

**Weekly Column: EdTalk**  
**Superintendent of Schools: Dr. David Leach**  
**October 9, 2024**

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The Partners in Education (PIE) program is one of the more popular programs in the Warwick Valley Central School District, and you can learn more about it at our annual PIE Fall Fest in late October.

The PIE ideology supports bridging the gap between home, school, and community. Students in the district are eligible for the program, which provides educators with a helpful support system and parents with a window into their child's learning environment.

PIE is a multi-age classroom grouping that facilitates non-competitive, collaborative social interaction, and supports children along their development continuum, while also providing valuable opportunities to be mentors and mentees. PIE classrooms connect home, school, and community through teaching and learning. They are places where teachers, students, and parents collaborate as partners with district leadership's full support.

The four pillars of the PIE program are:

- Multi-age class groupings
- Integrated curriculum
- Outdoor learning
- Parent/family involvement

Our elementary PIE classrooms are located at Sanfordville Elementary, and our fifth and sixth graders attend the Middle School in what is called the MAC Program (multi-age classrooms). At the grades 1-2 and 3-4 levels the program requires a two-year commitment, meaning students attend for both years (grades 1 and 2, and grades 3 and 4). Parents must commit their PIE Kindergarten students for the entire school year.

The program now serves 160 students in two kindergarten classes, three first- and second-grade classes, and three third- and fourth-grade classes. In math, we utilize the Math Expression Series resource, specifically geared toward multi-age classrooms.

A PIE Community group meets monthly and works collaboratively with PIE teachers and administration to plan, support and enhance lessons and activities. Classroom updates and upcoming projects are discussed by teachers with their families. This year, our PIE Fall Fest is Tuesday, October 29. The Fall Fest is a PIE family event where students dress in Halloween costumes, sing songs, read poems and participate in other activities. They collect and eat treats and snacks at the Peace Wall on campus.

To learn more about this program, visit our district website at [warwickvalleyschools.com/instruction-curriculum/academics/partners-in-education-pie-at-wvcisd](http://warwickvalleyschools.com/instruction-curriculum/academics/partners-in-education-pie-at-wvcisd)

***Here are some highlights from our schools this week:***

### **Park Avenue Elementary School**

At the Park Avenue Library/Media Center, fourth grade students were introduced to our new online library catalog kiosks. The kiosks allow students to search for library books independently, once they have learned the library's call number system. Using an online catalog to find books and information independently is an empowering experience for the students that strengthens their digital information literacy skills. Digital information literacy is one of the most important skills that our students can build in our connected world, and is a strong foundation for achieving every aspect of our district's *Portrait of a Graduate*. Knowing how to not only find, but also assess information paves the way for 21st century students to become effective collaborators, communicators, creators/innovators, ethical and global citizens, resilient individuals, problem solvers, and life-long learners.

Students in second and fourth grade went on a Library/Media Center scavenger hunt to help them learn what a call number is, and how to use it to locate a book in the library stacks. Everyone had fun spinning the "wheel of call numbers" and searching for their books in the library.

### **Sanfordville Elementary School**

Fourth graders in Sanfordville had a fun week wrapping up our Reading Launch unit. To celebrate the end of the launch, students chose a favorite book they have read this year and wrote a book recommendation to keep in the library section of our classrooms. Other friends can read these recommendations when "shopping" for their next novel to read. The students also had a choice of several different formats to use when writing their recommendations. During science, the students reviewed the processes of pollination and fertilization by building a 3-D model of the inside of a flower. Students used a bee on a craft stick to fly from flower to flower showing each process.

Our third grade students are enjoying their first reading unit of the year that focuses on providing them with skills to become stronger readers. Our mentor text for this unit is *Jeremy Thatcher Dragon Hatcher*. The students are practicing skills, such as predicting, retelling and active comprehension strategies, such as stopping and jotting.

### **Warwick Valley Middle School School**

Ms. Motter's eighth grade science students dove into the complexity of scientific inquiry, studying the groundbreaking work of geologist Walter Alvarez. Students analyzed Alvarez's asteroid impact hypothesis, coming to realize that scientific discovery is not a simple, linear

process. They explored Alvarez's combined multiple scientific practices, such as gathering evidence, forming hypotheses and collaborating with other experts. Students examined the layers of the Earth's crust that supported the hypothesis, gaining an understanding of how data collection and critical thinking contribute to successes like Alvarez's. The lesson also allowed students to practice the skill of argumentation, by discussing and reflecting on the nature of scientific methods, fostering critical thinking skills.

Meanwhile, Ms. Padilla's seventh grade math students were hard at work mastering the concepts of simplifying expressions and solving two-step equations. The students collaborated on engaging activities, rotating through different workstations. One highlight was incorporating the popular game Jenga, where each successful move required solving a math problem. This hands-on approach helped reinforce key mathematical concepts in a fun and interactive way, and by working together the students improved their problem-solving skills and strengthened their understanding of the material. Ms. Padilla's creative lesson made math both challenging and enjoyable for her students, and fostered the traits of our *Portrait of a Graduate!*

### **Warwick Valley High School**

Warwick Valley High School's Media Center buzzed with excitement as students participated in a memorable Read-In Day. The event, organized by Media Center Specialist Mrs. Davis and the English Department, aimed to cultivate a deep appreciation for literature among students.

Throughout the day, the library transformed into a haven for readers of all interests. Students gathered in cozy corners and around tables, engrossed in their favorite books and exploring new literary adventures. The atmosphere was vibrant with the joy of reading, as students shared recommendations and discussed plot twists with their peers.

In addition to independent reading, the Read-In Day featured interactive literacy activities that engaged students in creative ways. From book-themed trivia challenges to storytelling sessions, every activity encouraged active participation and celebrated the diverse narratives found within books.

Reflecting on the success of the day, Mrs. Davis expressed her gratitude to the students for their enthusiasm and to the English Department for their collaborative efforts in making the event a success. "It's inspiring to see so many students embrace the joy of reading," she said.

The Read-In Day exemplifies the school's commitment to nurturing a culture of literacy and lifelong learning. As students departed the Media Center, many carried with them not just books but a renewed passion for storytelling and knowledge.

We look forward to future events that continue to inspire and empower our students through the magic of reading.