

FIRST THURSDAY

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Franklin County Schools

Our *F*uture, Our *C*ommitment, Our *S*tudents

NOVEMBER, 2009

Harris To Lead Early College

Jim Harris likes new endeavors, and his next one has begun. Harris is the principal of Franklin County's first Early College High School.

The Early College High School, which will be housed on the Franklin Campus of Vance-Granville Community College, is a five-year hybrid program in which students can earn a high school diploma and up to 60 transferable college credits including an associate degree at no cost to the student.

"For students who would not normally go to college, this presents an opportunity for them," Harris said. "This is a way to get a high school

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Café Umami

FHS student-run café. P. 16

School Report Cards

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Lab Facelift

BES computer upgrade. P. 6

Ayscue Voted Top Principal



Debbie Ayscue (left) is the FCS Principal of The Year.

EBES Educator Honored By Peers

When Edward Best Elementary Principal Debbie Ayscue was a child she knew she wanted to be a teacher. Her passion began from playing school and is as strong as ever.

Her enthusiasm and expertise have earned her a new honor - Franklin County Schools' Principal of the Year.

Now in her 26th year as an educator and fifth year as Principal of Edward Best, Ayscue continues to excel.

"It is a great honor to be chosen by your peers," Ayscue said. "This is a great school system. All of the principals work hard

and know what it takes everyday to be a good principal."

Ayscue is grateful for her staff and makes a point to support them.

"You have to work really hard to make sure your teachers and staff members have the resources to make sure that their students are successful,"

Ayscue said. "It's not only the resources but also the support. I think the one thing that my staff realizes is that I wouldn't ask them to do anything that I haven't done before or be willing to do with them."

Ayscue began teaching at Louisburg Elementary in 1982

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Ingram Named Superintendent



New FCS Superintendent Dr. Eddie Ingram takes an oath in front of his family after being named Superintendent on October 5th. His contract is through June of 2013.

Career Educator Ready to Lead FCS

New Franklin County Schools' Superintendent Dr. Eddie Ingram is rich in experience having worked in education in many different roles and hopes to continue success with his new endeavor.

"This is an honor," Ingram said. "I'm very thankful for this opportunity, and I will perform to the best of my ability during my tenure."

Ingram served as FCS Interim Superintendent since July 1st and was named fulltime Superintendent on October 5th by the Franklin County Board of Education.

"I strongly believe in a team approach," Ingram said. "I will work closely with the Leadership Team and Board of Education to do

what's right for kids. I want to continue to help students achieve. One of more major goals is improve the high school graduation rate. We have improved in recent years; and I want to make sure that continues."

Perhaps a key to help increase the graduation rate is already taking shape. Ingram played a major part in forming the new Early College High School, a five-year program designed for students to receive a high school diploma and two years of college credit. The new program now has a principal, Jim Harris, and will open the second semester of the cur-

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State Releases Report Cards

School System Will Analyze Data and Try To Improve

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction released its annual school report card for each school in the state Thursday morning.

The annual report consists of average classroom/course sizes, funding, student performance, safety information, qualifications and experience of teachers and administrators and many other items.

"The School Report Cards provide a virtual window into what is happening in schools and school systems across our state," said State Superintendent June Atkinson. "The information should empower parents to start informed discussions with principals, PTA and PTO leaders and other members of the school community about how our students and schools are doing and what we can do to improve education in North Carolina."

Franklin County Schools Superintendent Dr. Eddie Ingram also believes the Report Card is an excellent source to breakdown the dynamics of the system as well as each school.

"We will use this report to help improve all of our schools, which obviously will help the entire district," Ingram said. "It will take some time to break down all of the data, but I am confident we will learn from it."

In terms of school size, FCS has an average of 506 students per elementary school, compared to a state average of 511. FCS middle schools are slightly larger than the state average with 659 students compared to 652. Franklin County high schools have an average of 778 students, but the state average is 826 students.

Public schools are funded through three main sources, including state, federal and local money. Per student, \$1,754 comes from local money, \$5,657 from state money and \$914 from federal money. Respective statewide averages are \$2,130, \$5,653 and \$873. In all, each FCS student accounts for \$8,325, while the state average is \$8,656.

In the category of student performance, FCS has a math

composite of 78.4% and 66.5% for reading in grades 3-8. This is the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency on the end-of-grade tests designed by the state. The respective NC averages are 80% and 67.6%.

High school students take a variety of end-of-course tests each year. FCS is above the state proficiency average in Chemistry, Civics and Economics and Algebra II. FCS is below the state average in the subjects of English I, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Physical Science, Physics and United States History.

"We monitor EOG and EOC scores closely," Ingram said. "While we are above the state average in a few categories, we want to continue to improve each year. Our staff and students are dedicated to this process. We will continue to evaluate what is working and what needs improvement."

Adequate Yearly Progress, a measurement designed

[SEE REPORT PAGE 14](#)

For complete report and school breakdowns visit the following website:

www.ncreportcards.org

Traveling Science Lab



Cedar Creek Middle students in action.

Bunn High students starting a lab experiment.

Destiny Lab Visits Bunn High, CCMS

Students from Bunn High School and Cedar Creek Middle School got to experience the Destiny Traveling Science Learning Program in October.

The Destiny Traveling Science Learning Program is a science education outreach initiative of Morehead Planetarium and Science Center at UNC-Chapel Hill, serving pre-college teachers and students across North Carolina. Destiny develops and delivers a standards-based, hands-on curriculum and teacher professional development with a team of educators and a fleet of vehicles that travel throughout the state.

Bunn High School biology students taught by Anne Paris and Darlene Perry will performed a

lab exercise called "The Crucial Concentration." Students assumed the role of laboratory investigators for a court case to determine the amount of protein found in three sports drinks. Using the general concept of the Lowry assay and micro-analysis skills, students learned how to use a spectrophotometer, measure absorbencies, collect quantitative data and produce a standard curve to find the protein content in each sample.

Lori Craven's eighth-grade science students performed a lab exercise called "So Fresh, So Clean." Students learned about the chemistry of water and its role in their daily lives through an

SEE SCIENCE PAGE 16

YES' Happy Campers



YES students pay close attention during the Traveling Trunk program during a recent history mini camp.

Mini Camp Leads to Interactive History Lesson

While Youngsville Elementary School was tracked out in October, many students took advantage of a mini camp focused on Early American History. The program, which was led by YES' Teresa Shaver of the Before and After Program, featured professors, historians, Civil War characters and more.

Several people from the 4H Club came in to show the process of spinning wool on a real wooden spinning wheel. In addition, they made butter and showed the students how leather is processed. The 4H members also brought five real sheep in which students were able to touch their wool.

Students got to try their own hand at making

artifacts of the past through art work and using corn husk to make objects.

A Traveling Trunk full of treasures from the past was check out from National Parks Service in Richmond. The trunk contained clothes and items soldier's used on a daily basis during the Civil War. Students got to see the Civil War food popular among soldiers known as hardtack as well as eating utensils. In addition, a military map, money from the confederacy and the union and books were on display.

YES music teacher prepared a booklet of CDs of songs from the time period that became

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PLCs at Work



BES' remodeled computer lab not only has new computer equipment but is also more user friendly and has a much sounder ergonomic design that provides more comfort and greater teacher visibility.

BES Revamps Student Computer Lab

Franklin County Schools continues to utilize Professional Learning Communities, while many school systems are just now coming on board with the PLC movement. Franklin County, meanwhile, can really start to show improvements across many areas, thanks to the PLCs that have occurred since 2005.

PLCs are a district-wide program in which teachers and administrators organize in focus groups to enhance certain aspects of education.

Many areas of our county have been improved thanks to school PLCs. Various school groups work on grant opportunities, improving the achievement gap, and of course, improving student achievement. Bunn Elementary succeeded in making a distant dream a reality, thanks to two PLCs, a visionary principal, and their entire community.

"It's amazing," Bunn Elementary School Principal Jewel Eason said. "It's rejuvenated our computer lab usage. Our lab was originally designed

in the early 90s. A lot of the issues that come to the forefront now made it not feasible to use. Now, not only do we have the new technology in there, but we have computers set so we can monitor the students and teach at the same time without having to move. The kids are excited about it. They want to be in there because they fill like it is more user-friendly."

Bunn Elementary School, much like every school in our district, strives to put 21st century equipment into each and every classroom. While not receiving large amounts of funds earmarked for this purpose, Eason and her staff stretch every dollar, look for every possible grant, and enlist community support to make their dreams come true.

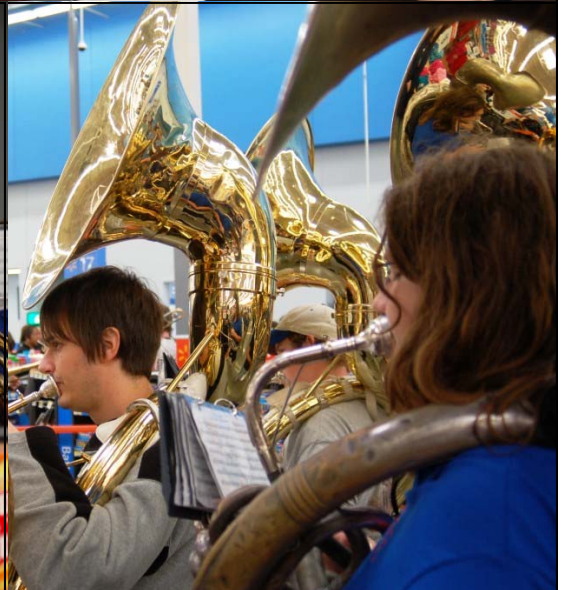
If you walk through the halls of BES, you will see students and teachers engaged in lessons using their SMART Boards. Teachers use interactive student response systems (clickers) to quickly as-

[SEE LAB PAGE 15](#)

Warriors Live Ceremony



The Louisburg High School band got a sneak peek at the new Wal-Mart in Louisburg last week. The Warrior band performed in an employee appreciation ceremony two days before the store opened.





Long Mill Space Race Readathon

Franklinton High School drama students arrived at Long Mill Elementary on their spaceship after running out of gas. Since they were there, FHS students taught LOMES students how to read the phrase "Readers today leaders tomorrow". They then awarded the students certificates and the golden telescope pendants. Franklin County Library Director Holt Kornegay then read the story *What Faust Saw*. This event marked the closing ceremonies for the Space Race Readathon at Long Mill.



Franklinton Woman's Club Donates to FES

Franklinton Elementary is the proud recipient of a donation from the Franklinton Woman's Club. The donation will be used to allow children to participate in field trips. Pictured left to right are Peggy McGhee, Janie Mitchell Ray and FES Principal Carol Davis. Not in pictured is Dianne Moss.



Bunn High Beta Club Visits UNC, Duke

Members of the Bunn High School Beta Club had a memorable trip to the Durham and Chapel Hill area in October. Students first toured the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and followed with an afternoon visit to Duke University.

BHS Students Offer Fire Safety Tips at BES

Morgan Pearce, a senior at Bunn High School, is doing her senior project on Fire Safety. So, to get the word out, she and her friend, Fire Pup, another BHS senior (Stormi Barham), came to Bunn Elementary to discuss how to be safe with Mrs. Lisa Barham and Mrs. Billie Jo Abney's 2nd grade classrooms. Morgan shared with the students the story of Fire Pup and then did some fire safety activities on the SmartBoard. She asked questions after her discussion and Maya Hodge won a smoke detector for her correct response. The students were then given Fire Pup coloring books, stickers, a fire helmet, and fire hydrant erasers along with a Fire Safety Certificate and a home checklist. Fire Pup then went around to the other second grade classrooms and presented them with stickers.



Bunn High School student Morgan Pearce (far left) stands tall with Fire Pup during a recent demonstration at Bunn Elementary School.

AYSCUE

Continued from page 1

and moved to Edward Best seven years later where she taught for 10 years prior to becoming Assistant Principal at Edward Best. She often draws on what she learned during those posts to keep students as the point of focus.

"I think the staff understands that we act on what is best for the students," Ayscue said. "Even if someone has to do something that is difficult, he or she understands that it is the best thing for the child and the school."

Ayscue said she really enjoys collaborating with the teachers and staff on projects.

"When you work together as a team and the end result is a success for students and everyone else involved, you know the time was worth it and that you have effectively done your job."

Ayscue attributes the school's success, such as making Adequate Yearly Progress and expected growth, to the dedication of the students, parents, teachers, staff and administration as well as overall community support.

"It really is nice to have the staff understand that the students are first – that helps make this a better school. The faculty, staff and students make this school."

Ayscue finds the community reaching out to help quite often and is very appreciative.

"The Edward Best community has been very supportive of me," Ayscue said. "Local churches have donated supplies to students who need them. The firemen come out for our fire safety day, and other community members will come in and speak to our classes on various classes. We have strong support from many community volunteers."

A prime example of the community support includes a recent donation of \$20K for a computer lab and playground equipment (\$10K each).

Ayscue, who graduated from East Bladen High School, earned her undergraduate degree in teaching from Methodist College and went on to earn her administrative degree from N.C. State University.

John May, who represents the Edward Best area as a member of the Franklin County Board of Education, was excited when he learned that Ayscue had



EBES Principal Debbie Ayscue (right) gets a warm congratulations from school employee Sheila Alston

earned the honor.

"I'm thrilled for her," May said. "This award reflects on the whole school. Mrs. Ayscue, her staff and students deserve it."

What makes her a great principal is that she genuinely cares about all of the students and staff. She has goals. Her goal is for Edward Best is to be the top school, and she won't be satisfied until it is. They've been second and third a few times, and they continue to try and get better."

May praised Ayscue for her ability to stay focused, willingness to do any task from helping students get in the car to go home or wipe cafeteria tables, and refusal to make an excuse for anything.

"She doesn't get distracted. A few years ago, we had student reassignment, and Edward Best got over crowded. She didn't let that bother her. She said

SEE POY PAGE 11



Debbie Ayscue receives the good news from FCS Superintendent Dr. Eddie Ingram and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Lynn Henderson.

POY

Continued from page 10

send them here, and we will teach them.”

In addition to being a hard worker and never settling for less, May believes Ayscue’s organizational skills allow her to get the most out of each employee.

“One of her biggest assets is her ability to organize. She is the most organized principal that I have ever seen. There is no dead time at Edward Best. It is great for the teachers and staff – they know where they need to be on the first day.

She treats all of her students and all of her staff the same way. She’s good to all of them. If there is a line drawn, the line is there for everyone. She is most deserving of this award.”

Ayscue’s son, Gray, is a sophomore at Louisburg High School and her daughter (Amber) is a junior at N.C. State University. The Principal of The Year’s husband, Phil, is employed in Raleigh.

“We want to continue to excel,” Ayscue said. “We need to keep our teachers moving forward at a good rate. Our goal is to become a School of Excellence and keep this a safe place for students.”

FCS Superintendent Dr. Eddie Ingram believes Ayscue’s award is well deserved.

“This is a well-deserved recognition,” Ingram said. “Not only is Mrs. Ayscue a hard worker, but she does what is in the best interest for the children. She gets along very well her staff and co-workers throughout the school system. Edward Best Elementary is an excellent school, and that is a testament to her dedication to the students, community and staff.”

With the honor, Ayscue now moves on to the State Principal of the Year process.

- Nathan Moreschi

ECHS

Continued from page 1

diploma and two years of college for free. I think that would be appealing to any parent who could not afford to send his or her child to school."

While he doesn't begin the job officially until the first full week in November, Harris is already seeking information and pondering ideas.

"Other schools have started similar programs, and I've heard nothing but positives.

"Everyone will be involved with this. We will bring kids from all over the county and take input from everyone. It's going to be a challenge. We want to work as one unit. We want to come up with our own mascot and be able to say this is ours. These students will be the first. Nobody can duplicate that. Our staff is going to have to wear a lot of hats."

The Early College will open in



ECHS Principal Jim Harris.

the second half of January with up to 60 students who are in their second semester as a high school freshman. Students will begin with high school level courses and gradually add in college level courses as they progress through the program. In the fifth year, students will be enrolled primarily in college courses.

Each year, 60 more freshmen will be enrolled into the early college. In its fifth year, the program will reach a capacity of 300 stu-

dents. While the school will not compete in athletic events, students can still participate in athletics at the traditional high school district in which he or she lives.

Across North Carolina, there are about 65 early colleges, with the first beginning about a decade ago. Franklin County Schools began planning for the new school two years ago and was awarded a state grant for the program late this summer when the state budget was finalized.

Harris, who retired from the military in the early 90s, has been involved with education ever since. His most recent post included a four-year stint as an assistant principal at Cedar Creek Middle School. He was named Assistant Principal of the Year last year.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for the community," Harris said. "We will involve parents and community members as much as we can. We want this program to work well and do our best to keep students motivated and on the right track."

INGRAM

Continued from page 2

rent school year.

"I'm very excited about Early College and thankful for all of the help from Vance Granville, FCS Administration and the Franklin County Board of Commissioners," Ingram said.

Ingram's career in education is sprinkled with many different duties. During his 29 years, he served as an English teacher for 12 years before making the leap to administration.

He grew up in eastern North Carolina, but has family roots in Franklin County (Franklinton).

Prior to becoming Superintendent, Ingram spent the previous four years as Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction for FCS. He previously worked for FCS from 1997 to 1999 as Principal of Louisville High School.

Other posts held throughout his career include elementary school principal, middle school assistant principal, human resources director, district athletic director as well as NC Department of Public Instruction section chief for licensure.

Ingram believes one of the factors to his past success has been to continue to have an open mind and willingness to listen and communicate well with parents.

"I'm always open to new ideas; and I want parents to know that the school system is here to help them. I always welcome comments and concerns. I do my best to return all emails and phone calls within a reasonable time frame."

In the meantime, if you have a question for Dr. Ingram, please do not hesitate to contact him at 496-2600 or via email at eddiein-gram@fcschools.net.



Harris Bids Farewell to CCMS

Cedar Creek Middle School held a farewell ceremony for former assistant principal Jim Harris on the final Friday in October. Harris, who spent four years at Cedar Creek, is now the Principal of the FCS Early College High School. See page 1 for more information on Early College High School and Harris.



CAMP

Continued from page 5

popular with students as the camp progressed. Students participated in colonial games, made artwork, had folktales read to them and learned about superstitions of that time.

Students got a sense of what it was like to live during that time by sampling homemade butter, and learning about herbs used for cooking as well as medicines.

Students and staff involved with the event were happy to learn more about the time period as well as broaden their perspective.

FES K Students Visit LC

Franklinton Elementary kindergartners got an early glimpse of what a college campus looks like after visiting Louisburg College during the first week of October. FES, like all other schools in FCS, believe the earlier you encourage students to head to college, the more likely it is that the student will attend.



REPORT

Continued from page 5

through the No Child Left Behind Act, was another bright spot for FCS. In all, 88% of FCS campuses made the mark for AYP (state average is 82%) for the past school year. All of the middle schools made the mark, 7 of 8 elementary schools and one high school met all targets.

For school safety, FCS matches the state average of one incident per 100 students for acts of crime or violence that take place at school, at a bus stop, on a bus, on school grounds or during off campus activities sponsored by the school.

Another element monitored by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction is the level of quality for teachers and administrators. For the elementary level, 97% of the teachers are fully licensed, with 89% at the middle school and 90% at the high school level. Respective state averages are 98%, 92% and 90%. Teachers who are not fully licensed are currently working with a provisional license and working toward completing their permanent creden-

tials. Highly Qualified is a status defined by the Federal Government and is typically related to the teacher's field of study. FCS ranks well with its number of HQ teachers (100% in elementary, 99% in middle, 98% in high school). The respective state averages are 100, 98 and 97.

Average class size is an element that FCS has worked very hard at in the past several years. In typical K-8 classrooms, FCS is below or at the state average in K, 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 7th and 8th. FCS is slightly above average in grades 3 and 6. Average class size ranges from 18 to 22 elementary and middle school students in Franklin County.

For high school students, average course size is typically at or above the state average by one or two students in 8 of the 10 areas.

"Class size is very important," Ingram said. "The smaller the class typically means more time the teacher can have for individual students. Our teachers work very hard with their students and should be commended for working with larger course sizes. It's not easy. More students results in more prep time

required by the teacher to run the class effectively."

Individual school snapshots and total detailed breakdowns can be found on the Internet at www.ncreportcards.org.

"Giving the public access to such a large collection of school data is one more way we are increasing accountability and transparency and showing taxpayers how their investments in public education continue to pay off for our students and our state," said State Board of Education Chairman Bill Harrison.

The North Carolina School Report Cards have been produced annually since 2001 to provide the public with the most comprehensive information about local schools, districts and overall state data. For the first time ever, this year's Report Cards will also feature North Carolina's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) state-level scores. Users of the Report Cards can search by school or school system name, by using a North Carolina map, or by selecting desired school characteristics.

- Nathan Moreschi

BES Computer Lab



Before...



...After

LAB

...ess their students, while the students enjoy the game show-like environment. But when a guest would come to the main computer lab, they would share in the teacher's agony of aging equipment, a less than collaborative arrangement of tables, a dark environment, and no curriculum resources.

To overhaul the lab would require teacher sacrifices, a shared vision of making the lab a cornerstone of the school, and of course, some unbudgeted funding. Bunn Elementary and Ms. Eason, however, did not bend at all of those obstacles. Two professional learning communities formed to tackle the two issues of the logistics/environment of the lab and provid-

ing relevant technology lessons for the lab. The groups worked with Ms. Eason, the FCS Technology Department, Tommy Piper (Assistant Superintendent of Auxiliary Services), FCS maintenance and community groups to seek out support for their two goals. Diagrams were sketched, equipment purchased, lessons shared, and finally, BES opened their newly renovated lab.

Not only did they purchase new equipment, some coming from community contributions, but they also rearranged the lab to allow for more student/teacher collaboration, more 21st century skills lessons, and more interactivity with the SMART Board and additional peripherals.

"We had so much support from so many different people," Eason said. "The technology department was amazing. They had several

different designs for us to choose from. Mr. Piper and the maintenance department were great. David Brewer (maintenance director) was a big help, too. Everyone chipped in. The PTA bought new carpet, and there were other private donations."

This project highlights all of our Franklin County Schools' Professional Learning Communities. All throughout our county, teams of educators work tirelessly to develop curriculum, activities, and make positive changes for the benefit of our students. Educators in FCS, along with other staff and administrators, continue to show that working collaboratively can make positive impacts in our community.

"This is a testament what schools can get out of Professional Learning Communities," Eason said.

SCIENCE

Continued from page 4

investigation of the differences and similarities of bottled water and tap water. They built their own pH scales and simulate part of the water treatment process. This module is offered by DREAMS (Destiny's Role in Engaging and Advancing Middle School Science), a new Destiny initiative especially for middle schools.

Destiny and Discovery, two custom-built, 40-foot buses equipped as mobile science laboratories, bring advanced science and technology equipment to students who otherwise might not see high-tech experiments or what a career in science can offer. The mobile science labs are powerful visual images that heighten public awareness of the importance of and funding necessary for quality science education.

To be eligible to request a visit from a Destiny mobile science lab, each participating teacher must attend workshops to learn how to incorporate module activities and experiments into his or her classroom. Destiny offers 15 different science modules, each aligned with the N.C. Standard Course of Study.

The Destiny program was created by UNC-Chapel Hill in 2000. Its principal funders are the State of North Carolina and GlaxoSmithKline, with additional support from Bio-Rad Laboratories and from the North Carolina Biotechnology Center. Since 2006, Destiny has been part of Morehead Planetarium and Science Center.

FHS' Umami Café



FHS students prepare food for serving at the Umami Café.

Engaging Food Project at FHS

Well planned projects incorporate many different activities and skills. Great projects do the same and result in a lot of smiling faces.

It's safe to say that the Umami Café project at Franklinton High School is a great project. At regular intervals, students enrolled in the Foods II class provide lunch for FHS teachers and staff. At a cost lower than most lunch restaurants, the students are providing a hot delicious meal that keeps costumers coming back.

"Each semester, we run our own teacher lunch café," FHS teacher Maria Styers said. "Students begin by writing their business plan, surveying the teachers to gauge their interest, and then begin putting their plans into action. The money to run the program comes from grants over

time and profits from previous classes. We cannot pay the students money, but preparing and eating samples of our menu items is the next best compensation. At the end of each semester, we celebrate our business success by spending some of our profits on lunch that we order in and some of our profits on equipment for future classes. The students determine what equipment they wish they had and buy it for the future classes."

Since 2005, the program has expanded and will probably continue to do so in the future.

"Our beginning business just sold pre-ordered baked goods (cheesecakes, breads and cookies). In 2007 we expanded to pro-

[SEE UMAMI PAGE 17](#)

UMAMI

Continued from page 16

vide lunch for teachers,” Styers said. “Lunches have included salad/potato bar, soup and sandwich lunch, and spaghetti lunches. Our most recent lunch was a Halloween Appetizer lunch buffet. We offer our food choices based on surveys of our target market – teachers.”

Student participation has been strong. Enthusiasm is so great students often offer to extra work at home for the benefit of the program.

“The students love it,” Styers said. “When I first tell them about it at the beginning of the Foods II class, they seem interested but not terribly excited. As we begin planning and they see their plans become reality, they get so excited and proud. I have even asked them if they would be willing to do extra work on our regular curriculum at home to allow more time to run our business and they have said “Yes!” The students plan everything from the market-



Another satisfied customer.



FHS teachers find the Umami Café quite tasty.

ing to the menu and even the table decorations. As they plan, work together and apply the culinary and sanitation guidelines they have learned in class, they see more purpose in what they are learning and gain deeper understanding of the concepts.”

Teacher response has been very positive as well. Teachers say they enjoy the food and getting the opportunity to interact with the students while they are actively working on coursework. Teacher involvement with the program continues to grow each semester.

So where does the name Umami come from?

“This year we had a difficult time deciding on a name for our business,” Styers said. “One student started reading through the Food Lover’s Companion, a dictionary of words that deal with foods and cooking. She happened on the word umami and liked the meaning. The class like the sound of the word and the meaning and the Umami Cafe was born. Umami has no literal English translation, but can be loosely translated from Japanese to mean delicious, savory, the essence of flavor. We

are familiar with the four tastes of sweet, salty, sour and bitter. Umami is the fifth taste which was identified in 1908 but recently has received recognition in the news.”

Previous names have been Ram Goodie Shop, The Lunch Box, the Ram Shack and the Casual Café.”

Styers is quite pleased with how engaged the students are with Umami Café.

“The most satisfying part of the project is to see the excitement in the students’ faces when they see their work displayed and shared with others,” Styers said. “Students from other classes peep in prior to the event and want to know what they are doing and how they can get involved. The students working seem to stand up taller and prouder as they serve teachers and hear all the compliments. To see the class come together as a team for a common goal and complete it well is such a joy. At the end of the day when we run the café, we are all tired, but it is a good tired -- knowing that we have done our best and feeling accomplishment in our skills.”

- Nathan Moreschi