

## Eric Manko



Eric is an eight-year Army veteran and currently serves as the **Library Media Specialist and Technology Liaison** for [Loch Raven High School](#) in Baltimore, Maryland. Dedicated to making a difference in the lives of students, he serves as the Class of 2015 advisor, works with the Credit Recovery Program helping under credited students graduate on time, and is the sponsor for the Board Game and Anime clubs.

### Learn and Grow From Failure

Eric shows students that failure is just a part of the learning process, and to learn and grow from it. He cultivates their self-worth by celebrating their strengths, successes, and diversity, while cultivating an atmosphere of community.

*There are many paths to success in life, but they all begin with hard work and persistence. Never be satisfied with failure, use it to fuel future success.*

Eric takes time to get to know students individually, and they know him. Working as a community, they take care of one another because it is the right thing to do. They interact on a daily basis, so that when there are problems they can work through them together. It is what moves them forward as a school, and prepares them for life.

*After a setback, we form a plan of action together to surmount their obstacles, solve their issues, or simply take action toward the best outcome in a given situation. Listening to them and asking them questions empowers them to make good decisions. Sometimes that is all they need.*

### Empowerment, Grit and a Good Education

When asked to share a story about youth empowerment, Eric shares, “*many of us have had teachers and mentors that have made a major difference in our lives simply by listening to us.*” Coming from poverty, as do many of his students, Eric says that he has only been able to achieve what he has because of those who instilled in him the values of grit and a good education. People taught him that life was not easy or fair, but that “he” had the power to change his circumstances. His students want real world solutions to their issues, and he tries to pass on what he has learned.