

Northern High welcomes two Grimsley teachers as well as students from Northwest and Northeast

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Advisor

When Guilford County schools began second semester on Jan. 28, approximately 465 students, their teachers, additional staff, and administrators entered brand new surroundings at Northern High School, located at 7101 Spencer Dixon Road. Previously enrolled at Northwest High and Northeast High, students looked forward to studying in a wireless environment, while teachers awaited working in the expansive office area where private space is available for planning and collaborating with their colleagues comfortably.

Each teacher received a laptop instead of the normal desktop computer. Document readers and smart boards are also available to teachers.

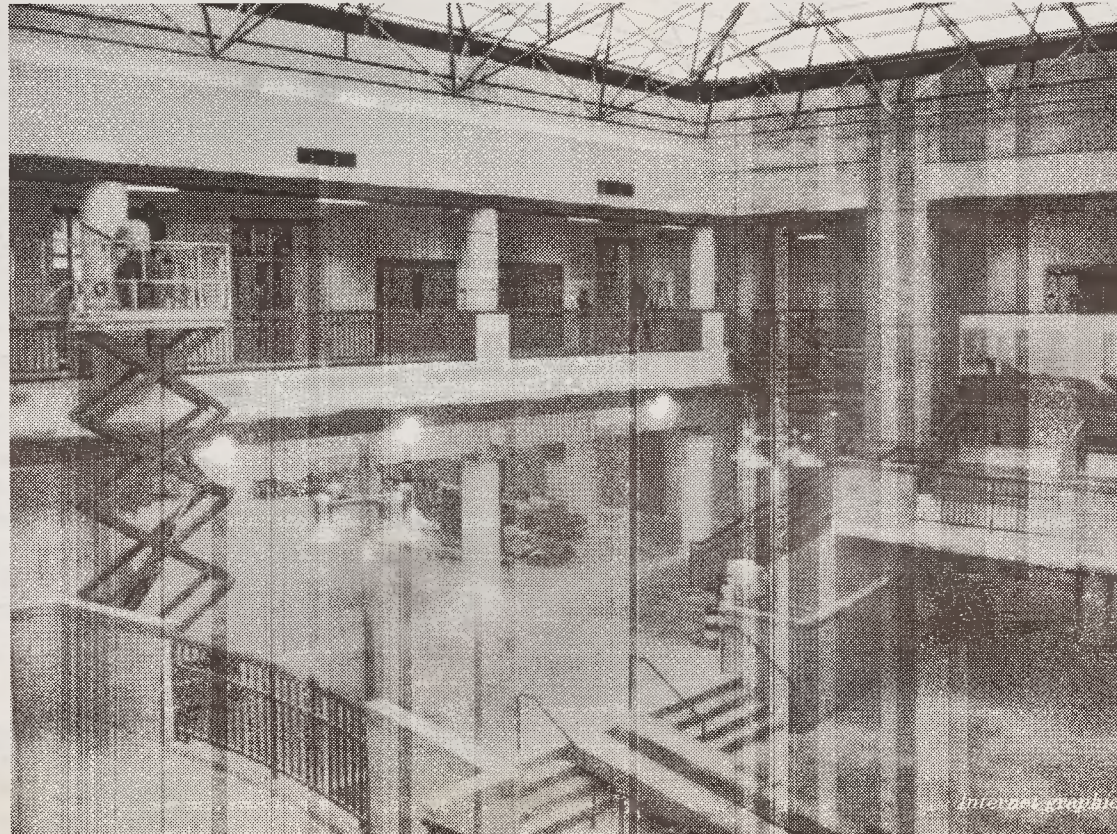
Two teachers who joined the Northern faculty are David Willoughby and Karen Cobb, who both taught at Grimsley previously before transferring to the new school.

"I had been at Grimsley for 21 years, and I loved the school. However, I also felt that I needed a change if I was going to stay in teaching another 20 years. I always respected those teachers who put in 30 or 40 years at GHS, but I felt I needed to shake things up a bit. Also, I loved the idea of opening a new school," said Willoughby.

After teaching his classes first semester in a portable classroom in between Northwest High and Northwest Middle, he looked forward to a shorter drive once his classes started meeting at the new high school.

Cobb, a registered nurse and educator, had her own reasons for transferring to Northern.

"I made my decision to move because it is only seven minutes from my house. Having two kids in schools that are also five minutes from my house will make participating in their activities so much easier. Fortunately, it will also make participating and being involved in



Northern High features a modern atrium that allows a place where students can socialize during breaks. By October of 2007, the building was already undergoing final touches.

school activities much easier," said Cobb.

Willoughby presently teaches English 9 Honors and CP as well as Guided Studies, otherwise known as Strategic Reading. Since Northern only houses freshmen and sophomores this year, Willoughby had to stop holding teaching senior English. Holding titles as assistant coach for cross country and track years ago at Grimsley, he resumed such responsibilities as head coach for the Northern Cross country team this fall and will be the assistant coach for the track team this spring.

Having taught juniors and seniors at Grimsley, Cobb had to make some adjustments in her style of instruction to work effectively with freshmen and sophomores. She teaches Biomedical Technology and Health Team Relations.

"First semester, I taught three classes on the Northwest campus and two on the northeast campus, all in portable classrooms. The nice thing about the mobile units was

they had their own bathrooms, but one tornado warning was enough to make me realize I wanted to be in a building!" said Cobb.

Besides teaching in a modern setting, Willoughby also looks forward to working on a more accommodating, adaptable schedule.

"On Thursdays, students will arrive 45 minutes later to school at 9:15 am so that teachers have substantial time to collaborate without having to do so after school or during lunch," said Willoughby.

While students at Grimsley have a seven-period day only if they decide to take a zero period, students at Northern will follow an alternative, seven-period day.

"We will have a Monday, Wednesday, Friday schedule of seven classes, with Tuesday having only first, third, fifth, and seventh periods, and Thursday having second, fourth, sixth, and seventh periods. This plan provides 90 minutes for completing labs, projects, or other assignments

port already in place and a faculty comprised of many experienced teachers who expressed an interest in making a change. Some of these teachers are new to Guilford County or have returned to Guilford County after moving away, and others are transferring from different local schools.

"It was my understanding that Principal Joe Yeager also hired a few newly certified teachers because he was not to take too many from any one school," said Cobb.

While the anticipation of moving to a new educational setting proved exciting for both Willoughby and Cobb, they both had mixed emotions about leaving Grimsley.

"I did not leave Grimsley because I was unhappy there. I left because I wanted a new challenge. I miss the tradition of GHS and the reputation it holds in the community. When I interviewed for this position three years ago, I told Mr. Yeager that I loved GHS's traditions, but I was ready to begin new traditions somewhere else, to be on the ground floor of something new. I miss my former students and my colleagues desperately. As much as I hated my little room, I miss the beauty of the Grimsley campus," said Willoughby.

Cobb explained she had reservations about leaving Grimsley as well, but she was "excited to start this new chapter. I miss everyone terribly, which has been one of the hardest things, not having a real 'home' and 'neighbors' yet, but they will come soon. I do miss the big Grimsley-Page stuff."

In just a matter of time, the students, teachers, parents, and administrators will build their own traditions.

that may take a little longer than 50 minutes," said Cobb.

Yet another perk for students and teachers is the ten-minute break built into the school day on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Both Willoughby and Cobb agree Grimsley hosts a more diverse group of students, and Northern cannot boast a long history of tradition. Even so, everything the Northern family does is making history.

Both Grimsley and Northern have student bodies who perform alike academically, but many of his new students come from more rural backgrounds.

"I often see more cowboy boots than I did at Grimsley!" said Willoughby.

Northern is fortunate to have strong community sup-

Northern High Quick Facts:

Student Enrollment: 465 (grades 9 through 10)

Core Student Capacity: 1,600

Mascot: Northern Nighthawks

Football Stadium Seating: 2,500 home side; 1,500 visitors' side

Environmental Features: Rainwater harvesting, Wetland "Living Machine" to filter waste water, Eco-Educational courtyards, solar water heating

Sports Fields: Football stadium, soccer/lacrosse field, six tennis courts, baseball field, softball field, practice field

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