

Warren Connection: Winter News

December 22, 2020



Dear Warren Community,

Thank you for reading our December 2020 edition of the Warren Connection. Our December 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.



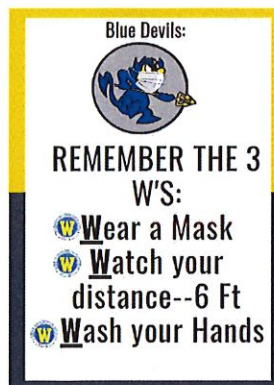
The district and schools will be closed December 24, 25, and 31, and January 1. Please use the district emails found on our website to contact staff regarding student issues, as we are primarily using electronic means to conduct business over the break.

Our first day of student attendance for second semester will be Tuesday, January 5.

Semester 2

Due to continued high COVID-19 numbers in our area, WTHS is currently planning to continue with our remote learning plan for the first two weeks of the semester (January 5-15). We hope to initiate our hybrid learning plan and schedule for students as early as January 19, 2021. Turn to page 3 for more information.

Check the district website at <https://d121.org/returntoschool>



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!

Inside this Newsletter

Board of Education News	Page 2
Superintendent's Corner	Page 3
Instructional Services	Page 4
Student Services	Page 5
Business Services and Operations	Page 6
Principal's Corner – Almond Campus	Page 7
Principal's Corner – O'Plaine Campus	Page 8
Athletics	Page 9
Activities	Page 10

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>



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

In recent months, Warren Township High School District 121 has been sharing information about a possible limiting rate proposal that may appear on the April 2021 ballot and gathering public input. We are grateful to the thousands of district residents who participated in our mail survey, webinars and/or phone/email poll. Your thoughts and recommendation will play an important role in how the District moves forward in addressing its operating needs.

Below are answers to important questions asked by taxpayers during the District's public engagement program.

Why is WTHS considering placing a funding proposal on the April 2021 ballot?

Without additional funding, WTHS will need to continue making major cuts to staffing and programs. The District has already eliminated 51 teaching and staff positions over the past five years and reduced student support services.

How does the District's funding compare to other school districts?

WTHS has the lowest revenue per pupil when compared to other Lake County high school districts.

What has WTHS done to reduce expenses?

In addition to eliminating 51 teacher and staff positions the past five years, the District has refinanced outstanding debt, reduced the cost of employee benefits by joining a different healthcare cooperative, renegotiated vendor contracts, and pursued other cost-containment measures.

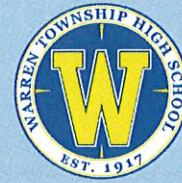
What is the funding proposal being considered and how would the proceeds be used?

WTHS seeks the community's input on a possible 60-cent limiting rate increase proposal to address the District's operating needs, including:

- Preventing the elimination of up to 46 more teaching and staff positions.
- Maintaining the 8-period day and eliminating the need to cut academic and elective courses.
- Strengthening programs that help ensure all students, including at-risk students, have access to and success in the most academically challenging programs.
- Restoring math and English intervention programs, mental health services, and other important student support services.
- Preventing the elimination or reduction of band, choir, drama and other activities/clubs.
- Preventing the elimination of many athletic programs or levels within programs.
- Ensuring adequate funds are available in the District's fund balance to address emergency needs, protect the District's credit rating, and eliminate the need for short-term borrowing.
- Bringing student fees in line with other Lake County high schools.

When will a final decision be made?

The Board of Education will decide on the timing and composition of a limiting rate proposal in mid-January 2021 after reviewing public opinion research, the recommendations of the Community Task Force, and other public input.



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

Recap of December 15, 2020 Board of Education Meeting

The Board recognized 17 students who signed their national letters of Intent to attend their university. Students recognized were: Baseball: Michael Rivera, Nick Shiu, Nikki Harrison, Taylor Latza; Football: Marc Davila Jr., Phillip Hird, Malachi McNeal, Tommy Matheson; Boys Soccer: Sebastian Rodriguez; Softball: Bianca Gallegos, Autumn Grayczyk, Lauren Heuberger, Brooke Mangler; Girls Swimming and Diving: Annie Stingle; Girls Track and Field: Annika Bynum; Girls Volleyball: McKenna Cominsky; Wrestling: Joel VanderVere

Presentations and reports were provided for the following items:

- Partnership Report: Schuler Foundation
- Insurance Committee, November 18, 2020
- Safety Committee, December 1, 2020
- Policy Committee, December 8, 2020
- Curriculum Committee, December 9, 2020
- Superintendent's Report including monthly reports for November 2020
- Department Report: English Language Learners
- Winter Building Hours
- Community Task Force Update
- Return to School Information
- First Reading District Board Policies

The Board approved the following items:

- Hiring recommendations for 4 employees and prospective candidates
- Payment of bills in the amount of \$4,496,146.37
- Regular and Executive Session minutes of November 17, 2020
- Approval of Summer School Program 2021
- Approval of Change Order #2 and #3 with VanDoorn Roofing Company at the Almond and O'Plaine Campuses
- Approval of Intergovernmental Agreement for Designation, Payment, and Allocation of Surplus Funds between the City of Waukegan and All Taxing Bodies Affected by the Fountain Square RID District
- Approval of a One Year Bus Lease Extension on the 2017 and 2018 Buses

More information about the possible limiting rate proposal is on the district's website at:

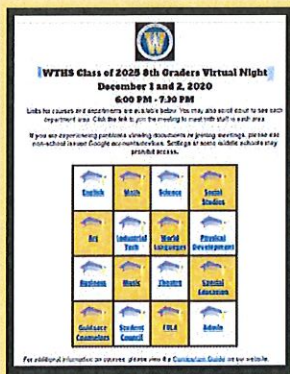
<https://d121.org/limitingrateproposal>

Superintendent's Corner

by Dr. John P. Ahlgrim, Superintendent of Schools



It was great to have our **Class of 2025** and their parents attend our course selection nights on December 1 and 2!



Parent-Teacher Advisory Committee Meeting

**January 12, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.
Virtual**

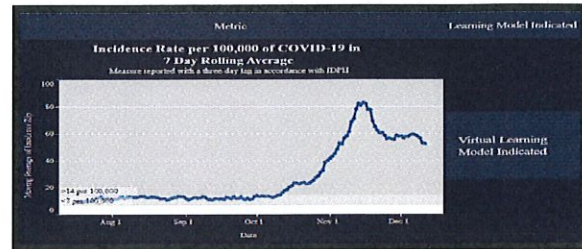
If you are interested in attending, please email Dr. John Ahlgrim at jahlg@wth.net

This committee assists in the development of student discipline policy and procedure, and provides information and recommendations to the Board. Its members are parents/guardians and teachers, and may include persons who have expertise or experience in these areas. The committee reviews issues such as administering medication in the schools, reciprocal reporting between the school district and local law enforcement agencies regarding criminal offenses committed by students, student discipline, disruptive classroom behavior, school bus safety procedures, and the dissemination of student conduct information.

(Board Policy 2:150, Committees)

Return to School Status

COVID-19 numbers in Lake County continue to be above the incidence rate threshold of 14 per 100,000, and we are still experiencing significant community spread. However, these incidence numbers have come down significantly over the past month. We are hopeful this will continue over the next month.



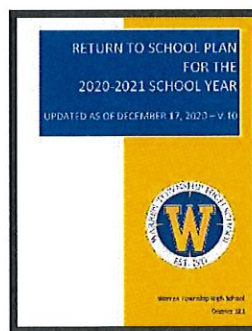
YOU MAY ACCESS THE LAKE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT SCHOOL DASHBOARD WEBSITE AT:

[HTTPS://COVID19RESPONSE-LAKECOUNTYIL.HUB.ARCGIS.COM/PAGES/SCHOOLS-DASHBOARD](https://COVID19RESPONSE-LAKECOUNTYIL.HUB.ARCGIS.COM/PAGES/SCHOOLS-DASHBOARD)

We are also reviewing and reinforcing the Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Department of Public Health enhanced health requirements and COVID-19 mitigation efforts associated with in-person learning at WTHS, as we are hoping to have larger groups of students on campus again soon.

Semester 2 Plan

We are currently planning to continue with our remote learning plan for the first two weeks of the semester (January 5-15). We hope to initiate our hybrid learning plan and schedule for students as early as January 19, 2021.

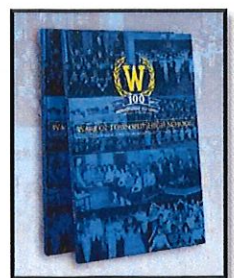


Detailed information about our hybrid learning plan and schedule will be sent out on January 6, but families can learn more right now by reviewing the "Hybrid Learning" chapter of our Return to School Plan on our website, at www.d121.org/returntoschool.

We truly appreciate the ongoing flexibility and support our community has demonstrated over the course of this school year.

The Warren Township High School District 121 and WTHS Foundation are proud to announce the publication of *Warren Township High School: Celebrating One-Hundred Years of Excellence*. This 9" x 12" limited-edition volume chronicles the history of the school, as well as the proud alumni and educators who have graced its halls. Read about the memorable stories that helped make Warren Township High School what it is today. This book contains 96 pages of interesting facts and stories about the school, complemented with approximately 140 historical and modern photographs of the campus, faculty and staff, students and alumni.

Don't miss your chance to capture history! Cost of the book is \$49.95 to pick up, or \$59.95 including shipping. Click here to order your copy today: <https://www.d121.org/Page/632>



News from Instructional Services

by Christopher J. Geocar, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services

As we conclude this semester, I want to take a moment to thank all our teachers for their hard work this semester to provide meaningful educational experiences for our students during this period of extended remote learning.

WTHS teachers have engaged in extensive professional development and have worked diligently to adjust their curriculum and implement new digital instructional strategies. I also want to thank our students and families for their flexibility and engagement during this past semester. Your support of one another and of our teachers is truly inspiring, and part of what makes our school community so amazing to be a part of. I am prouder than ever to be a Blue Devil! I hope you have a restful, relaxing and safe break.

Senior Student Chromebooks



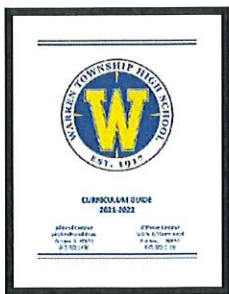
Senior students will keep their Chromebooks when they graduate from WTHS. Important information for seniors to transfer their Chromebooks from WTHS to their own Google accounts will be communicated to students' email accounts in the upcoming weeks. This information is also posted on our [Senior Technology Information](#) page on our website.

Printing from a Chromebook



On January 1, Google will discontinue its Google Cloud Print extension. Students will still be able to print at home from their Chromebooks, but will need to follow these directions to add their home printer to their Chromebook. Click the following link for specific instructions on adding a printer from Google: [Printing From Chromebooks](#).

Students Register for 2021-22 Classes



Students have been working with their counselors to choose their courses for next school year. The 2021-22 Curriculum Guide is posted on the website 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.



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 schoolwork 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.

News From Student Services

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



College and Career Information Center

Parent Night Dates

Sophomore College Planning Night
January 14, 2021 at 7 p.m. (Zoom)

Camino a College Freshmen and Sophomores
January 21, 2021 at 7 p.m. (Zoom)

Exploring Your Options for Freshmen
February 18, 2021 at 7 p.m. (Zoom)

Financial Aid Application Graduation Requirement

New this year, the State of Illinois is requiring all seniors to file a financial aid application or submit a waiver to opt out for graduation from a public high school.

As a result, we have several Financial Aid Workshops this year to assist families in understanding the financial aid process and completing this required step.

If you need help or have questions on your FAFSA or the IL Alternative App, click on the link below to register for a workshop and learn more about the process.

If you would like to submit a waiver to opt out, please download the waiver form and return it to Mrs. Cindy Joy, our Student Services Secretary. You can scan and email the completed document (cjoy@wthsh.net) or you can drop the document off at the Almond Campus to her attention, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Happy Holidays! As the semester is coming to a close, please make sure your child is finishing the semester strong. I know it has been an unprecedented semester, and teaching and learning has been a struggle. However, it is important that we prioritize staying on track for graduation and postsecondary plans. Our student services teams are here to support you and your child. Please reach out to your dean, counselor or social worker with any questions or obstacles you are facing in finishing the semester.

News from the Lake County Health Department



A COVID-19 Vaccine is Coming

Exciting vaccine announcements are coming this week! Please make sure you are subscribed to the Lake County Health Department's COVID-

19 email newsletter so you don't miss out. Visit www.bit.ly/lccovid-19 (English) or www.bit.ly/lccovid-19-es (Spanish) to subscribe.

Potential Return to School Safety Procedures

Once it is deemed safe to return to school in some capacity, please make sure you look for more detailed information regarding daily health screenings, attendance call procedures and our safety procedures. Once back, it will be critically important for everyone to be on the same team and follow procedures to keep us safe and in school. More information to follow once a date is set for a return.

Financial Aid Application Completion Workshops

Counselors, along with Dari Pedines from the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), will be available to help families complete the FAFSA or Illinois Alternative Application and answer questions you may have.

****Please note that these are optional workshops and no formal presentation will be shared. This is simply a working time for families to come with questions or if they need assistance walking through the financial aid application process.**

- ✓ Thursday, January 7th from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. via Zoom (20 minute time slots)
- ✓ Wednesday, January 27th from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. via Zoom (20 minute time slots)

¿Necesitas asistencia en Español? Un representante de Warren estará presente para las familias que necesiten ayuda en Español.

Workshop Registration Information

To protect the confidentiality of our families, please [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#) and secure your spot. Families who pre-register will receive an email two days prior to the workshop with the Zoom meeting information and additional reminders.

****If your family prefers, we encourage you to reach out to our ISAC Corp Member assigned to our high school, Ms. Dari Pedines (Dariane.Pedines@illinois.gov or (847) 309-9141. You can schedule a one-on-one meeting to work through this process, as well: dari-pedines.youcanbook.me.**

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. All students ages 18 and under are eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch, regardless of their Free and Reduced status.

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

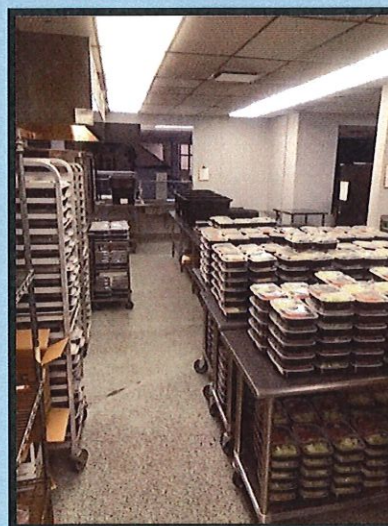
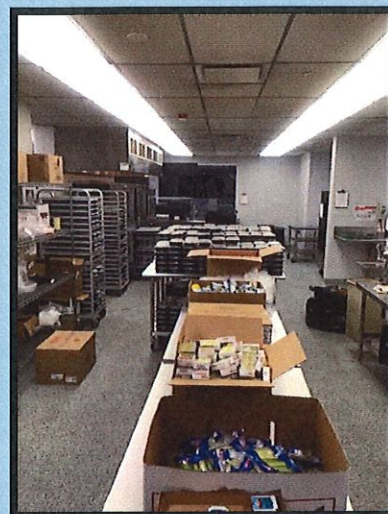
During the District's winter break, there will be meal distribution on December 22 and 29 at the O'Plaine Campus only.

Grab-and-Go Meals – Updated starting December 17 until further notice

Now serving 7-day meal kits. Easy once-a-week pick-ups.

Available to all teens and children 18 years of age and younger.

O'Plaine Campus North Entrance	500 N. O'Plaine Road, Gurnee	Tuesday and Thursday • 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. • 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Almond Campus Main Entrance	34090 N. Almond Road, Gurnee	Tuesday and Thursday 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
Park City Teen Center School bus parked in lot	333 Teske Boulevard, Park City	Tuesday and Thursday 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
Green Valley Apartments School bus parked in lot	4100 Greenleaf Court, Park City	Tuesday and Thursday 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
Continental Village School bus parked in lot	Continental Drive and Abbingdon Court, Waukegan	Tuesday and Thursday 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.



Principal's Corner at the Almond Campus

by Rob Parrott



Second Semester Supply Pick-Up: Students have been picking up supplies for 2nd semester the week of 12/14 and will also be able to pick up materials on Monday, January 4. See our website for more information.

Please utilize PowerSchool and Canvas to see your student's progress. Reach out to teachers if you have questions or concerns about student work.

Thank you to our Lead Teacher, Brandon Schild, and our Physical Development staff for hosting a virtual blood drive last month. They did a great job getting students and parents out to donate. They had 53 donors show up to donate, a great turnout for a virtual blood drive. They are used to really high numbers from Warren, but for a virtual drive during COVID-19, this really was something special. They are planning another virtual drive in February 2021. Great job!

The month of December always seems to go by quickly. It is typically a month full of events and activities that keep our staff and students very busy. The current health restrictions have limited many of our traditional activities leading up to the end of first semester, but we continue to find ways to do things through our virtual world.

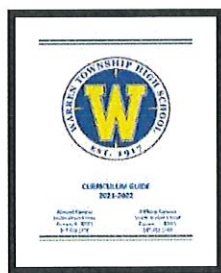
I hope everyone takes time over our winter break to relax and rejuvenate as we get ready to ring in a new calendar year. We all know the last nine months have been challenging, and we are excited for what 2021 will hopefully bring us. Please be safe and enjoy a few highlights from the Almond Campus from the last month or so.

Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizen Nominee - Congratulations

Congratulations!

to Senior Bryson King, who has been nominated to represent WTHS as the DAR recipient this year. His essay will allow him to continue in the competition to move forward for some scholarship opportunities. For those of you who have not had the pleasure of meeting Bryson you have missed out on meeting one of the most amazing students to attend Warren...EVER! He is a special young man with a very bright future, and he deserves any scholarship and/or recognition he earns. Congratulations Bryson!

COOL Pantry Toiletry Drive: Thank you again to our lead teachers in Social Studies, Dave Zaban and Vince DeSecki, and the Social Studies Departments for leading and collecting toiletry items for veterans in partnership with the COOL Pantry.



It has been a busy month or two in our Student Services Department. Our postsecondary counselors (Mrs. McGahan and Mrs. Hartley) have hosted several virtual meetings with our junior and senior students to discuss scholarship opportunities, financial aid, the college search process and more. Our juniors are currently working with our counselors to select courses for the 2021-22 school year. Our guidance counselors met with all juniors virtually during their English class to guide course selections for their senior year.

We hosted a powerful staff development this month that featured our very own students from Warren, sharing via a student panel, how we can build a more equitable and inclusive environment at our high school. Our staff heard firsthand from our students about what matters to them, how we can support them, and how we can continue to get better as an organization. Our staff loved the format and our students were amazing, as usual. Listening to others is a very important skill that helps build unity and community!

Principal's Corner at the O'Plaine Campus

by Michele Bertola

Happy December! Winter is officially here, and that means our semester is coming to an end. December is a busy month as students finish up their first semester work. Below are some updates and happenings at the O'Plaine Campus:

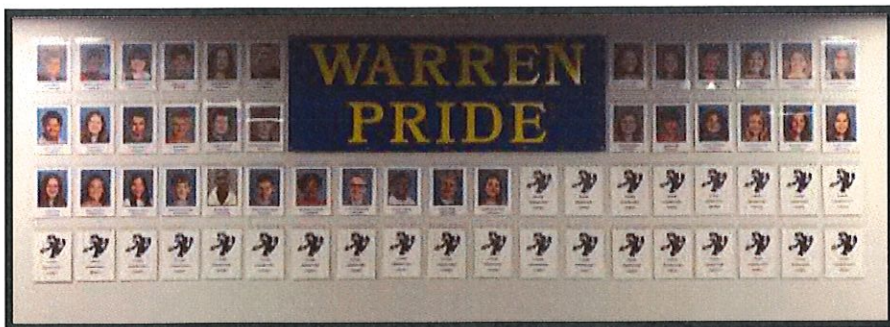
We had a friendly Kahoot competition between **Link Crews** to end the semester. Link Crew is a mentoring program for all freshmen. Please encourage all freshmen to continue to attend next semester. Information is shared via email.

Giving Back:

- COOL Pantry Toiletry Drive was led by our lead teacher in Social Studies, Dave Zaban and Vince DeSecki, and the Social Studies Departments. Toiletry items were collected for veterans in partnership with the COOL Pantry.
- Student Council has partnered with Fill a Heart 4 Kids, a local charity that helps foster and homeless children in Lake County.
- National Honor Society led a coat drive for those in need.

We hosted a powerful staff development this month that featured our very own students from Warren, sharing via a student panel, how we can build a more equitable and inclusive environment at our high School. Our staff heard firsthand from our students about what matters to them, how we can support them, and how we can continue to get better as an organization. Our staff loved the format, and our students were amazing as usual. Listening to others is a very important skill that helps build unity and community!

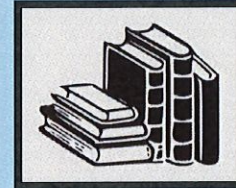
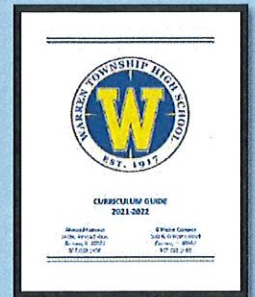
It has been a very different and challenging semester, and we will continue to challenge students to work hard every day. We want them to finish out the semester strong and continue their focus on staying physically and emotionally well.



Congratulations to our Matter of Pride recipients honored in December: Audrey Deck, Luke Etienne, Anna Fragassi, Hailey Gonzalez, Marco Guagliardo, Emma Kunz, Abbigail Martha, Reese Mertens, Kamariyae Moore, Olivia Morgan, Esmailyn Nunez-Payano, Angelina Salinas, Elijah Samuelson, Demar Scott, Christopher Stadig and Ammena Wideman.



Students have been working with their counselors to choose their courses for next school year.



Second Semester Supply Pick-Up:
Students have been picking up supplies for 2nd semester the week of 12/14 and will also be able to pick up materials on Monday, January 4. See our website for more information.

Please utilize PowerSchool and Canvas to see your student's progress. Reach out to teachers if you have questions or concerns about student work.

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.

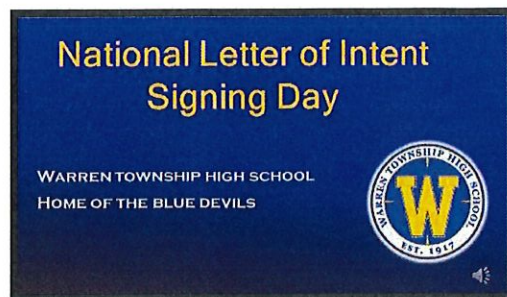
Warren Township High School District 121 is a member of the following athletic organizations:

Illinois High School Association (IHSAA), 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.

National Letter of Intent Signing Day

Congratulations to the following students on their commitment to continue their athletic career at the collegiate level:



Baseball

Michael Rivera
Heartland C.C.

Nick Shiu

University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh

Girls Cross Country

Nikki Harrison
University of Wisconsin - Stout

Taylor Latza
St. Edwards University

Football

Marc Davila Jr.
Northwest Missouri State University

Phillip Hird
Olivet Nazarene University

Malachi McNeal
University of North Dakota

Tommy Matheson
Princeton University

Boys Soccer

Sebastian Rodriguez
Roosevelt University

Softball

Bianca Gallegos
Rock Valley College

Autumn Grayczyk

University of Wisconsin, Platteville

Lauren Heuberger
University of Wisconsin, Platteville

Brooke Mangler
University of Wisconsin,
Whitewater

Girls Swimming and Diving

Annie Stingle
Long Island University Brooklyn

Girls Track and Field

Annika Bynum
Marquette University

Girls Volleyball

McKenna Cominsky
Elmhurst University

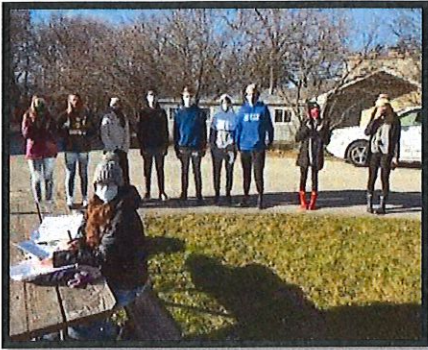
Wrestling

Joel VanderVere
Northwestern University

News about Activities

by Aimee Lonigro, Assistant Director of Athletics and Activities Coordinator

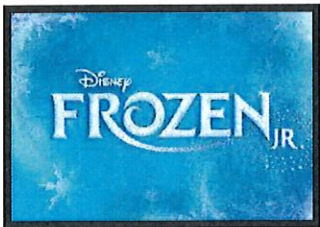
The **Almond Students of Service (SOS)** spent two weekends in November volunteering at the Northern Illinois Food Bank, sorting and packing food for needy families in Lake County. They also volunteered at Volo Bog State Natural Area by participating in Habitat Restoration Day.



Congratulations to the following Speech team members on their success in the Elk Grove virtual invitational:

- ❖ Mateo Castro placed 6th in Original Comedy
- ❖ Nidhi Shanmugam placed 5th in Impromptu Speaking
- ❖ Audrey Deck placed 4th in Original Oratory
- ❖ Remya Rajan placed 3rd in Radio Speaking

Warren Theatre is proud to present our 2020 Children's Show, *Frozen, Jr.*

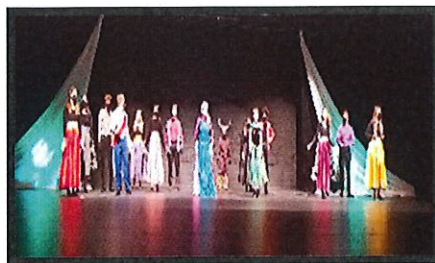


Frozen JR. is based on the 2018 Broadway musical. It brings Elsa, Anna, and the magical land of Arendelle to life onstage. It expands on the emotional relationship and journey between Princesses Anna and Elsa. When faced with danger, the two discover their hidden potential and the powerful bond of sisterhood.

You can watch the premiere at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/c/WarrenTheatreOnDemand/videos>. The show is just under an hour.

In lieu of tickets, we ask that you make a donation to [Lurie Children's Hospital](#) this holiday season. Also, a special thanks to GC Films for their work on this production!

Please check out the [FROZEN, JR. WEBSITE](#) that our Front of House crew made. It includes our playbill, shoutouts, and some photos!



The Math Team has done a great job adjusting from in-person to virtual competitions!



Frozen, Jr.

