



Pathways

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

April 21, 2019

Volume 10, Number 27

Upcoming Dates

- 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
- April 29 – (7:30 p.m.) Town Meeting if needed in the Endslo PAC
- April 30 – (6:30 p.m.) RMHS National Honor Society Induction in the Endslo PAC
- May 1 – Elementary Schools Open Houses
- May 2 – (7:30 p.m.) Town Meeting if needed in the Endslo PAC
- May 3 & 4 – (7:30 p.m.) RMHS Spring Show in the Endslo PAC
- May 5 – (2:00 p.m.) RMHS Spring Show in the Endslo PAC
- May 6 – 17 – RMHS AP Testing Period
- May 7 – (2:00 p.m.) RMHS MAJE Jr. Jazz Festival
- May 8 – Grade 6-12 Early Release
- May 9 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the RMHS Library

Racist Graffiti Incident at Wood End During Vacation

During this past vacation week, our school district and community experienced another graffiti incident, this time, a racist graffiti word was found outside on the grounds at Wood End Elementary School. Each incident is concerning and disturbing and does not define who we are or what we stand for as a community. We take each of these incidents very seriously and have worked collaboratively with town officials and police to address each situation and communicate the necessary information to our greater community.

Our school district continues to provide programming and educational opportunities for our staff and students to educate them on the impact that incidents like this have on the affected populations. Recently, our entire Reading Public School staff participated in a day long spring institute that focused on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The day was centered around two main themes for staff. One was to give our staff more tools in their tool boxes when they encounter incidents of hate. The second idea was to have staff start reflecting their own internal narratives as we continue this work together.

Below is the letter that Wood End Principal Joanne King sent to the Wood End staff and community. If you have any questions or any information regarding this incident, please contact the Reading Public Schools administration offices at 781-944-5800.

April 20, 2019

Dear Wood End Community:

On Wednesday, April 17th, racial graffiti was discovered on school grounds outside of the building by the Reading Police Department. In accordance with our Reading Public Schools/Reading Police Department joint graffiti protocol and procedures, Reading Police reported this incident to our Facilities Department, and John Doherty, Superintendent of Schools. Photographs of the graffiti were taken by both Reading Police and Facilities and then the graffiti was immediately removed. At this time, the incident is under investigation by the Reading Police Department and we do not have any information about who wrote these words or when they were written.

In light of events at our middle and high schools, as well as Birch Meadow where racist and hate speech has been written on walls, it is important that we take these incidents seriously. Unfortunately, school age children may repeat words or phrases they overhear yet may not understand the harm and damage racist language and

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to girls & boys track, boys & girls lacrosse, baseball, softball, and boys & girls tennis for wins recently.
- Thanks to the RPS Fine & Performing Arts teachers for presenting an outstanding annual Artsfest.
- Congratulations to Superintendent John Doherty for finishing his first Boston Marathon.
- Congratulations to Killam teacher Kate Splaine for finishing her second Boston Marathon.

graffiti can cause. At Wood End, we are absolutely committed to following our Core Values and these values do not align with racism or hate in any way.

Our School Council has discussed issues of diversity, racism and prejudice in our schools. We raised questions about how to teach about bias and equity with children as well as how to promote inclusivity for all. Several ideas were considered since this was the first discussion we have had around this issue. As families and a school community, we need to think about educating ourselves and our students about racism and bias in our world today. Our children are exposed to this whether we want them to be or not.

We will continue to work closely with the Reading Police Department, the Superintendent of Schools and the Town of Reading to address this and any future issues. If you have any questions, concerns or information about this incident, please do not hesitate to contact me. Additionally, see the information below to text an anonymous tip to the Reading Police Department.

You can provide an anonymous tip to the Reading Police Department by texting the keyword **READINGPD** and a message to **847411 (tip411)**

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns related to this issue.

Sincerely,

*Joanne King
Principal*

Reading Public Schools Experiencing Phone Outages

Some phones in some schools may not be working on Monday

Some or all of the Reading Public Schools may be experiencing phone outages this week. Due to a vendor error in transferring numbers from one system to another with the Town telephone system, several of the phone numbers in our schools are not working at all or are partially working (inbound or outbound calls only). Unfortunately, it may take up to several days to resolve the issue.

We have taken the necessary precautions to address this issue while the phones are not functioning properly. Public Safety and Town Officials have been notified and we are working closely with our IT department and the Town Facilities Department to make sure that communication procedures are in place. Our IT Department has been working with all of the vendors involved in the situation to identify the scope of the impact and how we can address it in a timely manner.

Building principals will send out specific details on how to communicate to the schools, if the phones are down. In the meantime, if you need to contact your school, please follow the following procedure:

- Continue to send email communication for routine correspondence.
- If you need to call the school, call the regular school phone number.

Superintendent's Office
Half-Hours this Week

All are welcome

*There are no office half
hours this week.*

- If you cannot reach the school via the school phones and it is an emergency, please call the Reading Public Schools Administrative Offices at 781-944-5800.
- If you are reporting a student absence and the absentee line is not working, please send the absence by email (your building principal will provide an email address).

We appreciate your patience as we correct this issue.

Reading Education Foundation Donates \$41,728 to Schools



Members of REF Board Present Check to Reading School Committee

The Reading Education Foundation REF is pleased to support innovation and creativity in Reading schools by awarding **\$41,728** in teacher grants and professional development in 2019.

District-Wide Professional Development Fund

Year-Long Professional Development Fund: REF will continue to offer a rolling deadline fund for RPS educators to take advantage of training opportunities that arise throughout the year, thus making it easier for teachers to bring new ideas into their classrooms. Established by REF Board

Middle School Grants

Expanding Boundaries: With the purchase of classroom laptops, 7th & 8th grade Coolidge foreign language students will experience heightened engagement through a variety of tools designed to accommodate different learning styles, individualized lessons and assessments, global collaboration and cultural exposure. Grant proposed by Ursula Abad

Working like an Artist with Pottery Wheels: The purchase of three pottery wheels for 7th & 8th grade students at Parker will expand their ceramics knowledge and provide a new way to express their own unique creativity. Grant proposed by Diane Davis

Inspiring Future Programmers: Through the use of Finch robots and Microbits, Parker students will build critical thinking skills, computational aptitude, and enthusiasm for computer science. Grant proposed by Robyn Ferrazzani

Building Compassion and Empathy through Literature: Both middle schools will participate in an all school read of Alan Gratz's [The Refugee](#), engage in activities in a variety of curriculum areas, and experience an author visit to develop a deeper understanding of refugee situations, including those of the current day. Grant proposed by Sarah Marchant and Richele Shankland

Expanding Current Non-Fiction in the Classroom: Broaden the quality of non-fiction offerings and improve reading/writing skills of Parker 6th grade students through a subscription to Scope magazine and the wide range of text formats found in the interactive, online Scope website. Grant proposed by Julie Merrill and Megan Kiser

Elementary School Grants

Access-for-All Chapter Audio Books: Through the use of PlayAway audiobooks, Birch Meadow library will achieve increased circulation of popular chapter books for 3rd-5th graders. Grant proposed by Paula Falvey

Exploring STEM through Play: [Cubelets robot blocks](#) will provide a fun, creative and engaging platform for introduction to basic coding activities and critical thinking skills at Barrows. Grant proposed by Lori Hill and Kelley Papa

All-Inclusive Library Collection: By seeing themselves in books they read, Wood End students will gain acceptance, self-discovery, respect and safety. Grant proposed by Joanne King

Sensory Motor Trails: This outdoor trail will provide all elementary schools and Rise Preschool a fun and engaging way for students to involve whole body movement to self-regulate and focus. Grant proposed by Alysia Redard, Maria Fitzpatrick and Rebecca Schromm

Completion of Elementary Ukulele Program: Final installment of instruments will give each school a full class of instruments, achieving more student engagement and a more beneficial musical experience. Grant proposed by Melissa Steiger

METCO Advocacy Day at the State House, March 19th

On Tuesday, March 19, ten people from Reading rallied with METCO Inc and met with our State Legislators to advocate for adequate funding for the METCO Program. We sent the strong message that authentic relationship building was a vital component of METCO's success and that nurturing these relationships requires transportation that enables our Boston students to participate along with Reading residents in after school clubs and programs. It was exciting to be a part of this group which included three of our METCO parents, Sherilla LeStrade and Beverly and Yon Perrin; the Director of METCO Jason Cross; School Committee Members Geoffrey Coram and Linda Snow Dockser; and Reading residents including but not limited to Megan Fidler-Carey, Gina McCormick, and Kaitlyn Mercurio and her children.

Quote of the Week . . .



“You are today where your thoughts have brought you; you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you.”

-James Allen

We all spoke of the importance of the program for all of the students in our schools, and that the benefits and lasting impact go far beyond just academic opportunity and graduation rates. This program enables authentic relationships to evolve as an antidote to hate, stereotyping, and injustice. Rally speakers heralded the METCO students as the "foot soldiers for current day civil rights," doing the hard work of integration every day which will make all of our futures better. Senator Jason Lewis and his Legislative Director Dennis Burke and Representatives Richard Haggerty and Bradley Jones asked important questions and expressed support. They will carry this message into the committees on which they serve, including Education, Ways and Means, and Budget Committees.



Disney Quote of the Week



“When you believe in a thing,
believe in it all the way,
implicitly and
unquestionable.”

– Walt Disney



RMHS Late Start Information

Did you know that we have a link to information about the RMHS plan to start later next year (from 7:30-2:11 to 8:30-3:02)? Please check out: <https://www.reading.k12.ma.us/memorial/reading-late-start-committee-updates/> In addition, we have provided a form to ask for more information or to ask a question. To access the form, head to the site link above and click on the tab marked “Facts and Questions”.

You can also contact Kate Boynton (kathleen.boynton@reading.k12.ma.us) as well as Chris Kelley (Christine.kelley@reading.k12.ma.us) for more information.

Does Civic Education Make a Difference?

In this article in the *Peabody Journal of Education*, David Campbell (University of Notre Dame) analyzes what social scientists have learned about civics instruction in U.S. secondary schools. His conclusion: handled well, civic education can have a positive effect on young people’s “active citizenship in a democratic society.” Some possible ways this can manifest itself: participating in debates and discussions; speaking up at community meetings; volunteering in the community; participating in civic or political activities; working on a political or issue campaign; participating in a demonstration or boycott; and, of course, voting.

But for a long time, the assumption among scholars was that civics classes made no difference. An influential article published in 1968 (Langston and Jennings) said that teaching civics had little to no effect on political knowledge, interest, attitudes, and discourse, or on media consumption, civic participation, sense of efficacy, and tolerance. The good news, says Campbell, is that recent research has established that civics courses *can* have a positive effect. Here are the key variables:

- *Classroom instruction* – Civics classes make a difference, he says, when there is an

Important Websites

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

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

“open classroom climate,” defined as an atmosphere “in which students are exposed to the enlivening discussion of political and social issues, are encouraged to share their own opinions, and have their opinions respected by the teacher.” Effective teachers steer away from textbook reading and worksheets and involve students in discussing current events, researching political issues, engaging in classroom debates, role-playing, and writing letters to elected officials. Campbell mentions three programs that have produced good results: We The People, Student Voices, and Kids Voting.

- *Extracurricular activities* – Researchers have found that when students take part in student council, service organizations, drama clubs, musical groups, and religious organizations, they get a “civic boost” after graduation (he notes that athletics are not on this list). There are two caveats: first, there is a socioeconomic skew in the availability of many extracurricular activities, with disadvantaged students having fewer options; second, it’s possible that students who are predisposed to civic activism are attracted to these activities; correlation is not causation. More research is needed, says Campbell.

- *Service learning* – The research in this area is not as strong, but in some cases taking part in school-sponsored service projects boosts students’ downstream civic engagement.

- *School ethos* – Some studies have shown that the values reinforced within a school, either explicitly or implicitly, have an impact on students’ future civic engagement. One study (Bruch and Soss, 2018) found that adolescents in schools with punitive discipline policies, who believed their teachers treated them unfairly, were less likely to vote as young adults and had less trust in government. Students of color are generally more likely to bear the brunt of punitive school discipline, which means that schools may (say the authors) “operate as institutional mechanisms that convert social hierarchies into predictable patterns of political inequality and civic marginalization.”

Other studies have found that in schools that foster trust and positive beliefs, the opposite is true, especially when teachers explicitly endorse the importance of voting. The Democracy Prep charter schools in New York City send students as young as kindergarten to campaign for voter registration in Harlem (their bright yellow T-shirts say *I can’t vote, but you can!*); have high-school seniors work all year on capstone “Change the World” projects focused on key social problems; and require students to pass the U.S. Citizenship Test before graduating. Follow-up studies have found that Democracy Prep graduates are significantly more likely to vote than students who applied but weren’t admitted to the school through the lottery process.

- *High-stakes testing* – States that have introduced a high-school civics test as a graduation requirement show higher levels of civic knowledge among graduates, especially Latinx students and immigrants.

Campbell says that when high schools successfully increase their students’ civic awareness and participation, the benefits are most significant among students of color. He believes this is because the school’s impact compensates for more skeptical messages students may be receiving at home. It’s possible, he says, that effective civics programs in schools may have a “trickle-up” effect, changing patterns of civic engagement in students’ families.

"What Social Scientists Have Learned About Civic Education: A Review of the Literature" by David Campbell in *Peabody Journal of Education*, April 2019 (Vol. 94, #1, p. 32-47), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0161956X.2019.1553601>; Campbell can be reached at dave_campbell@nd.edu.
Reprinted from Marshall Memo 781.

Celebrate Reading 375!

The Reading Public Schools is proud to partner with Reading 375, a two-week celebration of Reading's 375th anniversary this spring from May 31 - June 15. As we approach this celebration, we will be periodically updating the Reading school community about Reading 375 events that might be of particular interest to our students.

Paint the Town – During the two-week celebration, there will be a town-wide art show with paintings and drawings inspired by Reading. **THIS ART SHOW IS OPEN TO ARTISTS GRADE 6 AND UP.** It's a wonderful opportunity for our student artists to display their work publicly. Registration is due by May 1. Full information on submitting a painting or drawing can be found at Reading375.com.



PorchFest – On Saturday, June 8, live music will be playing on porches and front lawns all over Reading. It's a great opportunity for our local musicians to perform. For full information, or to sign up your band to play or your front yard to host, check out Reading375.com.

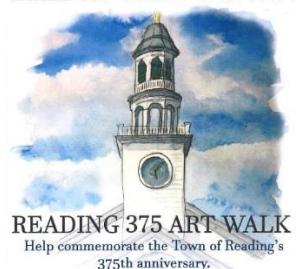
If This House Could Talk – This is a fantastic opportunity for you and your family to celebrate the stories that make your home unique. To learn more and to register to participate, head to Reading375.com.

Images of America: Reading – In honor of our town's 375th anniversary, local authors Ginny and Everett Blodgett have written a new history book about Reading. This is a must for history buffs. For information on the book launch party and how to reserve your copy, see Reading375.com.

Reading 375 Paint the Town Event

Calling all artists! As part of the Reading 375 celebrations this spring, local artists GRADE 6 AND UP are invited to submit a work of art inspired by Reading for Paint the Town. This is a great opportunity for our student artists to have their work publicly displayed as part of a town-wide art show. Submissions are due MAY 1. See www.reading375.com/paint-the-town/ for full information on how to participate.

PAINT THE TOWN



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

Reading Public School Happenings

RMHS High Five For This Week

Below is the RMHS High Five for this week.

Antonio Ruiz-Nokes, Class of 2019

As we end the week of Arts Fest 2019, we recognize with this week's High Five an accomplished performing artist and scholar, Antonio Ruiz-Nokes. During the school day, Antonio lives our school's core values of respect, responsibility, perseverance, and scholarship. He has earned an outstanding academic record—he is in the National Honor Society and is co-president of the Spanish Club-- but Antonio says his greatest achievement in the classroom has been learning, over time, that it is the challenging learning experiences that provide the most growth and offer the most rewards. He cites Ms. Mooney's AP Literature and Composition class as the one that has done the most to teach him that lesson and as the class that he counts as he favorite at RMHS. Antonio is an active member of the RMHS Drama Club, and his contributions to that club are many. He has been a performer, most notably in last fall's production of *Mamma Mia* where he played one of the leads, Sam Carmichael. When he's not on stage, Antonio works in tech. In the coming weeks he'll be one of the students in charge of running the sound board during the production of *Don't Touch That Dial!*. Antonio has distinguished himself in the area of vocal music. He has performed in Mixed Choir and RMHS Singers. He has also been honored regionally, auditioning for and winning a spot on both the All-State chorus and this past fall, the All-Eastern chorus, participating with students from up and down the east coast at the All-Eastern Music Festival in Pittsburgh. As accomplished as he is in the area of vocal music, Ms. Killian is quick to note that it is his attitude and unfailing patience and kindness that truly define his work in the music suite at RMHS. In the fall, Antonio will attend Northwestern University where he will study vocal performance and music education. Congratulations, Antonio!



RMHS High Five Antonio Ruiz-Nokes

Reading Students Participate in Junior Districts

After February auditions by students from more than 60 public and private schools, 47 Reading students were selected to participate in the Northeastern Massachusetts Junior District Music Festival, a prestigious Massachusetts Music Educators' Association event. The program, for students in grades six through nine, is offered by the M.M.E.A. as an enrichment opportunity for talented young musicians. Students were selected to perform in the Junior District Concert Band, Orchestra, Jazz Band, Boys' Chorus, or Girls' Chorus. They rehearsed with guest conductors on March 27, 29, and 30 and then performed at two large concerts at Galvin Middle School on Saturday, March 30. Reading music teachers Jenny DiMuzio, Joe Mulligan, Andrew Norton, Cheryl Webster, and Anna Wentlent helped prepare students and accompanied them to the rehearsals and concert.



(Row 1 from left) Brandon Boutin, Adrian Muniz, Constantine Georgeopoulos, Aaron Fusco, TJ Korwan, Quinn Grant, Samantha Zhu, Amy DeMartinis, Melody Vakili, Lucy Boyden, Chase Fruehauf

(Row 2): Quinn Synnott, Blake Thomas, Ryan McCann, Jonathan Clapp, Jack Ross, Lucas Scozzari, Nick Mirogiannis, Ethan Norton, Victoria Costa, Laurie Wise, Audrey Lee, Laura Gesmundo, Gibson Carpenter

(Row 3): Graham Hardin, Max Rizza, Charlie Benjamin, Jordan Whitmer, Brendan Manning, Liam Synnott, Pete Koster, Kevin Kinney, Aiden Vinciguerra, Zach Nichols, Dylín Wolter, Will Gallagher

(Row 4): Owen Abruzzese, Timmy Duggan, Cole Kenyon, Maddy Sinagra, Lucy Weld

Missing from the photo are:

Grace Brown, Maria Cremin, Kylin Daley, Catherine Hattery, Bethany McGrath

ArtsFest Shows the Talents of our Students

Prior to vacation, hundreds of students in the Reading Public Schools showed their artistic and musical talents at the annual ArtsFest Celebration of the Arts. A special thanks to the art and music teachers in our school district for the tremendous amount of work that they have done with our talented students.



RMHS Symphonic Band



Combined Grade 8 Chorus

Stepping Stones...

- Congratulations to Coolidge teacher **Dan Cody** on the birth of his daughter Tessa Marie on April 12th weighing 7.08 lbs. and 19 in. long.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
 - ✓ Davis Truong, Substitute, District
 - ✓ Samantha Weld, Substitute, District
 - ✓ Richard Clark, Substitute, District
 - ✓ Angela Holman, Cafeteria Worker, Birch Meadow
- **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, 61.5 hours biweekly, RMHS (repost)

https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=706
Special Education Therapeutic Support Program Paraeducator, 60 hours biweekly, Killam Elementary School (repost) https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=711
1.0 FTE Music/Chorus Teacher, Coolidge Middle School (19-20) https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=712
1.0 FTE Grade 5 Teacher, Wood End Elementary School (19-20) https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=713
1.0 FTE Grade 4 Teacher, Killam Elementary School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=714
0.6 FTE Kindergarten Teacher, Killam Elementary School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=715
1.0 FTE Elementary School Psychologist (1 Year), Birch Meadow Elementary School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=716
Town Job Postings
Community Development Director – Community Development https://www.readingma.gov/sites/readingma/files/uploads/2019_community_development_director.pdf

Blazing Trails...

"Report Lists Skills the Class of 2030 Will Need." The education system must change in three key ways if the class of 2030 -- today's kindergartners -- are to succeed in the workplace, according to results from a report conducted by Microsoft. Schools should focus on social and emotional learning, personalized instruction and using technologies such as artificial intelligence and collaborative platforms, the report finds. [Read More](#)

"Study Finds that Principals Can Boost Student Achievement." Providing support for principals can improve student achievement, according to a report by RAND that studied a five-year effort led by the Wallace Foundation in six school districts. The study focused on effective ways to train and retain school leaders through a "principal pipeline initiative." [Read More](#)

"The Top 10 Takeaways from the 2019 Visible Learning World Conference, Edinburgh." The conference made it clear that there is now a distinct model for education with learning at the center. It is extremely powerful. It builds on what schools are already doing and allows them to scale up. By building an evidence base at the center, all schools and school systems can become the improvement that they want to see. [Read More](#)

"How to Apply SEL in High School." Teenagers may benefit from a different approach to social and emotional learning than younger students, writes Amy Eva of the University of California at Berkeley. Eva shares three strategies to engage high-schoolers in SEL, including approaches that tap into students' need for respect. [Read More](#)

"Japanese Practice Could Boost US Schools." The Japanese art of self-reflection, called hansei, could have applications in US education, writes Christine Powell, a special-education teacher from California who learned the practice while attending a conference in Japan. Powell shares four steps to adopting hansei, including reflecting on actions and behaviors and questioning assumptions. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!