

EdTalk: September 17, 2021
Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

When parents consider relocating, the quality of the public schools is almost always at the top of the priority list. Because of our strong reputation, families look for homes in Warwick when their children are ready to start school.

However, academic excellence is frequently confused with test scores. Our academics at Warwick Valley Schools are about so much more. We recognize that great learning is about much more than teachers' ability to deliver information and students' ability to regurgitate that information on an exam.

Great learning allows students to experience learning and curiously engage with their minds and hands, preparing them to succeed in the future. It establishes deep connections between students and the world they live in by connecting what they learn in the classroom to the relevance of what they learn outside of school. Great learning creates bridges across academic disciplines because the world is not divided into neat silos of math, science, language, history, and art.

In all our schools, at all ages and all levels of ability, our students have the chance to explore academics, athletics, the arts, and more. They begin to open the door to possibilities with these opportunities. And we are all so excited to once again welcome our students to school every day.

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

Pine Island Elementary School (236 kindergartners)

A kindergarten student in Rebekah Jackson's class recently gave Principal Marijane Reinhard a lesson on how to properly use a Chromebook, which she was happy to receive. Dr. Reinhard learned how to properly turn it on, connect headphones, listen to directions, shut it down and put it away on the cart by following the instructions. The student was very patient with Dr. Reinhard, but he did suggest another follow-up lesson.

Park Avenue Elementary School (388 students)

We are so excited to share the success of the Park Avenue Drama Club rehearsals. Auditions were recently held with the help of teachers and staff and the support of our exceptional high school students. We now have 68 students cast for this year's production of "101 Dalmatians Kids." Students in grades 1 through 4 have begun visiting the Kinesthetic Learning Lab. In the K-Lab, students participate in Action-Based Learning (ABL). ABL is based on brain research that strongly supports the link between movement and learning. Each active learning station in the lab applies what is known about the brain-body connection and focuses on the foundations of learning readiness.

Sanfordville Elementary School (646 students)

Veronica DeGuisto's PIE third and fourth-grade students demonstrated collaboration and creativity with reading and writing to build a classroom community of learners. Students were assigned to write a script and then act out a skit that shows the kinds of problems third- and fourth-graders might face in school. They then showed how those problems could be avoided or solved. This activity was the perfect way to establish as a community the ways to prevent or handle the issues that inevitably come up for third- and fourth-grade students.

Jeanne Tully's students are setting goals after she explained the importance of goal-setting with her students. Together they discussed what short- and long-term goals are and how to make a realistic plan to reach those goals.

Warwick Valley Middle School (1,050 students)

To ease the transition into Middle School, Diana Piascik and Janeen Mitchell had their fifth-graders from last school year create "A Fifth-Graders Guide to Middle School." These current sixth-graders shared helpful tips, such as, "Get your work done, but don't rush and do a bad job." They also shared that the middle school is not as scary as they thought it would be and that all teachers are friendly.

Students wrote a few words about how they envision this school year going. Students shared that they anticipate the year going well and that they made new friends. Our sixth-grade teachers posted the stories outside their classrooms.

Warwick Valley High School (1,341)

Congratulations to Laura Cook and Arden Hallet for being named semifinalists in the National Merit Scholarship competition.

The High School Drama Club announced this year's productions. The fall comedy, "Suite Surrender," will be performed on November 5th and 6th. The spring musical, "Little Shop of Horrors," will be on March 18th and 19th.