

Article X.A.10. Novels as Part of the Required Curriculum

Table of Contents

A. Novels Committees page 1

- 1. Novels Committee Charge
- 2. Teacher Charge
- 3. District Novels Committees
- 4. School Novels Committees
- 5. Selection and Training of School Committee Members

B. Review Process page 5

- 1. Submissions
- 2. District Specialist
- 3. Assignments
- 4. School Liaisons
- 5. Reviews
- 6. Reports

C. Initial Approval/Voting Process page 6

- 1. District Committee First Vote Parameters
- 2. Voting Results
- 3. Notwithstanding subsection C2

D. Red Flag Process page 8

- 1. GEA and PTA Addition
- 2. Expanded Committee
- 3. Discussion and Voting
- 4. Voting Results
- 5. Adopted Novels

E. Appeals Process..... page 9

- 1. General Provisions
- 2. The District Appeals Committee and Its Responsibilities
- 3. Appeals Procedure

F. Instructional Materials List (Approved Novels List)..... page 11

- 1. Disclosures
- 2. Changes
- 3. Annotations
- 4. Concerns
- 5. Objections
- 6. Required Participation

G. Additional Items page 12

- 1. Gifted and Honors
- 2. Differentiation
- 3. State Core/Common Core Appendices
- 4. Award Winning Novels
- 5. Adopting for All Content Areas
- 6. Network Teams
- 7. Text Complexity
- 8. *William and Mary* Materials

A. Novels Committees

1. Novels Committee Charge

Novels carry powerful and important life lessons and have significant literary import; therefore, novels are to be reviewed in accordance with this policy and thereafter adopted for general classroom use, adopted with annotations, or not adopted for classroom use. It is the intent of this policy to ensure that the use of all novels (to include both fiction and non-fiction works) in all areas of the curriculum be prior-adopted within the guidelines of this policy.

Reviewers are to consider the recommending teacher's goals and educational rationale, core educational standards, and community ideals as they make recommendations regarding the use or non-use of novels. The goal of review is to assist teachers in enabling students to meet the Mission of the District (to prepare every student with the knowledge and skills needed for lifelong success in a changing world) through the appropriate use of novels.

2. Teacher Charge

It is important to note that any lengthy work, fiction or non-fiction, used in whole group or small group (such as literary circles) **must** be from the Granite District Approved Novels List.

In addition to only using novels from the approved list, teachers must also use their best judgment (considering lexile levels, interest levels, State Core standards, individual community standards and student need) in choosing materials from the approved list for their classes.

3. District Novels Committees

District committees should meet at least quarterly. As new ways of meeting and reading (such as electronic devices and digital books) become available, they should be employed where appropriate and cost effective. Revisions in committee structure may occur as needed and with administrative approval to reflect changing structure within the Granite School District.

a. The District High School Novels Committee consists of:

- i. 8-9 teachers (liaisons - 1 per high school);
- ii. 2 District parent representatives; and
- iii. a District curriculum specialist.

b. The District Junior High School Novels Committee consists of:

- i. 16 teachers (liaisons - 1 per junior high school);
 - ii. 2 District parent representatives; and
 - iii. a District curriculum specialist.
- c. The District Elementary School Committee consists of:
- i. 8 teachers (liaisons - 1 per high school network when possible);
 - ii. 2 District parent representatives; and
 - iii. a District curriculum specialist.
- d. State Core Adaptations
- i. Novels are banded consistent with the Utah State Core.
- e. District committee tasks include:
- i. overseeing the review of novels which teachers request for use in the curriculum;
 - ii. determining whether requested novels are to be adopted and placed on the Instructional Materials List (Approved Novels List);
 - iii. determining whether listed novels require annotations, and if so, the particular annotations; and
 - iv. ensuring that
 - A. community standards and student needs and backgrounds are considered;
 - B. students have the chance to explore challenging novels representing a variety of literary genres; and
 - C. teachers are encouraged to search for new novels adding depth and vitality to the curriculum based on articulated goals and educational rationale.
- f. In order to take official action, at least 2/3 of the District committee members, including at least one parent, must be present.

4. School Novels Committees

- a. Each high, junior high, and elementary school has a School Novels Committee consisting of:
 - i. 2 teachers from the school (one may be the District liaison);
 - ii. 1 administrator from the school;
 - iii. 2 students from the school; and
 - iv. 2 parents with students in the school.
- b. School committee tasks include:
 - i. reviewing novels as assigned by the District committee;
 - ii. reading recommending teacher's goals and educational rationale regarding the novel; and
 - iii. responding to the District committee in writing.

5. Selection and Training of School Committee Members

- a. Selection Process
 - i. A sign-up opportunity for parents to serve as members will be offered through the school registration packets.
 - ii. District committee liaisons, principals and PTA representatives may also recommend names. At each site, the liaison, an administrator and a PTA member will select members, adding and deleting names annually as necessary.
 - iii. Student members will be selected by the liaison, representing the audience to whom the requesting teacher is directing the request.
 - iv. Teacher members will be selected from the English and other departments as the need for expertise in a particular discipline arises.
- b. Training Process
 - i. Training is overseen by the curriculum specialist and is required for reviewers.
 - ii. Training will be held for school committees at the beginning of each year.

- iii. Parent and student member training materials will be available for use at other times during the year in case a new member is chosen.

B. Review Process

1. Submissions

A teacher submits a written request to the District committee through the District curriculum specialist or a District committee liaison. The request:

- a. identifies a novel for classroom use;
- b. includes goals and educational rationale;
- c. indicates a recent reading with a student audience in mind; and
- d. may include a request to make an in-person presentation to the District committee at the time the novel is discussed.

2. District Specialist

If the requested novel has not been reviewed for classroom use in the last three years, the curriculum specialist provides copies of the novel for each person on two school committees, for the District committee parent members, and for the curriculum specialist.

3. Assignments

At the next District committee meeting for the requested school level (elementary, junior high, or high school)

- a. the requesting teacher's goals and educational rationale are read by the committee;
- b. the novel is assigned to two school committees for review; and
- c. copies of the novel and the teacher's written request are given to the liaisons of the two school committees.

4. School Liaisons

The two designated school liaison committee members distribute the novels and written requests to the school committee members, giving a date to submit written responses to the liaisons.

5. Reviews

Since reviews need to be as independent as possible, it is important that:

- a. members respond individually;
- b. the school of the recommending teacher not be one of the review schools; and
- c. parent members of the District committee seek varied perspectives if they have others read for them.

6. Reports

The two designated school liaison committee members report from the written responses to the District committee members and explain specific or strong reactions before District voting occurs. A vote is taken following discussion at a subsequent committee meeting.

C. Initial Approval/Voting Process

1. District Committee First Vote Parameters

- a. Voters
 - i. Each written response will count as one vote and each District committee member will have one vote, with the exception of the District committee members whose votes were represented through written responses and the curriculum specialist.
 - ii. In the event that neither teacher member from the school committee was the District committee liaison for that school, then that liaison must concede his or her own vote and allow both teacher member votes to count.
- b. Each vote is either “yes,” meaning the novel is adopted, or “no,” meaning the novel is not adopted.
- c. With all District committee members present and all written responses submitted, the high school District committee will have a total of 22/23 votes which include:
 - i. 10/11 teachers (8/9 school liaison teachers plus 1 additional teacher from the two selected schools);
 - ii. 2 administrators (1 from each of the two selected schools);

- iii. 4 students (two from each of the two selected schools); and
 - iv. 6 parents (2 parents from each school plus the 2 District committee parents).
 - d. With all District committee members present and all written responses submitted, the junior high school District committee will have a total of 30 votes.
 - i. 18 teachers (16 school liaison teachers plus 1 additional teacher from the two selected schools),
 - ii. 2 administrators (1 from each of the two selected schools),
 - iii. 4 students (two from each of the two selected schools), and
 - iv. 6 parents (2 parents from each school plus the 2 District committee parents)
- c. With all District committee members present and all written responses submitted, the elementary District committee will have a total of 22 votes which include
 - i. 10 teachers (8 school liaison teachers plus 1 additional teacher from the two selected schools),
 - ii. 2 administrators (1 from each of the two selected schools),
 - iii. 4 students (two from each of the two selected schools), and
 - iv. 6 parents (2 parents from each school plus the 2 District committee parents).

2. Voting Results

- a. If a novel receives 75% or higher “yes” votes, it is adopted for classroom use, with annotations as needed.
- b. If a novel receives between 70-74% “yes” votes, the District committee conducts further discussion and then takes another vote, according to the same procedures found above, or submits the novel to the Red Flag Process.
- c. If a novel receives between 50-69% “yes” votes, the novel is submitted to the Red Flag Process immediately.
- d. If a novel receives below 50% “yes” votes, it is not adopted for classroom use.

3. Notwithstanding subsection 2C above

- a. if two or more parent members on any committee have concerns with adopting the novel, it is automatically referred to the Red Flag Process;
- b. if an impasse in discussion occurs, the novel is automatically referred to the Red Flag Process;
- c. when two schools' evaluations are in conflict, the novel is automatically referred to the Red Flag Process.

D. Red Flag Process

1. GEA and PTA Addition

A GEA Office Representative and a member of the PTA Regional Board join the District committee for the Red Flag Process.

2. Expanded Committee

All members of the expanded District committee read the novel. The novel will not be presented for a vote until each of the additional members either attend the voting session or prepare a written response.

3. Discussion and Voting

- a. At the earliest possible subsequent District committee meeting any school committee member who is not on the District committee who has read the book and has strong opinions about the novel is invited to join the committee for discussion of the novel and whether it is an appropriate tool for the goals and educational rationale presented by the requesting teacher.
- b. After the discussion process is completed, a vote is taken following these guidelines:
 - i. each vote is either “yes,” meaning the novel is adopted, or “no,” meaning the novel is not adopted;
 - ii. each Red Flag committee member in attendance will have one vote; and
 - iii. each District committee member in attendance will have only one vote and is not bound by any previous vote.

4. Voting Results

- a. If a novel receives 75% or higher “yes” votes, it is adopted for classroom use, with annotations as needed.
- b. If a novel receives between 70-74% “yes” votes, it is adopted for classroom use, with strong warning annotations.
- c. If a novel receives below 70% “yes” votes, it is not adopted for classroom use.

5. Adopted Novels

Any adopted novel which went through the Red Flag Process is to be so identified in order for teachers to be aware of the depth of discussion received prior to approval.

E. Appeals Process

1. General Provisions

- a. When a parent has a concern about a novel which a teacher is using, the parent is encouraged to talk to the teacher to discuss concerns, goals, and educational rationale.
- b. If a parent is uncomfortable in approaching the teacher, the school’s District committee liaison or a PTA officer can serve as an intermediary to help the teacher and parent.
- c. A parent may contact the District curriculum specialist for general assistance, as well as information regarding the filing of appeals if the parent’s concerns are not resolved at the school.

2. The District Appeals Committee and Its Responsibilities

- a. The District appeals committee consists of
 - i. three parents selected by the PTA Regional Board,
 - ii. three teachers selected by the District curriculum specialist, and
 - iii. the District curriculum specialist.
- b. Selections should be made to represent diverse points of view.
- c. One parent and one teacher are rotated (one “prior” our and one “new” in) annually.

- d. The District Appeals Committee
 - i. meets at least twice a year or more frequently as determined by the District curriculum specialist;
 - ii. reviews parent or teacher requests to rescind a novel's prior adoption; and
 - iii. reviews teacher requests to adopt novels which were previously reviewed but not adopted.

3. Appeals Procedure

- a. Persons raising objections to adopted novels may submit a written objection to the District curriculum specialist. Persons making objections are expected to have read the entire novel.
- b. Teachers may submit a written request to the District curriculum specialist for reconsideration of a novel reviewed but not adopted or reconsideration of an adopted novel's annotations. Teachers must have read the entire novel recently with a student audience in mind.
- c. Objection and reconsideration requests are considered at semi-annual (or more frequent, as necessary) District appeals committee meetings.
- d. The District appeals committee members
 - i. each read the novel;
 - ii. consider the complete review process and objection history of appealed novels;
 - iii. consider the number of appeal requests, whether appeals have been conducted previously, etc., to decide whether reconsideration is merited;
 - iv. discuss all known issues; and
 - v. take a vote following these guidelines:
 - A. each vote is either "yes," meaning the requested action is adopted, or "no," meaning the requested action is not adopted;
 - B. if a requested action receives 75% or higher "yes" votes, that action is adopted; and

- C. if a requested action receives below 75% “yes” votes, that action is not adopted.
- e. In the event a teacher appeals to change a novel’s annotations at the same time another appeal requests a novel’s prior adoption be rescinded, the question of whether the novel’s adoption should be rescinded will be determined first.
- f. The District Appeals committee decisions may be revisited at the pleasure of the committee’s majority at any time, but may not otherwise come before the committee for three years after the initial committee decision.

F. Instructional Materials List (Approved Novels List)

Following review, adopted novels are placed on the Instructional Materials List (Approved Novels List) either for general use or for use as limited by annotations.

1. Disclosures

Teachers are encouraged to list novels which will be studied in the class on Disclosure Statements introduced at the beginning of the course and explain the goals and educational rationale to assist parents as follows:

- a. in understanding why particular titles have been selected; and
- b. in becoming partners with teachers in their student’s schooling.

2. Changes

If novels to be used are changed or added throughout the year, teachers are encouraged to notify parents of the change and explain their goals and educational rationale for teaching the novel, including an explanation of how it complements and enhances the required curriculum.

3. Annotations

Novels with limiting annotations require specific notification to parents prior to use in the classroom.

4. Concerns

Parents are encouraged to discuss concerns with the teacher or the school liaison.

5. Objections

By law, schools must respond to objections to materials or curriculum content in one of the following ways:

- a. waive the participation requirement; or
- b. provide a reasonable alternative to the requirement; or
- c. require participation as originally assigned

6. Required Participation

If participation in the original assignment is required, the school must articulate the compelling governmental interest in requiring the student to proceed with the original assignment.

G. Additional Items

1. Gifted and Honors

- a. 5th grade gifted and honors teachers may “reach up” to the 6th grade novels list, excluding any novels specifically approved for 6th grade advanced students only.
- b. 6th grade gifted and honors teachers may “reach up” to the 7th – 8th grade novels list, excluding any novels specifically approved for 7th grade advanced students or 8th grade only.
- c. 8th grade gifted and honors teachers may “reach up” to the 9th-10th grade novels list excluding any novels specifically approved for 9th grade advanced students or 10th grade only.
- d. 10th grade gifted and honors teachers may “reach up” to the 11th-12th grade novels list excluding any novels specifically approved for 11th grade advanced students or 12th grade only.
- e. Especially when “reaching up,” gifted and honors teachers must read the annotations carefully and use sound judgments with clear rationales and educational value as it relates to the Utah State Core Standards.

2. Differentiation

- a. Teachers may “reach down” to works approved for a lower grade level to help differentiate and scaffold material for students with lexile needs that are not on grade level.

3. State Core/Common Core Appendices

- a. Non-fiction as well as fiction novels used as exemplars have been

grandfathered in to the approved novels list for use at the suggested level.

- b. Approved works are listed in the approved materials (Approved Novels List).
- c. Short stories, poetry, and other materials found in the appendices are not a part of this process. Teachers must use reasonable judgment for their own class and community in using these materials. (Teachers should not assume that just because something is listed in the appendices that it is appropriate for use.)

4. Award Winning Novels

Beehive and Newbery Award winners and honorees are automatically approved for the Granite novels list since the books on these lists have already been screened through a rigorous review process and selected as best works of the year. All other award-winning novels, regardless of the award, must go through go through the District Novels Committee process for approval.

5. Adopting for All Content Areas

- a. Each content area will develop a committee modeled after the district design.
- b. The content specialist will chair and the ELA specialist will co-chair this committee.
- c. It is advised that at least one content area adoption take place each year.
- d. Each content area committee must determine criteria for appropriate materials within the content. Example: ELA looks for educational purpose and value, literary merit, and alignment to Utah State Core Standards.

6. Network Teams

- a. Networks and grade levels/departments must negotiate with one another both horizontally and vertically to determine placement of novels for schools.
- b. These determinations must be guided by the parameters set in the District Approved Novels List.

7. Text Complexity

- a. Text complexity in keeping with the Utah Core Standards should be understood and considered. Information about text complexity can be found at **<http://www.schools.utah.gov/CURR/langartsec/Language-Arts-Secondary-Home/LangArts-CE-web.aspx> on page 65.**

8. *William and Mary* Materials

- a. The suggested novels from the College of William and Mary materials are approved for use by honors and gifted classes only.
- b. These novels are listed separately and must only be used by the appropriate grade level. No “reaching up” or “reaching down.”