



Pathways

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

April 12, 2015

Volume 6, Number 32


Upcoming Dates

- April 13 – (3:15 p.m.) RMHS Select Artsfest Practice
- April 14 – (9:00 a.m.) Parker Shakespeare Now Performance; (2:30 p.m.) Artsfest Rehearsals @ RMHS; (5:00 p.m.) Artsfest Celebration @ RMHS
- April 15 – (5:00 p.m.) Artsfest Celebration @ RMHS; (4:00 p.m.) RETELL Session 9 in Distance Learning Room;
- April 16 – (11:00 a.m.) Early Release PreK – 12; Annual Blue Ribbon Conference; (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Junior Prom @ Danversport Yacht Club
- April 17 – No School; Blue Ribbon Conference
- April 18 – (10:00 a.m.) RMHS Drama Set Build
- April 20 – No School Patriot's Day
- April 21 – 24 – No School April Vacation
- April 22 – RMHS Trip to the Metropolitan Opera
- April 26 – (12:00 p.m.) RMHS Drama Q2Q

Arts Fest This Tuesday and Wednesday

This Tuesday and Wednesday, the Reading Public Schools proudly presents Arts Fest, A Celebration of Student Achievement in the Arts, beginning at 5:30 p.m., in the William Endsloew Performing Arts Center. All of our band and chorus groups will be performing, as well as, outstanding student art work, which will be displayed all up and down the Main Street area. Special thanks goes out to the all of the art and music teachers in our district for the time and effort that they have put in preparing our students for this great event.

The Reading Public Schools
present
A Celebration of Student Achievement in the Arts



Tuesday, April, 14, 2015
Wednesday, April 15, 2015

Schedule of Events

All music performances will take place in the Performing Arts Center
TUESDAY, APRIL 14th 5:30 p.m. 6 th Grade Combined Band 6 th Grade Combined Chorus 6:30 p.m. 3 rd Grade All-District Chorus 4 th /5 th Grade All-District Chorus Reading Memorial High School's <i>Fermata Nowhere & The Crescendudes</i> Middle School Select Chorus 7:15 p.m. Middle School Jazz Band Reading Memorial High School Stage Band Reading Memorial High School Jazz Ensemble
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15th 5:30 p.m. 7 th and 8 th Grade Combined Band 7 th and 8 th Grade Combined Chorus 6:30 p.m. Reading Memorial High School Symphonic Band Reading Memorial High School Concert Band

Student Art on display daily from 5:00 pm until Final Performance

- April 27 – (3:00 p.m.) District PD Committee; (7:30 p.m.) Annual Town Meeting
- April 28 – 30 Kindergarten Screening (all elementary schools)
April 28 – (8:15 a.m.) Coolidge Daytime Open House; (6:00 p.m.) Wood End Spring Open House; (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- April 29 – (6:00 p.m.) RMHS Drama Dress Rehearsal
- April 30 – (9:30 a.m.) Killam W.A.S.H Committee Meeting; (7:00 p.m.) Annual Town Meeting
- May 1 – (7:30 p.m.) RMHS Drama Production – The Legend of Sleepy Hollow in the Endslo PAC
- May 2 – (8:00 a.m.) SAT Testing – RMHS is a Test Center; (7:30 p.m.) RMHS Drama Production – The Legend of Sleepy Hollow in the Endslo PAC

Blue Ribbon Institute Next Thursday and Friday



2015 program-short
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Next Thursday and Friday, is our annual Blue Ribbon Institute. We are excited that the Reading Public Schools is partnering with the Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence to present an institute that will assist our teachers and our district as we all move forward in providing our students with a top-notch 21st century education. This two day professional development conference is very unique to our area and provides a wide variety of workshops and opportunities for our staff to share best practices in education. These are professional development days for all staff with a great variety of topics presented not only by our talented Reading staff but also from many other professionals from outside of Reading. This year, we actively invited a number of excellent presenters for some very timely and important topics.

We have attached the program above for your information so that you can see the types of opportunities our staff will have during the two days. You will note that there is a wide variety of engaging and thoughtful presentations that focus on learning, teaching, and current issues in education. These workshops are presented by practitioners who are dedicated and passionate about the work we do every day for our students. This institute includes two keynote addresses. Susan Campbell Bartoletti is an award winning author of historical narratives who will discuss the “magic” that transforms research into both fiction and non-fiction of some challenging historical topics. Author and artist Bruce Taylor shows us how the arts and the Curriculum Frameworks can mutually exist and improve student learning in engaging ways.

The Reading Public Schools has dedicated significant effort over the past several years on our journey toward excellence. We are so proud of the leadership that our administrative team and our faculty have displayed in moving our district forward. Their dedication and hard work have made a difference for our students. We know that we are not alone on this journey and we seek to join you in your journey toward excellence in education.

This institute allows us to build and expand partnerships and share innovative teaching strategies as well as grow a network of educators that share our passion and vision to prepare students for their futures in a 21st century global society.

If you would like to join us as our guest from the Reading Community, please contact Linda Engelson at linda.engelson@reading.k12.ma.us.

Teen Tantrums: Ten Ways to Ensure Anger Doesn't Rule Your House

By Dr. David Walsh

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to the Girls & Boys Track and Boys & Girls Lacrosse who all posted wins this past week.
- Congratulations to the Reading Food Service Department on a very successful three year DESE review!
- Congratulations to RMHS Chemistry students Alisyn Bourque, Thomas Bradford, Anson Huang, Peter Satterthwait and Jared Whitney who were chosen to take the Avery Ashdown Chemistry exam that was administered at Simmons College last Saturday, April 4th. The exam is administered by the Northeastern Section of the American Chemical Society and top scorers in the Ashdown Examination are eligible to take the qualifying exam for the United States Chemistry Olympiad Team. Congratulations to Anson Huang whose score has qualified him for the next round of competition, which will be held on April 18th at Simmons College. These students are taught by Frank Buono and Jen Thomas.
- To all of the teachers and administrators who were involved in the administration of the first round of PARCC assessments. We appreciate the time and effort that you put into the process. Special thanks goes to our technology staff for all of their efforts.



I had just finished an iBrain presentation for parents when a couple approached me. "Do you have a minute for a question?" the gentleman asked.

"Sure," I responded. "How can I help you?"

"We're really struggling with our fifteen-year-old daughter's cell phone use," he began. "She's spends so much time talking, texting, or Facebooking that we can't even get her attention. The real problem, however, is her use at night. She has her phone under her pillow and we know she's using it at all hours of the night. She's sleeping through her alarm and is exhausted in school. What would you suggest we do?"

I've had questions like this a lot lately so I had my answer ready. "I'd recommend that you start a tech curfew. Choose what you think is a reasonable time and have everyone, even yourselves, turn in the phones in a common place and recharge them overnight."

"See!" he blurted as he turned to his wife.

I immediately realized that I was being pulled in as an arbiter for a disagreement.

He quickly explained. "I've been wanting to do that for months, but she refuses to go along with me."

I turned to her and asked, "What's your objection to a curfew plan?"

"If we did that she would so angry, and I am not willing to put up with that!"

I tried to diplomatically explain that it sounded to me that their daughter was really in charge, not her parents. "It's not a good idea to let a fifteen-year-old run the family. It's not fair to her either," I added.

"Well to be fair to my wife, you haven't seen our daughter's temper tantrums," the man responded.

The good news is that twenty minutes later these two parents had agreed on a tech curfew plan. Moreover, they realized that they needed to take charge in some other areas as well.



- To Reading School Committee Member Chris Caruso who recently retired as a member of the Reading School Committee. Thank you for your nine years of service and commitment to the children of Reading.

Don't let your child's anger rule the house

This conversation is not an isolated incident. I hear about more and more families where the kids take charge with their anger. I talked a month ago with a single mother who was so physically afraid of her 13-year-old son that he was able to do whatever he wanted. It's not healthy for anyone in the family, most of all the kids themselves, to learn that all they have to do is use their anger to get what they want.

It's not easy, but here are some steps that can help you take charge and teach your kids a very important life lesson.

Modeling. The first step in preventing out-of-control behavior in our teens is modeling. We'll be less able to confront our teen's inappropriate behavior if we lose control ourselves. If you do lose control of your anger, find a way to mend and apologize.

Adjust your expectations. Remember that changing an unhealthy pattern won't change overnight. Look for progress, not perfection.

Talk. Choose a time to have this serious and important discussion when there is no immediate burning issue or amped up emotions. Check out these tips on **avoiding power struggles**.

Validate feelings. Make sure your teen knows that *being angry* is okay. It is *not okay* to fly off the handle, throw things, swear, or threaten. Talk about more appropriate and respectful ways to handle and manage big feelings like anger.

Be an emotion coach. When things escalate, remember that you are your teen's primary **emotion coach** - learning how to handle disappointment and anger is part of growing up.

Be clear. Be very specific about what behaviors you will accept. Our kids need to know that they step over an important line when they call us names, scream, swear, threaten or throw and break things.

Formalize it. Consider creating a formal "Respect Plan" together that lays out a roadmap for respectful behavior. Start by writing down the goal (for example: to treat one another with respect) and then generate the behaviors that are out-of-bounds (for example: hitting, throwing things, or name calling). Make sure that you also write down what the reward will be if the goal is met for a specific number of days and appropriate consequences if not.

Draw the line. We should never let our kids get what they want if they can't respect themselves and others. Conversations should end, for example, if out-of-control behavior starts. Make sure to come back to the conversation once your child is under control again.

Remind your kids that **respectful behavior is a prerequisite to negotiation**.

Teach kids about their brains. Explain to them that they need to practice strategies to avoid letting their brain get hijacked by anger. I explain this in detail in my book on adolescents, *Why Do They Act That Way? A Survival Guide to the Adolescent Brain for You and Your Teen*.

Quote of the Week....



"Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen."

-Michael Jordan



Four Qualities of Great Teaching

In this *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, veteran professor Rob Jenkins (Georgia Perimeter College) describes the qualities of K-12 and college teachers "who most move us, who have made the most difference in our lives, and whom we most wish to emulate."

- **Personality** – Great teachers tend to be good-natured and approachable; professional without being aloof; funny, perhaps because they don't take themselves or their subject matter too seriously; demanding without being unkind; comfortable in their own skin, without being in love with the sound of their own voices; natural; creative; and always willing to consider new ideas, sometimes on the spur of the moment. Some of us enter the classroom with more of these traits than others, says Jenkins, but that doesn't mean we can't develop and fine-tune how we come across. "With apologies to Lady Gaga," says Jenkins, "your students will never know if you were born that way or not."

- **Presence** – This is "the ability to appear completely at ease, even in command, despite being the focal point of dozens (or even hundreds) of people," says Jenkins. "That's a type of presence to which we can all aspire, whether or not we're born with great charisma. All it takes is a degree of self-awareness, a little concentration, and a fair amount of determination."

- **Preparation** – "Knowing what you're talking about can compensate for a number of other deficiencies," says Jenkins, "such as wearing mismatched socks, telling lame jokes, or not having an Instagram account." He believes preparation has three levels:

- Long-term: Your professional degree and training;
- Medium-term: Reading extensively in your field, attending conferences, and continuing to explore new ideas and teaching techniques. "It means being so familiar with your subject matter that you can talk about it off the cuff," he says.
- Short-term: Great teachers go into every class meticulously prepared – but also constantly reassess what they're doing, prepared to abandon ineffective or outdated strategies.

Disney Tweet of the Week



You can stay in here and hope for a miracle, or you can get out there and make a miracle of your own"

. –Laverne (Hunchback of Notre Dame II)

Some of this comes with experience, says Jenkins. "Then again, just because you've been teaching a course for 15 or 20 years doesn't mean you shouldn't approach it each term as if for the first time."

- *Passion* – "Of all the qualities that characterize great teachers, this is the most important, by far," says Jenkins. "Passion, or love, manifests itself in the classroom in two ways: love for students and love for your subject matter." Some educators are always complaining about how their students are irresponsible and disrespectful, say stupid things, don't do their work, etc. Jenkins has found that students pick up on this attitude and heartily dislike those teachers. Jenkins wants to say to them, "If you dislike students so much, why are you in this business? Why in the world would you want to spend so much of your time with a bunch of people you find so disagreeable?"

"Conversely," he says, "the faculty members who seem to love teaching and love (or at least really like) students are the ones who are the most popular and, I believe, the most effective... Students might not even like a course at first, especially if it's one they're required to take, but a teacher's passion for the subject can be extremely infectious."

"The 4 Properties of Powerful Teachers" by Rob Jenkins in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 3, 2015 (Vol. LXI, #29, p A31-32), <http://bit.ly/1Cbnx0B>; Jenkins can be reached at Robin.Jenkins@gpc.edu. Reprinted from Marshall Memo 581.

Reading Public School Happenings

Parker Cribbage Tournament

Last week, students and community members from Parker Middle School participated in the 27th annual Cribbage Tournament. From left to right, Tournament winners Joan Coco and Steven Jin with runners-up Michael Miele and Christopher Duran.



Barrows Read A Thon

Over the past several weeks, students at the Barrows Elementary School participated in a Read A Thon where they read hundreds of books. In the photo below, students who were standing read for either 100 minutes or for 500 minutes. Other photos are below. For more information, go to the Barrows Principal Blog [Link](#)



REF Contribution

In last week's newsletter, the Reading Education Foundation announced their 2015 grant winners. Below are REF Officers presenting a check for over \$40,000 to the Reading School Committee. Thank you to the Reading Education Foundation for all of their support of the Reading Public Schools.



Stepping Stones...

- We welcome the following new hires to our school district:
 - ✓ Lisa White-Long Term Substitute Biology Teacher, RMHS
 - ✓ Deb King – Regular Ed. Paraeducator, Birch Meadow
 - ✓ John Karonis, Custodial Substitute, District
 - ✓ Sarah Tully, Substitute, District
 - ✓ Greg Sheridan , Substitute, District
 - ✓ Matt Dal Pozzo, Boys Freshman Lacrosse Coach, RMHS
- **We have posted** a position on School Spring. If interested, please visit www.schoolspring.com to view the job details.

1.0 FTE Special Education Team Chairperson, Reading Public Schools	JOB ID #1401832
Special Education Learning Center Teacher, Barrows Elementary School	Job ID #1409342
Long-Term Substitute Heath Education Teacher, Reading Memorial High School	JOB ID #1403852
After School Care Assistant Teacher, Killam Elementary School	JOB ID #1400462
Girls Soccer Coaching Assistant, Reading Memorial High School	JOB ID # 1419542
K-8 Instructional Coach for ELA/Literacy (Anticipated Opening), Reading Public Schools	JOB ID #1426322

K-8 Instructional Coach for Mathematics (Anticipated Opening), Reading Public Schools	JOB ID #1422092
Math Teacher, Parker Middle School	JOB ID #1426822
Special Education LLD Position, Parker Middle School	JOB ID #1426672

Blazing Trails....

"Writing for a Purpose." In texts, Snapchat, or passed notes, students write to entertain, to inform, and to make arguments. Yet in school, many students struggle to articulate a reason for writing. In this issue of ASCD Express, teachers use audience, the writing domains, choice, and community to engage students in authentic academic writing experiences. [Read More](#)

"How One District Embraces Multiple Innovations at Once." "One size does not fit all when it comes to education," suggests Roger Cook, superintendent of the Taylor County School District in Campbellsville, Ky. In this blog post, he writes about how the district has embraced multiple innovations at once and has given teachers and students the ability to choose an approach that works best for them. [Read More](#)

"And on the 6th Day, School was Reinvented." Most schools ask themselves, "Why would kids come to school on a Saturday?" but at Matthew Moss High School in Rochdale, UK, they're asking "Why would they not?" Welcome to the D6 program, profiled in the video below. D6 refers to the 6th day of the week, Saturday, and the opt-in programming offered to students who want more school. Why do they want more school? As administrators, teachers, and students at Matthew Moss explain: it's naturally fun to learn, and to help others learn. [Read More](#)

"The Deconstruction of the K-12 Teacher." Technology -- from crowdsourcing sites for lessons plans to online videos -- are shifting the role of today's educators, English teacher Michael Godsey writes in this commentary. Technology has replaced the need for teachers to be "the local expert," he writes. "These days, teachers are expected to concentrate on the 'facilitation' of factual knowledge that is suddenly widely accessible." [Read More](#)

"UK is Thinking There is a Need to Pay Top Teachers More to Work in Poorer Areas." Alan Milburn, the chair of the social mobility and child poverty commission in England, is suggesting paying top teachers 25% more to encourage them to work in schools in disadvantaged areas. The move, he says, would help reduce the achievement gap among low-income students and their peers. [Read More](#)

Three Ways To Create A Student-Centered School *EdSurge*-Based on the research and current trends across the country, it is clear that the trajectory of education is headed towards student agency and personalization. For an individual school or district looking to make inroads in these areas, the breadth and depth of a personalized learning program is ultimately dependent on its vision, infrastructure, and capacity for sustainability...

Contact Us
The Pathways newsletter is published weekly for the Reading Public Schools 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

Have a Great Week and A Restful and Relaxing Vacation!