

WVCSD EdTalk: May 25, 2022
Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

In the Warwick Valley Central School District, all of our students learn the importance of making well-informed decisions for the greater good. Civic education facilitates the development of the skills required for a free society. Beginning next year, the district will offer its students the opportunity to pursue the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness +1 Civics Pathway. For students who complete this pathway, they will earn a state Seal of Civic Readiness on their high school diploma.

Through civic education, students become better equipped to deal with issues that arise in their neighborhoods, schools, and communities. Students learn to consider others' rights, respectful disagreement, and evidence for a counterargument. The Seal of Civic Readiness is a formal recognition that a student has attained a high level of proficiency in terms of civic knowledge, civic skills, civic mindset, and civic experiences. It shows the student's understanding of a commitment to participatory government, civic responsibility and civic values. It demonstrates to universities, colleges, and future employers that the student has completed an action project in civics or social justice. And, it recognizes the value of civic engagement and scholarship.

Using classroom discussions and insightful questions, students will make sense of civics-related events from history, the news, the curriculum, their school, or their neighborhood. Teachers will work with students to determine "What are the facts?" and assist them in distinguishing between rumors and the truth. Teachers will also model for the students that they should always check their sources, be skeptical of claims, and evaluate their credibility. They will encourage students to think about fairness and equity and their own and others' rights.

Last but not least, students will look at how they can lend a hand. Students will consider how they can improve situations or help others by donating their time, effort, moral support, and resources. No matter how small, our contributions can make a difference in the lives of others.

Highlights from our schools this week include the following:

Pine Island Elementary School 'How To' Writing

Kindergarteners in Kaitlyn Lordy's and Suesette White's classes are finishing up their "How to" writing units. Classes met outside to demonstrate using a yo-yo and a hula hoop. Students had to remember to say the steps in order and use ordinal numbers and transitional words. For example, one student started with, "First, you put the hula hoop around your waist, second, you swing the hoop, and finally, your hips. You have to keep it going. There were many laughs and giggles as students tried to keep the hula hoop swinging around and the yo-yo moving up and down.

Park Avenue Elementary School

Third-grade students were so excited to begin their hands-on science unit involving the investigation of the life cycles of butterflies and plants. Currently, students are observing the growth of various beans and seeds in their classrooms. They also had the opportunity to dissect a lima bean for close observation! Students were happy to report that their classroom caterpillars are growing quickly and should begin the next stage of their life cycles very shortly.

The Traveling Trunks team of the Warwick Historical Society visited our school once again. Our local historians visited Park Avenue's first-grade classrooms to share old stories from our town's history. The children were allowed to help tell some of these stories using cue cards. Classes learned all about simple games, like keeping a feather in the air, that local children played 200 years ago.

Sanfordville Elementary School

Everyone was excited to welcome the incoming kindergarteners to Sanfordville for the kindergarten screening for the first time since 2019. Our youngest Wildcats were eager to show off their skills in the areas of fine motor, gross motor, concepts, speech, vision, and hearing. District staff seamlessly organized check-in and confirmed the completion of registration and health information. A variety of teachers administered the DIAL 4 to students. This information is critical in identifying the needs of the incoming students and the placement process. Students received the book *The Three Little Bears* as a gift from their new school.

Our fourth-graders toured the grounds of the Sanfordville property with the Warwick Historical Society and saw the setting in a whole new light. The history here is impressive, and our students seemed fascinated. The tour included:

- The front lobby for map study.
- The flagpole for a DeKay Homestead visit.
- The picnic table site for landscape interpretation.
- The bee tree for nature study.
- Washington's Spring for a Revolutionary history lesson.
- The DeKay Cemetery visit.
- The Peace Circle for a Patriot-Loyalist lesson.

Warwick Valley Middle School

Janeen Mitchell's fifth-grade class held a craft fair to raise money for charitable organizations that promote helping our planet. The students spent the winter making different crafts out of recycled materials, with the idea of selling them to raise money for charity. The students were inspired by the research they had done on marine debris. The students wanted to take action and do something that would benefit the environment. The craft fair was a huge success. Our students raised over \$600. They are looking forward to their efforts in helping the Earth.

Warwick Valley High School

Timothy Leonard and Erin Eicher have been named the recipients of the 2022 Senior Scholar Humanities Award by Orange-Ulster BOCES. Each year, the award is given to two seniors from each high school in the county. Tim and Erin were selected by the art and music teachers based on their participation in and above-average artistic engagement in music, art, drama, instrumental, and choral programs and for their excellent academic standing. The school will recognize them at the Senior Scholar Humanities Award breakfast on June 6th.

The English, Art, Music, and Video Production courses collaborated on their annual project to write, illustrate, score, and produce a narrated storytelling video of a children's book. Students in Danielle DeBella's creative writing class wrote a children's story. Students in Kristen Spano's art classes illustrated the report after meeting with the author. Elissa Maynard's orchestra students provide appropriate background music for effect. And finally, the students in Video Production recorded a narrator and combined all of the components to create a video storybook. The films debuted at a presentation during unit lunch to an audience consisting of the teachers and students who contributed their talents to the productions. The excitement of the students to see the final product was tangible. This project exemplifies the cross-curricular project-based learning that occurs in high school regularly. The students take pride in their work and their role in the culminating task.