



Pathways

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

January 22, 2017

Volume 3, Number 20

Upcoming Dates

- January 23 – Second Semester Begins - Middle & High School; (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the RMHS Schettini Library
- January 24 – (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Sophomore Parent Guidance Night in the Endslo PAC
- January 25 – Early Release Grades 6 – 8; (after school) Secondary Building Meetings – Collaborative Building Time
- January 26 – (after school) RISE/Elementary Building Meetings – Collaborative Building Time; (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the RMHS Schettini Library – Vote on FY18 Budget
- January 27 – (6:00 p.m.) RMHS Choral Department Game Night @ RMHS
- February 3 – (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Drama presents “Twelve Dancing Princesses in the Endslo PAC
- February 4 – (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Drama presents “Twelve Dancing Princesses in the Endslo PAC
- February 5 – (2:00 p.m.) RMHS Drama presents “Twelve Dancing Princesses in the Endslo PAC
- February 6 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent’s Conference Room

FY18 Budget Update

Last week, the Reading School Committee continued to hear presentations on the FY18 Budget. On Thursday evening, there was a Public Hearing on the budget which was attended by over 100 teachers, students, and community members. After the Public Hearing, Director of Facilities Joe Huggins gave a presentation on the Facilities budget, which can be accessed [here](#).

On Monday, January 23rd, the School Committee will hear a presentation on Grants and Revolving Accounts and then begin to review answers to the questions that have been asked by individual School Committee members and the Community. On Wednesday, January 25th at 7:30 p.m. in the Reading Public Library, there will be a Financial Forum consisting of the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, and the Finance Committee to hear input from the Community on additional ways to seek revenue. This could include, but is not limited to, the possibility of revisiting an override ballot question in April.

On Thursday, January 25th, the Reading School Committee is scheduled to vote on the FY18 budget.

If you have any questions, please attend the School Committee meetings, Financial Forum, Superintendent’s Office Hours, or contact the Reading Public Schools at 781-944-5800 or by email at john.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us.

A Service To The Heart

By Sarah Bacci, Parker Grade 8 Student and Project 351 Ambassador for Reading

For as long I can remember, I have wanted to make people happy. Just to put a smile on someone else’s face, or know that I had made their day a little less stressful, always filled my heart with joy. Not only was it beneficial to that person, but it was also teaching me the power of service. A service that is done out of love and keeps the heart pumping.

This weekend I was given the privilege to participate in Project 351’s Launch Day. This experience has opened my eyes to world I had thought I was already living in. I’ve always known that I can change the world if I really try, but now I *believe* I can truly change the world. Being surrounded by hundreds of kids and adults that had a heart of compassion and kindness filled my entire body with such a positive mind and attitude. From working at the Greater Boston Food Bank, and seeing everyone work towards this one goal, that was changing people’s lives, I realized that I want to do projects like this every day. It made me understand how powerful my service actually was.

- February 8 – (afterschool) Secondary Building Meetings – Collaborative Proposal Meetings
- February 9 – (afterschool) RISE/Elementary Building Meetings – grade Level; (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Junior Parent Guidance Night in the Endslo PAC

FY18 Budget Links

- Superintendent's Recommended Budget
- January 9th Presentation
- January 12th Presentation
- January 19th Presentation



Sarah Bacci (2nd from the Right) at Project 351 Launch Day last weekend

I want to give a huge “Thank You!” from the bottom of my heart to all the teachers that made this experience possible. I am still amazed and overwhelmed at the fact that out of my whole grade, I was chosen. It means a lot that through my teacher's eyes I stand out in a crowd. To be recognized for my kind heart and hard work has motivated me to keep going down the path I have started to take. I am so thankful that I was able to start this adventure and hope to continue the amazing journey for the rest of my life!

[Click here](#) for more information on Project 351!

4 Proven Strategies for Teaching Empathy

Help your students understand the perspectives of other people with these tried-and-tested methods.

By **Dr. Donna Wilson and Marcus Conyers** for **Edutopia Blog**

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Empathy has the capacity to transform individual lives for the better while helping to bring about positive social change in schools and communities worldwide. In psychology, there are currently two common approaches to empathy: shared emotional response and perspective taking.

Shared emotional response, or affective empathy, occurs when an individual shares another person's emotions. An example from our own lives came when a group of friends joined Marcus as he crossed the finish line of a half-marathon—they threw their arms up just as he did, mimicking his stance. Individuals in an audience involuntarily mirroring a speaker's smile is another example of this type of empathy.

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to the gymnastics for recent victory.
- Congratulations to RMHS Girls Track athletes Megan Eagleston, Allison Gage and Shannon Parks on a second place finish in the shot put and the 4 x 400 relay team of Cat Almeida, Eliza Fandel, Jamie Ritondo and Maevie Swanson for a sixth place finish as part of the Division II relays.
- Special thanks to the district administrators, directors, team chairs, and staff that have attended the recent School Committee meetings supporting the FY2018 budget discussions
- Kudos to the RMHS junior class for successfully completing the Real World Problem Solving activity during midterm week.

Perspective taking, also known as cognitive empathy, occurs when a person is able to imagine herself in the situation of another. A good example is a line spoken by Atticus Finch (Gregory Peck) in the movie *To Kill a Mockingbird*: "If you just learn a single trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view . . . until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it."

Here are some strategies our graduates around the world use with their students to help develop both affective and cognitive empathy.

Modeling

Teachers can be role models who, by example, show students the power of empathy in relationships. It is the teacher who leads individuals to care for the feelings of the others in class. As teachers model how to be positive when learning, students mirror optimistic and confident learning behaviors.

Teaching Point of View

We use the numbers 6 and 9 to teach students about different points of view. First, have students look at the number 6 and then the number 9. Explain to students that the idea for this exercise came from an old Middle Eastern legend in which two princes were at war for many years. One prince looked at the image on the table and said it was a 6, while the other prince said it was a 9. For years the battle raged, and then one day when the princes were seated at the table a young boy turned the tablecloth around, and for the first time, they could see the other's point of view. The war came to an end, and the princes became firm friends.

Illustrate with an example from your own life in which something similar has happened in terms of you arguing with somebody simply because they had a different point of view.

Ask students to break into small groups and discuss how important it is to understand that many people disagree with us simply because they have a different point of view. Debrief the student comments.

Using Literature to Teach Different Perspectives

In the classroom, literature can be used to help students see a situation from different perspectives. For example, everyone knows the story "The Three Little Pigs." We sympathize with the pigs because we see the wolf as a ravenous villain, but is it possible to see the story from the wolf's point of view? That's exactly what Jon Scieszka undertakes in his book ***The True Story of the Three Little Pigs***. In this humorous retelling, the wolf didn't huff and puff to blow the pigs' houses down; instead he suffered from a terrible allergy and, when stopping by to borrow a cup of sugar, accidentally blew the houses down with a big and powerful sneeze.

Listening Actively to Others

One of the most common obstacles to empathic relationships is that effective listening is difficult, and often individuals don't listen to one another in conversation. We designed the HEAR strategy to help students recognize and block out that noise as they devote their attention to listening to one another. The HEAR strategy consists of these steps:

Superintendent's Office

Hours this Week

All are welcome

1/25 (2:30 – 3:30 p.m.)-
Wood End Elementary

1/27 (7:45 – 8:45 a.m.)-
Killam Elementary

Halt: Stop whatever else you are doing, end your internal dialogue on other thoughts, and free your mind to give the speaker your attention.

Engage: Focus on the speaker. We suggest a physical component, such as turning your head slightly so that your right ear is toward the speaker as a reminder to be engaged solely in listening.

Anticipate: By looking forward to what the speaker has to say, you are acknowledging that you will likely learn something new and interesting, which will enhance your motivation to listen.

Replay: Think about what the speaker is saying. Analyze and paraphrase it in your mind or in discussion with the speaker and other classmates. Replaying and dialoguing the information you have heard will aid in understanding what the speaker is attempting to convey.

Being Metacognitive About One's State of Empathy

Be aware of your feelings and thoughts about your ability to understand and share in the feelings of others. With metacognitive awareness, we can all become more effective at taking another's perspective throughout our lives.

When we encourage students to become more empathic, we help them create more opportunities for success in school and other aspects of their lives. This valuable skill deserves more of our attention

What the Future Holds

In this article in *Principal*, Gary Marx (Center for Public Outreach) lists ten downstream realities faced by educators and the public at large:

- *Every institution is going through a reset.* The question is not, "When will things get back to normal?" but "What will the new normal look like?"
- *Lifelong learning is available any time, any place, any way, and at any pace.* Teachers should take advantage of the Web's incredible resources to craft their units and lessons.
- *Everything that happens in the world has implications for education.* "If it isn't already, international learning should be among our basics," says Marx.
- *The future is in school today.* Kindergarteners who entered school last fall will turn 65 in 2076 and 89 in 2100.
- *People entering the workforce today can expect to hold up to eleven jobs and go through several career changes during their working lives.*
- *If we don't constantly take the initiative to create the education system we need, someone else will.* ESSA is pushing more decisions to the state and local level.
- *If we manage our diversity well, it will enrich us. If we handle it poorly, it will divide us.* Our students must learn to thrive in a highly diverse nation and world.
- *Gross inequity will increasingly be seen as unfair, unconscionable, and unsustainable.* Educators are among the first to see the impact of poverty on students, and they're in the front lines of the battle against inequality. "When we

Quote of the Week . . .



Whenever you feel weak,
remember the things that
made you strong;
whenever you start to
doubt yourself, remember
those who believe in you.

-Unknown

neglect children, we all pay for it," says Marx. "Morally and economically, that cost is invariably greater than the up-front investment."

- *Polarization is standing in the way of progress.* Shouting too often replaces civil discourse. We all need "to exercise empathy and ethics, respect others despite differences, resolve conflict peacefully, and listen to others' ideas," says Marx.

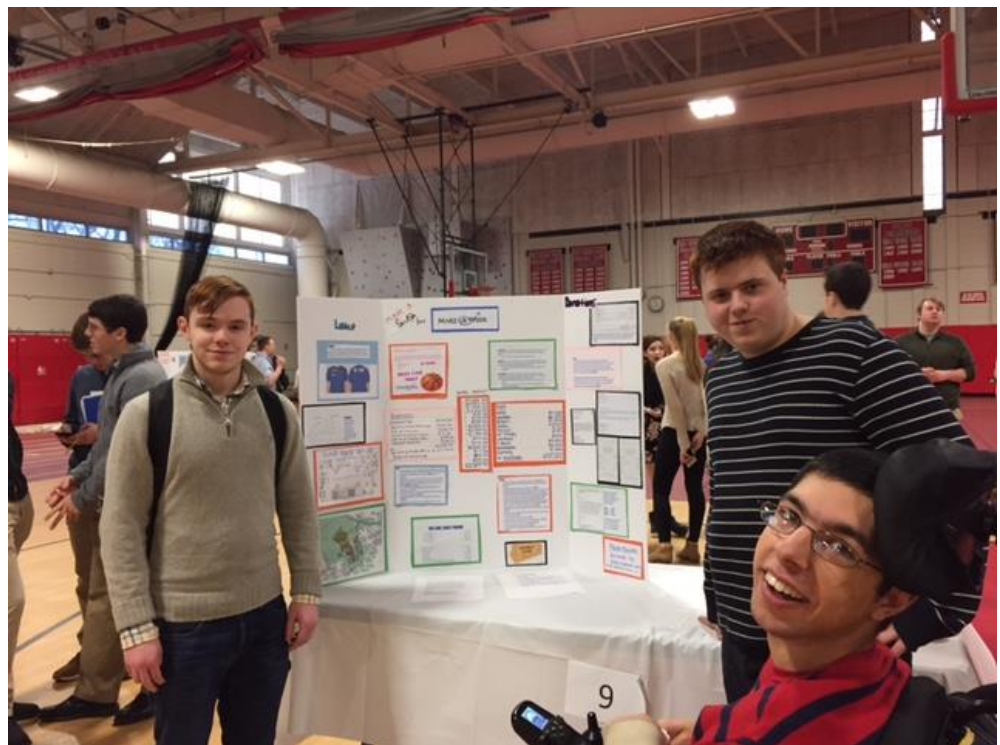
- *Future-focused leadership is essential if we hope to prepare students for life in a fast-changing world.* Such leaders are creative, imaginative, curious, optimistic, visionary, passionate, active listeners, issue-definers, nurturers, trend-spotters and trendsetters, conceptual and brainy, mobilizers, implementers, managers, and problem-solvers.

"The Future Is Now: Ten Realities for Educators and Communities" by Gary Marx in *Principal*, January/February 2017 (Vol. 96, #3, p. 32-35), no e-link available.
Reprinted from Marshall Memo 669.

Reading Public Schools Happenings

Real World Problem Solving

This past week, 275 Juniors from Reading Memorial High School participated in the Real World Problem Solving Event, which focused on students in mixed groups working on a real world problem based on their interests. On Friday, students presented their solutions to their peers and expert judges in the Field House. A special thanks goes to the community members who served as judges and the teachers and other staff who participated in this week-long event.

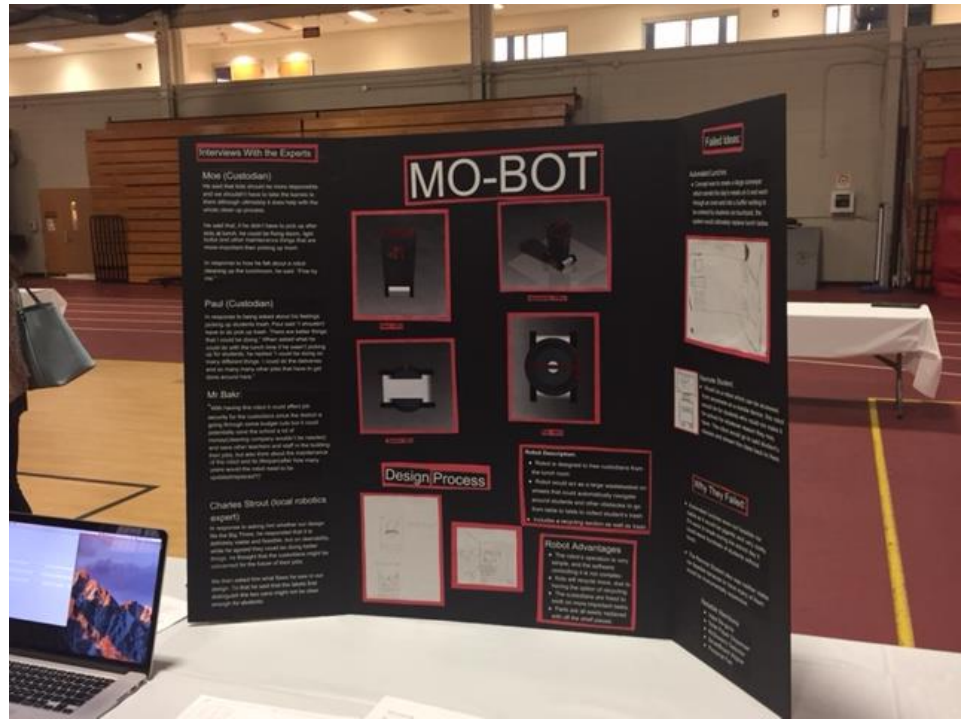


Disney Tweet of the Week



A dream is a promise
that you make to
yourself, so don't leave it
lying way up on some
shelf.

—Sofia (Sofia the First)



Missing Voices Presentation

Last week, students in Leia Richardson's Grade 12 English Missing Voices Elective Class gave their final presentations for the semester course. The presentations focused on how to make the Grade 9-12 English Curriculum more diverse and reflective of the issues of today's society. This course is part of a series of new Senior English Elective Courses designed by the RMHS English Department to stretch the thinking of our students and help prepare them for the next step in their educational journey. Special thanks goes out to the English Department for designing such outstanding courses for our students.

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/>



Martin Luther King Event

Last Monday, the Human Relations Advisory Committee, the Reading Public Schools, and the Reading Clergy Association sponsored the annual Martin Luther King Celebration. The theme of the event was *Liberty and Justice For All* and included several performance groups including the Reading Civic Concert Band, the METCO and Friends Elementary Chorus, the Vocal Ensemble from the Korean Church of the Nazarene, and the Reading Memorial High School Singers.



METCO and Friends Elementary Chorus



RMHS Singers



RMHS Singers

Coolidge Presents Beauty and the Beast

Last weekend, Coolidge Middle School students, under the direction of Director Lori Loussedes, Assistant Director Stephen MacDonald, Music Director Anna Wentlent, and Choreographer Lindsey McGovern, presented Disney's *Beauty and the Beast Jr.* Congratulations to the cast and crew on a job well done!

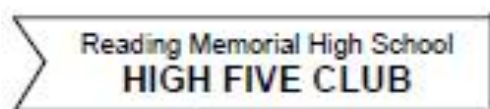


Contact Us

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 info to John Doherty at:



RMHS High Five Club



**ALISYN
BOURQUE**
Class of '17

Alisyn Bourque is being recognized for her excellence in academics, activities, and service. Alisyn sets the gold standard for scholarship and responsibility, achieving the distinguished status of being in the top 1% of her class. She is a member of the National Honor Society and a 3 year member of the Century Club. Last year, she was the recipient of the prestigious Harvard Book Award and this year has been recognized as the recipient of the MA Association of School Superintendents Award for Academic and Community Excellence. Over the past two summers, Alisyn has challenged herself even further by taking college engineering courses at Brown University and has also attended the Congress of Future Medical Leaders, a symposium attracting some of the nation's top students and surgeons to discuss the future of medicine. In terms of activities, Alisyn has dedicated herself to dance, where she has channeled her passion since she was four years old. Her favorite dance styles are contemporary, ballet, jazz, and modern dance, and she has had the chance to perform annually with the professional dance company, the Albany-Berkshire Ballet Company, where she has performed in the Nutcracker for the past twelve years. In terms of service, Alisyn tutors elementary and middle school aged children at Coolidge and Joshua Eaton. She also serves as the French Club co-president and helps teach French to elementary students at Birch Meadow. Next year, Alisyn will be attending college and will be pursuing a degree in mechanical or biomedical engineering....Congratulations, Alisyn!

Reading Memorial High School HIGH FIVE CLUB



**DAVID
OLIVER**
Class of '17

David Oliver is being recognized for his excellence in academics, athletics, leadership, and service. David epitomizes RMHS's core values of respect, responsibility, perseverance, and scholarship. Academically, David is an Honor Roll student who consistently demonstrates excellence in his studies placing him in the top 40% of the senior class. David enjoys his accounting class immensely, where he has achieved a high level of scholarship and has a keen sense of numbers and attention to detail. Athletically, David is a 3 year member of the RMHS Wrestling Team and is a captain this season, helping the Rocket grapplers to compete in what has proven to be a very competitive Middlesex League this season. David has taken his captaincy very seriously, priding himself on being an exemplary leader not only on the wrestling mat, but also in the classroom and in the community. In terms of service, David volunteers his time at the Mission of Deeds, helping local families in need find furniture and hope during difficult times. Additionally, David volunteers at St. Agnes on a regular basis and holds a part-time job at Sunoco downtown. Next year, David will be attending college and will be pursuing a degree in accounting....Congratulations, David!

Stepping Stones...

- Our thoughts and prayers go out to RISE Preschool paraeducator **Cara Connelly** on the loss of a loved one recently.
- Congratulations to RMHS teacher **Jennifer DeCoff** on the birth of her daughter Abigail on January 19th.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
 - ✓ Joy Pippy, Regular Education Paraeducator, Joshua Eaton
 - ✓ Katherine Sutherby, Substitute, District
- **We have posted** a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

Long Term Substitute Kindergarten Teacher, 0.6 FTE Barrows Elementary School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=212

Long Term Substitute Regular Education Paraeducator, 45.5 hours biweekly Barrows Elementary School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=213

1.0 FTE High School Math Teacher, Reading Memorial High School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=214

0.6FTE Long Term Substitute English Teacher, Reading Memorial High School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=215
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Blazing Trails...

"3 Areas Where Having 'The Innovator's Mindset' is Crucial." This post by educator and consultant George Couros speaks of how "The Innovator's Mindset" and innovation in education does not just connect to "technology" but how it can apply to the three elements of Entrepreneurial Spirit, the Ethical Citizen, and the Engaged Learner. [Read More](#)

"Massachusetts State Panel Fighting to Reduce Teen Suicides." Bay State schools are being asked to partner with community mental health agencies to fight a spike in student suicides and suicide attempts, a member of a panel set up to help at-risk kids told the Boston Herald. Dr. Melissa Pearrow, director of school psychology at the University of Massachusetts Boston who sits on the first-in-the-nation Safe and Supportive Schools Commission, said one of the top priorities the task force is calling for is linking up with various agencies, including the Home for Little Wanderers and Boston Children's Hospital. [Read More](#)

"Reconnecting with the Joy of Teaching by Finding Your #OneWord." "Empower. Engage. Action. Commitment. Which word will set the tone for your new year? Although the school year starts in September, we get an additional reset in January and as educators, boy do we need it" as written in this ASCD Inservice post by High school educator, coach, author, reformer, and recovering perfectionist, Starr Sackstein. [Read More](#)

"In Exit Interview, King Urges his Successor to 'Protect Kids'" The "NPR ED" blog reports on an interview with Education Secretary Arne Duncan about the end of his tenure, saying that while he always knew he would only have one year to serve, while in office he "followed the polestar that had guided him as a teacher, principal and as deputy secretary under Duncan: protect kids, especially those who have been traditionally marginalized - children of color, English language learners, students with disabilities and those living in poverty." The piece includes an edited transcript of a conversation with King in which he discusses supporting at-risk students, the lasting impact of his formative years, and his belief that ED "is a civil rights agency with a responsibility to protect the civil rights of students." [Read More](#)

"What are the Ingredients to Finland's Elementary School Success?" William Doyle, a 2015-16 Fulbright Scholar and faculty member at the University of Eastern Finland, shares insights from "Master Teacher of Finland" Heikki Happonen. Among the transferrable elements of the Finnish school system, Doyle counts "early learning through play, equitable school funding, highly professionalized teacher training, a research-based and whole-child approach to school management, warmth and respect for children and teachers," challenging but low-stress learning environments and a strong special education system. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!