

## SEMESTER DEPARTURES

*Jeff High's staff lost some faces after the first semester, causing students to wonder what to do with their schedules in the new semester*

**By Bryce Thomas**

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The Jeffersonville High School teaching staff got a bit smaller at first semester's end.

Business teacher John Herfel retired, while music teacher Michael Launnius and English teacher Jennifer O'Brien left Jeff High to pursue other ventures.

These abrupt changes left some Jeff High students with late-changing schedules for the second semester.

For Herfel's students, the departure of their teacher left many schedules uncertain. The plan for Herfel's classes was originally to merge them into other business teachers' schedules, creating new classes in some cases.

"We had no clue of the future and whether to switch to (Advanced Placement) Econ or regular, as many thought Econ Honors would be ditched," said senior Sean Cole, a student in Herfel's Honors Econ. "At first we were told we would have to drop the class, and a lot did. I stayed because I liked having a free period, but a lot of other kids immediately switched classes."

However the plan changed when JHS decided to hire a new teacher, Thomas Geldermann. Geldermann is a professor at Ivy Tech and was given the opportunity to take over Herfel's classes. Gelderman is not a full-time teacher at Jeff, however, only coming to JHS three days out of the week.

While the plans for Herfel's classes were being worked out with the counseling department, his classes were left without an actual teacher, instead having substitutes for the first two weeks of class. Geldermann eventually took over the class on Jan. 17.

Launnius, one of two band teachers, took a more active role in the transition of his classes to a new teacher.

Even though he left Jeff High at the end of the fall semester as a teacher, he continues to come in and volunteer his time to teach several band classes. He also maintains a presence in the Jeff High marching band and winter percussion.

Some of Mr. Launnius's former students were sad to see him go, including senior Dylan Wyatt, a member of the color guard.

"I'm sad to see that Mr. Launnius is leaving and can't teach all of the classes he did, but I'm glad that he's still able to be a part of the band program," Wyatt said. "He was a great teacher, and a great mentor to a lot of band students, and to see him leave is a travesty. But his continued leadership in the band and winter percussion programs is amazing."

## Staff Editorial

Eighty years apart and one would think that two situations weren't similar. For Jeff, the 1937 and 2017 flood seem even more connected than one might think.

In 1937, the Ohio River Valley flood devastated thousands in Jeffersonville, forcing countless families to start their lives over again. An estimated 90-percent of the city was completely submerged and to this day is the grandest natural disaster in Jeffersonville history.

In 2017, the water pipes busted above the IT room within the halls of JHS. Roughly 100 gallons of water from an HVAC system burst onto the mainframe systems, which control the entire Greater Clark County School technology system. The damage forced GCCS to call off school for the upcoming Monday as they tried to repair the mainframe systems and dry out the school.

But what connects these two events?

Yes, water was involved with both of them, but the excess water forced people to start from scratch, or repair what was broken. The sheer devastation of both events was enough to send people into a frenzy.

Civilians had to evacuate their homes in 1937 because of the rising water, seeking shelter as a refugee within buildings on higher ground. An estimated 4,000 residents were forced to leave their homes, leaving their belongings behind as the water swallowed everything they had.

According to news reports, the storm lasted for 21 days as the water kept growing in size before it crested at 57.1 feet. JHS had to give students multiple weeks off from school and were eventually passed on to the next grade despite not making up the missed days.

While the 2017 "flood" wasn't as dangerous or widespread, the results were still devastating, especially for JHS students and staff.

No longer could students (or teachers) use their school-issued Chromebooks for anything with the Lightspeed systems down. The Topic yearbook lost every photo they had stored since 2007. WJHI, the school's new radio station, was off the air for hours. The water filled the commons and made its way into classrooms where the band, choir and ROTC rooms felt the water's wrath.

Technology, which has played such a crucial role for the expansion of JHS, was unusable, forcing teacher to turn back the clock to teach.

The 1937 flood, obviously, was the bigger issue based on the sheer magnitude of it. But the 2017 flood provided Jeff with new-age complications, as well.

Both of these events were unplanned, and left everyone unprepared. But both were, or should be, able to come back even stronger from these catastrophes.



Michael Launnius

## Mission Statement

*"The Jeffersonville High School newspaper, the Hyphen, is an open student forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions. The Hyphen will strive to publish fair, balanced, and accurate news for the interest and importance to the student body"*

## 2016-17 Hyphen Staff

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