

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



May 7, 2022

Dear Amity Community:

With the failure of the 2022-2023 Amity Regional School District Budget to pass referendum, this is opportunity to address some of the most common concerns, misunderstandings, and questions that have been received in the last month. While not every individual issue might be addressed, by responding to the most common topics, clarification may be provided around many of the concerns that have been expressed about the proposed budget.

This letter to the community is the first sent to the community between now and when the next date of referendum is set. The purpose of this letter is to address the 2022 U.S. News and World Report rankings of the “Best High Schools” and to highlight the focus and success on academics that students experience while attending Amity Regional High School.

Some members of our community have expressed concern about Amity’s 28th place ranking in the U.S. News and World Report 2022 Best High Schools list for Connecticut. An argument being perpetuated that Amity has lost its focus on academics, which is the reason for the drop in the rankings. That conjecture is false, as the current school year is in no way reflected in the 2022 rankings.

The 2022 U.S. News high school rankings are based on data from the 2019-2020 school year. Therefore, the rankings are, at best, based on data from our schools 2 years ago. However, since most schools across the United States shut their doors in March 2020, U.S. News changed their calculation process from prior publications of this rankings list. With little assessment data available from the 2019-2020 school year, “U. S. News relied on historic assessment data from the three prior ranking years...Specifically, an average of the following years and academic subjects were used: 2016-2017 math and reading assessment data; 2017-2018 math and reading assessment data; and 2018-2019 math, reading and science assessment data.” This meant that 50% of the data used to calculate the rankings is old data, while the remaining data (like graduation rates) comes from the 2019-2020 school year. The argument that what occurs in Amity now is somehow reflected in the 2022 U.S. News rankings is untrue.

The Bethwood Patch reported on April 27, 2022 “Amity Regional High School Ranked Among Best in Country” based on the U.S. News and World Report rankings. Niche.com, another ranking system, ranks Amity Regional High School as 19th in the state of Connecticut and gives the high school as grade of A – placing Amity in the top 10% of all high schools. These different scores and interpretations show the futility in using algorithms to assess the quality of our school.

Rather the focus on the rankings, consider that Amity Regional High School offers a comprehensive educational experience to students that encompasses so much more than the test scores that go into a ranking calculation. Some experiences worth noting include:

- 29 Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings with 54 AP Sections
- 443 different students enrolled in AP classes for a total of 956 AP course enrollments

- 3 UCONN Early College Experience (ECE) Classes with a total enrollment of 57 students
- 98 students enrolled in our Science Research Project (SRP)
- 8 Pre-Apprenticeship Manufacturing Program candidates
- 321 Senior Service Learning Program (SSLP) students

The State of Connecticut's most recent Next Generation Accountability Report show Amity Regional High School above the state average with:

- 98.4% of students in grades 9, 10, 11 on track to high school graduation
- 98.3% of students graduating high school in 4 years
- 87.7% of students enrolling in postsecondary education within first year of graduation
- 96.1% of students returning to postsecondary education after their first year of enrollment

Beyond academics, our high school students can experience approximately 50 different student clubs, extracurricular, and co-curricular activities. Our athletics department is comprised of 67 different athletic teams. In the current school year, Amity Regional High School has had a total roster 1,215 of athletes. Our students have opportunity for music adjudication, scholastic arts competition, and performance in both the dramas and musicals of Amity Creative Theater. Amity students also have choice to attend area magnet schools and vocational schools if the specialized programming of those schools meet their post-secondary goals and academic needs.