

Faces Of New Bedford #226: Justine Medina



Meet Justine Medina, 39-year-old elementary school principal at Carlos Pacheco Elementary School. Justine grew up in New Bedford's west end, attending Carney Academy. It was there that she fell in love with learning and used that passion to continue on to graduate from New Bedford High School and attend school in New York.

After college, Justine would become a social worker and after a few years in the field, knew she wanted to make an impact on the youth in other ways. This would lead her to a teaching program in the Bronx, where she worked in unstaffable schools, amongst the highest levels of poverty in the country, and with very little resources. It was this environment that was able to teach her how to not only make learning exciting for them but provide her students with stability, which they weren't used to.

Justine would eventually move back to New Bedford to take care of her father and in doing so, land herself a teaching position at the school that started it all, Carney Academy.

She would teach at Carney over the next few years, receiving her admin license in 2012, and then being asked to take the position as assistant principal in 2014. She worked as the assistant principal until 2016, when she was offered the role of principal at Carlos Pacheco Elementary School.

Justine credits the major success the school has had over the last few years since she has arrived to the amazing staff she has around her. They have worked to raise the attendance rate in the school significantly and was able to have the school ranked in the top 2% of schools, being 1 of 38 schools in MA to ace I've 96% of their achievement targets in MCAS assessments.

Faces of New Bedford is a project by Colton Simmons. If you are interested in booking a shoot or getting prints from the series email all inquiries to colton@coltonsimmons.com. Follow Colton on Instagram: <https://instagram.com/simmonscolton>

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