

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5
Bethany Orange Woodbridge
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Superintendent's Report – September 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

Welcome Back: On August 31, 2020 the district welcomed back students A-L and on September 1st, we welcomed back students K-Z. Teachers spent the first week getting to know students and orienting the students to the learning platforms, building safety measures, and all other changes that have been implemented. We saw many “smiling eyes” behind masks, as students and teachers reconnected with each other and it was wonderful to see our buildings and school community come back together.

Taking Risks, Trying New Things and Collaborating: As teachers worked to prepare for the new landscape of hybrid, synchronous instruction, teachers at ARHS have worked diligently to introduce new technology (hardware and software) to their teaching practice, as well as support each other through collaboration and sharing of instructional practices. This work will continue throughout the year during Inter-Disciplinary PLC time.

2019-2020 Underclass Awards Night: In order to recognize the accomplishments, both academically and community-based, of our current 10th-12th grade students, the high school building leadership team will host an Underclass Awards Night ceremony via a virtual presentation on Wednesday, September 30, 2020. The program will highlight departmental awards as well as book awards presented by the counseling department. Parents and students will be invited in advance to watch the pre-recorded presentation and certificates and books will be available for pick-up in the counseling department after the ceremony.

AMSB Holds Team Meetings: The administration at AMSB met with each team of students over the first week of school. We spent time together in the side field, courtyard, and orchard as we discussed the expectations for the year, including treating each other with kindness, staying positive, and being respectful and responsible. It was nice to take a quick mask break together and spend some time seeing each other's faces!

AMSO Welcome: AMSO welcomed 351 students to the Amity school community. In-person students participated in small welcome assemblies hosted by administration over the first 2 days of school. Remote learners participated in a Zoom welcome meeting that included an opportunity for students to ask questions and become familiar with the expectations of being a remote learner at AMSO.

AMSO Tech Bootcamp: 7th grade students spent the day on Thursday, September 3 and Friday, September 4, 2020 working with academic and Life Arts teachers with a focus introducing students to all the various technological devices and platforms they will use as an AMSO student. Students participated

in a variety of learning activities that introduced them to Aristotle, Google Classroom, G-mail, the school schedule, and other software programs.

Pupil Services Update: Pupil Services welcomed Ms. Jaime Guthrie (Dawson) as our new Pupil Services Coordinator. Ms. Guthrie will be supporting ARHS while further developing our transition and social emotional supports for students. During the first two weeks of August, we welcomed back students in our Transition Academy and SAILS programs to an in-person summer session to build school readiness skills. Amity Transition Academy has settled into their temporary location at Amity Middle School Orange. ATA students have begun to access the Albertus Magnus Campus and select work environments as health and safety protocols have permitted. Students in Ms. Galiani's class at AMSO have begun participation in adaptive Music and Physical Education classes. Work has started on completing The Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan for all students receiving special education services across our district.

Amity Welcomes New Teachers: An abbreviated and socially distanced New Teacher Orientation was held in August and included a description of the Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM) for teachers working under an Initial Certification. The TEAM Program provides for mentor teachers to support the new teachers. The mentors have an important role in working with the new teachers to guide and support them through specific learning modules focused on instruction, planning, classroom environment, and assessment.

Increased Professional Learning to Start 2020-2021: Professional Learning sessions were held during the week of August 24-28 for teachers and paraeducators. Sessions included a keynote by Allison Zmuda, a nationally known curriculum consultant in the Understanding by Design (UbD) and the importance of creating a *Week at a Glance* to support students and families during Hybrid or Full Distance Learning. Ms. Zmuda met with each content department 7-12 to answer specific curriculum design questions. Other sessions included training on Aristotle, a new classroom management system, Google Classroom, and the Hybrid Teaching Model/Blended Learning. Content/PLC time was given daily for teacher planning time to practice new learning. Professional Learning has continued for all staff on Thursday afternoons during our hybrid instructional model.

Resources

Virtual Back-To-School Night: To maintain a continuum of programming while using resources efficiently, the high school will be hosting one "Open House" night this year, which will take place in a virtual format. All teachers will create a presentation for their classrooms and students will be asked to "walk" their parents through each class period on September 16, 2020. Open Houses for the middle schools will be held in the same format on September 17, 2020.

AMSB Holds Device Exchange Days: During the last few weeks of summer, the Amity Technology Department held a series of device exchange days for students and families at AMSB. Paraeducators and the school security team assisted to make the days run smoothly and ensure that our first in-school experience for 7th grade students was positive and productive.

AMSO Device Rollout: The AMSO 1:1 device rollout on August 18, 2020 was very successful. Over 125 devices were distributed to 7th grade students. In addition to getting their devices, 7th grade students were able to become familiar with the building prior to opening day.

Climate

Administrator Google Classrooms: In an effort to keep the student body up to date regarding school information, including schedules, announcements, letter days, etc., the high school administrators have created Google Classrooms for each grade. Pertinent information is posted through the Classrooms and students can find links to the letter day calendar, hybrid bell schedule, and offsite class schedule. Grade-specific announcements will be posted through this platform as well. The classrooms will complement the

Student Happenings Newsletter, which continues to be published weekly and in an accessible manner for students.

Spartan Seminar during Hybrid: The ARHS Advisory Program, Spartan Seminar, will begin on Wednesday, September 23, 2020 during the virtual Wednesday and will meet roughly every 2 weeks for the remainder of the year (regardless of the instructional model the District is following). The vision of Spartan Seminar is to be “a program designed to engage Amity students, faculty and staff in an exploration of various civic, social, and emotional topics in an effort to build a strong, inclusive community and empower individuals to be the best version of themselves.”

Virtual Club Meetings: As part of the District Reopening Plan, high school clubs are encouraged to organize and begin meeting in a virtual format (provided the advisor is able to attend meetings). So far, Junior State of America, Student Government, Debate Club and others have begun to meet virtually.

Awareness/Activist Opportunities for Staff and Students: Over the past month, there have been opportunities presented to students and staff to engage with online webinars and join committees to help address issues of systemic racism, bias, and exclusivity in our school, local, and larger communities. In August, Mrs. Mahon disseminated information on an ADL webinar about talking to children about bias, in which many Amity High School teachers and administrators participated. CAS-CIAC has invited students from around the state to apply to the newly-formed Student Equity Advisory Board, about which multiple Amity students have expressed interest, and Amity Regional High School Social Studies teacher Jim Clifford shared information about a Zoom discussion called “Revolution on Trial” that took place on the afternoon of Wednesday, September 9, 2020 which many Amity HS educators also planned on attending.

AMSB Picture Days: September 8, 2020 (L-Z) and September 10, 2020 (A-K) were picture days for all AMSB. Extended hours starting after school were held for any fully remote students to have the opportunity to have their picture taken.

New Staff at AMSB: We have had a couple retirements this past year and would like to welcome the new teachers and staff taking their place. Over the course of the summer several AMSB teachers and administration worked to find the best candidates for each position, and are proud of the new staff members we have found. We would like to welcome Teresa Garrity (7th grade Spanish), Caitlin Magnan (7th grade Science), and Gary Roberts (SSO).

Thank You AMSB PTSO: Over the summer, the PTSO, along with several AMSB teachers, planned for a wonderful welcome for students and staff. The PTSO provided our teachers with snacks during our summer professional development. In addition, they created wonderful posters, reminding our students about healthy BE AMITY habits. The PTSO made the welcome banner for our front entrance and prepared welcome bags for our students, filled with items to promote mental and physical health.

PTSO Welcome Back Gifts: Thanks is given to the AMSO PTSO for the wonderful goody bags presented to teachers at the start of the school year. The mobile organizers are a great addition to the teachers traveling carts.