

**Weekly Column: EdTalk**  
**Superintendent of Schools: Dr. David Leach**  
**July 13, 2022**

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As I delivered my commencement speech to the Class of 2022, I urged them to focus on personal fulfillment rather than others' perceptions of success. To help them reach their goals, I told them how important it was to follow their interests and do things that make them happy.

At Warwick Valley, we take great pride in the diversity of academic, athletic, artistic, particular interest, social, and community opportunities we provide our students. That is because we understand that these occasions for exploration open students' eyes and minds to worlds of possibilities and the power of their own potential. With every new chance for discovery that school gives them, students become better equipped to identify what speaks to them and what they want to say.

Seeing students avail themselves of these opportunities is exciting. I was delighted to watch students arrive so enthusiastically at Sanfordville Elementary School last week to kick off our six-week Summer Enrichment program!

Students in kindergarten through fourth grade have registered for a variety of one-week courses that will continue until August 12. Summer enrichment aims to help students build upon skills they already have and explore new interests. There were eight courses during week one, including Art Therapy & Fun, brick building in Crazy Lego ARTists & Builders, marine lessons in Under the Sea, Sewing for Beginners, and a beginner's intro to the kitchen, with Cooking & Baking for kindergarten & grade 1.

Over 2,000 WVCSD community members collaborated on the # TheirFuture initiative six years ago to define and ensure that every Warwick student received a solid foundation to learn, lead, and thrive in our increasingly global community. The community-guided process inspired and informed our district's Portrait of a Graduate, a set of aspirational types based on intellect and character traits that we strive to instill and encourage in every student, preparing them for what comes next. As a reminder, those types of people are Communicators, Creators/Innovators, Ethical and Global Citizens, Resilient Individuals, Problem Solvers, and Lifelong Learners.

So as I saw the young students at Sanfordville getting creative, being innovative, communicating their ideas to one other, and collaborating on projects—all while addressing problems related to topics that pique their interests—I was struck with that sense of pride again! I am proud that Warwick Valley students have learning opportunities rooted in choice and of the dedicated teachers and mentors who make our summer programs a success.

It will be fulfilling to me, eventually, to see where the early exploration going on in the Summer Enrichment program this year takes the students of the classes of 2029-2034.

Summer school also began this week at Sanfordville Elementary School, Middle School, and High School. Funding for the program to address learning loss brought on by the pandemic comes from federal grants.

Remedial education takes place during summer school in elementary and middle schools. Students receive extra time to learn in smaller classroom settings. More than 300 students in grades K–8 are enrolled in the program. The main subjects are English, math, science, and social studies, but students also have the chance to learn world languages and participate in physical education.

This summer, we have over 100 teachers participating in summer curriculum work. This critical work is in almost every subject area and supports the district's overall vision. The building and district administrators have collaborated with the different teacher groups as they come in. One example of the work is 1st-grade teachers working on the indicators of their report cards so they align well with the standards and the new chief instructional resource that the district adopted this past school year. Another is a few teachers looking at the skills needed to do well in advanced placement courses and building these skills into the social studies curriculum. The idea is that more students will be ready to take on a course at the AP level.

*Here are some highlights from our schools this week:*

### **Park Avenue Elementary School**

Planning for the 2022–2023 school year has begun in full force! Park Avenue teachers have been collaborating with colleagues on many different ventures, including:

- Planning new STEM units and corresponding lessons
- Refining the K–4 art curriculum to align with our Portrait of a Graduate and NYS Visual Arts Standards.
- Teachers work together on word study scope and sequence to ensure student success with "attending to, learning about, and efficiently using sounds, letters, and words."

In addition, a great deal of moving, cleaning, and maintenance takes place to ensure a seamless return for our kindergarten teachers returning from Pine Island and their incoming classes. We know the building will feel and look great when everyone returns in September!

### **Sanfordville Elementary School**

The NYS Attorney General's Office Triple C Award program recognizes the "character, courage, and commitment" of New York's hardworking students. Whether excelling in academic pursuits, participating in community service, displaying leadership among their classmates, or overcoming personal challenges, they inspire and provide hope for the future. The 2021-22

Sanfordville recipients of the Triple "C" Awards program are Sienna Jarer and Eloni Wilson (grade 4). Congratulations!

The Principal's Leadership Award is given to students who demonstrate leadership skills in the classroom and throughout the school community, consistently acting with P.A.W.S. behavior, support classmates, and act as role models for others. Congratulations, Lina Lauritsen, Timothy Pakenham, Lainey Murphy, Max Paltrowitz, Hannah Hall, George Bukovsky, Kody Bossio, Finian Ryle, Rex Heymer, Adelaide Whittaker, Keri Leahey, Daniel O'Shea, Brielle Vivino, Jack Fiore, Madison Candia, Anastasia Nguyen, Alessandra Lundgren, Grayson Breen, Lylah Colon, Catherine Jacob, Thea Duerkes, Tristan Ayala, and Kenneth Grunenberg.

### **Warwick Valley Middle School**

Planning for 2022-2023 is also underway at Warwick Valley Middle School. Teachers have begun meeting to examine current teaching practices and refine their planned experiences for the future. In addition, our custodial staff has been moving furniture, cleaning classrooms, and painting in preparation for the fall.

WVMS Summer Academy also began last week. Students attending the program receive support in reading, writing, math, and problem-solving. There were a lot of smiles in week one, and students enjoyed engaging in lessons and making friends.

### **Warwick Valley High School**

The custodial staff has started its summer cleaning lineup. The furniture in all classrooms has been removed, and the floors are being cleaned and waxed. In some cases, durable vinyl flooring is being installed in classrooms. There is a new agriculture suite being put in, which will offer larger spaces for students and new stoves and ovens for the cooking parts of some classes.

Our summer swim program is back! Every day at the pool, younger members of the Warwick community are taught to swim by high school students. Attendance was great this week, and the program has been successful over the years.