OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s)/Teacher: Olentangy Academy (Amanda McCleary)
Classes/Grade Level(s): ELA 9-12

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: *Project Hail Mary* by Andy Weir
Genre: Fiction
Lexile Reading Level: 1030L
Total number of pages: 476

Book Summary:	**Potentially Objectionable Content:**
Project Hail Mary by Andy Weir tells the story of Ryland Grace, a middle school science teacher who awakens alone on a spacecraft with no memory of who he is or why he is there. As his memories return, he realizes he has been sent on a mission to save Earth from a mysterious organism called *astrophage* that is draining energy from the sun and threatening all life. During his journey, he encounters another scientist who is also working to save his own planet; together, they collaborate through scientific reasoning and experimentation in order to solve the challenges they face. The book explores themes such as cooperation, sacrifice, curiosity, and the power of science.	**Profanity:** Occasional mild language (e.g., several instances of "damn" and one expression of "Holy f--ing s--t" on pg. 120), but no pervasive profanity; the main character doesn't swear and uses expressions such as "darn" and "shoot" instead. **Violence and/or abuse of any kind:** No graphic violence or abuse toward characters; some characters briefly discuss methods of suicide should their mission fail. **Descriptions of underage drinking alcohol, drugs, smoking, and/or vaping:** None. **Implicit and explicit sexual content and sexual innuendo:** References to sexual content are limited to a matter-of-fact discussion between two characters about their relationship and its impact on the mission. **Other topics that elicit psychological traumas or re-traumas:** Minimal; fear (of isolation, death, etc.) is present due to space travel and high-stakes mission, but handled in a scientifically-focused context. **Language or actions that reflect bias, stereotypes, and prejudice:** None.



Book Reviews *(Note: teacher is not responsible for broken links)*

From *Kirkus Reviews*:
Weir's latest is a page-turning interstellar thrill ride that follows a junior high school teacher–turned–reluctant astronaut at the center of a desperate mission to save humankind from a looming extinction event. Ryland Grace was a once-promising molecular biologist who wrote a controversial academic paper contesting the assumption that life requires liquid water. Now disgraced, he works as a junior high science teacher in San Francisco. His previous theories, however, make him the perfect researcher for a multinational task force that's trying to understand how and why the sun is suddenly dimming at an alarming rate. A barely detectable line of light that rises from the sun's north pole and curves toward Venus is inexplicably draining the star of power. According to scientists, an "instant ice age" is all but inevitable within a few decades. All the other stars in proximity to the sun seem to be suffering with the same affliction—except Tau Ceti. An unwilling last-minute replacement as part of a three-person mission heading to Tau Ceti in hopes of finding an answer, Ryland finds himself awakening from an induced coma on the spaceship with two dead crewmates and a spotty memory. With time running out for humankind, he discovers an alien spacecraft in the vicinity of his ship with a strange traveler on a similar quest. Although hard scientific speculation fuels the storyline, the real power lies in the many jaw-dropping plot twists, the relentless tension, and the extraordinary dynamic between Ryland and the alien (whom he nicknames Rocky because of its carapace of oxidized minerals and metallic alloy bones). Readers may find themselves consuming this emotionally intense and thematically profound novel in one stay-up-all-night-until-your-eyes-bleed sitting. An unforgettable story of survival and the power of friendship—nothing short of a science-fiction masterwork.

From *Common Sense Media*:
Parents need to know that *Project Hail Mary* by Andy Weir *(The Martian)* is a science fiction tale about one man's attempt to save humanity. Ryland Grace wakes up on a spaceship with no memory of how he got there, but his mission is clear: Find a way to save Earth at any cost. Graphic violence is limited, though there are plenty of tense moments. Accidents cause dire injuries while characters are in outer space. Minor characters die because of equipment malfunction a few times, but it's always "off-screen." Some characters briefly discuss methods of suicide should their mission fail, including asphyxiation, a heroin overdose, and using a gun. One character is forced to take part in the mission without their consent. Sex includes a matter-of-fact discussion between two characters about their sexual relationship and its impact on the mission. The main character wakes up naked in a medical bay on life support. Swearing is infrequent and includes a few instances of "f--k," "s--t," "damn," and "butt." "God" and hell" are used as exclamations. The main character doesn't swear, using expression such as "darn" and "shoot" instead.

ABOUT THE CLASS

Rationale for the Literature Selection (in addition to standards):

Project Hail Mary by Andy Weir is a relevant choice for a high school English class, especially in a STEM-focused environment. As the story unfolds, the protagonist (Ryland Grace) must rely on scientific reasoning, experimentation, and collaboration to solve complex problems. Weir's writing

style combines clear explanations of scientific concepts with an engaging narrative voice. The structure of the novel (i.e., alternating between present-day problem solving and flashbacks that reveal how the mission developed) encourages readers to piece together information and analyze how new and emerging knowledge shapes the protagonist's decisions. The relationship that develops between Ryland Grace and the alien scientist Rocky also provides opportunities to explore themes such as cooperation, communication across differences, problem-solving, and sacrifice. These elements make *Project Hail Mary* effective for classroom discussions about character development, ethical decision-making, and the role of collaboration in addressing global challenges.

The Ohio Department of Education ELA Standards:

- ☐ **RL.1:** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support textual analysis.
- ☐ **RL.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development.
- ☐ **RL.3:** Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- ☐ **RL.5:** Analyze how an author's choices concerning structure (e.g., flashbacks, pacing, and shifts in perspective) contribute to the overall meaning and impact of the text.
- ☐ **RL.6:** Analyze how point of view and narration influence how readers interpret events and characters.

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. *The Martian* (Andy Weir)
2. *Ender's Game* (Orson Scott Card)

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

Teacher: Amanda McCleary Date: 3·17·26

Building Principal: Lisa Nemeth Date: 3·17·26

District Curriculum Administrator: Elaine Ford Date: 3/22/26