



Pathways

A weekly collection of information, thoughts, reflections, and accolades for the Reading Public Schools Community

November 27, 2016

Volume 8, Number 13

Upcoming Dates

- November 27 – (3:30 p.m.) Annual Tree Lighting on Reading Common
- November 29-(7:20 p.m.) Joint Meeting with Board of Selectmen at Town Hall to interview applicants for School Committee vacancy
- November 30 – (7:00 p.m.) RCASA BREAKING POINTS Film Screening & Panel in the Endslow PAC; (7:00 p.m.) SEPAC presents Distracted & Dyslexic at the Reading Public Library
- December 1 – (5:00 p.m.) Downtown Reading Shop the Block Event
- December 3 – (8:00 a.m.) SAT Testing RMHS NOT a Test Center; (12:00p.m.) REF Festival of Trees @ Parker Middle School; (8:00 p.m.) Division 1A Super Bowl RMHS Football vs. King Philip @ Gillette Stadium
- December 4 – (10:00 a.m.) REF Festival of Trees @ Parker Middle School
- December 5 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting
- December 7 – Grades 6 – 12 Early Release Day; (after school) District PLC Meetings; (6:00 p.m.) Coolidge Middle School Grade 6 Winter Concert; (7:30 p.m.) Coolidge Middle School Grade 7 Winter Concert
- December 8 – (after school) RISE/Elementary Building Meetings – Collaborative Proposal Time: (7:00 p.m.) Parker

RMHS Girls Swim Team Win Division 2 State Championship!

Congratulations to the RMHS Girls Swim Team who captured the Division 2 State Championship last week. Below is an article from Greg Dudek of the Boston Herald. Congratulations to Coach Lois Margeson and the entire RMHS team!



RMHS Girls Swim Team

By: [Greg Dudek](#), [Boston Herald](#)

It was time for Reading to reclaim its crown.

After three straight years of Bishop Feehan taking home the state title, the Rockets captured the Division 2 state swimming and diving championship Sunday night at Blodgett Pool at Harvard University. Reading last won the state title in 2011 and won it all this year with 287 points to edge out runners-up Central Catholic (261) and Wellesley (239.5). "The girls worked hard all season and it's just nice to see them accomplish their dreams and reach the goal that they set out at the beginning of the season," said Reading coach Lois Margeson.

Reading set the tone from the beginning of the meet to jump out in front on the leaderboard. The 200-yard medley relay team of Molly Jones, Anna Roberts, Jillian

Middle School Grade 8 Winter Concert; (7:00 p.m.) SEPAC presents An IEP for my Child in the Superintendent's Conference Room; (7:30 p.m.) Special Town Meeting in the Endslo Performing Arts Center

- December 10 – (8:00 a.m.) RMHS Drama Dickens Holiday Craft Faire
- December 13 – (6:00 p.m.) Parker Grade 6 & 7 Winter Concert; (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- December 14 – (8:30 a.m.) Joshua Eaton Holiday Concert; (after school) Secondary Building Meetings; (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Band Winter Concert
- December 15 – (after school) RISE/Elementary Building Meetings; (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Winter Songfest

Rhodes and Alana Loughman took first with a time of 1:52.25. It was a final push by Loughman with 25 yards left in the freestyle that helped the relay team claim victory. "It's crazy," Rhodes said. "I think going into the season we thought it would be a good season, but we never expected to win states. We're all really excited." One of the other biggest factors in Reading's victory came on the diving board. Sophomore Maddie Doyle placed second to Katie Mullin of Wellesley to give the Rockets a much-needed boost.

"I've seen her dive in summer league and our league; she's good," said Margeson of Doyle's performance.

Reading filled in the other events with top finishes to keep piling up the points, most notably receiving a second-place finish from Roberts in the 100 breaststroke and taking second in the 200 freestyle relay.

In the end, Reading had enough to hold off Central Catholic, which closed the meet out by winning the 400 freestyle relay.

"All of us worked our hardest," said Reading junior Kirsten Stevens. "We knew that it was going to be a challenge. We weren't going to come in thinking like, 'We're going to have the win. We'll go easy.' We definitely pushed ourselves the hardest." Freshman Kerrigan Hemp and junior Alyvia Petrozza were both impressive individually for Central Catholic.

Hemp took first in both the 100 freestyle and backstroke, while Petrozza claimed titles in the 100 butterfly and 200 individual medley.

The only other individual double-winner was junior Kate Fosburgh of Winchester with wins in the 200 and 500 freestyle.



RMHS Girls Swim Team Rings the Victory Bell

School Committee Update from November 22, 2016 Meeting

On Tuesday, November 22nd, the Reading School Committee held a rare Tuesday meeting (due to Town Meeting) to discuss several items. A copy of the agenda and the School Committee packet can be found [here](#).

- The School Committee heard a special education update from Attorney Michael Joyce our student services legal counsel on settlement agreements and the process of how special education services work.
- RMHS Principal Adam Bakr and Director of Guidance Lynna Williams presented information regarding RMHS topics such as NEASC accreditation, the High School Schedule, College acceptances, AP and SAT scores, and new guidance programs. The presentation can be found [here](#).
- Director of Finance Gail Dowd presented a quarterly budget update (found in School Committee packet) which shows that the Reading Public Schools is financially in good shape for FY17.

RMHS Shelter in Place and Canine Search

At approximately nine o'clock on Tuesday, November 22nd, the Middlesex County Sherriff's Office K-9 Unit, in cooperation with the Reading Police Department and the Reading Public Schools, conducted a lockdown and canine search of Reading Memorial High School. All parking lots, common areas, lockers, and several random classrooms were searched in accordance with proper legal procedures and the Reading School Committee Policy JIH on Search and Seizure. This lockdown and search drill was the result of extensive planning with school and police personnel and every effort was made to minimize the disruption to instruction. The lockdown procedure took approximately 55 minutes.

Our continued goal in our schools is to provide a safe environment for your children; where they are not exposed to unlawful and harmful activities such as illegal substance possession. The canines that were used today are trained to search for illegal narcotics. They are part of a highly skilled K-9 unit that conducts school searches throughout Eastern Massachusetts. Similar drills have been held in the last few years at high schools in North Reading, Wilmington, and Melrose.

During the search, two "alerts" were discovered in the school and two "alerts" was discovered in the parking lots. An "alert" occurs when canines are able to detect an odor consistent with illegal narcotics. In the "alerts" identified by the canines, no illegal narcotics were found during the search by Reading Memorial High School Administration. The School Department will continue to work with the Reading Police Department to monitor the issue of illegal substances on campus and will authorize a repeat search if we feel it would help in our efforts to maintain a positive learning environment.

We hope that you will understand our position on this issue and will be supportive of our proactive steps to maintain a safe school environment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Police Chief Mark Segalla at the Reading

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to the RMHS Girls Swim Team for winning the Division 2 State Championship.
- To the collaborative efforts of the RMHS Administration and the Reading Police Department in implementation of the RMHS Canine Search/Drill that was held last Tuesday.

Police Department at 781-944-1212 or Superintendent of Schools John Doherty at 781-944-5800.

Over \$12,000 raised for Charity

Joshua Eaton Holds Annual Carregal Classic

For the 5th year in a row the JE dads held their annual flag football fundraiser. This year they decided to rename the event to the annual "Carregal Classic" (after the beloved teacher, Jody Carregal). The event committee worked diligently to make sure it would be a successful and fun day for all and it certainly was. The staff from JE helped by organizing a bake sale table and a face painting table, while others participated in the corn hole tournament. This year the event was even more special because not only did JE dads play tag football and corn hole, but we had dads from all five elementary schools participating in this event. This event raised over 12, 000.00! The proceeds from the fundraiser will be shared with the Carregal Children's fund and also a donation will be made to the Reading Scholarship foundation in the name of Nick Diranian, a Killam dad who passed away suddenly this year.

There are no words to describe how our school community came together as one for an amazing cause. It was a beautiful day spent remembering two very special people.



Joshua Eaton Staff Helping Out at Carregal Classic

Quote of the Week . . .



You gain confidence and grow stronger by every experience in which you really push yourself to do something you didn't think you could do.

-Unknown

Teaching Interpersonal Skills

In this article in *Kappan*, Adam Dovico (Wake Forest University), says that because of students' constant heads-down focus on their electronic devices, there's been a "stark decline" in their ability to interact appropriately with other people. "Typically, students are more comfortable texting or sending an e-mail to introduce themselves or communicate than offering a firm handshake or a warm smile," says Dovico. "With the convenience of and accessibility to cell phones, it's now more important to select the correct emoji than to excel at face-to-face interactions."

To prepare students for college admission, scholarship opportunities, job interviews, and the modern workplace, not to mention their personal relationships, Dovico believes schools need to join with families in explicitly teaching students the skills of interacting with others. This is especially important because studies have shown that humans form an impression of another person "spontaneously and with minimal cognitive effort" within a tenth of a second – somehow we take in scores of subtle cues to form a split-second judgment that can make a big difference in subsequent interactions.

Drawing on his experience as a teacher, professor, researcher, and PD presenter, Dovico came up with this SPECIAL acronym for face-to-face interactions:

- Shake hands – a firm, appropriate grip;
- Posture – standing up straight, shoulders back, conveying confidence and awareness;
- Eye contact – looking the other person in the eye during the entire interaction;
- Charm – winning the person over with a smile, raised eyebrow, head nod, laugh;
- Introduce yourself – saying, "Hi, I'm ----" gets the ball rolling;
- Ask a question – "What brings you here?" or "Don't you hate this snow?" begins a conversation and shows interest in the other person;
- Lean in and listen – without invading the person's space, getting a little closer signals engagement and helps you listen and respond appropriately.

These elements, executed smoothly and naturally, "make you come across as confident and professional," says Dovico. "Many of these proficiencies require practice, which is why it's vital to begin teaching them at an early age." He's working with his four-year-old son on the handshake and introducing himself. In the elementary grades, building a repertoire of questions is helpful, and by middle school students might be coached on the head nod, eyebrow raise, or appropriate lean-in. In high school, students should be able to get into a good conversation with a stranger, maintain eye contact, be charming, and stand out in a crowd.

Of course, says Dovico, "we're humans, not robots, and no amount of practice in a staged setting can prepare someone for real-life, unpredictable encounters. Reading social cues, understanding cultural proficiency, and sharpening interpersonal skills can aid greatly in mastering this practice." Here are his suggestions for how teachers and school leaders can fit this skillset into the day and gradually improve students' proficiency:

Disney Tweet of the Week



Keep your dream alive.
Dreaming is still how the
strong survive.

—Oliver and Company

- Greet students coming into school and classrooms with a handshake and some components of the SPECIAL acronym.
- In each classroom, designate a student each week to get up and greet visitors using several of the components.
- Have students stand up when they speak in class and occasionally get feedback from classmates on how effectively they maintain eye contact and communicate.
- Practice the skills in group discussions, with Common Core speaking and listening standards in mind.

[An additional element is using literature, current events, and discussion protocols to coax students into being less egocentric and less wrapped up in themselves, helping them develop genuine curiosity about other people and what makes them tick. K.M.]

“Making a S.P.E.C.I.A.L. First Impression” by Adam Dovico in *Phi Delta Kappan*, November 2016 (Vol. 98, #3, p. 55-59), www.kappanmagazine.org; Dovico can be reached at dovicoa@wfu.edu. Reprinted from Marshall Memo 662.

Anxiety, Depression, and Self-Harm Among U.S. Teens

In this *Time Magazine* cover story, Susanna Schrobsdorff reports that teen anxiety, depression, and self-harm (often cutting) have been on the rise in recent years, and are present in suburban, urban, and rural areas among students heading to college as well as those who aren't. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, about 30 percent of girls and 20 percent of boys have had an anxiety disorder – that's about 6.3 million teens – and those figures are probably on the low side because as many as 80 percent of teens who suffer don't report. Girls are more than three times more likely than boys to experience depression.

Experts believe there are three reasons for the increase: Post-9/11 anxiety about terrorism; families weathering the aftermath of the 2008 recession; and the effects of social media. “If you wanted to create an environment to churn out really angsty people, we’ve done it,” says Janis Whitlock of the Cornell Research Program on Self-Injury and Recovery. “It’s that they’re in a cauldron of stimulus they can’t get away from, or don’t want to get away from, or don’t know how to get away from.”

In dozens of interviews with teens, parents, clinicians, and school counselors, Schrobsdorff found “a pervasive sense that being a teenager today is a draining full-time job that includes doing schoolwork, managing a social-media identity, and fretting about career, climate change, sexism, racism – you name it. Every fight or slight is documented online for hours or days after the incident. It’s exhausting.” A girl outside Bangor, Maine, who started cutting the soft skin near her ribs with a metal clip from a pen when she was in eighth grade, said, “We’re the first generation that cannot escape our problems at all... We’re getting this constant pressure, from our phones, from our relationships, from the way things are today... A lot of value is put

Important Websites

RPS District Website

www.reading.k12.ma.us

Interface Health Services

<https://interface.williamjames.edu/community/reading>

Need help finding mental health care?

 **WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE**
INTERFACE Referral Service

The Town of Reading has contracted with a unique HELPLINE service staffed by licensed clinicians that can help children, teens, & adults in Reading become connected with mental health care. Get provider matches that meet your specific needs, accepts your insurance & has available appointments.

Call 1-888-244-6843 (toll free) • M-F • 9am-5pm
<https://interface.williamjames.edu/>

on our physical beauty now. All of our friends are Photoshopping their own photos – it’s hard to escape that need to be perfect.”

And there’s meanness. Florida elementary school counselor Ellen Chance says, “I couldn’t tell you how many students are being nasty to each other over Instagram or Snapchat. I’ve had cases where girls don’t want to come to school because they felt outcasted and targeted. I deal with it on a weekly basis.” For many kids it’s an ongoing reality TV show, with no boundary between their online lives and real life.

Fifty years ago, parents could tell their teenagers to turn off the TV or get off the phone. Now kids are in the driver’s seat. Teens can be sitting in the same room as their parents and, unbeknownst to the grown-ups, says Schrobsdorff, be “immersed in a painful emotional tangle with dozens of their classmates... looking at other people’s lives on Instagram and feeling self-loathing (or worse)... or caught up in a discussion about suicide with a bunch of people on the other side of the country they’ve never even met via an app that most adults have never heard of.” Many parents have no clue what their children are going through. And some parents aren’t setting a good example – they’re zoning out, ignoring people, using their devices during dinner, their minds on work seven days a week, not setting limits on technology use in their homes.

Why do depressed and anxious teens harm themselves? “The academic study of this behavior is nascent,” reports Schrobsdorff, “but researchers are developing a deeper understanding of how physical pain may relieve the psychological pain of some people who practice it. That knowledge may help experts better understand why it can be hard for some people to stop self-harming once they start.” But why is cutting increasing now? In the late 1990s, tattoos and piercings became mainstream activities. “As that was starting to happen,” theorizes Cornell’s Whitlock, “the idea of etching your emotional pain into your body was not a big step from the body as a canvas as an idea.”

Experts believe that cutters fall into two groups. There are those who feel disconnected or numb – “They don’t feel real, and there’s something about pain and blood that brings them into their body,” says Whitlock. At the other end of the spectrum are those who feel emotionally overwhelmed by events that don’t register so intensely for others. “They need to discharge those feelings somehow, and injury becomes their way,” says Whitlock.

How can parents and educators help? First and foremost, adults need to validate the teen’s feelings rather than getting angry, punishing, or taking away the computer and cell phone. A straightforward acknowledgement and acceptance of what the teen is going through is essential, especially since mental illness is still heavily stigmatized. “I’m sorry you’re in pain. I’m here for you.” Schrobsdorff summarizes other recommendations for parents and other caring adults (more detail at www.time.com/teenmentalhealth):

- Talk about the real stuff. Ask what’s keeping them up at night and what’s the best part of their day.

- Pay attention, but don't smother them. Give teens space while watching for signs of change that might not be healthy.
- Resist getting angry. Instead, say, "It seems like you're having trouble. I'm here to help. Tell me what's happening with you."
- Don't put off getting help. Talk to a school counselor, therapist, or doctor before things escalate.
- Treat the whole family. Often it's important to address the home dynamic with family counseling.

"No adolescent wants to be seen as flawed or vulnerable," says Schrobsdorff, "and for parents, the idea that their child has debilitating depression or anxiety or is self-harming can feel like a failure on their part." It's even worse when parents look at social media posts of other families, with everyone smiling, happy, and perfect.

Once a student is in treatment, a clinician will work to help the teen identify the underlying psychological causes of anxiety and depression and learn healthy ways to cope. But for recovery to begin, there must be strong internal motivation. "You're not going to stop for someone else," says one girl who continued to cut herself even when she saw how upset it made her mother. "I tried making pacts with friends. But it doesn't work. You have to figure it out for yourself. You have to make the choice." Eventually she got herself out of the "dark, destructive corners of the Internet that reinforced her habit by romanticizing and validating her pain," says Schrobsdorff. "She's now into holistic healing and looks at positive sites populated by people she calls 'happy hippies.'" Another girl in recovery channeled her feelings by working with a group of peers directing a short film about anxiety and depression called *The Road Back*. "I had a place where I could be open and talk about my life and the issues I was having," she said, "and then I could project them in an artistic way." The issues will always be with her, but she's stable and getting on with her life.

"The Kids Are Not All Right" by Susanna Schrobsdorff in *Time Magazine*, November 7, 2016, available for purchase at <http://ti.me/2fVqgcb> . Reprinted from Marshall Memo 662.

Reading Public Schools Happenings

Reading and Stoneham Rotary Club Hold Annual Thanksgiving Football Luncheon

The Stoneham and Reading Rotary Clubs held its annual Thanksgiving Football Luncheon which was held at Montvale Plaza on Tuesday, November 22nd. This luncheon celebrates the Reading vs. Stoneham Thanksgiving Football Game. As part of the luncheon the Athletic Directors, Coaches, and Captains speak. Below are some pictures of the event.



RMHS Athletic Director Tom Zaya



RMHS Head Football Coach John Fiore



RMHS Football Captains Speak About the Tradition of Playing Football and the Life Lessons



RMHS and Stoneham Football Captains and Coaches Hold Thanksgiving Trophy

Reading vs. Stoneham Thanksgiving Football Game

On Thanksgiving morning, Reading played Stoneham in the Annual Thanksgiving Football Game held at Stoneham High School. Below are some photos from the game. Stoneham beat Reading 27-13.



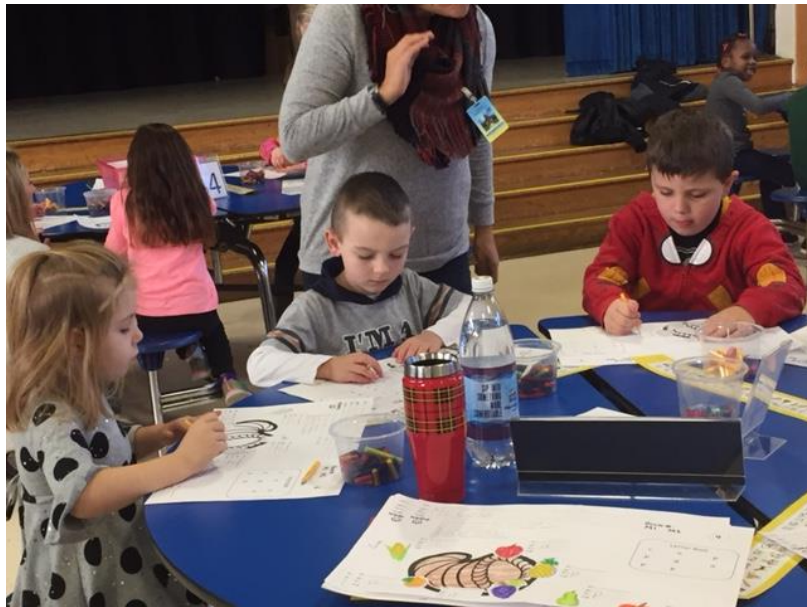
Contact Us

The Pathways newsletter is published weekly for Reading Public School Community. If you have anything that you would like to share, please email your info to John Doherty at: john.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us



Killam Kindergarten Students Participate in Center Activities

Learning is ongoing in the Reading Public Schools, even on the half day before Thanksgiving! Each month, the kindergarten students from Killam Elementary School participate in center activities in the Cafeteria with the help of teachers and parent volunteers. Below are some photos from the different activities which focused on math skills.



RMHS Senior Auditions

On Saturday, November 19th, several students from RMHS participated in Senior District Auditions in instrumental and choral productions. RMHS had 30 musicians audition and 17 students were accepted. In addition, 10 of the accepted students are recommended to audition for the All-State level. All of the accepted students will participate in January's Festival at UMass Lowell. Special thanks and congratulations goes out to the students and RMHS teachers Joseph Mulligan and Kristin Killian for their efforts.



RISE Students Participate in Yoga

Students in the RISE Preschool Program, under the direction of Director Debbie Butts and staff are participating in a yoga program as a part of their social emotional learning curriculum. Below are some pictures of a recent experience.





Stepping Stones...

- Congratulations to Parker Teacher **Eric Hiltz** on the birth of his son, Jack who was born on November 22nd at 12:30 p.m. at 6 pounds, 7 ounces and 18.5 inches long!
- **DESE Introduces Educator Licensure Public Lookup Tool**
The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recently developed an educator licensure **public lookup tool** on its website that allows people to find basic information about the licensure status of educators who have a Massachusetts license. All information on the site is a matter of public record, and the new public lookup is designed for very basic inquiries.

During the development of the public lookup tool, ESE consulted with teachers' unions, principals' associations, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, and the Massachusetts Association of School Personnel Administrators. In addition to increasing transparency, providing basic educator licensure information via an online tool aligns the Commonwealth with the vast majority of states and with several other professions in Massachusetts.

If you have any questions about the information contained in the public lookup tool or about licensure, please do not hesitate to contact the Licensure Call Center at 781-338-6600 or visit our Welcome Center at 75 Pleasant St. in Malden. The call center is open each business day from 9:00 a.m. to noon and 2:00-5:00 p.m., and the Welcome Center is open from 8:45 a.m.-4:45 p.m.

- **We have posted** a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

1.0FTE Physical Education Teacher, Coolidge Middle School
<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=189>

Blazing Trails....

"Be Honest About PD." Massachusetts educator and ASCD Emerging Leader, Kerry Gallagher discusses the benefits of personalized Professional Development in this post from her blog, Starts with a Question. As she writes, "If we are going to make real positive progress in our schools, we have to have real honest conversations with our colleagues and with ourselves." [Read More](#)

"Will President-Elect Trump Remake Healthy School Lunches?"

PBS NewsHour reports that "children grumbling about healthier school meal rules championed by first lady Michelle Obama may have reason to cheer [Donald] Trump's election as [he] is a proud patron of Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonald's while promising to curb federal regulations." According to Sam Kass, a former White House senior adviser on nutrition, "Food advocates are already nostalgic for the Obama era and will be playing defense for the next four years." PBS points out that "Trump himself hasn't weighed in on school meal regulations. But Republicans, school nutrition directors and some in the food industry have balked at parts of the administration's rules." According to Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-AL), chairman of the House subcommittee that oversees Agriculture Department spending, "I would be very surprised if we don't see some major changes on the school lunch program" and some other food issues. [Read More](#)

"How a New Jersey High School Transformed to Stay Relevant for Students." In early 2009, as principal of New Milford High School in New Jersey, Eric Sheninger would spend part of his days taking cell phones away from students. By 2011, the school was making headlines for encouraging students to use their phones in class. Sheninger's change of heart helped turn around his school. New Milford became the first school in New Jersey to have a bring-your-own-device policy and it has long allowed students to check out Chromebooks like their parents once checked out library books. [Read More](#)

"Disrupting Inequality." The latest issue of ASCD's *Educational Leadership* examines the daily fight for equity in our education system, from the effects of discrimination to the challenges of poverty to the causes of opportunity gaps. In "Disrupting Inequity," our expert authors explore consequences of discipline disparities, needs of transgender students, strategies to support students living in poverty, and more. [Read More](#)

"In Singapore, Sports are Used to Engage and Motivate Students." "Ultimately, a school is more than its facilities, it is the quality of the interactions within the school that builds up the students' values, character, leadership skills and their readiness for the future." Students at a secondary school in Singapore learn at least six sports under the Sports for Life program. The school's principal says the sports program allows teachers to inspire and motivate students. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!