

**WVCSD EdTalk: June 21, 2023**  
**Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools**

The Warwick Valley High School graduation is just days away. As I ponder what to include in my commencement speech, I like to reflect on the past year and our collective accomplishments. Another school year has quickly passed, and it was a remarkable one, filled with achievements, classroom activities, experiments, sports events, friendships, music concerts, art shows, cherished memories, and, most importantly, learning.

Instead of overthinking it, I may turn to a tried and true resource: the beloved children's book "Oh, The Places You'll Go!" by Dr. Seuss. This whimsical and uplifting guide encourages readers to embrace their potential, conquer challenges, and explore the vast possibilities that lie ahead. With playful rhymes and colorful illustrations, the book motivates readers of all ages to strive for success, embark on thrilling adventures, and discover their true selves. The following seven quotes are widely recognized and often used as inspirational messages, especially during graduation season:

1. "You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose."
2. "Congratulations! Today is your day. You're off to Great Places! You're off and away!"
3. "And will you succeed? Yes, you will indeed! (98 and 3/4 percent guaranteed.)"
4. "You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go."
5. "Oh, the places you'll go! There is fun to be done! There are points to be scored. There are games to be won. And the magical things you can do with that ball will make you the winning-est winner of all."
6. "Oh, the things you can find if you don't stay behind!"
7. "You're off to great places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, so get on your way!"

As each year swiftly flies, oh my! Excitement dances in the sky. Stand tall, Warwick Valley Class of 2023, so grand. Together we celebrate, hand in hand!

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

**Park Avenue Elementary School**

First grade students in Aimee Urvater's class shared some of their writing pieces from this year with parents and guests. The writing pieces included: all about the author, realistic fiction chapter books, persuasive writing reviews, and reflections about first grade. The students' work showed how much their writing has improved over the year and that they are ready for second grade.

Second grade classes went on a class trip to the Turtle Back Zoo. Students were asked to make observations during the field trip and compare and contrast them with their own experiences when outdoors. Based on this work, students will conduct online research about an animal of their choice. For example, in Shannon Kennedy's and Catherine Hobart's class each student chose an animal from the

zoo that they wanted to research and organized their thoughts using a KWL chart. Research was continued at school and students will be sharing what they learn with their peers.

### **Sanfordville Elementary School**

The first grade had started their theme days as a fun way to celebrate the last two weeks of school. At Camping Day students' desks were turned into tents and students were able to work/read/tell stories in their tents. On Disney Day, students dressed as their favorite Disney character. At our ice-cream social, parents joined us at the playground for watermelon, a visit from the ice-cream truck, bubbles and outdoor fun.

Students, parent volunteers and staff enjoyed this year's PAWS Field Day over the course of two days. When rain put a damper on the afternoon events, games were rescheduled for the following day. Students got to experience some fun activities including: parachute games, pirates gold, an obstacle course, a dance party, relay races, soccer, kickball and more. Students were even treated to a skateboard assembly sponsored by the PTA. Thank you to the SES physical education staff, the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports team, all of the staff members, and all of the PTA volunteers for making both days really special for our students!

### **Warwick Valley Middle School**

Middle School is a time of growth and development for our students. It is a transitional period between elementary school and high school, where students experience significant physical, emotional, and social changes. Throughout middle school, students often explore their interests, develop new friendships, and gain a greater sense of independence.

To celebrate the end of middle school our eighth graders attended their Eighth Grade Formal. The Warwick Valley Middle School PTA sponsored the event. The Formal committee transformed the Middle School cafeteria into a nightclub with mood lighting, tables and a photo booth. Students spent the night taking photos, dancing and eating snacks. The event ended with a balloon drop that added an element of surprise and excitement.

The Warwick Valley Middle School PTA did an incredible job of hosting this memorable event for our Warwick graduating Class of 2027.

### **Warwick Valley High School**

Many high schools value yearbooks as tangible keepsakes to commemorate students' time in high school. A few days before the end of classes, the High School yearbooks were distributed to the students. Yearbooks serve as both a collection of photos and a comprehensive document capturing both the written and visual memories of the year. Through a photojournalistic approach, the yearbook helps students relive the special moments, achievements, and milestones they experienced throughout the year.

The student editors, under the guidance of Therese McLoughlin, have an important responsibility in creating an appropriate theme and layout for the yearbook. Meeting strict publishing deadlines is crucial for ensuring the yearbook is completed and distributed in a timely manner and fundraising is an integral part of keeping the cost of the yearbook down. The student editors generate funds to cover expenses such as printing, photography, and design software. This not only helps make the yearbook more affordable for students but also instills a sense of ownership and pride in the final product, knowing that they contributed to its creation.

The yearbook project also gives students budget-management, teamwork and leadership skills. It's impressive to see their dedication to creating a memorable yearbook while also managing the practical aspects of its production.