

WVCSD EdTalk: May 10, 2023
Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

During the Board of Education meeting on Thursday, May 4th, the Board members and I had the honor of listening to students who will be graduating in June with a Seal of Civic Readiness affixed to their diplomas. Five students summarized their Civic Readiness Capstone research projects as part of their responsibilities to earn the seal. Their topics ranged from how social media affects politics to redistricting and gerrymandering.

The Seal of Civic Readiness is a formal recognition granted by the New York State Education Department that a student has achieved a high level of proficiency in civic knowledge, skills, mindset, and experiences. This academic recognition opportunity is open to all graduating seniors across the state. To receive the Seal of Civic Readiness, a student must complete all requirements for a New York State local or Regents' diploma and earn six points by completing tasks in two categories: Civic Knowledge and Civic Participation. The ways to earn these points include taking four credits of social studies, taking advanced social studies courses, and demonstrating proficiency and/or mastery on the Regents exam. Earning Civic Participation points entails civics projects, elective courses promoting civic engagement, and service-learning projects. Students can also complete a four-point capstone project, in which they identify a local civic problem, study it, come up with and/or try out a solution, and then take action to solve it. Having the Seal of Civic Readiness on a high school diploma indicates to potential employers and college admissions officers that the student values civic engagement and scholarship, has a commitment to take part in the local community and government, and possesses a sense of civic responsibility and values.

If a high school student is interested in working toward their Seal of Civic Readiness, the student should talk to his or her social studies teacher and guidance counselor to learn more about this exciting opportunity next year.

This week's EdTalk column is a final reminder that the 2023-24 Budget Vote and Board Election is scheduled for Tuesday, May 16th from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. The polling locations are District 1 - Pine Island Firehouse, District 2 - Dorothy C. Wilson Education Center, and District 3 - Kings School.

For information about the 2023-24 budget, please visit the District webpage or email us at budget.questions@wvcsd.org.

Park Avenue Elementary School

The members of the fourth-grade orchestra and band, under the direction of Keely Blaikner and Ryan Muehlbauer, are busy with their final preparations for the upcoming concert. Although our band participated in the district's annual concert in March, this will be the first time members of the orchestra will perform for a wide audience. Orchestra students will perform for a second time on June 7 at the annual String Fling concert, which will feature all orchestra students from grades 4 to 12.

During STEM class with Amanda Cangialosi, second-graders began their next engineering unit in which they will have the opportunity to act as packaging engineers when designing a package for a live plant. Using what they are learning in their classrooms about plant needs, students will collaborate with their teams to create a package that meets the needs of their plant and consumers. Students will ensure that their package checks off the following functions of a package: appealing display, clear communication, and protection and preservation of the product. It must also be a container for the product, and consumers must be able to carry it. Student teams will also have a budget for purchasing their materials. After creating the package, student teams will analyze their design and evaluate their scores for all of the necessary components.

Sanfordville Elementary School

Recently, Sanfordville held the fourth-grade Spelling Bee Finals, sponsored by the Warwick Rotary Club. Earlier in April, the local Rotarians visited the fourth-grade classes to give them dictionaries to read and use as a resource. The fourth-grade students took a written test in class, and the top five scorers advanced to an oral spelling bee in their own classroom. The class winners then advanced to the grade-level final. Twenty finalists competed to crown a champion speller. The 20 finalist spellers were Joshua Fostine, Solaris Keiler-Leitao, Desmond Cartwright, Michael Januario, Ella Shaw, Tyler Gordon, Miles Muehlbauer, Adrianna Messina, Anaya Lopez, Violet Xin, Anjali Peralta, Liam Marrero, Cameron Todmann, Lucas Barr, Anthony Moglia, Annabeth Bradely, Ronan Sezak, Carson Beers-Wright, Ezra Friedman, and Philip Ahrens. The top spellers were 3rd place Desmond Cartwright, 2nd place Joshua Fostini, and the Champion of the Sanfordville 2023 Warwick Rotary Spelling Bee was Carson Beers-Wright! Thank you to the Rotary Club and Rotarian Bob Carl for their support and participation. Also, a special thank you to Literacy Coach Alisa Kadus for the wonderful job she did as the pronouncer for the bee, to teacher coordinators Jenny Augelli and Sherry Wishnia, and to Casey Fitzgerald for being one of the judges. Congratulations to everyone who participated!

Earlier in April, our third-grade students visited the Hudson Highlands Nature Museum in Cornwall. Our students gained an understanding of animal adaptations and habitats. They investigated, observed, and identified creatures in water samples from the ponds there. Students participated in interactive and hands-on exploration of pond life. They learned so much about these aquatic creatures and our ecosystem during this fun field trip.

Warwick Valley Middle School

The Town of Warwick's 2023 Celebration of Arbor Day, organized by the Town of Warwick Shade Tree Commission, took place at the town's newest park, Mountain Lake Park on Bowen Road.

Fifth- and sixth-grade student artists participated in the Arbor Day Poster Contest, and members of the sixth-grade Honors Chorus also attended. The artists rang bells to commence the celebration, and the chorus sang two songs, "Aiken Drum" and "Let it Grow." This year's celebration honored retiring Warwick Town Supervisor Michael Sweeton "for his exemplary

service to the Town of Warwick and constant dedication to the environmental enhancement of our community." A beautiful blooming Weeping Cherry Tree was planted in dedication to Mr. Sweeton.

Mayor Michael Newhard and Warwick Town Tree Commissioner Karen Emmerich thanked the students for their participation in the Arbor Day Poster Contest. The posters have been on display at Town Hall since April.

Warwick Valley High School

As we approach the end of the academic year, our specialized elective courses culminate in standardized assessments during the first two weeks of May. AP students take national exams that can ultimately transfer into college credits. AP courses offer students opportunities to challenge themselves with college-level work. Beginning in the 10th grade, we offer 11 AP courses, and we have a total AP enrollment of more than 650 students, some of whom are enrolled in multiple AP classes. Course offerings include English literature and writing, history, science, mathematics, and computer science. Next year, we will add AP Music Theory for the first time.

Students enrolled in the second year of our Cosmetology, Criminal Justice, and Video Production programs took the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) exams last week. The exams are developed to meet industry standards and requirements and measure students' knowledge, skills, and competencies critical for success outside the classroom. NOCTI is recognized as the leading provider of industry credentials in the nation!