

WVCSD EdTalk: June 22

Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

As I began to author my commencement speech, I realized that the best people to give advice to graduating high school students are their mothers and fathers. After all, nobody loves you more than your parents. As a result, I Googled “graduation letters from parents to their children” and was surprised, and quickly became emotional, at how similar the letters were.

Listed below are excerpts from five letters:

"We are tremendously proud of what you've accomplished thus far. It seems like it was only yesterday that you were bringing home toads and turtles or smiling with pride as you wheeled the book cart around your primary school."

"This is a significant achievement in your life. We are confident that as the years pass, you will continue to achieve the objectives and goals you have set for yourself."

"Without a doubt, you are one of the most incredible things that has ever happened to me. I've learned so much from you over the last 17 years. Your laid-back demeanor, profound love for your family, strength, and ability to focus when you set your mind to anything."

"We are in awe of the remarkable, sensitive, and resilient young woman you have become as we celebrate your high school graduation."

"It's difficult to put into words how instantly we fell in love with you when we first saw you, and even more difficult to express how proud we are of you. We've joked that we raised a far better person than ourselves, but on many days, we know it's true."

I noted the many connections in the wording, approach, and message in these letters from proud parents to their graduates, and discovered inferences and themes that could be easily deduced in each of them.

I'm excited to celebrate the Class of `22 on Saturday morning and hoping – as I'm sure all of the proud parents are – for excellent weather. Now, to continue working on my speech so that I can do these brilliant scholars justice!

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Pine Island Elementary School

Kindergartners had their final PBIS celebration this week with a “tip to the beach.” For the last six months, our Wildcat Cubs have been working hard to demonstrate can-do attitudes, use kind words, be responsible, and stay safe. As a reward for that effort, it was time to transform the Pine

Island playground, lay down our beach towels, get the beach balls in the air, and have some kindergarten fun! Under a perfectly sunny blue sky, each class visited three stations: Water Balloons, Limbo, and Beach Balls & Bubbles. Our kindergartners are friendly but fierce competitors, and at the end of the day everyone celebrated with high fives, fist pumps, and ice pops. The laughter and cheers could be heard all the way down County Route 1. Nice job, Wildcat Cubs!

Park Avenue Elementary School

Park Avenue held its annual Moving Up Ceremony – two, in fact – to celebrate the fourth grade classes graduating to middle school. More than four hundred guests attended the two ceremonies, acknowledging the efforts and accomplishments of our wonderful students. Highlights included students singing *Walk Through Life* by Pinkzebra, and readings of the Emily Dickinson poem *Hope is the Thing with Feathers* by Sage Brookins and Jackson Brown. The following awards were also presented:

NYS Comptroller’s Award for academic achievement and potential for leadership:

- Peter Blandino
- Ulysses Michelson

NYS Attorney General’s Triple C Award for academic success, community service, peer leadership, or overcoming personal obstacles:

- Alex Podolec
- Leah Scalo
- Alyssa Balsamo

Congratulations to our entire fourth grade class and a huge thank you to our fourth grade teachers and all Park Avenue teachers for preparing our students for middle school!

Sanfordville Elementary School

PIE Water Day returned to Sanfordville, and students had a great day learning about water, from its many uses, to conservation, to having fun with water. Among the many fun and educational activities, students learned from a water conservation specialist, created bubbles with soap and water, painted with watercolor paint, and planted seeds and fed them water. The students became experts on H₂O. Thank you to the PIE community and teachers for an awesome day!

After a year of working hard on their academics and positive P.A.W.S. behaviors—in and out of the classroom—Sanfordville held its PAWS Schoolwide Field Day Celebration! Students enjoyed a fun-filled, perfectly sunny day of activities, including an obstacle course, parachute games, a DJ dance party, relay races, and a variety of team games. Thank you to the PE staff and

the Field Day Team for planning and organizing the day, and to the Sanfordville PTA for sponsoring the entertaining assembly, *The Luneaus Basketball Family*. (The students loved the basketball tricks and stunts!) And, a special thank you to over 60 parents who volunteered to help throughout the day! PAWS stands for being polite, being accountable, making wise choices, and always thinking of safety first.

Warwick Valley Middle School

Eighth grade students celebrated their upcoming moving up ceremony with a dance held under tents on the WVHS football field. Students were greeted by staff and parent volunteers, then led to a photo area where professional photographers took their pictures. Students then entered the Big Top themed party, where they danced, played cornhole, got their fortunes read by a 'fortune teller,' took photos in a photo booth, and ate popcorn, pretzels, and Italian ice. Each student took advantage of the opportunity to get dressed up, and everyone had a blast. A beautiful evening concluded with a gorgeous sunset. Thank you to the WVMS PTA for organizing this wonderful event to celebrate our eighth grade students.

Warwick Valley High School

WVHS students officially completed-and celebrated-their last day of classes for the 2021–22 school year! The seniors attended morning classes before enjoying the annual Senior Picnic on the football field, where they brought blankets, lawn chairs, and outdoor games. They came together to sign yearbooks, enjoy three food trucks, and socialize with their classmates one last time at school before graduation. Ms. Gina Scarpulla and the Class of 22 were able to enjoy this free event thanks to the fundraising efforts of many parents in the community, including Ms. Cathy Sommer. The weather was stellar and the students had a great time!

Regents exams also began again for the first time in several years. Students felt prepared and said their teachers did a great job making them feel ready and calm during their exams. The testing period continues through tomorrow.