

Weekly Column: EdTalk
Superintendent of Schools: Dr. David Leach
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Standards in teaching and learning are essential to delivering a high-quality education to all students. At Warwick Valley Central School District, these standards are seen not just as targets but as benchmarks to be exceeded. Our commitment is to equip every student with the skills necessary for success as learners, workers, and citizens.

The District's strategic focus revolves around several key areas: enhancing student success through a guaranteed and viable curriculum, fostering a welcoming and caring culture, and developing a premier workforce. This strategy is shaped by valuable community input, with over 2,250 participants contributing to the #TheirFuture initiative, helping to design our educational program. Our aim is for students to graduate equipped with the competencies outlined in the District's Portrait of a Graduate, which includes skills in collaboration, communication, creativity, ethical citizenship, resilience, problem-solving, and lifelong learning.

As we enter the 2024-25 school year, we are committed to continuous improvement, ensuring that every student achieves these outcomes. Our dedicated faculty and staff have made significant strides, and we are re-energized to continue advancing our goals.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

Instructional aides and monitors are vital to student support! Monitors help ensure the safety of our students during lunch and recess, while instructional aides assist classroom teachers in meeting the academic and other needs of our students. Any casual visitor to our school building can't help but notice the many ways our students acknowledge these staff members. Like our teachers and other staff, monitors and instructional aides also participate in their own professional learning. Between now and the start of school, these staff members will learn ways to enhance current practices so our students can have a great experience every day—whether in the classroom, cafeteria, or on the playground.

Important topics to be discussed include:

- Park Avenue's approach to Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS), specifically deepening the understanding of the ROAR Matrix, which communicates to students our expectations of Respect, Outstanding Choices, Acceptance, and Responsibility.
- Using positive reinforcement and language to redirect student behaviors.
- Playground safety.
- Overall communication.

Thank you to all of our instructional aides and monitors for your contributions! We look forward to seeing you soon.

Sanfordville Elementary School

During the last week of our Extended School Year (ESY) program, our first graders were busy applying many of the concepts they've learned. Academically, students focused on different phonics concepts during literacy centers, including reviewing blends and being introduced to the "magic E," where they learned that "magic E" can make the vowel say its name. Other students were introduced to letter blends and practiced writing words with blends. Additionally, students continued to review their letter sounds and worked on reading and writing CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant) words. In math, students worked on solving word problems within 10.

In conjunction with Beach Week, students also engaged in various crafts, creating sandcastles using construction paper and crayons and making ocean-colored slime with small charms. Students will also participate in Water Day centers during speech therapy sessions!

Third graders celebrated Beach Week by making their own Math Octopus, focusing on two-digit addition and subtraction. They also wrote "Who Am I?" Water Animal Guessing Game, where they gave three clues describing their mystery water animal, and the class had to make educated guesses before the animal drawing was revealed. Finally, the students created sand art shell necklaces to celebrate learning about the beach.

To celebrate the final week of the ESY program, middle and high school students also had Beach Week! Each day ended with a fun event, starting with water balloon obstacles and races to develop agility, followed by water twister to practice left and right concepts. Midweek, students collaborated on Super Soaker relays, and to finish, they played water slide kickball, practicing team play. They had a blast!

Warwick Valley Middle School

We are delighted to welcome a dynamic group of exceptional educators to the middle school this year, whose passion and expertise will significantly enhance our fifth and sixth-grade teams: Josephine DiSalvo, Isabella Voelker, Margaret Ryan, and Holly Sunny. We are also excited to introduce Andrew Rao as our new Associate Principal. Mr. Rao will play a pivotal role in supporting both our students and staff. Each of these educators brings a wealth of experience and a fresh perspective that will enrich our students' educational journey and contribute to the ongoing success and vibrancy of our school community. Their commitment to fostering a positive and engaging learning environment aligns perfectly with our school's mission to inspire and empower every student.

As we eagerly anticipate integrating these new teachers into the Warwick Valley school community, they will be participating in our New Teacher Institute, taking place during the final week of August. These sessions immerse our new faculty in WVCSD culture, values, and goals, and equip them with the resources, support, and connections they need to make an immediate impact in their new roles. The enthusiasm they've already shown suggests they are ready to do their part in providing the top-notch education Warwick expects for its students, and they will enhance both our academic programs and our overall student experience. We can't wait to see

the exciting contributions this class of new teachers brings to the middle school—welcome to our newest Wildcats!

Warwick Valley High School

Warwick Valley High School's Class of 2025 has embarked on a timeless tradition during these final weeks of summer—having their senior portraits taken!

These photographs are more than just snapshots; they hold profound significance for both the students and the school community. They serve as visual milestones, marking the culmination of years of hard work, growth, and friendships forged throughout high school. They freeze a moment in time, encapsulating the unique personality and journey of each graduating senior. For many, these portraits are not just pictures but cherished memories that will be shared with family and friends and treasured for years to come.

For the Class of 2025, this tradition began with excitement and anticipation. Each senior's unique journey is celebrated through these photographs, which will be recorded in the pages of our yearbook, leaving a lasting impression on future generations. As the school year progresses, senior portraits symbolize not only individual achievements but the collective spirit of unity and pride that defines the Warwick Valley High School community. They are a reminder of the bonds formed, lessons learned, and dreams pursued during the transformative years of high school.

As we reflect on the many activities and initiatives taking place across the Warwick Valley Central School District, it's clear that our commitment to excellence in education is thriving, even during the summer months! From the nurturing support provided by our dedicated instructional aides and monitors at Park Avenue Elementary to the innovative learning experiences at Sanfordville Elementary and the exciting integration of new educators at Warwick Valley Middle School, each step we take is guided by our mission to prepare students for a successful future. At Warwick Valley High School, the Class of 2025's journey serves as a powerful reminder of the lasting impact of our educational community, and our focus on the "portrait" of a graduate. As we move forward into the 2024-25 school year, we remain focused on our goals, energized by our progress, and united in our dedication to helping every student reach their full potential. Together, we are shaping the future, one student at a time.