



Pathways

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

November 11, 2018

Volume 6, Number 11

Upcoming Dates

- November 11 – Veterans Day; (3:00 p.m.) RMHS Drama presents Mamma Mia in the Endslo PAC
- November 12 – Veterans Day Holiday Celebrated – No School and Offices Closed
- November 15 – (7:30 p.m.) Town Meeting in the Endslo PAC
- November 16 – Teacher In-Service/Conference Day; No School for Students; (7:30 p.m.) RMHS Drama presents Mamma Mia in the Endslo PAC
- November 17 – (7:30 p.m.) RMHS Drama presents Mamma Mia in the Endslo PAC
- November 18 – (3:00 p.m.) RMHS Drama presents Mamma Mia in the Endslo PAC
- November 19 – (7:30 p.m.) Town Meeting in the Endslo PAC
- November 21 – (11:00 a.m.) Grades PreK – 12 Early Release
- November 22 – Happy Thanksgiving; (10:15 a.m.) Football vs. Stoneham
- November 23 – Thanksgiving Break – Schools and Offices Closed
- November 26 – (7:30 p.m.) Town Meeting in the Endslo PAC
- November 29 – (7:30 p.m.) Town Meeting in the Endslo PAC
- December 1 – (10:00 a.m.) REF Festival of Trees @ the Parker Middle School

Graffiti Found at Parker Middle School

Below is a statement from Parker Principal Richele Shankland regarding a graffiti incident reported at Parker Middle School on Thursday and Friday. This incident, along with the recent incidents at Reading Memorial High School are disturbing, divisive, and disheartening and our thoughts go out to those that have been impacted by these hateful events. We will continue to work with the Reading Police Department to investigate each incident fully and to continue to educate our students and community on these issues.

On Thursday and Friday this week, a custodian reported that a discriminating word was written at Parker Middle School, we will not be releasing specific details on the wording and locations while the police are actively investigating these latest incidents. Once this incident was reported to the police, the graffiti was removed and we are in the process of an investigation.

As indicated in a joint press release issued on Thursday, November 8th from the Superintendent, Town Manager and Deputy Policy Chief, we have shifted our approach in reporting these incidents. Rather than send out immediate information to the general public, we will summarize using a combination of our school district newsletter, press releases and social media. Our intent is to continue to internally address the issues and also to keep the community informed. It is our hope that this shift will reduce and eliminate these acts of hate.

At Parker, we are committed to teaching and promoting inclusiveness and acceptance. We integrate community, kindness and personal best into our everyday teaching and learning. We will be addressing this with students on Tuesday through class discussions. When things like this happen, it negatively affects the culture of our whole community. I've provided some resources below for engaging in conversations with your children about bias, racism and recent events in the world. We will continue to send the message at Parker that this is unacceptable and challenge our young people to stand up against acts such as these by making sure their peers know they believe this is unacceptable as well. I thank you for your support and partnership in having these difficult conversations with our students.

<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/what-is-everyday-bias>

<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk>

- December 2 – (10:00 a.m.)
REF Festival of Trees @ the
Parker Middle School
- December 4 – (6:30 p.m.)
RMHS Sophomore Guidance
Night in the Endslo PAC
- December 5 – Grade 6 – 12
Early Release; (6:00 p.m.)
Coolidge Winter Concert in
the Endslo PAC
- December 6 – (7:00 p.m.)
School Committee Meeting
in the RMHS Library; (7:00
p.m.) Parker Grade 8 & Jazz
Band Winter Concert @
Parker
- December 8 – (10:00 a.m.)
RMHS Drama Dickens
Marketplace @ RMHS
- December 11 – Parker
Winter Concerts – (6:00
p.m.) Grade 6 & (7:45 p.m.)
Grade 7
- December 13 – (7:00 p.m.)
RMHS Choral Songfest in the
Endslo PAC
- December 19 – (7:00 p.m.)
RMHS Winter Concert in the
Endslo PAC
- December 20 – (7:00 p.m.)
School Committee in the
RMHS Library

Joint Press Release Regarding High School Incidents and Change in Communication Protocol

Joint Press Release

Robert LeLacheur, Town Manager, Town of Reading
John Doherty, Superintendent of Schools, Reading Public Schools
David Clark, Deputy Chief, Reading Police Department

Over the last three weeks, Reading Memorial High School has experienced a series of six threatening and hateful graffiti incidents which has impacted our Jewish Community, LGBTQ Community, and Students of Color. In each of these incidents, we have informed the Community in a timely manner with specific information and have taken actions which included a candlelight vigil, courageous conversations with students and staff, increased staff visibility in the hallways and public areas during classes, and tightening up of other rules and procedures. In addition to the above, we have continued to educate students during class of what these hateful symbols mean and how we can be upstanders and call out those that are committing these hateful acts.

Each incident is currently under investigation and both Reading Police and RMHS Administration have been aggressively reviewing camera footage and interviewing potential witnesses. Unfortunately, at this time, we do not have any suspects for any of the incidents.

Yesterday, two more incidents were reported, both in different bathrooms at Reading Memorial High School. The first incident was two additional swastikas and the second incident was some threatening remarks impacting “white people.” Both incidents are under investigation by our High School Administration and the Reading Police Department. Both incidents are unacceptable and are not welcome in our community.

For each of the above situations, it has been our intent to keep the community informed with timely and transparent communication, including joint press releases from town, police, and schools and messages from the High School Principal and the Superintendent of Schools. In spite of these ongoing communications, the incidents continue to occur and with increased frequency. After each incident our frustration, and the frustration of this community grows.

To that end, we have decided to change our approach in reporting the incidents to the community. We will continue to investigate all incidents aggressively and proactively put in place the measures mentioned above. Rather than send out immediate information to the general public, we will summarize using a combination of our school district newsletter, press releases and social media. Our intent is to continue to internally address the issues and also to keep the community informed. It is our hope that this shift will reduce and eliminate these acts of hate.

The Reading Police Department encourages anyone with any information to report it to the police non-emergency line, either by calling 781-944-1212 or reporting it anonymously through the Text-a-Tip service or the Town website, detailed below.

More information on reporting an anonymous tip to Reading Police:

- Text a Tip by texting the keyword READINGPD and a message to 847411 (tip411).

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to the volleyball team on their wins vs. Lowell and Masconomet in the MIAA tournament.
- Congratulations to RCASA Executive Director Erica McNamara for being recognized as Rotary's Unsung Hero.
- Congratulations to the RMHS Marching Band, under the direction of Joseph Mulligan, who placed 2nd in the NESBA State finals last Sunday afternoon. The band scored a 95.4, the highest score that the RMHS Marching Band has ever scored at finals.

- The Town website (READINGMA.gov) has more information about anonymous tips, including an anonymous reporting form, through this link: [Reading Police Anonymous Tips](#)

Parker Student Chosen As Reading Representative for Project 351



Congratulations to **Shreya Bajaj** who has been selected as the Reading Grade 8 Project 351 Ambassador! Project 351 is a nonprofit organization that develops a new generation of community-first service leaders through the year-long engagement of an 8th grade Ambassador from each of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts. She was selected for an exemplary ethic of service and the values of kindness, compassion, humility, and gratitude. Shreya's leadership offers a vision of strength and care that inspires adults and peers alike. Founded in 2011, Project 351 has engaged 3,001 unsung heroes and quiet leaders, like Shreya, as change agents in their community. We look forward to Shreya's efforts in our community and beyond!

RMHS Holds Candlelight Vigil

In response to the number of hateful graffiti incidents at the High School since October 12th and to remember those that lost their lives in the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, Reading Memorial High School sponsored a community wide Candlelight Vigil last Saturday evening at the Memorial Wall at RMHS. The Vigil, which last approximately 90 minutes, was well attended with over 300 people. During the Vigil, students, staff, and parents shared their stories of who we are at RMHS, the RMHS Chorus sang, *You will be Found*, which is a song in the Broadway Show, Dear Evan Hansen, and students and staff recited poems. In addition, Reading Embraces Diversity read the names of the victims of the Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting.

The video of the entire Vigil can be found at the link below. A special thanks to RMHS Principal Kate Boynton who led and organized this event.

<https://www.facebook.com/RCTVStudios/videos/vb.112024913778/185457095670411/?type=2&theater>

Superintendent's Office

Hours this Week

All are welcome

- 11/19 Killam
7:45 – 8:45 a.m.
- 11/20 Superintendent's
Office
4:30 – 5:30 a.m.
- 11/27 RMHS
7:00 – 8:00 a.m.
- 11/29 Birch Meadow
2:15 – 3:15 p.m.



RMHS Principal Kate Boynton Addresses the Community at the Vigil



RMHS Teacher Zac Broken Rope addresses the Community with his story



Taking Time for Mental Health

A Letter from the District Behavioral Health Coach

I don't have to tell you that there are bad things that happen in this world. We see it every day on the news, we hear it every day on the radio, we read about it on social media and we experience it ourselves whether it be facing challenges in our personal or professional lives.

I think its high time that we remember all the good things that we have. I think it's time that we shift our focus more towards gratitude. We shouldn't have to wait for the holiday season to take time to appreciate the good things that we have in our lives.

Personally, I am grateful for my job here at Reading Public Schools. I get to go into classrooms and support teachers and students and become a small part of their world as they learn and discover in a safe and supportive environment. I am grateful for my family, and for their health, and even when they are loud and overwhelming, they truly care about one another and show support when things get tough.

When we think about all the bad things that we can't control it is easy to get overwhelmed. It is easy to point fingers, place blame, and spread negativity. We do not have control over a lot of the things that happen to us, but we do have control around how we react to them.

I invite you to take a breath, for your own mental health, and for the mental health of our children. Take a breath and find your gratitude. Find the good things in life. Share a story of a blessing, thank someone who you truly appreciate, tell someone that you love them, give hugs.

Giving hugs is not typically something that I would recommend. I was recently reminded by the amazing Challenge Day leaders that Reading welcomed to our middle schools that hugs are scientifically proven to increase serotonin levels in humans. Safe physical touch is one of the easiest ways to show someone that you love them, that you care about them, that they are important. Safe touch sends a signal throughout the body and can actually regulate your heart rate and breathing promoting calm.

We are not without our own faults, individually and as a community. However, our strengths, passions, drives, and our compassion for one another greatly outweigh the hate. As a community, it is up to us to stop the hate by reaching within ourselves and showing our fellow citizen that we love them and that we have compassion for them. We will not tolerate hate, but instead we vow to make a conscious effort to spread love and acceptance in our own lives as best we can. Our actions as adults directly affect the thoughts, feelings, and emotions of our children.

Thank you
Lauren Sabella M.ED., LMHC
Reading Public Schools
District Behavioral Health Coach

Quote of the Week . . .



“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.”

-Martin Luther King



SAVE THE DATE 2ND ANNUAL PARENT UNIVERSITY

WHEN

Saturday, March 30th
8:00am – 12:15pm

WHERE

Reading Memorial High School, 62 Oakland Rd

Benefit from FREE workshops presented by community experts on a variety of topics.

FREE childcare for children in grades K through 5 will be provided by the Extended Day Program. You must pre-register for childcare when you are registering for Parent University workshops.

Pre-registration will begin on Monday, March 11th at the following link:
<https://www.reading.k12.ma.us/community/adult-and-community-education/>

Sponsored By



Reading Education Foundation
Outside the box ~ Inside the classroom.

Reading Public School Happenings

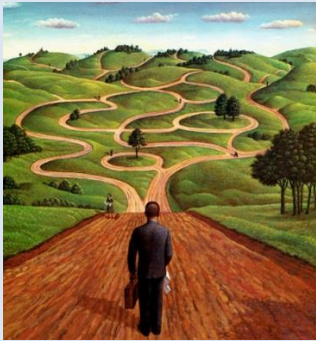
Parker Students Lead Veteran's Day Assembly

This past Friday, Parker Middle School students led an assembly honoring our Veterans. Below are some pictures of the event.



Parker Students Who Led Veteran's Day Assembly

Disney Tweet of the Week



"Life is a journey to be experienced, not a problem to be solved."

-- Winnie the Pooh



Parker Student Brendan Manning

Stepping Stones...

- Our thoughts go out to former Joshua Eaton staff member and current substitute **Carol Sano** who lost a loved one recently.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
 - ✓ Bobbi Wortman, Substitute, District
 - ✓ Laurie O'Neill, Spanish Teacher, RMHS
 - ✓ Lindsay McMahon, Grade 2 Teacher, Killam
 - ✓ Allison Allen, Extended Day, RISE
 - ✓ Andrea McKenna, Paraeducator 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 Literacy (Reading) Specialist, Birch Meadow Elementary School

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=617

1.0 FTE Special Education Connections Program Teacher (repost), Coolidge Middle School
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https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=618

Regular Education Tutor, 38 hours biweekly, Killam Elementary School
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https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=619

Regular Education Paraeducator, 35 hours biweekly, Joshua Eaton Elementary School

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=620

1.0 FTE Special Education Crossroads Program Teacher (1 year), Wood End Elementary School

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=621

1.0 FTE Long Term Substitute Math Teacher, Reading Memorial High School

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=622

1.0 FTE School Social Worker/Adjustment Counselor, Reading Memorial High School

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=623

Assistant Boys Winter Track Coach, Reading Memorial High School

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=624

Administrative Assistant – Public Works, Administration

https://www.readingma.gov/sites/readingma/files/uploads/2018_october_administrative_assistant_-_public_works.pdf

Temporary Reference Librarian, Library
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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/>

https://www.readingma.gov/sites/readingma/files/uploads/2018_pt_per_die_m_reference_librarian.pdf

Blazing Trails...

"When Teachers Lead Their Own Learning." Teacher-led professional development (PD) is on the rise, presenting a new set of challenges and opportunities for schools. Whether it's through professional learning communities (PLCs), Edcamps, documentation, or social media, educators are exploring ways to take learning into their own hands. Try these strategies for creating and supporting the connections that spark growth in and out of the classroom. As educators Bethanne Chimbel and Orion Smith write, "Teaching is a hard job. 'Go home and cry' hard. 'Can't just leave it at school' hard. 'Break your heart' hard. We all need to find those people who get it." [Read More](#)

"Competency-Based Education Faces Pushback." Dozens of states are moving toward competency-based education models, according to data from the nonprofit International Association for K-12 Online Learning. However, the movement is facing opposition in some areas, including in Maine, where officials are walking back the move to a proficiency-based approach after many parents criticized the change. [Read More](#)

"'Hamilton,' Cultural Relevance and the Quest to Personalize Learning." At a Boston high school with a large Latino student population, educator Eleni Saridis draws from her students' cultural backgrounds to make their lessons more relevant. Saridis teaches about the American Revolution by connecting it with events in the Caribbean and Central America at the time and wraps up the unit with a student trip to see the musical "Hamilton." [Read More](#)

"Why 'What Works' Doesn't In Education Research." If the quality and informativeness of education research is to improve, it will need to kick a bad habit—focusing on whether or not an educational intervention 'works'. And efforts to answer that question through null hypothesis significance testing (NHST), which explores whether an intervention or product has an effect on the average outcome, undermines the ability to make sustained progress in helping students learn. It provides little useful information and fails miserably as a method for accumulating knowledge about learning and teaching. [Read More](#)

"Australia: Do Makerspaces Improve Learning?" Educators at three schools in Australia have been studying whether high-tech makerspaces can improve outcomes for young students from kindergarten through second grade. The study included a 3D-printing project that taught students to take risks, and the results show that makerspaces foster creativity and problem-solving skills among students. [Read More](#)

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

Have a Great Week