

**NOVEL/BOOK-LENGTH WORK (Fiction, Non-Fiction, Drama) PROPOSAL**

**Proposal Request Information**

Prior to filling out this form, please read the [Novel Adoption Proposal Checklist](#) with pertinent policies regarding novel selection and adoption.

**Section I**

To be filled out by requestor/educator:

**Ia. REQUESTOR AND REVIEW TEAM INFORMATION**

School	HRHS	
Date	9/23/20	
Requestor/Educator	Mike Schmidt	
Email address	<a href="mailto:mjschmidt2@dcsdk12.org">mjschmidt2@dcsdk12.org</a>	
Phone number	913-999-5282	
<b>Proposal Review Team Member</b>	<b>Reviewer's Name</b>	<b>Contact Information - email</b>
CIPG Strategist	Tracie King	tking@dcsdk12.orb
Colleague	Gretchen Stulock	<a href="mailto:gstulock@dcsdk12.org">gstulock@dcsdk12.org</a>
Parent #1	Stephanie Pellegrino	stephanie.pellegrino@yahoo.com
Parent #2	Paula Mantey	mamantey@comcast.net
Parent #3	Jane Engle	jengle@dcsdk12.org

**Ib. BOOK INFORMATION**

Title of proposed book	The Nickel Boys
Author (s)	Colson Whitehead
Publisher	Doubleday
Edition	NA
ISBN number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ISBN-10: 0-385-53707-7</li> <li>● ISBN-13: 978-0-385-53707-0</li> </ul>
Copyright date	2019
Course and/or subject area in which work will be used	9th grade Honors English & 10th grade English
Grade level(s)	9-12
Dates the book information was displayed at the school and posted on the school's website (2 week min.)	9/23/2020
Date the book was communicated to the School Advisory Council	9/24/20

**Ic. NOVEL DESCRIPTION**

*Nickel Boys* is the story of a young African-American boy who is hitchhiking to class, but is pulled over and arrested because the car that picked him up was stolen. The main character, Elwood, is then sent to a reform school that is segregated by race, and functions much more like a prison than a school. Here, Elwood is faced with blatant injustice, including a savage beating from the Dean. But Elwood begins to draw from his hero, Martin Luther King, Jr., and he starts to resist. From there, we see Elwood as he tries to navigate the rules of the school with his own quest for equality and justice.

**Id. ALIGNMENT WITH DCSD'S CURRICULUM**

This novel aligns to Colorado Academic Standard 2.1: "Increasingly complex literary elements in traditional and contemporary works of literature require scrutiny and comparison." This is particularly true when reading the portion that says "Prepared Graduates 'Read a wide range of literature (American and world literature) to understand important universal themes and the human experience.'" This book is a recent novel, which gives readers a glimpse of the African-American perspective both in the 1960s and present day. Because the book's narrative shifts in time, students will be able to see how an injustice early in life dramatically affected a character's future.

Additionally, this novel will align to Colorado Academic Standard 2.2: "Increasingly complex informational texts require mature interpretation and study." This book is more challenging than most freshmen novels, and requires some understanding of history as well as the ability to infer, which is why I think it is a great fit for 9th grade Honors or 10th grade general ed classes.

**Ie. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Three recommendations, referrals or reviews must be included. Please use professional reviews (reviews from the School Library Journal, Kirkus, Booklist, Publisher’s weekly etc.). The District Library Media Center will be happy to direct you to these sources. List the sources of the reviews below and attach copies of all reviews.

Review #1

[Booklist](#)

There were rumors about Nickel Academy, a Florida reform school, but survivors kept their traumas to themselves until a university archaeology student discovered the secret graveyard. Whitehead follows his dynamic, highly awarded, best-selling Civil War saga, [The Underground Railroad](#) (2016), with a tautly focused and gripping portrait of two African American teens during the last vicious years of Jim Crow. There is no way Elwood Curtis would ever have become a Nickel Boy if he was white. Raised by his strict grandmother, Elwood, who cherishes his album of recorded Martin Luther King Jr. speeches, is an exemplary student who earns admission to early college classes. But trouble whips up out of thin air, and instead he is sent to Nickel, where the Black boys are barely fed, classes are a travesty, and the threat of sexual abuse and torture is endemic. As Elwood tries to emulate Dr. King’s teachings of peace and forgiveness, he is befriended by the more worldly and pragmatic Turner, and together they try to expose the full extent of the brazenly racist, sadistic, sometimes fatal crimes against the Nickel Boys. Whitehead’s magnetic characters exemplify stoicism and courage, and each supremely crafted scene smolders and flares with injustice and resistance, building to a staggering revelation. Inspired by an actual school, Whitehead’s potently concentrated drama pinpoints the brutality and insidiousness of Jim Crow racism with compassion and protest.

**HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** After the resounding triumph of Whitehead’s previous novel, readers will avidly await this intense drama, a scorching work that will generate tremendous media coverage.

— *Donna Seaman*

Review #2

[Kirkus](#)

The acclaimed author of *The Underground Railroad* (2016) follows up with a leaner, meaner saga of Deep South captivity set in the mid-20th century and fraught with horrors more chilling for being based on true-life atrocities.

Elwood Curtis is a law-abiding, teenage paragon of rectitude, an avid reader of encyclopedias and after-school worker diligently overcoming hardships that come from being abandoned by his parents and growing up black and poor in segregated Tallahassee, Florida. It’s the early 1960s, and Elwood can feel changes coming every time he listens to an LP of his hero Martin Luther King Jr. sermonizing about breaking down racial barriers. But while hitchhiking to his first day of classes at a nearby black college, Elwood accepts a ride in what turns out to be a stolen car and is sentenced to the Nickel Academy, a juvenile reformatory that looks somewhat

like the campus he'd almost attended but turns out to be a monstrously racist institution whose students, white and black alike, are brutally beaten, sexually abused, and used by the school's two-faced officials to steal food and supplies. At first, Elwood thinks he can work his way past the arbitrary punishments and sadistic treatment ("I am stuck here, but I'll make the best of it...and I'll make it brief"). He befriends another black inmate, a street-wise kid he knows only as Turner, who has a different take on withstanding Nickel: "The key to in here is the same as surviving out there—you got to see how people act, and then you got to figure out how to get around them like an obstacle course." And if you defy them, Turner warns, you'll get taken "out back" and are never seen or heard from again. Both Elwood's idealism and Turner's cynicism entwine into an alliance that compels drastic action—and a shared destiny. There's something a tad more melodramatic in this book's conception (and resolution) than one expects from Whitehead, giving it a drugstore-paperback glossiness that enhances its blunt-edged impact.

Inspired by disclosures of a real-life Florida reform school's long-standing corruption and abusive practices, Whitehead's novel displays its author's facility with violent imagery and his skill at weaving narrative strands into an ingenious if disquieting whole.

### Review #3

#### [The Orwell Foundation](#)

Colson Whitehead was born in 1969, and was raised in Manhattan. After graduating from Harvard College, he started working at the Village Voice, where he wrote reviews of television, books, and music. He is the author of *The Nickel Boys*, *The Underground Railroad*, *The Noble Hustle*, *Zone One*, *Sag Harbor*, *The Intuitionist*, *John Henry Days*, *Apex Hides the Hurt*, and one collection of essays, *The Colossus of New York*. He has received a MacArthur Fellowship, A Guggenheim Fellowship, a Whiting Writers Award, the Dos Passos Prize, and a fellowship at the Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers. He lives in New York City. Before winning this year's Orwell Prize for Political Fiction, his latest novel *The Nickel Boys* also won the Pulitzer Prize, making him only the fourth writer ever to win the Pulitzer Prize for fiction twice.

An expertly crafted historical novel, *The Nickel Boys* is as convincing in its character portrayal as it is unsparing in its depiction of corruption and racial brutality. All the while it provides unimpeachable evidence that human dignity and love can provide a beacon for transforming lives that's ultimately more powerful and enduring than violence."

**SECTION II: Review Team Information**

Each review team member will complete an individual section for a formal review of the book based on your stakeholder perspective. All members of the site review team **MUST read** the proposed novel/book prior submission to **CIPG strategist for final review prior to submission to CIPG Director.**

**IIa. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by requestor/educator)**

The proposed novel...	Y/N	Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable
is appropriate for the <a href="#">following</a> grade level(s)	Y	I believe that the reading level is appropriate for 10th graders and advanced 9th graders.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	Because this novel deals with racism and injustice, students are able to make many connections - from history class to contemporary issues to their own life experiences.
actively engages students through the text	Y	The book is written about a student roughly the age of our students, and the writing is straightforward and engaging .
facilitates learning that has long-term significance	Y	Specifically, students will be able to learn lessons about racism and injustice, and the lasting impact they can have on a life.
<b>Recommend novel for adoption</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

**Iib. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by CIPG Strategist) Tracie King**

The proposed novel...	Y/N	Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable
is appropriate for the <a href="#">following</a> grade level(s)	Y	I believe the book is appropriate for the grades requested. If used with 9th grader students it should be noted that the students should be able to process violence and complex social and historical cues that Elwood faces.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	This book will resonant with students about the racism and injustice that has gone on for years in our country and will enable the students to make strong connections with what is going on around them in the present day. I think this book will open up a strong dialogue to help develop understanding and empathy.
actively engages students through the text	Y	The book is engaging and powerful but I believe the teacher will definitely need to facilitate understanding for some of the challenging content.
facilitates learning that has long-term significance	Y	This book will stay and impact the reader for years to come. It will push their thinking on race, injustice, and being ethical in your actions.
aligns with <a href="#">proposed connections</a> to DCSD curriculum (Colorado Academic Standards, Higher Order Thinking Skills, 4 Cs, 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills, and Content)	Y	This book ties into the reading and writing standards but also ties into social studies standards of American History. The literary themes will help to facilitate deep thinking, encourage thoughtful but difficult discussions, and will definitely push students to think and push their thinking in ways they probably haven't experienced before.
<b>Recommend novel for adoption</b>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Iic. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by a colleague)**

The proposed novel...	Y/N	Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable
is appropriate for the <a href="#">following</a> grade level(s)	Y	I believe that this book would be appropriate for 9-12. (In particular I can see this book pairing well at the 9th grade level with Knowles' <i>A Separate Peace</i> .) While the content is challenging, our 9th graders deserve more quality contemporary literature.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	I do not see a permission slip as a necessity. (If parents have the option to opt students out of books that are approved, there is no need to require parent permission. It's an extra, cumbersome step for teachers to facilitate.)
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	This novel feels simultaneously familiar and new. In many ways it is a classic <i>bildungsroman</i> about the moments that transition us from children and make us who we are, but it also provides new insights into the Black experience in the United States. This text would pair well with many of the "classics" -- <i>A Separate Peace</i> , <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> , <i>Invisible Man</i> , and perhaps even <i>The Outsiders</i> . It also would work well alongside texts from the Civil Rights era or texts about injustice.
actively engages students through the text	Y	This novel provides excellent opportunities for literary analysis of style and narrative perspective, but could also be used as a supplemental text in a history class. Students will be intrigued by the setting of Nickel Academy, and will enthusiastically root for the characters. This book is accessible and, while the content is challenging, the reading is engaging and digestible for students.
facilitates learning that has long-term significance	Y	This book will bring up significant questions about identity, school, discipline, injustice, and ethics.
aligns with <a href="#">proposed connections</a> to DCSD curriculum (Colorado Academic Standards, Higher Order Thinking Skills, 4 Cs, 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills, and Content)	Y	This is one of the great American novels of our time. Whitehead has written a novel that will stand the test of time and age well on the approved book list. This novel will spark vibrant discussions, prompt deep reflection, and is an example of quality contemporary literature of literary merit.
<b>Recommend novel for adoption</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

**IId. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by Parent #1)**

The proposed novel...	Y/N	Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable
is appropriate for the <a href="#">following</a> grade level(s)	Y	This book is not only an enjoyable read, but offers insight into thoughts and actions teenagers find relevant, and opens the door for conversations about friendships, guilt by association, and being “tough.”
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	I think students should know that there is some strong language in the book, but it’s never gratuitously or glibly employed. Rather, it’s normal conversation between very realistic characters and is used to reflect the time rather than attempt to be edgy.
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	I highly recommend this for freshmen since they’re currently reading the same novels I read in high school. I think this helps to update the curriculum by offering an historically relevant book that ends in hope, as so few American literary pieces do.
actively engages students through the text	Y	The first sentence is a draw, and the story balances well between action and insight. I can see many students being drawn to the story and engaging in discussion throughout.
facilitates learning that has long-term significance	Y	The themes are universal, and the novel has relevance to the current time period without the political quagmire that so many can get caught in since it’s set in a slightly different time period.
<b>Recommend novel for adoption</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	



**Iie. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by Parent #2)**

The proposed novel...	Y/N	Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable
is appropriate for the <a href="#">following</a> grade level(s)	Y	I believe this book would only possibly work for 11-12 graders. These more mature students may be able to inch through this novel.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	N	A book written in current times, about current events, would allow Douglas County students to identify with and make meaningful connections to, and would have a more lasting experience.
actively engages students through the text	N	Students generally do not relate to or have empathy for events that happened before they were born, let alone when their parents were born. This book is very slow moving until the final pages. Students will only read parts to get a grade and not retain the message teachers are trying to convey. Again, a novel about more current events will help engage more students.
facilitates learning that has long-term significance	N	The book jumps from one time of the author's life to many years ahead, then back again with no transition. As an adult that loves to read, this was confusing and boring to me. Students will forget what they read the moment the test is turned in. They will not remember, not retain, nor will they learn empathy through a book they cannot identify with.
<b>Recommend novel for adoption</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**IIIe. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by Parent #3)**

The proposed novel...	Y/N	Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable
is appropriate for the <a href="#">following</a> grade level(s)	Y	While there are mature subjects (physical and sexual abuse), they are not overly graphic and are necessary to understand the character's experience.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	There are difficult topics discussed, and it would be beneficial for the teacher to present that to the students before reading the book.
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	The main character is a likable, thoughtful, intelligent young man. The story helps us to see how his race prevents him from becoming who we know he can become. Racism is still an issue in our society and this book highlights how ingrained it is in our society. Is what happened in this book still happening in 2020?
actively engages students through the text	Y	While there are difficult topics discussed, the writer does an excellent job of writing about them without being too graphic. Students will love Elwood and be impacted when he is treated awfully. From the start of the book, you are rooting for him and want to know how things turn out.
facilitates learning that has long-term significance	Y	This book is set in a time when the Civil Rights movement is gaining ground. All these years later, racism is still insidious. There are so many talking points that will facilitate learning and understanding. Our students are often oblivious to the existence of systemic racism. They have an opportunity to discuss whether things are better today than they were over 50 years ago.
<b>Recommend novel for adoption</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

**SECTION III: Requestor/Educator & CIPG Strategist Level Process Review**

**IIIa. Grade Level Recommendations (to be collaborated on between Requestor/Educator & CIPG Strategist based on recommendations made by the review team)**

Place initials in the columns indicating level of recommendation. Complete by initialing for every grade level indicated on the chart below. Please include justification if necessary for the level(s) of recommendation below the chart.

**Note: If approved by the Board of Education, this novel can be used by all educators in DCSD. Please consider the use of this book for all PK-12 grades, not just the grade or content you teach.**

Grade level	Recommended	Recommended: Requires parent notification and consent: The novel/book may contain some mature content and themes	Not Recommended: Content inappropriate for grade level(s)
PK/K			Not Recommended
1			Not Recommended
2			Not Recommended
3			Not Recommended
4			Not Recommended
5			Not Recommended
6			Not Recommended
7			Not Recommended
8			Not Recommended
9	Tk MS		
10	Tk MS		
11	Tk MS		
12	Tk MS		

**SECTION V: Signatures/Approvals**

**Va.**

Does the evaluating <b>Educator</b> recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Nov 13, 2020</u>		
Evaluating Educator Signature <u><i>Michael J Schmidt</i></u> <small>Michael J Schmidt (Nov 13, 2020 13:08 MST)</small>	<u><i>MJS</i></u> MJS	

**Vb.**

Does the evaluating <b>Colleague</b> recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Nov 13, 2020</u>		
Evaluating Colleague Signature <u><i>Gretchen Stulock</i></u> <small>Gretchen Stulock (Nov 13, 2020 13:08 MST)</small>	<u><i>GS</i></u> GS	

**Vc.**

Does the evaluating <b>Parent #1</b> recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Nov 13, 2020</u>		
Evaluating Parent (#1) Signature <u><i>SP</i></u> <small>Stephanie Pellegrino (Nov 13, 2020 13:12 MST)</small>	<u><i>SP</i></u> SP	

**Vd.**

Does the evaluating <b>Parent (#2)</b> recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Nov 13, 2020</u>		
Evaluating Parent (#2) Signature <u><i>Jane Engle</i></u> <small>Jane Engle (Nov 13, 2020 13:26 MST)</small>	<u><i>JE</i></u>	

**Ve.**

Does the evaluating educator's <b>Administrator</b> recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Apr 2, 2021</u>		
Administrator Signature <u><i>Dr. Christopher R Page Jr</i></u> <small>Dr. Christopher R Page Jr (Apr 2, 2021 14:12 MDT)</small>	<u><i>CP</i></u> CP	

**Vf.**

Does the <b>CIPG Strategist</b> certify that the information on this form accurately reflects the process followed at the site.	YES	NO
Date <u>Nov 30, 2020</u>	<u>TK</u> TK	
CIPG Strategist Signature <u>Tracie King</u> <small>Tracie King (Nov 30, 2020 15:18 MST)</small>		

**Vg.**

Does the <b>CIPG Director</b> support adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Nov 13, 2020</u>	<u>EM</u> EM	
CIPG Director Signature <u>Erica Mason</u> <small>Erica Mason (Nov 13, 2020 13:07 MST)</small>		

**SECTION VI: Superintendent's Approval**

**SUPERINTENDENT'S APPROVAL**

Does the Superintendent approve adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Nov 13, 2020</u>	<u>CJW</u> CJW	
Superintendent Signature <u>CoreyJWise</u> <small>CoreyJWise (Nov 13, 2020 15:34 MST)</small>		

**SECTION VII: Board of Education Approval**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVAL**

Does the Board of Education approve adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date _____		
Board of Education Signature _____		

**OFFICE USE**

	DATE	INITIALS
Approved novel list updated (including recommended grade level)		
Approved form with BOE signatures scanned to CIPG folder on District server		