

WVCSD EdTalk: February 8, 2023
Dr. David Leach, Superintendent of Schools

Last week, Governor Kathy Hochul released her 2023-24 proposed state budget, promising to fully fund the Foundation Aid for the first time since its creation. This news is especially positive for the Warwick Valley Central School District, as the district stands to benefit from the Governor's proposed budget.

As you may know, Foundation Aid is the main source of state funding for New York's school districts, and it is based on a formula that takes into account factors such as the community's overall wealth. The Warwick Valley school district is considered one of the wealthiest districts in the region, and as a result, it has received a lower percentage of its funding from Foundation Aid in the past. For instance, similar sized districts in our surrounding area receive about \$10 million more in foundation aid. With that said, the full funding of Foundation Aid is now on the horizon, and the district, like most, is poised to receive an increase in state funding.

In fact, the district anticipates an actual increase in NYS Aid of about \$4.3 million dollars, which will go a long way in supporting the education of its students. The Hochul administration is also requiring the district to set aside \$500,000 of this increase towards "high impact tutoring" programs, which will focus on supporting reading and math skills for third grade through eighth grade students.

In addition to the increase in Foundation Aid, the Governor is also directing her administration to expand full-day pre-kindergarten programs in the state. The Warwick Valley Central School District will benefit from this initiative, as the state's investment in its pre-K program is set to increase from \$513,000 to \$1,036,800. This increase in funding will likely make it possible for more families to participate in the program, as the district was able to offer slots to about 100 students last school year.

The proposed increase in Foundation Aid couldn't come at a better time for the Warwick Valley Central School District. As we strive to overcome the challenges posed by inflation, we aim to strike a delicate balance between maintaining the quality of education for our students and relieving the strain on our taxpayers.

Here are some highlights from our schools this week:

Park Avenue Elementary School

Kindergarten students in Theresa Canfield's class celebrated the completion of their Patterns Text Unit by inviting parents and faculty to Park Avenue to listen to the students read their completed Pattern Text books in the Park Avenue Media Center. A Pattern Text is a book that follows a pattern such as starting each page with "I see...." or "I love...." Students worked on their books for several weeks before sharing the finished product with families, faculty, and friends. During the celebration, teachers and family members rotated throughout the Media Center to hear every child's individual story. This wonderful event provided our kindergarteners with many opportunities to practice reading their work clearly and with expression. Students were proud to show off their writing and corresponding illustrations. Their

finished works will be donated to Preschool Solutions in Sugarloaf, where our pre-K friends can benefit by practicing reading them as well.

Sanfordville Elementary School

Fourth-graders celebrated World Read Aloud Day with many different read-aloud opportunities. The fourth grade had parents/grandparents coming in throughout the week to read aloud a favorite picture book to the students. The entire fourth grade also had two Google Meets with two amazing authors, Josephine Cameron and Lauren Magaziner. Cameron read aloud a chapter from her book, A Dog Friendly Town. Magaziner read aloud from book four of The Case Closed series. The students asked both authors questions and shared their thoughts about their books. The classes kicked off the next Reader's Workshop unit, which is an author-study book club. The students have five authors to choose from that they would like to focus on and read multiple books by that author.

Warwick Valley Middle School

Many of our Middle School students in grades 7 and 8 take a Literacy Lab class. Amanda Wright's students are working on a culminating project for a Book Club unit they are working on. A book club is a way to get students together in small groups to discuss and analyze a common book they are reading. Students are given the opportunity to choose the book they would like to read from a collection that is presented. The novels in this book club all shared a focus on survival and overcoming adversity. In each novel, the setting or culture impacted the character's main conflict. As a culminating assignment, students were asked to dive more deeply into the setting of their novel, by researching the culture of a location mentioned in the text. As a final assignment, students will have to present their research to the class and reflect on how the setting impacted the characters and their conflict in the novel.

Warwick Valley High School

The second semester of the school year has begun! Believe it or not, the planning for the 2023-2024 school year begins now. Teachers are making course recommendations for their students, who will begin meeting with their counselors to select their elective courses for next school year. To help students make informed decisions about their course selections, elective fairs are being held at the high school this week. On February 7th, students in grades 9-11 will have the opportunity to learn about classes they can enroll in next year in the areas of math, science, ELA, history, engineering and the arts during lunch. On February 8th, incoming ninth grade students from Warwick Valley Middle School and Greenwood Lake Middle School will come to the high school to meet with students and teachers and hear about freshmen electives in engineering, agriculture, science, the arts and computer science.