



## New Tech Network

### **Tyler Elementary, Van Buren Public Schools: An interview with Principal Alesia Pitt**

New Tech Network (NTN), a national nonprofit organization, is a leading design partner for comprehensive K-12 school change. New Tech Network partners with districts and communities to transform schools into innovative learning environments for students and adults. To explore more about the New Tech model and transforming your school, visit NTN's [School Design Studio](#).

*New Tech Network sat down with Alesia Pitt, Principal at Tyler Elementary, a K-4 elementary school, part of Van Buren Public Schools to discuss how adult learning affects student success.*

*Q. Why has adult learning been a key area of focus for Tyler Elementary's improvement journey?*

A. We've created a culture of reflection and inquiry for our adults, where they review their successes and failures, and we built a safe space for that. Teachers who collaborate and plan well carry that over to the classroom.

*Q. Why have your teachers excelled in a more collaborative environment, and specifically with remote work?*

A. The collaborative environment creates a place to feel safe and vulnerable. They're more willing to take risks and try new things, which carries over to our students taking risks and trying new things. Though adjusting to remote learning was frustrating, we'd created an adult learning culture that fostered open dialogue, so teachers were comfortable enough to reach out to their colleagues when they needed support.

*Q. Why is it important that teacher leaders provide learning support for their colleagues?*

A. It makes a big difference to teachers when the person leading them in their learning is not the same person doing their evaluations (like me!). Our teacher leaders provide guidance in a non-judgmental way to help their colleagues improve. And, our teacher leaders continue to be learners themselves and help lead others in PBL.

*Q. Why is it important to model collaborative learning for your students?*

A. Our students see the collaboration of our teachers in action every day. They know teachers work together to design their projects. Students see this example of adults constantly learning and working together, just like they are, which models how the actions we want for students.

*Why do you benefit from having a partner in this school transformation journey?*

A. Our NTN School Development Coach constantly pushes me to think outside the box and asks hard questions. As well as keeping us on track with our adult learning, she seems to know what we're struggling with and how to solve for those challenges. For me personally, it's been an awesome connection. I have been an educator for 43 years, and this is the first time I've been involved with a program where there's someone I can talk to in this role, where I can bounce ideas off of, and share successes and struggles. I share my learning with my teachers too, so I feel that I'm modeling the ongoing learning with them—that modeling trickles down all the way to our students. It's important for my staff to



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know I'm vested in the NTN model, and that I don't have all the answers and still too need someone to guide me in the right way.