

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

Bethany Orange Woodbridge
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Superintendent's Report – December 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

ARHS Alumni Panel: On the day before Thanksgiving break, ARHS hosted its annual Alumni Panel for our students in Grades 11 and 12. This annual event hosted by our Counseling Department allows students to hear directly from recent graduates about how they prepared for life after high school, how their time at Amity helped prepare them for it, and what they wish they had known while they were still in high school.

PLCs Begin Learning Walks: ARHS has begun the process of having all our faculty members participate in classroom walkthrough observations, with training sessions for Inter-PLC groups starting the first week of December and observations beginning the second week of December. Over the course of the next three months, all 120+ members of the faculty will have an opportunity to observe multiple classes and to participate in small-group discussions about what they learned from them following the observations.

ARHS Class Meetings: ARHS held class meetings on Wednesday, December 11, with the following grades:

- The Senior class met to discuss options for the spring UELP internship program and what students can be doing now to ensure a positive and successful internship experience in May.
- The Junior class met to get updates on the POG Portfolio development process and to learn more about the presentation day scheduled for next April.

AMSB Whole School Trip/POG Day: On December 19, 2024, AMSB will take a full-school field trip to see *Moana 2* at the Cinemark Theaters in North Haven. The trip will support our efforts with the Amity POG and, upon their return, the students will participate in some reflection and other fun activities that were created by our Student Government and will focus on the characteristics of the POG.

AMSO Meets Author Lissette Norman: AMSO 7th Grade students participated in an online discussion with author Lissette Norman. Ms. Norman is a poet and author of children's books *My Feet Are Laughing* and *Plátanos Go with Everything*. Students read these texts in Spanish in preparation for this online discussion. This was an authentic learning experience for students as they learned about the writing process and how an author's personal life and culture are reflected in their writing.

AMSO Receives Project Teach: The Milford Rape Crisis Center presented to each of the four academic teams. The seventh-grade presentation focuses on sexual harassment and knowing the different forms of

sexual harassment. The 8th Grade students focused on the concept of consent as it relates to sexually based offensives. School counselors followed up with students as needed following the presentations.

AMSB Winter Concert: On December 12, 2024, AMSB held the annual Winter Concert. The students all sounded great and have definitely been putting in the work! It was nice to see our AMSB families and friends share in the Holiday spirit. If you missed it, please consider coming out to our Spring Concert on May 1, 2025.

AMSO Winter Concert: AMSO had their Winter Concert on December 11, 2024. Over 200 students participated. The choir, orchestra and band students performed a repertoire that highlighted the skills and various genres of music they have been exploring all year.

CMEA Auditions: Over 19 AMSO students participated in the Connecticut Music Educators Association (CMEA) auditions on December 14, 2024. Students in the band and orchestra who are selected will have the opportunity to perform alongside other talented musicians from around the state.

Teacher Observations: Administration across all three district schools have conducted first rounds of teacher classroom observations using the new Amity Educator Evaluation model. We have enjoyed seeing the wonderful work that is going on in our classrooms and have had great conversations with our teachers about instructional practices.

Spartan Academy Supports Food Pantry: Students and staff in Spartan Academy donated food to the Human Services Department for the Town of Woodbridge. Additionally, they volunteered time in the pantry to support the mission of the pantry.

Curriculum Articulation Meetings: Teachers representing the subject areas of Social Studies, Math, and World Language met this month to discuss a curriculum revision process, making up cancelled December 5th Professional Learning, and planned February content-based professional learning. English will meet prior to the Winter Break.

Curriculum Writing: Curriculum writing professional learning for English and Social Studies occurred this month with support from ACES. The Board Curriculum Committee received a presentation on 5 curricula recently rewritten; approval from the Board of Education is scheduled for February 2025.

Professional Development and Evaluation (PDEC): A committee of district and building based teachers and administrators met this month to discuss the presentation on a new teacher evaluation management system. The committee planned for a virtual January conference with school districts in Connecticut currently using the Frontline system. The PDEC also reviewed expectations for the mid-year meetings required as part of the new teacher evaluation plan.

Elementary Vertical Articulation: During the last week of December, Amity will be hosting vertical articulation meetings for social studies and science with teachers from all three elementary school districts. The purpose of the meetings will be alignment of curriculum and content from grades 5-8.

Resources

Amity Supports Holiday Bear: Forty-six children from Shepherd Glen School and Helen Street School in Hamden were sponsored by Amity teams through the CEA/CEF Holiday Bear Project. Teams ranged from high school departments, the Amity Advocates class, middle school teams, support services, the Cafeteria, Central Office, Administrative Offices, and the AMSB PTSO (along with 4 individuals who sponsored children on their own with their personal families). Packages will be delivered December 11th and 12th by Sean Malloy, Marian Boyns, Wendy Carrafiello, Brian Serapiglia (AEA President) and Chris

Borelli (AEA Vice President). A huge shout of appreciation is given to current Amity Teacher of the Year Wendy Carrafiello for spearheading this charitable community project.

On-Site Acceptance Days: ARHS has continued to host On-Site Acceptance Days for several area colleges and universities, and in addition to the 19 acceptances mentioned in last month's update. Since then, Amity seniors have been offered immediate acceptance to:

- Quinnipiac University: 15
- Western Connecticut State University: 11
- University of New Haven: 6

Amity Podcast Appearance: Amity's Director of Counseling Services, Jill LaPlante, was recently interviewed on Dartmouth College's podcast, *Admission Beat with Lee Coffin: An Ivy Dean Demystifies the College Search*. You can find her episode, "Life is a Suburban Town," at this link: [Dartmouth Admissions Beat](#).

Amity Welcomes Guest Alumnus: Amity Class of 1968 graduate Steve Alpert spoke to students in the ARHS library on December 12, 2024. For fifteen years, beginning in 1996, he was a senior executive at Studio Ghibli, a Japanese animation studio based in Tokyo. He was previously an executive at The Walt Disney Company, and at Citibank before that. Steve speaks Japanese and Chinese fluently, having lived in Tokyo, Kyoto, and Taipei for a combined total of over thirty-five years. He graduated from Colgate University with a BA in Fine Arts, and he has an MBA from Columbia. Steve has published two books about his experiences in Japan: *Sharing a House with the Never-Ending Man* and *Kyoto Stories*. He now lives in Connecticut.

Amity Voice Addressing Swatting: Pupil Services Director Mr. Tom Brant is part of the Swatting-Call Taker working group being facilitated by the Connecticut School Safety and Crisis Preparedness Center. This group is working to design a universal documentation process of telephonic and social media driven threats to school districts.

Climate

Football Makes Playoffs: The Spartan football team played in its first postseason tournament game in more than 20 years on December 3, 2024. Although that game was the end of their season, this year has been a tremendous journey for a team that consistently exceeded expectations, changed perspectives on what Amity football is capable of, and made Friday nights exciting for the whole community. Well done, and congratulations to the team and coaching staff!

ACT "The Minutes": Amity Creative Theater's fall production of the Broadway comedy "The Minutes" by Tracy Letts took place December 12-14, 2024. This scathing new comedy about small-town politics and real-world power, from the author of *August: Osage County*, exposes the ugliness behind some of our most closely held American narratives while asking each of us what we would do to keep from becoming history's losers. Thank you to the Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation for your support of the production!

ATA Thanksgiving: Amity Transition Academy hosted their annual Thanksgiving gathering at the University of New Haven-Orange Campus. This annual gathering brings together staff and students from ATA and the University of New Haven. More than 50 attendees enjoyed a delightful spread of homemade Thanksgiving dishes and traditional family recipes lovingly prepared by students and their families.

AMSB Student of the Month: AMSB held the monthly Student of the Month breakfast this past November 30, 2024, and celebrated with close to 40 students. Teachers select one student a month to recognize their citizenship, behavior, or academic achievement, and the students are treated to breakfast in our cafeteria.

AMSO POG Recognition: Eight AMSO students received the POG Recognition of the Month for consistently demonstrating a high level of empathy both inside and outside of the classroom. These students serve as role models to their peers and help make AMSO a kinder place for all students.

District Middle School Spirit Day: On December 13, 2024, AMSB will again be supporting CT Children's Foundation with PJ Day for the Kids. Staff and students are encouraged to wear their most comfy PJs and consider making a donation to support the efforts of Team AMSB! AMSO is also participating in this day, and the team who raises the most money will win back the coveted Amity Spirit Shovel!!

December Recess: The December vacation starts early on December 20, 2024 with an AMSB School Spirit half day! Students are encouraged to wear their ugliest sweater and have a little pre-holiday fun.