

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

Bethany Orange Woodbridge
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Superintendent's Report – March 2019

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.

March is National School Board Member Appreciation Month. Thank you for all the work and time that you give to the students and our Amity community. I know from the time I have spent with you that each of you cares passionately about our children, our schools, and the experiences we provide to students, teachers, and staff. I know there are events and communications that literally keep you up at night and you are constantly reminded of the importance of the work you do. On behalf of our students, staff, and community, I sincerely thank you.

Instruction

C-SEF Science Fair: On February 9, 2019, ARHS hosted the state C-SEF Science Fair, where many of our own students shared their research and work they have completed through the Science Research Program. This is the 2nd consecutive year ARHS has hosted the event.

Amity Middle School Orange 8th Grade Students Make Authentic Connection: Approximately 20 8th grade students participated in a lunch and learn with a Korean War Veteran. Students prepared questions and listened to a firsthand account of Mr. Matthies' military experience. We thank Mr. Matthies for taking the time to speak with our students.

Seventh Grade Awareness of Global & Local Issues: AMSB seventh graders presented their Global Issues projects to their families, friends, and the Amity community on Tuesday, March 5, 2019, in the gym. Students worked diligently on these projects for nearly 6 weeks and issues included: access to water, access to education, disease and epidemics, use of child soldiers, LGBTQ and gender rights, civil war, refugee crises, and habitat preservation. Student groups presented an informational poster, an awareness campaign (which may be presented with technology, art, or music), as well as an individual argumentative essay, in which they advocated for what they believe to be the best organization for their chosen issue.

Solo & Ensemble Concert: Some of the finest of the AMSB music department performed in the annual Solo & Ensemble concert on Thursday, February 21, 2019. The program included a variety of musical styles and genres performed by choir, band, and strings students. There was a mixture of solos, duets, and small ensembles, featuring the Jazz Band, String Ensemble, and Chamber Singers.

AMSO & AMSB Teachers Professional Development Day: Teachers spent the ½ day of February Professional Development working on grade level assessments and reviewing the CT State Department of Education Early Indicator Tool which allows teachers to review a variety of data points to monitor student progress.

March 15th Full-Day Professional Learning for All Staff: ARHS will focus their attention on completing NEASC reports. Middle school teachers will receive technology training from a cadre of Amity teachers who were recently trained by ACES consultant Dina Secchiaroli as part of the recent Technology Grant. EdCamps will be the focus of the afternoon allowing for roundtable discussions of pertinent topics for Amity teachers. Administrators will facilitate the EdCamp discussions. Custodians, classified staff, and security guards will attend a session facilitated by DCF in the new mandatory requirements for reporting incidents. Physical and Psychological Management Training (PMT) will also be scheduled for those teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals who need refresher training.

The BOE Curriculum Committee: The committee will meet prior to the regularly scheduled March BOE meeting for a presentation of the Amity Youth Survey results by Lorrie McFarland, Prevention Coordinator Alliance for Prevention & Wellness, and a program of BHcare.

Resources

Jack Levine Efficiency Award: The 2019 call for applications has been sent to students who are members of the district community. Principals have already received a few thoughtful completed applications.

PMT Certified Trainer: Two additional teachers completed advanced Physical/Psychological Management Training (PMT) necessary to become trainers. By having Amity in-house trainers, the district will become more cost effective in planning for this training. PMT trained staff must annually renew their certification.

Safety Drill at Amity Middle School Orange: Our monthly drill included an extensive debrief with the Orange Police Department.

CT Educator Preparation Program Insights: As a member of the CAPSS/American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Dr. McPadden has attended several meetings focused on preparing an informational conference for superintendents and assistant superintendents related to the new teacher certification requirement edTPA. The Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) officially adopted edTPA as a requirement for CT Educator Preparation Programs. Having Dr. McPadden as part of this work provides the district with insight and preparation prior to implementation.

Climate

8th Grade ARHS Orientation Night: On February 25th, ARHS hosted an 8th Grade Orientation Night for current 8th grade students and parents. The event was a huge success, with over 280 current 8th grade students attending with their parents, along with many interested students and parents who are new to the District.

Orientation for 6th Grade Parents/Guardians/Students: On February 28, 2019, AMSB hosted a 7th Grade Orientation Night for current 6th grade parents/guardians. The event was very successful with approximately 200 parents and some students attending. There was a formal presentation and several AMSB students provided tours and helped answer questions. The principal, counselor, and other staff also visited both BCS and BRS the same day and gave an orientation to all students.

Mentorship and Inclusion through Literature: In a continuing effort to build a positive, supportive and inclusive climate at the high school and throughout the District, current juniors and seniors at Amity have partnered with 8th and 9th grade English teachers to conduct lessons pertaining to the literature that is part of the curriculum. On March 14th, high school students will join 8th grade English classes at Orange to discuss the personal, societal and cultural significance of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The program will continue at the high school for lessons regarding Eli Wiesel's *Night*.

AMSO Unified Sports Tournament: On February 26th, AMSO had 11 student athletes and partners participate in the Unified Sports Basketball tournament in Waterbury. Our students competed with students and friends from around the state in friendly competition that promoted physical fitness and sportsmanship.

AMSO Students Raise Over \$300 for South Sudan: 7th grade students on AMSO Team Y hosted a breakfast fundraiser for “Water for South Sudan”. This culminating activity is the result of the interdisciplinary study of water resources around the world.

AMSO Diversity Week: The hallways reflected the diverse cultural heritage of our school community. Advisory groups explored countries and decorated doors around the school to reflect the different cultures that make up our school community. Students also participated in a variety of activities including an interactive presentation by a group titled *Journey into Africa*, which celebrated African dance and culture. The week served to highlight the differences among us, and yet recognize the similarities that unite us.

ADL Training Follow-up: The 8th grade students who participated in the ADL bystander training in February met with AMSO 8th grade teachers to continue the discussion started during the training. The group’s discussion focused on the students’ experiences and perceptions regarding life in middle school. Continued discussions are scheduled in March.

Vaping Assemblies: On February 4, 2019, AMSB had assemblies for all students about the dangers of vaping. Tricia Dahl, an Amity graduate and currently a research assistant at Yale, spoke to all students about e-cigarettes, discussed the potential health concerns, answered questions, and talked about the state and federal laws that apply to teens. She also spoke to the faculty. Information was also shared with parents in an email blast.

AMSB Climate Committee: The committee had its monthly meeting on February 12, 2019. The purpose of the AMSB Climate Committee is to provide stakeholders in the school with an opportunity to discuss current trends and issues within the school community as well as implement programs and strategies to help improve the climate for all. Thayer Doyle, Chairperson, reviewed an agenda that included a review of our “Be Amity” positive behavioral intervention strategy, the progress of our Advisory program implementation, and data on discipline.

School-wide Collection: The AMSB 8th Grade Fem Club organized a school-wide collection of unused toiletries for the New Reach Women’s Shelter in New Haven.