Warren Township High School District 121

Warren Connection: January News

January 24, 2022



Dear WTHS Community:

We would like to thank the nearly 500 community members who provided valuable feedback through our recent communication survey, which was available to our school community in November 2021. We provided an overview of the feedback that was provided to the Board of Education at our December 22 meeting. Now, we want to share some of the highlights with you.

The primary means of communicating with our school community have been through direct communications (email or U.S. mail), followed by our district website and Facebook page. Most people have been aware of the most critical district processes—including COVID-19, our return-to-school plan, referendum information, and the superintendent search—through these means. These tools also continue to be the methods by which our school community prefers to get information.

We will begin to implement some of the common suggestions that were provided in the survey, such as:

- 1. Provide subject lines on all or most emails that come from WTHS so that individuals within our community can more quickly identify the importance and intended audience of each message.
- 2. Use text messaging and/or social media to bring additional attention to very important emails sent from WTHS.
- 3. Update website content more regularly for timeliness and relevance.

The Board of Education thanks you for providing this valuable input. We look forward to implementing this feedback in the near future.

Parent-Teacher Advisory
Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 25, 2022 6:30 p.m.

Warren Township High School Almond Campus Library 34090 N. Almond Road, Gurnee

> If you are interested in attending, please email Dr. John Ahlgrim at jahlgrim@wths.net

District 121 Referendum Informational Meeting for the Community

District 121 will host a community informational meeting focused on the tax rate increase referendum on the June 2022 ballot.

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

Warren Township High School Almond Campus 34090 N. Almond Road, Gurnee

English presentation at 6:30 p.m. Spanish presentation at 7:30 p.m.

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 contact information on file is up to date. 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

Warren Township High School District 121 Announces Next Superintendent of Schools

The Warren Township High School District 121 Board of Education is pleased to announce that Dr. Daniel "Danny" Woestman has been hired to serve as Superintendent of Schools beginning July 1, 2022.

He will fill the Superintendent position currently held by Dr. John Ahlgrim, who has led the District since 2015 and will be retiring at the end of this school year.



Dr. Woestman is currently the Superintendent of Schools at Belvidere School District 100, a position he has held since 2016. Under Dr. Woestman's leadership, Belvidere has been recognized at the state and national levels for its career readiness programs, increases in early-college opportunities for high school students, positive work environment, and continuous improvement structures.

Before taking that position, Dr. Woestman served for five years in leadership roles at Rockford Public Schools as Assistant Superintendent and Director of Accountability. He also served as an Assistant Principal at Hononegah Community High School. He began his career in education as an English teacher at Hononegah Community High School in northern Illinois and Springville High School in Utah.

"We are very excited and fortunate to have Dr. Woestman join the Warren Township High School team," said Paul Schulz, School Board President. "As our new Superintendent, Danny's experience and positive energy will be a great addition to both our school and our community."

"I am honored by the opportunity to be part of the Warren Township High School community," Dr. Woestman said. "High schools are such an important part of every community, and I hope to continue the strong traditions that are part of the WTHS history. I'm excited to work and learn alongside the great people that make this district the amazing place it's known to be."

Dr. Woestman earned a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Northern Illinois University and a Masters of Education in Educational Leadership from the University of Cincinnati. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching and English as a Second Language (ESL) from Brigham Young University in Utah.

Dr. Woestman was recently named the 2020-21 Illinois Principal Association Kishwaukee Region Superintendent of the Year.

Danny and his wife reside in Cary, Illinois with their three children.



Would you like us to provide an informational forum for a school or community group to learn about our revenue challenges and the referendum question? Please reach out to Dr. John Ahlgrim at 847-548-7144 or email jahlgrim@wths.net.



Paul Schulz, President John R. Anderson, Vice-President Bency Beals, Secretary Katherine Blair, Member Tony DeMonte, Member Thomas Drake, Member Natalia Alvarez Martinez, Member

Recap of the December 21, 2021 Board Meeting

The Board recognized and congratulated the National Letter of Intent Signers in December, the IHSA Fall Sport State Qualifiers and Winners and announced the Illinois State Scholars.

Presentations, Reports and Discussion regarding the following items:

- Public Hearing for the 2021 Tax Levy
- Partnership Report: Schuler Program
- Annual Joint Conference Report, November 19-22, 2021
- Safety Committee, November 30, 2021
- Curriculum Committee, December 8, 2021
- Student Leadership Report
- Department Report: World Language
- Treasurer's Reports, November 2021
- Monthly Reports, November 2021
- Lake County Safety Conference, March 7, 2022
- Staff Wellness Program Participation Update
- Winter Building Hours, December 23, 2021 to January 7, 2022
- Discussion of Special Education Transportation
- Communications Survey Report
- Referendum Update
- Return to School Update

The Board approved the following items:

- Approval of personnel recommendations for eight candidates or employees
- Payment of bills dated December 21, 2021 in the amount of \$5,281,460.36
 Regular Meeting minutes and Executive Session minutes of
- November 18, 2021

 Special Meeting minutes and Executive Session minutes of
- November 8, 2021, November 9, 2021 and December 2, 2021
- Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Gifts to the District
- Approval of Employment Contract for New Superintendent of Schools
- Approval of Summer School Program 2022
- Approval of the Resolution Directing the Transfer of Funds from the Educational Fund of THSD121, Lake County, Illinois, to the Working Cash Fund of Said School District
- Action on Roof Repair Bids
- Approval of Bus Lease for 33 2022 International Conventional 77-Passenger Buses
- Approval of FY22 Tentative Staffing Plan as of December 21, 2022
- Resolution Authorizing Final Aggregate Tax Levy 2021

Recap of the January 18, 2022 Board Meeting

The Board recognized and congratulated Elizabeth Webster for receiving the Classroom Legend Award from the Chicago Bears.

Presentations, reports and discussion regarding the following items:

- Illinois Association of School Boards, Lake Division Meeting, March 9, 2022
- Policy Committee, January 11, 2022
- Student Leadership Report
- Department Report: Special Education and Transition Program
- Almond Campus Solar Project Year One Savings Report
- Treasurer's Report, December 2021
- Monthly Reports, December 2021
- Information Regarding Direct Certification Including Free and Reduced Applications for the 2022-2023 School Year
- Return to School Update
- Referendum Update

The Board approved the following items:

- Approval of personnel recommendation for seven candidates or employees
- Payment of bills dated January 18, 2022 in the amount of \$5,682,657.59
- Regular Meeting Minutes and Executive Session Minutes of December 18, 2021
- Presentation of the FY21 Audit
- Approval to Begin Budget for the 2022-2023 School Year
- Authorization to Close Inactive Student Activity Accounts
- Approval of Board Scholarships for 2022
- Approval of the 2022-23 Public School Calendar
- Approval of Amended 2021-22 Board of Education Meeting Schedule
- Approval of 2022-23 School Board Meeting Schedule
- Approval of Technology Upgrades of Firewalls
- Approval of eRate Category 2 Expenditure for eRate Year 25
- First Reading of District Board Policies and Exhibits
- Discussion and Approval of Purchasing up to Three (3) Vans for Student Transportation

Superintendent's Corner

by Dr. John P. Ahlgrim, Superintendent of Schools



Get the Facts about the Referendum Question at www.d121.org/referendum

On August 17, the Board of Education approved a 60-cent operating rate increase question that will appear on the ballot on June 28, 2022. If approved by voters, it would provide approximately \$13.25 million in additional revenue annually, with an estimated annual tax impact of \$200 (\$16.67 per month) per \$100,000 of a home's fair market value.

This increased funding would allow the District to preserve the eight-period school day, improve academic supports and mental health services, restore and protect activities and clubs, and restore and protect athletics. It would also allow us to lower student fees to rates comparable with other Lake County high schools.

We aim to provide clarity and details regarding how students would be impacted with and without this funding over the next two years.

There are several programs affected by the referendum question, including our eight-period school day, academic and mental health assistance, activity programs, and athletic programs. The information on this page focuses on normalizing student fees.

District 121 Referendum Informational Meeting for the Community

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Wednesday, February 9, 2022

Warren Township High School Almond Campus 34090 N. Almond Road, Gurnee

English presentation starts at 6:30 p.m. Spanish presentation starts at 7:30 p.m.

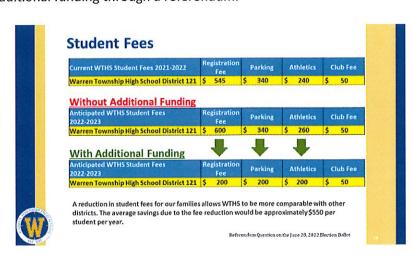
Get the Facts About the Referendum Question: Investing in our Students

Normalizing Student Fees

One of the consequences of the low annual revenue the District currently receives from property taxes has been increases of student fees on families to offset the lower local tax revenue. Currently, the fees for WTHS are abnormally high and much greater than comparable Lake County High School districts.



Pending additional funding through a successful referendum in June, the Board of Education has approved lowering the fees to more normal levels for our families. Below is a chart demonstrating the anticipated fees for families, beginning with the 2022-23 school year, both with and without additional funding through a referendum.



News from Instructional Services

by Christopher J. Geocaris, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services

Frequently Asked Questions

As we provide informational meetings to our community regarding our revenue challenges, questions often come up that we will look to address in the newsletter over the next several months.



Question: How does WTHS compare academically?

Warren Township High School Recognized as One of the Top Schools in the Country

Warren Township High School has recently been recognized as one of the Best High Schools in America by U.S News & World Report. The publication measures the performance of over 24,000 high schools nationally in several areas:



- The percentage of 12th grade students who took and passed an Advanced Placement exam.
- Student performance on staterequired assessments (i.e., SAT).
- Performance on state assessments (i.e. SAT) by black and Hispanic students in comparison to other student subgroups in Illinois.
- 4-year graduation rate of the district.

Warren has earned recognition as one of America's Best High Schools annually for more than 10 years.

In 2021, Warren ranks in the top $1/8^{th}$ of schools nationally and in the top 15% of all schools in Illinois.

Congratulations to our students and staff for all of their hard work to earn this recognition!



SAT Test Prep Opportunity

Warren Township High School has an amazing opportunity to help students prepare for the SAT test on April 13, 2022. We are proud to partner with Academic Tutoring Centers to offer junior students high-quality SAT prep classes after school at the Almond Campus.

To best accommodate our students' busy schedules, we will be running two classes on Wednesday nights. Students can register for a 2:30-5:00 p.m. class or a 5:30-8:00 p.m. class. Classes will meet from February 23 through April 6, 2022, with a week off for spring break.

If you are interested in finding out more information about the program or signing up, please go to

AcademicTutoringCenters.com/wt2022.

The six-week program costs \$395. There is also a discounted rate of \$245 for those who qualify for the free/reduced lunch program.

Registration closes on February 8, 2022.

If you have any questions regarding this SAT prep program, please contact Matthew Jones, Assistant Principal at the Almond Campus, or the Academic Tutoring Center at (847) 823-5300.



Warren Connection: January News

News from Student Services

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



5Essentials Survey and Illinois Youth Survey

Each year, the State of Illinois requires schools to conduct the 5Essentials survey. It identifies five indicators that lead to improved outcomes for all students, including improved attendance and larger test score gains.

The five indicators that positively affect school success are:

- 1. Effective Leaders
- 2. Collaborative Teachers
- 3. Involved Families
- 4. Supportive Environments
- 5. Ambitious Instruction

Research derived from the 5Essentials has proven that schools strong on at least three of the items above are 10 times more likely to improve student outcomes.

Schools across Illinois participated in the ninth annual 5Essentials Survey of Learning Conditions: Organizing Schools for Improvement, this past academic year. This survey generates valuable data that districts can use to guide their ongoing efforts to improve schools and offer students an excellent education. The survey is another improvement tool that allows districts and the state to share data as a means to inform parents and community members about the school's learning environment.

The Illinois 5Essentials Survey is administered online by Chicago Impact at the University of Chicago, on behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education. Data and indicators result from an anonymous administration of the survey instrument.

WTHS will conduct the survey during physical education classes between January 11 and March 11.

As we look ahead to the second semester of the 2021-22 school year, we are modifying our Return to School Plan to incorporate COVID-19 guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), which follows the updated Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance released December 27, 2021 (reducing exclusion days due to COVID-19).

Mitigation strategies and expectations that have been in place this school year—including appropriate mask wearing and social distancing guidelines—are still in effect. We appreciate the cooperation our WTHS community has provided this year as we navigate the pandemic together.



- Masks will be required for all individuals in schools during the school day, except for specific times when removal of the mask is necessary (such as eating lunch).
- Masks are required of all individuals at all times on school buses. School buses fall under the same public health guidelines as public transportation.
- ➤ We will maintain social distancing of at least 3 feet (rather than 6 feet) between students within classrooms, but not if it would be a barrier to in-person learning.
- Students and staff should not come to school if they are experiencing symptoms on the IDPH's COVID-19 updated list, which includes a temperature above 100.4 degrees. However, students are no longer required to use the District's online daily form for self-certification prior to coming to school. No temperature checks

will be required upon entry to school.

Schools will provide remote instruction for students while they are under quarantine, as consistent with guidance or requirements from the Lake County Health Department or the IDPH.

As a reminder, if your child must miss school (regardless of vaccination status), please leave specific details (sore throat, fever, new cough, etc.) as to why they are absent when you call the attendance line. If the absence is NOT COVID-19 related (e.g., overslept, sports injury, documented allergy problems), please say so and you will not get a follow-up call. If your child has COVID-19 symptoms, please take them for a PCR test as soon as possible. If it is the common cold or anything else, a negative PCR test will allow your child to return to school.

Testing is available at most pharmacies, your primary physician's office, or the Lake County Health Department testing site, located at 102 W. Water Street in Waukegan.

As always, thank you for your ongoing flexibility and support!

	February
Our Career	r and College counselors are working hard
to provide	timely and valuable information to our
parents/gu	uardians and students. Please consider
attending	or discussing with your students.
Jan 22	ASVAB Career Assessment for
and the second	Sophomores, Juniors or Seniors, 9 a.m.
	in Room 211 at Almond
Jan 25	Career Workshop in College and Career
	Centers, both campuses
Jan 26	Financial Aid Workshop for Senior
	families, 6 pm to 8 pm at Almond
	Campus, College and Career Center
Jan 27	I'm First Club Meeting for Junior and
	Senior first generation students, 2:20
	pm to 3 pm at Almond College and
	Career Center
Jan 28	College of Lake County Application
	Workshop, lunch periods at Almond
	College and Career Center
Feb 2	Camino a College, Spanish Speaking
	College and Career planning for
	freshmen and sophomore families, 7
	p.m. at O'Plaine Campus Auditorium
Feb 4	National Scholarship Workshop, lunch
- 1 0	periods at O'Plaine Campus Library
Feb 8	First Generation Workshop, "Test
	Taking" -3rd period at O'Plaine Campus
Feb 11	Library
Lep 11	iHeart Local Scholarship Workshop for Senior students, "A" portion of lunch
	periods at Almond College and Career
	Center
Feb 15	Army Cafeteria Visit, all lunch periods at
16013	O'Plaine Campus
Feb 17	Freshmen Finding Your Glow Family

Presentation about Career Exploration, 7 p.m. at O'Plaine Auditorium

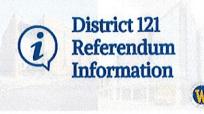
Post-Secondary Events - January and

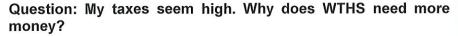
News from Business Services and Operations

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

Frequently Asked Questions

As we provide informational meetings to our community regarding our revenue challenges, questions often come up that we will try to address in the newsletter over the next several months.





WTHS is only one of the several taxing bodies that receive a percentage of your overall real estate tax. WTHS also receives less per-pupil revenue from taxes than any other high school district in Lake County.

The chart below compares these amounts to areas with nearby communities with similar household incomes, for example, on a \$300,000 home:

High School Districts	2020 Tax Rate	\$200K Home Value		\$300K Home Value		\$400K Home Value		\$500K Home Value	
Grayslake High School #127	4.326821	\$	2,881.66	\$	4,326.82	\$	5,767.65	\$	7,208.48
Antioch High School District #117	3.091101	\$	2,058.67	\$	3,091.10	\$	4,120.44	\$	5,149.77
Mundelein High School District #120	2.511506	\$	1,672.66	\$	2,511.51	\$	3,347.84	\$	4,184.17
Warren Township High School District #121	2.231785	\$	1,486.37	\$	2,231.79	\$	2,974.97	\$	3,718.15

- Warren Township High School District 121 receives \$2,231.79 from property taxes.
- Mundelein Community High School District 120 would receive \$2,511.51, or approximately 13% more tax revenue annually.
- Antioch Community High School District 117 would receive \$3,091.10, or approximately 39% more tax revenue.
- Grayslake Community High School District 127 would receive \$4,326.82, or approximately 94% more tax revenue.

This revenue problem continues to be a critical challenge for sustaining the current level of programming at WTHS.

Question: How much money did the solar field save the District over the last year?

Solar production from November 2020 through October 2021 was 2,908,562 kWh. This generation accounted for 91% of all the electrical needs at the Almond Campus. It reduced the District's electrical costs by \$215,639. The District also received \$666,708 in SRECs (solar renewable energy credits) and a ComEd rebate of \$601,965, for total benefits of \$1,484,312.



Get the Facts about the Referendum Question at www.d121.org/referendum

Warren Township High School has the lowest per-pupil revenue of all of the high school districts in Lake County.



Revenue Per Pupil 2020

Lake County High School Districts	Local Sources	State Sources	Federal Sources	Total		
Lake Forest District 115	\$31,419	1876	\$190	\$32,635		
Highland Park Deerfield District 113	628,617	\$1,162	\$570	438,851		
Libertyviša Vernon Hiša Diatrict 178	\$22.245	\$1,351	5248	\$22,045		
Adial Mayaneon District 125	\$26,278	1,060	\$404	\$28,081		
Graystake District 127	\$19,845	37,544	5280	\$27,469 \$25,024		
Zige-Senton District 129	\$15,469	\$8,375	\$1.152			
Antioch Lakes District 117	\$18,281	\$4,738	\$281.	\$23,288		
Mundelein District 120	\$19,874	\$1,903	5978			
Grant Township District 124	\$13,520	\$3,865	\$400	\$17,790		
Warren Township High School District 121	\$10,293	\$2,940	\$400	\$10,633		

On August 17, the Board of Education approved a 60-cent operating rate increase question that will appear on the ballot June 28, 2022.

A 60-cent increase would provide approximately \$13.25 million in additional revenue annually, with an estimated annual tax impact of \$200 (\$16.67 per month) per \$100,000 of a home's fair market value.

News from the Almond Principal

by Rob Parrott, Almond Campus Principal







We hope everyone had a great winter break and the first few weeks as we have resumed our school calendar. Happy New Year to all our families and students! As challenges continue to come our way regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, we are counting on everyone for their flexibility, communication, and support. I am confident we will get through this.



We are off to a strong start to the second semester, and many students have started some new semester-long classes. This is an exciting time for them to learn about a different subject and gain new skills.

The process of selecting courses for the 2022-2023 school year is also in the final stages for students returning next year. If you have a student who is not graduating in May 2022, please check with them and/or their counselor to make sure they have their course requests submitted for next year.

Prior to winter break, we enjoyed many holiday concerts that were performed by our Jazz Bands, Choir Program, and Concert Bands. Congratulations to the students who have worked hard to perform at such a high level!









We have two valuable academic resources available to ALL STUDENTS.

Resource Rooms: English, Math, and Science help is available every period 3-6 of the day! Teachers are available in these rooms to offer help for students.

Virtual Study Table: Homework help in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies is available on Tuesday and Thursday nights, from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

We will continue to work hard and work together to have a great second semester. Thank you, and remember We Are Respectful, Resilient, Engaged - Now and Always. Go Blue Devils!

News from the O'Plaine Principal

by Michele Bertola, O'Plaine Campus Principal

Happy 2022 to all our families and students! I hope everyone had a great winter break and first few weeks as we have resumed our school calendar. As challenges continue to come our way regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, we are counting on everyone for flexibility, communication, and support. I am confident we will get through this.





We are off to a strong start to the second semester, and many students have started some new semester-long classes. This is an exciting time for them to learn about a different subject and learn new skills. Students signed their class banners the first week back, committing themselves to graduate WTHS and to the Warren Way.

Students are challenged each day to work hard in their classes, stay engaged in their work, and to get involved in our school community. We talk daily about what it means for students to own their learning and to develop habits that work best for them. Here are some resources to support ALL STUDENTS with these challenges:



- **Testing Center:** Students can make up tests or quizzes here.
- Resource Rooms: Students can get help from teachers in Math, Science, and Reading/Writing throughout the A portions of the lunch periods.
- Lunch Study Hall: All students have a halfperiod study hall opposite their lunch.
- Virtual Study Table: Students can access virtual teacher help in Math, Science, English, and Social Studies on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

I appreciate the collective responsibility of all students and staff in regard to the safety protocols we have at our building. Wearing masks, watching our distance, and washing our hands are expectations for everyone to keep each other safe. We will continue to follow safety mitigations at our campus for the health of all and work closely with the Lake County Health Department to make any necessary adjustments to our learning environment.

Thank you, and remember We Are Respectful, Resilient, Engaged - Now and Always. Go Blue Devils!



Is this your first child in high school? Want a refresher on the high school experience? Join our Parent/Guardian Boot Camp Monday, February 28th 6:00-7:00

O'Plaine Campus Main Office Topics for this session include: wellness, school security, Q&A with the principal



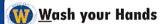
BLUE DEVILS:



REMEMBER THE 3 W'S







News About Athletics

by Becky Belmont, Director of Athletics



Congratulations to the JV Devilettes and Coach Jordan Smason on their 1st place finish in the Huntley Invite and 3rd place finish in the NSC Championship!



Congratulations to the Freshmen Wrestling team and coaches John Hergenreder and Mark Mika! The team has won three tournaments this year and are currently 14-0 and vying for the top spot in the NSC.



Congratulations!



Congratulations to Maurice Edwards and Jalen

National Letter of Intent Signing Day

Handford on their commitment to play football at the collegiate level! Maurice will play at Vanderbilt University and Jalen will play at Central Michigan University.

Congratulations to Coach Jake Anderson, Coach Michael Harrison, and the Freshmen Boys' Basketball team on their Blue Devil Invite Championship!





Congratulations to Coach John Stanczykiewicz, Coach Ryan Skidmore, and the Varsity Girls' Basketball team on their 2nd place finish in the Grant Tournament! Annika Gustafson, Grace Lynch, Mariah Phelps were all named to the All-Tournament team.

Congratulations to the Boys' Bowling team and coaches Jim Voutsirisas and Jenna Charbonneau on their 2nd place finish in both the Blue Devil Invite and the Blue Devil Open. Sophomore Quron Jones led the team in both tournaments, while taking 3rd overall in the Blue Devil Open.





Congratulations to 2021 graduate and All-State wrestler, Isaiah Parker, who was selected 3rd overall by FC Dallas in the 2022 MLS SuperDraft!