

WVCSD EdTalk: November 2, 2022
Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

The Warwick Valley Central School District was visited in the spring by members of the Tri-State Consortium, an alliance of public school districts we have proudly been a part since 2018. The consortium is committed to systems thinking and collaborative inquiry as pathways toward continuous improvement.

Consortium member schools and their faculty engage in external peer reviews of one another's programs and practices. This is a critical but supportive process during which evaluators apply the standards of the Tri-State model to chart a district's advancements in teaching and learning. When evaluators from the consortium visited our schools last spring, they were here to answer this essential question: To what extent do the K-12 reading and writing competencies foster the skills described in Warwick's Portrait of a Graduate?

Evaluator observations were made around eight key indicators. I am happy and proud to report that our district received multiple excellent commendations for each. This week, we share the first four of eight indicators and the positive feedback that our district received for each.

Indicator 1: Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)

- Evaluators noted evidence of thoughtful, engaging, and challenging performance-based assessments in K-12.
- Students spoke enthusiastically about classes and teachers and the opportunities they have for self-directed learning and tailoring their education to their intended post-graduate paths.
- Evaluators noted the consistent implementation of PBAs and evidence of learning connected to the Portrait of a Graduate, including student interviews.

Indicator 2: Metacognition in the Learning Process

- Evaluators noted a commitment to providing opportunities for self-assessment and reflection, and students frequently engage in metacognitive practices in K-12.
- Teachers at all levels created assignments that required students to communicate what they had learned throughout a lesson.
- Students are encouraged at every grade level to engage in the process of planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning.

Indicator 3: Metrics of Student Performance

- Evaluators noted "considerable assessment data" in grade levels K-4 that is both norm and criterion-referenced.
- Subject areas have implemented varied versions of a gap analysis tool in both the middle school and high school.

- Evidence points to alignment of student performance assessment with the attribute of “Communicator” in the district’s Portrait of a Graduate.

Indicator 4: Curriculum & Instruction

- Evaluators noted the use of Rubicon Atlas as a tool for documenting and articulating curriculum.
- Teachers were commended for using the Readers & Writers Workshop as an instructional framework, lending to personalization.
- Faculty meetings in the middle school provide useful instructional strategies that teachers implement in their classrooms.
- Monthly ROAR lessons are well-received and create a common experience for the middle school, with intentional alignment to the character education plan.
- Students are given their choice of reading materials.
- Students are given ample opportunities for group work and to engage in research.
- Classroom routines promote engagement with minimal loss of instructional time.

Next week, we will look at the commendations we received for the following learning indicators: Professional Learning, Equitable Support for Student Needs, Shared Vision and Environment for Change, and Parent & Community Support.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

Park Avenue celebrated national *Red Ribbon Week* and the theme *Celebrate Life and Be Drug-Free*. It has been a reminder that Americans make significant daily contributions to their communities by living drug-free, and that we are all empowered to shape our communities by being positive, brave, and strong. Though the message of *Red Ribbon Week* is centered around being drug and alcohol-free, since Park Avenue students are younger, we focused on respecting their bodies and brains, making healthy choices, and making positive contributions to the community.

Students were encouraged to participate in a theme for each day of the week. On Monday, students wore red to show they respect their bodies and brains, and make healthy choices. Students wore pajamas on Tuesday to show they understand their choices are the keys to their dreams. On Wednesday, students and staff wore ties to show they do not get “tied up” with negative choices. On Thursday, everyone wore bright socks to show they would “sock it” to unhealthy and unsafe choices. Lastly, students wore purple and gold on Friday to show their future is too bright to make poor choices, and that they have the spirit to dream big!

Sanfordville Elementary School

Carrie Ann Greiner’s class “adopted” a cow. Delilah was born September 14 on the Stargo Dairy Farm in Malone, Franklin County at 33 inches tall and 94 pounds. She was adopted by the class

through the Dairy Excellence Foundation. The class received pictures of Delilah, marked her original growth information on a chart in their classroom, and checked the map to see where she's living. Throughout the year, more activities will center around Delilah and her growth. Students will engage in reading, writing, and research activities about cows, including learning about the importance of dairy farming.

Fourth-grade students are learning about plant pollination and fertilization. They created a three-dimensional model of a flower and the parts that assist in pollination and producing seeds and fruit, after first diagramming and labeling the parts of the flower. To finish the model, they cut out a bee to demonstrate its role in the pollination process. The model helped them describe the steps of pollination to their peers. Sanfordville is very fortunate to have music teacher Ryan Muehlbauer and SRO Officer Katie, who both enjoy beekeeping as a hobby. They visited fourth grade classrooms to share pictures and information about their bees and hives. Thanks to both of them for sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm with students.

Warwick Valley Middle School

Mallory's Army visited the district last week for a viewing of *The Mallory Film*, a documentary about the suicide of 12-year-old Mallory Rose Grossman, who tragically took her own life after enduring months of bullying at school and online. Approximately 150 middle school and high school students and their parents attended the viewing, which also included an emotional and informative forum with Mallory's mother, Diane Grossman, who shared what we can do as parents and educators to help our youth rise above bullying and be advocates for those struggling. Mallory's Army empowers kids to be amazing people, educates parents and brings communities together. They work with schools to help kids understand "gateway behaviors" and "relational bullying." Learn more at www.mallorysarmy.org.

Warwick Valley High School

The high school participated in national *Red Ribbon Week*, which began in response to the killing of US Drug Enforcement Agent Enrique Camarena in 1985. To honor Camarena's memory and his battle against illegal drugs, friends and neighbors began to wear red satin badges. Red ribbons were adopted as a symbol of Camarena's memory. Communities formed drug coalitions with Camarena as their inspiration. The first National Red Ribbon Celebration was held in 1988, and today serves as a catalyst to mobilize communities to educate youth and encourage participation in drug prevention activities.

Members of our local SADD chapter and the WVHS Coalition participated in the Red Ribbon Week Kickoff Ceremony at the Orange County Emergency Services Center in Goshen. Students attended workshops where they learned about the effects of drugs and alcohol and strategized steps and resources needed to empower our youth to live a drug-free life. The Warwick Valley Community Coalition also met with students to encourage healthy choices and to say no to drugs and alcohol. Many students signed a banner, pledging to "Celebrate life. Live drug-free."