

# Warren Township High School District 121

## Warren Connection: eLearning Together

April 16, 2020



Dear Warren Community,

Early in the semester, the coronavirus became a serious health crisis for the nation and the world. Ultimately, the Governor of Illinois declared stay-at-home orders and closed schools from March 17 through March 30 as an initial means to ensure social distancing to help limit exposure to the virus. Schools were allowed to open March 31, only under remote learning status, with students and staff staying at home and continuing the educational process remotely. We will continue with eLearning through at least April 30.

At WTHS, our eLearning platform has been implemented and we are adjusting to this new way of operating until further notice. This edition of our Warren Connection is dedicated to some of the processes that have been used and supports that are available to our community while we are in eLearning status.

Warren's website, at [www.d121.org](http://www.d121.org), is a key link to staying connected with our updates and programs.



Home of the  
Blue Devils

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### KEY RESOURCES

Each day, students need to  
check their WTHS email  
and  
sign in their attendance in Google.



**ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
(ISBE) Resources for Eligible Low Income  
Families:**

[FREE INTERNET ACCESS RESOURCES](#)

[GRAB AND GO MEALS](#)  
(see page 6 for more details)

## Board of Education News

The safety, health and wellness of our students and staff is our highest priority. The governor and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) have been providing directives regarding school closures and/or remote learning for the past month. All schools were officially closed from March 17 through March 30. Governor Pritzker announced mandatory stay-at-home procedures for all Illinoisans to help slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). For WTHS, this meant that in-person instruction was suspended beginning March 31 originally through April 7, and then extended through April 30 and possibly longer.

On behalf of Warren Township High School, thank you to everyone who has embraced the eLearning process to help us during this unprecedented situation the coronavirus has brought to our community. Our teachers, staff

Thank You

and administrators put together a comprehensive plan to work with our students through creative and innovative remote lessons. Our students stepped up to the plate and have been diligently completing their lessons and moving their education forward with daily coursework. Our parents and families created spaces at home for their students to complete day-to-day assignments and provide encouragement to keep their students on task. Our community has worked together to stay at home and help prevent spreading this virus. Additionally, our administrators have developed a program to provide meals and technology support for our families, while our custodial staff has thoroughly cleaned our buildings. Thank you all for working together during this challenging time so that our students continue to learn and grow.

Please continue to check the WTHS website and our new Facebook page for further information. Stay safe and healthy!

### Board Meeting Updates

Shortly following the stay-at-home order by the governor in March, the state legislature also made some quick, temporary changes to state statutes regarding the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and how public meetings (including those by our District 121 Board of Education) can be conducted. Specifically, the changes to the OMA allow individuals to participate remotely in public meetings. Prior to the changes, board members could participate remotely provided some conditions of their absence, and it provided a quorum if other members were physically present at the meetings. During the current stay-at-home order, members are allowed to participate remotely without the need for physical attendance at meetings.

Public participation is mandated for all public meetings, including our Board of Education meetings. This participation can also be allowed and expected to be conducted remotely. For upcoming board meetings, the process for remote public participation during the normal specified timeframes at our meetings will be provided, along with the required normal posting of the meeting. The meetings themselves will also be livestreamed as required by these temporary adjustments to the Open Meetings Act.



### WTHS Board of Education

Paul Schulz, President  
John R. Anderson, Vice-President  
Jim Walz, Secretary  
Bency Beals, Member  
Tony DeMonte, Member  
Thomas Drake, Member  
Jonita C. Wilson, Member



This school year, we have been working to improve our communication with our families, staff, students and community members. One of the many ways we look to make this happen is through social media.

To that end, we are excited to share that Warren Township High School now has an official Facebook page. You can find the page and follow us at this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/WTHSDistrict121>

The page will help us continue to enhance our communication and engagement with you and all our other stakeholders in the WTHS community. We will use Facebook to communicate news and events, provide updates, share photos and engage our community in all the great things happening in our school.

We look forward to sharing more soon!



## Superintendent's Corner

by Dr. John P. Ahlgrim, Superintendent of Schools



### End of Year WTHS Events

The coronavirus epidemic and subsequent suspension from in-school activities has unfortunately also caused WTHS to cancel or reschedule several end-of-the-year events. Below are cancellations or postponements that were communicated earlier this month. We will continue to communicate with district families regarding any further cancellations and/or postponements.

- All school events scheduled prior to May 4 are cancelled.
- Co-curricular/athletics: To be determined by the Illinois High School Association. Please see page 9 of the newsletter for more details.
- Cum Laude Recognition Night is cancelled.
- Senior Awards and Scholarship Night is cancelled.
- Prom (May 9, 2020) is cancelled.
- Prom is tentatively rescheduled for July 10, 2020, at the Almond Campus.
- Graduation: May 17, 2020 (if we are allowed back in school May 1).
- Graduation: Tentative alternative date set for July 12, 2020 (if eLearning extends beyond April 30).



As much as we would like to be back with students and staff at WTHS, the well-being of everyone is our highest priority and we want all our students and staff at home, safe and well with families. We all need to work together to minimize exposure to the virus and do our part to overcome this challenge.

For our students in the community, one thing you can gain from this pandemic is that this is truly a unique time in our history. The common referral to the COVID-19 and the subsequent medical response as “unprecedented” is certainly valid. In any new situation, society has an opportunity to learn and become better informed.

Specifically, I believe we all have a greater appreciation for the incredible commitment made each and every day by first responders and health care workers. We have seen the economic and social impacts of this temporary shutdown on our business world, and the incredible subsequent calls of generosity providing personal assistance to the many people who are impacted.

Finally, we have been encouraged to isolate with just our family units for an extended period during this stay-at-home order. While it has been challenging in the short term, it also allows us to embrace the time we now have to truly talk, play games and spend time together at home, which in itself can be a gift. Additionally, the power of the internet and social networking tools have allowed us to stay connected or reconnect with our friends (and the broader world) in new and fun ways. This can bring much-needed laughter and relief.

I am confident that when the social restrictions are lifted, we will emerge as smarter, stronger and more empathetic individuals and communities, and that the unprecedented aspects of the coronavirus will also bring some unique and unanticipated discoveries.

### eLearning Planning Days

As part of the transition to extended eLearning, the Illinois State Board of Education is allowing school districts to use up to five eLearning planning days to help teachers develop and implement meaningful lessons for students during this extended eLearning period.

*There will be no required attendance check in or daily email to students on these days. Students will be responsible for catching up on coursework. Students may continue to email teachers with questions about past assignments on these days, but no new eLearning assignments will be provided.*

#### eLearning Planning Days

- ✓ **Monday, April 27**
- ✓ **Monday, May 11**  
(if eLearning is still in effect)
- ✓ **Friday, May 22**  
(if eLearning is still in effect)



## News from Instructional Services

by Christopher J. Geocaris, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services

The past few weeks have certainly presented us with unprecedented and challenging times. Our Instructional Services team has worked collaboratively with our teachers, other school districts and the State of Illinois to put together an extended eLearning Program for our students that will continue to provide meaningful educational experiences until we are able to meet again in person. Our plan is designed to allow students the flexibility to complete work when they are able, as well as continue to provide options for direct instruction mixed with instruction delivered through a variety of technology-based strategies.

Our staff has risen to this challenge and developed video blogs and implemented innovative lessons that incorporate interactive online content. They also have found new ways to interact with and support their students in their learning.

While we miss seeing our students every day, we are doing our best to support them in this period of extended eLearning.



# Thank You

I also want to recognize our Educational Technology Department. They have worked diligently over the past month to ensure our systems are stable and to implement processes to ensure students can receive technology support from a distance.

Our Technology Department has established a help desk system to communicate with students who require technical support, including the repair of malfunctioning school-issued Chromebooks. The student help desk system is available on our home page on our website, or by [clicking here](#).



We are, of course, incredibly proud of our students for such a strong start to eLearning! Each day, students should continue to complete their attendance forms and check their WTHS email to receive their assignments and information from teachers. If you have any questions regarding our eLearning procedures and expectations for students, please [click here](#) to view our eLearning web page.

I recognize that this is an incredibly difficult time, and that COVID-19 is impacting families within our community in a multitude of ways. Please reach out to your student's teachers if there is anything we can do to help support your student in their learning.



### Testing Information for the 2019-2020 School Year

Due to the extended school closure, the State of Illinois has suspended all state testing for this spring. The PSAT9 for freshmen, PSAT10 for sophomores, SAT for juniors and the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM) test are all postponed for this year. We are waiting for further information from the state as to the potential of offering the SAT in the fall. We will communicate additional information regarding the SAT suite of assessments as we learn more.



### Advanced Placement Testing will still take place in May

The College Board has posted information on [its website](#) regarding updates on how the tests will work, as well as additional resources for students and teachers. We have been sharing information with our AP Students and their families as we have received information from the College Board.

If you have any questions regarding AP testing this spring, please contact Matthew Jones, Assistant Principal at the Almond Campus, at [mjones@wths.net](mailto:mjones@wths.net)

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## News From Student Services

by Dr. Patrick W. Keeley, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

### Basic Netiquette Guidelines

#### BE RESPECTFUL

Treat everyone with kindness and respect. Please remember there are other people—with thoughts and feelings—who are viewing your communication. Use the same standards for your communication online as you do in a face-to-face setting. Think before you click send!

#### BE FOCUSED

There are limitless distractions when you're engaged in online learning. It may help to tell yourself that you are going to sit and focus for a certain amount of time, after which you will allow yourself to take a break. You'll be amazed how much easier it is to concentrate!

#### BE PRODUCTIVE

Remember, even though our school buildings are closed, *school* is still in session. You have a responsibility to engage in your school work and continue making progress on your learning. Communicate to the best of your ability using the skills (writing, speaking, presenting) you've learned in school. Challenge yourself to learn something new each day.

#### BE SAFE

Do not post personal information online about yourself or anyone else. This includes addresses, phone numbers, social media account handles, ages, and workplaces. Keep in mind that even if you delete something you posted, it can still live online permanently.

#### BE RESPONSIBLE

Whenever you are sharing something that originated from someone else, (video, picture, words, music, sounds) it is good practice to cite that source. This applies to discussion forums too. If you read a great thought, share it, but be sure you let your audience know where you saw it first.

### Lake County Resources

Below are some important websites and links to stay connected in Lake County.

[Warren Township Youth and Family Services](#)

[Lake County Health Department](#)

[Warren-Newport Public Library](#)

[United Way of Lake County](#)

[Illinois Department of Human Services](#)

The Student Services teams are working to connect with our families during this difficult time. Our first priority is to make sure students are connected with their eLearning. Our deans are monitoring student attendance check-in daily. If a student does not check in, a staff member will call the house to clear up the absence. Please make sure your student is checking in each day between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. The attendance link is a pop-up on the website. Please make this a daily routine to ensure you are connecting with us on each school day.

Our teams will also continue to engage in intervening with students who are struggling. If you have any concerns with your student's progress, please contact your child's counselor or dean. Click this link to access contact information:

[CLICK HERE](#)



### Social Workers want to CONNECT WITH YOU!

The social work team is working hard to stay connected with you. We are available virtually! Reach out if you need support. If you or a loved one is in crisis, we encourage you to seek help immediately.

**Google Voice**  
**Google Meet**

Email a social worker to set up a time to talk.

**Instagram**  
[@Everythingsocialwork\\_wths](#)

To better reach our students, we have joined Instagram. Please follow us:  
[@everythingsocialwork\\_wths](#).

**YouTube**  
[@Everythingsocialwork\\_wths](#)

We're working on setting up a YouTube channel.

**WTHS District Webpage**  
<https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/Page/251>

Our social workers have updated their section of the website to include important resources for families. Please take some time to review these important resources.

It is times like these when we really gain a different perspective on how important community is to our daily lives. Please know WTHS staff is committed to working with our students, parents and guardians—and our community at large. I am confident in our ability to adapt and grow stronger during this difficult time. We are all in this together!

## Thank You

Thank you to our Student Services teams for their hard work in developing resources to stay connected with our students and families during this difficult and challenging time.

## News from Business Services and Operations

by Michael A. Engel, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services and Operations

### Grab-And-Go Meals

Since the onset of the eLearning implementation, WTHS has been providing free meals to eligible students through a Grab-and-Go meal program. The program provides for the distribution of approximately 600 meals twice per week at six identified locations throughout the WTHS community. We anticipate this program will continue through the duration of our eLearning timeframe. A special thank you to Quest Food Service for helping us initiate the process and the meal preparation, which occurs at our O'Plaine campus.

Also, thank you to a handful WTHS bus drivers and administrators who deliver the meals to the sites on our activity buses twice per week. Thank you to our citywide site supervisor Mary Santiago, who provided a very generous donation toward this cause. Providing food to students and families in need continues to be a priority for the state of Illinois and for WTHS.

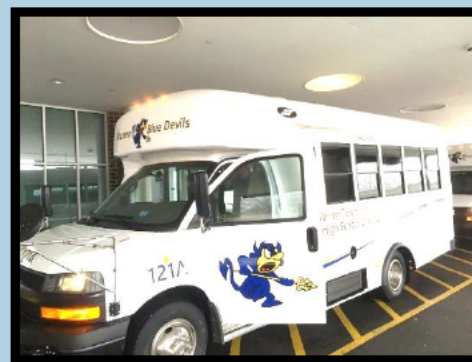
<b>Mondays and Thursdays</b>  <b>April 13 until further notice</b>  <b>2:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• WTHS Almond Campus Main Entrance 34090 N. Almond Road, Gurnee</li><li>• WTHS O'Plaine Campus North Entrance 500 N. O'Plaine Road, Gurnee</li><li>• Brookhaven Apartments 150 Greenhaven Lane, Gurnee</li></ul>
<b>Mondays and Thursdays</b>  <b>April 13 until further notice</b>  <b>3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Park City Teen Center 333 Teske Boulevard, Park City</li><li>• Green Valley Apartments/Park Terrace Apartments 4100 Greenleaf Court, Park City</li><li>• Continental Village Continental Drive and Abbington Court, Waukegan</li></ul>

Thank you to our Business Services and Operations department for maintaining the necessary operations of our school district during this unusual and difficult time. Our business office staff continues to process invoices and prepare financial reports as required. Our buildings and grounds staff are attending to essential building needs and equipment as needed. Our custodial staff are thoroughly cleaning our buildings. Additionally, a special thank you to Liz Sharrock-Gilliland, our food service director, and several Quest Food Service staff for taking the lead on preparing nearly 600 meals each delivery for many of our students and families. Finally, a special thank you to some of our bus drivers who have

helped deliver the meals to the scheduled sites with our administrators. We appreciate the helpful and creative ways they are all working to help ensure our students, families, staff and school buildings are taken care of during this unprecedented time.

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Thank You





## Principal's Corner at the Almond Campus

by Rob Parrott



### Student Support Contacts

If you have concerns with a particular class, please reach out directly to that teacher for help.	<a href="https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/Page/279">https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/Page/279</a>
If you are struggling with social and emotional needs, please reach out to your counselor. We have an entire Student Services team that can be of service to you.	<a href="https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/domain/106">https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/domain/106</a>
If you need to correct attendance during eLearning, please reach out to your dean.	<a href="https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/site/Default.aspx?PageID=206">https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/site/Default.aspx?PageID=206</a>
If you need help with technology, please complete this help desk ticket and we will be in touch!	<a href="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1q3RbSxgH9_4n6_1XQbLPLcQY9E37nOGfaHc2z2j5mU0/viewform?edit_requested=true&amp;pli=1">https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1q3RbSxgH9_4n6_1XQbLPLcQY9E37nOGfaHc2z2j5mU0/viewform?edit_requested=true&amp;pli=1</a>
If you need something and do not know where to turn, you can email me!	<a href="mailto:rparrott@wths.net">rparrott@wths.net</a>

### Staying Connected

Please continue to check your **Warren emails**, **school website**, and **Canvas**, as those are our primary forms of communication during this time. Make sure to reach out to teachers or staff as needed—we are here for you! You can also follow us on social media, using the #WeAreWarren hashtag. I have been connecting with students on my **YouTube Channel** and Twitter account **@rnparratt**. Please find ways to stay connected!

I hope this message finds you safe and healthy! I cannot thank our parents and students enough for the flexibility and resilience you have provided us as we have moved Warren Township High School into an eLearning environment through April 30 (and possibly longer) per the new extended mandatory school closure from the governor. Your respect and patience while we have navigated uncharted waters has been appreciated by our entire staff. For our students, we miss you and are thinking about you! We will get through this.

I would also like to recognize and thank our entire staff for the work they have done over the past several weeks. I told them that this was a great opportunity for us! They looked forward to the challenge we were given, and I knew our students were in good hands because of them. Please realize that the world has asked an entire nation of educators to take what we do on a daily basis and reinvent it in about a week. Our staff represent some of the most dedicated, creative, resilient and caring people in the world. This is a challenge they accepted head on, and because of them, we will be better together when our "new normal" resumes.

Thank You

**Building Access.** At this time, the Almond Campus is closed for student access. We are following the recommended social distancing and stay-at-home order to keep our community safe. As we continue to assess the situation, we will be in communication in regard to our schedule and building access. Our hope is to be back to school in May, but if that does not happen, we will schedule times as it becomes safe to allow students into the building to gather their things.

**Graduation Update.** Our highest priority is to have a graduation ceremony at the Sears Centre to recognize and honor the Class of 2020. It is very important for us to be able to honor and celebrate the hard work of our senior students and to share in that experience with their families and friends. While we continue to hold out hope that we will be able to have our graduation ceremony Sunday, May 17, we are also tentatively planning to hold graduation on Sunday, July 12 (at the Sears Centre) if our original date is no longer an option. We cannot imagine missing the opportunity to celebrate the amazing accomplishments of our seniors with their families, and securing a later date could allow this to occur. More information is located on our website by [clicking here](#).



Thank you and, as always, go Blue Devils!



## Principal's Corner at the O'Plaine Campus

by Michele Bertola

I hope you are all staying healthy and well during this unprecedented time. We miss our students and staff greatly and are working hard to keep learning going remotely. Our first priority is to connect with our students and check in on how they are doing.

I want to thank all students and parents who have been keeping up with our communications and eLearning processes. We appreciate your commitment to your education. I want to thank our teachers and support staff, who are working hard to serve all our students. We have asked educators to redesign school and come up with solutions and plans to this difficult situation. I am proud to work alongside all the Warren staff as we help navigate learning through these uncharted waters. Our students and staff are working hard daily to make the best of this challenge in front of us, and I am happy to be part of a community that pushes us to get better together.

Thank You

**Building Access.** At this time, the O'Plaine campus is closed for student access. We are following the recommended social distancing and stay-at-home order to keep our community safe. As we continue to assess the situation we will be in communication in regard to our schedule and building access. Our hope is to be back to school in May, but if that doesn't happen, we will schedule times as it becomes safe to allow students into the building to gather their things.

I will continue to challenge the Warren community to control what we can during this time. We can choose to focus on what we can do, what we are grateful for and how this is an opportunity to learn new things. Let's continue to be resilient, healthy and engaged during this time!

We've got this, Warren. Go Blue Devils!



### Student Support Contacts

If you have concerns with a particular class, please reach out directly to that teacher for help.	<a href="https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/Page/279">https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/Page/279</a>
If you are struggling with social and emotional needs, please reach out to your counselor. We have an entire Student Services team that can be of service to you.	<a href="https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/domain/106">https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/domain/106</a>
If you need to correct attendance during eLearning, please reach out to your dean.	<a href="https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/site/Default.aspx?PageID=206">https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/site/Default.aspx?PageID=206</a>
If you need help with technology, please complete this help desk ticket and we will be in touch.	<a href="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1q3RbSxgH9_4n6_1XObLPLcQY9E37nOGfaHc2z2i5mU0/viewform?edit_requested=true&amp;pli=1">https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1q3RbSxgH9_4n6_1XObLPLcQY9E37nOGfaHc2z2i5mU0/viewform?edit_requested=true&amp;pli=1</a>
If you need something and do not know where to turn, email me!	<a href="mailto:mbertola@wths.net">mbertola@wths.net</a>

### Staying Connected

Please continue to check your **Warren emails**, as that is our primary form of communication during this time. Make sure to reach out to teachers or staff as needed—we are here for you! You can also follow us on social media, utilizing our **#WeAreWarren** hashtag. I have been connecting with students daily through **Instagram** ([mbertola\\_d121](#)). My daily videos are also posted on my **You Tube Channel**. Please find ways to stay connected!



## News about Athletics and Activities

by Becky Belmont, Director of Athletics and Aimee Lonigro, Assistant Director of Athletics and Activities Coordinator



### Coming Soon! WTHS Theatre Students present *Elf, the Musical*

Warren Theatre students are excited to share that *Elf, the Musical* is still being performed this month! Currently, cast members are in the process of recording the songs from the show. Their hope is to roll out a digital version of the musical via YouTube in mid-April. We are thankful for your continued support and look forward to appearing on your screen very soon!

### Prom Update

Holding prom on May 9 is no longer a realistic option for us. The event has been canceled. However, we know this is an important event for our students. We are hopeful we can have prom later this summer at the Almond Campus and have a tentative date set for Friday, July 10.

This dance would follow a similar format of our homecoming dance, as a result of the current difficulty of finding vendors to provide the same experience as an off-site location. In addition, this event will only be for current WTHS (junior and senior) students. No outside guests will be allowed unless they are O'Plaine students. Details on an outside guest form will become available when it is official that we can host such an event. That said, we are still following public health and CDC guidelines, which may impact our ability to host the event.

Please keep in mind that planning and executing this event for typically over 1,000 students will be challenging given the current uncertainty. We will continue to do our best.

### Illinois High School Association (IHSA) and Spring Sports

The IHSA has provided the following statement regarding the status of the spring athletic season:

#### IHSA COVID-19 Update

\* Last updated at 2:30 pm on Wednesday, April 1, 2020

First and foremost, the IHSA continues to encourage all Illinois residents to heed the recommendations of state officials and medical experts. of state officials and medical experts. These quarantine and social distancing measures have been put in place not only for your own safety, but also for those around you. By adhering to them, we ensure the shortest path to returning to normalcy, including physical school attendance and participation in high school sports and activities.

Even though Illinois schools will remain closed through April 30th following the March 31st announcement by Illinois Governor JB Pritzker, we remain optimistic that a May 1 return to school, followed by a to-be-determined acclimatization practice period, can still result in a truncated spring season that culminates with IHSA State Series tournaments and the crowning of state champions in June.

In its discussions thus far, the IHSA Board of Directors has been highly supportive of creating an exemption to the IHSA Season Limitation By-law to allow spring sports to play into late June, but competing into or beyond July is not being considered at this time.

We are also realistic in recognizing that any further school postponements, or the cessation of physical school attendance for the remainder of the year, will almost certainly result in the cancellation of all remaining IHSA sports and activities this school year.

### Athletic Participation Fee

Although we have postponed payment for our spring sport athletes, we are aware that many of you have already made payment for the spring season. We have been following the directives of the governor and the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) regarding the school closure through April 30, 2020. We will not be issuing any refunds until an official decision has been made to cancel IHSA spring athletics and activities.

### Summer Camps

We are hopeful we will be able to host summer camps once the shelter-in-place order has been lifted. Registration for summer camps will not open until we have been given the appropriate directives.



## Thank You

Thank you to our coaches and activity sponsors for their patience, flexibility and creativity to stay connected with our students and families during this challenging time.