

Michelle Davies

Memphis, Tennessee



Michelle is in her 18th year teaching high school English. New to Crosstown High School in Memphis, TN, she hopes to bring her love of independent reading to this community. She understands the difficulty in making this transition as she herself has had to abandon units on literary favorites like Cather in the Rye. She, however, has seen the amazing results this switch has had on her students' love for books and their abilities to tackle ELA standards.

Peek into her classroom, and by the glow of twinkle lights, observers will see students lounging on comfy cushions and couches, reading their choice novels taken from her bookshelves lining the room. The students and she work together on poems, excerpts and shorter works during class to hone their skills, and then apply those skills to their choice novels. The students are experts! she enjoys being there for them to answer questions, read over their work, and act as a sounding board for their ideas. The transformation in her classroom rekindled her own love of reading. Suddenly, she found herself consuming as many young adult novels as possible to have an arsenal of recommendations for her students.

Because of the move from Michigan to Tennessee, she did have to leave many of her beloved books behind. This grant will help her restock her shelves with new and exciting titles, including graphic novels, the books that seem to disappear from her shelves most often. Her ultimate hope is to show how successful independent reading is in her own classroom so that her colleagues will feel inspired and supported to do the same.