

Amity Board of Education News – December 2023

By Paul Davis, Amity BOE Chair

Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education

The Amity Board of Education conducted its annual meeting on December 11, 2023. Sworn in as new members to the Board of Education were Cathy Bradley (O), Dana Lombardi (O), Michael McDonough (O), and Donna Schlank (B). Following the swearing in ceremony, the Board conducted the election for officers. I (Paul Davis (O)) was re-elected to the position of Board Chair, Sean Hartshorn (O) will serve as Vice Chair, Michael McDonough (O) was elected Treasurer; Donna Schuster (W) was chosen as Deputy Treasurer, and Cathy Bradley (O) was selected to be Secretary. The Board of Education set its schedule for regular meetings for 2024 at the November meeting; the regular meeting schedule can be found on the Board website and was filed with the Town Clerks in Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge. I invite and encourage all our residents to visit our District website www.amityregion5.org for information and updates about the District and BOE.

Graduation Date Set

The Amity Board of Education set the date of graduation for the Class of 2024. Commencement exercises will be held on Wednesday, June 5, 2024, beginning at 4:00 pm. State Statutes permit Boards of Education to set a fixed date for graduation which is not impacted by snow days. Missed days will still be made up at the end of the year and may push the final day of school past graduation for all students except those graduating.

Board Approves Three New Policies

At the December meeting, the Amity Board acted on the recommendation of the Policy Committee and approved three new Board policies. They include Bylaw 9160, codifying the selection process and role of the student government representatives to the Amity BOE; Policy 5141.231, setting forth expectations for the administration of Narcan as an opioid overdose preventative; and Policy 5141.3, bringing the district up to date on the health assessments and immunizations required to enroll in school. Two policy updates were also approved including: a) Reporting to Parents and b) Formulation, Adoption, and Amendment of Policies.

Board of Education Reviews 2023 School Climate Survey Data

Annually and as required by Connecticut General Statute 10-222d, the Amity Regional School District administers a school climate survey. The survey provides insight into students' perceptions of our school climate and helps identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. The survey was offered electronically and 1,425 students across the district responded. The district-wide analysis shows a positive overall climate. Several subcategories are at or above the district benchmark: Peer Social Support, Character, School Safety, and Order and Discipline. Respondents reported an overall positive climate. The total district score was at 3.07, up from 2.94 in 2022. Cultural Acceptance, Adult Social Support, Physical Environment, School Connectedness are areas of opportunity. The complete Executive Summary is available on the district website.

On-Site College Acceptance Days

We have held several events recently where college admissions officers reviewed and interviewed our Seniors, then offered them immediate acceptance to their schools. Fifty-nine Amity seniors were accepted to Quinnipiac University, Southern Connecticut State University, Central Connecticut State University, Western Connecticut State University, or the University of New Haven.

Amity Military Wall of Honor Dedication on Veterans' Day

To better recognize the military service of Amity graduates, a group of our faculty, staff, and students have been working all fall to create the Amity Veterans Wall of Honor. It took the efforts of many to create the display, and a big thank-you goes out to faculty and staff members Andrea Santos (Army veteran), Miguel Pickering (Army veteran), Peter Downhour (Navy veteran), Ed Rostowski, Carl Teravainen, Lisa Toto, Jessica Zamachaj, Paula Vallee, and the CTE students who all had a part in the design and creation of the project. We unveiled and dedicated the permanent display on Veterans' Day for an audience that included faculty, staff, and graduate veterans and family members, and the staff and students involved in the project.

Medical Careers Fair

One of the post-secondary goals at Amity is to make sure that all students graduate with a meaningful and actionable plan for life after high school, and in the past two years the Career Center has gone above and beyond to make sure that students are exposed to the career options in the skilled trades. Last year the Career Center staff instituted a new event, Trades Week, and this year they added our first Medical Careers Fair designed to foster, promote, and teach students about alternative careers in the healthcare industry. Representatives from 13 area health career organizations met with students during lunches and the student response to the presenters was excellent.