

WVCSD EdTalk: March 15, 2023

Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

Even though this cold and snowy March has us feeling otherwise, spring break is right around the corner. After that, planning for the 2023-24 school year really takes off. Even as we look forward to celebrating the Class of 2023 in June, we will be getting ready to welcome a whole new group of students just beginning their educational journey!

The kindergarten registration process and subsequent orientation and screening events are among our top priorities when we start preparation for an upcoming school year. In fact, kindergarten registration began with the New Year, and we often find that the majority of parents have registered their children by the time spring comes around. Again, this year, our kindergarten orientations and screenings will take place in May.

The principal from each new registrant's school will contact families in the weeks following spring break to let them know which orientation event to attend. Parents and students universally enjoy our informative open house events. Principals review building routines, procedures, and expectations, and there are also fun activities. The main events are school tours for incoming kindergarteners and their parents. Parents appreciate the peace of mind – and students, the confidence – they feel after interacting with faculty and administrators prior to their big first day of kindergarten.

The district will also soon begin enrolling students in Universal Pre-K. Since its inception, the UPK program has been a great success. We have been able to meet the high demand for the program, with quality, local services. We will be able to accommodate 130 students in the program for the 2023-24 school year. More details on the Universal Pre-K program – including enrollment, provider, and deadline information – are coming soon to the district website and social media.

Warmer days are coming soon, and spring semester is packed with all kinds of academic, athletic, and arts events. Kindergarten orientations will be here before we know it, and the excitement and anticipation of welcoming the Class of 2036 to Park Avenue and Sanfordville next September really begins!

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

The Warwick Historical Society visited and shared some of Warwick's past with our first grade classes. Students learned about various household chores from early periods of the community's history, including rolling dough, mixing batter, ironing clothes, sweeping the floor, and cooking.

They even got to see and use some of the old, traditional tools that previous generations of Warwickians used for these tasks. Students enjoyed comparing and contrasting the old-fashioned tools with the more modern ones that are currently at our disposal. Their discussion on differences and similarities was quite robust, thanks to their new knowledge. Thank you to the Warwick Valley Historical Society for connecting our students with Warwick's rich history and past traditions.

Sanfordville Elementary School

Students in 4th grade learned about fractions and celebrated their new knowledge by creating fractions and equivalent fractions. One activity involved students becoming chefs to create paper pizzas with toppings, which they placed in mini pizza boxes. They even came up with logos for their pizzerias! Students determined the fraction of the toppings on their slices of pizza and created equivalent fractions for each. They also created a fraction word problem for their peers to solve, based on their pizzas. Real-world connections meant sampling fractional pieces of foods – dividing apples into eighths, clementines into tenths, and graham crackers into fourths – and using them as manipulatives to answer fraction questions. Such a fun way to learn!

Ms. Harrington's PIE 3/4 class is learning about some of the many women who have used their strength, intelligence, courage, and daring to change, or make a difference in, our world. Each student has chosen a woman who inspires them and is reading a biography of her life. As a culminating activity, we will "invite" all these ladies to lunch, when each student will get the opportunity to share with their classmates what they learned about their person and that person's contributions to society.

Warwick Valley Middle School

Percussionists in seventh and eighth grades enjoyed a masterclass with professional drummer Karl Latham. A Pine Island resident, Mr. Latham has performed, recorded with and produced acclaimed artists around the globe. He teaches privately and is on the faculty of several area colleges and universities and has also played on Broadway. The masterclass covered a wide range of drumming techniques and styles. The students enjoyed how Mr. Latham was able to simplify difficult musical concepts and were excited to see immediate improvements in their own playing.

There was even more drumming going on this week during the celebration of National Foreign Language Week. The WVMS PTA hosted an assembly with cultural performances representing the three languages taught in the middle school. Yahaya Kamate, from Chiku Awali African Dance Arts and Culture, shared French-influenced African drumming and dancing. Daniel Villegas, a WVHS graduate, introduced song and dance from the three main cultural influences of Latino and Hispanic Americans. Dancers from Fei Tian College wrapped up the performance with traditional Chinese dances.

Warwick Valley High School

Interact Club board members Nathalia Evelyn, Leila Horn, Brooke Sullivan, and Lauren Lasso attended a luncheon hosted by Warwick Rotary and shared their experiences of working on different community events with the Rotarians. Among their favorites were the holiday party and food drives, the distribution of dictionaries, and raising donations for Ukraine. Interact Club president Nathalia Evelyn was presented with the Paul Harris Fellow recognition, which acknowledges individuals who contribute or who have contributions made in their name in the amount of \$1,000 to the Rotary Foundation. Nathalia joins other notable Paul Harris Fellows, including President Jimmy Carter, astronaut James Lovell, UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, and polio vaccine developer Jonas Salk.