

# AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

*Bethany Orange Woodbridge*  
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## Superintendent's Report – April 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**

**Offsite Learning:** On Monday, March 23, 2020 we began implementing our [Offsite Learning Plan](#). Teachers and administrators have been working diligently over the past few weeks to prepare meaningful lessons and were anxious to reconnect with their students. A flexible schedule was provided to all teachers with planning time, instructional time, and student contact time. This process was successfully facilitated for the past three weeks. Paraprofessionals received training to work with students in need of support as recommended by school counselors. Teachers also identified students in need of support and were in contact with interventionists, who then followed-up providing support to those students identified. The technology team and library media specialists have provided daily workshops in Zoom, integrating curriculum in a distance learning platform, and how to connect with students. All schools made arrangements for parents and students to retrieve resources (books, instruments, etc.).

**Teachers Put Fall Professional Development Experience to Use During Off-Site Learning:** During the Convocation professional learning for the 2019-2020 school year, teachers were presented with various technology platforms that would help facilitate the integration of technology in to their everyday teaching. Despite only having one year of experience as a 1:1 environment in 7<sup>th</sup> grade last year, many teachers worked on piloting platforms, such as FlipGrid and NearPod, along with enhancing use of Kahoot, Study Island, etc. Since the sudden move to off-site learning, these experiences have been put to good use and allowed teachers to be in a slightly better position to handle the crisis. Along with being open to using new technologies such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, many teachers started working on posting narrated PowerPoint presentations and notes for their students almost immediately upon closing school in mid-March.

**Amity Teachers On-going Professional Development Opportunities:** The Amity technology team, the Library Media Specialists, and several teachers have offered a variety of technology based professional development opportunities to teachers since the start of off-site learning. These workshops are offered several times per week and are designed to support teachers not only in the use of technology, but also in the shift in their instructional practices required to successfully meet the needs of student using the off-site learning platform.

**Collaboration and Planning Continues:** Curriculum meetings for 7-12 content leaders and department chairs planned for April include ELA, Science, Social Studies, Fine and Performing

Arts, PE/Health, World Language and Math. District meetings planned for April include Reading. Various department, team, and content meetings for teacher check-ins have been organized weekly.

**AMSO Outstanding Performance in New England Math League Contest:** AMSO ranked second in the Connecticut Region. We are proud to have an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student who was the number one student in the Connecticut region and ranked number two in the entire league.

**Chinese Language Honors Society Induction:** Despite the school closure, Chinese Language Teacher Xia Feng was still able to organize and host the 2020 induction ceremony of new members of the Amity Chapter of the National Chinese Honor Society on March 31, 2020 over Zoom. She did a wonderful job, and even in these difficult times, she called attention to the work that her current officers had done over the past year, and recognized the hard work of the new inductees. (Credit to E. Serapiglia for the explanation and information)

**Drowsy Chaperone Rehearsal Continues:** Despite the school closure, the cast and crew for the ARHS Spring Musical continues to rehearse (remotely) for an as-of-yet-to-be-determined opening night. These students and advisors have demonstrated an unyielding commitment to this production, continuing to rehearse for multiple hours every week.

**Fiber Arts Project:** Earlier in March, AMSB students had an opportunity to create a fiber art piece expressing what they have learned about a 19<sup>th</sup> century social reformer. Heather Stoltz, a fiber artist, visited our school to guide students in the creation of their artwork. The fiber art pieces students created were really impressive! This project was made possible through the generous grant of the Jamie A. Hulley Arts Foundation.

## **Resources**

**Supporting Community Efforts:** Local engineer Yaron Baitch has made and distributed over 400 face shields to the following organizations: Woodbridge Police and Fire, Northeast Medical Group, Yale Hospitalists, Wallingford Police Department, Area VNAs, Connecticut State Police, and Orange Police Department. This would not have been possible without the use of the printers borrowed from both middle schools. Not only are they helping with the production, they allow him to refine the design and print new prototypes on the Amity printers without interrupting current production. They are also being used to print spare parts needed to keep the production running smoothly.

**Continuing to Keep School Open Amidst Crisis:** The high school administration has worked collaboratively with the administrative assistants to come up with a solid plan for the offices to be open, including the attendance desk and counseling department, while continuing to keep staff members safe. Some administrative assistants are able to work exclusively from home by having phone lines forwarded and being available to work with administrators remotely throughout the day. There is a small “skeleton crew” of staff and administrators who oversee on-sight operations daily.

**AMSB Class Trips:** All AMSB class trips are canceled for the remainder of this school year. The trips that have been canceled are: Nature’s Classroom, Woosley Hall, Aladdin NYC, Adjudication trip to 6 Flags, and Holiday Hill. Refunds for the Nature’s Classroom trip were processed and refunds/reimbursements for the other trips are being discussed with the outside vendors.

**Grab and Go Lunches at ARHS & AMSO:** Due to increased need in the Orange community, preparation of Grab and Go lunches has been expanded to the AMSO kitchen. Since the start of the program on March 18, 2020 through April 14, 2020, Amity has served 6,957 meals to children in our towns.

## Climate

**Pupil Services:** During our closure, students at Amity Transition Academy participated in a virtual dance competition where everyone enjoyed showing off their dance moves! The School Psychologists and School Counselors at ARHS developed a voice over PowerPoint with 25 coping skills that will be shared with our community. Finally, the Pupil Services Department is looking to develop a series of Zoom/Webinar sessions that will be shared with parents on various special education and mental health topics.

**ARHS Administrators Reach Out to Students and Staff:** As part of the ongoing crisis management, the high school administrators have worked to support students and staff through directly reaching out to individuals, making videos to address each grade on Spartan Seminar Days, working synchronously with faculty on a daily basis to trouble shoot problems and sending messages to parents and community members to encourage them to stay hopeful. In addition to working with students on academics, administrators have also been “meeting” with students to discuss concerns, specifically through student government, and encouraging clubs to meet virtually.

**AMSO Teachers Send Meals to Yale:** AMSO teachers donated over \$300 to provide meals to health care workers. The money donated was used to purchase food from a local restaurant and thus teachers were able to support both our healthcare workers and local businesses.

**Middle Schools Have Virtual Spirit Weeks:** Last week, AMSO students participated in their first virtual spirit week. Students were encouraged to share photos of themselves participating in a variety of activities to build community and encourage positive social connection. All photos were posted on the AMSO Twitter page. Last week was also the online spirit week at AMSB. Students were encouraged to show off their wacky hairdos, favorite book, comfy pajamas, and their best black and gold! Pictures were included on the next day’s morning announcements.

**AMSB Morning Announcements:** Every morning Mr. Orie sends the students and staff a morning “newz real”. Starting our day with the same routine we have every day provides the students with a sense of connection and normalcy...and gives Mr. Orie a forum to show off his acting skills!! Recently, Mr. Orie has started including students as “guest hosts”.

**Gold Pen Award Program:** Nominations have been collected for review to honor outstanding teachers through the Gold Pen Award Program. This program was inaugurated as a means to recognize teachers who are dependable, hardworking, committed to students, and whose contributions to the district are recognized and valued by their peers. The Gold Pen Award is truly a special significant and prestigious award because their peers select the winners. We plan to acknowledge this year’s recipients at Convocation in August 2020.

**STEAM Day Cancelled:** Amity is saddened to inform you that the Fifth Annual Amity STEAM Day scheduled for May 27, 2020 has been canceled this year. We look forward to planning for the 2020-2021 academic year.