

Warren Township High School District 121

Warren Connection: Our Strategic Plan Update



June 18, 2020

Dear Warren Community:

Happy summer heat, everyone! This edition of our *Warren Connection* is dedicated to providing an overview of our annual Strategic Plan, which was reviewed by the Board of Education on June 9.



At the board meeting, administration reported results on our *Greatness Indicators* (which are some of the “ends” to which we hold ourselves accountable), reported progress on our 2019-20 goals, and identified goals for the 2020-21 school year. We have included all the 2020-2021 identified goals and highlighted a few of them in this newsletter. These goals also become part of a document, our *2020 Addendum*, which may be found with past

years’ documents at the Strategic Plan tab on the District website, at <https://il02214492.schoolwires.net/Page/276>

To ensure your student’s successful registration experience, please review the **registration information** on the District website.

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HIGHLIGHTS

2020-21 Registration Information

Online registration for all students is open. Parents and students received several notifications about the new online opportunity and process for completing registration.



Summer Hours 2020

Starting Monday, June 1, 2020 through Friday, July 31, 2020, the daily hours for public access to staff are 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday.



The buildings are closed on Fridays. Parents and students may make an appointment with staff after 3:30 p.m., if necessary.



Please check your email over the summer to stay in touch with us about returning to school and other important information.

Board of Education



Warren Township High School District's Board of Education, administrative staff, teachers and support personnel will have a lot on their plate for the 2020-2021 school year due to the likely challenges of COVID-19 and the need to keep our students and staff safe. However, the District remains committed to providing a quality education no matter what obstacles we might face.

There is important work that will continue to be addressed in each of the six main areas outlined in the District's Strategic Plan:

- 1) Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction
- 2) Student Advocacy
- 3) Student Leadership
- 4) Student Life
- 5) Community and Communication
- 6) Securing the Future

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

Referendum Planning Efforts Postponed

Planning Efforts Tied to Possible Funding Proposal Postponed

This past February, Warren Township High School District assembled a Citizen Task Force comprised of business, civic, and educational leaders to evaluate the District's funding challenges and proposed solutions.

What the Task Force members learned at the first meeting is that compared to other Lake County high school districts, WTHS receives the least amount of federal, state and local tax dollars. In fact, the District's tax rate is among the lowest of its peer districts, with some districts having access to more than twice the amount of local funding.

Comparison of Revenue Per Pupil for Lake County High School Districts FY 2019

High School Districts	Local Sources	State Sources	Federal Sources	Total
Lake Forest District 115	\$32,671	\$979	\$355	\$34,005
Highland Park Deerfield District 113	\$30,549	\$1,388	\$538	\$32,475
Libertyville Vernon Hills District 128	\$27,029	\$1,142	\$214	\$28,386
Adlai Stevenson High School 125	\$26,161	\$1,444	\$371	\$27,976
Grayslake District 127	\$20,536	\$4,649	\$275	\$25,459
Zion-Benton District 126	\$16,432	\$7,264	\$1,010	\$24,705
Antioch Lakes District 117	\$18,825	\$4,688	\$317	\$23,830
Mundelein District 120	\$19,362	\$2,309	\$497	\$22,168
Grant Township District 124	\$14,464	\$3,908	\$702	\$19,073
Warren Township High School District 121	\$14,052	\$2,808	\$361	\$17,221

Source: Lake County Regional Office of Education

Given the District's current level of funding, and the need to balance its budget each year, more than 40 teacher and staff positions have been eliminated the past five years. And without additional revenues, continued staff reductions and other cuts will be necessary, negatively impacting programming, student services, and class sizes.

Due to Covid-19, the Citizens Task Force's planning efforts came to an abrupt halt in early March. Fortunately, if the Governor's reopening plan stays the course, it appears the Task Force will be able to regroup early this fall to continue vetting possible funding solutions.

After the Task Force fully weighs in, WTHS plans to roll out a comprehensive public engagement program starting in late September or early October. The District seeks to allow the entire community to provide their thoughts and recommendations on possible funding solutions that the Task Force helps craft. Public outreach efforts will likely include in-person and/or virtual community information meetings, online surveys, a public opinion mail survey, and other strategies for gathering public input.

The Board of Education understands the challenges our community faces due to the pandemic and stands committed to only pursuing funding solutions that it is confident our community will support. Nothing is set in stone until we gather additional public input.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

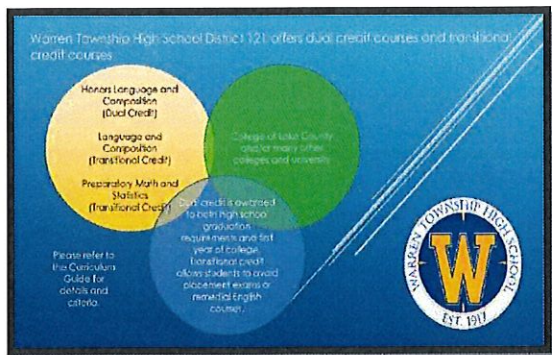
by Christopher J. Geocaris, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services

Dual Credit and Transitional Credit Course Expansion

A key focus of our strategic plan the past few years has been to increase access to dual credit courses for students at Warren Township High School. Research has proven that high school students who are exposed to college-level coursework, such as dual credit or Advanced Placement courses, are more successful in their postsecondary education. Dual credit courses are different from advanced placement (AP) courses. Students enrolled in AP courses take an end-of-course exam in the spring, and if they earn a score of 3 or higher, then they are awarded credit from most colleges/universities. Students enrolled in dual credit courses are subsequently enrolled at College of Lake County (CLC). Upon successful completion of the course, students earn high school credit through Warren and college credit through CLC.

Warren has traditionally offered dual credit through our Honors Earth Science course, and students enrolled at the Lake County Tech Campus are able to earn dual credit in their areas of study. Dual credit information for the Technology Campus is available at: <https://www.techcampus.org/>. Beginning with the 2020-21 school year, WTHS is expanding our dual credit offering to include Honors Language and Composition. This course is offered in our English Department to senior students who successfully completed English III or Honors American Studies. Please see our [Curriculum Guide](#) for other prerequisites for enrolling in this course.

We are also offering transitional courses in English and Math beginning in the 2020-21 school year. Transitional courses allow students who successfully complete the course to enroll directly into credit-bearing English and Math courses upon enrolling at CLC, without having to take a placement exam. Students enrolled in Language and Composition and Preparatory Math and Statistics will complete a curriculum focused on strengthening their skills to be considered college ready by CLC.



2020-2021 Goals and Timelines

1. Bring curricular updates for Spanish Language Arts program to the Curriculum Committee for approval. Begin planning for full implementation beginning in the 2021-2022 school year. (Dec 2020)
2. Increase access to dual credit courses for WTHS students. Potential dual credit opportunities will be explored in Science, Business, and Industrial Technology. (Dec 2020)
3. Provide professional development opportunities for WTHS teachers that focus on increasing capacity in effective Remote Learning Instructional Strategies. Professional development will focus on utilizing online platforms to provide real-time instruction as well as engaging and interactive asynchronous lessons for students that facilitate meaningful learning. (Aug 2020)
4. Implement the collection method for student college/career readiness indicators utilizing eForms in PowerSchool. (Dec 2020)
5. Develop a system for identifying career pathways for students and promoting opportunities for students to pursue Consumer and Technical Education opportunities while enrolled at Warren. Assist students in identifying post-secondary options that are aligned to their identified career interest areas. (May 2021)

Student Advocacy

by Michele Bertola, Principal at the O'Plaine campus



2020-2021 Goals and Timelines

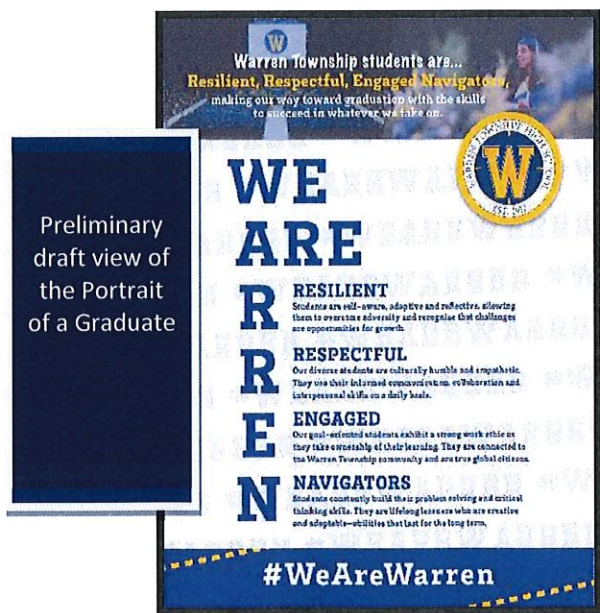
1. Finalize advisory model curriculum and implementation timeline. The curriculum will include the Active Learners Framework and Social-Emotional Learning Standards. (May 2021)
2. Identify and utilize interventions to increase the percentage of freshmen on track. (Dec 2020)
3. Facilitate the potential implementation of a College of Lake County Navigator position at the Almond Campus. (Dec 2020)

Portrait of a WTHS Graduate

During the 2019-20 school year, WTHS staff worked to develop a **Portrait of a Graduate**. The purpose of this project was to identify the key characteristics that we believe will lead to lifelong success for our students after high school. This was an extensive process that involved gathering feedback from students, parents and all WTHS staff.

Throughout the year, our administrative team, along with our lead teachers, dedicated time to reviewing survey data and current research in the field of education to narrow the focus and develop language that would facilitate the integration of our **Portrait of a Graduate** into our school culture. We have now nearly completed our work.

We will be spending the summer months finalizing some of the language and presentation to ensure the document is easily understood by students, families and school personnel. This document will guide the educational decisions made by the District in the years to come, and will continue to foster a student-centered approach to learning at Warren Township High School. We are excited to unveil the final **Portrait of a Graduate** document in the fall!



Shared Leadership

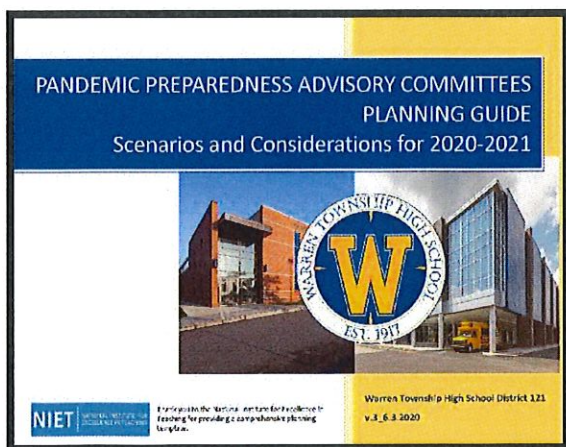
by Dr. John P. Ahlgrim, Superintendent of Schools

Pandemic Preparedness Advisory Committees (PPAC) to Review Back-to-School Options

A significant goal for Warren Township High School this summer and fall is to help review all possible options and ultimately execute a 2020 return to school plan at a time when COVID-19 will likely still be with us. WTHS is actively planning for multiple school reopening scenarios. The process of identifying the status of reopening depends greatly on the direction we receive from the governor, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Public Health. This direction allows us to determine which scenarios are most likely for us, as well as the necessary conditions for returning to in-person instruction.

We anticipate receiving updated and revised guidance from the state this summer. We will most likely not make a final determination on our reopening status until a few weeks prior to the start of school, as the guidance we receive is subject to change based on the status of COVID-19 statewide.

To facilitate reopening either in-person or remotely, the district has established several Pandemic Preparedness Advisory committees to identify the operational, academic, support and district-wide aspects of a return to school. The overarching focus of these committees' work is ensuring all decisions made are focused on student, staff and visitor wellness, as well as maximizing educational opportunities for our students. Although we hope to be able to welcome our students back into the classroom soon, we are also working to further develop remote teaching strategies and skills with our staff over the summer in case eLearning is the best option to start the school year.



2020-2021 Goals and Timelines

1. Finalize the development of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion master plan and share this plan with our WTHS community. (Dec 2020)
2. Share our current Portrait of a Graduate to highlight essential areas of development for success of our WTHS students at WTHS and beyond. (Dec 2020)
3. Utilize a Pandemic Preparedness Advisory Committee to help investigate and identify most appropriate return to school condition and processes. (Aug 2020)

Student Life

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



2020-2021 Goals and Timelines

1. Complete the move for our transition program from Gurnee Mills to the O'Plaine campus. (Aug 2020)
2. Continue to develop and implement strategies that support SB100 mandates including restorative practices and professional development for staff. (May 2021)
3. Complete the O'Plaine campus student courtyard improvement project. (Dec 2020)



Warren Township High School District 12 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Master Plan

A nine-page master plan is in a draft format with some final work to complete.

District 121 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Master Plan

During the 2019-20 school year, the District 121 Equity Team was committed to creating a District 121 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Master Plan to capture some of our District's core tenets, as well as to document some past, current and potential future initiatives to support our work with equity. District committees have been working on equity-related initiatives for four years, and the master plan is intended to capture many of the most critical outcomes of this essential work. The document itself, which was reviewed by the Board of Education in conjunction with the 2020 Strategic Plan Addendum, comprises six commitments:

- District Leadership Commitments
- Staff Efficacy Commitments
- Instructional Program Commitments
- Advocacy Commitments
- Student Life Commitments
- Community Engagement Commitments

There are identified focus areas and specific initiatives related to each of these commitment areas within the plan. While these commitments, focus areas and initiatives are certainly not independent of one another, they are identified as such within this document to support clarity and accountability for our district work. Some of the identified initiatives currently have been and/or are currently active within the district. Others are yet to be initiated due to current lack of opportunity due to resources, and these are identified as future work within this plan.

*Education focused
on excellence and
equity*

This District 121 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Master Plan is also intended to be reviewed regularly, and no less than annually, to review progress and modify initiatives to help achieve goals related to our equity work.

Community and Communication

by Rob Parrott, Principal at the Almond Campus

Warren Township High School Launches New Facebook Page

Warren Township High School District 121 has launched a new Facebook page as a way to better connect with district families, students, staff and community members.

The page, available at www.facebook.com/WTHSDistrict121, is part of the high school district's efforts to enhance its communication and engagement with its stakeholders. It will use the page to communicate news and events, provide updates, share photos and engage the community in all that's happening at WTHS.

"We are thrilled to launch our official Facebook page as part of our effort to use social media to engage in meaningful conversations about our school and the students and families we serve," said Dr. John Ahlgrim, District 121 Superintendent. "Those who follow us will receive updates on school events, news and the exciting initiatives taking place to continually improve the quality of education we deliver to our students."

This school year, WTHS has been working to examine its current communication practices to determine what is working well and where improvement may be needed. As it continues this process, the district will seek feedback from its stakeholders through a variety of means.

Community members are encouraged to "like" and follow the district's new Facebook page at @WTHSDistrict121.

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



<https://www.d121.org>



2020-2021 Goals and Timelines

1. Explore multilingual platforms for improved communication with all families. (Dec 2020)
2. Continue to work with the Foundation and provide support for establishing an Alumni Association. (May 2021)
3. Explore and develop alternate avenues to communicate daily announcements to students and/or parents. (May 2021)
4. Explore and develop a plan for increasing district presence on social media platforms. (Dec 2020)

#WeAreWarren

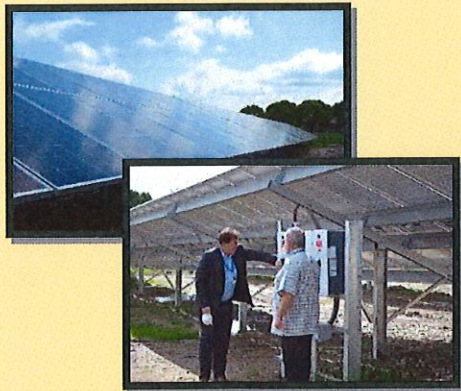
Securing the Future

by Michael Engel, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services and Operations



2020-2021 Goals and Timelines

1. Continue to implement green initiatives, including additional LED lighting and the completion of the Almond Campus solar project. (Dec 2020)
2. Regularly review the current and future year budget worksheets to analyze changes in revenue sources and expenditures, and make adjustments accordingly for current and future year planning including but not limited to staffing and benefits. (May 2021)
3. Continue to facilitate the dialogue regarding tax rates and the potential need for a referendum in April 2021 to help increase local revenues. (May 2021)
4. Continue to identify potential funding sources to support the construction of new locker rooms at the O'Plaine campus. (May 2021)
5. Complete the roof repair projects at both campuses. (Dec 2020)



Warren Township High School District 121 Announces Completion of Solar Project

Warren Township HSD 121 (WTHS) is taking full advantage of the sunshine this spring. A new 2.4-megawatt solar array has been completed and will be energized on May 29, 2020. The solar project, identified in the 2018 bond issuance, is distinguished as one of the largest for an Illinois school district and will generate enough electricity to account for nearly all the electricity needs of the Almond Campus—an estimated \$300,000 annually. The new ground-mounted solar facility is located on the south end of the Almond Campus, along Gages Lake Road.

After several years of research into the environmental, educational and financial benefits of solar power, the school district selected Performance Services, Inc. to design and install the solar system. The \$7.3 million project officially broke ground in October 2019 with substantial site work and reforestation work to meet Lake County requirements. As a result of the project, the district will receive approximately \$2.5 million in rebates and incentives within the first five years of operation.

The energy-focused project is an important part of WTHS's continued efforts to reduce energy-related utility costs and its carbon footprint of buildings and grounds. The energy produced by the solar array is also significant from an environmental standpoint. The clean energy project will reduce greenhouse gases by 2,263 metric tons, equivalent to taking nearly 500 cars off the road or the electricity needed to power an estimated 383 homes each year.

"The fiduciary and scholastic benefits are obvious," said Jim Walz, WTHS Board of Education member. "More importantly, however, as stewards of the earth, it is our shared responsibility to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Also, the use of renewable energy is a key component of our strategic plan. This solar field underscores that commitment, all the while adding to our intellectual infrastructure."

WTHS will also take full advantage of its new solar system as an on-campus "learning lab" for students. Performance Services is a partner with the National Energy Education Development (NEED) Project and is providing teacher training, e-learning/classroom lesson plans and solar kits to the district.

"We are pleased to provide a solar curriculum program at Warren, which reinforces our commitment to supporting high-performing learning environments while bringing exceptional value that extends to classroom learning," said Tim Thoman, President and CEO for Performance Services. "The customizable curriculum will directly benefit teachers and students by engaging them on how their school's solar systems work," Thoman added.

Performance Services specializes in renovating education and government facilities to deliver high performing buildings with optimal environments. Renewable solar energy is an important part of the portfolio of design and construction services. The company is accredited with the National Association of Energy Service Companies (NAESCO), an ENERGY STAR Partner, and is a qualified provider of energy savings performance projects. The company has designed and installed more than 60 megawatts of solar power systems for customers and \$1.6 billion in design-build and guaranteed energy savings education and municipal projects.

Greatness Indicators with Metrics

Greatness Indicators with Metrics – Page 1 of 2

	Data Source	2018 Results	2019 Results	Needs Improvement	Solid Performance	Exemplary Results	2020 Results
Enrollment	ISBE Fall Housing Report	4,137	4,032				3,951
Superior Performance							
Student Academic Achievement							
Maintain a High Graduation Rate	Summer ISBE Cohort Report (Current School Year—CSY—1)	93.7%	92.9%	<92%	92-96%	>96%	93%
Increase Freshman On Track Rate	Annual Illinois School Report Card (CSY – 1)	90%	90%	<86.9%	87%-94.9%	>95%	86.8%
Increase our SAT Evidence-Based Reading/Writing Score Average (College Board Report)	Spring Junior testing; Results from College Board in June	534	523	<450	450-539.9	>540	*NA
Increase our SAT Mathematics Score Average (College Board Report)	Spring Junior testing; Results from College Board in June	521	521	<500	500-539.9	>540	*NA
Maintain high percentages of students meeting expected growth targets for Evidence-Based Reading/Writing from PSAT9 to PSAT10	CADCA SAT Student Growth Data Report (CSY – 1)	N/A	89%	<59.99%	60% - 89.9%	>90%	89%
Maintain high percentages of students meeting expected growth targets for Mathematics from PSAT9 to PSAT10	CADCA SAT Student Growth Data Report (CSY – 1)	N/A	85%	<59.99%	60% - 89.9%	>90%	66%
Maintain high percentages of students meeting expected growth targets for Evidence-Based Reading/Writing from PSAT10 to SAT	CADCA SAT Student Growth Data Report (CSY – 1)	N/A	70%	<59.99%	60% - 89.9%	>90%	70%
Maintain high percentages of students meeting expected growth targets for Mathematics from PSAT10 to SAT	CADCA SAT Student Growth Data Report (CSY – 1)	N/A	84%	<59.99%	60% - 89.9%	>90%	84%
Maintain High Percentages of Enrollments in Honors and AP Classes	Data Warehouse	25%	25%	<23%	23-25%	>25%	23%
Maintain High AP Successful Participation Rate	College Board AP Report—Equity and Excellence (CSY – 1)	47.8%	47.8%	<40%	40-50%	>50%	42.2%
Maintain High AP Success Rate	College Board AP Report (CSY – 1)	85.9%	85.9%	<70%	70-89%	>89%	85.0%
Increase MAP Growth Targets Met for Students Behind in Reading	Annual Summer Report	52%	61%	<50%	50-65%	>65%	*NA
Increase Summer School Enrichment Enrollments	Annual Summer School Report	696	11.9%	<5%	5% - 15%	>15%	11.7%
Student Academic Achievement							
Maintain High Attendance Rates	School Report Card Data Collection (CSY – 1)	93.7%	94.6%	<93%	93-95%	>95%	93.5
Maintain Low Suspension for Misconduct Rate	June Out-of-School Suspension Report	.94/day	.96/day	>3/day	2-3/day	<2/day	.89/day
Maintain High Participation Numbers in Athletics per student enrollment	Annual Summer Report	39%	38.9%	<.35%	35%—40%	>40%	*NA
Maintain High Numbers of Unique Participants in Clubs and Activities per student enrollment	Annual Summer Report	47.3%	52%	<40%	40%—50%	>50%	*NA

Greatness Indicators with Metrics – Page 2 of 2

	Data Source	2018 Results	2019 Results	Needs Improvement	Solid Performance	Exemplary Results	2020 Results
Distinctive Impact							
External Recognition of Students, Staff, School and the District							
Increase Recognition for the School Community	Board of Educ Recognized Events	25	28	<27	27-40	>40	*NA
Maintain High North Suburban Conf Success in Athletics	Annual Summer Report	3	3	#5-8	#3-4	#1-2	*NA
Community Partnerships and Connections							
Increase Community Partnerships and Intergovernmental Agreements	Communications report to BOE	29	30	<20	20-30	>30	30
Leaders in the Field							
Increase Number and Visibility of Innovative, Exemplary Programs	WTHS Innovative Program Report	9	9	<7	7-11	>11	9
Lasting Endurance							
Success Beyond High School							
Maintain High Attendance in Post-Secondary Institutions (prior yr. grad class)	National Student Clearinghouse (CSY – 1)	75%	76%	<75%	75-90%	>90%	Still waiting on report from National Student Clearinghouse. This data may be delayed due to COVID19
Maintain High Retention in Post-Secondary Institutions (grad class 2 yrs ago)	National Student Clearinghouse (CSY – 2)	91%	91%	<80%	80-95%	>95%	Still waiting on report from National Student Clearinghouse. This data may be delayed due to COVID-19
Maintain High Numbers of Technical Certificates Earned	Annual Summer Report	1,081	23.7%	<20%	20% - 30%	>30%	*NA
Fiscal Responsibility/ Securing the Future							
Increase Food Service Satisfaction Rating	Satisfaction survey (bi-annual IYS) questions)	2.8	NA	<2.66	2.67-3.25	>3.25	*NA
Maintain a Balanced Annual Operating Budget	End of FY financials *unaudited	-\$2M **	** - \$900K	<-\$2M to -\$750K	-\$750K to \$750K	\$750K to \$2M	** -\$2.5M
Maintain Funds in Reserves of at least 40% of annual budget	End of FY financials *unaudited	32% **	** 64% (35% after \$19M allocated expenditures)	<35%	35-40%	>40%	** 32% (22% after \$5.5M allocated expenditures)

*NA = Data not available due to COVID-19.

** Unaudited