



Adequate Yearly Progress

Roxanna Elden

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From the mundane to the insane, Adequate Yearly Progress captures the teaching experience with insight, humor, and heart.

Each year brings familiar educational challenges to Brae Hill Valley, a struggling urban high school in Texas. But the school's teachers face plenty of challenges of their own. English teacher Lena Wright, a spoken-word poet with a deep love for her roots, can never seem to satisfy her students that she's for real. Hernan D. Hernandez is confident in front of his biology classes, yet tongue-tied around the woman he most wants to impress: namely, Lena. Down the hall, math teacher Maybelline Galang focuses on the numbers as she blocks out problems whose solutions aren't so clear, while Coach Ray hustles his football team toward another winning season, at least on the field. Recording it all is idealistic history teacher Kaytee Mahoney, whose blog gains new readers by the day but drifts ever further from her in-class reality. And this year, a new celebrity superintendent is determined to leave his own mark on the school—even if that means shutting the whole place down. The fallout will shake up the teachers' lives both inside and outside the classroom.

Adequate Yearly Progress Details

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Author : Roxanna Elden

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From Reader Review Adequate Yearly Progress for online ebook

Zakia says

This is a great read. I got to read an advanced copy through Netgalley.

As a teacher, I found this book super relatable. Each of the characters reminds me of someone (or several someones!) I've worked with. There are a plethora of little details that filled my teacher's heart. For example, there is a great juxtaposition between the two potential love interests of the protagonist. It is a small detail, that I loved, and the type of thing I would point out in an English class. I loved the way the blog comments were riddle with errors in spelling and grammar, just like in real life. I have taught in Houston, Boston (and just outside of Boston, and DC- so the evaluation process in the book was quite familiar. However, this is not just a book for teachers. There is real relationship drama that happens to all people- and everyone has an annoying coworker. Those are just a few of the ways that this book is relatable to a wide audience. I highly recommend this book.

Honestly, I cannot say enough about how much I enjoyed reading AYP.

Dora Okeyo says

This book served me a variety of characters that were quite similar to the kind of teachers I had in school. It's quite hilarious as it is thought provoking and I got to read a copy of it through NetGalley in exchange for this honest take of mine. I reckon teachers or any administrator who is familiar with AYP would enjoy this read, and so would anyone who's ever been in a classroom.

Ramona says

Best novel on teaching since Up the Down Staircase

This book is amazing!! Every single character was a perfect fit for people I have encountered in my 37 year career. More than any book or film I have seen, this book gets what it is like to teach at a school that is under the gun over test scores. So good! The descriptions of the superintendent and the consultant are spot on, as is the "write on the board" requirements. I loved this book.

Kathy says

This book is entertaining and a fun read. If you have ever been to school, you will relate to the absurdity of the situations occurring in Brae Hill Valley High School. If you have a job with a less-than-perfect boss, you will understand the plight of the teachers in this setting. If you are a sports fan, you will appreciate Coach Ray's difficulties cultivating "scholar athletes." If you are a parent, you will identify with, and smile at, the author's humorous descriptions of families' handling of cheerleading uniforms, homework, bumper stickers, and sneaky teenagers, all carefully detailed complexities of sending any child to school. If you are a teacher, the story will conjure all those "strange-but-true" memories of work situations, characters, and administrative

memos that you thought you had buried. But even the "not teacher" readers will enjoy the story, and the author keeps her audience speculating about the state of education today and about the fanciful invention that is her plot. But teacher or not, everyone will laugh out loud and wonder, just a little bit, about which parts could be real and which are artfully designed by the author to generate that laugh!

Reema Hamdan says

Adequate Yearly Progress offers a hilarious glimpse at public school life behind the scenes. Roxanna Elden captures the struggles of several teachers from varying ethnic and social backgrounds, and demonstrates how they come together to form one complete staff in a modern, public high school. Elden has a hilarious way of delving into policies and demonstrating how they effect teachers, which makes this novel both informative and entertaining. I couldn't put this book down, and I highly recommend it for anyone interested in laughing while also learning more about big city education.

Amanda (Books, Life and Everything Nice) says

Thank you to NetGalley, the author and publisher for a copy of the book. As always, an honest review.

Adequate Yearly Progress accurately captures what I would imagine it's like to work in an inner city high school. The story starts out a few days before the beginning of the school year. There's a new superintendent who is ready to make some changes. Maybe with the students' best interests at heart, but definitely with an enormous lack of experience in the school setting. It sets up what's bound to be an eventful school year.

The chapters are told from different teachers points of view. This choice keeps the book fresh, interesting, and moving along quickly. The reader also gets a well rounded perspective of all the happenings within the high school. We mainly follow Lena, Hernan, Maybelline and the football coach. I like that the characters are diverse regarding gender, age, race, and life experiences. The story is a discussion about life in and out of the classroom. I really appreciated when the story would show the rich complex inner lives of the teachers. A great combination of serious and funny. I also liked the inclusion of one teacher's blog posts. I found it fun, modern, and added an additional perspective.

Most of the book was amazing; there were a few aspects that I didn't enjoy as much. A few of the teachers bothered me, personality wise. It's in keeping with a realistic perspective of a school, but they could still really annoy me at times. Also, the ending of the school year seemed a little rushed. However the teachers' personal lives were well paced.

Overall I really enjoyed getting to know the teachers in Adequate Yearly Progress. A humorous, realistic perspective of teaching with all of its challenges and wonderful moments. Definitely give this a read when it's released!

*My rating is actually 4.5 stars, but since there aren't half stars here, I always round up.

Paula Pugh says

If you have ever worked in any business that always has some new program or idea that will improve, grow, better the situation/business, you will surely relate to this book. Even if you have not, you will engage with the story and the characters.

The trials of four teachers and a principal at Brae Hill Valley High School are told as the new and improved year progresses and impacts each of them. I liked that Ms. Elden included the characters' lives outside the high school which gives them depth and connects them to their reactions to the newly instituted changes. Having survived the same type of new program will improve productivity drudgery, I found myself cheering some teachers and cringing at others and at many situations described. I can totally get this book!

Ginger says

I love this book! The characters are so real and relatable, I felt completely part of their "lives". I did not want to put it down.

Kathy says

I would like to thank NetGalley and the publisher for the opportunity to read Adequate Yearly Progress in exchange for an honest review. The book is a perfect story for any teacher or school administrator. Set in a school district in Texas that has a difficult time with student achievement, the book follows Lena, Maybelline, Hernan and Kaytee as they navigate through a new school year with a big-time new superintendent who brings changes to the district that may or may not be an improvement. The wit and humor of the story lie in the fact that, of course, the teachers know the best way to get their students to respond, but they have to fight "upper management" and the impossible standards and ideals in order to get the job done. Anyone who has ever worked in a school in any capacity will enjoy the daily grind of the characters trying to maintain their personal lives while juggling the responsibilities of teaching jobs that are an uphill battle.

Andy says

Laughter may not be our next school reform initiative--though imagine all the hoot and a half inservice training days those comedic geniuses down at the school board could cook up if it were, but it will be your constant companion as Ms. Elden takes you on a magical journey where economy car driving teachers have their souls #2-pencil-tested away to justify the jobs of data-hungry administrators and bureaucrats. It's just like The Sound of Music, but no music, and the only sound's coming out of a crackly P.A. system.

Adequate Yearly Progress keeps us laughing while we learn all about the lives of the very human teachers just trying to keep up.

Faith says

I taught middle school and high school English for two years after college. I happened to become a statistic by leaving teaching early, although the reason I did was primarily because of a move out of state that would have meant I would have a *third* first year of teaching. I feared I would burn out with all the prep work required, particularly given the atmosphere of the public school environment was so much different from what I had trained for and taught in previously. I worked in a relatively small district that boasted two highly ranked liberal arts colleges in town, with invested parents who were firmly behind teachers, and most students had some self-motivation to succeed. Then I moved to a larger city where the graduation rate was much lower and there were metal detectors in the schools. For my own mental preservation and in acknowledgment I would likely be over my head and unsuccessful, I stepped away.

I still have a fondness for stories that focus on teachers, so when I heard of the premise of *Adequate Yearly Progress*, I picked up the book. Each chapter is told from the points of view of several teachers and administrators. Brae Hill Valley High School is located in the inner city and is receiving special focus from the new superintendent, who sends in a young consultant with more power than he deserves due to his limited classroom experience.

We get glimpses into the lives of the educators inside and out of the classroom. The cast of characters includes the coach more focused on winning football games, the earnest woman from Teach Corps who is convinced she knows better than seasoned teachers how to motivate and succeed, the English teacher who is a spoken-word poet outside of the classroom but struggles to be effective when her teenage students read more at an elementary level, the rigid math teacher who maintains a thin grasp on sanity with her plastic-sleeved binders, and the acronym-loving administrators who want numbers to improve but insist on less than helpful means that actually stand in the way of progress.

I was entertained by the book, seeing aspects of myself in different characters from my short time teaching and being able to resonate with struggles in the book. There's no one hero, as everyone is flawed, but that led to a genuine story and you find yourself rooting for (and against) specific characters. It feels tongue-in-cheek at points with the various caricatures, but that may be what helped me enjoy the story. And there are embedded truths that lead to genuine reflection on how there is a huge disparity in public schools in our country, based on socioeconomic status:

"Rich kids could mess up and still go on to college. They could commit crimes and still go on to become CEOs. They could cheat on their taxes, or defraud sick people, or run banks into the ground, and leave others to clean up their messes. Hell, they could even become president.

"Meanwhile, one screw-up could transform a kid like Gerard Brown or O'Neal Rigby from a superstar into a big guy with a criminal record who did menial jobs and made authority figures nervous."

(I was given a digital ARC from NetGalley and Rivet Street Books in exchange for my honest review.)

Ms. Dewsbury says

Love this book! The author does a great job with multiple perspectives of an interesting and believable cast of teacher characters. As someone who has taught for 12 years at three different schools, I think she nailed it!

Summer says

I loved this book!

The story is told through alternating perspectives of several different teachers in the same high-needs urban school district. The teachers' professional and personal lives allows the reader to really see them in various lights.

Reading this felt the same way as watching a workplace sitcom (i.e. The Office, 30 Rock, Parks & Rec).

There was plenty of comedy and satire but also plenty of emotion as well.

As a future teacher, I definitely appreciated all of the references to education but I would recommend this book to ANYONE.

Melina says

In Adequate Yearly Progress, teachers at Brae Hill High School deal with the changes that come with a new superintendent and a new school year.

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As a teacher, I don't think I've ever read a more realistic portrayal of teaching. The teachers created by Roxanna Elden are teachers represented in every public school.

I was hooked from the start but was hoping for a little more in the ending. Overall a great read before heading back to the classroom.

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Thank you NetGalley and Rivet Street Books for this ARC!

Adequate Yearly Progress will be released August 1st, just in time for a new school year.

Cindy says

Thank you NetGalley for the copy of Adequate Yearly Progress. What a great first novel to review! As an educator I was drawn to the title because of course AYP is an acronym that we spend a lot of time with. The author talked the talk of someone who has walked the walk. Her characters were so right on that I laughed out loud! The accurate depictions of teachers in staff meetings, in the copy room, and at happy hour were just perfect! The staff development specialist, 'a heavily accessorized, well connected former teacher,' who tried desperately to capture her audience with inane gimmicks that they could take back to the classroom was spot on! I liked the diversity in the teachers as they struggled with the constant onslaught of best practice, mandated by outside agencies that had dubious irons in the fire.

I enjoyed this book and will recommend it to my teacher friends. It would be a fun book club pick, and not just for educators. I think the general public will gain a new appreciation for where and how some of the latest buzz words come into play, and how quality teaching can be overlooked by someone who is just going by test scores. So much to talk about!
