

**EdTalk: November 19, 2021**

**Dr. David Leach, WVCSD Superintendent of Schools**

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The Science Research Program at Warwick Valley High School provides students with opportunities to conduct hands-on research in real-world settings. Students engage with the scientific research community during the three-year program by undertaking authentic research projects of their design.

The University at Albany and the New York State Board of Regents recognize this unique experience as part of the University in the High School Program, and students can potentially earn up to 12 college credits.

Students join the Science Research Program as sophomores and work on their projects throughout their junior and senior years. All Warwick Valley High School students interested in the scientific process and conducting their research are welcome to participate in the program.

Students select their topics in the first year and begin an extensive study into general publications and peer-reviewed articles. These are high-level academic papers published in notable science and medicine journals.

The students' passion for their chosen subjects drives them from the very beginning. They can finally research something that they enjoy, so, they're willing to read these challenging articles and put in the time to identify and approach a mentor who will help guide their inquiry and discovery along the way.

Students must connect with a professional in their interest area for mentorship by the spring of their sophomore year, and they gain greatly from their mentor's expertise and support. As the program quickly becomes very challenging, it requires a significant time investment.

The project continues during the summer between sophomore and junior years, followed by a complete junior year in-program and a second summer between junior and senior years. The student's senior year includes continued study and, finally, presentation and potential publication.

Seniors present their findings at a local symposium and in professional competitions for young scholars, typically traveling to Albany for the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium. The Science Research Program teaches life skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, time management, and public speaking, in addition to advanced research skills.

To learn more about this program, please visit our webpage under the curriculum and instruction area. I frequently feature our academic programs on my weekly radio show, "Your Schools," which airs on WTBQ every Monday at 12:05 p.m.

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

### **Pine Island Elementary School**

This week was “Thankful for You Week” at Pine Island Elementary School. The Sanfordville and Park Ave PTAs teamed up to recognize all Pine Island teachers and staff with a great week of appreciation. Students had a part to play by bringing a flower, both real and hand drawn, for their teachers. Another day saw all students wearing their favorite outfit to school. On Friday, all teachers and staff enjoyed a “Grab and Go” breakfast courtesy of the PTAs. The treats were delicious, the coffee was hot, and the smiles were wide. Everyone at Pine Island thanks the PTAs for all their hard work and for this wonderful week of appreciation. The teachers especially enjoyed all the little surprises from their students.

### **Park Avenue Elementary School**

First-grade teacher Ms. Berghahn has been teaching her students all about needs and wants as part of their Social Studies lessons. Classes have discussed ways to support their friends and the greater community through random acts of kindness and providing for those with the greatest needs. For example, the class decided to collect food for the Florida Community Food Pantry. So far, they have collected 80 cans of food. Students also created a chart and graph to display in the classroom to integrate mathematics into the project, monitor their progress, and celebrate their charitable work. The school will drop off the food items on Tuesday to help others in time for the Thanksgiving holiday.

### **Sanfordville Elementary School**

The fourth-grade orchestra students are learning to set up their bow hold on their bow correctly. They are learning that a proper bow hold is a key to a great sound on their instrument. In the following two lessons, they will be learning proper bow arm motion and making their first sounds using the bow on their instruments! These young musicians are learning skills to use for life.

The fourth-grade band students have completed their first "practice" band song, *Purple Alligator*. The routine the students have practiced includes sitting in a rest position, raising instruments in unison with a visual cue, starting the first note together in unison, performing the song to the best of their ability, and finally lowering the instruments together in unison. No small feat! They are well on their way to becoming young performers. The next song the band is beginning to work on is "Jingle Bells," which will expand upon the skills they have already mastered.

Mrs. Guido's first-grade students are learning about equal parts in Math. They enjoyed solving problems and indicating their answers with physical movements. Students did scissor kicks for agreeing that the two equations are equivalent and cross-body elbow-to-knee movements for when they disagreed.

The SES Leadership club put together a kindness/gratefulness calendar for the two weeks leading up to Thanksgiving. It prompts students with ways to be kind each day and spread a smile! The last day before Thanksgiving is PJ Day, to wear a pair of pajamas and donate a pair. This drive will benefit *Four Seasons Kids*, a new local organization helping to clothe a large

group of our Warwick children starting this holiday season and continuing year-round. Our student leaders support our local organizations and friends, keep local children warm, and foster kindness and community!

The kindness continues as SES students and staff have once again participated in the Rotary Club's coat and warm weather gear drive. Currently, they are also beginning to collect food for the Food Pantry's Christmas food drive.

### **Warwick Valley Middle School**

The Middle School resumed its annual Cabaret show on Friday night. This year's Cabaret occurred at the high school and featured more than twenty performers. Students will be selected for their parts in our spring production based on their Cabaret auditions. A big reveal occurred at the end of the show -- this year's show will be *Spongebob Square Pants: The Musical!*

The Middle School is currently holding a Thanksgiving food drive. The teams with the most items collected per grade will be rewarded with various celebrations the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. We have now collected more than 1,200 items!

On Wednesday evening, our Students of the Month for September and October were recognized in a virtual ceremony. Parents and family members joined in on the fun. We even had some teachers show up to present their nominees with their awards. Student of the Month is awarded to students who display the traits outlined in the District's *Portrait of a Graduate*.

### **Warwick Valley High School**

Lori Tillinghast, the wife of High School Science Teacher Eric Tillinghast, presented to our AP Psychology classes and PLTW Human Body System classes. Ms. Tillinghast has 22 years of experience as a physical therapist in the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Unit at Helen Hayes Rehabilitation Hospital. She is also a Certified Brain Injury Specialist. Her presentation, *Neuroanatomy and Neurological Deficits*, focused on the different medical conditions that would bring a patient to the TBI Unit and discussed some current treatments to help these patients. These stories from her real-life experiences allowed the students to connect to the concepts they were studying in class. The students seized the opportunity to ask insightful questions and share personal experiences with family members or friends who experienced brain injuries.

Students in the Empty Bowls club sold the pottery to raise funds for Backpack Snack Attack and the local food pantries. Members created plates, bowls, and jewelry with colorful and intricate designs. This event is their first fundraiser of the year, and it was a success!