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Chef shares cooking tips with staff

By **Maureen O'Connell**/ Staff Writer
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Seasoned squid with vinegar and picked cabbage were two of the featured dishes last Tuesday night at the dining hall.

With a menu like that, one might expect teenagers to head to a neighborhood pizza joint, but at Concord Academy last week, students waited eagerly outside for the doors to open.

The dishes were just two offerings made by Korean chef Hak Joon Kim, who spent three days at the private high school last week, teaching the food service staff how to make authentic Korean dishes.

This school year, 6 percent of Concord Academy's students come from Korea, and the school is hoping the more authentic dishes will make their school feel a little more like home.

Daphne Kim, a Korean student from Virginia, said she was impressed by the dishes made at CA that night.

"They're not Americanized," the freshman said. "That happens a lot here, especially when you have Chinese or Japanese food. This is pure Korean."

Cathy Nam, also from Korea, and a sophomore, said the rice was the best part of the meal.
"It's sticky - the way they cook it makes it taste a lot different," she said.

Judging from the lines forming for the Korean offerings, it wasn't only the Korean students who were excited about the new fare.

Emily Cole, a sophomore, was one of the students waiting in the long line.

"There are vegetables I've never seen before," she said. "It's something new and really interesting to try something you've never had before."

Cole said she had tried a dish the previous day that had sautéed vegetables, topped with a fried egg.

Tonight, she was excited about seaweed soup, offered along with the squid and cabbage.

Her classmate, Jake Dockterman, said he enjoys the effort CA makes to present international dishes, with the occasional Thai night and other international dish nights.

"It's nothing quite this good, though," he said, as he went back to the Ojingeocho, or seasoned squid with vinegar.

Dennis Gallant, food service director, said although the school serves international dishes often, this is the first time a chef from another country has worked with the kitchen staff.

"He's leaving us a whole package of recipes," said Gallant.

CA's Korean students said they appreciate the time the kitchen staff put into creating dishes from their home country. They also loved seeing the enthusiasm their fellow students had for the meals.

"I'm surprised many of them had experience with Korean food," said Cathy, adding that some have been requesting favorite dishes. "Some of them have been asking if they'll be cooking this, or cooking that."