

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

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Superintendent's Report – October 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

Schedule Change: Starting the week of October 12, 2020, students began attending school in their cohort groups 5 days per week. The time to practice the full remote instruction was helpful if a shift is ever needed. For the month of October, students in cohort A-K will attend each Wednesday from 7:34 to 12:12 to make up for the three in-person days A-K students missed due to holidays. Adjustments to calendars for Wednesday attendance will be considered monthly to balance between the two cohorts. Students receiving special education and English Language are also eligible to attend school five days a week beginning October 12th.

Learning Model IEP Implement Plan: Special Education teachers and related service providers have been working diligently on completing the Learning Model IEP Implement Plan for all special education students. These plans are required to be updated with each change to the reopening schedule/model.

Effective Synchronous Instruction: Six weeks in to the school year, teachers are regularly using creative ways to engage students—whether remote or onsite—in interesting ways. Some teachers are having students collaborate with one another through breakout rooms, other teachers are flipping classrooms and offering direct instruction to students who are remote while students in class have the opportunity to ask questions, and still others are using technology to configure whole-class lessons that allow for student and teacher interaction.

Teacher Professional Learning: Professional Learning sessions have continued throughout September and October. Sessions offered by Amity Library Media Specialists and teachers have included technology tools and apps for hybrid/remote instruction. Members of the Counseling Department, led by Director Jill LaPlante, presented a session on *Social Emotional Learning*. Several staff and a PPS Coordinator will be attending a series of trainings offered by SERC on providing high quality transition services to all students. Outside consultant, Jackie Whiting, a Certified Google Innovator with CES and former teacher, provided an informative session titled *Distance Learning by Design*. Isobel Stevenson, consultant with the CT Center for School Change, offered a Social Emotional Learning session on teacher self-care and *How to Embed Social-Emotional Learning in Instruction* using the Developmental Relationship Framework from the Search Institute.

Unified Sports is Back: With support from the Amity Athletic Department and dedicated staff advisors, Unified Sports at ARHS has developed a plan for resuming our Unified program.

Amity Transition Academy: Students in Amity Transition Academy have been participating in virtual meetings with students from other Transition Programs to maintain previous friendships that had been

made. Additionally, students welcomed Ms. Shelby Drake as their new part time job coach at Amity Transition Academy.

Transition Meetings at AMSO: Mrs. Burke has begun meeting with small groups of 7th grade students via Zoom. These casual conversations center on building rapport with students and getting their feedback regarding school activities and programs to enhance the middle school experience.

Mid-Terms: Students have just passed the midpoint of the first marking period. Teachers are working to actively engage students and parents to ensure students have a successful first marking period. Parents were encouraged to review their child's grades and assignments in PowerSchool and have a conversation with the teacher if there were any concerns. The first quarter ends November 4, 2020.

Resources

Building Maintenance: The custodial staff continues to maintain our facilities to a very high standard and have developed comprehensive cleaning protocols for each evening that allows schools to remain open. Custodians have recently worked with staff to set up classrooms with the desks required for full in-person learning and are working with teachers to arrange classrooms.

Piloting Technology: Various teachers and departments have signed on to pilot different instructional technology to assist the school and district in making informed decisions based on applicability of the technology available. Some types of technology include webcams with microphones, stylus pens that turn a computer screen in to a SmartBoard, swivel cameras that follow a speaker, and more.

Repurposing Computer Tables: Several computer tables have been repurposed to provide additional seating in the AMSO art room. The addition of these tables helps ensure art students maintain appropriate social distancing during class.

Climate

ARHS October Faculty Meeting Focusing on Restorative Practices: As part of our commitment to building an inclusive and supportive climate where we are actively combating bias, the October Faculty Meeting at the high school incorporated a learning focus around restorative practices. Faculty broke up in to 10 groups of about 12-13 people each and participated in ARHS faculty/administrator-led workshops introducing the concept of RP, including the social discipline window and an introduction to restorative circles.

AMSB Color Run 2020: The PTSO is planning the 2nd annual AMSB color run on Saturday, October 17, 2020. This would be the FIRST coming together of new 7th grade families and current 8th grade families at AMSB. Last year the color run was a blast, and this year the PTSO have several ideas that will make the event even better. There has been a great response from the community and we are planning to have a wonderful and socially distanced event.

ARHS Virtual Club Day: As part of our continued commitment to fostering a positive environment, the administration worked closely with the leaders of ARHS Club Council to arrange for a Virtual Club Day, launched at the end of September. There is strong hope that we will be able to hold an onsite club day sometime later this year, with a focus on highlighting club activities instead of solely garnering interest.

ARHS Morning Announcements are Back: Interested 11th and 12th grade students were invited, through the Administrators' Google Classroom Pages, to complete a form to become members of the morning announcement team. Based on month and cohort, different small groups of students lead the school in the Pledge of Allegiance, a moment of silence, various daily announcements and birthdays of 12th grade students each day, including Wednesdays.

Middle School Student Clubs Meet Virtually: At AMSO, the Astronomy Club, the Computer Club and the Debate Club have begun meeting regularly. Students from AMSO and AMSB are working together via Zoom practicing the art of debate in preparation for this first scrimmage on Oct. 24th. Members of the high school debate team are assisting at these meetings making this a district wide endeavor. Other virtual club meetings have also started at AMSB, and students will continue to connect and have a club experience. The middle schools add to the club offerings as we learn from our process and have continued student interest.

AMSO Parent Conversation: The AMSO administration hosted the first Bi-monthly Parent Conversation on October 13, 2020. The focus of the conversation centered on the successes and challenges of the hybrid learning model. Parents had the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

Advisory Meetings at AMSO: The AMSO advisory program kicked off on September 30, 2020. Each advisory group created norms and is beginning to work on an advisory crest that will represent the diverse interests of each group.

AMSO Morning Music: Student DJs have returned to AMSO. Students are enjoying uplifting music played at the start of the school day.

Amity Athletics Welcomes Back Spectators: This week, Amity welcomed spectators back to our athletic events. Every student athlete is permitted to have 2 spectators watch their competition in person. Pre-registration is required and spectators must complete a COVID self-assessment prior to entry. Masks must be worn at all times by spectators while watching the event. For those who are unable to attend in-person, home events are live streamed.