

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 – January 2020

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

Pupil Services Updates: The SAILS program at ARHS held their annual holiday cookie sale during December. Students in the SAILS program baked, packaged, and sold various types of cookies to staff for their enjoyment during the holiday season. Amity Transition Academy at Albertus Magnus collected bottles and cans and, with the money they earned, they bought gift cards to donate to New Reach (<https://newreach.org/>.) Unified Sports is practicing weekly for their upcoming basketball games. 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 12:00-1:30pm. Future *Office Hours with the Director* (7:30-8:30am) are February 13, March 3, April 24, and May 26, 2020.

2018-19 Next Generation Science Standards Assessment Results: The 2018-19 Next Generation Science Standards Assessment Results were released in December and Amity School District No.5 was 4th in DRG B with 77% at or above goal. These are the first results based on the Next Generation Science Standards that were formally adopted by the Connecticut State Board of Education in November 2015. The NGSS assessments are cutting-edge, rigorous, and highly engaging science assessments that are administered to all students in Grades 5, 8, and 11 as required per federal and state law.

Amity Middle School Students Perform Well at Southern Regional Music Festival: 20 AMSB student musicians auditioned on December 7th for the Southern Regional Middle Music Festival, and 16 students qualified for band, choir, or strings. 26 AMSO students auditioned and 21 qualified to move forward in the competition. Students competed with other music students from the southern region of the state including New Haven, Hamden, Clinton, Madison, Branford, Cheshire and other towns. These 16 student musicians will perform at North Branford Intermediate School on March 6, and March 7, 2020. Amity Middle School Band teachers, Rob Fragione and Kristen Morace, are the Jazz Band Co-Chairs of the Southern Regional Festival.

Junior Planning Night: On Tuesday, January 7, 2020, 11th grade students and their parents were invited to hear Director of Admissions for Union College, Ann Fleming Brown talk about the college search and admissions process in a humorous, interactive presentation. Over 250 students and parents attended the program.

Makerspace Kick-off: The AMSO Makerspace opened this month. Students can now sign up to participate in a variety of hands-on learning opportunities including coding, exploring circuit boards and other STEAM activities. We want to thank AMSO teacher Vittoria Fielosh who provided the start-up funds for the Makerspace through a Donor's Choose grant.

Winter Concert: ARHS held the annual winter concert on December 19, 2019, with band, strings and choirs performing. The performance was a huge success with close to a full house audience. AMSB also had an extraordinary evening Winter Concert on December 12, 2019. Approximately 47% of the student body performed, making AMSB look very much like a performing arts middle school!

Mining Lab in AP Environmental Earth Science: A part of a creative solution to exposing students to real-world environmental issues was having students “mine” chocolate chip cookies. Students were required to separate the cookie from the chips and weigh the different materials in order to discover how much time it takes, the materials and costs associated and the impact on the environment.

Classical Piano Assembly: Mr. Fragione arranged to have a classical piano assembly for all AMSB students on January 8, 2020. The pianists were Arianna & Robin Giesbrecht.

AMSO Students Participate in the Geography Bee: Students in both grade 7 and 8 completed the classroom level rounds of this nation-wide competition. The school wide finals will take place in late January. The winner will move on to the state level competition.

STAR Assessments: STAR assessments in Reading and Mathematics were given in early January. Results of the assessment will be analyzed by teachers and administration to help inform instructional decisions moving forward.

January Instruction Meetings: Curriculum meetings for grade 7-12 content leaders and department chairs planned for January include the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC), ELA, Science, Math, and Social Studies. District meetings planned for January include District Reading, District Steering, and District Wellness. BOWA meetings include Curriculum Directors, Math, and STEAM Day.

Resources

The Jamie A. Hulley Arts Foundation Awards: The Jamie A. Hulley Arts Foundation awarded AMSB \$3,000 in grant awards for three creative proposals to integrate arts into our curriculum. Eighth grade social studies teachers, Marika Wissink and Robert Murphy, along with seventh grade social studies teacher Nick DaPonte were each awarded \$1,000.

BLT Works to Save with Vendors: As part of our ongoing effort to be fiscally frugal, department chairs have continued to work personally with vendors and representatives of distributors to negotiate cost savings while ordering. As an example, the Phys. Ed/Health department chair was able to order \$2000 worth of equipment and receive free shipping (normally a \$400 cost) due to the consistency of using the vendor-Gopher, as well as the size of the order. Math, science and social studies department chairs also regularly work to arrange for no-cost trial periods for texts and resources for teachers.

Climate

Narrative4 Facilitator Training: During the week of December 9, 2019, over 120 students (grades 9-12) were trained as Narrative4 Facilitators. These students will lead the whole-school story exchange which will take place in early February.

Cocoa and Cram: On January 15, 2020, Link Crew will hold the annual Cocoa and Cram event for 9th grade students where Link Crew Leaders will assist 9th graders in studying for midterm exams and preparing for the comprehensive exam experience. The event will run from 6:00-7:30pm and all 9th graders are encouraged to attend.

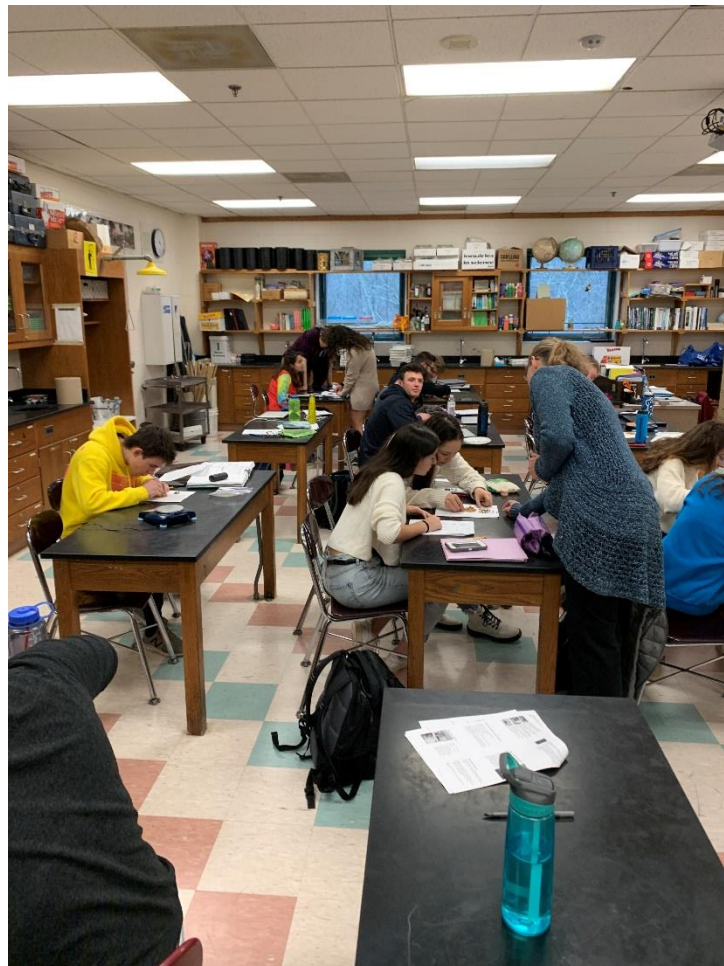
AMSB Support of District Wide Holiday Bear Gift Giving: 47 members of the AMSB staff took part in the district wide Holiday Bear gift giving campaign. They provided holiday gifts to eight children for the season.

“Holiday for Giving” Toy Collection: The AMSB Student Council and SAVEPromise Club organized a “Holiday for Giving” toy drive and collected 126 toys and books. "Holiday for Giving" is a group based in Wallingford.

Woodbridge Youth Services Kindness Klub: The Youth Services Kindness Klub made blankets for the LIFE HAVEN homeless shelter on Tuesday, December 17, 2019, after school in the AMSB cafeteria.

AMSO Fabulous Friends Holiday Party: AMSO Fabulous Friends welcomed 8 students from ACES to celebrate the holiday season. Students enjoyed participating in a variety of festive activities designed to build collaboration and friendship.

AMSO Student Council Movie Night: The student council hosted a movie night on Friday, January 10, 2020. Students were asked for a \$3.00 donation or a donation of canned food items to raise funds for the local food pantry.



AP Earth Science Students Mining Chocolate Chip Cookies