

MINUTES OF THE SECONDARY NOVEL COMMITTEE
SCOTTSDALE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 48
Mohave District Annex, 8500 E. Jackrabbit Rd., Scottsdale, AZ 85250
February 16, 2023 5:00-7:00 PM

Attendance:

Present: Michael Bengert, Karina Bohn, Harry Towner, Traci Avalos, Doreen Thomas, Michael Wierzbicki, Nick Noonan, Barrie Muzbeck Pinto, Whitney Jennings, Brandi Brumfield, Becky Antioco, Stuart Rhoden, Jessica Winget, Tammy Holmberg, Chad Johnson, Sara Johnson, Jonna Wallis, Diane Murphy, Jill Scott, Shawn Crosier

Absent: Theresa Byro, Pat Shaler, Olivia Woods, Dan Milligan, John Andrews, Kim Dodds Keran, Gail Oper

Information/Discussion and Possible Action:

1. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes – January 5, 2022 – Action:

Motion by: Tammy

Seconded by: Stuart

Vote Count: Unanimous

[Comments: Do we want names included in Novel minutes: Removed: 7 Stay: 2](#)

[Decision: remove names.](#)

2. Introductions:

What's for Dinner? If you could have an endless supply of any food, what would you get?

Group members shared out their responses using a “whip around” protocol.

3. Review purpose & norms - Information

4. Schedule of upcoming whole-group meetings - Information: 5-7 PM at the MDA Room A/B
March 23, 2023
April 27, 2023

5. Small Group Novel Presentations and Recommendations – Information/Action:

Grade 7: *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793* by Jim Murphy

[Comments: Would pair well with *Fever 1793*.](#)

[No concerns voiced](#)

Grade 7: *The Other Side of the Sky: A Memoir* by Farah Ahmed (with Tamim Ansary)
[Comments: Question/Opinion: Are *I am Malala*, *Zlata's Diary* available to read in SUSD? In comparison both have great literary merit.](#)

[No concerns voiced](#)

Grade 8: *The War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells
[Comments: No comments](#)

Grades 10-12 Holocaust/Genocide Class: *A Holocaust Memoir of Love & Resilience: Mama's Survival from Lithuania to America* by Etti Zilber

[Comments: Confirmation that this book is appropriate for the specific class it is being used in.](#)

AP Language & Composition: *Thank You for Arguing* by Jay Heinrichs

Comments: Summarized: Group is divided. Not objective, inappropriate sections vs the potential usefulness when used appropriately in the intended class.

Is the book problematic because it is recent vs older politically charged books? Isn't this what critical thinking is for?

May be appropriate for use many years from now. Isn't appropriate for today's climate.

Book isn't objective. Too much judgment and charged narrative regarding rhetoric

If there is a book written with a different point of view, would it be appropriate to recommend?

If it is on approved list, teacher can choose it for anything other than just summer read. A student would not have any guidance if it was used as a summer read.

Why not leave it up to the teachers to choose?

What is the sexual innuendo that is most offensive? It's words said by the President.

Too many red flags to use, maybe look for an earlier edition that doesn't include trigger points.

If this book is specific to AP language and composition, it could be useful for students' discussion of real current events.

Grade 10: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs

Comments: No comments

Grades 12: *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* by Mark Twain

Comments: No Comments

6. Round 5 book assignments and small group meetings – Information:

Grade 9: *Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin

Grade 10: *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas

Grade 10: *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville

Grade 11: *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett

Grade 11: *Heart of Darkness and the Secret Sharer* by Joseph Conrad

Grade 11: *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane

Grade 12: *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes

6. Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 6:10 PM

Dated this 16th day of February 2023