

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

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Superintendent's Report – May 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

Off-site Learning Week 7: This week marks the seventh week of Distance Learning for Amity students. As teachers and students continue to move through this uncharted territory, teachers are working hard to be creative and provide engaging opportunities for students, such as in acting classes where guest speakers have joined Zoom conversations to add to the discussion about acting or set design.

NEASC Panel Presentation via Zoom: ARHS Principal Anna Mahon was part of a 7-person international panel on Tuesday, May 5, 2020 to discuss how heads of school are handling the remainder of the school year during the COVID-19 pandemic. The webinar-based panel, which had over 1300 participants from more than 60 countries, asked these school leaders to share their thoughts and preliminary plans as they look ahead towards wrapping up the school year and plan for end-of-year celebrations in a virtual world. Thoughts and concerns about the summer months were also addressed.

Credit Recovery Program Planning: Amity is working with ACES in exploring an online credit recovery program for this summer. In the past, Amity has hosted ACES to conduct credit recovery for area students. Due to the current pandemic crisis, ACES is planning an online program to be organized for students in need of credit recovery.

AMSO Hosts Virtual Advisory: Over 70 AMSO students attended a virtual advisory meeting facilitated by 4 members of the AMSO staff on Tuesday, May 5, 2020. The Zoom meeting provided students with a forum to connect with their peers in a large group setting and have discussions driven by their own interests and concerns.

AMSB Advisory: The teachers of AMSB have been connecting with their advisory students on Friday's around lunch. The advisory committee has created lessons that help students share thoughts and feelings, deal with anxieties and stressors, and just enjoy making connections with their peers.

Pupil Services Updates: Students working with Ms. Healy have been participating in Fun Friday group activities to help student's feel less isolated and foster a sense of community. The Soap Lift work is continuing for students at Amity Transition Academy (ATA). It was important to the staff and students at ATA to try and continue this work to the best of their abilities to support the local business. On May 28, 2020, the PPS Department will host a virtual workshop for parents with Dr. Paula Gil Lopez from Fairfield University. The focus will be on self-care and mindfulness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Articulation Meetings: Curriculum meetings for 7-12 content leaders and department chairs planned for May include ELA, Science, Social Studies, Fine and Performing Arts, PE/Health, MS Music, MS Art, and Math. Various department, team, and content meetings for teacher check-ins have been organized weekly. District meetings planned for May include District Reading and District Interventionists.

Technology Workshops Continue: The technology and library media specialists have continued to provide daily workshops in Zoom. A simple survey went out to all teachers in an effort to collect responses on what technology supports they need for the remainder of this school year.

Resources

PE Locker Room Cleanout Organization: Through use of the Forms option in PowerSchool, the ARHS building administration, athletic office and PE/Health Department Chairperson were able to begin an efficient program for students to return to the building to clean out their lockers in the locker rooms. This plan will be a framework on which we can build other end-of-year school closure activities and material returns/collections.

Adult Education: Virtual Adult Education classes are being explored for the 2020 summer session. Several instructors have indicated that they can teach their classes virtually.

Jack Levine Award of Efficiency: AMSB has received a few submissions for ways to save resources and the student ideas were forwarded for consideration.

Climate

Students Take Charge to Show Appreciation: This year's ARHS theme for Teacher Appreciation Week is "Amity Teachers Go for Gold" (Olympic Theme). In order to support their teachers' tireless work, students created videos for each department and sent personal shout outs to teachers through notes compiled by members of the student government. As per tradition, the rock was painted by the building administrators in honor of the ARHS Teachers and teachers will be formally celebrated by PTSO and the building administration when they return to school.

AMSO Celebrates Teacher Appreciation Week: Parents and students showed their appreciation for our teachers and staff in a variety of creative ways during Teacher Appreciation Week. Teachers and staff were treated to several video messages and e-cards throughout the week that reaffirmed the important work they do.

AMSB Videos of Encouragement: This past week the teachers of AMSB submitted a video with positive messages and messages that encouraged students to keep working hard. In turn, the students, directed by the PTSO, submitted a video to the teachers expressing their thanks for all that teachers are doing to support them.

Meetings with Student Groups and PTSO: The ARHS Administration and many club advisors continue to work with student-led groups through online meeting forums to plan support of the student body, receive feedback and offer ideas. These connections within the school community have been invaluable for students and adults as they help to create a continuity during this time of off-site schooling.

AMSO Holds a Virtual Fundraiser for St. Baldrick's: Amity students and staff gathered on Zoom for the annual AMSO Giving Hair and Hope Event on Monday, May 4, 2020. AMSO teacher Vicki Fielosh served as the MC for the event and cheered on over a dozen participants as they shaved their heads to raise money for cancer research. The event raised over \$11,000.

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 us a chance to share information and inspiration. Starting this past week, students vote to choose a theme for the week, submit Tic Toc videos, and then vote as a school to decide who will win a gift card to a local restaurant. Thank you to the PTSO for the generous donation, and for supporting our local businesses.

AMSO Parent Forum: Several parents attended an open forum session hosted by the AMSO administration. The opportunity allowed parents to ask questions and share feedback regarding off-site learning.

ARHS Google Form for Student Engagement: The ARHS administration has created a Google form for teachers to complete for any student who is struggling to maintain engagement with a class. This form serves as a check and balance for counselors and administrators to help support students in their academic, social, and emotional needs, as well as create a system to monitor overall student engagement.

Amity Awards of Excellence: Nominations are currently being collected for the 2020 Amity Teacher of the Year and the Amity Award for Excellence. The Teacher of the Year announcement will be made prior to the end of this school year to allow for participation in the CT Teacher of the Year process. However, we hope to honor both these recipients, as well as the Gold Pen recipients, at the Amity Convocation in August.