



Russell Elementary School

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Mr. Brett Thomas, *Principal*



Dear Russell Families and Community,

I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself and express my excitement and gratitude for the opportunity to return to Marple Newtown as principal of Russell. As a graduate of the district, class of '96, I share your great sense of pride for this special community and believe whole-heartedly that together, we can continue to build a school where all are welcome, and all thrive.

As many of you may know, I'm joining Russell from Wayne Elementary, where I served as Assistant Principal since 2020. Prior to that, I held the same role at Radnor High School, after serving as Dean of Students there for seven years. As a 2001 West Chester University graduate, I began my career as a special education teacher and have worked in classrooms in both Upper Darby and Radnor Township school districts.

Many people have asked why I made the transition to elementary school from high school—and you may be wondering the same. For me, the answer is easy—it's always been my goal to become an elementary school principal and help students build a foundation for success well beyond their time within school walls. At Russell my mission is to do just that, creating a positive learning environment that nurtures the development of our district's youngest students both as learners *and* as people. You'll quickly see that my leadership style is rooted in building trust by modeling the expectations I have for our students and staff.

To share a bit more about me, I currently live in West Chester with my wife, Melissa, and our sons, Will (8) and Matt (5). As a family, we enjoy playing and watching sports, hiking, and spending time in the mountains and down the shore. While we love where we live, I'm so excited to give my children a deeper connection to my Delco roots, and the district and community that helped mold me into who I am today.

I look forward to getting to know each of you once I officially start on May 1. In the meantime, I wanted to share a few opportunities to meet in person before then, including:

- Monday, April 17– I'll be joining the PTO meeting
- Friday, April 21 – I'll be onsite at Russell to meet staff
- Saturday, April 22 – My family and I will be at the Fun Fair

If your schedule allows, I hope to be able to meet as many of you as I can before I officially begin! And know I'll be sharing information on additional meet and greet opportunities soon.

To be the best, we must all work together toward a common goal; I'm eager to learn what it is that you love about our Russell—and where you see opportunities to improve. There is hard work ahead, but together I'm confident we can all accomplish great things together.

Finally, I pledge to communicate as consistently and clearly as possible, but please also know that my door is always open. As your partner in education, I'm here to serve your children and our staff.

Warmly,
Mr. Brett Thomas