



# Pathways

*A Weekly Collection of Information, Thoughts, Reflections and Accolades for the Reading Public Schools Community*

March 29, 2015

Volume 1, Number 28

## Upcoming Dates

- March 30 – April 2 - PARCC Assessment for Grades 3-8
- March 29 – (2:00 p.m.) RMHS Formal Recital in the Endslo PAC
- March 30 - (3:15 p.m.) Expanding the Boundaries of Teaching and Learning Class;
- March 31 – (2:30 p.m.) Five Star Theatre Auditions in the Music Suite and PAC
- April 1 - (4:00 p.m.) RETELL Session 7 in Distance Learning Room; (5:00 p.m.) Parker School Council Meeting; (7:00 p.m.) Parker PTO meeting
- April 3 – Good Friday No School; Passover begins at sundown
- April 6 – (3:15 p.m.) Expanding the Boundaries of Teaching and Learning Class; (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- April 7 – Town Election in the Hawkes Field House
- April 8 – (2:30 p.m.) RMHS PLC Meetings; (3:00 p.m.) Middle

## David Brooks on Key Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

“As the economy changes, the skills required to thrive in it change, too,” says David Brooks in this *New York Times* column, “and it takes a while before these new skills are defined and acknowledged.” He gives several examples:

- *Herding cats* – Doug Lemov has catalogued the “micro-gestures” of especially effective teachers in his book, *Teach Like a Champion 2.0* (Jossey-Bass, 2015). “The master of cat herding,” says Brooks, “senses when attention is about to wander, knows how fast to move a diverse group, senses the rhythm between lecturing and class participation, varies the emotional tone. This is a performance skill that surely is relevant beyond education.”
- *Social courage* – In today’s loosely networked world, this has particular value – the ability to go to a conference, meet a variety of people, invite six of them to lunch afterward, and form long-term friendships with four of them. “People with social courage are extroverted in issuing invitations but introverted in conversation – willing to listen 70 percent of the time,” says Brooks. “They build not just contacts but actual friendships by engaging people on multiple levels.”
- *Capturing amorphous trends with a clarifying label* – People with this skill can “look at a complex situation, grasp the gist and clarify it by *naming what is going on*,” says Brooks. He quotes Oswald Chambers: “The author who benefits you most is not the one who tells you something you did not know before, but the one who gives expression to the truth that has been dumbly struggling in you for utterance.”
- *Making nonhuman things intuitive to humans* – This is what Steve Jobs did so well.
- *Purpose provision* – “Many people go through life overwhelmed by options, afraid of closing off opportunities,” says Brooks. But a few have fully cultivated moral passions that can help others choose the one thing they should dedicate themselves to.”
- *The ability to simultaneously hold two opposed ideas in mind* – “For some reason,” says Brooks, “I am continually running across people who believe this is the ability their employees and bosses need right now.”
- *Cross-class expertise* – “In a world divided along class, ethnic, and economic grounds,” says Brooks, “some people are culturally multilingual. They can operate in an insular social niche while seeing it from the vantage point of an outsider.”

“Skills in Flux” by David Brooks in *The New York Times*, March 17, 2015,  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/17/opinion/skills-in-flux.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/17/opinion/skills-in-flux.html?_r=0)  
. Reprinted from Marshall Memo 579.

## Effective Use of On-the-Spot (a.k.a. Formative) Assessments

In this *Edutopia* article, Vicki Davis describes a telling moment as she taught binary numbers to her students (adding ones and zeroes like a computer). This topic

School PLC Meetings; (3:30 p.m.) Band & Chorus Jr. District Rehearsal in Lowell; (4:00 p.m.) RETELL Session 8 in Distance Learning Room;

- April 9 – (3:15 p.m.) Elementary PLC Meetings; (3:30 p.m.) Elementary Artsfest Rehearsal; (6:30 p.m.) Killam Learning Fair
- April 10 – RMHS Drama Elementary School Tour; (3:30 p.m.) Band & Chorus Jr. District Rehearsal in Lowell;
- April 11 - (9:00 a.m.) Band & Chorus Jr. District Rehearsal & Performance in Lowell; (10:00 a.m.) RMHS Drama Set Build; (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Playwriting Festival in the Endslo PAC

looks harder than it is, says Davis, and she's found that if she teaches students to count by binary numbers, they usually get it. After a few minutes of this, two students piped up, "We've got this, it's easy. Can we move on?" Davis checked with the rest of the class: "Do you have this?" They all vigorously nodded their heads in assent.

"My teacher instinct said that everyone knew it," says Davis, "but I decided to experiment. So I wrote a problem on the board. Students were already logged into Socrative, and a box opened on their screens. Each student typed in his or her answer to the problem. They clicked enter, and all their answers appeared on my screen beside the name of each student." Davis was shocked to see that only two students had the correct answer – the two students who had impatiently asked her to move on. Not one of the students who confidently nodded that they understood was able to answer the problem correctly.

Davis retaught the concept, had students try another problem in Socrative, and the results improved a little. She worked another slightly different problem and checked in, and more students got it. Ten minutes later, the entire class had mastered binary numbers.

Is this checking-for-understanding and reteaching process too time-consuming to be a realistic option, given the pressure to cover the curriculum? Not at all, says Davis: "It didn't take me longer to teach binary numbers. You see, I don't move past binary numbers until all of my students are scoring 90 percent or higher. And as a result of this experience, *I taught binary numbers and all of the accompanying standards in three days instead of my usual five, and no one had to come for after-school tutoring.*"

The key, she says, is an anonymous all-class assessment system that allows the teacher to see what's really going on in students' minds without "the embarrassment of public hand-raising." She recommends the following real-time checking-for-understanding systems:

- Socrative – It can be used on the fly, for quick quizzes, or for tests that count, and also works with competitive games like Space Race:  
<http://www.socrative.com>
- Kahoot – This program allows teachers to create quizzes, flashcards, and review games, with students using computers, cell phones, or other devices:  
<https://getkahoot.com>
- Zaption – This tool can embed questions within a flipped video, not allowing students to continue till they've answered each one correctly:  
<https://www.zaption.com>
- Backchannel chat tools – These are live chats that accompany class discussions and allow teachers to create exit ticket activities. One example:  
<http://www.chatzy.com>
- Plickers – Each student holds up a unique QR card, with its orientation signaling their response to a 4-choice question, and the teacher's smartphone reads and instantly tabulates individual and all-class responses:  
<https://www.plickers.com>.

"Test scores should never be a surprise," concludes Davis. "You don't need to be a mind reader. You just need a formative assessment toolbox, and you need to use it every day."

"5 Fantastic, Fast, Formative Assessment Tools" by Vicki Davis in *Edutopia*, January 15, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1xUUm0J>. Reprinted from Marshall Memo 579.

## Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to Coolidge students Maddie Lemone, Sofia Azevedo and Gracyan Rafuse for being the first Reading participants for the All-State Treble Chorus. In its second year, the All State Treble Chorus performed on Saturday the 21st at the Seaport Hotel in Boston, MA under the direction of Dr. Judy Bowers.
- Congratulations to the RMHS Percussion Band for placing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the NESBA Winter Show held at RMHS.
- Congratulations to the RMHS Winter Guard for placing 3<sup>rd</sup> in the NESBA Winter Show at RMHS.
- Congratulations to the RMHS Science Team for their strong showing in the state competition with 11 students placing in the top 10 of 9 events.
- Congratulations to the RMHS Robotics team for a strong showing at their competition at Bryant University. The team once again won the Entrepreneurship award.
- Congratulations to the RMHS Jazz Ensemble for capturing Gold at the State finals in Framingham. Also, congratulations to Jazz members Niles Singer, Scott Dumas and Bailey Lanzilotta who received outstanding musicianship awards.
- To Birch Meadow Teachers Danielle Tucker and Patti Beckman for their presentation on Teacher Leadership at

## Reading Public School Happenings

This past weekend was a very busy weekend for our schools. Special thanks to the students, parents, and educators who made these opportunities and accomplishments possible.

### RMHS Science Olympiad Team

Last weekend, the Reading Memorial High School Science Olympiad Team competed in the Massachusetts State Science Olympiad Tournament. Below is a picture of the team with Advisor Martha Moore and RMHS student Taylor Bergeron in the Compound Machines event.





the School Committee meeting last Thursday.

### RMHS Jazz Ensemble

Congratulations to the RMHS Jazz Ensemble (below) who received a gold medal in the MAJE State Jazz Festival last weekend.



### Hunts Photo's School Pride Photo Contest Recognition

Congratulations to RMHS student Sarah Bond whose photo was selected along with 11 other Massachusetts photos to be part of the Hunts Photo's School Pride Photo Contest Gallery. The unique part of this photo is that Sara took this photo herself. It's a self-portrait where she placed the camera on a tripod and set the self-timer. She had to set the time just right for the hurdle jump. A track star *and* a photographer all in one. Sarah is a student in Kathleen Dailey's Photography Class.





### Quote of the Week....



**"The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping old ones."**

**John Maynard Keynes**

### **RMHS Color Guard and Percussion Band**

Last weekend, the RMHS Winter Color Guard and Percussion Band participated in the NESBA Tournament. Congratulations to the Percussion Band who placed 2<sup>nd</sup> and to the Winter Color Guard for placing 3<sup>rd</sup>.





## Disney Tweet of the Week

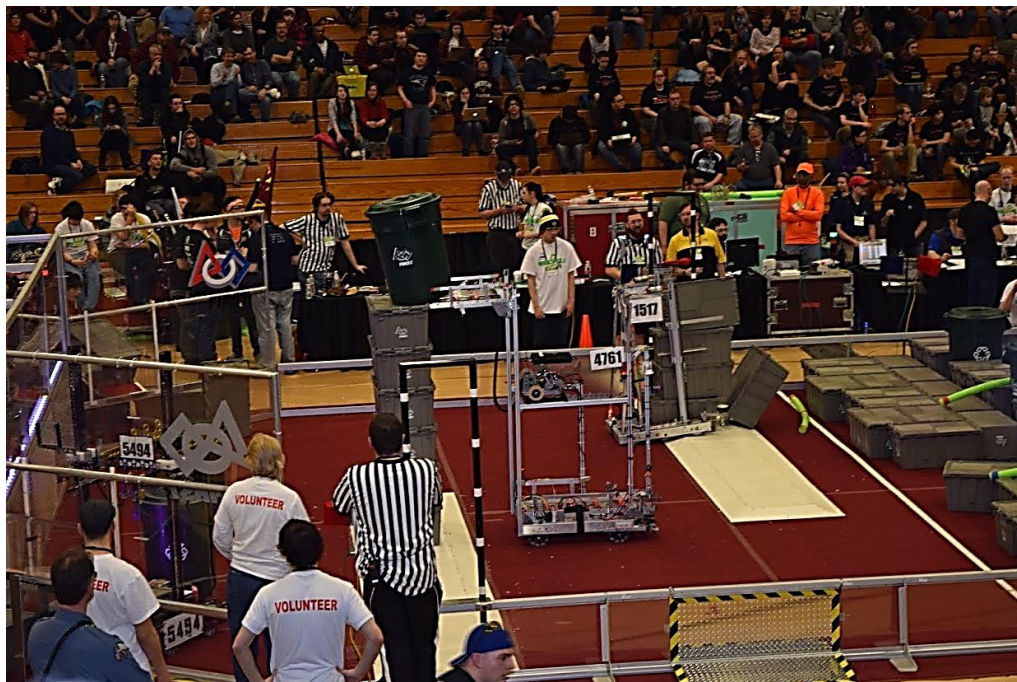


"Don't look backwards for very long. Keep moving forward, opening up new doors and doing new things."

Walt Disney

## RMHS Robotics Team

This past weekend, the RMHS Robotics Team, Team 4761, participated in the NE FIRST Regional Tournament in Smithsfield, Rhode Island. The team did very well, reaching the quarterfinals of the tournament and receiving the Entrepreneurship Award. The team now awaits to see if they qualify for the State Tournament, to be held at WPI in April.



## Stepping Stones...

- We welcome the following new hires to our school district:
- Paul Loan, Custodial Substitute, District
- **We have posted** a position on School Spring. If interested, please visit [www.schoolspring.com](http://www.schoolspring.com) to view the job details.

Girls Lacrosse Coaching Assistant, Reading Memorial High School	JOB ID #1378162
Volunteer Assistant Baseball Coach, Reading Memorial High School	JOB ID #1378182
Volunteer Assistant Softball Coach, Reading Memorial High School	JOB ID #1378222
French Teacher, Reading Memorial High School	JOB ID #1381822

- **Math resources website** – In this article in *Teaching Children Mathematics*, Holly Henderson Pinter recommends the YouCubed website <http://www.youcubed.org>, which has a rich variety of free resources. Topics include mindset, number sense, depth not speed, and math apps.
- **19 Exemplar CCSS-Mathematics Resources**

<http://www.air.org/resource/quality-online-resources-and-supports-educators-teaching-common-core-state-standards>

After sifting through nearly 400 websites, researchers from the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Education Development Center (EDC) have highlighted thirteen of the best collections of math lessons, units, and assessments for the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

To get this free report, funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Regional Education Lab (REL) Northeast & Islands, download this PDF:

<http://www.relnei.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/4-1-4-NRDRA-Quality-Online-Resources.pdf>

- **Teaching the Core Video Library**

<http://achievethecore.org/press-release/teaching-the-core>

So, what does a lesson aligned to the CCSS look like? What does it sound like in actual practice?

A new video library launched Tuesday with free examples of strong, bell-to-bell lessons videotaped in real schools:

<http://www.teachingthecore.org/>

Starring teachers hand-selected by their districts for classroom excellence, each clip in the Teaching the Core Video Library comes with descriptive annotations from educators that call out

- teacher actions
- student behaviors
- lesson elements that support CCSS learning

## Contact Us

The Pathways newsletter is published weekly for the Reading Public School Community. If you have anything that you would like to share, please email your information to John Doherty at

[john.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us](mailto:john.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us)

Every video from Teaching the Core also includes the materials used in the lesson, examples of student work, and short teacher interviews about the lesson.

A project of the non-profit Student Achievement Partners, Teaching the Core Video Library received support from the Danielson Group and funding from The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust. **Thanks to Parker Teacher Anne Natale for sharing these valuable resources.**

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## Blazing Trails....

**"Obama Seeks More Federal Money for Education."** President Barack Obama recently said he is seeking additional federal funding for education. "The challenge that we face is that this is a monumental task and it requires resources," he said. A budget proposal from Republicans is expected soon. [Read More](#)

**"Time on Testing ... Well spent?"** As concern grows over the amount of time students spend preparing for and taking standardized tests, ASCD's latest Policy Points examines data from the most recent assessment studies and surveys for a better understanding of how many tests students take, who requires the tests, and what purposes the tests serve. See Policy Points: Testing Time today to find out other interesting tidbits, including which students are tested the most and how much standardized tests cost. [Read More](#)

**"Tips and Tools for Student Portfolios."** Digital student portfolios offer a great form of authentic assessment and a tool to demonstrate student learning to parents, fourth-grade teacher Lindsey Petlak writes in this blog post. Petlak shares how she designs and uses portfolios in her class, and offers forms to help with organization and brief overviews of useful software and tablet applications. [Read More](#)

**"10 Reasons Flipped Classrooms Could Change Education."** Flipped instruction can help maximize class time, personalize learning, excite students and teachers and build 21st-century skills, said education consultant and author Kathleen Fulton. She recently shared ways that flipped instruction can change learning. [Read More](#)

**"My Journey Toward a Differentiated Classroom."** "Wanting to be the best teacher you can be means that you never fully 'arrive,'" writes ASCD Faculty member Kristina Doubet. In a recent Inservice post, Doubet discusses her journey toward a differentiated classroom and shares tips on how educators can incorporate differentiated instruction into their classrooms. [Read More](#)

**"Countries, Global Organizations are Working to Improve School Safety."** Data from global organizations show there have been hundreds of attacks on schools worldwide in the past decade. Now, A World at School -- a global education coalition -- and other groups are seeking to curb school violence. Several countries, including Norway, and the United Nations also are working to improve safety. [Read More](#)

**Have a Great Week!**