



Pathways

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

June 18, 2017

Volume 8, Number 39

Upcoming Dates

- 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

Thank You

As we put closure to our school year, we would like to take a moment to thank you, the Reading Community, for your support of our school district. Your support is evident in so many ways, from your attendance at our events, to your volunteerism at your child's schools, and from the financial support that we receive from our PTO's and other community groups. What makes our school community so strong is the investment that you have made in your child's education. Like every school year, we have had numerous experiences that we can celebrate; some in our individual classrooms, and some in our schools. We have watched first hand your children grow, learn, and blossom from the moment that they walk into school in September to the time that they leave this week for the summer. Their successes and growth in learning is a tribute to the partnership that our teachers and administrators have with you each and every day.

During this year, we have also had to persevere through many challenges including the defeat of a Proposition 2 ½ override which led to a difficult budget process for next year. We also mourned the loss of Birch Meadow Teacher Jolene Tewksbury who had a very positive impact on our lives and the lives of our students. Through all of our challenges, we strengthened as a community and focused on our mission to teach and support our students so that they could continue to learn and grow.

This year, we said goodbye to the Class of 2017, a group of students who began in our school district as kindergarten students in 2004. Thanks to you, each of them have had amazing experiences during their 13 years in the Reading Public Schools that have shaped and molded them into the students that they are today. These students will now move on and most of them will become the college class of 2021. Next year, we welcome kindergarten students who will be part of the class of 2030 and they too will be shaped by their own learning experiences in our school district. Each of these students have the potential to make a positive difference in our world and your guidance will help them reach that potential.

For those of you who has their last child graduating from the Reading Public Schools, we want to thank you for your support over the years and we wish your children good luck in their future endeavors. For those of you who continue to have children attending our schools next year, we hope that you have a healthy, restful, and relaxing summer with your families. See you on August 30th!

Sincerely,
John F. Doherty
Superintendent of Schools

RMHS Holds Underclassman Awards Assembly

Last Monday morning, Reading Memorial High School held its Underclassman Awards Ceremony for the families and students of the classes of 2018, 2019, and 2020 in the Walter Hawkes Field House. The awards assembly included the Century Club recipients, Foreign Language National Exam Medals, Core Values Awards by Department for Perseverance, Scholarship, Respect, and Responsibility, and the College Book Awards. Congratulations to all of the students of the Classes of 2018, 2019, and 2020!



RMHS Freshmen Samantha Gibbs Receives A Core Value Award

Kudos and Accolades

- Thanks to the RMHS Student Leaders, coaches and extra-curricular advisors for supporting a successful Future Freshmen night.
- To RMHS Teacher Heather Connors who will be speaking at the Boston Globe All Sports Scholastic Event held this Sunday.
- To RMHS Teacher Jennifer Baskin for receiving her 10th year milestone pin for the Reading Public Schools. Jennifer was inadvertently omitted from the original list.
- Thank you to the following Reading Public School Teachers who have retired or are retiring at the end of this school year: Denise Carroll, Maureen Thurnauer, Sheila Buttaro, Connie DeBendetto, Deb Kinton, Deb Dellovo, Janet Dee, Paula Graham, Angela Tenedios, Jeanne Thomases, and Barbara Sheehan. We appreciate your years of service to the Reading Public Schools.

Barrows Raises Funds for Sanborn Street Fire Residents

Students raise over \$300 towards the cause

Last Friday, Barrows Elementary School students held a fundraiser for the residents of the Sanborn Street Fire. Due to their hard work and generosity, the school raised \$314 towards the cause. The Barrows Student Council, pictured below coordinated the fundraiser. Fourth grade students, Ava Richardson and Ryla Demers, wrote the letter below to Reading Cooperative Bank, who has set up a fund for the victims. A special thanks goes out to the fourth grade Barrows Team of teachers who worked with the students.

June 16, 2017

Dear Reading Cooperative Bank,

Please accept this donation of \$314 to help the victims of the Schoolhouse Condo Fire in Reading. The students and staff here at Barrows Elementary School have collaborated to raise enough money to donate to the victims, to help them with their needs. The Barrows Student Council has organized a fund raiser by letting kids wear a crazy hat at school, if they bring in a dollar. Some students and staff were extra generous and donated more than one dollar, or donated money even if they didn't wear a hat. We hope that this donation will help the victims of the fire.

Sincerely,
Barrows Elementary School



Barrows Student Council

Superintendent's Office

Hours this Week

All are welcome

6/22 (2:00 – 3:00 p.m.)

RPS Administrative
Offices

6/23 (7:30 – 8:30 a.m.)

RPS Administrative
Offices

RMHS + MTSS = Responsiveness & Supports to All Students



People don't always remember much about kindergarten, elementary or middle school – perhaps a favorite teacher and a couple of BFFs (although not always forever, sometimes just until the next grade).

But everyone remembers high school.

There's the pressure and stress; greater responsibilities; stronger friendships; understanding more about who you are and what you like and yet still being unsure about your future; juggling homework, school activities, hobbies and family responsibilities; balancing the need for independence while still needing help from parents or guardians; and – lest we forget – learning.

All of that adds up to greater intensity.

Behind the scenes, **Reading Memorial High School** uses Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS), a problem-solving framework to help students deal with the intensity, their stresses and keep them on track to graduate.

Under the MTSS framework, RMHS uses data, along with input from teachers and staff, be more responsive to the academic and non-academic needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners, students who are academically advanced as well as students who might otherwise fall through the cracks and be overlooked. RMHS uses MTSS data to identify areas for improvement in order to provide a safe and supportive learning environment through system-level change across the classroom and school to continually enhance support delivered to students.

Each of Reading's nine public schools implements its own version of MTSS that is appropriate for its students. At each grade level, there are different challenges that MTSS addresses. Because of the issues (identified above) unique to high school students, MTSS at RMHS takes a different approach than does RISE Pre-School – even as they share common goals, language and structure. And it takes a different approach from middle school because individual high school teachers don't spend as much time with students because teachers generally see students only for a particular course whereas middle school teachers see students across a number of different classes during the day,

At each school, there's a leadership team that develops and manages MTSS. At RMHS, the leadership team uses the MTSS framework to provide more emphasis and deliver more support for academics than non-academic areas, building on existing cultural norms students were taught at prior schools within the district.

RHMS feels that the academics are important regardless of whether students continue to college (as 89.3% of Reading students do as compared to 76.2% for the rest of the state's high school students).

Now in its third year of MTSS, RMHS teachers have been trained in MTSS structures and practices and have adapted the language to match RMHS' culture, as articulated in the school's mission statement:

"We believe that a good learning community should be one:

- That is safe, caring, consistent, fair, flexible, open and democratic.
- That meets the needs of all students through educational programs that promote individual fulfillment in a variety of ways as well as encompasses the complex interdependency of the world and the community.
- That achieves educational excellence in an environment which promotes the free and open exchange of ideas; encourages mutual respect, creative expression and problem-solving skills; fosters human dignity; and recognizes and respects racial, ethnic, cultural and sexual differences.
- That promotes individuality; nurtures self-esteem, health and well-being; and encourages participation in a democratic society."

As part of its culture, RMHS established core values – Respect, Responsibility, Perseverance and Scholarship – and has found different ways to reinforce those values inside and outside of classrooms. Every month, a student in each grade level is recognized for embodying the core values. And there are end-of-the-year awards that recognize students (in addition to scholastic awards) and allow students to vote for the Core Value Teacher of the Year. The school has also instituted "Thank You Thursdays," which allows students to thank individual classmates and teachers. That has been generating a lot of positive comments.



Because teaching should not take a one-size-fits-all, according to the National Center on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), RMHS teachers get trained on UDL, a neuro-science-based program that seeks to challenge and engage a range of learners. UDL looks at the *whys* of learning, the *what* of learning and the *how* of learning. With UDL, students learn how to learn *better*.

Quote of the Week . . .



How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.

A.A. Milne

To help students manage emotional and behavioral growth, RMHS receives 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.

As RMHS seeks to provide more guidance and support to students, one of the challenges the leadership team encountered was carving time from the daily schedule. To address that, on Tuesdays, RMHS classes have a later start time so that teachers can hold additional office hours to meet with students to provide homework and study skills support. (This is helpful to parents, too, because drop off and pickup times don't change, and students don't necessarily need to meet after school.)

On Thursdays, RMHS's schedule now includes flex blocks to create space for guidance counselors to work with their students. Guidance counselors meet with their students at least five times per year, with a different emphasis for each year. For 9th graders, the school works with them to understand the importance of transcripts. Tenth grade is focused on careers, including what students might be interested in, how to look for a job, information to get a job, and how to keep a job. For junior and senior years, the focus is on post-high school and college choices, to open students' eyes to what they might be able to pursue.

For next year, the MTSS team at RMHS is looking at the data it is collecting since day-to-day interactions can mask trends and real problems. Getting a handle on trends may be more challenging in 2017-18 since some of the facilitator positions, who helped with data collection and evaluation, have been eliminated due to budget cuts.

As an ongoing process, the MTSS framework always looks for ways to improve and be more responsive to students' needs, using student data to inform the leadership team as it makes incremental improvements for next year.

Up next, the MTSS team will evaluate the Student Study Team (SST) process, which focuses on providing support to individual students. The team also will look at scores on how the school did in various areas to determine whether RMHS hit the mark or whether it will need to make adjustments for next year.

Reading: Teen Mindfulness and Psychological First Aid Combats Student Anxiety

Stress, anger, and emotions are all too present in the lives of today's teens and adolescents. That doesn't have to be the case, according to Dr. Chris Willard of Harvard Medical School and author of *Growing Up Mindful*, who spoke to the Reading school community this spring.

Dr. Willard, who focuses on mindfulness and its benefits, said that students can become better learners and able to see the big picture if they can take steps to steer themselves away from the distracting emotions of stress and anger. In making this point, Dr. Willard offered that students can help their friends with the "psychological first aid" of adopting mindfulness – while helping themselves.

Some of Dr. Willard's approaches to mindfulness:

Disney Tweet of the Week



Whatever you do, do it well. Do it well that when people see you do it, they will want to come back and see you do it again.

—Walt Disney

ADAPTING MINDFULNESS

Using the Breath

Engaging the five senses as anchors

Engaging the imagination as an anchor

Utilize natural learning styles in teaching & reflecting

Play, games, music, arts, sports and more!

Bringing mindfulness into everything we do

Eating, walking, working, even chores and more

Dr. Willard's talk was sponsored by the Reading Educational Foundation (REF), the Reading Public Schools' PTOs and by the Joshua Eaton WASH Committee. The emotional and psychological health of Reading students is a key component in the district's MTSS initiative, schools can better education their students and prevent larger issues down the road.

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 Yatsuhashi 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>



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

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/>

Final RMHS High Fives of the School Year

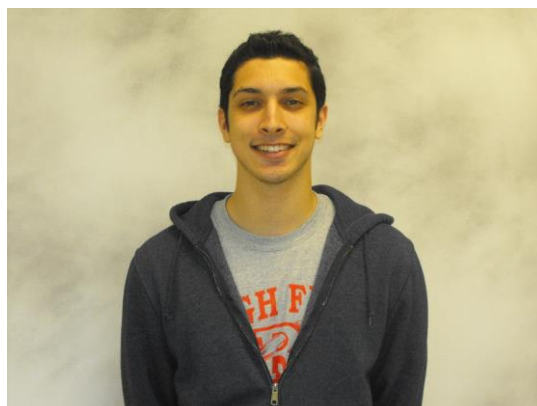
The Final RMHS High Fives were announced for the School Year, including two for our retiring RMHS teachers.

Catherine Grayson, Class of 2017



Catherine is being recognized for her excellence in academics, activities, service, and leadership. Academically, Catherine is a four year Honor Roll student in the top 20% of her class. She is a member of the National Honor Society and the Spanish National Honor Society and last year, won the National Spanish Exam Silver Key, as well as the 11th grade RMHS Responsibility Award. Catherine is an avid writer whose favorite class is AP English Literature & Composition. In terms of activities and service, Catherine is the Regional Ambassador for Girl Rising, a global campaign for girls' education in developing countries. She started a local chapter of Girl Rising here at RMHS in her sophomore year and has hosted two screenings of the Girl Rising film in order to promote awareness. Catherine has helped raise about \$3,000 for the Girl Rising Fund, which distributes money to foundations dedicated to improving education for young women around the globe. She has participated in the *United Relay of America* event, which is the largest coast to coast relay race in history and helps to raise money for seven charitable organizations including Girl Rising. Catherine was a top five fundraiser for the entire relay and then wrote an article about her experience, which was later published in *Women's Running* magazine and then on the Girl Rising blog. Catherine is also the co-president of the Model United Nations and helped organize the first trip to the National High School Model UN Event in New York City. In addition, she is one of the student liaisons to the Human Relations Advisory Committee, which helps to spread the mission of celebrating diversity. Next year, Catherine will be attending Tulane University and will be studying International Development and Economics.

Benjamin Lynch, Class of 2017



Benjamin is being recognized for his outstanding achievement in academics, athletics, leadership, and service. Academically, Ben has been an Honor Roll student for all four years at RMHS. He is in the top 30% of his class and continued to challenge himself this year by taking a rigorous course load, including AP Statistics and AP Physics. Ben has been a member of the Century Club and has won impressive school awards including: the Team MVP Award for Real World Problem Solving and the Scholastic Gold Key Award in Art for painting. Athletically, Ben is a team captain for Varsity Track & Field. Last year, he was the Middlesex League Champion in the high jump event and placed 2nd in the State Finals. Ben was also the Division 2 State Relay High Jump Champion and was named as a Middlesex League All-Star for Track & Field. In terms of activities, Ben is a member of the Leo Club and is an Upper Connector, who helped incoming 9th graders ease the transition of becoming high schoolers. He also served as one of the student speakers at this year's Future Freshman Night for 8th grade parents. Ben also finds time to volunteer as a youth basketball coach for elementary age children at the Reading YMCA, and last summer, helped as an assistant coach at a youth summer track camp. Ben also volunteers for Boston Cares, a community service organization that offers volunteer opportunities throughout Greater Boston. He has even taught himself how to play the guitar and has been entertaining audiences over the past five years. Next fall, Ben will be attending Union College and will be studying mechanical engineering.

Jeanne Thomases



Jeanne Thomases is being recognized for her outstanding contributions and achievements as a teacher in the RMHS Special Education Department. Ms. Thomases started her career in the Reading Public Schools 21 ago, first as a music teacher before becoming a special education teacher at RMHS for the last 17 years. Ms. Thomases comports herself with grace and good spirits, and always has a smile and an encouraging word to offer. She has a distinct ability to make all her students feel welcomed, supported, and accepted in her classroom. She is genuine, kind, and sincere in her relationships with students, faculty, and staff. Over the years, Ms. Thomases has taught students a variety of academic subjects as well as several important life skills. She is always ready to burst into song and to encourage others to

join in. Congratulations on your retirement and best wishes for wonderful adventures ahead! You will be missed!

Paula Graham



Paula Graham is being recognized for effectively teaching a variety of Health and Wellness classes at both Coolidge Middle School and RMHS for 28 years. Mrs. Graham has also served as a RMHS gymnastics coach and as a Department Head. Mrs. Graham first entered the Reading Public Schools after graduating from Northeastern University's Boston-Bouve College of Human Development Professions. Mrs. Graham continued to grow both personally and professionally throughout her career by earning a Master's degree as well as a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in Secondary Education. Over the years, Mrs. Graham has established excellent relationships with students, faculty, and staff based on kindness and respect. Mrs. Graham always greets her classes with a warm smile and a friendly hello. In 2008, Mrs. Graham was recognized as the Massachusetts Physical Education Teacher of the Year. Outside of school, Mrs. Graham is a devoted and loving mother, daughter, wife, and friend to many. She has made a positive difference and has left her mark at RMHS. Congratulations on your retirement, Mrs. Graham!

Parker Holds 8th Grade Music Festival

On Friday, June 2nd, Parker Middle School, under the direction of Parker Music Teachers Jenny DiMuzio and Andrew Norton, held its first 8th grade music festival. As part of this event, the Parker 8th grade band and chorus performed for and were adjudicated by clinicians Dr. David Rox (Gordon College) & Dr. Jonathan Richter (New England Conservatory). Following the adjudication, Dr. Rox worked with the band, & Dr. Richter worked with the chorus. The day was capped off by an after-school trip to Canobie Lake.

Below is a picture of Dr. Richter working with the 8th grade chorus.

Special thanks go to the Parker PTO for sponsoring this event.



RMHS Lacrosse Team Helps Out Fire Victims

Over the last two weekends, members of the RMHS Lacrosse Team have been working with the victims of the Sanborn Street Fire to help move the belongings out of the damaged building. A special thank you goes out to this group and to parent Brian Tobin for coordinating this cause.



Birch Meadow Students Honor Jolene Tewksbury

Jolene Tewksbury's 2015-16 Grade 4 class sit in front of the mural that was recently displayed at Birch Meadow in honor of Jolene Tewksbury, who passed away last year.

Contact Us

The Journey newsletter is published weekly for Reading Public School Staff. 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 Holds Final Assembly

Last Wednesday, Killam held its final assembly where they honored the fifth grade students and two retirees, Secretary Priscilla Osterlind and Grade 2 Teacher Deb Dellovo. Some photos of the event are below.



Killam Principal Sarah Leveque and Former Killam Principals Paul Guerrette and Cathy Giles honor Priscilla Osterlind and Deb Dellovo



Killam Grade 5 Students Leaving the Assembly High Fiving the Rest of the School

Stepping Stones...

- Our thoughts out to Joshua Eaton Food Service staffer **Jennifer Jangro** who lost a close family member recently.
- Congratulations to Coolidge Food Service staffer **Michele McCarthy** on the birth of her grandson Jaiden on June 11th.
- Congratulations to Food Service Driver **Paul Collins** on the birth of his grandson, John Paul, born on June 12 at 7lb 8oz.
- **We have posted** a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

Special Education Program Paraeducator, 50 hours biweekly, Wood End Elementary School

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=284

1.0FTE Spanish Teacher, Reading Memorial High School

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=285

1.0FTE Spanish Teacher, Coolidge Middle School

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=286

1.0FTE Grade 2 Teacher, Barrows Elementary School

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=287

Freshman Softball Coach

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=288

Blazing Trails...

"I Replaced Final Exams with Passion." Massachusetts High School Principal Brian McCann reflects on what is important for his students. "When I finished my 12th year as principal of my high school, I was again fed up with final exams. High stress with little academic bang - except the high ticket value - meager follow-up discussion, no chance for improvement, Scantron-a-palooza, scaled essays. Finals were more a test of futility than academics. Why? Except that's the way high school's have always done it. Some claim they teach responsibility and accountability. They won't be prepared for college. ... So I cancelled final exams this year." [Read More](#)

"Massachusetts Middle School Launches Water Rockets Through Career Program." The Norwood Transcript and Bulletin reports "School to Careers initiated, planned and secured funding for" a two-year program at Massachusetts' Coakley Middle School and six other middle schools to introduce students "to career professionals, projects and ideas that help them identify their interests and plan for their futures." Coakley seventh-grade science teacher April Collins said this year, the program included a six-week lesson on how to make water rockets. The 20 participating students studied "after school the theories of propulsion, thrust, and Newton's law of gravity," and then built and launched rockets. Collins and another teacher, Stacey Bernritter, sought to pique students' interest in science, technology, engineering, and math, or STEM, careers. They incorporated "the NASA educational curriculum and conducted in partnership with the Society of American Military Engineers." [Read More](#)

"Google Launches "Be Internet Awesome" Campaign." The AP reports that on June 6, Google launched its nationwide educational campaign, called "Be Internet Awesome," aimed at teaching children between the ages of eight and 12 "how to protect themselves from scams, predators and other trouble." Google partnered with the Family Online Safety Institute, the Internet Keep Safe Coalition, Connect Safely, and other organizations to design the curriculum. Google has encouraged teachers to implement the program in their classrooms. [Read More](#)

"Year-End Roundup, 2016-17 -- All Our Lesson Plans, All in One Place." At the end of every academic year, the New York Times Learning Network collects all the lesson plans they've published and lists them in a directory of sorts for teachers. On this site, one will find their 2016-17 offerings, categorized by subject area, but you can find similar posts going all the way back to 2010 and visiting their old site. [Read More](#)

Have a Restful and Relaxing Summer!