OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s): OSMS

Classes/Grade Level(s): 6th Grade

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: The Goldfish Boy by Lisa Thompson

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Lexile Reading Level: 750

Total number of pages: 320

Book Summary

Lisa Thompson's debut novel is a page-turning mystery with an emotionally-driven, complex character study at its core -- like *Rear Window* meets *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Matthew Corbin suffers from severe obsessive-compulsive disorder. He hasn't been to school in weeks. His hands are cracked and bleeding from cleaning. He refuses to leave his bedroom. To pass the time, he observes his neighbors from his bedroom window, making mundane notes about their habits as they bustle about the cul-de-sac. When a toddler staying next door goes missing, it becomes apparent that Matthew was the last person to see him alive. Suddenly, Matthew finds himself at the center of a high-stakes mystery, and every one of his neighbors is a suspect. Matthew is the key to figuring out what happened and potentially saving a child's life... but is he able to do so if it means exposing his own secrets, and stepping out from the safety of his home?

Potentially Objectionable Content (list all categories and at least one example, referenced with a page or chapter number)

Language

- "Damn it" Ch 22
- During his therapy appointment the main character thinks to himself that he wants "to get the hell out of there" Ch 14

Trauma

- Lots of memories, trauma, and guilt around the death five years ago of Matthew's baby brother, who did not survive long enough to come home from the hospital (exact circumstances are never explained) Ch 1, 4

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

From Kirkus Reviews:

Matthew is the Jimmy Stewart of this Rear Window for middle graders. Behind the safety of his bedroom window, 12-year-old Matthew Corbin watches the world go by. Unable to go to school consistently or play with friends like other children his age because of a crippling fear of germs, Matthew observes life from behind the safety of glass windowpanes. Neighbors come and go

about their business. Children play. And one day, a posh black car delivers a young girl and her baby brother to their grandfather, and neither Matthew nor his cul-de-sac in a largely white London suburb will ever be the same. When 15-month-old Teddy disappears, Matthew, with the unexpected help of a quirky, cemetery-obsessed neighbor, vows to solve the mystery of his disappearance. Matthew's struggles with OCD and guilt over the death of his own baby brother are heartbreakingly real, yet somehow, even in Matthew's most difficult moments, the novel never loses its sense of hope. Hope that Teddy will be found. And hope that Matthew will fight his demons and reclaim his life. A secondary cast of characters, including Matthew's parents and Melody Bird, his sassy, self-appointed investigative partner, helps to make this possible. Thompson strikes the perfect balance, seemingly without compromise, between an issue-driven novel and one with broad, commercial appeal.
This empathetic debut is a middle-grade whodunit with a very special heart. (Mystery. 8-12)

ABOUT THE CLASS

Rationale for the Literature Selection (in addition to standards): (To be completed by the teacher or team)
This book is being used in 6th grade ELA as part of an ELA reading and research project on neurodiversity. Students will read the novel, and then research the condition the main character has in preparation for sharing what they've learned with the class. They will research the specific element of neurodiversity and then they will create a presentation to educate their classmates.

This book has been selected because of its plot and character perspective. It provides a unique perspective of a neurodiverse individual, which allows students to build empathy towards that character. In addition to adopting a new perspective, the book provides a springboard for researching more about the character's struggles through research.

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. The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle by Leslie Connor
2. Rain Reign by Ann M. Martin

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

Teacher: _____ Date: 10/6/25

Department Chair: Valerie Biagram Date: 10.6.25

Building Principal: _____ Date: 10.6.25

District Curriculum Administrator: Lorie Ford Date: 10-25-25