



Pathways

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

January 17, 2016

Volume 7, Number 19

Upcoming Dates

- January 17 – (2:00 p.m.) Coolidge Musical in the Endslo PAC
- January 18 – (No School) Martin Luther King Day; (9:30 a.m.) Martin Luther King Day Celebration in the Endslo PAC
- January 19 – 22 – RMHS Midterm Exams and Real World Problem Solving for all Juniors; RMHS Music to Visit Middle Schools
- January 20 – (3:00 p.m.) District MTSS Team Meeting; (7:30 p.m.) Financial Forum at the Senior Center
- January 21 – (4:00 p.m.) RETELL in Rooms 321 & 320 @ RMHS; (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room; (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Music Department Grade 8 Orientation
- January 23 – (8:00 a.m.) SAT Testing – RMHS is NOT a Test Center
- January 25 – Start of Second Semester (MS & HS); (7:00 p.m.) School Committee meeting in the

FY17 Budget Update

Last week, Superintendent of Schools John Doherty presented to the School Committee and the Community the FY17 Superintendent's Recommended Budget. A complete copy of the budget is located [here](#). On Monday evening, an overview of the budget was presented, as well as, the Administration and Regular Day cost centers. On Thursday evening, Director of Student Services Carolyn Wilson presented the Special Education Cost Center budget, and Director of Finance and Operations Martha Sybert presented the District Wide Services (Athletics, Extra-curricular, District Wide Technology, and Health Services) budget.

In addition to the School Committee meetings, two community budget presentations were held last week where parents and other community members had the opportunity to ask questions about the FY17 budget.

Upcoming Meetings

We will continue to inform Staff and Community about the FY17 Budget Process in this newsletter and the *Pathways Blog*. The upcoming budget meetings are as follows:

Reading School Committee Budget Meetings (All Meetings Begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Reading Public Schools Administration Offices)

- Thursday, January 21st-Public Hearing, Town and School Facilities
- Monday, January 25-Final School Committee Vote

There will also be a Financial Forum of the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, and Finance Committee on **Wednesday, January 20th at 7:30 p.m.** at the Reading Senior Center. The topic will be the FY17 budget and future budget discussions. This is a public meeting and all are encouraged to attend.

Further Thoughts and Challenges

The Community Forums that were held last spring and fall provided an opportunity to gather feedback on what was working in our school district and what needs to be improved. The data shows that, overall, the community and staff gave positive remarks about the Reading Public Schools. In the focus group sessions, the consistent strengths that emerged include the quality and dedication of our teaching staff and administrators, our students who come to school every day ready to learn, and the commitment that our parents make to our schools. Our data also showed that we have strong special education programs, significant opportunities for our students to participate in extra-curricular activities, athletic programs, and extended field trips, and the access that students have to technology in our district.

Superintendent's Conference Room

- January 27 – Grade 6 – 8 Early Release; (after school) Secondary Building Time & SpEd LC Teachers, Sec. Curriculum Leaders & Reading Specialists Meetings
- January 28 - (after school) Elementary Building Time & SpEd LC Teachers, Elem. Curriculum Leaders & Reading Specialists Meetings; (7:00 p.m.) SEPAC Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- January 30 – RMHS Band NE Color Guard Evaluation Show @ Salem High School (RMHS to perform at 5:40 p.m.)

In addition, we are also beginning to see some positive downward trends in some of our key Youth Risk Behavior Data, which is based upon a survey that is administered to all Grade 6-12 students every two years. Since 2005, we have seen significant decreases in the use of cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana. This is a testament to the collaboration and partnership with the Town of Reading, Reading Public Schools, the RCASA, and the Reading Police Department, both from a policy perspective and an implementation and enforcement perspective. In 2005, the use of alcohol by our high school students was at a much higher rate than today. Due to the work of the Board of Selectmen who passed a revised Town Liquor Policy in 2009, the Reading School Committee who passed a revised chemical health policy for students who participate in extra-curricular activities and athletics in 2011, and our Police Department, who began implementing compliance checks and a zero tolerance policy for our youth, we have seen a significant decrease in the use of alcohol by our high school students. This is a concrete example how a collaborative effort of policy changes and implementation can result in a positive benefit for our youth. Although we would like these percentages to be at 0%, the results are showing that our efforts are having an impact.

Although the data and the forums show we have a lot to be proud of in our schools, the information gathered also shows that there are areas we need to address so that we can maintain the level of excellence that we have taken pride in over the last several years. Addressing these areas will be critical to the long term success of our school district.

Our continuing challenge has been to address the achievement gap that exists with our High Needs group consisting of students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English Language Learner students. Although our recent MCAS and PARCC state assessment scores showed significant progress, Reading is still a level 3 district as designated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This designation is based upon state assessment scores and has been due to the fact that we have not been able to meet the needs of this group of students as compared with the general population. We are encouraged that the school improvement process that we have been embarking upon for the last two years will provide us with an opportunity to review every aspect of what we are doing at our schools and in our district to effectively address the needs of all our students. Several of the unfunded areas mentioned in last week's newsletter, particularly the ones directly related to our district goal 1 of addressing student learning needs, will help close this achievement gap.

Another area of concern is the overall behavioral and emotional health of our students. As mentioned above, although we have seen some very positive results in the latest administration of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, we are seeing some troubling trends as well. We have seen slight increases since 2005 in the use of some of the more dangerous drugs, such as prescription medication, heroin, hallucinogens, and inhalants. Synthetic marijuana is emerging as a potent and risky alternative for students. In addition, 24% of our community's 14-18 year olds stated that they have used electronic cigarettes with nicotine products, also called vaping, which is a dangerous upward trend.

In addition, over the last 10 years, we have seen increases in the percent of teens who have felt sad or hopeless for more than 2 weeks in a row, are involved in non-suicidal self-injury, or have engaged in suicidality. During the 2014-15 school year, 55 RMHS students were hospitalized for anxiety, suicidal tendencies, and/or depression. We have seen increases in this area at our elementary and middle schools as well. Our high school students have indicated on the 2015 YRBS that the major stressors in their life are increased workload, expectations about school and lack of sleep. Although these increases are not isolated just to Reading, we are concerned that the numbers of incidents in Reading is higher than the state average. As a community, we have taken significant steps to address these increased concerns through our partnerships with the Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse and the Community's support in previous budgets with programs and staffing that supports behavioral health. In addition, as reported last year, the Town and the School Department received three Federal grants, totaling 1.95 million dollars, to continue to help address the overall behavioral health of our youth. The first grant continues the great work that RCASA has done over the last several years. The second grant will allow the Reading Public Schools to train a minimum of 584 school educators, school support staff, first responders, youth workers, and faith leaders in Youth Mental Health First Aid to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders in our youth. So far, over 300 people have been trained in this area. The third grant will implement a highly sustainable, multi-tiered system of supports to improve school climate and behavioral outcomes for all students. We have made tremendous progress in this area in just one year. These three grants ensure that we will be able to move forward in creating structures, systems, and processes throughout our community to reach and engage all of our youth, particularly those youth who may be vulnerable to risky behaviors such as substance abuse or creating harm to themselves or others. These initiatives, combined with the work that we have done over the last several years in school safety with the Reading Police and Fire Departments, places our community as a leader in proactively addressing the overall safety of our children. As we all know, if students do not feel physically and psychologically safe in school, they will not learn, no matter what curriculum, technology, or teacher you put in front of them. I would like to thank the Reading Police and Fire Departments and the Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse, under the leadership of Chief James Cormier, Chief Greg Burns, and RCASA Executive Director Erica McNamara, for the partnership that they have forged with the Reading Public Schools over the last several years and their leadership and efforts in creating safe and supportive environments for our children.

The final area of concern and challenge for our school district is related to school funding. We are very appreciative and value the financial support that our community has given to public education over the last several years. Unfortunately, as mentioned above, our latest state financial data shows that Reading ranks 305th out of 326 Massachusetts communities in per pupil spending, 118th out of the 125 communities in the Boston Metro Area and this ranking has been in steady decline since 2006. It is well documented that our community has a revenue challenge as we become more and more reliant on cash reserves each year to fund our budgets. It is to our town's credit that through mutual respect and collaboration, town boards have stretched our dollars to provide the quality education and services, of which Reading is so proud.

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to the Coolidge Middle School cast and crew for an outstanding production of Alice in Wonderland, Jr
- To Boys Basketball, Boys Track, Boys & Girls Hockey, Swimming, Gymnastics, and Wrestling who all had wins this week.
- To the Wood End staff for providing lunch for the Joshua Eaton staff on Friday.
- To the following RMHS students of the month, who are chosen by grade and the core values of the High School that they exhibited. You can access the power point with the stories of each student [here](#). The students are: Grade 9 (Will Hattery, Ryan Assarian, Michael Miele, Rachel Shurland); Grade 10 (Molly Keane, Madeline Herrick, Hayley Higgins, Jake Powers); Grade 11 (Michelle Downey, Allison Foley, Khaleigh Johnson, Travis Giragosian); Grade 12 (Isabel Murray, Catherine Halley, Michael Sciuto, Jason Kwan)

While of course a particular “per pupil expenditure” is not the point, nor a guarantee of educational excellence (for instance, there are many school districts where higher spending does not necessarily translate to greater student achievement), it’s important to make clear that the objective is not the specific dollar amount—but rather a sustainability from year to year that is comparable to other communities in the state. For many years, Reading’s per pupil expenditure was in the average to low average range for the state, and we were proud that we were still able to attain above average results. The significance in the state “per pupil” ranking is not any specific dollar amount but rather the yearly comparison to all the other communities in the state. As the drastic decline in the state ranking indicates however—dropping in the last decade from 232 to 305 (out of 326 communities), Reading has unfortunately not kept pace in sustainability with other communities in the commonwealth. In order to continue providing our students with the most effective programs and also to continue attracting/retaining excellent educators, this is clearly an issue that needs further attention as we move forward.

Our continuing decline in per pupil expenditure is beginning to have an impact on our school system, especially during the times of transition that our schools are currently facing. Over the last five years, the average budget increase has been 2.64%, however, expenses in health care costs, utilities, supplies, special education costs and compensation have come in at much higher increases. This leads to overall decreased funding for school services and programs. We are in the midst of tremendous educational change in our state and in our country with more rigorous curriculum frameworks, a next generation assessment system, and the expectation to make sure all students are college and career ready. We also need to address the areas mentioned earlier in behavioral health. During these times of transition, it is more important than ever to sustain our previous levels of support and to add resources to address additional needs. In the upcoming school years we will need to begin to update our science and engineering curriculum, provide time and resources for teachers to implement these new curricula, continue to improve our special education services and programs, add more tutorial and social emotional support for struggling students, offer dedicated health education classes at our elementary and middle schools, increase our Advanced Placement course offerings at the high school and elective offerings at all levels, and update the High School Graduation requirements to help prepare our students for college and future opportunities. The resources necessary to move forward in these areas are listed in Figure 3 above and are not in the FY17 Recommended budget.

Equally important, we need to continue to attract and retain the best educators. This past school year alone five educators left our district and took employment in another school district in the Metro Boston area for higher compensation, better benefits and improved working conditions related to caseload and paperwork. In addition, four candidates who were offered positions in our school district declined to accept our offer and accepted a position in another school district for higher compensation and benefits.

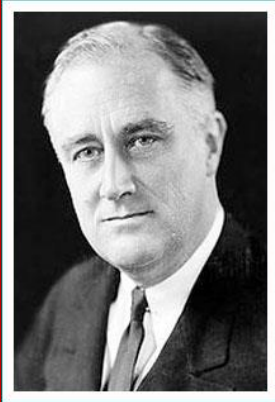
While the FY17 Superintendent’s Recommended budget allows us to address many of the priorities which reflect the community’s desire to continue a long-standing tradition of excellence in our schools, financial constraints limit our ability to pursue

many of the innovative programs, structures, and systems that we believe will make our students even more successful. The Reading Public Schools is at a crossroads when it comes to the amount of funding available and what we are able to do to continue to improve education in our district. While each district's per pupil spending might be impacted by varying needs, what is evident has been our inability to sustain what had been effective levels of services from year to year. What we are finding is that, in the last several years, we are losing ground, and finding it harder to compete with comparable communities. In FY15, the School Department needed to reduce a level service budget by \$285,000. Last year, the FY16 Superintendent's Recommended base budget was reduced by \$849,620 from a level service budget, and this year, the FY17 Recommended budget has been reduced from the level service budget by \$658,193. Although we do not support making any reductions, the Superintendent's Recommended FY17 base budget is designed so that the reductions proposed minimize the overall impact on student learning, while helping us move forward in key areas to begin implementation of the science curriculum frameworks, continue to provide support for our teachers in math and literacy, and provide funding in our special education program for some of our most fragile students.

In addition, what this budget is not able to provide is funding for long term improvements that are needed in our school district at every level. Several of these areas (see figure 3), are important initiatives that we need to provide for our students, and include funding full day kindergarten for all students, restructuring our elementary schools to eliminate the early release Wednesday and to provide more opportunities in computer science, science, the arts and engineering, restructuring our high school schedule and programming, improving our special education programs and services, and increasing health education across the district. However, these initiatives are not sustainable with the current revenue available. Without additional revenue, our ability to improve and provide the best educational opportunities for our students will decline. As we have seen in this budget, there are fewer and fewer non-personnel reductions that can be made to offset the budget constraints. Moreover, this budget continues to be very dependent on increases on offsets which are not sustainable long term. If the FY18 budget has similar limitations in available revenue, we will need to make even more reductions in staffing, which will result in eliminations of programs, courses and services and further increases in class size.

In conclusion, our district will continue to stay focused on the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral well-being of our students. While we are proud of the fact that we are a district that is on the forefront in many areas, we have many challenges that lie ahead, including educational space needs, funding for full day kindergarten, making the transition to a more rigorous curriculum and improving the social and emotional well-being of our students. The increasing accountability demands on public education and the needs of our students have increased significantly over the last five years and we need to identify additional resources and restructure some existing resources so that our teachers and administrators can continue to do the hard work necessary to improve student learning. We need resources to create more opportunities for teachers to collaboratively work together to share their work, and improve their practices, and to provide instructional coaching support so that teachers can see firsthand what it looks like in the classroom. The Superintendent's Recommended FY17 budget reflects those priorities.

Quote of the Week....



"Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort."

-Franklin D. Roosevelt

Although this is an uncertain budgetary time in our schools, we have an opportunity to make positive substantive changes. It is difficult work, but we are up to the challenge of providing the best learning experiences for our students. We are proud of the work that our teachers and administrators do every day to improve teaching and learning in our district. In addition, we have enthusiastic and respectful students who arrive to school every day eager to learn. This is a testament to our parents and our community who value the importance of education and the role that it needs to play in a community. There is no question that a major indicator of the quality of life for everyone in a community can be measured by the quality of its schools and by a community's commitment to its children. In this way, the quality of a school district affects every single person in a community, and the Town of Reading is no exception.

We appreciate the support that we have received from the community in the past and we look forward to working with town officials during this budget process and in providing sustainable funding solutions for FY18 and beyond.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Reading Public Schools administration offices at 781-944-5800.

Using Questioning to Stimulate Mathematical Thinking

Stage: 1, 2 and 3

Article by Jenni Way

Published February 2011, on *Enriching Mathematics Blog*

Good questioning techniques have long been regarded as a fundamental tool of effective teachers. Unfortunately, research shows that 93% of teacher questions are "lower order" knowledge based questions focusing on recall of facts (Daines, 1986). Clearly this is not the right type of questioning to stimulate the mathematical thinking that can arise from engagement in open problems and investigations. Many Primary teachers have already developed considerable skill in good questioning in curriculum areas such as Literacy and History and social studies, but do not transfer these skills to Mathematics. Teachers' instincts often tell them that they should use investigational mathematics more often in their teaching, but are sometimes disappointed with the outcomes when they try it. There are two common reasons for this. One is that the children are inexperienced in this approach and find it difficult to accept responsibility for the decision making required and need a lot of practice to develop organized or systematic approaches. The other reason is that the teachers have yet to develop a questioning style that guides, supports and stimulates the children without removing the responsibility for problem-solving process from the children.

Types of Questions

Within the context of open-ended mathematical tasks, it is useful to group questions into four main categories (Badham, 1994). These questions can be used by the teacher to guide the children through investigations while stimulating their mathematical thinking and gathering information about their knowledge and strategies.

1. Starter questions

These take the form of open-ended questions which focus the children's thinking in a general direction and give them a starting point. Examples:

How could you sort these.....?

Disney Tweet of the Week



"The flower that blooms in adversity is the most rare and beautiful of all."

—The Emperor (Mulan)

How many ways can you find to ?
What happens when we ?
What can be made from....?
How many different can be found?

2. Questions to stimulate mathematical thinking

These questions assist children to focus on particular strategies and help them to see patterns and relationships. This aids the formation of a strong conceptual network. The questions can serve as a prompt when children become 'stuck'. (Teachers are often tempted to turn these questions into instructions, which is far less likely to stimulate thinking and removes responsibility for the investigation from the child).

Examples:

What is the same?
What is different?
Can you group these in some way?
Can you see a pattern?
How can this pattern help you find an answer?
What do think comes next? Why?
Is there a way to record what you've found that might help us see more patterns?
What would happen if....?

3. Assessment questions

Questions such as these ask children to explain what they are doing or how they arrived at a solution. They allow the teacher to see how the children are thinking, what they understand and what level they are operating at. Obviously they are best asked after the children have had time to make progress with the problem, to record some findings and perhaps achieved at least one solution.

Examples:

What have you discovered?
How did you find that out?
Why do you think that?
What made you decide to do it that way?

4. Final discussion questions

These questions draw together the efforts of the class and prompt sharing and comparison of strategies and solutions. This is a vital phase in the mathematical thinking processes. It provides further opportunity for reflection and realization of mathematical ideas and relationships. It encourages children to evaluate their work.

Examples:

Who has the same answer/ pattern/ grouping as this?
Who has a different solution?
Are everybody's results the same?
Why/why not?
Have we found all the possibilities?
How do we know?
Have you thought of another way this could be done?
Do you think we have found the best solution?

Levels of Mathematical Thinking

Another way to categorise questions is according to the level of thinking they are likely to stimulate, using a hierarchy such as Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). Bloom classified thinking into six levels: Memory (the least rigorous), Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation (requiring the highest level of thinking). Sanders (1966) separated

the Comprehension level into two categories, Translation and Interpretation, to create a seven level taxonomy which is quite useful in mathematics. As you will see as you read through the summary below, this hierarchy is compatible with the four categories of questions already discussed.

1. *Memory*: The student recalls or memorizes information
2. *Translation*: The student changes information into a different symbolic form or language
3. *Interpretation*: The student discovers relationships among facts, generalizations, definitions, values and skills
4. *Application*: The student solves a life-like problem that requires identification of the issue and selection and use of appropriate generalizations and skills
5. *Analysis*: The student solves a problem in the light of conscious knowledge of the parts of the form of thinking.
6. *Synthesis*: The student solves a problem that requires original, creative thinking
7. *Evaluation*: The student makes a judgement of good or bad, right or wrong, according to the standards he values.

Combining the Categories

The two ways of categorizing types of questions overlap and support each other.

For example, the questions:

Can you see a pattern?

How can this pattern help you find an answer? relate to Interpretation, and;

the questions:

What have you discovered?

How did you find that out?

Why do you think that? require Analysis, and;

the questions:

Have we found all the possibilities?

How do we know?

Have you thought of another way this could be done?

Do you think we have found the best solution? encourage Evaluation.

In the process of working with teachers on this topic, a table was developed which provides examples of generic questions that can be used to guide children through a mathematical investigation, and at the same time prompt higher levels of thinking.

You may also find Jennie Pennant's article [Developing a Classroom Culture That Supports a Problem-solving Approach to Mathematics](#) useful, which includes a section on questioning.

References

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Bloom, B. (1956). Taxonomy of Educational Objectives Handbook 1: Cognitive Domain. New York: David Mackay

Dains, D. (1986). Are Teachers Asking the Right Questions? Education 1, 4 p. 368-374.

Sanders, N. (1966). Classroom Questions: What Kind? New York: Harper and Row.

Cell Phone Policy-A Letter to My Students

By **John Thayer**, for *Edutopia Magazine*

Dear Class,

We have work to do this trimester in our Geometry class. I can understand that your brain is wired to care so much more about your friends than anything else on earth right now. It's natural and I remember it well. In fact I'm still a little like that, just more balanced and mellow in my old age. We didn't have cell phones though in my day, we hung out on roof tops and abandoned barns and jumped off cliffs into the lake and skated all over town without supervision and generally were outdoors as much as humanly possible.

But I can see you don't want to hear this. I remember not wanting to hear when adults gave me the "back in my day" talk. I can see your entire body aching to grab your smart phone and flip it open -- wait, that doesn't even happen anymore -- how time flies. The truth is you have more computing power in your pocket as a 10th grader than my whole family had in the house when I was typing research papers for my community college class -- oh wait, more back-in-the-day talk, I apologize.

What I am trying to say is that I empathize, but really we have work to do. We have some serious analysis to perform on these playground structures that we are learning about and I need your help. I need you to help us get a rough idea of the population density surrounding different playgrounds and find out if there is a correlation between new and beautiful playgrounds and nicer houses, or if we were just imagining that. I might need you to look into some kind of cost-benefit analysis of using recycled tire material for playground floors.

So the thing is, I really need you to get that cell phone out and use it because these weren't the assignments we got in my geometry class as a kid. We had dittos, these blotchy, purpley worksheets that smelled like glue, and you could barely read the teacher's handwriting. We needed to sit in rows and do the dittos because they said.

But in this class, I need you to look at various types of polygonal shade structures we could create to shield kids from the sun so they can play. I need you to look at and create new playground equipment that use compositions of geometric transformations that will provide exciting experiences for kids, and I need you to understand the cognitive development issues involved with play and why kids need it. Also, can you try to help me figure out some playground design ideas that have a healthy balance between risk and safety? Letting kids take risks is also important. We were allowed to take a lot more risks "back in my day" and it was amazing.

We have work to do so please take out your phone and let's not waste any more time.

Reading Public School Happenings

Geography Bees

This past week, Coolidge and Parker held their annual National Geographic Society Geography Bee Final and Championship. Below are pictures of the students who participated. Congratulations to all of the students who participated in this challenging event.



Parker Middle School Geography Bee Finalists



Coolidge Middle School Geography Bee Finalists

Coolidge Science Team Reunion to Honor and Remember John McCarthy

Last Saturday, January 9, members from each of the 24 Coolidge Middle School Science Teams, coaches, and parents attended a reunion to honor and remember Coolidge Science Teacher and Science Olympiad Coach John McCarthy, who passed away on October 19th after a courageous battle with cancer.

Over 150 people attended, including former students and coaches from the original 1992 Coolidge Science Olympiad Team. At the reunion, individuals shared stories and memories from the Science Team experiences, especially the impact that John McCarthy had on their lives.

Below are some photos of the event. Special thanks goes out to Coolidge Principal Sarah Marchant, Coolidge Science Team Head Coach (and alumni) Karawan Meade and Coolidge Secretary Marianna Zanni for organizing the event.





Stepping Stones...

- We welcome the following new hires to our district.
 - Denise Santoro, RISE Preschool Secretary
 - Karen Guarino, RMHS, Long-term Substitute
 - Peter McAnespie, District, Substitute
 - Brian D'Ambrosio, District, Substitute
 - Vivian Tringale, Community Education, Billing Specialist/Staff Accountant
 - Kathleen Wilcox, Joshua Eaton, Regular Ed. Paraeducator
 - Dina Cail, Barrows, Regular Ed. Paraeducator
 - Kristin Ford, Wood End, Special Ed. Paraeducator
- **We have posted** new positions on School Spring. If interested, please visit www.schoolspring.com to view the job details.

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| Library Media Center Educational Assistant, RMHS This position is for the 2015-2016 school year only. | JOB ID # 2282854 |
| Extended Day Site Coordinator, Barrows Elementary School | JOB ID #2283694 |

- ✓ **RMHS Food Service Department Looking for Substitutes**-Looking for some flexible parent-friendly work hours. Consider a cafeteria substitute position at the Reading School Nutrition Department working in all 8 of the Reading school cafeterias. Interested candidates may inquire at the School Nutrition Department at RMHS by emailing Kristin.Morello@REading.k12.ma.us or calling 781-942-9134.
- ✓ **Step up For Colleen (5K Walk/Run Course)**-Are you ready to **Step Up for Colleen?** Registration is now open for the 3rd Annual Step Up for Colleen 5K Walk/Run on Sunday, May 1, 2016 in memory of beloved daughter, sister, friend and teacher, Colleen Ritzer. The 5K Walk/Run **course** is certified by USA Track and Field and winds through the streets of Andover, MA and the scenic bird sanctuary on the campus of Phillips Academy.

Click Here to Register

In honor of Colleen's love of math, register by Pi Day (3.14.16) and save \$5 off race registration.

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

Proceeds from this event will support the Step Up for Colleen Fund at the Essex County Community Foundation, which benefits the [Colleen E. Ritzer Memorial Scholarship Fund](#). The Fund provides financial assistance to graduating high school seniors who pursue a college degree in education and reflect Colleen's values.

Registration for the 2016 Step Up for Colleen 5K is now open at www.stepupforcolleen.com. Please visit the website for more information about [Colleen](#), to sign up to [volunteer](#), a [video of the race course](#) and much more. The website also features a [social wall](#) that will collect and share why individuals have decided to #StepUp4Colleen. Please use #StepUp4Colleen to share why you have decided to step up.

Blazing Trails....

"In Massachusetts Schools, a Focus on Well-Being." In this Boston Globe article, schools are focusing on the whole child for good reason. Across Massachusetts, schools are devoting more time to address the social and emotional well-being of their students. Educators stress the movement is not simply "feel good" education. They say teaching students at every grade to manage their emotions can help them deal with a multitude of serious issues, including bullying, mental illness, substance abuse, or trauma. Such problems, educators say, can present immense barriers to learning and, if left unaddressed, could exact heavy tolls like suicides, drug overdoses, or even school shootings. [Read More](#)

"Want To Know What's Wrong With Averages?" In this EdWeek post by teacher and author, Starr Sackstein, she tackles one of the third rails of education. Although playing the averages is a safe way of getting to the middle, it isn't an effective way of showing student learning. There are just too many varieties of combinations that end up equaling the same thing. If "grades" are supposed to inform about learning, it can be agreed that the marks on report cards are not as useful as they claim to be. [Read More](#)

"4 Ways to Become a Better Learner." In this Harvard Business Review article, author Monique Valcour investigates "learning agility." "Research shows that leaders who think and act from the same assumptions and behavioral repertoires they've used for years are prone to stagnate, underperform, or derail. As David Peterson, director of executive coaching and leadership at Google puts it, 'Staying within your comfort zone is a good way to prepare for today, but it's a terrible way to prepare for tomorrow.' To sustain success, you must develop learning agility." [Read More](#)

"2016: What's In, What's Out." As 2016 begins, ASCD Capitol Connection pays tribute to the compelling people, policies and pursuits of the past year and predicts their attention-grabbing successors. In 2015, test-based accountability was in, TED Talks were all the rage, everyone was drinking coconut water, and the No Child Left Behind Act ruled K-12 education. In the new year, multimetric accountability is spreading, Humans of New York has taken over social media, artisanal soft drinks are quenching thirst, and ESSA is in, too. [Read More](#)

"Australian Students Star as International Baccalaureate (IB) Exam Results are Released." Students in Australia continue to lead their peers in International Baccalaureate exam results, according to the most recently released results. Data show that 30 of the 81 perfect scores reported worldwide were earned by Australian students. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!