

The Amity Board of Education held its regular August meeting last evening. What follows are highlights of the meeting:

Chairman Blake and the Board welcomed new member Jim Horowitz of Woodbridge to the Board of Education.

1. The Board added an item to the agenda by majority vote. The item concerned appointment of Mr. Rob Schumann as Director of Counseling Services at the high school. Mr. Schumann replaces Dr. Jason Tracy who moved to a high school associate principal position upon the resignation of Ms. Kim Vigliotti. Mr. Schuman has been a school counselor for twelve years beginning his career at Amity and moving to Woodland High School with Dr. Arnold Frank when that school opened in 2001. For the past five years, Mr. Schumann has been with the Wilton Public Schools as a school counselor and leader of their internship program. We enthusiastically welcome him back to Amity. The Board vote to appoint was unanimous. Rob is a resident of Orange. With the appointment of Mr. Schumann, the District is fully staffed.
2. The principals reported that they have their schools ready to receive students on August 30th. There were many accolades for the Facilities staff for the outstanding work done to prepare the buildings. School mailings will go out this week from the middle schools and have already gone out from the high school. Parents/guardians were asked to read all information carefully and respond to all required items.
3. Dr. Brady provided a report to the Board in response to a request to study the issue of changing school start times to 8:30 a.m. He reviewed a research study that concluded that such a change for motivated and committed students has not shown improvements in attendance or grades. Dr. Brady stated that changing school start times to 8:30 a.m. would result in dissolution of the BOWA transportation agreement. This cooperative agreement saves the four school districts well over \$1,000,000 per year.

For these reasons, the Superintendent did not recommend changing school start times at Amity. The Board took no action on the matter.

4. Dr. Brady provided a report on the CMT and CAPT results for 2011. These are state-mandated tests that all Connecticut public school students take in March of each year. The CMT for grades 7 and 8 and the CAPT for grade 10 test important skills and content knowledge. Amity has been developing a systematic approach to preparation for these tests that prepares students to perform maximally, while preserving our enriching curriculum. This past March students in grades 8 and 10 performed at historic highs for Amity students. Grade 7 scores remain strong and show improvement. Of particular note was substantial improvement in Math and science at grade 10 and science at grade 8. Amity students scored first in the reference group of 19 high schools in the area of reading. Chairman Blake expressed congratulations to the faculty and administration for these outstanding results.

5. Ms. Raiola, Director of Pupil Services, reported that she is bringing a new program to Amity called Unified Theatre. This is a program where students with special needs will be working with regular education students to design and perform an original theatrical production. The production will be held in the spring each year.
6. Mr. Grande reported that the HVAC project at Amity Regional High School has exceeded projected cost and that the Facilities Committee supported an expenditure of \$237,000 for Superior Mechanical to complete the project. The project is scheduled for completion in mid September.
7. The Board took action to assign any end-of-year balance to the Capital Nonrecurring Account for the purpose of building funds for the roof restoration project that will be required on the old section of the high school in 2012-2013. The Board also acted to set aside \$5,000 in the same account for the Black Box Theatre. This amount will be matched by a donation from the Drama Program. The Black Box Theatre is in the five-year capital forecast as a project that will enhance the theatrical arts program. It will be undertaken when sufficient funds have been set aside. Community members are encouraged to contribute to the fund if possible. They may do so by contacting Dr. Brady at 203-397-4861.
8. The Board voted in favor of a new policy which allows the Board to name and/or rename portions of Amity Facilities. Through this policy, a process was established whereby individuals seeking to name a portion of the facility must complete an application which is available through the Superintendent's Office. Criteria for naming/renaming are as follows:
Individual(s)/group(s) must have:
 - significantly enhanced the experience of Amity students in the area(s) of Academics, the Arts or Athletics
 - made outstanding contributions to the heritage of Amity Regional Schools
 - made contributions which will remain memorable long beyond the lifetime of those who propose the name
 - significant community support
 - Length of service to Amity shall also be a consideration.

The next regular meeting of the Amity Regional Board of Education is on Monday, September 12, 2011.