

Beth Furnari
Principal of P-TECH Norwalk

How do you and your school community promote a sense of belongingness?

At P-TECH, we try to promote belonging by making sure students feel seen, respected, and cared for each day. We know that belonging does not happen through one program or one event; it happens through relationships, consistency, and the small ways adults show students that they matter.

Therefore, our school community works hard to create spaces where students can be themselves, build trusting relationships with adults, and feel connected to their peers. We are especially focused on listening more closely to student voice, giving students more choice, and making sure every student has at least one adult they feel connected to. Through mentoring, advisory, student leadership groups, MTSS, family outreach, and project-based learning, we are continuing to build a school where students feel valued and supported.



What do you value most about your staff?

What I value most about my staff is their heart for students. They show up every day for young people, often in quiet ways that may not always be seen but make a real difference. I am grateful for their care, patience, flexibility, and willingness to keep learning. P-TECH asks a lot of its staff because our model is unique and complex, yet they continue to support students academically, socially, and emotionally. I value the way they build relationships, collaborate with one another, reflect on their practice, and keep trying to meet students where they are.



How does your school community help you to be a better principal?

My school community helps me become a better principal by teaching

me every day. Our students, staff, families, and partners help me see what matters most, what needs attention, and where I need to grow as a leader. Their voices keep me grounded. When students share what helps them feel connected, when staff offer honest feedback, when families trust us with their hopes and concerns, and when partners invest in our students' futures, I am reminded that leadership is about listening, serving, and improving.

What are you most proud of and what are you striving to do better?

I am most proud of the love and commitment that exists in the P-TECH community. We are building a school where students are not only working toward graduation, but also toward college, career, confidence, and a future they can imagine for themselves. I am proud of our students, our staff and the ways we continue to grow together. At the same time, I know we still have important work to do. We are striving to strengthen student achievement, improve attendance, deepen family engagement, expand student voice, and ensure that every student has equitable access to opportunity. Most of all, we are striving to make sure EVERY student feels connected, supported, challenged, and loved.

