



# Pathways

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

March 18, 2018

Volume 4, Number 27

## Upcoming Dates

- 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 Endslove 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
- March 26 – (7:00 p.m.) Parker Grade 5 Family Transition Night
- March 28 – (6:15 p.m.) Coolidge Grade 5 Family Transition Night; (6:45 p.m.) Coolidge Math & Science Night
- March 30 – Good Friday; Passover begins at Sundown
- April 3 – Local Election in the Hawkes Field House
- April 4 – Grade 6 – 8 Early Release

## Reading Students Use Their Voice To Support School Safety



*Reading Memorial High School Students*

This past week, thousands of students across the country participated in a voluntary seventeen minute walkout during the school day to eliminate school violence, support school safety, and to remember those students and staff who have lost their lives in school shootings across the country. At RMHS, Coolidge, and Parker, students participated in student led events and activities to support these causes. At Parker, a student led assembly was held in the auditorium where over 400 students participated. As students held signs with the names of the 17 Parkland victims, student Meredith Korwan opened the assembly:



*Parker Students Holding Up Names of Students Killed at Parkland*

## **Kudos and Accolades**

- Congratulations to gymnast Maddie Doyle on her first place finish on balance beam at the New England High School Gymnastics Championship.
- To the Facilities Department, under the direction of Joe Huggins, Kevin Cabuzzi, and Kevin Gerstner for all of their hard work in snow removal, the Taste of Metro North, and the NE FiRST Robotics Tournament. All of this occurred in a span of four days.

*"The purpose of this walkout is to highlight how important it is to have a school where we feel safe and supported. We are also hoping it will bring students and teachers together and will serve as a chance for us to show each other that we are committed to promoting an inclusive community here at Parker."*

After reading the names of the victims, students were asked to participate in a moment of silence to remember the students and teachers who lost their lives at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on February 14.

At Coolidge, students wore orange, the color that supports reducing gun violence and made ribbons (seen below) which were displayed in the front foyer of the school.



Reading Memorial High School held a student led assembly that was coordinated by the student council on Friday outside of the school where more than half the students participated. Several students spoke on topics ranging from making connections to students to mental health to supporting school safety. Each speech was passionately given by the students in support of this cause.



## Superintendent's Office

### Hours this Week

*All are welcome*

3/20 RMHS  
7:00 – 8:00 a.m.

3/21 Killam  
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

3/29 Parker  
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

3/30 Coolidge  
7:15 – 8:15 a.m.

4/3 Wood End  
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

4/4 Barrows  
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

## Student Services Office Hour and Classroom Visits This Week

### March 20

7:30-8:30 Office Hour at  
Joshua Eaton

9:30-10:30 Classroom  
Visits at Joshua Eaton

### March 21

8:30-10:00 Classroom  
Visits at Coolidge

The impressive piece about each of these events in our three secondary schools is that student voices drove these events in their own unique ways. Staff were not involved, except to make sure that all students, regardless if they participated or not, were safe and that each event was conducted in a safe and respectful manner. We would also like to thank the Reading Police Department for their guidance and support of these events.

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## RMHS Student Wins Art Award



Award Winning Photo, "Gramma"

We are pleased to announce that Reading Memorial High School's own Hannah Wiese (class of 2018) has earned a national Silver Medal in the 2018 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for her photograph entitled "Gramma" (see above). Hannah has demonstrated that she is among the most talented young artists and writers in the nation. Since 1923, the Awards have recognized creative teenagers from across the country. By receiving a Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Silver Medal, Hanna joins a legacy of celebrated authors and artists including Andy Warhol, Sylvia Plath, Truman Capote, Robert Redford, Joyce Carol Oates, and the renowned author and illustrator who will receive an Alumni Achievement Award this year, Marc Brown. Nearly 350,000 works of art and writing were submitted by students in grades 7–12 this year. Receiving a Silver Medal places Hannah within the top 1% of all submissions! Please join us in congratulating Hannah on this amazing achievement! A special recognition also goes out to her teacher, RMHS Art Teacher Kathleen Dailey.

## Quote of the Week . . .



"People inspire you or drain you-pick them wisely."

Hans F. Hansen

## 42 Ways To Raise An Empathetic Kid

By Michele Borba for [Parent Toolkit](#)

Empathy is the ability to identify with and feel for another person. It's the powerful quality that halts violent and cruel behavior and urges us to treat others kindly. Empathy emerges naturally and quite early, which means our children are born with a huge built-in advantage for success and happiness. But although children are born with the capacity for empathy, it must be nurtured and takes commitment and relentless, deliberate action every day and can't be left to chance.

Here are 42 simple ways to help us raise empathetic children despite a plugged-in, me-centered culture. These ideas are from my latest book, ***UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About Me World*** (Touchstone, June 2016), which is chock-full of research-based, proven strategies to boost empathy and teaches the nine essential habits of empathy (Emotional Literacy, Moral Identity, Perspective Taking, Moral Imagination, Self-Regulation, Practicing Kindness, Collaboration, Moral Courage and Altruistic leadership). None cost a dime or take a Ph.D. to implement, but using them will help us raise what we all hope for: good people with strong minds *and* caring hearts.

- 1. Talk feelings.** Kids need an emotion vocabulary to discuss feelings and guidance to become emotionally literate. Point out feelings in films, books, or people and use emotion words.
- 2. Be an emotion coach.** Find natural moments to connect face-to-face, listen, and validate your child's feelings while boosting emotional literacy ("You look happy. You seem sad.")
- 3. Share kind deeds.** Let's not assume kids know how to show others they care. Tune them up! "That girl looks like she could use a hug." "I bet that boy hopes someone asks him to play."
- 4. Make teamwork and caring a priority.** Insist that they consider others, even when it inconveniences them.
- 5. Teach: "Always look at the color of the talker's eyes."** Kids must learn to read people's emotions face to face, so enforce the "color of the talker's eye" rule to help them use eye contact, and pick up facial expressions, voice tone and emotional cues.
- 6. Make kindness matter.** Instead of, "I want you to be happy." Stress, "I want you to be kind."
- 7. Use "Feels + Needs" formula.** Draw attention to people's feelings, and then ask your child to guess what the person might feel or need in order to change his mood or be comforted.

## Disney Tweet of the Week



"A little consideration, a little thought for others, makes all the difference."

-- Eeyore (Winnie the Pooh)

- 8. Start kid book clubs.** It's a fun way for parents to connect with their kids and they with peers while boosting empathy and a love of reading. Try: *The Mother-Daughter Book Club*.
- 9. Point out the impact of uncaring.** When you see lack of caring or unkindness, don't be afraid to lay down the law and say 'Not in this family.'
- 10. Use the "2 Kind Rule."** Get kids in the habit of being kind. "Everyday you leave this house I expect you to say or do at least two kind things to someone else."
- 11. Develop a caring mindset.** Help your child see himself as kindhearted by praising the times he is.
- 12. Use nouns, not verbs.** Using the noun 'helper' may motivate children to help more. So if you want your child to see himself as a caring person, highlight times he is a helper. Or ways he could be more of a helper.
- 13. Focus on character.** Praising kids' character helps them internalize altruism as part of their identities. So use labels that stress your child's kind-heartedness. "You're the kind of person who likes to help others." Or "You're a considerate person."
- 14. Model kindness.** Want a caring child? Model the behaviors you want your child to adopt.
- 15. Do five kind acts a day.** One study found that kids who did five kind acts in one day (like writing a thank-you to a teacher, doing someone's chores, working at a shelter) - instead of spreading their acts over a week – gained the biggest happiness boost at the end of a six-week study period. So encourage kids to get on a kindness brigade.
- 16. Make kindness a regular happening.** Set an empty box by your door for kids to put gently used toys, books, and games. When filled, deliver it together to a shelter or less-fortunate family.
- 17. Get kids to reflect on kindness.** Instead of always asking, "What did you learn today?" Try: "What's something kind you did? Or "What's something nice that someone did for you?"
- 18. Imagine how the person feels.** To help your child identify with the feelings of others, have him imagine how the other person feels about a specific circumstance.
- 19. Share good news.** Cut out news stories about kids who are doing caring deeds and share them with your child and friends to inspire their hearts to do the same.
- 20. Stress the impact.** Help kids see how caring might make others feel. "How do you think Grandma will feel when she gets your card?" "Make your face look like Sally's when she opens your gift. You're right, she'll be so happy."

## 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>



- 21. Make kindness a routine.** Kindness is strengthened by seeing, hearing and practicing kindness. So find simple ways to tune it up and weave it into daily routines.
- 22. Reduce your MEs and increase your WEs.** For instance: What should we do?" "Which would be better for *us*?" "Let's take a 'We' vote, to do what *we* choose."
- 23. Halt the "parading."** Praise when deserved, but focus on your child's "inside-out" qualities: their kindness, respect, courage so she sees herself as a caring person.
- 24. Make sure at least half your questions are about your child's friends.** You'll teach your child to think about the world in a different way—that it's not all about *her*.
- 25. Create a "save, spend, give" system.** Make allowances come with the caveat that kids give a predetermined small portion to the charity of their choice as well as saving a portion.
- 26. Make service a family affair.** Provide opportunities for your child to experience giving to others in your community.
- 27. Help your child create a "caring code."** Talk to your child often about the kind of person he wants to become, how he wants to make others feel, and what he stands for.
- 28. Urge kids to serve.** Encourage your kids and friends to start a "Care About Others Club" in their neighborhood, school, scout troop, faith group, or community organization.
- 29. Give back frequently.** Don't assume that a one time visit to the food bank will open your kids' heart. Empathy is more likely to be expanded with frequent face-to-face visits.
- 30. Teach copers.** Self-regulation helps keep empathy open so teach your child to use deep, slow breaths ("exhale twice as long as you inhale") to reduce stress and manage strong emotions at the first sign of stress.
- 31. Switch sides.** Sibling battle or friendship tiff? Ask conflicting parties involved to "reverse sides" and tell you what happened, but from the other's side to stretch perspective taking.
- 32. Be "feeling detectives."** Encourage kids to "investigate" how other people might be feeling. "Listen to the boy's voice. How do you think he feels?" "Look how that girl has her fists so tight. See the scowl on her face? What do you think she's saying to the other girl?"
- 33. Choose a summer camp that stresses fun.** A diverse mix of campers doesn't hurt either!

## Contact Us

*The Journey* newsletter is published weekly for Reading Public School Staff. If you have anything that you would like to share, please email your info to John Doherty at:

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

- 34. Set regular “unplugged” times.** Empathy is learned face to face. Reclaim conversation!
- 35. Hold family movie nights.** Films can be portals to help our children understand other worlds and other views, to be more open to differences and cultivate new perspectives.
- 36. Insist that kids read!** Not only does reading literary fiction (*Charlotte’s Web*, *Wednesday Surprise*, *Wonder*) boost kids academic performance, but it also boosts empathy.
- 37. Find ways to gain a new view.** Depending on your child’s age you might visit a nursing home, homeless shelter, animal shelter, or soup kitchen. The more kids experiences different perspectives, the more likely they can empathize with others whose needs and views differ from theirs.
- 38. Ask, “How would you feel?”** Post questions to help your child think about how she would feel if someone had done the same behavior to her. “Lucas, how would you feel if Aaron yelled out that you can’t hit?” “How would you feel if someone said that to you?”
- 39. Use real events.** The newspaper or television news is rich with possibilities to stretch kids’ empathy. “The fire destroyed their homes. What do you think those kids are feeling and thinking? What can we do to let them know we care?”
- 40. Capture caring moments.** Make sure to display prominently photos of your kids engaged in kind and thoughtful endeavors so they recognize that “caring matters.”
- 41. Use “earshot praise.”** Let your kids overhear (without them thinking they’re supposed to) you describing those qualities to others. “I’m so proud of how kind my child is because...”
- 42. Make a kindness jar.** Each time a parent or child sees *another* family member act in a kind way, they add a penny, small stone or plastic bead to a large plastic jar. Review the kind acts daily, and if you’re using money, when the jar is full donate the money to a charity of your family’s choice.

***Michele Borba, Ed.D.*** is an award-winning educational psychologist and an expert in parenting, bullying and character development. She is the author of 22 books including her latest, ***UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World***. Check out: [micheleborba.com](http://micheleborba.com) or follow her on Twitter @micheleborba.

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## Four Counseling Strategies for Young Adolescents

In this article in *Independent School*, author/consultant Amy Homayoun says that “many of today’s students have difficulty identifying what they truly enjoy or giving themselves the freedom to explore new interests, because they are fixated on an external definition of success and achievement.” She offers several ways for teachers and counselors to address this challenge:

- *Create opportunities for self-awareness and self-acceptance.* Homayoun suggests asking students questions like:

- What is something new you want to try this semester?
- What skill would you like to improve?
- What is one area where you are really proud of your development over the past year?
- Which personal skills have you developed well?
- What do you love about yourself?
- If there is one new interest you could pursue, what would it be and why?

These don't all have to be solo activities; some may involve collaboration with peers or adults.

- *Clarify values and close the believing-doing gap.* Homayoun often gets an enthusiastic response when she asks adolescents to identify their top 3-5 values from this list: abundance; commitment; compassion; connecting to others; creativity; determination; emotional health; emotional wellness; empathy; care of the environment; family; flexibility; freedom; friendship; fun; humor; integrity; joy; kindness; leadership; loyalty; personal growth; physical health; privacy; recognition; respect; service; spirituality; trust; vitality. Having identified their top values, Homayoun has students reflect on whether their daily habits are moving them closer or further away from their ideals. She believes kids like this exercise because they often feel adults are pushing particular values on them rather than asking them to identify their own.

- *Focus on daily habits and incremental progress.* Many teens are victims of technology overload, dysfunctional multitasking, and sleep deprivation. They need to be guided toward a personalized strategy for dealing with social media, the Internet, and organizing schoolwork and other obligations – with specifics on focusing on one thing at a time, organizing work, and getting enough sleep.

- *Redefine failure.* By middle and high school, many kids are leery of taking healthy risks and trying new things because they're afraid of failing. "The only real failure," says Homayoun, "comes when we don't allow ourselves to explore opportunities that are in line with our values, interests, and personal goals." Sometimes it's wise for a student to "take a B" by trying something that doesn't work out, or make a choice to not excel in one activity in order to fully commit to another – for example, a boy who pushed back on his family's tradition of baseball excellence in order to spend serious time with the basketball team.

- *Bolster resiliency and buoyancy through time-travel reflection.* It's often helpful for a student to look back and ponder progress, new opportunities, and things that could have gone differently, considering questions like:

- What has happened that you are proud of?
- What was something positive that you learned through your experience?
- If something didn't go as planned, what was something you learned that was beneficial for you?

"One Size Does Not Fit All" by Ana Homayoun in *Independent School*, Spring 2018 (Vol. 77, #3, p. 80-84), no e-link available  
Reprinted from Marshall Memo 727.

*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.**

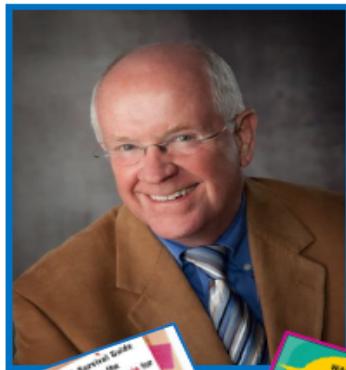
**At the Reading Memorial High School / Performing Arts Center  
62 Oakland Road, Reading, MA**

**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**

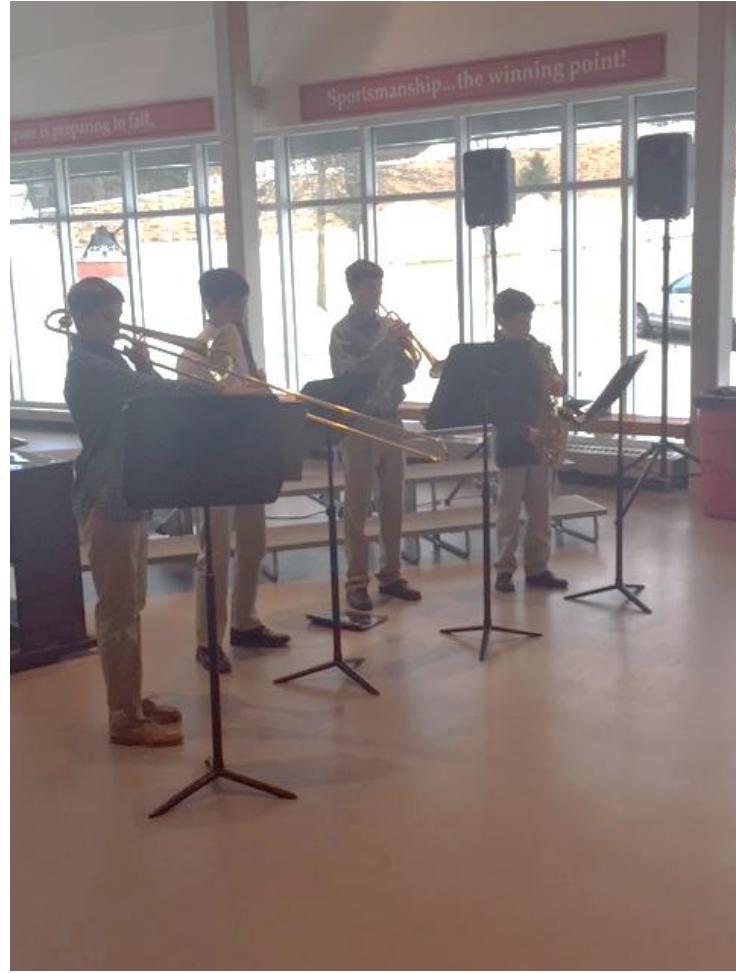


**Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence**

## **Reading Public Schools Happenings**

### **Taste of Metro North**

On Thursday evening, the Reading Rotary Club held its annual *Taste of Metro North* event in the RMHS Field House. Reading Rotary is a community organization that provides financial and community service support to our community, including the Reading Public Schools. Student band and chorus performances highlighted the event and our Reading Public Schools Food Service Department also participated in the event. Below are some photos of the event.



*Middle School Ensemble*



*RMHS Crescendudes Vocal Group*



*RMHS School Nutrition Department*

## Stepping Stones...

- Congratulations to Wood End teacher **Danielle Gianatassio** on the birth of her son Anthony Christopher on March 8<sup>th</sup> weighing 7.5 lbs., 20 inches long.
- Our thoughts go out to Central Office Administrative Assistant **Kristyn Cohen** on the loss of a loved one recently.
- Our thoughts go out to former Killam secretary **Priscilla Osterlind** on the loss of a loved one recently.
- **We have posted** a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

Special Education Compass Program Paraeducator, 56.5 hours biweekly, Birch Meadow Elementary School

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=456>

Long-Term Substitute Paraeducator Tutor – 32 hours biweekly, Wood End Elementary School

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=457>

## Blazing Trails...

**"Amplifying Student Voice."** Too often, student voice is treated as a novelty. But it should surprise no one that the same people who spend a majority of their time in school would have a lot of constructive ideas about it. In Parkland, Florida, students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School are using their voices to ignite the #neveragain movement, demanding action on gun reform. For these students, survivors of a horrific school shooting, "There's grieving obviously, but we're breathing and coping through our voices, not through our tears," says 11th grader

Cameron Kasky. This ASCD Express issue looks at student-led and school-based collaborations that elevate student voice and agency. [Read More](#)

**"Transformational Six: Ignite Student Understanding."** Instructional leaders should focus on student understanding. Schmoker (2005) wrote, "It starts with a group of teachers who meet regularly as a team to identify essential learning, develop common formative assessments, analyze current levels of achievement, set achievement goals, share strategies, and then create lessons to improve upon those levels." This ASCD Edge post explores what are the existing barriers to student understanding in your school district. [Read More](#)

**"Encouraging Student Voice with Project Based Learning."** Student Voice is something many people talk about in education right now, but it can be hard to find out how to actually give students a voice in their education as noted in this ASCD InService post. "It is something I used to struggle with as an educator. It bothered me that I couldn't find a good way for student voice in the way I ran my class." [Read More](#)

**"Parkland Students Prove Adept At Using Social Media To Control Narrative."** The New York Times reports the negative reaction Parkland students had to Education Secretary Betsy DeVos' visit on Twitter illustrates their ability to "[overtake] another adult official's narrative." The Times reports "it has become obvious that many of the most well-known students at Stoneman Douglas in Parkland, Fla., are adept at using social media, and Twitter in particular. ... With their consistent tweeting of stories, memes, jokes and video clips, the students have managed to keep the tragedy that their school experienced - and their plan to stop such shootings from happening elsewhere - in the news for weeks, long after past mass shootings have faded from the headlines." [Read More](#)

**"Malawi Schools Focus on Self-Defense, Empowerment."** Female students in some Malawi schools are learning about self-defense and self-empowerment via courses taught by the Malawian nongovernmental organization Ujamaa Pamodzi. The program focuses on building skills among 11- to 16-year-old girls. [Read More](#)

**Have a Great Week!**