

PLEASE POST

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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, February 24 2025, 6:30 pm
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, CT**

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. Board of Education Regular Meeting – February 10, 2025
4. **STUDENT REPORT**
 - a. Monthly Report
5. **3 A's (Academics, Arts, Athletics) AND POG (Portrait of the Graduate) FOCUS PRESENTATION**
 - a. Class Act Council – Eric Rothbart
6. **UPDATE ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S PROPOSED 2025-2026 BUDGET**
7. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S PROPOSED 2025-2026 BUDGET**
8. **RECESS**
9. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**
 - a. Superintendent Report
10. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – Public Comment will be limited to those items noticed in this agenda
11. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S MID-YEAR EVALUATION (Anticipated Executive Session)**
12. **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING AGENDA – Due to Chairperson by February 28, 2025**
13. **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 MINUTES

Monday, February 10, 2025 6:30 pm
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, CT
Lecture Hall

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Cathy Bradley, Paul Davis, Carla Eichler, Sean Hartshorn, Andrea Hubbard, Dana Lombardi, Michael McDonough* left at 7:18, Dr. Carol Oladele, Patrick Reed, Donna Schlank and Donna Schuster

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Dr. Karunakaran, Christina Levere-D’Addio

STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Janet Fan and Sophia Messina

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Jennifer Byars, Dr. Shannon Carlson, Theresa Lumas, Thomas Brant

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Davis called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Amity Board of Education Chair Paul Davis

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Board of Education Special Meeting – January 27, 2025

MOTION by Cathy Bradley, SECOND by Sean Hartshorn to approve January 27, 2025 minutes as submitted.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 6 (Bradley, Davis, Eichler, Hartshorn, Reed, Schlank)

ABSTAIN, 5 (Hubbard, Lombardi, McDonough, Dr. Oladele, Schuster)

MOTION CARRIES

4. PRESENTATION ON SOLAR CANOPY OPTION FOR AMITY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL – TITAN ENERGY

- a. Discussion and Possible Action on Approval authorizing the Superintendent to enter into a solar power purchase agreement and the installation of a solar canopy at Amity Regional High School.

MOTION by Carla Eichler SECOND by Sean Hartshorn to authorize the Superintendent to enter into a solar power purchase agreement and the installation of a solar canopy with Titan Energy/Green Skies at Amity Regional High School.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 9 (Bradley, Davis, Eichler, Hartshorn, Hubbard, McDonough, Dr. Oladele, Reed, Schlank)

VOTES OPPOSED, 2 (Lombardi, Schuster)

MOTION CARRIES

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Woodbridge Resident

Speaker thanked the Board and the District for their decision to support solar power and voiced that it's a great example to show students that that we care about climate change and that there is much we can do to counter the effects.

ARHS Student

A student read a statement from a peer. Speaker raised concerns over fears about the possibility of ICE agents entering ARHS, legislation or mandates that would limit student use of preferred pronouns and bathroom access. Speaker asked the administration to make an official statement making their stance on these important issues clear.

Bethany Resident

Speaker presented credentials and addressed challenges faced by the gender diverse community. Speaker applauded what he believed was an admirable and quite effective job of establishing an environment of “No Place for Hate” in the Amity district. Speaker urged the Board and District to stay the course and continue the work of supporting the social and emotional well-being of all students.

Bethany Resident

Speaker voiced his appreciation for the work the Board does and thanked the Board members. Speaker applauded the work Amity has done in the areas of anti- bullying and DEI. The speaker addressed the issue of defunding the Department of Education and his concerns over the potential privatization of education in Connecticut.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

Presented by Amity Board of Education Secretary Mrs. Cathy Bradley

7. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT’S PROPOSED 2025-2026 BUDGET

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

8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON CHANGES TO THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL CALENDAR

MOTION by Patrick Reed SECOND by Carla Eichler to approve changes to the 2024-2025 School Calendar to include a Professional Development Day (minimum day for students) on April 03, 2025.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 10 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

9. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

a. Committee Reports

1. **ACES**
2. **CABE**
3. **Communications**
4. **Curriculum**






a. **Discussion and Possible Action on New High School Course Additions**

MOTION by Andrea Hubbard, SECOND by Donna Schlank to approve New High School Course Additions.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 10 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

b. **Discussion and Possible Action on Adoption of Revised Curricula**

- i. **English Grade 9**  [English Grade 9.pdf](#)
- ii. **English Grade 10**  [English Grade 10.pdf](#)
- iii. **English Grade 11**  [English Grade 11.pdf](#)
- iv. **AP US History**  [AP US History Curriculum.pdf](#)
- v. **ECE Chinese**  [ECE Chinese.pdf](#)

MOTION by Andrea Hubbard, SECOND by Patrick Reed to adopt English Grade 9, English Grade 10, English Grade 11, AP US History and ECE Chinese Revised Curricula.

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

ABSTAIN, 2 (Bradley, Lombardi)

MOTION CARRIES

2. **District Health and Safety**

3. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Executive Committee**

4. **District Technology**

a. Monthly Report

5. **Facilities**

a. Monthly Report

6. **Finance**

a. Presentation and Discussion of Fourth Quarter 2024 Executive Summary
Review of Amity Pension Fund, Sick and Severance Account, and OPEB Trust

Presented by Amity Region 5 Director of Finance Theresa Lumas

b. Discussion and Possible Action on Designating Final Reimbursement for HVAC
Grant

MOTION by Sean Hartshorn, SECOND by Dr. Carol Oladele to approve the budget transfer for the designation of \$40,355 of HVAC grant funds for renovations to the library media centers at all three schools with the high school project slated first.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 10 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

c. Discussion of Monthly Financial Statements

Presented by Amity Region 5 Director of Finance Theresa Lumas

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

Presented by Amity Region 5 Director of Finance Theresa Lumas

e. Discussion and Possible Action on Accepting a Gift

MOTION by Donna Schlank, SECOND by Sean Hartshorn to accept the cash donations from parents of Amity Creative Theatre in the amount of \$28,750 for the Amity Drama Club.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 10 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

7. Policy

a. First Reads

- i. Policy 5144.4 - Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students
- ii. Policy 5145.111 - Students/Probation/Police/Courts

b. Second Reads

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

MOTION by Patrick Reed, SECOND by Cathy Bradley to approve Policy 5141.231 - Psychotropic Drugs and Policy 5142.4 - School Resource Officer.

VOTES IN FAVOR, 10 (UNANIMOUS)

MOTION CARRIES

8. Personnel

a. Personnel Report

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

10. NEW BUSINESS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Special Joint AFC and Amity BOE Meeting February 24, 2025
- b. Executive Session February 24, 2025 – Superintendent’s Mid-Year Review

11. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING AGENDA – Due to Chairperson by February 28, 2025

12. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned, without objection, at 8:39 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



Dr. Jennifer P. Byars
Superintendent of Schools

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203.392.2106

Superintendent's Report – February 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 Welcomes Class of 2029: ARHS hosted an information night for more than 500 eighth-grade students and parents on January 30, 2025. The evening started with a performance by Amity's honors choir and information from Principal Andre Hauser and Counseling Director Jill LaPlante in the auditorium. After that, 8th graders and their parents took guided or self-directed tours of the school, met with the department chairs for information about their programs, learned about sports and extra-curricular opportunities from team representatives and club members, visited with visual and performing arts students at work in their studio and rehearsal spaces, and watched the girls' basketball game that was taking place that night.

The course registration process for 9th grade has now officially started. School counselors have visited 8th graders during their classes to review the high school letter day schedule, course recommendations, elective options and reviewed how to enter course requests into PowerSchool. Students received an Amity district email with all directions on this process as well. All course requests must be submitted by students by February 26, 2025.

Course Selection 2025-2026: Course selection for the 2025-2026 school year is well underway, with the following steps occurring over the last month

- The 2025-2026 Program of Studies has been fully updated and added to the school website. This document is full of helpful information on the courses we offer, graduation requirements, how to plan out a schedule for next year, and other helpful pointers for success in high school. You can access the Program at this link: [ARHS 2025-2026 Program of Studies](#)
- Throughout January and early February, classroom teachers have been talking with students about course recommendations and options for elective courses in their departments that students may wish to take next year.
- The Spartan Seminar activity for February 12, 2025, for grades 9-11, focused on having students complete the course request process for next year. Following that session parents/guardians received an email from the school with instructions for how to check and approve their children's course requests in PowerSchool. Parents will have until February 26, 2025, to complete this approval process.

2024 Congressional App Challenge Winner: Congratulations to Junior Sage Wong, who won the 2024 Congressional App Challenge for Connecticut's Third Congressional District. His app *Factualize AI* is an automated fact-checker that uses AI technology to evaluate the credibility of website content. Sage's app

will be featured at the US Capitol and on the House of Representative website, and he will be participating in a conference to celebrate App Challenge winners from around the country this April.

Junior POG Portfolio Practice: On February 11, 2025, we had 14 courageous Juniors give their Portrait of the Graduate Portfolio presentations to a panel of teachers and administrators from all three schools – two months early to help us better understand how to support their classmates as they finish up their portfolios. All of the faculty members who had the opportunity to observe all these presentations were impressed by how much thought and effort the students put into their work. Thanks to all of them, we will be sharing their pointers with the rest of the class after February break regarding how to make their portfolio presentations manageable and meaningful.

SRP Has Big Month: February has been a big month for the students in our Science Research Program, with several of them receiving recognition at the awards ceremony for the annual CT-STEM Science Fair. Congratulations to the following award winners:

- Elena Huber: 1st in Environmental Sciences
- Aryan Shrivastav: tied for 1st in Health and Medical Sciences
- Nicholas Lu: 2nd in Physical Sciences
- Janet Fan: tied for 2nd in Behavioral Sciences
- Soumya Wijesekera: tied for 3rd in Health and Medical Research Proposals
- Shreya Viswanathan: 4th in Health and Medical Sciences
- Chloe Chang: 4th in Environmental Sciences

AMSO Students Create New Mural: Over 85 AMSO seventh grade students took part in the creation of a mural with artist Miguel Estrada. The mural center includes the words empathy, kindness, friendship, respect, love, and peace written in various languages to reflect the cultures of students within our school community. It highlights the characteristics in our Portrait of a Graduate, as well as the values of our school club No Place for Hate. This program is made possible by a grant Spanish teacher Elaine Hashemian received from the Jamie Hulley Arts Foundation.

AMSO Students Drumming Workshop: AMSO seventh grade Social Studies students participated in a workshop on West African drumming and *Jeli, or griot*, culture. Jocelyn Pleasant from *The Blues and Beyond* presented and performed during this interactive workshop. Students experienced a variety of instruments including the Balafon and Djembe, Kenkeni, and Dundun drums. Additionally, students were introduced to the Mande people of Mali and Guinea.

AMSB Local Art Field Trip: On February 4, 2025, a group of young artists took a trip to a local Art Museum in Bethany. The group, guided by Bethany art teacher Mrs. Smolinski, explored and learned about this treasure in our own backyard. The students were all provided a copy of the artist's book and read it as a group prior to the visit. Students who participated in the field trip brought back the skills and techniques to teach to their classmates.

AMSB Solo/Ensemble Concert: AMSB will hold its Solo Ensemble concert on February 27, 2025 at 6:30 in the AMSB Gymnasium. Our talented students will perform music from across genres and generations and to show off their musical skills!

Winter Parent/Teacher Conferences: Parent/teacher conferences were held across all three district schools on February 5, 12, & 13, 2025.

Professional Learning Early Release Day Rescheduled: Our February 6th district-wide early release professional learning day was rescheduled due to a snow day. The new date is April 3, 2025.

Vertical Science Articulation Meeting: A team of science teachers from the BOWA area came together to better understand the bridge between 6th grade to 7th grade science. The purpose of this meeting was to

build greater coherence from our BOWA feeder schools to AMSO and AMSB, in addition to greater alignment to the Portrait of the Graduate. The discussion was rich and productive, staff left eager to come together again in April.

Curriculum Articulation Meetings: A variety of curriculum articulation meetings occurred over the past two weeks and more to come this week. These include reading, world language, and social studies. A range of topics were covered, such as the integration of the Portrait of the Graduate into classroom lessons, identifying opportunities for targeted professional learning, as well as discussions pertaining to curriculum alignment and pacing.

Curriculum Writing Support: Ms. Dina Secchiaroli from ACES has been working with the district for the past three school years. Ms. Secchiaroli has assisted in creating a system for curriculum writing and curriculum feedback. Dina trained the Curriculum Council Committee on curriculum writing and on how to provide feedback during the curriculum writing process. Ms. Secchiaroli was also key to creating the district Curriculum training presentation and protocol. The presentation and protocol developed has now been transferred to in-house staff providing presentations. She also works at the teacher level providing support during curriculum writing days and provides feedback to teachers writing curriculum both in person and through shared curriculum documents. Dina has also worked with various departments to provide instructional strategies workshops to teachers writing curriculum.

Special education teachers Sandy Zuvanich, Jason Stoner, Kristen Relihan, and Arielle Eighmy participated in curriculum writing training with their general education colleagues. Through this training, special education teachers will be joining curriculum writing teams providing valuable insight to the unique learning needs of special education students as it relates to curriculum development and writing.

Building Thinking Classroom and Math Curriculum: Dr. Jessica White from ACES has been working with math teachers in grades 7-12. Her work has focused on best math instructional strategies. One area of focus has been around strategies from *Building Thinking Classrooms*. Additionally, Dr. White has worked with teachers on reviewing standards for each course and determining alignment and overlap. Her most recent work also has focused on developing a common philosophy for middle school math.

Readers' Workshop Implementation: Ms. Maggie Roberts has worked with middle school English teachers in their creation, rollout and curriculum development using the workshop model. Ms. Roberts works with teachers on creating lessons, modeling lessons and helps create and provide feedback on assessments. Ms. Roberts work has been integral in the creation of the curriculum for grades 7 and 8 as well as the structure that was adopted for middle school English.

Goal Book Implementation: Special Education Teachers and Speech Language Pathologists have continued their work with Goal book. Goal book is holistic solution that helps special educators develop higher-quality IEPs and implement them with more effective, specially designed instruction.

Resources

Elected Officials Day: Amity hosted its third Elected Officials' Day on January 31, 2025. The day started with a tour of Amity Middle School Orange, followed by a bus ride to the high school and a tour of ARHS. Student leaders were integral to both visits and guests were able to see collaborative workspaces, innovative programs, and areas we are looking to renovate. A Question-and-Answer session with District leadership was held over a lunch prepared by ARHS Culinary chefs and students before returning to the middle schools. Nineteen elected officials from our Boards of Selectmen, Boards of Finance, Elementary Boards of Education, and State Legislature attended, along with the Superintendents of our three elementary districts.

ARHS Video Message Boards Installed: ARHS has installed video message boards in high-visibility locations around the school over the past month, and these boards are now scrolling information about school announcements, schedule information, special events, and student activities. These boards were purchased and installed through the PEGPETIA grant program without any cost to the school system thanks to the efforts of ARHS teacher Jeremy Iverson.

Rosa DeLauro Visits Amity: Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro visited Amity on January 28, 2025 to present Sage Wong with a certificate of achievement, visit social studies and technology education classes, and meet with a group of student leaders for a roundtable discussion. This visit was featured on WTNH, you can see their coverage here: [Rep. DeLauro visits ARHS](#)

Improving Trauma Support for Students: School Engagement Specialist, Jessica Simone attended the Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Ms. Simone attended sessions on supporting students and their families who have experienced trauma and how to support the creation of trauma sensitivity and awareness in schools. The conference was attended by over 1700 attendees representing 39 states.

NASP Annual Conference Attendance: Mr. Tom Brant, Bibi John, and Jenna DeLorenzo attended the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) annual convention in Seattle, Washington. This annual convention focuses on best practices in mental health, special education, and assessment. Additionally, Mr. Brant presented four sessions, covering topics on well-being, Title IX, School Refusal, and School Safety. The NASP conference was attended by over 6100 school psychologists, representing the 50 states and Canada.

Behavioral Threat Assessment Practices: School Psychologists, School Social Workers, and select administrators worked with Dr. Melissa Reeves from Safe and Sound Schools/Raptor Technologies to further develop and enhance our Behavioral Threat Assessment practices. This is Dr. Reeves' second time working with Amity, having previously trained in the district in the PREPaRE curriculum in June of 2021.

Climate

Spring Sports Registration: Students athletes considering participating in a spring sport must begin the registration process by filling out the online form. Once parents begin the registration process, they will receive information from the athletic department and coaches in subsequent emails.

Amity Model UN Attends Yale Conference: Leaders of the future in Amity's Model UN Club participated in last weekend's 51st Annual Yale Model United Nations Conference in New Haven. This was our Model UN chapter's first time at the conference where they were joined by more than 2,000 students from 27 different countries.

ARHS Celebrates Black History Month: February is Black History Month, and ARHS started the month with a reading during our morning announcements focusing on the month's significance and this year's theme of "African Americans and Labor." Throughout the month we have been featuring information about the contributions African Americans have made to American labor, education, politics, and our overall culture displayed around the school. These are displayed both on posters and scrolling on the video message boards we have recently installed in high-visibility locations around the school.

Lunar New Year Celebration: Amity's annual Lunar New Year celebration hosted by our Chinese National Honor Society took place on February 7, 2025 in the ARHS cafeteria. In addition to the delicious food, the celebration featured martial arts, dance, music, and poetry performances provided by our students and local partners.

Winter Sports Celebrates Seniors: Senior Night events have been taking place throughout February for our winter sports teams. Congratulations to all our senior athletes and thank you for your years of dedication to your teams and teammates!

AMSO Student Council Supports Wildfire Relief: The AMSO Student Council ran a fundraiser to raise money for the victims of the California wildfires. Students raised over \$400 to donate to the Altadena Girls. The organization seeks to provide essential items to help teenage girls affected by wildfires rebuild.

Flamenco Dancing at AMSB: The students of AMSB took part in a presentation from a local Flamenco Dancing group on February 14, 2025. The presenters discussed the history of Flamenco Dancing, the musical instruments and artistic representations in the dances, communicated with the students in Spanish, and engaged our students in some fancy dance moves!

Bethany Selectman's Youth Award: The First Selectman's Office is accepting nominations for the Annual Bethany First Selectman's Youth Award. Any Bethany youth, 18 or under, who is in school, and who, either individually or as part of a group, has demonstrated positive actions to improve Bethany or assist Bethany residents is eligible to be nominated for the First Selectman's Youth Award. Areas of involvement may include group or individual volunteer work aimed at improving the quality of life in the Bethany community. Please see the attached forms for more information and nomination form.

Woodbridge First Selectman's Youth Award: Woodbridge Youth Services, in collaboration with First Selectman Mica Cardozo, is accepting nominations for the Annual Woodbridge First Selectman's Youth Award to honor a Woodbridge youth who has impacted their community. The deadline to submit a nomination is Tuesday, April 1, 2025. Please feel free to forward this form or make as many copies as you wish for distribution within your organization. The nomination form may be found online at <https://www.woodbridgect.org/160/Youth-Services>.