

Weekly Column: EdTalk
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It's always a busy summer in the Warwick Valley Central School District! We offer so many educational programs during these months that help students stay engaged in learning. These programs help students make up courses to fulfill graduation requirements, develop social skills, and get ready for the next school year.

The Summer Academy and Extended School Year programs, for grades 1 through 12, kicked off at the Park Avenue Elementary School building on July 5. In addition, the Credit Recovery program for high school students. The enrichment program began this week.

The Summer Academy offers an excellent blend of academic learning and engaging enrichment activities to ensure a well-rounded summer experience. We understand the importance of maintaining and furthering scholarly skills during the break. We provide a stimulating academic curriculum that includes mathematics and the language arts. Our experienced and dedicated teachers employ interactive teaching methods, including hands-on experiments, group discussions, and outdoor play to make learning enjoyable and effective. The curriculum is carefully designed to align with grade-level standards and caters to individual learning needs, ensuring every student receives support.

Social engagement is crucial to our summer program. We prioritize creating a supportive environment where students can develop strong social connections and interpersonal skills.

Daily physical education is another essential component of our summer school program as it promotes overall health, mental well-being, social skills, and the development of lifelong healthy habits. By encouraging students to be active, we empower them to lead healthy and balanced lives. We also foster positive social interactions and support their overall academic success. Physical education activities often involve teamwork, cooperation, and sportsmanship. Through these experiences, students learn valuable skills such as communication, collaboration, and leadership. They understand the importance of working together toward a common goal, respecting classmates and opponents, and handling success and failure graciously. These skills transfer to various aspects of life, including academics, social interactions, and future careers.

Some examples of what students learned during their first week include:

First-grade teachers engaged students in theme-based learning meant to incorporate summer fun into the work. Students participated in parachute play, hopscotch, and playground time. Students also began working on their writing skills. This work included writing complete thoughts in

sentence form, including using finger space, proper punctuation, and uppercase and lowercase letter usage.

The second-grade team kicked off their summer work and fun centered around the theme “Under the Sea.” Students expanded on their word work, such as decoding and encoding mixed short and long vowel sounds. In addition, during their math class, second graders began strengthening their fact fluency skills. They reviewed adding using multiple strategies and tools such as using a number line and the double plus 1 method.

Middle school students, incoming fifth-graders to ninth-graders, began enrichment classes in reading and writing along with mathematics. Additionally, our students cycle through various electives such as visual arts, physical education, home and careers, STEAM, wellness, and our highly anticipated robotics course. Our summer program is also an opportunity for our students to continue to receive services such as speech, counseling, and occupational therapy.

In the Credit Recovery program, our high school students can participate in credit recovery courses. This approach fulfills New York State graduation requirements in English Language Arts, Algebra, Global and US History, and Living Environment. Eligible students can also take state Regents exams in August.

By offering a diverse range of classes, Warwick Valley High School’s summer school program aims to provide students with opportunities for academic growth and skill development. This allows students to further their education, catch up on missed credits, strengthen their knowledge and prepare for their academic endeavors.

Our in-district Extended School Year program is specifically designed for students with disabilities who require ongoing support and services beyond the traditional school year. It is a continuation of special education services during the summer months to ensure that students with disabilities have access to a consistent and individualized education. It recognizes that some students need additional instructional time to maintain their progress and prevent skill loss during extended school breaks. Our District has offered this program for the past two years. In the past, eligible students attended a centralized location in Goshen.

Later this month, our summer programming will grow with a staggered schedule of one-week courses in our Summer Enrichment program. Students can select and register for enrichment courses based on their area of interest. Sessions include:

- Cupcakes, Cookie Decorating, and Chocolate Covered Treats - Students will learn to make and decorate treats with buttercream frosting and make designs like stars, rosettes and leaf and flower decorations.
- Hogwarts Academy - Students will learn spells, craft wands, mix potions and explore other magical things as they attend Hogwarts school.

- Team Time - This camp is designed to bring adventure into the classroom as each student will have the opportunity to engage in physical activities such as one-minute-to-win-it games, scavenger hunts, nerf and noodle fun games, water sports events, and theme-oriented games.
- Crazy with LEGO Science - Students will focus on science activities involving the use of LEGO bricks, including a volcano that will erupt, challenges, team-building, crafts, and more.
- Cooking, Baking, Crafting, and Slime - Students will be baking/cooking, crafting, and slime making to bring out their creative side while getting a little messy.
- Art Therapy & Fun - Students will have the choice of cartooning/animation, drawing/painting, pencils, markers, water color, fashion/interior design, book illustrating, or all.
- Small Bento Cakes & Cupcake Decorating - Students will learn the foundations of cake decorating with instructions and guidance on how to ice a basic small buttercream cake and cupcakes.

Between a well-balanced blend of academic rigor and enrichment opportunities, we aim to nurture students' intellectual growth, foster creativity and curiosity, and create an environment where every child can thrive and make the most of their summer vacation.