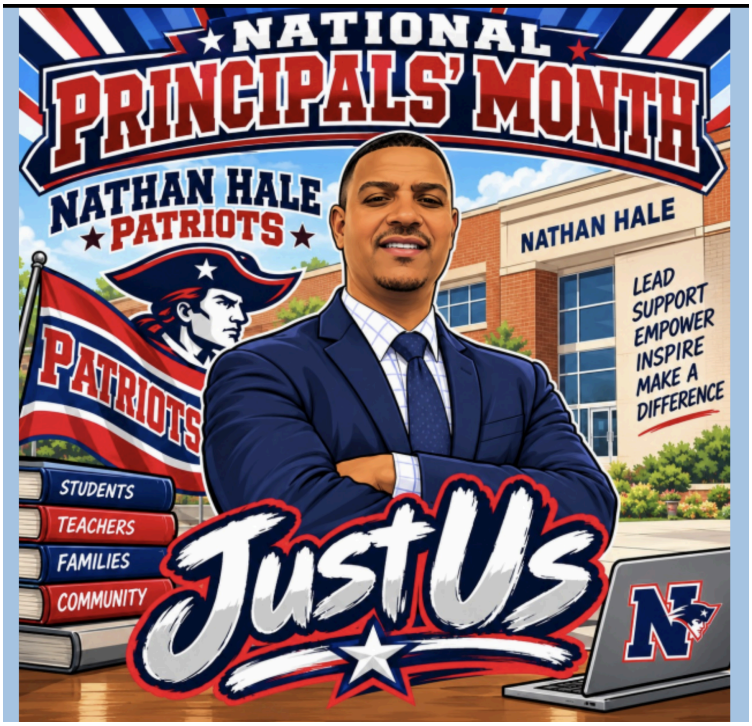
James Crouch
Principal of Nathan Hale Middle School



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

By treating our school like one big, slightly chaotic, but deeply loving family! Belongingness isn't just a buzzword here, it's in the way we greet each other in the hallways, celebrate every single win (big or small), and step up for one another when things get tough. We don't teach children at NHMS, we train champions. We build an environment where students and staff feel genuinely seen, heard, and valued for who they are, ensuring everyone knows they have a home at Nathan Hale Middle School.

What do you value most about your staff?

Their endless heart, resilience, and dedication to our students. They roll with every challenge, show up with relentless energy for our kids every day, and continually put our students first. They keep me grounded, push me to improve, and work tirelessly behind the scenes to make the magic happen. I couldn't ask for a better team to walk alongside.

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

They keep me humble and constantly inspired! Our students keep me on my toes with their honesty and humor, while our staff and families aren't afraid to partner with me, challenge me, and offer real feedback. Being surrounded by a community that cares so deeply about our shared vision motivates me to listen harder, lead with more empathy, and show up as my best self every day.



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

I am most proud of the incredible culture we've built together. Seeing our students grow into confident, compassionate leaders is the ultimate reward. 7 for 7 Baby. Truthfully, the students and staff are the number one reason we've experienced so much success, and I'm the lucky one who gets to be part of it and reaps the benefits. As for what I'm striving to do better? Continuously expanding support for our team, finding new ways to elevate student voice, and trying very hard not to lose my walkie-talkie quite as often.