

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

Our goal at Warwick Valley Central School District is to provide students with a challenging and meaningful education. We recognize that students learn differently. Our staff are encouraged to be lifelong learners and to be aware of each child's unique learning style. The district offers a lot of in-service and professional development, including a formal mentoring and internship program. Implementing an educational program involves a variety of instructional strategies and practices. Parent visitors may see team teaching, peer tutoring, and differentiated instruction in action in a classroom.

We regularly review our New York State Standards-based curriculum at the elementary level to ensure it emphasizes critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective study habits. Children in elementary schools receive regular instruction in the arts, music, physical education, health, and library/research skills. Additionally, students can join clubs and sports teams. It's no secret that Warwick's elementary schools often outperform Orange County schools. We also have a highly regarded K-12 music program, with band and strings beginning in grade 4.

Warwick Valley Middle School (WVMS) has about 1,200 students. The schedules of fifth- and sixth-graders rotate to offer blocks of academic instruction. Like high school students, seventh and eighth-graders follow a rotating block schedule. Each student is assigned to a team so the school retains its small-school feel. Honors courses start in seventh grade in English, math, science, and social studies. There are three foreign language options: French, Spanish, and Mandarin Chinese. Students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities, clubs, intramurals, and sports. WVMS also has a student senate, a drama club, a band, a chorus, and an orchestra.

About 95 percent of Warwick Valley High School's (WVHS) 1,350 students earn Regents diplomas. Our students consistently score higher on standardized tests than their county, state, and national peers. We offer Advanced Placement and college classes through Rochester Institute of Technology, SUNY Orange, SUNY Albany, and St. Cloud State University. Ninety-three percent of our graduates continue their formal education after graduation. WVHS students can also choose from dozens of clubs and varsity athletic teams as part of their well-rounded educational options. Also available to WVHS students are technical and occupational career programs. The middle and high schools often put on musical and dramatic plays as part of their annual productions.

The district offers honors classes in English (8-12), Social Studies (8-12), Science (8-12), Math (7-12), and foreign languages (9-12). In middle school, honors programs begin, and entrance is determined by a student's grades, assessments, and universal screening results. Honors in high school require passing grades in every marking period and/or a final grade of 85 percent or

above. For more information about your child's enrollment in the Honors Program, contact the guidance office at his or her middle or high school.

Throughout the district, the district continues to implement a balanced assessment system that accurately reflects student progress. In addition to monitoring student progress, WVCSD recognizes that it's imperative to maximize instructional time. A significant goal of this focus is to replace more traditional assessment practices with performance-based assessments that are meaningful to students.

The school district publishes its school district report card and accountability reports. Please visit our website to view our archive of information.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

As part of the morning announcements, fourth-grade students provide a daily weather report. This fun experiential learning opportunity was related to their science unit. Students record weather data on a daily calendar to explore *the range, median, and mode as different measures*. Additionally, they are looking for patterns and trends in the weather. Lastly, students keep track of current sunrise and sunset times, which they find interesting the closer we approach the winter solstice. They have shared how fascinating it is to see daylight gradually decrease with each passing day.

Students in third grade are working hard to complete their hazardous weather presentations. Each class becomes an “expert” on one specific dangerous weather condition. Teachers are planning and organizing a day when each class will present their expert opinions on detecting, preparing, and reducing these hazardous weather conditions to their peers. Groups of students work together to complete these science presentations.

Sanfordville Elementary School

A group of third-grade students are preparing to become transportation engineers. In their labs, students continue to study magnetic forces and how they can attract and repel one another. The students are working to identify which sides of the magnets are “north” or “south” as they create “sailing magnets” and “levitating magnets.” The students will collaborate with their partners to determine the strength and force of the magnets and how this will apply to the creation of their Maglev toy. The students are involved in the “Ask and Test” stage of the Engineering Design Process. The students will then brainstorm ideas for the Maglev toy.

Students in second grade have begun a new reading and writing unit. Students will study characters in Readers' Workshop and write realistic fiction stories through the lens of one author in Writers' Workshop. Some classes will study Tomie dePaola books and others will study Kevin Henkes books. Students will gather all the information they can about characters before they

even open up a book. They will consider what they can predict about the kind of book they are about to read, and the kind of characters that live in its pages. The recommendation is based on their previous reading, the book's front and back covers, and its table of contents.

Warwick Valley Middle School

Seventh grade English language arts students are reading *A Long Walk to Water* by Lunda Sue Park. The novel tells the story of two Sudanese children attempting to overcome mortal dangers and improve their lives. Nya, an 11-year-old female living in Sudan in 2008, and Salva, a male who becomes one of Sudan's "lost boys", tell the story from their points of view. As part of their research to understand the water crisis discussed in the novel, students learned that not everyone enjoys the luxury of having access to running water. Many students demonstrated a heightened appreciation for the resources available to them in their everyday lives.

Wildcat Ambassadors continued to develop their leadership skills during their monthly leadership workshop. They focused on the difference between proactive and reactive language. Students responded to scenarios, sharing ways they might become more proactive in their daily lives. The conversation focused on matters you can control versus those you cannot. This led to a discussion of Stephen Covey's Circle of Influence theory. This theory encourages people to focus their attention on the things they can influence, which, in turn, enables them to make effective change. Our Wildcat Ambassadors have done a great job establishing themselves as role models in our school community.

Warwick Valley High School

The Career and Technical Education programs hosted at WVHS have developed strong relationships with regional colleges and universities, leading to fantastic opportunities for Warwick students. Those enrolled in criminal justice and video production recently visited local schools to work with and learn from college professors and students on various activities.

Mr. Eduardo Avila organized a visit to Marist College for students in the criminal justice program and the Career Exploration in the Armed Services Club. The visit focused on Marist's criminal justice and ROTC programs. Representatives from each group spoke to the students about content curriculum, scholarship opportunities, and the diverse career fields ROTC and criminal justice students may pursue.

Student Oliver Portugal was recognized for his dedication to leadership, civics, and community as a vital member of the criminal justice program, presented by Mr. David Rogers of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Chapter 1782. Student Josephine Tuckfelt received the Military Order of the Red Fox for outstanding support of the active military, veterans, and reserve officers through her leadership as president of the Career Exploration in the Armed Services Club.

Video Production students traveled with their teacher, Dan Cecconie, to William Paterson University to co-crew a news production alongside William Paterson instructors and students. The visit was a coordinated effort between Mr. Cecconie and William Paterson officials. Warwick students got to see how the skills they are developing will one day help them build a career, and they excelled at this hands-on experience. William Paterson professors even noted their preparedness and focus. Students who participated included: Brooke Holzauer (news talent); Theo Fernandez (sports talent); Jazleen Alagh (teleprompter operator); JoJo Gagliano (A2 audio technicians); and Shane Crane, Liam Kevins, and Logan McKay (camera operators).