

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	Douglas County High School	
Date	1/14/2021	
Requestor/Educator	Ashley Bidinger	
Email address	aebidinger@dcsdk12.org	
Phone number	720-207-8768	
Proposal Review Team Member	Reviewer's Name	Contact Information - email
District Strategist	Jennifer Gaffney	jgaffney@dcsdk12.org
Colleague	Marika Olson	molson1@dcsdk12.org
Parent #1	Susan Graham	susan.graham@gmail.com
Parent #2	Tamara Engelhardt	luv2laugh2@comcast.net

Ib. BOOK INFORMATION

Title of proposed book	Turtles All the Way Down
Author (s)	John Green
Publisher	Penguin Books
Edition	Penguin Books 2019 (FollettBound Glued)
ISBN number	978-1-72543-427-1
Copyright date	October 10, 2017
Course and/or subject area in which work will be used	Young Adult Literature
Grade level(s)	9-12, Committee Recommended 9-12
Dates the book information was displayed at the school and posted on the school's website (2 week min.)	14 January, 2021
Date the book was communicated to the School Advisory Council	14 January, 2021

Ic. NOVEL DESCRIPTION

A story about mental illness with the backdrop of a mystery. John Green uses high school romance, friendship, loss and mystery as the backdrop to a story that takes a look into the brain of a 16-year-old girl suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder.

Learning Objectives:

Mental health - refers to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel and behave. Mental health can affect daily living, relationships and physical health.

Change - The transformation of a character socially, emotionally and intellectually over time.

Internal Struggle - A conflict a character(s) may face or have to overcome, or an ethical or moral dilemma to conquer.

Overcoming Adversity - The character's ability to be resilient and overcome difficult situations, despite how it may affect them.

Relationship Skills - Establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups.

Id. ALIGNMENT WITH DCSD'S CURRICULUM

CAS 2020 Standards:

Read a wide range of literary texts to build knowledge and to better understand the human experience.

Using novels as a place to grapple with and understand complex issues like mental health, change, adversity and interpersonal skills can be a valuable way to figure out one's own self. In many ways the experiences and lessons of the characters can be a way for the audience to learn life lessons while the cost is cheap: "If [insert character name here] can make it through this adversity, maybe I can too." By being able to evaluate and critically think about the events and issues of a novel, we as the reader are also able to evaluate and critically think about our own lives.

Craft arguments using techniques specific to the genre. And Craft narratives using techniques specific to the genre.

Students can use the novel as support for ideas and arguments on the many themes of the novel, including: mental health, true friendship, and coping with change.

The beauty of this novel and many YAL novels, is that even though they are generally fiction, the topics and characters feel real. Students connect and identify with what the characters go through. Especially characters like Aza, who struggles with her own mental health in a time of turmoil and change. Many students, especially in the 20/21 school year, would be able to connect and learn from the story in *Turtles All the Way Down*.

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

Publishers Weekly Annex (October 16, 2017)

Like many of Green's characters, Aza Holmes is whip smart, articulate, and tortured by worry. When she was eight, her father succumbed to a heart attack while mowing the lawn. Now 16, Aza takes meds (irregularly) to treat anxiety, which is manifesting in increasingly self-destructive ways. Her problems amplify when she reconnects with Davis, a boy she met years earlier at "Sad Camp," where both had gone to grieve their recently deceased parents. Now Davis's billionaire father is missing, running from a warrant for his arrest. Aza's best friend Daisy, in a classic sidekick role, pressures Aza to contact Davis, hoping they'll learn something about the disappearance-and maybe get a cut of the \$100,000 reward. The reunion leads to romance, until Aza's anxiety won't allow it. Green's first novel since *The Fault in Our Stars* is another heartbreaker, full of intelligent questions. It's also a very writerly book, as Aza frames a lot of the questions she asks herself in literary terms. Am I a fiction? Who is in charge of my story? Why do we describe pain with the language of metaphor? Because of this, it's tempting to conflate Aza the character with her author, who has been open about his own mental illness. But readers need not know where the line is between the two to feel for someone trapped in an irrational, fear-driven spiral. In an age where troubling events happen almost weekly, this deeply empathetic novel about learning to live with demons and love one's imperfect self is timely and important. Ages 14-up.

Review #2

School Library Journal Xpress (November 1, 2017)

Gr 9 Up-Sixteen-year-old Aza Holmes first met Davis Pickett at "Sad Camp" the summers after fifth and sixth grades. Both Aza and Davis had recently lost parents and the kids bonded in their grief and fascination with the natural world. They've had little contact since then, even though they still live in Indianapolis, albeit in very different circumstances. When Davis's billionaire CEO dad disappears on the eve of a fraud and bribery investigation, Aza's best bud Daisy is intrigued, particularly since the police are offering a \$100,000 reward for information about his whereabouts. The bright, talented girls worry about affording college and soon get caught up in solving the mystery. However, a lack of finances is just one of the myriad things, large (existential) and small (microbes), that Aza stresses about. She is living with debilitating anxiety and obsessive-compulsive responses to it. Despite years of therapy and meds, she works hard to function in the face of physically harrowing mental health challenges. When she reconnects with her childhood friend, the prospect of a budding relationship is at once thrilling and terrifying. As always, Green creates whip-smart and articulate characters who will charm, frustrate, and possibly annoy readers. While the romance is never fully realized, this is undoubtedly a love story. Aza is a likable protagonist and readers will be caught up in the claustrophobic, narrowing spiral that is her existence and root for her to gain control of her life. Her tough, brutally honest first-person narrative will leave teens battered and raw but will also

show them that, with love, everything is possible. VERDICT A deeply resonant and powerful novel that will inform and enlighten readers even as it breaks their hearts. A must-buy. -Luann Toth, School Library Journal © Copyright 2017.

Review #3

Horn Book Magazine (January/February, 2018)

Five years after *The Fault in Our Stars* (rev. 3/12), Green returns to chart a different kind of debilitating illness. When we meet sixteen-year-old Aza Holmes in the cafeteria, her thoughts are laser-focused on her body's microbiome: "Admittedly, I have some anxiety problems, but I would argue it isn't irrational to be concerned about the fact that you are a skin-encased bacterial colony." Aza's obsessive compulsions, anxiety, and "invasive" thought-spirals only grow from there. Note-perfect narration--which seamlessly switches from first- to second-person during panic attacks--makes what should be objectively irrational seem relatable, even logical; readers' empathy with Aza continues to grow throughout the story. But *Turtles* is also a mystery and a romance. Aza and her vivacious best friend, Daisy Ramirez, investigate the whereabouts of local billionaire Russell Pickett, who's running from criminal charges. Their sleuthing leads to Pickett's son Davis, Aza's childhood friend from "Sad Camp" (his mother had died, as had Aza's father). The stars don't seem aligned as Aza begins a tentative romance with kind, introspective Davis: her mental health deteriorates, and he struggles with being a guardian to his grief-stricken younger brother. These plot lines give the story momentum and shape, but its epicenter is a clear-eyed exploration of mental illness and of the deep existential revelations that suffering can engender. Green has proven himself a master manipulator of readers' feelings, but he is, as ever, benevolent in that role. What readers may shed in tears is repaid in hope, spiritual curiosity, and a deeper connection to the human experience. Katrina Hedeem

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) Ashley Bidinger

The proposed novel...	Y/N	Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable
is appropriate for the following grade level(s)	Y	This story even though it is fiction, has characters that feel real and deal with the same struggles many of our students do.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	No, the middle grade reading level and the innocent nature of the romance does not require permission.
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	The topics within the novel (like mental health, creating meaningful friendships, and coping with change) are relevant topics that many students face, especially this school year.
actively engages students through the text	Y	See above.
facilitates learning that has long-term significance	Y	This a story that will stick with students and keep them thinking long after they are done reading.
Recommend novel for adoption	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Iib. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by District Strategist) Jennifer Gaffney

The proposed novel...	Y/N	Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable
is appropriate for the following grade level(s)	Y	Older teens, especially, will connect and sympathize with the characters and appreciate John Green’s witty and thought-provoking writing style.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	The language and regular day-to-day situations in the story mirror what teenagers encounter in their everyday lives.
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	So many other subjects are touched upon: science (biology, zoology, astronomy), psychology, math, art and pop culture.
actively engages students through the text	Y	The book reads like watching a movie with its rich dialogue and well described action, but also gets deep into the mind of its characters (vividly documenting Aza’s inner thoughts/turmoil and Davis’ emotions through his blog posts) which will keep students engaged and thinking throughout the book.
facilitates learning that has long-term significance	Y	This book is an incredible tool to promote Social and Emotional Learning. It helps illustrate the stigma of living with mental illness in our society (which is the first step in addressing how common it is and, hopefully, one day getting rid of that stigma.) Reading this will make students empathize with those suffering from mental illness and will, hopefully, also encourage them to seek help themselves when needed.
aligns with proposed connections to DCSD curriculum (Colorado Academic Standards, Higher Order Thinking Skills, 4 Cs, 21 st Century Skills, and Content)	Y	<p><i>Read a wide range of literary texts to build knowledge and to better understand the human experience. Mental illness is a part of the human experience and reading books such as <i>Turtles All The Way Down</i> which address it is a wonderful way for students to vicariously learn what it is like to live with such an illness.</i></p> <p><i>Craft arguments using techniques specific to the genre. And Craft narratives using techniques specific to the genre. There are questions for discussion at the back of the book (and our English Language Arts teachers can come up with countless other ideas for projects, writing assignments and discussion based on this book.)</i></p>
Recommend novel for adoption	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

IIc. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by a colleague) Marika “Mo” Olson

The proposed novel...	Y/N	Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable
is appropriate for the following grade level(s)	Y	Intelligent, nerdy, sweet characters dealing with some traumatic events.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	The author has filled his story with tender-hearted teenagers who care for each other through some serious issues. This book is not to be feared.
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	Mental health, good or bad, impacts our daily lives, our relationships, and our physical well-being. The characters are well developed and amicable, and readers will see themselves or others on the pages of this book and develop understanding and empathy towards others.
actively engages students through the text	Y	Compelling story, great characters.
facilitates learning that has long-term significance	Y	Interesting medical terminology to become familiar with, lots of conversation starters with Shakespeare quotes and contemporary music lyrics and constellations, not to mention discussions of mental health and well-being.
aligns with proposed connections to DCSD curriculum (Colorado Academic Standards, Higher Order Thinking Skills, 4 Cs, 21 st Century Skills, and Content)	Y	<i>Read a wide range of literary texts to build knowledge and to better understand the human experience.</i>
Recommend novel for adoption	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

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

The proposed novel...	Y/N	Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable
is appropriate for the following grade level(s)	Y	Well written, quirky characters that high school kids will definitely relate to.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	The romance is sweet and age appropriate and while there is minor profanity it adds verisimilitude/realism, which will engage these students.
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	The descriptions of Aza’s “thought spirals” are fantastic and with the rising number of kids dealing with anxiety, this text will allow students to make meaningful connections to their lives.
actively engages students through the text	Y	Teachers these days deal with reluctant readers and it is imperative that they have access to engaging, well written texts. This one definitely fits the bill. The teen characters have depth and aren’t stereotypes, and their development provides a point of entry and connection that will keep many students engaged. For instance, Aza’s best friend Daisy is into writing Star Wars fanfic, but she also has a hard time being patient with her anxiety ridden friend. This character is also quite relatable.
facilitates learning that has long-term significance	Y	This is a book that will stay with these kids. There aren’t any easy answers at the end. We learn that mental health, while manageable, is a chronic condition and never gets “cured.” But there’s hope and the way Green honestly deals with this facilitates long term learning and open, honest discussion.
Recommend novel for adoption	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

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

The proposed novel...	Y/N	Examples/Justification Please be specific and give examples when applicable
is appropriate for the following grade level(s)	Y	The characters are realistic and relatable. They are dealing with a lot of real life issues that teens could possibly face.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	There is profanity used throughout the book, but otherwise involves a mystery, great friendship, and innocent romance that teens can relate to. Some parents could take offense to the profanity.
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	Very much so especially in the areas of mental health, friendship, and relationships.
actively engages students through the text	Y	Due to the quiriness and the relatability of the characters, the mystery involved, and the friendship and romance portrayed, I believe older teens would be engaged with the text.
facilitates learning that has long-term significance	Y	Definitely facilitates long term significance in the area of anxiety/OCD. Green clearly demonstrates what it is like to live in the head of someone with a mental health disorder. I believe this book teaches compassion in this area.
Recommend novel for adoption	<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	AB, MO, JG		
10	AB, MO, JG		
11	AB, MO, JG		
12	AB, MO, JG		

SECTION IV: Signatures/Approvals

IVa.

Does the evaluating Educator/Requestor recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Mar 31, 2021</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Evaluating Educator Signature <u><i>Ashley E Bidinger</i></u> <small>Ashley E Bidinger (Mar 31, 2021 12:03 MDT)</small>		

IVb.

Does the evaluating CIPG Strategist certify that the information on this form accurately reflects the process followed at the site?	YES	NO
Date <u>Mar 31, 2021</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Evaluating CIPG Strategist Signature <u><i>Jennifer Gaffney</i></u> <small>Jennifer Gaffney (Mar 31, 2021 12:09 MDT)</small>		

IVc.

Does the evaluating Colleague recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Mar 31, 2021</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> X	
Evaluating Colleague Signature <u><i>Marika Olson</i></u> <small>Marika Olson (Mar 31, 2021 12:11 MDT)</small>		


IVd.

Does the evaluating Parent (#1) recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Apr 2, 2021</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> X	
Evaluating Parent (#1) Signature <u><i>Susan Graham</i></u> <small>Susan Graham (Apr 2, 2021 14:28 MDT)</small>		


IVe.

Does the evaluating Parent (#2) recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Apr 4, 2021</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> X	
Evaluating Parent (#2) Signature <u><i>Tamara Engelhardt</i></u> <small>Tamara Engelhardt (Apr 4, 2021 16:48 MDT)</small>		

IVf.


Does the evaluating Educator's <i>Administrator</i> recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Apr 4, 2021</u>		
Signature <u> Katy Kollasch (Apr 4, 2021 19:28 MDT)</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

IVg.

Does the <i>CIPG Director</i> support adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Apr 5, 2021</u>		
CIPG Director Signature <u> Erica Mason (Apr 5, 2021 04:48 MDT)</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

SECTION V: Superintendent's Approval

SUPERINTENDENT'S APPROVAL

Does the Superintendent approve adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Apr 5, 2021</u>		
Superintendent Signature <u> Corey J. Wise (Apr 5, 2021 05:10 MDT)</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

SECTION VI: 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		