



**Name:** Jonathan Crossley

**Content area(s) that you currently teach:** English, Oral Communication, Drama

**Employer:** Palestine Wheatley School District, Palestine Wheatley High School

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Jonathan Crossley graduated magna cum laude in 2010 with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of South Carolina at Columbia. He is currently working on a master's in Education from Arkansas Tech University at Russellville.

Crossley teaches at Palestine Wheatley High School in Palestine, AR. In addition to teaching 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade English and oral communication, as well as serving as drama director, Crossley is the literacy coach for grades six through 12. He has been a teacher for four years and also served as the girls' basketball coach for grades seven through 12 from 2010 to 2013. Crossley serves on the board for The College Initiative, a college preparatory program geared toward low-income students. He also is a lead teacher for the online resource exchange Teacher Publisher.

Crossley is the 2014 Arkansas Teacher of the Year.

Crossley is noted for his leadership in improving student literacy scores. His students were recognized for having the most improved literacy scores in the state of Arkansas (from 36 percent to 82 percent proficient or advanced). Furthermore, Crossley tracks ACT score growth where his students improved an average of 5.6 points (from 17.6 to 23.2). He was recently selected as a national honor roll teacher for the Fishman Prize for Superlative Classroom Practice.

"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence." – Robert Frost

Cultivation of self-efficacy guides his educational philosophy. As a first generation college graduate, Crossley is thankful for the leaders in his past who saw a diamond in the rough. Standing before his students, he envisions himself as a 16-year-old. "I desperately needed someone to believe in my potential and support my dream of changing the educational trajectory of my family," Crossley

said. He relates to his students because, “We share similar backgrounds. My father worked relentlessly in the cotton mills of South Carolina to provide his son with hope. Wayne Crossley would come home with lint in his hair and sweat on his brow.” His father’s words still ring in his ears daily: “Son, always leave a place better than when you found it.” Crossley believes the stakes are too high to hold anyone else responsible for his students’ education. Statistics indicate that a direct correlation exists between education levels and upward mobility. “I am the embodiment of these findings,” Crossley states. His personal accountability filters down to the students. In turn, they own their success.

Crossley is available to speak, conduct workshops, and/or serve on committees around the following topics:

- Socratic seminars
- Creating high performance in schools in high poverty communities
- Higher level questioning
- Common Core
- Parental involvement
- Student engagement
- Emotional intelligence
- Rigor and relevance in modern classrooms
- Education and upward mobility
- Building grit and determination in classrooms
- Teach for America
- Teacher Cadets