



Pathways

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

June 3, 2018

Volume 4, Number 37

Upcoming Dates

- June 3 – (1:00 p.m.) Graduation in the Hawkes Field House
- June 4 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- June 5 – (7:30 p.m.) RISE PTN Meeting
- June 11 – (1:00 p.m.) Grades 5 & 8 Move-Up Day; (6:30 p.m.) RMHS Future Freshmen Night in the Hawkes Field House
- June 20 – Last Day of School; (11:00 a.m. Release Prek - 12

RMHS Participates in Envirothon *RMHS Students Earn 4th Place in Water Event*

Recently, Reading Memorial High School Participated in the 31st Annual Massachusetts Envirothon competition on Friday, May 18th at the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park in Uxbridge, Mass. The approximately 200 students from 27 Massachusetts communities also tested their knowledge of the area's soils, forests, water, and wildlife as part of the competition. For the past school year, high school students across the commonwealth have been studying watersheds, water infrastructure and the impact of recent damaging storms in their community, and formulating steps their local leaders can take to protect land and water ecosystems in the watershed.

At this outdoor field event, teams rotated through four "ecostations" where they answered written questions and engaged in hands-on activities such as soil analysis, wildlife habitat assessment, tree identification, and water quality measures. Each team had up to 10 participants and split into specialized sub-teams during the competition, each focusing their efforts at different ecostations.

At the fifth station, the Current Issue, each team gave a 15-minute presentation on "Partnering with Nature in Watersheds" to a panel of judges. Teams researched the Current Issue in their own community in preparation for their presentation. Each panel of judges included concerned citizens and environmental professionals from government agencies, non-profit organizations, academia and private industry. Teams were asked to assess water infrastructure resources and needs, identify an important partnering opportunity, and make specific recommendations for action.

Congratulations to RMHS students Lisa Li and William Qiu took 4th place in the Water Ecostation at the Massachusetts Envirothon Competition last week. Overall, the RMHS team placed 16th.

A special thanks to RMHS Science Teacher Martha Moore for coaching the students on these events.

The 2018 Massachusetts Envirothon is made possible through the contributions of partnering agencies and organizations, including financial support from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, the U.S. Forest

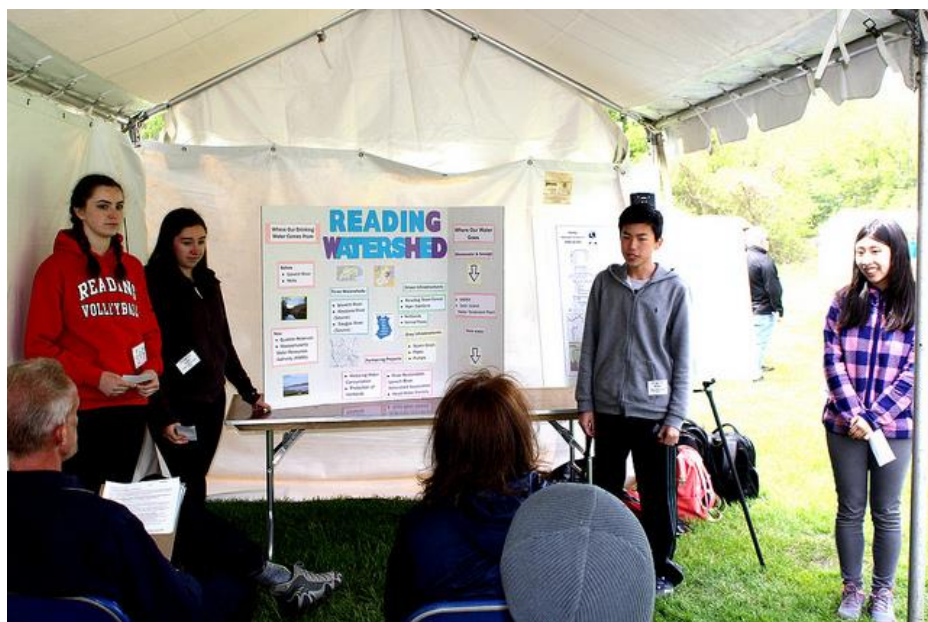
Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to boys & girls lacrosse and baseball on recent wins.
- Good luck to boys & girls lacrosse, boys tennis, baseball and track as they enter the MIAA post season tournament action this week.
- Good luck to RMHS track athletes Shannon Parks, Haley Lightbody, Maeve Swanton and Chris Wheeler who will be competing in the All State track meet on Saturday.

Service, the Massachusetts Grange, Environmental Business Council of New England, Wegman's supermarkets and local conservation districts.

Fifteen federal and state environmental agencies, conservation districts, non-profit organizations, higher educational institutions, and businesses provide expertise and help organize the event. Dozens of volunteers were also on hand to handle all the event logistics from setting up tents, tables and chairs, checking-in teams, serving food, scoring tests and cleaning up.

For more information on the Massachusetts Envirothon visit www.massenvirothon.org.



A Little Prep Goes a Long Way

A bit of logistical work in the classroom can help new teachers wrap up for summer—and ease the back to school crunch as well.

By **Kim Lepre** for **Edutopia Magazine**

At this point in the year, many new teachers are just trying to make it to the end in one piece, eager for summer break. They're not planning or preparing for anything aside from handing in their keys and walking out the door. With little to no prior experience, they assume that's what teachers do.

Veterans can tell them that if they truly want to head out that door right behind the students, feeling carefree and blasting Alice Cooper's "School's Out " from the car stereo, they must plan ahead.

So here are four areas new teachers—and veterans—can start taking action on now in order to have a stellar end of the school year.

BACKWARDS PLANNING AND CALENDARING

We know we need to backwards plan our lessons starting with the standards—the same principle holds true for activities. If we take a close look at the school calendar, we may see some dates that, at first glance, seem insignificant.

We may have events calendared in our own calendar but haven't yet considered how the school's calendar will affect them. Or we haven't taken into account a field trip for a group of kids that could thwart our plans for an assignment or project.

Starting now, planning with the end in mind is the first step we should take, figuring out which events we must attend and which will disrupt class time.

EVALUATING CLASSROOM SYSTEMS

Our class policies and procedures never have to be set in stone—even those things we borrowed from a respected colleague. It can take a couple of years to know for sure if a system works for us, but it's essential to continually evaluate the way we run our classrooms.

Following a mentor makes sense for any new teacher because it's best to try out what someone else knows will work and then adapt it to your style and philosophy.

When I switched from teaching band to English, I followed the policies and procedures of my mentor. I mimicked her grading, late work, and homework policies. Points were awarded were based on completeness, late work triggered automatic deductions in points, and homework composed of a large chunk of a student's overall grade.

However, six years later, my classroom runs very differently than it did when I started, particularly since I've moved to standards-based grading. Always a teacher-learner, I've reflected year after year on what felt natural and right and what needed improvement.

Just after the school year ends, we can sit and reflect on our classroom management, grading, seating arrangements, procedures for getting supplies, etc. If something in the way

Quote of the Week . . .



“When you think you can't go on, force yourself to keep going. Your success is based on persistence, not luck.”

our class runs isn't quite right, this is the time to figure out what to change so that we can plan to implement it next year.

ORGANIZING AND PACKING

I spent too many summers coming back to school early to organize my classroom. Too exhausted to even think about cleaning at the end of a school year, I'd throw everything into a few boxes and lock them in a storage cabinet. At the end of summer, I'd drag my poor husband and daughter in as manual labor to help me organize my mountains of mess.

Because I had failed to plan and organize, I wouldn't remember which supplies I'd run out of. This inevitably led to being stuck in those dreadful back-to-school lines with my future students, which was doubly frustrating because I had brought it on myself and because I already had enough to think about with my curriculum to get the new school year started right.

Making time at the end of the year to take an inventory of supplies, put together a shopping list, and carefully pack and label boxes will save us stress and frustration in those first days back.

PREPARING THE ROOM

Newer teachers often overlook this one. Aside from packing up your stuff, what else is there to do?

Many schools have their custodians do a deep cleaning over the summer since there are no students or staff in the way. Each school I've taught at has gone so far as to remove all of the desks and as much furniture as possible from each room in order to mop and wax the floors or shampoo the carpets with nothing in the way.

If we want to ensure that our carts and our chair come back to our room, we need to prep by labeling all of our items, wrapping cords directly around their source, and otherwise making it as easy as possible for the custodial staff to put the room back together the way it was.

And if we'll be changing classrooms, we want to make sure that we carefully pack and label all of our supplies and belongings, and leave the room ready for the next teacher.

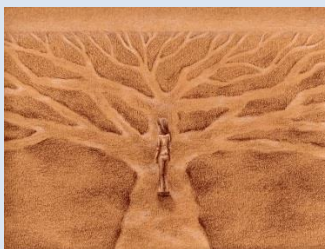
Spending a little time each day for a couple of weeks will set us up so we don't have to stay late on the last day of school to clean up—or haphazardly throw everything in boxes. We'll be ready to enjoy summer and then start the new school year off right

Reading Public Schools Happenings

Parker Holds Annual Cribbage Tournament

Last Tuesday, Parker held its 30th annual Cribbage Tournament, in which students are paired with senior citizens from Reading. Attached is a picture of the finalists. Left to the right are runner-up Solana O'Shea, champions John Saczynski and Mike Dufton, and runner-up Pat Hoyt.

Disney Tweet of the Week



"You control your destiny --
you don't need magic to do
it. And there are no magical
shortcuts to solving your
problems."

-- Merida (Brave)



Greek Day

Recently, Coolidge held its annual Greek Day Activities as part of their 6th grade social studies curriculum. Students in the 6th grade participated in a variety of activities connected to Ancient Greece History. Thanks to Coolidge Teachers Ann Jacobsmeier and Michael Benard for coordinating the event.



Important Websites

[Help Desk \(To submit a ticket\)](#)
help.desk@reading.k12.ma.us

[RPS District Website](#)
www.reading.k12.ma.us

[Access Your Email](#)
<https://login.microsoftonline.com/>

[Baseline Edge](#)
<https://baseline.ioeducation.com/Site/login>

[Interface Health Services](#)
<https://interface.williamjames.edu/community/reading>

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RMHS Class Day

On Friday, the RMHS Class of 2018 had its final day of classes and celebration with the traditional Class Day activity. In this ceremony, the torch is passed from the outgoing Senior Class to the incoming Senior Class (Current Junior Class). Below are some photos of the event.



The Passing of the Torch



RMHS Senior Class Officers

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



Class of 2018 Baccalaureate

On Thursday evening, the RMHS Class of 2018 celebrated their annual Baccalaureate ceremony at the Universalist Unitarian Church. This annual event, which is sponsored by the Reading Clergy Association features a combination of reflections, songs, prayers and student remarks. Some photos of the event are below. For more on the Baccalaureate, go to the following [Reading Post Link](#).





Stepping Stones...

- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
 - ✓ Joseph Huggins, Student Helper, Extended Day
- We have posted a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

Assistant Cheerleading Coach, Reading Memorial High School

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=499>

1.0 FTE Special Education Teacher – Connections Program, Birch Meadow Elementary School

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=500>

Blazing Trails...

"More Massachusetts Students Taking AP Courses, Tests." The Boston Globe reports that a "growing number of high school students" are taking AP courses and exams. "Over the past 10 years, the number of students has more than doubled." The Globe quotes Mass

Insight Education and Research CEO Susan Lusi saying, "There is research that shows that students taking college-level course work in high school better prepares them for college, makes it more likely they go [to] college and are successful once there." The group "works with the state and 79 high schools to increase AP participation among underserved populations." [Read More](#)

"Massachusetts Program Encourages Incarcerated Juveniles To Pursue STEM

Education." Forbes contributor John Farrell profiles RAISE (Reclaiming Access to Inquiry-based Science Education), an iPad-based education program for incarcerated juveniles in Massachusetts. Since incarcerated teenagers "are usually left out of the educational system - having either no access to good education or having been kicked out of school - they often fail to pass state mandated tests in science and cannot obtain a high school diploma." Michael Krezmien, the dean of the University of Massachusetts College of Education's Office of Research and Engagement and program co-developer, said the goal of RAISE is to encourage those students to consider STEM-related careers and pass the state's science assessment, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Krezmien and his co-principal investigator, Martina Nieswandt, collaborated "with the Massachusetts-based Center for Applied Technologies (CAST) as well as the state's Department of Youth Services (DYS)" to develop the program. The RAISE team also secured a \$3 million grant from the National Science Foundation to design the digital platform. [Read More](#)

"Social And Emotional Learning Programs Spreading In US Schools." On its "All Things Considered" program and in its "Shots" blog, NPR reports that the "Resilience Builder Program" is "form of group therapy designed to help students who are struggling with trauma or cognitive disorders - or everyday anxiety caused by things like bullying or moving schools." The program is the brainchild of psychologist Mary Alvord, PhD. According to NPR, "in Australia, Canada and the UK, social and emotional learning in schools is already being implemented on a large scale." In the US, it has also "spread, but not as quickly as some would hope." [Read More](#)

"Bolstering the Teacher Pipeline." How do we help the best people for the job stay on the job, or even into the job, to begin with? A recent report from Learning Policy Institute outlines how high teacher turnover rates exacerbate teacher shortages, negatively impact student achievement, and disproportionately affect high-poverty schools. From preparation to PD, recruitment to retention, there are a host of levers educators are using to build and sustain a pipeline of diverse, effective teachers. This ASCD *Express* and the May *EL* discuss some of the causes and cures of the teacher shortage. [Read More](#)

"What the Best Education Systems in the World are Doing Right." Fifty years ago, both South Korea and Finland had terrible education systems. Yet over the past half century, both South Korea and Finland have turned their schools around - and now both countries are hailed internationally for their extremely high educational outcomes. Here's what other countries can learn from these two successful, but diametrically opposed, educational models. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!