

EdTalk: December 17, 2021

Dr. David Leach, WVCSD Superintendent of Schools

Over the past month, there have been a growing number of general threats levied against the nation's schools and school districts on social media platforms. We are fully aware of the troubling post that was shared widely last week on the social media platform TikTok. The post is part of a national TikTok trend and did not originate in our school district. There are no known specific threats against our schools.

We are always assessing the safety of our students and schools. Monitoring social media trends such as this one and communicating with the police are just a couple of our methods of protecting our students and staff. Emergency planning, de-escalation tactics, measuring school climate, threat assessments, supportive school environments, professional development, police presence, and security guards are all strategies that the district continues to provide in all of our schools. In January, we will add a fifth full-time police officer.

When there is a threat - even a *general threat* to school safety, such as this - our district is in a state of alert. We handle these rumored, widespread threats very seriously and work with the police to look into these threats.

The Warwick Valley Central School District understands that communicating information to our families is important. Rest assured, we will always alert our district families to *credible, specific threats* made against our schools or the school district.

We will communicate about the threat, what our protocols are to address the threat, and what our students should do. If the situation warrants, we will provide updates during the school day. Of course, in working with the police in some instances, there may be specifics that we will not be able to communicate. And, remember that only communications that come from an official school source, such as an email from me, a phone call from our automated phone system, or a post on our school district Facebook page, are official communications.

Please continue to speak with your children about this unfortunate trend on social media. Explain to them that WVCSD has zero-tolerance for any person making a threat toward school safety, which is outlined in our district Code of Conduct.

I am personally outraged over these rumors, "jokes," and malicious acts intended to disrupt students' education across our country. Please know that if we should have a credible, specific threat to our district, we will alert you to that threat.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Pine Island Elementary School

If you walk the hallways of Pine Island you will be greeted by an array of colorful gingerbread houses decorating the walls and bulletin boards. They were created by students in Sunwha Gil's

art classes. Ms. Gil first showed them a few different models of what a gingerbread house could look like and then using a little bit of fantasy, students discussed who would live in a gingerbread house, where it could be located, and how it would be decorated.

Park Avenue Elementary School

Park Avenue Student Council Members dedicated Sunday, December 12th to decorating the Trees of Heroes at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Goshen. The Student Council made over 200 ornaments with the help of their friends, family, and our faculty. These trees are now ready for Wreaths Across America Day, which will take place on Saturday, December 18. Each December Wreaths Across America organizes and coordinates wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as at more than 2,500 locations in the U.S., at sea and abroad. Park Avenue's Student Council will partake in the laying of the wreaths during this event.

Sanfordville Elementary School

Partners In Education (PIE) 3/4 students performed Native American live museum exhibits for classmates and parents outside by the PIE Garden. Students created interactive scripts where they took the roles of Iroquois men, women or children to teach about their expert topics. They designed and created artifacts to use to teach as you would see at a real museum. They completed their PowerPoint presentations where they taught their classmates all about their expert topics and helped them to complete guided notes.

Warwick Valley Middle School

In its most general form, algebra is the study of mathematical symbols and the rules for manipulating these symbols; it is a unifying thread of almost all of mathematics. Algebra 1 is typically taught in ninth grade, however there is a group of eighth graders that accepted the challenge of learning algebra in eighth grade. The students are working through the curriculum, solving equations and understanding functions. This week our algebra students had the opportunity to apply their knowledge of linear functions and coordinate geometry to create a festive winter picture. The students have approached this project in creative ways, turning linear functions into art.

Warwick Valley High School

Regina Satkowski arranged for her students to meet Jennifer Longo, the author of the book, *What I Carry*. The students are about half-way through the book, which tells the accounts of a teenage girl who is about to age out of the foster care system. Students had prepared questions for Ms. Longo that helped them understand her perspective a little more when writing the book. The class will meet the author next month when they finish the book. *What I Carry* was named the Washington State Young Adult Literature Book of the Year in 2021.