

Melissa Martinez

*Sam Rayburn High School
Pasadena, TX*

Melissa Martinez has been teaching for 24 years and is currently at Sam Rayburn High School in Pasadena, Texas. She serves on her campus' site-based decision-making team and on the school's Emergent Bilingual Student Task Force. For years Melissa has taught on level high school English, but it was COVID that catapulted her into the world of high school ESL. A teacher shortage required some class changes be made, and she was asked three weeks into the school year to teach English to students who were newcomers to the country. Knowing her emergent bilingual students have so much to learn, speaking, reading, and writing in English, Mrs. Martinez knows that choice reading plays a huge part in that. Unfortunately, her classroom library lacks the Spanish, bilingual, and high interest/low level books that her students need. She has slowly been adding to her bookshelves from titles she finds at thrift stores, garage sales, and some that she has purchased, but it isn't enough. She is excited to fill her classroom with books that her students will connect with and that will celebrate their identities.