OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s): Middle School
Classes/Grade Level(s): ELA

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: Don't Call Me Hero by Ray Villareal
Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction / Middle Grade YA
Lexile Reading Level: 670L
Total number of pages: 201 (approx.)

Book Summary (abbreviated, bulleted list or link to a book summary)	**Potentially Objectionable Content (list all categories and at least one example, referenced with a page or chapter number)**
• Rawly Sánchez is a young Mexican-American teenager whose family restaurant is struggling, his older brother is in prison and school is tough. • One day Rawly rescues a famous model from a flooded creek; the incident is recorded and he becomes a local hero overnight. • Suddenly everyone wants to know him, his old-life shifts: friends, popularity, pressure converge. He must decide who his real friends are and what heroism really means. • Themes include fame vs. authenticity, friendship, family responsibility, heroism, identity, and the Latino	• **Violence / Danger**: Rawly rescues a woman from a dangerous flood/creek situation (Chapter ?) – introduces danger and injury scenario. • **Family incarceration / prison**: Rawly's older brother is in prison – may provoke discussion of crime and consequences. • **Teen popularity pressure / social conflict**: Rawly dealing with peer pressure, popularity, changing relationships. (general) • **Mild language / social themes**: While not overtly mature, the book addresses real adolescent issues which may require guidance.

American experience.	

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

"After saving the life of a famous model, a 14-year-old Mexican-American boy learns the pressures of popularity and the definition of true heroism. The third-person narration follows Rawley's journey as he learns who his real friends are and the difference between comic-book and real-world heroes. A good story with some unexpected twists."—Kirkus Review

"This is a welcome addition for libraries short on books about Latino males."—School Library Journal

"A story of coping with the pressures of sudden fame and finding one's own peace, Don't Call Me Hero is a fine and much recommended read."—The Midwest Book Review

ABOUT THE CLASS

Rationale for the Literature Selection (in addition to standards): (To be completed by the teacher or team)

This novel is well-suited for middle school readers as it features a relatable protagonist navigating everyday problems (family responsibility, school struggles, peer relationships) alongside an extraordinary event. The story's focus on Latino heritage and authenticity offers representation and discussion opportunities about identity and culture. Its engaging pace and accessible language make it ideal for reluctant or striving readers while offering depth for literary exploration—analyzing character development, theme (what makes a hero?), and social issues. The book supports initiatives in social emotional learning (SEL), diversity and inclusion, and encourages critical thinking about fame, media influence, and true friendship.

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

1. **RL.7.2** – Determine theme and analyze its development over the text.

2. **RL.7.3** – Analyze how characters develop and interact to advance the plot/theme.

3. **RL.7.4** – Determine meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text (including figurative and connotative meanings).

4. **SL.7.1** – Engage effectively in collaborative discussions about grade 7 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

ALTERNATIVE TEXTS

What alternative texts would allow students to meet the same objectives? (1-2 texts, title/author; Note: these texts must also have lit. reviews forms associated with their selection)

1. **Maniac Magee** by Jerry Spinelli
    a. Themes of racism, belonging, courage, kindness, community division
    b. Both stories explore moral courage and how young people can challenge community perceptions.
2. **Bridge to Terabithia** by Katherine Paterson
    a. Themes of friendship, loss, imagination, bravery
    b. Both feature young protagonists growing through emotional challenges and learning from adversity.
3. **Ghost** by Jason Reynolds
    a. Themes of perseverance, self-control, teamwork, identity
    b. Both focus on young boys finding positive outlets for self-discovery while facing personal and family challenges.

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

Teacher: Suzanne R Ny Date: 11.11.25

ELA Department Chair: _____ Date: _____

Building Principal: Eric B Gulley Date: 11/11/25

District Curriculum Administrator: Elaine Ford Date: 1/21/26