

D211 POST: CONANT HIGH SCHOOL UNVEILS NEW CULINARY ARTS KITCHEN



Angela Drenth (left), department chair for Family and Consumer Sciences at James B. Conant High School, describes the features of the new culinary arts kitchen during an open house Sept. 19, 2017.

The Family and Consumer Science Department at James B. Conant High School unveiled their new culinary arts kitchen Sept. 19. The new classroom expands the abilities of the culinary arts programs at the school.

“We’ve moved from a home economics kitchen to a bit more modern culinary arts room,” said Angela Drenth, the F.C.S. department chair.

The new classroom created six new residential kitchen stations with monitors linked to a video camera over the demonstration station at the front. It also includes a new commercial kitchen area with a double convection oven, industrial burners, two large mixers, a three-compartment sink, a variety of additional industrial equipment, and large work area.



The new culinary kitchen at James B. Conant High School includes an industrial kitchen which gives students experience on equipment used in restaurants.

Jackie Brown, an F.C.S. teacher at Conant High School said the new kitchen makes the students industry ready.

“This is the equipment they will be working on if they graduate Conant and go into the field,” said Brown.

Senior Dylan Toth has taken classes in the F.C.S department since he was a freshman. He was excited to see the new industrial equipment.

“Second semester we run a bakery called Cougar Perk,” said Toth.

Toth said using the old home economics style kitchens to bake items for the restaurant was very inefficient.

“Now we have those convection ovens, so we can knock out double the amount [of food] in half the time,” said Toth.



Cupcakes made by the Cougar Perks student bakery during the unveiling of James B. Conant High School's new culinary kitchen.

The addition of the new equipment allows the teachers to expand how they teach.

“We offer our students a safety and sanitation license,” said Drenth. “This requires them to know how to use this equipment. Before, we could only teach it from a book; now we can teach it hands on.”

Destiny Aaron, a senior at Conant High School, said having the new equipment gives her an advantage to students from other schools who may be pursuing culinary arts after graduation.

“I’m already getting knowledge and experience on how things are done,” said Aaron.

Toth and Aaron both feel that without the faculty and staff, none of this would be possible.

“We are so grateful to the teachers for all they have taught us and for all the time and effort they have put into this room,” said Aaron.

Drenth said she appreciates what District 211 did to create she referred to as their ‘happy place’.

“We’re very grateful that the district invested in such an amazing space for our kids to be able to train and have the best resources available to them,” she said.



One of six individual kitchen stations in the new culinary kitchen classroom at James B. Conant High School.