



# Pathways

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

November 15, 2019

Volume 7, Number 8

## Upcoming Dates

- November 15 - (7:30 p.m.)  
RMHS Musical in the  
Endslow PAC
- November 16 - (7:30 p.m.)  
RMHS Musical in the  
Endslow PAC
- November 17 - (3:00 p.m.)  
RMHS Musical in the  
Endslow PAC
- November 18 - (7:30 p.m.)  
Town Meeting (if needed)
- November 21 - (7:30 p.m.)  
Town Meeting (if needed)
- November 22 - No School  
for Students; Parent  
Conference/In-Service Day
- November 27 - (11:00 a.m.)  
Early Release for  
thanksgiving Holiday
- November 28 - Happy  
Thanksgiving
- November 29 - No  
School/Offices Closed

## RMHS Students Recognized at Town Meeting

During the State of the Schools Address at Town Meeting, Superintendent of Schools Dr. John F. Doherty awarded the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendent's Award for Academic and Community Excellence to Reading Memorial High School Seniors Allison Tompkins and Lucas Marden. These two students have demonstrated strong academic skills in their high school studies, participate in extracurricular and community service activities, and are currently in the top 5% of their graduating class.

Allison attended Barrows Elementary School and Parker Middle School, is currently a class officer for the RMHS Student Government and is a member of the Middlesex League Champion girls swim team. She is president of the Cradles to Crayons Club, a group that collects donations of clothing, shoes, books, and other essential items for children in need. She also volunteers her time at the YMCA Sunday Swim for students with disabilities.

A member of the National Honor Society, Allison has taken or is currently taking a total of 10 Advanced Placement Classes at the Reading Public Schools. Currently, she is enrolled in AP English Literature, AP Statistics, AP Government, AP Spanish, AP Physics, and the History and Science of Epidemic Diseases. She envisions a career in molecular biology, and has applied to Northeastern University, Johns Hopkins University, College of William and Mary, University of Pennsylvania, Villanova University, and Washington University in St. Louis. When asked which teachers had the greatest impact on her educational journey, she said RMHS science teacher Ray Albright, RMHS math teacher Jane Shea, and Parker Teacher Brian Cormier.

Lucas attended Joshua Eaton Elementary School and Parker Middle School and is a captain for the RMHS Gymnastics Team. Academically, he is currently taking several high level courses including AP Government, AP French, AP US History, AP Physics C, Honors Poetry, and Multivariable Calculus. A member of the National Honor Society, Lucas is also very involved in community service activities, including the YMCA Sunday swim where he works with students with disabilities and is one of the leaders for the group.

Next year, Lucas plans on majoring in Biomedical Engineering or Material Science and is applying to University of Pennsylvania, United States Naval Academy, Stanford University, MIT, Northeastern University, and the University of Michigan.

The teachers who have had a significant impact on his journey are RMHS Teacher Math Teacher Bob Mooney, RMHS Chemistry Teacher Frank Buono, and Parker Middle School Math Teacher Brian Cormier.

Congratulations to Lucas and Allison!

## Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to RMHS Drama on a successful first weekend of the fall musical "Chicago"

## Elementary Report Card Overview

Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching Chris Kelley has created an informational presentation for parents regarding the changes in this year's Elementary Report Cards. You can access the presentation at the link below.

<https://www.powtoon.com/c/dWeUTeDEmeo/2/m>

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## Superintendent of Schools State of the Schools Remarks at Town Meeting

Mr. Moderator, Town Meeting Members, Select Board, Finance Committee Members, School Committee, Fellow Town Leaders and Department Heads, School Building Principals, District Administrators, Members of the School Community, and Invited Guests. It is my great privilege tonight to represent the hundreds of dedicated educators and thousands of students in the Reading Public Schools, as I deliver to you the annual State of the Schools address. Tonight's address will focus on the collective accomplishments and progress in our district with a vision toward the future.

To that end, I want to begin this evening by recognizing two Reading Memorial High School Seniors who are the recipients of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Award for Academic and Community Excellence. It is always difficult to select these students, given how many deserving candidates we have here at Reading Memorial High School. The two students being recognized this evening have demonstrated strong academic skills, participate in extracurricular and community service activities, and are currently in the top 5% of their graduating class. I have had the opportunity to meet with them and they are genuinely great kids, which is a tribute to their families who are here this evening as well. It is with honor and pride that I present this award to our first recipient who was a student at the Barrows Elementary School and Parker Middle School, is currently a class officer for the RMHS Student Government and is a member of the Middlesex League Champion girls swim team. This student is president of the Cradles to Crayons Club, a group that collects donations of clothing, shoes, books, and other essential items for children in need. She also volunteers her time at the YMCA Sunday Swim for students with disabilities.

A member of the National Honor Society, this student has taken or is currently taking a total of 10 Advanced Placement Classes at the Reading Public Schools. Currently, she is enrolled in AP English Literature, AP Statistics, AP Government, AP Spanish, AP Physics, and the History and Science of Epidemic Diseases. This recipient envisions a career in molecular biology, and has applied to Northeastern University, Johns Hopkins University, College of William and Mary, University of Pennsylvania, Villanova University, and Washington University in St. Louis. When asked which teachers had the greatest impact on her educational journey, she said RMHS science teacher Ray Albright, RMHS math teacher Jane Shea, and Parker Teacher Brian Cormier.

It is with great pleasure tonight that I recognize Allison Thompkins. Allison, please come forward to receive the 2019 Massachusetts Association of School Superintendent's Award. Tonight's second recipient attended Joshua Eaton Elementary School and Parker Middle School and is a captain for the RMHS Gymnastics Team. Academically, this student is currently taking several high level courses including AP Government, AP French, AP US History, AP Physics C, Honors Poetry, and Multivariable Calculus. A member of the National Honor Society, this student is also very involved in community service activities, including

**Superintendent's Office**  
**Half-Hours this Week**

*All are welcome*

11/20 8:00 a.m. RISE

the YMCA Sunday swim where he works with students with disabilities and is one of the leaders for the group.

Next year, he plans on majoring in Biomedical Engineering or Material Science and is applying to University of Pennsylvania, United States Naval Academy, Stanford University, MIT, Northeastern University, and the University of Michigan.

The teachers who have had a significant impact on this student's journey are RMHS Teacher Math Teacher Bob Mooney, RMHS Chemistry Teacher Frank Buono, and Parker Middle School Math Teacher Brian Cormier.

It's a great honor to introduce to you, Lucas Marden! Lucas, please come forward and accept the MASS 2019 Superintendent's Award for Academic Excellence. Congratulations, Allison and Lucas!

These students, together with the dedicated educators who have supported them each and every day, are quite honestly the living personification of the state of our schools. Before I go further into my remarks, however, I would like most of all to say thank you...thank you to all of those who help make our schools—(and thus our entire community) a successful place to learn and grow. This includes our dedicated and caring staff, a strong and committed leadership team (many of whom are here this evening), and the tremendous support that we receive from our parents and from each one of you—(truly from everyone in our community). I am proud to work in a school district and in a community where this dedication is part of our culture and where we work together for the greater good and for the future of our children.

My remarks this evening focus on three main themes: The progress of our district, our commitment to teamwork and collaboration, and a vision moving forward.

**Progress**

As I mentioned in my remarks last year, due to support of this community through a Proposition 2 ½ override, our school district received a tremendous infusion of support in the areas of curriculum, instructional technology, and training for our staff. This has resulted in our school district making progress in several key areas, including science, English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Mathematics. I am proud to announce that our school district continues to improve in several key academic areas of our MCAS, SAT, and AP results. We are now in the third year of the next generation MCAS in Grades 3-8 for literacy and mathematics and we saw increases in literacy for Grades 3, 4, and 6, and in math in Grades 3, 5, and 6. In the grade levels where we did not see the increases we would have wanted, our principals, teachers, and district staff are working to analyze the data, which will then inform improvements to curriculum and instruction. We continue to use MCAS results as just one of many data points to thoughtfully inform and improve instruction. I did want to share with Town Meeting a particularly significant accomplishment our students achieved this year that is, I believe, directly related to this body. Several years ago, Town Meeting voted to fund expensive new science curriculum for the Reading Public Schools. We have spent the last several years implementing this curriculum which includes purchasing materials, training teachers, and refining instruction every year. This new curriculum, along with the work that our curriculum team under the direction of Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Chris Kelly has done to align our standards with the state standards, and of course, the efforts of our teachers to effectively teach the curriculum. The results are the gains that we saw this year in science, where in the first year of the next generation science test, 70% of our students exceeded or met expectations compared to 48% in the state in grade 5, and 65% of our students exceeded or met expectations compared to 46% in the state in Grade 8. Thank you, Town Meeting for your support in this critical area.

We are now in the second year of the new state accountability system and we continue to show progress in this area as well. The new system includes data points such as MCAS scores, attendance, and percentage of students in AP and honors courses to give a more complete picture of the schools and district.

I am pleased to report that all 8 of our schools received an overall classification of “not requiring assistance or intervention” and as a district, we received a rating of “substantial progress towards our targets”, which means that all of our schools are on the right path to student success. In addition, we met the requirements for special education. As a district, our accountability target percentage increased from the year before with significant progress made in reducing chronic absenteeism and access of students to honors and AP courses.

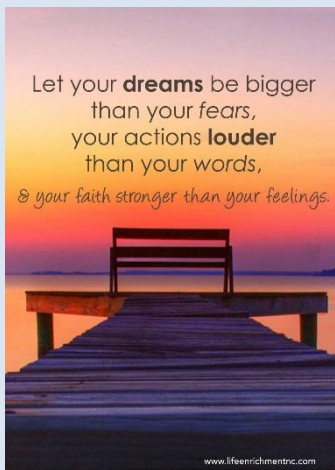
In addition to the above, we have focused our training for all staff in the area of equity. For instance, during our day long professional development day last March, the Reading Spring Institute focused on the topics of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Twenty-five workshops were offered which focused on meeting the needs of all learners. The workshop themes included race, religion, gender, learning styles and mental health. Our work has continued in this area as one of our more popular Reading Institute courses focuses on cultural proficiency. This course is part of our three-year induction program for all teachers new to Reading.

In addition to addressing academic needs, we have been continuing our focus on the physical and psychological safety of our students. Each school has been implementing different social and emotional learning curriculum activities and programs that include Open Circle at the elementary schools, Advisory Programs which include Facing History and Ourselves at the middle schools, and developmental guidance activities at our high school. The overall goal of our social emotional learning programs and curriculum is for each student to have at least one trusted adult that they can go to in our schools and that they feel safe.

The physical safety of our students has been one of our top priorities for the last several years and we have continued to emphasize it over this past year by working with police and fire to update our school emergency operations plan, having the facilities department, under the direction of Director of Facilities Joe Huggins conduct safety audits and upgrade the key access system for each school, and holding several evacuation and active shooter drills with public safety during the school year. As this body knows, we are in the process of implementing security measures in the town and school buildings to improve overall building security. We are currently in the bid process and a more specific timeline will be developed once the bid process is complete.

Recently, the Killam PTO sponsored a community presentation that was done by the U.S. District Attorney’s Office and our School Resource Officers on cybersafety. In addition, the Massachusetts Department of Education have presented at both Wood End and Barrows on how to educate transgender youth and develop a culture of inclusion. Through our survey results, staff and students feel safe in our schools. This designation is due to the continued focus on this area, the emphasis on school safety drills, the level of behavioral health supports that we have at each level and the extraordinary teamwork between the schools and public safety. I would like to publicly thank Deputy Police Chief Dave Clarke, Lieutenant Detective Rich Abate, Fire Chief Greg Burns, and RCASA Executive Director Erica McNamara for their continued efforts in working with the schools to ensure a safe and supportive environment.

## Quote of the Week . . .



“Let your dreams be bigger than your fears, your actions louder than your words, and your faith stronger than your feelings.”

—Unknown

One of the ways that our students build a connection to adults and have ownership to their schools is through the numerous extra-curricular and athletics programs that are offered in the Reading Public Schools. This past year, several of our athletic teams and extra-curricular activities had successful seasons with 10 Middlesex League Titles since last fall and 1 State Championship in Girls Swimming. Our middle and high school band and chorus programs are very strong and each year, several students qualify for state and regional level performances. Our High School Marching Band recently won the highest recognition possible earning a 1st place finish for music, best drum major award and gold medal performance at last week's New England finals competition in Lawrence. Our drama club continues to offer outstanding performances, including Chicago, which is playing this weekend in this very performing arts center. Our outstanding fine arts program, along with amazing student art work, is on display each year at our Artsfest in the spring. Our students are also learning appreciation for our democracy and the sacrifices that have been made to give us the freedoms that we enjoy. This year, we are beginning to implement new curriculum in social studies in middle school with the biggest change being an eighth grade course in civics. This past week, several schools in the district honored our veterans at Veteran's Day assemblies and breakfasts.

This tradition began 21 years ago when Joshua Eaton held its first annual Veteran's Day Assembly, a tradition that continues to this day and is a highlight each year for our Joshua Eaton students and families.

Our schools, programs, and school leaders continue to be role models for other school districts in our state. This past summer, Killam Principal Sarah Leveque presented at the Massachusetts School Administrators Annual Conference on courageous leadership and the types of skills needed to be a principal in today's schools. In addition, Sarah Leveque, Julia Hendrix, Beth Leavitt, Lisa Marie Ippolitto, Ricki Shankland, and Sarah Marchant are participating in the Souls of Leadership Course where principals from all over the state are thinking about their own practice in relation to school culture and climate where people can take risks, learn from those risks, and be vulnerable for the betterment of students. Sarah Leveque, Lisa Marie Ippolito, Beth Leavitt, and Joanne King participated in the DESE Principals Network where they shared best practices in education with other principals throughout the state. Working with the National School Reform Initiative, Birch Meadow Principal Julia Hendrix and her staff focused their work last year on making learning more accessible and equitable for all students. Our new Director of Student Services Dr. Jennifer Stys recently earned her Doctorate from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell in Educational Leadership with her dissertation focus being reading within special education and working with adult learners to develop systems to teach reading. RMHS Principal Kate Boynton is currently in her second year of the doctoral program in Education Leadership at UMass Lowell.

I could go on and on about the progress that we are making and how the Reading Public Schools is a great place for students to learn, to thrive, and to develop the skills necessary for the next steps after high school. This is due to the dedication of our teachers and staff, the commitment and leadership of our Principals, Assistant Principals, Directors, Team Chairs, and Central Office and District Administrators, and the support we receive from our community and our parents. I am grateful for their efforts.

### **Collaboration and Teamwork**

This leads me to the second area that I want to focus on which is the amount of collaboration and teamwork that is evident in our schools and between municipal government and our school district. Earlier in my remarks, I gave several examples of how we are working together as a school district to improve student learning. This same teamwork and collaboration is evident between municipal staff and school staff. Over the



## Disney Quote of the Week



**"Life is composed of lights and shadows, and we would be untruthful, insincere, and saccharine if we tried to pretend there were no shadows."**

**– Walt Disney**

last year, there have been several examples of the effective relationship that exists, which is not the norm in other communities. This collaboration begins at the top where Town Manager Bob LeLacheur has always modeled a culture to work with schools to solve problems in the best interest of students.

One recent example of a collaborative effort involves the Turf II project, which was approved last April at Town Meeting.

This project was an interdepartmental effort between schools, DPW, Recreation and Town Facilities.

I am happy to report that we are in the final stages of this project and as you can see from the photos behind me, this project will be finished on time and under budget and will be ready for activities and events in the spring.

Other examples of town and school teamwork include, but is not limited to, collaboration in Human Resources, the School and Town Security Project, the Birch Meadow modular classroom project, the Elementary Space Planning and Enrollment Study (which I will talk about more in a few minutes), and of course, public safety. The recent boil water order is a specific example of how quickly and effectively town and school officials worked together in an emergency situation and coordinated communication to ensure that the community was given the information necessary to address the issue.

Most of these examples involve capital projects or facilities and I want to publicly recognize the efforts of Chief Financial Officer Gail Dowd and Director of Facilities Joe Huggins for their leadership in effectively addressing these projects and situations. They have spent countless hours on multiple projects to assure that the community is getting the best outcome possible for the funding allocated.

### **Vision for the Future**

It is my strong belief that the Reading Public Schools are progressing in the right direction. We have the dedication, vision, talented leadership, effective teaching staff, and parent and community involvement to build on this momentum for the future.

Recently, the Reading School Committee approved the Superintendent's Annual Goals and District Improvement Plan for the upcoming year. The district improvement plan is supported by academic and behavioral data that has informed our work. Our biggest challenge, which is common in many school districts, is closing the learning and opportunity gap between our general population and our most vulnerable students including students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English Language Learners. Here are some ways that we are addressing this gap.

Under the leadership of Assistant Superintendent Chris Kelley, our K-8 curriculum coordinators Alison Straker and Heather Leonard, and RMHS Department Heads, curriculum guides are being developed in each curriculum area that align with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. These guides are scheduled to be completed by December, 2020. The aligned curriculum, along with the ongoing training, will give our teachers the tools and support needed to reach all students in the classroom. In addition, we will be developing and implementing a five-year curriculum renewal cycle which will allow us to review and improve each curriculum area over a five year period. Director of Student Services Dr. Jennifer Stys is doing parallel work with staff to develop a five-year program review cycle which will review all of our special education programs over a five year period. This year, Joshua Eaton is one of small number of schools in the state piloting an early childhood dyslexia screener which will be required of all elementary schools next year. The results from the screener will give us additional data to identify students with dyslexia earlier so that they can access services earlier. It is important to note that having strong in-district

## 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>

special education programs and services not only benefits our students as they are given the opportunity to be educated with their peers in the Reading Public Schools, but also it is a more cost-effective way to educate those students which allows us to invest more of our educational funding to the general classrooms.

There are two areas that I want to highlight from the district improvement plan that are more long term in nature, but are very important for the future of this district. They are the Elementary Space and Enrollment Study and the Vision of the Graduate Project.

The Elementary Space and Enrollment Study, which was approved at the 2018 November Town Meeting is now nearing completion and is ready for community feedback. Recently, the Reading School Committee heard an update on the study from Gienapp Associates who is coordinating the study. I encourage you to watch the presentation to get a more complete update. As I have reported in the past to Town Meeting, we have had space constraints at our elementary schools for the last several years. This concern prompted Town Meeting in 2015 to approve funding for six modular classrooms. Because of additional space constraints, this evening you will be asked to approve funding for three additional modular classrooms at Birch Meadow for the 2020-2021 school year.

Our elementary space constraints are being driven primarily by the increase in classrooms needed for special education programs, an increase in students enrolled in full day kindergarten, and the increase in classrooms needed for our RISE preschool. The study has also shown that we will have a slight enrollment increase at the elementary level over the next 10 years, with the majority of the enrollment increase being in the Killam and Birch Meadow districts.

Because we are already at or over capacity already at each of our elementary schools, redistricting alone will not solve this issue. As a result, Gienapp Associates presented options that could be utilized to address the space issues. These options looked at 4, 5, and 6 school solutions, which included different combinations of building or renovating a larger Killam Elementary School, putting additions to Birch Meadow or Wood End, building a sixth school at an undisclosed site, and taking Birch Meadow offline and repurposing it for another use. Like any set of options, each one has pros and cons that include a range of capital costs, additional operating costs, degrees of redistricting, whether or not preschool is located at one site and if we need to relocate students during construction. The project is eligible for MSBA funding, however, it should be noted that it is not guaranteed we will receive funding due to the competitive nature of the process. We have been consulting with Pat Thompkins the chair of the Permanent Building Committee and Liaison to this project and Town Manager Bob LeLacheur to receive their feedback as well.

Our next step in the process is to begin to hold information and community sessions to explain the project, explore different options in more detail, and answer questions from the community. I encourage you to attend one or more of these community sessions. We will be communicating dates in the next few weeks for the community sessions. Based on feedback received and recommendations, the School Committee will then vote on an option which then we will move forward to begin the MSBA process. If everything was completed and approved in a timely manner, the process is anticipated to take 3.5 to 5 years.

The other project that I want to highlight is the Vision of the Graduate. As part of the NEASC accreditation process, Reading Memorial High School is required to develop a vision of what skills, knowledge, and dispositions Reading students should attain and develop during their Grades 9-12 years in our schools. We have decided to expand that discussion to include PreK-12 and make it a true district vision of the graduate. Our plan is

to develop a Vision of the Graduate Committee comprised of different stakeholders in the community who will coordinate this process. This process will include receiving community input at various stages with an end date of November, 2020.

Essentially, we will ask our stakeholders these three questions:

- **What are the hopes, aspirations, and dreams that our community has for our young people?**
- **What are the skills and habits of mind that our children need for success in this rapidly changing and complex world?**
- **What are the implications for the learning experiences we provide in our school system?**

This vision will help inform our next district improvement plan and future direction for our school district.

As you can see, there are exciting things happening in our school district and we are poised for some great progress to be made over the next 3-5 years. We have the systems, the leadership and an infrastructure in place to take the Reading Public Schools to the next level.

I began my remarks this evening by focusing on the students and I would like to conclude with that same focus. We are proud of the fine and performing arts in our schools and take every opportunity to showcase our students. At this time, I would like to introduce to you the RMHS Select Choir, under the direction of our K-12 Fine Arts Department Chair Anna Wentlent, who will sing “Make Them Hear You” from the musical, *Ragtime*.



We have a great story to tell about our school district and the examples of what you heard and saw this evening are just a sample of why we do this work in our public schools and why your support and the support of this community is appreciated and valued. Our schools are for all students...those who sing, who perform, who compete, who study, and who may require additional support and assistance. Our schools are for the students who



are anxious, who need our guidance and support, and who have trauma in their lives. Our schools are for students who come from stable, loving families and students who come from much more challenging backgrounds. Our schools are for students who come from families who have been in America for generations, and students whose families are new to our country. Our schools are for continued growth and evolution of learners who are ready to embark on the world upon graduation. On behalf of the four thousand, two hundred eighty-two students and over 600 staff who teach and support these students, thank you for your continued support of our schools... as together, we continue to make Reading a place where all students are supported, a place where we develop the leaders of tomorrow, and a place where our schools continue to provide the strong foundation for the future of this great community.

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## RMHS Drama Club Presents *Chicago* This Weekend

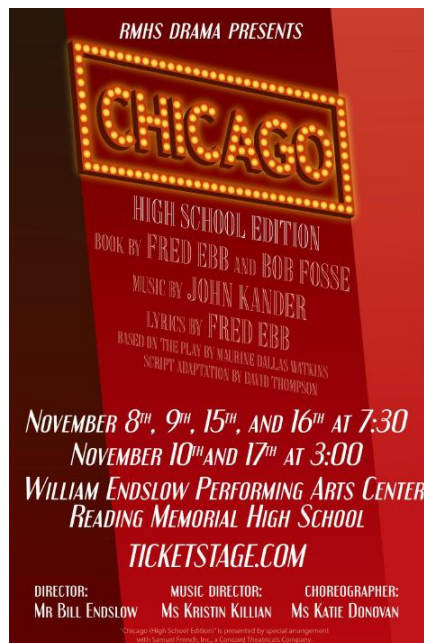
Hello Reading staff,

This weekend, the RMHS drama club will be presenting *Chicago*! Many of your former students are involved in the show as members of the cast and crew, and they are beyond excited to be presenting one of the most popular Broadway musicals of all time. In roaring twenties Chicago, Roxie Hart murders a faithless lover and convinces her hapless husband, Amos, to take the rap... until he finds out he's been duped and turns on Roxie. Convicted and sent to death row, Roxie and another "Merry Murderess," Velma Kelly, vie for the spotlight and the headlines, ultimately joining forces in search of the "American Dream": fame, fortune, and acquittal.

Please come to the show! As always, all Reading PK-12 teachers and staff members can get one free ticket at [www.ticketstage.com](http://www.ticketstage.com) by using the coupon code READINGTEACHER (all caps, no spaces). If you need help with accessible seating or experience any technical difficulties, please email me ([anna.wentlent@reading.k12.ma.us](mailto:anna.wentlent@reading.k12.ma.us)) or our parent ticket coordinators ([rmhstickets@yahoo.com](mailto:rmhstickets@yahoo.com)).

Thanks so much,

Anna Wentlent



## Contact Us

*The Pathways* 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](mailto:john.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us)

## Paul Bambrick-Santoyo on Small Teaching Moves with Outsize Impact

In this *Educational Leadership* article, Paul Bambrick-Santoyo (Uncommon Schools) says that for novice teachers, being coached on seemingly minor points – for example, standing still and facing the class when asking students to stop talking and come back together at the end of a turn-and-talk – can be transformational. But for this kind of coaching to work, a school needs a culture that includes a shared language of effective pedagogy and a norm of frequent, low-stakes feedback and practice. “In effective cultures,” says Bambrick-Santoyo, “people use words everyone can understand to describe actions that committed members consistently put into practice.”

Over a period of years, he and his colleagues have compiled a list of teaching behaviors that are granular, observable, and high-leverage. These are skills each of which can be learned within a week, produce immediate improvements in classroom dynamics and student learning, and accelerate what is often a painfully slow learning curve for novice educators. “Rather than wait for years of trial-and-error experience to perfect their craft,” says Bambrick-Santoyo, “new teachers can actually grow quickly, step by step.” Picking up the pace is a moral imperative, he believes; students can’t afford to wait for incremental improvement in teaching, especially in high-need schools with a large proportion of rookie teachers.

Below are some of the action steps in Bambrick-Santoyo’s “Get Better Faster” playbook. They parallel the kinds of small, easy-to-learn-and-practice skills that musicians and athletes learn with their coaches as they rapidly improve performance:

- Use “strong voice.” Square up, stand still, and use a formal tone of voice when getting students’ attention and delivering instructions.
- “Radar” the room. Scan “hot spots” where students are often off-task, and crane your neck so it looks like you are seeing all parts of the classroom.
- Have students write first, talk second. Begin each class with an independent writing task (a Do Now), and before starting a discussion, have students respond individually in writing to a prompt.
- Aggressively monitor independent student work. Walk around to every part of the classroom and look for patterns of student responses, not just compliance.
- Engage all students. Have students turn and talk when pair interaction will maximize involvement and learning.
- Check for whole-group understanding. Poll the room and tailor instruction to focus on patterns of error.
- Narrate the positive. Put into words what students are doing well to encourage those actions and redirect less-productive behaviors; reinforce students’ intellectual progress by praising effort, not just results.

“What You Practice Is What You Value” by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo in *Educational Leadership*, November 2019 (Vol. 77, #3, pp. 44-49), <https://bit.ly/2NCYJ28>; the author can be reached at [pbambrick@uncommonschoools.org](mailto:pbambrick@uncommonschoools.org). Reprinted from Marshall Memo 811.

## Superintendent Office Hours Continue This Week

Starting this week, Superintendent of Schools John Doherty will begin to hold office hours at the different schools. Superintendent Office Hours will be scheduled for 30 minutes and are open to all members of the community and staff. The purpose of office hours is for staff and community members to discuss any topics related to the Reading Public Schools with the Superintendent. We will try to schedule two office hours per week.

The next week's office hours are as follows:

11/20 8:00 a.m. RISE

No appointment is necessary. If you are attending an office hour, please go to the Main Office of the school that is holding the office hour.


If you cannot make one of the advertised office hour times and you would like to schedule an appointment with Dr. Doherty, feel free to call the Reading Public Schools Administration Offices at 781-944-5800 or contact Linda Engelson at [linda.engelson@reading.k12.ma.us](mailto:linda.engelson@reading.k12.ma.us).

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## Reading Education Foundation Festival of Trees on December 7 and 8

Don't miss the Reading Education Foundation's (REF) 18th annual Festival of Trees, Saturday and Sunday, December 7 and 8, at the Parker Middle School in Reading. This signature fundraising event is a magical and memorable community holiday tradition for adults and children of all ages. Proceeds from this event go towards teacher grants in Reading public schools. Visit [www.readingef.org](http://www.readingef.org) to order raffle tickets in advance, to donate a tree, and to learn more!

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FREE PARENT WORKSHOP  
**HOW TO HAVE  
"THE TALK"**

An information session for parents on how to talk to your kids about sex.

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**DECEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> 2019**  
**6:30PM-7:30PM**

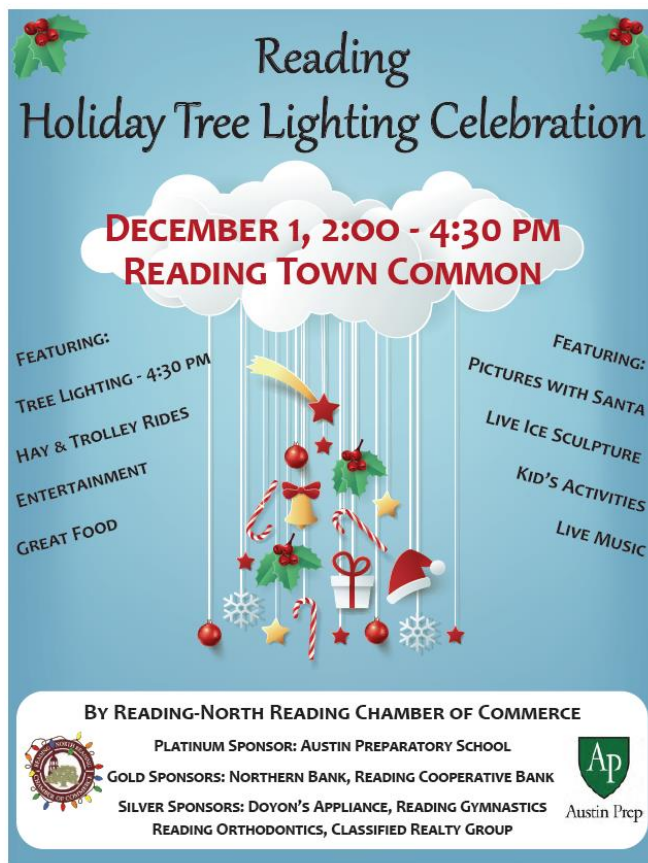
THE READING PUBLIC LIBRARY  
64 MIDDLESEX AVE, READING, MA 01867

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In order to promote healthy mental, physical and behavioral health in our community, we would like to welcome you to join us to have conversations around, and share resources for, how to promote healthy decision making for the youth in our community regarding sex. We feel that it is important that our kids get accurate information from family rather than be misinformed by friends or the internet, where they may draw incorrect assumptions that could lead to risky or unhealthy decision making. Parents of students of all ages welcome to attend.

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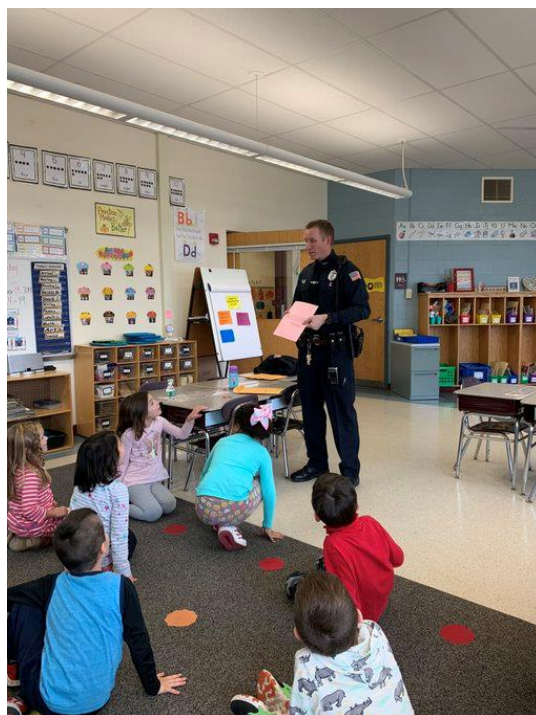
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: [LAUREN.SABELLA@READING-K12-MA-US](mailto:LAUREN.SABELLA@READING-K12-MA-US)



## Reading Public School Happenings

### School Resource Officer Visits Barrows

School Resource Officer Matt Vatcher works with Grade 1 students to deliver word detective badges





### **Parker Advisory Groups Work Together To Develop Norms**

As part of their Middle School Advisory Program, students in Andrew Spinali's Advisory Group work together to develop norms on how the group should work together and be productive.



### **A World of Difference Training for Middle School Students**

Recently, the A World of Difference groups for Parker and Coolidge received training from the Anti-Defamation League. Below is a picture of students in the training.



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### **Stepping Stones...**

- Our thoughts and prayers go out to Birch meadow paraeducator **Jenn Delaney** who lost a loved one recently.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
  - ✓ Kara Melillo, RMHS, Girls Basketball Coach



## Blazing Trails...

**"Why Teachers Are So Excited About the Power Of Sketchnoting."** Mansfield, MA, elementary school teacher Rayna Freedman has come to see sketchnoting as a bridge between early elementary, when students necessarily think visually because they are still learning to read, and middle school, where suddenly all visual thinking seems to stop. Freedman uses sketchnoting resources on the website of Sylvia Duckworth, a former teacher and author who has become a sketchnoting celebrity. Duckworth breaks down the elements of a sketchnote like icons, containers and font to help the artist think about organizing the sketch. Freedman has found those tools help her students organize their thinking as well. [Read More](#)

**"Schools All Over Including MA Adopt Mindfulness to Help Curb Students' Stress."** At the start of a recent class in Milford, Massachusetts, fourth-graders at the Woodland Elementary School were hushed. Occasionally, teacher Donna Williams would break the silence by striking a Tibetan singing bowl, letting its echoing peal wash over her students. "Feel your breath come in and out," said Williams in a calm, steady voice. Williams usually begins her class by asking students to pay special attention to their breathing to rekindle their focus. She follows up with a lesson on mindfulness tricks students can use if they want to calm down, such as mindful listening, deep breathing and sending kind thoughts. Students at local schools are trying hard to be in the present moment. It's part of how districts are embracing social-emotional learning, and is emblematic of how districts are trying to wedge stress-reducing techniques into the course of a student's day. [Read More](#)

**"Social Media Has Not Destroyed A Generation."** Anxiety about the effects of social media on young people has risen to such an extreme that giving children smartphones is sometimes equated to handing them a gram of cocaine. The reality is much less alarming. A closer look at social media use shows that most young texters and Instagrammers are fine, as this article by Lydia Denworth, a contributing editor for Scientific American explains. [Read More](#)

### **"Stop Trying to Raise Successful Kids."**

... And start raising kind ones. As anyone who has been called out for hypocrisy by a small child knows, kids are exquisitely attuned to gaps between what grown-ups say and what grown-ups do. If you survey American parents about what they want for their kids, more than 90 percent say one of their top priorities is that their children be caring. This makes sense: Kindness and concern for others are held as moral virtues in nearly every society and every major religion. But when you ask children what their parents want for them, 81 percent say their parents value achievement and happiness over caring. [Read More](#)

**"Schools in Japan, Vermont Have Sister School Exchange."** Students at a Vermont intermediate school recently received a visit from their counterparts at a sister school in Japan as part of the Rutland-Ishidoriya Student Exchange program. The students from Japan were invited to share information about themselves with students, including their hobbies. [Read More](#)

**Have a Great Week!**