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Superintendent's Report – January 2021

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

Continuing to Prepare for Academic Success: Students and teachers in Advanced Placement classes are continuing to prepare for the planned May exams by incorporating meaningful experiences and assessments in to their daily lessons. In order to provide the most appropriate learning and assessment experience for all students this year, there will be no comprehensive midterm examination period at the conclusion of 2nd marking period.

Collaborative College Planning: The Counseling Departments at Amity High School, Fairfield Ludlowe High School, Trumbull High School, and Pomperaug High School have partnered to offer multiple virtual presentations that will explore a variety of topics to address all students' post-secondary goals. The presentations will include topics such as the college application components, NCAA college recruitment, community college, military, gap years, and navigating Naviance.

AMSO and AMSB Debate Team News: On Saturday, December 19, 2020, Amity Middle School students from Orange and Bethany attended the first competitive debate tournament of the season sponsored by the Connecticut Middle School Debate League. Three hundred debaters from 19 schools competed. Three of the seven Amity teams won all three of the preliminary rounds.

AMSO 8th Grade Cross Team Collaboration: 8th grade students on Team S and Team T had the opportunity to work collaboratively with their peers on a research project in preparation for reading *Of Mice and Men*. The learning task allowed students to work with peers outside of their cohort which was a welcome change for students. Students can expect more collaborative opportunities to reach out beyond their cohort group as the unit continues.

Voluntary Professional Learning: Voluntary professional learning sessions will continue throughout January on Thursday afternoons. Sessions will include focusing on technology tools and apps that are particularly useful for hybrid/remote instruction.

Curriculum Articulation Continues: A curriculum articulation meeting was held with high school English teachers to discuss how a workshop model is being facilitated in their classes. The middle school ELA teachers and reading consultants will meet for a joint meeting to discuss The Readers Workshop Model, training for that spring, and summer curriculum writing. A math curriculum articulation meeting was held to discuss the criteria for middle school math placement for incoming seventh graders. Several alternate assessment options were discussed for possible adoption in the future.

New Textbook Adoption: The District Steering met to review new textbook proposals for possible adoption. The Board of Education Curriculum Committee was provided the information at the January committee meeting and these textbooks will be brought to the BOE for adoption in February.

Pupil Services Update: Ms. Kristi Bellara returned from her temporary leave and we are excited to have her back. Unified Sports hosted a holiday themed virtual gathering prior to the winter recess. During the month of January, middle school special education teachers will be completing advanced professional development in the area of Structured Literacy.

End of Quarter 2 at AMSB: January 22nd marks the end of Quarter 2. Teachers are working with students and families to wrap up any missing or late work so they can submit mid-year progress marks and provide students with feedback.

Mix It Up Days: The Green Team at Bethany Middle School mixed it up for a team wide activity day before the winter break. Students were able to interact virtually, play games, and solve problems with kids in other cohorts. It was great fun, and students enjoyed the team building experiences.

Resources

Restorative Practices: The Amity cadre of teachers and administrators who attended the Restorative Practices Train the Trainer professional learning are busy planning a voluntary informational session during February. The long-term goal is to provide initial training for all Amity teachers.

Substitute Teaching Force: Amity is appreciative of the substitutes who have assisted in keeping our schools open. Many thanks to Dr. McPadden who has worked closely with neighboring universities to get college students as substitutes and interns. Thanks also to Mrs. LaPlante for reaching out to recent graduates who are also becoming members of our substitute force.

Parent Teacher Conferences: Parent teacher conferences for the middle schools will be held on February 4th and 10th. They will be held virtually and sign up for the February 4th conferences will begin on January 25th.

Climate

Amity Orange PTSO Supports Teachers and Students: Our thanks to the PTSO for providing delicious treats and beverages for the AMSO holiday luncheon. Their support and kindness is very much appreciated.

AMSO Spirit Week: Students and staff showed their school spirit December 21-23, 2020. Students enjoyed wearing pajamas, showing off their holiday sweaters and ending the week wearing their Amity gear.

Faculty/Staff Donations: Wendy Carrafiello continued to organize the ARHS/Amity Holiday Bear program this year by collecting money to donate to DCF on behalf of Amity Faculty and Staff. The response was so overwhelming, some of the donations were given to Amity families in need to supplement the PTSO Gift Basket initiative and the ARHS Time of Your Life Fund:

\$200 - CEA/CEF Holiday Bear (\$100 from HS/\$50 from each MS)

\$150 - Time of Your Life Fund

\$600 - PTSO Community Family Donation

From Wendy – "The holiday season looks different this year, but your holiday spirit is the same as always!"

Teen Teaching Pajama Drive: Even though the Amity Teen Teaching program is unable to participate in the regular visits to Wexler Grant Elementary/Middle School this year, the Amity students and advisor

were able to collect over 600 donations for their annual pajama drive, which were distributed at the school before the holiday break.

Continued Focus on Faculty/Staff Connections: In a continued effort to keep the faculty and staff connected during the orchestrated remote-only week, Associate Principal Monica Kreuzer continued to share interesting facts about our faculty/staff through her “New Year/Knew You” Google form and emails. This week’s emails are a follow up to the post-Thanksgiving emails and are meant to help build a positive community among the adults in the building.

Compliance with Sexual Harassment Training Requirements: The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities requires all workplace employees to attend a two-hour statutory mandated training in Sexual Harassment which is planned for January 28, 2021 and February 11, 2021 for Amity employees.

SEL Focus at AMSB: The January faculty meeting was held on January 4th and the staff engaged in our ongoing effort to support and reflect on our social and emotional learning as adults. We will continue to focus on emotional well-being for staff at each faculty meeting this year.

PTSO at AMSB: Our wonderful PTSO distributed a hot chocolate “Snowman Kit” to each student and staff member prior to our December break. Students were encouraged to celebrate being a kid over the break by playing in the snow and warming back up with a hot cocoa!

Student Musical Club Community Outreach: Three ARHS 11th grade students started the Music for the Community club this year with strings teacher Mrs. Serio serving as advisor. As reported by club founder Liam Tassielo, “since we could not go around to different Senior living facilities and houses this year, we compiled a short holiday video that had been sent out to different senior facilities and senior people. Please take time to [watch the video here](#).