

CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
**BOARD REPORT**

To: Board of Trustees

From: Gregory Merwin, Associate Superintendent, Education and Support Services  
Prepared by: Cary Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction, Education and Support Services

Date: March 16, 2022

Board Item: Instructional Materials Recommended for Adoption: Secondary English-language arts and History Social Science Supplemental Novels, Grades 6-12

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### **HISTORY**

This is a new item. With the introduction of the Common Core State Standards in 2010, English elective courses (e.g., Science Fiction, British Literature, Bible Literature, Literature of the Sea) were discontinued. Grade level and Advanced Placement (AP) courses were primarily offered (e.g., English I-III, Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC), AP Language and Literature). At that time, the adopted core curriculum for the core English classes and the supplemental adopted novel list were not aligned with the Common Core State Standards. To address this, teacher committees were formed to create District curriculum alignment guides (CAGs), in order to provide standards-aligned resources for instruction.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

During the 2016-2017 school year, the District began the adoption process to identify materials to align to the current standards for English-language arts. A committee of teachers from the majority of District middle schools and high schools recommended Amplify and California Collections, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. During the same time period, an additional committee was formed to evaluate the novel literature offerings that were previously adopted to supplement the core curriculum. To begin the process of diversifying the titles, the 27 member committee surveyed all secondary English teachers in order to determine what titles were predominantly taught and also considered classic and contemporary literature from diverse authors for adoption. The committee put forth 32 novels and all were adopted by Trustees in April 2018. An additional 11 novels representing diverse authors and voices were adopted as one of the goals of the Cultural Proficiency Plan in 2020-2021.

### **CURRENT CONSIDERATIONS**

A committee of 27 secondary teachers is requesting the adoption of supplemental titles for secondary English-language arts and History Social Science, grades 6-12, to align with state standards and the Fair Accurate Inclusive and Respectful Education (FAIR) Act, Senate Bill 48. The list of proposed novels is included in the exhibit. The committee of 27 secondary teachers

evaluated the current core reading list and recommended the listed additional novels, and non-fiction texts for approval. Recommendations were then evaluated by the Instructional Materials Review Committee (IMRC). The materials were found to be in alignment with other disciplines and grade level reading standards. During discussion, the IMRC members proposed new grade level spans that were deemed more appropriate for *Everything Sad is Untrue*, *The Forgotten Fire*, and *Parable of the Sower*. All books were recommended by the IMRC by a majority vote during a public meeting on February 1, 2022, and they are therefore being recommended to the Board for adoption. The votes were:

| Title                           | Author            | Grade(s)      | Ayes | Noes | Absent |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|------|------|--------|
| <i>Everything Sad is Untrue</i> | Daniel Nayeri     | 7-12          | 9    | 1    | 4      |
| <i>The Forgotten Fire</i>       | Adam Bagdasarian  | 9-12          | 6    | 4    | 4      |
| <i>Other Words From Home</i>    | Jasmine Warga     | 6-8           | 10   | 0    | 4      |
| <i>Parable of the Sower</i>     | Octavia Butler    | 11-12         | 9    | 1    | 4      |
| <i>Poet X</i>                   | Elizabeth Acevedo | 8 Honors - 11 | 7    | 3    | 4      |

The recommended novels are supported by Board Policy 6161.1, *Selection and Evaluation of Instructional Materials*, which states that “instructional materials should present a broad spectrum of knowledge and viewpoints, reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of our society,” and the Board approved Cultural Proficiency Plan that seeks to diversify the current curriculum by increasing the representation of diverse authors, and they will provide students with diverse perspectives from Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), women, and marginalized characters and authors.

The supplemental titles for consideration are being recommended by a committee of 27 secondary English teachers. Diverse authorship is present in the adopted core curriculum. The recommended supplemental titles are suggested to increase the representation of diverse authors, engage students in higher-order thinking, and provide additional diversity in adopted materials. In addition, the titles recommended offer collaboration with English-language arts and History Social Science. This approach provides opportunities for teachers and students to examine historical perspectives from diverse populations as required by both the Common Core Standards and the Fair Accurate Inclusive and Respectful Education (FAIR) Act, Senate Bill 48.

The instructional materials include material or language which may be considered challenging or controversial; therefore, these novels are being recommended for specific grade levels where it would be more developmentally appropriate for students, and the grade levels are denoted in this report. Additionally, teacher training will be provided, so that the novels will enhance a student’s instructional experience with proper context and unbiased viewpoints.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Purchase of these supplemental titles will be funded by site funds provided for this purpose.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Following discussion, it is recommended the Board of Trustees approve, Instructional Materials Recommended for Adoption: Secondary English-language arts and History Social Science Supplemental Novels, Grades 6-12.

**PREPARED BY:** Cary Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction, Education and Support Services

**APPROVED BY:** Gregory Merwin, Associate Superintendent, Education and Support Services

CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
San Juan Capistrano, California

March 16, 2022

**INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION: SECONDARY  
ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS AND HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE SUPPLEMENTAL  
NOVELS, GRADES 6-12:**

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Instructional materials are on display for public inspection at the Capistrano Unified School District, Instructional Materials Center, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

Please note, there is no additional supporting documentation for this agenda item.