

Weekly Column: EdTalk
Superintendent of Schools: Dr. David Leach
July 26, 2023

The Warwick Valley Central School District is again working hard this summer to update its buildings and grounds. This work improves the teaching and learning environment for staff and students. Quite a few projects are a result of the community's support of funding the 2021 capital improvement project.

At the High School, with newly installed natural grass sod and LED lights, the C. Ashley Morgan Field improvements are nearly complete. The project expanded the 160-foot-wide football-only field to create a 185-foot-wide multi-sport, natural grass field that will allow students from other sports teams to play at the stadium at night, under the lights. The first football game on the expanded field under the upgraded lights is scheduled for Sept. 1 when the Wildcats host Binghamton.

The old six-lane track was removed and replaced by an eight-lane track. The field events area was relocated from the center of the field to its own area at the end of the field. The areas were repaved and resurfaced.

The field and track will remain closed while the grass takes root and the upgraded rubberized running surface cures.

Field fencing has been installed, and the outdoor restroom construction is nearly complete. These restrooms will be available for public events such as games and graduations as well as for students and staff during classes and practices. Other improvements include updated football countdown clocks, an irrigation system for the field and a storage facility.

The 940 seats in the High School auditorium have been removed and carpeting and vinyl composite tile replaced. The updated seats are due to arrive in mid-August and will be installed shortly thereafter so the auditorium is ready for use by the end of September. In the fall, an air conditioning chiller will be installed on the roof to cool the auditorium.

The air handling equipment serving the kitchen and both cafeterias has been replaced. The spaces will be air conditioned and provide improved air quality when school begins.

The office chiller was also replaced.

About 47,000 square feet of foam roofing, which needs constant repair, are being replaced with a rubber roof at the High School.

A total of 15 unit ventilators will be installed at the high school by September, providing air conditioning. This project is to replace old ventilators in classroom units that were not covered by federal stimulus funding a couple years ago.

Recently, bids were received for construction of exterior restrooms at the Middle School near the tennis courts. In addition, bids were received for Sanfordville Elementary School near the athletic fields, playground, and outdoor classroom. Construction is expected to start in August and finish in the fall. They will be accessible for athletes, spectators and the community, and complement the newly constructed outdoor classrooms.

Additional air handling units will be installed on the roof above locker rooms at the Middle School and High School later this summer.

A total of 107,000 square feet of roof will be replaced at Sanfordville. This project is expected to take all of the summer, but will be ready by the start of the school year. Repairs had become more frequent and costly because the roof had reached the end of its useful life and failed.

At Park Avenue Elementary School, upgraded energy efficient windows will be installed this fall on the front of the building. Over 30 year old windows will be replaced with upgraded ones that are easier to open.

All outdoor classrooms will have technology and electricity and be ready for instruction at the beginning of the school year.

Here are some highlights from our summer program:

Park Avenue Elementary School

The Extended School Year students spend their days practicing reading, writing, and math skills structured around themed weeks. These themes include Lemonade Week, Camping Week, Picnic Week, Under the Sea Week, Ice Cream Week, Sports Week, and Outer Space Week! Students also can receive related services during the day. Last week, students celebrated Fun Friday with a Water Day celebration. They enjoyed playing games, making bubbles, and cooling off by running through a giant inflatable fire hydrant and sprinkler. It was a fun reward for working on their academics all week long.

Sanfordville Elementary School

Thank you to the Fuchs Family, John Saunders, and the entire coaching staff at Fox Soccer Academy here in Warwick. We appreciate the time they spent with our students. Fox Soccer graciously volunteered to have their coaches visit Sanfordville students during recess once a week. The Academy coaches taught students warm-up activities and ball-handling drills. They

also organized small-sided games. Our students truly enjoyed the time spent with the coaches and learning more about soccer. Thank you Fox Soccer Academy!

Warwick Valley Middle School

The Middle School welcomed the Summer Youth Leadership Academy for a visit. Students moving into grades 7, 8, and 9 were invited to apply for this leadership program run by the Warwick Community Center. Fourteen Middle School students were selected based on their applications and interviews for this four-week program. This program integrates life skills, and cultural enrichment for student leaders over the summer. Each week these students meet with local and county leaders and engage with guest speakers and presentations.

This week we were delighted that the Leadership Academy trip was to the Middle School. Jared Yapkowitz greeted students, who spoke with students about his newly appointed principal role. We then welcomed the students and engaged in a rich discussion about leadership traits. Dr. Leach joined the group for a discussion of his role. We discussed how the Portrait of a Graduate relates to students' lives and long-term goals, and what motivates each student to be a leader. After speaking with the students, we offered a valuable question and answer session to all of the students and their mentors in the room. After the presentation, students moved into leadership activities presented by Mr. Yapkowitz. Students worked together to discuss leadership traits, skills, and abilities.

Students then engaged in a psycho geometric activity, and a NASA activity about leadership.

All of the students and mentors were thankful and appreciative of the time and experience.

Warwick Valley High School

The High School administrative team met with members of the Warwick Prevention Coalition to collaboratively strategize and coordinate the much anticipated launch of Red Ribbon Week. Warwick is honored to be selected as the host for the nationally recognized Red Ribbon Week event scheduled for October 23.

We are looking forward to hosting our neighboring districts to celebrate this yearly tradition in Orange County. The focal point of the event will be a keynote speaker along with an array of engaging breakout sessions. These sessions are thoughtfully designed to empower students to embrace this year's resonating theme: Be Kind to Your Mind.

The planned activities will encourage students to embrace their uniqueness, foster mental well-being, and understand the importance of making responsible choices for themselves and their communities. Through interactive workshops, insightful discussions, and inspiring talks, we aim to leave a lasting impact on all participants. We equip them with the knowledge and motivation to lead a healthy lifestyle.