

WVCSD EdTalk: May 3, 2023
Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

The Warwick Valley Central School District Board of Education recently approved the proposed 2023-24 academic year budget. The budget meets the District's goals of preserving student opportunities while staying within or below the tax cap. It is the eighth time in the last 12 years the tax levy is below the state's allowable tax cap. The District has never exceeded the tax cap.

The District is anticipating high inflation in the upcoming school year after adjusting to record inflation during this past year. This proposed 2023-24 school year budget accounts for rises in contractual obligations; pupil personnel and special education services; inflation in supply costs, utilities and materials in all facets of the District; more expensive contract transportation; and the addition of a fifth police officer for afternoon dismissal and after school activities.

We will always have uncontrollable outside factors, such as changes in state aid, unexpected expenses, or rising costs. But, as a District, we are committed to planning for the future for our students and families. Despite these challenges, the District is optimistic that it can continue to provide high-quality education while maintaining a reasonable tax levy increase for residents. The proposed tax levy increase for next year is 3.49%, which is nearly one percentage point below the allowable state tax cap to save taxpayers \$631,157.

The budget will enable the District to sustain its impressive return on investment for our community. The District's students are arguably the highest performing in the region, as evidenced by their high test scores across nearly all categories in Orange County that we discussed a few weeks ago. In addition, the District boasts an impressive five-year graduation rate of 97%, making it the top-ranked district out of 43 in the Mid-Hudson region, with a student count of at least 105.

We will be providing you with more information over the coming weeks on the Budget page of our website (<https://www.warwickvalleyschools.com/board-of-education/budget/>). Check back often as we are making frequent updates. Also, if you should have any questions on the budget, please feel free to reach out to the district at budget.questions@wvcسد.org.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

The Warwick Valley Rotary Club sponsored Park Avenue's annual Spelling Bee. Each of our fourth-grade classes held their own classroom-based Spelling Bee before sending their two finalists to the schoolwide bee. Parents, other invited guests, and classmates came together to

cheer on the spellers. This year's winners are Addison Cohen, Grace Brown, and Connor McNamee.

All of Park Avenue's first-grade classes walked to Stanley Deming Park to participate in this year's earth day event. The celebrations, which started at the Arboretum, included opening remarks by Mayor Michael J. Newhard and "America the Beautiful" sung by Village Trustee Carly Foster. We extend our gratitude to the organizers and attendees, including Shade Tree Commissioners Lynn Cheney, Frank Desidario, and Karen Emmerich; Mary Berrigan from the Warwick Valley Gardeners Club; the Department of Public Works staff; and Craig Wadeson from Wadeson's Home Center for distributing a sapling to every student who was present.

Sanfordville Elementary School

Suzanne Havell's kindergartners read books about earth day and why it's important to take care of our planet. They learned the significance of not only picking up garbage but also turning off the running water while brushing their teeth, turning off lights, and planting flowers and trees. Students watched a short video on how a recycling center works and then went outside to put on gloves and pick up garbage around the lacrosse fields. Later, students dumped their bags of garbage and sorted the plastic, paper, and other items they found. As a class, they discussed the importance of not adding more garbage to our landfills. The students then wrote about what they would do to help our planet and painted the earth using marbles to roll blue and green paint on a tray, creating a beautiful image when cut out and dried.

The P.I.E. classes enjoyed celebrating earth day with a variety of activities focused on taking care of animals, using recycled materials, planting seeds, and making art projects. Students and parent helpers gathered by the P.I.E. garden to plant sunflower seeds in recycled newspaper cups. P.I.E. 3-4 students painted kindness rocks with messages of peace, hope, faith, and love, while P.I.E. K and P.I.E. 1-2 painted the earth on paper plates with balloons and paint. They also made bird feeders out of pine cones and cardboard tubes. The children played ring toss and cornhole using recycled cardboard boxes. Lastly, everyone participated in a nature scavenger hunt. We thank our parent helpers for sending in materials and assisting with the stations.

Warwick Valley Middle School

Congratulations to the Warwick Valley Middle School Drama Club cast and crew, who recently presented "Newsies" in the high school auditorium. The show was directed by high school music teacher Noreen Hanson and produced by middle school teacher Christy Brown. The cast included over 100 middle school students, with vocal direction by middle school chorus director Shane Peters, set design by Dan McQuade and Rocco Manno, and costumes by Melanie Wesloske. The students began rehearsals in November and worked tirelessly to put on an amazing performance. Congratulations to our cast, including Madison Lijoi as Jack Kelly, Ashlyn Brown as Crutchie, Lucas Cresser as Davey, Emmerson Powers as Katherine Plumber,

Zoe Ham as Albert, Autumn Levine as Buttons, Emily Laule as Henry, Jenna Grady as Racetrack, Aeon Rosin as Romeo, Miles Allen as Mr. Wiesel, Sydney Becker as Jojo/Elmer, and Chloe Spencer as Mush.

Warwick Valley High School

The high school recently hosted the Henry C. Lamoreaux Warwick Chapter of the National Honor Society induction ceremony, honoring 108 students for demonstrating excellence in the four pillars required for membership: scholarship, service, leadership, and character. To qualify for membership, students must maintain a GPA of at least 92 by the end of their fifth semester of high school, demonstrate commitment to volunteering their time to the school or community without compensation, provide evidence of resourcefulness, problem-solving, and idea contribution, and show high standards of honesty, reliability, and respect for others. Students seeking acceptance into the National Honor Society must submit an application similar to a college application, including two essays and three teacher recommendations for membership. Ms. Mary Fox, Director of Guidance and School Counseling, is the advisor for the National Honor Society and organized the application process and induction ceremony. Congratulations to all of the new members!