

'Kids-First and Foremost' to Set the Tone of New Superintendent's Term

Nine months after Dr. Kirby announced his decision that he would not seek another contract as Council Rock's Superintendent, and following a lengthy search process throughout the winter, the School Board has announced its decision to appoint Holland Elementary School Principal Mark Klein as our new Superintendent.

The awarding of a three-year contract to this 26-year Council Rock veteran met with thunderous applause and a standing ovation when announced at the May 6th School Board meeting.

Though many parents, staff and community members have had opportunities to get to know Mr. Klein over the years, Citizens For Education thought it was important to share a glimpse of the District's future leader with our membership. Mark Klein graciously met with us to give some insights into his perspectives and persona, and we thank him for taking the time to talk to us.

Mark is very open about his passion for Council Rock. He claims to "bleed blue and white (Council Rock's colors), with a little gold and silver on the side." His passion and determination gives him the confidence to take on this leadership role. "I have seen Council Rock develop from a mid-sized, rural school district, to one of the largest in the state," he notes. I just love Council Rock."

Earlier in his career, he claimed to have no aspirations beyond Elementary Principal. Dr. Kirby's resignation led to his re-thinking of personal goals. That, coupled with a "don't be afraid to take risks" attitude, led to his interest in the superintendent position.

As a new leader, Mr. Klein begins his tenure with no preconceived priorities. "I plan to use the first six months to 'listen.' I feel that I know the elementary issues pretty well, and now I will work to get to know the secondary level better." With the goal of continuous growth, he hopes to garner a "shared vision among all the constituencies." His transition to the helm may yield numerous areas in need of attention, but his plan is to determine a "top three" priority list on which to concentrate.

One area that will clearly take Mr. Klein's attention is the budget. With virtually no involvement in the development of the 2004-2005 budget, Mr. Klein states that his involvement in the 2005-2006 budget, "the budget I will own," begins on July 1.

As best he can, without compromising his position as principal at Holland Elementary, the transition to superintendent will begin. New principals for both Holland Elementary and Newtown Elementary, where long-time principal Dave Hunter is retiring, will soon be in place.

Mr. Klein plans to take in the "big picture" by keeping communication open with the School Board, parents, community members, teachers and staff and appreciating the "good people" who work in this District, whom he will rely on to craft Council Rock's future. Ideas, information and feedback from all sides will help shape priorities. He is respectful of the "unleashed potential" all sides have to offer. Through it all, he plans to keep his eye on what drives him: "Kids-First and Foremost."

As his professional life begins its massive change, Mr. Klein also remains committed to his personal and family life. The announcement of his appointment at the May 6th Board Meeting was scheduled for 9 pm, so that he could attend an important event led by his wife, a teacher in the Central Bucks School District. His three children—a daughter in her first year of college, a son in High School and a daughter in Middle School—are priorities.

Mark Klein's commitment, enthusiasm and passion for children will help him begin his journey with hope and optimism. He shared his work ethic, inspired by a book titled, "The Four Agreements" by Don Miguel Ruiz, given to him by 4th grade teacher Barbara Schneider, as a strong motivator:

- Be impeccable with your word
- Don't take anything personally
- Don't make assumptions
- Always do your best

These sentiments set the tone for Council Rock's next chapter.