

Barbara Wood
Principal of Brien McMahon High School

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

At Brien McMahon High School (BMHS), promoting a sense of belonging is rooted in our core identity: "Once a Senator, always a Senator." We are dedicated to ensuring that every single student embraces their identity as a Senator and that our entire school community stands together to support all Senators in their academic, social, and personal growth.

What do you value most about your staff?

I value our staff's deep commitment to nurturing both the academic growth and the overall well-being of our students. Beyond their dedication in the classroom, our staff actively sponsor clubs, lead our HOUSE advisory sessions, and show up for events like Homecoming. Their dedication to building cognitive capacity while cultivating a warm classroom environment ensures that every student, including our Multilingual Learners and students with learning differences, feels supported both inside and outside the classroom.

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

Our community challenges and inspires me through continuous dialogue, collaboration, and student-led leadership. Hearing directly from students through our House of Representatives and during classroom visits provides essential insight into the daily student experience. Combined with feedback from our School Governance Council (SGC) and insights from events like Back to School Night, I am constantly reminded of what makes BMHS unique. This active community participation keeps me grounded in our core values and pushes me to make decisions that truly serve our vision of preparing ethical, innovative global citizens.





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

I am immensely proud of the rich, inclusive culture we have built at BMHS, where we create spaces for every student to connect and lead. I am equally proud of our progress in expanding access to advanced coursework through our IB pathways, ensuring all students are challenged and supported to succeed.

We are actively working to build on this foundation by continuing our focus on making sure every student feels a strong sense of belonging by leveraging HOUSE, student representation, and rigorous, inquiry-based instruction to keep every student motivated, connected, and present each day.

