

## **Al Funk Becomes Moves Over to South To Become the New Principal**

The 2007-2008 school year ushers in a new chapter at Council Rock High School South with Mr. Al Funk, the school's new principal. Mr. Funk is no stranger to the Council Rock School District. He embarks on a challenging, new role following his promotion from Assistant Principal at Council Rock High School North. Through his five years at North, beginning as a 9<sup>th</sup> grade principal and following that class of students all the way to their graduation, Mr. Funk gained invaluable insights and experience which make him uniquely qualified for his new job.

Mr. Funk lives in the Warrington area with his wife and five (yes five!) sons, ages 12, 10, 8 and 2-year-old twins. As a child, Mr. Funk attended elementary and middle schools in the Lower Moreland School District. His high school years were spent at La Salle College High School. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in English from Villanova University. After graduation he joined his family's trucking business for a few years. When that business declined, Mr. Funk decided to return to school to pursue a degree in education. He received his Master's Degree in Special Education from Beaver College (now Arcadia University) and his Principal Certificate from Penn State-Malvern.

Mr. Funk began his career in education at the grassroots level, as a teacher assistant and recess aide at Jenkintown Elementary School. Once he was certified, he took a position in the Crisis Intervention classroom at Norristown High School, providing behavioral support for low performing students. After one year there, he moved to a position at Central Bucks High School East, where he served as an Emotional Support teacher, and later became Department Chair. He gained valuable leadership experience in Central Bucks, as chair of Accreditation for Growth (AFG) committee and on the Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence Committee, during which time the school was bestowed that honor. Mr. Funk also served as an interim assistant principal at CB East for six months.

His experience led him to apply for an assistant principal job at Council Rock High School North. Mr. Funk came to the Council Rock School District in 2002, a monumental year. The year began with a work stoppage, an unfinished new high school and split sessions for students. While it would be natural to question your decision to take a new job during such a contentious time, Mr. Funk's attitude, on this and most things, was optimistic and positive. "In some ways it's good to start (in a situation) like that. Now I feel like I can survive anything!"

As assistant principal at North, his duties were numerous. Mr. Funk served as liaison to the Math Department, school nurses, and social worker. He served on both the AFG and Strategic Planning committees. He oversaw the Supervisory and Evaluation process and was liaison to the Twilight School and Sloane School. Other responsibilities included CARES, Special Education, PSSA testing and the Child Study Team.

Now at South, Mr. Funk hopes to refresh and enhance the culture that has been developing since the school opened. During the summer, Mr. Funk invited the CRHS South staff to stop in for 20 minutes to share each other's education platform. This gave him the opportunity to be better informed about the ideas and issues the staff were thinking about before students and staff returned to school. A new perspective was illustrated when he welcomed the staff to the building on opening day. Each teacher received a t-shirt depicting the "5 R's" his focus for the year: Relationships, Rigor, Relevance, Resiliency, and Revision.

Other issues were also important from the start. Realizing a need to improve student transition, two days were scheduled during the summer for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders for an orientation. Another objective is enhancing student achievement with initiatives such as after-school PSSA remediation. He hopes the school year will afford him many opportunities for informal classroom observations. He looks at that as an opportunity to "catch someone (staff) doing something well. He is pleased that a strong, collaborative administrative level is now in place and is eagerly looking forward to "gelling as a team".

Mr. Funk begins each school day orating a 45 second vignette with inspirational and thought-provoking messages to "set the tone for the day. Each message concludes with the following sentence: "Make it a great day. Or not. The choice is yours."

Citizens for Education is delighted with the choice Mr. Funk has made to take on this new role, and we wish him the best of luck!