

WVCSD EdTalk: August 17, 2022

Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce two new administrators at Warwick Valley High School to the community. Chris Fiorentino and Erin Hill-Lewis are now Warwick Schools' secondary associate principals.

Ms. Hill-Lewis had been a teacher at the High School for Environmental Studies in New York since 2016. There, she mentored untenured teachers to improve upon their pedagogical and instructional practices using research-based techniques. She has worked in integrated co-teaching, general education, and honors classroom settings. She has taught courses such as algebra I, calculus, geometry, data science, and statistics. She was also the testing coordinator for the school.

Ms. Hill-Lewis, who is originally from Chester, earned her master of science in educational leadership and administration from the College of St. Rose and her master of science in education from St. John's University. She earned her bachelor of arts from SUNY Albany. She holds school building leader, school district leader, mathematics, and Google educator certificates.

She was impressed with the many programs the high school offers to our students. "For a school to offer all of the things that Warwick offers its students that focus on developing the whole child; that was a really big reason I wanted to come here," she said. "Not only are there so many offerings, but the things being offered are done on such a large scale. I've never seen a school with a salon like Wildcuts or a room with an actual electric car for tech students to work and learn on. "

Mr. Fiorentino has been in education for 19 years. He joins us from the Newburgh Enlarged City School District, where he served as their director of mathematics. Prior to Newburgh, Mr. Fiorentino served as a principal in the Highland Falls-Fort Montgomery School District and an assistant principal in the Hyde Park School District. Mr. Fiorentino has a strong background in administration and a long list of accomplishments. He also has a lot of classroom experience as a math teacher, having taught for seven years in the Wallkill Central School District.

"Teacher, assistant principal, principal, director, I enjoyed my time in all of these roles," said Mr. Fiorentino. "But what I love most about all of them is working directly with students in the building; fostering that sense of everyone working together for the collective good."

Mr. Fiorentino has his personal mantra – Make It Cool to Care – hung on the wall of his office to remind himself and others how important a climate of caring can be in enabling and encouraging everyone to work together toward that collective good.

Mr. Fiorentino earned his bachelor of arts in mathematics from SUNY Albany, and then his master of science in secondary education from Mount Saint Mary College. He also holds an advanced certificate in school leadership from SUNY New Paltz. His professional certifications

include school building leader, school district leader, and a permanent certification in secondary mathematics.

Both Ms. Hill-Lewis and Mr. Fiorentino have been thinking a lot about our district's Portrait of a Graduate as they prepare for their first year.

"It's awesome to have this North Star, something that clearly spells out the district's goal and vision for its graduates," said Mr. Fiorentino. "It shows that this is what we're working towards together, and having that clear focus and having that common language is very helpful not only to students but adults too."

Ms. Hill-Lewis said she appreciates how the Portrait of a Graduate can help individuals grow beyond their high school careers.

"We're in the classroom now, but how are we going to help you beyond this?" she said. "To me, the Portrait of a Graduate not only illustrates what every Warwick graduate should embody but presents a set of traits worth developing that will help them in the real world once they leave us. They are things that I still make sure to do on a daily basis in my own life. "

We feel very fortunate to have Ms. Hill-Lewis and Mr. Fiorentino join the high school leadership team. Their strong instructional backgrounds, shared student-centered focus, and passion for building open and collaborative relationships will strengthen the great work already being done at Warwick Valley High School.

Please join me in extending them a warm Wildcat welcome. I look forward to introducing you to more new members of the Warwick school community as we count down the days until the 2022-23 school year.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

The planning and preparation for the start of the new school year at Park Avenue are in their final stages. Please remind all Park Avenue families that this year's PTA Ice Cream Social will be held on September 2 at 3:00 pm, and consider attending. Families will have the chance to interact with one another, PTA representatives, and Park Avenue faculty and staff. In addition, parents will be able to drop off school supplies for their children, which will be delivered to the classroom. We hope you'll think about joining us!

Sanfordville Elementary School

During our Summer Academy Library Classes, our Media Specialists, Mr. Scott Sibila and Mrs. Danielle Cancel, engaged students in interactive engineering activities, working collaboratively and creatively. Some students learned about sculptures—what they are, what some look like—and how people use materials to create works of art that represent things in our world. Students created sculptures of their own and worked with Rigamajig, life-size building sets that include pulleys, various wooden shapes, ropes, nuts, and bolts. Other students researched specific

animals to learn more about the animal's body structure, then used the Rigamajig to build a sculpture of the animal. The young engineers enjoyed the activities and the time they had to free-build with the Rigamajig or read a book of their choice from the library independently.

Warwick Valley Middle School

Last week brought us the conclusion of our Summer Academy and Extended School Year programs. Over the last six weeks, students and staff from grades 5-9 engaged in ELA, Math, Civics, Foreign Language, and Physical Education lessons. Our new fifth graders enjoyed exploring the middle school and meeting some of their new teachers. They have definitely gained a level of confidence and are ready to officially start their middle school careers. Various STEAM-based learning activities occurred over our summer programs as well. Students had the opportunity to measure various ingredients and engage in the science of cooking and baking. Some of the kitchen projects saw students cook pizza, bake pretzels, and bake cupcakes. Students also competed academically, grade versus grade, during a schoolwide Jeopardy.

Summer learning isn't just for students. Throughout the summer, our ELA, Social Studies, and Foreign Language teachers have been engaged in designing new curriculum for their subjects. The middle school administrative team just completed the first of four classes from the Harvard Business School, "Leading School Strategy and Innovation."

The middle school office staff and custodial team have been hard at work preparing the building for September 6th. The building will be open for student walkthroughs the last week of August for new fifth graders and new to the district students. The building is looking clean and our mailings will be headed out to families soon. We can't wait to welcome students back to the building this fall!

Warwick Valley High School

Many summer programs came to an end at the high school. Summer school students successfully completed their courses, and some students are taking a Regents exam in order to fulfill graduation requirements. Our extended school year students closed out their program with a week of fun activities. The highlight of the week included a recorded stand-up comedy show, during which each student told a few jokes before a live and piped-in audience. Dan Ceconie produced the show in the school's television studio. The second and final junior police academy for the summer concluded in a ceremonious fashion. About 20 middle school and high school students were able to take part in a variety of training and field trip activities that helped them learn more about police work.

In preparation for the new school year, sports physicals were administered to all athletes who intend to participate in fall sports. The second of four college application workshops was held for

high school seniors who are beginning the application process using the Common Application and Naviance.