



Pathways

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

September 27, 2019

Volume 7, Number 2

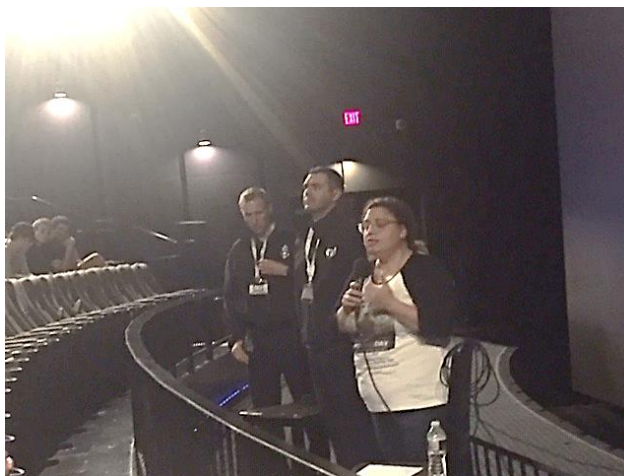
Upcoming Dates

- September 29 – Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown
- September 30 – 1st day of Rosh Hashanah
- October 1 – Rosh Hashanah ends at sundown
- October 4 – (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Football vs. Woburn; Band Night at game
- October 5 – (8:00 a.m.) SAT Testing – RMHS is a test site
- October 8 – Yom Kippur begins at Sundown
- October 9 – Yom Kippur
- October 11 – (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Football vs. Arlington
- October 14 – Columbus Day – No School/Offices Closed
- October 16 – (7:30 p.m.) Financial Forum @ Reading Public Library
- October 17 – (6:30 p.m.) Annual College Fair @ Shriner's Auditorium, Wilmington; (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in RMHS Library
- October 19 – (8:00 a.m.) PSAT Testing @ RMHS
- October 23 – Grade 6 – 12 Early Release; (6:30 p.m.) RMHS Guidance Freshman Parent Night in Endslo PAC
- November 5 – Full Day In-Service – No School for Students; (6:30 p.m.) Fine & Performing Arts College fair @ Emmanuel College
- November 7 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee in the Schettini Library

Chris Herren Cuts Deep With Students Through The First Day

Movie Presented at RCASA Annual Meeting on September 26th

At the RCASA Annual Meeting on September 26th, over 200 people, including members of the RMHS Boys Hockey Team, attended a film showing of the Chris Herren Film, *The First Day*. A story from **Forbes** magazine about the film is below.



School Resource Officers Matt Vatcher and Brian Lewis facilitate a discussion with Executive Director Erica McNamara

After the movie, RCASA Executive Director Erica McNamara and School Resource Officers Brian Lewis and Matt Vatcher facilitated a discussion about the movie.



Members of the RMHS Boys Hockey Team with Coach Mark Doherty Attend RCASA Event



Chris Herren
HOCK FILMS

By: **Omaid Homayun**

Herren's meteoric rise and tragic descent in the NBA because of his drug addiction was publicized in the ESPN 30 for 30 film titled, *Unguarded*. His story is fascinating because in his own words, he went through hell and back. Tragically, his seven-figure salary financed his addiction and he found himself hawking drugs on street corners before games. His career fell off a cliff and he had little resemblance of being a dad to his three children. After his last heroine overdose, the cops told him he was dead for 30 seconds after he was revived. Once the hero of Fall River, his life was unraveling in public shame.

While his memoir reads like an endless tragedy, Chris was finally able to turn his life around. Since then, Chris has been sharing his story and his focus has been to help others through his [treatment center](#) in MA. What's extraordinary about his message is that it's evolved to strike a chord with middle and high school students to address their struggles whether it be substance abuse, self-harm, or bullying. In his talk which has been produced as a new film titled, *The First Day*, he states that parents are present for students as it relates to their academics, but they forget to be there for them *socially*. He questions their presence and supervision on the weekends – when the kids need it most.

Through speaking to over one million kids, Chris has learned that not everyone has parents present and that the responsibility needs to be shared with the educators who spend extended time with them. While many private schools have counselors and wellness classes, Chris believes all students should have access to these resources to help them through their teenage years where they are most vulnerable.

[He explained to me](#) that his message to students was born through deep reflection when CBS This Morning asked him to write a [Note to Self](#) for their popular segment.

“They said 500 words is not that difficult, you just have to write it and read it on camera. In my mind I just wrote a book and was featured in a documentary, this should be easy. But getting in touch with my younger self, feeling those feelings, and retracing my steps is the hardest thing I've ever done. That's the moment when I discovered we need to focus on *the first day*, not the worst day. We need to talk about the beginning and not just the end.”

The First Day is a remarkable documentary produced by award-winning film maker, Jonathan Hock. The inspiration came from Robert Drew who produced the 1964 documentary about JFK's funeral titled, *Faces of November*. The film focuses on the faces of all the people who lined the streets to attend his funeral.

Kudos and Accolades

- Thanks to the RMHS Administration and staff for holding a successful back to school night this week.
- Congratulations to football, golf and swim for wins this week.

“Those faces told the story. The story wasn’t about the tragedy. It was about understanding what was going to happen next?” Hock explained.

“With our drug and alcohol epidemic in our country today, the question that *The First Day* asks is not about Chris Herren. The question is written on the faces of these kids which begs to ask, *what is going to become of us?*”

Watch The First Day Trailer:

<https://vimeo.com/345805750>

[Click here to listen to the full interview with Chris Herren & Jonathan Hock](#)

State Release of Spring 2019 MCAS Data

An Update from the Assistant Superintendent for Learning & Teaching-Chris Kelley

MCAS Results Released by DESE

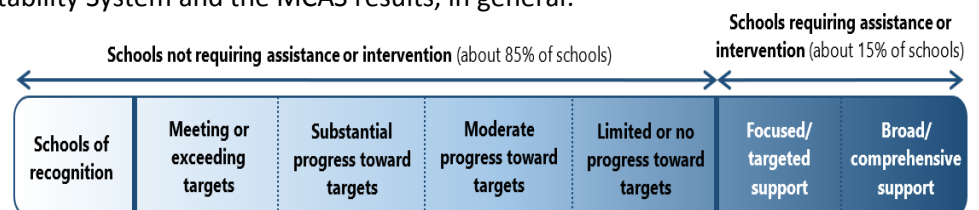
The Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE) released results today for last spring’s state assessments. This includes Grades 3-8 “Next-Generation” MCAS results for both English Language Arts and Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering. High School testing for English Language Arts and Mathematics used the new “Next-Generation” MCAS. However, the Science Tests used in 2019 were still in the old “Legacy” format. You will be receiving your child’s individual scores by mail in the next few weeks as DESE should be sending them to our district soon.

In this update, you will receive three sections of data related to MCAS: Accountability results, MCAS results for English Language Arts, Math and Science, and Student Growth Percentiles.

Accountability Results

This year DESE will continue to report accountability results under its new framework for district and school accountability and assistance that was introduced last year. As a result, there are differences in the way the state is now reporting out. Scores at the High School level can not be compared to other years as this is their first year with the “Next Generation” testing. Additionally, at the elementary and middle school level, we are only in the second year of this new Accountability System.

Below are some important points from the DESE regarding the results for the new Accountability System and the MCAS results, in general:



- *Broad/comprehensive support, Focused/targeted support, Limited or no progress toward targets, Moderate progress toward targets, Substantial progress toward targets, Meeting or exceeding targets and Schools of recognition.*
- *Schools are given an Overall Classification and Reason for that Classification as well as a percentage of Progress toward improvement targets as well as an Accountability percentile.*

Superintendent's Office
Half-Hours this Week

All are welcome

There are no office half hours this week.

- This new accountability system looks at schools through three determinations: Non-High Schools (schools serving a combination of grades 3-8) High Schools (schools serving a combination of grades 9-12), and Middle/High Schools or K-12 Schools (schools serving grade 10 and at least one other grade 3-8).

Reading's schools fall into the first two determinations. Barrows, Birch Meadow, Coolidge, Joshua Eaton, Killam, Parker, and Wood End Schools are compared to other Non-High Schools. RMHS is compared to other high schools serving grades 9-12 only.

- Non-High Schools determinations are measured in *Achievement* in ELA, Math and Science as well as *Growth* in ELA and Math. In addition, the state looks at *Progress Towards English Proficiency* (only measured at the district level for Reading due to low numbers), and Chronic Absenteeism. *Chronic Absenteeism* is defined as the percentage of students who miss 10% or more of their school days (for a full year, that would be 18 days).
- High School determination also looks at *Achievement* in ELA, Math and Science as well as *Growth* in ELA and Math. In addition, they look at the *Four-year Cohort Graduation Rate*. This represents the percentage of the cohort that graduates in four years or less. They also look at *Extended engagement rate* which is the total of the five-year cohort graduation rate plus the percentage of students from the cohort that remain in schools after five year. Also included in accountability is the *Annual Drop Out Rate*, *Progress Toward English Proficiency* and *Chronic Absenteeism*. They also look at *Coursework Completion*. *Coursework Completion* looks at the percentage of enrolled).

Achievement	MCAS scores in English language arts, math, and science
Student Growth	Student growth percentiles in English language arts and math
High School Completion	Four-year cohort graduation rate
	Extended engagement rate (five-year cohort graduation rate plus the percentage of students from the cohort who are still enrolled)
	Annual dropout rate
Progress Towards English Proficiency	Percentage of English learners meeting annual targets <u>in order to</u> be English proficient in six years
Chronic Absenteeism	Percentage of students missing 10 percent or more of the days they were enrolled at a given school during a school year
Advanced Coursework Completion	Percentage of 11 th and 12 th <u>graders</u> completing advanced coursework (Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment courses, and other selected rigorous courses)

- High school students participated in the Next Generation/Computer model testing in ELA and Math in 2019. The next-generation tests will next be introduced at the high school level Biology exam in spring 2020.
- The next-generation MCAS uses a scale of 440 to 560 and should not be directly compared to the legacy MCAS, which used a scale of 200–280.
- 2019 Assessment results were based on targets set by last year's data as a baseline. DESE has not yet determined how they will set targets in the future.
- In addition to meeting targets for each school as a whole, the school (and district) has DESE targets set for the *Lowest Performing Students* as well as in 11 subgroups. Subgroup results are reported if there are more than 20 students within them at the school and at the district level. In Reading, we are not given reports in all the categories due to our lower numbers in some subgroup categories. The group called *Lowest Performing Students* is not a subgroup, but that group is also factored into accountability determinations.

School	Overall Classification	Progress Toward Improvement Targets	Accountability Percentile
District	Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention	67% Substantial Progress Toward Targets	
Barrows	Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention	78% Meeting or Exceeding Targets	82%
Birch Meadow	Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention	58% Substantial Progress Toward Targets	72%
Joshua Eaton	Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention	86% Meeting or Exceeding Targets	86%
Killam	Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention	83% Meeting or Exceeding Targets	81%
Wood End	Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention	50% Substantial Progress Towards Targets	75%
Coolidge Middle School	Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention	87% Meeting or Exceeding Targets	92%
Parker Middle School	Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention	45% Moderate Progress Towards Targets	67%
RMHS	Not Requiring Assistance or Intervention	62% Substantial Progress Towards Targets	62%

Boldened Accountability Percentiles were improved from last year's Percentiles.

As the final full data sets have just been released, staff are continuing to review all the information that is now available for each school, grade level, and content area. We are also working at the district level to align our coursework and curriculum so that all students will continue to make gains. Our district is already using this data in order to identify current strengths and weaknesses, review curriculum and instructional alignment, and identify appropriate interventions for students where applicable. We will also utilize released assessment items-including test questions, scoring rubrics and examples of student response to inform our practice. Our district met the requirements and is not in need of Assistance or Intervention in Special Education.

An overview presentation of the district assessment data will be given for the School Committee on October 17, 2019. Each school will also be doing its own school-level presentation in order to more fully discuss and identify each school's individual progress.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact your school Principal or the district administration offices. Below also are several links to the DESE website for further information about Reading's results and the next-generation MCAS.

The MCAS assessment data are assembled in several different tables below. In addition to the achievement levels in each content area, we have also created tables to review the median Student Growth Percentiles, as that data also provides us important information. The Student Growth Percentile (SGP) measures how much a student's performance has improved from one year to the next relative to his or her academic peers (other students statewide with similar achievement results in prior years).

[Reading Public Schools / DESE Assessment Profile](#)
[Parents' Guide to the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System \(MCAS\)](#)
[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) about next-generation MCAS Results](#)

[MCAS Results](#)

[2019 English Language Arts](#)

Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels:

- Exceeding Expectations
- Meeting Expectations
- Partially Meeting Expectations
- Not Meeting Expectations

Quote of the Week . . .



“In life, many things don't go according to plan. If you fall, get back up. If you stumble, regain your balance. Never give up.”

-Unknown

2019 ELA % of students by school and grade level, at each Achievement level		Not Meeting Expectations	Partially Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations	2019 Meeting & Exceeding Expectations	2018 Meeting & Exceeding Expectations
State	Gr 3	8	36	46	10	56	52
	Gr 4	9	39	43	9	52	59
	Gr 5	9	39	45	7	52	71
Barrows	Gr 3	3	20	62	15	77	74
	Gr 4	3	25	58	13	71	67
	Gr 5	0	36	59	5	64	58
Birch Meadow	Gr 3	3	19	65	13	78	70
	Gr 4	2	40	54	5	59	58
	Gr 5	2	36	56	6	62	83
Eaton	Gr 3	1	24	64	10	74	57
	Gr 4	5	29	51	14	65	66
	Gr 5	3	33	48	16	64	72
Killam	Gr 3	1	31	55	13	68	74
	Gr 4	4	34	52	11	63	49
	Gr 5	2	38	52	8	60	75
Wood End	Gr 3	6	24	57	12	69	58
	Gr 4	6	40	42	12	54	63
	Gr 5	7	29	53	11	64	71
State	Gr 6	13	33	41	13	54	50
	Gr 7	13	38	40	8	48	46
	Gr 8	14	35	40	11	51	51
Coolidge	Gr 6	6	17	46	32	78	73
	Gr 7	4	20	54	22	76	75
	Gr 8	6	16	49	28	77	83
Parker	Gr 6	1	22	54	22	76	67
	Gr 7	4	39	50	6	56	67
	Gr 8	4	34	50	12	62	65
State	Gr 10	8	31	48	13	61	n/a
RMHS	Gr 10	3	26	54	17	71	n/a

2019 Mathematics

Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels:

- Exceeding Expectations
- Meeting Expectations
- Partially Meeting Expectations
- Not Meeting Expectations

2019 Math % of students by school and grade level, at each Achievement level		Not Meeting Expectations	Partially Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations	2019 Meeting & Exceeding Expectations	2018 Meeting & Exceeding Expectations
State	Gr 3	13	38	40	9	49	50
	Gr 4	12	39	41	8	49	48
	Gr 5	10	42	43	6	49	46
Barrows	Gr 3	8	29	48	15	63	61
	Gr 4	0	30	55	15	70	77
	Gr 5	3	21	67	9	76	46
Birch Meadow	Gr 3	5	21	56	18	74	61
	Gr 4	2	44	52	2	54	58
	Gr 5	2	38	50	11	61	68
Eaton	Gr 3	3	30	52	15	67	63
	Gr 4	5	30	59	5	64	71
	Gr 5	0	31	54	15	69	54
Killam	Gr 3	3	41	45	12	57	60
	Gr 4	0	30	57	12	69	43
	Gr 5	5	45	45	5	50	60
Wood End	Gr 3	10	33	49	8	57	58
	Gr 4	8	51	37	5	42	63
	Gr 5	9	13	60	18	78	70
State	Gr 6	10	38	41	10	51	48
	Gr 7	13	39	37	11	48	46
	Gr 8	12	41	37	10	47	49
Coolidge	Gr 6	6	21	53	20	73	66
	Gr 7	6	25	50	18	68	73
	Gr 8	7	16	54	23	77	82
Parker	Gr 6	2	36	51	11	62	62
	Gr 7	3	38	49	10	59	62
	Gr 8	3	36	50	10	60	65
State	Gr 10	9	33	45	13	58	n/a
RMHS	Gr 10	3	22	56	19	75	n/a

Disney Quote of the Week



“Ohana means family, and family means no one gets left behind or forgotten.”

- Lilo & Stitch

2019 Science, Technology, and Engineering

Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels:

- Exceeding Expectations
- Meeting Expectations
- Partially Meeting Expectations
- Not Meeting Expectations

2019 STE % of students by school and grade level, at each Achievement level		Warning/Failing	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Advanced	2019 Proficient & Advanced	2018 Proficient & Advanced
State	HS	5	20	44	30	74	75
RMHS	HS	1	15	48	37	85	81

2019 Science, Technology, and Engineering – High School Biology – Legacy MCAS

Legacy MCAS Achievement Levels

- Advanced
- Proficient
- Needs Improvement
- Warning/Failing

2019 STE % of students by school and grade level, at each Achievement level		Not Meeting Expectations	Partially Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations	2019 Meeting & Exceeding Expectations
State	Gr 5	12	39	40	8	48
Barrows	Gr 5	2	16	67	16	83
Birch	Gr 5	3	30	58	9	67
Eaton	Gr 5	2	20	59	19	78
Killam	Gr 5	3	33	58	6	64
Wood End	Gr 5	9	24	51	16	67
State	Gr 8	13	41	38	8	46
Coolidge	Gr 8	2	26	58	14	72
Parker	Gr 8	3	36	50	10	60

Student Growth (SGP)

Massachusetts measures growth for individual students by comparing their change in achievement on statewide assessments to that of their peers (all other students in the state who previously had similar historical assessment results). The state sets a goal of 50 for each growth. Last year, the state converted using the MEAN SGP and not the Median SGP. The mean is the true average. Therefore, comparisons on SGP should not be made prior to 2018 for Elementary and Middle School results. This year, the ELA/MATH grade 10 is the Next Generation MCAS so it can not be compared to the previous Legacy test. Included in the SGP is the average for each grade for Reading as we are looking at district data and how close we are to the state goal of 50.

Important Websites

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

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

	ELA SGP 2019	Math SGP 2019	ELA SGP 2018	Math SGP 2018
Grade 4- District Average	48.5	52.1		
Barrows	49.2	64.2	50.3	69.6
Birch	42	38.1	39.8	37.3
Eaton	56.4	54.2	52.6	64
Killam	48.9	62.6	46.8	54.7
Wood End	44.9	42.8	54.7	39.9
Grade 5 – District Average	52.6	58.8		
Barrows	41.2	56.9	36.8	24.6
Birch	50.4	52.6	61.5	55.1
Eaton	58.2	62.2	66.8	53.9
Killam	58.8	55.1	58	52.2
Wood End	53.4	71.2	48.9	60.8
Grade 6 – District Average	60.6	49.7		
Coolidge	64.5	57.2	67.7	65.8
Parker	57.6	43.7	58.2	58
Grade 7 – District Average	55.4	54.4		
Coolidge	65.2	61.5	70.2	69.6
Parker	46.8	47.9	53.9	67.4
Grade 8 – District Average	49.3	55.6		
Coolidge	61	65.4	63.9	59.9
Parker	40.7	48.9	42.6	45.5
Reading Gr 10	46.8	49.9	N/A Can't compare	N/A Can't compare

Providing Accommodations for Students on Religious Holidays

Over the next week, there will be teachers, students, and their families who will be celebrating and observing two major religious Jewish holidays where they will be missing school. During this time, families will be attending temple services and gathering with families during the evening hours. The full School Committee Policy, IMDA and the implementation regulations, IMDA-R are found [here](#). For planning purposes, the following upcoming holidays are recognized by the Reading Public Schools as major religious holidays:

Rosh Hashanah: Begins at sundown on **Sunday, September 29th** and ends at sundown on **Tuesday, October 1st**.

Yom Kippur: Begins at sundown on **Tuesday, October 8th** and ends at sundown on **Wednesday, October 9th**.

State and federal laws require schools to make reasonable accommodation to the religious needs of students in observance of holy days. With respect to students, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 151C, section 2B reads in relevant part as follows:

“Any student in an educational or vocational training institution...who is unable, because of his religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study or work requirement which he may have missed because of such absence on any particular day....No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his availing himself of the provisions of this section.”

As a result, the following accommodations will be in place for **ALL** students on the following dates:

No assignments will be due for any student the day of or the day after the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur holidays. **Therefore, there will be no assignments due in any classroom in the Reading Public Schools on September 30, October 1, October 2, 9 and 10.**

No tests or quizzes will be scheduled on the days of Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur. **Therefore, there will be no tests or quizzes scheduled on September 30, October 1, and October 9.**

No one-time events such as field trips, music performances, theatre plays and productions, auditions, and back to school functions will be scheduled on the days or eves of Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur. Therefore, there will be no one-time events scheduled on **September 29th (evening), September 30, October 1st, October 8th, and October 9th.**

Absences on Religious Holidays

Parents and students (if age appropriate) are encouraged to notify the school in advance when their child will be not be attending school because of religious or ethnic observance.

Discrimination against any student, because of such individual’s religious/ethnic belief or practice, or any absence based on said belief or practice is prohibited.

1. Any pupil absent from school because of a religious holiday may not be deprived of any award or eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award because of such absence;
2. Students whose conscientious observance of a religious or ethnic holiday conflicts with participating in a school-scheduled event such as tryouts, athletic contests, theatricals, or concerts, will not be required to participate nor penalized for their non-participation;
3. Any absence because of religious or ethnic holiday must be recorded as an excused absence for religious observance in the school register or in any group or class attendance record.
4. Parents should follow the normal procedures when their child is going to be absent to observe the religious holiday and call the parent verification system at the school on the day of the absence or notify the school in advance by email, written note, or phone. If a child is to receive an excused absence for religious observance, the parent must indicate that information in the correspondence with the school.

If you have any questions, please contact your building principal.

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

A White Teacher Deals an Accusation of Racism from His Students

In this article in *Education Week Teacher*, Boston eighth-grade teacher Colin Turner describes how he was pulled aside by an African-American colleague last October and told that some students thought two statements he'd made were racist. The details:

- Briefing students for a field trip, Turner (who is white) said, "Remember that you are representatives of our school, your families, and our neighborhood, and people at the museum may judge us accordingly." A student asked, "What do you mean, judge us?" Turner replied, "I mean, people at the museum will see students from Roxbury, mostly students of color, and they will form an opinion about all students who look like you. I don't agree with it, I don't like it, but that's the way it is. So act in a way that represents yourselves well."

- During a discussion on careers, students talked about being nurses, baseball players, doctors; then a Cape Verdean student said he wanted to be an engineer. "That's great, Franco!" said Turner. "There aren't many people of color in that career. You'll be a pioneer. Good for you!"

Seeing the stricken look on his face as she relayed students' concerns, Turner's colleague said, "I know you're not a racist, and I told the students that I would have said the same thing to them. But they're not used to hearing that kind of thing from a white teacher. I realize you had good intentions, but their truth is more important than your intent."

For the rest of the day, Turner struggled to process the conversation. At first he was defensive: *Of course I'm not racist! I chose to teach in a mostly black and Latinx school. I've worked and lived here almost as long as they have. Don't they know who I am? These kids don't know what they're talking about. They are the ones making this a racial thing. Or maybe they're just trying to test me, and distract me from teaching.* Over dinner that evening, he thought of strategies to placate them. *I need to fix this. But how do I convince them I'm not racist? By bedtime, he was feeling guilty. I'm a failure. My comments were tone deaf at best, and racist at worst. What else have I said?*

The next morning, after a talk with his wife (also a Boston middle-school teacher), Turner was determined to have an authentic dialogue about race with his students, but he knew he had some homework to do. He talked again with the colleague who had passed along students' concerns, re-read parts of *Stamped from the Beginning* by Ibram Kendi and an article on white fragility by Robin DiAngelo, and spoke to a friend who teaches in New York City and does anti-racism work.

"As I discussed, reflected, and read," says Turner, "I began to see this from my students' perspective. Their teachers have been white women or white men, with few exceptions. They get to eighth grade, and their white male history teacher, in the second month of school, implies that white people would form judgments about their entire racial community if they didn't behave well in a museum (a white space). Most of my students have probably heard negative stereotypes about their racial identities from other white teachers before, and are sensitive to them. From their position, anger and rebellion were appropriate reactions; pushing back was a healthy response. The more I thought about it, the clearer it was. What I said to students in those two instances was inappropriate and insensitive. My intentions were irrelevant. What mattered was the impact on my students. Did I really need to bring up race? Couldn't I have expressed high expectations without referring to racial identity? The pain I caused my students was what I needed to address – and repair."

Over the next several weeks, Turner created a unit on identity, race, and power with his students. He posted Kendi's definition of racism on the wall: *Any concept that regards one racial group as inferior or superior to another racial group in any way*, and also a definition of anti-racism: *All racial groups are equal*. Students used these to examine statements made by national political figures, asking, "Is this a racist idea? If so, what makes it racist?" Students discussed and wrote and worked through their ideas together. "It took

time, repetition, mistakes, and re-do's," he says. "I had to constantly check my ego, and remind myself, 'This is about them, not you. Slow down and listen with empathy.'"

Gradually the classroom climate shifted, with students seeing that their teacher genuinely cared and was trying. Over the spring, there were several times when students called Turner on words they considered offensive, and he was able to apologize, win back their trust, and move on. "In the end," he says, "it turns out my students didn't need me to say anything to convince them that I wasn't racist. They needed me to listen with empathy, ask questions, and help them develop and practice the language to analyze issues of race on their own."

Turner is grateful to the colleague who passed along the students' concerns: "When she took the risk of telling me about their discomfort, she put students first." Reflecting on the incident, he sees the importance of spending more time at the beginning of every school year building relationships with students and earning their trust. "They may have had overtly or covertly racist teachers in the past," he says, "and be on edge, waiting for me to say something that invalidates or puts down their identities. I learned that I have to be responsible for my identity, which means thinking about how my students will interpret what I say, and understanding that as a white, middle-class man, I've had the privilege of not having to be aware of how my identity may influence the way people hear me. I need to be willing to learn as much from my students as they learn from me. That is the empathetic, supportive, anti-racist teacher that I want to be, and what our students deserve."

"'Mr. Turner, Are You a Racist?' A White Teacher Grapples with His Privilege" by Colin Turner in *Education Week Teacher*, September 18, 2019, <https://bit.ly/2IXaF38>. Reprinted from Marshall Memo 804.

Reading Public School Happenings

Reading Public School Mentor Training

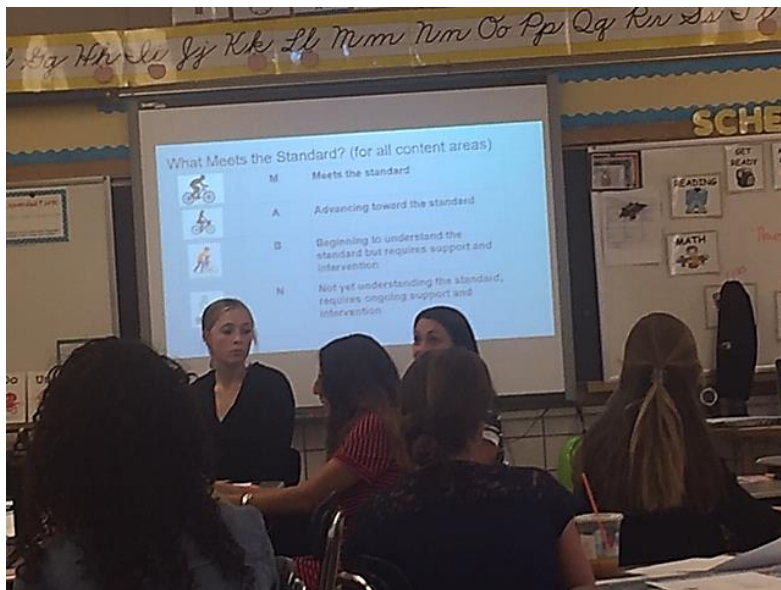
Last week, several teachers were trained for the first time or had refresher training in the Reading Public School Mentor Training Program, which was coordinated by Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching Chris Kelley and Human Resources Administrator Jennifer Bove. Trained mentors work with new teachers as part of the new teacher induction program.



Mentor Training

Elementary Inservice Day Focuses on Standards Based Report Card

This past week, all elementary teachers participated in a Wednesday afternoon inservice day focused on the Elementary Standards Based Report. The training was divided by grade level and was co-facilitated by Elementary Principals and Teachers.



Stepping Stones...

- Congratulations to Joshua Eaton teacher **Jessica Cornetta** on the birth of her son Jordan Stephen on September 22nd weighing 7 lbs., 12 oz.
- Congratulations to Parker teacher **Ali Sanchez** on the birth of her daughter Estrela Marie on September 24th weighing 6 lbs.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
 - ✓ Lorraine McBride, Daily Substitute, District
 - ✓ Frank Potvin, Daily Substitute, District
 - ✓ Mary Margaret Hogan, LTS Performing Arts Teacher, RMHS
 - ✓ Stephen Clermont, Special Education Paraeducator, Killam
 - ✓ Jessica Thistlethwaite, LTS Art & Photography Teacher, RMHS
- **We have posted** a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

Regular Education Tutor, 36.5 hours biweekly, Birch Meadow Elementary School (repost)

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=844>

Accounting Assistant

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=845>

1.0 FTE Long Term Substitute Special Education Teacher, Coolidge Middle School (repost)

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=846>

Blazing Trails...

"Shredding for Success: Researchers Study Links between Skateboarding and Academic Success." Skateboarders have skills that are applicable to education and can help students succeed in school, according to a study by researchers at the University of Southern California. An after-school program in the state, Skate-4-Education, provides a place for students to skate, get tutoring and learn entrepreneurial skills, including graphic design and social media marketing. [Read More](#)

"We Desperately Need a Merger between Education and Work." This essay is a part of the Scientific American & Macmillan Learning STEM Summit. The STEM Summit is an annual event that attracts diverse stakeholders, ranging from teachers, policy makers, journalists, entrepreneurs, and students. The theme of the 2019 Summit is "The Future of Work," and will explore critical questions such as: What are we doing to prepare students for careers in our automated future? What skills-both "hard" and "soft"-will students need to thrive in the "4th Industrial Revolution"? And what strategies, tools and technologies will best help students achieve that success? [Read More](#)

"Making Difficult Decisions in Students' Best Interest." This NASSP post by Kristina MacBury, principal at Sarah Pyle Academy in Wilmington, Delaware, speaks to making the "tough decisions." "Like my colleagues across the globe, my daily battle revolves around how to make decisions through the lens of what is in the best interests of my students. This seems particularly trying in my current nontraditional school situation that is focused on dropout prevention, content mastery, and personalized learning-all still within the confines and with remnants of our traditional mindset. I often feel my opinion on what is in the 'best interests' for our students can change several times within the same day." [Read More](#)

"Bill Gates Shares the Ultimate Recipe for Achieving Global Literacy." More than 260 million children worldwide lack access to basic education, according to a report from the Gates Foundation released today. Bill Gates says that the solution to closing literacy gaps is more primary-school teachers, small class sizes and teachers who are paid and come to work. [Read More](#)

"5 Ways to Build Students' Global Competency." Teaching local is not separate from teaching global; it is an interconnected web. Give globally minded learners the skills to listen intently, think critically, filter and curate information, and participate in their communities. [Read More](#)

Have a Great Week!