



Pathways

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

April 1, 2018

Volume 9, Number 29

Upcoming Dates

- April 3 – Local Election in the Hawkes Field House
- April 4 – Grade 6 – 8 Early Release
- April 8 – (2:00 p.m.) RMHS Formal Recital in the Endslo PAC
- April 9 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- April 10 – 11 – (5:30 p.m.) Artsfest at RMHS
- April 11 – (5:30 p.m.) Artsfest at RMHS
- April 13 – (11:00 a.m.) Grade PreK – 12 Early Release; Teacher In-Service Day; (6:30 p.m.) RMHS Junior Prom at Danversport Yacht Club
- April 16 – Patriots Day – Schools and Offices Closed
- April 17 – 20 – Spring Break - No School for Students; Offices Open

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to the Birch Meadow staff and students involved in the production of "Birch Meadow the Musical"
- Congratulations to the RISE Preschool staff and students involved in the production of "The Three Little Pigs"

Christine Kelley Named Reading Assistant Superintendent *Current Pentucket Assistant Superintendent Will Begin This Summer*



On Wednesday, March 28, the Reading School Committee approved by unanimous vote, Superintendent John Doherty's recommendation to appoint Christine Kelley as the next Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching for the Reading Public Schools. Chris is currently the Assistant Superintendent for the Pentucket Regional School District and will transition from Pentucket to the Reading Public Schools this summer.

In addition to her role as Assistant Superintendent, Chris is currently the Co-Chair of the Reading Education Foundation and an adjunct professor at American International College's Masters in Education and Administration program. She has held the Pentucket post for the current school year and last year served as the Principal of the Pierce Elementary School in Brookline. She had served as the interim High School Principal in Winchester (2015-2016) and as Principal of the Lynch Elementary School in Winchester from 2010 to 2015. In addition, Chris was an elementary school Principal in Woburn from 2006 to 2010. She was also a classroom teacher for 18 years.

In her application Kelley wrote "As an almost lifelong resident of Reading, this community is tremendously important to me. I have a strong interest in serving the Reading Public Schools team because I care deeply about the strong work that has been done. Further, I am committed to the future our community's schools. I have spent my career with a passion for teaching and learning. Much of my work as teacher, administrator and as adjunct professor has centered around working with

Superintendent's Office

Hours this Week

All are welcome

- 4/3 Wood End
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.
- 4/4 Barrows
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.
- 4/11 Birch Meadow
12:15 – 1:15 p.m.
- 4/13 RMHS
7:15 – 8:15 a.m.

Student Services Office

Hour and Classroom

Visits This Week

- 4/3 Wood End Office
Hour (7:45-8:45 a.m.)
- 4/3 Classroom Visits at
Wood End (8:45-9:30
a.m.)

teachers. I believe the role of Assistant Superintendent in Reading is a uniquely good fit for my experience and work ethic."

Kelley was one of four finalists to replace Craig Martin as Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Teaching and Learning. The other finalists were Brent Conway, Principal of Melrose Middle School, Joanne King, Principal of the Wood End School in Reading and Jennifer Roberts, Principal of the Essex Elementary School. There had been 37 applicants for the position.

The Reading Public Schools would like to thank all of those who participated in the screening process, including the Screening Committee and those staff and community members who participated in the open microphone sessions and site visits.

A Message From Jams for Jake

Dear Community Member,

I am writing on behalf of the organizers of Jams for Jake to share some recent successes we've had, thanks in large part to your generous support last fall.

We understand that shame and stigma are significant barriers to treatment for individuals battling addiction, and family members may not want to admit that their loved one is facing something life threatening.

This is why a key aspect of our mission is to keep talking about addiction. It seems simple, but by repeatedly presenting addiction resources in inclusive community settings without judgment or moralizing, we believe we can help to normalize the struggle that so many of our community members face, and prevent more overdose deaths from happening.

On February 27th we held a free, comprehensive Opioid Education and Narcan Training at the Coolidge Middle School in Reading. It was well attended and the feedback we got was incredibly positive. For individuals who could not make it to the training or perhaps did not feel comfortable attending in person, we live streamed the event across social media for people to watch from home.

One woman who attended shared that she worked as a pediatric nurse at a hospital, and neither she nor her colleagues had learned about how to use Naloxone (Narcan) to reverse an opioid overdose, but that she was now going to suggest this training to her director. There is an enormous need for this type of education, and we hope to continue running these trainings. It is our hope that the more education there is, the less stigma there will be, and the more overdoses will be reversed and prevented.

In addition to that training, we also held our first "Let It Out" Coffeehouse on Friday, March 23rd at the American Legion in Reading. This event blew our expectations out the water, and we had almost one hundred attendees. The night featured an open mic as well as several "featured performers," including a dance company and local musicians. Two middle school students kicked things off for the night, setting the bar incredibly high, and was rounded out by an unbelievably talented group of high school seniors.

Our focus for this event was on getting this important demographic involved, and we did so by reaching out to students on a few separate visits to the high school. The results did not disappoint. We were happy to provide a platform for so many young musicians and artists

Quote of the Week . . .



We are reminded how short life really is, and how we are just passing through. So, all the people you haven't told you love lately, tell them, and live your days like you mean it.

Hal Sutton

to showcase their talents and creativity at a positive, sober event. In addition to free food and refreshments, we also had a full table of mental health and addiction resources for people to take home with them if they wished, and Brittany even gave an impromptu one-on-one Narcan training to a few people who had questions.

We were also able to introduce a project we are incredibly excited for: a community service grant open to all current RMHS students. With the support of the school administration, we will be continuing to spread the word and solicit community service project proposals from students. After the June 15th deadline, we will be choosing one project that we feel is innovative and will have a positive impact in the community, and with the student as the lead, will help provide support and resources to make their vision a reality. The student who is selected will also receive a \$500 grant to fund their arts education/enrichment, and a featured spot in the lineup at this year's Jams for Jake.

We cannot wait to see what these students come up with. We know their ideas will not disappoint!

Thank you again for your support at last year's Jams for Jake. We hope to continue to bring positive growth to the community. Keep an eye on www.JamsforJake.com for news of our upcoming events, information about the community service grant, and details of this year's Jams for Jake!

With gratitude,

Lauren Anderson
Director, The BeatHeart Foundation
AKA "Friends of Jake"

Reading Holds First Lego League Science and Engineering Exhibition

The FIRST LEGO League challenges kids to think like engineers and scientists. During this year's Hydro Dynamics season, each team chose and solved a real-world problem in the Project. They also built, tested, and programmed an autonomous robot using LEGO MINDSTORMS technology to solve a set of missions in the Robot Game. Throughout their experience, each team operates under the FIRST LEGO League's set of Core Values, celebrating discovery, teamwork, and Gracious Professionalism. The Core Values are the heart of the FIRST LEGO League. Kids learn that friendly competition and mutual gain are not separate goals, and that helping one another is the foundation of teamwork.

On Sunday, March 25th, 2018 the Reading FLL Science & Engineering Exhibition was held at the RMHS Field House and included sixteen teams comprised of elementary and middle school students. Each of these teams have been meeting since October and this event was the culmination of all of their hard work. The Coolidge School Science Olympiad had a display in the lobby area for everyone to see as well.

Each of the teams was judged by professional and parent volunteers from Reading. Teams were judged in three categories: Robot Games, Project Presentations, and Robot Design & Software Assessment. The Ramoras from Wood End Elementary School and the [Insert Catchy Name Here] team from Coolidge Middle School were the overall winners of the day. Congratulations to both teams for their wins and to all of the teams for their hard work! Thank you to all of the coaches for their time and dedication to the students and to the FLL Program!

Disney Tweet of the Week



"Don't just fly, soar."

-- Dumbo (Dumbo)



CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Aiming for Discipline Instead of Punishment

Brain-aligned discipline isn't compliance-driven or punitive—it's about supporting students in creating sustainable changes in behavior.

By **Lori Desautels** for **Edutopia**

There are many perspectives on the topic of discipline in our classrooms and schools, and I'd like to explore the idea of using brain-aligned discipline with students who have adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

Traditional punishment with these students only escalates power struggles and conflict cycles, breeding an increased stress response in the brain and body. Punishment is used to try to force compliance. The vast majority of school discipline procedures are forms of punishment that work best with the students who need them the least.

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?



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/>

With our most difficult students, the current way schools try to discipline students does not change their behavior, and often it escalates the problems.

Discipline, unlike punishment, is proactive and begins before there are problems. It means seeing conflict as an opportunity to problem solve. Discipline provides guidance, focuses on prevention, enhances communication, models respect, and embraces natural consequences. It teaches fairness, responsibility, life skills, and problem solving.

There are times when students need to be removed from the classroom and school for aggressive, volatile actions, but upon re-entry we should make a plan of action that begins to address these actions in these brain-aligned ways.

The neurobiological changes caused by chronic negative experiences and a history of adversity can trigger a fear response in the brain. As Pam Leo says, "A hurtful child is a hurt-filled child. Trying to change her behavior with punishment is like trying to pull off only the top part of the weed. If we don't get to the root, the hurtful behavior pops up elsewhere." In children the fear response often looks aggressive, defiant, and oppositional.

Young people with ACEs have brains that are in a constant state of alarm. In this alarm state, consequences don't register properly. Discipline can only be done when both the educator and the student are calm and self-regulated. If they aren't, behavioral difficulties will escalate.

In a brain-aligned model of discipline, we must teach the behaviors we want to see, laying the groundwork for prevention systems and strategies.

PREVENTIVE BRAIN-ALIGNED STRATEGIES

Preventive systems are taught as procedures and routines. They are collaborative and filled with choice. Their purpose is to create a sustainable behavioral change, not just compliance or obedience for a short period of time.

I teach students about their neuroanatomy, so they understand what happens in their brains when they become stressed, angry, or anxious. When we understand this, we feel relieved and empowered.

In morning meetings or whole class time, I discuss the prefrontal cortex, amygdala, and neuroplasticity with students. We identify and make lists of our emotional triggers and coping strategies, and I teach students to use their breath and movement to calm their stress response systems.

Is there an adult in the school who connects with this student and has a space where the student can go if they need to regroup and calm their stress response systems? Are you teaching these procedures ahead of a time when a student needs to regulate away from the class?

Could your school create a area for both teachers and students to go to when they need to reset their emotional state? This area could be stocked with paper, markers, crayons, water, soft music and lighting, a jump rope, a stationary bike, lavender scented cotton balls, jars for affirmations or worries, or a rocking chair. Students will need to be taught ahead of time

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

how to use this area, which they should need for just two to five minutes in order to feel refocused and ready to return to class.

EXAMPLES OF NATURAL, NON-PUNITIVE CONSEQUENCES

Name-calling: Have the student create a book of positive affirmations for the class, or have them create a list of “kind words” and teach them to a younger class.

Low-level physical aggression (pushing, kicking, hitting): Some consequences could include giving the student a new learning space in the room or a new spot in line, or they could be tasked with performing an act of kindness or service for the hurt person.

If this occurs at recess, the student could be tasked with assisting a teacher on recess duty in monitoring the playground, noticing everything that is going well. They can roam around the playground, still getting the exercise they need. Or again they could perform an act of kindness toward the student who they hit.

Inappropriate language: This calls for a discussion when both student and teacher are in a calm brain state. Sometimes words that are inappropriate at school are used at home, so we need to understand the cultural context and have a discussion with the student.

An older student could research the words they used and report to you on why they’re not school words; younger students could try to write out what they were trying to convey using school-friendly language or drawings.

Incomplete assignments: Have a one-on-one discussion to convey what this behavior communicates to you. Ask if something has changed at home or school, or if the student doesn’t understand what is required. Make a plan with the student and possibly a parent for making up the work that has been missed. And consider assigning a student mentor to help the student.

The research is clear. Our brains learn best in a state of relaxed alertness. Our discipline systems must begin to shift toward creating this state in all the members of our school community.

Reading Public Schools Happenings

RMHS High Fives for This Week

Below are this week’s RMHS High Fives. Special thanks goes to RMHS Teacher Steve McCarthy for providing this information.

Jill D'Alessio, Class of 2018

Jill is being recognized for her excellence in academics, athletics, leadership, and service. Academically, Jill is an outstanding student in the top 20% of her class. She is a distinguished member of both National Honor Society and Spanish National Honor Society. She has also been recognized as a top performer at RMHS by earning Century Club recognition last year.



This year, Jill has continued to challenge herself by taking AP European History and AP Spanish and performing very well in both. In terms of athletics and activities, Jill has been a 2-year member of the Girls Varsity Soccer Team and a 4-year member of the Girls Varsity Lacrosse Team, where this year, she serves as one of the captains. Over the past two years, Jill has also been a very dedicated officer for the Class of 2018 in the role of Social Chair. In this role, she has been an essential contributor helping to plan for and manage a very successful Junior Prom last year and helping to coordinate the never-ending number of exciting senior events this school year. Jill also finds time in her busy schedule to give back to her local community in a variety of ways. She serves as the secretary of the Samantha's Harvest Club, where she helps raise awareness by fundraising to support programs that directly enhance the lives of individuals with Down Syndrome. She also volunteers at the Reading Food Pantry and at St. Agnes Church, where during the summers, she teaches religious education to middle school aged children. Lastly, Jill has spent the past eight summers working at a science camp in Winchester with her grandmother, helping school-aged children discover the wonders of science through interactive activities and experiments. Next year, Jill will be attending Providence College where she will study Elementary Education and Special Education.

Yanni Pang, Class of 2018

Yanni is being recognized for his outstanding achievements in academics, athletics, and service. Academically, Yanni has challenged himself throughout his time at RMHS--taking a number of difficult courses including AP Chemistry, AP Computer Science Principles, AP Biology, and Engineering. In his junior year during Real-World Problem Solving week, Yanni was recognized within his team as the MVP for his overall contributions, innovation, and leadership. This year, he has enjoyed the rigor and variety of his classes—especially Engineering, where recently he and his classmates have been constructing a robot. In terms of athletics and activities, Yanni is a 4-year member of the Boys Varsity Swim Team and has qualified for States in two of those four years. He also has been a dedicated member of the Student Library Assistants for the past four years, helping to manage pass distribution and to assist with the various technology issues that arise. Yanni is also very involved in a number of service opportunities--both locally and internationally. As a member of the Grace Chapel, he volunteers his time helping to supervise preschool-aged children during religious services. Additionally, Yanni has participated in three separate church missions including to New Mexico, Trinidad, and Guatemala. In these interesting and exciting service

opportunities, he helped communities to renovate local recreation centers and helped teach children at surrounding vacation bible school programs. Lastly, in spite of his very busy schedule, Yanni even finds the time to work as a fry cook and cashier at Chick-fil-A! Next year, Yanni will be attending a 4-year college to study Engineering or Computer Science. Congratulations, Yanni!



Birch Meadow the Musical

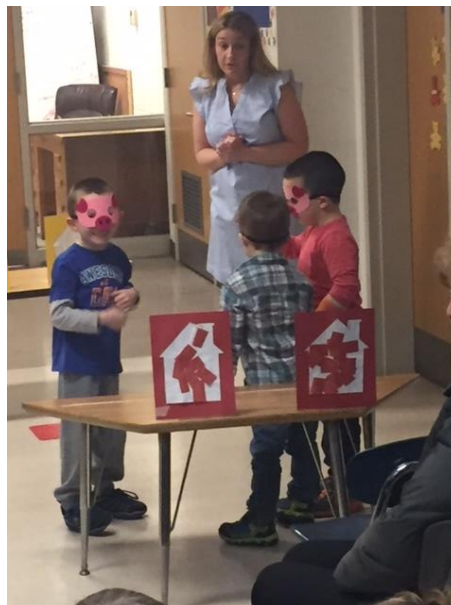
On Thursday evening, over 200 students from the Birch Meadow Elementary School participated in *Birch Meadow the Musical*, which was held at the William Endslow Performing Arts Center. The Musical was an original story, script, songs, and music by Birch Meadow parent, Karen Kalafatas. The Musical was directed by Caitlin Beckman and Co-Produced by Danielle Slater and Karen Kalafatas. Below are some pictures from the show, which was performed in front of a sold out audience and raised \$10,000 for the Birch Meadow Elementary School.

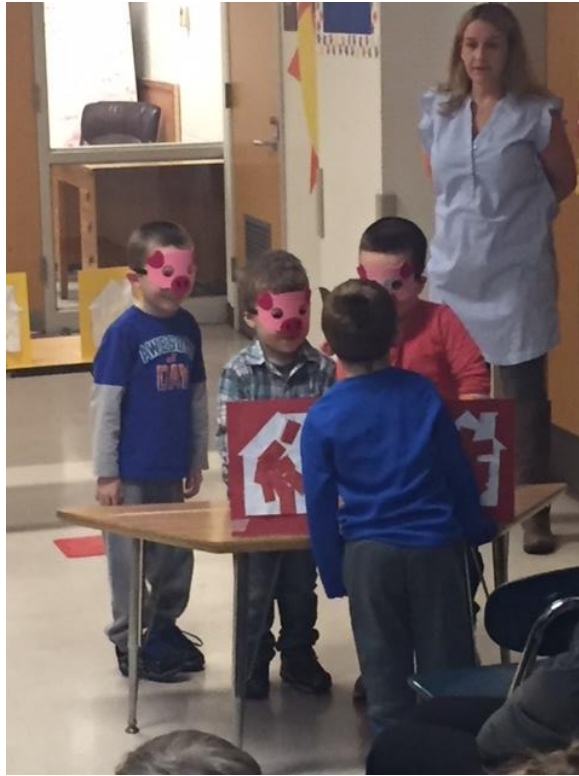




RISE Students Present Three Little Pigs

Last week, several students in the RISE Preschool Program presented the Three Little Pigs. Below are some pictures of the performance. Congratulations to the students on a job well done!





Stepping Stones...

- Our thoughts go out to RISE Paraeducator **Roberta Crosby** who lost a loved one recently.
- Our thoughts go out to Parker Paraeducator **Maria Arthur** who lost a loved one recently.
- Our thoughts go out to Birch Meadow Learning Center teacher **Laurette Cullen** who lost a loved one recently.
- Our thoughts go out to retired Birch Meadow teacher **Janis Gerety** who lost a loved one recently.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
 - ✓ Nathaniel Tarin, Long Term Special Ed. Paraeducator Substitute, Killam
 - ✓ Derek Galante, Baseball Coaching Assistant, RMHS
 - ✓ David Lautman, Boys Freshman Lacrosse Coach, RMHS
 - ✓ Brian Sheahan, Custodial Substitute, Facilities
- We have posted a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

Internal Posting

2018-2019 High School Advisorships, Reading Memorial High School
2018-2019 Middle School Advisorships, Coolidge and Parker Middle Schools
2018-2019 Elementary School Advisorships, Elementary Schools
2018-2019 District Advisorships, Reading Public Schools

Blazing Trails...

"5 Strategies to Unlock Innovation in Schools." Is your school's potential tethered to a culture of no, where risk-taking and big thinking are silenced by the status quo? Building a "culture of yes" unlocks possibilities and creates contagious energy where ideas flourish and people grow. Assess where your school sits on the Yes-O-Meter and find out what to do to shift culture in a positive direction in this ASCD Express post. [Read More](#)

"ASCD Student Growth Center Webinar: A School's Journey to Standards-Based Grading." Curious about making the shift to standards-based grading? ASCD Student Growth Center's free monthly webinar series presents one school's journey through the process. Listen to an online conversation between Rachel Levine Marcotte of Colegio Jorge Washington in Cartagena, Colombia, and ASCD Student Growth Center's Lee Ann Jung as they discuss the school's implementation of standards-based grading. The conversation includes what went well, pitfalls to avoid, and the design of the school's new standards-based report card. [Read More](#)

"The 19 Behaviors Most Essential to a Positive School Culture." Positive climates do not just happen. They arise from the practices and rituals implemented and encouraged within a school. Tracking and reinforcing the behaviors that contribute to a positive school climate -- especially the 19 behaviors research identifies as most likely to positively affect a school -- is a practical way to focus on the behaviors that have the greatest influence in creating a safe, supportive learning environment in this ASCD Express post. [Read More](#)

"The Best Feedback Focuses on the Future." Feedback should look to help someone learn going forward and not simply be a list of criticisms, writes Shubha Apte. "Feedback can work wonders for continuous development and is often considered a gift for improvement," she writes. [Read More](#)

"Creators of a New School in India Focus on Happiness." A new school in India will feature communal spaces and small, separate buildings to help support students' happiness, character and emotional intelligence. Planners of the school considered a study from Harvard University linking the benefits of strong relationships to later success. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!