

Dear Clark-Pleasant Parents/Guardians:

The eighth grade students will begin a new unit this semester covering the Little Rock Nine, the first African American students to racially integrate Little Rock High School during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. We will read *Warriors Don’t Cry,* which is the memoir of Melba Patillo Beals, one of the original nine students to integrate.

Because *Warriors Don’t Cry* contains some strong language as well as mature content around race and gender, we want to share why we think this book is the best choice for our students:

* The language shows the fierce struggle our characters endured as well as the challenges of integration.
* As an African American author, Mrs. Patillo Beals decided to include this language. While it is distasteful, it gives a clear picture of the incredible discrimination she faced.
* Reading about the reaction of the Little Rock Nine to strong language helps students understand the power of words and the importance of relating to people in respectful ways.
* Many of the topics in the novel relate to issues in current news events.
* The story shows the importance of standing up for what is right and the value of perseverance in the face of difficult situations.
* The argumentative devices students will find in the memoir will prepare them for the challenges of high school as well as the approaching ISTEP exam.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with your child’s English teacher to share questions, concerns, or request a copy of the memoir for you to make a more informed decision.

Thank you,

8th Grade English Staff

Clark-Pleasant Middle School