



Pathways

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

October 25, 2015

Volume 2, Number 8

Upcoming Dates

- October 26 – (3:00 p.m.) Understanding Grief Workshop at Coolidge Multipurpose Room; (7:00 p.m.) Special Education Parent Advisory Council Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- October 27 – (9:00 a.m.) Elementary Math Workshop in RMHS DLL; (6:30 p.m.) Annual College Fair at Shriner's Auditorium, Wilmington, MA
- October 28 – (3:00 p.m.) District MTSS Meeting; (5:30 p.m.) Joshua Eaton Halloween Howl; (7:00 p.m.) Performing & Fine Arts College Fair at Boston University
- October 29 – (3:00 p.m.) School Presentation on the Community Forum data at Joshua Eaton; (4:00 p.m.) RETELL in Rooms 321 & 320 @ RMHS; (7:00 p.m.) RCASA Guest Speaker – Dr. Kevin Hill in the Endslow Performing Arts Center
- October 31 – Happy Halloween
- November 2 – (8:00 a.m.) Coffee & Conversation @

49 Ways to Create a Tidal Wave of Kindness in Schools

by Elizabeth Mulvahill on the [We are Teachers Blog Post](#)

"Remember there's no such thing as a small act of kindness. Every act creates a ripple with no logical end." —Scott Adams

October is National Bullying Prevention Month. But what if, instead of focusing on anti-bullying, we focused on kindness? We all know the profound influence our everyday actions and attitudes can have on our students. When you toss a pebble into a pond, the ripples spread from the point of impact to the very edges of the whole. With that in mind, what if we made a vow to create as many "ripples" of kindness as we can to create a tidal wave in our schools and in our lives by simply focusing on acts of kindness?

Here are 49 ideas to help you get started:

1. Acknowledge each student with a greeting as they enter your room. Let them see how happy you are to see them.
2. Stop at the coffee shop on your way to school and surprise your teammates with their favorite beverage.
3. If you jack up the copier, don't leave it that way!
4. Give your students five minutes to just visit with one another.
5. Resist temptation to "borrow" the unlabeled Diet Coke in the staff refrigerator.
6. Compliment another teacher's class as they walk through the hall quietly.
7. Slow down!
8. Thank your administrators for setting a positive tone in the building.
9. Keep eye rolling to a minimum during your professional development meeting.
10. Leave anonymous chocolate kisses in the staff mailboxes.
11. Eat lunch with your team and take a break from "work talk."
12. Make eye contact.
13. Pick up your kids from Art a few minutes early and admire their work.
14. Pick up your kids from PE a few minutes early and join in the game.
15. Pick up your kids from Music a few minutes early and enjoy their performance.
16. Share an awesome read-aloud with another teacher, better yet- lend them the book.
17. Forward funny teacher cartoons to the staff.
18. Laugh at your students' jokes.
19. Put up inspirational or humorous posters in the staff bathrooms.
20. Compliment your students like crazy for their awesome ideas, incredible word choice, stupendous mathematical skills, etc, etc.
21. Offer to take a stressed-out teacher's after school duty.
22. Email a "happy note" home to one of your more difficult student's families.

Coolidge Middle School; (3:00 p.m.) School presentation on Community Forum data at Wood End; (6:30 p.m.) School Committee Office Half Hour; (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room

- November 3 – (9:00 a.m.) Annual Joshua Eaton Veterans Day Assembly; (3:00 p.m.) School Presentation on Community Forum data at Killam.
- November 4 - Grade 6 – 12 Early Release Day; (1:15 p.m.) Elementary PLC Meetings; (1:30 p.m.) Secondary PLC Meetings
- November 5 – (8:30 a.m.) Coffee & Conversation @ Birch Meadow; (2:45 p.m.) Elementary Building Meetings; (4:00 p.m.) RETELL in Rooms 321 & 320 @ RMHS
- November 6 – (7:30 p.m.) RMHS Drama Fall Musical – Mary Poppins in the Endslo PAC
- November 7 – (8:00 a.m.) SAT Testing – RMHS is a Test Center; (7:30 p.m.) RMHS Drama Fall Musical – Mary Poppins in the Endslo PAC

23. Have your students decorate and sign a thank you poster for the front office staff/cafeteria staff/custodial staff.
24. Put up a mailbox for students to deposit “kindness reports” about their classmates.
25. Replace the paper in the copier before it runs out.
26. Tell your parent volunteers what lifesavers they are.
27. Acknowledge publicly every kindness you witness in your classroom.
28. Smile!
29. Invite the guest teacher to join you for lunch.
30. Post students’ work everywhere!
31. Ask a veteran teacher to share their wisdom with you about something that’s been baffling you.
32. Stay with your class during library time and help them pick out great books.
33. Straighten up the mess someone else left in the teacher workroom.
34. Compliment another teacher in front of his class.
35. Repeat it one more time (yes, even if it’s the fifth time!).
36. Listen to the librarian’s read-aloud and tell her what a great storyteller she is.
37. Eat hot lunch every once in a while and tell the cafeteria workers how delicious the food is.
38. Take time to listen to your students’ stories.
39. Help another teacher change his bulletin board.
40. If a positive thought about someone crosses your mind, take the time to share it with them!
41. Raffle off a free homework pass.
42. Call a few parents after school just to tell them something wonderful their child did that day.
43. Share a sweet moment from your day with a colleague.
44. Give your grouchy voice the day off.
45. Ask a newbie teacher for advice.
46. Sit with someone different at the staff meeting.
47. Make a big deal about extraordinary effort in class.
48. Help another teacher carry a heavy load to their car.
49. Ask your students questions about their time away from school.

What acts of kindness would you add to the list?

How Schools Can Accommodate Their Introverted Students

“Why do so many introverts look back on high school as the worst time of their lives – and why do we accept this reality as normal and ‘OK’?” ask Susan Cain (author of *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*) and Emily Klein (Montclair State University) in this article in *Independent School*. “Do professional educators have a full understanding of how tough a place an American school can be for introverts? Do we realize what an extroverted act it is, in the first place, to go to school all day long in a classroom full of people, with constant stimulation, precious few breaks, and almost no quiet time or alone time? Even for introverted kids who like school, it’s still an over-stimulating environment – not unlike an all-day cocktail party for an introverted adult (but without the alcohol).”

Researchers have found that between one-third and one-half of students are introverts, but most teachers think the “ideal” student is an extrovert. A number of introverts have achieved great success – among them Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, George Orwell, Steven Spielberg, Larry Page, Steve Wozniak, and J.K. Rowling – but their

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to the volleyball, boys soccer, boys cross country, field hockey and swimming with wins this week.
- Congratulations to the RMHS Football Team who defeated Arlington on Friday. The Rockets are now 6-1 and will be in the playoffs beginning next week.
- To the following teachers and administrators who chaperoned the Camp Bournedale Trip over the last few weeks: Melissa Milner, Jen Conrad, Beth Slater, Patrick McCracken, Carina Becker, Andrew Herlihy, Wina Leahy, Marissa Holt, Brittany Conant, Adam Derosier, Lauren Fusco, Kelley Hardiman, JoEllen McGinnity, Ann Sweeney, Helen Palmieri, Melissa Hotchkiss, Jennifer Delaney, Ellen Commito, Lisa Norcross, Heather Sullivan, Heather Leonard, Sarah Marchant, Eric Sprung, Joanne King.
- To the dozens of parents who helped chaperone the Camp Bournedale trips this month.

success may have been in spite of their schools. Cain and Klein are on a mission to reverse the historical bias of schools in favor of extroverts.

They start with lessons from brain research on temperament, which shows that “physiological differences profoundly influence temperament – and therefore the classroom experiences of students.” Introverts differ from extroverts in the way their dopamine-based reward network reacts to external rewards – it’s less activated. Social situations that are energizing for extroverts are exhausting and “unrewarding” for introverts, who need to be alone to recharge their batteries after stimulating interpersonal interactions.

“And while extroverts and introverts are equally warm and loving (dispelling the myth that introverts are somehow antisocial), extroverts are more likely to respond to the reward value of a social situation,” say Cain and Klein. “As a consequence, they tend to seek positive social attention.” School is tailor-made for them: “From grading students for participation (almost exclusively defined as raising one’s hand and speaking, rather than engaging quietly with the material), to an emphasis on cooperative learning and group discussion, to subtle and informal but powerful incentives for being well liked and socially active, schools reward outgoing students and penalize quiet ones.”

Drawing on a Connecticut school’s lively interchange among students and faculty on this topic, Cain and Klein suggest several ways for schools to right the imbalance:

- *Rethink grading for participation.* The point of grades is to accurately assess students’ learning, not how much they talk in class. “We encourage teachers to separate grades for learning from grades for participation,” say Cain and Klein. “Why not give one grade for mastery of the material and a separate grade for character?” The second grade would measure meaningful intellectual contributions, empathy, courage, persistence, listening, and respect for others.
- *Change classroom dynamics.* Teachers should think about orchestrating classroom engagement, defined as how absorbed students are in a variety of tasks. Instead of whole-group discussions, this might involve “think, pair, share” with students reflecting, writing, and then discussing with one other classmate. This is also helpful for extroverts, who benefit from slowing down their thinking and putting a filter between their brains and their mouths. The best classroom structures push both introverts and extroverts out of their comfort zones. Another approach is posting several quotes around the classroom and asking students to engage in a “silent dialogue” about them, rotating from sheet to sheet “conversing” with classmates through their written comments and questions.
- *Connect with introverted students.* “I was more intentional to make warm eye contact with them,” says one of the Connecticut teachers, “smiles that let them know that I know they are with me, even if they are not sharing as much.”
- *Wait five or ten seconds before calling on students.* This gives all students more time to think and shy students a chance to gather their courage.
- *Use social media in the classroom.* Quiet students may have an easier time sharing their thoughts in an online response or blog, which will make them more confident in all-class discussions.
- *Coach introverted students.* Cain and Klein encourage teachers to talk individually with shy students to prep them for a comment they might make in class or a question they might think about answering. Parents can also be coached on how to support their introverted children.
- *Create groups for students who are anxious about public speaking.* “In a class swirling with social and, in the later grades, sexual politics, practicing public speaking can be so frightening that it becomes counterproductive,” say Cain and Klein. “Desensitizing the fear in small, supportive settings is crucial for students who are afraid of the spotlight.”
- *Rethink recess.* “The notion that *all* students should restore themselves, each and every day, by running out into a big noisy yard is very limiting, and frankly unimaginative,” say the authors. Students should have the option to play board games or chill by themselves.

- *Change cafeteria tables.* Socializing in a noisy group of 10-12 kids at conventional lunchroom tables is not an introvert's cup of tea – they're much more comfortable chatting with two or three peers at a small, round table.

- *Encourage deliberate practice.* Many students do their best work taking on challenging tasks alone.

- *Some quiet, please!* Extroverts perform better academically in a lively environment while introverts do better when it's quiet, so there is no one-size-fits-all formula for schools. All the same, accommodations must be made, say Cain and Klein: "In order to flourish, quiet students need to have the ability, for at least part of the day, to have some control over the amount of stimulation that is right for them to optimally learn."

"Engaging the Quiet Kids: Brain Science and the Teaching of Introverts" by Susan Cain and Emily Klein in *Independent School*, Fall 2015 (Vol. 75, #1, p. 64-70), no e-link available; Klein can be reached at kleine@mail.montclair.edu.

Marshall Memo 608.

Reading Public School Happenings

Camp Bournedale

Last week, fifth grade students from Killam, Wood End, and Birch Meadow attended the annual Camp Bournedale nature and team building experience. Special thanks goes out to all of the parents, teachers, and administrators who organized and chaperoned the trip.



Quote of the Week....



"The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away."

Picasso



Smiles for Sally Walkathon

Last Saturday, several families participated in the first annual Smiles for Sally Walkathon, in memory of Wood End Grade 1 Teacher Sally Mucica who passed away last July. Below are some pictures of the event. Visit Smiles-for-Sally.org for a donation link to the Reading Scholarship Foundation to donate to the Sally J. Mucica Memorial Fund and visit Smiles for Sally Facebook page to see all the pictures for the October 17th walk.



Disney Tweet of the Week



"Best friends stick together."

—Mickey Mouse



Stepping Stones...

- Congratulations to Birch Meadow paraeducator **Christine Underwood** on the birth of her granddaughter Parker Vanessa.
- Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family of former Coolidge teacher **John McCarthy** who recently passed away. For a recent blog post honoring John's life, please go [here](#).
- Our thoughts and prayers go out to RISE paraeducator **Anita Hogan** on the recent loss of a family member.
- **We welcome** the following new hires to our school district:
 - ✓ Katrina Maher – Daily Sub
 - ✓ Cynthia Boutin – Before School Head Teacher, Rise at Wood End
 - ✓ Karin Norris – Reg Ed Para, Eaton
- **We have posted** a position on School Spring. If interested, please visit www.schoolspring.com to view the job details.

Data Analyst, Reading Public Schools	JOB ID# 2108974
0.6 FTE Special Education Teacher (Reading), Reading Memorial High School	JOB ID# 2109014
1:1 Special Education Paraeducator (60 hours biweekly), Reading Memorial High School	JOB ID# 2109214
Community Education Billing Specialist/Staff Accountant, Reading Public Schools	JOB ID# 2108274
Community Education Registration Coordinator, Reading Public Schools	JOB ID #2107374

- **COFFEE & CONVERSATION - Facilitated by the District Leader of Social Emotional Learning**-Over the past few years, parents in the community have been asking for a forum where they can meet and share with and hear from other parents how they are navigating various issues with their students. Topics such as how to responsibly use technology, navigate social media, talk about substance use and anxiety, gender identity, grief, and so many other

issues. This year, we are excited to be offering COFFEE & CONVERSATION! Once a month at the elementary level and once a month at the secondary level, we will host a morning parent coffee where families can drop in and engage in facilitated conversation with other parents. We will have a topic of focus each month but will welcome conversation on any relevant issues that families bring to the table. Flyers with information (one for elementary, one for secondary) can be found by clicking the link below:

[Elementary Link](#)

[Secondary Link](#)

Blazing Trails....

"The Seven Habits of Highly Affective Teachers." In this October ASCD Educational Leadership article, author Rick Wormeli discusses how we need to pay a keen eye towards our students' emotional health. "Anxious, overconfident, curious, indifferent, angry, amused, lonely, hopeful, embarrassed, empowered, afraid, excited, diminished-teachers have seen all these emotions emerge from students as they engage with classroom content. Emotional responses to lessons often go through students' minds before they even begin to think about the material." [Read More](#)

"Dissatisfied With School PD, Teachers Turn to Twitter for Solutions." Educators say the social media platform offers immediacy and practicality often missing from school PD programs. For several years, growing numbers of teachers have been taking to Twitter to network and learn from other educators, often through education-related chat groups. There are now dozens of Twitter communities for teachers, featuring weekly scheduled chats as well as continuous, ongoing discussions. Most every kind of K-12 niche is represented, often many times over: Science, English, leadership, professional associations, and state-based educator connections are all represented. [Read More](#)

"Eight Student-Friendly Strategies to Develop Emotional Skills." Just like graphic organizers, anchor charts and other cues help students navigate and work independently with the concepts we teach, brief, kid-friendly strategies for handling emotional situations can help our students develop healthy social and personal habits. In this ASCD Express article, Todd J. Feltman shares eight strategies students can use to develop their emotional skills, along with an explanation of the purpose of each strategy and a few helpful reminders to guide students. [Read More](#)

"Free e-Book Download: Digital Learning Strategies." As a special offer during Connected Educator Month this October, download a free copy of Michael Fisher's ASCD Arias®, "Digital Learning Strategies: How do I assign and assess 21st century work?" This book explores what types of assignments are worth engaging online, how teachers and students can leverage global interactions to improve their work, and how teachers can assess digital projects and other work. Download it now for practical advice on formative assessment, digital portfolios, and more. [Read More](#)

"More Students in China Opt for MOOCs, Online Learning." The online education market is booming in China, where data show 40% of courses will be offered online within five years. Much of that support is for massive open online courses, which offer greater flexibility and more affordability. [Read More](#)

Contact Us

The Journey 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

Have a Great Week!