

WVCSD EdTalk: March 29, 2023

Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

The importance of providing students with educational experiences outside the classroom cannot be understated, and the district recognizes this fact. To ensure that these off-campus experiences are meaningful and relevant to student learning, the district has classified student trips into three categories.

The first category is educational field trips, which directly relate to the curriculum. These trips are considered a part of the school's curriculum and are subject to the same rules that apply to regular classroom activities, including student conduct and attendance. When deciding whether to approve these trips, factors such as their connection to the curriculum, distance, transportation availability and cost, and weather conditions are taken into account.

The second category of student trips includes those organized by school organizations, such as sports teams, performing groups, and clubs. Finally, the third category includes approved excursions by student groups, like the senior class trip.

This year alone, the district has arranged more than 50 field trips for Warwick Valley students. These trips provide students with opportunities to apply the concepts they learn in the classroom in real-world environments and situations, which can be inspiring and motivating. They also give students the chance to learn while interacting and socializing with their peers in a relaxed setting outside of the usual academic environment, which helps build relationships and promote collaborative work.

To ensure that these field trips are meaningful and relevant, the district takes a lot of logistical effort in choosing appropriate destinations, setting clear objectives, and providing background information to students. Here is just a sampling of some of the field trip destinations that Warwick Valley students have, or will have, enjoyed this year. Not listed are the numerous college visits that we arrange throughout the year, or the many visits we make to area high schools for academic and arts competitions.

International Beauty Show (NYC), Thunderbird Farms (Goshen), National Association of Broadcasters Expo (NYC), OC Emergency Service Center (Goshen), Yankee Stadium (Bronx), STEM Day at Hershey Park (Hershey, PA), FDR Library (Hyde Park), Radio City Music Hall (NYC), Phantom of the Opera on Broadway, Music in the Parks Competitions at Dorney Park (Allentown, PA), Regeneron/DNA Learning Center (Sleepy Hollow), Warwick Wastewater Treatment Plant, Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge (Pine Island), Westchester Incinerator (Peekskill), Liberty Science Center (Jersey City, NJ), Pochuck Mtn. State Park (Pine Island), New York Library Association Library Lobby Day (Albany), OC Government Center (Goshen), Hudson Theatre (NYC), The Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC), Legoland (Goshen), Storm

King Art Center (New Windsor), Bear Mountain Zoo (Bear Mtn.), Woodmont Day Camp (New City), Wright Family Farm (Warwick), Museum Village (Monroe), Turtleback Zoo (West Orange, NJ), Museum of the Hudson Highlands (Cornwall-on-Hudson), and West Point.

Despite the logistical challenges and expense that come with organizing field trips, the benefits far outweigh the effort. As educators and parents, it's important to recognize the value of these experiences and advocate for their continued inclusion in our children's education.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

Mrs. Blaikner's fourth grade orchestra is working on music for their Spring Concert. The student musicians are working as a team to put everything they have learned so far into their performance, from mastering how to sit properly as a symphonic performer to the music itself. Students listened to a recording of one of their concert selections as a learning exercise, and they loved how it sounded. We are looking forward to their performance!

Our young fourth grade scientists are continuing their study of the motion of waves. Students have read various articles, watched relevant videos, answered questions based on what they learned, and engaged in robust classroom discussions regarding different scientific questions related to this topic. As a culminating activity to this section of study, students completed a claim-evidence-reasoning (CER) in which they explained why a buoy stays in its location.

Once again The Warwick Historical Society visited Park Avenue this week. Staff members, including John Johansen, worked with our third grade students as they shared some very interesting information on the history of barns and different work that takes place on the farm. Students learned all about the construction method used to build farms back in the 19th century and were able to touch some of the tools used to build and repair barns. The Warwick Historical Society, which conducts several workshops with our students each year, has preserved twelve historic sites and thousands of items from throughout Warwick, NY for over a century. Thank you so much!

Sanfordville Elementary School

On March 21, students and staff at our school recognized and celebrated World Down Syndrome Day with "Rock Your Socks" activities. The number 21 is symbolic because people with Down syndrome have three copies of the 21st chromosome. To celebrate, we chose to "rock interesting socks" because the karyotype of DS chromosomes looks like mismatched socks. Many classes read the book *What's Inside You Is Inside Me, Too*, which teaches people about Down syndrome in a fun way, explaining chromosomes and their role in making every living thing special.

We would also like to express our gratitude to Mr. Hall, a master gardener from the Cornell Cooperative Extension, for visiting Sanfordville on Thursday. Mr. Hall read the book *Tomatoes for Neela*, by Padma Lakshmi, to our second graders. The book is about Neela, who loves cooking and writing down recipes in her notebook. Neela learns about all the different kinds of tomatoes and how to make delicious tomato sauce. Mr. Hall used this opportunity to teach our students about tomatoes and growing them in the garden. He even donated a copy of the book to our library!

Warwick Valley Middle School

Moving from elementary school to middle school can be an intimidating experience for students. To assist with this transition, WVMS invited current fourth graders from Sanfordville and Park Avenue to visit the school. The staff and students at the middle school look forward to this event every year as it provides an opportunity to meet and get to know our future students.

Upon arrival, visitors were greeted by the building administration and our Wildcat Ambassadors, who escorted them into the cafeteria for a live musical performance by the WVMS Honors Symphony. Their Michael Jackson medley was particularly popular. After an introduction from Principal Diopoulos and the concert, the fourth graders had the opportunity to experience a middle school lunch. Our food service staff was delighted to hear that the pizza was once again a crowd favorite this year.

The visit concluded with a tour of the building, led by our Wildcat Ambassadors. The tours allowed our visitors to explore the building and ask any questions they had. It was a fun event, and we cannot wait for the fourth graders to join us at the middle school in September.

Warwick Valley High School

Model UN is a simulation of the United Nations General Assembly, where students assume the roles of ambassadors and debate global issues such as equality, climate action, health, and more. The simulation challenges students to think and speak about global issues from the perspective of another country's ambassador, encouraging them to develop public speaking, critical thinking, and research skills. The Model UN experience enriches students' civic readiness and global affairs knowledge.

Under the guidance of Social Studies teacher Brian Nelson, the WVHS Model UN Team will be competing on March 31 at Suffern High School against teams from Monroe-Woodbury, Nanuet, Clarkstown, Suffern, and schools from Bergen County, New Jersey. The team will be debating a range of topics, including Women's Health, Scottish Independence, Jack the Ripper, Artificial Intelligence, and Exotic Animal Trafficking. Before the meet, students are assigned their country and then research the topic from that nation's perspective, using topic papers provided by the

host school. At the event, students build consensus and write a platform to pass global policies that result in positive outcomes.

The WVHS Model UN Team has had a successful season thus far, with a winning record and recognition for outstanding performances and the ability to pass global policies. Christian Katsabanis won Outstanding Delegate in the Disarmament and International Security Committee, Abigail Foust won Outstanding Delegate in the World Health Organization Committee, and Mario Petrozza won the prestigious Best Delegate award.