

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5
Bethany Orange Woodbridge
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525



Dr. Jennifer P. Byars
Superintendent of Schools

jennifer.byars@amityregion5.org
203.392.2106

Superintendent's Report – November 2022

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

Veterans' Day Celebrations: On Friday, November 11, 2022, all three district schools honored Veterans' Day. AMSB started the day at the flagpole where students sang the national anthem, read Flanders Field, and paused for a moment of silence following a moving rendition of *Taps*. Social Studies classes attended a Veterans' Day speaker and listened to stories of service to our country. AMSO also held a flagpole ceremony and at ARHS, students used their SSP time to view a celebratory Veterans' Day [video](#).

Science Research Makes the News: Amity's Science Research Program, a multi-year opportunity to students interested in careers in research, was featured on WTNH Channel 8's "What's Right With Schools" program on November 1, 2022. This is a program co-produced by WTNH and the Connecticut Association of Schools that features positive news about schools. To hear about it directly from some of our students and faculty, check out the video [here](#).

November 8th Professional Learning Day: All staff reported to the high school on November 8, 2022 for a full day of professional learning. Teachers had a busy, but interesting schedule of events for the day that started with a presentation from our district's Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Committee (MTSS) that included an overview of Amity's intervention processes and instructional practices. Following the morning session, teachers engaged in two different workshops for the remainder of the day, one focused on differentiated instruction facilitated by Dr. Kristi Doubet from James Madison University and a second session titled the Career Connections Collaborative, hosted by our district's counseling department in support of the ongoing implementation of our Portrait of a Graduate.

Portrait of a Graduate: The Career Connections Collaborative portion of the November 8, 2022 professional learning day provided teachers a unique opportunity to hear directly from working professionals regarding the skills and characteristics they recommend students must have to be successful in their careers. The presenters discussed education and training requirements, provided an overview of a typical work day, shared their impactful experiences from middle and high school, and linked their presentations to the skills and characteristics outlined in the BOWA Portrait of a Graduate. Careers represented included: Attorney, University Professor, Veterinarian, Arts Administrator, Business Owner, Medical Lab Assistant, Surgeon, Librarian, Physical Therapist, Tradebook Editor, Pharmacy Manager, IT Business Executive, and Police Officer.

Music in Motion: The ARHS Music Department staged its annual Music in Motion performance to a packed auditorium of music fans and supporters on October 28, 2022. The show featured performances by the Amity High School Band, Choir, Jazz Band & Percussion ensemble inspired by tv and movie music. To encourage middle school students to stay involved in the performing arts, all 7th and 8th grade students were invited free with an adult audience member.

AMSO 8th Grade Boston Trip: AMSO 8th grade students went to Boston on October 27, 2022. Students walked the Freedom Trail and visited several historical sites throughout the city. The trip complements their study of the Revolutionary War in Social Studies.

AMSB Career Day: On November 11, 2022 AMSB held its annual Career Day. Almost 30 parents, friends, and members of the AMSB community were welcomed to present their career journeys and help our students explore future pathways. The presenter group was diverse, including professionals from finance, law enforcement, fire/EMT, acting and producing, a cellist, law, doctor, nurse, teacher, CEO, and many more. Our students were able to select from our list of presenters and were encouraged to select professions that matched their career inventory assessment results from a lesson earlier in the school year with our school counselors. The event illustrated the importance of the school to career connection and made clear connections to the dispositions in our Amity Portrait of the Graduate.

ASVAB Testing: ARHS students in grades 10-12 had the opportunity to take the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Batter) test in school on October 19, 2022. This free exam provides students with a wealth of information about several career fields they may be interested in pursuing after graduation.

Peer Tutoring Program at AMSO: The AMSO Peer Tutoring program has started. Over ten 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 to strengthen the school community across the grade levels.

Tri-M Honors Society: The Tri-M Music Honor Society welcomed 22 new members in its induction ceremony and performance on October 19, 2022.

Curriculum Articulation Meetings: The first round of curriculum articulation meetings between middle school content leaders and high school department chairs was held throughout the past month. Teachers representing the subject areas of English language arts, visual and performing arts, social studies, world languages, physical education and math met to discuss vertical alignment of the curriculum, resource usage, and areas for professional growth and development.

Whole Group Admin Meeting/Admin Professional Learning: District and building based administrators engaged in a collaborative professional learning session this month focused on defining the characteristics of high-quality goals for teacher evaluation. Throughout the session, administrators shared samples of goals they felt best reflected the characteristics needed to be included in teacher goal setting materials. A list of the characteristics was recorded on a document that will be shared with the district's Professional Development and Evaluation Committee members. A finalized version of the document will be used as reference material for teachers and administrators as they navigate through the teacher evaluation process.

Resources

NAHS Exhibition: The National Art Honor Society will have their opening reception for the exhibition at the Woodbridge Library in the Community Room on November 15, 2022 from 5:30-7:30 pm. The NAHS invited all students grade 7-12 to participate in this exhibition. The exhibition can be viewed during normal Woodbridge Library operating hours through November 30, 2022.

News in School Psychology: Geoff Millenson and Jenna DeRosa, School Psychologists at Amity Regional High School, attended the New York Association of School Psychologists Fall Conference October 20-22, 2022. They attended sessions on DBT/CBT, School Avoidance, Writing Trauma Informed IEPs, and engaging students across the life span. Mr. Brant, Director of Pupil Services, presented at the conference to graduate students on employment and clinical skills. Mr. Brant also attended the Preventing Targeted Violence in Schools Working Group conducted by the Connecticut

Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparedness. He will be serving as one of the public schools' advisors to this working group for the duration of the 2022-2023 school-year.

Coffee and Conversation: The AMSB administration held their first Coffee & Conversation with parents on November 10, 2022. This was an informal opportunity for us to spend some time together and engage in meaningful conversation. AMSB Social Worker Talia Marinaccio held a brief presentation on the topic of Helping Teens Navigate Anxiety.

Complementary Observer Training: A total of thirty-five teachers from both the middle and high school were trained to act as complementary observers as part of this year's teacher evaluation plan. These teachers will now partake in classroom observations of their colleagues. The focus of their work throughout the year includes collecting evidence from classroom lessons that aligned to the attributes of the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching Rubric and providing teachers with beneficial, reflective feedback on their instructional practices.

Staff Flu Clinics: The School Health Offices in conjunction with the Orange Visiting Nurse Association hosted staff flu vaccination clinics at each building. We are grateful for our partners at Orange Visiting Nurse Association and their commitment to creating healthy communities.

Climate

Virtual Keynote Series: The ARHS Counseling and District Pupil Personnel Services Departments hosted the first Virtual Keynote Speaker presentation of the year. On Thursday, November 3rd, Dr. Alicia Farrell, a cognitive psychologist, presented a virtual keynote address titled, "*The Pressure to be Perfect and Its Unintended Consequences.*" Dr. Farrell discussed how we are raising our children in complicated times where performance is valued over character. In such a competitive world, parents, educators and leaders are unwittingly passing on to their children pressure to be perfect. In turn, our children are feeling inadequate, anxious, overwhelmed, stressed, scared and tired. The webinar addressed how we arrived at this place and what we can do about it.

Just over 300 people registered for the webinar and about 125 watched live. A copy of the recording as well as some helpful handouts for parents were distributed to all three schools.

Link Crew Events: The Link Crew 9th grade orientation program advisors and student Link Crew Leaders have been busy in the past month, hosting two events for the Class of 2026:

- The 9th Grade Tailgate on October 21, 2022, was a free pre-game party for the 9th grade class that featured music, food, and games, as well as free entry for all 9th graders to that evening's football game.
- Ice Cream Social and report card review with the Link Crew Leaders after school on November 9, 2022 was an opportunity for the members of the Class of 2026 to get together and celebrate the successful completion of their first marking period in high school and to talk with their Link Crew leaders about how the year has gone so far and to update their academic goals for the next marking period.

ARHS Spirit Week: Spirit Week will take place from November 14-19, 2022 with school spirit events throughout the week, a pep rally on Friday, November 18th, and the Homecoming Dance on Saturday, November 19th.

ARHS Blood Drive Success: The ARHS National Honor Society and the Red Cross co-hosted a blood drive on October 18, 2022 that collected more than 30 pints of blood. Some came from first-time student donors while other donations came from faculty and staff members who may have donated blood a hundred times or more. There was so much interest in donating that we ran out of appointment spots to fill.

Unified Soccer Tournament: On October 20, 2022, the stadium field was the site of a five-team Unified Soccer tournament hosted by ARHS. Unified Sports provides opportunities for students with significant disabilities to compete in interscholastic athletics. The list of faculty, staff, and students who worked together to make the tournament a success is too long to name, but the football, girls' soccer, and girls' cross-country teams all deserve a specific shout-out for joining and serving as a cheering section when their practices ended Thursday afternoon.

ATA Unified Soccer: Amity Transition Academy hosted collegiate unified soccer at Albertus Magnus. Students from seven local school districts attended. Collegiate unified sports is unique to Amity Transition Academy and we are thankful to Albertus Magnus for hosting our fall soccer tournament each year.

Going Pink: The Girls' Volleyball Team at AMSB collected \$350.00 during their "Dig Pink" bake sale fundraiser in support of breast cancer awareness month. The proceeds were donated to Seymour Pink, a nonprofit who supports women across our area and raises awareness for breast cancer.

No Place for Hate Pledge Signing: The AMSO No Place for Hate Committee created a lesson to introduce the No Place for Hate Pledge. Students participated in an extended advisory to discuss how to make our school community welcoming and inclusive. The culmination of the activity included all students signing the pledge.

Matilda Jr.: The Spartan Players production of Matilda was held this past Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Our students and staff worked hard to put on a great show and our actresses and actors did not disappoint! As always, the performances were fantastic and were overwhelmingly supported by our community. Thank you to all who were involved.

SCC Volleyball Coach of the Year: Congratulations to ARHS Volleyball Coach Seth Davis, who has been selected as the SCC Volleyball Coach of the Year for 2022. Coach Davis is no stranger to this award, having been selected as the Coach of the Year in past seasons as well.