



Issaquah High Teacher Profile

Alyssa Giesler

Issaquah High English teacher (9th, 10th, 12th grades)



What is your education background?

Before I decided to get my Master in Teaching, I wanted to test my English teaching abilities and get some traveling under my belt. I joined a program called Greenheart Travel, and lived in Sicily, Italy, as a private English tutor for a family. After that, I got my Masters from Seattle University and was hired at IHS after completing my teaching internship there. It's crazy to think I have been at IHS for nearly 6 years already!

Did you grow up around Issaquah? If not, where did you grow up and did that help shape the person you are today?

I grew up in Port Townsend, WA. It's a very small town, one where everyone knows everyone and their mother. I absolutely loved growing up there and try to go back home whenever I can. Life moves at a much slower pace there; people really embrace being present in each moment. That has had an impact on my adult life in reminding me to take time to stop and just simply enjoy where I am at.

What was your job/career before coming to teach at Issaquah? If you had a prior job/career, how did that job/career make you become a better teacher?

I have dabbled in several different fields before teaching, including publishing and dental hygiene. However, working in the restaurant industry was a constant source of income for me. I spent many years working as a waitress and bartender in Issaquah. I even continued to cocktail waitress/bartend on weekends during my first two years of teaching at IHS. While they are vastly different, restaurant work helped me become a more effective communicator, especially in dealing with conflict.



How many years have you been teaching at Issaquah?

I have been teaching at Issaquah for almost 6 years (including my teaching internship).

< My boyfriend and me



< Attending Carnivale celebrations with my host sister in Catania, Sicily (this is the student I tutored).

What classes at Issaquah do you teach, and why do you love teaching that subject?

I currently teach on-level English 9 and 10, and senior Contemporary Literature. I have always been fascinated by the power of words: they have the power to create and also to destroy; the meaning of words can change over time or within different contexts; they can transport people from their own reality. I love teaching this subject because we get to explore the impact that language and literature has on society. We can read a text from

another time or another culture and find commonalities within our own lives. Literature embodies the human experience and provides a medium to discuss those collective experiences together.

Any favorite teaching memories?

There are too many to choose just one! My favorite teaching memories come from those moments in class when students are unapologetically joyful and are having fun. I think there is so much pressure placed on students to excel in every area of their academic life that they forget to find some joy in what they are learning. Those favorite teaching moments that come to mind are those moments when students are still engaging with the work we are doing in class and embracing the process of learning, being vulnerable and willing to try something new. I feel like those are the moments when I can really understand each student as individuals, see their personality, and see what awesome people they are.

Is (was) volunteering part of your life? If so, tell us about your volunteering experiences and what you love about them?

Volunteering was a huge part of my life growing up. One of my favorite experiences was volunteering with Big Brothers, Big Sisters while I was in high school. I mentored a girl in middle school and spent time with her every week. What I really loved about doing that was building a positive relationship with a girl who was painfully shy around people. What started out as an hour of playing Connect 4, mostly in silence, gradually turned into hours of talking about school, playing music, and baking family recipes together. While we both gained a friendship with each other, I got to watch firsthand how she became more confident talking to others. The other students who participated in Big Brothers, Big Sisters became a family unit for her.

What do you like to do outside of school?

Obviously, I love reading (I think that is a given for all English teachers)! Being in quarantine this year allowed me the time to do some of the things that I have been putting aside, particularly, playing the piano. I also love going to long walks, whether it's going hiking in the woods or just walking through my neighborhood. I listen to music, take in deep breaths of fresh air, and use that time to just decompress and get out of my own head.



< Go Seahawks! So sad that we couldn't go to any games this year.

I am also a huge Marvel fan. >

