

## **Amity Board of Education News – November 2024**

By Paul Davis, Amity BOE Chair

### **Amity Board of Education Special Meetings**

The Amity Board of Education has held two special meetings since the transition to two meetings per month.

In September, the Board recognized the National Merit Scholarship Commended Scholars and Semi-Finalists. The focus presentation came from the Visual and Performing Arts Department, led by Department Chair Jessica Zamachaj. She presented the dates of upcoming fall music concerts, theater performances, and art shows, followed by a performance of *Concerto for 2 Violins in D Minor*, performed by Benjamin Want and Victoria Pelton and conducted by Orchestra Teacher Lisa Serio. Assistant Superintendent Frank Purcaro presented the Connecticut State Assessment Data from 2023-2024, highlighting student performance in grades 7, 8, & 11 on the state assessments in mathematics, English, and science.

The October Special Meeting opened with a focus presentation on the district-wide student presidential election. Under the guidance of social studies teachers LeeAnn Browett and Christopher Borelli, seniors in Amity Critical Issues class prepared campaign ads and position speeches for all four candidates. These were shared with all students in grades 7-12 prior to the student election. Critical Issues students also ran the student election, functioning as the election officials. The board reviewed and approved the new Amity Educator Supervision and Evaluation Plan and received a presentation from Mr. Peter Downhour on the 2023-2024 School Climate Survey.

### **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 their efforts to increase the number and diversity of students taking AP courses and exams. Data about last spring's AP test-takers support how the school earned distinction:

- 398 students took 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, and last year the 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.

### **National Merit Scholars**

The Board of Education would like to congratulate Amity's National Merit Scholarship honorees. Scoring in the top 1% nationwide of all juniors taking the PSAT, Amity's Semi-Finalists are Avaith Nair, Ian Stoltenberg, and Benjamin Wang. Students who score in the top 3% nationally are identified as Commended Scholars. Amity recognizes the following Commended Scholars: Leonard Ablozhey, Ayan Chawak, Alexander Cuzio, Alexander Klee, Hallie Lai, Nathan Liu, Daniel Mathew, Sophia Messina, Matthew Park, Kirby Perler, Nikhil Petrov, Macie Salado, Louis Savarese, Massimo Sincavage, Jules Taverner, and Julie Zhang.

### **National Honor Society Induction**

This year's National Honor Society induction ceremony took place on September 12, 2024. The 33 new NHS members were selected due to their demonstrated achievement in all four of the NHS pillars of Service, Character, Leadership, and Academics.

### **Hall of Honor & Hall of Fame**

On October 17, 2024, Amity recognized several distinguished alumni at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Athletic Hall of Fame and 15<sup>th</sup> 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 Coppolla 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.

**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. The presentation can be seen on the College & Career Center website.

### **BOE Adopts Two New Policies**

At the October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Amity Board of Education adopted two new policies. The first was an update to the District's Title IX policy – aligning it to the 2024 federal regulations. The policy prohibits sex discrimination in all educational programs, activities, and employment, in accordance with Title IX, including protection against sex stereotypes, gender identity discrimination, and sex-based harassment. Reports or complaints can be directed to the District's Title IX Coordinator or the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. The second policy established a "reserve fund for educational expenditures," funded by up to 2% of the annual budget and any year-end surpluses, to support capital projects and equipment purchases. The Board can reallocate funds for other educational purposes with a two-thirds majority vote and will provide annual fund reports to member towns.

### **2025-2025 Budget Process Begins**

The Amity Board of Education will hold the first of many meetings to discuss and prepare the 2025-2026 Region 5 Budget. The first meeting will be held on November 25, 2024, beginning at 6:30 pm in the Lecture Hall at Amity Regional High School. This meeting will be an overview of the departmental requests presented by School Principals and Department Directors.