

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

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Superintendent's Report – November 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

Mock Presidential Election Results: Once every four years, the ARHS Critical Issues class organizes and conducts a mock presidential election for all three Amity schools. The goal of this project is to create an environment where students can make informed political decisions and to model meaningful, respectful civic dialogue, two goals that reflect both our national civic ideals and Amity's Portrait of the Graduate. Throughout the last week of October, this process included a presentation to the Board of Education on the mock election goals and process by students and faculty members, a Spartan Seminar lesson Wednesday on each of the candidates' platforms planned by our Critical Issues students, and the mock election itself on November 1, 2024. Election results closely mirrored the national election results, with the Trump/Vance ticket winning the mock election.

American Mathematics Competition (AMC) Test: On November 12, 2024, more than 100 math students took the prestigious American Mathematics Competition (AMC) test. This challenging exam, designed to promote problem-solving skills and mathematical thinking, is a national competition that provides students with the opportunity to showcase their abilities in mathematics. Our students embraced the challenge, striving to achieve high scores and earn recognition at both the school and national levels. The experience not only highlights the students' commitment to academic excellence, but also their passion for mathematics.

Lesson on Intellectual Disabilities: In preparation for the 8th grade class to read the novel *Of Mice and Men*, AMSO's School Psychologist, Jennifer Zoppi, presented on the topic of Intellectual Disabilities to all the 8th grade English classes. The goal for this presentation included conversations about what intelligence is and how it plays a role in daily life, as well as allowing students to understand differences in abilities and learning needs.

ASAP Celebration of Young Photographers: Congratulations to student photographers Augustus Khan and Hannah Guo, who were both selected for acceptance into the 14th annual ASAP Celebration of Young Photographers exhibition. Their work has been on display as part of this highly selective exhibition at the Mattatuck Museum, and there was an opening to honor the artists on November 10, 2024.

Career Day: On November 21st AMSB held their annual Career Day. This event was coordinated by the School Counseling Department and began with refreshments for our participants in the Library Media Center. From there, our volunteers visited classrooms and students attended presentations to hear about careers of interest to them. Thank you to all who were involved in this event, helping to coordinate the

student choice schedule, and especially to those community members who volunteered their time to our school.

Personalized SAILS Orders: Students in Ms. Kopjanski’s SAILS program have started taking personalized orders for their snack and beverage cart. The students gather information from staff regarding what items they would like to see on the cart, create a shopping list, and then shop for those items at Costco. The students then price the items at fair market value and offer them for sale during the school day to staff.

Dual Credit Enrollment Update: In the first year of Amity’s expansion of dual credit enrollment classes, we have enrolled 200 students into a dual credit opportunity. Courses are being offered through both UCONN and the University of Bridgeport. A breakdown of the enrollment is below.

Course Name	School	# Enrolled Students	Course Name	School	# Enrolled Students
AP Psychology Sec. 1	UB	18	AP Latin	UConn	8
AP Psychology Sec. 2	UB	14	AP Chemistry	UConn	12
Entrepreneurship	UB	2	Chinese IV	UConn	24
Calculus	UB	9	AP Chinese/ Chinese V	UConn	18
Intro to Tech Drafting	UB	15	AP French	UConn	10
AP Statistics	UB	4	AP Env. Science	UConn	40
			Spanish V	UConn	26

We are working to add more dual enrollment options for the 2025-2026 school year and will also track how many students currently enrolled earn credit when they enroll in college next year.

November 5th Professional Learning Day: All staff reported to their individual schools for the morning portion of the day to complete training on the updated Title IX regulations in the State of Connecticut. For the afternoon sessions, all teachers reported to ARHS for a presentation from the Amity AI Council after which a series of breakout sessions were offered on topics related to AI and education.

Curriculum Articulation Meetings: Teachers representing the subject areas of Visual and Performing Arts and Physical Education met to discuss resource usage, professional growth and development, vertical alignment of the curriculum as well as content specific data connected to the Next Generation Accountability Report.

Complementary Observer Training: A total of thirty-eight teachers from the middle schools and high school were trained to act as complementary observers as part of this year’s new teacher evaluation plan. Once trained, these teachers will now partake in classroom observations of their colleagues. The focus of their work throughout the year includes collecting evidence from classroom lessons that align to the Characteristics of an Amity Educator single point rubric as well as providing teachers with beneficial, reflective feedback on their instructional practices.

Curriculum Training: Teachers in grades 7-12 in the subject areas of math and social studies met with consultants from the ACES RESC for curriculum writing training. As part of the training, teachers were given the opportunity to work on specific units and performance tasks while being provided real-time feedback on their projects. Curriculum development training will continue throughout the year.

BOWA Curriculum Leaders Meeting: The monthly meeting of curriculum leaders from the BOWA district was held this past month. Time was used to discuss curriculum alignment, common assessment practices, and the rollout of the Portrait of the Graduate. Future meetings are scheduled throughout the year to promote an open dialogue and consistency in practice throughout the K-12 school system.

Resources

Signing Day: Amity has a long tradition of our scholar-athletes moving on to collegiate athletics, and on November 13, 2024, ARHS held a signing ceremony to honor those senior athletes who have already made commitments to college athletic programs. The honorees were:

- Addelyn Maxwell – Girls Lacross, Kennesaw State University
- Addison Zalinsky – Girls Lacrosse, University of New Hampshire
- Mia Hartmann – Girls Lacrosse, Southern CT State University
- Haley Mario – Girls Lacrosse, University of Cincinnati
- Jenna Maus – Softball, Eastern CT State University
- Leah Monschein – Softball, Montclair State University
- Alexx Reinwald – Softball, Randolph College
- Dylan Agvent – Baseball, UMASS Boston
- Derek Porto – Baseball, Merrimack College
- Collin Tenney – Baseball, Salem State University
- Marea Li, Swimming, Northeastern University

Staff Recognition at CT Police Academy: Members of the Amity administration and many former teachers traveled to the Connecticut State Police Academy on November 12, 2024 to support AMSB Physical Education Teacher, Ms. Dubay. During their fall awards ceremony, the CT State Police recognized Ms. Dubay for her heroic actions on May 30, 2024 when she assisted the police in the apprehension of a hit and run driver who struck and killed a CT State Trooper while he was conducting a traffic stop. At the ceremony, Ms. Dubay received a citation from the Commissioner of the Department of Emergency Services.

Trades Week: The first week of November was Trades Week at Amity. Knowing that our students will be pursuing all kinds of career paths after graduation, Trades Week is an opportunity our Career Center offers to expose everyone to a variety of skilled trade career options. The week started with a guest speaker from the CT Department of Labor's Apprenticeship Office, who shared information about trade apprenticeship options with interested students on Monday. After that, representatives from a variety of professions were available at all lunches from Wednesday through Friday. Altogether, ARHS hosted more than 20 representatives from 19 career fields, representing professions as varied as emergency services, health sciences, multiple types of contractors, and skilled manufacturers.

High School Welcomes Many Guest Speakers: We have had several guest speakers and presentations for classes recently, and we appreciate their willingness to come in and share with our students. Recent speakers and presentations included:

- Director, screenwriter, and novelist Gorman Bechard spoke to interested students in the library on November 4.
- Amity graduate and licensed insurance agent Alyssa Cofrancesco spoke to financial literacy students on November 4.
- On November 12, the Save a Life Tour – a program on distracted and impaired driving – spoke to Health & Physical Education classes. As part of their presentation, they brought two distracted driving simulators that allowed students to safely experience the hazards of distracted or impaired driving first-hand.

- Ellie Haney, the founder of Here for You Clothing and an advocate for mental health and decreasing the stigma associated with addiction issues, spoke to interested students on November 13.
- Amity graduate and tax manager for AAFCPA Tyler Champagne spoke to accounting classes on November 14.
- Lauren Taylor spoke to students on November 19. Lauren has worked in several capacities in the film and television industry, and she currently worked as the Director of Development for Media Res Studio, a Hollywood television and film studio responsible for programs on Apple+ and HBO.

On-Site Acceptance Days: ARHS held two “On-Site Acceptance Days” for Connecticut colleges recently. On November 19, 2024, we hosted an admissions representative from Southern Connecticut State University, and we are proud to announce that 13 of our seniors were offered acceptances. On November 21, 2024 Eastern Connecticut State University was here, accepting another six seniors on-site.

Goalbook: Special Education Teachers and Speech Language Pathologists met with trainers from Goalbook Toolkit. Goalbook Toolkit partners with over 1,000 school districts across 46 states to provide holistic, research-based solutions that improve specialized instruction and student outcomes. While improving students' outcomes, Goalbook Toolkit also looks at maximizing teacher efficiency through a student performance driven platform.

FBI Training: Administrators, administrative assistants, and additional staff throughout the district participated in the Responding to and Investigating Bomb Threats and Swatting Hoaxes - presented and hosted by: FBI Boston and Massachusetts State Police. This free one-hour virtual training provided attendees with an overview of the realities of bomb threats and swatting hoaxes and includes a detailed review of statistics and current trends seen across the country. The training also covered the characteristics of hoax calls, law enforcement best practices for assessment and response, and the decision-making process for evacuation or sheltering in place.

DTA Training: School Psychologists Rebecca Rivera and Jennifer Zoppi along with administrators Monica Kreuzer and Tom Brant attended the Safer Schools Together, Digital Threat Assessment (DTA) Training. DTA teaches participants to establish a Digital Behavioral Baseline through a Safety / Threat Assessment lens. By engaging with popular social media applications, you will learn how to find and document worrisome digital media content originating from your community. This training solidifies your understanding of how to effectively use DTA as a critical part of any modern-day Threat Assessment. Ms. Rivera, Mrs. Zoppi, Mr. Brant and Mrs. Kreuzer are all now certified in the basics of Digital Threat Assessment. Additionally, Ms. Rivera, Mrs. Zoppi, and Mr. Brant attended the Advanced Digital Threat Assessment training presented by Safer Schools Together. Working collaboratively through case scenarios based on real-life situations, teams navigate the social media world using familiar and new techniques.

Signs of Suicide Screening: Amity started the Signs of Suicide Screening (SOS) as part of our partnership with Sandy Hook Promise. All 7th Grade students across both middle schools were screened in November. Sixty-nine students required additional assessment and follow-up. SOS will be provided for high school students on December 9 & 10, 2024.

UCONN –Multiply Your Options Field Trip: On November 15th a small group of girls from AMSB traveled with Mrs. Doheny to the UCONN for the Multiply Your Options Conference. This trip exposed 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!

Professional Development and Evaluation (PDEC): A committee of district and building based teachers and administrators met this month to review options for a new teacher evaluation management system. The first demonstration was provided by Frontline, as the team will make a decision on the adoption of a new system for the 2025-26 school year.

NYASP Annual Conference: Tom Brant, Pupil Services Director presented at the NYASP Annual Conference in Syracuse, NY. Mr. Brant and colleagues from Meriden Public Schools and Connetquot Central School District presented on Developing Function-Focused Case Conceptualizations and Interventions for School Refusal Behavior. Additionally, Geoff Millenson, School Psychologist, attended the three-day conference.

Climate

SCC Champions!: CONGRATULATIONS to the Amity Spartans Girls Volleyball and Girls Swimming and Diving teams, who both won their sports' Southern Connecticut Conference tournaments on October 30, 2024. Winning two SCC championships in one day is remarkable, and for the Swimming and Diving team, this was their second SCC tournament championship in a row!

Class of '74: Welcome back to the Amity alumni from the Class of '74 who held their reunion recently. As part of that reunion, we hosted a tour on November 8, 2024, for several members of the class. Thank you to all the students who gave up a Friday afternoon to serve as tour guides for our alumni!

ARHS Spirit Week: November 18-22, 2024 was Spirit Week at Amity Regional High School, and it has been great seeing the school spirit build throughout the week. The week will end with a pep rally on Friday afternoon, and our Homecoming Dance will take place on November 23, 2024. With more than 800 tickets sold, we are looking forward to a fun and crowded end to our Spirit Week.

Seussical the Musical: AMSB held its annual Fall Musical November 8-10, 2024 and it was amazing!! From the lights and set, to the costumes and performances, the students and staff really outdid themselves this year. Congratulations to all who were involved in this production and many thanks to the community for their support.

World Kindness Day: On November 13, 2024, AMSB celebrated World Kindness Day. As students arrived to school, they were greeted by over 700 notes of kindness that were placed on every student locker, in the bathrooms, and all around the halls. This act of kindness was the work of the amazing AMSB PTSO!!

ATA Unified Soccer: Thank you to our ATA staff for their support in hosting our annual Unified Sports soccer match. This event would not have been successful without the substantial support from our partners at Albertus Magnus College. By all accounts, our students and the students from the six neighboring school districts that attended created memories and experiences that they will remember forever. Nine total teams representing 6 school districts participated in the activities.

AMSB 7th Grade Trip: On November 7, 2024, the AMSB 7th grade class traveled to Adventure Park Field at the Discovery Museum. The trip exposed our students to a ropes course comprising over 190 treetop platforms connected by ladders, bridges and 38 ziplines. They had fun and new experiences at this aerial adventure park and were challenged to push themselves for that extra adrenaline rush! This perfect day out is ideal for everyone, highlights aspects of our POG (collaboration, communication, empathy, and problem solving), and is a guaranteed bonding experience, especially when helping each other through our high-rope courses.

Veterans Day at AMSO: AMSO students and staff welcomed local Veterans to school in recognition of Veteran's Day. The Veterans enjoyed a student-led ceremony to thank the Veterans for their service. Students also wrote letters to Veterans and raised over \$700 for Disabled Veterans of America.

Veterans Day Celebration: On November 11, 2024, AMSB students observed Veterans Day by hearing from Veterans in our community. Each year, several Veterans gather at AMSB and share their experiences with our 7th and 8th grade students, and each year we look forward to welcoming them back. This year we were happy to have over 7 volunteers including staff members ARHS teacher Thomas Norton and AMSB Security Guard Dr. James Scott.

Amity Advocates Visit AMSO: The Amity Advocates (ARHS student organization) visited AMSO earlier this month. The Advocates are working to pilot a mentorship program and build a stronger connection between the high school and 8th grade students as they prepare for the transition to high school.