

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5
Bethany Orange Woodbridge
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Superintendent's Report – February 2024

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

Second Semester: Semester 2 started on January 23, 2024, and all our second-semester courses are now well underway. Graduation for the Class of 2024 is set for Wednesday, June 5, 2024.

8th Grade Parent and Student Information Night: ARHS hosted its annual 8th Grade Parent and Student Information Night on January 31, 2024. Based on student and parent feedback, we updated the event this year to increase the information available on extracurricular opportunities by adding an Activity Fair in the cafeteria and an Athletic Activities Fair along Student Street.

Parent Teacher Conferences: The next round of Parent-Teacher conferences at the middle schools are scheduled for February 7, 2024 and February 15, 2024. High School Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled for February 14, 2024. We are looking forward to seeing our parents and sharing all of the amazing progress that their students have made this year.

UELP/SIP Parent Information Night: The ARHS Career Center staff hosted a parent information night on January 10, 2024 to provide information on the UELP/SIP “Senior Internship” program that all members of the Class of 2024 will participate in from mid-May through the end of the school year.

ARHS Course Selection for 2024-2025 is Underway!: The 2024-2025 Program of Studies has been fully updated and added to the school website. This document is full of helpful information on the courses we offer, graduation requirements, how to plan out a schedule for next year, and other helpful pointers for success in high school. Access it at this link: [ARHS Program of Studies 2024-2025](#). The February 7, 2024, Spartan Seminar activity focused on course selection for students in grades 9-11. Students reviewed teacher recommendations and made initial selections for next year's classes. School counselors will be following up with students over the next month to make sure that everyone's course requests meet all of the graduation requirements and are setting students up for success in their classes next year as well as their college and career aspirations.

Blues and Beyond: On January 24, 2024, our 7th Grade students at AMSB participated in the “Blues and Beyond” presentation during their Social Studies classes. This event educated students about the history of the Blues and incorporated the cultural and period influences that led to the creation of this type of musical expression.

Professional Learning Day: A district-wide professional learning day was held on the afternoon of February 8, 2024. Teachers had the opportunity to attend a variety of content specific sessions. A sample of the sessions that were offered included: Inquiry-based instructional strategies for math, NGSS

assessments and intervention for science, review of financial literacy curriculum resources for business, and instructional strategies and vertical curriculum alignment for ELA.

Winter Assessments: Middle school students at both AMSO and AMSB completed their Winter STAR and i-Ready assessments in Mathematics and English.

School Wide Data Talks: Instructional Coaches Lisa Lassen and Andrea Drewry visited the 7th and 8th grade teams in each of the middle schools to review the results of the mid-year STAR and i-Ready assessments for both reading and math. Teachers were given an opportunity to analyze 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, I-Ready, and SBAC.

Curriculum Writing Training: Social studies teachers in grades 7-12 and Algebra teachers from the high school math department met with the leaders of the district's Curriculum Council for curriculum writing training this month. Newly trained teachers will now begin revising their written curriculum, as feedback on specific units and performance tasks will be provided by the district's Curriculum Council members throughout the process.

Curriculum Articulation Meetings: Several different curriculum articulation meetings occurred this month. These include science, ELA, social studies, and technology. A range of topics were covered, such as the integration of the Portrait of the Graduate into classroom lessons, identifying opportunities for targeted professional learning, as well as discussions pertaining to curriculum alignment and pacing.

Portrait of a Graduate: A team of teachers and administrators from across the district met this month to continue the work needed to support the implementation of the BOWA Portrait of the Graduate (POG). Committee members started planning the culminating portfolio activities for middle and high school students. The team also started outlining the criteria for quality self-reflection, as teachers throughout the district are giving students opportunities to reflect on their assignments as they relate to the characteristics of the POG. Students are then uploading the completed self-reflections into an online portfolio in Schoology.

Inclusive Literacy Practices: Colleen Cruz continued working with special educators on inclusive literacy practices utilizing an instruct, demonstrate, observe, feedback model. These are known as lab days and provide our staff with the ability to work with Ms. Cruz in the classroom setting while applying the literacy strategies. Additionally, Ms. Cruz is working with focus intensive co-teaching groups from each of our buildings utilizing the same model approach.

Resources

Elected Officials Day: Amity hosted its second Elected Officials' Day on January 26, 2024 and February 2, 2024. Both days started with a tour of the middle schools, followed by a bus ride to the high school and a tour of ARHS. Student leaders were integral to both visits and guests were able to see collaborative workspaces, innovative programs, and areas we are looking to renovate. A Question-and-Answer session with District leadership was held over a lunch prepared by ARHS Advance Culinary students before returning to the middle schools. Nineteen elected officials from our Boards of Selectmen, Boards of Finance, Elementary Boards of Education, and State Legislature attended, along with the Superintendents of our three elementary districts.

Amity Educators Secure State Mini Grants: The CSDE launched the Connecticut Educator Support Funds Initiative: Helping our Teachers with Classroom Expenses which will allocate ARP ESSER funds to help Pre-K through grade 12 public school educators get up to \$1,000 for classroom initiative resources through DonorsChoose. Three Amity teachers have been awarded grants thus far through this program.

Hold the Date – Spring College Fair: The date for Amity's Spring College Fair has been announced: this valuable resource for students embarking on the college search process will take place on April 29,

2024, from 6:30 – 8:00 pm in the main gymnasium. This is an opportunity for students and parents to get exposed to several schools all at once, so we encourage all of our 10th and 11th grade students and their parents to attend.

Speech & Language Collaboration: The University of New Haven’s speech and language pathology graduate program is excited to announce its second annual communication collaboration with the Amity Transition Academy! This collaboration provides speech and language pathology graduate students the opportunity to work closely with ATA students and teachers to hone clinical skills while also enriching the social communication skills of ATA students. The SLP graduate students will engage ATA students in a variety of communication activities including 1:1 enrichment, group work, and supporting vocational communication skills under the supervision of a certified SLP faculty member. This program benefits out ATA students and provides an excellent learning site for UNH students under the support of our ATA staff and our PPS Director and Coordinator.

BOWA Regional Collaboration: The monthly meeting of curriculum leaders from the BOWA district was held this past month. Time was used to review district reading practices, curriculum alignment, EL student populations, and the intervention and support processes. As part of our ongoing collaboration with the BOW elementary schools, science teachers from the region met at AMSB to share thoughts and ideas around instructional practices, resource usage, and state assessment data. Additional meetings with science teachers and other subject areas will continue throughout the school year.

Spring NASP Convention: Amity school psychologists will be attending the National Association of School Psychologists annual convention in New Orleans, LA from February 12-17, 2024. They will join over 5500 school psychologists from across the country to refresh and enhance their skills. Pupil Services Director, Mr. Tom Brant will present with colleagues from Meriden Public Schools and Connetquot Central School District on Supporting Students with School Refusal: From Functional Assessment to Intervention.

Title IX: Jaime Dawson, PPS and Title IX Coordinator recently attended an updated Title IX training on The Rights of Respondents During the Investigation of Alleged Sexual Harassment. Ms. Guthrie participates in on-going professional development focused on Title IX compliance and best practices.

Maximizing Medicaid Reimbursement: District Pupil Services Administrative Assistants participated in a recent webinar from PCG Consulting (developers of CT SEDS) on how to maximize Medicaid reimbursement procedures. Medicaid billing is required under Connecticut Law and increasing our efficiency in the reimbursement process is essential to maximize reimbursement rates.

AMSO Family Night Out: AMSO would like to thank the PTSO for sponsoring a Family Night Out at Chip's restaurant. Over 35 AMSO families attended this fundraising event. Students and families enjoyed a lovely evening out while supporting the PTSO. The proceeds from the fundraiser will be used to defray the cost of upcoming field trips for students.

Climate

Supporting Students During Midterms: After a one-day delay due to weather, Midterm Exams took place from January 17 – January 22, 2024. To help all our students prepare as well as possible for their exams, student service organizations hosted these study sessions the previous week. On January 10, 2024, our Link Crew student leaders hosted Cocoa and Cram, an evening of snacks, study tips, and tutoring for 9th grade students. Our National Honor Society members hosted two afternoons of subject-specific Snack and Study sessions for students in grades 9 and 10 on January 9, 2024 (Humanities subjects) and January 11, 2024 (STEM subjects).

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

Grad Ad Design Night: *The Embers* Yearbook staff hosted a “Grad Ad Design Night” for parents of Seniors interested in getting support designing and creating their yearbook ads for their children on January 30, 2024. This one-stop shop approach meant that if parents arrived with some photos and an idea, they could leave with a fully designed and submitted ad for this spring’s yearbook.

Unified Sports Resumes: Unified Sports has resumed at ARHS. Unified athletes practice every Wednesday with their coaches and mentors in preparation for their upcoming Duck Pin Bowling and Basketball tournaments.

Boxes to Boots: On February 2, 2024, the Amity Transition Academy volunteered at the Boxes to Boots Organization to help make Valentine's Care Packages for the Troops. The students donated candy and homemade Valentine's Day cards. The transition students helped sort food, pack bags and count inventory. All of these goods will be packaged and sent to the Troops.

Staff Appreciation Breakfast: At ARHS, the Amity Advocates class and the Community Outreach Committee welcomed the Amity Faculty/Staff to a Staff Breakfast on Tuesday, January 16, 2024 to show their appreciation for the hard work and dedication that all of Amity’s employees put into their work on behalf of our students.

AMSO Peer Network: The AMSO Peer network group is meeting regularly to expand inclusivity between neurodiverse and neurotypical peers. Students who have exhibited kindness, compassion, and a willingness to build an inclusive environment are recommended to participate in team-building activities with students who may have difficulties forming connections with others. Currently the program has over 20 volunteers. Our neurodiverse population has an opportunity to apply social communication skills within a naturalistic, supportive setting, and our typical peers have an opportunity to increase their empathy and acceptance of their neurodiverse peers.

AMSB Canstruction Contest: On February 16, 2024, AMSB will hold their annual Canstruction Contest, where students are encouraged to bring in a canned good and create a tower or other creation with their Advisory group and compete for the best Canstruction. We then donate all the collected items to our local food pantry.

AMSO Kindness Week: Congratulations to the AMSO No Place for Hate Committee for running Kindness Week. The committee created four different activities that promoted and celebrated kindness. In addition to supporting a positive school climate, the No Place for Hate committee members learned valuable skills in collaboration, planning and empathy in an authentic context.

AMSB Solo Ensemble Concert: The AMSB Solo Ensemble concert will be held on February 22, 2024. All members of the community are welcome to come out to support our students and listen to some wonderful music!

Amity Art Exhibition: The annual Bethany Exhibition was installed on February 2, 2024. This exhibition highlights works from our 7-12 graders in all different media. The reception is March 5, 2024 from 3:30-5:30pm, all are welcome. The exhibition will close on April 4, 2024.

