

**WVCSD EdTalk: March 8, 2023**  
**Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools**

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Together, curriculum, instruction and assessment form a complementary learning cycle.

The curriculum is organized around learning standards and anticipated student outcomes. It’s all about “what” we want the child to understand.

After this, the teacher provides students with instruction to assist them in mastering the learning objectives. This is “how” pupils learn content and develop a long-term grasp of it.

Along with curriculum and instruction, we must also acknowledge the importance of classroom assessment, an important part of the teaching and learning cycle. Students and educators have been critical of assessment over the past few years due to the amount of time it takes to complete it, the amount of stress it causes, and the fact that high-stakes tests are constantly evolving as state curriculum standards change. Despite this, most criticism focuses on high-stakes standardized exams, which we all agree are not the most important.

In a balanced assessment plan, traditional measures like state exams do have a place. The most recent results from the Warwick Valley Central School District indicate that our students have performed exceptionally well in the region when compared to schools with at least fifty test takers.

***New York State Assessment Rankings  
Orange County, New York***

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Grade Range</b>	<b>County Ranking</b>
ELA	3-8	1
Math	3-8	2

English	9-12	1
Algebra	8-12	1
Geometry	9-12	1
Algebra 2	9-12	1
Living Environment	9-12	2
Earth Science	8-12	1
Chemistry	9-12	1
Global History	9-12	3
Physics *	9-12	6

\* Warwick Valley HS had more physics test takers than the top three highest-scoring districts combined.

In addition to these statewide assessments, there are, of course, classroom assessments that are performed by teachers daily that gauge student learning. In addition to providing feedback to the teacher, these student outcomes from classroom instruction have implications for individual

students. Teacher assessments improve instruction during each lesson. They keep educators and students focused on where they're heading, and shift the instructional conversation in schools to student learning results.

If the learning results aren't what the teacher had hoped for, the teacher modifies the lesson plan to get better results. Assessment data may also reveal curricular gaps that need to be addressed.

*Here are some highlights from our schools this week:*

### **Park Avenue Elementary School**

The Park Avenue Volunteer Club hosted special guest Joany Schmick during one of their morning meetings. As one of the Warwick Humane Society's animal control officers, Ms. Schmick spent her time with our students discussing her role and the mission of the Humane Society. She brought with her two very adorable kittens, which made much of what she spoke about even more real.

The Volunteer Club, which is supervised by Amy Buliung and Theresa Canfield, is made up of fourth-grade students who share a common enthusiasm for community service. Throughout the month of March, club members, the majority of whom are rescue pet owners themselves, will be collecting donations for the Warwick Humane Society. In order to spread the word, students used creative digital skills to make flyers that will be posted around the school and distributed via social media.

### **Sanfordville Elementary School**

The second-grade students at Sanfordville are currently working on learning to write block code using the program Tynker. This program will teach students different commands and the purpose of writing code. Once the students complete the lessons on the basics of block code, they will apply these skills to learning to write code for the Dash Robots using the tablets and the application Blockly. The students will work with their partners to create a maze on chart paper, and then code their robots to escape it.

Sanfordville's PIE 3/4 students are studying world cultures, comparing the United States, Brazil, and Kenya. Currently, they are engaged in petition writing about deforestation in Brazil and the water shortage in Kenya. Ms. Reilly's class has been researching Kenya and its geography, culture, and animals that live there. The class was able to Google Meet with a student's grandfather who grew up in Africa and currently lives in England. He shared experiences such as hiking Mount Kilimanjaro in Kenya and attending boarding school in Zimbabwe. They were able to see pictures he took all around Kenya and other parts of Africa. The student's mom also traveled to Africa and shared pictures from a safari tour and artifacts purchased at local markets in the area. These connections have made studying Kenya even more special!

### **Warwick Valley Middle School**

The Warwick Valley Middle School Drama Club is preparing for their upcoming performance of the Broadway show Newsies. Newsies is a musical based on the New York City newsboy strike of 1899. The cast has been rehearsing for this production since the beginning of the school year and is very excited to perform for the community on April 21 and 22.

The cast recently had the opportunity to spend the afternoon with renowned Broadway actress and singer Donna Vivino. Ms. Vivino is best known for playing Elphaba in Wicked on Broadway and also played the original Young Cosette in Les Miserables on Broadway. She provided the students with insight into auditioning for shows and what to expect if they should get cast. Students asked thoughtful questions and learned a tremendous amount about the field. The students also performed a few numbers from their upcoming performance, receiving insightful feedback and tips and tricks about vocal health and pedagogy. The master class concluded with Ms. Vivino performing "Defying Gravity" from Wicked. We are so grateful to Ms. Vivino for spending time with our students.

### **Warwick Valley High School**

When a student graduates from high school, their diploma documents indicate that they have attained the necessary New York State requirements of coursework and credits over their four years in school. Honorary accolades can also be earned and recognized on the diploma for numerous accomplishments that extend past the graduation measures determined by the state. During the second semester of the year, teachers in the World Language, English, and Social Studies departments meet with students who wish to demonstrate excellence in languages and civic readiness, in order to earn honorary distinctions in these areas upon graduation. Through a review of written and verbal presentations in the content areas, capstone projects, and a portfolio of high levels of demonstrated work, students can qualify to earn the Seal of Biliteracy and the Seal of Civic Readiness.

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award given to students in recognition of attaining proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. There are many positive outcomes for students who earn the seal. It encourages students to study languages, certifies attainment of biliteracy skills, recognizes the value of language diversity, provides universities, colleges, and employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills, prepares students with skills that will benefit them in the labor market and the global society, and honors multiple cultures and languages in a community.

Currently, 60 students are working toward achieving the seal. These students will meet with English teachers to present a project in which they will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the English language to a panel of judges. In June, the students will meet with

language teachers in a similar fashion and will present a project that demonstrates their ability to listen, speak, and write in a second language.

This year is the first that the high school will offer the newly developed and distinguished Seal of Civic Readiness to students. This honor is a formal recognition that a student has attained a high level of proficiency in terms of civic knowledge, civic skills, civic mindset, and civic experiences. Students who earn the Seal of Civic Readiness distinction on a high school transcript and diploma will demonstrate their understanding of a commitment to participatory government, civic responsibility, and civic values. It tells universities, colleges, and future employers that the student has completed an action project in civics or social justice. It also recognizes the value of civic engagement and scholarship. There are currently close to 50 students that have shown interest in earning the Seal of Civic Readiness in our first year of implementation of this pathway.