

**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](#) (scroll down to the novel section) with pertinent policies regarding novel selection and adoption.

FOR DISTRICT USE ONLY FINAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED APPROVAL GRADE LEVELS:	11th and 12th
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**Section I**

To be filled out by requesting educator:

**Ia. REQUESTOR AND REVIEW TEAM INFORMATION**

School	Chaparral HS	
Date	5/10/23	
Requesting Educator Name	Heather Pitzel	
Requesting Educator Email	hpitzel@dcsdk12.org	
Novel Adoption School Process Manager Name	Damon Larson	
Novel Adoption School Process Manager Email	dllarson@dcsdk12.org	
<b>Proposal Review Team Member</b>	<b>Reviewer's Name</b>	<b>Contact Information - email</b>
District Coordinator	Elyse Rhodes	evrhodes@dcsdk12.org
Colleague	Shannon Doyle	scdoyle@dcsdk12.org
Parent #1	Kate Muus	kmuus@dcsdk12.org
Parent #2	Steve Block	smblock@dcsdk12.org

**Ib. BOOK INFORMATION**

Title of proposed book	Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress
Author (s)	Dai Sijie
Publisher	Penguin Random House
Edition	

ISBN number	9780385722209
Copyright date	English translation copyright 2001 (Orig. published in French)
Course and/or subject area in which work will be used	English/Language Arts: Contemporary Literature, World Literature, International Baccalaureate Programme
Grade level(s)	11-12
Lexile Level Score (If you are unsure, please visit <a href="https://hub.lexile.com/fina-a-boo k/search">https://hub.lexile.com/fina-a-boo k/search</a> )	None available
Dates the book information was displayed at the school and posted on the school’s website (2 week min.)	August 2023 for books on display at the school Announcement on the school website about all 4 texts all summer long and run in two Wolverine Weekly publications August-September
Date the book was communicated to the School Accountability Committee?	August 2023; SAC meeting Sept. 27

**Ic. NOVEL DESCRIPTION**

Please write a brief description of the novel in your own words and how it relates to the content and age group of students using this proposed book.

*This novel offers a high school audience some humor and inspiration through its teenage protagonists, some insight into world history through China’s Cultural Revolution, and an exploration of the power of literature as part of the storyline. The love story adds some additional adolescent intrigue while the ending provides a twist for students to consider in terms of power, identity and freedom. Having taught the novel abroad at international IB schools, I can attest to its relevance and interest for high school upperclassmen.*

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

Please write a detailed description of how the novel **aligns to DCSD’s Curriculum - Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) and Essential Skills:**

*(Please cite the specific CAS Grade Level Expectations and if applicable, the Evidence Outcomes (EOs) the novel will help address).*

Because CAS Grade Level Expectations are about skills such as Oral Expression and Listening, much of those skills are developed by the lessons created by a teacher and not the text itself. One area, however, that can be addressed by the text itself is Standard 2 where the CDE says on [page 6 of its CAS document](#) that “prepared graduates in reading, writing, and communicating” will “read a wide range of literary texts to build knowledge and to better understand the human experience.” This novella meets that expectation. (The standards and EOs are copied below in red for easy reference.)

This novella is relevant for junior and senior students who are approaching adulthood and grappling with

relationships and their own independence as well as the personal impact of politics. The novella's main characters are two 19-year-old boys in China during the Cultural Revolution.

Because the text is set in China, and it's a work in translation (originally written in French) students will need to use context clues and some research to learn new vocabulary and references (EO b.i.) as well as discuss issues of translation.

Students examine the use of craft and structure for novellas and how those contribute to audience understanding of character development and theme (EO a.iii.). The short novel uses the characters' discovery of a stash of Western literature as a way to explore ideas about love, freedom, survival, and honor.

The ending of the play addresses the EOs a.i. and b.ii. by having the Little Seamstress choose to leave the boys, who both wanted her, to go to the city. While they call after her, "she took off like a bird," which invites discussion of the simile. The author also has them recount a possible rationale for her departure, "She said she had learnt one thing from Balzac: that a woman's beauty is a treasure beyond price." This ambiguity about her choices and the boys' reactions allows for discussion of authorial choices and impact on the audience.

The thematic topics of oppression, relationships, power, imagination, education, and freedom give students the chance to "determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account" (EO a.ii.).

Teachers could use the [2002 film version](#) of the novella to address EO c.i., which asks students to evaluate how each version affects interpretation. The writer actually directed this film version.

#### Evidence Outcomes for the 11th/12th grade band - Read a wide range of literary texts

Students Can:

a. Use Key Ideas and Details to:

- i. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. (CCSS: RL.11-12.1)
- ii. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text. (CCSS: RL.11-12.2)
- iii. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (for example: where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed). (CCSS: RL.11-12.3)

b. Use Craft and Structure to:

- i. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.) (CCSS: RL.11- 12.4)
- ii. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (for example: the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact. (CCSS: RL.11-12.5)
- iii. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (for example: satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement). (CCSS: RL.11-12.6)

- c. Use Integration of Knowledge and Ideas to:
- i. By the end of 12th grade, analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (for example: recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (for example: a play by Shakespeare and/or a play by an American dramatist.) (adapted from CCSS: RL.11-12.7)
  - ii. By the end of 12th grade, demonstrate knowledge of foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics. (adapted from CCSS: RL.11- 12.9)
- d. Use Range of Reading and Complexity of Text to:
- i. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. (CCSS: RL.11-12.10)
  - ii. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently. (CCSS RL.11-12.10)

Essential Questions:

1. How does form affect meaning?
2. How is literature a product of its time?
3. How do we analyze texts to deepen our understanding?

Essential Reasoning Skills:

1. Evaluate the ethical implications of a character’s thinking or actions.
2. Examine texts through multiple critical lenses.
3. Rank the significance of multiple texts and justify the ranking.

**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

<https://burlingame.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S76C1391716/reviews>

### **Publisher's Weekly**

The Cultural Revolution of Chairman Mao Zedong altered Chinese history in the 1960s and '70s, forcibly sending hundreds of thousands of Chinese intellectuals to peasant villages for "re-education." This moving, often wrenching short novel by a writer who was himself re-educated in the '70s tells how two young men weather years of banishment, emphasizing the power of literature to free the mind. Sijie's unnamed 17-year-old protagonist and his best friend, Luo, are bourgeois doctors' sons, and so condemned to serve four years in a remote mountain village, carrying pails of excrement daily up a hill. Only their ingenuity helps them to survive. The two friends are good at storytelling, and the village headman commands them to put on "oral cinema shows" for the villagers, reciting the plots and dialogue of movies. When another city boy leaves the mountains, the friends steal a suitcase full of forbidden books he has been hiding, knowing he will be afraid to call the authorities. Enchanted by the prose of a host of European writers, they dare to tell the story of *The Count of Monte Cristo* to the village tailor and to read Balzac to his shy and beautiful young daughter. Luo, who adores the *Little Seamstress*, dreams of transforming her from a simple country girl into a sophisticated lover with his foreign tales. He succeeds beyond his expectations, but the result is not what he might have hoped for, and leads to an unexpected, droll and poignant conclusion. The warmth and humor of Sijie's prose and the clarity of Rilke's translation distinguish this slim first novel, a wonderfully human tale. (Sept. 17)

Forecast: Sijie's debut was a best-seller and prize winner in France in 2000, and rights have been sold in 19 countries; it is also scheduled to be made into a film. Its charm translates admirably—strong sales can be expected on this side of the Atlantic.

### Review #2

#### **School Library Journal Reviews**

Adult/High School-This beautifully presented novella tracks the lives of two teens, childhood friends who have been sent to a small Chinese village for "re-education" during Mao's Cultural Revolution. Sons of doctors and dentists, their days are now spent muscling buckets of excrement up the mountainside and mining coal. But the boys-Luo and the unnamed narrator-receive a bit of a reprieve when the villagers discover their talents as storytellers; they are sent on monthly treks to town, tasked with watching a movie and relating it in detail on their return. It is here that they encounter the little seamstress of the title, whom Luo falls for instantly. When, through a series of comic and clever tricks and favors, the boys acquire a suitcase full of forbidden Western literature, Luo decides to "re-educate" the ignorant girl whom he hopes will become his intellectual match. That a bit of Balzac can have an aphrodisiac effect is a happy bonus. Ultimately, the book is a simple, lovely telling of a classic boy-meets-girl scenario with a folktale's smart, surprising bite at the finish. The story movingly captures Maoism's attempts to imprison one's mind and heart (with the threat of the same for one's body), the shock of the sudden cultural shift for "bourgeois" Chinese, and the sheer delight that books can offer a downtrodden spirit. Though these moments are fewer after the love story is introduced, teens will enjoy them at least as much as the comic and romantic strands.-Emily Lloyd, Fairfax County Public Library, VA Copyright 2001.

Review #3

**Booklist Reviews**

Stories set in China during the Cultural Revolution usually follow a trail of human struggle and tragedy, but this little gem of a book spins magic thread out of broken dreams. Already a best-seller in France and slated for release in 19 countries, this novel is the story of two whimsical young men ordered to the countryside for reeducation as a result of their parents' political designation as "class enemies." Assigned the revolting task of carrying buckets of excrement up a hillside for the peasant farmers, the boys design a venue of storytelling sessions and quickly earn the headman's leniency in return. When they meet the local tailor's beautiful daughter, the luminescent Little Seamstress, and discover a wealth of forbidden Western books, life on the hillside takes a brighter turn. His book is truly enchanting, written with the rhythm of a fable. Dai Sijie is himself a survivor of that fateful time in China's history, yet he incorporates delightful humor into sketching his innovative cast of characters. ((Reviewed September 15, 2001)) Copyright 2001 Booklist Reviews

**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 the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Director.**

**IIa. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by requesting 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	The main characters are about the same age as our upperclassmen.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	There is mature content, but the novella is for upperclassmen.
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	Family and friendships are of prime importance as is the connection to students' learning about world history and oppressive types of governments.
actively engages students through the text	Y	The students will connect to the characters' adventures and mishaps in this story of survival at a re-education camp. They can also relate to the role of literature and art in helping the characters rise above their daily lives.
Gives an opportunity for all students to access	Y	There's an audio version and a film version.
Is in alignment with <a href="#">Board File ADB on Education Equity</a> , AND contributes to an inclusive culture for all students?	Y	Students gain a wider global and historical perspective.
<b>Recommend novel for adoption</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

**Iib. EVALUATION of Book (to be completed by District Coordinator) - Elyse Rhodes**

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 novel is classified as Adult/High School. It is appropriate for 11th and 12th grades.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	The novel is appropriate for 11th and 12th grades.
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	The novel explores relationships (friendship, first love, families) and government (communism, revolutionaries, and rebelling against injustices like book banning and forced labor).
actively engages students through the text	Y	The novel takes place in China and addresses the re-education of Chinese teenagers in 1971. Chairman Mao closes all of the universities and sends students who graduated high school to the country to be re-educated by poor peasants. Students are forced to be laborers, books are illegal, and anyone thought to be revolutionaries are jailed and labeled as enemies of the people. The themes in this novel will be very interesting to 11th and 12th grade students.
Gives an opportunity for all students to access	Y	This novel is available in a number of formats (physical copy, eBook, audiobook).
Is in alignment with <a href="#">Board File ADB on Education Equity</a> , AND contributes to an inclusive culture for all students?	Y	This novel is similar to <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> and <i>The Crucible</i> , both of which take place in the USA. However, this novel allows students to read a text about China with similar themes to <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> and <i>The Crucible</i> .
<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	11/12 is appropriate for this text.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	The novella contains content that would require maturity and therefore be appropriate only for upperclassmen.
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	The setting during China’s “lost years” of cultural revolution provides students with opportunities to make historical connections. The topics/themes regarding the power of literature and human connection and the harms of censorship/anti-intellectualism lead to modern connections.
actively engages students through the text	Y	There is humor as well as depth to the literary elements of the text. The first person narration will be familiar to students who regularly consume less challenging YA fiction.
Gives an opportunity for all students to access	Y	Pretought vocabulary will be necessary, but with guidance, the text is accessible, especially with the length of both the novella and its chapters.
Is in alignment with <a href="#">Board File ADB on Education Equity</a> , AND contributes to an inclusive culture for all students?	Y	This novella contains perspectives otherwise missing from our current text offerings.
<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) Kate Muus**

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	11/12
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	There is some content in the novella that requires maturity on the part of student readers.
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	There is some great language in this story and the novella provides an interesting perspective that is missing from our current book selection
actively engages students through the text	Y	The novella is engaging and interesting
Gives an opportunity for all students to access	Y	Yes. All students can access the novel.
<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)- Steve Block**

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	Some more mature themes in the book could lead to a rich discussion in class. One interesting idea is an appreciation for the current rights we have in this country and how valuable literature and arts are, and how we take our freedom of speech for granted.
requires parent permission for students to read the book?	N	The book is appropriate for older readers who can approach the content with more maturity.
allows students to create meaning and make relevant connections to other knowledge and experience	Y	This book takes place during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, so students will be able to make connections to world history, specifically the spread of communism during the Twentieth Century. Students will also make connections to government and the different types of governments (autocratic/communist/single party) and the consequences that come with them.
actively engages students through the text	Y	Some entertaining stories and predicaments the main characters become involved in, plus the main characters are roughly the same age as our students.
Gives an opportunity for all students to access	Y	When paired with the appropriate reading level, yes.
<b>Recommend novel for adoption</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> X- Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

**SECTION III: Requestor/Educator & District Coordinator Level Process Review**

**IIIa. Grade Level Recommendations (to be collaborated on between Requesting Educator & District Coordinator 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			ER, HP
1			ER, HP
2			ER, HP
3			ER, HP
4			ER, HP
5			ER, HP
6			ER, HP
7			ER, HP
8			ER, HP
9			ER, HP
10			ER, HP
11	ER, HP		
12	ER, HP		

**SECTION V: Signatures/Approvals**

**Va.**

Does the evaluating <b>Educator</b> recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Oct 09 2023</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluating Educator Signature <u>Heather Pitzel</u>		

**Vb.**

Does the evaluating <b>Colleague</b> recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Oct 10 2023</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluating Colleague Signature <u>Shannon Doyle</u>		

**Vc.**

Does the evaluating <b>Parent #1</b> recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Oct 10 2023</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluating Parent (#1) Signature <u>Kate Muus</u>		

**Vd.**

Does the evaluating <b>Parent (#2)</b> recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Oct 10 2023</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluating Parent (#2) Signature <u>Steve Block</u>		

**Ve.**

Does the evaluating educator's <b>Administrator</b> recommend adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Oct 11 2023</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administrator Signature <u>Greg Gatchey</u>		

**Vf.**

Does the <b>District Coordinator</b> certify that the information on this form accurately reflects the process followed at the site.	YES	NO
Date <u>Oct 11 2023</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
District Coordinator Signature <u>Elyse Rhoades</u>		

**Vg.**

Does the <b>Director of Library Programming</b> support adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Oct 11 2023</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Director of Library Programming Signature <u>Tracie King</u>		

**Vh.**

Does the <b>DCSD Cabinet Member</b> support adoption of this book?	YES	NO
Date <u>Oct 11 2023</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DCSD Cabinet Member Signature <u>Matt Reynolds</u>		

**SECTION VI: Superintendent's Approval**

**SUPERINTENDENT'S APPROVAL**

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

**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 CIA folder on District server		