

*THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
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drop outs rates, low test scores and not the best athletic players on it's sports team, needed. Mr. Smith gave up being an assistant principal for nine years at Mount Tabor High School also in Winston-Salem came in with force and he didn't tolerate anything that was not acceptable. Some call him "the man with the plan", and that is truly the best title for him. Since Mr. Smith has been principal many changes have occurred. These are changes for the better. When put on the spot about how he would respond to someone who would put down Parkland he simply stated what one of his teacher told him. "It doesn't matter we are not competing with other area schools we want to be the best high school in the state".

Parkland's test scores have gone up dramatically. The student proficiency or the EOCT composite test has went from 39.4 percent in 1997 to 51.0 percent. There are also many more changes that have occurred such as the number of National Honor Society admittees in 1998 there were only 17 and for the 2001-2002 school year it raised to 57 students. Just recently Parkland has been awarded one of the schools in the country and was featured in a magazine. Parkland is one of schools that have received the "signature school" award, this is for the most improved schools in the school system in North Carolina this was in 1999. When asked did Smith believe all Parkland's achievements were putting Parkland on the map he replied "Not yet people doesn't know the importance of these awards, but eventually they will, more kids are taking the S.A.T. and the scores have been raised."

When asked what awards Parkland has received Mr. Smith was more than happy to answer there were so many only a few could be listed. "Clean and green every year, our Drama Department is doing very well, they are really performing to the best of their ability and being successful in doing so," stated Mr. Smith. They have received best actor, best actress, best assembly, best play twice and Ms. Johnson has received the best Director award. This puts Parkland Players in the top 10 percent in the State. They were third in the state. Parkland has won the most improved school, they met growth 2 years, they have won a football state championship, basketball championships, and for the first time ever the Cross-country team were conference champions. They won the National Clearing House award for most improved school in the state, an achievement only five other schools have received this award, one from Georgia, one from Texas, one from Colorado, one from Kentucky and one in North Carolina (Parkland).

In the school year of 2001-2002 Parkland students received over 4 million dollars in grants and scholarships compared to just four years earlier when it was 750,000 dollars worth of grants and scholarships. Smith stated that about when he came to Parkland "It needed direction," he felt that the school was striving day to day. He believed in the saying "it takes a village to raise a Child." He "set the forces in motion." Smith will immediately tell you that he doesn't deserve all the credit "It's the students, teachers, community and parents that have made Parkland a success." When asked how this school is compared to last year Smith replied, "We have the best teaching staff ever, this year."

Much of Parkland's new found success comes not only from the teachers and staff but also from the parent involvement. Parent volunteers play a major role at Parkland. In 2001 the booster club (a parent based organization) raised \$10,000 for lights on the softball and baseball fields. Four years prior to that the maximum earnings reached only \$3,000. Parents' involvement goes beyond financial needs. There are 5 parent involvement programs such as The Athletic boosters, Parent Advisory Council, Parent-Teacher-Student Association, Victory-in-Partnership (V.I.P.) all that are sponsored by Parkland High School. Smith believes that parents as well as teachers and staff should "push kids to believe in themselves," let them believe they can do more than they can do and strive to be the best that they can be. Parents' involvement plays a major role in activities at Parkland. These programs discuss ways for Parkland High School students to further themselves in life. They voice their concerns like any other staff members. Parent involvement has not always been big at Parkland. This was until Mr. Smith along with Assistant Principal Mrs. A. Harvey went out into the community and churches discussing the importance of being

involved with their children, and their own parents concerns with honesty, and with right to visit at anytime, and they get their advisors in the parent group include Reg Club), and Herlene Wall (PTSA).

Community involvement plays and programs such as Dr. Earnie Wade who works with Hunt and Pastor Leak who work with "A" program that helps at-risk students show even when times get tough. In the 2001-2002 the challenge. They each received a supposed to take care of the bear and protect it from getting stolen or lost. This was to show how your dreams (bears) could be stolen or lost. The "I can" program is for 9th and 10th graders which is the foundation year and the year when students can learn from the past year and improve. The Excel program is for 11th and 12th grade students, which is the last year of high school to demonstrate aptitude to college admissions offices, and is the time to focus on matching skills with choices for their future. These two programs encourage further education. The programs also take the participants to visit college and prepare them for the Scholastic Aptitude Test also preferred to as the S.A.T. Out of 25 students who have participated in the 2001-2002 school year, 23 were accepted in to a 4-year post-secondary institution.

When Mr. Smith first came to Parkland he noticed some things that needed to be changed, therefore lockers were painted, the bathrooms had doors added to the stalls, new locker rooms were built, the computer inventory was increased, science classes received 32 microscopes, the softball and baseball field received improvement, and something that hasn't happened since the 1970's happened, the library was stocked with books. Smith also made changes in the behavior of the students. He didn't allow sleeping in the class. Smith was the "big brother" of Parkland you never knew when he would catch you sleeping. Other faculty members also walked around school "chatting" with students to see where they stood as far as grades and extracurricular activities just to let the students know that they have a friend on the faculty and staff. Smith selected the "Comer" model for the school to follow. The goal of this model is to advance students' social, emotional, and academic development towards the goal of becoming successful citizens. Assistant Principal Harvey and 20 other staff members attended a fair to research and get a better understanding of the "Comer" plan. After a year of planning in 2000 the staff received training at Yale so they could better apply the Comer-Style learning process.

Many things were added but some things were taken away. Like, some of the staff who did not want to embrace Smith's new teaching styles. Therefore 22 new teachers were hired. One very important question in this process of hiring new teachers was "would you rather have an army of sheep or an army of lions?" The answer Smith was looking for was lion, because they can work independently, and take charge when the leader is gone. Parkland staff is made up of and cultivates "Lions". Some of Mr. Smith's main Lions consist of his staff who works right along with him in the office. They consist of three assistant principals Rodney Bass, Alecia Harvey, and Susan Hunt. The school planning and management team chair Tiffany Hamilton. The director of guidance Marcia Ramsdell, the VIP parents organization coordinator Beverly McCarthy, a focus facilitator Kay Miller, and a curriculum coordinator Cathy Stankwytch.

Lastly, Mr. Smith came to Parkland because of it's friendly atmosphere. Mr. Smith received the opportunity to take the job and he did. "I love Parkland High School's students, parents, and the community. Every one was down to earth when I met them." Mr. Smith came into Parkland with a positive attitude towards everything. He showed direction in what was once a lost school. With the advice of the staff that was already here and some input by Mr. Smith, Parkland has been transformed completely. Our main goal is to become "the best high school in the state." A few very important things that Smith wants everyone to know is that "all kids can learn", and "you don't have to be the smartest person in the world to be successful."