

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

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Superintendent's Report – October 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

Amity Earns Advance Placement Honor Roll: Amity Regional High School has been selected by the College Board as an *Advanced Placement Honor Roll School* due to our efforts to increase the number and diversity of students taking AP courses and exams. Here are a few of the data points about last spring's AP test-takers that earned our school this distinction:

- We had 398 students take AP exams last spring, an increase of more than 20 students from the previous three-year average.
- Many students take multiple AP courses, so the total number of AP tests taken is also a consideration. Last spring, Amity's students took a total of 839 AP exams, which is a new school record and an increase of 84 AP exams over the previous three-year average.
- The College Board considers a score of 3 or higher on an AP test to be worthy of college credit. Last year our rate of AP test-takers scoring 3 or higher was 91.5%. This represents an increase of 4.6% from the previous three-year average rate.

POG Portfolio Preparation Underway: On October 16, 2024, all Juniors met with their POG Portfolio mentors to learn more about the specific requirements for the POG Portfolios they will develop this year and present in April and how their POG mentors will work to support them through the process. A meeting of the members of the district-wide Portrait of the Graduate (POG) Committee met this month to discuss the plans for the culminating portfolio reflection projects that all 11th graders will engage in this spring. The culminating project will take place on April 24th, as students will have the opportunity to reflect on their learning journey through the Amity schools while making connections to the characteristics of the POG.

PSAT Testing Day: ARHS students took a pause from their regular schedule on October 17, 2024 so that students in grades 9 - 11 could take the PSAT test during school. For our Juniors, this is the PSAT test that will allow them to qualify for National Merit Scholarship Competition recognition. For the students in grades 9 and 10, the PSAT serves two important purposes. From the student perspective, it gives them some valuable exposure to taking an SAT test. And for the school, it gives us valuable performance data about our students so that we can both identify students who may need a little extra support and assess and adjust our instructional practices if we see any areas of concern in the results. While most of the school was testing, our 12th graders had the opportunity to spend the day off-campus working on their post-secondary plans.

End of Quarter 1: October 29th will mark the end of First Quarter. Parent conferences for both middle schools will be held on November 6th and November 14th from 5:00-7:30 p.m. At ARHS, parent

conferences will be held from 5:00-7:30 p.m. on November 7th and November 13th. We look forward seeing our families!

Learning Walks: Teams of teachers and administrators are once again collecting observational evidence of the Portrait of the Graduate within classroom instruction. In year three of this work, the focus of evidence collection is targeted to the specific Learning Progressions of the Amity Portrait of the Graduate. The Learning Walk protocol will continue through the year and the data will be analyzed to determine the district's strengths and areas in need of improvement related to the Portrait of a Graduate. This cycle of learning walks will be done in a paperless format on tablet devices.

AMSO Peer Tutoring: Peer tutoring is underway at AMSO. Twenty 8th graders have been trained and paired with tutees based on student need. In addition to supporting academic skills and growth, the program is another opportunity for students to learn valuable POG skills including communication, empathy and planning.

ATA Work Experiences Community Partner: Students at Amity Transition Academy (ATA) are engaged in various work experiences through the greater New Haven and Fairfield counties. Our employer focus this month is: Woofgang & Co. Team Woofgang & Co is a non-profit organization committed to empowering adults with a wide range of intellectual and developmental disabilities through vocational skill training, life-long learning, and social opportunities. Our team members participate in two unique curriculums that include producing, packaging, marketing, and selling handmade dog treats and pet toys.

Hispanic Heritage Month: Middle school students across the district participated in a wide variety of activities to recognize Hispanic Heritage Month. Students explored Hispanic culture through music, dance and food. Live presentations and interactive lessons included cooking, singing and salsa dancing. In addition, students utilized their research skills as they explored the culture of various Hispanic cultures and prepared a presentation all in the target language.

Professional Learning Day: A district-wide professional learning day was held on the afternoon of October 17th. Teachers had the opportunity to attend a variety of content specific sessions. A sample of the sessions that were offered included: Inquiry-based instructional practices for social studies, NGSS assessments and intervention for science, and vertical curriculum alignment for ELA.

Curriculum Articulation and Committee Meetings: Science and CTE curriculum articulation meetings occurred this month. The agenda topics that were covered included identifying opportunities for targeted professional learning and discussions pertaining to curriculum alignment and pacing. Meetings of the Health, Safety & Wellness Committee, Curriculum Council, and Technology Committee also occurred this month. Time was spent reviewing goals, objectives and action plans for this school year.

Curriculum Development: Social studies teachers in grades 7-12 met this month to collaborate on curriculum development. Throughout the day teachers created units and lesson activities aligned to the recently revised social studies state standards.

Resources

Financial Aid Night: The ARHS Counseling Department hosted their annual Financial Aid Night for parents of seniors on October 16, 2024. This event provides parents with information about the FAFSA form, college financial aid, and other useful information they need for making sound decisions about paying for a college education.

District AI Council Professional Learning: The district-wide A.I. Council, a team made up of library media specialists, the technology coach and the Director of IT, attended two sessions regarding the

integration of Artificial Intelligence into teaching and learning. One session was held at CAPSS and the other at CAS, both dealt with how this emerging technology can be used by both teachers and students to enhance teaching and learning. The sessions also presented potential challenges with this new technology and considerations for schools as it develops.

Music in Motion 2024: The Music in Motion performance took place on the evening of October 24, 2024, for the community, followed by another performance for the 8th graders from both middle schools on the following Friday morning.

Hall of Honor & Hall of Fame: On October 17, 2024, Amity recognized several distinguished alumni at the 23rd Annual Athletic Hall of Fame and 15th Annual Academic Honor Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony. The Athletic Hall of Fame inducted 10 new members, all either former Amity scholar-athletes or former coach-teachers at ARHS. The Academic Hall of Honor celebrated four new members. Listening to the presenters talk about everyone's accomplishments was impressive and listening to the honorees talk about how Amity prepared them for success was an inspiring reminder of how our faculty touch so many lives. This year's inductees are:

- Athletic Hall of Fame: Robert Coppola Jr., Jason Esposito, Elizabeth "Betsi" Grace, Dina Grindall, Brian Kownacki, Richard McGowan, Michael Moras, Kate Simon, Paul Thees, and Katie Yanagisawa.
- Academic Hall of Honor: Robert Flaumenhaft, Jason Klein, Erik Stocklin, and Robert Slie.

Training for Special Education Transition Planning: Jennifer Zoppi and Jennifer Berkowitz completed "Charting the LifeCourse" training through the CSDE. This training allows our staff to facilitate transition focused planning meetings with families and can be repeated as many times as necessary to ensure successful transition planning.

UCONN – Multiply your Options Field Trip: On November 15th a small group of girls will travel with Mrs. Doheny to UCONN for the Multiply your Options Conference. This trip will expose our students to the many women who have impacted the field of STEM across many different career paths and help our students explore the world beyond Amity!

Seussical the Musical: The AMSB fall musical is fast approaching, and tickets are selling fast! The outstanding cast, crew and faculty advisors are proud to present *Seussical Jr.* on **November 8, 9, and 10, 2024**. Both Friday and Saturday are a 6:30 p.m. curtain and Sunday's matinee is at 2:00 p.m.; doors open about 45 minutes before the show. The show is directed by Andrea Kennedy and is sure to be a hit!

Climate

Link Crew in the News: One of the hallmarks of 9th grade at Amity is Link Crew, our robust and ongoing 9th grade orientation and support program. Starting well is one of the keys to success in anything, and Link Crew gives our students that strong start. In fact, our program is so noteworthy that it was featured this month on WTNH's "What's Right with Schools" program. Here is the link to the feature: [Link Crew - What's Right With Schools](#)

Signs of Suicide Assessment: On October 21st (AMSB) and October 28th (AMSO), the counseling department held its annual Signs of Suicide presentation and screening assessment. The program addresses this difficult topic in a caring and supportive way and encourages students to seek help if needed. Counselors from each middle school participated in the presentation and staff from both the middle and high schools were available to support students and speak with students individually if needed. This lesson is a wonderful example of how we work as a community to support one another and keep a focus on the practice of self-care and care for others. Our Director of School Counseling, Jill

LaPlante, and Director of Pupil Services, Tom Brant, spearhead this initiative annually. This intervention will be provided to high school students in the upcoming weeks.

NHS Blood Drive: The ARHS chapter of the National Honor Society worked with the Red Cross to host the first of Amity's two annual blood drives on October 22, 2024. The Red Cross had set a goal of 30 donations during the drive, and our students, faculty, and staff exceeded that goal with a total of 31 pints of blood successfully donated.

Ping-Pong Fridays Have Returned!: Amity's Chinese National Honor Society hosts ping-pong competitions during lunch waves on the second Friday of the month, and our first Ping-Pong Friday was earlier this month. All students are welcome to participate in games during their lunch period – no experience or paddle necessary!

AMSB Color Run '24: On October 19, 2024, AMSB held the Annual Color Run. This event is always well run and well attended, and this year was no exception! It was wonderful to see our community come together, share a few laughs, and spend a morning celebrating all that makes AMSB a special place. Thank you to all of the volunteers who made the event possible, including the numerous sponsors, The Amity PTSO, Bethany FD, The Bethany and Connecticut State Police, Harkness Tree Service, and of course our Awesome Amity Students!

AMSO Halloween Dance: The AMSO PTSO sponsored a Halloween dance for students on October 18, 2024. Over 180 students came dressed in costumes and enjoyed a fun evening with great music, food and friends. Our thanks go out to the teachers and staff members who volunteered to chaperone the event.

AMSO No Place for Hate: The AMSO No Place for Hate (NPFH) committee had its' first meeting this month. The group explored the NPFH Pledge and began to brainstorm activities that encourage tolerance and acceptance that will be delivered to all students.

Athletics Senior Nights: As our fall sports teams approached the end of their regular season schedules, Amity held Senior Night celebrations at home games over the past few weeks. Cross Country started the celebrations on October 7th, Field Hockey celebrated their Senior Night on October 9th, and Volleyball's Senior Night was October 10th. We honored the Boys Soccer seniors on October 15th, and both the Girls Soccer and Swimming & Diving Seniors on October 18th. We will honor the Cheerleading and Football seniors at their last home game of the season on November 15th. Congratulations to all our fall senior athletes, and best of luck with the tournament competitions!

Pink Out!: Throughout October, our Student Government has been highlighting its efforts to raise funds and awareness for the Smilow Cancer Center. Fans attending any of our home sports events this month have been encouraged to wear one of our "Pink Out" t-shirts if they have one, or any other pink clothing they have, to show your support for this worthy cause. Faculty and students have been wearing them to school on Fridays as well.

Unified Sports Off and Running: Unified Sports at ARHS is off and running with Amity hosting a Unified Sports Tournament on October 16, 2024. Thank you to Ms. Carrafiello and Ms. Tucker for once again coaching our athletes and to our paraprofessionals for supporting student participation after school hours.