BEAUFORT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE CHECKLIST

Committee Number: 46 **Date** 4/5/23

Name of Novel Water for Elephants by Gruen, Sarah

Directions: After reading the selected novel, review the material using the below criteria. Note upon review of the book the following Beaufort County School District Non Discrimination will be taken into consideration:

Non-Discrimination. The BCSD affirms the right of all individuals to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm, and/or harassment. The BCSD is committed to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all students, parents/legal guardians, staff, visitors, applicants for admission and employment, personnel, and community members who participate or seek to participate in its educational programs or activities. Accordingly, the BCSD does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, sex, pregnancy, childbirth, or any related medical conditions, color, physical or mental disability, age (40 or older), ancestry, genetic information, national origin, or any other applicable status protected by Title VI, Title VII, Title IX or any other local, state, or federal law.

EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE	**Check all that apply**
The novel supports the BCSD's mission, vision, and goals.	✓
The novel directly supports the acquisition of related standards. (Educational Significance)	✓
The novel contributes to improved academic achievement for a variety of learners and learning styles.	✓
The novel promotes the integration of higher-level thinking skills.	✓
The novel reflects the needs/interests of the school and the culture of the school community.	✓
The novel/material adds value to the library/school collection	✓
The novel reflects a clear, adequate, and broad presentation of the content.	✓

Evidence from the text or standards relating to EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Depression era
Info on elderly care
Early circus details
use of historical photos
historical fiction

QUALITY, CONTENT, MANNER OF PRESENTATION	Check all that apply
The novel is to be engaging and able to meet a variety of student needs. Meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation to include, but not limited to: i. No errors, validity, accuracy; ii. Objectivity; iii. Well written; and iv. Strong visual appeal.	✓
Ensure reputation and significance of author and producer.	✓
The novel/material contains a value/currency commensurate with cost.	✓
The novel/material has high artistic quality, and/or literary style.	✓
The novel/material avoids bias and adheres to standards of sensitivity relative to student race, sex, religion, culture, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status.	✓
Ensure that the novel/material contains clarity adequacy, and scope of test.	✓
The presentation of contents is organized in a manner that provides clarity and ease to the reader.	✓
The novel/material ensures a high degree of readability and/or comprehensibility.	✓

Evidence from the text relating to QUALITY:

Well written and easy to follow
Good details and descriptions of scenes, animals, and characters.

Thought provoking on:
mental illness & animal abuse
and domestic violence

Not linear plot

AVOIDANCE OF PERVASIVE VULGARITY	Check all that apply
When considered as a whole, the novel does not appeal to sexual interest in a shameful way.	✓
The novel does not depict or describe sexual conduct in a clearly offensive way.	✓
The novel abides by prevailing standards in the adult community in regard to suitable material for minors.	✓
The novel is free from graphic depictions of sexual activity.	
Evidence from the text relating to PERVASIVE VULGARITY: Some foul language Sex scenes, but nothing un-natural or purposefully vulgar. Real life situations.	

APPROPRIATENESS	K-5	6-8	9-12
The novel is appropriate to the age and grade level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the maturity level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the content area.			✓
The novel/material reflects the contemporary community standards.			✓
Evidence from the text relating to APPROPRIATENESS: Appropriate for high school students.			

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EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE	Check all that apply
The novel supports the BCSD's mission, vision, and goals.	√
The novel directly supports the acquisition of related standards. (Educational Significance)	√
The novel contributes to improved academic achievement for a variety of learners and learning styles.	√
The novel promotes the integration of higher-level thinking skills.	√
The novel reflects the needs/interests of the school and the culture of the school community.	√
The novel/material adds value to the library/school collection	√
The novel reflects a clear, adequate, and broad presentation of the content.	√

Evidence from the text or standards relating to EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The use of primary sources (historical photos of actual circuses) interspersed throughout the book present an especially compelling argument to the book supporting BCSD's academic standards for ELA.

QUALITY, CONTENT, MANNER OF PRESENTATION	Check all that apply
The novel is to be engaging and able to meet a variety of student needs. Meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation to include, but not limited to: i. No errors, validity, accuracy; ii. Objectivity; iii. Well written; and iv. Strong visual appeal.	✓
Ensure reputation and significance of author and producer.	✓
The novel/material contains a value/currency commensurate with cost.	✓
The novel/material has high artistic quality, and/or literary style.	✓
The novel/material avoids bias and adheres to standards of sensitivity relative to student race, sex, religion, culture, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status.	✓
Ensure that the novel/material contains clarity adequacy, and scope of test.	✓
The presentation of contents is organized in a manner that provides clarity and ease to the reader.	✓
The novel/material ensures a high degree of readability and/or comprehensibility.	✓

Evidence from the text relating to QUALITY:

Sara Gruen is a well known, best selling author. While some reviews took issue with the happy ending feeling predictable, all praised her rich use of language to bring to life the daily activities of the Circus as well as her thought provoking exploration of tough issues such as mental illness and abuse.

2009 Award winner of Outstanding Books for the College Bound + Lifelong Learners. (aka- high school students)

AVOIDANCE OF PERVASIVE VULGARITY	Check all that apply
When considered as a whole, the novel does not appeal to sexual interest in a shameful way.	✓
The novel does not depict or describe sexual conduct in a clearly offensive way.	✓
The novel abides by prevailing standards in the adult community in regard to suitable material for minors.	✓
The novel is free from graphic depictions of sexual activity.	

Evidence from the text relating to PERVASIVE VULGARITY:

Descriptions of sexual activity constitute only a slight portion of the novel and do not meet the legal definition of obsenity.

APPROPRIATENESS	K-5	6-8	9-12
The novel is appropriate to the age and grade level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the maturity level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the content area.			✓
The novel/material reflects the contemporary community standards.			✓

Evidence from the text relating to APPROPRIATENESS:

This book is a well written, thought provoking story of literary merit that is more than appropriate for high school or even mature middle school students.

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EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE	Check all that apply
The novel supports the BCSD's mission, vision, and goals.	✓
The novel directly supports the acquisition of related standards. (Educational Significance)	✓
The novel contributes to improved academic achievement for a variety of learners and learning styles.	✓
The novel promotes the integration of higher-level thinking skills.	✓
The novel reflects the needs/interests of the school and the culture of the school community.	✓
The novel/material adds value to the library/school collection	✓
The novel reflects a clear, adequate, and broad presentation of the content.	✓

Evidence from the text or standards relating to EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

PROVIDES A DETAILED LOOK AT A DEPRESSION-ERA CIRCUS & TRAINS, TOWNS, MEALS, COLLAPSING ECONOMY (& FAILING CIRCUSES) AND THE TIERED SYSTEM OF PRIVILEGE WITHIN THE CIRCUS. THE DUAL SETTINGS (THE LOVE STORY, THE OLD MAN ALONE) ALTERNATE IN A WAY THAT PROVIDES A STYLISH PERSPECTIVE ON A MAN'S LIFE, AND A PEEK INTO AGING RARELY OFFERED IN BOOKS THAT APPEAL TO YOUNGER READERS. AN HONEST LOOK AT WHY CIRCUS ATTRACTS! THE FREAKS, EXOTIC/MISTREATED ANIMALS, THE COOCH TENT, THE RISKY PERFORMERS' ACTS. PHOTOGRAPHS EXCELLENT!

QUALITY, CONTENT, MANNER OF PRESENTATION	Check all that apply
The novel is to be engaging and able to meet a variety of student needs. Meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation to include, but not limited to: i. No errors, validity, accuracy; ii. Objectivity; iii. Well written; and iv. Strong visual appeal.	✓
Ensure reputation and significance of author and producer.	✓
The novel/material contains a value/currency commensurate with cost.	✓
The novel/material has high artistic quality, and/or literary style.	✓
The novel/material avoids bias and adheres to standards of sensitivity relative to student race, sex, religion, culture, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status.	✓
Ensure that the novel/material contains clarity adequacy, and scope of test.	✓
The presentation of contents is organized in a manner that provides clarity and ease to the reader.	✓
The novel/material ensures a high degree of readability and/or comprehensibility.	✓

Evidence from the text relating to QUALITY:

THE BRAIDED STORY IS BOTH SKILLFULLY EXECUTED AND CHALLENGES PERSPECTIVES. IN ONE WAY THIS IS QUITE SIMPLY A LOVE STORY: THE ROCKY EARLY ROMANCE THAT LEADS TO A LONG, MONOGAMOUS MARRIAGE AND 5 CHILDREN; THE AMAZING ELEPHANT THAT SAVES AND TAKES A LIFE — AND UNDERSTANDS POLISH; THE PATCHWORK OF FRIENDS, ESP. WALTER AND CAMEL, AND A CODE THAT CREATES ALLIES AND NEMESES. THAT SECRET HE KEEPS — WE ASSUME IT'S MARIENA BUT SHE IS PURE. ROSIE EXTRACTS JUSTICE, AND AUGUST (IRONY IN THAT NAME) DESPITE MENTAL ILLNESS CAN ONLY BE SEEN AS PURE EVIL, THE CHARMING DEVIL.

AVOIDANCE OF PERVASIVE VULGARITY	Check all that apply
When considered as a whole, the novel does not appeal to sexual interest in a shameful way.	✓
The novel does not depict or describe sexual conduct in a clearly offensive way.	✓
The novel abides by prevailing standards in the adult community in regard to suitable material for minors.	✓
The novel is free from graphic depictions of sexual activity.	✓

Evidence from the text relating to PERVASIVE VULGARITY:

THE COOCH TENT SCENES ARE NECESSARY FOR SEVERAL REASONS; THIS WAS A BIG REASON (ALONG W/ FREAK SHOWS) CIRCUSES CREATED A BUZZ WHEN THEY ARRIVED. THE DESCRIPTIONS ILLUMINATE WHAT WENTON— WITHOUT THESE THE BURLESQUE REMAINS A MYSTERY. IT REVEALS WITH JACOB'S REACTIONS/THOUGHTS THAT HE IS NOT PROMISCUOUS AND SEES THE SCENE AS DEMEANING TO WOMEN. IT'S DEPRESSING, NOT CELEBRATED.

THE ATTRACTION TO MARLENA IS HEALTHY, NORMAL, CONSENSUAL, NOT DESCRIBED IN ANY EXTENSIVE/PRURIENT WAY AND OUT OF REQUITED LOVE.

APPROPRIATENESS * CANNOT FIND WHAT ITS CURRENT PLACEMENT WAS, BUT SUGGEST RESTRICT TO HIGH SCHOOL SHELVES *	K-5	6-8	9-12
The novel is appropriate to the age and grade level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the maturity level of students.			✓
The novel is appropriate to the content area.			✓
The novel/material reflects the contemporary community standards.			✓

Evidence from the text relating to APPROPRIATENESS:

ALTHOUGH THE ADVANCED READER COULD UNDERSTAND THIS BOOK IN LATE ELEMENTARY, SOME ASPECTS PUT THIS WHERE IT'S FOR MORE MATURE READERS:

1. THE ANIMAL ABUSE, ESPECIALLY AUGUST BEATING ROSIE, WARRANTS CAUTION
2. THE COOCH TENT ~~[illegible]~~ SHOW DESCRIPTION WARRANTS AN AGE LIMIT
3. THE RED LIGHTINGS, MURDER OF AUGUST, DISCOVERY OF AL'S BODY, WIFE ABUSE, FIGHTS — A BIT MORE VIOLENCE THAN UNDER 12S NEED TO EXPERIENCE.