

# 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 – March 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.

*March is National School Board Member Appreciation Month. Please know that our entire Amity community appreciates the efforts you make on behalf of our students. You work with heart and heads and always consider what is best for kids. I know this role takes time and effort and I would like to say thank you for all you give.*

### Instruction

**Pupil Services Update:** AMSB hosted their Special Education informational nights for incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade students respectively. A special thank you to the staff from AMSB! Unified Sports hosted a Unified Basketball Tournament at ARHS on March 4, 2020! The SAILS classroom at AMSO hosted their annual Valentine's Day gathering. Students enjoyed food, dancing, and socializing with students from all grade levels! SAILS at ARHS continues to run a snack shop in the faculty lounge at ARHS. Money raised through the snack shop goes to their end of the year celebration events. Future *Office Hours with the Director* (7:30-8:30) are April 24 and May 26, 2020.

**Middle School Readers Workshop Study Group:** Mrs. Burke and Dr. McPadden have arranged for middle school ELA teachers and reading consultants to visit Regional School District No.15 on March 26, 2020. The group will visit to observe one-seventh and one-eighth grade Readers Workshop Model at Rochambeau Middle School. Amity teachers will also have an opportunity to debrief with the teachers following the observations. The joint committee will meet to debrief as a whole group at a later date.

**March 20, 2020 Full-Day District Professional Learning for Teachers and Staff:** Several morning workshops will be offered for teachers and administrators including technology sessions, instructional strategies, trauma-informed classrooms, questioning techniques, and unifying writing at Amity. After the morning sessions, participants will engage in a variety of Wellness activities followed by lunch. After lunch, teachers will be given time to work on their professional focus for the remainder of the day. A CREC consultant will continue training for all district paraeducators.

**Check-ins with Interdisciplinary Professional Learning Communities:** As part of the midyear check-in with teachers, Mrs. Mahon has met with every inter-disciplinary PLC group to engage in discussions about instructional rounds, social and civic expectation discussions, and ask for feedback on this year's work in PLC. Teachers have used the time this year to discuss what the school-wide learning expectations, specifically the social and civic, look like in various classes throughout the building as well as share their thoughts, ideas and reflections on their professional goals, and learn from their colleagues through discussion and instructional rounds.

**ARHS 2020-2021 Scheduling Process:** In preparation for next school year, the scheduling communications, recommendations and selection of classes has been completed by counselors, teachers, students and parents. The next phase will be to begin to organize the requests and have discussions with

department leaders about sections and classes that will run. The master schedule will be built by the beginning of May and students/parents will receive a course list for the 2020-2021 school year by the end of May.

**Middle School Scheduling Process:** The scheduling process of selecting and verifying classes for both current seventh and eighth graders was done electronically using PowerSchool. Jill LaPlante, Director of School Counseling, and other high school staff met all 8th grade students during the first week of February and provided information regarding course selection and high school course requirements for graduation.

**AMSB 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Awareness of Global & Local Issues:** 7th graders at AMSB presented their Global Issues projects to their families, friends, and the Amity community on Thursday, March 5, 2020 in the AMSB Gym. Presentations were open-house, exposition-style. The students have been working hard on these projects for nearly 6 weeks. Issues included access to water, access to education, disease and epidemics, use of child soldiers, LGBTQ and gender rights, refugee crises, and habitat preservation. Student groups presented an informational poster, an awareness campaign (which could be presented with technology, art, or music), as well as an individual argumentative essay, in which they advocated for what they believe to be the best organization for their chosen issue.

**AMSB Solo & Ensemble Concert:** Some of the finest of the AMSB music department performed in the annual Solo & Ensemble concert on Thursday, February 13, 2020. The program included a variety of musical styles and genres performed by choir, band, and strings students. There was a mixture of solos, duets, and small ensembles featuring the Jazz band and Chamber singers.

## Resources

**Professional Learning Opportunities through Faculty Meetings:** In an effort to foster a continuous learning environment, partner with community entities, and exercise cost savings, the high school administration continues to host professional learning activities during monthly faculty meetings. The March meeting focused on a brief presentation from the counseling department on trauma-responsive classrooms and the cognitive behavior intervention for trauma in schools (CBITS) training they have been working on through this year, as well as a joint presentation from athletic trainer Kim Pearce and members of our local AMR team who re-trained the faculty in hands-only CPR. Neither presentation was a cost to the district.

**Jack Levine Efficiency Award:** The 2020 call for applications has been sent to students and parents in the Amity community.

**Restorative Training of Trainers (TOT):** Three days of training will take place on March 30, 31, and April 1, 2020. Twelve teachers and administrators who completed the initial two-day training will become trainers for the district. This cost saving model will allow the district to have a cadre of in-district trainers.

**AMSO Repurposes Counter Tops and Shelving:** Shelving and countertops in the old computer labs are being removed and used in a variety of locations throughout the district. The shelving is being custom cut to help finish the security offices and add shelving space to other offices throughout the district.

**Mardi Gras Party for 8<sup>th</sup> Graders at Amity Regional High School:** On Friday, February 21, 2020, Woodbridge Youth Services, in collaboration with Orange Youth Services, organized the first *Tri-Town 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Mardi Gras Party at Amity Regional High School*. This was a party for 8<sup>th</sup> grade residents of Woodbridge, Bethany, and Orange.

## **Climate**

**Signs of Suicide Screening with 9<sup>th</sup> Grade:** As part of our work with Sandy Hook Promise, faculty members from the counseling and physical education/health departments led lessons on “signs of suicide” and had all 9<sup>th</sup> grade students complete a prevention screening for suicide. The lessons and screening also served as an opportunity for inter-disciplinary collaboration for faculty members and administrators. Students at Bethany Middle School will also participate in this program on March 9<sup>th</sup> and Orange Middle School on March 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Continued Vigilance with “SpeakUp” Program:** Members of the ARHS community have continued to use the SpeakUp program vigilantly to report various concerns, including issues with vandalism, concern for other students in the building, concerning behavior by students, and inappropriate parking concerns. From January, 2019-June, 2019, there were 11 total reports through SpeakUp. From January, 2020-March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, there have been 28 messages, and over 50 throughout this school year.

**Be AMITY Assemblies:** On February 14, 2020, AMSB students celebrated at the 100th Day of School “Be AMITY” assembly. We recognized Character of the Quarter students for their “Motivation,” conducted team-building activities, and raffled off gift cards, Amity socks, and bracelets to 10 lucky students.

**AMSB School-Wide Collection:** The Student Council and SAVE-Promise Clubs sponsored a Food Drive during the first two weeks in February and collected over 1,300 items that were donated to Woodbridge Youth Services for distribution. Students brought in nonperishable food items to their Advisory teacher and there was a “Canstruction” contest using the items. Prizes were awarded to the Advisory Group that used the most food items in their Canstruction and for the group that showed the most creativity.

**Orientations for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents/Guardians/Students at AMSB:** On February 27, 2020 AMSB held a 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation Night for current 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents/guardians. A smaller orientation session for parents who have students with special needs was held in the media center prior to the orientation for all parents/guardians. Approximately 200 parents attended the session. The principal, counselor, and other staff also visited both BCS and BRS the same day and gave an orientation to all students.

**AMSO Jackie’s Nine Assembly:** AMSO student attended a school wide presentation by Mr. John Tartaglio. Mr. Tartaglio touched upon several Jackie’s Nine character traits including perseverance, determination, and courage. He shared his personal story overcoming his physical disability to become a highly successful athlete, businessman, husband, and father.

**AMSO Adds New Club with Focus on Tolerance and Diversity:** A new club addressing acceptance and tolerance in the LGBTQ community was started on Feb. 25, 2020. The club was well attended and is off to a positive start.

**Community Outreach:** To continue to foster leadership opportunities for students as well as positive relationships with the community, Mrs. Mahon and three 12<sup>th</sup> grade students spoke at a community breakfast on February 20, 2020 at Chip’s Restaurant. The topic was on what it is like to be an Amity Regional High School student and how Amity has helped prepare these students to become contributing members of society. About two dozen community members attended the breakfast.



AMSB Canstruction Contest – AMSB collected over 1300 items for the Woodbridge Food Bank!

