

Martha Boisselle

ESL / SEI Teacher Leader
Brighton High School



In the words of one of the many appreciative students of Martha Boisselle, Special Language Teacher for the Boston Public Schools we quote, "When Martha Boisselle teaches, she does it with passion. When her students learn she feels joyful. She makes sure that her students are learning, and she is there for them when they are happy and when they are sad. That's what makes a great teacher."

Martha has taught at Brighton High School for the past 12 years. During that time she has never ceased to amaze her peers with her natural ease in developing strong relationships with students or her ability to create well-executed lessons that focus on motivating students to learn. Despite her outstanding educational skills, what truly sets Martha apart is the exceptional initiative she takes in addressing the needs of the increasing immigrant population at the high school.

After a year of study in Spain, Martha returned to Brighton High as an ESL teacher and became an advocate and voice for immigrant students. She attends School Site Council meetings on a regular basis to ensure that the ESL population is considered during all policy-making decisions. Recognizing teenagers' eagerness for inclusion, Martha also makes certain that this population of students is involved in assemblies, field trips and all other school programs.

Because she is aware that the whole student has many needs beyond academics, she frequently attends to her students' social, environmental and emotional concerns. When she saw that many students arrived from warm climates with no winter clothing, she started a campaign to provide coats, hats and gloves for them and their family members. She also encouraged students and other teachers to take actions that provide new students a warm welcoming to this new community they now call home.

Martha's passion for her students and concern for their needs has inspired hundreds of young people in the school. Her astounding ability to encourage students to develop their talents and skills has inspired many who could have been overwhelmed in their new environment to graduate from high school and move on toward happy and productive adult years.

Martha Boisselle is most deserving of the 2016 Shattuck Award, for, to quote yet another student, "When it comes to supporting us, we ESL students are stronger and more confident in everything thanks to a vital person in our lives who has forgotten all her hobbies like painting or music and given all of her time to students just to see them happy. This person is Ms. Boisselle."

Congratulations and thank you Martha for your extraordinary love for teaching and for your students.