

Monday, October 22, 2018



Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

I hope this letter finds you well as we prepare to shift into the 2nd half of your student's 1st semester here at New West. We are beginning to prepare for this year's interdisciplinary project, and I wanted to give you some information regarding the text we plan to use in English class to collaborate with the art department and build from what the students have already learned in history.

We will be reading and analyzing the award-winning novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie. This novel will allow us to dissect and discuss identity, social issues, values, and ways to create positive change in our communities. While reading this coming-of-age story, students will be tracking lessons that the protagonist learns and write a literary analysis that gives evidence to the lesson they deem to be most vital. Additionally, they will be using that same moral to create a graphic novel for a New West 6th grade student in order to teach them this value through a self-made story of their own.

This text is well respected by literary critics due to its engaging, thought-provoking, and relatable content. One New West parent shared with me that they know Sherman Alexie personally and are excited for us to use one of his books in our class. It tackles real-life conflicts and challenges through the eyes of a character of similar age and teaches about the requirements it can take to endure such a time in life. The following excerpt succinctly summarizes the storyline:



"*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* is bestselling author Sherman Alexie's first foray into the young adult genre, and it took him only one book to master the form. This gem of a book tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot. Heartbreaking, funny, and beautifully written, this book, which is based on the author's own experiences, coupled with poignant drawings by Ellen Forney that reflect the character's art, chronicles the contemporary adolescence of one Native American boy as he attempts to break away from the life he was destined to live."

The content in this novel can be mature at times, but it will always be safeguarded, framed, and analyzed with guidance. However, if you wish to opt your child out of this reading, a secondary book with similar themes can be provided. If you have any questions/concerns, please email me at akalma@newwestcharter.org.

Thank You,

Mr. Kalma | englishwithkalma.weebly.com

Please sign and return this bottom portion to Mr. Kalma by Friday, October 26, 2018.

Student: _____ Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____ Signature: _____