

U.S. Department of Education
2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Charles Britton

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Amity Regional High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 25 Newton Road

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Woodbridge State CT Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 06525-1598

County New Haven County State School Code Number* _____

Telephone 203-397-4830 Fax 203-397-4866

Web site/URL http://www.amityregion5.org E-mail charles.britton@reg5.k12.ct.us

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Charles Dumais E-mail: Charles.Dumais@reg5.k12.ct.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Regional School District 05 Tel. 203-392-2007

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. William Blake
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2013-2014 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2008 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. 7 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	183	168	351
10	208	187	395
11	211	211	422
12	233	195	428
Total Students	835	761	1596

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 11 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 81 % White
 - 4 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2012 - 2013 year: 2%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the school year	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	25
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	1596
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.016
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1%
14 Total number ELL
 Number of non-English languages represented: 7
 Specify non-English languages: Arabic, Bangla, Cantonese, French, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5%
 Total number students who qualify: 73

If this method is not an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

9. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
158 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 18 Autism | 0 Orthopedic Impairment |
| 0 Deafness | 39 Other Health Impaired |
| 0 Deaf-Blindness | 55 Specific Learning Disability |
| 16 Emotional Disturbance | 16 Speech or Language Impairment |
| 2 Hearing Impairment | 2 Traumatic Brain Injury |
| 6 Mental Retardation | 1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| 3 Multiple Disabilities | 0 Developmentally Delayed |

10. Use Full-Time Equivalent (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of personnel in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	6
Classroom teachers	90
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	43
Paraprofessionals	8
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	17

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	97%	96%	95%
High school graduation rate	98%	97%	93%	95%	97%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2013

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	392
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	83%
Enrolled in a community college	12%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	3%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	1%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No X

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

PART III – SUMMARY

Amity High School is a comprehensive high school composed of 1596 students in grades 9-12. Amity High School is part of the Connecticut Region 5 Public School District that serves resident students from the towns of Bethany, Woodbridge and Orange. Bethany, Woodbridge and Orange are suburban communities in the Greater New Haven area of Southern Connecticut. Region 5 students are motivated to succeed. Amity students see academic excellence as a pathway to life-long success. The passion for learning and belief that a solid education will prepare individuals for life-long success is fostered in the home. The vast majority of students from Bethany, Woodbridge and Orange reside in homes with well-educated parents. A recent census found that when compared with other communities across Connecticut, Woodbridge has the highest percentage of residents with a Bachelor Degree or higher. Families from Orange and Bethany are also composed of well-educated individuals. Many parents of Amity High School students work in academia, business, medicine and law. A large percentage of parents works for Yale University and other colleges and universities that comprise a vibrant academic community in the Greater New Haven area. In general, parents of Amity High School students have forged successful careers after many years of advanced studies. Bethany, Orange and Woodbridge parents value education, and see education as the most important foundation upon which they raise their children. Amity High School parents choose to reside in the communities of Bethany, Woodbridge and Orange due to the outstanding system of public education afforded students by the K-6 Woodbridge, Bethany and Orange Public School Districts, which feed the 7-12 Region 5 Public School District.

Teachers and administrators at Amity High School are expected to be the best. When it comes to the education of children in Region 5, the Bethany, Orange and Woodbridge communities do not abide mediocrity. Amity High School teachers are masters of their content, possess a deep understanding of the curriculum, instruction and assessment practices that guide teaching and learning in the classroom, and are passionate about educating young people. The learning community at Amity High School is driven by the school's Mission Statement and Academic, Civic and Social Expectations:

Amity Regional High School Mission Statement and Expectations

Amity High School teaches all students to think critically and creatively and to develop their potential through a diverse program of courses and activities that help them mature into productive and responsible citizens.

The achievement of our mission will be realized when our students can demonstrate the following academic expectations: 1. Read effectively in all curricular areas. 2. Write effectively in all curricular areas. 3. Think critically and creatively to solve problems and reason with evidence. 4. Present information and ideas fluently and confidently before an audience. 5. Demonstrate technological proficiency aligned with district competencies.

The achievement of our mission will be realized when our students can demonstrate the following social expectations: 1. Act with respect and compassion. 2. Maintain physical fitness and personal well-being. 3. Participate in a variety of school activities. 4. Use constructive strategies for conflict resolution. 5. Gain knowledge of personal strengths, weaknesses, talents, and interests to fulfill personal goals and career possibilities

The achievement of our mission will be realized when our students can demonstrate the following civic expectations: 1. Adhere to school rules and regulations as delineated in the Student Handbook. 2. Demonstrate service to the school and community

The Amity High School Program of Studies offers students a wide range of academic and elective courses that span the humanities, sciences, mathematics, creative and performing arts, career and technical education, physical education, health, and world languages. Each of these courses is guided by a rigorous curriculum that is fully aligned to the Common Core State Standards, relevant state and national content standards, industry standards, and best practices articulated in current research and theory. Upon successful

graduation from Amity High School, students are equipped with career and college readiness skills and content knowledge.

The Amity High School Program of Studies is supplemented and supported by a wide-ranging program of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, and an elite program of high school athletics. Amity High School students are regularly recognized as regional and state champions in all manner of athletic and academic competition. The Amity High School Debate Team, Mathematics Team, Robotics Team, Junior States of America club, and students in the Amity Science Research Program meet with regular and unprecedented success. Two students in the Amity Science Research Program have been recognized as Intel Science Semi-Finalists. In the area of creative and performing arts, Amity students are recognized throughout the region as some of the finest musicians, actors and artists in Connecticut. The Amity Creative Theatre was recently recognized with the 2013 Best High School Musical award by the Connecticut High School Musical Awards selection committee for the production of Sweeney Todd. The Amity Athletic Department has a noteworthy record of success on the various courts, fields, and tracks throughout the Southern Connecticut Conference and, more broadly, within the scope of the statewide Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

The Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) has been administered annually to Connecticut public school students in grade 10. The CAPT assesses student performance in mathematics, reading, writing, and science. Performance levels are reported as Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Goal, and Advanced. Amity High School uses CAPT as a graduation requirement. In order to satisfy the school's graduation requirement, students are required to achieve the mid-point of the proficiency band on all four sections of the CAPT.

On the CAPT, Amity High School students demonstrated significant improvement from the 2010 to the 2011 testing years. Amity students sustained this improvement from 2011-2013. In Mathematics, in 2009, 64.4% of students made goal; in 2010, 65.8% of students made goal; in 2011, 80.7% of students made goal; in 2012, 76.2% made goal; in 2013, 81.2% made goal. In Science, in 2009, 59.3% of students made goal; in 2010, 66.7% of students made goal; in 2011, 76% of students made goal; in 2012, 75.9% made goal; in 2013, 75.6% made goal. In Reading, in 2009, 72.9% of students made goal; in 2010, 73.6% of students made goal; in 2011, 82.4% of students made goal; in 2012, 81.5% made goal; in 2013, 79.8% made goal. In Writing, in 2009, 76.7% of students made goal; in 2010, 85.1% of students made goal; in 2011, 87.4% of students made goal; in 2012, 85.8% made goal; in 2013, 87.7% of students made goal.

On the SAT, Amity High School outperformed the vast majority of public high schools in the State of Connecticut. From 2008-2012, on average, Amity High School students outperformed students from 88.3% of Connecticut public high schools on the SAT Math section; Amity High School students outperformed students from 90.2% of Connecticut public high schools on the SAT Critical Reading section; Amity High School students outperformed students from 92.7% of Connecticut public high schools on the SAT Writing section.

On the Advanced Placement test, Amity High School has administered more tests each year since 2009, while maintaining strong overall performance. In 2009, Amity High School administered 453 AP tests to 251 students, with 92.4% of students scoring 3 or higher; in 2010, Amity High School administered 469 AP tests to 248 students, with 91.9% of students scoring 3 or higher; in 2011, Amity High School administered 454 AP tests to 252 students, with 92.1% of students scoring 3 or higher; in 2012, Amity High School administered 553 AP tests to 292 students, with 91.8% of students scoring 3 or higher; in 2013, Amity High School administered 590 AP tests to 304 students, with 91.4% of students scoring 3 or higher.

Over the past five years, the Amity High School subgroup which has made the most impressive gains on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) is "Students with Disabilities." In Mathematics, in 2009, 64.7% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2010, 63.9% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2011, 73.9% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2012, 77.1% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2013, 76.9% of students with disabilities reached proficiency. In Science, in 2009, 62.9% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2010, 70.7% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2011, 71% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2012, 74.4% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2013, 93.3% of students with disabilities reached proficiency. In Reading, in 2009, 73.5% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2010, 94.4% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2011, 91.3% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2012, 94.3% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2013, 100% of students with disabilities reached proficiency. In Writing, in 2009, 80.6% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2010, 92.7% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2011, 81.3% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2012, 93% of students with disabilities reached proficiency; in 2013, 90% of students with disabilities reached proficiency.

The improvement in the subgroup Students with Disabilities is attributable to three pedagogical and organizational shifts at Amity High School, which have occurred over the past three years: First, Amity High School embraced a mainstreaming approach to the delivery of instructional support to special

education students. Core course levels were collapsed, and an emphasis was placed on ensuring that special education students receive support services in the least restrictive environment. Second, special education teachers were removed from the traditional “resource room” model of support service delivery and placed directly in the classroom, where they now co-teach with regular education teachers. Special education and regular education teachers are provided the time necessary for co-planning, and ongoing professional development in the area of differentiated instruction and assessment, and co-planning strategies. Third, planning and placement teams redoubled efforts to ensure that appropriate accommodations and modifications are made to promote the least restrictive environment and maximize special education student access to content material with non-disabled peers.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) is administered annually to all sophomores at Amity High School. The CAPT is administered in March. CAPT results are returned to the school in July. Throughout July and August, the high school administration carefully analyzes CAPT results. The community is informed about students’ achievement on CAPT via press releases from Amity High School and the Connecticut State Department of Education. All parents are informed about CAPT results during back-to-school meetings and email communications. Parents of students who took the CAPT are informed about CAPT results through a direct mailing that contains a full report of their child’s performance. Teachers are informed about CAPT results during back-to-school meetings, department meetings, and goal-setting conferences with administrators. Students are informed about CAPT results when performance reports are distributed and reviewed by teachers, counselors and administrators.

Performance gains on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) at Amity High School are attributable to several efforts associated with the school’s adoption of Response to Intervention practices, and use of student performance data to monitor individual student, full cohort, and subgroup progress.

From 2008-2010, student performance data was carefully analyzed. Teacher assessment data was electronically extracted from the school’s student management system and tested for statistically significant correlation with student performance on the CAPT test. Those teacher-created assessments that were found to have a Pearson r Correlation $>.400$ were used as the basis for the creation of common formative and summative assessments. Once developed, on a monthly basis, these common formative and summative assessments were administered to all students in grades 9 and 10 in the social studies, science, English and mathematics content areas. Assessment data was loaded into the school’s student management software. The data was electronically harvested and analyzed using SPSS. The assessment data was analyzed on the cohort level, subgroup level, and individual student level. Once the analysis was conducted and findings organized, teachers then collaborated with department chairs and administrators in data team meetings to review and discuss student progress.

Using the common formative and summative assessments as benchmarking data, individual student performance is reviewed monthly. Those students who fall below determined cut scores are identified for Tier 2 remediation. Tier 2 remediation programming consists of short-term, intensive tutoring in the skills or content area assessed on the benchmark assessment. Identified students are required to attend this tutoring during the school day. Identified students remain in the tutoring until the tutor and classroom teacher certify that the identified student has demonstrated proficiency in the targeted skill or content material. Once an identified student demonstrates proficiency, he or she is returned to Tier 1 programming, which consists of general classroom instruction and assessment. Students who fail to demonstrate proficiency in targeted skills and content are considered for Tier 3 programming, and potentially special education testing.

Parents and students are informed of progress on common formative and summative assessments through the school’s grade reporting system, which is available electronically to parents through an online grade portal. Students who fall below identified cut scores are notified by a letter. The letter identifies the skill or content material that has been targeted, and alerts students and parents to the scheduled tutoring sessions. Support is provided to parents and students via the classroom teacher, tutor, and school counselor.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

The faculty and administration at Amity High School collaborates with teachers and administrators from the two middle schools that are part of the Region 5 Public School District, and the faculty and administration from the Bethany, Orange and Woodbridge School Districts. Successful approaches are shared with district and feeder schools. The faculty and administration at Amity High School also shares approaches to the development of curriculum and instruction, and use of student assessment data with a variety of stakeholders in the wider academic community, including teachers and administrators from other schools, aspiring teachers, and aspiring administrators.

District teachers regularly meet for the purpose of curriculum articulation. These curriculum articulation meetings ensure horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment. During these meetings, successful strategies are shared and duplicated. The Region 5 Director of Curriculum meets with counterparts in the Bethany, Woodbridge and Orange School Districts, which feed the Region 5 School System. These meetings are held for the purpose of vertical curriculum articulation and sharing of successful strategies.

Outside of Region 5 and the Bethany, Orange and Woodbridge School Districts, the faculty and administration at Amity has presented to a wider audience. For example, the Amity Regional High School Principal and teachers have presented the school's implementation of Response to Intervention at a region-wide conferences hosted by the Connecticut Association of Schools.

Many teachers, including the principal, teach at the university level. In this capacity, Amity High School approaches are shared with aspiring educators. The faculty at Amity High School regularly hosts student teachers, interns, and university students completing observation hours as part of educator preparation programming. These aspiring educators are provided direct insight into the outstanding teaching and learning at Amity High School. This insight includes observation of classroom instruction, opportunities to review curriculum documentation, opportunities to observe and discuss assessment practices, and participation in the dialogue that occurs during data team meetings and as part of the school's ongoing program of professional learning conversations. The principal at Amity High School serves as an adjunct professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Southern Connecticut State University. As an adjunct professor, the Amity High School Principal teaches the EDL 685 Curriculum course, which is a required course for educators pursuing a Sixth Year Degree in Educational Leadership. Amity High School approaches to curriculum, instruction and assessment are used as case studies throughout the semester-long EDL 685 course.

4. Engaging Families and Community:

Amity High School regularly communicates school success and needs to families in the community, and actively promotes ways that families can ensure that the continuum of teaching and learning extends from the classroom into the home. Information is communicated via the school's website, and a weekly email distributed by the high school principal on a listserv that contains over 2,500 email addresses.

All parents of Amity students have access to online student information through the school's data management system. Parents may view real-time assignment grades, exam grades, and in-class assessment grades. Parents are also able to access and view student demographic, attendance, discipline and standardized testing information. Teachers regularly communicate student progress and information about current and future assignments and expectations to parents through email and online systems such as Moodle, Edmodo, Blackboard, and Schoology. Parents are invited to a series of annual assemblies and meetings at the school, including freshmen parent orientation, parent back-to-school nights, three nights of parent conferences, monthly PTSA meetings, and a variety of awards ceremonies. These regular meetings are supplemented with special events and programs designed to engage and educate parents about school programming.

Each individual student is assigned a school counselor. Counselors monitor student progress and intervene on an as-needed basis if students begin to struggle academically, behaviorally or socially. The school uses a

Student Study Team (SST) process to program and plan for students who begin to struggle. Any teacher, administrator, counselor, coach, or member of the Amity faculty may refer a student to the SST. The SST meets to review student progress, interviews the students, interviews the parents, and gathers as much information as possible about the student. The SST then programs for the student, and carefully monitors student progress going forward. Resources available to the SST include the services of three school psychologists, a student assistance counselor, a school social worker, three reading teachers, a speech and language specialist, an alternative education program, an adult and continuing education program, and a wide variety of programming available in-house and in the broader community.

Families of students with special needs are regularly engaged through PPT and 504 meetings. The work of the school's SST, PPT, and 504 teams individualizes programming and actively engages families. More broadly, all families of students meeting with every degree of success are fully and actively engaged by the professional faculty and staff at Amity Regional High School.

The broader community is actively involved at Amity High School. Strategies that the school has found successful in working with community members, and involving community members in school improvement efforts and student success, include the school's Senior Service Learning Program and Amity Speaker Series. Each year, over 150 seniors at Amity High School spend the last six weeks of their senior year participating in the Senior Service Learning Program. During the Senior Service Learning Program, local businesses, non-profit organizations, schools, hospitals, farms, day care centers, non-government organizations, etc., host Amity seniors. Amity seniors spend eight hours a day working and learning at these placements. The program is designed as a capstone project for seniors. The goal of the program is to provide seniors career-readiness skills. At the conclusion of the program, sponsoring agencies in the community are invited to provide the school feedback on the quality of seniors' work ethic, performance, and related skills. This feedback guides school improvement efforts. The Senior Service Learning Program is complimented by the Amity Speaker Series. Through the Amity Speaker Series, professionals in the Amity community are invited to the school. During visits, these professionals engage Amity students in discussions about career and college readiness skills necessary for success in various organizations, businesses, and agencies.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

In 2009, the Connecticut State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards. The Common Core State Standards replaced the legacy standards in Connecticut known as the Connecticut Frameworks. As part of the adoption process, the Connecticut State Board of Education targeted a Common Core State Standards implementation date of September, 2013. The implementation of the Common Core State Standards was scheduled to coincide with the replacement of the Connecticut Framework-aligned Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), and implementation of the Common Core State Standards-aligned Smarter Balanced (S-Bac) assessment. From 2009-2013, the faculty and administration at Amity High School carefully studied the Common Core State Standards, attended professional development on the Common Core State Standards, and engaged in the arduous task of re-aligning all written curriculum to fully articulate the Common Core State Standards. In September 2013, the faculty at Amity High School implemented a Common Core-aligned curriculum with fidelity.

To begin the transition from the Connecticut Frameworks to the Common Core State Standards, Region 5 invested in an online curriculum mapping software called Atlas Rubicon. The online Atlas Rubicon system replaced the traditional paper-based curriculum. The entire faculty was provided professional development in the use of the Atlas Rubicon curriculum mapping system. The faculty was also provided professional development on the Common Core State Standards. All English teachers in grades 9-12 were oriented to the Grades 9-12 Common Core English Language Arts Standards. All mathematics teachers were oriented to the Common Core High School Number and Quantity, Functions, Modelling, Geometry, and Statistics & Probability Standards. All science and career and technical education teachers were oriented to the Common Core State Standards for Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects. All social studies teachers were oriented to the Common Core State Standards for Literacy in History and Social Studies. All world language, art, physical education and health teachers were oriented to the Common Core Career and College Readiness Anchor Standards. All Amity teachers engaged in the laborious process of transitioning curriculum to Atlas Rubicon, and realigning each and every unit of study to the Common Core State Standards.

In 2011, Amity High School adopted a new 8-period schedule. The new schedule has provided teachers time during the school day for professional learning conversations. Department chairs and administrators have structured this time for the purpose of creating a living curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and other pertinent content standards. Working collaboratively, teachers documented course essential questions, unit focus questions, content, skills, objectives, activities, instructional strategies, techniques for differentiated instruction, literacy strategies, resources and materials, and assessments. All curriculum material, particularly assessments, was aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The curriculum was purposefully designed to promote critical and creative thinking, and 21st century learning objectives.

Concurrent with the curriculum revisions, all teachers at Amity Regional High School were provided professional development in the area of text complexity. Reading teachers trained faculty in analysis of text complexity through quantitative considerations, qualitative considerations, and reader-task orientation. Once training was complete, Amity teachers were asked to review the entire diet of reading students engage with at Amity Regional High School. Teachers considered both the content aims of the material, and the level of text complexity. Texts with less complexity were eliminated from the resources and materials used in Amity classrooms. Texts that articulate content aims and are determined to be appropriate in terms of grade-level text complexity are documented in resources and materials housed in Atlas Rubicon. The appropriately complex texts are used to stimulate critical and creative thinking, and are subject to a wide range of text-dependent assessments that measure student skills articulated in the Common Core State Standards. Students at Amity are now exposed to a diet of reading that is 30% fiction and 70% non-fiction, all of which is appropriately complex and supports literacy skills articulated in the Common Core State Standards.

The curriculum used at Amity Regional High School is grounded in the Career and College Readiness Standards articulated in the Common Core State Standards. Instruction and assessment practices articulated in the school's written curriculum are purposefully designed to prepare students with the skills necessary for career and college readiness.

2. Reading/English:

At the beginning of the current academic year, all students were assessed using the Gate-McGinnite Reading Test (GMRT). The GMRT provided feedback on all students' reading ability and grade level proficiency. This data was carefully reviewed by reading teachers. Students who fall below an identified cut score receive direct instruction in reading through reading courses. Reading scores were distributed to every teacher based on his or her course load. Teachers reviewed GMRT reading scores in a concerted effort to gauge the reading ability of students they directly instruct during the school year. As part of teacher and principal evaluation, all teachers and administrators are expected to set measurable goals for student reading improvement. Teachers are expected to use literacy-based instructional strategies to scaffold and build student vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. Students will be re-assessed using GMRT at the end of the school year. Student progress will be evaluated and used as part of teacher and principal evaluation.

All teachers at Amity Regional High School are considered teachers of literacy. All teachers are expected to use reading materials that are appropriately text-complex, and engage students with assessments that use text-dependent questions to promote critical and creative thinking. English teachers hold a special place in the development of student literacy skills.

The English Language Arts curriculum begins with a 9th grade survey of world literature. The 9th grade curriculum is focused thematically around the concept of "The Hero's Journey." Students read classical and contemporary works such as *The Odyssey*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Speak*, and *Night*. Students use these texts to examine the development of the protagonist through the lens of the hero's journey. The 10th grade curriculum is based on American Literature. Essential questions focus on what it means to be an American, and the individual versus society. The 11th grade curriculum provides a survey of British Literature. The 11th grade curriculum engages students in inquiry focused on reality versus illusion, power versus powerlessness, fate versus free will, and good versus evil. Each of these courses prepares students with reading and writing skills necessary for career and college readiness. In the senior year, these skills are formalized through a senior year elective program that includes semester-long courses focused on literature or writing, such as Expository Writing, Creative Writing, Journalism, Modern Novel, and World Literature.

3. Mathematics:

Students are required to complete 3 years of mathematics at Amity High School. On average, for the past three graduating classes, over 90% percent of Amity graduates completed four full years of mathematics. For the Class of 2017, the mathematics graduation requirement has been raised to a four-year requirement. The mathematics program is designed to prepare students for career and college level application of skills and content material.

The mathematics curriculum has been fully aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Before the junior year, students are exposed to all of the Common Core process standards, including persevering when problem solving, justifying and critiquing the work of others, paying attention to precision, enhancing estimation skills, choosing the appropriate procedure to solve a problem, and problem solving. These process standards are elucidated through the study of the Common Core Content Standards, including number and quantity, algebra, functions, modelling, geometry, and statistics and probability.

Instructional strategies focus on developing student critical thinking, reasoning, problem-solving. Amity mathematics teachers are as concerned with students justifying and providing logic for a solution as they are with finding the correct answer. Amity students are prompted with cues such as: How did you find your answer? How do you know this is right/wrong? Explain your rationale. To engage in these types of cues and

prompts, mathematics teachers at Amity rely heavily on numeracy and literacy strategies. Students are shown how to find the right answer, and then taught explicitly about the language of mathematics, and instructed in ways to use the language of mathematics to justify, explain, and expand upon their answers.

In concert with the adjustments to instruction and curriculum, assessment strategies at Amity have altered. Teachers now regularly collect data on individual student, subgroup and full cohort progress. Teachers collaboratively review and discuss student progress. When individual students are identified with deficits, they are required to attend RTI-designed Tier 2 remediation support. This support comes in the form of required tutoring in the identified skills and content material. Students are required to remain in tutoring until they demonstrate proficiency in the area of remediation. Excelling and gifted students are challenged with content material designed to push them to the frustration level. Once students arrive in the Zone of Proximal Development, scaffolding is provided, and students are encouraged to explore ways to apply and extend their understanding of mathematics content in novel and new situations. Examples of these enrichment activities include authentic research, real-world design challenges, engineering projects, computer programming projects, field studies, internships with researchers and engineers, and other efforts designed to allow student to contribute to the literature and research conducted in the academic and research fields.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Amity High School students complete a minimum of three years of lab-based science. The science course progression includes biology, environmental earth science, and chemistry. Over 85% of students complete a fourth year of science through coursework in physics, marine biology, technical and applied science, anatomy and physiology, forensics, and/or nutrition and exercise science. Science course curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects, and Connecticut content frameworks. Science courses emphasize literacy and inquiry, foster an understanding of the scientific method, and focus student learning on 21st century concepts and issues. Amity offers Advanced Placement science courses in chemistry, environmental science, biology, and physics. Many students participate in a unique program called the Amity Science Research Program (SRP). SRP provides direct instruction in research methodology. SRP students partner with professional scientists and researchers, and conduct research in fields such as environmental science, health and medical science, behavioral science, and physical science. Student research is adjudicated in local, regional and national science fairs. SRP students have had research published in leading peer-reviewed journals, and have been recognized statewide and nationally for research and scholarship.

The fine and performing arts program at Amity High School provides opportunities for students to think critically and creatively, and demonstrate practical artistic skills. The Amity Art Program includes a variety of courses in digital video, photography, theatre arts, acting and directing for stage and film, band, strings, orchestra, and chorus. The curriculum in these courses is aligned to the CCSS Anchor Standards, as well as Connecticut content frameworks. Advanced Placement courses are offered in art history, 3-D design, and music theory. The art program is supported with a rich array of musical productions, plays, film festivals, concerts, and exhibitions that showcase student talent in the fine and performing arts.

The career and technical education program offers students over 30 elective courses that are aligned to industry standards and best practices. Students are able to select technical courses in computer aided design, auto maintenance, robotics, wood working, engineering and design, web design, computer programming, manufacturing, child development, business, accounting, and silk screening. These courses are aligned to the CCSS Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects, and Connecticut content frameworks. Some CTE programs are fully aligned with the course sequence offered at area community colleges. Students who complete an aligned sequence of technical coursework are awarded community college credit towards associate and bachelor degrees.

5. Instructional Methods:

Differentiated instruction and literacy instruction are the centerpieces of Amity pedagogy and methodology. Since 2007, the faculty and administration at Amity High School have calibrated instruction used in all academic areas to focus on the inclusion of strategies designed to help students engage in the reading of both fiction and informational texts. This focus on literacy instruction supports and complements the inclusion of differentiated instructional strategies, which has been a focus of Amity instructional practices since 2009.

During the 2006 academic year, the Region 5 Public School District implemented a literacy initiative. The initiative began with an external audit commissioned by the Superintendent of Schools. The audit concluded that the district should use reading teachers as consultants, and begin equipping all teachers with the skills necessary to instruct and guide the reading of content-specific text. Reading consultants were assigned to each content area and worked with content area teachers to identify the type of fiction and informational texts that students were reading. The reading consultants then worked with content area teachers to articulate research-based before, during and after reading instructional strategies designed to help students engage the text. Literacy-based instructional strategies were shared within and across departments, and have been documented in the school's written curriculum. In 2013, all teachers adopted a SMART goal in the area of literacy. The SMART goals include a measureable outcome aligned to student literacy skills, and require teachers to identify instructional strategies necessary to guide student acquisition of literacy skills.

In 2009, the faculty and administration at Amity Regional High School focused on the inclusion of a broader array of differentiated instruction strategies in the classroom. The focus on differentiated instruction was necessitated by the elimination of one academic level, and inclusion of special education students in the least restrictive environment. With the support of differentiated instruction experts and consultants, the faculty identified differentiated instruction strategies in each content area. The differentiated instruction strategies were piloted in the classroom. Those strategies determined to be successful, are now documented in the school's written curriculum.

Digital literacy and the incorporation of technology is also a centerpiece of instruction at Amity. The district has adopted a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) strategy. The vast majority of students bring personal electronic devices into the classroom. Teachers enrich instruction by using these devices for online research, organization of information, presentation of information, and analysis of data.

6. Professional Development:

The Region 5 Board of Education provides three full days of professional development each academic year. In 2011, the Region 5 Board of Education adopted a new schedule for Amity High School. The new schedule provides teachers two, 57-minute long periods every four days in the schedule cycle. This time is used for professional development and professional dialogue. These periods are referred to by the faculty and administration as interdisciplinary PLC and intra-disciplinary PLC.

Interdisciplinary PLC groups are composed of 15-20 teachers from across content areas. These interdisciplinary PLC groups meet throughout the school year, once every eight days. The groups are facilitated by teachers who have been trained in the process of stimulating professional learning conversations. These conversations span the spectrum of teaching and learning, including differentiation of instruction, literacy, incorporation of technology in instruction, assessment practices, examination of student work, development of the school's core values and beliefs, school climate, etc. The interdisciplinary groups provide teachers a forum to discuss successes and failures, and study best practices.

Intra-disciplinary PLC groups are composed of within-content area teachers. The groups are organized and led by the content area department chairs. Intra-disciplinary groups meet three times every eight days in the schedule for 57-minute long periods. The groups meet for the purpose of creating and maintaining a living curriculum. Intra-disciplinary PLC groups monitor the scope and sequence of content instruction, align the curriculum to Common Core State Standards and other relevant content standards, refine essential questions and unit focus questions, update resources and materials, document instructional strategies, develop and

document common formative, summative and performance-based assessments, and reflect on data derived from unit assessments.

The professional development that occurs during interdisciplinary and intra-disciplinary PLC meetings is complemented with workshops offered during full-day staff development sessions, and external workshops and seminars that teachers are encouraged to attend. The professional development program is overseen by the Region 5 Director of Curriculum and Staff Development, who works closely with the building administrators and leadership team to develop ongoing professional development programming, and align the professional development programming to building and district goals. The professional development program works effectively to build programmatic capacity and guide school improvement.

7. School Leadership

The school leadership team is composed of the building principal, two associate principals, one assistant principal, a director of counseling, and eight department chairs. The school leadership team is supported by the work of the district leadership team, which consists of a superintendent, director of pupil and personnel services, coordinator of pupil services, athletic director, facilities director, director of finance, and director of curriculum and professional development.

The school leadership team meets regularly to monitor school operations, promote school improvement, and ensure that the school is living its mission. An example of how the Amity High School leadership team ensures the implementation of school improvement programming occurred this year when the leadership team implemented a new teacher and principal evaluation plan.

In 2012, the Connecticut State Legislature passed a new statute calling for revisions to teacher and principal evaluation in the State of Connecticut. The Connecticut State Board of Education adopted guidelines for the use of formal observations, informal observations, standardized assessment results, non-standardized assessment results, student feedback, teacher feedback, and parent feedback in teacher and principal evaluation. During the 2012-13 academic year, a district committee used the guidelines to develop a new teacher and principal evaluation plan. The plan was adopted by the Region 5 Board of Education in the spring of 2013. An implementation date was set for September, 2013.

Throughout the process, the school leadership team met regularly to review the progress of the district teacher evaluation committee and provide input. Once fully developed, the leadership team was trained in the new evaluation instrument, went through calibration exercises, communicated expectations to teachers, students, and parents, and implemented the plan with fidelity. The building principal and associate/assistant principals provided in-service training to the entire faculty in August and September, 2013. Following this training, department chairs consulted with content area teachers to guide the development of SMART goals that incorporate standardized and non-standardized assessment data. Throughout the process, the leadership team met to monitor progress, troubleshoot, align resources, calibrate and adjust the plan to ensure effective implementation.

The development and implementation of the teacher and principal evaluation plan provides an example of how the leadership team works collaboratively to implement district and State policy. The site-based approach relies on effective collaboration between all stakeholders. Ultimately, the focus of the leadership team is always on implementation of practices that support student achievement.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: Connecticut Academic Performance Test

All Students Tested/Grade: 10

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: Connecticut State Department of Education

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient and Above	96	96	96	89	90
% Goal and Above	81	76	80	66	64
Number of students tested	410	395	378	421	402
Percent of total students tested	98	95	96	98	98
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	4	6	2	1	2
% of students tested with alternative assessment	1	2	1	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient and Above	77	77	74	64	65
% Goal and Above	46	29	44	36	18
Number of students tested	26	35	23	36	34
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient and Above	93	98	97	97	97
% Goal and Above	82	87	94	77	90
Number of students tested	39	50	37	40	41

7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient and Above	97	97	97	92	90
% Goal and Above	83	75	81	67	63
Number of students tested	332	336	316	354	328
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA

Test: Connecticut Academic Performance Test

All Students Tested/Grade: 10

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: Connecticut State Department of Education

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient and Above	98	98	98	97	94
% Goal and Above	80	82	82	73	73
Number of students tested	410	395	381	421	402
Percent of total students tested	98	95	97	97	98
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	5	5	1	1	2
% of students tested with alternative assessment	1	2	1	1	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient and Above	100	94	91	94	74
% Goal and Above	46	51	56	50	44
Number of students tested	26	35	23	36	34
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient and Above	90	96	100	98	98
% Goal and Above	75	82	84	90	81
Number of students tested	39	50	37	40	41
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient and Above					

% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient and Above	98	99	98	97	94
% Goal and Above	80	82	83	76	74
Number of students tested	332	336	319	353	328
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient and Above					
% Goal and Above					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: