



# Pathways

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

March 1, 2015

Volume 6, Number 26

## Upcoming Dates

- March 1 - (12:00 p.m.) RMHS Drama Q2Q
- March 2 - (3:15 p.m.) Expanding the Boundaries of Teaching and Learning Class;
- March 4 - (2:30 p.m.) High School District PLC Meetings; (3:00 p.m.) Middle School District PLC Meetings; PARCC Training for all Special Education Teachers at Coolidge; (4:00 p.m.) RETELL Session 4 in Distance Learning Room; (5:00 p.m.) Parker School Council Meeting; Wood End Staff vs. Grade 5 Basketball Game; (7:00 p.m.) Parker PTO
- March 5 - (3:15 p.m.) Elementary District PLC Meetings; PARCC Training for all Special Education Teachers at Killam
- March 6 - (7:30 p.m.) RMHS Drama Production - Antigone
- March 7 and 8 (All Day)-First Robotics Regional Tournament at Reading Memorial High School



THE RMHS DRAMA CLUB PRESENTS



Dear Parents and Community Members,

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> the Drama Club of Reading Memorial High School will present ***Antigone*** by Sophocles. As a part of our English curriculum many of you know this classic tale of a young girl's strong rebellion against her family and her government. Our telling brings us to a modern day war-torn Thebes. The characters come from behind the mask to show how this story still reflects our own communities, fears, and flaws. In a time when protestors take to our own streets and power struggles separate cities and nations, there has never felt like a more appropriate time to revisit the lessons and themes of this piece.

**As always, we would love to invite you to be our guest at a performance to support your students.**

If you would like to reserve your ticket, please go to our website ***www.ticketstage.com*** and receive your ticket through our on-line ticketing service.

You could also contact me at ***natalie.cunha@reading.k12.ma.us*** to reserve tickets and they could be held for you at the box office.

Thank you for your continued support of the Drama Club as your commitment and enthusiasm helps to make each show a positive experience for our students.

Sincerely,  
***Natalie Cunha***  
Director

## 7 Steps to Good Digital Parenting

*By Steve Balkam*

*Reposted from the Family Online Safety Institute.*

- March 8 – (7:30 p.m.) RMHS Drama Production – Antigone
- March 9-Elementary Report Card Grades due to Principals; (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- March 10 – (2:00 p.m.) RMHS Band – MAJE Jazz festival at RMHS; (3:30 p.m.) Killam School Council Meeting; (7:00 p.m.) Killam PTO Meeting
- March 11 – (1:15 p.m.) PARCC Training for all Non-Special Education Teachers at Killam; PARCC Training for all non-Special Education Teachers at their middle schools. High School PLC meeting; (1:30 p.m.) Special Education Vertical Meeting; (4:00 p.m.) RETELL Session 5 in Distance Learning Room; (6:00 p.m.) Wood End Ice Cream Social; (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Junior Parent Night in the Endslo PAC
- March 12 – Elementary Report Cards emailed home; (6:30 p.m.) Parker Musical "Just So" in the Parker Auditorium
- March 13 – (7:30 p.m.) Parker Musical "Just So" in the Parker Auditorium
- March 14 – RMHS

I'm often told how hard it is to parent in this digital age. So many decisions about devices, software, apps and games have to be made and at increasingly younger ages. Amazon and others have created tablets for pre-school kids. Parents are buying smart phones for kindergartners. And there's a potty training app complete with stand for your iPad. All of this before they've reached elementary and middle school years. Then it's Minecraft, Moshi Monsters and Club Penguin. Texting takes off, particularly among the girls and new issues arise around photo and video sharing.

And just when you've mastered all that, the teen years come along with the onslaught of social media sites from Facebook to Instagram to Twitter, never mind anonymous apps like Ask.fm, Secret and YikYak. Problematic issues arise that range from sexting and cyberbullying to identity theft and simply spending too much time online.

What's a parent to do?

Well, I've tried to distill many years of work in this constantly changing space to seven simple, but still challenging steps to become a good digital parent. It is definitely a journey, like parenting itself. And there is no such thing as perfection. Just good enough. Here goes:

### 1. Talk with your kids

It sounds simple, but the number one indicator of good digital parenting is keeping an open line of communication going with your kids. Talk early and often. It is not like the birds and the bees discussion. It is more like an ongoing dialogue that will move and shift as your child works her way through several key developmental stages. Stay calm. Be open and direct. But keep talking.

### 2. Educate yourself

This is probably the first technology in human history where the kids are leading the adults. It is very humbling to have a 7 year old explain how to upload a video. Or your teen rolling his eyes once again as you try to master Pandora. But there is a wealth of tips, videos, explanations and guides out there. If in doubt, simply type in your question or concern in your favorite search engine and there will be more than enough information to go on.

### 3. Use parental controls

It goes without saying that there is content on the Internet you don't want your kids stumbling upon. All of the major operating systems, search engines, cell phone providers and gaming platforms provide either free or inexpensive parental controls to help you manage your kids' online experience. And, as your kids get older, move from controls to monitoring tools, particularly around time limits to discourage texting in class or vamping late at night.

Jazz Competition @ UNH; (8:00 a.m.) SAT Testing – RMHS is a test site; (12:00 p.m.) RMHS Drama Set Build; (2:00 p.m.) Parker Musical “Just So” in the Parker Auditorium

#### 4. Set ground rules & apply sanctions

Many parents don’t know where to start in creating rules of the road for their kids’ digital use. But there are many online safety contracts to choose from as well as simple house rules such as no devices at dinner and handing in their phones at night. Once you’ve set the rules, enforce them. Let your kids know that they will lose online privileges if they break the rules and be clear and consistent about what those sanctions will be.

#### 5. Friend and follow, but don’t stalk

When your teen opens her Facebook account at 13, ensure you’re her first friend. Follow your kids on Twitter and YouTube. Don’t overdo it and leave daily comments, but don’t under do it either. It’s good to stay close as your teen makes his first forays into the world of social media. But don’t be tempted to spy on your kids, either. Talking instead of stalking is what builds trust. Give your teen some space to experiment, to take (healthy) risks and to build resiliency.

#### 6. Explore, share and celebrate

With the rules and tools in place, don’t forget to just go online with your kids. Play games, watch videos, share photos and generally hang out with your children online. Learn from them and have fun. Share your favorite sites and download their apps. See the world through their eyes. And let them know your values and beliefs as you guide them on their way.

#### 7. Be a good digital role model

Be the change you want to see in your kids. Resist the temptation to pull out your phone to check your email over dinner or send a quick text while driving. Keep an eye on your own digital habits and compulsions and model good digital behavior and balance. Your kids will pay far more attention to what you do, than to what you say – both online and offline.

*Stephen Balkam is the Founder & CEO of the Family Online Safety Institute. For the past 30 years, Stephen Balkam has had a wide range of leadership roles in the nonprofit sector in the both the US and UK. He is currently the Founder and CEO of the Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI), an international, nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, DC. FOSI’s mission is to make the online world safer for kids and their families.*

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## Collegiality 101

“The level of collaboration demanded by modern teaching is unprecedented,” says Kentucky high-school teacher Paul Barnwell in this *Education Week* article. “[I]f we don’t deliberately forge personal connections and strengthen relationships within our school buildings, then we are handicapping our efforts to reach, mentor, and educate all our students.” Here are his suggestions for overcoming the tendency to hunker down:

- *Give without strings attached.* For example, one of Barnwell’s colleagues was fighting a nasty cold and asked him to cover her fifth-period class a couple of times, and he did so without expecting a quid pro quo. “In our personal and professional lives, dealing with people who always expect something in return isn’t a way to build sustainable or authentic relationships,” he says.

- *Talk, don’t e-mail.* “The more time you spend in front of a screen, the less time you have to say hello, ask questions, and build relationships,” says Barnwell. “The more e-mail you send, the more messages you must check and reply to.” He makes a point of walking down the hall and making personal contact, or at least picking up the phone.

## Kudos and Accolades

- Kudos to RMHS students Megan Catalano and Julia Donohue along with RMHS Social Studies Kerry Gallagher for presenting at the February 24<sup>th</sup> School Committee Meeting.
  - Congratulations to RMHS wrestler Adam Morton won the state championship in the 152 lbs. weight class.
  - The following RMHS Wrestlers will be competing in the All-State Wrestling tournament in Salem this weekend in Salem: Trevor Morton, Adam Morton, Joe Penna, Matthew Ferraro
  - Congratulations to Killam Principal Cathy Giles, who was featured in the latest edition of the *Readings* magazine. The article features Cathy's life as a Principal of the Killam Elementary School.
- Congratulations to the following Coolidge students who were chosen for the Northeastern Junior Districts; Angelo Catalano, Abigail La Terza, Hannah Jung, Isabel Molettieri and Alyssa Pryputniwicz.
- Congratulations to RMHS Physics Teacher Steve Cogger, who was recently published in the February issue of *The Science Teacher* magazine. The article is titled, *Doing the Data Walk, Ticker Tapes for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Student*.

- *Follow your colleagues on social media.* This can spark personal and professional conversations, says Barnwell. He's set up a Twitter list in his school that allows people to take the pulse of opinions and ideas throughout the building.

- *Make interdisciplinary connections.* Barnwell recently reached out to the functional mental disabilities teachers in his school to get their students involved in his digital media elective. "My interactions with the FMD teachers and students have been some of my favorite, most meaningful interactions at my school," he says.

- *Laugh.* "Yes, our work is important and incredibly difficult," sighs Barnwell. "I know the feeling of having a furrowed brow and tension building up in my neck and shoulders after a particularly trying day." Smiling, cracking a joke, sharing joy are vital to making the job sustainable.

- *Be humble.* "I'm in the midst of my 11<sup>th</sup> year teaching," says Barnwell, "and one of my current classes is the most difficult I've ever had in terms of student engagement, promoting positive behavior, and attendance issues." It makes all the difference if he can reach out to colleagues who don't have an aura of knowing it all.

- *Expand your circles.* Barnwell confesses that it's easy for him to limit his professional conversations to his English III colleagues. He pushes himself to reach out to counselors, librarians, classroom aides, and others.

"Keep an Open Door, and Other Ways to Build In-School Relationships" by Paul Barnwell, *Education Week*, February 18, 2015 (Vol. 34, #21, p. 8-9), [www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org); the author can be reached at [paul.barnwell@jefferson.kyschools.us](mailto:paul.barnwell@jefferson.kyschools.us). Reprinted from Marshall Memo 575.

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## A Math Problem That Will Get Third Graders Thinking

In this *Teaching Children Mathematics* article, Ed Enns (Waterloo Region School District, Canada) suggests the following problem-solving challenge and invites teachers to try it with third or fourth graders and e-mail him with solutions, student work, and feedback.

Students work in pairs or triads supplied with a large piece of paper to record solutions, pens or markers, and (optionally) calculators. Here's the problem (given to students after some introductory discussion of allowances):

- *You are going to receive an allowance for the next twelve weeks. You must choose how you would like to be paid. These are your choices:*

- *You get \$2 for the first week, but you get \$0.25 more every week after that.*
- *You get \$0.01 for the first week, but the amount doubles every week after that.*

*How much would you get paid if you picked the first approach?*

*How much would you get paid if you picked the second?*

*Which choice would give you more money?*

After reviewing the problem with the class, Enns suggests having students make a prediction of which choice bring in more money and take a straw poll to see what students think. As groups work on the problem, the teacher circulates to observe problem-solving strategies and perhaps take digital photos of their work. "Try not to tell students how to do the math," he says, "but use questions to provoke their thinking," such as:

- What is the rule for how much money you will receive?

- How much money do you get the first week?
- How could you keep track of how much money you receive each week?
- Is that amount in cents or dollars?
- How much money would you have altogether after 12 weeks?
- Students who finish early might be challenged to try a third payment option:  
*Flip a coin each week to determine the amount of allowance – if the coin lands on heads, you get \$6, if it lands on tails, you get no allowance. Could this end up being more lucrative than the other two approaches?*

When students have finished, have groups present their solutions and strategies and compare and contrast them in terms of accuracy and efficiency.

“Which Is the Better Deal?” edited by Ed Enns in *Teaching Children Mathematics*, February 2015 (Vol. 21, #6, p. 328-330), [www.nctm.org](http://www.nctm.org); Enns can be reached at [ed\\_enns@wrdsb.on.ca](mailto:ed_enns@wrdsb.on.ca). Reprinted from Marshall Memo 575.

## Reading Public School Happenings

### Joshua Eaton World Café

Last Thursday evening, the Joshua Eaton Community held a World Café presentation and discussion with the purpose of having a community dialogue to gather input and ideas for moving the school forward. The World Café focused on three areas: Learning and Teaching, Leadership and School Culture, and School-Family Partnership and Communication. At each station, facilitators helped participants focus on three questions: What should we stop doing, What should we keep doing, and what should we start doing? Special thanks goes to the members of the Joshua Eaton Task Force, under the leadership of Task Force Co-Chairs Assistant Superintendent Craig Martin and Community Member Sherri VandenAkker, for coordinating the event.





Quote of the Week....



"What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail."

Robert Schuller



### Taste of Metro North

On Wednesday evening, the Reading and North Reading Rotary Clubs sponsored the Taste of Metro North in the Reading Memorial High School Field House. Twenty-eight local area restaurants were on hand to share their specialty dishes with the community. There were also student performances by the RMHS Chorus and Jazz Combo, as well as, North Reading student groups. Over 350 people attended with the proceeds going to local community organizations, including the Reading Public Schools and the Reading Education Foundation.



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### Stepping Stones...

- **We welcome the** following new hires to our school district:
  - ✓ Scott Mullen, Computer Technician, District
  - ✓ Christopher Bauer, .9 Physical Education, Wood End
  - ✓ Nancy Madden, Special Education Paraeducator; Coolidge
  - ✓ Emma Soules, Substitute, District

## Disney Tweet of the Week



"When you find out you can live without it, go along not thinking about it."

**Baloo (Jungle Book)**

### **Contact Us**

The Pathways newsletter is published weekly for Reading 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

- **We have posted** a position on School Spring. If interested, please visit [www.schoolspring.com](http://www.schoolspring.com) to view the job details.

Short Term Substitute, Full Day Kindergarten; Joshua Eaton Elementary School
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JOB ID #1286952
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## **Blazing Trails....**

**"Five Myths About School Improvement."** "Evidence abounds that educators are hard at work improving schools. More support from policy-makers for internal efforts would go a long way toward making them more successful," writes editor in chief of ASCD Educational Leadership Marge Scherer. In her recent Educational Leadership column, Scherer dispels common myths about school improvement. [Read More](#)

**"A Class Full of Geniuses: How Student-Led Help Desks Support Innovation."** Some schools in Massachusetts have launched student help desks. In this commentary, Andrew Marcinek, a director of technology, highlights a student help desk -- -- inspired by Apple's Genius Bar -- that he helped launch and talks about how the model supports authentic learning and innovation. [Read More](#)

**"ASCD Wants to See Pumping the Brakes on High-Stakes Accountability."** ASCD has released a statement on testing and accountability, urging policymakers to institute a two-year moratorium on using state standardized assessments for high-stakes accountability purposes. During the pause, assessments would continue to be administered and the results communicated to districts, schools, and families, but without the threat of punitive sanctions. [Read More](#)

**"Giving Effective Feedback When You're Short on Time."** Feedback doesn't have to take up all your time, author Daisy Wademan Dowling writes. Being straightforward and direct is better and quicker than a lunch meeting that dances around the issue. "The trick to being candid without feeling like an ogre? Be honest, be sincere, be personal -- while addressing the issue head-on," Dowling writes. [Read More](#)

**"How Teachers Can Stimulate Students' Curiosity - 10 Ways."** Curiosity is at the root of what makes students want to learn, asserts Marilyn Price-Mitchell, a developmental psychologist. In this Edutopia blog post, she shares several ways teachers can stimulate students' curiosity and tap the desire to learn in the classroom and beyond. [Read More](#)

**"Student Panels Used to Interview and Hire Teachers in Australian Schools."** Some schools in Australia are relying on student panels to help interview and hire teachers. Educators say student input can play an important role in hiring, but officials with the Australian Education Union have cautioned that students cannot make final hiring decisions. [Read More](#)

***Have a Great Week!***