

# Mindy Collins

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It is an honor to be selected as Teacher of the Year for Grove Public Schools. Our district is made-up of some of the most dedicated, highly-qualified teachers in the state, so to be selected by my peers to represent our building and then by an interviewing committee to represent our school is a very humbling experience.

This is my 10<sup>th</sup> year at Grove Middle School. People think I'm crazy when I say this, but I love teaching middle school students! I student-taught here and was lucky enough to be hired the following year. Since beginning my career at Grove, at one time or another, I have taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade English, as well as ACE Reading. This year I am thrilled to be adding 7<sup>th</sup> grade Reading to that list. I have also coached middle school girls' basketball and track.

My decision to become an educator was greatly influenced by two wonderful teachers. My middle school English teacher was the typical "old school" English teacher. She taught me the necessity of organization, and she showed me the importance of quality composition. My high school English teacher, on the other hand, was much more free thinking. She introduced me to the exciting world of literature: short stories, poetry, and novels. They were both very dedicated and interested in the success of their students and played such a huge role in my interest in academics that I decided I wanted to do the same for other children someday. So, in my quest to mold the two styles into one, I hope I have come up with a successful mixture of structure, creativity, compassion, and understanding.