



# Pathways

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

January 29, 2017

Volume 4, Number 21

## Upcoming Dates

- February 2 – (7:30 p.m.) RMHS Drama Presents “The Workshop” in the Endslo PAC
- February 3 – (7:30 p.m.) RMHS Drama Presents “The Workshop” in the Endslo PAC
- February 5 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent’s Conference Room
- February 7 – (7:30 p.m.) School Committee FY2019 Budget Presentation to the Finance Committee
- February 8 – (6:30 p.m.) RMHS Guidance – Junior Parent Night in the Endslo PAC
- February 13 – (6:30 p.m.) RMHS Guidance Junior Parents Night (snow date)
- February 14 – Grade 6 – 12 Early Release
- February 19 – President’s Day – Schools and Offices Closed
- February 20 – 23 – February Vacation

## Kudos and Accolades

- Kudos to boys & girls basketball, boys & girls hockey, gymnastics, RMHS Mock Trial team and swimming on wins this week.

## Reading Public Schools Budget Bulletin 8

*School Committee Approves Balanced Budget and Reconstruction/Override Budget*

On Monday evening, the Reading School Committee approved a balanced budget of \$42,723,025, which is an increase of 3.2%. As was discussed during the different School Committee budget meetings, a level service budget of \$43,507,576 or 5.1% increase was needed to maintain all the same services and programs as the current school year. Therefore, to reach this balanced budget, \$784,551 had to have been reduced. The reductions that were made are listed in the chart below.

### FY19 Balanced Budget Reductions

Cost Center	FTE	Reduction	Amount
Regular Day	7.0	Middle School Teachers	\$485,880
Regular Day	3.0	Elementary Classroom Teachers	\$197,251
Regular Day	2.0	Regular Education Tutor	\$40,105
District Wide	N/A	Reduce Athletics/Extracurricular/Club Stipends	\$24,953
Regular Day	N/A	Virtual High School	\$18,362
Facilities	N/A	Cleaning Services-RMHS	\$18,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.0</b>		<b>\$784,551</b>

The reduction of 3.0 FTE Elementary teachers will result in some class sizes in grades 3-5 to reach up to 27 students per classroom and may result in some half day kindergarten classrooms being combined with other elementary schools. The reduction of 7.0 FTE Middle School teachers will result in the elimination of one of the double periods of English Language Arts in Grade 6, the elimination of foreign language in Grades 7 and 8, and the restructuring of the middle school schedule to a 6 period day. This restructuring will make it more difficult to support students who may be academically or behaviorally struggling, and provide less time for teachers to meet to address student needs. The elimination of the regular education tutors will result in less support for students who require additional academic intervention at elementary and middle school.

In addition, to the 12.0 FTE in staffing reductions, there are non-personnel reductions as well. It should be noted that due to four consecutive years of level service budget reductions, most non-personnel expenses are already at critical funding levels necessary to provide support for staff and students. These include a reduction in the vacation cleaning services contract at RMHS, the elimination of the

elementary after school chorus program and the reduction of games being played in most Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Freshmen sports at RMHS. All sports will continue to play their league schedules, with a reduction of 2 non-league games (one home and one away game) in most sports at all levels.

In addition to the balanced budget, the School Committee voted to support a reconstruction/override budget amount of \$2,436,000. The details of the reconstruction/override budget are captured below and in the document that is located at the link below:

[https://www.reading.k12.ma.us/files/8315/1700/3562/Override-Reconstruction\\_Plan\\_1-26-2018.pdf](https://www.reading.k12.ma.us/files/8315/1700/3562/Override-Reconstruction_Plan_1-26-2018.pdf)

Summary of Plan Components	FTE Request	Amount
<i>Retain Vacation Cleaning at RMHS (which would be eliminated in FY19 budget)</i>	N/A	\$18,000
<i>Retain 1 Elementary Tutor – Regular Ed/School Day (which would be eliminated in FY19 budget)</i>	1.0	\$20,000
<i>Retain Athletics/Extracurricular funding (which would be eliminated in FY19 budget)</i>	N/A	\$25,000
<b>Clerical Support (Payroll/Human Resources Generalist)</b>	1.0	\$45,000
<b>Restore Classroom Computer/Technology</b>	N/A	\$50,000
<b>Restore Computer Technician</b>	1.0	\$57,000
<i>Restructure existing admin positions for Special Education Assistant Director</i>	0.6	\$70,000
<i>Restore Teacher Training (e.g., Science, ELA, Math) for curriculum</i>	N/A	\$75,000
<b>Districtwide K-8 Curriculum Coordinator (Mathematics/Science)</b>	1.0	\$95,000
<b>Districtwide K-8 Curriculum Coordinator (English Language Arts/Social Studies)</b>	1.0	\$95,000
<b>Curriculum Updates and Renewal</b>	N/A	\$150,000
<i>Restructure existing admin positions for Assistant Principals at Elementary Schools</i>	2.4	\$215,000
<i>Retain Elementary Teachers (which would be eliminated in FY19 budget)</i>	3.0	\$241,000
<b>Salary Adjustments for Retaining/Attracting Staff</b>	N/A	\$360,000
<i>Restore High School Teachers (which were eliminated in previous budget reductions)</i>	6.0	\$420,000
<i>Retain Middle School Teachers (which would be eliminated in FY19 budget)</i>	7.0	\$500,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$2,436,000</b>

### In Closing

The remaining FY19 budget meetings is listed below. The balanced budget that was approved on Monday evening, is now the School Committee budget, which will be reviewed by the Finance Committee on Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. at Town Hall. This Tuesday, January 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m., the RMHS Library Media Center, the Board of Selectmen will vote on whether or not there will be an override ballot question and how much the amount will be.

**January 30<sup>th</sup>**-Board of Selectmen meeting to decide override ballot question (7:00 p.m.-Reading Memorial High School Library)

**February 5<sup>th</sup>**-School Committee Meeting to review Board of Selectmen vote from January 30<sup>th</sup> and revote reconstruction/balanced budget (if necessary). (7:00 p.m.-Reading Memorial High School Library)

**February 7<sup>th</sup>**-Finance Committee Meeting to review School Committee balanced budget (7:30 p.m.-Town Hall)

All budget information is posted on the Reading Public School website, located below:

### Superintendent's Office Hours this Week

*All are welcome*

- 1/30 Superintendent's Office  
5:00 – 6:00 p.m.
- 1/31 Wood End  
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.
- 2/2 Parker  
7:15 – 8:15 p.m.
- 2/6 Barrows  
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

### Reading Public Schools "Learning & Teaching" Office Hours

(For Staff and/or Community) w/Craig Martin, Assistant Superintendent and Carolyn Wilson, Director of Student Services are scheduled this week for:

- Wednesday, January 31, 8:00-9:00 a.m. (Joshua Eaton Elementary School)
- Wednesday, January 31, 2:00-3:00 p.m. (RMHS, Learning & Teaching Office)

**School/Classroom Visits during the school day are scheduled this week for:**

- Tuesday, January 30, RISE Preschool (11:00 a.m.)
- Wednesday, January 30, Reading Memorial High School (11:00 a.m.)

**District Goal/Focus Area for this week:** Literacy

<https://www.reading.k12.ma.us/test/budget-information/fy19-budget-information/>

If you have any questions about the budget process, please contact Director of Finance Gail Dowd at [gail.dowd@reading.k12.ma.us](mailto:gail.dowd@reading.k12.ma.us) or Superintendent of Schools John Doherty at [john.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us](mailto:john.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us).

## Boston Globe Scholastic Art Awards Announced

*Several RMHS Students Honored*

The Reading Memorial High School Fine and Performing Arts Department is pleased to announce that 16 students have received awards in the Boston Globe Scholastic Art Competition. The names and awards are listed below. Congratulations to these students and their teachers on an outstanding accomplishment.

First Name	Last Name	Award	Area	Name
Alyssa	Baylis	Honorable Mention	Photography	ART
Kelly	Chetwynd	Honorable Mention	Photography	Shadows in the Dark
Kalliope	Doherty	Honorable Mention	Art Portfolio	Architecture
Kalliope	Doherty	Silver Key	Photography	Twisted
Samantha	Imrich	Gold Key	Drawing and Illustration	Nowhere to Hide
Wendy	Meyers	Gold Key	Photography	Self Portrait
Ethan	Piani-Hohmann	Gold Key	Photography	Suit Jacket
Ethan	Piani-Hohmann	Honorable Mention	Photography	Watchers
Jamie	Ritondo	Silver Key	Photography	Philadelphia
Isabella	Scozzari	Gold Key	Photography	Lucas
Isabella	Scozzari	Honorable Mention	Photography	Pull
Sofia	Spadafora	Gold Key	Photography	Patterned Pajama Pants
Sofia	Spadafora	Silver Key	Photography	Lonely Dog
Sofia	Spadafora	Silver Key	Photography	Textured Man
Hannah	Wiese	Gold Key	Photography	gramma
Hannah	Wiese	Honorable Mention	Photography	PPC

## Learning and Teaching Update

**News from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted on January 23<sup>rd</sup> to open public comment on the newly revised draft of the *Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework*. The draft document is available for public review and comment via a **public survey from January 23 – April 2, 2018**. The Board will vote on whether to adopt the final version of the framework in June 2018. Below are links to the draft of the January 2018 *History and Social Science Curriculum Framework*—and to the Public Comment Survey for the 2018 Framework Draft.

## Quote of the Week . . .



Always end the day with a positive thought. No matter how hard things were, tomorrow's a fresh opportunity to make it better.

Unknown

## Links:

[January 2018 Draft: History and Social Science Curriculum Framework](#)

[Public Comment Survey](#)

## Killam Teacher To Run in Boston Marathon

*Kate Splaine to Run For Dana Farber*

On April 16, Killam Teacher Kate Splaine will join hundreds of Dana-Farber runners to participate in the 122nd Boston Marathon®. One hundred percent of every dollar raised by this team supports the Claudia Adams Barr Program in Innovative Basic Cancer Research at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Check out this short [video](#) to see how funds raised through DFMC are fueling some of today's most promising basic cancer research.

The DFMC team runs and raises funds with thousands of special people in mind. From Hopkinton to Boston, each individual runner carries thoughts of those people every step of the way. For Kate, she will be running in honor of her student Kyle Koster, who was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) last fall at the age of 8. As Kate states,



*Kate and Kyle*

“Kyle's devastating diagnosis left him out of school for 7 months. During those 7 months, I was fortunate enough to be Kyle's tutor. After meeting the Koster family and hearing Kyle's story, I knew my heart, without hesitation, was committed to helping this child escape his reality and regain a sense of normalcy through learning. I tutored Kyle for a total of 163 hours between December 2016 and August 2017.

While Kyle was receiving chemotherapy treatment at the Jimmy Fund Clinic, he stayed on top of his school work during afternoon tutoring sessions with me. On most days, Kyle amazed me with his ability to quickly pick up the reading, writing and math content; working through unimaginable circumstances. Kyle always greeted me with a smile and we made it a goal to laugh while we learned. Sure, there were tough days when Kyle wasn't feeling well enough to hold a pencil, or was too upset to giggle. On those days, he requested to only listen to me read. Kyle's ability to persevere over such profound challenges and

## Disney Tweet of the Week



"Do not be followed by its commonplace appearance. Like so many things, it is not what is outside, but what is inside that counts."

-- Merchant (Aladdin)

frustrating setbacks, both mentally and physically, at such a young age is something I will remember for the rest of my life. What has become abundantly clear to me is that Kyle has taught me more in those months than I could have possibly taught him.

I am happy to report that Kyle is now in the maintenance stage of treatment and is CANCER FREE! Throughout this journey to the Boston Marathon I will share more of Kyle's story, so keep checking in!"

If you would like to donate to Dana Farber and support Kate's run in the Boston Marathon, please do to the link below.

<http://www.runDFMC.org/2018/katesplaine>

Good luck to Kate on her fundraising marathon run!

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## Orchestrating "Flow" in the Classroom

In this online article, John Spencer (George Fox University) suggests five ways teachers can increase the chances of students experiencing "flow" – a zone of intense concentration and immersion that may be experienced by athletes, artists, authors, musicians, engineers – and yes, students – when time and distractions are almost completely tuned out and performance is at a higher level. "It's a strange paradox," says Spencer, "where time seems to stand still and yet it seems over in an instant. It feels effortless even though it's an extreme challenge. There's a sense of relaxation but it's also intense. You seem more present than ever but you can lose your sense of self." The idea of flow has been around for thousands of years, but Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi popularized the term in the 1970s and 80s when he observed artists so absorbed in their creative work that they lost track of time and even ignored the need for food, water, and sleep.

How do we increase the incidence of flow in classrooms? Spencer suggests five preconditions that make it possible:

- *The task needs to be intrinsically rewarding to students.* It has to engage their internal drive and fit their passions, interests, talents, or desires. It can be solitary or group-oriented, competitive or non-competitive, artistic or athletic.
- *There need to be clear goals and a sense of progress.* And students need a sense of agency: "You need to feel that you have a command over what you are doing," says Spencer. "In the moment, it can feel effortless. However, it's often an exceptionally challenging situation. You're often doubtful of success ahead of time. But this uncertainty is part of what makes the challenge fun."
- *There needs to be clear and immediate feedback.* "In other words," says Spencer, "it should be easy to figure out what's working and what's failing... [and] modify and adjust what you are doing based on this instant feedback."
- *The challenge must match one's perceived skills.* If a task is not challenging, boredom and apathy can set in. If it's beyond one's skill level, anxiety and frustration might result. Flow is in the sweet spot of high challenge matching a high level of skill in that area.



## 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?

 **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, accept your insurance & has available appointments.  
**Call 1-888-244-6843 (toll free) • M-F • 9am-5pm**  
<https://interface.williamjames.edu/>

• *Flow requires intense focus on the present moment.* Csikszentmihalyi said people in a state of flow “often stop being aware of themselves as separate from the actions they are performing.” But at the same time, these are the moments when they feel most alive.

So how can teachers maximize flow in their classrooms? Spencer has experimented with ideas when he was a middle-school teacher and now as a university professor and has these preliminary suggestions:

- *Provide the right scaffolding for the task.* For a writing project, this might be sentence stems, tutorials, or graphic organizers.
- *Tap into intrinsic motivation.* This means being creative with the required curriculum by asking big questions, posing interesting challenges, creating simulations – and sometimes just being goofy.
- *Embrace student choice and agency.* Maximize student-centered, creative projects. Ask, “What am I doing for students that they could be doing for themselves?”
- *Minimize distractions.* Creativity can be noisy, says Spencer. “However, this can also be distracting. It’s not a bad thing to reduce clutter or decrease noise and allow students to reach that state of hyper-focus. It can also help to slow down.”
- *Help students with metacognition.* Teach them to visualize where they’re going, assess the task, evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, plan an approach, apply strategies, monitor progress, reflect on what’s working, and continuously make adjustments.

“Five Ways to Boost Student Engagement with Flow Theory” by John Spencer, December 3, 2017, <http://www.spencerauthor.com/flow-theory/>; Spencer is at [jspencer@georgefox.edu](mailto:jspencer@georgefox.edu). Reprinted from Marshall Memo 720.

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## Reading Public Schools Happenings

### RMHS Chorus and Band Students Shine at Districts and All States

Recently, members of the RMHS Band and Chorus performed at the New England District Musical Festival (see photos below). In addition, two students, Isabel Molettieri and Antonio Ruiz-Nokes were accepted into the All-State Music Festival. Isabel and Antonio will be performing at Symphony Hall on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. All of the students who performed at the New England District Music Festival are listed below. Congratulations to the students and the teachers on a job well done!

#### **NE Districts musicians:**

Angelo Catalano, Band  
Ryan Dieselman, Chorus  
Larry Gao, Band  
Rebekah Gernert, Band  
Michael Malley, Orchestra  
Zac Melagrano, Chorus  
Natalie Mendez, Chorus  
Wyatt Mittnight, Chorus  
Isabel Molettieri, Chorus  
Amogh Morje, Band  
Antonio Ruiz-Nokes, Chorus  
Logan Thornton, Orchestra

## 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)



## Stepping Stones...

- Our thoughts go out to the Joshua Eaton Cafeteria Manager **Roberta Ferrari** who lost a loved one recently.
- Our thoughts go out to RMHS paraeducator **Colleen DiMattei** who lost a loved one recently.
- Our thoughts go out to RMHS paraeducator **Linda Russo** who lost a loved one recently.
- Wishing a speedy recovery to RMHS Data Support Specialist **Joe Cain** who is recovering from a recent surgery.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
  - ✓ Diane Chaput, Daily Substitute, District
  - ✓ Sabrina Cavaliero, Long Term Substitute Special Education Paraeducator, RISE
  - ✓ Lisa Downing, Cafeteria Substitute, District
- **We have posted** a new position. If interested, please visit
- <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

Boys Lacrosse Coaching Assistant, Reading Memorial High School <a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=438">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=438</a>
Assistant Football Coach – Offensive Coordinator; Reading Memorial High School <a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=439">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=439</a>
Football Coaching Assistant; Reading Memorial High School <a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=440">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=440</a>
Middle School Special Education Program Paraeducator (60 hours biweekly), Coolidge Middle School <a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=441">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=441</a>
Custodial Substitute, Facilities <a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=442">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=442</a>

## Blazing Trails...

**"Feedback That Fuels Learning."** Why don't students use feedback? Sue Brookhart writes that if students don't know how to use feedback or don't understand the learning goal they're applying it to, they're likely to see feedback as evaluative rather than informative. Like a final grade, feedback under these circumstances marks an end to learning, not an opportunity to extend. Raters can be motivators, however, when feedback is timely, specific, actionable, and compassionate. Here's how to put forward-focused feedback to work in your classroom in these ASCD Express posts. [Read More](#)

**"Six K-12 Trends to Watch in 2018."** With a new administration taking office and a new law, the Every Student Succeeds Act, taking effect last fall, 2017 was an eventful for K-12 education- and those changes, among others, are only going to keep changing the playing field in 2018. From district cooperatives and personalized professional development to new approaches to class design and assessment, administrators should keep their eyes on these six trends over the coming year. [Read More](#)

**"Missouri High School Tests Weekends With No Homework."** Leaders at a Missouri school are testing homework-free weekends during February and March in response to an uptick in the number of students seeking social and emotional help from counselors. Survey data will help determine whether the test will be continued. [Read More](#)

**"Amazon Reopens Platform to Share Education Resources."** Amazon has reopened its Amazon Inspire platform, which allows educators to share and access online educational materials. The platform was temporarily closed because of concerns over copyright infringement. [Read More](#)

**"Japan's Ministry of Education Considers Overhauling Their Testing Culture."** Research shows the current testing culture in Japan can have negative effects on students' mental and emotional states. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is planning to transform the country's university-admissions assessment and approach to career preparation. [Read More](#)

**Have a Great Week!**