

**From:** [OnPoint Community Credit Union](#)  
**To:** [Onpoint Prize](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] OnPoint Prize - Educator of the Year Nomination Submission  
**Date:** Monday, April 8, 2024 8:49:03 PM

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**Your Name**

Christina Sheppler

**Relationship to the Nominee**

The nominee is principal at the elementary school my kids attend.

**Your Phone Number**

[REDACTED]

**Your Email Address**

[REDACTED]

**Please confirm that you have shared this nomination with the nominee. We encourage this as a first step since many of the required attachments moving forward will involve the nominee.**

Yes

**Award Category**

Gold Star (Includes an educator who is a pre-kindergarten teacher, school counselor, substitute teacher, librarian or school administrator.)

**Nominee's Name**

Traniece Brown-Warrens

**Nominee's Email**

[REDACTED]

**Nominee's Phone Number**

[REDACTED]

**Grade(s) Taught**

currently principal; has taught 8th grade

**Subject(s) Taught**

currently principal; has taught US history

**Is the Nominee Licensed/Accredited?**

Yes

**School Name**

Markham Elementary School

**School District**

Portland Public Schools

**County in Which School Resides**

[REDACTED]

Multnomah

**School Address**

10531 SW Capitol Hwy  
Portland, Oregon 97219  
United States  
[Map It](#)

**School Type**

Public

**School Principal or Administrator**

Traniece Brown-Warrens

**How long has the nominee been in their current position?**

almost 2 years

**How many years of teaching experience does the nominee have?**

5

**Does the nominee have other responsibilities (coach, advisor, etc.)?**

Educator Advancement Council K-12 Director; Portland Backpack Board Member

**Is the nominee a job-share applicant?**

No

**Please describe in 1-2 paragraphs why you are nominating this educator.**

Excerpts from full nomination letter (included with other recommendation letters):

It is with great excitement that I nominate Dr. Traniece Brown-Warrens, the beloved principal of Markham Elementary School, for the 2024 OnPoint Educator of the Year Gold Star Award. When I saw the award announcement on the website, I felt compelled to share this amazing person, educator, and leader with you. Principal Brown-Warrens fully embodies each of the criteria on which this award is based and exemplifies the spirit of exceptional leadership through her dedication to creating a learning environment that fosters creativity, inclusivity, and academic excellence.

Principal Brown-Warrens' exceptional qualities as a leader were vividly demonstrated following the winter storms of January 2024. When it became clear that Markham Elementary School would require extensive repairs, she wasted no time in advocating fiercely for the immediate return to in-person education rather than resorting to remote learning. Despite the immense challenges posed by the closure, she worked tirelessly to ensure the needs of our students and parents remained a top priority. Within a remarkably short timeframe, she worked with district administrators to develop a comprehensive plan to relocate the student body across four different locations, addressing logistical complexities such as transportation for students who rely on the bus to get to school. Principal Brown-Warrens' commitment to the welfare and educational continuity of our students was evident throughout this process. Even as we received the devastating news that Markham would remain closed for the rest of the school year, Principal Brown-Warrens continued to lead with empathy and resilience. By providing a safe space for the entire community to express their emotions and concerns, she continues to maintain a sense of unity despite ongoing challenges. In the face of adversity, Principal Brown-Warrens' devotion, advocacy, and ability to maintain community spirit have shone brightly through these unfortunate circumstances.

## NOMINATION LETTER

April 1, 2024

Dear Members of the OnPoint Educator of the Year Selection Committee,

It is with great excitement that I nominate Dr. Traniece Brown-Warrens, the beloved principal of Markham Elementary School, for the 2024 OnPoint Educator of the Year Gold Star Award. When I saw the award announcement on the website, I felt compelled to share this amazing person, educator, and leader with you. Principal Brown-Warrens fully embodies each of the criteria on which this award is based and exemplifies the spirit of exceptional leadership through her dedication to creating a learning environment that fosters creativity, inclusivity, and academic excellence.

In the summer of 2022, we received an email communication from the district introducing our new principal. The past few years had been tough trying to navigate the educational journey of my children during the pandemic, and as a parent, I was feeling isolated and frustrated. I wasn't sure what to expect with the new principal but was hopeful this would be a "new start" of sorts for my kids, myself, and our school community.

Approximately 2 weeks into the school year, both my husband and I received the following text message on a weekday evening:

*Hey Shepler family! This is Principal T. Brown-Warrens and I wanted to tell you how AMAZING Brooklyn is! Today I got to learn side-by-side with her as we went over vocabulary and it was soooooo much FUN! She totally captured my Principal heart and I wanted you to know!*

To say I was surprised is an understatement. I hadn't received any personalized communication from the previous two principals, let alone a text message sharing details of an interaction with my daughter. It was unexpected, uplifting, and it immediately sparked a discussion with both of my kids about their new principal and other school happenings.

Last spring she also invited my son, Bennett, to participate in the Markham TEDx event (see portfolio for additional information). This was definitely something outside his typical comfort level, and at the time he was struggling with writing. I truly appreciate that he was selected for this event because he had to (1) write a speech, which provided additional practice and the opportunity for feedback in an area where he needed additional attention), and (2) give a public speech, something he had never done before. He spoke on the topic of kindness; he was proud, we were proud, and he got to be part of something special with Principal Brown-Warrens and his fellow classmates. He has also gained more confidence in his writing ability and continues to improve in that area.

Over time, I have only become more impressed by Principal Brown-Warrens. She has exceeded any standard I've had for what a principal should be and has inspired me as a parent. She has a way of motivating others just by the example she sets. She isn't the type to say what should be done—she just *does* it, and by doing so, gains respect and support. She truly puts the wellbeing and needs of her students above all else.

I believe Principal Brown-Warrens earns a “gold star” in all of the categories listed as evaluation criteria for this award.

- Her commitment to **creativity and enthusiasm** is evident in every aspect of her work at Markham Elementary School. She consistently infuses innovative approaches that reinforce educational goals, sparking excitement and curiosity among students, staff, and parents. Her contagious enthusiasm for education inspires a love of learning within the school community, creating a vibrant atmosphere where students thrive. Some examples of her creativity are shared in the portfolio section of this application (e.g., book vending machine, TEDx Markham).
- Principal Brown-Warrens' **teaching methods** reflect her deep understanding of the diverse needs of her students. She ensures that every student receives the support they need to succeed. Her dedication to student-centered learning cultivates a sense of belonging and empowerment among all students, regardless of background or ability. A firsthand testimony to this is shared in the recommendation letter from parent Janna Schuh, and further elaboration is provided in her portfolio (e.g., “What I Need” time, restorative justice approach).
- Her **impact on the community** extends far beyond the walls of Markham Elementary School. Through her collaborative efforts with parents, educators, and community leaders, she has led numerous initiatives that address the unique challenges facing students in our school and serves as an example for leaders across the district and nation.
- Principal Brown-Warrens is a champion of **diversity, equity, and inclusion** in education. She actively promotes a culture of respect, empathy, and acceptance within the school environment, celebrating the richness of our cultural diversity and fostering a sense of belonging for all students and staff. Under her leadership, Markham Elementary School is a place where every voice is valued and respected.

Principal Brown-Warrens' exceptional qualities as a leader were vividly demonstrated following the winter storms of January 2024. When it became clear that Markham Elementary School would require extensive repairs, she wasted no time in advocating fiercely for the immediate return to in-person education rather than resorting to remote learning. Despite the immense challenges posed by the closure, she worked tirelessly to ensure the needs of our students and parents remained a top priority. Within a remarkably short timeframe, she worked with district administrators to develop a comprehensive plan to relocate the student body across *four* different locations, addressing logistical complexities such as transportation for students who rely on the bus to get to school. Principal Brown-Warrens' commitment to the welfare and educational continuity of our students was evident throughout this process. Even as we received the devastating news that Markham would remain closed for the rest of the school

year, Principal Brown-Warrens continued to lead with empathy and resilience. By providing a safe space for the entire community to express their emotions and concerns, she continues to maintain a sense of unity despite ongoing challenges. In the face of adversity, Principal Brown-Warrens' devotion, advocacy, and ability to maintain community spirit have shone brightly through these unfortunate circumstances.

I'd like to share one more personal example of how amazing Principal Brown-Warrens is before concluding this nomination letter. As you will see in her portfolio, she is big on attending the extracurricular activities of her students. When my daughter made the all-star team in softball last year, one of the first people she wanted to share the news with was Principal Brown-Warrens. When Brooklyn told her about this accomplishment, she asked Brooklyn to have me send her the game schedule so she could attend a game and cheer her on. When I shared the schedule, Principal Brown-Warrens let me know that she would be unable to attend because she was attending classes at Baylor that week for her PhD program. That didn't stop her from supporting Brooklyn though. On the morning of her first all-star game, she emailed me this video: <https://youtube.com/shorts/gfxARshnFRA?feature=share>.

I watched the video and cried. I feel so fortunate that my kids get to experience a principal with this heart. She does this sort of thing every day. Her students never doubt that she has them at the forefront of her mind, that she believes in them, and that she is fully invested in their success.

In conclusion, Principal Traniece Brown-Warrens exemplifies the qualities of an outstanding educator and leader. Her creativity, enthusiasm, effective teaching methods, community impact, and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion make her a truly deserving candidate for the 2024 OnPoint Educator of the Year Gold Star Award. I wholeheartedly endorse her nomination and strongly urge you to consider her for this prestigious honor.

Sincerely,

*Christina R. Sheppler*

Christina Sheppler, PhD, PMP  
Mom to Brooklyn (5th grade) & Bennett (4th grade), Markham Elementary Students



Brenda Gutierrez - School Climate Specialist  
3/12/2024  
OnPoint Community Credit Union  
OnPoint Educator of the Year Award

Dear OnPoint Educator of the Year Committee,

I am writing to wholeheartedly endorse Principal Dr. Brown-Warrens for the OnPoint Educator of the Year Award. As a member of the Markham Community, I have witnessed firsthand her unwavering dedication and invaluable contributions to our school and its students. Principal Brown-Warrens embodies the essence of an exceptional educator, consistently going above and beyond to inspire creativity, foster inclusivity, and ensure the success of every student under her guidance.

Principal Dr. Brown-Warrens has demonstrated exceptional leadership and community impact, particularly during challenging times. The 2024 ice storm presented an unprecedented challenge. Markham Elementary was damaged beyond repair and the entire community lost their home school, their hub for community. Principal Dr. Brown-Warrens successfully navigated the crisis by demonstrating clarity, transparency, innovation, and hope and personally led efforts to first secure a learning location for SPED classrooms while the remaining students were spread across four different campuses. The efforts also included creating a new school-wide schedule to maintain vital services, communicating changes effectively to the community, and guaranteeing ongoing support for the students' social and emotional needs. Her ability to bring together diverse stakeholders throughout the process and prioritize the well-being of our students amidst adversity is truly commendable.

Creativity and enthusiasm are at the core of Principal Dr. Brown-Warrens approach to education. She has a remarkable ability to ignite a passion for learning within her students. One of her innovative initiatives includes the introduction of a book vending machine, which rewards students for academic and behavioral achievements. Through this initiative, she not only encourages literacy but also instills in students the belief that knowledge is a precious reward.

Principal Dr. Brown-Warrens' teaching methods are exemplary, characterized by a dynamic and engaging style that resonates with her students. She consistently seeks out innovative approaches to instruction, ensuring that every student receives a personalized learning experience tailored to their needs and interests. Principal Brown Warrens engages students at lunch time by giving them Markham Eagle rewards and hosting a talent show. Students are engaged and celebrate their community and accomplishments.

Furthermore, as a Black woman Principal, Dr. Brown-Warrens has fostered a climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion within our school built on trust and consistency honoring student culture. With a student body that is 44% minority, including predominantly Black and Muslim students, she has created an environment where every student feels valued, respected, and celebrated. Through initiatives that honor and celebrate students' cultural heritages, she promotes a sense of belonging and mutual understanding among our diverse community.

In addition to further highlighting her exceptional character, resilience, and dedication to her professional endeavors, Principal Dr. Brown-Warrens is resolute in her values around personal determination. Inscribed on her forearm are the words "Strong Willpower Achieves Greatness," which communicates her journey as an individual. As a young child who grew up with four siblings in a single mother household, under-resourced, her life and her accomplishments are truly against all odds. She strives each and every day to be the example, to have young students bear witness to what is possible, even in the midst of extreme adversity. To double down on her impact, Principal Dr. Brown-Warrens also is currently supporting a young child in the foster care system and has entered into the adoption process in order to provide a long-term loving environment for the child she now calls her son. She is dedicated to providing her son a beautiful life as they embark on this journey together.

In conclusion, Principal Dr. Brown-Warrens is more than deserving of the OnPoint Educator of the Year Award. Her dedication, creativity, and commitment to fostering a nurturing and inclusive learning environment exemplify the highest standards of educational excellence. As Markham Elementary's School Climate Specialist, I wholeheartedly support her nomination and urge you to consider her for this prestigious recognition based on her invaluable contributions and unwavering dedication to the Markham Community.

Sincerely,

Brenda Gutierrez - School Climate Specialist Markham



March 16, 2024

Sarah Godding



Dear OnPoint Educator of the Year Award Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I support the nomination of Principal Dr. Traniece Brown-Warrens for the prestigious OnPoint Educator of the Year award. In my role as Co-President of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) at Markham Elementary, I have had the honor of witnessing Principal Brown-Warrens' remarkable leadership in promoting school-wide literacy, fostering academic excellence, and supporting innovative teaching that impacts our diverse school population.

Principal Brown-Warrens has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to enhancing literacy throughout our school, spearheading initiatives that have led to significant improvements in reading and writing proficiency across all grade levels. She has worked closely with teachers to develop an engaging curriculum and has fostered a culture where reading is celebrated and valued.

Beyond her dedication to academic excellence, Principal Brown-Warrens has shown remarkable resilience and leadership in the face of adversity. When our school building was tragically destroyed by a storm, Principal Brown-Warrens rose to the challenge with grace and honesty. Despite the immense difficulties posed by this crisis, she prioritized the well-being of our students and advocated tirelessly for our school community.

In the aftermath of the storm, Principal Brown-Warrens led our school through the challenging process of relocating our student body to four separate school buildings. Throughout this period of transition, she remained a steady and reassuring presence, providing guidance and support to students, parents, and staff alike. Her unwavering commitment to our school community and her ability to lead with grace and honesty during such a difficult time has been truly inspiring. Our student body will continue to be housed in four locations for the rest of the year, which will result in four times the workload for our Principal, yet she continues to show up with a smile and lead with compassion.

Principal Brown-Warrens' innovative approach to teaching and learning has also had a profound impact on our students. From integrating technology into the classroom to implementing project-based learning initiatives, she ensures that our students are engaged, motivated, and equipped with the skills they need to succeed in the 21st

century. She has proactively engaged with our sizable Muslim population and prioritized their access to information and activities throughout her tenure. She has partnered with our PTA to make sure all students can attend music classes by encouraging funding expenditures on drums that are culturally appropriate for this demographic.

In conclusion, Principal Brown-Warrens embodies the qualities of an OnPoint Educator of the Year. Her dedication to promoting school-wide literacy, fostering academic excellence, and leading with grace and resilience in the face of adversity makes her an exceptional leader and educator. I wholeheartedly endorse her for this prestigious award, as I cannot think of a more deserving candidate.

Sincerely,

Sarah Godding Co-President, Markham Elementary Parent-Teacher Association

April 2, 2024

To the OnPoint Educator of the Year Selection Committee,

First of all, it is difficult to put into words how incredible this educator is, and I am grateful for the opportunity to write a recommendation on her behalf. Principal Brown-Warrens is an educator that every parent dreams of having for their child because she puts her whole heart into every child in her care.

Three years ago, my son was diagnosed with aggressive brain cancer. His diagnosis and treatment resulted in complex cognitive and emotional challenges, making it harder for someone in his shoes to properly process things compared to other kids that haven't been in his position. Principal Brown-Warrens openly welcomed my son into her school and has remained committed to our family ever since the first day we met her.

Myself and Principal Brown-Warrens, along with some of her staff, have been working hard since my son started at Markham Elementary to get him an individual education plan (IEP) to help meet the setbacks and academic challenges he has faced post treatment. She has gone the extra mile to assist me and has provided both emotional support and invaluable recommendations to remove the barriers standing in the way of his achieving academic success. Principal Brown-Warrens' extraordinary qualities as a leader never go unnoticed. When my son's first full year in school approached, it was very challenging for him, but she helped me fight for my son to receive the educational accommodations he needed.

My son has never been much of a reader, that is, until Principal Brown-Warrens put a book vending machine in at Markham. This machine lit a fire in my son that I didn't know existed. Today, he gets so excited to find his favorite books, especially the Dog Man series. She also started "The Energy Bus" and strives to instill literacy in all her students by making reading fun and exciting. It has been extremely inspiring to watch Principal Brown-Warrens use her passion for reading to engage entire auditoriums of students and parents and get them excited to read more books.

Fast forward to the winter storms of January 2024. Principal Brown-Warrens didn't let this horrific storm slow her down when it came to protecting her students' educational needs. Communication is key to her, which is another quality that makes her an incredible educator and leader. No time was wasted in communicating all the damage that Markham Elementary encountered after the storm cleared up. She kept in constant communication with all the parents, in addition to setting up meetings with the district to allow parents to get their questions answered. Principal Brown-Warrens worked tirelessly to make sure her students had the opportunity to learn in person instead of immediately defaulting to online education. Within days of hearing about the indefinite school closure, she got right to work on finding room in neighboring schools for her students and managing the complex transportation needs of families. Once students were assigned to a neighboring school, my son was left without transportation. Principal Brown-Warrens worked directly with me to find a solution so that I wouldn't have to work his transportation into my already overwhelming schedule. After speaking with her, my son had transportation the next day. Principal Brown-Warrens' drive and determination to make sure her students receive the best education possible is unmatched, even when resources are limited and situations are beyond challenging.

Principal Brown-Warrens' advocacy for her students and continued commitment to our community is unparalleled. What makes her such an incredible educator is that she always goes

above and beyond to make sure every student is safe, happy, and working in an environment in which they can thrive.

In closing, I believe there is no one more deserving of the incredible honor of being educator of the year than Principal Brown-Warrens. She sets the highest bar for all educators and deserves to win this award because no matter how high the bar is, it never seems to be high enough for her. She will always try to do more. Principal Brown-Warrens is a passionate and effective educator, leader, and advocate that our family and Markham Elementary are incredibly fortunate to have.

Thank you for taking the time to read my recommendation.

Sincerely,

Janna Schuh

Mom of [REDACTED] 2nd grader at Markham Elementary  
[REDACTED]

# PRINCIPAL BROWN-WARRENS

Principal Brown-Warrens is an amazing principal that lets students have more opportunities in multiple ways such as the student leadership team, student clubs, and ways to help raise money for the school.

At Markham Elementary School I have had three principals. My other principals did not have the same impact as Principal Brown-Warrens has had on me. During the PPS teacher strike she would send out messages to families with encouraging words, and she even would give updates on sports teams (such as basketball, football, and baseball) that she knows students like.

She also plays a very critical role in the school community. Principal Brown-Warrens sent me a personal message the morning of my first all-star softball game. This meant a lot to me coming from Principal Brown-Warrens. She is a safe person to go to at school. She makes kids feel welcome and important. When a kid has an issue with another person Principal Brown-Warrens never comes to a conclusion without hearing both sides of the story.

During winter break she gave us the opportunity to write a book about "the learning pit." She said if we wrote a book she would publish it into a real book. This made me very excited! I wrote a book and I did get my book published. I felt a big sense of accomplishment after she handed it to me.

In conclusion, when principal Brown first came to this school she immediately started learning kids names. I would be surprised if she did not know all the kids at Markham. I think principal Brown should win the teacher of the year award.

  
5th grader at Markham Elementary

## **STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

By Dr. Traniece Brown-Warrens, Principal at Markham Elementary School

I once heard a speaker say, “If you could stand atop a balcony and look down on your campus, what would you see, hear, feel, and what would you witness as your impact?” As I ponder this question today, I would say, “I see students who deserve high-quality instruction and can be pushed to view themselves as excellent. I would hear students engaged in discourse, challenging grade-level standards aligned curriculum with evidence and using restorative actions due to possible harm caused. I would feel a culture of positivity that is rooted in celebration, care, accountability, and excellence.” The impact? Well let’s take a journey so you can see what I see.

When I became the proud principal of Markham Elementary School during the 2022-2023 school year, I came in with no sense of the campus culture, but what I did know was the level of impact I wanted to have over academic excellence for students. Just the year before, I was the assistant principal at the neighborhood middle school, the school Markham students would attend after completing 5th grade. During my time at the middle school, I covered 6th grade classes on occasion and began to see a pattern with Markham students that was different from other students. For example, when I gave the directions for an assignment, I noticed the same students would stand in line for “help” because they did not know how to get started. I began asking students what elementary school they attended, and by and large, the answer was “Markham.” As I brought my findings to the middle school leadership team, no one else seemed to be as concerned as I was. Instead, someone brought up how empathic Markham students were. This sparked my passion and desire to be an elementary school principal. I felt the elementary environment was the place one could help give students the tools they need to succeed in secondary school and beyond.

Why was it important to ensure these students had the tools to be academically successful? My past experience dictates my current position. Years prior, I taught 8th grade U.S. History in Houston, Texas across campuses that were 98% Hispanic (60% spoke English as a second language). Many students lacked the motivation to thrive academically because they were undocumented and lacked hope for what their lives could be post high school. Converse to those students, I had a childhood that fostered a disposition aimed at life being better than it was for my parents – I could make a better life for myself and break a generational curse by gaining access to education at the highest level. Witnessing the barriers for my students, I insisted that they not be pushed out of my classroom. I instead leaned into my students' lives and stories to understand how I could connect with them. My students and I shared a common love for hip-hop/rap music, memes, and the movie *The Hunger Games*. I took our

commonalities and combined them to create "[Hip-Hop History](#)" and taught students how to beat the state test – just like how Katniss Everdeen won the Hunger Games in the movie. Through these connections, students started to see the importance of learning history beyond their grade requirements and state test score. History tells us a story we can unpack and gain insight from to make a difference in our own communities and beyond. Students loved being in Ms. Brown's (my) class and walked away with a love for history and learning.

From the moment I started at Markham, I began conducting empathy interviews with key stakeholders—the former principal, staff, parents, and students—to gain an understanding of the culture, hopes, aspirations, and challenges of the school. I learned the campus experienced several years of principal turnover and substitute leaders. This revolving door caused distrust, siloed teachers, fractured teams, and left the staff and community with no thread of communication or collaboration. Educators who wanted to do right by students languished directionless in the absence of a leader. Instead of being intimidated by the picture, I leaned in and introduced a culture shift influenced by Jon Gordon's book [The Energy Bus and The Energy Bus for Kids](#). We dedicated time to reading the book as a staff and with our homeroom classes to understand and adopt the concept of fueling our campus with positive energy. As a leader, I chose to focus on RULE 3: *Power Your Bus with Positive Energy* and RULE 8: *Care about Your Team* during my first year at Markham.

RULE 3 is the inspiration behind the Markham Energy Bus News, increased focus on academic excellence, and enhancing literacy. The Energy Bus News serves as the medium for daily announcements. Each and every day, students, staff, and family members receive positive messages from me, other staff members, and each other. While the concept is simple, the benefits are immeasurable; it is our grounding and sets the tone for the remainder of the day. Secondly, we created a culture where learning mattered more than playing. Students now invite me to their classrooms to hear student presentations and see their work. This cultural piece has become so strong that students reach out to me when another student is impacting their learning environment. Lastly, we started a reading campaign entitled Markham Reads a Million Minutes, and as a campus we read 598,632 minutes between October 2022 and June 2023.

RULE 8, care about your team, was my fuel for getting to know my staff, kids, and families. First, I encouraged families to invite me to their students' sports games, plays, and other activities. The joy of seeing my students light up when they see me in the crowd cheering them on is ineffable. Secondly, I centered students' passions and voices. This included working with Portland Public Schools (PPS) Innovation Studios to present the idea of [TEDx Markham](#), an evening event that spotlighted students' passions and included connective mentorship. Student



performance and exhibition is where students can express themselves and feel a sense of belonging. In this effort, I worked with a second grader to put on an [art show](#) that featured her and her peers' art work, and I had a student put on an assembly on March 3rd, 2023 to celebrate [International Hearing Awareness Day](#). Finally, then student future fashion designer Yah-Hannah put on a [Black Is....Fashion Show](#). Yah-Hannah designed each t-shirt and wrote all the content in the program. These student events bring me the most joy and are the true center of my leadership.

I also decided to enhance the communication for families because I believe parents/guardians who entrust their children with me should know what is happening to their children throughout the day, whether good, bad, or even ugly. This was a hard transition but one that was necessary and included having an open door policy. Ensuring parents' technology apps have ease of use so that communication about school incidents are delivered in a quick and timely fashion has fostered trust among the community.

The most magnificent shifts began to happen at the end of my first year with a decrease in discipline incidents and an increase in academic performance. Markham's state testing scores increased 6.2% in English/Language Arts and grades 3-5 experienced a 7.2% increase in math. Our students' sense of belonging increased by 11%, and staff-leadership relationships increased by 14%, according to the PPS Panorama survey of students, staff, and families.

Going into my second year at Markham, I wanted to focus on Energy Bus *RULE 1: You're the Driver* and *RULE 2: Use Vision and Focus to Set Your Direction*. When it came to *RULE 1*, I envisioned saturating the environment beyond Markham Reads A Million Minutes with a push to further foster the joy of reading. To bring this vision to life, we purchased a book vending machine. The goal was that students would receive book tokens for academic excellence and not just behavioral compliance. We even got the former Superintendent to purchase our school's Amazon Book Wish List, which added to the excitement around the vending machine experience.

I wanted to ensure students have a true social and emotional wraparound experience. This involved creating a tiered system of support that was more proactive and restorative in nature, rather than reactive and punitive. For instance, I ensured the school counselor had time for classroom lessons, small groups, one-on-one sessions, and lunch time groups that weren't attached to discipline referrals. My thought process was that students needed a place that is safe to share their emotions and thoughts without feeling worried about getting in trouble. To this effort, I also guaranteed that Climate Specialists had the time and resources to ensure each



classroom had a calming corner that students could visit if they needed a break. Those corners contain fidgets, breath activities, and opportunities to reset.

As a campus we learned about the emotional zones of regulation to help students understand their feelings and identify tools to help them to a state of calm. We then shifted to a restorative approach to discipline that involved students learning from their mistakes, repairing harm with their peers, and getting the help they needed from the counselor or climate specialist through check-ins, one-on-one groups, small groups, or lunch time groups. Lastly, we shifted our focus from compliance character traits to an academic focus, such as understanding what we call the learning pit – a natural process in the learning journey that is packed with doubt, fear, and self-conscious behaviors. We wanted to normalize the rollercoaster of learning so that students can have the fortitude to get through the tough moments of their learning journeys.

My focus on RULE 8 allowed us to revamp our mission statement into one we could practically see in action at Markham.

Previous Mission: Markham Elementary School is a caring community dedicated to excellence in education, empowering students to reach their potential as life-long learners and responsible contributors to society.

We believe:

- All students can learn.
- Children should become independent and self-reliant.
- A child's education will best occur in a safe, secure, and orderly environment.
- Higher academic achievement occurs with positive social, emotional, and physical development.
- Children will have greater success when there are goals with high expectations.
- Cultural and educational diversity enables students' comprehensive education.
- Education is a partnership of the student, home, school and community.
- Education is a continuous process for all members of the learning community.

Current Mission: At Markham Elementary School, we center joyful collective partnership between the staff and community to foster curiosity, an environment of collaboration, rich academic discourse and personal agency. Each student's growth and achievement are celebrated and recognized in our inclusive and caring community. We promote multicultural perspectives, courageous learning and a sense of belonging, to empower students to reach and exceed their full potential as lifelong learners.

We were on a roll with our campus climate shifts, when the current academic year brought a teacher strike. During this challenging time, I attempted to embody Energy Bus RULE 7: *Be Enthusiastic: It Attracts and Energizes Others*. My enthusiasm for my students led me to make inspirational videos during the strike; I trained to be a reading coach for students, and I organized food and book pick-ups. Overall, students and families felt connected, informed, and able to support our educators.

My enthusiastic flame torched us through the [ice storm that shut down Markham](#). Upon learning our building was damaged and we would be unable to return, I started to create an instructionally focused plan that would put students in buildings instead of online. My plan first centered around getting our Intensive Skills special education students into an instructional space immediately. Then I collaborated with our IT department to set up a technology and book pick-up. During this time, I developed and proposed a plan that would put us at four different campuses on the Southwest Portland side; while the plan was not ideal, it was better than the alternative of remote learning.

Once the students were placed, I crafted a schedule that ensured every student received their daily 45 minutes of reading, music, visual arts, library, English as a second language, and special education services. We also created a schedule that centers culture building and allows our counselor and climate specialist time to check-in with students, maintain our Eagle awards system, and do fun, engaging activities. The next big piece was putting transportation together. Our neighborhood buses, walkers, and parent drop are at Jackson Middle School; from there we ensure students get on the shuttle bus going to their host school. The students who used to walk to Markham did not have a regular bus to ride, so the climate specialist and I would meet those students near Markham and walk them to and from Jackson in the morning and afternoon. This walk was 20 minutes each way. Within the last two weeks, I was able to secure a bus for these students so that they no longer have to walk.

What has been the most impressive about this tumultuous and unexpected transition is that we have been able to stay connected, we've continued to center instruction and social emotional learning (SEL), and students have been able to make new friends at the host schools. The Energy Bus News has continued; 4th and 5th grade students were able to participate in their host school's book fair, where I was able to ensure that each Markham student received at least one book regardless of their ability to pay; and in the midst of everything, our student leaders made videos, such as *We Are Still Markham Strong* and *Student Perspectives on Ramadan*, and provided gifts for our host schools.

We also saw students make academic gains this year in English/Language Arts (ELA):

Grade Level	Average Fall 2023 ELA MAP Score	Average Winter 2024 ELA MAP Score
3	195	199 (+4)
4	208	212 (+4)
5	205	209 (+4)

Perched atop that balcony, I step down, peer at the view and smile, wiping away the tears of joy at the impact over time when reflecting on [students' words](#) that bring home how special this community is to me. Our story is just beginning at Markham, and I love how we have overcome strife and remain focused on our goals for students. Our students, staff, and community are the real champions. I am proud to be the Principal.

## PORTFOLIO/WORK SAMPLES

In this portfolio, we showcase some of Principal Brown-Warrens' remarkable achievements. These examples highlight her visionary leadership and dedication to the Markham community.

### Creativity & Enthusiasm

1. Communication with Students. Principal Brown-Warrens' creative approach to communication and connection with Markham students is exemplified by posts to her YouTube channel. She uses this medium to share important messages with students that they can access at school using their Chromebooks. Her “Energy Bus News” (EBN) series is one example. Each segment begins with a grounding breath exercise, reinforcing the school's core values encapsulated in the Markham High-5 motto: I am a kind, I am respectful, I am responsible, I am safe, I am a learner. By weaving in this ritual, she sets a tone of mindfulness and positivity. EBN serves as a vital source of information, keeping students informed of school happenings and events. However, the messages go beyond mere announcements, tackling tough topics head-on, such as navigating the challenges of the teacher strike earlier this year and the devastating aftermath of a recent winter storm that closed our school. Principal Brown-Warrens fearlessly addresses significant issues and encourages open dialogue about complex emotions, fostering a supportive and resilient school community. Her channel also contains a playlist for bedtime stories. See Principal Brown-Warrens in action:
  - [YouTube Channel](#)
  - [Energy Bus News playlist](#)
  - After Markham experienced significant storm damage earlier this year, Principal Brown-Warrens has consistently provided clear and compassionate communication regarding the status of our school. [This video](#) is an example of how she confronts difficult topics by acknowledging the emotional impact of learning that Markham would remain closed for the rest of the school year.
  - [Principal Brown-Warrens reading students a bedtime story](#). Throughout the story, she incorporates the “growth mindset” theme that was being discussed at school. By setting the example, she is also encouraging families to establish a bedtime reading routine.
2. TEDx Markham. TEDx Markham is another example of Principal Brown-Warrens' leadership and dedication to bringing innovative initiatives to our school community. Inspired by Markham's commitment to enhancing student discourse, Principal Brown-Warrens organized and hosted this event to serve as a platform for students to share their voices, inspire others, and develop essential skills. Eleven students from grades 3-5 gave speeches centered around the theme “I am BOLD,” where BOLD stood for boundless, optimistic, loving, and determined; speech topics included community, kindness, dreams, outside activity, and social justice and inclusion. From the initial stages of idea generation, outlining the talk, and incorporating feedback to the practice sessions on stage, each student was provided an opportunity to hone their

communication skills and gain confidence in their ability to articulate their ideas effectively. The benefits for participants extend far beyond the event itself. Through their participation in TEDx Markham, students had the opportunity to not only improve their public speaking skills but also develop essential life skills such as self-expression, active listening, innovation, adaptability, and collaboration.

3. Read-a-Thon. "Markham Reads a Million Minutes" was a 2022-2023 read-a-thon fundraiser ingeniously crafted by Principal Brown-Warrens to ignite enthusiasm for reading, enhance literacy skills, and raise funds for the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). This event encouraged donors to contribute either through general donations or by pledging an amount for every 10 minutes of reading time. By combining the joy of reading with a cause that directly benefits Markham's diverse school community, the fundraiser served as a creative avenue to meet literacy objectives while also raising funds for the school. Students eagerly recorded their reading minutes to vie for prizes, encouraging friendly competition, connection, and camaraderie among students. Prizes were awarded at the end of the event to (1) the class in each grade with the highest percentage of minutes read and (2) the student in each grade with the most minutes in their reading log. Through the "Markham Reads a Million Minutes" event, Principal Brown-Warrens showcased her ability to creatively align literacy goals with fundraising efforts to benefit the school community.
4. Book Vending Machine. Principal Brown-Warrens' latest innovation, the [book vending machine](#), is revolutionizing the way students at Markham engage with reading. With a dual mission to generate enthusiasm for books and improve literacy skills, the machine operates on a simple premise: students earn tokens through various achievements and then exchange them for a book of their choice. The excitement among students is tangible, and the opportunity to earn this reward provides students with a sense of ownership and pride in their reading journey. This creative approach not only cultivates excitement for reading but also empowers students with the freedom to select books that resonate with them, further reinforcing Principal Brown-Warrens' commitment to enhancing literacy through inventive means.
5. Maintaining Enthusiasm for Literacy during Colocation. The colocation of Markham students across four different buildings hasn't stopped Principal Brown-Warrens' focus on literacy. She has continued to find creative ways to keep the spark of reading alive.
  - *Book Fair*. One of the colocation host schools recently had a Scholastic Book Fair, and they kindly opened the event to Markham students for a two-hour window on a specific day. Principal Brown-Warrens rearranged her schedule to ensure she was there to welcome students and help them pick out books. She even created a scholarship fund for this event and personally ensured that every 4th and 5th grader at school that day was able to attend and left with a book of their own.
  - *New York Bestselling Author Visit*. Sadly, Markham has not been together as one campus since January 2024. However, the Markham community will be reunited

soon! Principal Brown-Warrens and her Librarian partnered with Green Bean Books, a local bookstore, to bring author Renée Watson to speak to the Markham student body. Ms. Watson, a former PPS graduate, is excited to speak to Markham students and provide them with hope on May 13, 2024.

### Teaching Methods

6. Restorative Justice. Principal Brown-Warrens employs a restorative approach to conflict resolution. She fearlessly dives into difficult issues and topics, creating a safe space for students to address disagreement, share perspectives, confront mistakes, and engage in the process of repair. Her approach not only resolves immediate conflicts, but also fosters a culture of accountability and growth within the school community. Through her guidance, students learn the value of acknowledging their actions, understanding their impact, and actively participating in the restoration of relationships. Principal Brown-Warrens' dedication to fostering empathy and understanding sets a powerful example, illustrating the transformative potential of restorative practices in creating a harmonious and supportive learning environment. These skills are invaluable, preparing students to navigate conflicts effectively throughout their lives.
7. "What I Need" Time. Principal Brown-Warrens ensured the district's "What I Need" (WIN) program was rolled out with fidelity upon her arrival at Markham Elementary School, reforming the daily routine for both students and teachers. Each student has 30 minutes of dedicated WIN time each day, providing them with focused time to address their individual needs and goals. This personalized approach allows students the opportunity to seek assistance and support in areas where they may be facing challenges, fostering a culture of academic growth and empowerment. Meanwhile, students who excel academically are given the chance to engage in enriching activities, expanding their horizons beyond the standard curriculum. As an example, some students are allowed to assist teachers of lower grades during WIN time, contributing to their sense of responsibility and fulfillment. Given Principal Brown-Warrens' focus on addressing academic needs, it is not surprising that Markham saw Oregon Statewide Assessment System (OSAS) scores for grades 3-5 increase 6.2% in English language arts and 7.2% in mathematics between the 2021-2022 and the 2022-2023 school year—growth achieved during Principal Brown-Warrens first year at Markham. Her implementation of WIN time has not only enhanced academic performance but has also instilled a sense of inclusivity and support within the school community, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive.
8. Calming Corners & Self-Regulation. Principal Brown-Warrens endorses the whole child approach, which recognizes that one predictor of educational outcomes is access to secure and inclusive learning environments. One example of how Principal Brown-Warrens utilizes this approach is by ensuring students have the tools to self-regulate and work through their emotions. Each classroom at Markham has a calming corner with fidgets, breathing activities, think-sheets, and charts showing the "zones of

regulation” to help students identify their emotion, pick a tool they can use to self-regulate, and then re-engage in classroom learning. Principal Brown-Warrens set up these calming corners directly in classrooms as a way to maximize students’ instructional minutes, as they no longer need to leave the classroom to calm down when emotions run high. By providing tools and strategies for identifying, managing, and expressing emotions effectively, students learn skills that extend beyond the school environment and can be applied to various aspects of their lives.

9. Communication & Transparency. Principal Brown-Warrens’ commitment to open and transparent communication merits recognition. She prioritizes regular updates and ensures that both students and parents are well-informed about the happenings within the school community. Her utilization of the Remind app for real-time updates is particularly effective, providing a central platform for disseminating crucial information efficiently. Moreover, her encouragement of teachers and staff to actively engage with the app enhances communication across the board. Upon starting at Markham, she also held quarterly in-person meetings titled "Sharing with Traniece" to encourage dialogue and foster collaboration between parents and the school. Unfortunately, these meetings have been put on hold due to our school closure. Nevertheless, these meetings were invaluable opportunities for parents to ask questions, share ideas, and be actively involved in their child's education.

### **Community Impact**

10. Extracurricular Activity Attendance. Principal Brown-Warrens distinguishes herself through her extraordinary support of students beyond the Markham Elementary campus. One notable quality that sets her apart is her active involvement in students' extracurricular pursuits, particularly attending sporting events and other activities. Her presence at these events demonstrates her commitment to the holistic development of her students. Witnessing the genuine joy on students' faces as they see their principal cheering them on serves as a powerful testament to her genuine care and support. With Principal Brown-Warrens, students never doubt they have an advocate and ally both inside and outside the school walls.
11. Setting the Example. Principal Brown-Warrens is a beacon of inspiration for her students, embodying the very principles she imparts. She sets high standards for excellence and lives by them. Her life is a testament to persistence, productivity, and achievement. Balancing the demands of her role as a full-time principal last year, she continued her own educational pursuit by working toward a doctorate in education. In her inaugural year as principal at Markham Elementary School, she juggled the responsibilities of leadership and education with grace and fortitude. Completing her EdD at Baylor University in December 2023, Principal Brown-Warrens now sets her sights on further endeavors, demonstrating her commitment to both her professional and personal growth. By candidly sharing her journey with students, she not only sets an

example but also underscores the importance of perseverance and integrity in achieving one's goals.

12. Perseverance through Challenges. Following significant storm damage earlier this year, Principal Brown-Warrens has remained a pillar of unity and guidance within the Markham community. She has provided clear and compassionate communication while being a fierce and unwavering advocate for the students, parents, and staff. She was quick to acknowledge the emotional impact of the school closure on the community and has found a way to turn this challenge into a tremendous opportunity for growth and learning. Her recent message to the community upon the announcement of the school's closure for the remainder of the year exemplifies her steadfast leadership. The [message](#) she shared upon learning the school would not open for the remainder of the year (also linked in section 1 above) is a testament to her connection with and dedication to the Markham community.

### **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

13. Student Assemblies. Principal Brown-Warrens' has held several student assemblies, which incorporate themes to further diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in our school community. One example is through devoting time during the assemblies to celebrate history/heritage months and recognize the rich cultural backgrounds of our students. Through highlighting individuals from various communities, Principal Brown-Warrens ensures that every student feels represented and valued. Additionally, these assemblies serve as an opportunity to promote empathy, understanding, and solidarity among students by showcasing different perspectives and experiences. By incorporating student voices through speeches and skits, the assemblies not only educate but also inspire empathy and appreciation for diversity. In essence, Principal Brown-Warrens' emphasis on student assemblies exemplifies a proactive approach to creating an inclusive and equitable school environment where every student feels seen, heard, and respected.
14. Student Clubs. Principal Brown-Warrens has been committed to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within the school community since assuming her role. Under her leadership, several new groups have been established, each serving as a platform for student voices to be heard and celebrated. Initiatives like Black Excellence and the Asian Pacific Islander Club provide spaces for students of diverse backgrounds to connect and support one another, while also serving as catalysts for broader inclusion efforts. Additionally, school groups such as the Leadership Club engage students allowing them to interact with their peers and provide representation for issues of importance to the larger student body. These groups collectively create a vibrant tapestry of diversity within the school, fostering understanding, empathy, and unity among students of all backgrounds. By nurturing these diverse initiatives, Principal Brown-Warrens ensures



that every student feels valued, heard, and empowered to contribute to an inclusive school environment.

In summary, Principal Brown-Warrens exemplifies the embodiment of transformative leadership, innovation, and dedication to student success. From her visionary initiatives like TEDx Markham and the Read-a-Thon to her commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion through student clubs and assemblies, Principal Brown-Warrens consistently goes above and beyond to create a supportive, empowering, and enriching learning environment. Her emphasis on restorative justice, transparent communication, and active involvement in students' extracurricular activities further solidifies her status as an exemplary educator. Through her unwavering commitment to excellence, Principal Brown-Warrens not only enhances academic achievement but also instills invaluable life skills in her students. We believe Principal Brown-Warrens is deserving of this award, as her leadership sets a shining example for educators nationwide.

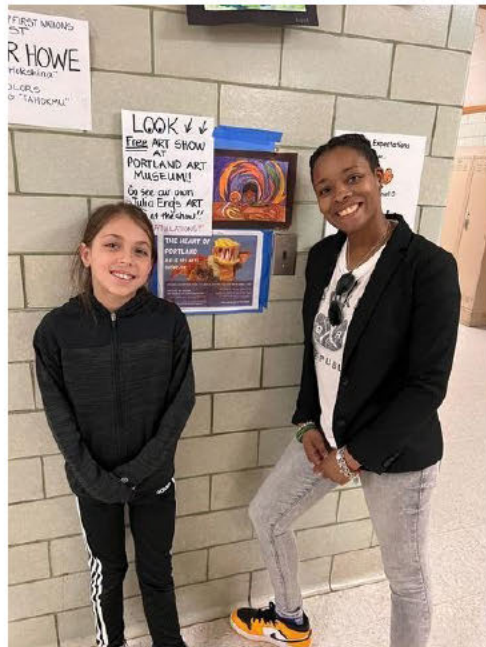
### TEDx Markham



**Book Vending Machine**



**Celebrating Student Achievements**





**DOCTOR Brown-Warrens!**



**Other Fun Activities**





Principal Traniece Brown-Warrens, Markham Elementary School





## Sharing with Peers

Principal Brown-Warrens was asked: *What does an “ordinary” day of making an extraordinary impact look like?* [Her response:](#)

