

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5
Bethany Orange Woodbridge
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Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Amity Community Member:

I have now been your superintendent for a little more than a month and my initial impressions of a vibrant school district are confirmed each day. I have now had the pleasure of meeting PTSA/PTO leadership and I am impressed with the focus on improving the district as a whole.

I want to share information about transition planning that is being conducted under the leadership of our three principals. Dr. Goldstone has been working with a transition committee as well as with a large number of staff to plan for the move of grade 9 to Amity High School. This group has delved into the exam schedule to ensure that grade 9 students have their mid-term exams prior to the move to the high school. They have planned a series of orientation activities for grade 9 students for the week of January 17. As far as we know, the move will take place on the Tuesday after Martin Luther King Day, January 18th. The plan calls for the moving company to move all needed furniture over the preceding weekend.

Student schedules will be forwarded after the first of the year. On the first day for grade 9 students at Amity High School, there will be an assembly in the cafeteria followed by orientation activities in the modular classrooms. Since this is an exam week at the High School, students will be on an exam schedule. This will provide time for teachers to meet for purposes of sharing information about student needs and for acclimating to the new environment.

The Board of Education has approved the hiring of a grade 9 assistant principal. I hope to have a recommendation to the Board shortly after Thanksgiving for the person to fill this position. This person will take a leadership role in preparing for and implementing the move effectively. We will also be expanding our nursing staff at the high school with a part-time nurse to ensure student health needs are met. Please refer to the Grade 9 Transition document which I have included with this letter for more information about the grade 9 move.

Since the grade 7 and 8 students will be going through their own transition, we have spent considerable time preparing for this move as well. Please refer to the attached Transition Exam Schedule included with this letter. This schedule outlines activities that will take place the week of January 10th. Since teachers need time to pack and move supplies and materials, there will be three exam schedule days that week.

Our project managers are monitoring the progress of the project closely. They are confident that we are on schedule at this point. There is a slight chance that the modular classrooms at the high school might not be fully ready until the last minute (January 14th). We will watch this situation closely, and make adjustments if needed.

If you have any questions about these activities, please contact your building principal.

Very truly yours,

John J. Brady

Grade 9 Transition

Program

- Grade 9 courses aligned for each course and level so that all students will have covered the same objectives and topics by the end of the first semester. Midterm exams are either standardized or substantially similar.
- Each department has established a framework for grading students so that a student's second semester teacher will have a grading philosophy and methodology substantially similar to the first semester teacher.
- Time has been planned for teacher to teacher sharing between semester one and semester two teacher.
- Time has been planned for support service and special education staff to meet with grade 9 teachers in small groups to talk about students with special needs and/or personal and family issues that might affect academic performance.
- Student schedules are set. Students will receive the elective courses that they have signed up for. In junior high schedule, students were often forced into electives to meet special scheduling demands.

Social-Emotional Elements of Transition

- Grade 9 teacher workshops on October 12 and November 2 to prepare them for the move to the modulars and the high school campus. Teachers now feel more secure which will have a major impact on attitudes of grade 9 students.
- Dr. Goldstone met with grade 9 students from Bethany and Orange in their respective gymnasiums on October 20 and 21. He gave the students an overview of their typical school day on the high school campus and the new opportunities available to them. The sessions were well received. Students were attentive and asked good questions. The Amity video production teacher, Jonathan Furst, accompanied Dr. Goldstone to the grade 9 meetings. He showed the students our student-made "video yearbook" to give them an exciting preview of the sports and activities available at the high school.
- We will plan a tour of the modulars and a "walkthrough" of their schedule for grade 9 students in late December or early January, depending on when the modulars are fully functional.
- We are also planning an evening for grade 9 parents to tour the modulars and have the opportunity for questions and answers in early January.
- We are also planning a "Back to School Night II" for grade 9 parents so that they can meet the second semester teachers.
- A blend of academic and transition activities will take place during the week of January 18-21, the first week that students will follow their new high school schedule.

Logistics

- Grade 9 midterms will be one week early to allow for move to the high school campus and transition activities during the week of January 18-21. Grade 7-9 students will have an 11:00am dismissal on January 11, 12, and 13 which will give teachers time to pack and label items as well as correct exams and work on grades.
- The actual movement of student desks, teacher desks, file cabinets, etc. from the junior high classrooms to the modulars will be over the weekend of January 14-17.

- During the week of January 18th, among other activities (see above), teachers will have time to set up their rooms, make sure technology is ready to use, and prepare for second semester instruction.

Transition/Exam Schedule

PLAN

Week of January 10th -14th

- All 7th -9th graders will be on an early dismissal (one bus run, Tuesday-Thursday).
- All 7th and 8th grade students will meet in 90 minute block periods and continue with normal instruction.
- All 9th grade students will meet in 90 minute periods to take their subject exams.
- Friday will be a full day for all 7-9 students. The regular bell schedule will be used. Ninth grade teachers will review exams and final grades with students as they close out the semester.

SCHEDULE FOR GRADES 7-9 January 10th-14th

Monday: Abbreviated schedule for periods 1-6, Exam Period 7 (Regular Dismissal)
 Tuesday: Periods 1 and 2 (Dismissal at 11 AM)
 Wednesday: Periods 3 and 4 (Dismissal at 11 AM)
 Thursday: Periods 5 and 6 (Dismissal at 11AM)
 Friday: Full Day for all 7-9 students (last day for ninth grade students at the JHS)

Week of January 17th-21st

- All 10th-12th graders on early dismissal schedule for exams
- All ninth grade students follow HS early dismissal schedule each day for orientation needs.
- Students will:
 - Learn the arrangement of the modular buildings
 - Meet their new teachers
 - Meet support personnel
 - Receive an explanation of daily procedures
- All seventh and eighth grade students will return to a full day schedule.

SCHEDULE FOR GRADES 9-12 January 17th -21st

Monday: NO SCHOOL Martin Luther King Day
 Tuesday: Periods 1 and 2 (Dismissal at 11 AM)
 Wednesday: Periods 3 and 4 (Dismissal at 11 AM)
 Thursday: Periods 5 and 6 (Dismissal at 11 AM)
 Friday: Periods 7 AND Make-Up (Dismissal at 9:15)

*Ninth grade students and teachers will have three early dismissal days to accommodate exams and four early dismissal days to accommodate transition needs associated with the move to the high school (semester one and two teachers will confer about students changing teachers; teachers will meet with guidance and special ed. to review IEPs and students with transition concerns, as well as pertinent personal and family issues; teachers

will plan and review special activities with administration; teachers will unpack and set up new rooms).

*Seventh and eighth grade students and teachers will have three early dismissal days to accommodate transition needs associated with the move to the modular classrooms. Teachers will be involved in packing and unpacking, room set up and working with administration on special transition activities.