

**2020-21 MS ENGLISH LITERATURE SELECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE:****8<sup>TH</sup>-GRADE READING GROUP****AGENDA & NOTES**3/10/21; Virtual: <https://pausd.zoom.us/j/94766097557>; 4:00 – 6:00

DESCRIPTION	NAME	PRESENT
<b>ENGLISH INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER</b>	Deanna Jones (8) Fletcher MS <a href="mailto:djones@pausd.org">djones@pausd.org</a>	<b>Yes</b>
	Kim Lohse (7) JLS MS <a href="mailto:klohse@pausd.org">klohse@pausd.org</a>	<b>Yes</b>
	Brooke Tassa (6) Greene MS <a href="mailto:btassa@pausd.org">btassa@pausd.org</a>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>MS ENGLISH TEACHER</b>	Ander Lucia (8) Fletcher MS <a href="mailto:alucia@pausd.org">alucia@pausd.org</a>	<b>Yes</b>
	Kari Nygaard (8) JLS MS <a href="mailto:knygaard@pausd.org">knygaard@pausd.org</a>	<b>Yes</b>
	Jennifer Valero (8) JLS MS <a href="mailto:jvalero@pausd.org">jvalero@pausd.org</a>	<b>Yes</b>
	Kelly Zalatimo (8) Greene MS <a href="mailto:kzalatimo@pausd.org">kzalatimo@pausd.org</a>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>PARENT REPRESENTATIVE</b>	Iva Reid JLS parent <a href="mailto:izreid@gmail.com">izreid@gmail.com</a>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE</b>	Olivia Souter Fletcher student Olivia's parent's email: <a href="mailto:souter98@sbcglobal.net">souter98@sbcglobal.net</a>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>HS ENGLISH TEACHER</b>	Shaina Holdener Gunn HS <a href="mailto:sholdener@pausd.org">sholdener@pausd.org</a>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>ENGLISH LANGUAGE REPRESENTATIVE</b>	Jedd Bloom Greene MS <a href="mailto:jebloom@pausd.org">jebloom@pausd.org</a>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>TEACHER LIBRARIAN</b>	Kristen Lee Fletcher MS <a href="mailto:klee@pausd.org">klee@pausd.org</a>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>DIRECTOR, SECONDARY ED</b>	Kathie Laurence District Office <a href="mailto:klaurence@pausd.org">klaurence@pausd.org</a>	
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<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
1. Welcome!	
2. Agenda Overview	
3. Review Norms & Expectations	<b>No questions/comments</b>
4. Fishbowl Setup	<input type="checkbox"/> Participants <input type="checkbox"/> Observers <input type="checkbox"/> Q and A <b>Suggestion to use chat to keep track of participant order</b>
5. Fishbowl Discussions	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss possible core lit candidates: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b><i>Pet</i> by Akwaeke Emezi:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Student: Should be core. Not a lot of books featuring LGBTQ+ characters, selectively mute/disabled characters. Gives representation to communities that are traditionally underrepresented. Very honest. Handles topics in a way that is elegant and articulate. Requires reflection/thought. As a student, I can see learning about the book and having conversations about characters. <input type="checkbox"/> I agree with everything [the student] has said. Lots of layers to book. Like the mystery element. Can't tell if you can rely on <i>Pet</i> at first. Lot of layers to explore from English perspective. Utopia. Complexities of community. <input type="checkbox"/> If we look at what our students said they wanted, this checks some boxes - Fantasy, student of color, the LGBTQ+ element is very important <input type="checkbox"/> Types of justice – Greene has a justice unit. Audio book is amazing. Draws you in. This is a great core selection <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Jam</i> just gets to exist. No struggle or trauma. The author works these things about her in, but not traumatically. Springboard for thinking forward – what does a positive society look like? Exciting to think about this futuristic society. Like that the book is short. Like so much about

this book. Part about Redemption having 3 parents is woven in. Jam has a loving, supportive family, but still there is a compelling challenge [in the plot]

- ❑ Loved hearing what everybody was saying and I loved this book. The only thing I can think of to add is that this is probably not something students have read yet. Even if a movie comes out, the language of the book gives English teachers a lot to work with
- ❑ Question: Abuse themes – does this feel like too much?
- ❑ Light touches in the suggestions of what happens. Basically in the language of “someone was hurt”; there’s no need to address it any further than in the context of a wrong that was done.
- ❑ To add on – also, sadly, I think these topics are a part of the world and a part of life. *Pet* is also about how when you say that these things don’t happen or think they don’t happen, that’s when you have a problem. That’s what the book is about. Jam & Redemption are told that there are no monsters in Lucille and that’s when someone gets hurt. Don’t think it’s too much from a student standpoint.
- ❑ From *Booklist*: “*Younger readers will enjoy the fantastical story line itself, while older readers will be able to look more deeply into its themes and pull out the social commentary on the hidden evils of our world that Emezi creatively weaves into the story. Just like Pet gently encourages Jam to see things unseen, to not be afraid, and to not forget, this book encourages its readers to do the same. Because as Jam notes, “Yes, people forget. But forgetting is dangerous. Forgetting is how the monsters come back.”*”
- ❑ For the majority of the book, we don’t know what’s happened. No heavy information about it. At the end, there’s the question of what do we do? Ending on that question is really powerful as well. Keeps you from sitting with the abuse/sadness.
- ❑ **March Book 3 – Andrew Aydin and John Lewis**
- ❑ Thought the book was great. Was in awe of the illustrations. How long did this take to complete? Masterpiece after masterpiece. As far as the text goes, it’s dense – lot of facts, names, thought it was great. John Lewis was a legend. As far as teaching, supplemental? It’s a little safe in terms of racism because it ends with the voting rights act/President Obama. Studying racism from a distance. Temptation in a white community to feel we’ve moved on from there, which we obviously haven’t
- ❑ I read this on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday – I

know how far we are from “check done, everything is fixed.” It’s a history. Super accessible – thinking of graphic novel – has built in access for struggling readers. Loved graphic novel, but also thinking it’s heavy. I have a lot of background knowledge – I wondered about a student who maybe didn’t have as much background?

- ❑ Student: I read it a little while ago. I was blown away. I read all 3 on a weekend. I thought I knew a lot about the Civil Rights Movement, but there were names, acronyms, events that I didn’t recognize. Definitely think there is a lot of information there that as students we won’t necessarily get in other contexts. You have a first-hand experience and recollection of events. Very important story – learned a lot. I think as long as it’s an option in the classroom, I’m good where ever it ends up [core or supplemental]
- ❑ I learned so much. Embarrassing how much my education was lacking. Narrative nonfiction, graphic novel, preparation for HS, - ticks those boxes. Very important to include in some way – as core or supplemental
- ❑ I have a question – I had a lot of trouble reading the actual text – wondering if there are other versions with bigger text. There were some parts where I needed a magnifying glass. Appreciate that it lets people know how many people were working for years and years – lots of people come into play in book. Probably inspire kids to find out more about all of these individuals.
- ❑ It is available on Hoopla – every 8<sup>th</sup> grader could be reading it at the same time. You can zoom in when you are reading the book on Hoopla. What I did
- ❑ Acronyms – mentioned in the back, loved all the info in the back
- ❑ Gives you an opportunity to say – look it’s time that we address these issues that we’ve regressed on. Opportunities to tie into current events. It is heavy and depressing considering how little progress we’ve made
- ❑ Question: With all of the attention we’re putting into black history, K-12, is this something that is really different than other units people are launching? The Civil Rights unit – is this a fresh take on Civil Rights?
- ❑ We talk about a spiral in education; Kindergartner getting this information is different than a fifth grader is different than an 8<sup>th</sup>-grader. I think it’s never too much. Especially not in this age.
- ❑ What would it be like just reading Book 3? Question for student

- ❑ I don't think that they [books 1, 2, 3] all rely on each other because they cover different parts of the movement. I think you could take Book 2 as a stand-alone or Book 1. All different. Doesn't rely on its partners.
- ❑ Couple questions: if this is adopted, it would be taught across the MS. How comfortable will teachers be teaching with a graphic novel? The technique that goes into crafting a graphic novel? How comfortable would teachers be? Would they have to get training? [HS teacher] teaches visual storytelling at Gunn. He has a lot of background, though, which he also teaches. Students read texts for both content and technique. Does that change people's desire to have it as core?
- ❑ Jerry Craft and Robin Ha (*Almost American Girl*) – talk about teachers being reluctant to teach graphic novels because they don't know how to read them. Sounds like we have an expert in the district who could teach us. We can get the PD! Don't let us hold back because of that
- ❑ Just responding to the question about the same narrative over and over and whether this is something we should address and I think that while we do often hear about these events, none of the education we get in school goes into these events as deeply as *March* does. We learn a lot about lots of events in history. There's always more to learn
- ❑ Spiral of moving through each year – a few of us have mentioned that the history was a lot, we didn't know. I wonder if people have a sense of how it would land with 8<sup>th</sup> graders? What does lit adoption look like for the coming years?
- ❑ Would it [*March*] belong better in a history class?
- ❑ 8<sup>th</sup>-grade US History doesn't make it to the Civil Rights in SS. Stops around Industrial Revolution
- ❑ I see *March* as a supplemental text.
- ❑ So much historical content – that you would need to help kids with and the expectation to go into the genre would make it a really long unit. Makes me a little concerned. Also think supplemental.
- ❑ **Take the Mic – Bethany Morrow (editor)**
- ❑ Great supplemental. Can bring stories in at different points in time during a year. New stories. I wouldn't recommend it as core
- ❑ I agree with [teacher]. It would be fantastic to have a collection, but I would really like to have a strong collection. Some stories stronger than others. Some of the stories really made me stop and think. Love to have a class set

- ❑ Yeah, I personally would not recommend it for either supplemental or core because I didn't find any of the stories interesting or attention-grabbing. I can't speak for a lot of the characters. Can't speak for how accurately a lot of the stories were represented. I can speak for one – the LGBTQ story. The representation that was given in that short story was not the kind of representation that I would want. A lot of other issues that I had.
- ❑ I agree with [student]. I wouldn't recommend it for either core or supplemental because none of the stories were compelling. I really have to think very carefully to remember a story. One of my main jobs as a librarian is to book talk – with this book I wouldn't be able to. GSA advisor – that short story is not the one I would want kids to read. In *Pet* the character just gets to exist. Big difference between that book and the story in this collection. Not a single MS library purchased that book for the middle schools
- ❑ Don't want to overstate the point. I would really like to have an anthology or collection. The theme was very similar; characters going through the same thing – to the point where they blend together. Darcie Little Badger and traffic stop story – those stood out. Also not enough to consider in terms of English. I liked the Jason Reynolds' pieces, but I think they got lost in everything else. Had to stop and re-read pages. Struggled with this one. Wanted to like it. Wanted an anthology
- ❑ Similar reaction – I liked the poems and a couple stories. We really need some contemporary stories. For supplemental some selections that would work, but not as core
- ❑ For people who are thinking of keeping it as supplemental, I was struck by the texting conversation [one of stories]. Would this collection become dated quickly? Or would it last?
- ❑ One of the things I liked about it – good question but yeah, some of those things might feel dated. One story that already felt dated. Any time technology is featured there's probably a risk of getting dated. I liked the texting story.
- ❑ Student: From my experience – the tech speak and acronyms – it was definitely clear it was an adult trying to replicate how kids speak? Not written by a kid!
- ❑ Vote on each candidate: Should this text stay in the running as a core lit contender?
- ❑ *Pet*: Core (11 votes); Sup'l (0 votes)
- ❑ *March*: Sup'l (6 votes); Core (5 votes)

	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Take the Mic: Not sup'l or core (8 votes); Sup'l (4 votes)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Wrap up: Which books are still in the running? Who else will read them by 3/31?
6. Small Groups: Identify Titles to Read for 3/31	<input type="checkbox"/> Decide which Fishbowl book(s) to read next <input type="checkbox"/> Debrief any new book you/your group read for today <input type="checkbox"/> Look at your group's book lists and pick a new book(s) to read and vet <input type="checkbox"/> Debrief decisions with the whole group <input type="checkbox"/> <i>See To Do's in separate email!</i>
7. Tidy Up the Supplemental Menu <i>Tabled for next time!</i> <i>Did not get to this.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Starred titles <input type="checkbox"/> Pink titles <input type="checkbox"/> Orange titles: Decide whether to keep or not <input type="checkbox"/> Social studies teachers & the supplemental menu
8. Thank you and good-bye!	<input type="checkbox"/> For Wed., Mar. 31, 4:00-6:00: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read any Fishbowl Core Candidates that you signed up for</li> <li>○ Read &amp; vet any new book(s) your group selected</li> <li>○ Be ready to continue working on the supplemental menu</li> <li>○ Talk to department/course-alike team about your reading. Solicit their thoughts and tell them yours.</li> </ul>

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, March 31, 4:00-6:00; Virtual: <https://pausd.zoom.us/j/94766097557>