

WVCSD EdTalk: June 7, 2023

Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

At the Warwick Valley Board of Education meeting on June 1, we gathered to celebrate and acknowledge the extraordinary individuals who have committed their professional lives to serving our students in the Warwick Valley Central School District.

Let us be reminded that schools encompass more than mere structures, transportation, and educational resources; they are intricately woven with the dedicated individuals who bring them to life, who serve our students. The true essence of a school district, and its ultimate success, lies in the caliber of people working in our schools as they profoundly impact our children.

As we bid farewell to our esteemed retiring employees, the Board of Education and I reflect upon their countless contributions. We celebrate their exceptional commitment to our students, families, and the community. They have been the heart and soul of our district, providing guidance, support, and inspiration for generations of learners.

Retirees ranged from bus drivers, teachers and office staff that supported our students, schools and district offices. They worked here for 20, 25 or even 30-plus years. We often recount how they retired from a very different position and school than when they first arrived. Over time, we promoted them to offer them new challenges, make our operations more efficient, and support and inspire our students.

There are countless stories about these people who showed unwavering willingness to help. They brought a delightful sense of humor, which made them beloved figures. They formed lasting and meaningful relationships. They fostered a welcoming and supportive environment for students, parents, and staff. These retirees brought remarkable passion and tireless effort. They struck a balance between setting high expectations and maintaining a nurturing demeanor so students could reach their full potential.

These retirees are now planning to travel, spend time with their families and take on various projects. But, while they were here, these exceptional individuals made a lasting impact on our district, our staff and our students. We express our profound gratitude for their unwavering dedication and remarkable service.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

Park Avenue students had the amazing opportunity to watch a magic show focused on meaningful messages connected to our ROAR matrix – the importance of respect, kindness, and gratitude. The show also introduced students to influential figures in American culture, such as Andy Warhol. Thank you to the Park Avenue PTA for an entertaining, exciting and educational experience for our students.

Maya Henderson, a former student, returned to kindergarten as a special guest speaker. She recounted her fond memories of being a Warwick student and what she does today. Maya read the book *Four Miles*, which she illustrated. She sketched some pictures based on student requests and the students presented her with a bouquet of flowers in appreciation.

Third grade students were transported to the Hudson Highlands Nature Museum in Cornwall, which fosters meaningful connections between students and the natural world. The students observed animals in a pond ecosystem, sorted macro-insects into groups, and used a resource guide to identify specific species and discuss their adaptations.

Sanfordville Elementary School

The third and PIE 3/4 grade students have been working on their table top mini golf courses. This Mini Golf Project used the forces of pushes, pulls, collisions and momentum to understand the Engineering Is Elementary unit. The students worked with their teammates to create a blueprint for their course and selected materials they would need to use to successfully create obstacles that involved applying the different types of forces (collisions, momentum, etc...). The students had to meet certain criteria for their designs; the course had to have sides, a go through, a go under and a go around obstacle, the course needed to be elevated off the table and (of course) have a hole to put the ball into. The students were taught how to use geometry nets to make 3 dimensional shapes. In addition, they learned how friction and simple machines are a major factor in a successful miniature golf putter. This project has provided the students practical real world skills such as communicating as a team to come up with one cohesive design. It also taught them to solve problems during brainstorming sessions and construction. All of the third and PIE 3/4 classes visited the SES library to test out the projects.

Carla Overbey's third grade students had a memorable hands-on learning field trip to Warwick ShopRite and Blue Arrow Farms this past week. Students have been working on identifying coins and counting money as well as learning about food and healthy choices. ShopRite staff worked closely with the teacher and her aides to create a wonderful learning experience for students. Each student was given coins and a shopping list of healthy foods to shop for. Students embarked on a scavenger hunt through the store to find their items, then scan their items and pay their bill with the coins they were given. After checking out of ShopRite and having a tasty treat, the class headed over to Blue Arrow Farms where students were able to learn about caring for animals and the behind-the-scenes tasks of sanctuary. The students reflected on their experiences the next day in school and were able to create writing pieces on their favorite parts of their trip. Thank you to both the Warwick ShopRite and Blue Arrow Farms for making the day so memorable for our students.

Warwick Valley Middle School

The Purple 5 team organized a successful craft fair to showcase a diverse collection of homemade crafts donated by students, family members, and staff. The fair featured multiple tables of bespoke goods, and two silent auctions – one for a corn hole set and one for an adorable handmade stuffed Warwick Wildcat. Talented student portrait artists sketched people as they browsed. It was wonderful to see parents, volunteers and students working side-by-side. The craft fair raised \$1,230. Purple 5 enjoyed organizing the event and will donate the money to a charity chosen by a schoolwide vote. The class was inspired to stage the event as part of a 30-Day Challenge. During this challenge, they explored ways to reduce their carbon footprint and promote environmental sustainability.

Warwick Valley High School

The high school held its 50th Annual Awards Night. This brought together students, faculty, parents, and

community members to celebrate our students' outstanding accomplishments in academics, the arts, community service, and leadership. The awards and scholarships are sponsored by a number of sources, including the district, colleges and universities, local families and civic organizations and private donors. Financial awards provide assistance and opportunities for students to pursue higher education and engage in activities to enhance their skills and explore their passions. These scholarships recognize students' dedicated, academic and extracurricular achievements, and the significant impact they have made in our community. Congratulations to everyone.