

# AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

*Bethany Orange Woodbridge*  
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## Superintendent's Report – February 2023

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

**2023-2024 Course Selection Process:** Throughout February, students in grades 9-11 will have the opportunity to learn about course offerings for next year and to select their courses for 2023-2024. The 23-24 Program of Studies (on the ARHS website) is an essential resource for students as they conduct this important planning process.

**Program of Studies Fair:** Students in grades 9-11 had an opportunity to meet with department chairs and student representatives from all departments to learn about elective offerings in each academic area during the Program of Studies Fair that was held during all lunch waves on February 7, 2023.

**ARHS's Trades Week:** The ARHS Trades Week will be an engaging, week-long event (February 13-17, 2023), designed to foster, promote, and teach students about careers in the skilled trade fields. All students will have the opportunity to meet with over 20 different skilled trades people who will share their pathways and experiences in their industry. [Click HERE](#) to see a list of our scheduled visitors.

**District Data Team:** The first meeting of the District Data Team convened this past month. The team consists of administrators and teachers from across the district representing a variety of subject areas. The purpose of the committee is to review district-wide data to determine areas of strength and opportunities for growth. At this first meeting, team members reviewed the district's most recent Next Generation Accountability Report and identified five areas for improvement. The team also set targeted goals in each of the five areas and outlined action steps that will be implemented to achieve the desired objectives. The District Data Team will continue to meet monthly to review any new data and monitor the progress we are making toward our set goals.

**ARHS Students Place in CT-STEM Fair:** Eight Amity Regional High School students took top spots in the CT-STEM Fair on Saturday, February 4, 2023. By presenting their authentic research to STEM judges, the following students were recognized for their work: Anchal Bahel, Andie Napolitano, Sabrina Osowiecki, Rebecca Chen, Jasir Zafar, Anushka Acharya, Henry Yang, and Daniel Matthew.

**Science National Honor Society Induction:** Amity's newest members of the Science National Honor Society were inducted into the organization at a ceremony on January 11, 2023. Congratulations to all the new inductees!

**ATA Feature Article:** Amity Transition and SOAP Lift were featured in a recent article in the New Haven Register. The article can be found [here](#). Students in Amity Transition used their funds from Soap Lift to practice their community and daily living skills while having lunch at *On the Border* in Orange. Students in Amity Transition Academy will also begin their preparation for the annual Unified Basketball tournament hosted by Albertus Magnus College.

**Spartans Bees:** Spartan Academy, our comprehensive alternative high school program, has been successfully cultivating and maintaining several beehives over the last five school years. Recently, the staff and students within Spartan Academy have begun offering locally sourced honey for purchase to our staff. The money received from these sales will be reinvested into the program to support the year-round maintenance of the hives.

**Something Fishy:** Our 9-12 Spartan Prep teachers have partnered with the Hammonasset Chapter of Trout Unlimited to bring the trout in the classroom (<https://www.troutintheclassroom.org/>) to our students. We are excited for this partnership and this unique opportunity for our students!

**AMSO Math Team:** Congratulations to the AMSO Math Team for an outstanding performance at the Mathcounts Competitions at Yale University. Two AMSO students finished in the top 40% overall with one member of the team moving on to the State Competition.

**Curriculum Training:** A small team of teachers and administrators attended a workshop being offered by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). The focus of the workshop was on the integration of the characteristics of the Portrait of the Graduate into the curriculum. The training was hosted by Jay McTighe, widely known for his expertise in backward design format for curriculum writing. Resources collected from the session will be used to support the work being done by the district's Portrait of a Graduate Learning Progression's Committee.

**Curriculum Articulation Meetings:** Several different curriculum articulation meetings occurred this month. These include reading, math, science, physical education and health. A range of topics were covered, such as the analysis of Next Gen data, identifying opportunities for targeted professional learning, and discussion pertaining to curriculum alignment and pacing.

**Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC):** Members of the district's PDEC Committee met this month to review feedback collected from the most recent professional learning day. Updates on the use of Complementary Observers throughout the district were also provided. Additionally, the group started the initial conversations and pre-planning for the development of the 2023-2024 professional learning calendar.

## **Resources**

**Math Resources (IXL Math):** Math interventionists and select teachers at the middle and high school level are piloting the IXL online math program with their students. IXL Math provides students with an individualized skills pathway to help close gaps in learning or provide enrichment to those students on or above grade level. Students master essential skills at their own pace through fun and interactive questions, while teachers are provided detailed reports of student performance.

**Yale's McBeth Comes to Amity:** Yale University School of Drama Professor and Amity parent Cynthia Santos-DeCure visited Amity Regional High School on Thursday, January 5, 2023 with some of her students who are currently in rehearsal for a student directed production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. They spoke with junior English classes and the Advanced Acting Class, demonstrating their rehearsal process and discussing their experience bringing Shakespeare's tragedy to life.

**School Wide Data Talks:** Instructional Coaches Lisa Lassen and Andrea Drewry visited the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teams in each of the middle schools to review the results of the mid-year STAR assessments for both reading and math. Teachers were given an opportunity to analyze the detailed reports for their own classrooms and identify the standards and skills that will require focused attention and support prior to the spring administration of STAR and SBA.

**Practicum Students Support Pupil Services:** Amity welcomed Kevin Lenhart to our Pupil Services Department as a School Psychology Practicum Student from Fairfield University. We also welcomed Danielle Schwartz to our department as a Speech and Language Internship Student from Sacred Heart University. Our collaboration with local training institutions is a testament to Amity's commitment to build outstanding future educators.

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Music Presentation:** Students and teachers from ARHS visited middle school students to talk about the high school music offerings. Students were treated to a few short performances from our talented Amity High School artists. The event will help our students to make informed decisions as they begin the course selection process in the weeks ahead.

**CT-SEDS Update:** Pupil Services staff across the district continue to navigate the CT-SEDS data system used for special education and Section 504 documents. Our building based expert trainers have been crucial in the role out of the system. Additionally, our Pupil Services Administrative Assistant has been essential in troubleshooting the numerous challenges that have occurred within the system. Amity, along with all other districts in the state, will be receiving a grant to assist in the training of staff in CT-SEDS.

## Climate

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Transition Night:** ARHS hosted approximately 500 students and parents from AMSB and AMSO for an evening of school tours and information about academics and successfully preparing for the transition to high school on January 31, 2023. The event was organized by our Director of Counseling and supported by the Department Chairs and Administration. Thanks is also given to the music teachers who directed their ensembles, and the student musicians in the Chamber Orchestra, Jazz Band, and Honors Choir who performed as part of the event.

**Orientation Night:** Incoming 7<sup>th</sup> grade parents are invited to attend our Parent Open Houses and Orientations on March 2, 2023 at both AMSB and AMSO. A brief building tour will be available starting at 6:00 p.m. conducted by student volunteers. The program will provide information about our schools, the middle school teaming model, and an opportunity to meet some of the staff in each building. The information presented will help parents better understand the middle school years and lay the foundation for a successful transition to our Amity Middle Schools.

**Hurricane Ian Photo Restoration Project:** Throughout the first semester, the students in art teacher Lisa Toto's photography classes have been the only high school classes involved in a nationwide effort to repair and restore family photographs damaged in last fall's Hurricane Ian. The organizer of this project travelled from Florida to Woodbridge to meet them and hold videoconferences with some of the people whose photos were restored. These meetings really drove home the importance of what our students had been doing to help others. To learn more, watch [here](#).

**Amity Student Art Show:** The 7-12 art teachers are proud to present a collection of work being exhibited at the Clark Memorial Library in Bethany. The show will stay up through mid-March. There will be an opening reception from 4:00-5:30 pm on February 23, 2023. If unable to attend the opening reception, student work can be viewed during library hours.

**Digital Media Project:** The middle school digital media classes have been working hard to finish a Valentines' Day gift for the Amity students in the ATA program. The students scoured the school and

home to find objects that look like letters, photographed the letters, and used our technology to create nameplates for all of the students in the ATA program. Each nameplate was personalized with favorite objects and themes chosen by their ATA peers and were presented to students as a gift of friendship. Displays will also be in some Orange elementary school classrooms.

**ARHS Celebratory Events:** Black History Month is being celebrated with displays highlighting the historical and cultural contributions of African-Americans from Connecticut and throughout the United States. The National Chinese Honor Society and the Amity Chinese Club hosted a Lunar New Year celebration of the Year of the Rabbit on February 10, 2023 featuring food, performances by students and community members, and traditional games and activities.

**AMSO Drama Club:** The AMSO drama club had their auditions for the Spartan Players Production of *Annie Jr.* Over 30 students participated in the auditions. Our thanks to the Jamie Hulley Foundation for this continued support of this program.

**AMSO Advisory:** In recognition of National Holocaust Remembrance Day, AMSO advisory groups participated in a lesson focused on remembering the Holocaust. Students participated in a discussion center on moving from being a bystander to an upstander in our community and in our world as reflected in the tragic events of the Holocaust.

**Virtual Keynote Speaker: Parent Primer on Fentanyl, Edibles, and Vaping:** The substance-use issues that our kids are navigating are much more complex than they used to be. To help parents stay informed and aware of current trends, Region 5 partnered with BOWDAAC and the Orange and Woodbridge Youth Service departments hosted a parent webinar addressing these important topics on January 25, 2023. The webinar can be viewed [here](#).