Jenna Masone
Principal of Cranbury Elementary School



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

Leading Cranbury School is an honor and a privilege. I have been able to watch the second and third generations of some families go through this school. There is a true sense of belonging to something bigger than yourself while you are here.

We gather students and staff each Friday for our Community Meeting during which we highlight student accomplishments and current happenings. Many children volunteer to present in front of their peers, which shows they know it's a safe space. The loudest cheers come when their peers are recognized as student of the week.

We also have Cranbuddies, a partnership between an upper-grade classroom and a lower-grade classroom. The older students serve as mentors and partners for the younger students which creates strong bonds across the school.

What do you value most about your staff?

The Cranbury Staff is incredibly committed to the success of all students. They do whatever it takes for each child to achieve their fullest potential. This means advocating for students who need a weekend meal, math help, or a check-in after a rough morning. Staff help students in many ways that aren't always visible to others. They develop strong and meaningful relationships with their students and can tell you about their favorite athletes, pets, family members, food preferences, or the holidays they celebrate. Knowing their students so well allows staff to tap into students' creativity and interests, making learning come alive for them. It is inspiring to work in a place with this level of care and commitment.

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

My school community inspires me to become a better principal so that I can connect students, families, and staff with what they need to achieve their potential. There is nothing more rewarding than creating conditions within which people can flourish. I enjoy watching students read books for the first time, solve math problems, or navigate challenging social situations. It is

a pleasure to see families come together at our community events and student performances, share phone numbers for playdates, and collaborate on parenting strategies during our book clubs. We have many staff members who have taken the initiative to further their careers through additional certifications, advanced schooling, and new job opportunities. It is incredibly rewarding to know that our work will have a lasting, positive impact on both students and the education profession in the years to come and that drives me to do better each year.

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

I am most proud of the way our students and staff treat one another. We have many students with unique learning needs. Their peers are supportive when classmates wear headphones to block noise, chew on items to meet their sensory needs, or walk around to regulate their feelings. I know Cranbury students are learning how to do well academically, but they are also learning what it means to be kind to one another. This gives me great hope that they will grow into good people who do good things for our world.

