**East Greenwich High School changes drastically**

Students are blind to the visible and not so visible changes

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EAST GREENWICH, RI – East Greenwich High School seniors are enraged upon discovering that their health room was once a “senior room,” complete with couches, a television, and refrigerator.

This is just one of the student privileges that have disappeared as new generations of students have filled the halls. The area of the school’s inner courtyard that has three connecting brick walls was once reserved as a smoking area for students. On rainy days, students would crowd the stairwell closest to the courtyard to get a smoke in. Today, smoking is banned on the EGHS campus. Seniors during the 1970’s and 1980’s had the privilege to sign themselves in and out of school. If they had a study hall first period of the day, they were able to come in late. Naturally, they were able to sign out of school in the case of a last period study hall. Current seniors are expected to stay in school all day, do not have the ability to sign in or out without parental permission, and do not have access to the abolished study halls.

A member of the class of 2012, Velinda Peralta, is upset that she cannot have the freedom that seniors twenty-five years ago had. She was first shocked more than anything, saying, “I cannot believe seniors of the past had those privileges.” Another current senior at EGHS, Karen Lockhart thinks, “It’s unfortunate that seniors do not get some of the privileges as in past years, but at the same time, we have to wonder if we have earned that respect.” Peralta and Lockhart have opposing views, as Peralta believes the loss of privileges is unfair and Lockhart is under the impression that the loss is the students’ own faults. There is no consensus as to why senior privileges have disappeared, besides the fact that the times are changing.

East Greenwich High School librarian Connie McCormack began teaching at the school in 1974. She has witnessed the changes to the school and its inhabitants, over the years. The school looks the same as it did when it opened, besides the “new gym,” guidance department, science wing, and the athletic fields. These additions are fairly new, and freshmen would have no idea about the building renovations if it were not for word of mouth.

McCormack thinks East Greenwich High School has “changed for the better.” She says the biggest change at the high school is technology. Students in the 1970’s had typewriters. Even in 1996, there were only four computers in the library. However, McCormack wishes to bring back some aspects of the past. She is firm in saying, “I do believe seniors should have privileges. You’ve worked hard to get that far, and should be rewarded for good standing with a senior room, senior lunch room, something.” Health teacher Christine Rivers, an EGHS student during the 1980’s, does not think this is the best solution. During her years at the school, the senior room “didn’t get used very often.”

One thing that both McCormack and Rivers agree on is that students of years past had more school spirit. Although there was no class t-shirts, dec-a-corner, or contests at pep rally, homecoming was once marked with floats created by the students. The drama department, led by Mr. MetCalfe, was hugely supported by the high school. Much more emphasis was put on school plays than is now. They also agree that styles were significantly different years ago. Rivers years at EGHS was part of a big MTV era. The style was to copycat Madonna. McCormack knows, “There were more individuals as far as style goes. People were more daring.” Hair, makeup, and clothes have changed so much over the years. There was a point in EGHS’s history that teachers wore miniskirts. Actress Debra Messing, a graduate of EGHS, was known for her bold outfits. Sports have always been big at this school, but some parts of that are different now. Rivers notes, “It kind of shocked me. A senior girl would come out her senior year for field hockey just to put that she played in a championship year on her resume.” Students are now more committed to their sport, and play it all four years of high school. Senior Velinda Peralta says, “People just don’t join a sport in the middle of their high school career.”

Despite the many changes over the years, some things have stayed the same at East Greenwich High School. McCormack, speaking of years past, admits, “Everyone was very proud to be a student at East Greenwich High School.” Students have always been very concerned about their grades and about getting accepting to good colleges. Rivers’s observation has been that the AP students are always the most stressed out. “Avenger traffic” has always existed, and has not improved at all. Kids still rush out the doors every day after school, and sit in an ever slow moving line of cars, the whole half mile up Avenger Drive. The East Greenwich High School experience must be a good one, or else there would not be so many members of the Facebook group, “I went to East Greenwich High School, and you know, it was pretty ok.”