

WVCSD EdTalk: July 27, 2022

Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

Town of Warwick Police Chief John Rader approached the Warwick Valley Central School District this spring with a unique and exciting opportunity – to host the inaugural Warwick Police Department Junior Police Academy. The program, for students ages 10 to 15, focuses on public service and leadership. It teaches civic engagement and local government while showing the demands of law enforcement training and a career in law enforcement.

It was clear in our earliest discussions with Chief Rader that much of what the program aims to teach its junior cadets aligns very closely with the qualities – leadership, collaborative and communication skills, as well as citizenship and problem-solving – that are outlined by our district’s Portrait of a Graduate. The invitation was quickly and enthusiastically accepted, and it was decided that the Warwick Police Department Junior Police Academy would be based at Warwick Valley High School.

I am proud to share that the first group of 20 junior cadets to go through the program graduated in an afternoon ceremony held last Friday!

The students were recognized for their hard work and perseverance during the two-week academy, with its packed schedule of classroom learning and hands-on, real world experiences. The 10-day program included activities and lectures led by members of the Warwick Police Department and New York State Troopers, as well as presentations and workshops by local professionals, and several field trips.

At the core of the program is the Cadet Creed, a set of standards that each participant agrees to uphold during their learning and training. It is in this creed that I found a number of similarities to our Portrait of a Graduate. Here is the Cadet Creed:

- As a Cadet, I will strive to improve myself physically, tactically, and intellectually at all times.
- As a Cadet, I will try to set the example for others to follow and take the initiative to do what is right.
- As a Cadet, I will respect my fellow cadets and never abandon them in a time of need.
- As a Cadet, I will never lie, cheat, or go back on my word.
- As a Cadet, I will maintain my bearing and keep my appearance to a high standard of professionalism.
- As a Cadet, I will follow the rules and regulations at all times. I will obey the orders of all instructors to the best of my ability.

In the first line, there is a call to perseverance and a challenge to be a lifelong learner. Cadets also develop invaluable leadership skills when they commit to modeling positive behaviors and being proactive toward the greater good. The creed calls for cadets to maintain a strong ethical center and to be collaborative and communicative as teammates and community members. What the Junior Police Academy fosters in its cadets, we foster in our graduates.

There was an overwhelming positive response when we first announced the launch of this program and our partnership with the police department. The academy was initially planned as a single two-week session, but a second session was added to meet demand. Session 2 begins with a new class of cadets on August 1, and will continue until August 12.

Just to give you an idea of what they have to look forward to, here is a peek at the incredible variety of activities that is on the Academy itinerary:

- Meeting with Officer Kerstner and his friend, K-9 Fritz.
- Processing a playground "crime scene" using techniques learned from Officer Feragola
- Touring the West Point Museum
- Touring the Orange County Emergency Services Center
- Training at Chosun Taekwondo Academy
- Experiencing defensive tactics and handcuffing techniques
- Working out and learning the benefits of yoga at Vastu in Warwick
- Learning about bicycle safety with John Jones, director of Orange County's Traffic Safety program
- Seeing a live police motorcycle demonstration
- Watching a New York State Police drone in action with Trooper Ross

Thank you to Chief Rader and the officers and staff of the police department for putting together this excellent program. Thank you to the community leaders and business owners who contributed. And a very special thank you to our school resource officers, who were pivotal in not only bringing this program to life but engaging with the students to share their experience, skills, and wisdom.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

During the past week, Park Avenue's leadership and other staff have been coordinating with our PTA to plan another eventful school year. All agreed that we are excited about and looking forward to the full return of our past traditions. Based on these recent conversations, here is a preview of some of the events you can expect to see at Park Avenue during the first part of the 2022–2023 school year:

- The Ice Cream Social is on September 2nd.
- Halloween Happenings is on October 31st.
- The Veterans Day Celebration is on November 10th.
- Drama Club performance is on November 18th and November 19th
- Thanksgiving Pie Sale – November 23rd

As always, we are very grateful for everything our PTA does to enrich the lives of our students. We especially thank them for taking the time during their summer to join us for our planning session.

Sanfordville Elementary School

Students in Grades 1-4 are having the opportunity to attend Summer Enrichment Classes at Sanfordville Elementary School this summer. The district offers a variety of interesting activities for students, including: Crazy LEGO Artists and Builders; Crazy LEGO Science; Cupcake and Cookie Decorating; Art Therapy and Fun; Hogwarts Summer Wizard; Team Time Sports; Cooking and Baking; Cardboard Arcade; and more. Each course is a week long, and several classes have been running each week over the full six-week session. There are certainly many smiling faces and happy kids!

Warwick Valley Middle School

Our World Language teachers have been meeting over the past two weeks to map out the curriculum for our Grades 7 and 9 World Language courses. By the end of the school year, students are expected to be able to:

- Express their likes and dislikes,
- Understand questions about school schedules,
- Compare schedules with a friend,
- Understand simple questions a guest asks about his family,
- Make plans with others through written communication,
- Describe your favorite characters in a novel, and
- Write a short note to a friend about upcoming plans.

Warwick Valley High School

The high school hosted a boys' basketball camp for local residents in grades 3-10. Members of the current and past boys' varsity basketball teams coached the younger players in skill development, ball handling, teamwork and sportsmanship. Over 90 children participated in the camp. The varsity players were great leaders because they built up the confidence of the younger players and were real role models when it came to coaching.

Congratulations to rising senior, Lionel Wolfe, who has been selected as a member of the 2022 NafME All-National Mixed Choir, Bass 2. The 2022 All-National Honor Ensembles program will take place at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland, outside Washington, DC, November 3-6, 2022. Lionel was one of only 22 students in the whole country to get this prestigious award as a bass musician.