

Amity Board of Education News – September 2024

By Paul Davis, Amity BOE Chair

Amity Board of Education Begins Holding Two Meetings per Month

At the August 19th Board of Education Meeting, the Amity Board of Education voted to transition to two meetings per month. September 9th marked the beginning of this new format.

The first meeting of the month will generally be held on the 2nd Monday of the month. It will focus on District Operations – specifically facilities, technology, finance, special education, and policy. As a Regular Meeting of the Board, this meeting will also include Public Comment on items that appear on the agenda or fall under the jurisdiction of the Board.

The second meeting of the month will generally be held on the 4th Monday of the month. It will focus on Curriculum and Instruction – specifically special presentations related to Amity’s 3 A’s (Academics, Athletics, and the Arts), the Portrait of the Graduate, the Student Government Report, Superintendents Report, Curriculum and Textbook Adoption, and special presentations. As a Special Meeting of the Board, Public Comment will generally be limited to only those items on the agenda or may not be noticed at all. Additionally, as a Special Meeting of the Board, the agenda cannot be modified after posting. The Board intends that these meetings will be limited to about 2 hours.

The next Special Meeting of the Amity Board of Education will be September 30, 2024.

Amity Board of Education to focus on Cell Phone Use and Technology in October Community Forum

The Connecticut State Board of Education recently adopted new guidance for districts on student cell phone use in schools. The position statement from the State Board of Education can be found at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/board/position_statement_cell_phone_use.pdf

The Amity Board of Education will seek feedback from parents and students before making policy decisions on cell phones in our Amity schools.

The Amity Board of Education will host its October Community Forum on Monday, October 21, 2024 beginning at 6:30 p.m. The topic for our fall forum is “Technology in Schools.” We hope to address your questions about cell phones in schools, how artificial intelligence (AI) is changing teaching and learning, answer questions on PowerSchool and Schoology—digital platforms for educators and families to track students’ progress—to a technology classes available to students, and any other tech related concerns. Additional details will be sent to the Amity community in the upcoming weeks.

BOE Approves Unspent Funds from 2023-2024 to Support Renovations to Library Media Centers

The Amity Board of Education approved the transfer of \$1,091,054 of unspent 2023-2024 funds to the Educational Reserve Fund – designating the entire transfer for Library Media Center Renovation projects. This fund transfer will help to fully finance the renovation of the High School Library Media Center. Our District has also applied for the competitive state construction grant to offset some of the cost of the renovations. Should those funds be awarded, the District would be able to start renovations to the middle school Library Media Centers sooner than anticipated.

ARHS Increases Student Parking and Improves Parking Process

Amity Regional High School returned to the traditional practice of assigning student parking permits to specific Senior and Junior lot areas, but not assigning students to specific parking spots within those lots.

This decision was made after consultation with the Senior Class Officers last spring, with part of the purpose of the change to encourage on-time arrival to school while also eliminating the issue of students accidentally parking in other students' parking spots. To support this process, the District Facilities Department coordinated the move of all the storage containers out of the parking lot – opening an additional 15 spaces for students.

Sophia Messina, the senior student representative to the Board, reported that these changes have positively impacted student drivers. The line for parking is much shorter and students can park more quickly than last year. As hoped, school administrators have noticed a decrease in the number of students arriving late to school.

BOE Adopts Two New Policies

At their September 9th meeting, the Amity Board of Education adopted two new policies. The first addresses Public Act 23-204, which requires graduating students to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or to complete a waiver affirming that they understand the FAFSA. This will apply to the Class of 2027 and beyond. The second policy, a Bylaw of the Board, permanently established the Board's Communication Committee. The Bylaw on the Board's Agenda was also updated to reflect the required posting of meeting documents 24 hours prior to the Board meeting. This information may be found on the District Website in the Board of Education meeting packet.