

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Lesia Stolpe
School: OLMS
Book Title: *The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl*
Genre: Fiction
Author: Stacy McAnulty
Publisher: Random House Books for Young Readers

Book Summary and Summary Citation:

A lightning strike gave her a super power...but even a super genius can't solve the problem of middle school. This smart and funny novel is perfect for fans of *The Fourteenth Goldfish*, *Rain Reign*, and *Counting by Sevens*.

Lucy Callahan was struck by lightning. She doesn't remember it, but it changed her life forever. The zap gave her genius-level math skills, and ever since, Lucy has been homeschooled. Now, at 12 years old, she's technically ready for college. She just has to pass 1 more test--middle school!

Lucy's grandma insists: Go to middle school for 1 year. Make 1 friend. Join 1 activity. And read 1 book (that's not a math textbook!). Lucy's not sure what a girl who does calculus homework for fun can possibly learn in 7th grade. She has everything she needs at home, where nobody can make fun of her rigid routines or her superpowered brain. The equation of Lucy's life has already been solved. Unless there's been a miscalculation?

A celebration of friendship, Stacy McAnulty's smart and thoughtful middle-grade debut reminds us all to get out of our comfort zones and embrace what makes us different.

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

RL.6.4, RL.6.5

The students will be listening to this book in their 6th grade Math class over the first quarter of school. The goal is for students to get into the mind of an extremely gifted math student who also struggles in other areas of getting along with others. It brings up some interesting math concepts for the students to enjoy at the same time understand some middle school interpersonal relations.

Specific District and Common Core Standards include (please include a link to the ELA Standards document and list the specific standards):

Include two professional reviews of this title: (links to the reviews are fine; Common Sense Media should be used, if available)

From School Library Journal

Gr 4–6—McAnulty (Brave) makes a big splash with this standalone novel. Twelve-year-old Lucy, a.k.a. Lightning Girl, has been homeschooled by her grandmother since she was eight; she's been a math genius ever since she was hit by lightning and survived. She also lives with OCD and has rituals that revolve around the number three. If she does not perform them, the numbers of Pi string

out in her brain. "It's like getting a song stuck in your head... Incredibly annoying but beautiful." Since she can recite the numbers to the 314th decimal place, seeing them prevents her from concentrating on anything else. She mastered calculus and now wants to take college classes. Nana wants her to go to middle school for a year, make a new friend, try one new activity, and read a book that isn't about math—a tall order for the genius. Lucy is a unique and endearing character who readers will not soon forget. The school, social situations, and dialogue are spot on. Lucy's voice is distinct, and her intelligence and wry humor shine. Her love of math will be contagious even for math-phobes. Other characters, such as Nana, Uncle Paul, Windy, and Levi, are equally well drawn. Readers should be prepared to weep at a gut-punching turn of events near the end but will close the book with a satisfied sigh and a Lucy-sized place in their heart. VERDICT Prepare to fall in love. This outstanding story sensitively portrays a neuro-diverse main character and is not to be missed.—Brenda Kahn, Tenakill Middle School, Closter, NJ

From Kirkus Reviews:

1math genius + 1 year of middle school = problems even the most gifted mind can't anticipate. Four years ago, 12-year-old Lucy Callahan was struck by lightning. The strike left her with brain damage, resulting in acquired savant syndrome and a "supercomputer brain." Lucy can solve any equation, recall every number she's ever heard or seen, and recite pi to the 314th decimal place (she doesn't allow herself to go beyond that). Lucy has finished school online and is ready for college, but her grandmother has a few conditions for Lucy to meet before she'll allow her to move on to higher education. (Nana is her guardian, her mother being dead and her father having split.) The reclusive Lucy has to develop her "soft skills": She has to attend middle school for 1 year, make 1 friend, and join 1 activity. Math is comfortably predictable; every problem has an answer if you know how to find it. But Lucy quickly realizes no formula can calculate the perils and pitfalls of public school. The multidimensional, highly likable Lucy's first-person narration is direct and unrestrained. In her first novel for middle graders, McAnulty (*Max Explains Everything*, 2018, etc.) eschews stylistic convention: All numbers are represented as numerals to allow readers to see the world the way Lucy does. Unique and utterly satisfying. (author's note) (*Fiction. 8-13*)

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements? (alternates should be previously reviewed texts or a new text needs a new review form)

Starfish

Document any potentially controversial content (clear, descriptive, accurate, and examples of a page number or two):

Parents need to know that *The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl* is about a home-schooled math whiz with obsessive compulsive disorder trying to get by in

middle school. Written by Stacy McAnulty (*Goldie Blox Rules the School!*), the story celebrates the way Lucy's love for math shapes the way she views the world. Her OCD is portrayed as a quirk she chooses to accommodate, with just a brief mention of it as a treatable condition. Middle school drama includes mean girls and a shortsighted teacher. One child has two moms, another feels like a misfit in her family, and another is pressured by her mom about her body image. Lucy's grandma and uncle are her closest family since her mom died of cancer and her father abandoned the family. Lucy tries to save a terminally ill dog from being put down. -Common Sense Media

Page 41: "That's Levi Boyd. He has two moms. That's his good trait, I've met his moms."

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

X Gifted/Accelerated X Regular X At-Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): (indicate the grade band or the grade level): 6-8

Reading Level of this Title (lexile level) 530

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: [Signature] Date: 5/7/24

Department Head: [Signature] Date: 5/8/24

Building Administrator: [Signature] Date: 5/8/24

Curriculum Supervisor: [Signature] Date: 5/8/24

