

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

Bethany Orange Woodbridge
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Superintendent's Report – August 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

Excited for the Start of School: We are preparing and excited for the start of school. The entire administrative team met on August 12th and 13th to prepare for the opening of school. Students return to school on August 26th! August 26th and 27th are early release days for students.

Return to School PL Days: Amity's Professional Learning Days are scheduled for August 20 – 22, 2024. Two of the major offerings for professional learning include workshops on the new Amity Educator Supervision and Evaluation Plan and the next steps for continued rollout of the BOWA Portrait of the Graduate. Teachers will also review the District's Crisis and All-Hazards Plan and participate in a selection of wellness activities.

Convocation 2024: In addition to speeches from the Amity Teacher of the Year and the Superintendent, Jonathan Costa will deliver the keynote address for convocation this year. Jonathan Costa has been involved in education in Connecticut for over 30 years. Through that time, he has worked with over 150 school districts, non-profits, and businesses in the tri-state area, and he currently serves as the Executive Director of EdAdvance, a Regional Education Service Center (RESC) that serves 32 towns in the state. Jonathan's keynote will examine how Artificial Intelligence can empower educators and transform learning for students. Convocation will be held on August 22, 2024.

New Staff Orientation: On August 14th and 15th, twenty-four new staff members were in the district for their official on-boarding and orientation. Staff members were given overviews of the major aspects of Amity's curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. Staff members were introduced to the Amity Portrait of the Graduate, participated in activities with the district's instructional coaches, and were also given time to meet with their building administrators and teacher leaders.

POG Portfolio: The Amity faculty has been planning for the first year of students (Class of 2026) who will be developing and presenting Portrait of the Graduate Portfolios in April 2025.

Summer Reading: This year, 'Amity Reads', Amity's summer reading program, was linked to the Portrait of the Graduate, asking students in grades 7-12 to begin thinking about how each characteristic plays a role in their summer reading book of choice. This fall, we will ask students to share their books and think about how their books showcased one or more of the POG characteristics. Students were encouraged to select one book that suits them in terms of topic and reading level. All students will be asked to complete an assignment related to their summer reading choice.

Amity AI Council: The Amity AI Council was formed last spring to address the rapid proliferation of AI resources and tools and their integration into schools. The AI Council has been developing resources to support teachers in the effective and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence in schools. They recently published sample syllabus language for teachers to use in guiding students regarding the appropriate application of AI tools in their learning.

ESY Wraps Up Summer: From July 1 – August 2, 2024, Amity provided Extended School Year services to nearly 64 students (an increase over last year). A special thank you to Nick DaPonte for coordinating ESY and all the staff who worked tirelessly to make ESY a success. For identified incoming seventh grade students, this was their first experience in Amity and the staff went above and beyond to make the entire experience a positive one. We would be remiss if we did not thank B & B and Tirollo Transportation for all their hard work in ensuring timely and accurate transportation of our students.

Summer Curriculum Writing: Teachers from the middle and high schools collaborated this summer to update a variety of curricular documents. These included: High School and Middle School English, High School Algebra 1, High School and Middle School Social Studies, Visual and Performing Arts, and Middle School and High School World Language.

New Teacher Evaluation Plan: Members of the Amity Professional Development and Evaluation Committee completed a final draft of the new Amity Educator Supervision and Evaluation Plan. The plan was submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education in early August for approval, and an official orientation to staff will occur during the initial professional learning days that start the year.

ARHS Building Leadership Team Summer Meetings: The ARHS BLT met in late June to map out initial plans for the coming school year, and they met again on August 15, 2024 for further planning for the start of the school year.

Middle School Student Schedules: Student schedules were released mid-August. At that time students were able to see their team, teachers, and classes by period. This is often a time of great excitement for middle school students (and parents)! Parents are encouraged to reach out to their child's school counselor if there is an error on the schedule or any missing classes.

Resources

Thanks to the Custodial and Maintenance Staff: Thank you to our custodial and maintenance staff for all of the hard work and preparation in getting both buildings and grounds ready for the 2024-2025 school year. Your hard work is noticed!

NEASC Accreditation Training: ARHS Associate Principal Monica Kreuzer and Principal Andre Hauser were invited to participate in a two-day training for accreditation committee chairs by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) in July.

NASSP Conference: Counseling Director Jill LaPlante, Associate Principal Monica Kreuzer, and Principal Andre Hauser attended the nationwide United 2024 School Leadership Conference co-hosted by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) in July. This three-day conference offered more than 275 workshops on a variety of school improvement and leadership topics as well as keynote addresses from motivational speaker Jon Gordon, NBC Chief Education Correspondent Rehema Ellis, and Khan Academy founder Sal Khan. The information from the workshops attended was shared with the entire District Administration Team during their August retreat.

School Crisis and Safety Presenter: Pupil Services Director Tom Brant was an invited presenter and named to the leadership council for the National Mass Violence Center (<https://nmvrc.org/>). The

conference was held at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law with a focus on responding to the aftermath of a mass casualty event. Mr. Brant was also one of eight invited speakers by the Hillsborough County (Florida) School to present on the NASP PREPaRE Workshop I curriculum. Mental Health staff from Amity Region 5 and Pomperaug Region 15 participated in the NASP PREPaRE Workshop I and II. Training was presented by Mr. Brant and Courtney Huguenin. This professional learning is an essential component in school safety and crisis preparedness and aligns to our district strategic plan.

ATA College Partnership: Amity Transition Academy returns to the University of New Haven: Orange Campus for our fourth year and Albertus Magnus College for our seventh year. We are grateful for our partnerships with each University/College. Be on the lookout for notifications regarding our Fall ATA Unified Sports meetings.

Mental Health Partnerships: The district is entering its third-year partnership with Connecticut Behavioral Health (CBH). Connecticut Behavioral Health provides community clinicians to each of our schools. This will allow students and their families the ability to access clinical level mental health services without needing to leave the school building. We are also entering our second full year of our partnership with Yale Child Study Center (YCSC). Through this partnership, ARSD mental health staff will be meeting on an on-going basis with identified staff from YCSC for professional development and community. Additionally, YCSC will work with district mental health staff to host parent evenings throughout the school year.

Climate

Link Crew News: The Link Crew freshman orientation program will be held for all incoming 9th graders on Friday, August 23, 2024. The Link Crew Parent Night for the parents of incoming 9th grade students will be held on Wednesday, August 21, 2024. Link Crew advisors are Anastasia Kimball, Marian Boyns, Scott DeMeo, Wendy Carrafiello, and Jeni Bonaldo.

Boys' State: Rising senior Patrick Yang was elected to the office of Governor of the American Legion's Boys' State annual youth leadership program. This is quite an honor, as each Connecticut high school is permitted to send one male student to Boys State, and Patrick was selected by the participants to serve as their elected leader.

Top Recognition in Journalism: Congratulations to rising senior Alex Klee for being selected as one of nine winners of The Learning Network's Student Open Letter Contest. Chosen from over 8000 submissions, you can find Alex's article – Every High School Student Can Save a Life – on the New York Times website.

AMSO 7th Grade Open House: AMSO staff and the Orange Youth Services welcomed the incoming 7th grade students on August 15, 2024. Students were able to tour the school, find their classroom and practice opening their lockers ahead of the first day of school. Parents attended an informal presentation by administration that provided parents and students with tips and suggestions to help students and their families make a successful transition to middle school.

AMSB 7th Grade Gathering: The AMSB 7th Grade Gathering will be held on August 22, 2024 from 5:30pm – 7:30pm. This event is sponsored by Woodbridge Youth Services. Refreshments will be provided under the pavilion and there will be plenty of activities to give students many chances to visit with their classmates and make new friends!

Middle School Fall Sports Registration: Students considering participating in a middle school fall sport must begin the registration process now. Links for registration are in principal newsletters and on the athletics website. Once you begin the registration process you will receive information from the athletic

department and coaches. The fall sports offered at our middle schools are Cross Country, Field Hockey, Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, and Girls Volleyball.

AMSO has a New Mural: Our thanks to the Jamie Hulley Foundation for their support in the creation of a new mural in the main hallway. The theme of the mural is “Amity Middle School, You Belong Here” and highlights the diverse talents and learning opportunities in our school community.

Hulley Arts Foundation Gala: The Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation's upcoming Evening for the Arts gala on Saturday, September 7, 2024 featuring FACE OFF: A Tribute to Elton John & Billy Joel. The Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation provides many educational enrichment opportunities for Amity students over the course of the year and your support of their foundation enhances the opportunities we are able to offer our students. If you like the music of Elton & Billy, or just want to help support this wonderful organization, please consider attending the gala.

SAVE THE DATE – Color Fun Run: On October 19, 2024, the Amity Middle School Bethany PTSO will host our Annual Color Fun Run. This school community event is always memorable and always FUN! This is a family event and is a great way to spend a fall morning, running the streets of Bethany, while being sprayed with colored water packets and powder. There are always laughs, plenty of selfies, and our community spirit is high. Please consider volunteering with our wonderful PTSO. If you are a local business owner and would like to be a sponsor of this event, please reach out to the AMSB PTSO.