

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

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Superintendent's Report – February 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

SSLP/SIP Orientation and Planning: In preparation for this spring's Senior Service Learning Program and Senior Interest Project, Ms. Lynn Cocco, with the assistance of Ms. Paula Vallie and Director of Counseling Jill LaPlante, hosted a virtual presentation for seniors and their parents to review the expectations and general provisions of the two programs. Roughly 130 students and their parents attended. If there is a need to alter the program due to COVID restrictions, an announcement will be made before the end of March.

8th Grade Transition Program: To support the Class of 2025 as they begin to think about transitioning to the high school, the high school administration and members of the faculty have hosted a week-long [8th grade transition series](#), including pre-recorded presentations, interactive digital booklets and a live webinar on February 2, 2021 to answer frequently asked and submitted questions. Students will complete course selection during February.

ARHS Virtual Choir Performance: Due to COVID restrictions, we have been unable to host a choir concert this year, however, choir teacher Mrs. Rizzotti compiled a virtual performance and added some movement to her classes so students were still able to make music. The virtual performance included concert and honors choir classes and was sent to families of the students involved.

AMSB Solo & Ensemble Concert: AMSB will hold a virtual solo and ensemble concert on February 11, 2021 at 6:30 pm. Mr. Orié has been working with students to prepare and students have the option to perform live or submit a recorded video. Parents will be able to join the Zoom link to view the virtual performance from our talented students.

Amity Transition Academy: Students in Amity Transition Academy have started to return to work settings located on the campus of Albertus Magnus. While not working on job sites at Albertus, students complete various tasks, including the Soap Saver (<https://www.coventrybodycare.com/product/soap-saver/>). Amity is grateful for our partnerships with Albertus Magnus College, Sea Lark Enterprises, and all of our additional community sites.

AMSO Guided Study: The Guided Study program is actively working to support students in need of organizational support and assistance with completing assignments. Teachers are meeting with students via Zoom twice a week to support their academic progress.

LAS Links Testing 2020-2021: The Pupil Services Department, with support from Lisa Lassen, scheduled and conducted LasLinks testing for our students that are identified as English Learners (EL).

Professional Learning: Voluntary Professional Learning sessions will continue throughout February on Thursday afternoons. Sessions will include focusing on technology tools and apps that are particularly useful for hybrid/remote instruction. A voluntary session on reviewing current STAR data will be offered to middle school teachers on February 9, 2021. There will be a second session on anti-bias training that will be provided for middle school teachers on February 12, 2021. The session will be presented by Luis Versailles of the Pacific Educational Group. ARHS teachers will continue their work on the Portrait of the Graduate. The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities requires all workplace employees to attend a statutory mandated training in Sexual Harassment. Part 2 of the training is scheduled for February 11, 2021.

Introduction to Reader's Workshop: The middle school ELA teachers and reading consultants will meet for a joint meeting in February to discuss a group focus book currently being read: *A Novel Approach* by Kate Roberts. The group will discuss chapters 1-3. Kate Roberts is one of the consultant trainers that will be working with Amity on introducing and facilitating the Readers Workshop Model.

Resources

Planning for 10th Grade Career Fair: To ensure that the annual ARHS Career Fair continues this year for 10th graders, Ms. Vallie and Ms. Cocco have been working with a group of student volunteers to complete interviews with local community members that will be compiled into a virtual Career Fair Program. More information will be forthcoming before the April Career Fair date.

Parent Teacher Conferences: Virtual Parent-Teacher conferences were held for ARHS on February 3, 2021 and for the middle schools on February 4, 2021 and February 10, 2021.

Psychology Practicum Adds SEL Support: In partnership with Fairfield University and the University of Connecticut, Amity is supporting the development of future School Psychologists by having three School Psychology practicum students.

Emergency Partnership Supports Nursing: Thank you to Chery Kiesel (Director of Pupil Services in Woodbridge) and Dr. Budd (Superintendent in Woodbridge) for supporting Amity schools by providing nursing support.

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 on February 25, 2021. The Amity Restorative Practices Team will be a cost savings to the District and the trainers will develop a long-range plan to train all staff.

Climate

National School Counselor Week: In a show of appreciation, Amity Regional High School students sent notes and a small gift to members of the ARHS School Counseling Department in honor of National School Counselor Week from February 1-5, 2021. The personalized notes and plant greeted the counselors, social worker and school psychologists on Thursday, February 4th when they entered their offices.

Winter Sports Resume: Student athletes were able to resume training on January 19, 2021 with a plan to begin competition the second week of February. Scholastic athletic participation is an important component to the physical, mental and emotional well-being of many of our students and the comprehensive learning experience of Amity Regional High School.

Memory Project Continues: As she has done in year's past, ARHS Visual Art Teacher Liz Smolinski continued to facilitate Amity's participation in this worthy project. While the work was disrupted last spring, Ms. Smolinski resumed with her students this fall to complete the portraits and send along to the

non-profit. A compilation of the 2020 work from all participating schools can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/memoryproject/january2021>

ARHS Academic Decathlon Continues: This school club, founded 5 years ago, combines Amity's focus on academic interests with its sense of community. The virtual competitions continue as does Amity's participation.

Be Amity Super Bowl Challenge 2021: AMSB teachers have come together to plan a calendar of events to engage and entertain our students, starting with a Groundhog challenge (sponsored by the student council), continuing with Trivia and Kahoot Challenges, and concluding with a "Name that Tune" contest on February 12, 2021.

AMSO Supports Wear Red Day: AMSO teachers showed their support for women's heart health. Staff members made a donation to the American Heart Association and wore red to highlight this worthy cause.

SEL Focus at AMSB: During the February faculty meeting, the staff engaged in our ongoing effort to support and reflect on our social and emotional learning as adults. We watched a Ted talk video and participated in a Paseo Community Mixer Activity from CASEL in an effort to recognize and overcome implicit bias. The teachers moved from one breakout room to the next on Zoom, switching partners and sharing aspects of their individual identity. We will continue to focus on emotional well-being for staff at each faculty meeting this year.

AMSO Social Emotional Support: The Amity Middle School Social Worker has been busy facilitating several small counseling groups. Each group has a specific focus based on the students' needs. The focus areas include executive functioning, self-esteem, building positive relationships and decision making.

PTSO at AMSB: Our wonderful PTSO has been celebrating the small things with our kids and staff. A few weeks ago we celebrated National Fig Newton Day by passing out Newtons to the students as they left the building. On Thursday January 28th the PTSO acknowledged everyone's favorite day, National Kazoo Day, by distributing Kazoos to each student with the strong encouragement to share their musical joy with parents at home! We hope that they brought joy and happiness to your evening activities.