



Pathways

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

September 4, 2016

Volume 3, Number 1

Upcoming Dates

- Sept. 5 – Labor Day (No School)
- Sept. 7 – (after school) Secondary Building Meeting – Principal Determined Time; (6:00 p.m.) Birch Meadow Curriculum Night
- Sept. 8 – State Primary; (after school) RISE & Elementary Building Meetings – Grade Level Common Time; (6:00 p.m.) Joshua Eaton & Killam Curriculum Nights; (6:30 p.m.) Barrows Curriculum Night
- Sept. 11 – (12:00 p.m.) Reading Street Faire
- Sept. 12 – (7:30 p.m.) Special Town Meeting in the Endslo PAC
- Sept. 13 – (6:00 p.m.) Wood End Curriculum Night for Grades 3 – 5
- Sept. 14 – (after school) Secondary Building Meetings – Collaborative Proposal Time; (5:00 p.m.) Joshua Eaton Book Fair and Picnic; (6:00 p.m.) Wood End Curriculum Night for Grades K – 2 & RISE @ Wood End; (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Senior Parents Night in the Endslo PAC

Community Financial Forum Held Last Week

On Thursday, September 1st, the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Finance Committee, and Town and School Officials held a Community Financial Forum in the RMHS Performing Arts Center to discuss the upcoming Proposition 2 ½ Override. The School Department Presentation from that evening is located at the Reading Public School District Website located [here](#). Information about the override can be found on the Town of Reading Website located [here](#).

Welcome New Staff!

Listed below are the new staff for the 2016-17 school year for the Reading Public Schools. All staff were introduced at the August 29th School Committee meeting by their building principal. Welcome to all new staff!

First Name	Last Name	Position	School
Patricia	Flaherty	Reading Specialist	Barrows
Jessica	Vanderlaan	Long term Substitute 5th grade	Barrows
Katherine	Breen	Special Education 4th Grade Co-Teacher	Birch Meadow
Bridget	Easler	Regular Education Reading Tutor	Birch Meadow
Paula	Falvey	Elementary Library/Media Specialist	Birch Meadow
Mackenzie	Gibson	Regular Education Tutor	Birch Meadow
Julia	Hendrix	Elementary Principal	Birch Meadow
Melissa	Kirby	Grade 4 Teacher	Birch Meadow
Tammy	Murzycki	Grade 4 Elementary Teacher	Birch Meadow
Bethlynn	Orzano	Special Education Kindergarten Co-Teacher	Birch Meadow
Olivia	Romano	Grade 2 Special Education Co Teacher	Birch Meadow
Heather	Sullivan	Grade 3 Elementary Teacher	Birch Meadow
Gail	Dowd	Director of Finance & Operations	Central Office
Christopher	Gonsalves	Night Shift Custodian	Coolidge
Nicholas	Kaempf	Regular Education Tutor	Coolidge
Krysta	Roy	Developmental Learning Center Teacher	Coolidge
Jessica	Shaneck	Therapeutic Support Program Teacher	Coolidge
Pauline	Tsoutsis	8th Grade ELA Teacher	Coolidge

- Sept. 15 – (after school) RISE & Elementary Building Meetings – Principal Determined; (7:00 p.m.) Parker & Coolidge Open Houses; (7:30 p.m.) Special Town Meeting in the Endslo PAC
- Sept. 16 – (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Football vs Acton Boxborough

Caroline	Boucher	Special Education Teacher language based program	Eaton
Kelley	McQuillan	Grade 1 Teacher	Eaton
Kathleen	Wilcox	Regular Education Kindergarten Para	Eaton
Daniel	Htoo-Levine	Music Teacher	Eaton/Barrows
Marisa	Botta	School Adjustment Counselor-Therapeutic Program	Killam
Andrea	Bray	Long term Substitute 4th grade	Killam
Sarah	Leveque	Principal	Killam
Lynne	Ayvazian	Special Education Program Paraeducator	Parker
Jennifer	Blackmon	French/Spanish Teacher	Parker
Jessica	Dougherty	Grade 7 English Teacher(1 year)	Parker
Roisen	Munson	Special Education Learning Center Paraeducator	Parker
Joumana	Salameh-Cafferty	French/Spanish Teacher	Parker
John	Savasta	Special Education Learning Center Paraeducator	Parker
Ariana	Seligman	PE/Health Teacher	Parker
Richele	Shankland	Middle School Principal	Parker
Arielle	Wezdenko	School Psychologist	Parker
Amy	Bettencourt	Special Education Teacher language based program	Parker
Cameron	Brown	Chemistry Teacher	RMHS
Jacqueline	Callahan	PE/Health Teacher	RMHS
Leanne	Donahue	Learning Center/LLD Para	RMHS
Timothy	McIntire	Chemistry/Environmental Science Teacher	RMHS
Eileen	Messinger	Life Skills Teacher	RMHS
Stacy	Scouten	Attendance/Asst. Principal Secretary	RMHS
Jessica	Therault	Assistant Principal	RMHS
Marissa	Wiegel	Speech and Language Pathologist	RMHS
Caitlin	DiLena	Special Education ILP Program Paraeducator	Wood End
Stacey	Foresman	Kindergarten Teacher	Wood End
Stephanie	Gauthier	ILP Program Para	Wood End
Margaret	George	Special Education ILP Teacher	Wood End
Kelsey	Wharff	Special Education ILP Paraeducator	Wood End

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to the Reading Public Schools faculty and staff for a great opening of school
- A huge thank you to the facilities staff, technology staff and administrative assistants for a great job preparing our schools for opening day.
- To Facilities Rental Coordinator Stephen MacDonald for his assistance in the Opening Day meeting.

Meet Our New Administrators

We welcome to our school district several new principals and central office administrators to the Reading Public Schools, each with a unique set of experiences and educational background. Their short biographies are listed below.

Jennifer Bove, Interim Human Resources Administrator

- BA in Psychology from Plymouth State University
- Currently pursuing a Masters in Human Resources Management at Salem State University
- 4th year working with Reading Public Schools as a paraeducator and extended day site coordinator

Gail Dowd, Director of Finance

- BS in accounting/finance from the University of Lowell and MBA from Suffolk University Sawyer School of Management
- Licensed Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in Massachusetts
- Has been spent her career in working in private/corporate sector in Boston and included positions at Ernst & Young, Investors Bank & Trust and lastly Eaton Vance. Her career has focused on all aspects of finance and accounting including reporting, budgeting and forecasting, internal controls and accounting.
- Volunteers as the Audit Committee Chair at the American History Textile Museum.

Julia Hendrix, Principal, Birch Meadow Elementary School

- Bachelor of Arts from Wellesley College, Masters in Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School, Masters in Education from Lesley University
- Worked in public education for 22 years as a classroom teacher in the Cambridge and Carlisle Public Schools and as math coach and assistant principal in the Lexington Public Schools
- Originally from South Carolina but has lived in New England for 37 years

Sarah Leveque, Principal, Killam Elementary School

- BA in Child Development and Master of Arts in Teaching from Tufts University, Literacy Certificate from Boston University
- Previously employed in the Lexington Public Schools: 7 years as a first grade teacher, 2 years as a third grade teacher
- Served on numerous committees and in various capacities, such as the District Data Manager, Mentor, and Literacy Task Force while in the Lexington School District
- Presented locally and nationally on leading adult learners
- Curriculum Developer for the Tufts University RAVE-O first grade literacy intervention program

Richele Shankland, Principal, Parker Middle School

- Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education in Mathematics from Arizona State University
- Master's Degree from Stony Brook University
- Masters in Educational Leadership from Salem State University
- Spent 16 of her 20 years in Lynnfield Public Schools as grades 7/8 math teacher, math department head and assistant principal.
- Prior to Lynnfield, she taught grades 7/8 math in Arizona and Long Island, NY

Building Relationships in the Opening Days of School

In this article in *Educational Leadership*, consultant Rick Wormeli remembers how hard he worked as a middle-school teacher to learn the names of all 185 new students in the days right after Labor Day. “It was the first leg of the year’s journey in relationship building,” he says. “[A]ll of us feel honored when others whom we respect think our names are worth remembering. In that simple act, we make a connection.” Wormeli has several other suggestions for the opening weeks of every school year:

- *Make sure students feel safe and know they belong.* “Once students feel sure these needs are met, they’ll dive into learning,” says Wormeli. Some key steps: Teachers laughing at their own mistakes and modeling how to handle them constructively; not ridiculing students’ questions, however silly they may seem; removing “all sarcasm from our comments, realizing that the sting of even a small, tossed-away remark can leave a lasting scar;” not assuming that students understand the idioms and references we use; not taking students’ inappropriate comments or reactions personally (“That doesn’t sound like you, Matthew. What’s really going on?”); giving students specific feedback on their work and a chance to improve it; affirming risk-taking and welcoming participation, however imperfect, in class discussions; asking students to explain their thinking and affirming what’s right; and when students say they don’t know, trying this line: “Pretend that you *did* know the answer – what words would come out of your mouth?”

- *Be yourself.* “Students detest duplicity in their teachers,” says Wormeli. “The first few weeks should provide consistent proof of personal authenticity... We are sad at sad moments and happy at happy moments. We don’t embrace students’ cultural likes and dislikes just to be more accepted by them. We share our unique interests – a favorite sport or book; how much we liked Legos as a child; our dream of going into space someday; our fondness for summer camp, bike touring, and pecan pie; and a little about our families and our deep commitments to them.”

- *Know your students well.* Wormeli recommends that teacher teams glean from students, over the course of the year, information on key areas that affect learning and keep them in a secure database in the guidance office:

- Socioeconomic status
- Family dynamics
- Nationality
- Transiency rate
- Parents’ jobs
- Students’ home responsibilities
- After-school work schedule
- Previous school experiences
- Religious affiliation
- English language learner status
- Technology access and proficiency

Quote of the Week....



Do not lose hold of your dreams or aspirations. For if you do, you may still exist but you have ceased to live.

– Henry David Thoreau.

- Personal interests – sports, music, movies, TV, movies, books, hobbies
- Physical health and maturity
- Behavior and discipline concerns
- Social-emotional learning strengths and challenges
- Existence of an IEP
- Challenges such as Tourette syndrome, Asperger syndrome, ADHD
- Vision and hearing problems
- Gifted/advanced learner status
- LGBT identity and transitions
- Leadership qualities
- Multiple intelligences
- Myers-Briggs personality profile

In addition, Wormeli suggests asking parents at the beginning of the year, “In a million words or less, tell me about your child.” He’s found that this open-ended invitation garners better information than conventional parent surveys.

A related strategy is asking students, “Write a letter from your parent to the teacher describing you.” This approach is surprisingly effective – some sample responses: “If it’s important to remember, please write it on the board or screen. Otherwise, Jerry doesn’t think it’s important.” “It drives Carla crazy when there’s nothing creative, so don’t be boring.” And “Lena finds sweat stains under teachers’ armpits revolting, so please keep them dry or don’t raise your arms.”

Another idea: ask students to write on a card everything that helps them learn – perhaps using high-contrast colors on dry-erase boards, speaking more slowly, allowing students to drink water or juice in class, identifying online tutorials, and making homework interesting.

Wormeli also recommends doing something like hiking up a mountain together. “Witnessing our students outside normal classroom and school contexts reveals something close to their true selves,” he says. “It’s gold.” Similarly, working with students in a club, sport, or extracurricular activity builds esprit de corps and strong relationships.

• *Practice empathy.* Wormeli finds the following techniques helpful for better understanding students’ minds and souls:

- Make home visits and observe students’ roles in their families;
- Sit at students’ desks and see the classroom from their point of view;
- Ask students to explain their thinking verbally, in writing, or by teaching a classmate;
- Really try to see why students don’t understand what you think you’ve taught effectively;
- Attend to students’ essential human needs – hydration, movement, nutrition, light, fresh air, sightlines, tools;
- Avoid overgeneralizing about students (for example, ignoring the great diversity of ELLs) and avoid the tendency to make a minority group member the spokesperson for his or her group.

Disney Tweet of the Week



**Believe in you. That's
how you make your
dreams come true.**

—Mickey Mouse.

"What to Do in Week One?" by Rick Wormeli in *Educational Leadership*, September 2016 (Vol. 74, #1, p. 10-15), <http://bit.ly/2bHsHQh>; Wormeli can be reached at rwormeli@cox.net. Reprinted from Marshall Memo 650.

Back to School Resources for Parents

By Edutopia Magazine

Back-to-School Advice and Checklists

- [Five-Minute Film Festival: Building a Parent Toolkit](#): Watch curated videos from the Parent Toolkit website on topics like stress reduction, healthy eating, homework, and more; [Back to School Basics](#) includes a collection of back-to-school videos for parents. (Edutopia, 2015)
- [Best Back-to-School Tips](#): Listen to this podcast about preparing students to head back to school and developing morning routines. For more on this topic, also consider reading "[Getting Back in the School Year Routine](#)." (Greater Good Science Center, 2012)
- [Back-to-School Health and Safety Tips](#): Browse advice about issues like backpack safety, transportation, bullying prevention, nutrition, before- and after-school childcare, study habits, and more. (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2015)
- [19 Meaningful Questions You Should Ask Your Child's Teacher](#): Mine this list for inspiration before talking with your children's teachers. (Edutopia, 2013)
- [Back to School](#): Find information about back-to-school shopping on a budget, getting organized, and supporting children academically in these back-to-school articles. Before back-to-school night, you may want to take a look at [Back-to-School Night Basics](#). (GreatSchools)

Easing the Back-to-School Transition

- [Guiding Our Children Through School Transitions](#): Transitions can be both exciting and anxiety-inducing for both children and parents. Discover tips for helping students transition into elementary school, middle school, high school, and post-secondary education. (Parent Toolkit, 2014)
- [Parents: Start with the A](#): Start the school year with inspiration and enthusiasm by celebrating your child's strengths and interests. (Edutopia, 2013)
- [9 Tips for Parents If Your Child Is Changing Schools](#): Moving to a new school can be a bewildering experience for students. Here are some tips to ease the transition. (*The Huffington Post*, 2013)
- [Nervous? How We Can Help Kids Transition Back to School](#): In this podcast, learn about strategies that can help kids manage change and calm their nerves about starting a new school year. (Greater Good Science Center, 2011)
- [Back to School Books](#): Read a book with your child as a springboard for discussing feelings about back-to-school; this guide includes recommendations for preschool through grade six. For more book suggestions, you might also want to check out Understood.org's "[5 Great Back-to-School Books for Kids in Grades 1–4](#)." (Bank Street School of Education)
- [Start School Strong: A Back-to-School Guide for Kids With Learning and Attention Issues](#): Find a variety of resources -- including live chats with experts, downloads, and more -- to help children get organized, process their feelings, and establish routines. (Understood, 2016)

Tech Tips for a New School Year

- [Four Tools to Improve Communication Between Home and School](#): Read about online and mobile tools that can help parents engage with schools in this post by [#PTChat](#) co-moderator and [#ParentCamp](#) founding organizer Gwen Pescatore. (Teaching Channel, 2015)
- [Your Ultimate Back to School Guide](#): Explore back-to-school advice and guidance related to managing technology in school and at home. (Common Sense Media)
- [Creating a Family Media Agreement: How to Have the Conversation](#): Learn how creating a family agreement on media use can help your family balance media use and time on schoolwork during the first weeks of school. (Edutopia, 2013)

For more tips and guidance about managing media and technology use, check out these other posts from Edutopia:

- [Technology at Home: Developing the Social Self](#) (Edutopia, 2013)
- [Young Kids and Technology at Home](#) (Edutopia, 2013)

Gearing Up for Fall Learning

- [Five-Minute Film Festival: Nine Boosts for Summer Learning](#): Watch a playlist of videos with fun ideas to re-engage kids in their learning process during the last days of summer. (Edutopia, 2013)
- [Homework and Developing Responsibility](#): Developing study habits early is crucial for long-term academic success. Find tips and ideas for encouraging effective habits in reading, math, and writing. (American Academy of Pediatrics, Updated 2015)
- [Teaching Good Study Habits: Minute by Minute](#): Explore advice, timed exercises, and games to help adolescents study effectively. (Edutopia, 2016)
- [School Success Prep: Growth Mindset Praise](#): Listen to a podcast on how to talk to kids about schoolwork. (Greater Good Science Center, 2011)
- [What Do Parents Need to Know About the Common Core?](#): Wondering how you can support learning under the Common Core in a new school year? Discover some resources that will help. (Edutopia, 2014)
- [Milestones](#): Watch a free collection of videos aimed at helping parents understand grade-level expectations for children in grades K-12. (GreatSchools)

For more parent strategies around homework, take a look at these other blog posts from Edutopia:

- [Homework vs. No Homework is the Wrong Question](#) (Edutopia, 2015)
- [Homework, Sleep, and the Student Brain](#) (Edutopia, 2014)

The Power of Parental Involvement

- [Parent Partnership in Education: Resource Roundup](#): Discover tips, tools, and strategies to help parents engage in a productive way with teachers and schools. (Edutopia, 2014)
- [Parental Involvement in Schools](#): Browse a report that discusses the positive effects of parental involvement in schools. A [downloadable version](#) is also available. For more on the research about what types of parental involvement work best, you may also want to read [Back to School: How Parent Involvement Affects Student Achievement](#) from the Center for Public Education. (Child Trends DataBank, 2013)
- [Beyond Back-to-School Night: Parents and Teachers as Allies](#): Take a look at tips for parents on how to build closer, more supportive relationships with teachers. (Edutopia, 2012)

- [Parent Involvement Checklist](#): Bookmark a checklist that can help educators and parents evaluate how well their school is reaching out to parents and explore how to work together to improve the quality of parent-school partnerships. (Reading Rockets/Project Appleseed, 2008)

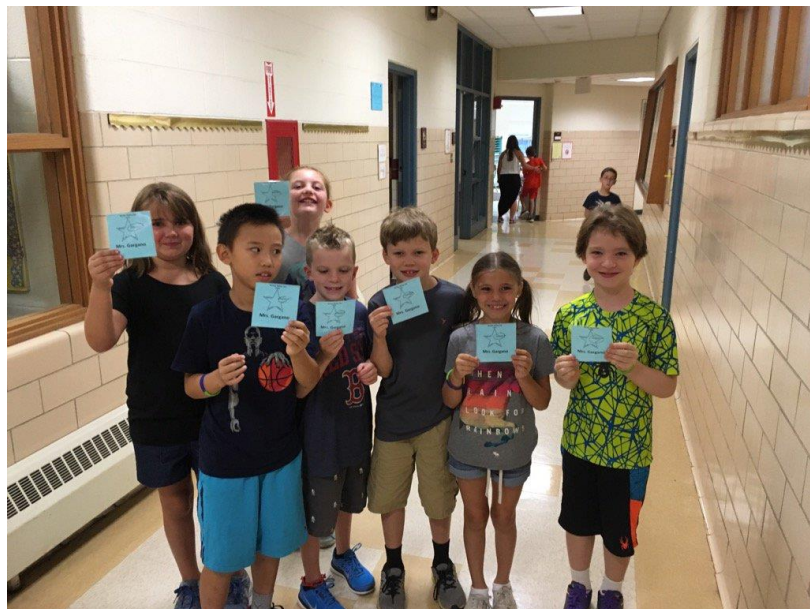
Reading Public Schools Happenings

Opening Days of School

The first week of school is always an exciting time for students, teachers, and administrators. Below are some pictures from the first week and other orientation activities.



Dr. Doherty Greets Staff at Opening Day Meeting



Barrows Shining Stars Showing Their Barrows Beliefs



Elementary Principals Showing Their MTSS Triangle Tattoos



Birch Meadow Teacher Olivia Romano Welcomes Students On Opening Day

RMHS Freshmen Orientation

On Wednesday, August 24th, the RMHS Class of 2020 had a day long Freshmen Orientation which included team building, small group meetings with their guidance counselors, and a pizza lunch. Below are some pictures of the day. Special thanks goes out to the RMHS Administration and Guidance Department for planning and coordinating the event.





Buddy Benches Installed

On Sunday, August 28th, RMHS Freshman Samantha Gibbs proudly held a ribbon cutting ceremony for one of six buddy benches that she was able to raise funds for and install as a result of her Girl Scout Gold Star Project. Because of her hard work, there are now buddy benches at the playgrounds of all five elementary schools and the RISE Preschool. Below are some photos from the ribbon cutting ceremony. Congratulations to Sammie on a job well done!



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



Stepping Stones...

- Our thoughts and prayers go out to former RMHS teacher **Bill Endslow** on the recent loss of a loved one.
- Our thoughts go out to Parker Physical Education Teacher **Ariana Seligman** on the loss of a family member.
- **We have posted** a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

Special Education Program Paraeducator, 56 hours biweekly Birch Meadow Elementary

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=147

Team Chairperson, Reading Memorial High School
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https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=148

Middle School Math Teacher Long-Term Substitute, Parker Middle School

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=149

Regular Education Kindergarten Paraeducator, 61.5 hours biweekly Birch Meadow Elementary School.
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https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=150

Blazing Trails....

"Focus on Feelings, First." The first days of school are filled with nervous anticipation. It's the perfect time for students to identify how they really want to feel, every day, at school. Using an emotional intelligence charter, a tool developed by Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence, you can help students put into words their vision for a positive classroom culture and the actions necessary to achieve it. [Read More](#)

"Homework Discussion Continues." New York Times reporter Christine Hauser writes on a continuing discussion about the value of homework, noting that her daughter, a rising second grader, had been asked to do homework for six days a week over the summer. At some point, her daughter said, "I hate reading," and the homework stopped. She cited a Texas second-grade teacher who wrote a note to parents explaining that she would be giving their children "no formally assigned homework," but instead encouraged them to "spend your evenings doing things that are proven to correlate with student success" such as having family dinners, reading, playing outside and going to bed early. She cites a guideline supported by the National PTA and the National Education Association of 10-minutes per grade per night so that 1st-graders should not exceed ten minutes per night, while 12th-graders might have up to two hours of homework. [Read More](#)

"Setting the Stage for Success with High-Leverage Practices."

Read this ASCD Express post to learn "teacher-as-manager" practices-such as implementing organizational routines, building respectful relationships, and setting goals-that prepare students for learning in any content area. [Read More](#)

"How are You Bringing Joy Back This School Year?" Days are getting shorter, Labor Day is looming around the corner, and you're back at work or prepping for your students to return. The new school year provides a fresh start for students and educators alike. With that in mind, we want to hear from you. Show us how you're Bringing Joy Back to your school or classroom this back-to-school season for a chance to win a \$500 gift card to the ASCD online store. [Read More](#)

"How Finnish Teachers Start the School Year." The global education pioneer eases students into the classroom. "In Finland, when that first week of school arrived, I noticed something odd. Many of my Finnish colleagues hadn't visited their classrooms all summer long. The day before school began, I met one young teacher who admitted she was still deciding what to do that week. I was a little shocked. To my American eyes, my highly trained Finnish colleagues didn't look particularly ready or organized for the first days of school. They seemed naively laid-back. Meanwhile, I felt incredibly stressed, as I strived to teach the textbook-perfect way." [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!