



Pathways

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

March 31, 2019

Volume 10, Number 25

Upcoming Dates

- April 2 – Local Election in the Hawkes Field House
- April 10 – (7:00 p.m.) SEPAC Meeting in the Reading Police Department Community Room
- April 11 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the RMHS Schettini Library
- April 12 – (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Junior Prom at Danversport Yacht Club
- April 15 – Patriot's Day Schools & Offices Closed
- April 16 – 19 April Vacation Week
- April 22 – (7:30 p.m.) Town Meeting in the Endslo PAC
- April 23 – (7:00 p.m.) RISE PTN Meeting at RISE
- April 24 – 26 – Parker Grade 8 Quebec Trip
- April 25 – (7:30 p.m.) Town Meeting in the Endslo PAC
- April 26 – (6:00 p.m.) Joshua Eaton Ice Cream Social; (7:00 p.m.) RMHS freshman Progressive Dinner in the RMHS Cafeteria

Director of Student Services Announcement



Jennifer Stys

The Reading Public Schools is pleased to announce that Jennifer Stys has been appointed as the new Director of Student Services for the Reading Public Schools. Ms. Stys is currently the Director of Special Education for the Lowell Public Schools and has been a special education teacher, special education team chair, and a special education department chair during her 28 years in the Lowell Public Schools. She is currently completing her doctorate work at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and is expected to graduate this May.

Jennifer will officially begin on July 1st, but will be taking part in transitioning activities between now and July 1st. These will include meetings with the SEPAC, Team Chairs, District Leadership Team, and school community.

We would like to thank the 16 member Screening Committee for all of their hard work during this two month process.

Please welcome Jennifer Stys to the Reading Public Schools!

RPS Students Recognized in Boston Sports Museum Essay Writing Contest

Congratulations to four Parker Middle School sixth grade students, one Coolidge Seventh Grade Student, and one RMHS 10th Grade student who have won Honorable Mention awards for the essays they submitted to the 2019 Boston Sports Museum Will McDonough Essay Contest.

Kudos and Accolades

- Kudo to Assistant Superintendent Chris Kelley for her hard work preparing for the Reading Spring Institute. It was a huge success.
- Congratulations to the gymnastics team for a 4th place finish in the New England Championship meet.
- Congratulations to all the student athletes recognized as winter all-stars, all-scholastics and players of the year

The students are:

Parker

Isabella Boyden
Kapil Shastri
Liam Hansen
Eden Young

Coolidge

Kylan Li

RMHS

Ellie Siu

We are very proud of the impressive effort they and all our students put in to their writing for this contest.

Below is the link to the Boston Sports Museum website announcing the winners.

https://sportsmuseum.org/program/will-mcdonough-writing-contest/?utm_campaign=McDonough%202019

Special thanks to those teachers at Parker, Coolidge, and RMHS who worked with those students on their accomplishment.

RMHS Students Participate in Congressional Art Show

RMHS Senior Places 3rd in Event

Recently, RMHS students Megan Coram, Jahnvi Patel, and Maddie Liberman were selected to participate in the 6th Congressional Art Show at the Montserrat College of Art, in Beverly, MA. Megan Coram, who is an AP art student in RMHS Art Teacher Sue Gilbert's class, won third place. Her piece is entitled, "Bird House". Congressman Seth Moulton presented Megan with the award.

Congratulations to Megan and all of the students who participated. Also, special thanks to RMHS Art Teacher Sue Gilbert for her work with these students.

See the link below for more information.

<https://www.montserrat.edu/congressional-art-show/>



RMHS Congressional Art Show Participants (from left to right) Jahnvi Patel (with her piece entitled "Melancholy"), Maddie Liberman (with her painting, "Kneading"), and Megan Coram (with her piece "Thread")

Superintendent's Office
Half-Hours this Week

All are welcome

*There are no office half
hours this week.*



Megan Coram's Winning Piece (Birdhouse)

The Talk 70% of Teens Wish Adults Would Have with Them

Posted by Erin Walsh • March 5 for [Dr. Dave Mind Positive Parenting](#)



"Just guess!"

I would say to the wall, purposely turned away from my mom perched gingerly on the side of my bed. "Honey," she would respond, "It's hard to just guess what you want to talk about." I usually met this gentle resistance with more crying and an insistence that clearly she should just KNOW what was on my mind or weighing on my heart.

As a teenager, the "just guess" strategy saved me from having to start a difficult conversation or to find the words that were stuck in my throat. It also, however, lowered my mom into the center of a minefield. Wrong guess? "I can't believe you think I want to talk about that!!" Sobbing ensued. Right guess? "Never mind, I don't want to talk about it anymore!" More sobbing ensued.

Difficult guesswork

Now that I am a parent I put myself in my mom's impossible shoes, perched on the side of

my bed. I imagine that on one hand, she was grateful that her teen daughter wanted to talk at all after intermittent stretches of stony silence. On the other, she was exasperated by the impossible position of not knowing what exactly we should be talking about.

Perhaps in your house, things go differently. Perhaps your teen turns to you bright eyed and engaged with a simple and clear request "Mom, I cannot wait to talk to you about _____!" (insert emotionally vulnerable topic here). But for those of you who are lobbing guesses towards teens whose backs are turned but desperate for conversations, a recent report gives us some clues about one set of conversations we should be sure to cover.

The Talk(s)

One of the talks that we've known we need to initiate with our kids is about sex and sexual health. A couple of years ago we wrote that parents should take the pressure off of having THE sex talk with their kids and instead think about talking early and often and breaking the conversation into many talks. We even provided a **set of tips** for getting those conversations started if you aren't sure where to begin.

Our writing joins a sea of blogs, tips, and resources for talking to children and teens about sex. This is good! These conversations can be anxiety producing and too few parents feel prepared to have meaningful conversations over time about a subject that many were raised to think is taboo. We know from research that young people who have good communication with their parents about sex are more likely to delay sexual activity and be responsible and safe.

But what about relationships?

But there is a complementary set of conversations that teens are also hungry for but aren't sure how to talk about. They want to know what caring and lasting romantic relationships can look like and feel like. It turns out that in our focus on sex, we've forgotten to talk with them about relationships.

As the authors of the study "**The Talk**" out of Harvard's Make Caring Common Project note, "Most sex education is either focused narrowly on abstinence or is 'disaster prevention' — how not to get pregnant or contract sexually transmitted diseases." They add, "We as a society are failing to prepare young people for perhaps the most important thing they will do in life—learn how to love."

Falling in love

Disaster prevention tends to focus on the first phase of relationships, the mood altering and exciting phase of falling in love. That's because when we fall in love, our rational brain and impulse control are not usually in the driver's seat. Falling in love is more emotion than thought. This isn't an unfamiliar brain pattern to scientists. The brain activity of someone in love isn't that different from someone on cocaine! From the brain's point of view it is equally as powerful a chemical experience: dopamine (happy), norepinephrine (quick response), and serotonin (mood) are brain chemicals that take over when falling in love. The only part of the brain that is fairly inactive? The prefrontal cortex - the seat of reason and regulation.

This explains the euphoric, impulsive, emotional roller coaster teenagers are on when they fall in love. As exhilarating as this is, the brain cannot sustain these emotional and chemical fireworks for long.

Standing in love

Compared to falling in love, standing in love is less euphoric and intense but more enduring and fulfilling. It is only after the brain cools down from falling in love that the prefrontal cortex starts making judgements again about the viability of the relationship and that the

Quote of the Week . . .



“Enjoy every moment you have. Because in life, there are no rewinds, only flashbacks. Make sure it's all worth it. I don't care about popularity. I live in reality. Based on originality. Forget looks. I respect personality.”

-Unknown

chemicals for attentiveness, protectiveness, and attachment start flowing. This is either when you settle into a more stable relationship or when you might start thinking, "What did I ever see in that person?"

Sometimes teenagers need to try dating multiple people to get a better understanding of what kind of relationship works for them and might get bored after the exhilaration of falling in love cools down. But how to stand in love and build healthy relationship is not easy. Even with the prefrontal cortex back on board, relationships are complicated, messy, and anxiety-producing for teens.



The cost of our silences

The consequences of not talking to teens about relationships isn't just a rougher start to dating. Our silence can inadvertently reinforce toxic patterns of misogyny and sexual harassment that young people absorb from culture, porn, and peers. According to the report, while 87% of survey respondents reported that they had been harassed, 76% of our respondents reported that they had never had a conversation with parents about how to avoid sexually harassing others. Similar majorities had never had conversations with their parents about various forms of misogyny.

Visions of standing in love rarely guide our conversations with teens. This is partially because our fears sit center stage. Yet some of these fears aren't supported by the data. For example, authors of "The Talk" found that, in particular, both youth and adults tend to greatly overestimate the size of the "hook up culture" among teens. The good news is that the research indicates that the vast majority of teens, upwards of 85%, prefer other options to hooking up. The bad news is that because we all tend to overestimate the prevalence of hook up culture it takes over the focus of our conversations with our kids.

So what should we talk about?

Absolutely adolescents need to hear about sex, sexuality and safe sex. But let's couple that by talking about what it means to build a meaningful relationship with someone too, regardless of how long it might last. Regardless of whether your child is engaged and eager or is facing the wall, here are some ways to get started today:

DO:

Talk with your teen about the difference between falling in love and standing in love.

Disney Quote of the Week



““Sometimes the right path is not always the easiest.”

– Pocahontas

Build off of their experience in friendships. What does a good friendship feel like? When might you realize that someone isn't being a very good friend?

Start with the self. Ask your teen to identify things they love about themselves. Why do they deserve safety, love, and respect?

Identify the feelings of different kinds of relationships - including infatuation, care, attraction, and love. What do these feel like? What are the healthy ways that these feelings can play out? When might they become unhealthy? What do you do when things don't feel right?

Brainstorm the skills of healthy relationships including problem solving, listening, conflict resolution, and generosity. How can you practice these?

Use TV shows and movies to talk about relationships. When you see examples of healthy relationships you might ask, What skills seem to be working for them? Where might they need more practice?" You can also ask questions like, "What would you do if your boyfriend started acting like this?"

Be clear about the definition of consent, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. Be open to questions and conversation.

Check out [ThatsNotCool.com](https://www.thatsnotcool.com) for more resources, teen-created tools, and forums for teens and parents to talk about healthy relationships online and offline.

DON'T:

Assume that your teen knows what a healthy relationship looks like or feels like.

Let misogynist comments or jokes go unchecked either in person or in media. Use it as an opportunity to step in, explain what is hurtful about the comment, and engage kids in conversations.

Assume that your teen will be attracted to the opposite sex. Instead make sure that your language is open and inclusive so they will be open to sharing with you.

Forget to practice what to say and what to do if your teen feels like they are in an unsafe or unhealthy relationship or if their friend is. For example, you can role play how to start that conversation with an adult.

Ignore [signs of teen dating abuse](#).



Important Websites

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

[RPS District Website](http://www.reading.k12.ma.us)
www.reading.k12.ma.us

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

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

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

HELP WANTED

**Reading Extended Day is
looking for HELP at all of our
Elementary Schools & the
RISE Preschool**

**Competitive Pay and
flexible schedules**

**Please contact Rich Belmonte,
Richard.Belmonte@reading.k12.ma.us
for more information
or call, 781-942-9136**

LOOKING FOR:

- Teachers
- Para Educators
- Child Care Professionals
- Retired Teachers
- College Students
- Parents
- High School Students

Before School Hours
7:00am – 8:15am
(Elementary)

7:00am – 8:00am (RISE)

After School Hours:
Elementary
2:30pm – 6:00pm
(M, T, Th, F)
12:30pm – 6:00pm
(Wednesday)

RISE:
2:00pm – 5:30pm
(M, T, Th, F)
12:30pm – 5:30pm
(Wednesday)

Reading Public School Happenings

RMHS High Five For This Week

Below is the RMHS High Five for this week.

Jessica, Kaitlin, Kevin, and Ryan O'Neil, Class of 2019

This week is the first time that four members of the senior class will receive the High 5 Award in the same week. We are pleased to recognize today Jessica O'Neil, Kaitlin O'Neil, Kevin O'Neil, and Ryan O'Neil, known to many in the school and the community as the O'Neil quadruplets.

Jessica, Kaitlin, Kevin, and Ryan are recognized for enriching the school with their positive attitudes and for the kindness that defines their interactions with classmates and teachers. They maintain an unmistakably strong bond with each other, even as their personal interests and passions take them in different directions. As Jessica puts it, "We're four different people, but the fact that we're able to be in a variety of activities shows how much the school has to offer."

Jessica O'Neil is an avid member of both the chorus and the RMHS Drama Club. She has enjoyed her experience in the RMHS Field Seminar program, and cites Mr. d'Entremont's WWII: The European Theater course as her favorite this year. Jess plans to study theater in college, likely at a school in New York.

Kaitlin O'Neil has been a dedicated member of the RMHS Color Guard, performing with the band at football games and working hard with her teammates to perfect their show for competition season. Kaitlin has devoted significant time to her love of writing. She has published one of her original works of fiction online and has plans to complete a full trilogy.

Kaitlin cannot cite a single favorite class, instead she expresses that Storywriting, Honors Psychology, Child Development, and Field Seminar are all number one in her eyes.

Kevin O'Neil serves as a mentor to middle school students at Coolidge and volunteers as a CCD teacher at his church. He looks forward to studying civil engineering in college and aspires to one day own his own engineering firm. This year, Kevin is particularly enjoying his AP Physics C class with Ms. Najmi, but Kevin is quick to point out that he feels very well served by all of the classes he has taken at RMHS. "The teachers are amazing here," he said.

Ryan O'Neil has been a member of our wrestling team in the winter and our track team in the spring, where he competes in the 100m and 200m dash. Ryan has no doubt about his favorite class at RMHS: Mr. d'Entremont's World War II class. In fact, Ryan has enthusiastically taken both semesters of the class, studying both the European and Pacific theaters of the war. This summer Ryan will begin training as an EMT and, ultimately, he plans to enlist in the military.

We congratulate Jessica, Kaitlin, Kevin, and Ryan and we know they will represent RMHS well in all that they pursue in the years to come.



Parker Middle School Student Competes in State Geography Bee

Congratulations to Parker Middle School Student Liam Synnott who competed this past week in the National Geographic State Geography Bee at Elms College in Chicopee, Massachusetts. Liam earned his way into the competition by winning the Parker Middle School Bee in January.



Liam Synnott

Contact Us

The Pathways newsletter is published regularly 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 Middle School Competes in State Science Olympiad

Recently, the Parker Middle School Science Team competed in the State Science Olympiad held at Assumption College in Worcester. Congratulations to the team on a great effort!



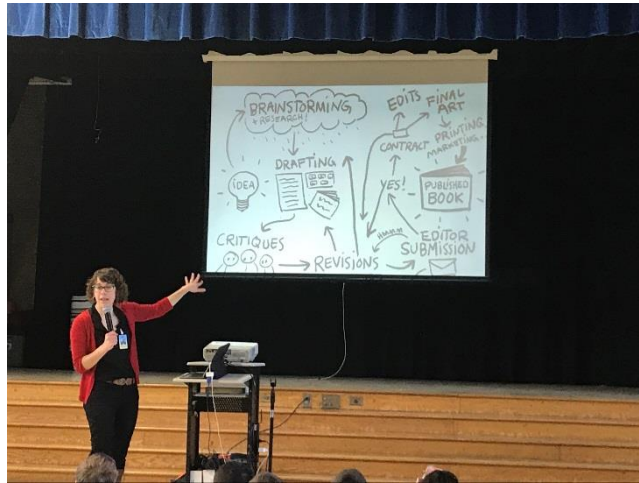
Parker Middle School Science Team

Killam Author Visit

Recently, award winning illustrator and author Sarah Lynne Reul visited Killam Elementary School thanks to the generosity of the Killam PTO. Her book *The Breaking News* was chosen as the Book of the Month by the Anti-Defamation League and the Best Picture Book of 2018 by the Chicago Public Library. In this book, small acts of kindness unite a community to make a world of difference. To spread this same message, Killam is creating Kindness Rocks to decorate our sensory garden and an outdoor space at the Reading Public Library.

Special thanks to Killam Librarian Kim Adamo for coordinating this event.





Stepping Stones...

- Congratulations to Parker teacher **Lauren Iannacci** on the birth of her son Luca Robert on March 24th weighing 9 lbs. 10 oz.
- Congratulations to Coolidge teacher **Eric Castriano** on the birth of his son Linden Frederick on March 24th weighing 7 lbs. 10 oz.
- Congratulations to Birch Meadow teacher **Jessica Duffy** on the birth of her son Benjamin Thomas on March 25th weighing 8 lbs. 13 oz and 20 3/8" long.
- Our thoughts go out to Parker teacher **Grace Therriault** who lost a family member recently.
- Our thoughts go out to Parker teacher **Juli Mitrano** who lost a family member recently.
- Our thoughts go out to Parker teacher **Leah Christi** who lost a family member recently.
- Our thoughts go out to Parker Office paraeducator **Donna Testa** who lost a family member recently.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
 - ✓ Kevin Hackley, Substitute, District
 - ✓ Sary Thach, Substitute, District
 - ✓ Michele Sanphy, Learning Center Special Education Paraeducator, Killam
 - ✓ Pavel Bondarev, Computer Technician, District
 - ✓ Christopher Finn, Special Education Paraeducator, Joshua Eaton
 - ✓ Angela Holman, Cafeteria Substitute, District
 - ✓ Elizabeth St. Germain, Learning Center Special Education Paraeducator, Parker
 - ✓ Kerry Lewis, Special Education Paraeducator, Coolidge
- **We have posted** a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

Special Education Program Paraeducator, 60 hours biweekly, Killam Elementary School

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=698>

Special Education Program Paraeducator, 60 hours biweekly, Coolidge Middle School

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=699>

Home Service Educator (Internal only. Please make sure to log into your TalentEd account to see the and apply for this job posting)

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=700>

1.0 FTE Director of Nurses

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=701>

Special Education Program Paraeducator, 50 hours biweekly, RISE
Preschool

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=702>

1.0 FTE School Social Worker/Adjustment Counselor, Reading Memorial
High School (19-20)

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=704>

1.0 FTE Special Education Teacher, Reading Memorial High School (19-
20)

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=705>

Blazing Trails...

"Is There a Better Way to School Transportation?" Dozens of school districts in Massachusetts and Rhode Island are considering using a school transportation system developed by MIT's Operations Research Center that aims to save money and allow teenage students to have later school start times. Boston Public Schools used the system to make some changes to their busing schedules, but the changes have been criticized by some parents because of the altered start times. [Read More](#)

"Make SEL a Daily Practice." Teachers who may be relatively close to their high-school students in age can try to support their social and emotional needs, even as teachers maintain professional boundaries, writes Michael Boyd, a new high-school physics teacher. In this blog post, Boyd shares several ways he incorporates SEL into the curriculum, including a daily check-in so students can talk about their successes and challenges. [Read More](#)

"ASCD Empower 2019 Takeaways from Day 1: Pizza Changes Lives." How pizza changes lives, reducing teacher burnout and creating safe learning spaces for students who identify as transgender are just some of the lessons we took from the first day of ASCD Empower 2019. Take a look at these highlights. [Read More](#)

"New Parent Group to Launch in Boston." Families in Boston launched SchoolFacts Boston on Monday to provide parents with the unbiased facts they need to make informed decisions regarding funding and other educational issues. The nonprofit, which is receiving startup funds from the Barr Foundation, wants to feature 50 families from different ethnic and racial backgrounds to reflect the communities they represent. [Read More](#)

"Program Connects Students and Schools Around the World." More than 3 million students in over 30 countries are forming connections through the Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning program. Students in some Northern Ireland classrooms, for example, are connecting with their peers in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, where they are collaborating on projects and developing understanding of other cultures. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!