

2026 YOU MATTER AWARD WINNER



Brenda Pezick



Welsh Valley Middle School



Brenda Pezick makes it her mission to discover what that common thread is between herself & a student and then uses it throughout the school year to form a connection that is unique and lasting. My daughter has Ms. Pezick for ELA & her approach has captured my daughter's attention & made her feel seen as an individual & valued as a contributing member to the school community. Ms. Pezick learned about my daughter through a practice/exercise Ms. Pezick calls "Email Mondays." Ms. Pezick sends everyone in the class an email about her weekend on Monday & then students respond back on Monday with something they did during their weekend. Through this simple form of outreach, she creatively & strategically gains insight into each student's interests without it feeling forced. Through weekend story sharing, she builds a bridge of approachability & human-ness. Of course, students need to use full sentences & proper punctuation when they respond. She found her common thread...& they exchange conversations/emails about the [topic] Monday morning. Ms. Pezick's keen attention & kind action made my daughter feel like she mattered as a person & her opinions matter, even if they go against the grain. Ms. Pezick also has Logic Puzzle Thursdays that my daughter absolutely looks forward to every week. Ms. Pezick's approach truly engages her students, builds their confidence, encourages collaboration to solve a problem, & makes learning fun!



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