. I will consult with various sources, including Jackie Merkle, as to how to sensitively and appropriately discuss its presence and gravity, ensuring that it is never spoken.

Finally, the main character experiences violence at the hands of the school.

(I can discuss this further. Jill Hartley has also read this text, and Jackie Merkle is currently reading it.)

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

CP Honors English 10

Reading Level of this Title (if applicable):

Suggested Professional Literacy 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

Signatures:

Teacher: Amanda Sweeney

Date: 8/23

Department Head: Jill Ceneskie Hartley

Date: 8/24/2020

Building Administrator: _____

Date: _____

Curriculum Supervisor: _____

Date: _____