To Kill a Mockingbird

Book Rationale

Dear Parents,

We will be beginning the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* this week in all tenth grade literature classes. I have provided below a rationale for this classic American novel. I ask that parents review the rationale and/or the book before we begin reading Monday, October 18; I have extra copies of the book in the classroom if needed for parental viewing. If you prefer that your child not read this selection for any reason, an alternative novel and lesson will be provided. Permission slips must be returned by Friday, October 15. If a slip is not returned requesting an alternative novel, the student will be asked to read *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Rationale and notes on the text:

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The novel is a Pulitzer Prize winner and has been selected by the College Board as one of the *Great Books Recommended for College Bound Readers*. Over the course of three summers during the 1930’s, the main character, Scout; her brother, Jem; and summer neighbor, Dill; experience the trials and tribulations of growing up in a racially-prejudiced community in Alabama. Weaving together stories about neighbors (the reclusive Boo Radley; the opinionated Mrs. Dubose; the nicest person they know, Maudie Adkins), a controversial trial of an African American (Tom

Robinson) accused by a white man, and the familial every day happenings of the Finch Family, Miss Lee delivers an unforgettable story. The children’s father, Atticus Finch, is the moral lightning rod who teaches the children and the reader that “you never really know someone until you walk around in their shoes….consider things from their point of view.” This classic text includes some mild profanities as the precocious Scout tries to attract the attention of others. In addition, the “n” word is used to present the racial prejudice of the story; however, the author reveals to the reader that this is not an appropriate term. The topics of racism and segregation are addressed. As the court case revolves around an alleged rape, there is testimony associated with this topic. Please be advised that the best way to evaluate a text is by reading it in its entirety.

Please check the statement that applies, fill in the student name, and sign at the bottom.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, has permission to read and participate in unit activities for

the classic novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, does not have permission to read the classic novel *To Kill*

*a Mockingbird*. Please send me alternative selections. (Rationales will not be provided for

alternative selections. Parents are responsible for pre-reading the materials.)

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Parent Signature Date