

WVCSD EdTalk: September 14, 2022
Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

The Warwick Valley Central School District's Transportation Department is thrilled to continue its alternative-fuel bus program for the 2022–2023 academic year. Our mechanics continue to keep all of the buses in excellent condition, and they have once more received a superb Department of Transportation rating of 99.4%. The New York State Department of Transportation inspects each bus in the fleet every six months, and each bus is serviced every 3,000 miles.

Driver recruitment remains a priority for our transportation team. School districts across the nation — including our own — continue to have trouble finding school bus drivers in the tightening labor market. The shortage is making transporting students to and from school a challenge. Currently, when all of our bus drivers report for work, every bus route is covered. However, in the event that drivers are absent, we may need to change pick-up or drop-off times.

The district offers competitive pay, starting at \$24.44 per hour, for part-time bus drivers. The benefits for employees include paid training; holidays; snow days; dental and vision insurance; and a \$1,500 signing bonus.

Our bus drivers complete extensive training before they are permitted to drive students. A background check is performed on each applicant before they obtain their Commercial Driver's License (CDL) permit. Candidates must then pass a physical exam and a drug/alcohol test prior to training. The candidate is then trained and must pass a road test from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles.

We are dedicated to providing safe transportation to and from school for all students. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has started a campaign to warn motorists about the risks of recklessly passing a stopped school bus. Two new videos in the campaign highlight the fact that kids are more in danger when they are leaving or entering a bus than when they are actually on it:

- “Stop Means Stop”
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVMIslj32iCQ&ab_channel=USDOTNHTSA)
- “Don't Be This Driver”
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmYFYYGzHNw&ab_channel=USDOTNHTSA)

If you are interested in becoming a school bus driver, please call our Transportation Office at 845-987-3050.

The following are some of the highlights from our schools in the past week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

Park Avenue students did not waste any time upon returning to school. This week, all STEM classes, kindergarten through fourth grade, started the school year with a LEGObuilding challenge! The lesson started with five to seven minutes of "free build" time. Then, Amanda Cangialosi spun the wheel of

LEGO Challenge objects. Depending on where the spinner landed, students had five minutes to build that object individually or with a partner. Students had a great time starting STEM with this fun and exciting challenge! This activity helps build teamwork, creativity, and critical thinking skills.

Sanfordville Elementary School

Sanfordville students once again filled the hallways and classrooms of our building. Students and teachers were excited to kick off the school year with fun getting-to-know-each-other activities, scavenger hunts, and tours of the building; meeting their special area teachers and lunch monitors; and establishing their new routines! The school's PTA treated teachers and staff to a wonderful Welcome Back Breakfast and a little "Survival Kit" to provide a warm welcome back to the 2022-23 school year. Thank you so much for the ongoing support of the parents and families in our community!

Warwick Valley Middle School

The Middle School was thrilled to welcome students back to school. We kicked off the school year with a schoolwide lesson that asked students to share why they think the 2022–2023 school year will be bright. Our students are excited to master math, read more books, make new friends, and try out for our various sports teams. We are looking forward to a great year!

The WVMS PTA met to discuss a number of upcoming events. We are excited to invite the organization, Sweethearts and Heroes, to the Middle School where they will speak to our students about the impact of bullying and the importance of being an upstander. During the month of October, we will host a Color Run, Flashlight Night at the Wright Family Farm, Pink-Out Day, Harvest Dance, and welcome Mallory Grossman's mother, the founder of Mallory's Army, to speak to our families about her story.

Warwick Valley High School

The rain could not damper the excitement that students showed as they arrived back at school. The hallways were filled with hugs, laughter, and lots of happy conversations among friends throughout the day. The next day, class assemblies were held in the auditorium. Students met the building administrators, their class advisors, and guidance counselors. Expectations of students were reviewed by the building principals and class advisors spoke about homecoming events, proms, trips, and class fundraisers that are planned throughout the year.