March 22nd, 2024

Dear Clayton Families,

As a middle school that is shifting from two grades to three, we want to keep open lines of communication with families and respect the values that you have instilled in your children. To this end, we want to share some information about our beautiful library's collection of books.

The Clayton Middle School library collection was started in 1964, to meet the needs of 7th- and 8th-graders. Over the years, the collection has continually evolved to meet the ever-changing reading tastes of this community of readers, with books being purchased based on curricular goals, professional recommendation, and student interest. As we began to shift over to a school that also serves 6th graders, we have begun to evaluate the collection to ensure that there are suitable materials for this age as well. Many new books have been (and continue to be) purchased; very few have been deselected.

This means that there are still Young Adult (YA) books in the library, books that some 6th graders may not be ready to read yet. Many of these titles are highly recommended even for younger students (such as *Stargirl*), some are perennially popular books that fly off the shelves (such as *Twilight*), and some are newer and trending (like *A Dog's Purpose, Red Queen,* and *Shatter Me*). We do not have all YA titles that students wish to read. In fact, many students have already been disappointed at our lack of some of their favorite authors (including Stephen King and Nicholas Sparks). But-as we always tell your students-those books are available at the Washoe County public library and will be in their high school libraries.

Please understand that public school librarians make every effort to develop a collection of classical and contemporary fiction and nonfiction that includes both award-winning and popular literature, and all new books must be reviewed by at least two professional sources and recommended for middle-grade readers. A middle school library collection can be particularly tricky because our new patron age ranges from 11 years old to nearly 15 years old. Student maturity, reading levels, and interests in middle school also range from primary grade to college-level abilities. It is the priority of the teacher-librarian to protect our students' right to read those materials that are protected by the First Amendment. It is also the priority of the teacher-librarian to develop and maintain a collection appropriate to the patron that reflects diverse and balanced topics, interests, and reading levels. This is no easy task, and that is why parents are the number one censor for their own children. A young-adult book that may be perfectly appropriate for an 8th grader may be of concern to a parent of a new 6th grader. If you have concerns about the appropriateness of a book your student has borrowed from the library, please return the book and we will help find another that your student is sure to love.

Common Sense Media provides parent reviews for books, apps, and other media; many parents have found it to be a helpful source when deciding if a book is appropriate for their child or not. If you are interested in the professional resources that the library staff consults when ordering books, just ask!

If, however, you wish to prevent your child from checking out books that are classified as young-adult interest level (containing language or situations that your family may not want to expose your child to yet), no problem. **We can put a note on his/her account.**

IF YOU DO NOT WANT YOUR CHILD TO CHECK OUT YA BOOKS, RETURN THE BOTTOM OF THIS FORM TO SCHOOL. YOU DO NOT NEED TO RETURN THIS FORM IF YOU ARE OKAY WITH YOUR CHILD CHECKING OUT THESE BOOKS.

Please return this form to your child's school as soon as possible **only if you DO NOT** want your child to check out YA books. If you prefer to determine as a family what is appropriate on a case-by-case basis, you do not need to do anything else.

[ ] **NO, my child may not check out YA-designated books in the Clayton Library this year**. Please put a note on his/her account.

Student's Name:

Parent/Guardian Signature: Date: