

Weekly Column: EdTalk
Superintendent of Schools: Dr. David Leach
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Welcome to the 2024-25 school year!

I hope your family enjoyed a well-deserved summer break, filled with moments to recharge from work and school. As we prepare to embark on a new school year, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the incredible work that has taken place over the past few months in the Warwick Valley Central School District.

Our district has been a hub of activity this summer, particularly with the successful completion of our extended school year program. We've also made significant progress on construction projects across all our schools. I deeply appreciate your patience as these improvements continue. Our Buildings and Grounds, custodial, clerical, maintenance, technology, transportation, and support staff teams have worked tirelessly to ensure that our schools are ready to welcome our students.

Our teachers and administrators are passionate, dedicated professionals who have readied our classrooms for our students. We will continue providing an innovative curriculum and engaging lessons this year that will support and inspire our students to succeed in the opportunities that lie ahead.

For several years now, we have been thoughtfully reflecting on what it truly means to be a successful Warwick Valley graduate. While our students consistently excel in traditional measures like state test scores, GPA, and college admissions, we have also embraced a broader vision — our Portrait of a Graduate. Portrait of a Graduate represents the district's priority goals for teaching and learning to create graduates who are collaborators, communicators, creators and innovators, ethical and global citizens, resilient individuals, problem-solvers, and lifelong learners – seven qualities to ensure every Warwick student receives a strong foundation to learn, lead, and find success. This vision has become our guiding light, our North Star, ensuring that our students are not just academically successful but also well-rounded individuals ready to face the future with confidence.

It's exciting to see that New York State will soon follow our lead, so to speak, potentially becoming the fourth state in the country to adopt a Portrait of a Graduate model closely aligned with our own. This change is likely to open more pathways to graduation for our students. It also is a testament to the forward-thinking work our school community has done.

As other school districts statewide begin to adapt to these shifts in expectations, I am confident that we are already ahead of the curve. Our Portrait of a Graduate is not just a concept or a mandate; it's a living, breathing part of our students' daily experiences. Through thoughtfully designed and skillfully taught lessons, our teachers are bringing this vision to life in meaningful and impactful ways.

Wishing everyone a successful, fulfilling, and joyful school year!

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

The start of a new school year is quickly approaching, and our teachers and staff are excited to welcome back all of our students on September 3rd. As we have reported throughout the summer, Park Avenue's teachers have been engaged with ongoing professional learning and curriculum development to ensure a fruitful 2024-2025 school year for all students. Here are some things that you should be aware of as we get closer to the first day of school:

- Important information – such as bus route numbers, bus pick-up and drop off times, and locations – can be found on the Parent Portal. Please review that information in advance. Review other information on the portal to ensure accuracy as well, including home and email addresses, and telephone numbers.
- Official elementary school start and end times are 8:55 am and 3:35 p.m., respectively.
- Please read the “reminders” portion of the class assignment letter, which was sent home. This section outlines the different morning drop off options available to you, in addition to other relevant information.
- Park Avenue's PTA has organized an Ice Cream Social for August 30th in front of the school building. The event will take place from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., with specific times allocated to each grade. In the event of rain, we will move the event indoors. Parents interested in dropping off school supplies can do so during this event. Please make sure to label everything with your child's name and class.

We are so excited to see all of our students and everyone at the Ice Cream Social and on the first day of school. We hope the remaining summertime left proves to be restful and fun!

Sanfordville Elementary School

The Extended School Year Summer School at Sanfordville wrapped up. Our close to 100 students in grades 1-12 enjoyed a wonderful summer of learning and fun. We thank our dedicated teachers, aides, service providers, and staff for spending the last six weeks with our students. "The last day included an Olympic Field Day for students. Our Encore teachers planned events such as volleyball, floor hockey, basketball, soccer and track and field events. The students had a gold medal day and surely made memories to last a lifetime!

Sanfordville looks forward to welcoming its teachers back to prepare for the opening of school next week! They have been busy planning curriculum, receiving professional development, collaborating with colleagues, and preparing their classrooms! We can't wait for September 3rd!

Warwick Valley Middle School

As summer winds down, the anticipation and excitement for the 2024-2025 school year are building throughout Middle School. Our guidance counselors have been hard at work putting the finishing touches on student schedules to ensure a smooth start for everyone. The positive energy is palpable as both staff and students prepare for a fresh start, eager to embrace new challenges and opportunities in the coming year.

Meanwhile, our custodial team has done a stellar job preparing the school for the new year. The floors gleam with fresh wax., and every corner of the building has been meticulously cleaned. Mr. Radon has added a touch of inspiration by hanging new motivational and school-spirited posters throughout the hallways. This week, many of our lockers were replaced with wider models in the second phase of our locker replacement project. Seventh and eighth-grade students were particularly excited to personalize their new spaces during our Look See days, adding their own flair to the freshly updated lockers.

We are looking forward to welcoming back our teachers at the end of next week as they prepare their rooms for our first day of school on September 3!

Warwick Valley High School

As summer draws to a close, Warwick Valley High School is eagerly preparing for the start of a new academic year. Among the many initiatives in place to ensure a smooth transition for incoming freshmen and new students, the deployment of our awesome Wildcat Ambassadors, who play a crucial role!

Wildcat Ambassadors are dedicated, seasoned students, well-versed in the school's layout and culture. They will be providing comprehensive tours to all incoming ninth graders and new students during the orientation.. Their mission is not only to help newcomers navigate the physical layout of the school, but to introduce them into the vibrant community and supportive atmosphere that define Warwick Valley High School.

Orientation is scheduled for Wednesday, August 28, to allow ample time for students to familiarize themselves with the school environment before embarking on their academic journey. Tours have been meticulously planned to cover key areas such as classrooms, common spaces, the library, cafeteria, and important administrative offices. Beyond the physical tour, Wildcat Ambassadors are always ready to answer questions and offer insights into extracurricular activities, academic support services, and other student life opportunities. And, they are always there as a friendly face!

With this proactive approach to welcoming new Wildcats, Warwick Valley High School continues its commitment to nurturing a supportive and inclusive community where every student can thrive. We can't wait to see everyone on Tuesday for another successful school year!

