

Sol Feinstone Welcomes New Principal John Harlan

The Council Rock School District welcomed Mr. John Harlan as the Principal of Sol Feinstone Elementary in March 2009.

Mr. Harlan graduated in 1994 from Wilkes University with a degree in Business. After working as a salesman for a year and a half, Harlan he realized he wanted to pursue a teaching degree. He went back to school at East Stroudsburg University to obtain a K-6 teaching certificate. In 2005, he furthered his education with a master's degree in Education Administration from Rider University.

After receiving his teaching degree, Mr. Harlan taught second grade in South Brunswick, NJ for a year and a half. In 1998, Harlan received a call from Sol Feinstone Principal, Bob Winters, regarding an open teaching position in the school. Both men grew up in the same area, attended the same schools and had a mutual friend. Mr. Harlan had great respect for Mr. Winters and considered him one of his greatest role models. This began Mr. Harlan's tenure at Sol Feinstone.

Mr. Harlan taught at Sol Firestone for nine years before becoming interim Principal in June 2008, following the departure of the previous principal, Patricia Pladsen. In the meantime, a full job search to fill the position took place. Over the next few months, the district reviewed many the credentials of many candidates and conducted many interviews. After several rounds of interviews, Mr. Harlan was very glad to have been chosen as the Principal at Sol Feinstone in March 2009. The transition was easy for Harlan, as the Sol Feinstone Community already knew him and respected him. He felt immense support from Superintendent Mark Klein and Joy McClendon, Director of Elementary Education/Curriculum Services, in his new position.

As Principal, Harlan has a hands-on philosophy. He writes a weekly newsletter about what is happening at the school and submits an article in each Owl Hoot, the school's newspaper. You can find him greeting his students at the door each morning. His focus is to do whatever is best for students. Building respect and relationships with students is important to him. He also tries to have the students present something at each month's PTO meeting to get everyone involved and further build a sense of community.

Being a strong believer that if the child is successful socially, academics will follow, he has created an atmosphere of respect at Sol Feinstone. Harlan has renamed the hallways with words like "Listen Lane" and "Appreciate Avenue" and installed stop signs in the hallways, which allow hallway rules to become second nature. Sol Feinstone Family Groups were established within classrooms. They meet monthly for special activities to give each classroom a sense of unity. If the students share, respect and listen to each other, they will be socially and academically successful.

On the Academic front, Mr. Harlan has initiated a new reading and math program. The reading program, "Four Block," allows students, in an hour time period, to practice different aspects of language arts. In "MIC Maps" (Math Investigation Center), students work independently on subjects at their comfort level. Whether advanced, proficient or below, each student gets to work on subject matter independently, allowing the teacher to focus on students in smaller groups.

Mr. Harlan's long term goals are to continue to promote social and academic programs. He plans to use available data more efficiently, such as data from PSSA, and incorporate it into daily instruction. He feels that technology, like Smart Boards, should be used to their maximum potential in the classroom. He believes all these initiatives will continue to make Sol Feinstone an excellent place for students to thrive within the Council Rock School District.

Citizens for Education welcomes Mr. John Harlan to the Council Rock community and wishes him well as the Principal of Sol Feinstone Elementary.