

Principal's Report

Amherst School District

School: Amherst Middle School

March 29, 2018

Porter Dodge, Principal

Elementary
& Middle
School
Excellence

- **Parent Partnership Team Meeting:** On March 19th Dr. Elizabeth Harwood, Psychology Department Coordinator at Rivier University presented at our March **AMS Parent Partnership Team** meeting. Dr. Harwood provided us with statistics on Drug Use in NH and in the US, and gave parents a sense of how prevalent it is and what the most common drugs for teens are. We learned what Substance Use Disorder was, the signs and symptoms, how to identify it, and how to differentiate it from typical experimentation and at what point does alcohol use become a problem. Dr. Harwood spoke of what makes teens in particular so vulnerable to drug use, and how can drug use affect the brain over time Her focus on their developing brain and risk-taking behavior, and additional risk factors and protective factors for drug use, with an emphasis on what parents can do was invaluable.
- **Junior National Honor Society:** The third installation of National Junior Honor Society took place on March 20th. The current NJHS officers did an amazing job running the entire evening to honor a distinguished group of students.
- **Willy Wonka, Jr.:** Congratulations to our talented AMS Theater Club cast and crew for last week's performances of Willie Wonka, Jr. The March 15-18 performances were simply wonderful! We appreciate all of the hard work by the production leaders Jennifer Fichera, Sharon April, Kim Whitehead and Loren Hallett. A big thank you to parents and students that worked so hard to bring about such a successful production.
- **Hunger Banquet:** On Thursday, March 22nd grade 7 held its annual hunger banquet. A special "thanks" goes out to teachers and the many parent volunteers that help to make this a powerful presentation and worthwhile learning experience for our students.
- **Vaping Presentation:** Souhegan High School and Amherst Middle School joined forces to offer a Parent Partnership Team evening at the SHS Theater on February 19. Dr. Joseph Hou, Pulmonary Specialist at Catholic Medical Center in Manchester, along with School Resource Officers Mike Knox and John Smith, presented an excellent and informative program on vaping and the ancillary

problems associated with it. Examples of paraphernalia and oils were shown, and the audience was allowed to ask many relevant questions at the end. This presentation was well attended and parents have asked for similar programs in the future.

- **Mock Trial:** 8th grade students have been busy exploring history through Mock Trial. SHS Mock Trial students have helped to inspire AMS students and will be scoring their trials in the coming school days. This experience provides an authentic, rigorous, and immersive experience for all students. Souhegan High School Mock Trial Coach, Richard Vassar, volunteers his time to assist grade 8 teachers with the preparation, and serves as the courtroom Judge during the trials.

- **Spelling Bee:** The annual Amherst Middle School Spelling Bee took place on Monday, January 8th and was a great battle! Three finalists represented each grade:

Grade 5: Anna Brammer-DePuy, Meagan Bunch, Noah Guarrera

Grade 6: Tommy Hanlon, Gabby Purvis, Sophia Swanson

Grade 7: Hannah Clement, Parker Krauss, Teresa Krawiecki

Grade 8: Jackie Hayden, Olivia Lau Quan, Kayli Pike

This bee went eight exciting rounds! Fifth graders, Anna Brammer-DePuy and Meagan Bunch, and seventh grader, Teresa Krawiecki, went many rounds before it came down to our winner, Ann Brammer-DePuy. The championship word was *propaganda*. It is rare to have a fifth grader win our school-wide spelling. The NH State Spelling Bee was held in Concord, NH at the Capitol Center for the Arts on February 24, 2018. All state school bee winners competed for the opportunity to participate to the verbal bee in the afternoon to determine the NH State Spelling Bee champion. Congratulations to **Anna Brammer-DePuy** for being crowned our Amherst Middle School Spelling Bee Champion!

Diligent
Fiscal
Oversight

Grade	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	Apr.	May	June
5	134	135	136	137	137	136	138	139			
6	141	141	142	141	141	140	140	139			
7	173 (28 MV)	174 (28 MV)	174 (28 MV)	174 (28 MV)	176 (28 MV)	176 (28 MV)	175 (28 MV)	175 (28 MV)			
8	184 (31 MV)	185 (31 MV)	185 (32 MV)	186 (32 MV)	187 (32 MV)	187 (32 MV)	186 (32 MV)	186 (32 MV)			
Total	632	635	637	638	639	639	639	639			

Inspirational
& Effective
Teaching

- **Assistant Principal Search Committee:** Several applicants have interviewed with staff, parents, and administration. The process has been thoughtful, thorough, and inclusive. At this point, we have decided that we need to continue and refine our search process to find the right match for AMS. Thank you to everyone who has contributed their time and voice to helping fill this important role in our truly special community of learners.
- **Staff Hiring:** Interviews are underway for all of our open teaching positions. Teachers have participated in all of our interviews to find the right candidates to join AMS.
- **PACE (Performance Assessment Competency Education)-AMS** teachers continue to work with the state to design common assessments to be implemented across the state as one component of PACE. 3 of the 7 common tasks for the 2017/2018 school year have been completed at AMS and the remaining tasks are in progress. These tasks are curriculum embedded and so are a natural part of students' classroom learning experience. Teachers continue to build their assessment skills through calibration of student work and design of engaging tasks.
- **Community Action for Safe Teens** (CAST is once again holding a [Youth Empowerment Summit](#) which will be an opportunity for youth to come together and connect with their peers in the Souhegan Valley Community around the topics of alcohol and drug prevention and mental health awareness. Amherst Middle School has had a number of students attend this summit over the past few years. It is a wonderful opportunity for them to develop leadership skills. Participants will engage in team building activities developed by NH Teen Institute and begin a discussion relative to issues of concern and ways to address these concerns in a positive manner.

Innovative
Technology
Integration

- We are continuing training on Empower as we expand the field test of the grading and reporting software. Teachers have received professional development time and opportunities to familiarize themselves with the software at the March late start.
- 5th and 6th grade students are using Dreambox learning to enrich and support their math experience. This online tool provides a developmentally appropriate mix of gamification and adaptive learning to support all levels of learners.

SAU #39
Strategic
Planning

- Formal and informal observations using the *Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Tool* and *STAGES* continue as part of our work with the **Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Tool**.
- *AMS* continues its work towards our *Mastery Learning System*. At the March department meeting, teachers completed a "Keep, Stop, Start" self-assessment that will be used by administration to plan targeted and differentiated professional learning pathways for all teachers.
- The March late start will be dedicated to working with *Empower* and standards-based grading across all curriculum.

Summary of
Upcoming
Events

March 23: Hurdles Clinic, 2:30-4pm
March 26: Spring Sports Tryouts/Practices Begin
March 28-29: Grade 7 to Battleship Cove
March 30: 8th Grade to SHS for Shakespeare play, 12:30-2pm
April 3: Theater Club DVD Party, 2:30-5pm
April 4: Quarter 3 specials for grades 5/6 end
April 6: Community Flyer Distribution Day
April 10: **Late Start**, school begins at 9:25am
April 13: School dance, 7pm, grades 6, 7 & 8
April 16: Parent Partnership Meeting, 6:30pm
April 18: NJHS Meeting and Service Session
April 19: Grade 7 GSI/Eagle Tank
April 23-27: Spring Recess, no school
April 30-May 1: Talent Show Technical Rehearsals
May 2: AMS Open House for MV Students and Parents
May 4: Grade 6 Field Trip (Nedelman/Provencher)
May 4: AMS Talent Show, 6:30pm
May 7: Grade 4 to 5 Transition Evening, 6pm