



HAMILTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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Phone: (269) 751-5148
#EachWillThrive

Dear Hamilton community,

Our Board of Education approved a new reading curriculum in the spring of 2017. We have observed steady improvement in our readers ever since; the new curriculum and teaching practices are working.

Much of the success can be contributed to the curriculum's book clubs, and classroom libraries that offer students more choice in what they read. Specific books are not recommended by the curriculum, rather it suggests resources and places to look for stories to use. Hamilton Community Schools used a publishing company highly recommended by other districts in our region to purchase materials for our book clubs. We did not receive a list of book titles ahead of time, but were promised a diversity of topics relevant to students.

In the spring of 2020, as the book clubs rolled out, it came to our attention that a few books featured content questionable for our younger readers. After additional feedback about the book clubs over the summer, both positive and negative, we decided to **create the Hamilton Book Club Vetting Committee** at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year. It has met twice already and is comprised of:

- (3) Board of Education members
- (3) Parents
- (3) Administrators
- (3) Teachers
- (2) Literacy coaches
- (1) Curriculum director

Every book our district purchases now passes through a vetting process. Sheets used in the vetting process analyze the books' **violence, language, sexual content, and suggest an age range based on reviews from a variety of Web sites**. Based on this information, the group then assigns the title to the appropriate grade level. Two weeks before a book club starts, the teacher sends parents a spreadsheet with all the book titles and their associated ratings.

This vetting process does not eliminate the diversity of choices for students. We will continue to provide titles that encompass the diversity of the greater community. However, **parents have the final say in what their child reads**. We have processes in place that will allow you or your child to opt out of any title or author.

If you have concerns about a title in the book club, please contact the teacher directly and it will be promptly addressed.

Sincerely,

Hamilton Book Club Vetting Committee