



Jessica Selby • Daily Times

**(ABOVE):** Students gather in front of Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School of Coventry before heading on in for the first day of class on Tuesday. **(BELOW LEFT):** Amy Propst, Guinevere Furtado and Olivia Hudson, all seventh graders at Feinstein Middle School, get ready for class. **(BELOW RIGHT):** A student steps off of the bus heading on into Feinstein Middle School.

# Everybody's back to school

## Coventry students return to class

JESSICA SELBY  
jselby@ricentral.com

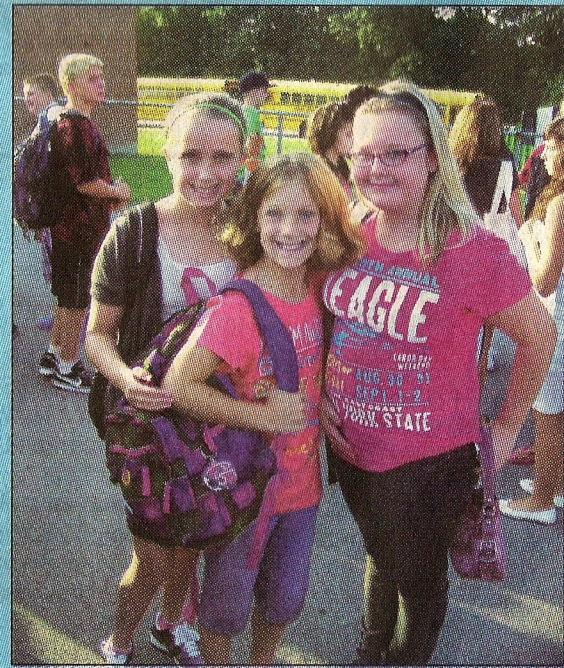
COVENTRY — There were some tears, many smiles, and some trepidation as students in Coventry headed back to school yesterday.

Some students rode the bus in while others had their parents bring them, but all gathered at their prospective locations at the designated time.

High School students started just before 7:30, middle school students, just before 8 a.m. and elementary school students varied, depending on their school, between 8:30 and 9 a.m.

Students at the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle

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# Coventry students return to school

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Students at the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School of Coventry clustered in the front and the rear of the building with their peers before the start of the school day; the sixth graders in one area and the seventh and eighth graders in another.

Amy Propst, Guinevere Furtado and Olivia Hudson, all seventh graders, were among them. The girls said that they were happy to be back in school, but Furtado admittedly said that she was still a little nervous, despite her advancement from sixth to the seventh grade this year. Hudson, however, said that she was ready to tackle the day.

"No, I'm not nervous, other than the fact that I have no idea where I am supposed to go," she said. "I am just going to walk in there and try to figure it out and I am sure I will be just fine."

Dr. Arthur Lisi, one of the administrators at the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School of Coventry, said that the school did organize a meet and greet last Monday and invited the students and their families to come to the building to familiarize themselves with the layout of the building, find out which teams they were on and learn who their teachers were. It was supposed to alleviate some of the student's anxieties, Lisi said.

Although the turnout for that was good, and the plan did help with many students nerves on Tuesday, there were still a few middle school students who appeared overwhelmed by the first day.

Lisi said that he saw two students freeze up as they approached the building. With tears in their eyes, they cowered behind their parent as they approached the school

building and the droves of kids who had gathered on the property.

"For some kids, especially the sixth graders coming up to this building from the elementary level, it can be daunting, but for others it's also exciting," Lisi said. "It makes the students feel that they are growing up and they also realize that they have many new adventures ahead of them."

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Dr. Arthur Lisi, an administrator for Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School of Coventry

The students at Black Rock Elementary School didn't appear to have any anxieties about heading back to school. Laura Kiselica said that her daughter, Taylor, who was entering her first day of kindergarten, simply turned to her as she entered the door, smiled and then was gone.

"Her BFF from preschool is in her kindergarten class, so she didn't care at all," Kiselica said. "She turned away from me with a smile and never looked back."

Even Andrew Walker, who was only in preschool, said, in a very quiet voice, "I'm not scared, it's going to be fun."

Jalen Fulton, who is in the fourth grade at Black Rock Elementary School, said that she was happy to be back because she got her "favorite teacher."

This is apparently a hot issue among the student body, according to Alicia Castel, principal at Black Rock Elementary School

"They want to know who their teacher is, who is in their class," Castle said. "This is all very important information."

To ease that stress, each of the elementary school level schools posted this information ahead of time at their schools.

Meghan Plumley and Talia Iannuccille, both fifth graders at the school, were not as concerned with this information or even just the fact that they had to be back at school. In fact, Iannuccilli said that she would rather "be floating around in my motorized raft in the pool."

Despite the conflicting options about the start of school, Michael Convery, superintendent of Coventry Public Schools, said that things, from an administrative standpoint, appeared to be going well.

District administrators, he said, had been assigned to each of the various school buildings to help each school administration with parent questions, students concerns and bus issues, but as of Tuesday morning, he said, things seemed to be going OK.

"There is always going to be some bumps in the road, but so far, everything seems to be good," Convery said.

Alicia Castle, the principal at Black Rock elementary school, said that she also felt that the first day was going well. She was definitely kept busy fielding many questions from parents and directing students, but overall, she said, it was pretty calm for the first day.