

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

Bethany Orange Woodbridge
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525



Dr. Jennifer P. Byars
Superintendent of Schools

jennifer.byars@amityregion5.org
203.392.2106

Superintendent's Report – September 2019

Continuously improve instruction, cultivate creativity, and enhance student engagement and performance.

Enhance the efficient and effective use of resources.

Foster a supportive climate for students and adults.

Instruction

Convocation 2019-2020: During Convocation on August 27th, the district goals and focus work was presented to all the staff. The work we will be undertaking this year includes: developing our Portrait of a Graduate; establishing a comprehensive district vision and process for curriculum development and evaluation; continuing the implementation of 1:1 devices and using technology to transform learning; and adjusting our professional learning and evaluation plan as we enter into the second year of our new model. We will also continue to look at supporting students' social learning and their emotional needs. Building principals introduced all new staff and Steven Anderson provided a keynote address on technology integration. Following the keynote, teachers met in the cafeteria for roundtable discussions led by Mr. Anderson and spent the afternoon in technology workshops.

Spartan Stories 2019-2020 Kick-Off Celebration: On Wednesday, August 28th, we welcomed two alumni – Darren Haynes, Class of 1999 and Margaux Farrell, Class of 2008—back to Amity to help kick off our 2019-2020 school year. Students listened to each of the speakers during the morning program and participated in some opening-of-school activities in homeroom. Both Darren and Margaux supported this year's school-wide theme of "Be true, Be you" by reflecting on overcoming adversity, establishing solid relationships, and believing in your own strength by working to be your best self. Both of this year's speakers are also former successful post-high school athletes and are successful professionals in news media.

Introduction of "restorative circles": Following a 2-day training for the entire district administrative team where the concept of "restorative circles" was introduced, the high school administration used the practice during the final building leadership team meeting of the summer. As part of the meeting initiation, goal setting and closure, the members of the meeting sat in a circle to answer questions. This approach is used organically in many of the high school classes (i.e. Socratic Seminars, fishbowl discussions, etc) and is a wonderful way to build a sense of community while also establishing goals and directions for a group.

Tech Bootcamp for Middle School Students: 7th grade students in both middle schools spent the day working with academic and Life Arts teachers for an introduction to all the various technologies devices and platforms they will use as an Amity student. Students participated in a variety of learning stations and activities. Students rotated through groups where they logged into their PowerSchool Unified Classroom, Google, and Microsoft accounts, set up their digital files, and completed a variety of tasks designed to orient them to Amity's technology and the district laptops.

MSB Seventh Grade Parent/Student Activities: On Thursday, August 22nd, we had three important events for parents and students: the distribution of HP ProBook devices to all families in the cafeterias; the Woodbridge Youth Services Welcome Back Picnic for students; and the “Strategies for Success” orientation/workshop for parents.

Teacher Educator and Mentoring Program (TEAM): Amity has nine beginning teachers who will participate in the Teacher Educator and Mentoring Program (TEAM). This program provides new teachers to Amity a professional growth model that incorporates the CT Standards for Professional Learning. Beginning teachers focus on one module per semester researching, facilitating newly learned information, and writing a reflection paper for each module. A series of five modules are required to be completed within the first two years of teaching in Connecticut including Classroom Environment, Planning, Instruction, Assessment, and Professional Responsibilities. Once the five modules are successfully completed, the teacher is able to advance their certification.

September Committee Meetings: Curriculum meetings planned for September for grade 7-12 content leaders and department chairs include Science, Social Studies, English Language Arts (ELA), Scientifically Research Based Intervention (SRBI), Math, and Music. Other meetings planned for September include Professional Development and Evaluation Committee, TEAM Coordinating Committee, and District Reading.

Pupil Services: Congratulations to Ms. Vicki Fielosh who delivered her teacher of the year speech at Convocation this year. Ms. Fielosh is a Special Education teacher at AMSO. The new dining hall has opened at Albertus Magnus and our students at Amity Transition Academy are enjoying their employment in the new dining hall! The first *Coffee with the Director* and *Open Office Hours* occurred recently with positive feedback from those in attendance. Future *Coffee with the Director* are September 13th from 8-9:30 a.m. and October 18th from 7:30-9:00 a.m. Future *Open Office Hours* (7:30-8:30 a.m.) are September 19th; October 2nd and October 28th; November 7th, December 10th, January 8th, February 13th, March 3rd, April 24th, and May 26th.

Resources

GCN Roll-out: The initial year of the Global Compliance Network (GCN) Online Mandated Trainings was well received by staff. The GCN platform will operate on a three-year cycle to provide mandated training videos to staff members. A timeline was provided to faculty and staff identifying the trainings that must be completed for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Greater Migration to PowerSchool Tools: Throughout the summer, the high school administrative team worked closely with the District Technology Department to create a more streamlined approach by using E-Collect forms through PowerSchool to complete many procedural aspects of school, including online field trip forms/permission slips, teacher sign-ups for computer labs throughout the building, and teacher demographic information. Success of these programs may be rolled out to the middle school later this year or in the next year.

New Security Guards: The additional security guards at all of our schools spent the first week of school learning the building, meeting students and staff, and becoming familiar with the school procedures. We welcome them to the school community.

Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation Grants: AMSB received three \$1,000 grants from the Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation. One grant is for an eighth grade social reform/fiber art project; the second is to bring in an African assembly tied to the seventh grade social studies curriculum; and the last is to support the AMSB school musical. The Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation also supplied matching funding to AMSB & AMSO so the schools could jointly purchase new microphones for their respective musicals.

Computer Labs Room Conversions: Two of the AMSB computer lab rooms were reconfigured to better meet the needs of students, as they are no longer needed as labs due to the addition of 1:1 devices to

all students. One is now a health room with space better able to accommodate student wellness activities. The other is now a general music room, which can accommodate more students.

Donation Accepted: Thanks is extended to John Pellicani for his donation of a drum set to Amity Middle School Bethany. This kit will no doubt be used by Amity students for many years to come.

Climate

OBOA Discussion Opportunities: Amity high school students, faculty and community members were invited to participate in a One Book One Amity ice cream social event coupled with small group discussions. The discussions were focused on the book *Dear Evan Hanson*, the choice for everyone to read this past summer. The entire school participated in conversations on Wednesday, September 4th.

Link Crew Class of 2023 Orientation: On Friday, August 23rd, the Link Crew Coordinators and all 66 Link Crew Leaders (current juniors and seniors at ARHS) welcomed the Class of 2023 to Amity Regional High School during the annual Link Crew Orientation Day. While the day is voluntary for first year students, over 95% of the incoming students attended and participated in icebreaker activities, team-building exercises, tours and other orientation program activities. The 9th grade students are split up in to groups of 10-11 and are paired with 2 Link Crew Leaders with whom they will work throughout the entire school year.

ARHS Spirit Fridays: As has become the established practice, the faculty, staff, and student body will be encouraged to participate in ARHS Spirit Fridays throughout the year. Faculty and staff are given a school T-shirt each year to promote a sense of unity and are encouraged to wear their Amity gear every Friday as well as on other special occasions, such as the 1st day of school for students.

AMSO Welcome: We welcomed 367 students to the Amity school community. Students participated in a welcome assembly and spent the first days of school getting acquainted with their teachers and peers through team building exercises.

Informative Parent Presentation: AMSO Parents also had the opportunity to attend a presentation sponsored by the Bethany, Orange, Woodbridge Drug and Alcohol Action Committee. "Hidden in Plain Sight" was a powerful presentation to assist parents in understanding how drugs can be easily hidden in a child's bedroom.

PTSO Welcome Back Celebrations: Thank you to all the PTSOs who sponsored welcome back food and activities for teachers and staff.

AMSO students encouraged to be environmentally friendly: AMSO has expanded the use of recycling food waste in the cafeteria. Students are encouraged to separate the food waste which will be used elsewhere for composting. A similar program was run at AMSB last year. Students are also being asked to bring in refillable water bottles to limit the number of plastic bottles brought to school daily.

AMSB Seventh Grade Orientation/Team Building Activities: Seventh grade teachers conducted several team-building and orientation activities during the first few days of school to help seventh graders with the transition to AMSB.

Middle School Advisory Updates: The AMSO advisory committee shared the plans for this year's advisory program. The advisory will continue to focus on community building both with the school and the greater community through participation in community activities and service projects. Our first advisory is scheduled for Sept. 13th. AMSB introduced their exciting new advisory program to all of their students. The advisory assignments are on AMSB student schedules. Teachers and administrators have been planning and preparing for this implementation for several years.