

# AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

*Bethany Orange Woodbridge*  
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## Superintendent's Report – April 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.

Congratulations is extended to Amity Regional High School teacher **Wendy Carrafiello** who was nominated and selected as this year's **Amity Teacher of the Year**. Congratulations is also given to **Lisa Criscuolo** for her nomination and selection for the **Amity Award of Excellence**. Ms. Carrafiello and Ms. Criscuolo will be honored at the Board of Education Recognition Event on Thursday May 30, 2024 at 5:15 pm in the ARHS Lecture Hall.

### Instruction

**Author Visit to Amity:** Connecticut author and storyteller Matthew Dicks will be visiting all three Amity schools this week. In addition to being an international best-selling author, Matthew is a multiple Moth Story Slam and Grand Slam champion, a podcaster, a public speaker, a public school teacher, and the co-founder of *Speak Up Storytelling*. Matthew will visit both middle schools to discuss storytelling and writing. He will also speak to students from Amity's high school English classes involved in creative writing and literary analysis and will discuss the process for creating written and oral narratives. At the end of his master classes in the art of storytelling, a Story Slam, open to the entire high school student body, will be held. The opportunity comes to our students in part through the generosity of the Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation.

**State Required Spring Assessment:** Amity's Junior class has been busy with the annual state-mandated tests over the past month. They took the SAT assessment in school on March 21, 2024 and the NGSS Science assessment on April 3, 2024. Our Sophomores took the voluntary Pre-ACT assessment while the Juniors took the SAT's. All other grades were involved in grade-specific special programming while our Juniors took these two assessments that will factor into next year's School Performance Index.

**Flamenco Success:** Thanks to a generous grant from the Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation, on March 21, 2024, all Spanish classes participated in workshops on contemporary Flamenco and percussion. Students were able to interact with the culture of Spain through music and movement under the direction of local artist Melinda Marquez. The workshops were so successful that AMSO will be featured in a WTNH News8 feature called "What's Right with School" that will broadcast next month.

**Global Studies Fair:** On April 10, 2024, AMSB will hold its annual Global Studies Fair. This event is held in our Gymnasium starting at 1:00 and the public is invited to attend. The students have been working for the past few weeks to research a topic of concern and have created multidisciplinary presentations describing their issue and potential solutions to the issue. They will present their findings to the public at the fair and are sure to impress!

**AP Lit Attends Long Wharf:** 80 students from the 11<sup>th</sup> grade AP Literature course attended Long Wharf Theater's production of Arthur Miller's "*A View from the Bridge*" in New Haven on Wednesday, March

6, 2024. In addition to the performance, our students were able to participate in a panel discussion with the cast of the play following the performance.

**Career Day for 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Students:** Amity held its annual Career Fair for Grade 10 students during school on March 28, 2024. Sophomores had three opportunities to hear from speakers introducing them to a variety of career fields. Altogether, we had 30 guest speakers representing 25 different career options – thank you to the many community members who gave up part of their day to help with the event!

**Career Day at AMSO:** AMSO students participated in Career Day on March 15, 2024. This year we had over 25 presenters from a wide variety of professions. Students met with professionals in the medical field, the arts, hospitality, government, social services and more.

**AMSO Small Ensemble Concert:** Several band and orchestra students participated in the AMSO Small Ensemble Concert on March 20, 2024. Students were given the opportunity to highlight their skills and celebrate their passion for music by performing a musical selection of their own choosing. Parents and family members were treated to a wide variety of genres from Mozart to Cold Play.

**Entertainers NYC Trip:** On April 3, 2024, a group of AMSB students took a trip to NYC to attend a theater workshop and later attend the Broadway production of *Alladin*. The students all participated in the workshop and learned more skills that will translate to the stages of Amity. The play and lunch were a hit!

**Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC):** Members of the district's PDEC Committee met this month to continue their work on the development of a new Teacher and Administrator Evaluation and Support Plan. The committee's work has been focused on finalizing the single-point rubric that can be used as an evidence collection tool as part of the evaluation process. PDEC will continue to meet throughout the year in preparation for the submission of a draft plan to the state by June.

**ACES Curriculum Writing Training:** Social Studies teachers in grades 7-12, English teachers in grades 11-12, and Algebra I teachers met with Dina Secchiaroli from ACES this month for training on curriculum writing in an Understanding by Design format. Teachers were given time to collaborate on lesson design, practice developing essential questions, and create performance-based assessments. Following the training, teachers will begin revising units and assessment throughout the spring and summer.

**Curriculum Articulation Meetings:** Physical Education & Health, Math and CTE curriculum articulation meetings occurred this past month. The agenda topics included identifying opportunities for targeted professional learning for the 2024-25 school year and discussions about curriculum alignment and pacing.

**Learning Walks Update:** Instructional learning walks, which are focused on collecting observational evidence of the Portrait of the Graduate, continue regularly throughout the district. As of April 1<sup>st</sup>, over 100 classroom visits have been conducted. At the building level, administrators are leading their own set of learning walks with teams of teachers for the remainder of this school year.

## **Resources**

**Congratulations to Mr. Goodwin!:** Congratulations to Athletic Director Ernie Goodwin for being selected to receive the 2024 *Paul Mengold Unified Sports Athletic Director of the Year Award* which will be presented at the CIAC Unified Sports Awards Banquet on April 29, 2024. Mr. Goodwin was selected for all he does to support and facilitate Unified Sports at Amity Regional High School and to include schools in our region in numerous events and activities.

**NEAG Job Fair:** Amity Region 5 administrators participated in the University of Connecticut job fair for education majors on March 19, 2024. Resumes were collected for teaching positions anticipated for the 2024-2025 school year.

**CEC Conference:** Teachers from the Amity Pupil Services department attended the annual Council on Exceptional Children Conference in San Antonio. Attended breakout sessions included best practices in transition planning, writing legally defensible IEPs, person centered planning, behavioral support through a communication lens, and linking assessment results to student planning, to name a few. The CEC Conference is the premier special education conference offered annually.

**Student Scholarships Available:** Spring is “Scholarship Season” for high school seniors, and during March our seniors had the opportunity to apply for approximately 100 different scholarships given by organizations and families in the BOWA communities. Recipients will be selected based on their applications and the individual scholarships’ criteria later this spring.

**Multi-Tiered Systems of Support:** The district wide MTSS committee met this month to review tiered intervention scenarios for both middle school and high school students. The building-based teams had the chance to draft sample goals and objectives and identify academic and behavioral strategies that best met the student's needs in the mock examples. The committee also continues to build their understanding of the state’s new intervention data collection portal known as CT-SEDS.

**SLP Partnership:** Amity continues to partner with the Speech and Language Pathology Program at the University of New Haven. Through our partnership with the UNH SLP Program, graduate students at UNH are able to complete their clinical rotations through some of the special education programs within Amity.

## Climate

**Unified Dance:** Amity hosted a Unified Dance for students from ARHS, the Amity middle schools, the Amity Transition Academy at Albertus Magnus and UNH, and Shelton Public Schools on March 21, 2024. Our Culinary Arts classes made snacks, and ARHS paraprofessional Akeem Elliott-Lazarus provided the DJ services – a great time was had by all!

**ARHS Library Media Center Guest Speakers:** The Amity Library Media Center continued its series of guest speakers in March with a NUMBER of new opportunities for our students to hear from talented and interesting speakers including:

*On March 8, 2024* they hosted Ms. Rhonda Roumani, a Syrian-American journalist and scholar who has written about Islam, the Arab world, and Muslim-American issues for more than two decades. She is a Contributing Fellow at the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at USC and an affiliate of Yale’s MacMillan Center, Council on Middle East Studies. She is the author of an award-winning upper middle grade book *Tagging Freedom*. Her first picture book, *Insha’Allah, No, Maybe So* will be released in May of 2024 and has been named a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection.

*On March 26, 2024* they hosted Roberto Alfaro, a retired, decorated Hartford, CT. police officer with twenty-one years of dedicated service to his community. Mr. Alfaro is also a SAG/AFTRA actor and professional model of over thirty years, a writer of dozens of poems and short stories, a motivational speaker, an inventor, a salsa dancer and instructor, a former bodybuilding champion and personal trainer, a Hartford Mounted Police rider and instructor, and finally, an author of two books.

**Rays Box of Socks:** AMSO 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and students would like to thank the Amity School Community for their support of Rays Box of Socks drive. This year the collection far surpassed the goal to collect over 1000 pairs of socks. The socks will be donated to local shelters.

**Middle School Hockey Trip:** Thanks is extended to the PTSO’s of both middle schools for their

generous support for the whole-school field trips to the Bridgeport Islanders Student Event. Every student was provided with a complimentary snack bag courtesy of the PTSO's.

**Spring Athletics:** The warmer weather brings out our athletes! The spring athletic season started with 520 student athletes registered for try-outs at ARHS and 238 student athletes registered across our two middle schools.

***Mean Girls:*** The big news in the Amity Arts world is the performance of Amity Creative Theater's *Mean Girls*, which staged its first of a two-weekend run of sold-out performances. Beyond what you will see on stage, this production is a school-wide event that called on the talents of student actors, musicians, stage crew members, and carpenters as well as a team of adult volunteers and advisors to become a reality.

**School Climate Survey:** The annual school climate survey was administered to students during the last week in March. Surveys were also distributed to staff and families throughout the district. The results will be collected, analyzed, and reported to the Board of Education at a forthcoming meeting.

**STEAM Day:** Amity High School will be holding its annual STEAM Day event on Wednesday, May 29, 2024. All Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge fifth grade students are invited to attend this wonderful day and actively engage in Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics activities.

**Unified Basketball Tournament:** On March 22, 2024, Amity Transition Academy (Albertus Magnus) hosted our annual winter unified basketball tournament at the Cosgrove Marcus Messer Athletic Center on the campus of Albertus Magnus College. Students from ATA-UNH Orange, Milford Public Schools, New Haven Public Schools, North Branford, and Southington Public Schools all participated. Thanks to the ATA staff and Albertus Magnus Athletic Director. Amity looks to continue their partnership with the CIAC and growing the Collegiate Unified Sports Offerings.