

**AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.5**  
**Bethany Orange Woodbridge**  
**25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525**



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Superintendent's Report – June 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.

**Important Dates!**

- **Amity Regional High School Drive Up Diploma Conference – June 10, 2020, Times TBD**
- **Amity Middle School Bethany 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion Ceremony – June 12, 2020, 4:00 – 6:30 pm**
- **Amity Middle School Orange 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion Ceremony – June 12, 2020, 4:00 – 6:30 pm**
- **Amity Regional High School On-site Diploma Conference – July 6 – July 8, 2020, Times TBD**

**Instruction**

**Off-Site Learning Survey:** Beginning in mid-May, student, parent, and teacher surveys were sent to all three district schools. The surveys included questions about scheduling, communication, climate, and technology and the data will be used to help evaluate how off-site learning was received, our perceived strengths and weaknesses, and to help us plan for off-site learning in the future. We received over 1000 student responses, almost 700 parent responses, and 185 teacher responses.

**AMSO Adds Technology:** Through a DonorsChoose grant awarded to Vicki Fielosh, all AMSO teachers will receive a Graphic Pen stylus. This technology will also allow teachers to interact with digital material more effectively during instruction and allow teachers to provide more immediate and specific feedback to the entire class or individual students.

**Senior Awards Night:** The ARHS Building Leadership Team collaborated to create a virtual presentation for the senior class for Senior Awards Night. Multiple scholarships were conferred and students were recognized for outstanding leadership, scholarship and being positive members of our school/community. \$85,000 in scholarships was given to members of the Class of 2020. Congratulations!

**AMSO Masked Singer:** AMSO music students participated in a masked singer competition as part of their off-site learning this month. AMSO staff members served as virtual Masked Singers and sang a variety of classic and current songs.

**ARHS PTSO Teacher of the Year:** Jeni Bonaldo was chosen as this year's PTSO Amity High School Teacher of the Year. She is a dedicated English teacher, Link Crew Advisor and passionately works to create a just and inclusive community for all Amity students. She led the Narrative4 whole-school story exchange for over 1460 students this year, which offered leadership opportunities to many of our students who served as facilitators for their groups. The experience also had a palpable positive impact on the school climate and set the stage for future whole-school events like this. Ms. Bonaldo's name will be inscribed on a plaque to be posted in the main office and she will be receiving a gift from the PTSO. Congratulations!

**Project-Based Learning When Off-Site:** As teachers and students quickly adjusted to offsite learning, many teachers capitalized on the opportunity to offer their students a chance to take the lead in their own learning. One English teacher, in collaboration with the library media specialist, created the following project:

Instead of reading Huck Finn, students had the choice of 7 different texts to read independently during the quarantine (ranging from narratives, non-fiction, fiction, and a podcast) and their texts were supplemented with various excerpts from people's narratives that they may not learn about in History or English. Then, they were tasked with picking a person or event that may not be taught when it comes to Black History or literature. The library media specialist guided them through research and developing an annotated bibliography, and then they had full choice in how they told this "untold story".

The results were amazing projects where students were able to explore so many aspects of their subject as well as their own experiences and how they can work to make a difference in our community.

**Science Research Symposium – Virtual:** On Friday, May 29, 2020, the Science Research Students and Teachers hosted a previously-recorded science research symposium where student projects were displayed, introductions and addresses were given, and the program was able to showcase the unique experience offered to Amity students.

**Reopening Schools Workshop:** The District Administration Team is currently working with the Connecticut Center for School Change (CCSC) leadership. As guided by the CCSC, the team will be participating in a Reopening Virtual Design Workshop that includes four modules to support planning, teaching and learning, wellness, and operations. The CCSC will also provide a full-day of coaching as the redesign of school reopening planning continues to rollout.

**Pupil Services:** The Pupil Services Department welcomes Mr. Nick DaPonte as our ESY Supervisor for the Summer 2020 ESY Program. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic all ESY services will be provided via an off-site virtual learning modality. Both synchronous and asynchronous instruction will be utilized. Pending additional guidance from the CSDE BSE and local health departments, the district may provide services to identified special education students during the first two weeks of the month of August. We have renewed our partnership with the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI). This partnership allows us to continue to train School Psychologists, School Social Workers, and School Counselors in Cognitive Behavior Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) at no cost to the school district. CBITS is the premier trauma focused intervention for schools and our ability to provide this support to identified students is essential for social and emotional stability and growth. Finally, a very special congratulations to Ms. Edwards from Amity Middle School-Orange who will be retiring at the end of this school-year. Ms. Edwards is a staunch advocate for children and she will be missed!

## **Resources**

**CARES Grant Application:** As part of her doctoral work, Mrs. Mahon has partnered with Mrs. Lumas and Dr. Byars to complete the CARES Grant application. This grant will help offset some of the extra costs the District will accrue due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This district was awarded \$55,040 in federal aid.

**AMSB Material Exchange Days:** On June 8, 2020, and continuing daily through June 11, 2020, parents and students will come to AMSB to collect all belongings that were stored in student lockers. Over the last few weeks, lockers were cleaned by administration, security, and secretarial staff and items were placed in boxes for each student. Parents used an online sign up program to arrange for pick-up times, and school paraprofessionals, custodial staff, and security staff will oversee the distribution and collection process. After collecting their belongings, students will also be asked to return school materials, like text and tradebooks to the box for redistribution back into classrooms. Once empty, the boxes will remain in

the gymnasium in the possibility they are needed to distribute materials in the fall. Student laptops will be collected after the last day of school on June 12, 2020.

**AMSO Students Collect Personal Belongings:** AMSO students picked up all their personal belongings from their lockers. The touchless, drive through locker clean out took place over the course of three days.

**Virtual 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 and are working with Phil Dolan, Director of Amity Adult and Continuing Education, to plan offerings.

## **Climate**

**Virtual Partnership with ADL to Combat Intolerance:** In May, ARHS participated in a virtual campaign sponsored by the ADL to celebrate the efforts schools are making to promote diversity, inclusion, and allyship. We posted a photo of a group of students and community members who visited NYC's Museum of Jewish Heritage in November on our social media accounts and tagged #noplacforhate to participate.

**Amity Administrators Senior Bus Tour:** During the week of May 26<sup>th</sup>, the Amity Regional High School administrators, along with Director of Athletics, Ernie Goodwin, and AMSB Principal, Dr. Jason Tracy, visited all 371 seniors on a school bus to offer congratulations on completing senior year, deliver senior gifts (a laptop cover), and reconnect with our students one last time before seeing them for graduation. The administrators travelled for 9 hours per day for 3 days, and drove over 310 miles across the BOW.

**Strong Collaboration with ARHS PTSO:** Throughout the past few months, the ARHS PTSO Executive Board has worked closely with Mrs. Mahon to maintain an open dialogue, strong communication, and partnership to support all of the Amity Regional High School parents, teachers and students. The PTSO is, once again, sponsoring the annual Project Graduation Balloon campaign to help celebrate this senior class!

**AMSO Holds Virtual Advisory:** Virtual advisories continue to a successful part of online learning for AMSO students. The May 26<sup>th</sup> advisory topic for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students centered on transition to high school. For 7<sup>th</sup> grade students the topic focused on social connections as students played baseball trivia.

**AMSB 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Stepping Up Ceremony:** The 8<sup>th</sup> grade stepping up ceremony will be held at Amity Middle School Bethany on **June 12, 2020 beginning at 4:00 p.m.** Parents will arrive to campus in 15 minute time blocks; students will receive a gift from the PTSO and Administration, will receive their certificate and have a photo taken, then will proceed through our teacher parade!

**AMSB Virtual Stepping Up Video:** A portion of the stepping up ceremony will feature a video with pre-recorded messages from administration and community leaders to our AMSB students We also asked that parents submit a picture of their 8th grader to be included in the video.