

WVCSD EdTalk: March 18, 2022
Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

Educators employ a variety of methods for collecting and analyzing student learning data. You may be familiar with the terms "summative" and "formative" assessments.

Summative assessments, such as year-end (or end-of-course) tests to compare students' performance against a set of uniform standards, are often the ones we dreaded as students.

While this method provides valuable feedback, educators place a premium on assessments that improve teaching and learning by delivering timely, informative results directly related to what teachers have taught. We call this a formative assessment.

Formative assessments have the potential to help teachers and students learn more effectively. They are used on a daily basis to provide students and teachers with a steady flow of updates for the next steps in their learning. They also assist students in determining their progress toward the learning target. Teachers and students use formative assessments to figure out what's going on while they're learning. It's not a tool used for formal grades.

One example of a formative assessment that is utilized at the elementary level is the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment (most commonly known as the F & P). It is defined as a way to "determine a student's independent and instructional reading levels." Teachers are able to observe student reading behaviors one-on-one, engage in comprehension conversations that go beyond retelling, and make informed decisions that connect assessment to instruction." This assessment is formative because it informs the instruction that the teacher will give to each student to further their understanding of reading. It also allows teachers to place similar students into reading groups.

Formative assessments do not have to be large or formal. They can be as simple as asking students a question in class. The response to a question can speak volumes about where a particular student may be in their understanding of the material that is being taught. This allows the teacher to tailor instruction to where a class may be. It will allow the teacher an opportunity to either speed up their instruction if the class is showing understanding or slow down and review instruction if students are struggling with the specific line of questioning.

This week's highlights from our schools include the following:

Pine Island Elementary School

Kindergartners were rocking during a recent music class with Alison Echevarria. Students were presented with many songs, beats, and tempos that they had learned from the beginning of the school year to the present. They had to remember the music and the holiday, season, or event the

musical pattern was linked to, along with the body movement that connected it all. "Let's start with the Zombie Walk," called Mrs. Echevarria, as students walked like zombies. Remember our groundhog song? You are tip-toeing and then popping out of the hole. Sometimes students had to recognize a faster beat and quicken their pace, and sometimes the tempo would completely change, and everyone had to stop, turn around, and go in the opposite direction. Positive behavioral interventions and support behaviors were also displayed: *wait your turn, compliment a friend, and follow directions*. There were many smiles and lots of giggles during this music class!

Park Avenue Elementary School

In honor of Dr. Seuss's week, art teacher Ms. Martimucci organized a hands-on art project with the second-graders. After listening to the story of *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*, students worked together to make their own Oobleck. Then, students used the Oobleck for different science experiments! They discussed density and worked with a partner to predict which items would sink or float. Students also learned the other properties of matter and tried to determine if the Oobleck was solid or liquid.

Also, Park Avenue's "Got Talent" show drew approximately 80 participants, making up 60 acts that impressed audience members. First-graders exhibited their talents during Act 1, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., while third- and fourth-graders "showed off" during Act 2, from 7 to 8 p.m.

Sanfordville Elementary School

During their nonfiction reading and writing unit, Meghan Ottochian's first-grade students researched information about animals. After gathering information from multiple sources, students wrote important information about their chosen animal. Once students wrote all of their factual essays, Ms. Ottochian gathered their work together to create a class book that was "published." Parents could purchase a copy of the book if they wished to do so. The students were so excited to see their work in an actual book!

Brittany Anderson's physical education classes are learning about careers and character. Students participate in an online activity, "Read Across America: Would You Rather? Workout." Students then celebrated Read Across America with a fun "Would You Rather" brain break.

Warwick Valley Middle School

Every March, schools around America celebrate World Language Week to discuss the joys of a new language and raise awareness of the importance of studying foreign languages. Learning a new language helps the brain grow. When speaking our native language, we only use the left side of the brain, but it stimulates the whole brain when speaking a second language. This learning keeps us sharp and staves off mental decline and aging. In seventh grade, our middle school students begin studying one of three world languages, Chinese, French, or Spanish. To celebrate World Language Week, we collaborated with the Middle School PTA to put together several

activities for our students to enjoy. On Monday, our fifth- and sixth-graders made flags representing their nationality, while our seventh- and eighth-graders met native Spanish speakers and learned about the Hispanic culture. On Tuesday, our seventh- and eighth-grade Chinese students met with our fifth- and sixth-graders and taught them about Chinese culture and language. On Thursday, our seventh and eighth-grade French students demonstrated how to say "hello," "goodbye," and "how are you?" in French to our fifth and sixth-grade students, while our seventh and eighth-grade students learned about the history of Chinese dance. On Friday, our week ended with our seventh- and eighth-grade students each receiving a goody bag full of international treats from our local restaurants. It was a wonderful week, full of new experiences for all students at Warwick Valley Middle School.

Warwick Valley High School

The Warwick Valley High School Drama Club has been putting in long hours of after-school practice to finalize the spring musical Little Shop of Horrors (7 p.m. March 18, 1 and 7 p.m. March 19). Many moving parts in the production undergo a tremendous amount of coordination by Director Nick DiLeo, Associate Director Ruth Trovato, and Producer Donna Nestor. Al Ridella, Joe Trovato, and John Simon have to make sure that the lighting in each scene and the positions of the spotlights are just right, so that each scene looks good. Student Sound Technicians Jojo Gagliano and Rori Legris coordinate the volume levels of the music, which Noreen Hanson provides, and the voices of the student actors so that spectators can hear them all appropriately. The stage is marked so that the set, built by Rocco Manno and his Set Design class, is positioned to create a realistic backdrop that corresponds to each scene in the play. The dancing, choreographed by Beth Maisonnet, is well-rehearsed to ensure that all performances are on point by opening night. The decorative and dazzling costumes are handcrafted by Nina Galitzine and Tina Roca and help make the show come to life. We are all excited about seeing the musical on Friday and Saturday nights. This team has worked so hard to make the performance successful and memorable. To all those involved: break a leg!