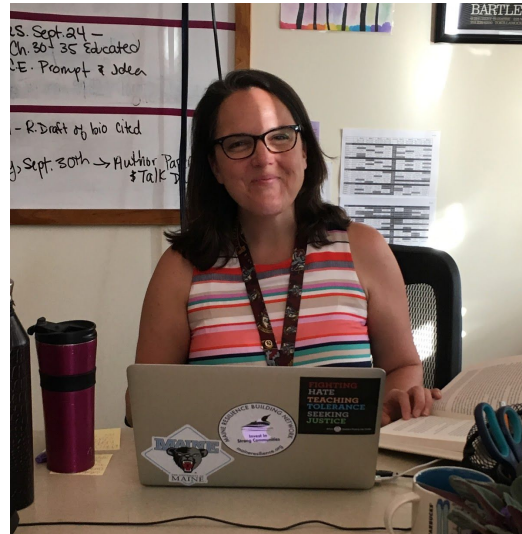


## Member Spotlight – Sherry Pineau Brown

**The Bio:** I started teaching at Chatfield Senior High School in Littleton, Colorado in 2000. Since then, I have taught 17 years of 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade English at all levels including AP Literature and Composition. At the college level, I have also taught Composition, Introduction to Literature, Introduction to Drama, Creative Writing, and Educational Psychology. Now I teach 11th and 12th grade English at Waterville Senior High School in Waterville, Maine and am also a Ph.D. Candidate in Prevention and Intervention Studies at the University of Maine. My interests include teaching resilience through trauma in literature as well as the effects of resilience and compassion fatigue on teachers.

**A Favorite Book:** Most recently, I paired teaching the College Essay with *Educated* by Tara Westover. My students found her coming-of-age story deeply touching and wildly engaging. I find that each of Westover's chapters are beautifully composed personal essays within themselves that serve as models for students' own writing. I also used the book to teach resilience, which helped students think of their own stories in new ways.

**An Influence:** I find that at different points in my life, a new mentor comes along to help me to the next stage of life. In my writing life, my Obi-Wan Kenobi came in the form of the fabulous Monica Wood, the author of a number of books and plays including *When We Were the Kennedys*, *Ernie's Ark*, and *The One-in-a-Million Boy*. She is not only a beautiful soul, but she is also the best writing teacher I have ever had. In my teaching, reading Paul Tough's *How Children Succeed* has had an immense impact on how I view education and my students.



**A Go-to Strategy:** A few years ago I developed a strategy of teaching the concepts of trauma and resilience through the characters in books. I first have students identify characters' adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as abuse and neglect and then discuss how those experiences affect the characters' emotions and behaviors. I then have students identify and discuss characters' protective factors such as the proximity of caring adults, the characters' level of optimism, as well as other skills, strengths, supports, and coping strategies. By adding the focus of protective factors and characters' resilience, I hope that students are able to identify those factors in their own lives and capitalize on them. I developed the strategy with Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but just added it to *Educated*, too. I find this approach also helps to add relevancy to stories that students often struggle to find relevant.

**Something Personal:** I love to travel. I also love to kayak, read, write, and help my husband on our grass-fed beef farm in rural Maine. All of the latter, I found, can still be done while social distancing, so win-win!