



The Journey

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

May 19, 2019

Volume 10, Number 31

Upcoming Dates

- May 20 – 23 – Senior Final Exams
- May 21 – (6:30 p.m.) RMHS Senior Awards in the Endslo PAC
- May 22 – Grade 6 – 8 Early Release; (7:00 p.m.) Middle School Open Houses
- May 23 – (6:30 p.m.) RMHS Senior Prom at the Boston Park Plaza
- May 27 – Memorial Day – Schools and Offices Closed
- May 28 – (5:00 p.m.) RMHS Senior Boat Cruise and All-Night Party
- May 29 – (7:00 p.m.) Reading Scholarship Foundation Night in the Endslo PAC
- May 30 – (6:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the RMHS Library; (7:00 p.m.) Baccalaureate Service at St. Athanasius
- May 31 – (7:30 a.m.) RMHS Senior's Class Day
- June 2 – (1:00 p.m.) RMHS Graduation in the Hawkes Field House
- June 3 – (8:00 a.m.) RMHS Underclassmen Awards; (7:00 p.m.) Coolidge Band Concert in the Endslo PAC
- June 4 – (6:00 p.m.) Parker Grade 6 Spring Concert; (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Acting Showcase in the Endslo PAC; (7:45 p.m.) Parker Grade 7 Spring Concert
- June 5 – Grade 6 – 11 Early Release Day
- June 6 – (7:00 p.m.) Parker Grade 8 Spring Concert

RMHS Choral Students Honor Choral Director Kristin Killian in Final Concert



RMHS Select Choir

Last Thursday evening, in front of a packed crowd of alumni, families, community, members, and educators, the RMHS Choral Groups, Fermata Nowhere, The Crescendudes, RMHS Singers, and Mixed Choir, did an amazing performance in honor of RMHS Choral Director Kristin Killian, who will be retiring at the end of this year after 36 years in the Reading Public Schools. During this two hour performance, the groups sang songs such as *Superstition*, *City of Stars*, *I'm a Believer*, *You Raise Me Up*, *Thriller*, and *What the World Needs Now is Love*. The RMHS Jazz Band, under the direction of Joseph Mulligan, accompanied the Mixed Choir with a medley of Armed Forces-The Pride of America. In addition, there were two student directed performances, one by RMHS Senior Antonio Ruiz-Nokes (*Si Tu Suenas*) and one by RMHS Senior Isabel Molettieri (*Already Home*). Current Coolidge Music Teacher and Next Year's RMHS Fine Arts Department Chair Anna Wentlent, accompanied the Select Choir in *If Music Be the Food of Love*.

Congratulations to Ms. Killian on an outstanding final performance. We wish her good health and fortune in her retirement.

- June 10 – (1:00 p.m.) Move-Up day; (6:00 p.m.) RMHS Future Freshman 2
- June 11 – (7:00 p.m.) Coolidge Choral Spring Concert in the Endslo PAC; SEPAC Meeting in RMHS Library
- June 14 – (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Improvosaurus
- June 17 – Last day of School
- June 20 – (6:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in RMHS Library



RMHS Jazz Ensemble and RMHS Mixed Choir

RMHS Students Display Art Work at AP Art Show

Last Tuesday evening, students in AP Art and Studio Art classes participated in the annual RMHS AP Art Show on Main Street at RMHS. AP students with work in the show included Megan Coram, Jahnavi Patel, Sam Imrich, Maddy Liberman, Matteo Coelho and Tali Shorr. These students are in the AP Drawing section of AP Art. Studio art students participated in the show as well. The show was very well They explored some topics relevant to our school, and community, as well as being exceptional works of art. A special thanks goes out to our art department for all of their hard work with these students.



AP Drawing Art Students

Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to boys and girls lacrosse, baseball, softball, girls track, boys and girls tennis for wins recently.
- Kudos to the RMHS Chorus on an outstanding spring concert performance.



Tali Shorr



Maddy Liberman



Matteo Coelho

Superintendent's Office
Half-Hours this Week

All are welcome

*There are no office half
hours this week.*

Why We Fight

By RMHS Sophomore Grace Brenner

Shared via Twitter by RMHS Department Chair Audra Williams

We are free now from our bondage
Though not yet from ourselves-
For the past, it still defines us,
Into our spirits it still delves.
It is time to rewrite history-
For the textbooks on the shelves.
The centuries of silence
That have eroded through our souls-
Rise up now like a silver flame
To fill our nation's holes.
Liberty may cost a token
And freedom has its toll-
But regardless we were broken
And now we can be whole.
Our past, it may be tainted
Our present held in chains
But a brighter future will prevail
And our dreams, they do remain-
Of life, love, and prosperity
For we do not fight in vain.
To avenge the dark and evil
That robbed us of our light-
And for our fallen brothers,
This is why we fight.
The cold hands of injustice
Still threaten to dethrone
Us kings from all the kingdoms
That have become our own.
We seek to cut the ties
That bind us to the night
To see the golden sun at last-
This is why we fight.
We will endure the pain inside us
Our defenses paper-thin-
But we will not raise our flag to them-
We will not let them win.
We've shared with you our story-
We've told you why we fight
And now we ask you why it matters
More than you thought it might.
We leave you now to wonder
What difference it does make-
To challenge all you know so well,
To bend so far you break?
Both answers lie somewhere inside us
Beside our beating heart-
Urging us to come together

Before we fall apart.

RMHS French Students Shine on National French Test



Recently, RMHS students participated in *Le Grand Concours* (National French Test). This national competition is sponsored by the American Association of French Teachers (AATF). More than 72,000 students competed this year, and **twenty-one RMHS students** earned national recognition - with Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals. Students were evaluated for their written, oral, and listening comprehension in French; students who rank nationally have shown 'a superior level of French language skills, cultural competence, and commitment'. The AATF congratulated teachers for their dedication and hard work in preparing these students, and expressed appreciation to parents who have supported and advocated for the French programs. *Félicitations!*

Congratulations to the students, families, and teachers for all of their hard work!

Anger Management is a Big Part of Parenting, So How Do We Do It?

Written by Erin Walsh • May 14 for [Dr. Dave Mind Positive Parenting Blog](#)

FROM CALM TO CHAOS

The sun rises, your alarm rings, you roll out of bed and find your way to your first mug of coffee (Not a coffee person? Imagine tea instead). The birds are singing. The world feels full of possibility. You take a deep breath, committed to starting your parenting day with smooth transitions and calm nerves. You were born for this.

Twenty minutes later, this delightful vision already feels outdated and naive. Your coffee mug is still half full but cold, your son has ZERO socks in his drawer and homework is nowhere to be found. You utter two or three well placed exasperated sighs which does nothing to produce the socks or the homework. You try yelling instead which, no surprise, is only producing a child yelling louder than you. You practically push your child out the front door to run to the bus.

Ah, parenthood.

Quote of the Week . . .



"Live every moment, love every day, because before you know it, precious time slips away."

-REO Speedwagon

Some days things go just as planned. Other days things go about as far from planned as we can imagine. It doesn't make it easier that **the part of children's brains** that help them regulate their emotions, get perspective, and problem solve is still growing and developing throughout childhood and adolescence. It also doesn't help that parenthood taxes that same part of our own brains.

There is certainly no "fix" for emotional outbursts in childhood and adolescence. Learning how to have and handle big feelings is one of the major developmental tasks of childhood (and parenthood). But starting the day with power struggles, yelling matches, and failed visions doesn't feel good either.

So what can we try instead? Start here to work from chaos back to calm(ish):

1. CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF:

Check your expectations. Take your child's developmental stage (**0-8** and **beyond**) and/or their specific abilities into account. Having unrealistic expectations for what your child is capable of sets everyone up for failure.

Know your triggers. Are you most likely fly off the handle if nothing is ready in the morning and you are heading off to work and school? When you are in between shifts? If you can, create systems that reduce your stress in predictably tense situations.

Take a break. Addressing things in the moment is important with very young children. As they reach school age, it is okay to take a break and come back to the issue when you are calm. "I am too angry right now to talk about this. Let's take a break and talk about this when we have both calmed down." The only catch? You have to come back to it.

Apologize if you need to. "I was really frustrated that you weren't listening to me earlier when I asked you to turn off the computer and come to dinner, but I shouldn't have yelled at you like that. I am sorry for yelling."

2. COACH FOR SELF REGULATION:

University of Washington professor **John Gottman**, coined the term "emotion coaching" when he found that children whose parents help them make sense of and handle their feelings were more confident and resilient. When we address misbehavior without attending to the underlying emotions we lose the chance to help them practice managing them differently.

Be curious. Big feelings can teach us a lot about our kids. Instead of just trying to get rid of them, try being curious about them. Are there things that predictably make your child angry or frustrated? What might they need? What skills do they need to practice?

Name feelings. "Maria I can see that you are really angry. Is that right? Yeah. You are really mad right now."

Validate their feeling. "It makes sense that you are angry. You want to go to your friend's house now but there isn't time before dinner."

Disney Quote of the Week



"Our greatest natural resource is the minds of our children."

– Walt Disney

Address the poor behavior. Coaching your child's emotions doesn't mean not setting boundaries or limits. "It is okay to feel angry and I know you were looking forward to hanging out with Veronica. But it is not okay to throw all your books on the floor. Let's calm down together and then you can pick them back up."

Work together to come up with different solution. When everyone is calm, you can process what happened. "Seeing your friends is really important to you and I understand that. Having dinner together is really important to me. How can we make this work?" With very young children it is helpful to give them words and ideas. For example, suggest, "You can say 'Mama I am frustrated. Please help me!'"

3. PUT YOUR POSITIVE THINKING TO WORK:

Are you thinking, "Yeah, those strategies all sound nice and good in theory but it never seems to work out that way!" That's true for all of us. Sometimes brushing our dreams up against the obstacles that stand in our way helps us plan for problem spots. **Dr. Gabrielle Oettingen's** WOOP method doesn't just **work for kids**, it works for us grown ups too. Here is the basic framework:

Wish: Start by focusing on something that you believe is achievable.

Outcome: What is the best thing that you associate with fulfilling your wish? How would it feel? Imagine enjoying this outcome as vividly as possible. Don't skip this part.

Obstacle: Look for the most critical internal obstacle that prevents you from fulfilling your wish. It might be an emotion, an unrealistic belief, or a bad habit.

Plan: Name one thought or action you can take in response to the obstacle and hold it in your mind. Think about when and where the obstacle will next occur. Form an "if-then plan." Repeat this in your mind. For example:

Let's take a quick look at what this can look like with a simple example -

Wish: "I want to stop feeling frantic and angry with my son when he seems so disorganized."

Outcome: "I will be more calm and feel comfortable in my body. I will enjoy my son more and have more time for myself. I will be proud of myself."

Obstacle: I realize that I have a belief that I need to do everything for my teenage son and manage his life. I have a belief that if I don't do things for him then bad things will happen.

Plan: The next time this will happen is tomorrow morning before school. I will expect my son to prepare for school the night before. If he needs help, then I will help him create a structure/system as he learns the skills but will not do it for him. If he forgets his homework, then I will let him experience the consequences of that at school and help him brainstorm solutions without feeling like I need to rescue him.

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>

There is no such thing as the perfect parent and there isn't a roadmap for how to navigate the messiness of human emotions and family relationships. The goal of parenting isn't to get rid of big feelings, but for all of us to learn how to handle them.



Reading 375 May 31 - June 15

Celebrations of our town's 375th anniversary include:

Opening Night - May 31 Reading Common 7PM
Jumbotron, live music, special events, and discounts
at downtown businesses and restaurants

Town-Wide Art Show

Dog Parade

Fee, app-based Scavenger Hunt

PorchFest

Free Concerts

Baseball

Food Events

Fireworks

Hot Air Ballon Rides

So much more

For Full Details
Visit READING375.COM

To stay up to date follow
Reading 375 on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

Reading Public School Happenings

Friends of Reading METCO hold Mixer

On Thursday evening, the Friends of Reading METCO held a mixer of Reading and Boston families at the Blarney Stone in Boston. The proceeds from the mixer help support the Reading METCO program.



METCO Director Attends Harvard Equity Institute

Thanks to the generosity of the Reading Education Foundation, Jason Cross, our district METCO director attended the Harvard Equity Institute last week in Boston. In this four-day institute, Jason gathered with other educators from around the nation to explore the role of racism in creating and sustaining educational inequity. Jason plans to return home ready to help implement concrete strategies for building a more inclusive school community where all children can achieve at high levels. We are so thankful to REF for their support of this powerful training.

For more information check out: <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/ppe/program/race-equity-and-leadership-schools>. Below is a picture of Jason Cross with Reading's METCO director Jason Cross with Columbia Professor Dr. Jason Lee at Harvard's Equity Institute.



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

Stepping Stones...

- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
✓ Samantha Stuart, 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 Special Education Teacher, Barrows Elementary School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=727
1.0 FTE School Psychologist, Barrows Elementary School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=728
1.0 FTE Grade 4 Teacher, Barrows Elementary School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=729
1.0 FTE Grade 1 Teacher, Joshua Eaton Elementary School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=730
Night Shift Custodian, 80 hours biweekly, Birch Meadow Elementary School https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=731

Blazing Trails...

"The Teens Are Not Alright." Excessive workloads, crammed schedules, and "perfectionism" are causing teens undue stress, says Cathy Vatterott, author and expert in K-12 homework, in the new issue of ASCD's Educational Leadership magazine. [Read More](#)

"Are Grades Reliable?" "No amount of reform in grading policies or report card formats will improve grading if the grades reported are not reliable" in the first place. Susan M. Brookhart and Thomas R. Guskey discuss how to boost your practice in this ASCD Express article. [Read More](#)

"Vineyard Students Travel the World Without Leaving the Library." One Massachusetts high-school library is holding cross-cultural conversations with students in Iraq, Afghanistan, Sweden and Nigeria as part of a project led by school librarian Kevin McGrath. Students taking part in the Cross Cultural Perceptions versus Reality program connect with their international peers through an online portal set up in the library. [Read More](#)

"Westford, Massachusetts Middle School Expands Project-Based Learning." A public middle school in Massachusetts expanded a project-based learning program to seventh-grade students after a pilot program for sixth-graders showed increased engagement and motivation. A program evaluation also showed that students have been absent less often and are taking fewer trips to the school nurse. [Read More](#)

"World Awareness Week Brings the World to Students." A high school in New Hampshire is displaying the flags of almost 200 countries and showcasing global facts on its walls as part of its celebration of World Awareness Week. The event aims to bring the world to students, says Helaine Wemple, who teaches Spanish at the school. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!