

Draft Meeting Minutes

October 12, 2021

Instructional Materials Committee

Facilitator: Fred Rundle, Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services • Secretary: Vanessa Adams, Learning Services

Present:

Jamey Balousek
Alyson Burks
Renee DeBock
Kimberly Griggs
Ryan Hsi
Kati McConn
Erica Ottesen
Sophie Prock
Mia Shi
Kelsey Sims
Beilan Wang
Alexandra Weil
Vivian Zhou

Absent:

Carly Adams
Lisa Bienstock
Mary Jo Budzius
Roxane Chan
Adil Chaudrey
Anna Fein
Joseph Gushanas
Tony Ive
Jill Kelly
Kim Thomas

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 PM. Fred welcomed participants to the first meeting of the year. The meeting was held via Zoom Video Conferencing. Fred noted that the IMC is comprised of parents and faculty from all schools, and high school student representatives. The committee reviews instructional materials that our educators feel would be an asset to the classroom. IMC helps ensure that we follow proper processes and procedures that are reflective of the values and commitments of our district. This year we added two more student representatives to the committee for a greater voice from students.

***The Poet X* – Novel**

MIHS Grade 9 English Language Arts, **Pilot Instructional**

Written by: Elizabeth Acevedo

Published by: HarperTeen/HarperCollins, 2018

Proposal submitted by: MIHS 9th Grade Teaching Staff: Curtis Johnston, Danielle King, Kati McConn, Susan Rindlaub, Leslie Seelye, Greg Smiley

Teacher Greg Smiley presented *The Poet X* for consideration as pilot material in Grade 9 English Language Arts. The protagonist of this young-adult novel, 15-year-old Xiomara, works through conflicts in her Harlem neighborhood by writing slam poetry. The entire book is in verse, every chapter is a short poem. Winner of the National Book Award for Young People's Literature, the book deals with current issues facing teenagers. It's a good story capturing subjects such as the generation gap, religion, and sexism. This book brings an author forward who is a person of color, helping to diversify our curriculum. It gives students the opportunity to examine modern poetry and can springboard students into slam poetry that they can do on their own.

Vote: Renee DeBock motioned to approve *The Poet X* as pilot instructional material for MIHS Grade 9 English Language Arts for the 2021-22 school year. Kati McConn seconded the motion. There were no abstentions. The motion passed.

**Mercer Island School District
Learning Services**

***The Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* – Graphic Memoir**

MIHS English Grade 12: Race, Identity, & Representation in Comparative Lit (RIR), **Pilot Instructional**

Written by: Alison Bechdel

Published by: Mariner Books, 2006

Proposal submitted by: MIHS English teachers: Anne Fillmore, Eric Goldhammer, Daniela Melgar, primary teacher of English 12: Race, Identity, and Representation (RIR) in Comparative Lit, Kati McConn, department co-chair, Jeff Randolph, Jane Stafford

Kati McConn presented *The Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*, a graphic memoir by Alison Bechdel for consideration as pilot material for a single Grade 12 elective English class, Race, Identity, & Representation in Comparative Lit (RIR). It portrays Bechdel's relationship with her closeted gay father, coming to terms with her own sexuality, and dealing with family tragedy and secrecy. Several parents on the IMC expressed doubts about its suitability, but IMC student reps voiced strong support for the book. They commented on its relevance, saying that students are seeing these issues on social media, etc., and in their lives. This novel will be taught in conjunction with the approved text *Persepolis* (Marjane Satrapi) in a graphic memoir unit. Fred asked that the English teachers provide feedback about how it goes at a January or March IMC meeting.

Vote: Sophie Prock motioned to approve *The Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* as pilot instructional material for MIHS English 12: Race, Identity, and Representation in Comparative Literature for the 2021-22 school year. Alex Weil seconded the motion. There were six yes votes, three no votes. Kati McConn abstained. The motion passed.

The Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir

MIHS English Grade 12 and Crest block, **Core Instructional**

Written by: Thi Bui

Published by: Abram ComicArts, 2017

Proposal submitted by: MIHS English teachers: Anne Fillmore, Eric Goldhammer, Daniela Melgar, primary teacher of English 12: Race, Identity, and Representation (RIR) in Comparative Lit, Kati McConn, department co-chair, Jeff Randolph, and Jane Stafford

Kati McConn presented *The Best We Could Do* for consideration as core instructional material. Told in a nonlinear fashion, this graphic memoir depicts the author's relationship with her parents, exploring their histories as Vietnamese citizens before and during the war and after becoming refugees in America. It deals with the author's experiences navigating her own identity and motherhood in the midst of generational family trauma. This novel will be taught in conjunction with the approved text *Persepolis* (Marjane Satrapi) in a graphic memoir unit for English 12 classes and the Crest Block. This will allow exploration of the increasingly popular graphic memoir as a genre. It will delve into a specific identity and bring representation to this group of people.

Vote: Kimberly Griggs motioned to approve *The Best We Could Do* as core instructional material for MIHS English 12 classes and the Crest Block. Mia Shi seconded the motion. Kati McConn abstained. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.