



Pathways

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

June 19, 2016

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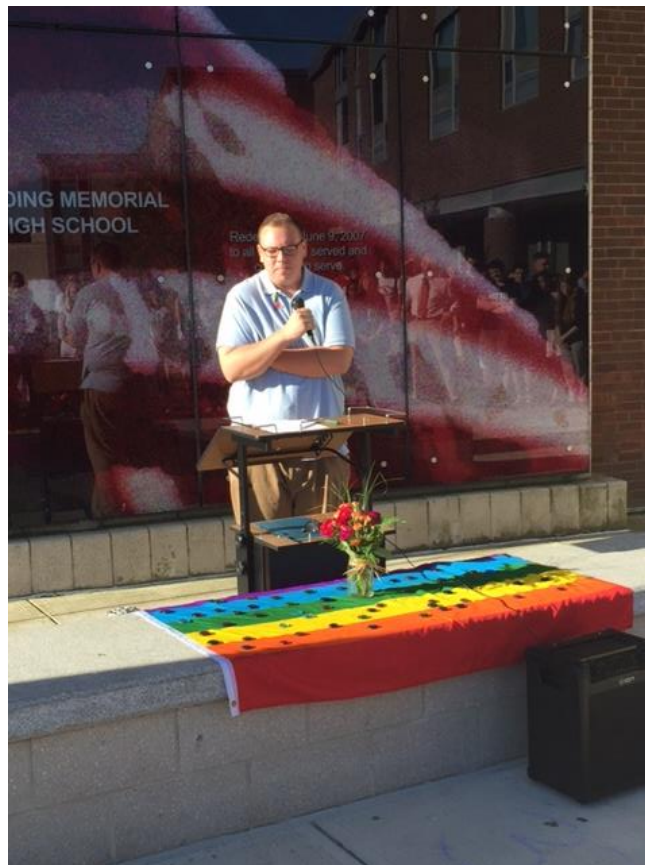
Upcoming Dates

- June 20 – (6:00 p.m.) Coolidge & Parker Grade 8 Promotion Ceremony; (7:30 p.m.) Coolidge & Parker Grade 8 Dance
- June 21 – Last Day of School; (9:00 a.m.) Parker Awards Assembly; (11:00 a.m. Dismissal for Students) Schools Out For the Summer!!!!
- June 27 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room

RMHS Holds Vigil In Memory of Orlando Victims

Last Wednesday morning at 7:00 a.m., over 75 students, faculty, and community members attended a peace vigil at the RMHS Memorial Wall a peace vigil in memory of the people who were killed or injured in the Orlando shooting. The vigil, which was organized by RMHS teachers Sharon Burke, Jen Baskin, and Leia Richardson, featured student quotes written on the walkway and reflections by students and RMHS teachers Dr. Jeffrey Ryan and Zach Broken Rope. The reflections focused on how we can support those who feel targeted and are under constant threat, especially the LGBTQ community. As part of the vigil, there was a rainbow flag draped in front of the Memorial Wall, which contained 50 stones, one for each of the victims of the shooting. At the end of the vigil, attendees were encouraged to take additional stones and place them on the flag.

A special thanks goes out to those who took part in the vigil.



RMHS Teacher Zach Broken Rope

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to the Reading Girls Tennis Team who were presented a plaque for their Sportsmanship and Community Service throughout the year from the MIAA.
- Thank you to the following staff who are retiring this year from the Reading Public Schools: Deb Burchill, Rick Downes, Pat Shields, Janis Gerety, Rafael Mercado, Jane Merrill, Anne Natale, Chris Copeland, Yeri Castellanos, Carmen Redfearn, and Noreen Scarpitto. We thank you for your years of service to children and we wish you good health and happiness in retirement.
- Congratulations to Parker Technology Integration Specialist Meg Powers on her 10 years of teaching service to the Reading Public Schools.



RMHS Teacher Dr. Jeffrey Ryan



Attendees placing stones on the flag at the end of the ceremony

Thank You

As we put closure to our school year, we would like to take a moment to thank you, the Reading Community, for your support of our school district. Your support is evident in so many ways, from your attendance at our events, to your volunteerism at your child's schools, and from the financial support that we receive from our PTO's and other community groups. What makes our school community so strong is the investment that you have made in your child's education. Like every school year, we have had numerous experiences that we can celebrate; some in our individual classrooms, and some in our schools. We have watched first hand your children grow, learn, and blossom from the moment that they walk into school in September to the time that they leave this week for the summer. Their successes and growth in learning is a tribute to the partnership that our teachers and administrators have with you each and every day.

During this year, we have also had to persevere through many challenges including the delayed installation of new modular classrooms at three of our elementary schools, difficult budget reductions throughout our district, and lead in the water at some of our schools. We also mourned the loss of three Reading Public School teachers who had positive impacts on our lives and our students: Coolidge teacher John McCarthy, Joshua Eaton Teacher Jody Carregal, and Birch Meadow Teacher Irene Bourne. Through all of our challenges, we strengthened as a community and focused on our mission to teach and support our students so that they could continue to learn and grow. Thank you for your support during those challenging times.

This year, we said goodbye to the Class of 2016, a group of students who began in our school district as kindergarten students in 2003. They have had amazing experiences during their 13 years in the Reading Public Schools that have shaped and molded them into the students that they are today. These students will now move on and most of them will become the college class of 2020. Next year, we welcome kindergarten students who will be part of the class of 2029 and they too will be shaped by their own learning experiences in our school district. Each of these students have the potential to make a positive difference in our world and are partnership with you will help them reach that potential.

For those of you who has their last child graduating from the Reading Public Schools, we want to thank you for your support over the years and we wish your children good luck in their future endeavors. For those of you who continue to have children attending our schools next year, we hope that you have a healthy, restful, and relaxing summer with your families. See you on August 31st!

Update on Lead Water Testing

We have received the second round of Lead in Water Testing Results for the Killam Elementary School, which will be posted on the Town of Reading website on Monday. In the second round of testing, two separate water tests were done for each of the 74 water faucet or water fountain fixtures in the school. The first test for each fixture was a "first draw sample", which is done immediately after the water is turned on at the fixture after the water has sat in the pipes and fixture for 6-8

Quote of the Week....



**Just think about how far
you've already come
before you think about
giving up.**

Anonymous

hours. The second test done is a “30 second flush sample”, this sample is taken after the fixture has been turned on and flushed out for 30 seconds. The purpose of doing both tests at each fixture is to identify whether the source of the lead contamination is in the building plumbing or in the water fixtures themselves. If the lead tests are consistently above the Action Level limits in most fixtures for both tests, then the lead source is most likely in the building plumbing. If the lead test sample is above the Action Level limit in the first test, but not in the second, the source of the lead is most likely in the fixture, not the building’s plumbing.

What the majority of the results have shown is that the “first draw” samples at most of the water fixtures in Killam are above the Action Level limit yet they are below the Action Level limit for the second “30 second flush” sample. To address this issue, over the next few weeks, we will be removing and capping all water fountain fixtures in the classrooms and creating handwashing only faucet stations in the classrooms. In addition, we will be replacing all of the water fountains in the school with new fixtures in all the hallways and student work areas. Once this work is completed, we will be retesting all of the water fountain fixtures again for lead in water content using the same two sample testing method. If additional work needs to be done as a result of the third round of testing, we will complete it prior to the start of the school year.

At the June 6th School Committee Meeting, the Reading Water Department and the MWRA updated the School Committee on the situation. To access a video of the meeting, go to the following [You Tube link](#).

For further information about lead in drinking water in schools, please go to the following websites:

MWRA “What You Need to Know About Lead In Tap Water” info and FAQ link:
<http://www.mwra.state.ma.us/04water/html/qual6leadinfo.htm>

MassDEP Overview of Lead in Massachusetts Drinking Water link:
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/overview-of-lead-in-massachusetts-drinking-water.html>

MassDEP Lead & Copper in Schools Link:
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/lead-copper-schools-lc.html>

Town of Reading Water Department Water Quality and Supply with a section concerning Lead & Copper Testing:
<http://www.readingma.gov/water-division/pages/water-quality-supply>

The Town of Reading and the Reading Public Schools takes this matter very seriously and we appreciate your patience on this issue. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Erik Mysliwy from the Reading Water Department at 781-942-9199 or by email at emysliwy@ci.reading.ma.us or the Reading Public Schools Administration Offices at 781-944-5800.

Disney Tweet of the Week



**Don't look backwards
for very long. Keep
moving forward,
opening up new doors
and doing new things.**

—Walt Disney

RMHS Inducts Students into Spanish National Honor Society

Last Tuesday, several RMHS students received recognition for excellence Spanish studies at a ceremony held in the Patrick A. Schettini, Jr. Library Media Center. After a few welcoming remarks from RMHS Foreign Language Department Chair Joanne Alvarez, students received honors or medals for their performance on the National Spanish Exam. In addition, students were inducted into the National Spanish Honor Society, Mario Vargas Llosa Chapter. The purpose of the National Spanish Honor Society is to recognize student achievement in Spanish and Portuguese and to promote a continuity of interest in Hispanic studies. Regularly enrolled students who have maintained an honor average in the study of Spanish for a minimum of three semesters and are in the 10th grade or higher are eligible. To continue their membership in the Society, students must maintain their standing as honors students of Spanish.

Congratulations to all of the students! Special thanks to Joanne Alvarez for coordinating the event and for the Spanish teachers who work with these students every day.



National Spanish Exam Award Winners



RMHS Department Chair Joanne Alvarez Inducts Junior Kyle Mungenast



Members of the National Spanish Honor Society

Director of Finance Search Update

We have begun a search process for a new Director of Finance/School Business Manager to replace Martha Sybert, who resigned recently. The position has been posted on **Talent Ed** with a deadline of July 1st. As with other administrative searches, we will have a screening committee consisting of staff and community members who will screen perspective candidates. The finalists will be interviewed by the Superintendent and the School Committee. A final decision on a candidates is expected to be by early August.

Your input as to the qualities that you would like to see in Reading's next Director of Finance and Operations is very important to us. In order to allow for the greatest amount of quality feedback possible and recognizing the time constraints that you all face, we have designed a web-based survey tool to assist us in gathering this input. The survey will remain open until Friday, June 24th, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.

Please click on the link below to access this survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/T7PFCBN>

Killam Principal Search Update

We are pleased to announce that Sarah A. Leveque, has been appointed as the next Principal for the Killam Elementary School. Sarah is currently a third grade teacher and teacher leader for the Bowman Elementary School in Lexington, Massachusetts. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Child Development and Her Master of Arts in Teaching from Tufts University. She has also attended the University College of London, England, Boston University, and the Commonwealth Leadership Academy for certificate and leadership training. In Lexington, Ms. Leveque has been a teacher leader at the school and district level, including the District Data Team, the School Site Council, the Math Leadership Team, and the Literacy Leadership Committee. She is also a Curriculum Writer Consultant for the Tufts University Center for Reading and Language Research.

Sarah will begin on July 1st. Please welcome Sarah Leveque to the Killam Community!

Helping Kids Cope With Tragedy

Posted by **Dr. Dave Walsh** • June 13

The details of the Orlando attack (and countless others) are just beginning to unfold and this violent high profile event will likely dominate news headlines for weeks. Though few of us were there during the shooting, the event may cause children to fear that an event like this could happen to them or their parents. All of us, including our children, are dealing with sadness, anger and other strong emotions. As we try to return to normal, our emotional reactions will continue to evolve.

This is a good time to remind ourselves of ways that we can help our kids manage their stress and emotions as they process tragedy. Here are a few tips for different age groups that can help you move forward:

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Even though very young babies and toddlers may not know what is going on, they may pick up a parent's worry and anxiety with their "sixth sense." Try to stay calm around babies and toddlers. Maintain normal routines as much as possible. Routines are reassuring for babies. Shield babies and toddlers from media coverage as much as possible.

Look for non-verbal signs that your toddler may be anxious. This might include being scared to go outside or to daycare, extra weepy, clingy, or irritable. Provide extra reassurance and time together. Take the lead from your toddler. Don't bring it up yourself unless they show signs of distress or ask questions.

PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers will be more tuned in to what is happening. They may have questions about guns, violence, and death. Safety is a primary concern for this age group. Reassure them that adults are in charge and will keep them safe. Preschoolers are also concerned about the safety of parents, relatives, and friends. Reassure them. Let them know your whereabouts and keep your commitments to them. Preschoolers are not always able to distinguish fantasy and reality. Limit media exposure. Look for non-verbal signs that your preschooler may be anxious. This might include being scared to go to preschool, extra weepy, clingy, or irritable.

Bedtimes are very important. Stories, books and tuck-ins are crucial. Try to maintain your children's normal routines. Give them lots of hugs and physical reassurance. Take the lead from your preschooler. Don't bring it up yourself unless they show signs of distress or ask questions.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

School age children will be more aware of what is going on. They have probably had discussions at school and with friends. Talk to your elementary age children. Explain what happened while reassuring them that you and your child's teachers will do everything to keep them safe. Children this age are also concerned about their own safety, as well as that of family and friends. Try to spend extra time together. This will provide extra reassurance. Ask them if they have any questions. If they do, tell them what you know without exaggerating or overreacting. Don't be surprised if they are more irritable and touchy. Be extra patient.

Limit TV coverage. Try to continue normal routines, especially at bedtime. If fear persists, point out all the things adults are doing to help. Children like to be helpful and feel like they can do something. Children can write a letter or send a package to those suffering.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Children this age will be very aware of what is going on. They have probably seen many of the tragic images on TV and online. They may have already discussed the event at school or with friends. Talk to your middle school children and answer any questions. This will help you determine how much they know and may help you correct any misinformation they might have. Acknowledge any feelings of fear, horror, and anger. Provide comfort and reassurance.

Children this age will be more interested in what might happen in the future. Don't burden them with fears that you might have and provide reassurance that they are safe. Some children may act out scary feelings through misbehavior. Others may become more withdrawn. Pay attention to these cues and ask them to tell you about their feelings. Some kids might want to take action in some way and be helpful. Get your kids connected to positive responses in their school or community. Talk to your kids about what they see on TV or read online. LGBTQ or questioning youth and/or children of LGBTQ parents may be especially upset by this event and need extra love and space to process.

This event may trigger existing anxiety, anger or fears about personal and community safety, especially for youth who have experienced bullying or violence. Listen to your child. Listen listen listen. And assure your child that you are working hard alongside them to make sure all people feel safe and respected. Publicly mention your horror at the crime so that there is no doubt about where you stand on violence against the LGBTQ and Latinx* communities. Seek out positive media - watch, read, and share stories of resilience, advocacy, and support with your child.

High School

High school students have probably had conversations with their peers and teachers. They might have fears about what this will mean for their own safety and or have questions about larger related issues including terrorism, hate crimes, gun control, or Islamaphobia. Questions about safety are all legitimate issues for this age group. It is important to discuss these topics with them. Acknowledge any fear, sadness, and anger they have. Some teens may want to block out the whole thing. It may appear that they do not care. This often masks real fears and feelings of being overwhelmed. Some teens may make jokes. Humor can be a way to help them cope, but discourage them from humor that disregards the importance of taking the tragedy seriously.

Talk to your kids about what they see on TV or read online. Some teens may be very interested in discussing the policy and/or political issues involved. Be willing to engage them in serious discussions about related issues included public safety, terrorism, media coverage and stereotyping, and gun control. Be careful to avoid placing blame on a whole group of people or targeting particular groups. LGBTQ or questioning youth and/or children of LGBTQ parents may be especially upset by this event and need extra love and space to process. This event may trigger existing anxiety, anger or fears about personal and community safety, especially for youth who have experienced bullying or violence. Listen to your child. Listen listen listen. And assure your child that you are working hard alongside them to make sure all people feel safe and respected.

Publicly mention your horror at the crime so that there is no doubt about where you stand on violence against the LGBTQ and Latinx communities. Seek out positive media - watch, read, and share stories of resilience, advocacy, and support with your child.

* The "x" makes Latino, a masculine identifier, gender inclusive.

Reading Public School Happenings

Final Week Activities

This past week, several schools held final full week activities such as field days, final assemblies and promotion ceremonies to celebrate the end of the school year. Some are below.



Coolidge Field Day



Coolidge Field Day



Parker Field Day



Parker Field Day



Birch Meadow students participating in dunk tank activities as a reward for achieving their Read Across America goal earlier this year.



Birch Meadow Grade 5 Party-Hollywood Style



Wood End Grade 5 Celebration

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



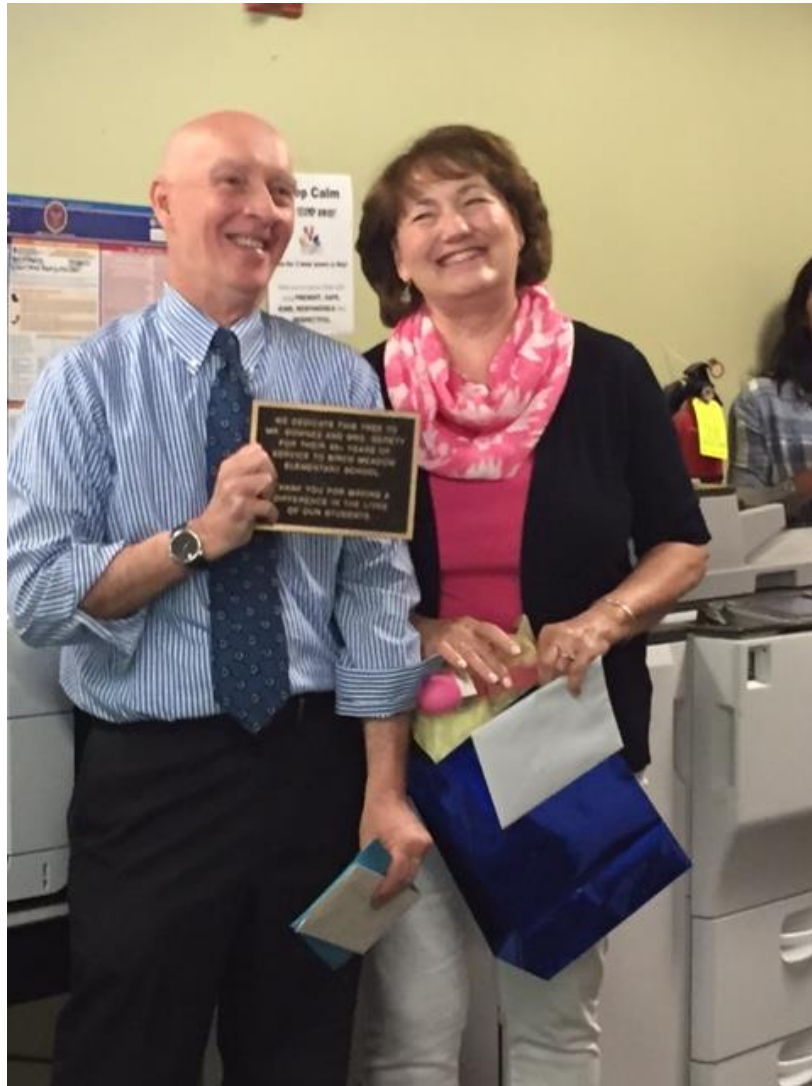
Killam Grade 5 Final Assembly



Killam Principal Cathy Giles Addresses the Grade 5 Students in their Promotion Assembly. Mrs. Giles will be leaving at the end of this school year. We thank Mrs. Giles for her 24 years of service to the Reading Public Schools and for making a difference in the lives of children.

Birch Meadow Honors Rick Downes and Janis Gerety

This past week, Birch Meadow honored teachers Rick Downes and Janis Gerety, who are retiring at the end of this year. Each have over 40 years in the Reading Public Schools. Congratulations, Rick and Janis. We wish you much health and happiness in your retirement!



Rick Downes and Janis Gerety

Stepping Stones...

- **We are pleased** to announce that **Jessica Theriault** has been hired as RMHS assistant principal. Jessica is currently in the Revere Public Schools system, where she was the District Level Director of Guidance and Testing for the past two years. Prior to that, she was an Assistant Principal at Revere High School for five years. In her time as Assistant Principal, she helped develop and implement a number of successful initiatives including: a Freshman Academy, 1:1 ipad initiative, and a flipped learning model—all helping Revere High School to be named as the best Urban High School in 2014 and to achieve level 1 status with the DESE. Jess began her educational career in Peabody, working for six years as a Guidance Counselor at the middle school level.
- **We have posted** a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

Team Chairperson, RMHS
https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=59
Grade 1 Elementary Teacher, Joshua Eaton Elementary School
https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=58
Assistant Cheerleading Coach, Reading Memorial High School
https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=60

Blazing Trails....

"Planning for Great Group Work." On the surface, having students work in groups may seem simple enough; however, there's much more to it in this ASCD Express article. Effective group work provides the space and structure for students to work together and learn from one another. Proper planning for group work includes laying the groundwork for collaboration, assigning groups that work well together, developing group-worthy tasks, and determining ways to assess group and individual contributions. [Read More](#)

"How Massachusetts Education Department Develops Standardized Tests." The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education works with nonprofit Measured Progress to design statewide exams. This article examines the step-by-step process that goes into creating the exams. [Read More](#)

"Three Steps to Building Curiosity in the Classroom." Carl Sagan said, "Every kid starts out as a natural-born scientist, and then we beat it out of them." Here, Howard Pitler writes that all you have to do is observe a toddler at play and you'll see Sagan was right. Where is the sense of wonder and enthusiasm for learning when you see a student in high school history or math class? Pitler proposes a three-step process for building a more curious classroom. [Read More](#)

"5 Questions that Most Define My Work." Educational author and presenter, Will Richardson, discusses aspects of education that are driving his research. "I've been thinking about the questions that drive my work a lot of late. I'm wondering which are really worth pursuing, as in which do I think actually have an answer that is within reach of both my feeble brain and my time left on Earth. (Change in schools is very slow, in case you hadn't noticed.) To that end, I've been making a list of all the questions that I'm asking that seem most interesting to me in relation to the work I'm trying to do. I'm up to 27, but just for posterity, I thought I'd share the top 5 at this moment." [Read More](#)

"More US Funding Needed for Global Education, Health Care." Poor countries need funding to help improve health care and education for children, and the US or the world's wealthy must provide more help, writes Jeffrey Sachs, director of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network. "Our world is immensely wealthy and could easily finance a healthy start in life for every child on the planet through global funds for health and education," he argues. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Last Week and a Restful and Relaxing Summer!