

WVCSD EdTalk: August 3, 2022
Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

On Monday, we let our WVHS students and their families know about a new academic recognition opportunity made available by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) for the 2022–2023 school year. The program, called the Seal of Civic Readiness, is open to all graduating seniors across the state and is a formal recognition of those who achieve a high level of proficiency in civic knowledge, skills, mindset, and experiences.

The new program is similar to the NYSED Seal of Biliteracy, which our district already offers. Students who earn the recognition have the seal affixed to their diplomas and reflected in their transcripts. Also, like the Seal of Biliteracy, the Seal of Civic Readiness is likely to become a standard question on the Common App for most colleges.

You may wonder how NYSED defines civic readiness. Interestingly, their description of civic readiness aligns with our Portrait of a Graduate. Here it is from the NYSED Seal of Civic Readiness webpage:

"..the ability to make a positive difference in the public life of our communities through the combination of civic knowledge, skills and actions, mindsets, and experiences."

Our Portrait of a Graduate calls on us to foster the qualities that equip young people to become "ethical and global citizens." What does being an ethical and global citizen mean to us? It means someone who acts with integrity and is community-minded; someone who understands the foundations of our nation, and assumes the responsibilities we share with our neighbors in an increasingly global community.

Both our Portrait of a Graduate and NYSED's Seal of Civic Readiness encourage graduates to consider the issues of the day through the lens of local, national, and global perspectives, and to exhibit empathy, compassion, and respect for others. What more could we ask for, as we send them off to be a positive force in the real world?

To receive the Seal of Civic Readiness, a student must complete all requirements for a New York State local or Regents' diploma and earn six points by completing tasks in two categories: Civic Knowledge and Civic Participation. Ways to earn these points include taking four credits of social studies, taking advanced social studies courses, and demonstrating proficiency and/or mastery on the Regents exam. Earning Civic Participation points entails civics projects, elective courses promoting civic engagement, and service-learning projects. Students can also do a four-point capstone project, in which they find a local civic problem, study it, come up with and/or try out a solution, and then take action to solve it.

Having the Seal of Civic Readiness on your high school diploma lets hiring agents and college entrance officials know that you value civic engagement and scholarship, illustrates your commitment to take part in your community and government, and expresses your sense of civic responsibility and values. These are traits held in high regard by our district, and I hope to see many of our students take advantage of this new program when it kicks off this fall. Your

student's social studies teacher and guidance counselor will be highlighting this opportunity again in September.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

In addition to the academic planning taking place this summer, work being done by the Buildings & Grounds team, our technology specialists, and custodial staff continues to improve the environment inside and outside of Park Avenue. Work currently underway includes:

- Installation of new flooring in all second and third floor classrooms
- Newly painted gymnasium
- Ground breaking and foundations for a new storage shed and outdoor classroom
- Installation of electronic presentation boards

We know that when the students return in September, they are going to love all of these (and many of the other large and small improvements being made at Park this summer).

Sanfordville Elementary School

Who said summer school can't be fun? Students in grades one through four have had a blast strengthening their reading, writing, and math skills in lots of fun ways! Ms. Murphy's class collaborated to design, plan, organize, and create a lemonade sale, using the design process they learned to create the lemonade stand, their writing skills to create menus and posters, and their math skills to measure ingredients, set prices, give change, and total their profits. And, of course, their communication skills to talk to customers and make sales.

Ms. Greiner's students enjoy a new theme every week. During Apple Week, they learned the process of growing apples from a seed to making applesauce from scratch! For Camping Week, they made tents under their desks, turned out the lights, and did their independent reading with flashlights under the "night sky." Occupational therapists Ms. Hillard and Ms. Dreyhaupt had kite sessions with several classes (perfect for a breezy day) where students worked on fine motor, gross motor, and sequencing skills to build, decorate, and fly their kites. Mrs. Disy and Mr. Perez taught students how to tie-dye t-shirts. On "Fun Fridays," Mr. Myers, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Shulze, Mr. Sibilla, and Ms. Cancel gather for kickball and other competitive games.

Warwick Valley Middle School

The Warwick Youth Coalition summer program for aspiring leaders, known as the Summer Youth Leadership Academy (SYLA), is back again. SYLA provides middle school students an opportunity to enhance their leadership skills through a team approach. SYLA students spend one session each year with WVCSD Superintendent Dr. David Leach and the WVMS administrators. This year, the students explored their own leadership styles based on their attraction to a specific shape. They discussed what the characteristics of their shapes meant

and how working with others who have different characteristics can strengthen a team. Overall, it was a fun morning and the students strengthened their leadership skills while working collaboratively to solve a problem.

Warwick Valley High School

As part of the Town of Warwick's summer camp program, WVHS hosted the swim and track camps in July. Wildcat swimmers and track team members were among the student counselors. They enjoyed being leaders and role models for young people in our community and teaching them how important it is to stay healthy, active, and fit.

Updates on projects taking place at WVHS this summer:

- Construction on the new agriculture classroom is progressing nicely. A new classroom space with a connecting workspace to include cooking areas and prep stations is being built and installed.
- Renovations to the Engineering & Robotics Suite are almost complete—two computer labs connected to three work spaces that will house 3-D printers, an electric car, and an area to build robots!
- The main lobby and cafeterias are receiving ceiling and ventilation makeovers, which will improve air quality and circulation in these spaces, and provide a new, clean look.
- Gymnasium floors were stripped and resealed.
- The courtyards have received fully manicured landscape upgrades.