

EdTalk: February 11, 2022

Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

The District is now engaging in an audit of our overall safety and security; this process continued last week. Specifically, throughout this process, we seek critical feedback to examine potential areas needing security improvement and ask how we can improve each site. Over the past few years, the Warwick Valley Central School District has made significant safety and security enhancements:

- School Resource Officers (SROs) – The District now has five full-time Warwick Police officers, as well as several security guards, on staff to increase the security level in our schools.
- Police School Visits – Police officers perform daily walk-throughs of all buildings, as well as daily, unannounced visits to each school.
- District Safety Plans – the District has developed a confidential district-wide School Safety Plan and Building-level Visitor management technology performs background checks for every visitor each time they enter, prints a badge with visitor's name, photo, date, time, and destination; and can send alerts to administrators and law enforcement.
- Security Doors – Upgrades have been made at Park Avenue, the Middle School, and the Dorothy C. Wilson Education Center (District Office) to include airlock double-door entryways and locked entrances with approved swipe card access.
- Lockdown and Emergency Drills – In addition to regularly scheduled fire drills, the District conducts four lockdown drills annually in each building. Emergency drills include school bus and tabletop crisis drills. The district coordinates with other area organizations: Orange County 911, Orange County Mutual Aid, and local first responders.
- Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) – Located within a four-minute range AEDs are in all buildings and on each school bus.
- Video Surveillance – The Warwick Police Department now has wireless access to District video cameras both in police cars and at the police department.
- District-wide Communications Enhancements – The District has over 70 digital radios used at District schools, as well as additional high-resolution cameras.
- Crisis Teams – District staff members trained in crisis management, with a team in each building, including psychologists, counselors, nurses, social workers, Guidance staff, and members of the Orange County-level crisis intervention/stress management team, as needed.
- Professional Development – District faculty and staff, continue to receive safety and security-related training.
- Social Media – In collaboration with the Warwick Police Department, the District pays close attention to inappropriate student activity on social media.
- Safety Consultant – A safety consultant recently completed a District School Security and Vulnerability Assessment.
- High School – The central entrance vestibule was renovated to secure a single entry point.
- Middle School – The District relocated the main office to provide the vestibule with an increased level of security.
- Active Shooter Drills – This training is currently taking place. The Warwick Police Department conducts "active shooter" drills during non-school hours for officers to become more familiar with our school buildings.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Pine Island Elementary School

Pine Island students are participating in a Valentine Service Project for our first responders at St. Anthony's and Garnet hospitals. Organized by Sally Woglom, a retired Warwick teacher, students are making cards and pictures for doctors, nurses, aides, technicians and all health staff who have given so much to the community over the past two years. Recently in one of Sunwha Gil's art classes, she introduced the project and discussed with the students the many important jobs hospital workers perform for us, especially during a pandemic. The students then went on to make Valentine's Day cards decorated with hearts, flowers and stars. The cards read, "Thank you, doctors and nurses, thank you heroes, thank you for all you do!" Mrs. Woglom will drop by Pine Island next week to pick up the cards and then distribute them to all hospital staff with love from the Pine Island students and staff.

Park Avenue Elementary School

In mathematics, third-grade students continued to practice division strategies and became fluent with division facts. In Reader's Workshop, students are reading in Book Clubs and putting the skills they have been developing throughout the year into practical use. In Writer's Workshop, students read and learn all about adapted fairy tales. They will begin writing their fairy tales shortly.

To enhance the "Forces, Magnets, and Simple Machines" third-grade science unit, STEM teacher Amanda Melican is working with the students on designing a maglev system as transportation engineers. In this cross-curricular activity, students will use what they are learning about magnets and forces to design, create, and test a maglev (magnetic levitation) train with their engineering groups.

Sanfordville Elementary School

Sanfordville Elementary, Park Avenue, and Pine Island schools kicked off the PTA-sponsored "Pick A Reading Partner" event last week through the One Book, One School program. All students, families, and staff are reading the book *School Days According to Humphrey* by Betty G. Birney for the next two weeks. Since Humphrey is the class hamster, Sanfordville media specialist Danielle Cancel and music teacher Alison Echevarria hammed it up and dressed as hamsters to distribute books to our students. Each night families are asked to read a chapter together. Then classes participate in different activities such as writing poems, creating vacation boxes, writing class rules, drawing cards, and writing to pen pals. More fun activities are planned throughout the next two weeks. Students and families shared pictures of them reading together at home. Humphrey may even be making another appearance in each classroom! Happy Reading All!

Warwick Valley Middle School

Brett Algera's students are exploring the properties of the solar system and have been doing a deep dive into better understanding the Earth's moon. The moon is the Earth's only natural satellite and is the fifth largest moon in the solar system. The moon's presence helps stabilize our planet and moderates our climate. To gain a more robust understanding of the moon's surface looks and feels, Mr. Algera had students explore the moon's surface with our Virtual Reality (VR) technology. VR provides students with immersive experiences that are unparalleled in teaching. Students are "transported" out of the classroom, and the student's imagination is allowed to flourish. Bringing technology into the school is a way to enhance the learning experience.

Warwick Valley High School

Guidance counselors finished their visits to all ninth-grade through 11th-grade social studies classes to make their presentations to kick-off the scheduling process for next year. Each presentation began with

the counselor presenting important information on: graduation requirements including credits required, Regents exams, and community service; the scheduling process; teacher recommendations, students' choice via the Elective Course Request Form; navigating Naviance; CTE options and visitations; and the upcoming Electives Fair. Students were able to ask questions throughout the presentations, and the counselors offered tips to help make the scheduling process as productive and seamless as possible. This week, eighth-graders from Warwick Valley Middle School and Greenwood Lake Middle School visited an Electives Fair to learn about all of the options they have to choose from to make informed decisions about their course selections for their first year. An Electives Fair will also be held during lunch for grades 9 through 11 this week in the main lobby. Teacher and student representatives will be able to share information about elective classes that they teach and enjoy with other students in the hopes of them selecting these courses when they create their schedules for next year.