

# Teaching as Kate Hodges

By: Lilyanna Hayes

Kate Hodges is an English teacher at Oak Hills High School. She has been teaching here for about 5 years and going into her 6th year, but this year has been a little different for her. Although she's used to teaching inside the building, she has switched to Virtual Academy this year



If you had Kate Hodges as a teacher, you will not forget her. Hodges is always there for her students, she cares about how they write and makes sure that they are writing to their fullest potential. We asked Kayden Thomsson how Hodges has helped them in school or even personally and he said, "Whenever I am having a bad day at a school I always want to go sit in her room. She's always there to listen to whatever I have to say and always gives amazing advice no matter what I talk about. She is probably the best teacher in the Oak Hills School District I have ever had. She cares about your personal growth and your writing growth." She is always moving her schedule around to just help her students, whether it's school-related or personal

We asked Hodges what she missed most/what her favorite part of teaching was, she responded with, "My students. Period. I picked English as my focus subject area because it was something I enjoyed more than other subjects, but ultimately, I could teach anything. I do this so I can connect with students. I love designing lessons and assessments that allow students to use their learning in a way that is useful and meaningful. Often the way we teach and assess content in schools is not how this material is applied outside of the school walls. I like to make the learning applicable, so students can see immediately why this matters. I also enjoy watching it all "click" for students. That magic moment where you "get it"- there is nothing better than that!" Hodges always tries her hardest to make sure all of her students succeed in what she is teaching. She makes sure that the students understand and learn her content before they leave her classroom, and that makes her a fantastic teacher.

The amazing thing about Hodges is that she didn't even know she was going to be a teacher. When asked about her becoming a teacher and if she knew she was going to do it she responded with, "No! I hated school and if someone told me in high school, I would be a teacher, I would've never believed them. It wasn't until I was in my early 20s that I decided to be a teacher. I really enjoyed my college classes and professors- and I finally felt "good" at school. I am a 3rd generation teacher, so my mom really pushed me to be a teacher. She works as a professor at SUNY in the College of Ed. and she believes if more teachers

weren't natural academics in high school, they would be more empathetic and engaging teachers. I am not sure if her theory is true, but I am so grateful that I decided to teach." She learned to love teaching and everyone she has met. She has met one of her closest friends at Oak Hills and met hundreds of students that have loved her through the years.

We asked her why out of all the schools she could have picked, why Oak Hills High School? She answered back with, "I actually didn't know anything about Oak Hills. I just wanted to work with kids- it didn't matter where to me. I went to a job fair at Xavier a few weeks before graduation with one of my good friends. We passed out our resumes, and both received a call back from Oak Hills. We ended up competing for the job, which was pretty awkward at the time. After three rounds of interviews, including teaching English 2 with Mrs. Tuchfarber and Lierman, I got the job!" Speaking on behalf of the students that have and know Kate Hodges, thank God she picked Oak Hills! She is an amazing teacher, day in and day out. She puts in the work every chance to make sure her students are growing into the writers she knows that they can be. Another student from Oak Hills, junior Rylee Tebbe, who had Kate freshmen year said about her, "Hodges helped me grow into a better person, not only did she teach me how to write strong and powerful writings but she helped me become a strong and powerful person." Hodges has helped many people in life and affected them for the better, and that is why so many people love her as a teacher and as a person.

This year sadly things have changed, due to the pandemic and coronavirus, Hodges was asked to work for the online learning program. Due to personal reasons, she took the job, however, a lot of students have missed her this year and are hoping she can return in the school year 2021-2022. Everyone's teaching is a little different this year and everyone can be impacted. So we asked how has coronavirus affects your teaching to students? She came back with, "Well, I am teaching in the Virtual Academy, which is challenging because I don't get to plan and my interactions with students, it is more sporadic. I can definitely understand what our students in the Virtual Academy are going through, because I am at home, and it is often isolating. I am very grateful for the opportunity to be safe and healthy- and still do what I love. It's just different and most of what I do is supporting students- since I don't get to plan and there is little teaching involved." Although she is not in the building, she is still helping with the yearbook for Oak Hills. She is trying to help the school when she cannot be here, and that is why Hodges is a fantastic teacher, she cares for her students in and outside of the school whenever she can!

