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# PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVES

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**Rebecca Pflughoeft, KATE President**  
McPherson High School

## Abstract

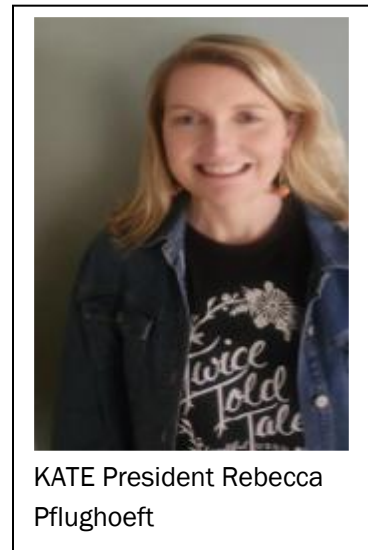
KATE President Rebecca Pflughoeft shares a personal story of how influential English language arts (ELA) teachers sparked her lifelong passion for reading and writing, shaping her path from an intended social science teacher to an ELA educator. Pflughoeft emphasizes the importance of fostering a love of reading and maintaining high expectations for students; expresses gratitude for the unexpected opportunities within KATE, including serving as its president; and celebrates the community of passionate ELA teachers.

**Keywords:** KATE, imagination, creativity, English Language Arts (ELA), reading, writing, dedicated teachers, classroom experiences, gratitude

The theme for the Kansas Association of Teachers of English Fall 2026 Conference “Reading and Writing Between Worlds—Imagination and Creativity in ELA” affords us an opportunity to ponder on where we have been and where we are going as English language arts (ELA) educators. As has been the case with many opportunities that have presented themselves to me during my lifetime, my involvement with KATE has taken me on unexpected journeys, connected me with wonderful, collaborative ELA educators from across Kansas, provided me with opportunities that I could never have imagined for myself, and reminded me of where my love for ELA began. In a short time, I have been honored to participate, learn, grow, connect, and serve in KATE, an association of which I am now proud to serve as president.

Not many things in my life have gone as originally planned. I initially set out to become a secondary social science teacher. I often stop and connect the dots along my journey, and they always lead back to the teachers who inspired me to be who I still dream about becoming the best version of to this day. I wasn’t aware while I was growing up, but my ELA teachers made an impact on my life that often causes me to stop and ponder where I was as their student and where I am now as an ELA teacher with my own students.

My sixth-grade teacher inspired such a strong love of reading in her students by providing time to sit and devour books. Drop Everything and Read Days were super special in her classroom. By junior high, it was evident that the ELA teachers at the secondary level in my school district had a relentless expectation of excellence from their students. I wanted to meet their expectations and perform at a successful level. What they were saying and doing became important to me. I was taught the proper rules of grammar and composition, how to read and analyze literature, conduct research, write essays and research papers, write and deliver speeches, and how to act and sing in a musical, all by my outstanding ELA teachers. I had no idea then how much of an impact they were making on my life and how the dots along my journey would connect and eventually lead me to my



KATE President Rebecca Pflughoeft

own ELA classroom. I now zealously work to help my own students foster and maintain a love of reading and also have relentless expectations of excellence for them.

My planned journey of becoming a secondary social science teacher led me into a special education classroom where I taught resource reading. The love and interest in the written word that was ignited back in the sixth grade and continued to be supported throughout my adolescent years eventually led me to a secondary ELA classroom.

Imagine my surprise when I recently learned that one of my high school ELA teachers was a long-time member of KATE. She was an editor of KATE's Update newsletter. I got teary when I became aware of this fact. I also found myself a bit hopeful that my teachers would be proud of the work that I do each day, aspiring to be as great an educator as they were for me. I find myself remembering the skills that they instilled in me when I'm teaching my own students how to read, write, and critically think in the real world while they imagine the futures that they can and will create for themselves.

I am incredibly honored to serve as the President of KATE. Much like many of the dots along my journey, this position was not a stop that I planned along the way. I am proud to serve such a wonderful association of the greatest teachers from across the state. I am thankful for the members of KATE who have had a hand in inspiring me to connect and serve. I truly believe that ELA teachers are some of the coolest people on Earth. There isn't a day that I'm not proud to walk on this journey with all of you. May we all continue to make our teachers proud and to serve our students by helping them imagine and create the world of their dreams.

### Author Biography

Rebecca Pflughoeft (B.A. Social Science Education, History, Political Science; M.S., Adaptive Special Education) is the current President of the Kansas Association of Teachers of English. She teaches English at McPherson High School, USD 418 McPherson Public Schools. She is a member of NCTE and serves on the William Allen White Book Awards Selection Committee. She can be reached at [rebecca.pflughoeft@mcpherson.com](mailto:rebecca.pflughoeft@mcpherson.com) or [kansasenglishpresident@gmail.com](mailto:kansasenglishpresident@gmail.com).



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