

Amity Regional School District No. 5 won the 2015 CQIA Innovation Prize, Connecticut's Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award for Fostering a District Culture of Maximizing Cost Savings and Efficiencies.

Our District's goal has always been to provide an exceptional educational program to our students and still be mindful of the financial impact on the taxpayers. The District has had to find cost savings and efficiencies each year to offset the higher costs for salaries, medical insurance, special education, and unfunded mandates to name a few of the many budget drivers. We have had success in finding ways to hold down expenses, but the ideas have come mostly from the District Office.

We developed a process in 2014 to foster a District culture of maximizing cost savings and efficiencies. First, the Board of Education made it a District Goal for this fiscal year. Second, the administrative team embraced the concept, because they quickly understood the benefits to the District. Third, the District's staff is continually being encouraged to participate through group meetings, e-mails and one-on-one conversations. Fourth, the community at-large, including Town Officials, are learning about our efforts through monthly financial reports, local access television, and group and individual conversations. Fifth, the taxpayers have given us their 'vote of confidence' as evidenced by all three regional school district member towns voting overwhelmingly for the District's budget.

Our school district is proud of our students' achievements in art, academics and athletics. Our students are amazing. We have an obligation to provide the staff, supplies and equipment, and infrastructure (both buildings and technology) so our students can excel. We do just that by planning, implementing and following up on a day to day basis. Our goal is to find cost savings and efficiencies to make the resources available to help our students be the best they can be. Since the start of this initiative in September 2014, our staff has identified about \$140,000 of savings and efficiencies!

We continue to encourage our staff to provide their ideas to save money and improve efficiencies. The staff can contact Dr. Charles S. Dumais, Superintendent of Schools, or Jack B. Levine, Director of Finance and Administration, when they have any idea, big or small.