

## Richard Boling

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To Whom It May Concern:

What follows is an enthusiastic appreciation of my colleague, Vice-Principal Benita Scheckel. During my thirteen years in the Pasadena Unified School District, she and I had met casually on several occasions during her time at Blair High School, and I often heard numerous teachers extol her extensive skills and accomplishments. However, when she arrived here at John Marshall Fundamental Secondary School in August 2015 as our new vice-principal in charge of activities, I quickly realized that virtually everything I had heard was understatement. In the past two years, Ms. Scheckel has not only proved to be an exceptional asset to our school operations and culture, but she has also been a remarkably valuable source of counsel, critique, and guidance for me personally in my role as an AP teacher in English Language & Composition, U.S. Government & Politics, and Macroeconomics. What's more, she leavens all of these necessarily serious undertakings with a keen wit, a playful and nuanced sense of humor, and a marvelously contagious laugh.

Beyond question, one of Ms. Scheckel's defining virtues is her enthusiasm. It is as seemingly boundless as it is genuine. Having found myself over several decades and in various industries repeatedly confronted by public officials and corporate executives who try futilely to mandate enthusiasm, it is refreshing to find an administrative officer who truly leads by example. Whether she's promoting an upcoming event for students, rallying faculty in a professional development session, or choreographing music and dance performances for the grand opening of our new gymnasium, her energy and enthusiasm are palpable. In my long tenure here, I have not seen any previous administrator in her position who remotely approaches her effectiveness. Handling a broad array of projects, events, and activities that would leave me twitching and paralyzed with exasperation, she masters each with admirable good humor, patience, and grace. It's really something to see.

Yet this vibrant bonhomie and charm are by no means the whole story. Benita Scheckel is a skilful, shrewd, and disciplined manager with high professional standards who deals forcefully with challenges, crises, and goals. She is a strong, decisive manager, demanding excellence, meticulousness, and data-driven, measurable achievement from students and faculty alike, here again leading by example. For many years, my personal criteria in identifying a good leader have included intelligence, energy, compassion, decision-making skills, and the ability to organize, direct, and unify a diverse group of individuals to work toward a common goal. Benita Scheckel exemplifies these qualities. It is gratifying, but not at all surprising that she is the recipient of the ACSA Region XV Leader of Promise 2016-17 Administrator of the Year Award.

Almost incredibly, amid this cyclonic whirl of responsibilities, she is also finding time to pursue her doctorate. Her ambition is to become a school principal, and I am confident she will make a superb one. We are lucky to have her, and I am proud to know her.

Should you have questions or need more information, please let me know. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Richard Boling