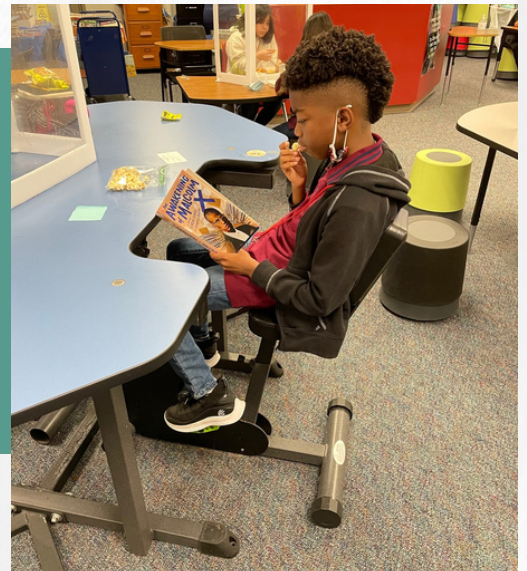


LATOYA BLOUNT



As I child I wasn't an avid reader. I would read here and there, but it wasn't a lifestyle. It wasn't until I became a mother that my love for reading began. Every book I read to my son, fanned a flame that was lying dormant deep inside my heart. Book after book, the flame continues to burn a lasting passion that I can't help but share with others.

Beginning my educational journey, I knew I wanted to change the way students view reading and value books. My passion is to empower a group of students to follow me on a journey, to a land that may seem unfamiliar because of the stigma that has been placed on reading, and those who love to read. Together we can build a culture that they will carry through the rest of their lives.

It has been my desire to provide books that act as a mirror for each of my students. Books that allow them to see themselves, their families, friends, and relationships. Books that teach about the endless possibilities, introduces new cultures, and show there is so much more to explore in this world.

One thing I have realized is there is a disconnect between the public library, schools, and the community. I want to change that. This year I initiated "Ms. Blount's Visionaries' Library Day". This event is held at the Clara B. Mounce Public Library. The goal driving this initiative is for students to obtain library cards, check out books, and participate in fun activities. My desire is to bridge the gap between the schools, communities, and the library. Allowing students to make unpressured choices in their reading has helped my students become strong, independent readers.

Penny Kittle was a presenter at a Literacy Professional Development after Christmas break. That day changed my life as an educator. I've watched several YouTube videos of Penny Kittle's students discussing how many books they have read throughout the year, compared to how many books they read before entering her class. Hearing the stories opened my eyes to the fact that there are people succeeding in building a love for reading.

The Book Love Foundation is helping a teacher continue on a quest to build a culture of reading and to enhance the voices of my students by increasing the amount of diversity in my classroom library. Together we can build a family of readers who move the world!

“Show me a family of readers, and I will show you the people who move the world.” Napoleon Bonaparte

