

## Kathleen Gorman

Middletown High School

3 years' experience

SAE, Natural Resources, Animal Science and Plant Science



### Experience

I started my journey as a 2012 graduate of the Woodbury FFA Chapter. I left the state to attend college at the University of New Hampshire studying Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems. After graduating in 2016 I became a National Service State AmeriCorps Member with Health360 located in Waterbury, CT tackling public health concerns focusing on agriculture and food deserts. I also worked at a Waterbury non-profit CSA as a manager for one of the greenhouses growing hydroponic lettuce for donation to the local food pantry, trout for local organizations and managing the community gardens on the property. After my term of service, I was accepted into the Waterbury TCPCG program and started my student teaching as a plant science teacher at Southington High School. I finished my graduate program while working as an Animal Science long-term substitute at Southington. The following year I was hired as Middletown High School's Natural Resources long-term substitute. Currently I am working as Middletown's SAE Interventionist.

### Hobbies

Growing up I was a competitive dancer. I retired after my 15<sup>th</sup> year as a performer and my fourth year as a choreographer and instructor. I love music and dance to this day. I'm also a proud dog mother and spend most of my free time hiking and spending time with my Catahoula Leopard dog mix, Odin.

### What personal qualities or abilities to you think are important to being successful in this position?

I think commitment is the best quality that you can bring to your position. As ag teachers we have many responsibilities in the classroom and beyond. It can be overwhelming, but as long as you are committed to your students success it is all worth it.

### What most prepared you for being an agriculture educator?

My family molded me into the person that I am today for certain. My high school teachers inspired me to pursue this career path. The love they had for their job certainly gave me a desire to share that same passion with my own students. My term as a National service member truly shaped me into the type of educator that I am. It groomed me to be more empathetic and in tune with the world around me to connect with those around me.

### If you could relive one of your most memorable days as a teacher, which day would it be and why?

It was a normal day in my classroom. The school year was close to ending. I was with my upperclassman period working with them on a final project. There was one particular senior who had a bad case of "senior-it is" and had very honestly told me that they were "done with ag" and "were only there for the credit." Needless to say, it had been a struggle to have that student work to complete tasks. Slowly I built a rapport with the student and they showed an improvement in classroom participation. This particular day I was working with them on their project. I praised them for working so hard and they told me, "You made ag amazing again." It was a surprising and heartwarming statement coming from this student. I use that memory to remind myself of the power a rapport with students in the classroom can have. I also use it to as a reminder that difficult students have a reason, if even if it is an irrational one, and that it is part of my job to connect with those students just as much as students that are "easy going."