

Mr. Timothy Long
Newtown Middle School's New, Student-Focused Principal

Mr. Timothy Long didn't have to move far for his new position; he took over as Principal at Newtown Middle School after serving as the Assistant Principal there since 2006. Mr. Long sat down with members of Citizens For Education to enlighten us on his background, educational philosophy and goals.

Mr. Long grew up locally, graduating from North Penn High School. He worked his way through West Chester University where he earned a BS in Education focusing in the areas of social studies and psychology. A mentor at West Chester had a connection to a residential facility in Sheridan, Wyoming and upon graduation Mr. Long headed west to work with court ordered children. During his six years there he attended Montana State University and earned an endorsement in Special Education.

In 1996 he moved back east to take a position at the Upper Moreland Middle School teaching in an emotional support classroom while also serving as an Administrative Assistant focusing on student discipline.

He met and married his wife in 2000 and moved to Phoenix to be nearer to her parents. He worked as an elementary learning support teacher in the Deer Valley School district and subsequently moved to a Special Education Support Specialist position, responsible for three charter high schools. While in the Phoenix area Mr. Long completed his Masters degree in Educational Supervision at Arizona State University and secured a position at the Willow Canyon High School as an Assistant Principal and Athletic Director. In 2006, following his father-in-law's passing, his wife's mother moved back east and Mr. Long, his wife, and by then two children, returned to the Philadelphia area.

He had a difficult choice to make upon his return to this area: he was offered a position in the Hatboro-Horsham School District at Hatboro-Horsham High School and in Council Rock at Newtown Middle School. Mentors who had been influential in his educational life were in Hatboro-Horsham, yet he very much wanted to work in a middle school environment and chose the Newtown Middle Assistant Principal position in Council Rock.

This year he replaced Rich Hollahan as Principal of Newtown Middle as Mr. Hollahan took over as the Richboro Middle School Principal. Newtown Middle is the only middle school in Council Rock to still have an Assistant Principal and Terry Kluck Stoertz took over that role.

His duties have not changed dramatically as he and Mr. Hollahan had a team approach to running a building of 894 students. He has extended this approach in working with Ms. Stoertz. The one area that has changed is that he realizes the importance of developing a collaborative relationship with educational staff. He wants to stay connected to the students and the teaching piece and to that end he and Ms. Stoertz will occasionally be team teaching with building teachers. In addition to being in charge of budgeting, the biggest difference between being the Assistant Principal and the Principal is that now all decisions are his and the responsibility is his.

Mr. Long feels that the administrative support in Council Rock is superior; he reports to Barry Desko, Director of Secondary Education and ultimately to Superintendent Mark Klein. All the middle school principals connect with each other and are currently working to implement a district-wide research based program to increase educational achievement; Robert Marzano's Art and Science of Teaching. Through this program, each team at NMS designs questions

geared toward student achievement. A goal is set each day and they work to achieve each daily goal. These questions are also used in the staff supervision and evaluation plan and Ms. Stoertz sits on the Supervision and Evaluation Committee. Mr. Long views this new educational philosophy as setting a higher bar than what the state currently uses. He feels that students are best served by a focus on good teaching over test preparation.

In the short term, Mr. Long is focusing on supporting new teams at NMS and implementing the Robert Marzano program (he also teaches this program at Chestnut Hill College). Long term he wants to bring in anti-bullying programs that will empower students to support each other, including introducing the idea of “circles” where all students have the opportunity to connect with and get to know each other.

Mr. Long says that his educational experiences have given him the chance to “work with brilliant people who have instilled in me one common theme, working and doing what is in the best interest of students.” Newtown Middle School is fortunate to have a student-centered principal focusing first and foremost on teaching and learning. Citizens For Education thanks Mr. Long for taking time from his busy day to meet with us and we wish him the best as he embarks on his new educational journey.