

WVCSD EdTalk: March 30, 2022

Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

A little more than a year ago, state officials in New York warned that the coronavirus had decimated state revenue, perhaps necessitating severe spending cuts. However, in mid-January, Governor Kathy Hochul issued a \$216.3 billion budget proposal that she termed a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" to kick start the state's recovery.

The governor forecasts balanced budgets through 2027, enabling her to propose significant one-time infusions of funds and significant increases in education and healthcare spending.

Even though they haven't yet reached full speed, the staff from each of the three branches of government are meeting to work out a deal on the state budget.

According to media sources, the Governor and legislative leaders now concentrate on possible criminal justice and bail reform efforts, which appear to be consuming the majority of their time. Typically, education concerns and state financing of schools are the deciding factors in budget negotiations, but criminal justice issues will almost certainly play that role this year.

Additionally, the Legislature is committed to significantly boosting funding for childcare and health care. The Governor also supports both education foundation and expense-based aid and has included a guaranteed minimum increase in foundation funding. School aid is likely to get a smaller share of any extra money that the Legislature appropriates.

Since the Legislature will be in session on April 4, 5, and 6 before their spring break, we may see a slightly late New York State budget.

This week's highlights from our schools are as follows:

Pine Island Elementary School

Kindergarteners in Ms. Urvater's PIE class had the opportunity to complete a Math/STEM activity that went from solving problems on paper to building something three-dimensional. Students were given a worksheet with addition and subtraction problems, and each row of math problems was linked to a color. As students completed a row of problems correctly, they received a corresponding piece of colored Froot Loop cereal. After solving all the addition and subtraction problems correctly—and earning all the Froot Loops—the students were given a pipe cleaner and some Play-Doh. Ms. Urvater asked the students to build a standing rainbow using pipe cleaners, Play-Doh, and Froot Loops. At first, the students were a little surprised, but then

they got to work, and soon there were standing rainbows in all sizes—short, tall, wide, narrow. The students were very proud of their hard work.

Park Avenue Elementary School

Students in the Green Cub Club are preparing for a visit from the local nonprofit organization, Wickham Works. Students are learning about how plastic gathers in the ocean, and how it breaks down into microscopic particles and travels around the world on various ocean currents. Students are collecting discarded plastic items they will use to create an environmentally friendly art project, which will be a part of a presentation at Wickham Works' annual Earth Fest, held in Stanley Deming Park on April 30. The Green Cubs are very excited to see their work presented at the festival.

Sanfordville Elementary School

In Writer's Workshop, second grade students worked on finishing informational writing pieces on animals that they chose to research and write about. The students enjoyed collaborating with group members to learn about their animals. They took notes using PebbleGo and World Book to find important facts, created a group chart of important information, and wrote individual writing pieces based on what they learned. The students especially enjoyed sharing their findings with their classmates.

Third grade students in the Green Club worked with Ms. Beth Debbout Laule and Ms. Melissa Shaw-Smith of local artisans' group Wickham Works to help sew and weave recyclable plastic items onto various tarps. These tarps will be worn as capes in a puppet show presented by Modern Times Theater and other local artists during Wickham Work's Earth Fest celebration in Stanley Deming Park on April 30. Like at Park Ave School, the students learned about how harmful plastic waste ends up in our oceans and what they can do to help.

Warwick Valley Middle School

The PTA sponsored the annual Scholastic Book Fair at the middle school, which allowed students to browse a selection of novels, graphic novels, posters, and novelty items throughout the week. Each year, students anticipate this event and enjoy the anticipation and pleasure that accompany the purchase of a new book. By providing pupils with a variety of books to read, they are more likely to take one up and develop an interest in reading. When students bring a new book home, they are adding to their own libraries and discussing their reasoning for selecting a particular book to read. During the week we learned about new books and found out what our students like to read.

Warwick Valley High School

Criminal Justice students were busy providing security and assistance to visitors that came to the school for the spring musical and parent-teacher conferences. Criminal Justice students must

earn work-based learning hours to receive security certifications upon graduation. At the musical, the students assisted audience members with finding their seats, providing guests with information about the play, and providing assistance at the ticket table. At parent-teacher conferences, the students greeted parents and helped them find their way to their children's classrooms. Before the events, the students and their teacher, Mr. Avila, map out the details of their assignments and determine where they should position themselves to be most helpful. The students communicate with each other through headpieces and walkie-talkies. This program teaches them the importance of planning, problem-solving, and communicating clearly.