

Mr. Dan Greenland, HMS' Principled Principal

Principal Dan Greenland took the helm at Holland Middle School last fall, and after 6 months on the job, he shared his thoughts with Citizens For Education about his administrative philosophy: "Holland Middle School is a community where everyone has a voice." More than just a mantra, Mr. Greenland has initiated Circle Time every 6th school day, in which small groups of students meet for 10 minutes with a staff member who facilitates discussions among them. One of the goals is to "empower the silent majority" so that kids who might not normally speak up about an issue have the opportunity and encouragement to do so. Mr. Greenland also finds ways to give the teachers a voice in decisions that affect the student body.

Mr. Greenland's upbringing in a small western Pennsylvania town taught him the importance of a friendly, open atmosphere and he brings this sensibility to his work at HMS, where he formerly held the position of Assistant Principal for 11 years. Besides the subjects and facts that students are taught, Mr. Greenland feels that when his staff can foster a love of learning in their students, such that their students cannot wait to come to school, then they have done their job well. In addition, he hopes that by modeling compassion, the HMS students will learn to show compassion to others, thereby enriching their own lives and the lives of those around them.

Mr. Greenland received bachelor and master degrees in Education from Bloomsburg University, and then attended Temple University where he obtained administrative certifications. He began his teaching career at Rolling Hills Elementary School in the 1970s, and after a few years became the Acting Principal of both Goodnoe (Grades 4-6) and Chancellor (Grades K-3) Schools. This coincided with the time when 6th grade was moved from the Junior High Schools to the elementary schools. Mr. Greenland then returned to Rolling Hills, where he split his time between teaching and administration, and then did a second stint at Goodnoe as Assistant Principal for 5 years, before moving on to HMS. Mr. Greenland and his wife Terry, a former Council Rock music teacher who now teaches at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, have 3 sons and make their home in Yardley Borough. In his spare time, Mr. Greenland enjoys woodworking, especially making reproductions of antiques, and like every parent, is always happy to see his sons interacting positively with each other.

Throughout his career, Mr. Greenland has seen the expansion of technology in the schools and in the culture. While Smart boards and online test help can truly improve the educational experience for children, he worries that middle school children don't always have the wisdom to properly handle the downside of technology, including the lack of privacy inherent in their Facebook accounts. Kids of this age tend to follow the crowd, and Mr. Greenland encourages HMS students to be their own person and be true to themselves. Coming from an elementary school background, Mr. Greenland

notes that discipline can be easier at the middle level compared to the elementary level, because students know the difference between right and wrong by the age of 12 or 13.

With the District evaluating a move of Rolling Hills Elementary students from HMS to Richboro Middle School, Citizens For Education asked Mr. Greenland about what the impact might be on HMS. Under this scenario, he said HMS would lose 50 kids the first year and 50 the second year. With a loss of 100 students, there would be a need for some HMS staff members to also transition to other Council Rock positions. While he doesn't like to lose good teachers, Mr. Greenland feels that a smaller school can be beneficial to students, especially when it comes to competition to be on sports and other teams. However, he also stressed the importance of retaining program opportunities in a smaller school environment. Mr. Greenland regularly shares his experiences with his counterparts at Richboro and Newtown Middle Schools, and will borrow ideas from them as well. Parity between the schools is important to Mr. Greenland, but he feels that each school will have its own identity based on the personalities and backgrounds of its staff and students.

Mr. Greenland credits his smooth transition to Principal in part to former HMS Principal Mike Lecker, who shared his philosophy that administrators should know all aspects of the job, from management to budgeting to scheduling to discipline and more. He also credits his new Assistant Principal, Ms. Terry Kluck, as a quick learner. Summing up his experience at Council Rock and particularly at Holland Middle School, Mr. Greenland states happily, "We have good students, good parents, and a good staff."