

AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5
Bethany Orange Woodbridge
25 Newton Road, Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525



Charles S. Dumais, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

charles.dumais@reg5.k12.ct.us
203.392.2106

Superintendent's Report – January 2017

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

High School Reimagined. A team including a teacher, administrator, and students from Amity Regional High School joined 19 Connecticut high schools on December 6, 2016, at the Connecticut State Legislative Office Building to present, discuss, and debate legislative resolutions that each school submitted. Students presented their individual school's resolution on the House Floor. Amity's resolution was among the top 6 being brought back to be considered for proposing to the legislature. The resolution is as follows: *Be it resolved that districts are provided flexibility when designing the school day, week, year and structure of the classroom to meet the learning needs of each student on his or her path to mastering standards. Be it further resolved that the length of the school year, currently defined as one hundred and eighty days of actual school sessions and nine hundred hours of actual school work, be amended so that students who can document, and show learning from experiential learning opportunities are awarded hours for those experiences.*

AmityTalks and Listens Speaker Series. The student-created speaker series held the first session of *AmityTalks and Listens* of the school year. Four students and a teacher shared talks about how they have "made it happen" by overcoming adversity, leaning in to their vulnerability, and exploring uncomfortable topics.

Professional Development. Friday, January 13, 2017, is an early release professional development day. All certified staff, nurses, and paraeducators will participate in either sexual abuse awareness education (State mandated; nearly half of our staff has completed this training in an earlier session) or student concussion education (provided by Dr. Karen Laugel).

Curriculum Articulation. In-district meetings for January will include World Language and Reading. BOWA meetings for January include Social Studies, Science, and STEM. The BOE Curriculum Committee is scheduled to meet January 19, 2017. The District Wellness and Health and Safety Committees are scheduled to meet on January 18, 2017. The District Technology Committee is scheduled to meet on January 26, 2017.

Teaching Educator and Mentoring Program. Amity teachers working under the Initial Educator Certificate are required to participate in the Teaching Educator and Mentoring Program (TEAM). This past December, *all* Amity teachers who are currently in TEAM successfully passed their required reflection papers.

Scientifically Research-Based Intervention. Training for implementing newly revised Scientifically Research-Based Intervention (SRBI) forms for grades 7-12 was provided to District SRBI Committee members in December. The committee is scheduled to meet on January 25, 2017, to review the feedback following the training. Training for teachers is being planned in the implementation of the new forms.

Instructional Rounds. Teams at each school continue to engage in Instructional Rounds. We are developing the capacity of staff to engage in critical conversations about instruction as we prepare to involve *all* faculty members in the Instructional Rounds process next year. I am participating in the debrief sessions at each school to ensure that the discussion protocol is implemented with fidelity and consistency.

AMSO Social Studies Position. Nearly fifty applications have been received for the recently vacated social studies teaching position at Amity Middle School Orange. We hope to have a full-time replacement in place by the end of the second quarter.

Middle School Winter Concerts. More than 65% of our middle school students (both campuses) performed in this year's winter concerts!

Science Olympiad. Amity Middle School Bethany students Jonathan Fischman, Andy Kim, and Arnav Paliwal had a first place performance in Optics at the December 10, 2016 Mock Science Olympiad.

World Language. Amity Regional High School world language national honor society students visited the middle schools to engage the students in activities that highlight the world language opportunities available at the high school.

Conference Presentations. Amity teachers Tom Norton, Rob Fragione, and Keith Smolinski will be presenting at the 36th Annual Middle Level Conference on March 30 and 31, 2017 in Providence, Rhode Island.

Family Math. The Amity Regional School District is hosting an elementary family math event on January 9, 2017. The event, with participants from Bethany, Orange, and Woodbridge, will feature national presenter Greg Tang.

Student Athletes Recognized. Kathleen Walsh (Volleyball) and Emily Criscuolo (Cross Country) were named SCC Athletes of the Year for their respective sports. Kathleen Handler (Cross Country) and James He (Soccer) were named SCC Scholar Athletes for the fall season.

Coaches Recognized. Seth Davis (Volleyball) and Todd Rainey (Swimming & Diving) were named SCC Coach of the Year in their respective sports.

Learning Management System. The District Technology Committee recognizes the potential benefits of a single platform for a Learning Management System (LMS). As part of the process for identifying and evaluating a single platform that will best serve Amity constituents, PowerSchool Learning (formerly Haiku) is being piloted with staff at all schools. This LMS communicates directly with PowerSchool.

Discover Video. We are expanding the functionality and content of the video sharing system that was installed as part of the PEGPETIA grant. The final two servers in the middle schools have been installed and deployed. Additional content, such as morning video announcements at the high school, is being developed and uploaded.

Transition Program. Students in our high school transition classes had a very successful fundraiser this holiday season. They planned, shopped for, baked, and sold over 140 dozen holiday cookies!

IEP Training. All Amity school counselors, special education teachers, and school psychologists met to address the outcomes of the recent Connecticut State Transition Workshop in order to increase understanding of the transition area of the IEP. A “Core Transition Skills Chart,” developed by our staff, will help facilitate planning for students.

Resources

Navigate. All relevant school data has been uploaded into the system. The Director of Facilities is coordinating additional training for security staff on the effective use of this emergency management system. Security infrastructure elements are being evaluated and adjusted to provide the most useful data for operation of the system during an emergency.

Substitute Management System Evaluation. The Finance Department has recently completed a financial review of the use of Aesop and Veritime for managing substitute requests, assignments, communication, and evaluation. The results will be presented to the Amity Board of Education Curriculum Committee.

Student Financial Obligations. Missing textbooks obligations, broken or damaged equipment reimbursement, and other fees amount to tens of thousands of dollars annually. In the past, the obligations were communicated annually. We are now posting high school obligations quarterly (with the hope that they will be paid sooner) through MyPaymentsPlus. Middle School obligations will be posted annually.

Recycling. The Amity Regional High School Environmental Club met with custodians and administrators this fall to discuss the various protocols in place regarding recyclable materials.

Communication. Schools, departments, teams, teachers, coaches, administrators, and clubs are taking advantage of free communication tools like Facebook and Twitter.

RFID Doors and Copiers. Four exterior doors are currently wired and operational, while four more are scheduled to be completed by the end of January. New copiers have been installed across the District and access is controlled by staff RFID badges. All copiers have “Follow Me” printing technology which allows users to print on any connected machine in any building,

Climate

Eighth To Ninth Grade Transition. Eighth grade Amity students visited Amity Regional High School on December 9, 2016, to begin the high school orientation process and to watch the ARHS fall play, Thornton Wilder’s *Our Town*. Students toured the school and heard (from students and staff) about some of the wonderful opportunities that await them as freshman.

Vegetarian Day. The Amity Regional High School Environmental Club teamed up with Chartwells in December to host a “Vegetarian Day.” Thursday, December 8, 2016, Environmental Club members helped the cafeteria staff serve lunch. The menu featured a choice of Vegetarian Taco Bar, Vegetarian Nacho Bar, and Vegetarian Quesadilla.

Homework. In an effort to recognize the need for mindful rest and relaxation, the Amity Regional High School administration encouraged teachers to modify expectations for assignments over the holiday break, including adjusting deadlines when possible so they did not immediately follow the holiday break. The administration pledged to limit email communication to teachers during the holiday break as well.

Collaboration On Social/Emotional Health. Many teachers have collaborated with counselors, the student assistance counselor, the school resource officer, and the school social worker to create lessons for students based around the social/emotional aspects of curriculum.

Opioids. In cooperation with the FBI, DEA, Justice Department, Yale, and Woodbridge Youth Services, Amity will host a Parent University on January 11, 2017 to explore opioid abuse. The documentary *Chasing the Dragon, the Life of an Opiate Addict* will be shown. It will be followed by a panel discussion of experts on the opioid crisis.

Charity. Students and staff across the District contributed time, toys, toiletries, money, and canned food to families and organizations that help the less fortunate during the Holiday Season.

Student Appreciation. The Amity Middle School Bethany PBIS Committee organized a breakfast for all students in December to recognize their efforts to support the tenets of the *Be Amity!* character development initiative.

Superintendent

Instructional Leadership. I visit each school on (at least) a weekly basis and make classroom observations a regular part of each trip. To date, I have visited more than *seventy-five* classrooms across all of the buildings.

AMSO Principal Search. Nearly thirty applications have been received for the Amity Middle School Orange Principal position. The posting closes on January 20, 2017. Application review, initial interview, second interview, site visit (if necessary), and presentation to the Amity Personnel Committee are scheduled to be completed by the beginning of March.

Central Office Reorganization. Prior to the Holiday Break, the first phase of carpet replacement in Central Office was completed and included some peripheral offices. The second phase will include the common area. The third and final phase will include the remaining peripheral offices. As part of the first phase, the Offices of the Superintendent and the Director of Curriculum and Professional Development have swapped locations.

Legislative Committee. The CAPSS Legislative Committee has drafted language on four priority pieces of legislation that we hope will be reconsidered. The changes include revisions to recently passed requirements for (1) alternative education for expelled students, (2) candidate/employee background checks, (3) student data privacy, and (4) participation in the school building advisory council. The CAPSS legislative agenda will be released shortly.



This report is a synopsis of many of the undertakings, efforts, and achievements toward our District Goals and Objectives. It does not represent a complete and comprehensive account of all that has happened in the past month. I would encourage you to contact me directly if you have questions about items that you read or that you anticipated reading. I would be glad to discuss them.