

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

*Bethany Orange Woodbridge
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525*

*Dr. Jennifer P. Byars
Superintendent of Schools*

AMITY REGIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

**Monday, January 27 2025, 6:30 pm
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, CT
Lecture Hall**

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. Board of Education Regular Meeting – January 13, 2025 [page 3](#)
4. **STUDENT REPORT**
 - a. Monthly Report
5. **UPDATE ON THE SUPERINTENDENT’S PROPOSED 2025-2026 BUDGET [page 7](#)**
6. **DISCUSSION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT’S PROPOSED 2025-2026 BUDGET**
7. **RECESS**
8. **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**
 - a. Superintendent Report [page 9](#)
 - b. Questions on English, Social Studies, or World Language Curriculum Revisions
9. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – Public Comment will be limited to those items noticed in this agenda
10. **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING AGENDA – Due to Chairperson by January 31, 2025**
11. **ADJOURNMENT**



Jennifer P. Byars, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

pc: Town Clerks Bethany, Orange, Woodbridge

***Working to "enable every Amity student to become a lifelong learner
and a literate, caring, creative and effective world citizen."***
District Mission Statement

If you require accommodations to participate because of a disability,
please contact the office of the Superintendent of Schools in advance at 203-397-4811.

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Bethany Orange Woodbridge



NORMS

BE RESPECTFUL

- Model civil discourse and discussion, respecting all viewpoints, welcoming ideas, and disagreeing with courtesy.
- Collaborate as a team.
- Listen actively and refrain from interruptions or side conversations.
- Respect each others' time by brevity of comment.
- Be fully present and mindful of the distractions caused by electronic devices.
- Grow and learn from each other.

HONOR THE POSITION

- Work within the Board's statutory and policy duties.
- Prepare for Board & Committee meetings by reading the packet prior to the meeting.
- Treat each student, parent, and stakeholder respectfully and assist them in following the designated chain of command.
- Be reflective, including conducting an annual Board self-evaluation.

REPRESENT THE BOARD WITH UNITY AND PRIDE

- Make decisions based on what is best for the collective student body of Amity Regional School District No. 5.
- Respect the professional expertise of the staff.
- Be flexible in response to challenges.
- Collaboratively engage in discussions and actions and once voted on, provide undivided support of Board decisions in both public and private.

AMITY REGIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Monday, January 13, 2025 6:30 pm
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, CT
Lecture Hall

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Cathy Bradley, Paul Davis, Carla Eichler, Sean Hartshorn, Andrea Hubbard, Dr. Karunakaran, Christina Levere-D'Addio, Dana Lombardi, Michael McDonough* (leaves at 7:16), Dr. Carol Oladele, Patrick Reed, Donna Schlank and Donna Schuster

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Janet Fan

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Jennifer Byars, Theresa Lumas, Thomas Brant

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Davis called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Amity Board of Education Chair Paul Davis

3. RECOGNITION OF AMITY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL 2024 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Presented by Amity Region 5 Athletic Director Ernest Goodwin and Amity Region 5 Head Varsity Coach Sal Coppola

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Board of Education Special Meeting – December 16, 2024

MOTION by Michael McDonough, SECOND by Dr. Karunakaran to approve December 16, 2024 minutes as submitted.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 10 (Davis, Eichler, Hartshorn, Hubbard, Levere-D'Addio, Lombardi, McDonough, Dr. Oladele, Reed, Schlank)

ABSTAIN, 3 (Bradley, Dr. Karunakaran, Schuster)

MOTION CARRIES

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON SETTING 2025-2026 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Dr. Oladele and Carla Eichler withdraw their motion, from 120924 BOE meeting, to amend the 2025-2026 Amity Region 5 School Calendar to add Diwali

Patrick Reed and Dr. Karunakaran withdraw their motion, from 120924 BOE meeting, to approve the 2025-2026 Amity Region 5 School Calendar recommended by Amity Region 5 Superintendent Dr. Byars.

MOTION by Patrick Reed, SECOND by Dr. Karunakaran to approve the 2025-2026 Amity Region 5 School Calendar recommended by Amity Region 5 Superintendent Dr. Byars.

Mr. Davis requests the Policy Committee to review and potentially revise Board Policy 6111 and to send to the Board for review no later than August 2025 with second read by September 2025.

Donna Schuster makes a motion to add Lunar New Year. Chair Davis ruled the amendment out of order. Donna Schuster withdraws her motion to add Lunar New Year to the calendar.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 8 (Davis, Eichler, Hubbard, Dr. Karunakaran, Dr. Oladele, Reed, Schlank, Schuster)

VOTES AGAINST 5, (Bradley, Hartshorn, Levere-D’Addio, Lombardi, McDonough)

MOTION CARRIES

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Woodbridge Parent:

Speaker expressed thanks and gratitude for the Amity District in recognizing the religious holiday of Diwali on the school calendar allowing students the opportunity to celebrate on the day of the holiday and not the weekend after.

Bethany Parent

Speaker expressed thanks and gratitude for the Amity District in recognizing the religious holiday of Diwali on the school calendar allowing students the opportunity to celebrate with friends and family on the day of the holiday.

Woodbridge Parent

Speaker expressed thanks and gratitude for the Amity District in recognizing the religious holiday of Diwali on the school calendar allowing students the opportunity to celebrate on the day of the holiday and not the weekend after.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

Presented by Amity Board of Education Secretary Mrs. Cathy Bradley

8. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

a. Committee Reports

- 1. ACES**
- 2. CAFE**
- 3. Communications**
- 4. Curriculum**
 - a. Questions about proposed revisions to English, AP US History, and Mandarin Curriculum
- 5. District Health and Safety**
- 6. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Executive Committee**
- 7. District Technology**
 - a. Monthly Report
- 8. Facilities**
 - a. Monthly Report
- 9. Finance**

a. **Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements**

i. **Special Education Update**

Presented by Amity Region 5 Director of Finance Theresa Lumas and Amity Region 5 Director of Pupil Services Thomas Brant.

b. **Director of Finance and Administration Approved Transfers Under \$3,000**

Presented by Amity Region 5 Director of Finance Theresa Lumas

c. **Discussion and Possible Action on Budget Transfers over \$3,000**

MOTION by Andrea Hubbard, SECOND by Sean Hartshorn to approve the following budget transfers:

For storage for apiary supplies:

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT NAME	FROM	TO
04-12-2151-5330	Professional Technical-Hearing	\$4,500	
04-12-1201-5690	Other Supplies		\$4,500

For transportation services:

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT NAME	FROM	TO
04-12-6111-5560	Tuition – Vo-Tech	\$20,000	
04-12-6130-5510	Transportation-Private-Out		\$20,000

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

d. **Other**

- i. **CNR Report**
- ii. **Educational Expenditure Report**
- iii. **Grant Report**

Presented by Amity Region 5 Director of Finance Theresa Lumas

10. **Policy**

a. **First Reads**

- i. Policy 5141.231 - Psychotropic Drugs
- ii. Policy 5142.4 - School Resource Officer

b. **Second Reads**

- i. Policy 4118.11 - Nondiscrimination/Equal Employment Opportunity
- ii. Policy 5145.53 - Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth
- iii. Recommendation to rescind Policies 2111 (Equal Employment Opportunity), 4111.1 (Equal Employment Opportunity) and 5145.4 (Nondiscrimination-Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students)

MOTION by Sean Hartshorn, SECOND by Dr. Oladele to approve Policy 4118.11 Nondiscrimination/ Equal Employment Opportunity, Policy 5145.53 Transgender and Gender Non- Conforming Youth.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

MOTION by Christina Levere-D’Addio, *SECOND* by Dr. Oladele *and to Rescind Policies 2111* (Equal Employment Opportunity), 4111.1 (Equal Employment Opportunity) and 5145.4 (Nondiscrimination-Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students).

VOTES IN FAVOR, 12 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

11. **Personnel**

a. Personnel Report

Presented by Amity Region 5 Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jennifer Byars

9. **NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a. Special Joint AFC and Amity BOE Meeting January 27, 2025

10. **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING AGENDA – Due to Chairperson by January 31, 2025**

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Dr. Karunakaran, *SECOND* by Donna Schuster *to adjourn meeting at 7:45 p.m.*

Meeting adjourned, without objection, at 7:45 p.m. by Chairperson Davis.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Zaleski

Lisa Zaleski

BOE Recording Secretary

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

Bethany Orange Woodbridge
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge Connecticut 06525



TO: Dr. Jennifer Byars, Superintendent of Schools
FROM: Theresa Lumas, Director of Finance & Administration
DATE: January 22, 2025
RE: 2025-2026 Budget Update

The proposed budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year represents a 3.66% increase compared to the current budget. The Administration has made efforts to reduce the initial budget requests by \$360,851.

Changes in revenue reflect higher excess cost reimbursements (generated from higher special education costs) and the Open Choice grant inclusion in the operating budget. The member towns will be credited the unspent funds from the prior year in March 2025. These funds can be applied toward next year's allocation.

There is a current net increase in Average Daily Membership (ADM) of 37 students. Total enrollment increased by 35 students compared to 27 anticipated. This ADM is used to determine the member town allocations for the 2025-2026 budget. If there were no changes in the budget, the Towns of Orange and Bethany would have decreases in their share of the budget, while the Town of Woodbridge will have an increase in their allocation. Woodbridge's rising enrollment and the 3.66% budget increase, the town's allocation will rise by 7.85%. On January 21st, the Woodbridge Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance expressed concerns about the proposed increase following your budget presentation.

The main factors driving the initial budget requests include salaries, technology, staffing needs, benefits, and inflation-related increases for standard purchases. Contractual salary increases are projected to be an average of 3.86%. The District is in the second year of the teacher contract, and since teachers represent the largest staff group, their 4.5% contractual increase is the primary driver of the salary increase. Staffing requests are focused on supporting students in math at the alternative school, English language learners, additional work hours for special education coordinators, and district-wide clerical support. Additionally, 1.6 FTE funded through the Open Choice grant are now included in the operating budget, with corresponding Open Choice grant revenue, as required by State legislation. Technology-related requests include a new lab for tech education, replacing 245 teacher devices, and setting aside \$100,000 for potential infrastructure issues. Benefit costs are expected to increase by 3.84%. Debt service has decreased by \$1,305,915, due to the ongoing reduction of existing debt and the use of the educational expenditure fund for large projects.

The following are proposed cuts that will reduce the requested increase to 3.16%:

Teacher laptops	\$ 144,675	Equipment-Tech- Replacement	Change purchase \$199,675 to 4 yr lease FMV buyout option, price estimate \$55,000
Vo-Tech bus	\$ 52,530	Transportation	Vo-Tech bus reimbursed by State

Tuition	\$ 63,750	Tuition	Student exiting
Room 27 Remodel AMSB	\$ (8,000)	Improvement to Bldgs	Actual cost update
Defined Contribution	\$ 25,000	Benefits	Reduction by using Forfeiture account
AHS Athletic Rentals	\$ 2,500	Rentals	AHS Athletic Rentals per AD
Printer	\$ 700	Equipment	Current replacement device is sufficient
	\$ 281,155	\$ 58,241,699	3.16%

Below is the impact of all changes including the reductions listed above.

MEMBER TOWN ALLOCATIONS
With a 3.16 Percent Budget Increase, Enrollment Shift, and Revenue Changes

Member Town	Enrollment Shift	Higher Revenues	Prior Years Credit	Higher Operating Expenditures	Variance Dollar To Budget	Variance Percent To Budget
Bethany	(\$103,912)	(\$29,657)	(\$ 183,117)	\$287,696	(\$ 28,990)	(0.32)%
Orange	(\$703,060)	(\$89,141)	(\$ 514,596)	\$864,749	(\$ 442,048)	(1.61)%
Woodbridge	\$806,972	(\$65,211)	(\$ 352,967)	\$632,603	\$1,021,397	5.44%
Totals	\$0	(\$184,008)	(\$1,050,680)	\$1,785,048	\$ 550,359	3.51%

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

Bethany Orange Woodbridge
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525



Dr. Jennifer P. Byars
Superintendent of Schools

jennifer.byars@amityregion5.org
203.392.2106

Superintendent's Report – January 2025

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 Midterm Exams: Midterm exams at ARHS took place from January 14-17, 2025 and the second semester began on January 21, 2025. To help ensure that all students had plenty of opportunities to prepare well for their exams, ARHS held the following annual student-led exam prep events:

- Link Crew's Cocoa and Cram event for 9th grade students took place on Jan. 7, 2025.
- National Honor Society hosted a Snack & Study afternoon for students in all grades on Jan. 8, 2025.

Course Selection for 2025-2026 Begins: The course selection process for next year has begun for students in grades 9-11, with teachers talking with students now about their course recommendations and the elective course offerings available to students in each subject area. Students will be meeting with school counselors to begin the process of requesting courses for next year in the next few weeks.

Winter Concerts at ARHS: The ARHS Orchestra program hosted *A Very Merry Winter Concert* on December 17, 2024, featuring students from all our strings performing groups. *The Three-Minute Nutcracker* performance was a real crowd-pleaser! On December 19, 2024, the ARHS Band and Chorus programs hosted their *Winter Concert* featuring seasonal pieces reflecting the diversity of the season and our student population. It was a great way to end a week of arts spotlights.

Amity's Disney Dreamer: Congratulations to Amity senior Zhiyan Jessie Zhang, who has been selected as one of only 100 students nationwide to participate in the Disney Dreamers Academy at Disney World this spring. This prestigious program recognizes students with exceptional intellectual curiosity, compassion, courage, optimism, and a positive outlook. We are proud of Jessie for being selected to such a prestigious program!

Scholastic Arts Competition: Congratulations to the seven Amity Regional High School students who recently won awards in the 2025 Scholastic Arts Awards Competition. Our award winners are Riley Cohutt, Augustus Khan (2 awards), Emily Sun, Carina Chock, Molly Emmens, Lucy Jiang, and Natalia Pepe (2 awards). Congratulations to all of them!

Blues and Beyond: On January 24, 2025, AMSB 7th grade students were treated to a presentation called Blues and Beyond. This presentation exposes students to musical genres from across Africa and the Caribbean, and is a lesson in history, culture, and music. Students were able to listen to the performance, participate in the performance, and ask questions of the presenter. There were tons of smiles, some

magical musical collaborations, and all were able to gain a better understanding of the many influences on the music we all love!

Special Education Middle School Transition Planning: Members of the high school and middle school Pupil Services Department met during the month of December to begin preparing for the transition to high school for our middle school students. These meetings between service providers are an essential step in the process to ensure a smooth transition to high school.

Local CSDE Approved Transition Programs: Jennifer Berkowitz, ARHS Transition Specialist, has been touring local CSDE approved transition programs. Throughout these tours, Mrs. Berkowitz has been learning about these individualized programs and how they support students with disabilities in acquiring transition-based skills. Ms. Berkowitz is developing pathways to expose our students to these experiences.

CT TEAM: All new Amity teachers in the district's Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program successfully completed their first modules. A total of five modules are required to be completed in order for teachers to maintain and advance their certification. All new staff are on track to finish three modules within the required timeframe.

Committee Meetings: A meeting of the Wellness, Health, and Safety Committee met this month. District-wide updates were provided by school nurses, security personnel, facilities, finance, and food services. Curriculum Council met to review curriculum under current revision, approve high school class name changes, and approve new course recommendations. The Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) met to continue review of a potential new platform for housing the CSDE approved teacher evaluation plan and process.

Curriculum Articulation: Curriculum articulation meetings were held in the content areas of Science and English Language Arts. Additionally, Amity started hosting learning walks with administrators from our elementary school districts. These collaborative walks guide elementary administrators through the learning walk process and manner in which students have an opportunity to learn or demonstrate characteristics of the POG. Our first walk was completed with Woodbridge; learning walks are scheduled in the upcoming weeks with Orange and Bethany administrators.

Resources

Elected Officials Day: AMSB and ARHS hosted the first of two elected officials day on January 24, 2025. At AMSB, our guests were able to see our students during an Amity Portrait of the Graduate Day. The AMSB tour guided our visitors through the many student-created activities, lead them through the various programs and spaces in the school, and allowed our guests to interact with students. Thank you to the amazing AMSB PTSO for providing snacks and a small gift for our guests! At ARHS, representatives from the Student Government highlighted their learning opportunities – both curricular and extracurricular – and led a tour of science, CTE, and math classrooms, as well as a visit to the Library Media Center. Many thanks to Chefs Hans and Linkstrom for an amazing Culinary Class lunch.

VPA Website Relaunches: As part of our continued website redesign, the new and improved Visual and Performing Arts department pages were activated in December. All the performing and studio arts information you need is there, all optimized for mobile devices. Video of both of our winter concerts is posted here so community members can enjoy those shows even if they were not able to see them live.

CSDE Rigorous Coursework: Parents of 9th and 10th grade students who met the state goal on their 8th grade SBAC or NGSS state assessments recently received a “rigorous coursework” letter from the State Department of Education. 500 of our students met this goal and received letters which encourages parents

to reach out to their child's counselors to ensure that their course selections for next year will place them in challenging classes.

Amity Representation on ConnCase: Mr. Brant, Pupil Services Director, serves on the Connecticut Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board. Included in these responsibilities is participating on the legislative subcommittee on ConnCase. ConnCase works closely with their lobbying firm to monitor and testify regarding legislation at the local level that impacts special education. Currently, four weeks into this legislative session, ConnCase is monitoring over 125 bills.

FERPA Deep Dive: Staff from the Pupil Services Department recently participated in the CSDE webinar entitled "FERPA Deep Dive." The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of students' education records. It applies to all public and private schools, as well as state and local education agencies that receive federal funds. This webinar clarified the expectations and responsibilities of school districts in addition to other technical advice.

UNH Speech & Language Amity Partnership: The University of New Haven's Speech and Language Pathology graduate program is excited to announce its third annual communication collaboration with the Amity Transition Academy! This collaboration provides speech and language pathology graduate students the opportunity to work closely with ATA students and teachers to hone clinical skills while also enriching the social communication skills of ATA students. The SLP graduate students will engage ATA students in a variety of communication activities including 1:1 enrichment, group work, and supporting vocational communication skills under the supervision of a certified SLP faculty member. This collaboration would not be possible without the outstanding collective efforts of Ms. Allison Morrill, Special Education Teacher, and Taylor Affinito, Amity Public Schools SLP.

Climate

Spartans in the News: The January 12 episode of *This Week in CT with Dennis House* program on WTNH featured an interview with Amity seniors Dan Mowerman and Mike Audie. Dan and Mike have been working with state representative Kathy Kennedy to develop a bill on safer social media use for minors, and it was recently introduced in the Connecticut General Assembly. It was great to see two of our own students using their talents to impact public well-being statewide! You can see the video here: [Amity High School students want lawmakers to protect teens from social media.](#)

Red Cross Responds to AMSO Students: In November 2024, 8th grade students focused on expressing gratitude to various organizations in recognition of their service and support of our community. Students researched non-profits and community-based organizations and wrote letters to over 30 different organizations to thank them for their commitment to serving others. The students' letters were very well received and volunteers from the American Red Cross responded back -

"Today was an extra special day for me as I had the privilege of reading several letters from members of your school that truly touched my heart. It takes special people, with special gifts, to know how important it is to make others feel valued and please know that you did just that!"

To all members of the Amity Middle School community including the students, teachers, Administrators, parents and all those who make your community capable of doing something like this, please know that my Red Cross family members and I will be forever appreciative of this kind gesture and will be more motivated than ever to serve because of it."

ARHS PTSO: District Webmaster Liz Martland joined the ARHS PTSO for the January meeting to give the members a presentation on the changes to the school website this year and to solicit their feedback on the changes and suggestions for how to make it even more user-friendly for users.

AMSO Drama Club to Present Shrek Jr.: Over 45 students are taking part in the AMSO production of Shrek Jr. Students will be involved in every aspect of play production including acting, set construction, sound and make-up. Our thanks to the Jamie Hulley Foundation for their continued support of the drama club.

AMSO Student Council Attends CIAC Leadership Conference: Fifteen AMSO Student Council members, along with their teacher leader Media Specialist Kristin Yeakel, attended the Connecticut Association of School's Student Leadership Conference at Southern Connecticut State University last week. At the conference, students attended a variety of workshops focusing on leadership, service, character, and scholarship. In addition, Mrs. Yeakel attended an Advisor's Only Session, which involved a collaborative and engaging discussion related to leading and supporting our student leaders. The students enjoyed the day and learned several new things they can now apply in school as well as in their roles as Student Council members.

2025 AMSB Yearbooks: The time has come to order the 2025 AMSB yearbook. This year Josten's has given us the option to add parent adds/shout outs to the yearbook! Check the AMSB newsletter for more information and links.