

**WVCSD EdTalk: June 1, 2022**  
**Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools**

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On May 25, I first communicated the message below to district parents and guardians. A version that includes links to helpful resources for discussing recent events with children is also available on our district website, [www.warwickvalleyschools.com](http://www.warwickvalleyschools.com).

*I express sympathy and concern for our community as well as others across the country. The heinous act of violence at Robb Elementary School in Texas and the horrific killings in Buffalo less than two weeks ago are beyond comprehension. We anticipate that individuals in our school community will confront difficulties as a result of these circumstances. Our administrators, counselors, and clinicians are prepared to offer any needed assistance to students and their families. The events are difficult to fathom and heighten our collective sense of vulnerability.*

*Every educational leader goes to sleep each night wondering, "Are we doing enough to protect students? Have we done enough to secure the safety of students, faculty, and staff when they enter our schools?" We speak daily with the Warwick Police Department, and our schools benefit from our partnership with Chief John Rader and the rest of the department. Today, he increased the number of police patrols at all of our schools.*

*Families have the right to know that each individual student's safety is the priority. The Warwick Valley Central School District has made the following safety and security enhancements in recent years:*

- *School Resource Officers (SROs) – the district now has five full-time Warwick Police officers, as well as fourteen security guards, on staff to increase the security level in our schools. This staffing is more than double the number employed in 2018 by the district*
- *Police School Visits – additional police officers perform several daily walk-throughs of all buildings*
- *District Safety Plans – the district has developed a district-wide School Safety Plan and confidential Building-level Emergency Response Plans*
- *Raptor Visitor Management System – visitor management technology performs a background check 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*
- *School Greeters – greeters are located in each school building entrance during the school day to sign in guests, run "Raptor" security checks, and unlock interior doors*
- *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*

- *High School – the main entrance vestibule has been renovated to secure a single point of entry*
- *Middle School – the main office has been relocated to provide the vestibule with an increased level of security*
- *Lockdown & 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*
- *AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) – located within a four-minute range, in all buildings and on each school bus*
- *Video Surveillance – the Warwick Police Department has wireless access to district video cameras both in police cars and at the WV Police Department*
- *District-wide Communications Enhancements – the district has purchased 75 new 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 has completed a district School Security and Vulnerability Assessment*
- *Active Shooter Drills – The Warwick Police Department has conducted “active shooter” drills during non-school hours for officers to become more familiar with our school buildings*

*I am optimistic that the school community we have created will enable us to support one another and persevere in the face of existing and future obstacles. We are lucky to have an abundance of mutual care and concern in Warwick. We appreciate your continuing support and confidence.*

*Please join me in sending positive thoughts to everyone in Uvalde, Texas.*

***This week's highlights from our schools include the following:***

### **Pine Island Elementary School**

Ms. Canfield's class carried on a time-honored Pine Island tradition, walking from the school to the nearby Polish Legion of American Veterans, Post 16, to plant red, white, and blue flowers in

front of the Veteran's Memorial. A police escort led the parade, and many of their parents joined the students. Upon arriving, the students were thrilled to see four veterans from the PLAV waiting to greet them. The yearly project honors the many veterans who served in the Armed Forces. The event wrapped up with the students leading a sing-a-long to *Yankee Doodle, You're a Grand Old Flag*, and *This Land is Your Land*. We honor our vets on Memorial Day, and we say THANK YOU!

### **Park Avenue Elementary School**

Park Avenue third and fourth graders presented their spring concert. Students from the orchestra, band, and general music programs performed for a large audience of parents, family members, and friends. The school building was full of palpable energy emanating from students and guests. Some highlights included the third-grade singing *I am a Small Part of the World*, fourth-grade orchestra students playing an excerpt from *Eye of the Tiger*, and band students playing *Power Rock* by Michael Sweeney. All of the performances were amazing!

It was a bittersweet moment for Ms. Cordisco's first-grade class as they watched their butterflies fly away after being released! This excellent learning experience allowed students to observe changes in nature, document those changes, and take responsibility for another species. These changes included cylindrical eggs hatching into larvae or caterpillars before forming a chrysalis. Finally, the butterflies emerged from the chrysalis. Although the students grew attached to the butterflies, they were happy to send them to their natural setting.

### **Sanfordville Elementary School**

Ms. Aberasturi, Ms. Quackenbush, and Ms. Wihrys' third-grade classes explored different types of poetry in both Reader's Workshop and Writer's Workshop. They practiced using their poet's pen to write poems about topics close to their hearts. The culminating project was to create a personal poetry anthology that represented their interests. The final product was a bound book that included a cover page and even an "About the Author" page! Teachers shared students' poetry anthologies with parents and guests at a poetry slam, celebrating and showcasing the students' hard work. The students were divided into presentation groups to have the opportunity to both share and listen. The beautiful day was enjoyed very much by both the poets and their parents.

The Warwick EMS Squad visited our students on Thursday during lunch periods in honor of EMS Week. Ambulances and EMTs were on campus to talk with students and show them around the ambulance. We were fortunate to have our fire department visit us in the fall. Thank you, first responders, for always having time for our students.

Sanfordville third and fourth graders took the WVHS stage last week for the first time in over two years! Our youngest musicians performed live for their friends, families, and teachers, and

the audience was excited and impressed with the talented students as they sang and played their instruments. It is hard to believe these students have only played their instruments for nine months! Congratulations to Ms. Echevarria's third and fourth-grade chorus groups, Ms. Blaikner's fourth-grade orchestra, and Mr. Muehlbauer's fourth-grade band!

### **Warwick Valley Middle School**

WVMS held its annual Veterans Appreciation Breakfast. Typically held in February, the event was moved to May due to scheduling conflicts. The event began with a welcoming address from Social Studies teacher Joan Rueckert. Our local veteran color guard presented the American flag while our Honors Symphony performed the *Star-Spangled Banner*. As the morning progressed, guests were entertained by several performing groups, including Wire Choir, Honors Chorus, and Ukulele Club. Students served eggs, pancakes, potatoes, sausage, bacon, and muffins. High school culinary students were on hand to make individualized omelets as well. NYS Senator Mike Martucci offered his gratitude to our veterans. It was a beautiful morning honoring our veterans' sacrifices to maintain our freedoms. We hope all of our veterans and their families enjoyed the morning.

### **Warwick Valley High School**

Each spring, students in our Cosmetology, Criminal Justice, and Video Production classes participate in the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) Exam. NOCTI provides industry-based credentials and partner industry certifications for career and technical education (CTE) secondary and post-secondary programs.

Measuring technical knowledge and hands-on skills helps ensure students are ready for their chosen college or career path and provides testing data to support program outcomes. The exams allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, learn about their strengths and areas that need improvement, prepare for state and/or national certification exams and potentially qualify for college credit. Each exam has a 'knowledge-based testing' written exam and a 'skill-based testing' practical exam in which a professional in the field is observed and rated. Members of the Warwick Police Department scored the four criminal justice tasks: crime scene investigation, arrest, visual memory test, and traffic stop and citation issue. Video Production students had to create a PSA video and were scored by a television media professional and professor in three components: Create/Script a Video, Production, and Post-Production. Students performed ten salon tasks for a licensed cosmetologist: haircutting techniques, blow-dry styling techniques, thermal curling/curling iron techniques, roller placement, chemical restructuring-permanent waving, diagonal pin curl wave/C-Shaping, finger waving, foiling, and hair color.

Over 95% of WVHS students exceeded the overall NYS and national standards for passing, and 100% exceeded all standards for the skills-based portion of the exam and will receive Workforce Competency Credentials for exceeding NOCTI's national accreditation standards. 73% of the

WVHS students achieved mastery of their cumulative exams and will receive a "College Credit Recommendation Report" from NOCTI. The district has also teamed up with some New York colleges to give WVHS graduates up to nine credits if they enroll in matching programs at those schools after completing their C-Tech programs with us.

We are happy to celebrate the successes of our CTE students. We congratulate their teachers, Mr. Avila (Criminal Justice), Ms. Bettello (Cosmetology), and Mr. Cecconie (Video Production), for building their students' knowledge, confidence, and performance in their respective fields. Our CTE programs are rigorous and successful with their professionally developed curriculum.