

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 – December 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

CT Automatic Admissions Program: Implemented for the first time this fall, the Connecticut Automatic Admissions Program (CAAP) offers eligible students automatic admission to participating Connecticut Colleges and Universities based on high school grade point average (CAAP GPA) and/or percentile class ranking. Out of 339 Amity seniors, 97 received the letter that they qualified for all 8 private and public schools (including the 4 CT State Universities), 166 qualified for all 4 of the CT private schools (Mitchell College and the Universities of Bridgeport, New Haven, and St. Joseph), 18 for admission to Mitchell, UB and UNH, 9 for Mitchell and UB, and 10 for UB.

On-Site College Interview & Acceptance: The ARHS Counseling Department has been hosting On-Site College Interview and Acceptance Days in which college admissions officers review applications, interview seniors, and offer immediate acceptance to qualified candidates during the school day. So far this fall, the interest in the program has been very positive with 21 students accepted to Southern CT State University and 22 students accepted to Quinnipiac University. Additional events for 62 seniors will include Eastern, Western, and Central CT State Universities, Sacred Heart, Albertus Magnus, University of New Haven, and SUNY Stony Brook.

Fall PSAT Results: PSAT results from the fall 2022 school-day administration of the PSAT tests to all students in grades 9-11 were released to students on December 6, 2022. This is the first time that we have tested students in all three of these grades, and over the course of the next two months, the ARHS faculty will be evaluating our student performance to identify areas of improvement to focus on in the second half of the year.

Middle School Winter Concerts: On Thursday, December 1, 2022, AMSB held its annual winter concert. The event was very well attended (standing room only!) and the students sounded wonderful. The sound panel enhancements to the space set the acoustic environment, and the hard work and determination of our students made for an evening of beautiful music. The AMSO band, orchestra and chorus had an outstanding performance at their winter concert. Over 150 students participated in this event. The performance was a wonderful opportunity for the band to show off the new instruments that were purchased this year.

Professional Learning Day: A district-wide professional learning day was held on the afternoon of December 8, 2022 with a variety of professional learning opportunities offered. Cohorts of teachers continue their advancement through a series of professional development pathways that include strategies for differentiated instruction, the use of the curriculum audit tool, and blending learning strategies. Instructional coaches also used this time to meet with teachers to support district wide implementation of

Schoolology and Reader's Workshop, while special education staff was provided training on the new CT-SEDS IEP online platform. Related service staff members from the Pupil Services department attended professional learning facilitated by Dr. Charles Barrett, Fairfield University. Everyone in attendance received a free copy of Dr. Barrett's book "It's Always about the Children."

Learning Walks: Instructional Learning Walks focused on collecting observational evidence of the Portrait of the Graduate progress throughout the district. The team of administrators participating in the classroom visits has been expanded this past month to include assistant principals in each of the schools. As of December 1, 2022, close to 50 classroom visits have been conducted, as evidence of rigor in tasks and assignments, student collaboration, and modes of communication continues to be collected throughout the year.

Portrait of a Graduate Learning Progressions & Assessment: A team of teachers and administrators from across the district met on December 6, 2022 to begin the next phase of the rollout of the BOWA Portrait of a Graduate. The next phase includes the development of learning progression for the 7-12 grade levels. The creation of a learning progressions document will give teachers and students a clearer picture of what the characteristics of the Portrait of the Graduate look like at different grade spans. Recent efforts by ARHS faculty have included developing the initial plans for a summative assessment system to measure how well our students have developed the characteristics of the Portrait during their time in Amity.

Dog Treat Business Grows: Students in the 7-8 Spartan Prep program continue to grow and develop their entrepreneurial dog treat business. This vocational training activity allows students to experience all aspects of running a small business (from marketing to production to banking).

Middle & High School SAILS: The 7-8 SAILS program at AMSO participated in several community outings to local stores and farms. The coffee cart has become a popular offering facilitated by the SAILS program. The 9-12 SAILS program has been busy engaging in community trips to BJ Wholesale to purchase items for various cooking/ art related activities and Clover Nook Farms (Bethany) to practice social language and finance skills. Students continue to operate a snack cart, sort and organize faculty/staff mail, and process printing and copying jobs for staff. These experiences allow students to work on their individual skill growth in an authentic workplace environment.

Reader's Workshop Professional Development: Consultant Maggie Roberts was in district for two full days of professional learning to support the continued implementation of Reader's Workshop in the middle schools. The two sessions included the modelling of classroom instruction followed by debriefing with teachers and instructional coach, Andrea Drewry. The goal of the session was to help teachers better assess and support student understanding and identification of literary theme using the Workshop model.

Committee Meetings: A meeting of the science articulation committee occurred this past month. Topics covered in the meeting included science lab safety training for new staff, opportunities for targeted professional learning, and curriculum alignment and pacing.

Resources

8th Grade Trip to ARHS: On Thursday, December 8, 2022, all eighth-grade students visited Amity Regional High School. Visiting 8th graders watched the ACT performance of "The Play That Goes Wrong". Before the performance, all of the visiting students had an opportunity to learn about elective offerings in our Visual/Performing Arts and Career-Technical Education departments and to tour some of the classroom facilities for both of these departments. The event exposed the AMSO and AMSB students to just some of the programs at ARHS and is the first step in preparations to transition students from the middle to the high school.

Signs of Suicide Screening: Now in its third year in Amity, the Signs of Suicide (SOS) lesson occurred November 9, 2022 (AMSO) and November 15, 2022 (AMSB) for seventh grade students. Over 320 students participated in the lesson and were screened for being at risk of suicide. ARHS 11th grade students will participate the week of December 12th. The SOS program remains the premier, research supported suicide prevention program in the country. Thank you to the Pupil Services & Counseling Departments for their work with this event.

AMSO Students Receive Internet Safety Information: AMSO 7th grade students saw an informative presentation by Orange SROs Detective Bailey and Detective Knepper on internet safety and the impact of social media. The program provided focus on helping students understand the risks they face online and suggestions on how to view social media with a critical eye.

Parent Conferences: Parent/teacher conferences were held across the district on Wednesday, December 7, 2022. Since the conference time was during the workday, the conferences were held virtually to accommodate working parents and the students enjoyed a half-day schedule.

BOWA Curriculum Leaders Meeting: The monthly meeting of curriculum leaders from the BOWA district was held this past month. Time was used to discuss Reader's Workshop, social studies curriculum alignment, EL student populations, and intervention and support processes. Future meetings are scheduled throughout the year to promote an open dialogue and consistency in practice within the K-12 school system.

Connecticut Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparedness: Mr. Brant, Pupil Services Director, attended the second meeting of the Connecticut Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparedness working group on preventing targeted violence in Connecticut schools. This working group has representation from federal, state, and local law Enforcement along with several key stakeholders from the K-12 and collegiate levels.

Climate

ARHS Spirit Week: Spirit Week took place from November 14 – 19, 2022, with theme days each day of the week, a Pep Rally to end the day on November 18th, and the Homecoming Dance on the evening of November 19th. With a sold-out crowd of 950 students and guests, this was the largest Homecoming Dance in Amity's recent history.

Captains Council Leadership Conference: Twenty-five student-athletes from Amity Regional High School attended the Southern Connecticut Council (SCC) Winter Captains Council leadership conference on December 6, 2022. They were met with student-athletes from all of the member schools of the SCC to discuss leadership issues in high school sports and to plan for a successful winter sports season.

Flag Football Win!: The annual pre-Thanksgiving Flag Football game between Amity and North Haven High School was won in a decisive manner by the Amity Spartans flag football players at North Haven HS on November 21, 2022.

UMTTR Volleyball Tournament: The UMTTR Volleyball Tournament took place after school on November 22, 2022, to raise awareness and funds for student mental health initiatives.

The Play That Goes Wrong: Amity Creative Theater presented four performances of "The Play That Goes Wrong," from December 8 – 10, 2022.

Unified Theater Resumes: The extracurricular Unified Theater after school activity has resumed for the 2022-2023 school year at ARHS. Following the unified sports model, this activity creates a safe, fun, and enjoyable space for typical and non-typical peers to engage in the arts. We are hopeful for a show in April!

ATA Thanksgiving Feast: The students at Amity Transition Academy at UNH-Orange and Albertus Magnus College campuses hosted their annual Thanksgiving feast on November 18, 2022. This potluck style gathering allows staff and students to share what they are thankful for while celebrating their individual cooking styles. Staff at UNH-Orange campus were invited to join the feast as well.

AMSB Pep Rally: On the day before the Thanksgiving break, AMSB held its first pep rally. The event was in celebration of the hard work the students have done in the first quarter. The number of donations that were made in our yearly Canstruction event was announced (323 cans collected!). There was recognition for student involvement in sports and clubs and students and teachers played some fun games as a school.

AMSO Cereal Collection: AMSO students collected over 683 boxes of cereal that were donated to four local foodbanks. To celebrate the collective effort and support of this drive, teachers created a domino chain of all the donations that ran throughout the building.

AMSB Student of the Month Breakfast: AMSB will host its next Student of the Month Award Breakfast on December 15, 2022. This program is in its first year and has had a great impact on the culture and climate at AMSB. Teachers from across the school recognize a deserving student and celebrate the students in a small ceremony in the cafeteria where they receive a small award plaque and a breakfast served by the teacher team of the month!

Holiday Bear: The Amity Teachers, Staff, and Administrators participated in our annual event of giving – Holiday Bear. This year, our collective Amity employees sponsored 34 children (past sponsorship has been around 20-24 children). All 24 nominated students from Shepard Glen Elementary School and 10 students from Hopeville Elementary School received toys, coats, gift cards, and items from their wish lists. We had so many elves this year, but special recognition goes to Head Elf Wendy Carrafiello who organized, orchestrated, and encouraged the participation of 15 teams from the high school, 7 teams from AMSB, 3 teams from AMSO, 4 teams from District Offices, and 5 individual employees in our efforts.

