

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

Bethany Orange Woodbridge
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Superintendent's Report – October 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

National Merit Semi-Finalists Announced: Congratulations to the seven Seniors who have been selected as Semi-Finalists in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program: Aditi Bhattamishra, Haseeb Chaudhry, Edward Han, Deborah Luo, Jack Morrison, Alice Xu, and Annika Yun. They are among the top 16,000 scorers nationwide out of the more than 1.3 million students who took the PSAT-NMSQT test during their Junior year. Amity is tied for the 5th highest number of Semi-Finalists among all public high schools in Connecticut this year (and 4th overall when school size is factored in). All seven are now in the competition to become National Merit Finalists later this year. Congratulations and good luck in the Finalist round!

Career Planning: The Counseling Department conducted developmental counseling lessons to all freshmen during their Biology classes on September 28, 29 and October 2. Every student completed the Strengths Explorer in Naviance and a counselor survey. This lesson assists students with identifying their talents or areas of strength and how these skills might translate to the world of work.

PSAT Testing in October: As part of our efforts to prepare students for success on the SAT, as well as to gather important information on student progress for our own instructional improvement, ARHS administered the PSAT to students in Grades 9-10 on October 12, 2023 and will test Grade 11 on October 19, 2023.

ARHS Hosts Successful Back-To-School Nights: Both Amity Back-To-School Night open house events were well-attended by enthusiastic parents during the second and third weeks of the school year. To better inform parents about what the school has to offer, this year we included a Schoology information station staffed by our librarians and technology experts and information on the social-emotional and counseling resources available to students provided by our school psychologists and social workers.

TEAM Induction: The district's Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM) held an induction event for first and second year teachers this month. New teachers were introduced to the requirements for completing the TEAM program which includes the completion of five modules of professional learning over a two-year span. Mentors and teachers also had a chance to collaborate and create plans for sharing and support through the year. Our district TEAM Coordinators led the group through a conversation that focused on ethical and professional dilemmas and their professional responsibility to students, the larger school/district educational community, and to families.

Professional Learning Day: A district-wide professional learning day was held on the afternoon of Oct 12, 2023. Teachers had the opportunity to attend a variety of content specific sessions. A sample of the sessions that were offered included: inquiry-based instructional practices for social studies, NGSS assessments and intervention for science, and vertical curriculum alignment for ELA.

Learning Walks: Teams of teachers and administrators are once again collecting observational evidence of the Portrait of the Graduate within classroom instruction. In year two of this work, the focus of evidence collection is targeted to the specific Learning Progressions of the Amity Portrait of the Graduate. The Learning Walk protocol will continue through the year and the data will be analyzed to determine the district's strengths and areas in need of improvement related to the Portrait of a Graduate.

Data Talks: Instructional Coaches Lisa Lassen and Andrea Drewry held meetings at each of the middle schools to review classroom level SBA, STAR, and I-Ready ELA and math data. Information shared at these meetings will be used to assist teachers when making informed decisions about instructional practices and the development of student achievement goals tied to teacher evaluation.

District Data Team: For the first meeting of the District's Data Team this year, team members reviewed the district's spring SBAC, STAR and I-Ready results. The team also reviewed the progress being made toward the district's three-year academic improvement goals based upon the CSDE's Next Generation Accountability Reporting. The District Data Team will continue to meet monthly to review any new data and determine areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

Curriculum Articulation and Committee Meetings: Science and CTE curriculum articulation meetings occurred this month. The agenda topics that were covered included identifying opportunities for targeted professional learning and discussions pertaining to curriculum alignment and pacing. Meetings of the Health, Safety & Wellness Committee, Curriculum Council, and Technology Committee also occurred this month. Time was spent reviewing goals, objectives and action plans for this school year.

Resources

College Reps at ARHS: College Representative visits have begun for the year in the Counseling Department's Career Center, with visits from college admissions staff occurring daily. The list of upcoming visits is available to students online, and students in Grades 11 and 12 are encouraged to sign up and attend visits by representatives of schools they are interested in learning more about.

50 TOP SCHOOLS: Once again, the College and Career Center at Amity HS has published our list of "[50 Top Colleges](#)". These are the most applied to (most popular) schools with our past seniors. This list was compiled with data from seniors' applications from the classes of 2019 through 2023.

Senior Planning Nights: The Counseling Department hosted its annual Senior Parent Night (September 20, 2023) and Financial Aid Night (September 27, 2023) to provide families the information they will need to assist their children in both researching, applying to, and financing their college educations.

College Application Meetings: School Counselors have spent the last month conducting small-group "College Application Process" meetings with seniors to ensure that all of our students have the information and support they need to successfully develop and carry out their post-secondary plans.

AMSB Fall Musical: The date(s) for the Amity Middle School Bethany fall musical, *Frozen Jr.* have been announced and tickets are on sale now! Our actors and crew are hard at work to bring this heartwarming story to life on the AMSB Stage on Friday, November 10, 2023, 6:30 pm; Saturday, November 11, 2023, 6:30 pm; and a final matinee performance on Sunday, November 12, 2023, at 2:00 pm. Tickets can be purchased through the AMSB PTSO Board. Also, any families with an aspiring Anna,

Elsa, or Olaf at home, are encouraged to send your future actor/actress in costumes to the musical; the cast will be available during intermission and after each show for photo ops.

CSDE Back to School Meeting: Members of the Pupil Services Department attended the Bureau of Special Education's 20th Annual Back to School Meeting. Information regarding CT SEDs, dyslexia, secondary transition, and CSDE monitoring among other topics was presented. Additionally, the new Deputy Commissioner, Sinthia Sone-Moyano, was introduced.

Inclusionary Literacy Practices: Colleen Cruz, a Literacy Consultant, is starting her second year working with special educators on inclusionary practices in teaching literacy. Inclusionary literacy practices are intentional instructional strategies used by teachers to create opportunities for students with disabilities to make literacy gains within the general education curriculum and classroom. Ms. Cruz conducted learning walks on October 4, 2023 and will be meeting with special educators on the upcoming professional learning minimum day as part of her continuing work with the district throughout the school year.

AMSO Parent Coffee: The AMSO administration had their first parent coffee of the year on October 2, 2023. The conversation centered on building a strong home school connection to promote student success. The open forum allowed parents to ask questions and get more information on helping their child with homework, accessing assignments through Schoology and building independence in adolescents.

Middle School Winter Sports Registration: Winter sports registration is now open. All students interested in participating in a winter sport must first complete the registration process online, then complete and submit all necessary forms to the school nurse by November 10, 2023. We are looking forward to a successful winter season...GO Spartans!!!

Climate

Thank You to the PTSO & AMSB Community: After learning about an AMSB family in need, our PTSO sprang into action last week. They turned to our AMSB community, and after posting a request for donations, received over \$2000 in just 10 hours...and that was just the beginning. Donations and offers of support poured in throughout the weekend and our community stepped up in a big way! It is impossible to put into words how much the generosity of the community made a difference for these members of our AMSB family. The PTSO also helped with a recent trip to NYC, given our late afternoon departure from NYC and early lunch, our fantastic PTSO graciously offered to provide the chaperones and students with "boxed lunch" meals to enjoy on our ride home. On top of that, they also provided drawstring bags packed with snacks eliminating any need to stop, regardless of traffic, and get us all home earlier to recharge the batteries for school the next day. We are so grateful for all the effort the PTSO, parents, and donators provided to help make these special events even more special for our kids!!

ARHS Club Day: Amity's annual Club Day took place on September 27, 2023. Student representatives from approximately 70 student clubs and organizations were advertising what they do for the rest of the school and students had an opportunity to meet with them all during their SSP period, get information about their activities, and sign up for any clubs or activities that interest them. Getting involved in extracurricular activities is one of the best ways for our students to feel connected to the school and their peers, and it has a huge impact on their academic success as well.

Student Government Pink Out: As part of their annual effort to support breast cancer research and treatment, the Amity Student Government raised more than \$2,800 selling pink-and-black "No-One Fights Alone" t-shirts that faculty and students are wearing each Friday in October.

Link Crew Tie-Dye: Link Crew Tie-Dye Day for 9th grade students took place during the lunch/SSP period on October 11, 2023. Tie-Dye Day is a fun and free event for 9th graders to get together as a class, connect with their Link Crew leaders and advisors, and make their own custom tie-dye t-shirts.

Unified Sports is Back: Unified Sports at ARHS began on October 11, 2023 with Amity hosting a Unified Sports Tournament on October 17, 2023. Ms. Carrafiello and Ms. Morrill have returned for another season of coaching our athletes and many of our paraprofessionals support student participation after school hours.

ARHS Recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month: Amity honored Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 – October 15. Students in Amity’s National Spanish Honor Society started the month off with a special message during morning announcements followed by a curated playlist of music that we broadcasted between classes. Throughout the month Amity students and the National Spanish Honor Society presented information on Hispanic culture and history with announcements, videos, and displays around the school.

SAILS Snack Cart: Students in the ARHS SAILS program restarted their snack daily snack cart. This year the cart has expanded their delivery area to include district office. The snack cart allows the students to practice their snack purchasing skills (through community outings to Costco/BJs), financial literacy skills (pricing of snacks at margin or above), and social skills (interaction with paying customers). Our students truly love selling their snacks and sometimes homemade pieces of art to our faculty and staff.

AMSO Student Lunches with Administration: The AMSO administration has begun having small group lunches with 7th grade students. The lunches help build connections with students and get their feedback on programs and their overall middle school experience.

Hispanic Heritage Month at AMSO: Through a grant from the Jaime Hulley Foundation, 7th grade students participated in an interactive presentation centered on the music and culture of various Hispanic countries. Additionally, students are participating in advisory activities to broaden students’ understanding of the contributions and influence of Hispanic culture in their lives.

AMSO Unified PE Peers: Fourteen 7th and 8th grade student volunteers have joined the AMSO Unified PE class as peer role models. In addition to promoting health and wellness, the class promotes the development of social skills, empathy, and community for all students in the class.

No Place for Hate Meetings at AMSO: The AMSO No Place for Hate committee met this month. Students on the committee began planning school wide activities to introduce students to the purpose and goals of the No Place for Hate program.

AMSB Color Fun Run: On October 14, 2023 the Amity Middle School Bethany PTSO held its Annual Color Fun Run. Registration began at 9:00 am and the event kicked off with a massive color toss at 9:30 am. This event is one of the main fundraising activities for the AMSB PTSO and a wonderful way to come together as an AMSB family. We spent the fall morning, running the streets of Bethany, while being sprayed with colored water packets and powder. There were plenty of laughs, plenty of selfies, and our community spirit and feeling of family was on full display!