



# Pathways

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

November 22, 2015

Volume 2, Number 12

## Upcoming Dates

- November 23 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- November 25 – (10:15 a.m.) RMHS Pep Rally; (11:00 a.m.) Early Release PreK – 12
- November 26 – Happy Thanksgiving (8:00 a.m.) Thanksgiving Pancake Breakfast at RMHS Cafeteria; (10:00 a.m.) Stoneham at Reading Football game
- November 27 – No School
- November 29 – (2:00 p.m.) Downtown Tree Lighting
- December 2 – (after school) Secondary Building Meetings
- December 3 – (8:30 a.m.) Coffee & Conversation @ Barrows; (after school) Elementary Building Meetings; (3:00 p.m.) RMHS Informal Recital in the Endslow PAC; (4:00 p.m.) RETELL in Rooms 321 & 320 @ RMHS; (7:00 p.m.) Parker Grade 8 Choral & Jazz Band Winter Concert
- December 5 – (8:00 a.m.) SAT Testing – RMHS is NOT a test

## A Day for Jody

On Saturday, hundreds of people gathered at the Joshua Eaton Elementary School to support Joshua Eaton teacher, Jody Carregal, who is courageously battling cancer. Jody has touched the lives of many students and families in so many positive ways and Saturday's events were a way for the Joshua Eaton Community to give back and support someone in need. Current RMHS Juniors who had Jody as a teacher in Jody's first class, as well as many other students came to see her and support her through this difficult time. There were several fundraisers on that day and the funds raised will help offset medical and family expenses. Special thanks goes out to those families and staff who organized the event. Our thoughts go out to Jody and her family during this difficult time in their lives.



center; (10:00 a.m.)  
Festival of Trees @  
Parker

- December 6 –  
Chanukkah Begins;  
(12:00 p.m.) Festival  
of Trees @ Parker
- December 7 – (8:00  
a.m.) Coffee &  
Conversation @  
Parker; (7:00 p.m.)  
School Committee  
Meeting in  
Superintendent's  
Conference Room
- December 8 – (6:00  
p.m.) Parker Winter  
Grade 6 Concert;  
(7:30 p.m.) Parker  
Winter Grade 7  
Concert
- December 9 – Grade  
6 – 12 Early Release;  
District PLC  
Meetings; (6:30  
p.m.) Elementary All-  
District Chorus in the  
Endslow PAC
- December 10 – (after  
school) Elementary  
Building Meetings;  
(4:00 p.m.) RETELL  
in Rooms 321 & 320  
@ RMHS (6:00/7:30  
p.m.) Coolidge  
Winter Concert in the  
Endslow PAC
- December 11 – (7:00  
p.m.) RMHS  
Improvosaurus in the  
Endslow PAC
- December 12 – (8:00  
a.m.) PSST Dickens  
Marketplace @  
RMHS; (6:00 p.m.)  
RMHS Select Chorus  
Caroling
- December 14 – 17 –  
Challenge Day @  
Parker & Coolidge
- December 15 – (7:00  
p.m.) RMHS  
Guidance Financial  
Aid Night in the  
Endslow PAC



## The Hand of a Teacher: A Thanksgiving Story

*By Steve Goodier*

Thanksgiving Day was near. The first grade teacher gave her class a fun assignment - to draw a picture of something for which they were thankful.

Most of the class might be considered economically disadvantaged, but still many would celebrate the holiday with turkey and other traditional goodies of the season. These, the teacher thought, would be the subjects of most of her student's art. And they were.



- December 16 – (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Winter Band Concert in the Endslo PAC
- December 17 – (4:00 p.m.) RETELL in Rooms 321 & 320 @ RMHS (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Winter Songfest in the Endslo PAC
- December 18 – (8:30 a.m.) Joshua Eaton Holiday Concert; (6:00 p.m.) RMHS Select Chorus Caroling
- December 19 - (6:00 p.m.) RMHS Select Chorus Caroling

But Douglas made a different kind of picture. Douglas was a different kind of boy. He was the teacher's true child of misery, frail and unhappy. As other children played at recess, Douglas was likely to stand close by her side. One could only guess at the pain Douglas felt behind those sad eyes.

Yes, his picture was different. When asked to draw a picture of something for which he was thankful, he drew a hand. Nothing else. Just an empty hand.

His abstract image captured the imagination of his peers. Whose hand could it be? One child guessed it was the hand of a farmer, because farmers raise turkeys. Another suggested a police officer, because the police protect and care for people. Still others guessed it was the hand of a parent or a grandparent, for that person feeds us. And so the discussion went -- until the teacher almost forgot the young artist himself.

When the children had gone on to other assignments, she paused at Douglas' desk, bent down, and asked him whose hand it was. The little boy looked away and murmured, "It's yours, teacher."

She recalled the times she had taken his hand and walked with him here or there, as she had the other students. How often had she said, "Take my hand, Douglas, we'll go outside." Or, "Let me show you how to hold your pencil." Or, "Let's do this together." Douglas was most thankful for his teacher's hand.

Brushing aside a tear, she went on with her work.

The story speaks of more than thankfulness. It says something about teachers teaching and parents parenting and friends showing friendship, and how much it means to the Douglasses of the world. They might not always say thanks. But they'll remember the hand that reaches out.

***The Thanksgiving Season is a good opportunity to reflect and be thankful for what goes on in our lives. A classroom teacher can affect countless lives of children in a positive way. A special thanks goes out to our teachers and staff and for what they do each and every day for the children of the Reading Public Schools. They may never know the impact that they have had, but, rest assured, they have made a significant positive impact in their student's lives.***

***On behalf of the Reading Public Schools, we wish you and your families a Happy and Healthy Thanksgiving holiday.***

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## A Wonderful Thanksgiving Story

By: Anonymous

A blind boy sat on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet. He held up a sign which said: "I am blind, please help."

There were only a few coins in the hat.

## **Kudos and Accolades**

- Congratulations to the RMHS Football Team who defeated Marshfield, 28-14 on Saturday in the MIAA Division 2A State Semi-finals. The Rockets are now 10-1 and will be in the Division 2A Super Bowl against Nashoba on Saturday, December 5.
- Congratulations to RMHS seniors Dan Cozzi (UMass-Lowell - Lacrosse), Colin Doherty (Franklin Pierce University- Lacrosse) and Pat Jordan (University of Maine – Baseball) who all signed National Letters of Intent this week.
- Congratulations to RMHS Football Player Tommy White who was named the Division 2 Player of the Week
- To the following staff who provided training to our paraeducators on Friday during the Inservice Day. Thank you to Patrice Donahue and Kelly Barry who worked with RISE staff; Lisa Studer worked with RISE, elementary, middle and high school; Tricia Stodden worked with our elementary staff; Caren Brown worked with our elementary staff; Sara Burd completed YMHF; Craig Murphy and Jackie Parker conducted QBS training; John Doherty and Mike Muolo completed the ALICE training and Cindy Joyce and Chris from Wideko.
- To Human Resources Administrator Micheala Saunders and Wood End Principal Joanne King who provided training for our substitute teachers on November 20

A man was walking by. He took a few coins from his pocket and dropped them into the hat. He then took the sign, turned it around, and wrote some words. He put the sign back so that everyone who walked by would see the new words.

Soon the hat began to fill up. A lot more people were giving money to the blind boy. That afternoon the man who had changed the sign came to see how things were.

The boy recognized his footsteps and asked, "Were you the one who changed my sign this morning? What did you write?"

The man said, "I only wrote the truth. I said what you said but in a different way." I wrote: "Today is a beautiful day but I cannot see it."

Both signs told people that the boy was blind. But the first sign simply said the boy was blind. The second sign told people that they were so lucky that they were not blind. Should we be surprised that the second sign was more effective?

Moral of the Story: Be thankful for what you have. Be creative. Be innovative. Think differently and positively. When life gives you a 100 reasons to cry, show life that you have 1000 reasons to smile. Face your past without regret. Handle your present with confidence. Prepare for the future without fear. Keep the faith and drop the fear.

The most beautiful thing is to see a person smiling. And even more beautiful, is knowing that you are the reason behind it!

Happy Thanksgiving to all!

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## **Board of Education Approves Next Generation State Assessment**

At its November 17 meeting, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education **voted to transition to a next-generation MCAS test** that will be given for the first time in spring 2017 and use both PARCC and MCAS items, as well as items developed specifically for the Massachusetts test.

In spring 2016, districts that used PARCC in 2015 will do so again, and the remainder of districts will continue with MCAS unless they affirmatively choose to administer PARCC. The spring 2016 MCAS tests will include a limited number of PARCC items in order to help make statewide comparisons easier and to offer students and staff the opportunity to experience PARCC items while the new assessment is being developed.

Also as a result of the vote, the state will:

- commit to computer-based state assessments with the goal of implementing this statewide by spring 2019;
- remain a member of the PARCC consortium; and
- convene groups of K-12 teachers, higher education faculty and assessment experts to advise ESE on the content, length and scheduling of statewide tests; testing policies for students with disabilities and for English language learners; the requirements for the high school competency determination (currently the

- To Student Services Administrative Assistant Annmarie Foley for organizing the space and coordinating logistics for the training.
- To Coolidge and Parker for offering the space necessary to provide the training sessions.
- To Director of Student Services Carolyn Wilson for her tireless effort in overseeing all of the training sessions.

10th grade MCAS); and the timeline for reinstating a history and social science test.

Any districts that administer PARCC in grades 3-8 in spring 2016 will be held harmless for any negative changes in their school and district accountability levels, although the commissioner **has authority** to designate a school as Level 5. The Department will continue to publish percentile rankings for all schools on the "View Detailed Data" option on the Accountability tab of each school and district listing on **Profiles**.

The Board also voted that schools and districts administering the new test in grades 3-8 in spring 2017 will be held harmless for any negative changes in their school and district accountability level based solely on test scores.

All high schools will continue to administer the grade 10 MCAS in English language arts and mathematics, as well as the high school science and technology/engineering tests, in 2016 and 2017. The "hold harmless" provisions do not apply to high schools.

### **What this means for the Reading Public Schools**

As a result of the Board of Education decision, Reading will continue to administer the computer based version of the PARCC in 2016. Because we are taking the PARCC, will be held harmless by the state in 2016 for the accountability determination, however, that determination will continue to be calculated and made public.

We will continue to analyze the results of this year's PARCC assessments in relation to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and work with teachers on how to adjust our curriculum and instructional practices to improve student understanding of the material.

## **Asking the Right Questions in PLCs**

In this article in *Educational Leadership*, Jason Brasel, Brette Garner, Britnie Kane, and Ilana Horn (Vanderbilt University) say that ideally, teacher teams analyzing interim assessment results should answer four questions:

- *What* do we need to re-teach?
- *To whom* do we need to re-teach it?
- *Why* did students struggle with this?
- *How* do we re-teach it?

The problem, say the authors, is that many PLCs focus only on the first two and don't think carefully about why students did poorly in certain areas, what went wrong instructionally, problems with the assessment itself, and what strategies will improve results. Here are some of questions that effective lead teachers and instructional coaches ask to get their colleagues thinking deeply about assessment data:

- What do you think made some items difficult for students?
- What are some possible sources of confusion?
- What do students' wrong answer choices tell us about their errors and misconceptions?
- How did we originally teach this concept? What worked? What didn't work?
- What are the best strategies for addressing the misconceptions?
- What are the best curriculum resources?
- How do you think students will respond to an alternative instructional approach?

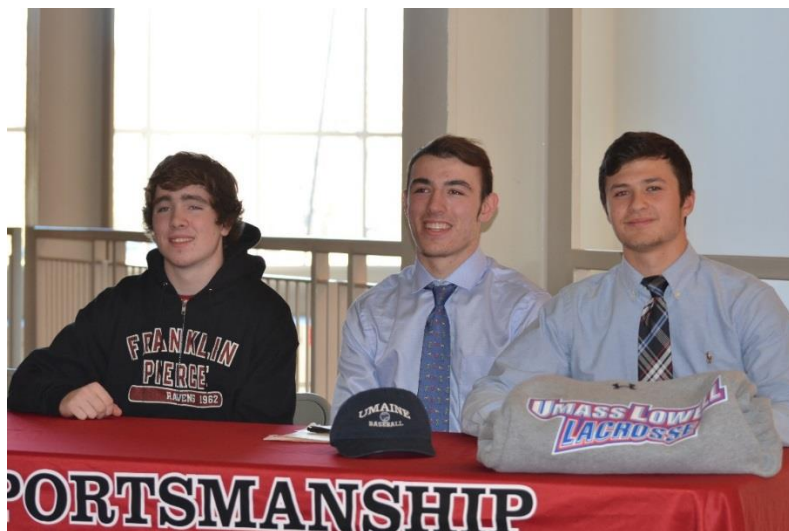
"Getting to the Why and How" by Jason Brasel, Brette Garner, Britnie Kane, and Ilana Horn in *Educational Leadership*, November 2015 (Vol. 73, #3), <http://bit.ly/1YdtZ4M>; Brasel can be reached at [Jason.brasel@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Jason.brasel@vanderbilt.edu).

Reprinted from Marshall Memo 612.

## Reading Public School Happenings

### National Letter of Intent Signing Day

Recently, three RMHS students signed letters of commitment to play in a sport at various colleges in the region. Congratulations to (from left to right) Colin Doherty who will be attending Franklin Pierce to play lacrosse, Dan Cozzi who will be attending the University of Massachusetts at Lowell to play lacrosse, and Patrick Jordan who will be attending the University of Maine to play baseball.

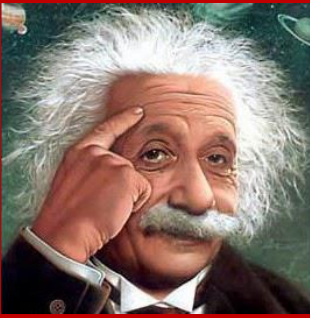


### RMHS Football Team Going to the Super Bowl

On Saturday, the RMHS Football Team defeated Marshfield 28-14 in the Division 2 State Semi-Finals in Lowell. The Rockets will now play in the Division 2 Super Bowl at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro on Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. Time to be determined. Congratulations to Head Coach John Fiore, the rest of the coaching staff, and the team for advancing to the Super Bowl.



Quote of the Week....



"Never give up on what you really want to do. The person with big dreams is more powerful than one with all the facts."

- Albert Einstein



### **National Honor Society Fall Induction Ceremony**

Last Thursday, the National Honor Society held its Fall Induction Ceremony for students who have achieved this worthy honor. Congratulations to the following students (seen below) who were inducted: Kathleen Bedingfield, Connor Mullin, Nicholas O'Leary, Parker Webb, Nathaniel Lemons, Jason Kwan, and Paulaine Goldsmith.



### **First Annual Science Expo**

On Saturday, the Reading Education Foundation, RMHS Robotics Team, and Reading Public Schools held its first annual Science Expo for any student who wanted to participate. The Expo feature student exhibits featuring student experiments and science research, robot demonstrations, and hands-on science experiments. Many thanks to the parents and students who organized and participated in this event.



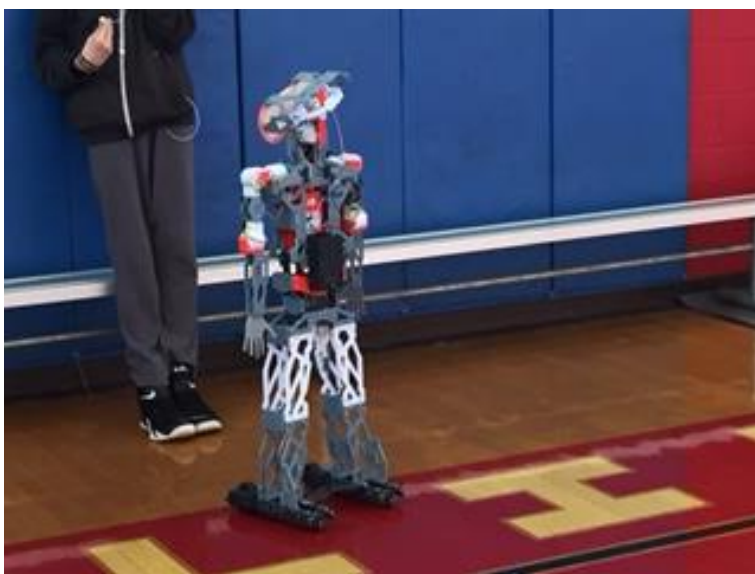
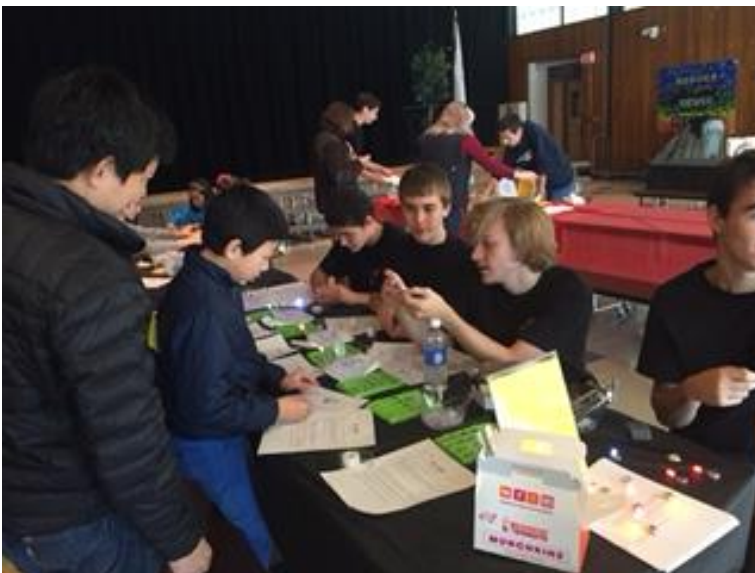


## Disney Tweet of the Week



"The more you like yourself, the less you are like anyone else, which makes you unique."

—Walt Disney



## Stepping Stones...

- ✓ **We welcome** the following new hires to our school district:
  - ✓ Alessandra Negrini – Daily Sub
  - ✓ Fanoula Eliadis – Daily Sub
  - ✓ Lauryn Blandford – Long Term Sub School Psychologist, Coolidge
- **We have posted** a position on School Spring. If interested, please visit [www.schoolspring.com](http://www.schoolspring.com) to view the job details.

Long Term English Teacher Substitute: Maternity Leave, Reading Memorial High School	JOB ID #2167604
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- ✓ **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

## 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)

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](#)

- ✓ **Families for Depression Awareness is presenting a free, 1-hour Coping with Stress and Depression webinar on Tuesday, December 8 at 7:00 PM ET / 4:00 PM PT.** Designed for family caregivers, human resources managers, EAP professionals, and adults concerned about themselves or others, the webinar covers
  - Practical ways to reduce the effects of stress
  - How to recognize signs of depression
  - What to do if you or someone you know is suffering from depression
  - What resources are available to you and your family

Our expert presenter is Dr. Timothy Petersen, psychologist in the Massachusetts General Hospital Department of Psychiatry and the Military Home Base Program, and faculty member of Harvard Medical School. He is the author or co-author of over 70 scholarly articles, numerous book chapters, and books including The Massachusetts General Hospital Handbook of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Dr. Petersen's clinical specialty is cognitive behaviorally-based interventions for difficult to treat mood disorders.

Register at [www.familyaware.org/trainings](http://www.familyaware.org/trainings).

Learn more about Families for Depression Awareness at [www.familyaware.org](http://www.familyaware.org).

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## Blazing Trails....

**"School Districts Swap Traditional A's and B's for Standards-Based Grading."** When Waukegan School District 60 mails home report cards in mid-November, parents of elementary school students won't see traditional A's, B's and C's. District 60 and Round Lake Area School District 116 are among several area districts moving to a standards-based grading system, which aims to give students and parents a more detailed look at how well students are mastering the skills and concepts they're expected to cover each school year. "We're trying to eliminate the concept of the kid who does school very well because the work ethic is there, but when it comes time to demonstrate learning, they don't do as well," said District 116 director of teaching and learning. "We're trying to provide an accurate reflection of what students know and are able to do." [Read More](#)

**"6 Truths About Technology in Education."** Writer and Education and Technology Innovation Specialist AJ Juliani discusses the need to utilize technology in education. This post comes out of a keynote he recently gave at the University of Pennsylvania Literacy Network's Winter Symposium. He starts with how every child deserves to own his/her learning, and edtech can help with this. [Read More](#)

**"Nancie Atwell in England: 'You can't test pupils into excellence.'"** Nancie Atwell, an award-winning teacher from the US, recently spoke in London about the dangers of standardized testing. Over-testing, she said, can harm students' achievement and teachers' morale. "Teachers don't need a standardized test to tell them who's struggling with reading or who is struggling with math," she said. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!