

WVCSD EdTalk: November 9, 2022
Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

In last week's EdTalk, we looked at some of the observations made by fellow members of the Tri-State Consortium during their peer review visit to the Warwick Valley Central School District during the spring. The external peer reviews of programs and practices that consortium member schools provide one another apply the standards of the Tri-State model to chart a district's advancements in teaching and learning, and provide invaluable insights that help districts do their best for their students.

The Consortium's evaluators kept in mind one essential question during their visit: To what extent do the K-12 reading and writing competencies foster the skills described in Warwick's Portrait of a Graduate?

Consortium evaluators looked at our K-12 programs through the lens of these eight key indicators:

- Performance-Based Assessment
- Metacognition in the Learning Process
- Metrics of Student Performance
- Curriculum & Instruction
- Professional Learning
- Equitable Support for Student Needs
- Shared Vision & Environment for Change
- Parent & Community Support

Last week, we looked at the first four key indicators and the commendations our district received for each. This week, we will focus on insights from the other four key indicators and commendations.

Indicator 5: Professional Learning

- Evaluators noted that Warwick teachers participate in ongoing professional development through coaching, consultations, Superintendent Conference Days, and collaboration periods.
- Evaluators noted the robust professional development program and its varied stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, and vice presidents of dual credit enrollment programs.
- Teachers are comfortable reaching out for additional professional development and utilize the K-4 literacy coach consistently.

Indicator 6: Equitable Support for Student Needs

- Evaluators noted the effectiveness of multiple assessments/measures during the IST/RTI process in K-12, helping teachers take a whole-student approach to evaluating potential supports and interventions.
- Students are offered a wealth of elective courses/programs, which provide personal direction in their education, and has helped to create an environment where multiple types of learning are valued and rewarded.
- Students in K–12 shared that they feel comfortable in their buildings and that their non-academic social-emotional needs are being met and supported by counselors, teachers, and administrative teams.

Indicator 7: Shared Vision & Environment for Change

- Evaluators noted how the "Portrait of a Graduate" was created collaboratively, in a process that gave all stakeholders a place to share their voices and ideas.
- The 43 new courses added since 2014 were noted as indicating our ongoing commitment to offering courses that students need today.
- The district was commended for our 95%, four-year graduation rate, for being Blue and Green Ribbon Schools, for our six years as a New York State Recognition High School, and for other commendations.

Indicator 8: Parent & Community Support

- Evaluators noted how students' strengths/accomplishments are celebrated in K–12 in features like the Superintendent's Spotlight and Artist of the Week, and that community messages are shared throughout the year to highlight initiatives the district supports.
- The district budget process is noted for its inclusivity of various stakeholders, with working sessions centered on district initiatives requiring financial support.
- Evaluators noted student involvement with the Student Youth Development Conference in Albany and student leadership training to promote best practices, healthy living, and prevention services.
- Evaluators appreciated how students are encouraged to volunteer in activities that will support critical needs in their community, and are presented with ample opportunities to get involved.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

Did you know that the Village of Warwick is one of the Hudson Valley's oldest recognized "Tree City USA" locations? 40 years! So, it was very special for the Park Avenue Student Council to take part in a tree planting ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park, which was made possible by a grant from the New York Urban State Forestry Council.

Following words by Mayor Michael J. Newhard, Shade Tree Commissioners Karen Emmerich and Robert Scheuermann; retired Warwick Valley teacher and head of the Warwick Valley

Gardeners Pat Reinhardt; and Park Avenue students shared their own pledges to be good stewards of the trees and green spaces in our community.

With a plush doll of Dr. Seuss' character the Lorax held aloft as their mascot, the students declared, "This is the Lorax, he speaks for the trees. We are Park Avenue and WE speak for the trees!"

Sanfordville Elementary School

Kindergarten classes visited Wright Family Farm, where they enjoyed learning about life on a farm, the life cycles of plants such as pumpkins and corn, and the needs and care of farm animals. They took a hayride, a train ride, scooter rides, and got in the corn wagon. Thank you to Wright Family Farm for giving our students a wonderful day.

PIE 1 and 2 went on a search to answer what it means to be a good citizen. They visited the high school and traveled down Main Street, where they met Mayor Newhard, police officers, EMS workers, local business owners, firemen, and a dance school teacher. Students visited the library, where they interviewed several community members about what it takes to be a good citizen in Warwick. The students also went on a scavenger hunt and enjoyed lunch in the park.

Sanfordville PTA sponsored the Halloween Spooktacular, where students were treated to fun activities, a pumpkin decorating contest, a scavenger hunt, a maze, relay races, fun decorations, non-food goodie bags, slime making, and trick-or-treat bags to decorate and take home. Congratulations to the Pumpkin Decorating Contest winners: Ryan Rose, Gavin Kleinman, David Pineada-Pinzon, and Jace, Dominick, and Anthony Moglia. Winners got a \$15 gift certificate to Zaydas Toy Emporium. Thank you to all the parent volunteers and PTA for a fun day.

Teachers and staff dressed up for the school's inaugural Halloween costume contest fundraiser. Guests paid a donation to participate, and students voted on their favorite staff costumes. First place went to the OT and PT teams for their Hocus Pocus costumes. They chose St. Jude's Children's Hospital to receive \$260.

Warwick Valley Middle School

We held our second annual Trunk or Treat in collaboration with the Warwick Valley High School and the Warwick Prevention Coalition. Members of the community hosted trunk shows while the Warwick Valley Middle School held a haunted house in the high school weight room. The kids had a great time getting spooked. The event was a tremendous success, with more than 240 cars stopping by to trick or treat.

The middle school students and staff were very excited to celebrate Halloween. The staff participated in a costume contest, where the entire student body was invited to vote. Our eighth grade Beta Team won the contest for dressing up as the characters from the animated movie Up.

Warwick Valley High School

As we wrap up the first marking period of the school year this week, it's almost hard to believe that the high school has already begun preparing for next school year. The eighth graders from Greenwood Lake Middle School came to visit the building and take a tour of classes. Later that evening, the high school administration and guidance counselors hosted an open house for all incoming eighth graders and their families in Warwick and Greenwood Lake. The event was well attended, with families being able to meet students and teachers on their tour and hear about all of the incredible programs and pathways that Warwick Valley High School has to offer, both in and out of the classroom.