



October 9, 2016

Volume 8, Number 6

Upcoming Dates

- October 10 – Columbus Day – No School, Offices Closed
- October 11 – Yom Kippur begins at Sundown
- October 12 – Yom Kippur ends at Sundown; (after school) Secondary Building Meetings; (2:45 p.m.) Secondary SpEd Learning Ctr. Teachers & Curriculum Leaders Meetings
- October 13 - (after school) RISE/Elementary Building Meetings; (2:45 p.m.) RISE/Elementary SpEd Learning Ctr. Teachers & Curriculum Leaders Meetings
- October 14 – (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Choral Fundraiser – Karaoke Night in the RMHS Cafeteria
- October 15 – (8:00 a.m.) RMHS – PSAT Testing;
- October 17 – 18 – Camp Bournedale Trip for Grade 5 students @ Wood End, Birch Meadow and Killam; (8:00 am – 2:30 p.m.) Challenge Day @ Coolidge; (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- October 18 – Special Election in the Field House
- October 19 – Grade 6 – 12 Early Release Day; (after school) District PLC Meetings
- October 20 – 21 - (8:00 am – 2:30 p.m.) Challenge Day @ Parker
- October 20 – (after school) Elementary Building Meetings
- October 21 – RMHS Drama Elementary School Visits

Pathways

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

RMHS Volleyball Team Sponsors Volley For Cure Event



RMHS Chorus Singing the National Anthem Before the Event

On Friday, September 30th, the RMHS Volleyball Team, under the direction of Head Coach and Joshua Eaton Teacher Michelle Hopkinson, sponsored the 7th annual “Volley for the Cure” event to fight breast cancer. The event began at RMHS in 2009 with Lexington and since then, the team has raised over \$10,000 towards breast cancer research, more specifically, the MGH-ESSCO Breast Cancer Research Fund which has local ties to the Reading Community. This year, the team played Belmont in the event and both teams wore pink which symbolizes the fight against breast cancer.

An additional special touch of the evening was the support of the RMHS Chorus, under the direction of Kristin Killian, who did an outstanding job singing a beautiful rendition of the Star Spangled Banner.

Congratulations to our students and staff who participated in this worthwhile event.

- October 22 – (5:00 p.m.) Killam Halloween Bash
- October 24 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- October 26 – (after school) Secondary Building Meetings; (6:00 p.m.) Joshua Eaton Halloween Howl; (6:30 p.m.) RMHS College Fair at the Shriners Auditorium in Wilmington
- October 27 – (after school) RISE/Elementary Building Meetings
- October 31 – Happy Halloween
- November 2 – Grade 6 – 12 Early Release; (District PLC Meetings (Elem – 1:15 p.m.; HS & MS – 1:30 p.m.); (7:30 p.m.) Financial Forum @ Senior Center
- November 3 – (after school) RISE/Elementary Building Meetings; (7:00 p.m.) Killam PTO Meeting
- November 4 – (9:00 a.m.) Joshua Eaton Veterans Day Assembly
- November 5 – (8:00 a.m.) RMHS SAT Testing – Reading is a test center; (2:00 p.m.) 2nd Annual RPS Science Expo at Coolidge



RMHS Volleyball Team

Second Annual Sally K. Mucica 5K Walk on October 15

Saturday, October 15, 2016, will be the second annual Sally J. Mucica 5k walk to benefit the Sally J. Mucica Reading Scholarship Fund. Sally Mucica was a beloved teacher at the Wood End Elementary School who passed away in 2015. Please visit Smiles-for-Sally.org for registration forms and a donation link to the scholarship fund. On-line registrations are being accepted and registrations will be accepted the day of the walk. Everyone that registers either on-line or on the day of the walk will receive a "Smiles for Sally" water bottle. Single registration is \$10.00 and \$30.00 per family. Registration begins at 8:30 am and the walk will begin at 9:30. Limited sizes of t-shirts will be on sale the day of the walk. Please come join us for music and lots of Smiles for Sally. Hope to see you October 15, 2016 at Wood End☺

We will be raffling off 2 Bruins Tickets the day of the walk. Raffle tickets will be \$10 each or 3 for \$20.

If you cannot join us, you can donate to the Sally J. Mucica Scholarship Fund through the Reading Scholarship Fund. Please specify your donation is for Sally J. Mucica.

Recess, Recess, All About Recess

By Reading Elementary Principals

There are several beliefs about recess that are universal in all schools. No child believes that there is enough recess in the school day. All children believe that their teachers' watches are broken and that they do not time the recess correctly. Everyone believes in a different temperature at which it's "too cold" to be outside. In our experience, these beliefs are held by most students.

However, even if we cannot reconcile these beliefs with fact, we do think there should be consistency among the Reading elementary schools in

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to field hockey, boys & girls soccer, volleyball, golf and swimming for wins this week.
- Congratulations to RMHS Seniors Travis Giragosian and Nicole Joyal who are this week's High Five.
- Congratulations to the RMHS Football Team for their 47-21 victory over Belmont on Friday Night.
- Congratulations to RMHS Food Service Employee Connie Kurchian, who is retiring on October 14th after 21.5 years of service in the Reading Public Schools. Thank you for your service to children.
- Congratulations to Director of Social and Emotional Learning Sara Burd who has been invited to advise the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development by serving as a member of its Council of Distinguished Educators. This new National Commission will build on powerful evidence emerging from research and practice to make the case for fully integrating social and emotional development alongside academic learning in K-12 education, so that all students are fully prepared to thrive in school, career and life.

terms of minutes of recess. Last year, the elementary principals embarked on a mission to standardize the school day across the schools and as a result, increased overall recess time in the elementary schools. As a result of that work, the following recess standard was adopted by all the Reading elementary schools:

- Full day kindergarteners through fifth graders have 120 minutes of recess time each week.
- Full day and half day kindergartners get 100 additional minutes of play each week.

While we set a common standard for minutes, we did not set a common way that time is spent. Each building has its own building based programs and specialists allocation which present different scheduling challenges between the schools. In some schools recess is scheduled in 15 minute blocks and in others in 30 minute blocks. Some schools schedule recess on Wednesday (our short day) and some do not.

Recess is a crucial and necessary component of a child's development and plays a significant role in promoting the overall development of the whole child (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2013). The benefits of physical education and physical fitness are well-recognized, leading to improved personal and academic performance. We continue to look at our practices and focus on meeting the needs of all students.

Engaging Parental Support for Smarter Thinking

Parents can help develop their children's executive function by modeling inquiry and reasoning, demonstrating real-world uses for what they learn in school, and creating an ideal study space.

By **Dr. Donna Wilson and Marcus Conyers** for *Edutopia*
October 3, 2016

Given that students spend much more time outside of school than in the classroom, partnering with parents can be an effective way to help children and youth enhance their executive function. Reinforcing messages and strategies related to taking charge of their thinking at home also illustrates how truly useful it can be to be the boss of your brain.

Many parents won't be familiar with the concept of executive function - or indeed the idea of guiding students to learn how to learn. In their own K-12 education, today's parents likely never encountered lessons about how the human brain learns and how people can become more effective learners. As a result, it will be helpful to share three key messages with parents:

1. The term **executive function** refers to the capacities of the human mind to develop and carry out plans, to get and stay organized, to make decisions, to hold information in working memory, and to focus

attention on the task at hand. A helpful metaphor is to think of executive function as the brain's CEO directing other parts of the brain, such as those that control the senses and body movement, to take action to carry out plans and perform tasks.

2. Many people believe that these kinds of thinking skills are inherent (for example, you're either naturally organized or you're not), but researchers have established that it is possible to improve various aspects of executive function through conscious effort and practice. For instance, over time, you can improve your working memory, which makes it easier to solve problems and remember all the steps in a task.

3. There are simple strategies that you can use at home with your children to help them -- and you -- learn to think smarter. Enhancing executive function can make a difference in schoolwork, on the job, and in personal pursuits such as hobbies and other pastimes.

Strategies for Parents and Children at Home

Encourage parents to use these strategies at home to reinforce what students are learning in the classroom.

Be the learner that you want your child to be. Learning doesn't stop at graduation. Especially in today's quickly changing world, adults always need to learn new skills on the job and in their personal lives. Underscore the importance of lifelong learning and the many examples of applying executive function in daily life. For example:

"I couldn't figure out this new app on my phone until I sat down this morning and focused all my attention on reading the directions and practicing how to use it."

"There are so many things we could do on our vacation. Let's come up with a systematic plan to compare our options and choose the things we'd most like to do."

Learn out loud. Take advantage of opportunities to model problem solving, planning, and organizational strategies. For example, you might ask, "What does *incomprehensible* mean? Let's see if we can break it down. Part of the word is *comprehend*. We know what that means, right? To understand. And *in-* at the beginning of a word often means 'not,' so this word probably means not understandable. Let's look it up to check and see if we're right!"

Apply classroom learning to life outside of school. A common lament in the classroom is, "Why do I need to learn this? I'll never use it again!" Parents can demonstrate the many ways that academic learning comes in handy in real life -- by working with your child to double the

Quote of the Week....



If you can speak what you will never hear, if you can write what you will never read, you have done rare things.

– Henry David Thoreau

ingredients in a recipe, for example, or to measure a room to figure out how much paint to buy when remodeling.

Plan a trip to the grocery store. A practical way for elementary-age children to develop their planning and organizational skills is to help parents develop and write a grocery shopping list. Enlist their help in taking an inventory of needed groceries, planning meals and identifying the necessary ingredients, sorting through coupons and figuring how much savings they will offer, and making an efficient list by organizing all the items in order of the path you will take through the store.

Organize a space and time for studying and reading at home. With your child, find and furnish a well-lit, comfortable study nook that is free from distractions. Set aside a quiet time after school or in the evening for homework and reading. Make a habit of reading with younger children, and let older children see you enjoy reading on your own.

Predict what happens next. Predicting what will happen next in a story employs key aspects of executive function, as we think about how the plot is organized and what clues are available that suggest where the story is going. When reading with children, stop and ask them what they think will happen next. When you're watching TV together, mute the sound during commercials and encourage children to predict the next scene or conclusion of the program.

By practicing smarter thinking with their children, parents may well discover how learning remains a positive experience at any stage of life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Student Work Analysis to Improve Teaching, Assessment, and Learning

In this article on her website, consultant Karin Hess suggests analyzing student work in three layers: first *describing* the student work we actually see (or what students tell about it); then *interpreting* what the evidence might mean (specific to the intended purpose); and then *evaluating* what next steps should be taken. Hess outlines how the process of analyzing student work can be helpful to teaching and learning:

- **Purpose #1: Improving the quality of tasks/prompts and scoring guides** – Piloting tasks and looking at student work helps to clarify prompts, make tasks accessible and engaging for all students, trim unnecessary components, modify the wording of scoring rubrics, and tweak questions so they will measure deeper thinking. For example, teachers gave this assessment

Disney Tweet of the Week



People often ask me if I could tell others how to make their dreams come true. My answer is, you do it by working.

—Walt Disney

to kindergarten students: *I saw 4 kindergarten students lined up to go outside to play in the snow. Everyone was wearing boots and a hat. How many boots and hats did I see in all? Show and tell how you know.* By jotting down the details of students' individual responses as they completed the task, teachers gained insights on the task and their students' abilities – for example, one student knows how to count to 8 but not how to write an 8.

- *Purpose #2: Making key instructional decisions* – Observing and taking notes on students' responses to this task gave teachers two specific teaching points. First, the sentence *Show and tell how you know* was unfamiliar to students. Second, watching students complete the task on paper and listening to their thoughts, teachers were quite surprised that students could do as much as they did with the task, changing adult perceptions of what was possible at this point in the school year.

- *Purpose #3: Monitoring progress over time* – A good pre-assessment focuses on the core learning or prerequisite skills that students will need to build on, and teachers can sort and work with students according to what they need to learn to be successful in the unit. Here's how a group of New York City teachers handled a unit on opinion writing with their third graders:

- The pre-assessment asked students to write about a favorite or not-so-favorite holiday and give personal reasons to support their opinions.
- Looking at students' work, teachers saw that most of them wrote an informational summary about holidays, not an opinion.
- Teachers designed lessons that taught the key parts of an opinion piece and how they differ from parts of a summary, also how to locate relevant text evidence to support an opinion.
- The post-assessment asked students to read about a shark scientist, examine facts about two different kinds of sharks, and state and support an opinion about which shark they wanted to study.

The post-assessment allowed teachers to track students' progress writing opinions from the pre-assessment and also measure more-complex skills, including using text-based evidence.

- *Purpose #4: Engaging students in peer- and self-assessment* – One approach is having students look at two pieces of work by other students side by side and asking them (for example):

- What does each student know and understand and where might they improve?
- (With two pieces of work done by the same student at different times) What does the student know now that he or she didn't know how to do as well on the first task? What were the areas of improvement?
- Which piece of work comes closest to the expectations? What's the evidence?

Students can use assessment evidence to set and monitor progress, reflect on themselves as learners, and evaluate the quality of their own work. "Valuing both one's struggles and successes at accomplishing smaller learning targets over time has proven to have a profound influence on deepening motivation, developing independence as a learner, and building what we have come to know as 'a growth mindset,'" says Hess.

- *Purpose #5: Better understanding how learning progresses over time* – Many skills, concepts, and misconceptions revealed in student work analysis

Important Websites

[Help Desk \(To submit a ticket\)](mailto:help.desk@reading.k12.ma.us)
help.desk@reading.k12.ma.us

[RPS District Website](http://www.reading.k12.ma.us)
www.reading.k12.ma.us

[Access Your Email](https://login.microsoftonline.com/)
<https://login.microsoftonline.com/>

[Baseline Edge](https://baseline.ioeducation.com/Site/login)
<https://baseline.ioeducation.com/Site/login>

are not explicitly addressed in curriculum standards. Looking at students' learning trajectories in interim assessments and student work can guide teachers in the next step that students at different levels of progress need to take.

• *Purpose #6: Building content and pedagogical expertise* – “Teachers give assignments and grade them daily,” says Hess, “but it is analyzing evidence in student work that causes teachers to reflect on *how* students learn and how to make their instructional and assessment practices more effective.” Teacher teams can establish common understandings of student work quality and measure the effectiveness of their instruction over time. “By the same token,” she concludes, “students who engage with rich, strategically-designed tasks on a regular basis learn that finding the answer is not as personally meaningful as knowing how to apply knowledge in new situations and explain the reasoning that supports their thinking.”

“Student Work to D-I-E For” by Karin Hess, *Educational Research in Action*, Winter 2016,

http://media.wix.com/ugd/5e86bd_0f9ffd8bf4a24aaf87371d9d1bc586cc.pdf

Reprinted from Marshall Memo 655.

Reading Public Schools Offers Courses On Trauma Sensitivity

Over the past few years Reading has been able to partner with Lesley University Institute for Trauma Sensitivity (LITS) to offer a wonderful graduate course (three credits), *Helping Traumatized Children Learn*. This year we will be offering the course again as well as the second and third courses in a 4-part certificate program in trauma sensitive schools. Staff who have completed the first course are welcome to register for the second and third. We hope to offer the fourth in the future.

The first course will take place in Reading on the following dates from 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m:

November 14th

December 8th

December 19th

The second course will take place in Reading on the following dates from 8:00am-3:00pm:

January 18th

February 6th

March 2nd

The third course will take place in Reading on the following dates from 8:00am-3:00pm:

March 27th

April 13th

May 18th

Before responding, please *confirm that you are available to attend ALL DATES of the course you are registering for as there are no make-up dates and course completion is dependent on attendance at all three classes, as well as coursework.*

The course will cost participants \$500 (the grant from Lesley covers the rest of the tuition). **Please check your contract to see if you are eligible for tuition reimbursement. If yes, you will need to complete the necessary paperwork prior to the beginning of the class to be eligible for tuition reimbursement (subject to successful completion of the course and a passing grade).** We recommend you complete this paperwork as soon as possible as reimbursement funds are limited. (tuition forms are found on district share)

Registration forms were sent out this week to all Reading Public School Staff via email. Due to the overwhelming response and to the course restrictions **THE FIRST 25 COMPLETED REGISTRATION FORMS FOR EACH COURSE WITH AN ATTACHED CHECK FOR \$500 WILL BE ENROLLED.** Please submit registration forms and payment to the Office of Learning and Teaching attn: Sara Burd. After the first 25 applications are received, a wait list will be created. Confirmation of your enrollment and details about the course will be emailed. We plan to offer the course again if interest remains high, so they will be future opportunities if you are unable to take the course this spring.

Directions on completing the registration from Lesley: Please have students fill out the personal information in the top section as well as the smaller section underneath it for government reporting. The forms should also be signed and dated.

If you have any questions, please contact Director of Social and Emotional Learning Sara Burd at sara.burd@reading.k12.ma.us.

Reading Public Schools Happenings

Barrows and Eaton Students Attend Camp Bournedale

Recently, Grade 5 students at Barrows and Joshua Eaton attended Camp Bournedale, a science and environmental camp in Plymouth. Below is a picture of all of the students. Wood End, Killam, and Birch Meadow students will be attending this week.



Barrows Students Learning Cybersafety

Recently, students at Barrows, under the direction of Library Media Specialists Kelly Papa and Lori Hill, have been teaching students cyber-safety using the FBI Cyber Citizenship Program. A photo of Ms. Papa with the students is below.



Barrows Librarian Kelly Papa

Students Learn About Fire Safety

Over the last few weeks, the Reading Fire Department has been educating Preschool and Kindergarten students about Fire Safety. Below are some photos. A special thanks to the Reading Fire Department for discussing a very important topic with our students.



Barrows Students Learn About Fire Safety



RISE Students-Fire Safety

Friday Night Lights

On Friday evening, the RMHS Football Team played its last home game of the regular season against Belmont, which they won, 47-21. It was also Senior Parent Night where Senior players and cheerleaders honored their parents. In addition, our RMHS Marching Band and Color Guard did an outstanding performance at halftime.



The Johnson Family



The Robinson Family



RMHS Band and Color Guard

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



RMHS Color Guard

Stepping Stones...

- Congratulations to Parker teacher **Rebecca Lord** on the birth of her son Benjamin on October 2nd weighing in at 8 lbs.
- Wishing Barrows teacher **Deb Burchill** a long and healthy retirement.
- Our thoughts and prayers go out to RMHS Social Worker **Deb Lanigan** on the recent loss of a loved one.
- Our thoughts and prayers go out to Food Service Secretary **Jeri Donahue** on the recent loss of a loved one.
- Our thoughts and prayers go out to Director of Community Education **Sandy Calandrella** on the recent loss of a loved one.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
 - ✓ Heather Maggio, Special Education Paraeducator, Eaton
 - ✓ Jane Rogers, School Psychologist, RMHS
 - ✓ Sharyn Matthews, School Psychologist, RMHS
 - ✓ Desire Stella, Special Education Paraeducator, Killam
 - ✓ Lauren Johnson, Special Education Paraeducator, Eaton
 - ✓ Leslie Jennings, Speech & Language Pathologist, Barrows
- **We have posted** a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

Night Shift Custodian, Wood End Elementary School

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=173>

Blazing Trails....

"Boston Considers Eliminating Middle Schools." Drastic changes are being considered for the Boston public school system due to dropping enrollment in the middle grades. Boston Superintendent Tommy Chang is considering creating an elementary school system that ends at grade six and a high school system that begins at grade seven. The shift could mean moving thousands of seventh and eighth grade students. [Read More](#)

"Top Massachusetts Schools Downgraded After Opt-Outs." The "Boston Globe" reports Boston Mayor Martin Walsh has announced that "a new report on state standardized test scores has downgraded Boston Latin School, one of the city's premier educational institutions," from being a Level 1 school to a Level 2 school. Though the change is "relatively minor," it "could come as a blow to the reputation of elite Latin School and the morale at the Clap School, which has made enormous strides in recent years." [Read More](#)

"More Elementary Schools Foregoing Homework." The AP reports that a "small but growing number of elementary schools and individual teachers" are refraining from assigning students homework "to allow kids more time to play, participate in activities, spend time with families, read and sleep." The piece cites National Elementary School Principals' Association President Steven Geis talking about "pushback against homework from parents in recent years who say their children's time is monopolized by other activities." Meanwhile, "some schools and individual teachers are revising their homework policies to ensure that they are effective." [Read More](#)

"Supreme Court Could Decide Proper Level of Special Ed Services." The U.S. Supreme Court will hear a case about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and its decision is expected to offer a definition for special education as outlined in the law. "USA Today" reports federal appeals courts are split on whether schools must provide a substantial education or something less than that, and the Obama administration has encouraged the justices to step in with a final decision. [Read More](#)

"Leading High School in England Says Goodbye to Homework." Teachers at a secondary school in Essex, England, will have more time for professional development under a new no-homework approach. Students will have access to extra work via an online program and will be rewarded for the effort. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!