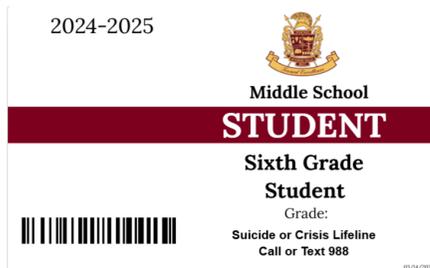


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## New Wyoming Valley West Identification Badges

Written by: Justine Alapack

On January 23, 2025, new I.D. badges were distributed among Wyoming Valley West students. On the following day, an assembly was held to further inform students of the badges' purpose and practicality. At the assembly, Mr. Bond stated that the badges were distributed for safety and efficiency. The badge includes the name, grade, picture, and school of the student so teachers can easily identify them. The badge also includes a barcode that can be scanned when a student is receiving their lunch. This barcode scan replaces students having to manually write out their lunch code and is meant to make getting lunches more efficient.

However, this new system brings about many questions. I hope to answer at least one: How do the students feel about this change? In this article, three students were interviewed to discover their personal opinions about the badge system and why they support it—or don't.

"They are unnecessary," an eighth grade student, Robert Chipego, noted. "Most of the students don't wear them and while they have some uses in identification, it's easier to just ask a student who they are."

"They're uncomfortable to wear," he continued. He also raised concerns about the break-away lanyards not pulling apart properly. He concluded his opinions by adding, "They would be more useful if they could be put in our backpacks and taken out when identification is needed."

Another eighth grade student, Gaberiel Golden, had differing opinions. He reinforced Mr. Bond's declaration of efficiency by stating, "It's a little hard to get used to, but I like them because the lines go by faster at the cafeteria."

He also brought about some privileges he hopes the badges will bring, such as being able to wear hoodies or masks for Halloween. He is optimistic about the future of the school with the badge system implemented and believes that overall, they are a pleasant addition to the district.

The final eighth grade student interviewed—Julia Levalley—said that they were unique and that she had never been aware of schools distributing badges before. She, however, disliked them because they were easy to forget. She also mentioned that the lanyards were of a rather low quality and could be easily worn down or torn. In conclusion, many students are conflicted about the new badges. Each student interviewed mentioned anything they would like to see changed or revamped and gave an intriguing perspective on how the new system will affect the district.

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## **Wyoming Valley West Middle School Winter Chorus Concert**

**Written by: Justine Alapack**

On December 19, 2024, at 6:00 P.M., the Middle School's auditorium was filled with zeal as the choir prepared for their performance. Every student there was dressed in "concert black," a uniform of all-black clothes from head to toe. There had been a menagerie of difficulties along the way—the chorus room had been closed for a few weeks at the beginning of the school year and the time to practice had been significantly decreased—but everyone was ready and sure they would do well. Parents soon filled every seat in the auditorium in anticipation of what was to come. At 7:00 P.M., the concert began.

The seventh grade chorus was the first to enter the stage. Directed by Ms. Orlando, they sang "In Winter" and "Let Heaven and Nature Sing." Angelic voices filled the room. After these two pieces, the curtains closed to allow the eighth grade chorus time to replace the seventh. The eighth grade choir then sang "Joyful, Joyful" and "Holy Night, Silent Night." During the former, five students sang solos: Lucille Cresho, Ella Frazier, Keleigh Longfoot, and Alivia Jordan.

Yet again, the curtains closed, and the Spartan Singers filled the risers on the stage. "Spartan Singers" is a group of singers selected from the

chorus to perform more difficult pieces. The group sang "Carol of the Bells," an acapella song that highlights the singers' voices by omitting a piano accompaniment, and "Jubilate Deo." To end the concert, the seventh and eighth grade choirs combined and sang "Nia," a Kwanzaa song about purpose, and "White Winter Hymnal." The latter featured body percussion done by Ella Frazier, Addison Gimble, Noelle Lesinski, and Lilly Eckstein. Rapturous applause echoed throughout the auditorium.

As a member of the choir and Spartan Singers, I would consider the concert a success. Every student did their best to enunciate their respective parts and make all of the work put into preparation come to fruition. Ms. Orlando did an outstanding job guiding the chorus both prior to and during the concert. Despite the many delays at the beginning of the year, every piece sounded beautiful and radiated the effort put into mastering them.

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## Winter Orchestra Concert

Written by: Maya Kaupp

On December 8, 2024, the Middle School Orchestra held its annual winter concert. Over the course of an hour, the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade orchestras performed a variety of pieces. As a member of the 8th-grade orchestra and an honorary member of the 7th, I had the opportunity to perform several pieces. The 7th-grade orchestra played five songs, including "Holly Jolly Christmas," "The Chipmunk Song," "You're a Mean One Mr. Grinch," "Stars of Wonder," and "The Little Drummer Boy." The 8th grade orchestra followed with 4 pieces, such as "Once Upon a December," "Winter Wonderland," "Somewhere in My Memory," and "Rest Ye Merry, Rock Ye Very."

Students who had performed earlier this year at Marywood University played one of their pieces again for the audience. They performed "Greensleeves," arranged by Mark Williams, showcasing their hard work and dedication to learn and play it again.

All grades had the honor to perform alongside Mr. Beare, a student teacher who had been shadowing Mrs. Hall for the past three months, on cello. Unfortunately, this was his final concert with us, as his shadowing had come to an end. Overall, this concert was a wonderful display of the students' progress musically, making for an

enjoyable concert experience.

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## WVW Middle School Winter Band Concert

Written by: Amelia Nankivell

The Wyoming Valley West Middle School Band Program had their winter concert on December 17th. The sixth, seventh, and eighth grade band students all performed and did quite well. Mrs. Schneider works very hard with her students, especially the sixth grade. Members of the sixth grade band are still learning how to play their instruments. They learned some basics in fifth grade, but for the most part, it's all brand new. The seventh and eighth graders played together for the Christmas concert. Mrs. Schneider has them play together because, when they combine, we have a full band that includes tuba, baritone saxophone, oboe, and bassoon. The entire school's band program worked so hard to make this concert a success. I think I speak for everyone when I say I can't wait to see what's in store for the spring concert.

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## Holiday Spirit Week

Written by: Noah Brzoska

During the 2024-2025 school year, the Wyoming Valley West Middle School held its annual Holiday Spirit Week. This fun and exciting event was held from December 18th to the 20th. There were many fun themes for students and teachers to follow throughout the week. All of the attire worn during the week was required to have been in dress code. On Monday, students and teachers dressed as their favorite holiday movie character. On Tuesday, the theme was Tacky Tuesday, which included wearing your ugliest holiday sweater and/or sweatshirt. Wednesday was Winter Sports Fan Day where teachers and students dressed in their favorite winter sports team jersey/shirt. Thursday was Tinsel Toes Day, everyone was invited to dress in the funkiest pair of holiday socks they could find. Finally, Friday was Flannel Frenzy Friday, where teachers and students alike dressed in plaid attire, but no pajama pants were allowed. Every day there were people from the yearbook staff who took pictures of the most festive people to be put in the yearbook. Overall, this week was a huge success and a fun way for students to end the week right before break.

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## Meet Mrs. Walsh, WVW MS Dean of Students

Written by: Tallulah Morreale

I recently had the opportunity to interview our new Dean of Students, Mrs. Walsh. Mrs. Walsh is very excited to be our new Dean of Students at WVW Middle School and she was ecstatic when I asked to interview her. She sat me down in her office and we spent the time discussing the following topics.

**Question:** What was your previous work experience in education?

**Mrs. Walsh:** I was a principal for the past 30 years, for both elementary and high school.

**Question:** How are you liking the middle school?

**Mrs. Walsh:** Love it. I find it very welcoming.

**Question:** What tools do you use to motivate teachers?

**Mrs. Walsh:** That's a great question. I think they should find the positive in the classroom.

**Question:** Why did you want to work here?

**Mrs. Walsh:** I like this age. I think middle school is where we can make the most difference.

**Question:** What was your biggest success as a school administrator?

**Mrs. Walsh:** I built a brand new building. It cost 10 million dollars. I wrote a grant. I did it because our students and teachers deserved it.

**Question:** Did you attend WVW School District? If not, where did you attend high school?

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**Mrs. Walsh:** I attended Bishop Hannan High School.

**Question:** Where did you attend college?

**Mrs. Walsh:** I went to the University of Scranton and Lehigh University.

**Question:** Who do you look up to most?

**Mrs. Walsh:** Well, my parents first, and then Eleanor Roosevelt.

**Question:** What's the best part of your job?

**Mrs. Walsh:** Working with the students.

**Question:** What do you hope to achieve in your career here?

**Mrs. Walsh:** At WVV, I just want to make a positive difference.

Now, a fun question!

**Question:** Would you rather live in Disney World or the rainforest?

**Mrs. Walsh:** the rainforest, because it would be so cool to be part of a different ecosystem.

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## Winter Sports at WVV MS

**Written by: Samuel Favata**

The Wyoming Valley West Middle School has a plethora of winter sports for students to consider joining. Basketball and wrestling are the most popular with students.. A wide variety of students join each of these sports, filling these teams to the brim.

The Wyoming Valley West Basketball Program consists of 6 teams: 7th, 8th, and 9th grade boys,

and 7th, 8th, and 9th grade girls. This season, our boys team worked very hard to succeed, and did just that. An 8th grade boy said, "This season was really good, I had a lot of fun with my friends, especially on the bus rides." Overall the entire season went well for these players.

The wrestling team consists of one unified team of girls and boys from 7th and 8th grade. The students on this team went through intense training to prepare for the season. In wrestling, a majority of the time you will have to lose or gain weight. This is an added challenge for the team, but the effort pays off.

The Wyoming Valley West winter sports were a thrill to watch.They always had me on the edge of my seat with the students' talent in these sports. The effort of the basketball and wrestling participants was strong, and led the teams to victory this season.

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## A Win for the Girls Basketball Team

*Written by: Luciara Cony*

The WVV Girls Basketball Team is one talented and hardworking group of athletes, and their recent championship victory has proven that. Team member Kamora Clark volunteered her time to provide me with an interview.

Kamora Clark is a dedicated player who has been passionate about basketball since her brother introduced her to it and her biggest inspiration is the professional player Caitlin Clark.

Recently, she and her team got a championship victory, a moment she will never forget. Standing proudly next to the trophy, she reflected on the journey it took to get her that trophy. "I always remind myself to stay calm and not let my heart race too much," she said. "Giving myself little compliments helps me stay focused."

Throughout the season, the WVV Girls Basketball Team showed incredible teamwork and determination in their most intense game against a tough rival, where each point they got mattered. When they won by one point, everyone was cheering and applauding. Kamora felt proud that they were able to accomplish winning the championship.

In every game Kamora thinks about their team first, handling the pressure by staying focused and making smart moves. "I like my teammates

and trust them," she said. "I focus on passing and keeping an eye on the ball." The team's chemistry and ability to work together make them a powerful force in every game.

Even when they lose, they still think positively. As Kamora says, "I can do better next time." The girls support each other through wins and losses, always trying to improve. Kamora believes learning from mistakes will make them better and stronger.

The WVV Girls' Basketball Team has proven that hard work and teamwork will lead to victory. Their championship win is just the beginning of what shows they will have an exciting future for this talented group. Let's go Lady Spartans!!

**MATHCOUNTS®**



## MathCounts & PJAS: Successful Competitions for the District

*Written by: Justine Alapack*

MathCounts is an extracurricular math program that encourages participants to "think outside of the box" to solve complicated or in-depth problems—all to prepare them for the chapter, state, and national competitions. The Wyoming Valley West Middle School MathCounts team, a group of the top four scorers on the MathCounts test, consisted of Noah Schuckers, Anny Espino, Ryan Cardillo, and Justine Alapack, with Rylee Lebar, Logan Monka, Nicholas Sickler, Liam

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Swetz, Sam Whalen, and Ethan Zim in the top ten. The former competed in all three rounds of competition while the latter competed in the first two. The event took place in the Middle School's auditorium with a plethora of other school districts also competing. Here is how it went.

The first round of the competition was called the Sprint Round, where students were given 40 minutes to solve 30 questions without a calculator that progressively grew in difficulty. This round was akin to the MathCounts test, where your score would dictate whether you would join the team or not. The silence was nearly deafening in the auditorium as everyone fervently worked to solve as many problems as possible within the rapidly depleting time limit. After the round ended and everyone's answers were collected, the Target Round started. In this round, students were given six minutes to solve two problems each. After the six minutes, their answers would be collected, and they would be given two more problems. When the Sprint and Target Rounds concluded, participants left the auditorium to eat lunch. Much fervor grew over how everyone did, and who would be in the top ten.

The top ten scorers would compete against each other in the final round—called the Countdown Round—where the tenth place participant was placed against the ninth place participant. Whoever would answer three questions correctly first would move ahead and compete against the eighth place participant, then the seventh, and so on. However, it was far more difficult than it sounds: you only had 45 seconds to answer the problems, and without a calculator. One student from Wyoming Valley West placed second overall in the individual competitions and third after the Countdown Round and is going to the State Competition. After the Countdown Round, the Team Round began, where the four students on the team would work together to solve a smaller selection of problems without going over the time

limit. After the Team Round, the team representing the Middle School placed fourth overall.

However, MathCounts wasn't the only extracurricular math activity that our school district participated in. Sponsored by Mrs. Konopke, 14 students made a presentation for the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS) in the mathematics department at Wilkes University. They then presented these projects to two or three judges who would give them a score. At the awards ceremony after everyone's scores have been tallied, students were given a second place, first place, or first place (perfect score) award in the form of a metal band that the participants could attach to their Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science pin. One student won a second place award and several won first place awards. Jonathan Bolan, an eighth grade student, won the Excellence Award in Mathematics. Many Wyoming Valley West students will be going to states for PJAS this year.

The past few weeks have been very successful for the mathematics programs at the WWW School District. The amount of effort, time, and dedication students put into doing their best is easy to see by the results they obtained. It is clear that all of the participants moving to the state competitions in both MathCounts and the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science are prepared and ready for the challenges ahead.

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