

WVCSD EdTalk: May 31, 2023

Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

Two known WVCSD administrators are poised to take on new leadership roles.

Middle School Principal Georgianna Diopoulos will become the principal of the High School, while Middle School Associate Principal Jared Yapkowitz will take over as the new principal of the Middle School. They will assume their new roles on July 1.

Ms. Diopoulos' assignment as high school principal is a tremendous asset to our district. Her infectious enthusiasm lends itself perfectly to the High School, while her established connections with students, families, and staff will ensure a smooth transition. Spend just a few minutes observing her interactions with our students, and you'll witness their admiration and respect for her. Given her leadership and experience, which includes leading two schools, the High School is set for even greater success.

Understanding the district's goals, adolescent development, and the importance of fostering a positive school culture, Mr. Yapkowitz is exceptionally equipped to lead our Middle School toward excellence. His commitment to family and community engagement, and his experience implementing Middle School specific programs, will ensure a nurturing environment where students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. He has earned this opportunity, and he is deeply committed to our students.

Ms. Diopoulos has been serving as the principal of the Middle School for the past six years. During her tenure as the Middle School principal, Ms. Diopoulos led several advancements, including the implementation of a new master schedule and the introduction of several new courses. She also oversaw major building projects to enhance security, safety, and instructional spaces.

Before joining the Warwick Valley Central School District, Ms. Diopoulos worked as the principal of the Achievement School, Felix Festa Middle School, in the Clarkstown Central School District in Rockland County. She had also served as a Special Education Department chairperson at Felix Festa and as a mathematics facilitator for the New York City schools.

Mr. Yapkowitz has been the associate principal at the Middle School for the past five years. Prior to coming to Warwick, he had been a peer instructional coach and teacher in various capacities for the New York City schools.

Marguerite Fusco, who joined the District in 2015 as assistant principal, will be leaving at the end of this school year. She played an important role in implementing changes at the High School, such as overseeing a new master schedule. After transitioning to the role of High School principal almost four years ago, she displayed excellent management skills, especially during the height of the pandemic. While most high schools were closed in the region, our High School remained open in September 2020. It brought a great sense of pride to the community and provided stability for our students when they needed it most. We wish her all the best.

Let's dive into some of the exciting learning activities happening in our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

The Warwick Historical Society led fourth grade classes through three stations on the Hallowed Grounds adjacent to the school, where students learned about the Revolutionary era campsites that were located across from our school, the meetinghouse and its founders, as well as the Loyalists and Patriots that lived in Warwick during that historical era. The students are very excited to continue learning about Warwick's history during their upcoming village walking tour.

The Park Ave Student Council and Volunteer Club were honored at their annual pinning ceremony. Each student shared their favorite events from this year before receiving a pin and a certificate from advisors Theresa Canfield and Amy Buliung. During their speeches, both advisors expressed their pride in the participants' hard work and dedication. Members of the Student Council and Volunteer Club are enthusiastic fourth graders passionate about leadership, volunteering, and serving others. They worked on many projects this year, raising a total of \$5,000 for organizations such as Wreaths Across America, Winslow Therapeutic Center, and Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation. They also hosted and participated in many other events, like the Trees of Heroes, Veterans Day, and the One Book One School effort.

Sanfordville Elementary School

The Town of Warwick Police Department and the district teamed up to host the first annual Bicycle Rodeo at Sanfordville. Officers from the department's bicycle patrol – Neil Ryan, Nate Petrosky, Sean MacNamara and Kat Hulak – demonstrated bike handling skills and led 20 third- and fourth-grade riders through a series of obstacles. Officers Dave Serviss, James Feragola, Bob Kenney, and Katie Oresto were also there to share safety tips. Thank you to Brian Fitzsimmons of the Orange County Bike Club for donating his time and expertise to inspect and tune everyone's bicycles. Additionally, Ed Avila and a few of his students from the High School's Criminal Justice program volunteered their time at the event.

Warwick Valley Middle School

Honors Symphony Orchestra is composed of highly motivated seventh- and eighth-grade band and orchestra students who must audition to be part of this advanced ensemble, and their dedication for music is to be commended. They dedicate two out of every eight recess days to rehearse their challenging repertoire, committed to honing their skills and delivering high-quality performances.

This year, the Honors Symphony performed holiday music during our faculty breakfast and went caroling at the middle school, elementary schools, and district office. This spring, they visited the elementary schools to perform a greatest hits list that had students dancing in the aisles. Their final performance of the year was the Valentine's for Veteran's Memorial Day Breakfast, where they performed the Star Spangled Banner and the beloved Armed Forces Medley. The guidance and leadership of band and orchestra teachers Pete VandeWater and Christy Brown play a crucial role in shaping the success of the Honors Symphony Orchestra, and their dedication and expertise have contributed to the growth and achievements of our students.

Warwick Valley High School

The High School National Technical Honor Society inductions were held. Thirteen students from the Cosmetology, Video Production, and Criminal Justice programs were inducted into this prestigious educational non-profit that honors, recognizes, and empowers students and teachers in Career & Technical Education. Three students enrolled in Orange-Ulster BOCES CTE programs will also be inducted on June 8. Inductees consistently demonstrate a proven record of outstanding leadership, scholarship, skills, honesty, citizenship, service, and responsibility, and have maintained an average of 90 or better within the CTE program, and an overall average of 85 or better. Congratulations to Pauline Cordova, Kailee Curtis, Jojo Gagliano, Liam Kevins, Ryan McLean, Ian Morrison, Oliver Portugal, Madison Vasquez, and juniors Lydia Bingham, Nico Carrillo, Ariana Elias, Kiera Ferrier, Astrid Kelly, Valeria Sandoval, and Emily Sorrell.