

WVCSD EdTalk: August 24, 2022
Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

Welcome to the 2022–2023 academic year! I hope you and your children are as excited about the upcoming year as we are. As a child, I couldn't sleep the night before the first day of school because I was so eager to meet my new teachers and see my friends; as a dad, I couldn't wait for them to leave the house! (Mom made sure the first day was as memorable as it was nerve-racking, and we may have shed a tear or two.)

Our staff has been busy preparing for the start of school. Our registrar's office has been bustling with nonstop activity all summer! Since July 1st, approximately 95 school-age children have moved to Warwick and enrolled in our schools. Many of these new families have personally shared with me that the quality of the school district was the primary factor in their decision to move to Warwick. They also described a very competitive local real estate market. Let's all give them a warm welcome!

Three common themes from our District's North Star continue to serve as a guiding light:

1. Our students learn by putting their minds and hands to work. We focus on direct, hands-on, experiential learning that keeps students interested and helps them learn and remember more. Students and teachers work together on projects with important themes to them and their world.
2. Our focus is on lifelong learning. We look to foster a districtwide culture of learning, growth, and fun. Our schools should be engaging and exciting for children and teachers.
3. Academic standards set by the New York State Education Department are a beginning point rather than an end goal for student learning. From kindergarten through high school, students learn social skills, personal skills, life skills, critical thinking and problem solving, and safety and health.

Students should ride the school bus to and from school. Even though it made sense that some families decided not to take the school bus every day for the past two years, they should reconsider their decision. Many of the difficulties caused by the pandemic seem to be behind us. The safest way to get to and from school is on the school bus. The traffic at drop-off and pick-up times is a challenge.

Please review the behavior standards outlined in the Code of Conduct with your child. Together, we can continue to make schools among the safest places for children to learn. I respectfully recommend that parents consider restricting or monitoring their children's social media usage. Our administrators spend a disproportionate amount of time addressing misbehavior on social media. Every cyberbullying or cyber threat will be taken seriously, with severe consequences.

So, as our students enjoy the final days of summer vacation and fill their backpacks with notebooks, pens, and other school supplies for September 6th, our administrators, staff, and teachers are finalizing their plans and classrooms for what will be a successful school year! In closing, I firmly believe that as a community of learners in Warwick, we will successfully prepare our children for their future!

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

Park Avenue's librarian and media specialist and his counterpart from Sanfordville have been collaborating to continue aligning their work with standards promoted by the American Association of School Librarians. Their standards framework "reflects a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning by demonstrating the connection between learners, school librarians, and school library standards." In addition to planning for the use of traditional texts and materials, our media specialists are continuing to integrate information technology in ways that will prepare all of our students for middle school and beyond.

Sanfordville Elementary School

Students and staff celebrated the last day of the Summer Academy and Extended School Year programs with a "Beach Party" filled with fun. It was a beautifully breezy August day for everyone to participate in obstacle courses, sponge and water games, beach ball volley games, a GoNoodle dance party, pin knockdown games, and everyone's favorite, the tug-o-war! The scene was set with beach music, Hawaiian shirts, Bermuda shorts, and straw hats! It was an enjoyable day and a great way to end the summer programs. Thank you to the physical education staff for planning and organizing the day. Thank you to the teachers and support staff of this year's summer programs for your dedication to helping your students grow and learn. And, of course, thank you to the students who worked so hard throughout the summer, and to their families, who made the commitment to be part of the magic over the last six weeks.

Warwick Valley Middle School

Preparing for a new school year is always an exciting time. This summer, our teachers have been hard at work preparing for the new school year. Many of them have been working to revise their curriculum calendars to provide our students with more rigorous and engaging learning experiences.

We are looking forward to inviting our students who are new to the district to an orientation that will be held at 11 a.m., Tuesday, August 30. Our new families will receive an overview of our offerings and be given a tour of the building. In addition, all students will be able to check out their classrooms from noon to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, August 30 and from 2 to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, August 31. The building will be open for students to "walk their schedules" and get

an idea of where all of their classes are. We are looking forward to a great start to the school year.

Warwick Valley High School

As we begin to prepare for the upcoming start of the school year, we continue the tradition of preparing student leaders to welcome freshmen and new students to our high school. Director of Guidance Mary Fox held a training session for students that volunteered to introduce new students to the building during the New Student Orientation, which will be held at 9 a.m. on August 31. Student leaders engage the new students in ice-breaker activities, review the high school schedule, discuss the opportunities to become involved in school activities, and provide a tour of the building. The responsibilities of these student leaders continue into the school year as they are viewed as mentors and people to go to if the new students need assistance. It is wonderful to see the impressive number of students that come out to help the new students each year. They show true school community pride and demonstrate what it means to be a Warwick Wildcat!

School counselors presented a college application workshop. Seniors were introduced to the Common Application, which is used by many colleges and universities around the country. Also, counselors went over the steps for submitting college applications through Naviance. This software connects high schools to colleges and universities and makes it easier for everyone to share information about college applications.