Warren Township High School District 121

Warren Connection: Autumn Reflections

November 24, 2020



Dear Warren Community,

Thanks for reading our November 2020 edition of the Warren Connection. Our November newsletter features some of the most recent highlights of achievements and activities of our students, parents and community members, as well as updated WTHS district news.

The district will be closed on November 25, 26, and 27 for the extended Thanksgiving weekend. Please enjoy a safe and nice Thanksgiving with your families.

Due to continued high COVID-19 numbers in our area, WTHS will complete the first semester with our current remote learning plan and schedules, with some small groups of students with higher needs for the last few weeks of this semester. Thank you again for your ongoing support and flexibility.

Winter Sports Paused as of Friday, November 20

The Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois High School Association have placed winter sports on a pause until further notice due to the significant community spread of COVID-19. Please look for more information from our athletic department and coaches for updates on specific sport plans.

Semester 2 Parent Survey on December 2



In our next parent letter, scheduled to be sent out December 2, we will be surveying parents regarding their preference to keep their children in remote learning for the second semester, even if we are able to safely open using a hybrid schedule at some point. Please be on the lookout for this communication.

The District is closed on:

Wednesday, November 25 Thursday, November 26 Friday, November 27 Happy Thanksgiving!



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STAY CONNECTED TO WTHS



Warren's website, at www.d121.org, is a key link to staying connected with our current programs and projects.



https://www.facebook.com/WTHSDistrict121

#WeAreWarren

PowerSchool



Please make sure your numbers on file are updated. This will ensure you receive all communications in a timely manner.

PowerSchool can also be used to access student schedules, grades, attendance and other useful student information.



Principals' Twitter

Almond Campus Principal Twitter Account
O'Plaine Principal Twitter



Principals' YouTube

Almond Campus Principal YouTube Account
O'Plaine Principal YouTube

Board of Education News

Possible Limiting Rate Proposal

Over the past six months—and with help from a Community Task Force comprising business, civic and education leaders, including WTHS alumni and parents—the District has developed a funding proposal for residents to consider. The funding proposal would allow the District to address its operating needs, including preserving academics, the District's current 8-period day, athletics and activities/clubs.



The proposed limiting rate proposal would also allow the restoration of important student support services, including math and English intervention programs and mental health services. Added funding would help ensure all students, including at-risk students, have access to and success in the most academically challenging programs. Lastly, funds would allow the District to maintain an adequate fund balance and lower student fees to be more in line with those of other local high school districts in our area.

Warren Township High School District 121 seeks our community's thoughts and recommendations on a possible funding proposal to address its operating needs. The district's financial challenges have been, and will continue to be, processed with community input in November and December.

Nothing is set in stone until the Community Task Force, and subsequently the Board of Education, hears from our community. The District would greatly appreciate the community's participation in a public opinion survey that will be mailed in the next few weeks.

WTHS has taken important steps to reduce expenses and maintain a balanced budget. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- > The reduction of 51 staff positions over the last five years.
- Refinancing outstanding debt to take advantage of better interest rates.
- > Joining a different healthcare cooperative to decrease the cost of employee benefits.
- ➤ Eliminating rental costs and reducing operational costs by moving the Transition Center Program back to the WTHS O'Plaine campus from Gurnee Mills.
- ➤ Significantly drawing down the District's fund balance. (Unfortunately, continuing to draw down WTHS's fund balance is not a sustainable solution. The District has already drawn down these funds to the lowest level that is recommended by the Illinois State Board of Education. WTHS has the lowest per-pupil funding compared to Lake County high school districts, and the Illinois State Board of Education is providing funding to WTHS at a 67% adequacy percentage.)

Without additional funding, WTHS is projected to continue to make necessary costcutting steps over the next three years, including:

- Moving from an 8- to 7-period day, which will reduce or eliminate some Advanced Placement (AP) courses and other academic and elective course options.
- > Cutting an additional 46 teaching and staff positions, as well as more student support services.
- > Eliminating many of the District's 32 athletic programs (or levels within programs).
- > Reducing or eliminating many of the District's 55 activity programs and clubs, including band, drama and choir.
- Further increasing student fees, which are already the highest among high school districts in Lake County, and which is an important issue for many WTHS families.



WTHS Board of Education

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

Bency Beals, Board Secretary

Member Bency Beals was elected to fill the Board Secretary position at the October 13, 2020 meeting, which was formerly held by Jim Walz, who resigned from the Board in September.

Board of Education Appoints Katherine Blair to Fill Vacancy

At a special meeting on November 4, 2020, the Board appointed Katherine Blair to fill the vacancy when member Jim Walz resigned in September. Ms. Blair will fulfill this appointment until April 2021.

Community Informational Webinars Regarding Possible Limiting Rate Proposal

The District will be hosting two more online informational webinars regarding a possible limiting rate proposal that includes opportunities for questions and answers.

- November 30, 2020 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- December 5, 2020 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.
 Check the website at d121.org/limitingrateproposal

Superintendent's Corner

by Dr. John P. Ahlgrim, Superintendent of Schools



D121.org/returntoschool

The most recent information and updates about our return to school status and plans are on the District's website, at d121.org/returntoschool.

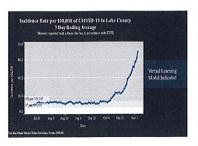
If you are not receiving notifications sent to you via email, please check your PowerSchool demographic information so you do not miss any school announcements.





Return to School Information and Updates

Lake County Health Department COVID-19 Data



The incidence rate per 100,000 of COVID-19 in Lake County is rising and continues to rise. We are seeing very high numbers for a seven-day rolling average. The LCHD remains in a recommended virtual learning model status for schools. You may access the Lake County Health Department school dashboard at:

https://covid19response-lakecountyil.hub.arcgis.com/pages/schools-dashboard

What are the School Status Options?

The definitions and return-to-school plans at WTHS, are:

- 1. **Fully In-Person:** All students in every day; safe athletics and activities allowed.
- 2. **Blended:** Some of our student population is in each day for full schedules; safe athletics and activities allowed.
- 3. **Hybrid:** Abbreviated schedules for some of our student population in-person each day; generally all staff onsite; safe athletics and activities allowed.
- 4. Remote with Small Groups: Most students work remotely; small groups of students invited, with only essential onsite workers required and instructional staff who choose to teach from classrooms and/or choose to supervise and support small groups of students; safe athletics and activities allowed.

As of November 24, WTHS is in remote with small groups status.

5. **Fully Remote:** No students in-person, only essential on-site workers required and no athletics or in-person activities.

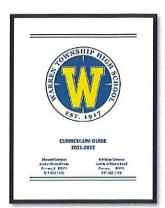
Parents and Students

3 W's

As we have more students on campus in smaller groups for academics or activities, please keep in mind that your transportation to and from school is also a very important part of keeping everyone well. We encourage students not to carpool with non-household members and, if necessary, please remember that wearing a mask is an important part of the three W's: 1) Wash your hands, 2) Watch your distance. and 3) Wear a mask

News from Instructional Services

by Christopher J. Geocaris, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services



2021-2022 Curriculum Guide

This month, the Instructional Services Department has been hard at work preparing the new Curriculum Guide for the 2021-22 school year. On Tuesday, October 13, the Board of Education approved the updated Curriculum Guide, which is now posted at

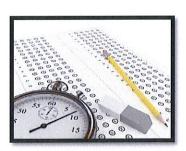
https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/Page/429.

It contains all the course information students will need as we begin our 2021-22 course selection process.

Update on Professional Development for Staff

Our teachers continue to work diligently during this period of remote learning to build relationships with their students and provide them with engaging lessons and learning opportunities. On our Institute Day on October 19, teachers participated in training focused on preparing for our concurrent instruction model, which is part of our Hybrid Learning Plan approved by the Board of Education on October 13.

Concurrent instruction is the practice of instructing students in the classroom and online at the same time.



SAT Testing

We have now completed the majority of our state-required SAT testing. On September 23, we welcomed more than 750 students, split between both campuses, to take the exam. Accommodations testing was completed on October 14-15.

Seniors who still need to take the exam will

receive additional communications regarding makeup dates. The State-sponsored SAT is a graduation requirement for all members of the Class of 2021. Students in the Class of 2022 will take the exam this spring.



Check the district website
https://www.d121.org/elearning
for information about the District's eLearning
schedules, supplies or textbooks needs,
Chromebook or technology questions, and
additional curriculum resources.



No Semester One Final Exam Schedule

To maximize instructional time for our teachers and students, no final exam schedule will be used at the end of our first semester. We will continue our fully remote schedule of days through December 18, 2020.

Students will follow a normal daily schedule the week of December 14. Teachers will utilize this week for activities that will support our students in finishing the semester successfully. Academic activities during the final week of the semester will vary by class.

2019-20 Illinois School Report Card



Each fall, the Illinois State Board of Education releases report card for each school and school district in the state.

The 2019-20 Illinois School Report Card is on our website at:

https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/Page/247

News From Student Services

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



How our Student Services Team (SST) Members Support Our Students

Deans of Students

- Lead SST meetings with counselors and social workers to review students in need
- Help support data collection (attendance, academics, mental health) to identify students in need
- Make home visits each week for students in need of support and assistance
- Leads and participates in mid-level team meetings with parents/guardians and students to provide supports, both academic and social/emotional

Counselors

- Assist students daily, working with parents/guardians, and participate in SST meetings
- May participate in home visits each week for students in need of support and assistance
- Communicate in a variety of platforms with students and families on academic progress and social/emotional support as needed
- Participate in mid-level team meetings with parents/guardians and students

Social Workers

- Assist students daily, work with parents/guardians, and participate in SST meetings
- May participate in home visits each week for students in need of support and assistance
- Hold one-to-one meetings with students on their caseload, as well as others identified as in need of additional support
- May participate in mid-level team meetings with parents/guardians and students
- Support students who are transitioning back to school from a hospitalization or an outpatient program
- Coordinate group meetings to support social/emotional needs, such as girls' and boys' groups, social skills and emotional regulation groups
- · Transfer student groups

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Updates

At the November 10, 2020, special board meeting, Dr. Keeley reported on a parent survey that was conducted at the start of the school year.

Three surveys were developed to collect data about students, families and staff regarding living situations and experiences as a result of the world climate. The family survey was conducted in August and October, the student survey was conducted in August and October, and a faculty/staff survey was



conducted in August. Families and students will be offered the survey again in December. The surveys will help our staff identify trends or changes in the community to provide timely and directed support and plan interventions.



The data collected was shared with the faculty at the beginning of the year at our institute day. This helped our teachers develop an understanding of our students and family experiences. Social workers and counselors can then provide counseling, connect families with outside resources and work at removing barriers for students so they can focus on learning.

During the summer of 2020, WTHS School Psychologist Joe Jordan presented a workshop for WTHS staff covering social emotional needs of students during a crisis. WTHS also partnered with the Warren Township Center in a town hall meeting, with information presented about "Preparing our Children for Success in Challenging Times." Additionally, during an in-service day on October 14, WTHS teachers participated in professional development that covered hybrid classrooms and social-emotional learning barriers. WTHS social workers continue to stay current on community resources available for our families and are sharing and collaborating with other districts in our community and the state of Illinois.

Other ways our students and families are being provided information on school and community supports:

- District-wide emails sent home from Student Services describing our services and community resources
- Warren Township High School website Student Services Tab
- District-wide emails sent home on community offerings through Warren Township Center
- Warren Township Center sharing information at Grab and Go lunches
- Social Worker Instagram Socialwork_wths

Check the district website at:
https://www.d121.org/domain/36
for information about student services and resources.

News from Business Services and Operations

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

Grab-and-Go Meals



Due to our current fully remote learning plan status, WTHS will continue to distribute grab-and-go meals, however, beginning November 10, all students ages 18 and under are eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch, regardless of Free and Reduced status.

A WTHS school bus or activity bus will be distributing packaged meals at the following locations, dates and time. These times cover the common student lunch periods on the fully remote learning schedule.

Every Tuesday and Thursday

Updated starting November 10 until further notice

10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Bus 1. WTHS O'Plaine Campus North Entrance 500 N. O'Plaine Road, Gurnee

Bus 2. Park City Teen Center 333 Teske Boulevard, Park City

Bus 3. Green Valley Apartments 4100 Greenleaf Court, Park City

Bus 4· WTHS Almond Campus Main Entrance 34090 N. Almond Road, Gurnee

Packaged meals will be available for pickup from our buses on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., at four convenient locations. Please note that the Continental Village location will be discontinued and the Almond Campus location is a new addition.

Transition Center Moves to O'Plaine Campus

The Transition program provides academic enrichment and integrated work training possibilities, as well as opportunities to develop independent living, self-advocacy, career and social skills, for our special education students ages 18 to 22.

In June 2020, the district ended its contract with Gurnee Mills and began working on transforming the O'Plaine Campus maintenance office—formerly the transportation center—into the new transition program center. The area is designed to house three instructional spaces for students and a teachers' office. Additionally, Room 108 at the O'Plaine Campus was converted from a science classroom into a large kitchen and one classroom.

Warren is committed to providing a robust program for our 18-22 year old special education population by eliminating rental costs and reducing operational expenses through moving the program back to the O'Plaine Campus.



Transition Center







Principal's Corner at the Almond Campus

by Rob Parrott

WARREN

Better Together

A-Team Awards

Our staff recognizes students each month who exhibits one or more of the pillars of our A-Team, which include:

Attendance – This is a dedication to being at school, in class, on time, each day.

Attitude – This is a focus on choosing to get better every day. To choose an attitude that makes yourself and others better.

Academics – This is a focus on taking active ownership of your learning and making positive progress academically.

Acceptance – This is an appreciation for the diversity in our world and valuing the assets diversity brings to our community. It is a commitment to treating others as you would want to be treated; and even better, getting to know others so you can treat them how they want to be treated.

Athletics/Activities – This is an engagement in the opportunities outside of the classroom that enhance student connectedness and contributions to our school community.

The following students are our monthly A-Team winners at the Almond Campus: Jovanni Briones, Darius Ursin, Vaibhav Joshi, Salvador Fajardo, Medina-Rodriquez, Miguel Gallegos, Saul Carruthers, Cody Koski-Nichols, Alexander Evelyn White, Angel John, Daisy Ramirez, Jackson Cole, Hailei Estrada, Esau Mercado, Jordan Hill, Saul Medina-Rodriguez, Anne Serdar, Olivia Ehlers, John DeSanto, Elizabeth Payson, and Keira Rodriguez.

If students (or parents) are in need of academic, social-emotional, or any other support, please reach out to our Student Services Team so we can follow up with you.

For the appointment request form. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1F AlpQLSeDFJ2j9sxwRD5UVxejWS1sEO SGup9Z-M6LAJhxvVFRixdGQ/viewform Thanksgiving is just around the corner, and there is so much to be grateful for. I am so proud of our staff and students as they continue to work extremely hard during a challenging time. As we work through the pandemic and the new challenges we are presented with, it is always great to see the new and creative ways our staff and students come up with to make the best of



the situation. Working together by listening, learning, and leaning on each other is one of the many special things about the Warren community. For that, I will always be thankful!



Although we have been in remote learning since the start of the year, we have been able to hold a few activities on campus to welcome some students back. I was thrilled to see our Class of 2021 students come to campus in September and October to take the SAT exam. This state-required exam was important for our students to complete to meet the ISBE

graduation requirement. It also provided a free exam for students to use in their college application process.



We also had a great "virtual" Homecoming week thanks to the leadership of our student council students and advisors. Although the week was without some traditional events, like a Powder Puff game and all-school assembly, we were able to

have a parade to kick off the week, hold spirit days, play a virtual game of all-school Bingo, and host our first-ever drive-in movie night. It took a lot of coordination and effort to host the events in a safe and fun way. It was great to see our students take part in the activities that were provided.

In partnership with our school representative, Mr. Brain Walter from Jostens hosted a virtual graduation meeting for parents and students in the Class of 2021 on November 2, 2020. The presentation provided updates to our graduation plans for May 23, 2021, as well as cap and gown and Class of 2021 merchandise ordering information.



The deadline to order cap and gowns (and other items) has been extended to December 1, 2020. Information can be found on our website.

Principal's Corner at the O'Plaine Campus

by Michele Bertola

Thanksgiving is just around the corner, and there is so much to be grateful for. I am so proud of our staff and students as they continue to work extremely hard during a challenging time. Our commitment to get through this together and grow stronger continues to drive our efforts each and every day. Please see some important



information below on supportive measures, recognitions, and leadership opportunities at the O'Plaine campus.

Link Crew

We are asking the Class of 2024 to attend our Link Crew meetings, which occur every 2-3 weeks. Link Crew is focused on helping freshmen transition to high school and provide support along the way. We have staff and sophomore and senior leaders that help lead each crew. Please encourage all freshmen to attend and participate in these informative and fun meetings. Meeting information is shared via student Warren email. Students should be checking their email daily.

Principal Leadership Team

Students: Are you interested in leadership?

Parents: Please encourage your student to reach out to me (mbertola@wths.net) if they are interested in being on my student leadership team.



I am looking for students interested in meeting to discuss current school issues and offer their perspectives and feedback. I am especially looking for interested freshmen, but any students interested can email me!

3W's

As we prepare for students to return to the building, we ask for all Blue Devils to follow the 3W's to help keep us all safe. By collectively following these guidelines we have a better chance of getting back and staying in school!



WARREN

Better Together

Matter of Pride

Staff have nominated students to recognize them for their academic excellence, academic improvement, leadership, act of kindness, or making Warren a better place. The students listed below were nominated for one of these reasons.



Brendan Albama, Lars Borland, Don Camacho, Rebecca Chase, Kennedy Cominsky, Hayden Cottrell, Jose Garcia, Travis Gillet, Dylan Hattenschweiler, Faith Hintz, Hallie Jasnoch, Eleanor Kreamer, Mehmet Jozwiak, Edward Lim, Angel Lopez, Llajaira Lopez, Valeria Marquez, Lilah Meyers, Eesha Narapareddy, Kiley Rodriguez, Sophia Rothus, Sofia Sapp, Sam Sellers, and Isabella Wittwer.

If students (or parents) are in need of academic, social-emotional, or any other support, please reach out to our Student Services Team so we can follow up with you.

For the appointment request form. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1F AlpQLSeDFJ2j9sxwRD5UVxejWS1sEO SGup9Z-M6LAJhxvVFRixdGQ/viewform

News about Athletics

by Becky Belmont, Director of Athletics



Winter Sports Paused as of Friday, November 20

The Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois High School Association have placed winter sports on a pause until further notice due to the significant community spread of COVID-19. Please look for more information from our athletic department and coaches for updates on specific sport plans.



NSC Sportsmanship Award Winners

The North Suburban Conference schools select one student-athlete from each sport that represents the true meaning of sportsmanship. This fall we are pleased to honor the following student-athletes:

Boys Cross Country: Carlos Villa Girls Cross Country: Nikki Harrison

Boys Golf: Nick Steinhilber Girls Golf: Kylee Wiltse Girls Tennis: Dana Fanizza

Girls Swimming & Diving: Grace Towson

Warren Township High School District 121 is a member of the following athletic organizations:

Illinois High School Association (IHSA), which competes in phases of competition tournaments: sectionals, regionals and state.

North Suburban Conference (NSC), competes against eight nearby high schools throughout the season and ends with a conference tournament.

Fall Season Wrap Up

Fall Season Wrap Up			
Boys Cross County	The boys team finished in 7th place overall qualifying for the State Finals. This is the first time in school history the boys cross country team has qualified for the state finals in school history. Junior Luke Wiley was the individual IHSA Sectional Champion. He ran a great race coming in at a very fast 15:07 for 3 miles. The Devils also contributing to the day were junior Max Zeisler, junior Nathan Garcia, sophomore Cole Kaether, junior David Lara, senior Carlos Villa, and freshman Ryan Moats. Congratulations to coaches Jason Jecmen, Joe Stubenvoll, and the entire team. The girls team placed 9th overall. The Devils were		
Girls Cross County	led by Sophomore Mia Pasha, freshman Emma Leung, senior Taylor Latza, senior Melissa Cote, senior Nicole Harrison, senior Caralyn Whalen, and sophomore Olivia Buccelli. Congratulations to coaches Brett Heimstead, Louie Klein, and Don Proft.		
Boys Golf	The Boys golf team wrapped up the season by finishing 6th out of 8 with a score 340 at the IHSA Regional. Top scorers were Nick Steinhilber (80), Andreas Ackron and Anders Johnson (86) and Charlie Badgley (88).		
Girls Golf	The Girls team placed 3 rd in the IHSA Regional tournament at Prairie Isle. Top scorers: junior Mia Bornhorst 94, sophomore Alaina Goeden 94, senior Sydney Bornhorst 96, and sophomore Mia Cosnotti 105.		
Swimming and Diving	The Blue Devils Swimming & Diving Team placed 5 th at the IHSA Sectional at Highland Park High School. The top 12 in each event score points and the top 6 earn medals. Diving: Kayleigh Glickley 6th place and Olivia Edgar 12th place. Swimming: 200 Free - Chloe Yoder 10th place; 200 IM - Grace Bevers 4th place and Grace Towson 12th place; 50 Free - Anni Stingle 9th place Aly Wallander 11 place; 100 Butterfly - Anni Stingle - 2nd place with a new school record of 56.96 this is also a state qualifying time if there was going to be a state meet. Hailey Benoit took 9 th ; place; 100 Freestyle - Grace Bevers 7th place; 500 freestyle - Chloe Yoder 10th place; 100 Backstroke - Grace Bevers 2nd place a state qualifying time of 57.36 and Hailey Benoit 4th place.		
Girls Tennis	The Varsity team finished their season with a 12-4 record overall. The program had an overall record of 34-10. Senior Olivia Wong finished her high school career as a four-year varsity player with 82 wins.		

News about Activities

by Aimee Lonigro, Assistant Director of Athletics and Activities Coordinator

WTHS Student Activities - Discover Your Passion!

View all our current clubs and activities and reach out to sponsors for more information. https://www.d121.org/domain/40



ACTIVITY FAIR!

DISCOVER YOUR PASSION

Warren Theatre - The shows must go... ONLINE! www.warrentheatre.net

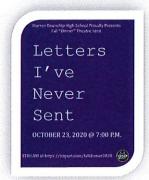


WARREN THEATRE PRESENTED A VIRTUAL RENDITION OF SHERLOCK HOLMES FROM NOVEMBER 2-4, 2020. VIEW THE SHOW AT <u>WWW.WARRENTHEATRE.NET</u>



THE NEW GIGGLES 'N BITS TROUPE WILL BE LIVE-STREAMING AN IMPROV SHOW ON THE WARREN THEATRE YOUTUBE CHANNEL AT 7:00 PM ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4TH. COME ON OUT AND HAVE A FEW HOLIDAY LAUGHS FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME AND SUPPORT THE WIT AND WISDOM OF THESE WONDERFUL STUDENTS. HOORAY COMEDY!





THE WTHS FALL DINNER THEATRE PRESENTED *LETTERS I'VE NEVER SENT* ON OCTOBER 23, 2020. VIEW THE SHOW AT HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/FALLDINNER2020



The SOS (Students of Service at Almond) and the MECS (Mother Earths Concerned Citizens) clubs teamed together to cleanup the Des Plaines River Trail on Saturday, October 17.



Homecoming 2020 There's No Place Like Home

Thank you to the Student Council and sponsors Mrs. Desiron and Mrs. Lainio for organizing a fun week of activities for our students. On October 4, we started the week with the Homecoming Parade, played virtual Bingo, had spirit wear contests, held Homecoming Royalty voting, collected for charity, and capped it all off with a Friday night outdoor movie.

The donation drives accounted for approximately 300 food/paper/cleaning items that were donated to the Warren Township Food Pantry. Approximately 60 books were donated to Bernie's Book Bank, while seven large bags full of blankets and warm clothing were donated to Love, Inc.

