

# Students nervous, excited to be back

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COVENTRY — Yesterday officially marked the end of summer for youngsters in Coventry as they all began their first day of school.

High school students were the first to take the plunge, gathering at Coventry High School before 7 a.m. yesterday.

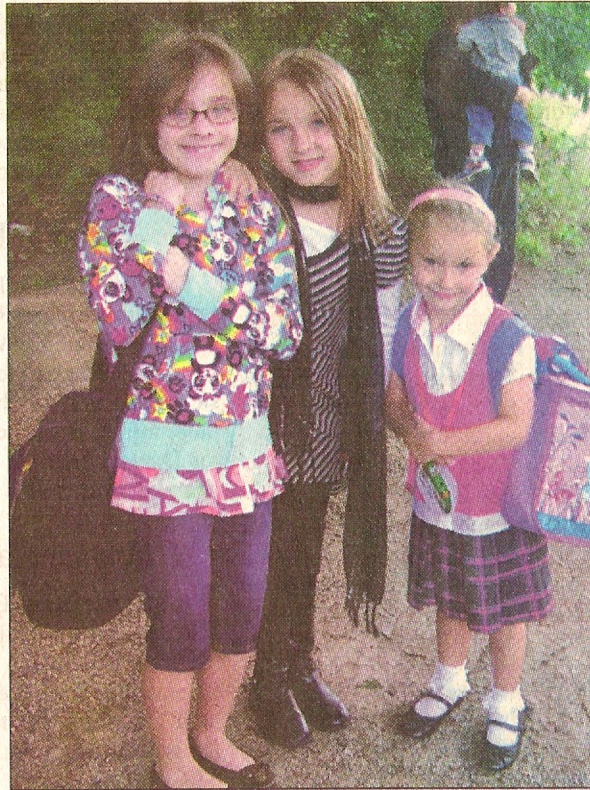
Students gathered inside and outside the building, with a large group clustering outside the school's cafeteria.

The school resource officer, Jay Burlingame, and the school principal, Michael Hobin, had to usher the students into the building just before the bell rang to kick off the first official day at 7:20 a.m.

Hobin said things appeared to be moving rather smoothly "for the first day of school." He said that for some of the kids, especially those who had never been to the building before, there was some obvious apprehension, but that there were no problems overall.

"We will have a short advisory period this morning, and then it's onto the first day's rotation periods," Hobin said. "We will also be on a normal bell schedule by Wednesday.

"Today, of course, the kids are just getting used to things, so there will be some transition periods, many of these students are here at the school for the first time, but it will not take long to get them into the routine," he said.



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Maya Pruenca (from left), third grade, Sierra DeAngelis, third grade, and Madison Roy, kindergarten, are all new to Tiogue School this year, coming from Oak Haven.



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Tiogue School students disembark the bus as they arrive for the first day of school.



Maranda Dailey and Michaela Metcalf, both freshman at the high school, admitted to being a bit nervous about the new environment, but appeared to find solace in recognizing friends who had arrived at the school shortly after them.

They too then filtered into the lunchroom with the other students upon the administrator's instruction.

Just a few miles up the street, at the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School of Coventry, another group of students were also adjusting to a new routine.

All sixth grade students were joining the upper class seventh and eighth grade students at the middle school. Marilyn Hammond and Madisen Kearney were among this group and they both said they arrived at school feeling a bit nervous, but excited at the same time.

The school principal, Dr. Michael Almeida, said this is a common emotion. He said many of the students had expressed similar sentiments to him as well. Overall, he said he was extremely pleased at how smoothly operations were running yesterday morning and how excited the kids appeared.

He also said commingling the students "has never been a problem." He said once inside the building the students are completely divided, but as they arrived for the start of their first day of school, they all clustered outside the building with bused students gathering at the rear of the building and dropped-off students gathering at the front entrance.

"Our seventh and eighth grade students display role model behavior that the sixth grade students just follow from watching them and before you know it, we have a school-wide culture," Almeida said.

The elementary schools were not free from transitions either. Many of the students arriving at Tiogue Elementary School yesterday morning were there as first-time students even though they were entering third, fourth or fifth grade.



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Lily Carley, Lauren Medeiros and Ariel Dorsey, all eighth grade students at the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School of Coventry, wait to enter the building yesterday morning. Coventry High School students gather outside the school cafeteria at the start of their school day.





# First day of school goes well

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Maya Pruenca and Sierra DeAngelis, both third grade students, had been transitioned over to Tiogue School as a result of the redistricting following Oak Haven Elementary School's closure. Both students said they were "a little nervous" about this first day because they did not know who their teachers were going to be, nor had they seen their classroom or had the opportunity to get familiar with the school.

The school principal, Denise Richtarik, said there was an open house at the school earlier this summer at which these opportunities were offered and that many families did attend, but not all.

Tara D'Aleno, who has been teaching at the school for 11

years, said she was seeing a lot of new faces yesterday morning and had mixed emotions about the results of the redistricting.

"It is sad in a way [referring to the redistricting] because we lost a lot of our family, but we are building a new community here at our school and it starts today and that is very exciting for everyone," she said.

Accompanied by his mother, Jen, his father, Jason, and his sister, Gia, Greyson Ramsay and his brother, Grant, who will be going into kindergarten this year, said that even though the school is new to him he was not nervous because he already knows most of the kids since they too came from Oak Haven.

Not only did the start of a new school year deliver many changes for teachers, adminis-

trators, parents and students, but it also appeared to affect traffic as well.

Reservoir Road was completely backed up onto Route 3 early yesterday morning.

Once on Reservoir Road, the cars were piled up back to back in both directions.

Bus drivers traveling in opposite directions waved to one another smiling, but other travelers, those who appeared to not be associated with the start of school, showed slightly more disgruntled faces.

There were similar lines on Knotty Oak Road around the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School of Coventry's start time, but high school-related traffic was heavier. Those backups lasted close to 20 minutes.

The first day of school for West Warwick is today.