

Amity Board of Education News – May 2024

By Paul Davis, Amity BOE Chair

Amity Staff and Students Return for the 2024-2025 School Year

The Amity Regional School District is prepared for and excited for the start of school. As we open this school year, our administrators, teachers, and staff are dedicated to meeting the Board of Education's mission "to enable every Amity student to become a lifelong learner and a literate, caring, creative, and effective world citizen."

To meet this mission, the Amity Regional School District will continue our advancement of the BOWA Portrait of the Graduate (POG). The five characteristics of Collaborator, Empathizer, Problem Solver, Planner, and Communicator – and their attributes – are embedded in our curriculum and instruction throughout the district and have been the roadmap for teachers and students over the past two years.

Teachers and staff returned on August 20, 2024 for three days of scheduled Professional Learning. Two of the major offerings for professional learning included workshops on the new Amity Educator Supervision and Evaluation Plan and the next steps for continued rollout of the BOWA Portrait of the Graduate. Students return to school on August 26th with scheduled early release on the first two days of school. August 28th is the first full day of school for students.

Convocation 2024

In addition to speeches from the Amity Teacher of the Year Wendy Carrafiello and Superintendent Jennifer Byars, Jonathan Costa delivered 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 examined how Artificial Intelligence can empower educators and transform learning for students.

Election Year Civics Lab

The Amity Regional School District is creating a 'Civics Laboratory' this election season as we hold our district-wide student presidential election with the backdrop of the U.S. Presidential election.

Amity has held a presidential election every four years (except for 2020) with the objective to teach students civic engagement and model respectful dialogue, promoting a well-informed student body prepared to participate in our democracy.

While heated dialogue may take place outside our school walls, we expect all members of the Amity community to adhere to the highest level of civility, led by our teachers. School should always be a safe space, and during our August and October professional development, our teachers will have the opportunity to focus on their role and how to ensure that they approach all instruction in a politically neutral fashion in adherence to Board of Education policy. We have a clear responsibility to uphold the First Amendment rights of students and staff while providing the best environment for teaching informed political discourse.

2024-2027 Strategic Action Steps

At the August Board of Education meeting, Superintendent Dr. Byars presented the three-year strategic actions steps to meet the Board's mission statement and the Board's goals to: 1) continuously improve instruction, cultivate creativity, and enhance student engagement and performance; 2) enhance the efficient and effective use of resources; and 3) foster a supportive climate for students and adults. Some of the strategic action steps that the district will undertake during the next school year include: a culminating POG Portfolio demonstration for our 11th grade students, implementation of a new Educator Evaluation and Support Plan for all certified staff, professional learning in Artificial Intelligence (AI), pilot school climate improvement plans, and increased support for multilanguage learners and families. The strategic action steps are reviewed annually by administrators and supported by data analysis from both the District and School Data Teams.