

## Member Spotlight – Eddie Vautrain

**The Bio:** I'll be entering my 19th year of teaching high school English. I taught at Nantucket HS (MA) my first year, then five years at Needham HS (MA), and will be entering my 13th year at Old Saybrook HS (CT). I have taught all grades in my career, but I have taught freshmen and juniors more than any other students. I have taught literature courses of various levels, electives such as journalism and creative writing, and AP Language & Composition. I am excited to teach a new course next year called News Media Now.



**A Favorite Book:** I have found that a balanced approach of integrating past and present readings works best. For example, I love teaching the Odyssey because of its poetry and timeless themes. Last year, we then transitioned to several contemporary verse novels with diverse authors as part of a poetry unit with the freshmen. The students enjoyed the units and gained much from being immersed in poetry from different time periods.

**A Go-to Strategy:** One of my go-to instructional strategies is to help students make some sort of connection to the material. I often have them respond to questions about the material's relevance today, particularly how it might relate to them. It works because it engages students in the lessons while also hopefully tapping into their long-term memory and learning.

**An Influence:** I have been very fortunate to have had many wonderful teachers in my life. However, Jeanne Proctor, a former Old Saybrook English teacher, influenced my teaching in profound ways, ones that I'm still realizing. She was the best teacher I've ever seen, able to teach equally well to students of all abilities and interests. She set high expectations, demanded maximum effort, and worked tirelessly to help students perform to the best of their abilities.

**Something Personal:** I run and play soccer to stay in shape and distract myself from being too focused on teaching. I read and write for pleasure - as much as possible! And I spend a lot of time with my family: my wife Suzann, son Connor, and daughters Olive and Lucy.