



Pathways

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

March 4, 2018

Volume 4, Number 25

Upcoming Dates

- March 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-
Service – Annual Blue
Ribbon Institute
- March 24 – (6:00 p.m.)
RMHS Sophomore
Semiformal in the RMHS
Cafeteria

ALICE Drills To Continue This Month

During the month of March, students and staff in all of our schools will be practicing ALICE Drills under the guidance of the Reading Police Department. Each school will practice one ALICE drill this month as part of our safety and security protocols and procedures.

For more information about ALICE, please go to the following link which is a presentation on ALICE from the October Parent University.

https://www.reading.k12.ma.us/files/4715/2009/0576/ALICE_Presentation_for_Parent_University.pdf

Below is a video from the Waltham Police Department regarding the ALICE Protocol.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqkUw9egsWc>

Kudos and Accolades

- Good luck to RMHS wrestlers Darren Driscoll & Trevor Morton who will be competing in the New England Championships this weekend.
- Congratulations to the gymnastics team for winning the North Sectional Championships.
- Congratulations to Coolidge Grade 8 Student Dylan Herlihy who qualified for the Massachusetts State Geography Bee Finals which will be held on April 6th at Elms College in Chicopee, MA.
- Congratulations to the Coolidge Science Olympiad Team for Winning the Massachusetts State Science Olympiad Championship on Saturday at Assumption College in Worcester. The team will participate in the National Science Olympiad Tournament to be held at Colorado State University in May.

The Power of Empathy

Empathy for others doesn't necessarily lead them to change their behavior, but it does help you better navigate difficult situations.

By [Elena Aguilar](#) for [Edutopia Blog](#)

A particular student was driving me crazy. During most of the fall, she'd storm into my final period every day, slam her backpack on a desk, and shout that she hated my class, wasn't stupid, and didn't belong in the class (eighth-grade reading intervention). She refused to do anything, and skirted the border of being disruptive. Week after week, I'd try to connect with her (I'll call her T.), but she put up a big wall around herself. In response, I felt myself closing up. What I honestly thought was: "You're going to be difficult. Fine. I don't care either, just be quiet."

Then in early winter, a little incident helped me find a wellspring of empathy for T. And what I learned was that cultivating empathy for others—for my students, colleagues, supervisors—helped *me* feel better. It helped me have more energy. It helped me manage challenges.

THE POWER OF EMPATHY

Often discussed as something that we might do (or perhaps should do) to be a good person, feeling empathetic helps us make connections with others and understand them better. It's different from having sympathy for someone, which means to look at their suffering from the outside and feel sorry or sad for them. Empathy is feeling someone else's pain or seeing through their eyes. It's also a precursor to compassion, which is empathy in action—a commitment to doing something that relieves someone else's suffering.

But here's another reason to foster empathy for others: Experiencing empathy can make your own life better. Empathy can open your heart, letting in more feelings, but also softening some of the tough experiences. As we build empathy for others, we understand them more and can connect with them differently, which boosts our resilience—the ability to bounce back after challenges.

Here's what happened with T. I asked students to do a quick write-in response to this prompt: "If a genie could grant you one wish, what would it be?" T. wrote about a genie who would buy her new clothes. She wrote about how she was growing out of her clothes, and her family didn't have money, and she was ashamed to come to school every day in pants that she knew didn't fit and bursting out of her shirts. She'd had a major growth spurt, she wrote, and all she wanted were clothes that fit.

"What must that be like," I thought, "for a 13-year-old-girl?" I remembered my own early adolescence. I imagined myself in her clothes. I felt some of what I imagined she might feel.

I wrote back a short message communicating empathy. She responded and told me about her sick grandma and her mother who was developmentally disabled. I wrote back. She responded and shared more. She still came into class with a temper, but it

Superintendent's Office

Hours this Week

All are welcome

3/6 Joshua Eaton
7:45 – 8:45 a.m.

3/8 Superintendent's
Office
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

3/14 Birch Meadow
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

3/15 RISE
7:45 – 8:45 a.m.

3/20 RMHS
7:00 – 8:00 a.m.

3/21 Killam
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

Student Services Office **Hours This Week**

Monday 3/5- Classroom
Visits at Barrows 9-10:15

Tuesday 3/6- Office Hours
8:00-9:00 Small
Conference Room- in the
Administrative Offices

Wednesday 3/7- Office
Hours 2:30-3:30 Office of
Learning and Teaching

dissipated much quicker. And I noticed that her temper didn't trigger me as much, that I actually smiled genuinely at her, and that I could authentically say, "It's nice to see you today."

Empathy for others doesn't always lead them to change their behaviors—and we can't expect it to. We can only hope that in exploring the rough terrain of empathy within ourselves, we can learn more about others and ourselves.

AN EMPATHY EXERCISE

There are many ways we can cultivate empathy for others. Here's one activity to try: Identify someone who bothers you, who you are having a difficult time with. This could be a student, a colleague, or a boss. Discreetly attempt to take a photo with your phone of the person's shoes. If you can't do this, then pay attention to their shoes and make a mental note of them, or even create a sketch.

Throughout the course of the day, imagine being in this person's shoes. Use whatever knowledge you have about them to imagine them putting on their shoes in the morning, getting to school, going through their day, leaving school at the end of the day, going home, and so on. At the end of the day, record your reflections. What was the experience like? How did you feel? How did your thoughts and feelings about the other person shift?

Empathy is about opening your heart. I know that this can feel difficult, but I also know that our hearts can hold a lot. Teachers have many opportunities to do this, and developing empathy as a practice can actually make our work as educators easier.

Ideas for Effective Tier 3 Response to Intervention

In this article in *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Lynn Fuchs, Douglas Fuchs, and Amelia Malone (Vanderbilt University) suggest seven principles for choosing and evaluating Tier 3 interventions when a student's needs haven't been met at Tier 2:

- *Strength* – What is the track record of the intervention for students with the specific needs in each situation?
- *Dosage* – Is this the appropriate instructional group size, number of minutes for each session, and number of sessions each week?
- *Alignment* – Does this program address the student's academic and skill deficits, dovetail with grade-appropriate curriculum standards and rigor level, and avoid spending time on skills the student has already mastered?
- *Transfer* – Does the intervention help the student apply skills in other formats and contexts and see connections between mastered and related skills? "Transfer is a major obstacle for students with severe learning problems," say the authors, "and research shows the benefits of explicit transfer instruction."
- *Comprehensiveness* – Does the intervention explicitly use key principles of learning, including: providing explanations in simple, direct language; modeling efficient solution strategies (versus expecting students to discover them on their

Quote of the Week . . .



"The size of your success is measured by the strength of your desire; the size of your dream; and how you handle disappointment along the way"

Anonymous

own); checking to see if students have the necessary background knowledge and skills to be successful; providing enough practice for mastery; including systematic cumulative review; and gradually fading support as students become proficient?

- *Behavioral support* – Does the intervention incorporate instruction and monitoring in self-regulation and executive function and include effective strategies to minimize unproductive behavior? "The goal," say the authors, "is to encourage students with a history of academic failure to persevere through academic struggle and continue to work hard, aim high, and adopt a high standard of coherence, in which students are not satisfied with answers that do not make sense."

- *Individualization* – Does the program frequently collect progress-monitoring data and adjust instruction (teach-test-revise) in ways that address the student's complex learning needs?

"The Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity" by Lynn Fuchs, Douglas Fuchs, and Amelia Malone in *Teaching Exceptional Children*, March/April 2018 (Vol. 50, #4, p. 194-202), <http://bit.ly/2lfj4uX>; Lynn Fuchs can be reached at lynn.fuchs@vanderbilt.edu. Reprinted from Marshall Memo 725.

Reading Public Schools are proud to present a community forum with

Dr. David Walsh

Thursday, March 22nd at 7:00 p.m.

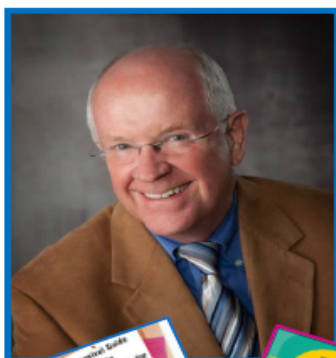
At the Reading Memorial High School / Performing Arts Center
62 Oakland Road, Reading, MA

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

Disney Tweet of the Week



"A little consideration, a little thought for others, makes all the difference." -- Eeyore (Winnie the Pooh)

Reading Public Schools Happenings

RMHS High Fives For This Week

Below are the Reading Memorial High School High Fives for this week. Special thanks to RMHS Teacher Steve McCarthy for sharing this information.

Chloe Doherty, Class of 2018



Chloe Doherty is being recognized for her impressive accomplishments in athletics, leadership, and service over the past four years. Chloe has been an active student at RMHS with a strong interest particularly with her English classes, and she describes Film and Literature and Missing Voices as two of her favorite courses. Athletically, Chloe has surfaced as a top athlete in the Class of 2018. She has been a member of both the Varsity Hockey Team and Varsity Lacrosse Team since her freshmen year, serving as a captain for the Girls' Hockey Team during both her junior and senior years. This year as a senior, Chloe adds lacrosse captain to that list. During her junior and senior years, Chloe was named as a Middlesex League All-Star in lacrosse. As a gifted athlete, Chloe decided to add cross country to her list of activities during her sophomore and junior years. Looking back on her four years athletically, there is no doubt that Chloe's top athletic moment was winning the State Championship as a member of the Girls' Hockey Team during her freshmen year. Chloe has also found the time to give back extensively to her community. Chloe spends much of her time outside of RMHS volunteering with children, teaching kids with disabilities how to skate, spending time with the elderly at Sunrise Retirement Home, and volunteering at a soup kitchen through St. Agnes Church. Next year, Chloe plans to attend a four-year college where she will major in English or History. Congratulations, Chloe!

Important Websites

RPS District Website
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/>

Kevin Spear, Class of 2018



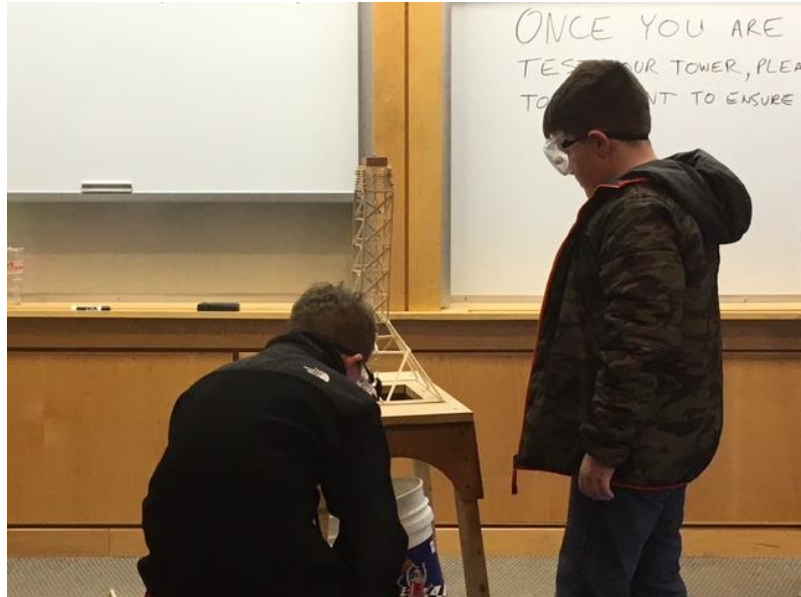
Kevin Spear is being recognized for his excellence in the areas of scholarship, athletics, and community engagement. Kevin has demonstrated his outstanding ability in all of these areas over the past four years at RMHS. Academically, Kevin has worked hard to earn himself a spot in the top 20% of his graduating class. Last year, Kevin was presented with the Scholarship Award for his achievement in business, which was a reflection of his strong interest in economics. This year, Kevin has challenged himself by taking a rigorous schedule of three Advanced Placement courses including Calculus, Physics, and Statistics. Athletically, Kevin has committed his time to his swimming career. For the past five years, he has been a member of his outside swim club, and swam as a member of the Boys' Varsity Swim Team during his freshmen, sophomore, and senior years. During his time as a member of the RMHS Swim Team, Kevin set seven school records, seven Middlesex League records, and the State Meet record in the 200 freestyle—earning him All-American Honors. Additionally, he was named as Middlesex League MVP in his sophomore season and this season, won the 200 freestyle at States, and the 100 freestyle at Sectionals—capping off an undefeated regular season. Over the years, Kevin has volunteered his time in the community, teaching swim lessons at the YMCA. He also volunteered during the last presidential election. Kevin has committed to Drexel University for the next four years where he plans to major in Finance and swim competitively. Congratulations, Kevin!

Coolidge and Parker Participate in Massachusetts State Science Olympiad

On Saturday, teams from Parker and Coolidge participated in the Massachusetts State Science Olympiad Tournament, held at Assumption College in Worcester. Over 30 teams participated from all over Massachusetts. Below are some pictures of the events. Congratulations to Coolidge who won the tournament and will now participate in the National Science Olympiad Tournament in Colorado in May!

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



Parker Students Testing Their Tower in the Tower Event



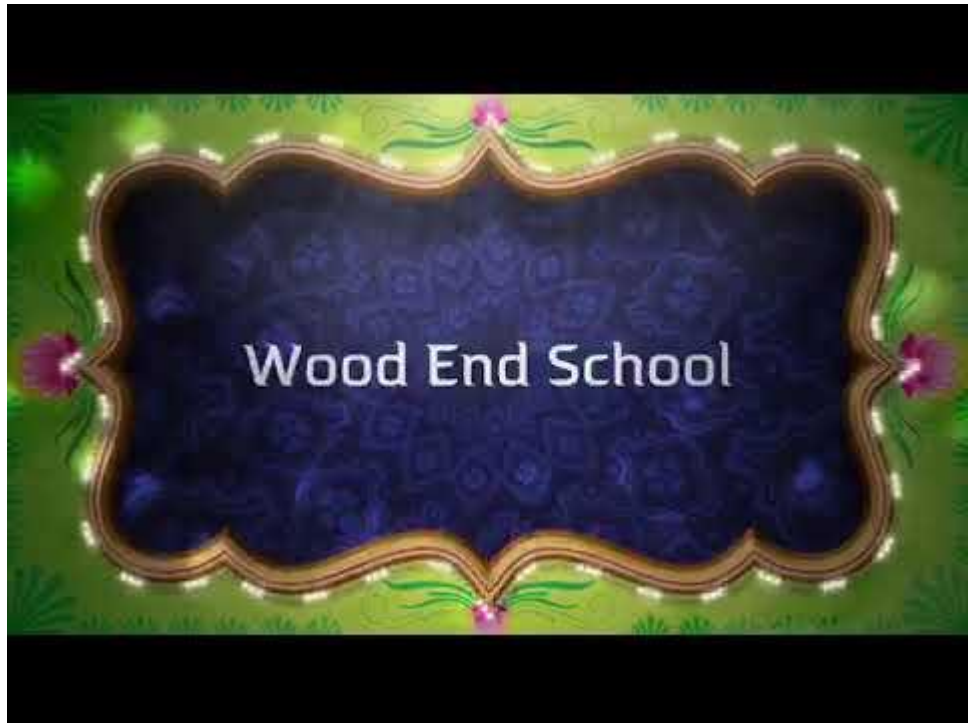
Coolidge Students Having Some Fun at Awards Ceremony



Coolidge Students Celebrating Their Championship

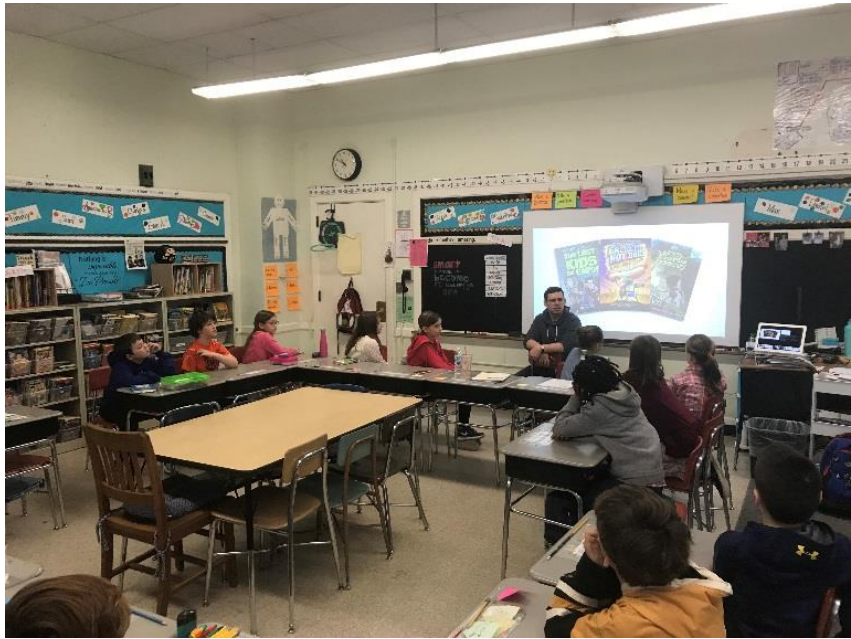
Read Across America

Several schools celebrated the birthday of Dr. Seuss with Read Across America. Below are some videos from Wood End to kickoff the event.



Joshua Eaton Author Visit

This past week, Joshua Eaton had a wonderful author visit from Max Brallier. Max is the author of "The Last Kids on Earth" and bases many of his stories and characters on Joshua Eaton! Students and staff had a great time learning about his writing process.



RMHS Basketball Teams Provide Community Service at Rosie's Place

Last Sunday, members of the Boy's and Girl's Basketball Teams prepared and served meals at Rosie's Place, a homeless shelter in Boston. Special thanks goes to the Reading Rotary Club for sponsoring the service and Lisa Gibbs for chaperoning.



Elementary Literacy Training

This past week, elementary teachers continued their literacy training when Maggie Roberts came back to work with upper elementary teachers on informational writing. Below is a picture of Maggie working with teachers and administrators.



Stepping Stones...

- Our thoughts go out to Birch Meadow Special Education Paraeducator **Sharon DiFiore** on the loss of a loved one recently.
- Congratulations to Barrows teacher **Jaclyn Gargano** on the birth of her son Anthony Joseph on March 1st weighing 6.14 lbs., 19" long.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
 - ✓ Orietta Shimansky, Daily Substitute, District
 - ✓ Courtney Toombs, Long Term Substitute Grade 4, Wood End
 - ✓ James Morley, Night Shift Custodian, Wood End
 - ✓ Darkling Rameau, Food Service, RMHS
 - ✓ Nicholas Cotter, Custodian Substitute, District
 - ✓ Robert Roan, Custodian Substitute, District
- **We have posted** a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

1.0 FTE Long-Term Substitute Spanish Teacher, Parker Middle School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=448
1.0 FTE Long-Term Substitute French Teacher, Parker Middle School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=449

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](#)

Have a Great Week!