



# Pathways

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

February 25, 2017

Volume 9, Number 24

## Upcoming Dates

- February 26 – (7:00 p.m.)  
Reading School  
Committee Meeting in the  
Superintendent's  
Conference Room
- March 2 & 3 – (7:30 p.m.)  
RMHS Dram Production of  
"Harvey" in the Endslo PAC
- March 4 – (2:00 p.m.)  
RMHS Drama Production  
of "Harvey" in the  
Endslo PAC
- March 5 – (7:00 p.m.)  
Reading School  
Committee Meeting in the  
Superintendent's  
Conference Room
- March 6 – (2:00 p.m.)  
RMHS Band – MAJE Jazz  
Festival @ RMHS
- March 7 – Grade 6 – 8  
Early Release
- March 8 – (6:30 p.m.)  
Parker Musical – My Son  
Pinocchio, Jr. @ Parker
- March 9 – (7:30 p.m.)  
Parker Musical – My Son  
Pinocchio, Jr. @ Parker
- March 10 – (2:00 p.m.)  
Parker Musical – My Son  
Pinocchio, Jr. @ Parker
- March 16 – (7:00 p.m.) Mr.  
RMHS in the Endslo PAC
- March 19 – (7:00 p.m.)  
School Committee  
Meeting in the  
Superintendent's  
Conference Room
- March 22 – (7:00 p.m.)  
RPS Community Forum  
with Dr. David Walsh in  
the Endslo PAC
- March 23 - No School for  
Students; Teacher In-

## District Message on Parkland Tragedy

*How to talk to children about this sad event*

Just before February vacation, our country's schools were dealt a sad and terrible school tragedy with another school shooting, this time in Parkland, Florida, resulting in the deaths of 17 students and staff members. Our hearts go out to the staff and students and their families of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and the Parkland community.

When a tragedy like this strikes, everyone's sense of safety becomes uncertain. As members of a school community, we find ourselves trying to answer our own and our children's questions that have no real answers. Below are some tips that have been provided by the National Association of School Psychologists on how to talk to children about violence. Feel free to use these as you help your children cope with this sad event.

If you see a child exhibit any unusual fears or is acting differently, please work with your school's counseling and support staff to address those issues. Many times, we do not know if events like these trigger other events that students have gone through in their lives. The majority of our Reading Public School staff have been trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid and we have learned that the more aware people are aware of what effective supports and treatments exist, the more young people will get the appropriate help that they need.

As a school district, this is also a time to take a look and review our safety plans and what we currently do in our schools regarding safety and security. Over the next several weeks, I will be working with police, fire, and school staff to review our current safety plans. It is unfortunate events like this that remind us that our schools are not built as fortresses; rather, public institutions of learning for our students and our staff. We can however, be as prepared as we can possibly be in the event that an intruder enters one of our schools. For the last several years, and continuing throughout this school year, each school has been going through ALICE, Fire, and Shelter in Place drills. Our safety plans have been updated and reflect the latest best practices. In addition, we have a very strong working relationship with the Reading Police Department and the Reading Fire Department. These drills are extremely important so that we can practice a possible event ahead of time and identify any areas that we need to improve before a real event occurs.

In addition to our drills, please be reminded of the following to improve our safety and security procedures:

- March 24 – (6:00 p.m.)  
RMHS Sophomore  
Semiformal in the RMHS  
Cafeteria

### Kudos and Accolades

- Kudos to boys & girls basketball, boys & girls hockey and gymnastics on recent wins.
- Congratulations to the gymnastics team for winning the Middlesex League Championship and League Meet
- Congratulations to girls basketball and boys & girls hockey for qualifying for post season MIAA tournament action.
- Kudos to the girls track team for a strong showing at the MIAA Division 2 meet.
- Congratulations to RMHS track athlete Shannon Parks for winning the shot put and Maeve Swanton for a 7<sup>th</sup> place finish in the 300 meter at the recent MIAA Division 2 meet.
- Kudos to the boys swim team for a strong showing at the Division 1 State Meet.
- Congratulations to RMHS swimmer Kevin Spear for winning the 200 meter freestyle, setting a Middlesex League and state record time at the Division 1 State Meet.

1. All visitors should buzz in at the main entrance of the school, state their purpose, be buzzed in, and check in the main office and receive a badge. **There are no exceptions to this rule.** If you are picking up a student, they need to provide a photo identification and be on the emergency list for adults who can dismiss a student. If you see a visitor without a badge, please escort them to the main office to receive one.
2. We keep all exterior doors closed and locked during the school day. This prevents visitors from entering without being recognized.

If you have any questions about our school safety procedures, please do not hesitate to contact your building principal. Thank you for your support and diligence on this important issue.

Over the next few weeks, we will be having our second ALICE drill of the school year. Prior to those drills, we will be reviewing with our students, in a developmentally appropriate way, the importance of conducting ALICE, fire and evacuation drills, and shelter in place drills.

The safety and security of our students and staff are our utmost priority. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact your child's building principal.

Life is precious – may we all be reminded today of what's really important – family, friends, and caring for one another. Thank you for your continued support of the Reading Public Schools.

### **Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers**

High profile acts of violence, particularly in schools, can confuse and frighten children who may feel in danger or worry that their friends or loved-ones are at risk. They will look to adults for information and guidance on how to react. Parents and school personnel can help children feel safe by establishing a sense of normalcy and security and talking with them about their fears.

1. **Reassure children that they are safe.** Emphasize that schools are very safe. Validate their feelings. Explain that all feelings are okay when a tragedy occurs. Let children talk about their feelings, help put them into perspective, and assist them in expressing these feelings appropriately.
2. **Make time to talk.** Let their questions be your guide as to how much information to provide. Be patient. Children and youth do not always talk about their feelings readily. Watch for clues that they may want to talk, such as hovering around while you do the dishes or yard work. Some children prefer writing, playing music, or doing an art project as an outlet. Young children may need concrete activities (such as drawing, looking at picture books, or imaginative play) to help them identify and express their feelings.
3. **Keep your explanations developmentally appropriate.**
  - **Early elementary school** children need brief, simple information that should be balanced with reassurances that their school and homes are safe and that

adults are there to protect them. Give simple examples of school safety like reminding children about exterior doors being locked, child monitoring efforts on the playground, and emergency drills practiced during the school day.

- **Upper elementary and early middle school** children will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what is being done at their school. They may need assistance separating reality from fantasy. Discuss efforts of school and community leaders to provide safe schools.
- **Upper middle school and high school** students will have strong and varying opinions about the causes of violence in schools and society. They will share concrete suggestions about how to make school safer and how to prevent tragedies in society. Emphasize the role that students have in maintaining safe schools by following school safety guidelines (e.g. not providing building access to strangers, reporting strangers on campus, reporting threats to the school safety made by students or community members, etc.), communicating any personal safety concerns to school administrators, and accessing support for emotional needs.

4. **Review safety procedures.** This should include procedures and safeguards at school and at home. Help children identify at least one adult at school and in the community to whom they go if they feel threatened or at risk.
5. **Observe children's emotional state.** Some children may not express their concerns verbally. Changes in behavior, appetite, and sleep patterns can indicate a child's level of anxiety or discomfort. In most children, these symptoms will ease with reassurance and time. However, some children may be at risk for more intense reactions. Children who have had a past traumatic experience or personal loss, suffer from depression or other mental illness, or with special needs may be at greater risk for severe reactions than others. Seek the help of mental health professional if you are at all concerned.
6. **Limit television viewing of these events.** Limit television viewing and be aware if the television is on in common areas. Developmentally inappropriate information can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young children. Adults also need to be mindful of the content of conversations that they have with each other in front of children, even teenagers, and limit their exposure to vengeful, hateful, and angry comments that might be misunderstood.
7. **Maintain a normal routine.** Keeping to a regular schedule can be reassuring and promote physical health. Ensure that children get plenty of sleep, regular meals, and exercise. Encourage them to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities but don't push them if they seem overwhelmed.

### **Suggested Points to Emphasize When Talking to Children**

- **Schools are safe places.** School staff work with parents and public safety providers (local police and fire departments, emergency responders, hospitals, etc.) to keep you safe.
- **The school building is safe because ...** (cite specific school procedures).

## Superintendent's Office

### Hours this Week

*All are welcome*

2/26 Superintendent's  
Office

4:45 – 5:45 p.m.

3/1 Coolidge

2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

3/2 Killam

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

3/6 Joshua Eaton

7:45 – 8:45 a.m.

3/8 Superintendent's  
Office

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

- **We all play a role in the school safety.** Be observant and let an adult know if you see or hear something that makes you feel uncomfortable, nervous or frightened.
- **There is a difference between reporting, tattling or gossiping.** You can provide important information that may prevent harm either directly or anonymously by telling a trusted adult what you know or hear.
- **Don't dwell on the worst possibilities.** Although there is no absolute guarantee that something bad will never happen, it is important to understand the difference between the **possibility** of something happening and the **probability** that it will affect our school.
- **Senseless violence is hard for everyone to understand.** Doing things that you enjoy, sticking to your normal routine, and being with friends and family help make us feel better and keep us from worrying about the event.
- **Sometimes people do bad things that hurt others.** They may be unable to handle their anger, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or suffering from mental illness. Adults (parents, teachers, police officers, doctors, faith leaders) work very hard to get those people help and keep them from hurting others. It is important for all of us to know how to get help if we feel really upset or angry and to stay away from drugs and alcohol.
- **Stay away from guns and other weapons.** Tell an adult if you know someone has a gun. Access to guns is one of the leading risk factors for deadly violence.
- **Violence is never a solution to personal problems.** Students can be part of the positive solution by participating in anti-violence programs at school, learning conflict mediation skills, and seeking help from an adult if they or a peer is struggling with anger, depression, or other emotions they cannot control.

### **Other Resources:**

Listed below are other resources that I hope you find helpful.

1. **Talking to Children About Violence:** [Tips for Parents and Teachers](#)
2. [National Association of School Psychologists Website-A National Tragedy: Helping Students Cope](#)
3. [Care for Caregivers: Tips for Families and Educators](#)
4. [American Psychological Society: Talking to Your Children About the Recent Spate of School Shootings](#)

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## 7 Powerful Things Teachers, Parents, and Kids Are Doing to Prevent School Shootings

BY: [HELAINA HOVITZ](#) for [Reader's Digest](#)

*Gun violence often starts with bullying or loneliness. Meet the local heroes who are working to address both issues—before tragedy strikes.*

### **Preventing loneliness**

Ten-year-old Christian Bucks was nervous about his move to a new school for first grade, so he and his mother came up with a solution: Buddy Benches, aimed at bringing together kids who are lonely, new to town, and who typically have nobody to play with at recess and before and after school. Loneliness may not sound like a serious issue, but according to one survey, 80 percent of kids between 8 and 10 years old are feeling it, and it can lead to some very sad and troubling experiences that stick with them. Fortunately, as Christian's mom [told the Washington Post](#),

## Quote of the Week . . .



"Struggles are required in order to survive in life, because in order to stand up, you gotta know what falling down is like."

"He's always looking out for the person who might need a little help." Now, Buddy Benches have taken off around the country and the world, where kids notice other kids sitting on these benches and either join them or invite them to play. Letters of appreciation have poured in from around the country, where children are letting Christian know just how much of a difference he's made.

Don't miss [this important list of 50 ways not to feel lonely](#).

### **Blocking online threats**

Some of the most dangerous threats children face today are not in school, but after school—on the Internet. Brian Bason, who works in mobile technology, decided to create **Bark**, a safety solution installed for free that alerts parents to signs of cyberbullying, mentions of suicide, and communication from online predators. "I didn't like the idea of manually spot-checking my kids' devices, as it's a highly ineffective approach to monitoring their online activity, plus it's time-consuming," said Bason, noting that 8 percent of the time, parents are completely unaware of things like bullying or talk of suicide. "Our data has shown that 60 percent of kids face cyberbullying situations, and 15 percent mention self-harm." To date, he says, Bark has saved lives by detecting imminent suicidal situations as well as shooting and bomb threats, and has made parents aware of issues such as depression and other mental health issues. "It's important for kids to feel a sense of autonomy and like parents trust them, so this helps balance the privacy they want with the awareness parents need." Here are more [parental control apps to help keep kids safe](#).

### **Getting people talking about gun violence**

In 1999, Donna Finkelstein's daughter Mindy was shot by a neo-Nazi while working as a camp counselor at the North Valley Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles. Finkelstein, a teacher and counselor herself, immediately joined the board of **Women Against Gun Violence** and has been speaking to parents, teachers, legislators, and community members for nearly 20 years. One of her initiatives, The Talk Project, helps parents talk to their children about guns, and talk to their friends and neighbors about gun violence and safe storage. The organization also distributes free gun locks upon request. "My goal is to place one pamphlet in every children's backpack before they go home," she says of her school visits. Some school districts allow her to meet with parents, and others invite her to speak with students about the issue, including the rates of teen suicide and gun deaths.

### **Inviting everyone to the lunch table**

Kids who "don't fit in" often face loneliness, social anxiety, and even physical violence, and the lunchroom can be a crucible for all three. One teen, Natalie Hampton, who had been pushed into lockers and physically attacked, realized that if kids could find more friendly faces, especially at lunchtime, the rates of this kind of abuse could potentially plummet. She invented the **Sit With Us App** to help teens find like-minded peers who are lunching and would welcome others to join without fear of rejection, according to a [story on CBS](#). The app is free to download and has more than 100,000 users. Here's another [great example of how one victim of bullying turned it all around](#).



### Disney Tweet of the Week



"Believe you can, then you will."

-- Mulan (Princess Stories)

### Looking for patterns in the classroom

There's a teacher in America who, every single Friday afternoon since the school shooting in Columbine, has asked her students to engage in an exercise. They jot down four peers with whom they'd like to sit the following week and nominate one student they think has been an exceptional classroom citizen. The goal here is not to seat friends together or give out awards, however. Instead, the teacher uses the information as a social barometer, to determine which kids are being forgotten, left out, or excluded, and to keep tabs on changes in social situations that could set off alarms. The teacher then arranges for any kids who are struggling to get the help that they need. It is her strategy for fighting disconnection, which has been shown to lead to violence. *Reader's Digest* shared this [one teacher's brilliant strategy for preventing loneliness](#) from the popular blog [momastery.com](#), and it went viral immediately after the tragic school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

### Preparing for emergencies

Alissa Parker and Michele Gay, two mothers who lost daughters in the tragic Sandy Hook shooting in 2012, have turned their grief into action, co-founding [Safe and Sound Schools](#), a nonprofit that empowers communities to improve school safety and security by assessing their preparedness for emergency situations, creating concrete action plans, and refining the measures already in place. Parker and Gay conduct several programs to help schools around the country, make resources available online, and invite kids to become part of their student leader and ambassador programs, giving them toolkits to create program chapters in their own hometown communities. Along with other Sandy Hook parents, teachers and community members, they have reached hundreds of thousands of people to help provide safer schools for everyone.

### Teaching kids how to avoid unsafe situations

Edward Burr created a children's foundation 20 years ago to honor his wife, a tireless child advocate who died tragically. Today, the Monique Burr Foundation for Children offers prevention-based programs for kids in kindergarten through 8th grade, teaching them how to protect themselves in any number of abusive or threatening situations, from bullying to sexual abuse and everything in between. Because unfortunately, [nearly 1 in 5 children who experience abuse are exposed to more](#) than one type, according to a 2010 study. The results speak for themselves. "I had a mother of one of my third-grade students request a meeting with me over the summer," says Michelle Harrison, school counselor at Cornerstone Academy in Orlando, Florida. "She wanted me to know that at a party, a family member approached her girls and asked them to play a special game in the garage. When they got there, they realized it was a red flag and got away. One of the girls told her mother, 'I did just what Ms. Harrison told us to do, Mom.'" The information saved those girls from a potentially traumatic experience. "This program works because it gives a clear understanding of what to look out for and what to do," Harrison adds.

Something you can do right now to help prevent future violence: Build kids up in ways that are meaningful and impactful. Here are [tiny ways to encourage your child every day](#).

## 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, accepts your insurance & has available appointments.

Call 1-888-244-6843 (toll free) • M-F • 9am-5pm

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

## One Teacher's Brilliant Strategy to Stop Future School Shootings— and It's Not About Guns

BY **GLENNON DOYLE MELTON** FROM **MOMASTERY.COM**

*Here's how one schoolteacher takes time each week to look out for the lonely.*

A few weeks ago, I went into my son Chase's class for tutoring. I'd e-mailed Chase's teacher one evening and said, "Chase keeps telling me that this stuff you're sending home is math—but I'm not sure I believe him. Help, please." She e-mailed right back and said, "No problem! I can tutor Chase after school anytime." And I said, "No, not him. Me. He gets it. Help me."

And that's how I ended up standing at a chalkboard in an empty fifth-grade classroom while Chase's teacher sat behind me, using a soothing voice to try to help me understand the "new way we teach long division." Luckily for me, I didn't have to unlearn much because I'd never really understood the "old way we taught long division." It took me a solid hour to complete one problem, but I could tell that Chase's teacher liked me anyway. She used to work with NASA, so obviously we have a whole lot in common.

Afterward, we sat for a few minutes and talked about teaching children and what a sacred trust and responsibility it is. We agreed that subjects like math and reading are not the most important things that are learned in a classroom. We talked about shaping little hearts to become contributors to a larger community—and we discussed our mutual dream that those communities might be made up of individuals who are kind and brave above all.

And then she told me this.

Every Friday afternoon, she asks her students to take out a piece of paper and write down the names of four children with whom they'd like to sit the following week. The children know that these requests may or may not be honored. She also asks the students to nominate one student who they believe has been an exceptional classroom citizen that week. All ballots are privately submitted to her.

And every single Friday afternoon, after the students go home, she takes out those slips of paper, places them in front of her, and studies them. She looks for patterns.

Who is not getting requested by anyone else?

Who can't think of anyone to request?

Who never gets noticed enough to be nominated?

Who had a million friends last week and none this week?

You see, Chase's teacher is not looking for a new seating chart or "exceptional citizens." Chase's teacher is looking for lonely children. She's looking for children who are struggling to connect with other children. She's identifying the little ones who are falling through the cracks of the class's social life. She is discovering whose

## 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)

gifts are going unnoticed by their peers. And she's pinning down—right away—who's being bullied and who is doing the bullying.

As a teacher, parent, and lover of all children, I think this is the most brilliant Love Ninja strategy I have ever encountered. It's like taking an X-ray of a classroom to see beneath the surface of things and into the hearts of students. It is like mining for gold—the gold being those children who need a little help, who need adults to step in and teach them how to make friends, how to ask others to play, how to join a group, or how to share their gifts. And it's a bully deterrent because every teacher knows that bullying usually happens outside her eyeshot and that often kids being bullied are too intimidated to share. But, as she said, the truth comes out on those safe, private, little sheets of paper.

As Chase's teacher explained this simple, ingenious idea, I stared at her with my mouth hanging open. "How long have you been using this system?" I said.

Ever since Columbine, she said. Every single Friday afternoon since Columbine. Good Lord.

This brilliant woman watched Columbine knowing that all violence begins with disconnection. All outward violence begins as inner loneliness. **Who are our next mass shooters and how do we stop them?** She watched that tragedy knowing that children who aren't being noticed may eventually resort to being noticed by any means necessary.

And so she decided to start fighting violence early and often in the world within her reach. What Chase's teacher is doing when she sits in her empty classroom studying those lists written with shaky 11-year-old hands is saving lives. I am convinced of it.

And what this mathematician has learned while using this system is something she really already knew: that everything—even love, even belonging—has a pattern to it. She finds the patterns, and through those lists she breaks the codes of disconnection. Then she gets lonely kids the help they need. It's math to her. It's *math*.

All is love—even math. Amazing.

What a way to spend a life: looking for patterns of love and loneliness. Stepping in, every single day, and altering the trajectory of our world.

*Glennon Doyle Melton writes the popular blog [momastery.com](http://momastery.com) and is the author of the #1 New York Times Bestseller and Oprah's Book Club 2016 Selection [Love Warrior: A Memoir](#)*



Reading Public Schools are proud to present a community forum with

# Dr. David Walsh

Thursday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

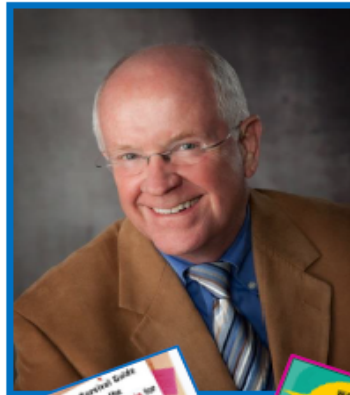
At the Reading Memorial High School / Performing Arts Center  
62 Oakland Road, Reading, MA

Join us for an evening presentation and discussion on the topic . . .

## **"It's Complicated: Children, Social Media, and Mental Health"**

Featuring Keynote Speakers: Best-selling author David Walsh, Ph. D. and Erin Walsh, M.A.

The Internet, social networking, cell phones, and video games are game changers for youth and families. Young people today spend an average of 53 hours a week with entertainment media, more than any other activity but sleeping. Digital technologies simultaneously unleash incredible opportunities and pose a new set of challenges for children and youth. In this interactive and energizing presentation, Dr. Dave and Erin Walsh will use brain science, stories, and humor to explain how technology is changing the ways that children grow up, socialize, and forge their identities. They will help parents and professionals understand the key ingredients for wellness in the digital age and provide practical tools and strategies that help children and youth build on their strengths.



David Walsh, Ph.D. is an award-winning psychologist, best-selling author, and international speaker. He has been a frequent guest on national radio and television programs including NBC's *Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, *The CBS Early Show*, *The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*, *Dateline NBC*, ABC's *20/20*, National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition*. He has testified numerous times before Congress, presented workshops throughout the world, and served as a consultant to the World Health Organization and the Ministries of Education in Japan, South Korea, Portugal and Singapore.

Dr. Walsh has written ten books including the national best sellers *Why Do They Act That Way? A Survival Guide to the Adolescent Brain for You and Your Teen* and *No: Why Kids – of All Ages – Need to Hear It and Ways Parents Can Say It*. His books have been translated into eight languages. He has also authored scores of papers for professional and general publications. His newest book is *Smart Parenting, Smarter Kids*. He and his wife Monica have three adult children and seven grandchildren.



Be sure  
to join us!

Brought to you by . . .



Reading Public Schools

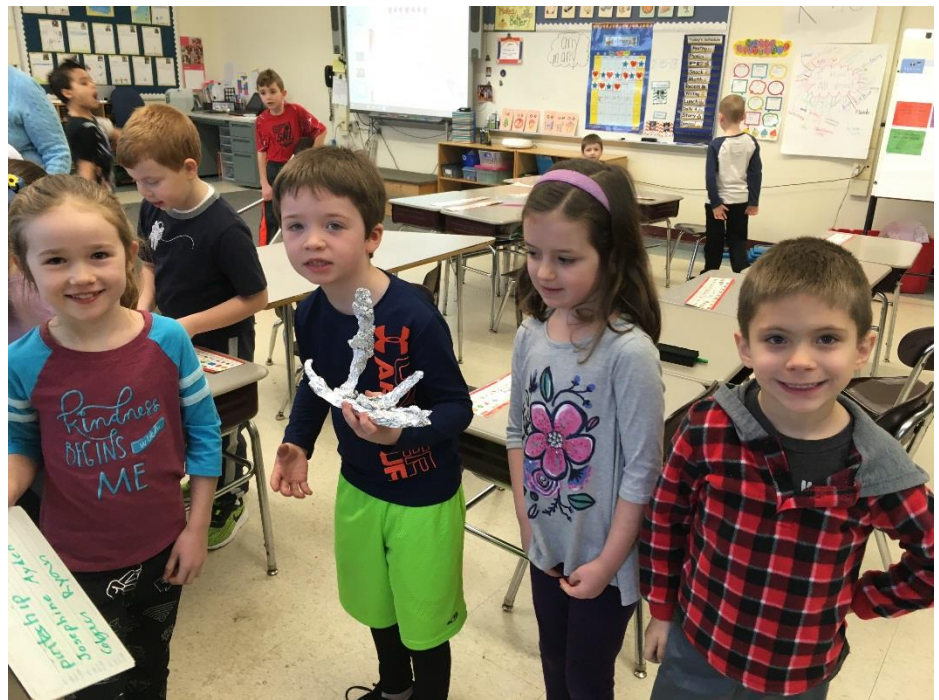


Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence

## Reading Public Schools Happenings

### Barrows Tackles Problem Challenge

On the Friday before vacation, Barrows students engaged in a problem solving activity to build a tower with common household items. Below are some pictures of the event.







### Stepping Stones...

- Our thoughts go out to Joshua Eaton Office Paraeducator **Joy Pippy** on the loss of a loved one recently.
- Our thoughts go out to Barrows and Eaton Music Teacher **Dan Htoo-Levine** on the loss of a loved one recently.
- Our thoughts go out to Barrows Teacher **Colleen DeRosa** on the loss of a loved one recently.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
  - ✓ Rebekah Miner, Daily Substitute, District
  - ✓ Michele Malley, Hospital Tutor, Special Education
  - ✓ Jared Beaulieu, Daily Substitute, District
  - ✓ Amanda Simard, Daily Substitute, District
  - ✓ Kelly Lyons, Daily Substitute, District
  - ✓ Kimberly Kolodzieczak, 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

Special Education Program Paraeducator, 55 hours biweekly,  
R.I.S.E. Preschool

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=444>

(2) Long Term Substitute Special Education TSP Program  
Paraeducator, 59 hours biweekly, Killam Elementary School

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=445>

Long-term Substitute Regular Education Paraeducator, 56 hours  
biweekly, Wood End Elementary School

<a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=446">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=446</a>
Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching
<a href="https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=447">https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=447</a>

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## Blazing Trails...

**"Learning From Olympians:** How Classroom Champions Is Pairing Athletes With Schools to Offer Unique Lessons on Grit, Goals, and Perseverance." Gold medal bobsledder Steve Mesler co-founded Classroom Champions because he wanted to have a deeper impact on students than giving "one-off" speeches about staying healthy. [Read More](#)

**"Massachusetts Teachers Say Curriculum Update Includes More African-American History."** The AP reports that although "public schools have come a long way in trying to incorporate the full breadth and significance of the African-American experience in their U.S. history curriculum," many educators, students, and "education officials agree: There's still more to be done." A "long-awaited update" to Massachusetts' history and social science curriculum framework is "on the horizon," and "initial feedback from school administrators and teachers" indicates that "the new standards appear to be more inclusive of African-American history." However, the AP points to remaining "obstacles," reporting that "a lack of professional development opportunities for teachers, limited funding to hire more humanities instructors, and competing curricular priorities all play a role in restricting just how deep history classes are able to get into the subject, experts said." [Read More](#)

**"Are Discipline Problems Really Disengagement Problems?"** When students act out, it may be their only way of speaking out about disenfranchisement and trauma. Instead of using punitive measures, this New York City principal and her teachers look for ways to de-escalate, relate, and ultimately engage student voice and agency. Students want to influence their situation in school; give them the positive tools to do so in this ASCD Express post. [Read More](#)

**"Building a Student-Centered School."** It's time to adopt student-centered learning, writes Amy Dujon, a practice leader with Learning Sciences International. In this blog post, she shares strategies to support productive struggle that she suggests can help prepare students for college and career. [Read More](#)

**"Singapore Schools to Use Comics in Essay-Writing."** Some schools in Singapore will use comics to help improve students' essay-writing skills. Low Yen Ling, senior Parliamentary secretary for education, recently announced a revised version of the Creative Comic Essay Writing Program for schools, which focuses on boosting creative-thinking skills. [Read More](#)

**Have a Great Week!**