

School is in session! One of my favorite parts of every first day of school is seeing the excitement on students' faces as they reconnect with their favorite teachers after a long summer. The student-teacher relationship can be one of the most meaningful relationships we have in our lifetimes. I still talk about my favorite teachers when discussing my education career. I remember their kindness, and I recognize how their influence and legacy have shown up in my work.

The Warwick Valley Central School District can offer a volume and variety of quality academic, athletic, arts, and extracurricular programs because we have exceptional, dedicated educators. They are selfless and generous with their time and talents in our classrooms, clubs, and everywhere. I feel fortunate to serve as superintendent of a school district with a reputation for recruiting and retaining these people.

We welcomed yet another new group of enthusiastic teachers to Warwick Valley Schools. The administration and our recruits spent the last two days of August together at our annual New Teacher Orientation. The orientation, which also introduced our central administration team and building administrators, was led by Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Cindy Leandro. It was enjoyable for everyone when one of the district's longtime leaders, Dr. Marijane Reinhard, gave our newest teachers a welcome and motivational message.

Along with meeting their tenured mentors, the new teachers met with our pupil services and special education teams. They learned the importance of making the right connections and staying positive from High School Principal Marguerite Fusco and her team. Park Avenue Elementary Principal Bill Biniaris and Sanfordville Principal Johnna Maraia discussed effective communication with families. Middle School Principal Georgianna Diopoulos and her administration spoke about the importance of connecting with students. I do not doubt that this group of new teachers will fit right in here, especially with the guidance and mentorship from their new colleagues.

I hope they will stay with us, just as many Warwick Valley teachers have chosen to make our district their "home" from their first classroom assignment to retirement. As you may surmise, students benefit from the strong sense of community and network of support created by a dedicated faculty of top-tier teachers.

Great teachers make for great programs. Great programs make for great schools. Teachers looking for great jobs gravitate toward great schools. Once they're in a great school, they stay. With that, I would like to share my congratulations and gratitude to some people. The teachers, staff, and administrators on this list have reached essential points in their Warwick careers.

35 Years of Service

Donna Berghahn and Joan Rueckert

30 Years of Service

Gia Gravelle and Carrie Ann Greiner

25 Years of Service

Carla Balkowski, Cathy Begnoche, Laura Boettcher, Jennifer Disy, Mary Fox, Jacqueline Maher, Harry Scott, Susan Sperling and Serena Sze

20 Years of Service

Brenda Agro, Patricia Bessler, Laura Campora, Ryan Candia, Scott Caswell, Christine Chenoweth, David Colao, Carolyn DeTorres, Michelle Ehlers, Marc Fasolino, Doreen Fothergill, Helena Hagen, Jamie Harrington, Lorie Ingber, Diane Kilbride, Rose Anne Kuzmiak, Jill Martinez, Dawn McKinnon, Janeen Mitchell, Carla Overbey, Dieu-Seulle Pierre, Karen Gray Plaisted, Michael Potter, Shannon Pravetz, Kyle Putnam, Colleen Russell, Andrew Sheets, Tia Thomson, Eric Tillinghast, Maryann Triplett and Tracey Waters

15 Years of Service

Colleen Amideneau, April Beauregard, Curtis Boone, Kathy Botta, Ana Brown, Katherine Caswell, Cynthia Cattani, Kayla Collins, Danielle Debella, Monica Debiase, Julia Doty, Patrick Ellis, Kathleen Eder, Louise Finnegan, John Hanley, Lisa Howard, Johnna Maraia, Dawn McBride, Nydia Mercado, Inga Mezzetti, Christina Murphy Colgan, Mary Murphy, Maureen Nelsen, Richard Reinert, Nancy Scheinert, Catherine King Steinberg, Jennifer Thurston

10 Years of Service

Jaelyn Ahearn, Danielle Bugasch, Mary Kalmanowitz, Cindy Leandro, Michelle Manelis, Meghan McGourty, Caroline Quin, Rachel Sullivan, Kevin Sebastian, Dina Tashman and Kathryn Welling

5 Years of Service

Brittni Aberasturi, Margaret Baruffaldi, Patrick Beauvais, Megan Bensetler, Kathleen Bettello, Edison Brown, Lisa Cann, Carol Carlson, Taylyn Carter, Daniel Cecconie, Erin Clark, Paul Colaluca, Linda DellaVecchia, Georgianna Diopoulos, Jeannine Emanuel, Kerry Gluckmann, Paula Hayes Hayden, Lauren Hughes, Valbona Janova, Jessica Kyritsis, Annette Lilly, Daniel Mabee, Amy McVeigh, William Mercado, Dolores Murphy, Beth Nagel, Janice O'Keeffe, Heather Parsons, Dalton Procak, Scott Sibilla, Elizabeth Slawinski, Heather Thompson, Ruth Trovato, Megan Unger and Beth Weinberg

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

Park Avenue's faculty was back in full force on Thursday, September 1. Teachers and other staff started at the high school, where they heard from district administrators and Board of Education President Keith Parsons. Then, they headed back to Park Avenue to continue the ongoing work of preparing for our students' arrival on September 6. Principal Bill Biniaris and the faculty reviewed the academic calendar and other expectations for the 2022-2023 school year. Some of the topics covered include:

- Implementation of our balanced literacy program
- Our chief math instructional resource - HMH's *IntoMath*
- School-to-home communication strategies
- Building Safety

The final preparation stage before schools opened was the Park Avenue PTA Ice Cream Social. Parents were invited to meet other families and their children's teachers, drop off supplies and celebrate the end of summer and the beginning of a new school year with some refreshing ice cream. Thank you so much!

Sanfordville Elementary School

Thank you to the Sanfordville PTA, which sponsored the Sanfordville Ice Cream Social for its students. Over 200 students and their families met with old and new friends at the school playground. Many

teachers attended to meet their new students and chat with former students. Of course, the highlight of the night was the ice cream!

Students had the opportunity to drop off their supplies and meet their teachers at the “Meet Your Teacher Open House.” Students were so excited to meet them, see their classrooms and make new friends. There were many smiling faces.

Warwick Valley Middle School

Approximately 40 Middle School students were designated Wildcat Ambassadors and attended a workshop. Their teachers or peers nominated them to apply to the program. These students completed a rigorous application process and chose to dedicate their time to helping their school, and we thank them for their time and service to helping their fellow students.

Warwick Valley High School

The halls at the High School were bustling. The custodial staff was putting the final touches on the summer building projects, and the building looks beautiful.

The annual Drivers’ Awareness Forum was held with more than 300 students. The event focused on driver safety, the everyday dangers of teenage driving, and the expectations of student drivers on campus. Students arrived early the following day to line up for their parking passes, hoping to get a spot close to the high school.

New students attended orientation, learning about the school culture from upper-class student leaders. Guidance counselors discussed scheduling and ways to make high school an outstanding student experience. The building administration addressed the students with tips for success in and out of the classroom. They also reviewed protocols and expectations of student behavior. Teachers also returned to the building to start the school year. They set up their classrooms and attended curriculum conferences and building and department meetings, so they were ready to roll on the first day.