

# ABOUT HOPE STOJKOV

ENGLISH INSTRUCTOR



Hope Stojkov is in her 9th year of teaching English at the Trumbull Career and Technical Center where she creates reading magic in her classroom. Hope currently teaches students in The Early Innovators STEM Academy and centers her teaching around building a love of reading and writing. Hope's love of reading and dedication to choice reading, access to books, and writing allows her kids to grow as both individuals and as a community. Hope holds both a bachelor's and master's degree from Youngstown State University, where she first learned about Penny Kittle, and has been practicing the craft of choice reading ever since. Year after year, Hope teaches students to fall in love with reading and flourish as they find themselves (and others!) in the pages of books. Hope believes that the more students get lost in books, the more they find themselves in the world.

## TRUMBULL CAREER & TECHNICAL CENTER

Convincing students at a career and technical center that reading is important, valuable, and cool, is a tall order. At the start of most school years, my students laugh at me when I tell them about our reading expectations, and they challenge me with words that only make my hunger to reach them greater: I hate reading.

Though some students of mine come to me as lovers of reading, most need major convincing. The books in my classroom do the work for me. The authors whose stories differ greatly from mine, whose lives reflect my students' skin color, sense of humor, experience, age, gender, and homelife line my chalkboard shelf. Titles shared during book talks speak to my kids in a way I never can, they grip the dormant reader and pull them in whispering: I know you. Or, *you know me*. Interviews from authors are played and silence fills my noisy classroom as my students listen in to someone who writes books but *also* talks like their best friend. The books in my classroom are not dusty paperbacks passed down to me from teachers before, they are living entities that breathe life and love into my classroom. When new books are in my classroom it is like a new student has arrived and kids inquire about where it came from, what's that book all about, *is it for me?* And, when kids leave for the summer, some books remain with them, in their minds, and sometimes in their trucks; I too know what it feels like to not want to part with the first book that ever made you a reader.

Day after day I set stacks of books on top of desks, leave post-it's on books that indicate "This ones for YOU" and I read right beside them so that they can see me do the work that I love in hopes that this will inspire them to turn to the next page. But, at the end of the day, I am only as convincing as the books I am able to give to them. There is reality to the work that I, as a teacher, am able to do. With books, however, there is no telling how many lives can be changed and influenced, or inspired.

To receive this Book Love Foundation grant fills my heart with gratitude. I am filled with joy to have my name alongside past and present recipients. Though I may not know them, I understand their purpose in the classroom. I understand why they choose to do what they do, and I, too, shed tears when a student who promises "I hate reading" reads past the allocated reading time for that day. There is magic in what we do as educators and being able to have more books to feed that magic means that my students will never go hungry.

