



# Pathways

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

April 24, 2016

Volume 2, Number 31

## Upcoming Dates

- April 25 – (3:00 p.m.) District PD Committee Meeting; (7:30 p.m.) Town Meeting in the Endslo PAC
- April 26 – (9:00 a.m.) Kindergarten Screening @ Barrows, Birch Meadow, Killam & Wood End; (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- April 27 - (9:00 a.m.) Kindergarten Screening @ Barrows, Birch Meadow, Killam & Wood End; (after school) Secondary Building Meetings; (6:30 p.m.) Joshua Eaton Open House
- April 28 – (8:00 a.m.) RMHS Music Elementary School Visits; (9:00 a.m.) Kindergarten Screening @ Killam; (after school) Elementary Building Meetings; (7:30 p.m.) Town Meeting in the Endslo PAC
- April 29 - (8:00 a.m.) RMHS Music Elementary School Visits; (9:00 a.m.) Kindergarten Screening @ Killam; (6:00 p.m.) RMHS Music Mini-Golf Fundraiser @ RMHS

## A Celebration of Learning

During the week of April 11<sup>th</sup>, the Reading Public Schools showcased student learning and engaged in professional learning with two annual and popular events, Arts Fest and the Blueprint for Educational Excellence National Institute. This action packed week provided our students, our staff, our community, and educators from outside our community, the opportunity to experience student learning, as well as, learn from each other the best practices that are going on in schools. Below are a few highlights from the week.

### Arts Fest

On Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, our talented and dedicated art and music teachers led the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Arts Fest at Reading Memorial High School. The William Endslo Performing Arts Center came alive with student performances from our elementary, middle, and high school choral groups, and our middle and high school bands and ensembles. Outside of the performing arts center, 2D and 3D art work and photographs from grades 1-12 were displayed up and down Main Street. Special thanks goes to Music Teachers Brittany Bauman, Holly Gallant, Melissa Steiger, Jenny DiMuzio, Andrew Norton, Cheryl Webster, Anna Wentlent, Joe Mulligan Jenny Cao, Kristin Killian, and Art Teachers Christina Erb, Beth Hurley, Amy Hussey, Sara Doane, Amy Ropple, Diane Davis, Sue Gilbert, Veronique Latimer, Kathleen Dailey, and Mike Radvany for their hard work and dedication to our students.



**ArtsFest Video**

- April 30 – (7:00 p.m.) Reading Education Foundation Imagination Celebration @ Sheraton Four Points in Wakefield



*Grade 4 and 5 Chorus*



*Combined Middle School Grade 7 and 8 Band*

## **Kudos and Accolades**

- Congratulations to Boys & Girls Lacrosse, Boys & Girls Tennis, Boys & Girls Track, Baseball and Softball for posting wins last week.
- Congratulations to our music and art teachers for a successful Artsfest last week.
- Kudos to Administrative Assistant Lori Miller for, once again, coordinating the recent Blue Ribbon Conference. Her herculean efforts allowed for a smooth running event.
- Congratulations to the Reading Robockets Team, under the direction of RMHS Math teacher Chuck Strout, for winning the New England Championship Chairman's Award at the NE FIRST New England Finals at Hartford, Connecticut. With this victory, the Robockets have qualified to attend the World Championship in St. Louis, MO from April 27-30.



*Combined Middle School Chorus*





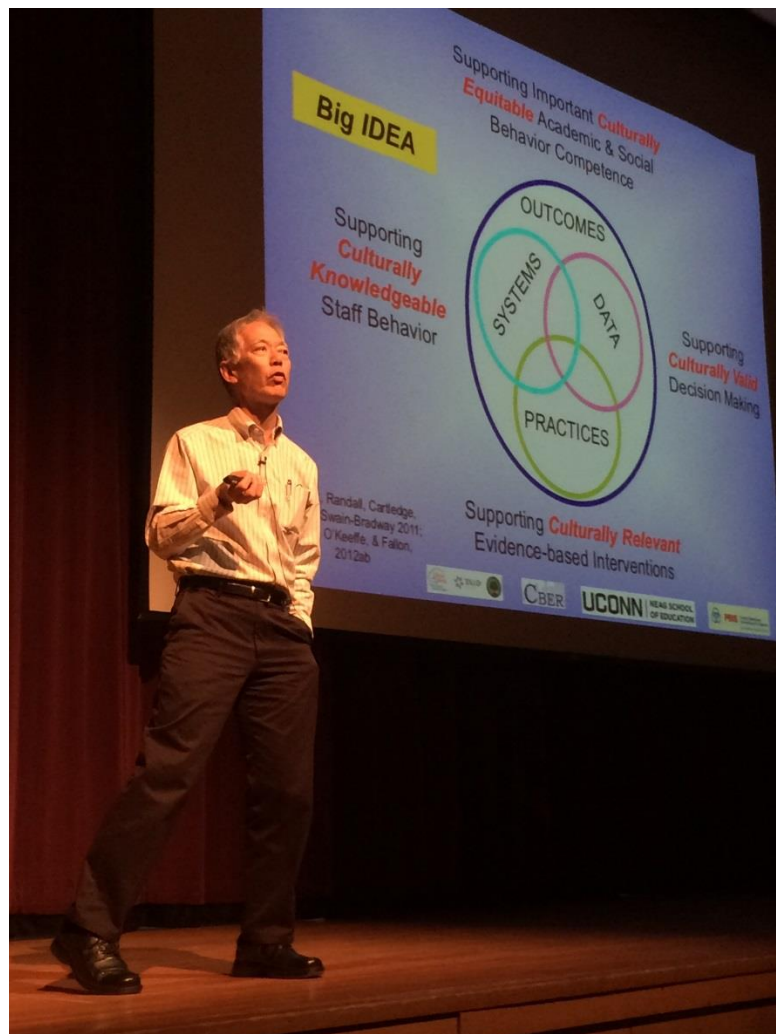


### **Blueprint for Educational Excellence National Institute**

On Thursday and Friday, Reading staff were part of several professional development experiences through both the theme based workshops and collaborative planning on Thursday afternoon, to the Blueprint for Educational Excellence National Institute on Friday. Over 350 educators from outside of Reading attended the Friday sessions which featured several national and local educators. This professional development day for all staff featured a great variety of topics presented not only by our talented Reading staff but also from many other professionals from outside of Reading. In addition to our nationally-known keynote presenter **Dr. George Sugai**, we were also honored to be hosting such presenters as **Dr. Jon Saphier** (acclaimed educator and author of *The Skillful Teacher*), and **Professor Mahesh Sharma** (founder of the Center for Teaching & Learning of Mathematics). A special thanks goes out Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching Craig Martin and Administrative Assistant Lori Miller for organizing this outstanding day of learning.



*RMHS Jazz Ensemble Performing at Blue Ribbon*



*Keynote Speaker Dr. George Sugai*

## Reading Public Schools Transitioning to Integrated Web Tool and Student Information Management System

During the last 16 months, Reading Public School staff have been looking at different solutions to replace our current websites (Edline), student information management system (Admin Plus), teacher grade book programs (Grade Quick and AP Web), and other online services. We received teacher feedback on the most critical piece of the program for teachers, which is the grade book and report card program. As part of the process, we also reviewed products that were budget neutral or less in cost. We are pleased that we finally have a solution that we will be able to transition to for the 2016-17 school year.

Over the next several months, the Reading Public Schools will be transitioning its websites, student information management system, and grade book/report card programs to an updated version of our current student information management system, Rediker Software. What this will mean is that we will be replacing Admin Plus, Edline, Grade Quick, AP Web, and Blackboard Connect with an integrated student information management system, grading program, notification system and web sites that are cloud based and provide student, parent, and teacher access through portals.

The first major change that will be happening is the transition of our Edline websites to RediSite, which is a responsive website system that works well on all devices. RediSite will give us a District Web Page and 9 School Web Pages that are interactive and responsive to mobile devices. Teacher pages will no longer exist because they will have their own class portals which students and parents will access.

Here are some examples of schools that use RediSite.

<http://www.bridge-rayn.org/>  
<http://www.awrsd.org/>  
<http://www.akfcs.org/>  
<https://www.incarnationschool.edu/>  
<https://www.asrsd.org/>  
<http://www.freelake.org/>  
<https://elps.eastlongmeadowma.gov/>

Over the next few months, we will be working with Rediker to develop the templates for each of the web pages for the design. By July 1<sup>st</sup>, Edline will no longer be our web host. **Therefore, if you have content on your web pages that you would like to keep, please begin to save it to your computer, thumb drive, or other storage devices and have this completed no later than the last day of school.**

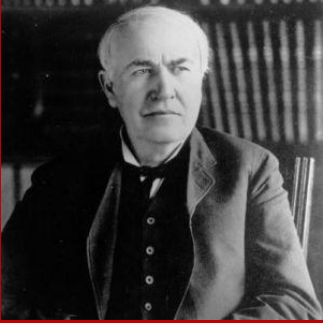
As we continue along the transition process, we will keep you in the loop and begin to provide training opportunities for the Grade Book program (Teacher Plus Gradebook), the Plus Portals, and the online forms. If you have any questions, please contact the technology integration specialist for your school.

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## Reading Robockets Win Chairman's Award At NE FIRST Championships

*Qualify for the World Event in St. Louis from April 27-30*

### Quote of the Week....



**““Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”**

**— Thomas Edison.**

Congratulations to the Reading Robockets Team, under the direction of RMHS Math teacher Chuck Strout, for winning the New England Championship Chairman's Award at the NE FIRST New England Finals at Hartford, Connecticut. With this victory, the Robockets have qualified to attend the World Championship in St. Louis, MO from April 27-30. A video of the team accepting the award is below.



### Grading Less, Learning from Students, and Giving Better Feedback

In this *Educational Leadership* article, high-school English teacher and consultant Cris Tovani bemoans the way her students used to ignore the comments she spent hours writing on their papers – and the fact that her comments didn't seem to make a difference. Overhearing a conversation between two high-school athletic coaches, Tovani realized how differently their feedback was received and used by young players. “In a perfect world,” she thought, “teachers and students would work together toward a common goal, like athletes and coaches do. Students would care about the feedback we give them as much as we do.” This epiphany led Tovani to three conclusions:

- Spend less time writing comments.
- Modify instruction based on what's learned from students' work.
- Build in time for students to revise their work based on feedback and self-assessment.

“Where I really needed to give feedback was before final assignments were due,” she says. “I needed a chance to reteach concepts, and students needed a chance to revise.”

In Tovani's reading lessons, students now take four-question comprehension checks as they read, assessing how well they can summarize, analyze the author's craft, annotate a text, and make inferences. Tovani grades these quickly (very few comments), gives them back the next day, and has students self-assess against a model answer. “Students compare



## Disney Tweet of the Week



**"What I really wanted was to prove that I could do things right, so that when I looked in the mirror, I'd see someone worthwhile."**

**—Mulan**

my criteria of success with their performance," she says, "and reflect on how my responses are alike or different from theirs." If students do poorly on one of her quizzes, she'll go over items in class, giving students a chance to add points by showing improvement.

In her writing lessons, Tovani takes a cue from Kelly Gallagher, who gave her this rationale for assigning students four times more writing than it's possible to grade: "Improvement starts with volume. Volume suffers if I have to grade everything. Grading doesn't make kids better. Volume, choice, and conferring makes kids better." This helped Tovani realize that she didn't have to assess every piece of student writing, which allowed her to grade less and assess more: "I don't have to always write the perfect comment or give a grade," she says. "[W]hat's most essential to improving the quality of students' work is collecting feedback for ourselves from that work and noticing patterns in students' skills (or lack thereof) that we can use to determine our next instructional moves."

Her new philosophy is, "Give students daily opportunities to leave tracks of their thinking, use those tracks to notice patterns, and adjust instruction on the basis of what kids know and what they need. Repeat cycle." Here are some of her tools:

- Reading think worksheets – Students jot on these as they do their independent reading, prompted to note pages read, stamina, use of their inner voice to remember what they read, and how their reading reflects new thinking (see the full article for a sample).
- Exit tickets – At the end of class, students jot one thing they figured out and one thing they're wondering about. Tovani spreads these out on a table and draws conclusions about the next day's lesson. "I don't waste time writing comments," she says. "I simply look for patterns, and when I've figured out a few, I throw the tickets away."
- Response journals – In individual composition notebooks, students reflect on their learning for the day. Tovani reads a third of these each day during her planning period, takes a third home, and reads the rest the next morning. "I limit my comments and challenge myself to identify patterns," she says.

Tovani continuously streamlines her process. She decides which qualities of students' reading and thinking she'll focus her feedback on and limits her comments accordingly. While commenting, she records her observations in four columns: students' use of skills and strategies; confusing vocabulary; students' questions related to the reading; and how skillfully students are dealing with a genre or text structure. She gives feedback or a quick correction to individual students or to the whole class.

"As much as we'd all like to coach kids one-on-one," Tovani concludes, "we can't. Getting feedback from student work and giving students feedback to advance their learning are both essential, but educators have to be strategic in how we use these instructional moves. In the end, both teacher and students have to get smarter."

"How I Learned to Be Strategic About Writing Comments" by Cris Tovani in *Educational Leadership*, April 2016 (Vol. 73, #7, p. 56-60), available for purchase at <http://bit.ly/1SgYzpF>; Tovani can be reached at [ctovani@hotmail.com](mailto:ctovani@hotmail.com).  
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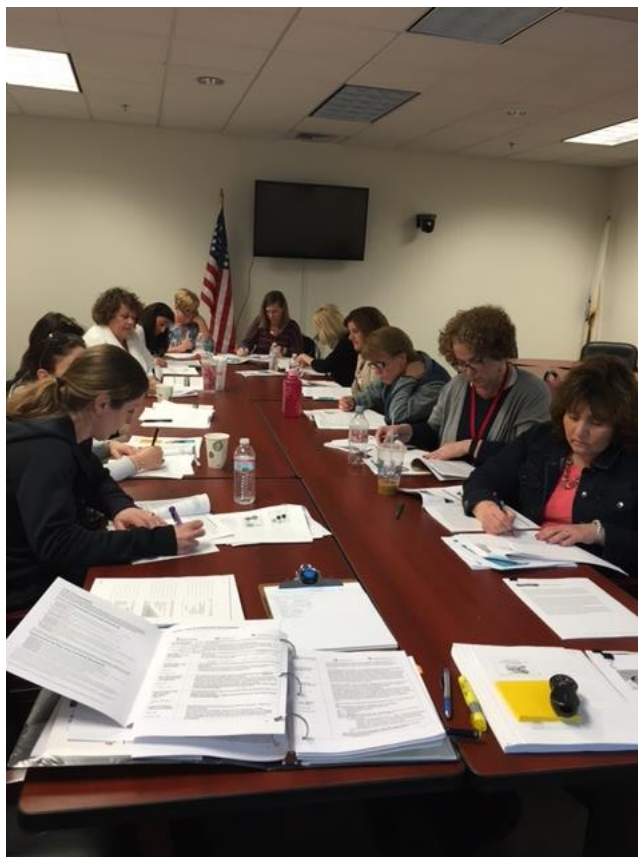
## Reading Public School Happenings

### **Barrows Open House Features Art In Motion**

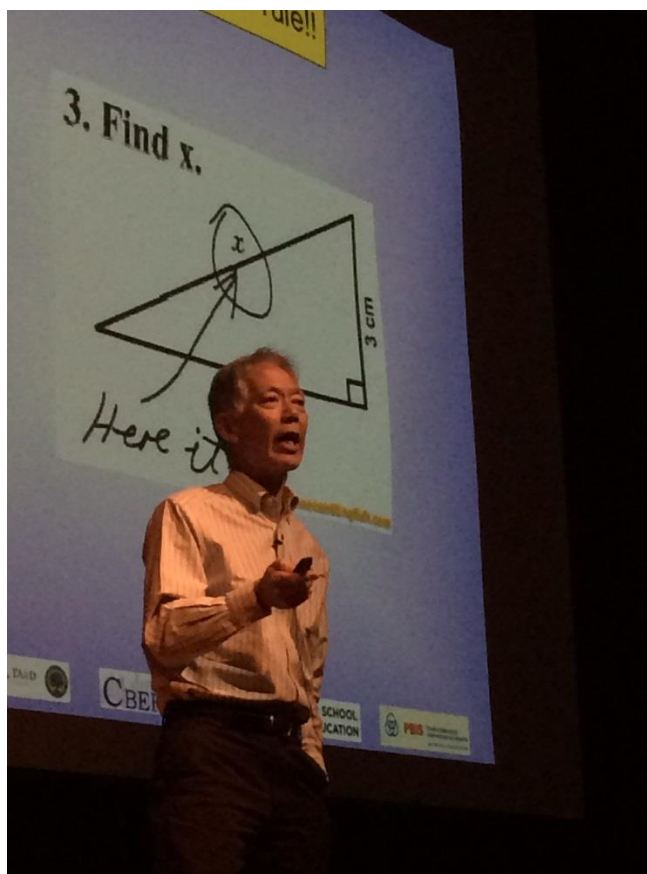
Recently, at the Barrows Open House, students and parents participated in Art in Motion! PE teacher, Sarah Atwood, and art teacher, Beth Hurley, designed three interactive stations that incorporated elements from both disciplines. Students and parents built sculptures that displayed balance, participated in "art on a cart" drawings, and worked collaboratively on a movement mural. Below are some photos from the event.



## Additional Blue Ribbon and Arts Fest Photos



*RISE Preschool Teachers Collaborating on a Learning Project at Blue Ribbon*



*Dr. George Sugai and his quest for finding X*



*Student Emcees at ArtsFest*

**RMHS Interact Students and Friends Prepare and Serve Meals at Rosie's Place**

Last Sunday, the RMHS Interact Club prepared and served meals at Rosie's Place in Boston as part of their ongoing Community Service. A Special thanks goes to the students, families and friends who took time out of their vacation to participate in this important cause.







Join  
**Reading Education Foundation**  
for the  
**5th Annual**

**imagination Celebration!**

**SATURDAY**  
APRIL 30, 2016  
**7-11 PM**  
TICKETS: \$35 each

at the  
**FOUR POINTS SHERATON HOTEL**  
1 AUDUBON RD | WAKEFIELD, MA

**Online Auction**  
with over 100 items!  
**OPENS APRIL 25**  
**CLOSES MAY 6**

**An Evening of**  
friends, food, drink,  
**FABULOUS SILENT AUCTION ITEMS,**  
raffles and more!

Visit  
**www.readingef.org**  
for more information!

Expand your  
and celebrate **imagination**  
what our community  
can accomplish for our children!

**BUY TICKETS ►**

## Stepping Stones...

- Congratulations go out to Joshua Eaton teacher **Marie Kiley**, who welcomed her grandson Maxwell Steven Kiley, born on April 4th, weighing 7 lbs, 8 ozs.
- Congratulations go out to Wood End teacher **Danielle Gianatassio** on the birth of her daughter Juliana Mari on April 19<sup>th</sup> weighing 5 lbs., 12 oz.

### 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)

- **We welcome** the following new hires to our school district:
  - ✓ Ruth Stanieich, Daily Substitute, District
  - ✓ Elizabeth Ruiz, Daily Substitute, District
  - ✓ Joseph Hastings, Daily Substitute, District
  - ✓ Carolyn O'Neil, Special Education Paraeducator, RISE
  - ✓ Katrina Maher, Special Education Paraeducator, RISE
  - ✓ Alissa Kaufman, Teacher, RISE
  - ✓ Erika Bell, LTS Adjustment Counselor, parker
- **We have posted** new positions. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job details.

1.0 FTE Therapeutic Support Program Teacher - 2016-2017 <a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=23">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=23</a>
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Special Education Elementary Teacher (ILP Program) <a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=24">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=24</a>
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Reading Specialist <a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=25">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=25</a>
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Special Education Program Paraeducator <a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=27">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=27</a>
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- **Climate Change Presentation**-The Reading Garden Club and the Friends of the Reading Public Library are sponsoring a presentation called, ***Climate Change: What does it mean for New England***, on Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup> from 7:00-8:30 p.m. at the Reading Senior Center, Pleasant Street, Reading. Quentin Prideaux, of the Climate Reality Project, combines powerful imagery with concrete data to present the basic science of climate change, its risks to New England, and what actions to take now to protect Massachusetts. For more information, go to the following [link](#).
- **Coaching for Multi-tier System of Support Certificate Program**-The Department of Special Education in the Graduate School of Education at Portland State University announces a new fully online innovative series of courses focused on implementation and sustainability of a multi-tiered system of supports for behavior. The **Coaching for Multi-tier System of Supports: SW-PBIS** certificate of completion is a four-course, 13-credit, fully online graduate-level program designed to provide guidance and coaching to school, district and state teams or individuals who are interested in or in the process of implementing a sustainable multi-tiered system of supports for behavior. Some features of this exciting program are:
  - In-state (Oregon) tuition applies regardless of residency!
  - Fully Online
  - One course a term
  - Provides hands-on application based on your district's/school's current environment
  - Coursework focuses on implementation planning, system evaluation, and sustainability efforts!

Visit our website for information about the [program of study](#), [course descriptions](#), and [admissions and registration](#) information. You may also contact Tracy Williams-Murphy, Program Specialist at [503 725-8102](tel:5037258102) [ortwill2@pdx.edu](mailto:ortwill2@pdx.edu) with questions. Registration opens *May 2, 2016*. A new cohort begins *June 20, 2016*!

## Blazing Trails....

**"More Bomb Threats are Called in to Boston Area Schools."** State police and the FBI said they are investigating bomb threats that have been called into at least 32 Massachusetts

schools on Thursday. Police believe the automated calls are being made through an online network of computer routers. [Read More](#)

**"Proven Techniques for Managing an Active Classroom."** How can the same student be engaged in one classroom and off task and disruptive in another? Regardless of the subject or lesson, any teacher can try these four techniques as they strive for a more manageable, productive, and positive classroom culture. Accompanying videos let you watch these strategies in action. [Read More](#)

**"A Lesson from an Oil Spill."** In her latest "Education Update" column, ASCD Executive Director and CEO Deb Delisle shares a story from her time as a science teacher when she saw the importance of relevant units of study, especially for gifted students whose grasp of content goes beyond the grade-level requirements. Making this a priority can allow students to identify topics of interest and pursue them in meaningful ways. By listening to kids, educators will learn every day and continue to create better learning environments for all to succeed. [Read More](#)

**"Ed Leadership: Looking at Student Work."** The April issue of Educational Leadership, themed "Looking at Student Work," is dedicated to exploring the art and science of responding to student work. The authors -- including John Hattie, Thomas Guskey, Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey and Jay McTighe -- examine the varied purposes for reviewing student work and present what research and best practice say about improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the feedback process. There are some surprising findings. [Read More](#)

**In the News: U.S. Department of Education Releases Guidance on Testing-**On Friday, the U.S. Department of Education released several [case studies](#) that share how states and districts are working to make assessment practices meaningful for students, parents, and educators. In a [statement that accompanied the release](#), Education Secretary John King said, "Done well, assessments are tools for learning and promoting equity. Done poorly, in excess or without clear purpose, they take valuable time away from teaching and learning, draining creative approaches from our classrooms."

**What We're Reading: "Why I Plan to Stay in Teaching"**-In this [EdWeek blog](#), Justin Minkel a 2nd and 3rd grade teacher from Springdale, Arkansas, explains why he hopes to still be teaching when he's "an old, tired, yet happy man."

**Did You Know?: TED Talks Features and Upcoming Boston EdTalks-**[TED Talks](#) started with a focus on technology, engineering, and design and now cover practically any topic you can imagine. The goal is to share innovative ideas and stories in through compelling talks in 18 minutes or less. You can find playlists dedicated to certain topics (checkout the [10 Talks from Inspiring Teachers](#)) or [search](#) by hundreds of topics aligned to your interests, content area, or students' interests. Some of the most recent TED Talks include: "[The Unexpected Benefit of Celebrating Failure](#)," "[Your Kids Might Live on Mars. Here's How They'll Survive](#)," and "[The Magic Ingredient that brings Pixar Movies to Life](#)."

On a similar note, [Boston EdTalks](#) will have its fifth annual celebration of teacher-led innovation on May 5, 2016 from 6-8pm with a reception before and after. The event will feature six short talks by local educators on subjects ranging from social and emotional learning to the making of math champions. Learn more and [RSVP online](#).

**Have a Great Week!**