



# Pathways

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

October 22, 2017

Volume 9, Number 8

## Upcoming Dates

- October 25 – 27 – Parker Grade 7 Nature's Classroom Trip; (2:45 p.m.) Middle School District/School Goal Meetings
- October 26 – (3:10 p.m.) RISE/Elementary Grade Level Common Time Meetings; (7:00 p.m.) – SEPAC Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room;
- October 27 – (5:30 p.m.) Joshua Eaton Howl
- October 28 – (TBD) RMHS Band Event @ RMHS; (5:00 p.m.) Killam Halloween Bash
- October 30 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- November 1 – Grade 6 – 12 Early Release; (after school) District PLC Meetings; (5:00 p.m.) Parker School Council Meeting; (7:00 p.m.) Parker PTO Meeting
- November 2 – (7:00 p.m.) Killam PTO Meeting
- November 3 – (9:00 a.m.) Joshua Eaton Veterans Day Assembly
- November 4 – (8:00 p.m.) SAT Testing – RMHS is a Test Center
- November 6 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- November 7 – Election Day – No School for

## State Release of Spring 2017 MCAS Data

*An Update from the Assistant Superintendent for Learning & Teaching  
October 2017*

**For the Full PDF with the Reading scores, go the following [link](#).**

### MCAS Results Released by DESE

As you may know, the Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE) released results last week for last spring's state assessments. This includes Grades 3-8 "Next-Generation" MCAS results for both English Language Arts and Mathematics, the Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS results for Grades 5/8/10, as well as the high school MCAS results for English Language Arts and Mathematics.

The MCAS assessment data are assembled in several different tables at the following [link](#). In addition to the achievement levels in each content area, we have also created tables to review the median Student Growth Percentiles, as that data also provide us important information. The Student Growth Percentile (SGP) measures how much a student's performance has improved from one year to the next relative to his or her academic peers (other students statewide with similar achievement results in prior years).

**Below are some important points from the DESE regarding the results for the "next-generation" MCAS . . .**

- The results released this week include scores from the next-generation MCAS, an updated version of the test that was given for the first time in spring 2017 to students in grades 3-8 in English language arts and mathematics. Eventually, all MCAS tests will be next-generation MCAS.
- The next-generation MCAS was developed after the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted in November 2015 to create a next-generation, computer-based, and Massachusetts-specific test. It is an updated version of the nearly 20-year-old MCAS assessment and focuses on students' critical thinking abilities, ability to apply their knowledge and ability to make connections between reading and writing. It gives a clearer signal of readiness for the next grade level, and the majority of students in grades 3-8 took the next-generation MCAS on a computer. The DESE expects that the move to computer-based testing should be complete by spring 2019.

Students; Teacher In-Service Day

- November 8 – (after school) Middle & High school Collaborative Planning Time Meetings
  - November 9 – (3:10 p.m.) RISE/Elementary Collaborative Planning Time Meetings
- The achievement score levels for the next-generation MCAS are different from those of the legacy MCAS. Next-generation MCAS scores fall into these four categories: ***Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations, and Not Meeting Expectations.***
  - Approximately fifty percent of grades 3-8 students in the state are already scoring in the *Meeting* or *Exceeding Expectations* categories on the new test. Some students will find, however, that they scored *Proficient* on the legacy MCAS in 2016 but only *Partially Meeting Expectations* on the next-generation MCAS in 2017. Students, parents and educators should keep in mind that:
    - In general, the new standards for Meeting Expectations are **more rigorous** than the standards for reaching the Proficient level on the legacy MCAS.
    - **Massachusetts educators** set the new standards to help signal students' readiness for the next grade level and indicate when students might need additional help to succeed. Ultimately, this will give students a better sense of what they need to do to be prepared for college or other post-secondary training.
    - Spring 2017 is a **baseline year** for a new test in grades 3-8, and spring 2017 scores *should not be compared* to previous years' scores.
  - The fact that approximately 50 percent of students were *Meeting Expectations* or above in each of the next-generation MCAS grades and subjects reflects the scoring standards that 125 Massachusetts educators set this summer when they reviewed test questions and student responses and compared them to what students need to know to be successful in the next grade.
    - The 50 percent is not a grading curve; it is where the scores fell after educators set the standards. The educators valued both readiness for the next grade level and consistent expectations across grades.
    - A higher percentage of students are likely to score *Meeting Expectations* or above in future years as students and schools become more familiar with the tests' expectations.
    - The consistency of the scoring standards is one benefit of creating the entire grades 3-8 next-generation MCAS at once. The legacy MCAS began in isolated grades and was introduced in other grades in subsequent years, each time requiring a separate standard setting process for that specific test. That meant that while, for instance, the fourth-grade scoring standards were the same every year, they did not necessarily reflect the same level of expectations as the third- or fifth-grade scoring standards.
  - High school students are still taking the legacy MCAS tests. The next-generation tests will be introduced at the high school level in spring 2019.
  - All "Next-Generation" MCAS schools (Grade 3-8 schools) who meet participation and graduation rate requirements will not receive an accountability level.
  - 2017 Assessment results will serve as the new baseline for target-setting in 2018 and beyond.
  - Parents should receive their child's scores from their school district in late October or early November.

## Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulation to the boys & girls soccer, girls cross country and field hockey teams on their wins this week.
- Kudos to Guidance Director Lynna Williams and the RMHS Guidance staff for an outstanding job hosting the annual college fair.
- To Heidi Murray, Tara Herlihy, and Lynna Williams for speaking at the YES for Reading Kickoff event on Wednesday night.
- To all of the elementary teachers, administrators, and parents who recently chaperoned the overnight Nature's Classroom Grade 5 Trip. Thank you for taking time out of your schedules to provide this experience for our students.
- To Sandy Calandrella, Annmarie Johnson, Rich Belmonte, and Vivian Tringale for all of their help in making Parent University a complete success.
- To Gail Dowd, Ricki Shankland, Sarah Marchant, Brienne Karow, Brendan Norton, and Lynna Williams for presenting at Parent University on Saturday.

As all the data has just been made released, staff are continuing to review all the information that is now available for each school, grade level, and content area. We are also, of course, continuing to improve the curriculum, instruction, and assessment in *all* content areas and grade levels in order to better align with the “next-generation” state assessments. In upcoming weeks, the district, school, and student results will be used to identify our current strengths and weaknesses, review curriculum and instructional alignment, and identify appropriate interventions for students where applicable. We will also utilize released assessment items—including test questions, scoring rubrics, and examples of scored student responses—to inform our practice.

An overview presentation of the district assessment data will be given for the School Committee later this fall, and each school will also be doing its own school-level presentation in order to more fully discuss and identify each school’s individual progress.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact your school Principal or the district administration offices. Below also are several links to the DESE website for further information about Reading’s results and the next-generation MCAS.

### **Reading Public Schools / DESE Assessment Profile**

[http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement\\_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=02460000&orgtypecode=5&](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=02460000&orgtypecode=5&)

### **Parents’ Guide to the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)**

[http://www.doe.mass.edu/odl/e-learning/mcas-parentguide/content/index.html#/?\\_k=e82zj7](http://www.doe.mass.edu/odl/e-learning/mcas-parentguide/content/index.html#/?_k=e82zj7)

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about next-generation MCAS Results**

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents/results-faq.html>

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## **Budget Liaisons Needed for FY19 Budget Process**

As part of the FY19 budget process, the Reading Public Schools will be seeking parent and community volunteers to become a budget liaison. Budget liaisons play a key role in the budget process as they develop an understanding of the FY19 budget process and then give timely communication to their school communities and peers.

The specific information regarding budget liaisons is listed below. We are looking for two parents per school (one preferably from each PTO or School Council), up to four members of the community, and two parents from the Special Education Advisory Council (SEPAC). If you are interested in becoming a budget liaison, please contact Linda Engelson, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent at [linda.engelson@reading.k12.ma.us](mailto:linda.engelson@reading.k12.ma.us) or 781-944-5800. The deadline to submit is **November 1st**.

### **Reading Public Schools Budget Liaison Information**

#### **WHO**

Community members who do not have children in the Reading Public Schools or parents who have children

## Superintendent's Office

### Hours this Week

*All are welcome*

10/25 Parker  
(7:30 – 8:30 a.m.)

10/27 Wood End  
(2:30 – 3:30 p.m.)

in the Reading Public Schools may become a budget liaison. We need two parents per school (one preferably from the PTO or School Council), up to four from the community at large and two parents to represent the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC).

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** The budget liaison responsibilities are as follows:

- Participate in meetings with the Superintendent of Schools and Director of Finance from November-February to learn about the school department budget and the budget process.
- Work with the Superintendent and the Director of Finance to review, critique and give input on the budget and the budget process.
- Understand how the budget process works and be able to explain the budget and the process to other members of the community.
- Act as a liaison between the school department and their child's school or community by reporting back to other parents and community members both formally (PTO, School Council and SEPAC meetings) and informally.
- Attend School Committee meetings and other relevant meetings during the budget deliberations in January and February.

#### **WHEN**

Meetings will begin in mid-November. The month of January is a busy month with six meetings in ten days. February will have one meeting.

The following School Committee meetings in January and February are dedicated to the FY19 budget. The Budget parents will meet prior to these meetings.

January 8, 11, 13, 16, 18, 24 (Financial Forum)

February 7 (School Committee FY19 Budget Presentation to Finance Committee Meeting)

*Please note that each budget liaison does not have to attend every meeting. We would always like at least one representative from each school and community at each meeting.*

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## When Students Are Traumatized, Teachers Are Too

*Trauma in students' lives takes an emotional and physical toll on teachers as well.*

*Experts weigh in on the best ways to cope.*

By: **Emelina Minero** for **Edutopia Blog**

Alysia Ferguson Garcia remembers the day two years ago that ended in her making a call to Child Protective Services. One of her students walked into drama class with what Garcia thought of as a "bad attitude" and refused to participate in a script reading.

### Quote of the Week . . .



Life is too precious to stress yourself out by worrying about everything. Relax, have fun, and enjoy the learning process.

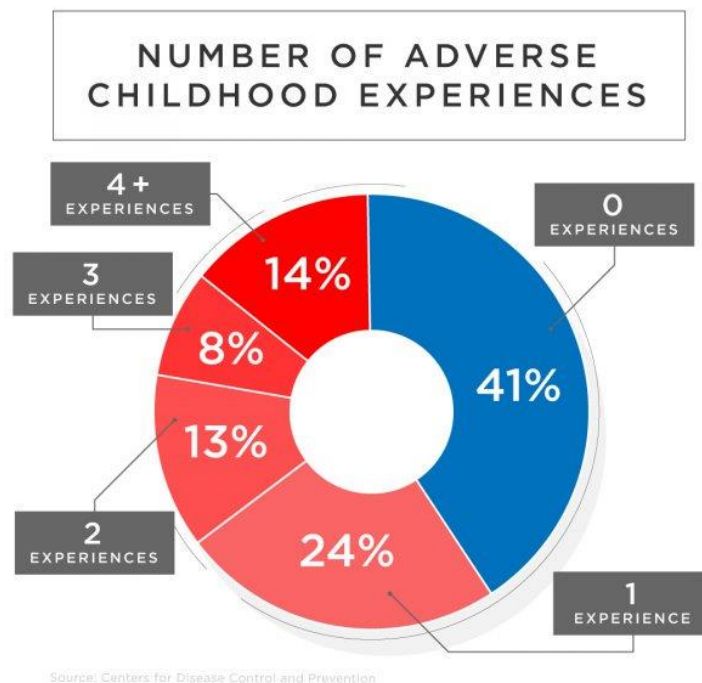
"I don't care if you've had a bad day," Garcia remembers saying in frustration. "You still have to do some work."

In the middle of class, the student offered an explanation for her behavior: Her mom's boyfriend had been sexually abusing her. After the shock passed, the incident provided an opportunity for the class—and Garcia—to provide the student with comfort, and to cry.

When Garcia first started teaching, she wasn't expecting the stories her students would share of physical and sexual abuse, hunger, violence, and suicide. The stories seemed to haunt her all the way home, she says, recalling nightmares and sleepless nights spent worrying about her students. They also dredged up deep-seated memories of her own experiences with abuse.

"When you're learning to be a teacher, you think it's just about lesson plans, curriculum, and seating charts," said Garcia. "I was blindsided by the emotional aspect of teaching—I didn't know how to handle it. I was hurt by my students' pain, and it was hard for me to leave that behind when I went home."

## The Real Costs of Trauma



*35% of children have experienced more than one adverse childhood experience.*

Data shows that more than half of all U.S. children have experienced some kind of trauma in the form of abuse, neglect, violence, or challenging household circumstances—and 35 percent of children have experienced more than one type of traumatic event, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These **adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)** can have impacts that extend far beyond childhood, including higher risks for alcoholism, liver disease, suicide, and other health problems later in life.

Trauma in children often manifests outwardly, affecting kids' relationships and interactions. In schools, the signs of trauma may be seen in a student acting out in class, or they could be



## Disney Tweet of the Week



"You control your destiny -- you don't need magic to do it. And there are no magical shortcuts to solving your problems."

-- Merida (Brave)

more subtle—like failure to make eye contact or repeatedly tapping a foot. (To learn more about how trauma impacts students, read “[Brains in Pain Cannot Learn!](#)”)

For teachers, who are directly exposed to a large number of young people with trauma in their work, a secondary type of trauma, known as [vicarious trauma](#), is a big risk. Sometimes called the “cost of caring,” vicarious trauma can result from “hearing [people’s] trauma stories and becom[ing] witnesses to the pain, fear, and terror that trauma survivors have endured,” according to the American Counseling Association.

“Being a teacher is a stressful enough job, but teachers are now responsible for a lot more things than just providing education,” says LeAnn Keck, a manager at [Trauma Smart](#), an organization that partners with schools and early childhood programs to help children and the adults in their lives navigate trauma. “It seems like teachers have in some ways become case workers. They get to know about their students’ lives and the needs of their families, and with that can come secondary trauma.”

*When you’re learning to be a teacher, you think it’s just about lesson plans, curriculum, and seating charts. I was blindsided by the emotional aspect of teaching—I didn’t know how to handle it.*

Vicarious trauma affects teachers’ brains in much the same way that it affects their students’: The brain emits a fear response, releasing excessive cortisol and adrenaline that can increase heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration, and release a flood of emotions. This biological response can manifest in mental and physical symptoms such as anger and headaches, or workplace behaviors like missing meetings, lateness, or avoiding certain students, say experts.

Yet many teachers are never explicitly taught how to help students who have experienced trauma, let alone address the toll it takes on their own health and personal lives. We reached out to trauma-informed experts and educators around the country to get their recommendations for in-the-moment coping strategies and preventative measures to help teachers process vicarious trauma. We share their tips below.

## Talking it Out

Garcia, now a teacher of eight years, says she’s found that confiding in others—either a therapist, her boyfriend, or colleagues—helps her process students’ trauma and her own emotions.

Connecting with colleagues to talk through and process experiences can be invaluable for teachers coping with secondary trauma, according to Micere Keels, an associate professor at the University of Chicago and founder of the TREP Project, a trauma-informed curriculum for urban teachers.

“Reducing professional isolation is critical,” said Keels. “It allows educators to see that others are struggling with the same issues, prevents the feeling that one’s struggles are due to incompetence, and makes one aware of alternative strategies for working with students exhibiting challenging behavior.”

## Important Websites

### RPS District Website

[www.reading.k12.ma.us](http://www.reading.k12.ma.us)

### Interface Health Services

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

#### Need help finding mental health care?



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/>

*It doesn't serve anybody to pretend that we're teacher-bots with no emotions, which I think sometimes teachers feel like they have to be.*

Finding a wellness-accountability buddy—a peer who agrees to support and keep you accountable to your wellness goals—or using a professional learning community as a space to check in with other teachers are also ways to get that support, offers Alex Shevrin, a former school leader and teacher at **Centerpoint School**, a trauma-informed high school in Vermont that institutes school-wide practices aimed at addressing students' underlying emotional needs.

At Centerpoint, time for a monthly wellness group—where teachers, administrators, and social workers support each other on their personal wellness goals like exercising and creating work-life balance—is built into the professional development schedule. Staff also use in-service time to focus on taking care of their health together, by hiking, biking, going to the gym, or even learning to knit.

“If I had one wish for every school in the country, it would be that they made time for teachers to really sit down and talk about how they're feeling in the work,” said Shevrin. “It doesn't serve anybody to pretend that we're teacher-bots with no emotions, which I think sometimes teachers feel like they have to be.”

### Building Coping Strategies

Students affected by trauma can have combative personalities and learn which buttons to press to upset you in class, says Garcia. When a student acts out in class, Garcia takes a few deep breaths, drinks coffee, or goes to a different part of the classroom to help another student.

“If I get upset, it never goes anywhere,” Garcia said. “When you try to have a battle in class, you automatically lose as the teacher.”

That's a good approach, says Keck, who suggests developing proactive coping strategies to address stressful situations in advance. A strategy may be counting to five, visualizing a calming place, or responding with an opposite action—like talking to a student quietly when you want to yell. Waiting until you're actually in a stressful situation means you're likely to overreact or to say or do something unhelpful.

Keck also recommends mapping out your school day and taking note of the times of day you feel most stressed, and then integrating scheduled coping strategies into your daily routine. If you feel stressed when students start to lose focus midday, for example, guide your students in a quick group stretch and some deep breathing to shift energy before getting back to work.

“Look at your schedule. If you see a stressful pattern, don't wait for it to happen. Don't wait to feel overwhelmed and stressed,” urges Keck.

The important part is customizing the strategy to meet your needs.

Garcia applies this strategy when she's at home. She knows that after she puts her daughter to sleep, the worry for her students creeps in—so she makes sure to take time for things she enjoys, like watching movies and playing video games.

While many teachers say they don't have time for self-care, experts insist that it's necessary to develop long-term self-care practices—and stick to them—to build up your overall well-being and resilience. These self-care activities could be going for a walk, reading, watching a movie, practicing mindfulness, or talking with a friend—whatever invigorates you.

### **Establishing Coming Home Rituals**

It can be hard to leave work at work, but to address vicarious trauma, teachers need to create clear boundaries between work and home life. Part of that can be developing a ritual or routine that signifies the end of a work day, either before you head home, on the way home, or at home.

"For me, sometimes it's just as simple as turning off my work phone before I go into my house," Shevrin says. "I hear the sound of my phone turning off and then I know that I'm home."

After an emotionally difficult day, many teachers will write about their experiences before they leave, or sit down with a colleague to help process it, Keck told us.

Others organize their desk or create a to-do list for the next workday so they can let go of worry before heading home. While driving home, teachers listen to audiobooks, call a friend, or sit in silence to decompress. A ritual could even be as simple as changing clothes or taking a bath once you get home.

For Garcia, it's about putting her daughter's needs first and making the most of the time she has with her.

"It's very easy to get overwhelmed and let the job consume you. But teaching is about balance," she said. "When I come home, I try to just focus on my kid so she gets as much of me as she can. It's not always easy, but I've learned to put my life and my daughter's life first."

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## **WE'RE HIRING!**

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Exciting daily substitute opportunities available each day with the Reading Public Schools.

As a daily substitute you will enjoy:

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ongoing support to develop your skills as an educator

**APPLY NOW**





## - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

Jams for Jake is a full-day, music, art, and community festival focusing on raising awareness and providing resources for those affected by the ongoing opioid crisis. The event is planned in remembrance of recent RMHS graduate, Jake Czuczwa. The event will feature music from local bands; guest speakers focusing on addiction and recovery stories; silent auctions featuring work from local artists; booths and tables providing information on addiction awareness, recovery, and associated resources; and much more!

When: Sunday, October 29, 2017 from 11am – 7pm

Where: Symonds Field (behind Burbank Ice Arena)

Volunteers are needed to help with setup, breakdown, and everything in-between. You are welcome to sign up for as many shifts as you would like.

Shift 1: 10am – 2pm

Shift 2: 2pm – 5pm

Shift 3: 5pm – 8pm

Jobs include helping with greeting and parking, trash collection, managing the entrance/exit, collecting donations, stage management, and more.

Volunteers will all receive a free Jams for Jake lanyard! We will sign off on any necessary paperwork to confirm completion of community service hours.

To register, email Kelsey at [jamsforjake@gmail.com](mailto:jamsforjake@gmail.com). Please include the following information:

- Name
- Phone number
- Shift(s) you would like to work
- To help with volunteer placement, mention if you do have experience with the following: operating cash register, ServSafe certification, customer service, sound/production for concerts/drama/etc.

Thanks for your interest and hope to see you there!  
Friends of Jake

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## REF Grant Cycle Now Open

Dear Teachers and Administrators,

Reading Education Foundation 2018 Grant Cycle is now open! The application is available on our website from this day forward. The deadline for the Superintendent's submission to REF is January 12, 2017. Please check with your school principal for their internal schedule, as they have to approve the application before submitting it to the Superintendent's office for final approval. All applications must be submitted through the superintendent's office.

We encourage you to visit our website at [readingef.org](http://readingef.org) for more information. Feel free to contact us with any questions.

## 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](mailto:john.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us)

We look forward to reading your creative and innovative proposals to enhance our children's educational experience.

Regards,

Nancy Dieselman  
REF Grant Committee Chair

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## When The Focus Is On The Student, Not The Class

BY: RACHEL GOTBAUM FOR **NPR ED**  
**FROM THE HECHINGER REPORT**

Not that long ago, the high school in Pittsfield, N.H., had some of the lowest standardized tests scores in the state and was known as a dropout factory.

But over the past six years, the school district has overhauled its approach to education. Now in most classes, grades aren't used to measure progress.

And that is a relief to Jenny Wellington, an English teacher at Pittsfield High School, who says grades never really told her whether her students were actually learning.

"The old grading system allowed students to pass with a 65," says Wellington. "What does that 65 mean? You did the bare minimum? You showed up? You did some tests right and you failed some?"

Now she says she can tailor her lessons to each individual student: "I can say, 'You're doing really well in the writing, but your grammar is a little weak. We need work on that.' "

It's all part of an approach that Pittsfield, and a growing number of schools across the country, have adopted called student-centered learning. The idea is to ditch traditional classes (think: teacher lecturing from a rigid lesson plan at the front of a class to students in neat rows of desks) for a more personalized approach, where students have a much greater say in what they learn and how they learn it.

At Pittsfield High School, students make their own progress and won't get a grade until the very end of the school year after having multiple chances to demonstrate mastery. Wellington says that once her students realize they can make mistakes in class, they take more risks and further engage in learning.

In her classroom, the students come up with their own questions for the reading and even decide the format of the class. There is one student whose job it is to make sure that everyone participates in the discussion. Wellington sometimes sits in the circle with the students and other times observes from the floor, asking an occasional question.

"Part of student-centered learning is asking the class, 'What do you need to make this class work?' " she says. "The students are the ones telling me what works, and it's going to be different for every class."

Outside of class, [students lead parent-teacher conferences](#) and develop [campaigns](#) to improve school climate and the student government council presents directly to the school board.

"I love it," says Elisa Sullivan, who graduated last year. Before coming to Pittsfield, she went to a high school in Manchester, the state's largest city. "I didn't get much one-on-one time and here I just feel more included."

But do numbers show that personalized learning works? It's hard to say. In Pittsfield, test scores and graduation rates have greatly improved. One major study found **big improvements in math and reading** among kids who participated in personalized learning. But there are few comprehensive studies. That is because there is no standard, yet. Each school, or district, will adopt its own version of the method, making it hard to measure.

Still, public and private funders across the country have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in student-centered learning.

This small district received more than \$4 million in government and foundation grants to train teachers and add staff for the effort. And although the district is running out of the money that helped fund its conversion, administrators have been so happy with the results that the district has expanded personalized learning to its elementary school.

Tessie Simpson's son is 8 and at the Pittsfield grade school. She says he was "so frustrated that he was melting down" in his classes, but once he started personalized learning, "his confidence has changed. His confidence is different. He's really trying and maintaining focus, and last year, it wasn't that way."

As for Jenny Wellington, the high school English teacher, she says there's no other way she could teach but has seen that other teachers can find it hard to adapt to. "It has to be about you going into the classroom and letting go of your ego. It has to be about you seeing it as a collaborative effort." Along with low pay, that may help explain the high teacher turnover rate in the district.

"Teachers are not comfortable giving up power," she says. "But I don't see it as giving up power, I see it has shared power and that makes the job a lot easier."

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*This story was produced by [The Hechinger Report](#), a nonprofit, independent news organization focused on inequality and innovation in education. Sign up [here](#) for our higher education newsletter.*

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## Reading Public Schools Happenings

### RMHS High Fives For This Week

Below are this week's RMHS High Fives for the Class of 2018.

### Meghan Flynn, Class of 2018

Meghan is being recognized for her outstanding achievements in academics, athletics, and service. Meghan is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> decile of the Class of 2018 and is a member of the National Honor Society. She has been an Honor Roll student throughout her time here at RMHS and was nominated by her teachers and then recognized as a "Student of the Month" for the core value of Perseverance. This year, Meghan continues to challenge herself by taking rigorous courses highlighted by Advanced Placement Biology. Athletically, Meghan has been a member of the Girls Varsity Volleyball Team for the past 3 years and helped the Lady Rockets earn Middlesex League Champ honors in 2015. Playing as the "Libero" or the defensive specialist, she competes year-round in volleyball, playing North Shore Club Volleyball for the AA Power Team in the offseason.



One of her proudest accomplishments in volleyball, however, has been participating in the annual “Volley for a Cure” game. This event helps to raise money for the ESSCO Breast Cancer Research Fund and has raised over \$13,000 to date. Meghan hopes to see everyone at this year’s “Volley for a Cure” event against Winchester High School this Tuesday, October 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 in the RMHS field house. Meghan also finds time to coach volleyball and mentor elementary and middle school aged children in the spring and the fall and participate as a coach at the annual summer Rocket Volleyball Camp, working with kids in grades 2 to 8. This past summer, Meghan was also an Upper Connector and helped at our Freshman Orientation. In addition, she participates in the EMARCC annual road race, where proceeds go to promote awareness and to fund programming for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Next year, Meghan will be attending college and will be pursuing a career in nursing. Congratulations, Meghan!

#### **Jack Geiger, Class of 2018**

Jack is being recognized for his outstanding accomplishments in scholarship, athletics, leadership, and service. Academically, Jack has challenged himself throughout his time at RMHS, taking Honors classes and this year, taking AP Calculus. He has been recognized as a “Student of the Month” on two separate occasions—once for Scholarship and once for Respect. Jack is especially proud of his ongoing academic improvement over the past 4 years—as his GPA has consistently increased in every semester during all of his four years. Athletically, Jack is a 3-year member of the Varsity Football Team and one of this year’s co-captains. He earned a starting role as a receiver and a running back in his junior and senior years and participated in the Rockets back to back pursuit of the Massachusetts Division 2 Super Bowl Title in 2016 and 2015. Jack is also a captain and a 4-year member of the Boys Indoor Track Team, competing in the 55-meter, the 300-meter, the 4 x 200 and the 4 x 400 relay events. He was recognized as a Middlesex League All-Star in both his sophomore and junior years and placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the entire state in the 300-meter track event. In lacrosse, Jack has been a 4-year member of the Boys Lacrosse Team and has been a co-captain for two years. He has been recognized as a Middlesex League All-Star for the past 3 years and earned First Team All-American honors last season. He has also been a member of the highly competitive East Coast Rocket Lacrosse Program for the past 8 years. In terms of service, Jack volunteers his time with the annual Samantha’s Harvest 5k Run to help raise money and awareness for children with intellectual disabilities. He also assists at the Reading Mission of Deeds, helping underprivileged families in Reading and coaches elementary and middle school aged children in Pop Warner Football. Next year, Jack will be attending UMass Amherst, where he has been admitted to the Eisenberg School



of Management. He will continue to play lacrosse at the collegiate level with the Minutemen, where he has earned a scholarship for his outstanding accomplishments and will pursue a major in finance.



### **Parker Grade 8 Students Engage in Community Service**

Coordinated by 8th grade teacher, Mrs. Carven, 8th grade Parker students organized a community outreach effort with the Pine Street Inn. For several weeks, all grades donated personal hygiene items which were then sorted and organized by 8th grade students on the day of their class trip to Boston. Scottie, an employee of the Pine Street Inn, visited Parker Middle School to speak with the 8th graders about homelessness, the Pine Street facility and how they support people who need help getting back on their feet. They rely on donations in order to provide people with basic personal care items. The 8th grade students assembled and donated over 200 kindness kits with the help of the Parker community! Thank you to everyone who contributed to this amazing service project!





#### **RISE Performance**

Students in Traci Glynn's RISE Preschool Class recently did a performance of "Caps for Sale". Great job!



*RISE Students*

#### **Barrows Food Service Manager Wins State Award**

Last Tuesday, Barrows Food Service Manager Dianne Ferguson was awarded the Massachusetts Food Service Manager of the Year at the Massachusetts School Nutrition Fall Conference held in Worcester. Below are pictures of the event. Congratulations to Dianne!



*Dianne Ferguson Receiving Manager of the Year Award*





*School Nutrition Director Kristin Morello (Left) Making Remarks About Award Recipient Dianne Ferguson (Right)*

## Stepping Stones...

- Our thoughts go out to Barrows Paraeducator **Jackie Fox** who lost a close family member recently.
- Congratulations to RMHS Science Teacher **Tim McIntire** on the birth of his son Jay Edward on October 14<sup>th</sup> weighing 5 lbs. 14 oz.
- Congratulations to Joshua Eaton teacher **Cathy Carmody** on the birth of her 2<sup>nd</sup> grandchild Charles Timothy on October 3<sup>rd</sup> weighing 8 lbs., 5 oz.
- Congratulations to Joshua Eaton paraeducator **Cre Zervas** on the birth of her 12<sup>th</sup> grandchild Dominic Robert on October 18<sup>th</sup> weighing 7 lbs., 11 oz.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
  - Victoria Lorden, Daily Substitute, District
  - Makenzie Calef, Daily Substitute, District
  - Colleen Hansen, Daily Substitute, District
  - Ursula Abad, Spanish Teacher, Coolidge
  - Emma Farley, Special Education Life Skills Teacher, RMHS
  - Michelle Hines, Daily Substitute, District
  - Mariola Jenkins, Daily 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 Bridge Program Special Education Teacher, Parker Middle School <a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=394">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=394</a>
Long-Term Substitute Grade 7 Science Teacher, Parker Middle School <a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=395">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=395</a>
0.5 FTE Board Certified Behavioral Analyst, Reading Public Schools (repost) <a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=396">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=396</a>
Per Diem – Substitute Teacher and Substitute Paraeducator, Reading Public Schools <a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=397">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=397</a>

- **New Resource: Special Education Professional Development Series-**The Department's Office of Special Education Planning and Policy Professional Development Series (formerly known as Special Education Summer Institutes) offers free training opportunities for Massachusetts educators, paraeducators, related service providers, and administrators throughout the year. The 17 courses have varying start dates and focus on topics ranging from educational equity to integrating social and emotional learning. More information, including [course descriptions, dates, and enrollment information](#), is available online.

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## Blazing Trails...

**"What Independent Readers Do."** In *Great Readers, Great Habits*, Doug Lemov writes, "If guided reading is about coaching and practicing with young readers ... independent reading is the scrimmage that prepares students for the 'big game' of reading. That big game happens later-when no one is keeping score." Use the strategies and advice in this ASCD Express issue to support students as they head into that crucial scrimmage. [Read More](#)

**"N.H. District Shifts to Competency-Based Report Cards."** Some students in a New Hampshire school district this year will receive report cards that replace letter grades with information about student progress on specific skills. School officials say they are introducing the change slowly to help everyone adjust to the competency-based model. [Read More](#)

**"Helping Parents Ask Good Questions."** Sometimes, parents know what they want for their child but need help knowing how to ask for it in school settings. Using the Question Formulation Technique, as described in this ASCD Express post, parents can produce a list of questions, refine that list, and set priorities for taking action. This strategy shifts parent engagement from teacher-driven conversations to a process where parents help set the agenda and identify information they need to be full partners in their child's education. [Read More](#)

**"Filmmakers Defend Pro-Public School Documentary 'Backpack Full Of Cash.'"** In its "Education and the Media" blog, Education Week reports that the documentary "Backpack Full of Cash" "defends the public school system and is critical of market-based reforms," and its producers are defending the film against recent attacks by Center for Education Reform CEO Jeanne Allen, who "publicly criticized the filmmakers, saying they misled her about their purposes for interviewing her." Mondale called the film a rebuttal to "Waiting for Superman," the popular 2010 documentary by Davis Guggenheim that reportedly promoted school choice. [Read More](#)

**"Survey Highlights Global Educational Trends."** More than 130 million girls worldwide are not attending school, according to a survey of 122 countries by the ONE Campaign. Data show girls living in the South Sudan may be the least likely to receive an education. [Read More](#)

**Have a Great Week Ahead!**