OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s): OSMS

Classes/Grade Level(s): 6th Grade

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: The Fastest Boy in the World by Elizabeth Laird

Genre: realistic fiction

Lexile Reading Level: 7-9 years (lexile unavailable)

Total number of pages: 192

Book Summary	**Potentially Objectionable Content** (list all categories and at least one example, referenced with a page or chapter number)
From award-winning and beloved children's author Elizabeth Laird comes a stunning edition of The Fastest Boy in the World, with a cover illustration by Zeamanuel Abera. This must-read book is a modern classic, and was shortlisted for the CLPE Carnegie Medal. Eleven-year-old Solomon loves to run; he dreams that one day he will be a gold-medal-winning athlete, in spite of his ragged shorts and bare feet. When his grandfather announces that he's going to take Solomon to Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, Solomon cannot believe his ears. And he is even more excited to hear that the Ethiopian running team will be doing a victory parade through the city that day! But then Soloman's grandfather collapses – and Solomon knows that getting help from his village is up to him. It's a twenty-mile run from the city to home, and his grandfather's life hangs in the balance. Can the small, bare-footed runner with the big heart make the journey?	**Violence** Pg 54 Mentions the revolution in Ethiopia and how thousands of people had been murdered- no details given. Pg 56 Main character finds out that as a young man his grandfather was jailed during the revolution and was beaten in prison- no details given.

Book Reviews (1-2 link(s)) *Note: teacher is not responsible for broken links*

Just Imagine Book Reviews:

The Fastest Boy in the World is possibly set in 2000 after the Sydney Olympics, indicated by the details provided about the athletes and a note by the author at the end of the novel. It is

told from Solomon's perspective and includes an italicised prologue and epilogue that shows the main story is a flashback to his younger years and Solomon is now an adult living his dream of becoming a world class athlete. The story includes reference to demanding themes throughout, such as political change, war, death, imprisonment and torture. There are also more general themes, such as family, friendship and the power of celebrity to inspire. There are some illustrations throughout the text that highlight key moments or help the reader to understand the changing geography described. At the end of the story there is a page of suggested activities for follow up work. While the narrative is clear and easy to follow, due to the challenging themes this is a book best suited for mature independent readers aged 9-11. It would work as a class novel if handled sensitively, or as a guided reading text to enable deeper analysis. It would also work as a catalyst to explore one of the many themes, issues or historical contexts described.

ABOUT THE CLASS

Rationale for the Literature Selection (in addition to standards):
This book is being used in 6th grade ELA as part of a cross-content ELA and social studies project on the 5 themes of geography, culture, and modern countries in the Eastern Hemisphere. Students will read the novel, and then research the country featured in the novel in preparation for sharing what they've learned with the class. They will research the elements of the country's culture and then they will evaluate the presentation of that culture in the novel they read.

This book has been selected because of its setting and genre. First, it is set in a modern day country in the Eastern Hemisphere, and second, it is a realistic fiction novel that allows students to learn about a culture by reading a story set in that culture. In addition to the culture of the country, students will be asked to describe the 5 themes of geography in relation to that specific country, and to evaluate whether the book's author accurately and fully portrayed the culture.

The Ohio Department of Education ELA Standards (list priority standards *only and* abbreviations of the main ideas of the priority standards) Link to Ohio's ELA Standards

- RL.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.6.2 Analyze literary text development. B. Incorporate a theme and story details into an objective summary of the text.
- RL.6.3 Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

ALTERNATIVE TEXTS

What alternative texts would allow students to meet the same objectives?

1. Middle School: Escape to Australia by James Patterson
2. Rickshaw Girl by Mitali Perkins

SIGNATURES (embedded jpegs of authentic signatures are fine OR download/print form and obtain traditional signatures)

Teacher: A M Hall Date: 9/3/25
Department Chair: Valerie Biagiarini Date: 9.2.25
Building Principal: S Tarff Date: 9.11.25
District Curriculum Administrator: Dave Ford Date: 10-1-25