Classes of the Future
By: Kassidy Hambrecht

COLCHESTER—The sweet smell of muffins and cookies baking in the FCS room are now gone. The pitter patter of the sewing needles tapping on tables have vanished and will never be heard again. On June 30, 2016, Family Consumer Science (FCS) was cut from William J. Johnston Middle School and replaced with Innovations and Computers.

FCS was elective that was taught by two teachers, Mrs. Free and Ms. Purtell, who are now retired. In this class, students learned how to cook and sew. Students learned how to cook delicious treats such as biscuits and smoothies. They also learned how to sew useful items such as pillowcases and gym bags.

The Future

Innovations is a new elective class that is part problem solving, part makerspace, and is based on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math). This creative new class is run by the former Alpha science teacher, Mrs. Ngai.

In this special, students learn how to problem solve and apply creativity, communication, and critical thinking skills to problems affecting their everyday lives as well as the global community. The specific skills vary, depending on grade levels, but the difference from FCS is that students can take on projects designed around their own interests and explore a variety of different topics and real life skills. Some of these may include designing different products, starting a business, and exploring new technologies.

8th grader, Mallory Scherff, explains that she believes Innovations will be a great experience. “I think it will be a fun way to research a topic and create a project, but at the same time, have fun and express myself.”

Computers is also a new elective class that helps students learn how to solve situations on a computer. It is a hands-on learning process that is taught by teacher Mrs. Cauffman.

8th grader Abigail Boislard, who loves the new class, looks forward to Computers every day. “Computers is just amazing. I don't know how else to put it. Everyday when I'm in class, I learn something new and exciting.

Although Computers is somewhat like 6th grade Computers, it has more hands-on activities, which is what I love about the class. I will honestly be very sad when the quarter is over and I will not have Computers anymore.”

Changes

Mr. Bennett, principal of William J. Johnston Middle School, explained why FCS was replaced by Innovations and Computers even though it was a great program.

“Cooking and sewing are phenomenal things to know and learn about. When I made the recommendation of having FCS replaced with Innovations and Computers at a Board of Education meeting, I did not expect my request to be approved that quickly.”

However, it was really came down to timing, “Both teachers who taught the subject were retiring and it would be difficult to find new teachers in such a short amount of time. Also, I wanted 21st Century specials added into our school programs and I thought Innovations and Computers would be perfect for the position.”

Although FCS will be missed, Innovations and Computers will be
Classes (continued)
a great improvement to our school.”

Not only was Mr. Bennett sad to see FCS go, but also 98 out of 100 students who got to experience the wonderful special were too. “It was a special that I looked forward to going to. It was a place that I could just relax and have fun cooking or sewing while getting a break from a busy day at school,” stated 8th grade student, Shannon Hickey, who had FCS in both 6th and 7th grade.

Saying goodbye to the beloved special was difficult. However, it is not entirely gone. When students go to high school, no matter what school they go to, there will be a class similar to FCS if they choose to take it. Whether it is for cooking or sewing, students will learn the same concepts as they may have in middle school.

Although Family Consumer Science was a great class and will be missed, Innovations and Computers will be just as amazing. Students are looking forward to seeing what new and exciting new learning lies ahead in Innovations and Computers.

New Classes and Schedule shaking up William J. Johnston Middle School!
By Delaney Lima

Colchester--The new 2016 school year started with some huge changes in the schedule. The new schedule is throwing a curve ball at the 7th and 8th grade students. With the change of workshop time, the new class SSR, and other new classes, the WJJMS students are thrown off.

First off, the eighth grade student’s workshop moved from the end of the day to the middle of the day! Eighth grade Zeta Mu student Tianna Croskey says, “I don't like having workshop in the middle of day because it's only 30 minutes and we don't get all of our homework yet. Also, if someone doesn't understand something they learn after workshop, they can't get help.”

But, eighth grade Zeta Mu English teacher Jennifer DelSesto likes the new workshop. “I do like the new workshop time because over the years we have found that eighth grade students in their last period just want to fool around.” The teachers and students both have different opinions on the subject.

A new class at William Johnston is SSR (silent sustained reading). Administration put in SSR because they took out a period of English, making all the classes 52 minutes.

In past years, all the classes were held for 45 minutes and English had two periods, at 90 minutes long.

During SSR, students sit in their assigned classroom and silently read for 20 minutes. The teachers put grades in toward students’ English grades. Eighth grade students have mixed feelings on the new class. “It's good to read because I don't have time usually. But, reading isn't my favorite thing to do, but it's a good break in the day,” said eighth grade student Shannon Hickey. Seven out of eight students interviewed prefer one less period of English. But, three out of three teachers didn’t like less English time.

The change in special classes have made many students unhappy. The school took out one of the most beloved specials, Family and Consumer Science, or FCS. “FCS is important because it teaches you how to cook and that's important,” eighth grade student Owen Burton claims.

According to the students interviewed, the changes made related to workshop, specials, and SSR have not been well received. Students hold out hope that the schedule and classes can be updated in the future. But for now, it looks like they are going to have to get used to the new schedule and classes.
Sardines or Students?
By: Emma McKenzie

Colchester--It’s the 2016-2017 school year, new sixth-graders are pouring into the building, eager to see their friends. Their mouths are gaping at the obvious hole in the middle of the school. In a town in southeastern Connecticut, William J. Johnston Middle School is getting eaten piece by piece by construction workers. They’re demolishing the school by small pieces so school can still be in session while they work. As they work, the school will be rebuilt into a beautiful, eye catching sculpture. But for now, the students are sardined into one end of the building.

Many teachers and students have varying opinions on the changes. Seventh grade teachers have gone through the stressful task of moving all of their supplies to the first floor of the sixth grade wing. Mrs. Windsor, a seventh grade teacher on the wonderful Sigma team said with joy, “I love my new room,” when asked about how she felt about her new classroom. “I do like the space, it really works well for groupings.”

Differing from Mrs. Windsor, Mr. Kelly, the math teacher for Sigma claimed, “Not as much as my old room. It was pretty big. This one’s a little smaller, but it’s becoming home for me now.” The rooms on the first level by the sixth grade wing are smaller than the classrooms in section B of the school. The rooms by the sixth grade were mostly used for storage or extra rooms for activities, now they’re occupied by the amazing seventh grade teachers.

Seventh grade Sigma history teacher, Mrs. Lavoie, felt like the task was daunting at first because she is very organized. “In the end, it turned out very well; I was worrying over nothing.” Then added, “I feel like I've done a good job and am making it work.”

Another teacher who had an inspiring opinion on the move says, “I think change is good so it was always good to move into a new room and decide what’s important to have and how to set up a classroom.” This was from seventh grade math teacher, Mr. Paterno from the Alpha team. “Instead of moving back, let’s move ahead.”

Another change that affected the two grades was that the seventh graders are closer to the sixth graders. Now the seventh graders are there as good influences and set good examples for how the sixth graders should act when they move up a grade. Before, the seventh grade was far from the sixth graders, which left them only guessing how to act. Now, the sixth graders have students to look up to. As Mr. Paterno said, “I think having the seventh grade close by provides role models.” Maybe having the seventh grade close by will bring out the maturity in the sixth graders.

This will be a new experience for the school and hopefully it will work out until the new building is complete.

Rooms where memories were made will be gone, but the real memories will stay and follow the students who once made them.

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Metal Monsters
By: Emma Mallett

Colchester--Only some will get them. They cause struggle and frustration. Beware, because when you receive them… there’s no escape!

Here at William J. Johnston Middle School, during the first week of school, 8th graders are assigned lockers. In the 8th grade wing, there are small lockers, and there are even smaller lockers. Most students think it’s the worst size of locker ever given to them. Student Jordyn Strong, who has a smaller locker, and an extra
locker to her side with no one using it, still faces difficulties. She states, “If I wanted to… I probably couldn’t even fit a sock!”

Another student, Kaitlyn Moody, was forced to stack her books at the bottom of her backpack.

Word of the despicable lockers has spread as a 5th grader at Jack Jackter Intermediate School, Jack Mallett, says, “I’m happy that I’ll get the biggest size of lockers next year instead of the tiny ones the 8th graders have.”

Students dislike their lockers due to the size. They would change the size and the amount of space in the lockers. When asked if they were ever late to class, most students agree that they are sometimes late. Also, many students find that they can’t fit their things in their lockers. An 8th grade student, Aidan Reever says, “I have no idea how I’m supposed to fit my winter jacket in it, when I can’t even fit a sweatshirt.”

These lockers are a problem for some students. While others get the bigger lockers, the students that have the smaller lockers face difficulties such as being late to classes because there’s no space to get or put their books, bags, and other supplies, and not being able to get their things in their lockers because the size and lack of space doesn’t allow them to.

What is going to happen to the lockers in the future? With the new school plan underway, hopefully new, larger lockers will be available to students.

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**The War On Flies**

By Jack McIlduff

Colchester--In the recent months, most residents of Colchester have seen a significant increase in the number of flies. These flies caused severe distractions in the William J. Johnston Middle School and angered teachers to the point where they felt they needed to bring flyswatters to school. Where are these flies coming from? Should we be worried about them?

According to the pest control company, “Rentokill” there has been a fifty percent increase in the number of flies this year. In a survey of fifteen students in our school, one hundred percent say they have seen a dramatic increase in the number of annoying flies in their classrooms since last year. The increase could potentially be due to the unusually long warm summer weather. It could also be due to farm animals unprotected from the weather attracting additional battalions of flies. It is also suggested more crops may produce a greater amount of food, attracting additional battalions of flies. The army of flies are an immense problem.

Many teachers reacted to the fly invasion by purchasing fly swatters to kill the flies and encouraging students to do the same. Tammy Burton, a math teacher, said, “[I allowed students to kill flies in my room because] they are gross and there are too many of them.”

However, some teachers do not allow students to kill any irritating flies. These peaceful teachers simply deal with the invading flies by ignoring them, potentially enabling flies a safe place to stay.

These menacing flies can transmit Lyme disease, especially if they are biting flies like horseflies or deerflies. A sneaky little malicious fly sneaks up on a deer and bites it on the back of its ear. The fly contracts Lyme disease and could potentially spread Lyme disease to a person. Should we be worried about Lyme disease from flies? Luckily, the army of flies that invaded WJJMS were simply common house flies.

As this ordeal continues, most people are realizing the worst an army of flies can do is cause a distraction in the classes across WJJMS. The teachers and students of WJJMS continue to be frustrated and battle with pesky flies and eagerly await colder weather.