

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

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Superintendent's Report – December 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

8th Grade Visit: On December 9th, the ARHS Class of 2026 visited the high school to view the Amity Creative Theater Fall Play, *Puffs*, and to listen to a brief panel discussion about elective opportunities at the high school. It was a wonderful opportunity to begin to build a connection with these future members of the ARHS community. The students and faculty were a WONDERFUL audience!

College Admissions and PSAT Results: December is a month highly-focused on post-secondary educational opportunities. Many of our seniors are anxiously awaiting results of their early-action and early-decision applications to their top choice colleges and juniors received PSAT scores via the College Board website on Monday, December 6, 2021. While these are stressful times, they are also moments of great hope and positive planning, which reflect one of the core tenets of the currently-piloted BOWA Portrait of the Graduate.

AMSB Winter Concert: On December 2, 2021, AMSB held its Winter Concert. This event was another step in the return to the performing arts in Amity and was very well attended. To accommodate for space and social distancing, the band and choir concerts were divided - alternating the start times and allowing time to have the crowds shift between concerts. Student performances far exceeded expectations and we anticipate that we will see more student growth as we look forward to our Spring Concerts!

AMSO Winter Concert: The AMSO Winter Concert was an enormous success. Over 250 students participated in performances by the band, orchestra, jazz band and choir. The concert was broken up into small sections to limit the size of the audience. In addition, the event was live streamed so family members could enjoy the performance from home.

Middle School Debate: The AMSB/AMSO Debate Team is preparing for an online tournament on December 19, 2021. Working in collaboration with members from the Amity Regional High School Debate Team, our students will debate the motion, "This House would boycott the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics."

New Course Proposals: District Steering approved of three new course proposals at the November committee meeting. The new courses include the CSDE mandated elective for the African American/Black Latino/Puerto Rican course, Exploring Technology Education, and a Structured Literacy course. The Visual and Performing Arts department proposed some modifications to their program including course name changes and length of courses.

Professional Learning: The December 9, 2021 minimum-day for professional learning was planned by the building principals. The focus of the afternoon sessions was to provide opportunities for collaborative discussion on the characteristics of the Amity Portrait of the Graduate within content curricula.

Committee Meetings: Curriculum Articulation meetings held included District Reading and Math. District meetings during November included District Technology, District Steering, PDEC (Professional Development, and Evaluation Committee), and District Wellness. Teachers new to the district participated in the Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM) and submitted their first TEAM Reflection Papers in early December.

Curriculum Equity Audit: Dr. Lori Elliott, CES Consultant for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion provided a session to District Steering Committee members on the plan for developing curriculum cycles, phases of the cycles, and the expectations of the curriculum work. Dr. Elliott will continue to provide English/ELA 7-12 and Social Studies 7-12 with training in the use of a Curriculum Equity Audit from January through May.

Resources

2022-2023 Budget Planning: The administration teams from all three schools continue to meet with district-level personnel to mindfully consider the needs of the schools for the 2022-2023 school year and make judicious decisions about various budget requests supportive of the excellent, comprehensive education provided to students in Amity.

CBITS Training: Amity is continuing their partnership with The Child Health and Development Institute and their CBITS initiative. School Social Workers Jennifer DeMattia and Claire McVey both completed their two day training recently. Amity now has 12 clinicians who are trained in CBITS. The district facilitates multiple CBITS groups across our schools each year.

AMSB Holiday Ideas from Art: Mrs. Smolinski, our awesome AMSB Art Teacher, has created an Amazon page for parents of emerging artists and their families. She has included links to ideas for the upcoming holidays or birthdays that would be of interest to students who have a love of art.

Climate

Amity Creative Theater: For seven years a certain boy wizard went to a certain Wizard School and conquered evil. This, however, is not his story. This is the story of the Puffs... who just happened to be there too. A tale for anyone who has never been destined to save the world. Amity Creative Theater Fall Play performed *Puffs* on December 9,10, & 11 2021 at the Brady Center.

Spartan Seminar Focus on Inclusion/Jingle Jam: As part of the intentional effort to highlight our core belief in inclusion, the December 8th Spartan Seminar was specifically designed around inclusion for students with intellectual difficulties and differences. Students discussed various terms around the concept of creating a welcoming environment during the session, watched a few videos regarding inclusion and Amity's programs, such as Unified Sports and Unified PE, that foster a sense of inclusion. Additionally, time was allotted to begin processing the impending midterm exams and offer space to students to discuss their mounting anxieties.

Unified Programs: Unified Sports at the high school have been very busy with their winter trail hiking, dance and jingle parties. Students are beginning their preparations for the winter basketball season starting after the New Year.

Leo Club Food Drive: The ARHS Leo Club recently held its annual food drive! Students collected over 1000 items for gift baskets! Faculty Advisor Ms. Beres-Nork gave a big shoutout of thanks to Mr. Catalde, who engages his classes in a competition to see who can donate the most items every year. His students brought in 915 items alone!

Signs of Suicide Assessment: Both Amity Middle Schools will participate in the Signs of Suicide assessment in January and February of next year. This program is part of the Sandy Hook Promise Program, started in 2019 in the Amity School District. Utilizing a protocol and the collective resources of our district staff to administer and review, this assessment will be conducted to identify students in need of support and to connect those students to the resources available at Amity and in our BOW community.

Self-Care Initiative: Jenna DeRosa and her school psychology colleagues at ARHS created a *12 days until Winter Break* self-care email initiative. Staff receive a daily email with helpful tricks and tips for supporting their own self-care in a variety of ways.

AMSB Winter Sports: Winter sports have started at AMSB and the girls' and boys' basketball teams at AMSB are ready for competition. The turnout for tryouts was overwhelming and we applaud all of the students who expressed an interest.

AMSO Culture of Giving: AMSO Team T is conducting its annual fundraiser for the Hamden Children's Center. The team is gathering gently used toys and games to be delivered to the children's center in time for the Christmas holiday. AMSO students, along with hundreds of schools from around the state, wore PJs to school on Dec. 10, 2021 to raise money for the Connecticut Children's Hospital to support the children with cancer and blood disorders.

AMSB Canned Food Drive: Prior to the Thanksgiving break, AMSB held a canned food drive. Students and staff donated items to the local food pantries, and in three days they collected over 40 large grocery bags full of non-perishable items. These donations will help support those in need across our community, and they serve as a testament to the kind and giving nature of the AMSB school community.

AMSB No Place for Hate: AMSB held its first No Place for Hate Committee meeting last week. There was a large number of students, staff and parents who participated, speaking to the commitment of our staff, students, and community to examine and strengthen our school climate, and continue to make AMSB a safe place for all students. The school also had the kickoff event with the ADL, and eight students and a few staff members were able to watch a live event and be a part of this kick off.



ARHS Leo Club Food Drive Collection