

WVCSD EdTalk: May 11, 2022
Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

On Tuesday, May 17, Warwick Valley voters will consider a budget for the next school year that reduces the tax levy by 0.37 percent from this year. The proposed \$101,729,239 budget lowers the tax levy by \$237,622 over the current year's budget.

The projected increase in state aid of \$3,016,956 will allow the district to meet its goals of preserving student opportunities while staying within the tax cap. For years, the state did not fully fund foundation aid, but last year it agreed to settle a lawsuit and follow through on its promise to fully fund the formula used to determine state foundation aid. As part of the agreement, foundation aid would increase in the next three school years.

If voters defeat the proposed budget, the school district will have the option of re-voting on the same or a revised budget or adopting a contingency budget. A district must adopt a contingency budget if voters defeat a proposed budget twice. A contingency budget would have a tax cap of 0%, keeping the tax rate the same as last year. That would be more than the initial budget proposal in this case.

Voters will also consider a proposal to spend up to \$585,000 on five buses and incidental equipment for the Transportation Department. The district would use \$250,000 from its bus reserve fund. About 61 percent of the cost, or \$354,983, would be paid back to the district through transportation aid from the state. As a result, no additional taxes are required to purchase the buses for approximately \$226,956. The district is also asking voters to approve the creation of a new capital bus reserve fund. The district would use the Bus Purchase Reserve Fund to pay for all or a portion of the cost of purchasing school buses and other vehicles. The most that could be put into the reserve would be \$3 million-plus any interest built up over 10 years.

The voters will elect three members of the Board of Education. The board members serve three-year terms and are unpaid. Thomas E. Maslanka, Daniel Mahoney, Eileen Gagliano, Keith Parsons, and Vanessa Holland are the candidates, and their names are listed in the order they will appear on the ballot. You can learn more about the candidates by visiting our website. Listen live on WTBQ on Tuesday, May 10, 2022, at 1:00 pm as host Frank Truatt interviews the candidates. The entire forum will also be broadcast the evening before election day, Monday, May 16, at 8:00 pm.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Pine Island Elementary School

There is excitement in Theresa Canfield's class. Last week, 16 eggs from Fury Brook Farm were delivered to the class by Kristina Bauman, the farm owner. For the next 21 days, students will

take care of the eggs and prepare them for hatching. Students will learn about the life cycle of the chick and how important it is for the proper temperature and humidity inside the incubator. Students will look inside the egg by shining a bright light inside to see if the embryo is developing. They will look for a sac and then look for movement. This process is called candling. Presently, 14 of the 16 eggs are fertile. Hatch Day is scheduled for May 11!

Park Avenue Elementary School

Park Avenue's first and second grade students attended the Town of Warwick Arbor Day Celebration at the Arboretum located in Stanley Deming Park. Trees were planted in honor of former Village Trustees William Lindberg and George McManus. Mayor Newhard spoke, along with the Village of Warwick Shade Tree Commissioner, Robert Scheuermann, and Warwick Valley Gardener, Patricia Reinhardt. Students helped in the planting of the ceremonial trees by shoveling dirt to cover the trees' roots! Wadson's Home Center distributed trees to all students in attendance. Finally, Park Avenue's Green Cub Club members shared a beautiful poem they wrote outlining their goals, and accomplishments.

On Wednesday, we were informed that the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) has awarded Park Avenue Elementary School its American Student Council Association (ASCA) School of Excellence Award for the 2021–2022 school year. This award recognizes outstanding achievements in community service, student leadership, citizenship, and school spirit. To be considered for the ASCA Award, the Student Council was required to submit an overview of the projects they completed this year, along with letters of recommendation from their school principal and Student Council president. The Student Council includes 12 fourth-grade students who meet twice weekly throughout the school year to plan and organize school and community service and leadership projects. I would like to extend a huge thank you to Student Council Advisor Amy Buliung, who has worked with Student Council members throughout the year.

Sanfordville Elementary School

The Warwick Lions Club collaborated with our school nurse, Creslyn Driscoll, to conduct visual screenings of all our kindergarten and first grade students. The Lions Club provides this screening as a community service. The Vision Screener is a very sophisticated scientific and clinical instrument intended to assist in identifying significant ocular conditions that may lead to amblyopia (lazy eye). If the child passes this screening but the parent or guardian has concerns, or there is an immediate family history of amblyopia or other eye problems, the child should receive a comprehensive eye examination by an eye doctor. This screening is not intended to substitute for a comprehensive eye examination. We thank our local Lions Club for providing this service for our students.

The PTA sponsored the first spring STEM Spectacular. This was not your typical STEM fair or spring dance. It was a fun combination of both! Students created STEM projects following the

design process. These projects were displayed around the hallways of the school. Thank you to the McGill family for the 3D printer station set up in the cafeteria for students to watch demonstrations and receive a key chain. Also, thank you, Mr. Hall from Cornell Extension, for providing a presentation on NASA vehicles with the use of Legos. Finally, in the gym, students and families enjoyed a Laser Show Dance Party! It was a fun night for all!

Warwick Valley Middle School

This week, the school counselors and administrators interviewed several Wildcat Ambassador candidates. The Wildcat Ambassadors are Warwick Valley Middle School's leadership group. Our Wildcat Ambassadors assist us in running many events at the middle school. They also assist our new students in learning their way around the building. Our current ambassadors and teachers nominated our most recent candidates. Once a student is nominated, they complete an application and interview with the administrators and school counselors. We are very happy to have our newest Ambassadors join us, and we can't wait to work with them to help them improve their leadership skills.

Warwick Valley High School

The administrators and a group of teachers at Warwick Valley High School presented an overview of the academic and extracurricular programs offered to our students and the board of education meeting. The presentation highlighted a plethora of elective courses and programs that support the pathways to graduation and meet the needs and interests of all students. Warwick Valley High School strives to create a learning environment where students foster the skills necessary to become productive and successful citizens while in school and upon graduation from the district. Our programming allows students to take ownership of their learning. We offer an extensive array of elective courses and an impressive number of elective programs that will enable students to enroll in coursework that piques their interests and moves them toward college and career preparedness. The daily rotating drop schedule allows students to enroll in eight classes each semester and enjoy an activity period each day. All students are free to meet with their friends for lunch, participate in school clubs and activities, or receive extra help from their teachers. Our school day is set up to promote optimal student choice in their learning and roles in our school community. Students have the opportunity to engage in coursework in agriculture, art, music, engineering, technology, biomedical sciences, and career and technical education, in addition to mathematics, science, English, history, and languages. Our enhanced curriculum choices for students distinguish our school from other high schools in the region. Students can join programs that help them improve their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, tap into their creativity, and become part of a community that works together to achieve excellence.