



Pathways

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

March 5, 2017

Volume 8, Number 25

Upcoming Dates

- March 5 – (3:00 p.m.) RMHS Drama Winter Musical “1776” in the Endslo PAC
- March 6 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent’s Conference Room
- March 7 – (2:00 p.m.) RMHS MAJE Jazz Festival @ RMHS
- March 8 – Grade 6-8 Early Release, (after school) Secondary Building Meetings – Collaborative Proposal Time
- March 9 – (after school) RISE/Elementary Building Meetings – Grade Level; (6:30 p.m.) Parker Middle School Musical Once Upon an Island, Jr. @ Parker
- March 10 – (7:30 p.m.) Parker Middle School Musical Once Upon an Island, Jr. @ Parker
- March 11 – (8:00 a.m.) SAT Testing – RMHS is a test center; (9:00 a.m.) SEPAC Meeting in the Superintendent’s Conference Room; (2:00 p.m.) Parker Middle School Musical Once Upon an Island, Jr. @ Parker; (5:00 p.m.) RMHS Freshman Progressive Dinner in the RMHS Cafeteria
- March 15 – (after school) Secondary Building Meetings; (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Guidance – Junior Parent Night; (7:30 p.m.) School Committee presents the FY2018 Budget to Fincom @ Town Hall

Safe and Supportive Schools Letter to the Community

Dear Reading Public School Community,

As you may know, the Federal government recently rescinded a previous directive to provide protections for transgender students that had allowed them to use bathrooms corresponding with their own gender identity. The change in the directive gives the primary role to develop laws and policies in this area to each state, rather than the Federal Government.

I want to inform you that Massachusetts has been in the forefront in protecting the rights of all students, including transgender students for the last several years. The Massachusetts state law, which was passed by the legislature in 2011, prior to the federal guidance, ensures protections for all students and prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity. An Act Relative to Gender Identity (**Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011**), amended several Massachusetts statutes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of specified categories, including gender identity. The statute states that “No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, *gender identity*, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.”

Based on the revised law, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education issued guidance in 2012 (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq/GenderIdentity.pdf>) to school districts to implement the gender identity provision.

This guidance includes the following:

- “All students are entitled to have access to restrooms, locker rooms and changing facilities that are sanitary, safe and adequate, so they can comfortably and fully engage in their school program and activities.”
- “...it is essential that the principal and student address access to the restrooms, locker rooms and changing facility. Each situation needs to be reviewed and addressed based on the particular circumstances of the student and the school facilities.
- “In all cases, the principal should be clear with the student (and parent) that the student may access the restroom, locker room, and changing facility that corresponds to the student’s gender identity.”
- Some transgender students may be uncomfortable using sex-segregated restrooms and should be provided an alternative, such as the nurses’ restroom or a unisex bathroom.

- March 16 – (after school) RISE/Elementary Building Meetings
- March 17 – (7:00 p.m.) RMHS – Mr. RMHS in the Endslo PAC
- March 18 – 19 – (all day) New England Robotics Competition in the Hawkes Field House
- March 20 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- March 21 – 23 – RMHS – MCAS Testing
- March 22 – Grade 6 – 12 Early Release; (after school) District PLC Meetings
- March 23 – (after school) RISE/Elementary Building Meetings – Grade Level Common Time
- March 24 – No School for Students; Blue Ribbon Conference for Staff
- March 25 – (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Sophomore Semiformal in the RMHS Cafeteria

Additional resources are available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq/default.html>.

In the Reading Public Schools, we have worked collaboratively with several individual families to support their child during their transition and have provided training for our staff in this area. Last year, we created a few individual gender neutral bathrooms at each of our middle schools and the high school to provide an alternative for all students. In addition, there are private changing and shower spaces in locker rooms for students who would like to use them. We are proud of the work that we have done in this area to provide a safe environment for all students.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your building principal or the Reading Public Schools Administration Offices at 781-944-5800 or by contact at <http://www.reading.k12.ma.us/about-us/contact-us/>

Coolidge Wins State Science Olympiad

Will compete in National Science Olympiad at Wright State University in May

On Saturday, the Coolidge Middle School Science Olympiad Team won the Massachusetts State Science Olympiad Championship at Assumption College in Worcester. Coolidge was one of 29 middle school teams that participated and placed (top 6) in 20 of the 22 events with 11 first place finishes.

With this victory, the team will compete in the National Science Olympiad at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio in May. Congratulations to the students, coaches, and parents for all of their hard work!



Joshua Eaton Principal Search Update

As you may know, Joshua Eaton Principal Eric Sprung has announced his resignation as Principal from the Joshua Eaton Elementary School, effective June 30th, to become the Principal of the Cabot Elementary School in Newton. We want to thank Mr. Sprung for his years of service in the Reading Public Schools and wish him the best of luck in future endeavors.

We have begun the search process for a new Principal at Joshua Eaton. The Joshua Eaton Screening Committee has been chosen from a variety of parents and staff who showed interest in being on the Committee. The members of the Screening Committee are as follows:

- **Jennifer Bove, Interim Human Resources Administrator-Facilitator**
- **Carolyn Wilson, Director of Student Services**
- **Joanne King, Principal Wood End Elementary School**
- **Richele Shankland, Principal, Parker Middle School**
- **Kathleen Ingemi, Teacher**
- **Allison Byrnes, Teacher**
- **Jaime Quinn, Teacher**
- **Amy Greco, Secretary**
- **Amy Branson, Parent**
- **Julie Ross, Parent**
- **Christine Lusk, Parent**

The Screening Committee plays a critical role in the process as they will spend time interviewing several perspective candidates and recommend candidates to become part of the next phase of the process. The recommended candidates are interviewed by the Superintendent of Schools and a number of those candidates will become finalists, which will begin the public portion of the process. Once the finalists are announced, they will go through a series of interviews by students, staff, and the community as part of a site visit to the school. Site visits to the candidate's school may be part of the process. It is anticipated that the selected candidate will be announced to the Community during the week of April 10th.

The positions has been posted and we have already received 27 applications from candidates who are interested in the position. The deadline to apply is March 10th. Candidates may apply at <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=235>.

The anticipated timeline for the entire Search process is as follows:

Date	Time	Event	Location
February 15		Boston Globe/TalentEd/School Spring/MASPA/Monster.com	Online
February 27	7:00 p.m.	School Committee Review of Timeline/Process	School Committee Conference Room
February 13-27		Survey Joshua Eaton Staff, Parents, Focus Group Sessions with Staff, Parents (School Council/PTO), Administrators	Online Surveys Meetings at Joshua Eaton Admin Council

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to RMHS Track Team members **Mark Porter**, **Jack Geiger** both had sound performances at the Allstate meet over vacation as well as **Jack Geiger**, **Kelvin Hoyt**, **Sam Mathewson**, and **Eric Webb** teaming up to place 5th in the state in the boys 4x200 relay.
- Congratulations to Gymnast **Emily Eagleston** on an outstanding performance at the State All-Arounds.
- Congratulations to the Girls Gymnastic team for finishing 7th in the North Sectional tournament.
- Kudos to Girls Track member **Shannon Parks** for advancing to the All States
- Kudo to RMHS Wrestlers **Trevor Morton** and **Darren Driscoll** for outstanding performances in the State and Sectional tournaments.
- To RMHS History Teacher and Assistant Football Coach **Dave Blanchard** who was named the Massachusetts High School Football Coaches Association (MHSFCA) Assistant Coach of the Year.
- To Coolidge Grade 7 Student **Dylan Herlihy** who has been selected to participate in the Massachusetts State Geography Bee which will be held at Elms College in Chicopee, MA on March 31st. Good luck!

March 6	4:00 p.m.	Organizational Meeting	School Committee Conference Room
March 10		Deadline for Applications	
March 14	4:00 p.m.	Meeting to Design Questions	School Committee Conference Room
March 16	7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	1 st Round Candidate Interviews	School Committee Conference Room
March 17-April 10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vetting Process • Superintendent Interviews • Open Microphone Night(s) • Site Visits • Final Superintendent Interview 	
Week of April 10		Staff and Community Announcement of Appointment	

If you have any questions, please contact Interim HR Administrator **Jennifer Bove** at 781-944-5800 or by email at Jennifer.Bove@reading.k12.ma.us.

Looking for great stories about Reading students or teachers.

Do you or your student have a cool story to tell about how their teacher or building helped them, as part of our district-wide approach to promoting the well-being of our students and families through our MTSS initiative. The Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is the framework we use to ensure high quality instruction and accessible interventions for all students. The goal is help all students thrive in their academic and social emotional development.

We've been using the MTSS framework for several years, and have a lot of behind-the-scenes successes. For example, the core values that each building proudly showcases in every room (and on their websites) is part of MTSS. These core values are reinforced daily, and is part of the non-cognitive skills we try to instill in all our students.

We are now looking to the Reading Public Schools community to highlight ways our schools help your students. Please email **Sara Burd** at Sara.Burd@reading.k12.ma.us with any thoughts or ideas that you may have.

Rest and Connect to Get the Most Out of Your (Digital) Life

Posted by Erin Walsh on [Mind Positive Parenting Blog](#)

When it comes to media and technology, naming the things that we do not want our children to do comes naturally to many of us parents. The urge to protect our children is strong, and as we gaze out into the digital wilderness it is no surprise that the risks, pitfalls, and challenges can loom large. Many of our concerns are warranted. There is a growing body of evidence linking excessive technology use with

all kinds of negative outcomes for kids. I guess that's why Taiwan just joined China and South Korea making it a crime for **parents to "over-expose"** their children to technology.

This is not to say that parents don't experience profound ambivalence when it comes to technology. On the one hand, we want our kids to take advantage of and enjoy the powerful technology that can help them learn, connect, create, and participate fully in 21st century life. On the other hand, we worry. We have power struggles. We reminisce about the good old days.

Navigating this ambivalence is part and parcel of getting beyond the **"lock down" or "hands off"** approach and charting a parenting path towards digital citizenship. I've written before about how important it is to name and celebrate our children's digital strengths, a helpful exercise to combat the lock down impulse.

It might also help us strike the right balance to name and celebrate what we do want our children and teens to plug into besides computers, tablets and smart phones. A couple of recent studies point to two things we should pay attention to.

1. Opportunities to "look in"

"I just feel exhausted" a 9th grader told me after a talk a couple of months ago. "There are always things to be doing, updated, responding to. I mean don't get me wrong I love it...Most of the time. But it is exhausting."

Children and youth today are consuming and responding to streams of information at unprecedented rates and some young people are starting to articulate just how tiring it can be to be "always on, always connected." We would be wise to listen to them. The cost of an always-connected life is not limited to fatigue.

Many of us think that we are either paying attention or we aren't. Research over the last ten years, however, has revealed that we have **two different attention systems**: a "looking out" system and a "looking in" system. One we use when we play video games or read a text from a friend, the other when we reflect, remember, feel social emotions, or daydream. The challenge for us humans is that we can't use both attention systems at once. Instead, we toggle back and forth between them. It turns out that "looking in" is important for our emotional and psychological health. We are just beginning to understand the incredible brain benefits that come from a rest state, but it is clear that this it is inextricably linked to our social, emotional, and ethical lives. For example, the **more often we reflectively pause** when confronted with an emotional story, the better we are at abstracting the emotions and morals from one specific event and applying them to others. The challenge today is that in a media rich world, our attention is increasingly pulled outward towards sound bites, snippets, and clicks.

The takeaway from this research *is not* that media and technology inherently corrupt our psychological lives. On the contrary we can gain incredibly valuable information, perspectives, and relationships through technology that can enrich our social and emotional lives.

The takeaway *is* that processing the moral and emotional consequences of what we experience both online and offline requires rest and reflection. Far from being a

Superintendent's Office

Hours this Week

All are welcome

3/8 (5:30-6:30 p.m.)-RPS
Administrative Offices

3/9 (2:30-3:30 p.m.)-
Barrows Elementary
School

waste of time, "looking in" may enable us to look back out in ways that are more intentional, thoughtful, and just.

2. Opportunities to look up.

We've known for a long time that little children need live social interactions to learn effectively. Dr. **Marjorie Hogan**, a spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics, reminds us "that need doesn't go away" as children grow up.

Indeed, we've written before about the late Clifford Nass' **research with heavy media multitaskers**. He found that face-to-face time acted as a clear antidote to the negative social and emotional impacts of heavy media use among tween girls. Our kids might be born into this world hardwired for empathy and connection, but research shows that they need a lot of **in-person interactions with peers** to fully develop these skills. Indeed, learning to read emotions and respond to them is hard work and takes lots of practice. Girls ages 8-12 are in a critical period in their development where they are learning to navigate the tricky contours of relational emotions on their own. It is no surprise that if they turn towards screens instead of each other, they won't do it as well.

Researchers with the Children's Media Center @ Los Angeles **likewise found** that pre-teens who spent five days at an overnight nature camp without access to technology showed significant improvement over that time in recognizing nonverbal emotion cues compared to the control group that retained normal media habits. While study design made it impossible to make a causal conclusion, the authors make a convincing argument that the increase in in-person communication was likely responsible for these changes. Time in the natural world, an experience known to have **cognitive benefits**, may have laid a productive stage for more meaningful interactions but this factor alone doesn't explain improvements in emotional communication.

The takeaway here *is not* that spending time with screens makes our kids sad or emotionally illiterate. The takeaway *is* that they plenty of opportunities to look up from their screens and into the eyes of a friend.

The digital world in which our children are growing up is complex and changing quickly. During times of great change it is tempting to fall into the "lock down" and "turn off" approach. So how do we resist this impulse? It's all about balance. I hope that my children's digital lives are engaging, entertaining, connecting, and full of new learning. It is in support of this vision of technology, not in resistance to it, that we need to defend the unplugged spaces that enable them to look in and look up as well.

Here are a few practical tips to get you started:

7 ways to get face-to-face with your tween

Parenting teenagers: Getting creative with connection

Quote of the Week . . .



It does not matter how many times you get knocked down, but how many times you get up.

-Vince Lombardi



Reading Public Schools
Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow



Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse

We invite high school students and adults

Just Talk About It^{**}

Mental Health for Teens

A two hour presentation for parents, high school students, teachers and adults to learn the warning signs of mental health issues in adolescents and teens.

7pm An interactive presentation by Minding Your Mind^{**} to increase your awareness of

- what is considered a **crisis**
- how **stress** affects a teenager
- the symptoms of **depression**
- the warning signs most often associated with **suicide**
- **how to help** a student or a friend

8 pm Melissa Ann Hopely will share her personal experience with mental health challenges, bullying, and the help that saved her. Melissa is the author of "The People You Meet in Real Life."

Monday March 13, 2017 at 7:00pm

Doors open at 6:45 pm

RMHS Performing Arts Center

This presentation is intended for high school students and adults.

^{**}Minding Your Mind is a national educational program working to prevent crises through education
"Just Talk About It" is Approved by the Best Practices National Registry, Section III: Adherence to Standards.

Because awareness leads to help-seeking behavior

www.understandingdisabilities.org

Reading Public Schools Happenings

RMHS High Fives

Below are the RMHS High Fives for last week.

Disney Tweet of the Week



Don't focus on the past
or you'll miss the future.

—Fairy Godmother
(Descendants)

Michaela Boyle, Class of 2017



Michaela is being recognized for her excellence in athletics and service. Academically, Michaela has enjoyed the challenges and rigors of a number of classes particularly English, Psychology, and World War II. She has a strong interest in writing and is looking forward to pursuing this interest in her college studies. Athletically, Michaela has been an outstanding player on this year's Lady Rocket Ice Hockey Team, leading them to an impressive 16-3-1 regular season record. After playing for 2 years at Austin Prep and for 3 years on the Junior Shamrocks, Michaela has returned to her home here at RMHS and hopes to help make a deep run into the state tourney, beginning with tomorrow night's game against Hingham. In terms of service, Michaela is an instructor in the Learn to Skate program in Saugus where she channels her love of hockey with a desire to help children develop both confidence and skills in ice skating. She also finds time to act as a mentor and tutor to students with disabilities in the Reading middle schools. Next year, Michaela will be attending Clarkson University on a hockey scholarship and will be pursuing a major in Communication and a minor in Digital Design. Congratulations, Michaela!

Nick Miele, Class of 2017



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/>

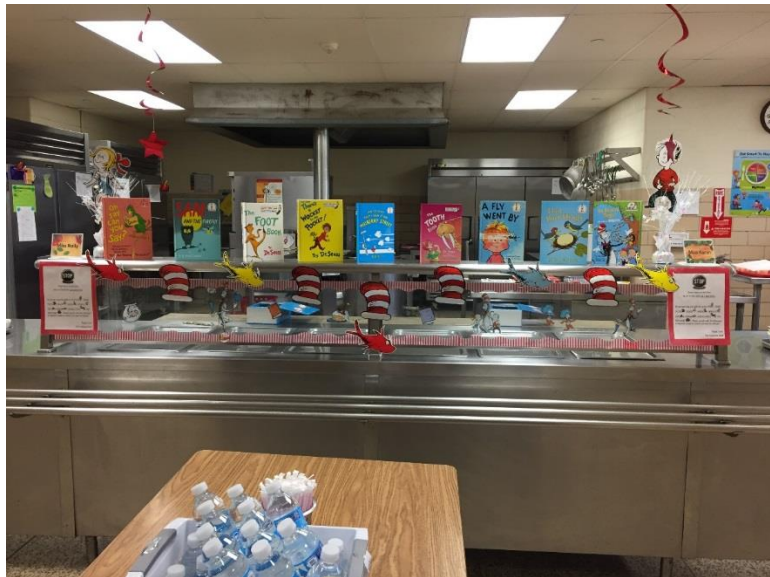
Nick is being recognized for his outstanding achievement in academics, leadership, athletics, and service. Academically, Nick has challenged himself with a rigorous schedule in his senior year, taking a variety of AP and Honors classes. He has enjoyed many of his classes here at RMHS, but is particularly enthusiastic about his coursework in Statistics. Athletically, Nick has been a four year member of the Boys Varsity Ice Hockey Team, serving this year as one of the team's captains and helping lead the Rockets to an appearance in the post-season tourney. One of his fondest memories as a Rocket was winning the State Championship during his freshman season. Nick has also been a four year member of the Boys Varsity Lacrosse Team, serving as one of this year's captains. Over the past few years, he has helped lead the Rockets Lax Team to very successful seasons with deep post-season runs and hopes to do so again this spring. In terms of service, Nick has given his time to the Special Skates Program at Burbank Arena, where he has enjoyed helping children with disabilities develop confidence and have fun while learning how to skate. Lastly, during the winter months, Nick regularly volunteers his time with the Lacrosse and Hockey teams, helping to shovel out senior citizens in need of assistance during snow storms. Next year, Nick will be completing a post-graduate year at prep school where he will continue playing hockey.

Read Across America-Part 1

This week and next week, several schools in our district are celebrating Read Across America. As part of this celebration, schools have guest readers come in and read to different grades of students. Below are some of the pictures from this past week. A special thanks goes out to our Library Media Specialists who help coordinate the events.



Killam Seuss Chefs



Barrows Cafeteria Getting Ready for Read Across America



Wood End You Tube Video
<https://youtu.be/ns3qihO-Kek>



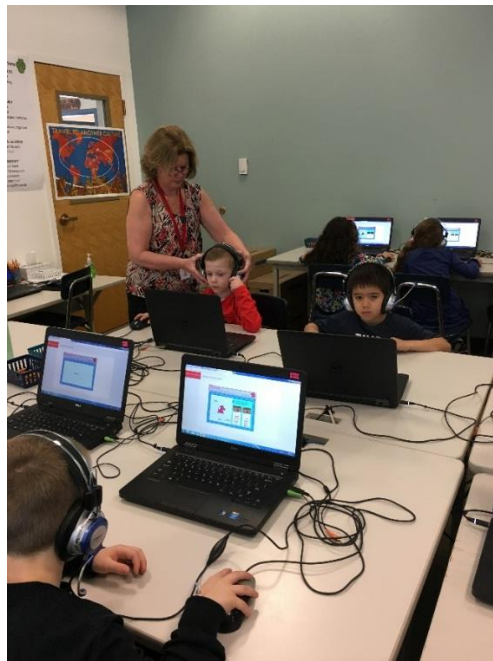
School Committee Chair Jeanne Borawski Reads to Killam Students



Director of Student Services Carolyn Wilson Reads to Killam Students

Joshua Eaton Kindergarten Use the Computer Lab

Kindergarten students at the Joshua Eaton are pictured below with Library Media Specialist Karen Ghirardi in the computer lab as they are working diligently to identify beginning sounds and reading words.



Stepping Stones...

- Congratulations to Coolidge Science Team Coach **Karawan Meade** on the birth of her son Finnbar Marwan on February 17th weighing 6 lbs. and 17" long.
- Congratulations to Joshua Eaton psychologist **Nicole Brett** on the birth of her son Julian Warren on February 26 weighing 6 lbs., 12 oz. and 19 1/4" long.
- Our thoughts and prayers go out to RMHS teacher **Tanya McSorley** on the loss of a loved one recently.
- Our thoughts and prayers go out to Wood End paraeducator **Cathy Peraner** on the loss of a loved one recently.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:

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: john.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us

✓ Neusa Sasso, Substitute, District

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

Elementary Principal, Joshua Eaton Elementary School
https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=235
Regular Education Tutor, 60 hours biweekly Coolidge Middle School
https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=236

Blazing Trails...

A Holocaust survivor gives his violin to a student in the Bronx – Joe’s Violin, an Oscar-nominated short documentary, is well worth watching. Have some tissues handy:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8D5h_Y8N4tg

“Joe’s Violin” directed and produced by Kahane Cooperman, Lucky Two Productions, 2016

Key websites – In this All Things PLC page, Sarah Schuhl recommends the following websites that support effective teamwork and instruction:

- EDSITEment – www.edsiteement.neh.gov has standards-aligned lesson plans, student resources, and close readings in ELA, foreign languages, art and culture, history and social studies.
- Classkick – <https://www.classkick.com> is a free formative feedback tool to use with high-level student tasks. The teacher uploads the tasks, has students complete them on a device, and can then view each student’s work and provide feedback.
- Newsela – www.newsela.com provides topical informational texts at different Lexile levels, some with quizzes and some in Spanish.
- ReadWorks – www.readworks.org provides informational and literary texts at varying reading levels with question sets, as well as elementary lessons and units on reading comprehension.
- Literacy Design Collaborative – www ldc.org has teacher-created lessons and modules geared to college and career readiness in ELA, social studies, science, and math, including task templates, rubrics, and student anchor papers.
- Illustrative Mathematics – www illustrativemathematics.org has math tasks geared to Common Core standards.

“Websites to PLC By” by Sarah Schuhl in All Things PLC, Winter 2017

Sesame Street puts the ideas of Carol Dweck and Jeff Howard to music – This 2014 video by Janelle Monáe captures the effort-based, growth mindset that can be so transformation in classrooms: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLeUvZvuvAs>

Pixar on storytelling – In collaboration with Khan Academy, Pixar created this website on storytelling <https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/pixar/storytelling> with segments on the storyteller’s unique perspective, favorite stories, words and character, and specific advice.

Hans Rosling’s website – Gapminder <http://www.gapminder.org> is the website created by Swedish graphic presentation guru Hans Rosling to visually dramatize the issues he cared about, especially ending world poverty. It contains some of his last video presentations.

Have a Great Week!