

EdTalk: October 29, 2021

Dr. David Leach, WVCSD Superintendent of Schools

When children struggle to meet learning standards, the Warwick Valley Central School District takes several steps to support them.

Our teachers follow grade level learning objectives and differentiate instruction to ensure all students learn effectively. This approach necessitates conducting frequent, brief assessments and making thoughtful revisions to instruction based on the results of the assessments. We follow up with students to monitor progress and, if they are not making progress after multiple interventions (about 10% of students) we refer them for evaluation by the Committee on Special Education (CSE).

After evaluation, educational and therapeutic services are provided through contracts with county-approved agencies for preschool children. School-age children receive services with District staff, including special education teachers, psychologists, and physical, occupational, and speech therapists. For children who require additional resources not available within the District, arrangements are also made with neighboring school districts, the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), or state-approved private schools.

One of the main goals of special education is to lessen the impact of a student's disability while also maximizing the student's ability to participate in society. All of our related efforts are aimed at achieving this goal.

The work of special education is guided by the philosophy of offering services in the least restrictive setting possible. That means delivering an education in the same way it is given to every other child, alongside peers, in a general educational environment — in their home district, in their home classes. Exceptions are made only when a multidisciplinary team determines that a child's needs are not met in the general classroom. The child will then be placed in a special education setting for a portion or all of the school day.

All children who have educationally handicapping conditions receive an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) tailored to their specific needs. Students who do not have disabilities requiring specialized instruction but have certain medical conditions and require an environment or assistance that addresses their physical limitations are assessed through a school-based committee (known as a 504 Committee after Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act) that devises a plan to address those pupils' needs, which are typically implemented by various support personnel, including a nurse, psychologist, or classroom teacher.

The following are some of the highlights from our schools in the past week:

Pine Island Elementary School

Students in Aimee Urvater's Partners in Education (PIE) class conducted an Apple Tasting Survey to determine which apple was the most delicious out of three of the more popular types. The students sampled Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, and Granny Smith apples, recording their results on an Apple Tasting form; describing the apples with words such as sweet, juicy, sour and chewy; and determining which was their personal favorite. The Golden Delicious variety received nine votes as the most popular of the class. Red Delicious and Granny Smith apples each received seven votes..

Park Avenue Elementary School

Halloween Happenings came back to Park Avenue in full force this year. Each class had the opportunity to visit our pumpkin patch, pick a pumpkin, and take it home. Students also participated in some fun Halloween activities, including venturing through our famed haunted house. It was so much fun watching our students dressed in their costumes and spreading their smiles during this annual tradition.

Sanfordville Elementary School

Sanfordville students demonstrated their writing skills with Halloween-themed activities. Some of these creative writing workshop tasks included: Creating Autumn poems using the five senses; reading the book "Ghost Eats It All" and then writing about what their ghost would like to eat for dinner; researching non-fiction bat facts and making lists of the fun facts, designing pumpkins and then writing "All About My Pumpkin" stories; publishing stories about Halloween through the eyes of a Jack-O-Lantern; and writing mystery stories about Harris Burdick spooky photographs.

Warwick Valley Middle School

The Middle School celebrated Red Ribbon Week as part of the national campaign to raise awareness about the harms of drug use and to promote healthy choices. This year's theme is "Drug-Free Looks Like Me". Throughout the week, students pledged to live a drug-free life by participating in our theme days. The Warwick Valley Prevention Coalition supported the Middle School in helping students write their pledge to live a healthy life.

Warwick Valley High School

The Warwick Valley High School Cosmetology program is pleased to announce the official public opening of its WILDCUTS Salon. The salon, which is located inside the high school, will be open to the Warwick Valley community from 3-7 p.m. on the following dates: Nov. 4, Dec. 2, Dec. 16, Jan. 27, Feb. 17, March 3, March 31, April 14, and May 12.