



Pathways

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

June 11, 2017

Volume 3, Number 38

Upcoming Dates

- June 12 – (8:00 a.m.) RMHS Underclassmen Awards Ceremony in the Field House
- June 13 – (8:30 a.m.) Barrows Grade 5 Celebration & Fun Day
- June 14 – (6:00 p.m.) Birch Meadow Fifth Grade Graduation
- June 15 – (8:30 a.m.) Parker Field Day
- June 16 – (8:45 a.m.) Killam Grade 5 Move Up Celebration and Field Day; (8:45 a.m.) Joshua Eaton Grade 5 Celebration; (6:00 p.m.) Wood End Grade 5 “Moving On” Ceremony and Celebration
- June 17 – (10:30 a.m.) Annual Friends & Family Day @ the Birch Meadow Campus
- June 19 – (6:00 p.m.) Parker Grade 8 Promotion Ceremony & Dance; (6:00 p.m.) Coolidge Grade 8 Promotion Ceremony & Dance; (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent’s Conference Room
- June 20 – Last Day of School – All students dismissed at 11:00 a.m.; (8:00 a.m.) Parker Awards Ceremony

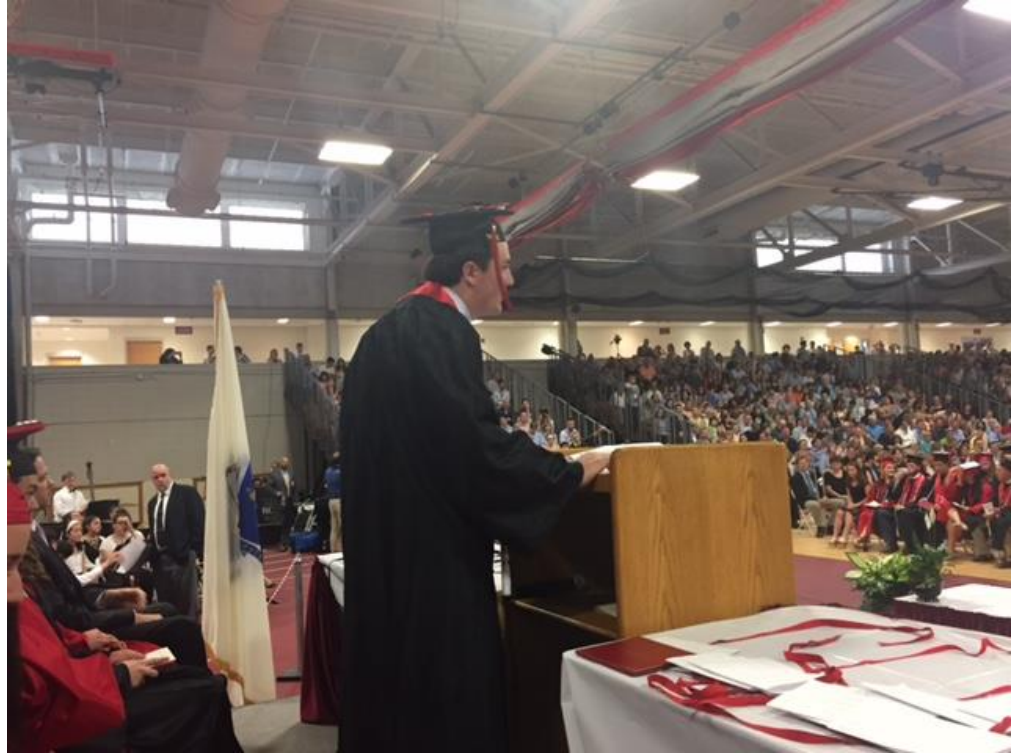
Reading Memorial High School Holds 150th Graduation *358 Students Graduate in the Class of 2017*



RMHS Class of 2017

On a beautiful sunny day last Sunday, Reading Memorial High School held its Commencement for the Class of 2017 in front of a standing room only crowd at the Walter Hawkes Field House with overflow seating in the Performing Arts Center. This year’s Commencement for one of the largest classes in recent history had some historical perspective. It was the 150th Commencement in Reading’s History, the 60th at the current Reading Memorial High School location, and the 10th since the addition and renovation. Several students participated in the ceremony including the Reading Memorial High School Band, the Reading Memorial High School Jazz Band, both under the direction of Joseph Mulligan, the RMHS Singers, under the direction of Kristin Killian, and Senior Celine Lizotte, who sang the National Anthem. Student speeches were given by Salutatorian Anson Huang, Valedictorian Alisyn Bourque, and Class President Timothy O’Sullivan. Superintendent of Schools John Doherty and RMHS Principal Adam Bakr also gave remarks. The diplomas were conferred by Chairperson of the School Committee Jeanne Borawski, and Vice-Chairperson of the School Committee Charles Robinson.

Special thanks goes out to Class Advisors Sarah Cummings and Stephanie Lecesse, for all of their hard work this year with the Senior Class. A special thanks also goes out to the following people and groups for their significant contributions to the RMHS Graduation: Lynne Cerretani-Clarke, Illeana Napoli, Carmen O'Rourke, Stacy Scouten, Flower Shoppe of Eric's, RCTV, the RMHS Guidance Department, the RMHS Custodial Staff, and the RMHS Facilities Department.



RMHS Class President Timothy O'Sullivan



RMHS Singers

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to boys lacrosse, and boys & girls tennis, on their wins earlier this week.
- Congratulations to track athlete Haley Lightbody on qualifying for the New England meet in the pole vault.
- Congratulations to Alyssa Pryputniewicz on qualifying for the New England meet in javelin.
- Kudos to Isabella Zagami and Maeve Swanton for a strong showing at the regionals meet.
- Kudos to track athlete Mark Porter on shattering the school record in javelin at the All State meet recently with a throw of 194' 7".
- Kudos to RMHS girls track team members Haley Lightbody, Alyssa Pryputniewicz & Maeve Swanson on a strong showing at the State Pentathlon meet finishing 2nd overall as a team.



Reading School Committee Vice Chairperson Charles Robinson presents diploma to Kyle Mungenast

Level Consolidation in Middle and High School / An Update

Next year, as you may know, we are continuing the consolidation of several of the lowest level course offerings at the middle and high school to better ensure that *all* students have equal access to core curriculum and equal opportunities also to access courses in later grade levels. Consolidation of some levels began this current school year at the high school in Social Studies-Grade 9 and English-Grade 12. Next year, the transition in course levels will include consolidating the former “college prep” (CP) into the “strong college prep” (SCP) level at the high school in English (Grades 9-11), Social Studies (Grade 10), and Science (Biology, Grade 9)—and at the middle schools, consolidating the former Math-7 into the Math-7 Enhanced curriculum.

For the high school community, it is important to note as well that after reviewing the updated enrollment/course section needs for next year’s grades 10/11 and consulting with teachers in these departments, we have also determined to *not* move forward in 2017-2018 with the consolidation in Social Studies-Grade 11 and Science-Grades 10 and 11 as originally announced. The consolidation in these grade levels will be deferred to the following year, which will allow for a more phased-in or gradual implementation as students naturally progress to the next grade level each year. High school staff will be communicating directly with the students who may be impacted by this change and who may wish to be scheduled into a reinstated CP course section.

As was discussed at a recent School Committee meeting, this transition is an important part of our district goal to address the achievement gap that exists with some of our students. It is consistent with education research as well as best practices already being implemented by other schools in our region. In addition, administrators and teachers at all three schools are working together to review essential steps for supporting students, to align effective and on-going professional development during this multi-year process, and of course to identify practices that successfully provide access and opportunity for all students as they progress to the upper grades in the Reading Public Schools.

Superintendent's Office

Hours this Week

All are welcome

6/12 (5:00 – 6:00 p.m.)

RPS Administrative
Offices

6/14 (5:00 – 6:00 p.m.)

RPS Administrative
Offices

6/15 (7:30 – 8:30 a.m.)

Wood End School

As we move forward with this transition over the next few years, we will be monitoring student progress and giving periodic updates to the Community through our newsletters and School Committee presentations. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of us.

Craig Martin
Asst. Superintendent

Adam Bakr
RMHS Principal

Sarah Marchant
Coolidge Principal

Richele Shankland
Parker Principal

Reading Public Schools Recognizes Staff Milestones

91 Staff Recognized

At last Monday's School Committee meeting, 91 staff members were recognized for reaching milestones in the Reading Public Schools. Staff were recognized for reaching Professional Teaching Status (Teachers), and for reaching milestones of 10, 20, and 30 years of service. Staff who were retiring at the end of the school year or who have recently retired were also recognized. Staff who were recognized received a certificate, a pin, or a glass apple, depending on the milestone that was reached.

Below are the names of all of the teachers, paraeducators, custodians, secretaries, and administrators who have reached milestones in the RPS career. Congratulations to those staff. A special thank you goes to Human Resources Administrator Jennifer Bove for organizing the recognition ceremony and to the Arnold Berger Foundation for providing the funding for the pins and apples.

Last Name	First Name	School
10 Years		
GARGANO	JACLYN	BARROWS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
ROSE	CHRISTINE	BARROWS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BUTLER	GIOIA	BIRCH MEADOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MILNER	MELISSA	BIRCH MEADOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
CLARK	JOAN	JOSHUA EATON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
GHIRARDI	KAREN	JOSHUA EATON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MINARD	SUSAN	JOSHUA EATON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
ZERFAS	LUCRETIA	JOSHUA EATON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BRUNO	JESSICA	KILLAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
RUOCCO	TONI-ANN	KILLAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
RYAN	CYNTHIA	KILLAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
TUCKER	MICHELLE	KILLAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
ANDERSON	MICHELLE	PARKER MIDDLE SCHOOL
ARTHUR	MARIA	PARKER MIDDLE SCHOOL
CORMIER	BRIAN	PARKER MIDDLE SCHOOL
HILTZ	ERIC	PARKER MIDDLE SCHOOL
CHIAPPINI	MICHELE	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
MAHONEY	PAUL	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
SCHUETTE	FIONA	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
SKEHAN	HENRY	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
SMITH	LAURIE	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
WILLIAMS	AUDRA	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
STUART	KAREN	RISE PRE KINDERGARTEN
SAWYER	KAREN	SCHOOL CENTRAL OFFICE

GOODWIN	JOHN	SCHOOL FACILITIES
FERGUSON	DIANNE	SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE
KOURBALI	HOURIA	SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE
LUGO	IVONNE	SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE
BJARNGARD	CATHERINE	WOOD END ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
LYDON-RUELOS	VICTORIA	WOOD END ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
20 Years		
WALSH	DONNA	BARROWS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
WEBSTER	CHERYL	COOLIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
KINTON	DEBRA	JOSHUA EATON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
DOUGLAS	KAREN	KILLAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
DAVIS	DIANE	PARKER MIDDLE SCHOOL
MARTINSON	DONNA	PARKER MIDDLE SCHOOL
DEBENEDICTIS	JAMES	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
MCSWEENEY	MICHAEL	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
RYAN	JEFFREY	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
STROUT	CHARLES	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
BOUDREAU	CYNTHIA	RISE PRE KINDERGARTEN
DONAHUE	PATRICE	RISE PRE KINDERGARTEN
ENGELSON	LINDA	SCHOOL CENTRAL OFFICE
MARTIN	CRAIG	SCHOOL CENTRAL OFFICE
SOLIMINI	ROSE	WOOD END ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
30 Years		
DOHERTY	JOHN	SCHOOL CENTRAL OFFICE
PROFESSIONAL TEACHER STATUS		
Engelson	Kara	BARROWS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Anderson	Katie	BIRCH MEADOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Cullen	Laurette	BIRCH MEADOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Hallett	Talia	BIRCH MEADOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Leahy	Edwina	BIRCH MEADOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Piacentini	Patricia	BIRCH MEADOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Coyne	Jerry	COOLIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
Pinkham	Lindsey	COOLIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
Simpson	Paul	COOLIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
White	Jane	COOLIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
White	Jennifer	COOLIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
Atkinson	Lee Ann	EATON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Hall	Karen	KILLAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Adamo	Kimberly	KILLAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Zrike	Ellen	KILLAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Carter	Caitlin	PARKER MIDDLE SCHOOL
Williams	Matthew	PARKER MIDDLE SCHOOL
Gianatassio	Danielle	WOOD END ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Hagopian	Jennifer	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
Derman	Courtney	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
Brokenrope	Zachary	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
Hooper	Susan	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

Quote of the Week . . .



We don't receive wisdom;
we must discover it for
ourselves after a journey
no one can take for us or
spare us.

Marcel Proust

Jones	Danielle	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
Pray	Courtney	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
Williams	Allyson	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
RETIREMENTS		
Carroll	Denise	BARROWS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Thurnauer	Maureen	BIRCH MEADOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Underwood	Christine	BIRCH MEADOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Buttaro	Sheila	COOLIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
DeBenedetto	Concetta	COOLIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL
Kinton	Debra	JOSHUA EATON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Dellovo	Deborah	KILLAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Osterlind	Priscilla	KILLAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Anderson	Virginia	PARKER MIDDLE SCHOOL
Bosco	Lori	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
Dee	Janet	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
Graham	Paula	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
O'Brien	Valerie	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
Shields	Patricia	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
Tenedios	Angela	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
Thomases	Jeanne	READING MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
Butts	Deborah	RISE PRE KINDERGARTEN
Hogan	Anita	RISE PRE KINDERGARTEN
Doherty	Kevin	SCHOOL FACILITIES
Porter	Darlene	SCHOOL FACILITIES
Sheehan	Barbara	WOOD END ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

RMHS Holds Financial Fair for Class of 2018

Real world opportunity sponsored by the Reading Cooperative Bank

Last Thursday, Reading Cooperative Bank sponsored a "Lessons in Life" Financial Fair Simulation for the Class of 2018. The Financial Fair was an engaging opportunity for students where they learned critical financial literacy skills to budget their money, track their income and expenses, and determine what they would need to change if their monthly budget did not balance. This experience taught students some important real life skills which they will need for the rest of their lives.



Students participating at one of the booths at Financial Fair

Disney Tweet of the Week



The past is lessons to learn. The present is opportunity to practice those lessons.

—Mickey Mouse

Students travelled to 14 different booths where they had to make choices about their life. The simulation begins where the students have recently graduated from college or a certificate program and are entering the workforce for the first time. The choices that the students had to make ranged from purchasing furniture, insurance, education and training, housing, credit and lending, savings and retirement, charity, transportation, clothing, investing, entertainment, fun, and food and nutrition. They also met with their financial advisor to run the numbers and check to see if they made sound financial choices.



Special thanks goes to the numerous volunteers from Reading Cooperative Bank, Reading Public Schools, and the Community who helped make this a success. A very special thank you goes to Reading Cooperative Branch Manager Michael Foley who coordinated this event.

How Parker and Coolidge Implement MTSS

Back in the days of a one-room school house in the mid-1800s, teachers could focus on teaching their students what was known – ironically, one hopes – as the 3 Rs: reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic. Today, with nine schools spread across Reading serving more than 4,300 students, teaching is more complicated.

While the focus on education remains, teachers and staff have a lot more to do these days.

That's where MTSS comes in. The state has developed a blueprint for what it calls the Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (in other states, the M stands for Multi-) that is designed to be a single system of supports that is responsive to the academic and non-academic needs of all students. The goal is to enable "system level change across the classroom, school and district," supporting "all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners and students who are academically advanced."

Each school building within every school district is empowered to develop its own MTSS implementation, based on its culture, students, families, resources, culture, etc. According to the state's blueprint, "Schools and districts are encouraged to work toward an integrated approach to support students' academic and social-emotional competencies. All students receive academic instruction and behavioral supports that include differentiation and extension activities."

But an essential part of MTSS is that different schools implement their MTSS approach differently. That means even as they share goals, and even though they teach the same

Important Websites

Help Desk (To submit a ticket)
help.desk@reading.k12.ma.us

RPS District Website
www.reading.k12.ma.us

Access Your Email
<https://login.microsoftonline.com/>

Baseline Edge
<https://baseline.ioeducation.com/Site/login>

Interface Health Services
<https://interface.williamjames.edu/community/reading>

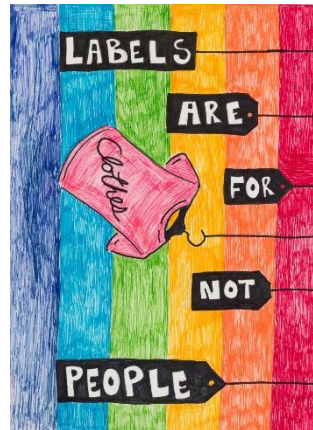
Need help finding mental health care?

WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE
INTERFACE Referral Service
PARTNERS IN PREVENTION
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/>

grade levels, the way in which the Walter S. Parker Middle School implements MTSS is different from the way MTSS is implemented at the Arthur S. Coolidge Middle School.

That said, there are some commonality in the approach Parker and Coolidge schools have taken. For example, each school spent first three years establishing MTSS-specific leadership teams to spearhead MTSS, building readiness and assessing the best way to begin the work and establishing core values. Teachers and staff at both schools were trained and continue to get training in MTSS structures and practices, which includes understanding how MTSS works, why it works and includes adapting the language to match specific building's culture. To successfully design, manage and run MTSS taken time – especially given all the other demands that teachers and staff must juggle while they teach our students.

Both schools receive teacher assistant support from the May Institute, a Massachusetts-based non-profit organization that provides training and consultation services to school districts to help students with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities, brain injury and neurobehavioral disorders, and behavioral health needs. And both schools took a similar approach of beginning the MTSS work by focusing on smaller groups of high-need (tier 2) students to pilot the work and then branch out to further strengthen the universal and tertiary supports.



An anti-bullying sign in Walker Parker Middle School.

Walter S. Parker Middle School incorporates MTSS

The leadership team at Parker, responsible for implementing MTSS, is working on a more uniform and consistent way to collect data – including absences, time out of class, and office discipline referral (ODRs are a key safety assessment). The goal of the data is to provide insight into the range of interventions, particularly how and when they should be used.

To develop predictive data to help Parker anticipate the types of grade-level and individual supports, Parker now uses two charts: the Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS) and Student Internalizing Behavior Screening Scale (SIBSS).

- SRSS tracks externalizing behaviors such as peer rejection; negative attitude; lie, cheat, sneak; low academic achievement; and aggressive behavior.
- SIBSS tracks internalizing behaviors such as nervous or fearful; bullied by peers; spends time alone; withdrawn; sad or unhappy; complains about being sick or hurt.

Used in team data meetings, scheduled three times a year, SRSS and SIBSS helps identify students who may not be on the radar but, nonetheless, need supports.

For example, SRSS and SIBSS allows teams to develop plans for individual students who may be struggling academically but a teacher may not know why. By tracking information in SIBSS, a teacher is better able to figure out if the problem is the result of an academic need or if there's an anxiety issue that may be the problem. SIBSS gives teachers the ability to identify trends that otherwise might be missed. After all, students who are quiet and hard to engage are rarely sent to the office but are often overlooked, even as they need additional support. SRSS and SIBSS also helps teams track whether the interventions and supports have been effective.

Adding SRSS and SIBSS to the mix has helped Parker help students on a grade-level and individual basis. The school plans to refine the process for the 2017-18 academic year, and include additional categories such as absences to find potential issues that might not get attention otherwise.

Currently data is uploaded each quarter. That may change next year, too, since it's easier than ever for appropriate teachers and staff to have real-time access to data that can identify trends that otherwise might get detected only late the following term. Parker students are showing an improvement, thanks to MTSS.



Arthur W. Coolidge Middle School is Doing Its PART for MTSS

At Coolidge, the MTSS process starts with encouraging students to “Do Your PART.” In this case, PART stands for the school’s core values: Perseverance, Accountability, Respect, and Teamwork.

Reminders of those values are displayed throughout the school, and in all settings. Each classroom teacher has examples of what PART looks like in their room – it may look slightly different in another teacher’s room. In the homerooms at the start of the year, there are lessons to teach students how to explicitly exhibit the expected behaviors. Students are asked, “What does Teamwork look like in home room?” “What does Perseverance look like during physical education – and how might it appear different in another teacher’s classroom?”

This year’s focus has been on staff buy-in and culture, to make sure teachers and staff understand and embrace MTSS. One way Coolidge kicked off that effort was to combine the school’s leadership team and its MTSS team – that’s how integral MTSS is seen in ensuring smooth operations at Coolidge.

Another way has been to ensure that all staff, including paraprofessionals, teaching assistants, custodians, etc., bought shirts for everyone, with money raised by the PTO in place of holiday gifts. Beyond the shirts, the PTO members wrote a note for each teacher.

The school also held potluck lunches for staff, giving people who don't usually work together or interact the opportunity to talk with each other. They held bowling nights; established a Compliment Board in the main office, where people could leave anonymous or signed compliments about other teachers and staff; and displayed staff's photos from when they were middle school students (described to us as having a lot of awkward 1980s fashions). Even students are writing staff appreciation letters.

The results: there's been an increase in morale, and a better sense of belonging that is being translated to student interactions.

The team developed student incentives, too, with many opportunities for "natural incentives" such as getting lunch first, getting music at lunch, four-way capture-the-flag games, a live-action version of Hungry Hippo played by students (though in smaller groups), tournaments, homework passes, etc. Each teacher kept a jar in their classroom to see how much they needed to achieve awards – with awards going to individuals and groups. The winners of a spring decorating contest won a pizza party. And, understanding what students want, Coolidge held a pie-in-the-face contest with teachers – who had to be okay with this – as a way for teachers, staff and students to be playful and have fun together. The team is looking to grow the ways their staff can recognize students in the future, especially those that reward social and emotional skills. One other way Coolidge emphasizes the growth of good behavior is with a then-and-now slide for each student designed to reward and reinforce expected behavior.

How is MTSS working?

Both middle schools are doing well.

Academically, Parker and Coolidge students scored 95.4 and 94.3, respectively, in English (as compared to 88.9 for middle schools in the state) and 88.9 and 88.8 in math (vs. 78.5).

Both Parker and Coolidge are showing improvements on key measures of student behavior. The state collects and compares data about in-school suspensions and out-of-school suspensions, and both of Reading's middle schools scored very low on both measures. Parker and Coolidge scored 1.6% and 1.3% in terms of in-school suspensions vs. 2.5% for middle schools in the state. Students at Parker and Coolidge also had far fewer problems with out-of-school suspensions, generating 0.4% and 0.5%, respectively, as compared to 4.2% for middle schools in the state.

While those numbers look good, an essential component of MTSS is continual, incremental improvement. The schools and the district have already identified ways to improve MTSS implementation for the next academic year, with the goal to make next year even stronger – and the same for the year after that.

RMHS Art Students Participate in Memory Project

RMHS Art Students, under the direction of RMHS Art Teacher Susan Gilbert recently finished a project where they sent off 11 portraits to the Memory project. The memory project is a non-profit organization that invites art teachers and art students to create portraits for kids around the world who have faced substantial challenges, such as neglect, abuse, loss of parents and extreme poverty. This year we were partnered with children in the United Republic of the Congo. The link for the project is www.memoryproject.org. Students who participated include: Nicole Kendall, grade 10, Molly Keane, grade 11, Jahnavi Patel grade

10, Kate McReynolds, grade 12, Allison Cashins, grade 12, Matteo Coelho, grade 10, Mary Chipman, grade 12, and Allison Cashins, grade 12.



RMHS Art Students Nicole Kendall, grade10 , Molly Keane, grade11 and Jahnvi Patel grade 10 participating in Memory Project



RMHS Art Teacher Sue Gilbert

Coolidge Student To Be on Class Act Segment on Channel 7

Congratulations to Coolidge 7th grade student Ben Mini who was selected to be on Channel 7's "Class Act" segment which celebrates a student or students who are going above and beyond for their schools and/or communities. Ben was nominated by Coolidge Science Teacher Paul Guidetti who was inspired to nominate Ben because of the fundraisers that he puts on each year with his band. Ben is a musician who sings, plays the guitar and many other instruments. For the last few years, Ben has held a benefit concert each spring to support local Reading charities. He has raised over \$6,000 for his efforts.

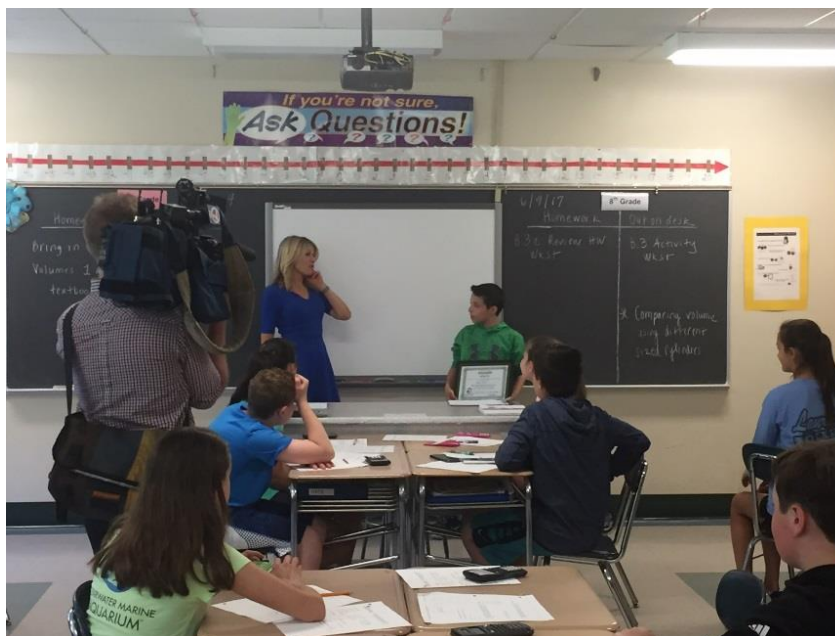
The segment will be aired next Friday morning on Channel 7 at 6:25 a.m. His benefit concert will be today (Sunday, June 11th) from 3:00-6:00 p.m. at Memorial Park. Canned food donations are welcome for the Reading Food Pantry, as well as, cash donations for Cradles to

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

Crayons. Congratulations to Ben on his recognition and for the work that he does in the community.



Ben being surprised by Channel 7 in his Math Class



#FinishStrong or Go Down Trying

By **Starr Sackstein** on June 6, 2017 4:34 AM for **Education Week Teacher Blog**

The **first week of school** is extremely important in setting the tone, but ending strong is equally as important. Depending on the age level you teach, in my case high school, leaving students with a sense of excitement and urgency about learning can make or break their feelings for upcoming learning as well.

With four days of learning left in school before **New York state exams** begin, teachers are challenged to make classes more than just review days from a test packet. We want to ensure that all students are wrapping up successful years but are also continuing to enrich the experience.

So how can we keep kids coming to school and ramp up excitement for future learning?

Consider the following:

- Plan a celebration of learning that isn't just a party, but an opportunity for kids to journey backward and reflect about their growth this year. Give them opportunities to look at older work and recognize that they can do more now than they could before.
- **Portfolio presentations** are a great way for students to talk about learning and set goals for the summer and next year. They can even write a letter to themselves about things they learned this year that they want to continue working on or areas that they feel they are ready to expand to.
- Teach kids about different learning opportunities that happen every day outside of school. Provide them with lists of free programs and/or museums or experiences that they can participate in over the summer.
- Encourage students to blog about something they care about and get them started before school ends. Give them resources for research or perhaps excellent fan fiction sites for their favorite books. Students do love to write or vlog.
- Teach kids about how they can use social media apps like Instagram, Twitter or Snapchat to create memories and write captions that capture the moments they are snapping photos and videos of.
- Have students share their favorite books from the year that they read on their own. Ask each student to do a short presentation and then put together a google doc where they each share their top picks. Encourage students to read independently without a **reading log**.
- Remind students that movies are texts too, so if they want to see movies, they should try to connect what they see to other learning they have done. What does the movie remind them of? Was there a book associated with it? Do they want to read the book now too?
- Another great activity to foster relationships in classes is to have students share what they learned from each other. One simple way to do this is to ask each child to place a blank sheet of paper on his or her back and then have the students write little notes about learning on them to be shared at the end. Students love to hear what classmates appreciate and respect about each other.

One final effort I like to make is to write each of my students a short note by hand or by email depending on the time. I like to thank each student for what they've taught me over the course of the year and let them know I appreciated their contribution.

Since school is really about relationships, finishing strong is as much about the content as it is about the personal growth. Let's focus on the positive and try to move forward in our learning experiences from each opportunity presented.

Reading Public Schools Happenings

Parker Student Receives Honorable Mention in Writing Contest

Parker Middle School is both pleased and proud to announce that a W. S. Parker sixth grade student has won an Honorable Mention Award for the 2017 Boston Sports Museum - Will McDonough Writing Contest. There were over 1000 entries this year from students attending public and private schools throughout New England.

Laura Yatsunashi won for her narrative essay titled, "Make It Or Break It," a fiction piece about a female gymnast who works hard to have her team compete in the national championships.

Here is the link to the Boston Sports Museum's winners' announcement page:

<http://sportsmuseum.org/education/will-mcdonough-writing-contest.aspx>

Director of Finance Gail Dowd Visits RMHS Accounting Classes

On Friday, Director of Finance Gail Dowd visited the RMHS SCP Accounting class to discuss career paths in the field of accounting and shared her knowledge in this area. Mrs. Dowd is a Certified Public Accountant. Special thanks to Mrs. Dowd for taking time out of her busy schedule to share her knowledge with students!



Wood End Young Author's Day

Last week, students at Wood End participated in Young Author's Day. Below are some pictures of the event.



Coolidge Principal for the Day

Congratulations to Grade 6 student Catie Amarault who was the Coolidge Principal for the day yesterday. Catie, who is shown below with Coolidge Principal Sarah Marchant spent her day meeting with the Ms. Marchant and Superintendent of Schools John Doherty, visiting classrooms, having lunch duty, and making announcements. Congratulations to Catie!



Darlene Porter Retiring After 30+ Years in the Reading Public Schools

Congratulations to Facilities Secretary Darlene Porter, who will be retiring this Friday, after over 30 years in the Reading Public Schools. Thank you for your service to the Reading Public Schools and the Town of Reading.



Debbie Butts Retiring From Reading Public Schools

Last week, a celebration was held for RISE Preschool Director Debbie Butts who is retiring at the end of the school year. Congratulations to Debbie on a very successful career and we wish her good health and happiness!



Priscilla Osterlind Retiring from Reading Public Schools

Last Wednesday, the Killam staff had a wonderful luncheon afternoon to celebrate Priscilla Osterlind, who is retiring after 36 years in the Reading Public Schools. Priscilla has spent the last 32 years as the Killam School Secretary and prior to that, was a paraeducator for four years. Below is a picture of Priscilla with her office colleagues, Denise Iozzo and Julie Callahan. Priscilla is truly the heart of Killam and she will be dearly missed. We wish her health and happiness as she enters into retirement in August.



Stepping Stones...

- Our thoughts out to RMHS Food Service staffer **Karina Ferrari** who lost a close family member recently.
- Congratulations to Food Service driver **Paul Collins** on the birth of his grandson John Paul on June 8 weighing 7 lbs. 8 oz.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
 - ✓ Logan Keen, Assistant Teacher, Barrows Extended Day & Substitute, District

Blazing Trails...

Experts Discuss the Pros and Cons of Fidget Spinners." Fidget spinners may be both a distraction and a therapeutic tool, some experts say. Occupational therapist Claire Heffron cautions that use of such devices should not take the place of other movement or sensory stimulation. [Read More](#)

"7 Tips for New and Aspiring Building Principals." In this ASCD InService post Howard Pitler gives seven tips for incoming principals. Congratulations! You have just been appointed a building principal. You have the ability to impact hundreds of students. What kind of impact do you want to have? Will you be that principal who is busy putting out fires and running from meeting to meeting or will you be that person who others look back on and think, "that person changed my life for the better?" [Read More](#)

"Special Leaders for All Kids." Our students need "special" educators who see beyond the "special needs" labels, and as leaders we can inspire this mindset. There are times when the peripheral noise of all that is asked of school leaders can make us lose our main focus: achievement for all students. In those times, we need to get back to our core values and remember that we do more than manage things like budgets and schedules; we mobilize people to act. [Read More](#)

"Hollywood Gets It Wrong About School." Hollywood often offers overly simplistic and unrealistic storylines about teachers -- and students -- in the classroom, according to high-school teacher Anne Beatty. In this commentary, she writes about the implications of such storylines and what happens when teachers and students reject the misconceptions. [Read More](#)

"Could Subjects Soon Be a Thing of the Past in Finland?" Finland has long been renowned for the quality of its education and always scores highly in international league tables. Now it is rethinking how it teaches in the digital age - seeking to place skills, as much as subjects, at the heart of what it does. But not everyone is happy, and there are fears it could bring down standards. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!