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Thrown Together, Rival Schools Adjust

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Like two long ships passing in the afternoon sun, the students from Stuyvesant High School and from Brooklyn Technical High School squeezed past each other on DeKalb Avenue Friday without incident on the first day of building sharing.

Though Stuyvesant has moved onto the campus of Brooklyn Tech because of the World Trade Center disaster — one of seven shools that had to be moved — school officials fine-tuned the schools' schedules so thoroughly that the only time the two large academic powerhouses interact is while Stuyvesant students are arriving and Tech students are leaving.

Stuyvesant's day starts at 1:30 p.m. and ends at 6:30 p.m. Tech's day starts at 7:15 a.m. and ends at 1:20 p.m. Though Tech students normally take over DeKalb Avenue for a short while after dismissal, Friday saw the 4,500 or so Tech students leaving at the same time as the 3,000 Stuyvesant students were coming, meaning that the sidewalk was so crammed with teenage bodies that many of them had to walk in the street. Befitting the awkwardness of teenagers, they glanced at each other, a small minority stared, but they strived hard not to notice each other's presence. With two Nobel laureates amongst the Tech alumni and three Nobel Prize winners from Stuyvesant, they are two of the most celebrated schools in the country. But they are also rivals.

Brooklyn Tech seniors Timothy Ng, 17, and Yuk Cheung, 17, chose to walk on the other side of the street, away from the crowd. Both boys admitted that it was strange to be sharing a building with a rival school, but Ng said it was only for about three weeks, "so it's no big deal."

"And we never see them anyway, except for now, when we're leaving," Cheung added.

The biggest pain to Tech students is not the sharing of the building but starting school an hour earlier. Because both schools draw students from all five boroughs, some of them have unbearably long commutes. So while the Brooklyn Tech students traded stories Friday of boarding subway trains before the sun had risen, Stuyvesant students swapped tales of staying up past midnight chatting with friends on the Internet while they were supposed to be asleep.

Eli Blum, 15, a sophomore, proudly announced that he woke up Friday at 11:30 a.m. His friend Feiras Rahman, a 16-year-old junior, woke up at 10:30 a.m. They are slightly worried about readjusting their body clocks after they return to their regular building in mid-October, but they will scale that hurdle when they get to it. For now they will sleep late.

In order to stuff all their classes into a five-hour schedule, Stuyvesant officials shortened the class periods to slightly less than 30 minutes.

"It's like fake school," a grinning Blum said as he approached the mammoth Brooklyn Tech building.

But that was before he got his first homework assignment.

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