

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

Bethany Orange Woodbridge
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Superintendent's Report – December 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

Amity Teacher of the Year: AMSO teacher Vittoria Fielosh was honored on December 4, 2019 with her colleagues from around the state for excellence in teaching at the annual Connecticut Teacher of the Year Awards Ceremony held at the Bushnell in Hartford.

Spaceward Bound: AMSB Technology teacher Kevin Berean was selected, as one of eight educators in the U.S., to attend a prestigious, NASA funded, professional development program called “Spaceward Bound” in Hanksville, Utah. Mr. Berean currently teaches a “Mars Unit” but from December 9 – 13, 2019, he will be able to experience what living on Mars might be like in the future.

Interdisciplinary Field Trip to Jewish Heritage Museum: Amity High School students and community members shared a truly inter-generational, interdisciplinary, and interfaith experience on November 19, 2019, as they traveled to NYC’s Museum of Jewish Heritage to tour their current exhibit and hear the testimony of a Holocaust survivor. The students and their adult chaperones – teachers, clergymen, representatives of the ADL, and community members—then listened, rapt, to one woman’s story of her family’s journey from Poland to France to the U.S. as they survived persecution and narrowly escaped imprisonment or even death. Students will respond to this incredible opportunity through writing and dialogue in their English and History classrooms, in a post-trip debriefing, and then will serve to share their thoughts and new perspective with younger students whose studies include the Holocaust. Many thanks to Marji Shapiro-Lipsitz from the ADL for her support and collaboration in organizing the event. The trip was paid for by an anonymous donor/member from Or Shalom Congregation in Orange.

English II In-School Conference: Organized by Shannon Martin, the entire 10th grade will participate in an in-school conference on December 11, 2019 as part of their continued focus on skill building and thematic study. Students will be attending inter-disciplinary presentations from Amity teacher-experts focusing on social, historical, and psychological context surrounding the *The Crucible* and *The Scarlet Letter*.

AMSB Career Day: AMSB conducted its annual, outstanding, Career Day program on Friday, November 15, 2019. Twenty-two parents and community members volunteered their time and expertise to help our students explore their own career paths.

Governor’s 2019 Summer Reading: On November 21, 2019, Amity Middle School, Bethany & Orange, were recognized as two of the top middle schools in Connecticut as part of the “Governor’s 2019 Summer Reading Challenge.” Two avid readers from each school along with Dr. Marie McPadden, Amity’s Director of Curriculum and Staff Development, represented AMSB at the award ceremony at the

Connecticut State Library in Hartford. Governor Ned Lamont and Commissioner of Education, Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, presented the schools with the award.

Amity Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM): TEAM Reflection papers are due from participating teachers on December 6, 2019 and will be reviewed by the district reviewers on December 13, 2019.

AMSO Spartan Players Auditions: Over 80 students are scheduled to audition for this year's production of *Mary Poppins Jr.* Students will have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of the production including acting, stage crew and lighting/sound tech.

Curriculum & Instruction Alignment: Curriculum meetings for 7-12 content leaders and department chairs planned for December include the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) and English Language Arts (ELA). District meetings planned for December include District Technology and District Reading. BOWA Curriculum Directors will meet on December 11, 2019 to discuss Math criteria for advancing students in all four districts, and the alignment of elementary criteria to middle school requirements.

District Pupil Services: Unified Sports at the High School and Middle School are preparing for the start of the Winter Season (Basketball). A very special thank you to Lynn Edwards, Betsy Grace, and Wendy Carrafiello for coordinating our Unified Sports offerings. Unified Theater at ARHS continues their hard work towards their Late Winter/Early Spring Performance. Students at Albertus Magnus are continuing work across various job sites, including the Soap Lift, which is a local community business in Bethany. The first of a series of parent workshops related to Special Education is scheduled for January 23, 2020 with Laurie Markus, Esq as our presenter. *Lunch with the Director* will be held on January 30, 2020 from 12-1:30. Future *Office Hours with the Director* (7:30-8:30) are January 8, February 13, March 3, April 24, and May 26, 2020.

Resources

AMSO Advisories Give Back: In keeping with the AMSO Advisory mission to help students connect with the school community and beyond, several advisories are working with local and national organizations to help care for the planet and one another. For example, plans are underway to bring Orange senior citizens to school to share stories and games with advisory students. The seniors will also attend the school performance of the Winter Concert. Another group will be selling bracelets in support of Pulsara Project which supports education and housing for families in Central America. By empowering each advisory group to work together to decide how they will give back to the community, students are provided with authentic learning experiences that promote student engagement with the greater community.

Climate

BOWA Youth Leaders Breakfast: Amity Regional Schools hosted a breakfast on December 5, 2019 for Youth Organization Leaders across the BOW area. In addition to school administrators, members of Youth Service organizations, as well as local clergy, attended the meeting. The focus of our discussion was a community approach to supporting our students. The December discussion honed in on student anxiety, stress, depression, and how we can support students and their families who are experiencing these challenges.

Most Successful Homecoming Dance in Amity History: This year's annual homecoming dance, sponsored by ARHS Student Government, had the highest attendance in school history with over 880 tickets sold. Students danced throughout the night, enjoyed a variety of food in the cafeteria-much of it donated-and even an ice cream bar!

Tom Pincince Presentation to 9th and 10th Grade Students: All 9th and 10th grade students participated in an assembly on the “dos” and “don’t’s” of social media use. Tom Pincince, Assistant Athletic Director at Central Connecticut State University, delivered his address to students called “[Take This Play Off.](#)” This assembly was a culminating activity for the fall related to our OBOA read *Dear Evan Hansen*.

Students and Parents Participate in Internet Safety Presentations: AMSO students and parents, along with Orange 6th grade students and parents, enjoyed informative presentations by Mr. Robert Hackenson Jr. The presentations focused on the challenges of Social Media and Internet Safety. Mr. Hackenson has been delivering highly interactive educational presentations in a dynamic fashion for over 15 years. His messages have been delivered to students and parents across the country and were well received by both parents and students.

Internet Safety Assemblies: Scott Driscoll, of [Internet Safety Concepts](#), conducted 60-minute assemblies for all 7th and 8th grade students on December 6, 2019 at AMSB. This program was supported by Woodbridge Youth Services.

Fabulous Friendsgiving Dinner: AMSO Fabulous Friends welcomed 17 students from the high school and ACES to celebrate Friendsgiving. Students enjoyed a wonderful meal together and participated in activities centered on the holiday.

Annual Career Paths/Alumni-Panel for 11th and 12th Grade Students: All 11th and 12th grade students were given the choice between two presentations: the annual “Alumni College Panel” and “Successful Career Paths without a Four Year Degree” presentation. The alumni panel consisted of alumni from the Amity Classes of 2018 and 2019. They shared their college experiences and offered insight into the college process. A change to this year’s panel included a few older students to provide a slightly different perspective on college life. For those students who were interested in learning about alternatives to college, a concurrent presentation was offered regarding “Successful Career Paths without a Four Year Degree”.

“Step Up! Program” Assembly at AMSB: On Monday, November 25, 2019, AMSB held an assembly for all 7th grade students. The program was designed and presented by the Anti-Defamation League to give a voice to the targets of bullying and prejudice, build empathy, and inspire bystanders to become allies.

Sandy Hook Promise Program & “Signs of Suicide” Training: Selected staff members from our counseling, pupil services, and health/pe departments from all district schools attended the Sandy Hook Promise “Signs of Suicide” Training on December 3, 2019. A second session of training will occur on December 12, 2019.



ARHS Students at the Museum of Jewish Heritage