OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s): High Schools
Classes/Grade Level(s): ELA

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: *We Beat the Street* / Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, Rameck Hunt, and Sharon M. Draper

Genre: Juvenile Non-Fiction (Memoir / Inspirational / Urban Social Issues)

Lexile Reading Level: 860L

Total number of pages: 194 pages

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)**
• A nonfiction, autobiographical account of three young men—Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, and Rameck Hunt—who grew up in Newark, New Jersey and eventually became doctors. • Chronicles their struggles with poverty, unstable family situations, peer pressure, and exposure to drugs, violence, and crime. • Highlights the powerful friendship among the three boys, who make a pact to support one another, stay in	**Violence / Crime Exposure:** • Includes accounts of neighborhood fights, gang presence, and dangerous encounters in their community (e.g., early chapters describing life in Newark). Reference to rape, though not explicitly described. **Drug Use / Substance Abuse:** • References to drug use in the community and temptations the boys face growing up; includes brief scenes



school, and pursue professional careers.

- Follows their lives from early childhood through high school, college, and medical school, showing the difficult decisions that shaped their futures.
- Written in short, personal chapters that alternate among the three authors' perspectives, with commentary and narrative shaping provided by Sharon Draper.
- Emphasizes themes of determination, mentorship, community support, and the transformative power of education.

involving drug dealers or drug-involved individuals.

Arrests / Juvenile Trouble:

- One of the authors recounts a situation involving getting into trouble with the law as a teen (mid-book chapters).

Family Instability / Abuse:

- Some descriptions of difficult home lives, including neglect, harsh discipline, or unsafe conditions.

Mild Language / Intense Emotional Themes:

- Occasional use of mild profanity or slang; also descriptions of fear, anger, grief, and frustration connected to poverty and discrimination.

Medical Content (Mild):

- References to injuries, hospital scenes, or medical training, though nothing graphic.

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

- **Kirkus Review:** "A powerful memoir of three young men who overcame great obstacles... an inspiring and often eye-opening read." https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/sharon-m-draper/we-beat-street/



- **Publishers Weekly Review:** "Motivating and accessible, this collaboration offers young readers strong role models for perseverance and academic achievement." https://www.publishersweekly.com/9780525474074

ABOUT THE CLASS

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

This book offers students an honest, relatable look at overcoming adversity through perseverance, education, and the power of supportive friendships. It encourages reflection on choices, goal-setting, resilience, and social pressures faced by many adolescents. Students gain insight into real-world consequences, the impact of community environments, and the possibilities of rising above difficult circumstances. The memoir format also supports instruction in narrative nonfiction and personal voice.

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

RI.9.1 – Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.9.2 – Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary that is distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RI.9.3 – Analyze how the author unfolds a series of ideas or events, including how they introduce and develop individuals, ideas, or events throughout the text.

W.9.7 – Conduct sustained research projects to answer a question or solve a problem, using multiple sources and demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.9.9 – Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

L.9.4 – Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases using context clues, word patterns, and reference materials.

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. Discovering Wes Moore — Wes Moore
   - Memoir written for young readers, just like We Beat the Street.
   - Focuses on choices, environment, mentorship, and personal responsibility.
   - Highlights how two boys with the same name ended up with drastically different life outcomes—mirroring the themes of overcoming obstacles and staying focused on goals.
   - Very accessible for middle and high school readers.
   - Thematic overlap: Real-life challenges, positive role models, education as a path to success, urban environment & social pressures, resilience and decision-making

2. *Bad Boy* — Walter Dean Myers

- Autobiographical account of Myers's childhood and teen years
- Shows how reading, writing, and education helped him overcome hardship in a challenging home and neighborhood
- Honest, relatable, and culturally relevant for middle and high school readers.
- **Thematic overlap: g**rowth through adversity, finding identity, value of persistence, importance of mentors and positive outlets

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

Teacher: Suzanne Ryan _____ Date: 11/25/25

ELA Department Chair: _____ Date: _____

Building Principal: Erin B Dudley Date: 11/25/25

District Curriculum Administrator: _____ Date: _____

Ebonie Ford 4-17-26