

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

Bethany Orange Woodbridge
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Superintendent's Report – November 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

November Professional Learning: A full-day Professional Learning Day was successfully held on November 2, 2021. The morning session included a panel discussion led by ARHS English Teacher, Tasia Kimball, and AMSB Principal, Jason Tracy. Our staff welcomed a panel of 5 current and former ARHS students to discuss inclusion and support of non-binary students within the school setting. The presentation and panel discussion was similar to a professional development workshop presented over 10 years ago called "Safe Spaces Training." The panel discussion was followed by an hour of Wellness offerings and included sessions focused on, but not limited to, Guided Meditation, Pet Portraits, Cricut, Crafts, Book Talks and Restorative Yoga. Todd Savage, PhD. from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and past NASP President, presented to School Psychologists, School Social Workers, and School Counselors from Amity and School Psychologists from New Fairfield Public Schools. Dr. Savage presented on Advanced Counseling Techniques with Gender Diverse Students. The entire district was provided lunch prepared by Chartwells. Afternoon sessions included a variety of facilitated EdCamps. Teachers selected two sessions of choice and everyone participated in a third session for Restorative Practice.

Spartan Seminar Emergency Vocabulary Review: On Wednesday, November 3rd, the entire ARHS community reviewed vocabulary for emergency situations and had a chance to debrief and discuss recent emergency situations at ARHS. This discussion was aimed at helping to restore a sense of security at the high school and to begin to get all members of our immediate school community to share a common vocabulary and set of behavioral expectations for when the unforeseen occurs.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: The first round of parent/teacher conferences are scheduled for next week. To accommodate different parent/guardian schedules and preferences, parent/teacher conferences will be offered both virtually and in-person during this school year. Registration information was sent via email.

Visit from Dr. Henry Lee: On Friday, October 29th, renowned forensic scientist (and former ARHS parent) Dr. Henry Lee visited the high school to share his advice, wisdom, and experience with many of our students. Students enrolled in the elective science forensic class were invited to attend, along with students from Science Research Program, the It's the Law CTE elective, and those enrolled in the True Crime English elective. Dr. Lee's witty and humorous approach to presenting held students' attention while they learned about real-world crime scene and forensic investigation. A HUGE thank you to Nick Shamp, from the ARHS Science Department, for arranging the presentation/visit.

Peer Tutoring Program at AMSO: The AMSO Peer Tutoring program started on November 1, 2021. Fifteen 8th grade students were trained to be tutors and mentors to 7th grade students. In addition to supporting academic achievement, the program seeks to promote collaboration and strengthen the school community across the grade levels.

AMSO Explores Spanish Culture: AMSO students celebrate the Day of the Dead. Eighth grade students explored Spanish culture and history as they participated in a variety of activities throughout the day.

District Committee and Curriculum Meetings: Curriculum Articulation meetings held included World Language and Math. District meetings scheduled during November included District Technology, District Steering, and SRBI/RTI (Scientifically Research-Based Instruction/Response to Intervention). Dr. Elliott provided the District Steering Committee a presentation describing the process and rationale for using the Curriculum Equity Audit during the last week of October.

Resources

English and Social Studies Begin DEI Curriculum Audit: Dr. Lori Elliott, CES Consultant for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, will provide training in conducting a Curriculum Equity Audit the first week of November. Identified departments will work with Dr. Elliott to examine curriculum through the lens of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Additionally, participating teachers will examine books and supplemental materials for curriculum with a focus on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity. English 9-12 and Social Studies/History 7-12 will begin the process in November and continue through this year. A Library Media Specialist will work with each grade, along with the MS Literacy Coach.

Free Dr. Lee Presentation: Even though Dr. Henry Lee is a world-renowned presenter, the presentation he gave for ARHS students was pro-bono...all he asked for were a few pumpkins, which Mr. Shamp stenciled for him to acknowledge his connection to Amity.

Amity Supports BOWA Reading PL: On November 2nd, Identified Special Education and Reading Teachers from Amity along with more than 30 colleagues from Bethany, Woodbridge, and Orange Public Schools attended professional development focused on consistent approaches to structured literacy across the BOWA. The presentation was facilitated by Jule McCombes-Tolis, Ph.D., Director of Reading and Language Development at Fairfield University.

Climate

High School & Collegiate Unified Sports: Amity Transition Academy hosted a successful Collegiate Unified Sports Event at Albertus Magnus College. Schools from Hamden Transition Academy, Milford, Southington, and North Branford were invited to participate. On Thursday, October 28th, ARHS Unified Sports hosted the annual soccer tournament on the all-weather field. With support from the ARHS Football Team, the tournament was the first opportunity for in-person competition in 2 years. Multiple area schools participated and the event was a huge success!

AMSO Spirit Week: AMSO students and staff enjoyed Spirit Week October 25-29, 2021. Students participated in daily raffles to encourage participation and school spirit. As a culminating activity students and staff were thrilled to wear their Halloween costumes to school.

No Place for Hate: AMSO students were introduced to the No Place for Hate pledge during advisory. Students were invited to sign the pledge as a symbol of unity and support to strive to promote a kinder, more inclusive school community. AMSB students will introduce the pledge through Advisory in the coming weeks.

AMSB Student Activities: The students and staff all participated in a pep rally and Halloween celebration on October 29, 2021. It was great to get classes together in the gym to celebrate hard work,

play some games, and have fun. Students had a costume contest by team and staff enjoyed their time with the students. The PTSO and WYS provided support and treats! It was fun to see our kids being kids!

AMSB Kindness Garden: Work has begun on the AMSB Kindness Garden this week. Students began painting rocks and creating unique pieces of art, with messages of kindness and hope. The rocks will be placed in our courtyard garden and the work will be viewable from the main hall throughout the year.

Winter Sports Registration: Winter sports registration has begun. Please check out the Amity Athletics webpage for information on how to register and also how to attend the Winter Sports Night.

National School Psychology Week: During the week of November 8-12, 2021 Amity will celebrate National School Psychology Week (NSPW) to highlight the important work school psychologists and other educators do to help all students thrive. This year's theme is "Let's Get in Gear." The theme's acronym provides a challenge to grow both personally and professionally. It encourages us to engage in best practices and advocate for children's access to mental health and learning supports. To rise implies resilience and renewal despite the challenges of the past.



ARHS Staff Welcomes Dr. Henry Lee – all for the price of a pumpkin