

**School Committee Meeting**

**December 17, 2020**

**Remote Open Meeting**

**7:00 p.m.**



## Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

2018-07-16 LAG

### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

#### School Committee

Date: 2020-12-17

Time: 7:00 PM

Building:

Location:

Address:

Agenda:

Purpose: Open Session

Meeting Called By: Linda Engelson on behalf of the Chair

Notices and agendas are to be posted 48 hours in advance of the meetings excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Legal Holidays. Please keep in mind the Town Clerk's hours of operation and make necessary arrangements to be sure your posting is made in an adequate amount of time. A listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting must be on the agenda.

**All Meeting Postings must be submitted in typed format; handwritten notices will not be accepted.**

### Topics of Discussion:

		THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD REMOTELY ON MICROSOFT TEAMS
7:00 p.m.	A.	Call to Order
	B.	Public Comment  For public comment, please use the live chat feature on the Microsoft Teams link which will be posted on the Superintendent's Blog and sent out via Connect Ed prior to the meeting. In lieu of the live chat, you may send an email in advance of the meeting to <a href="mailto:schoolcommittee@reading.k12.ma.us">schoolcommittee@reading.k12.ma.us</a> . This email will be included in the next packet.
7:10 – 7:15 p.m.	C.	Consent Agenda (A) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Accept a Donation from the Friends of Reading Soccer, Inc.</li><li>- Accept a Donation to the Parker Middle School</li><li>- Approval of CvRF School Meal Program Grant</li><li>- Approval of Minutes (November 19 &amp; December 3, 2020)</li></ul>
7:15 – 7:30 p.m.	D.	Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students</li><li>2. Director of Student Services<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• OCR Update</li></ul></li></ul>

This Agenda has been prepared in advance and represents a listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting. However the agenda does not necessarily include all matters which may be taken up at this meeting.



## Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Descriptions</li> </ul> 3. Assistant Superintendent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum Guides</li> </ul> 4. Chief Financial Officer           5. Superintendent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrollment Update</li> </ul> 6. Liaison/Sub-Committee
7:30 – 8:00 p.m.	E.	Old Business
8:00 – 8:15 p.m.		1. RMHS/Guidance Update and Student Handbook Review (A)
8:15 – 8:45 p.m.		2. Second Reading and Approval of Policy BDF – Advisory Committees to the School Committee (A)
		3. Student Opportunity Act Plan Approval (A)
8:45 – 9:45 p.m.	F.	New Business
		1. FY22 Prebudget Presentation
9:45 – 10:00 p.m.	G.	Old Business (continued)
		1. Winter Hybrid Update
	H.	Information/Correspondence
		1. MASS/MASC Letter to Governor Baker
		2. Middlesex League Guidance on Winter Sports from Superintendents
		3. Email from Geoffrey Coram - Re: Spectators
		4. Email from Mary & Joe Gilligan - Fw: Spectators at winter sports
		5. Email from Kara Miele - Sports spectators
		6. Email from Jennifer Fichera - No Spectator Rule Winter Sports - Request for change
		7. Email from Matt Donnelly - Winter Sports
		8. Email from Brian O'Connor - Re: RMHS Winter Season
		9. Email from Dennis Lawhorne - Re: Sports
		10. Email from Matt Donnelly - Fwd: LETTER TO THE EDITOR – READING
		11. Email from Connie Quackenbush - Re: Teacher meeting for tomorrow
		12. Email from Alex Shikhanovich - Re: Censorship at RMHS
	I.	Routine Matters
		1. Bills & Payroll Warrants
		2. Calendar
	J.	Future Business
10:05 p.m.	K.	Adjourn

**\*\*Times are approximate**

This Agenda has been prepared in advance and represents a listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting. However the agenda does not necessarily include all matters which may be taken up at this meeting.

John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Christine M. Kelley  
Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching

82 Oakland Road  
Reading, MA 01867  
Phone: 781-944-5800  
Fax: 781-942-9149



Gail S. Dowd, CPA  
Chief Financial Officer

Jennifer A. Stys, Ed.D.  
Director of Student Services

Kerry M. Meisinger, J.D.  
Human Resources Director

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee

FROM: John F. Doherty, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: December 15, 2020

TOPIC: Accept a Donation from the Friends of Reading Soccer, Inc.

At our meeting on Thursday night, I will ask the School Committee to accept a donation from the Friends of Reading Soccer, Inc. to be used to support the coaching assistant for the Fall 2020 season.

If you have any questions, please contact me.



12/1/2020

Friends of Reading Soccer Inc.  
c/o: John Schipelliti  
3 Jessica Circle  
Reading, MA 01867

Reading School Committee  
c/o: Reading Public Schools  
82 Oakland Road  
Reading, MA 01867

Dear Reading School Committee:

The Friends of Reading Soccer Inc. (FORSI) would like to make a donation to cover expenses associated with the RMHS Fall 2020 Boys Varsity Soccer Assistant Coach. Given the extremely shortened season due to Covid-19, we understand from Tom Zaya, RMHS Athletic Director, that the paid coaching staff for all Fall Sports received 75% of their pay for the season. As such, the FORSI donation for the boys Varsity soccer assistant coach also will be made at 75% of prior year donations. So, please find enclosed a check donation in the amount of \$1,875.00.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Thank you,



John Schipelliti  
Friends of Reading Soccer Inc.



John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Christine M. Kelley  
Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching

82 Oakland Road  
Reading, MA 01867  
Phone: 781-944-5800  
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Human Resources Director

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee

FROM: John F. Doherty, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: December 15, 2020

TOPIC: Accept a Donation to the Parker Middle School

At our meeting on Thursday night, I will ask the School Committee to accept a donation of an electronic drum set from the Marden family to the Parker Middle School. This gift will be used to support the Parker band program.

If you have any questions, please contact me.



**Walter S. Parker**  
**Middle School**

# Memo

**To:** School Committee  
**From:** Richele Shankland *RS*  
**Date:** December 14, 2020  
**Re:** Instrument Donation

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The Marden family would like to donate an electronic drum set to the Parker Middle School band program. The drum set is valued at \$1,500.00.

Please accept this donation.

Nick & Adrienne Marden

A handwritten signature, possibly "dr gsa", enclosed within a hand-drawn circle.

John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Christine M. Kelley  
Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching

82 Oakland Road  
Reading, MA 01867  
Phone: 781-944-5800  
Fax: 781-942-9149



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Director of Student Services

Kerry M. Meisinger, J.D.  
Human Resources Director

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee

FROM: Gail S. Dowd  
Chief Financial Officer

DATE: December 15, 2020

RE: Grant Update – CvRF School Meal Program

We were recently notified by DESE that we were allocated \$9,652.31 in Coronavirus Relief Funds (CvRF) to provide additional support to public school meal programs operating during the period March 1, 2020 to December 30, 2020. These funds were made available in a Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Supplemental budget approved in July 2020 funded through the CvRF. The allocation was based on the number of meals claimed since April 1, 2020.

We would ask the committee to approve the additional grant funding. We continue to review new grant funding opportunities as they arise and will keep the Committee apprised as new opportunities are announced.



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

**DRAFT**

### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

#### School Committee

Date: 2020-11-19

Time: 6:00 PM

Building:

Location:

Address:

Session: Open Session

Purpose: Open Session

Version: Draft

#### Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chuck Robinson, John Parks, Tom Wise, Erin Gaffen, Carla Nazzaro and Shawn Brandt

#### **Members - Not Present:**

#### **Others Present:**

Superintendent John Doherty, Assistant Superintendent Chris Kelley, CFO Gail Dowd, Director of Student Services Jen Stys

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Linda Engelson on behalf of the Chair

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### Topics of Discussion:

#### I. Call to Order

Chair Robinson opened the meeting and announced the School Committee was meeting in a virtual setting, fully remote via Microsoft Teams, practicing social distancing and in accordance with the Governor's suspension of certain open meeting laws. The meeting was being recorded and broadcast live on RCTV. The Chair called attendance:

Mr. Robinson	Dr. Doherty – here
Mr. Parks	Mrs. Dowd – here
Mr. Wise – here	Mrs. Kelley - here
Mrs. Nazzaro – here	Dr. Stys – here
Mrs. Gaffen - here	
Mr. Brandt –here	

Mr. Robinson called open session order at 6:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Brandt, to enter into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and non-represented personnel and to return to open session at approximately 7:00 p.m. The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Gaffen, Mr. Parks, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise and Mr. Brandt.**

The open session meeting recessed at 6:01 p.m.

Chair Robinson called the open session back to order at 7:16 p.m.

#### A. Public Input

Mr. Robinson explained that for public comment, please use the live chat feature on the Microsoft Teams link which will be posted on the Superintendent's Blog and sent out via Connect Ed prior to the meeting.

In lieu of the live chat, you may send an email in advance of the meeting to [schoolcommittee@reading.k12.ma.us](mailto:schoolcommittee@reading.k12.ma.us) This email will be included in the next packet.

B. Old Business

Fall Reopening Update

Special Education Update

Dr. Stys reported on the recent SEPAC meeting which featured representatives from BSEA who discussed different ways to partner during the IEP process, mediations and facilitated meetings. The SEPAC will meet again on November 24<sup>th</sup> and December 8<sup>th</sup>.

Operations Update

Mrs. Dowd reported on the food distribution program saying we have delivered over 60K meals to families which consists of 7 meals/child each week. The district is applying for 2 new grants to help fund the program. The Senate and House budgets were released and there is an increase in the METCO budget. Mrs. Dowd and Mrs. Kelley continue to monitor new grants that become available.

At the recent Select Board meeting the workings of the Command Structure was discussed. Mrs. Dowd stressed that the collaboration between town and schools has been tremendous assuring that everyone is on the same page. She continues to monitor the CARES Act funding and looking for additional sources of funding.

Mrs. Dowd shared that she will be coming back to the School Committee regarding the SEEM transportation contract for approval. The goal as she explained in the spring is continuity of service.

The Town has initiated a "Mask Up" campaign promoting safety.

Health & Safety

Dr. Doherty began by saying that we are focusing on a balance of health, safety and learning. He held a staff safety forum in an effort to continue to inform staff on health and safety protocols.

Director of Nursing Mary Giuliana shared that the protocols we have in place have worked. She went on to review the student/staff positive cases.

Mr. Wise read a public comment from Donald Gourley, 26 Waverly Road:

*"What is the quantitative criteria threshold to return to full-time in class education (and end of remote/hybrid)? This questions comes because the emphasis on "cases" instead of "deaths" is twisting public perceptions. From the DOD databases we have infection survival rates at (1) 99.8% for all ages (2) 99.5% for those ages 50-70 (3) 94.6% for those older than 70, and (4) 99.999% for those under 20 years of age. COVID is 2 to 3 times more lethal than the Flu, but we are still operating with a Spring 2020 mindset where we conflate COVID with the Bubonic Plague. CDC recommends full time in person learning for these reasons, which aligns with DOD databases. For these reasons,*

*I'm asking what the quantitative triggers are for a full return to in class education? Cases aren't relevant, only hospitalization/death."*

Dr. Doherty said decisions are based on many factors. The 6 ft. distancing guideline will not change, and we will not be going back full in person.

Discussion continued on determination when to close schools and protocols for persons exposed to COVID-19. Dr. Doherty said that we review the current DPH metrics and work closely with the BOH and Director of Nurses when making decisions on the closing of school. Mrs. Giuliana reviewed the definition of close contact and procedures for testing and quarantining. She reviewed the cases over the past two weeks and said cases are rising. Reading is currently yellow, and this is consistent with our surrounding communities. Mrs. Giuliana shared that we work in collaboration with the public health nurses on contact tracing, providing guidance to individuals/families that have been in close contact with someone that has tested positive. As mentioned at a previous meeting, phase one of the Binax Antigen testing program has begun. As you recall we opted not to participate but are watching this program as it moves forward. With Thanksgiving upon us the Governor has issued a state travel order asking that families do not attend large gatherings.

Dr. Doherty shared that he is encouraging all staff to unplug for the holiday weekend. Everyone has been working incredibly hard and needs this break.

Mr. Parks and Mr. Robinson thanked Mrs. Giuliana for her hard work.

Dr. Doherty shared information on the status of winter sports. The MIAA will be taking the final vote on the sports and modifications that will be playing this winter. The Middlesex League Superintendents and Athletic Directors set December 14<sup>th</sup> as the first day of tryouts and practices with the season beginning after the first of the year. The schedule will be similar to the fall schedule with a shorter season and no spectators. Tomorrow is the November Conference Day for elementary and high school families and a full professional development day at the middle school level. We have moved the January in-service day from January 19<sup>th</sup> to January 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Committee asked clarifying questions about staffing.

Mr. Wise read a public comment from Donald Gourley, 26 Waverly Road:

*"Seems logical RPS would know if a Reading employee died or was hospitalized..."*

Mrs. Giuliana said we can track students but not all staff live in Reading. Dr. Doherty added that there are privacy concerns as well.

Mr. Wise read a public comment from Samantha Weld:

*"When the teachers unplug over Thanksgiving, will the students be able to as well? Will homework be assigned at the high school and middle school? I think EVERYONE needs to unplug and not be on screens. Thanks"*

Mr. Wise read a public comment from Donald Gourley, 26 Waverly Road:

*"Is RPS open to raising pay in order to fill positions? The cost to individual families is logically and likely greater than the cost of raising pay (even if temporarily)? There are skillset out there that are not available in greater quantities at any price, however no one believes that the skillsets related to Public Education cannot be found at market rates. Listening to the last two commentors, it seems a lot a pain exists just*

*because the offer isn't being found attractive enough to fill the positions. How much extra salary are we talking? Really, tax payers would likely bear this burden easily to alleviate the pain that understaffing causes.*  
*Due to COVID, the market price of this labor seems to have risen."*

Mrs. Dowd said this is a matter of collective bargaining.

C. New Business

Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent Chris Kelley along with Curriculum Coordinators Heather Leonard and Allison Straker provided a curriculum update including the work happening around a robust remote platform.

Mrs. Kelley thanked the principals, department heads, curriculum coordinators, data coach and teachers for the outstanding work being done in the district.

Mrs. Kelley reviewed how our work has changed. Professional development is now done in asynchronous and synchronous models. We have created a Google site that houses all recorded PD for staff support. Mrs. Leonard reviewed the adjustments in the area of curriculum and instruction saying the State determines the frameworks. We have adjusted pacing guides with priority standards with identified areas that may require additional supports. We are also looking at what technology tools to support instruction. Mrs. Straker reviewed the adjustments in the area of data and assessment saying that we are prioritizing formative and frequent monitoring utilizing tools to meet individual needs and inform across content areas. We have a formative literacy assessment in place, have made adjustments to the assessment calendar and have protocols in place to support remote assessment.

Mrs. Leonard reviewed the K – 6 Math Curriculum. She shared that the current core curriculum tool Math in Focus has created a new copyright and we no longer have access to virtual tools. This has given us an opportunity to explore new curriculum options. The curriculum and content for math remains the same – the curriculum tools are the focus of the pilot. The timeline was reviewed with a decision, procurement and PD/training happening during the April – June timeframe. We will be looking for a program that will be fiscally sustainable.

Mrs. Straker reviewed the K – 5 Social Studies Curriculum. She shared the vision for Social Studies in the elementary schools. She said we are building foundations and building a writing curriculum that meets the needs of all Reading students. Students will work collaboratively, connect ideas across content and apply learning. Teachers will have access to a variety of resources, facilitate conversations and coach inquiry. Instruction will be hands-on; project and inquiry based and look like a workshop. We will use a variety of resources that will be engaging and culturally relevant.

Mrs. Kelley shared the Equity work being done in the district saying that the middle school staff will be participating in Equity and UDL training during the in-service day tomorrow. We are committed to an Equity Institute with student voice and choice. The Learning & Teaching team are in the process of planning the January 15<sup>th</sup> in-service day.

The committee asked clarifying questions.

Mr. Wise read a public comment from Donald Gourley, 26 Waverly Road:



*"Stolen"? I hope children aren't being exposed to this. Individual ideology should be limited to a teachers OWN children, not others. Tax payer have given no mandate for this, nor voted for this. Is this actually entering the classroom and who approved this? Mr. Doherty? If not him, who.*

*Can RPS return to the primary use of Math text books and workbooks? This makes it easier for parents to track student progress at home. Text books and workbooks allows progress to be tracked in a traditional manner. Now, it seems one needs 2 or 3 passwords to view online only curriculum content that cost too much to print out and put in binders. Math at this level hasn't changed, yet the tried and true teaching methods seem to be continually sacrificed for the "latest fad". Just because a new piece of tech exists doesn't mean its better or has to be used. Text books are sustainable, mine was used for years by many students.*

Mrs. Leonard said a lot has changed and we are using due diligence and applying our knowledge.

*Is Cornel West's ideology being presented to students? If yes, are opposite ideologies being presented equally? Who authorized this curriculum change?  
Glad to hear someone say "Baby won't be thrown out with bath water"*

Mrs. Kelley said the state has updated the frameworks and we are being proactive/reactive to changes. Mrs. Leonard added that we are using what is developmentally/mentally appropriate. Publishers are no longer producing textbooks.

D. Old Business

FY21 Budget

Mrs. Dowd reviewed the memorandum saying she is asking the School Committee to vote the revised FY21 School Department as determined by Town Meeting.

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Parks, to approve the adjusted November Town Meeting approved FY21 budget of \$48,442,662. The roll call vote carried 6 – 0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

Student Report (out of order)

Mr. Robinson welcomed student representative Bridget Parks. Ms. Parks reported on the following: Remote and hybrid learning, the use of breakout rooms, the upcoming virtual winter choral and band events and a virtual drama event. Spirit week is next week and the deadline is approaching for senior class officer nominations. The juniors and freshman held a bikeathon in November and the seniors are putting together a collage in lieu of the annual class picture on the football field.

District and Superintendent's Goals Introduction

Dr. Doherty thanked everyone for the feedback which has been incorporated into the plan. He reviewed the changes that have been made. In strategic Objective A he added the caveat that deadlines may need to be extended because we do not know what next year will look like. Under standardized testing he said this will be a baseline year and added interim outcomes under the District Crisis Support Teamwork. Under Goal #1 – Professional Practices the Human Resources director Entry Plan timeline has been adjusted to be more realistic and under Goal #2 the hiring of a Special Education Literacy Coach will be advocated in the FY22 budget process. This is a critical piece to the success of this goal. The Vision of the Graduate date will be changed to April.

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Brandt, to accept the 2020-2023 District Improvement Plan as amended by Dr. Doherty and 2020-2021 Superintendent's Educator Plan as amended by Dr. Doherty.**

The committee asked clarifying questions.

**The roll call vote carried 6 – 0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

First Reading of Policy JI – Student Rights and Responsibilities

Dr. Doherty worked with Attorney Brunt and did some research on this policy and has added #4 to the proposed policy. He then reviewed Policy IMB which is a MASC revision and added a statement in the Bullying Prevention Plan protecting freedom of expression.

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Brandt, to accept the First Reading of Policy JI – Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Mr. Wise began the first reading.

**Mr. Parks moved, seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro to suspend further reading of Policy JI. The roll call vote carried 6 – 0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro, to accept the First Reading Policy IMB – Teaching about Controversial Issues/Controversial Speakers.**

Mr. Wise began the first reading.

**Mr. Parks moved, seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro to suspend further reading of Policy JI. The roll call vote carried 6 – 0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

Discussion on Policy JI began with Mr. Wise suggesting the addition of legal references regarding dress and pregnant student. Mrs. Gaffen asked about the process for students peaceably assembling on school grounds. Dr. Doherty said the group would have to get permission. Mr. Brandt asked about student freedom. Dr. Doherty said he used the language of the law to clarify.

Mrs. Nazzaro thanked Dr. Doherty for his work on this policy. She feels staff need to be offered education and professional development to roll out conversations and topics that do not inhibit the rights of students. Dr. Doherty said how the topic is presented is key and work is being done as part of the equity discussions.

Discussion on Policy IMB began with Mrs. Gaffen asking how controversial is defined. Dr. Doherty shared that the name is from MASC. Mrs. Gaffen has an issue with the entire policy. Discussion on the term controversial continued and it was determined to continue the first reading of Policy IMB at the next meeting. It was suggested that two members (Mrs. Nazzaro & Mr. Brandt) meet with Dr. Doherty to work on the proposed revisions.

Vote on the first reading Policy JI:

**The roll call vote carried 6 – 0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

Vote of first reading of Policy IMD:

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Parks, to suspend the first reading of Policy IMD until a new version is developed by Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Brandt and Dr. Doherty. The roll call vote carried 6 – 0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

E. Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes (11.5.20)

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro, to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson**

F. Reports

Director of Student Services

No report

Assistant Superintendent

No report

Chief Financial Officer

No report

Superintendent

No report

Liaison

Mr. Parks reported on the recent Recreation Committee meeting. The Birch meadow Master Plan was discussed. He added that he is amazed at what the RMHS Guidance staff is doing regarding senior activities.

Mr. Nazzaro reported on the RCTV Board annual membership meeting saying the group has added a new board member. They also discussed the high school course offerings.

Mr. Robinson shared that the next meeting will be on Monday November 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss the Superintendent Search process and the committee will be posted for the December 7<sup>th</sup> Permanent Building Committee meeting.

G. Public Comment

None

1. Routine Matters

a. Bills and Payroll (A)

Warrant S2119	11.05.20	\$226,281.09
Warrant S2120	11.10.20	\$247,266.74

Warrant P2107	10.02.20	\$1,641,588.96
Warrant P2108	10.16.20	\$1,643,737.34
Warrant P2109	10.30.20	\$1,663,175.21
Warrant P2110	11.13.20	\$1,659,964.82

b. Calendar

2. Information/Correspondence
3. Future Business
4. Adjournment

Adjourn

**Mr. Parks moved, seconded by Mrs. Gaffen, to adjourn. The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

**NOTE:** The minutes reflect the order as stated in the posted meeting agenda not the order they occurred during the meeting.

Link to meeting video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bIyzUKNTuLE>



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

**DRAFT**

### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

#### School Committee

Date: 2020-12-03

Time: 7:00 PM

Building:

Location:

Address:

Session: Open Session

Purpose: Open Session

Version: Draft

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Chuck Robinson, John Parks, Tom Wise, Erin Gaffen, Carla Nazzaro and Shawn Brandt

**Members - Not Present:**

**Others Present:**

Superintendent John Doherty, Assistant Superintendent Chris Kelley, CFO Gail Dowd, Director of Student Services Jen Stys

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Linda Engelson on behalf of the Chair

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### Topics of Discussion:

#### I. Call to Order

Chair Robinson opened the meeting and announced the School Committee was meeting in a virtual setting, fully remote via Microsoft Teams, practicing social distancing and in accordance with the Governor's suspension of certain open meeting laws. The meeting was being recorded and broadcast live on RCTV. The Chair called attendance:

Mr. Robinson – here  
Mr. Parks - here  
Mr. Wise – here  
Mrs. Nazzaro – here  
Mrs. Gaffen - here  
Mr. Brandt –here

Dr. Doherty – here  
Mrs. Dowd – here  
Mrs. Kelley - here  
Dr. Stys – here

Mr. Robinson called open session order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda.

#### A. Public Input

Mr. Robinson explained that for public comment, please use the live chat feature on the Microsoft Teams link which will be posted on the Superintendent's Blog and sent out via Connect Ed prior to the meeting.

In lieu of the live chat, you may send an email in advance of the meeting to [schoolcommittee@reading.k12.ma.us](mailto:schoolcommittee@reading.k12.ma.us) This email will be included in the next packet.

Mrs. Dowd introduced new Human Resources Director Kerry Meisinger to the committee. She begins officially on Monday and comes to Reading with a wealth of knowledge.

Ms. Meisinger is very happy for this opportunity and is looking forward to joining the team.

B. Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes (11.23.20)

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Parks, to approve the consent agenda.**  
**The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson**

C. Reports

Student

Student Representative Bridget Parks reported on the following:

- The grade level yoga challenge (Gr.9 & 11 vs. Gr. 10 & 12)
- Drama Show on Friday
- Winter show auditions
- Winter concerts
- NHS Inductions
- Winter sports

Director of Student Services

No report

Assistant Superintendent

No report

Chief Financial Officer

No report

Superintendent

No report

Liaison

Mrs. Gaffen reported that the SEPAC will meet on Tuesday night. Dr. Stys and Assistant Director Allison Wright will be in attendance to discuss the renaming of the Special Education cohorts.

Mr. Brandt reported on the upcoming ad hoc Human Rights Committee meeting.

Mr. Robinson shared that the School Committee has been posted to attend the December 7<sup>th</sup> Permanent Building Committee meeting.

D. Old Business

## Approval of Transportation Contracts

Mrs. Dowd updated the committee on the status of negotiations with our transportation vendors and asked for committee approval on the renegotiated terms.

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Brandt, to approve the renegotiated terms of the regular day/METCO transportation contracts with North Suburban Transportation at a reduced rate of 70% for non-transportation days. The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson**

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Brandt, to approve the renegotiated terms of the special education transportation contract with North Reading Transportation at a reduced rate of 78% for non- transportation days with a further reduction for the first 10 days of School that were professional development days (reduction of 50% per day). The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson**

## Superintendent Search – Appoint Preliminary Screening Committee

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro, to appoint the preliminary screening committee as outlined in the Chair’s memorandum.**

Mr. Robinson thanked all that submitted letters of interest to service on the screening committee. Mr. Wise, Mrs. Dowd, Mrs. Presser and he spent considerable time reviewing and discussing the pool of applicants. They wanted a balanced and well-rounded committee with broad representation.

Mr. Brandt feels that the committee is light on middle school and classroom teacher representation. He would like the School Committee to consider adding Theresa Wiggins citing her experience as a classroom teacher.

Discussion continued on adding another person to the screening committee and the lack of anyone with special education or related services experience. Mr. Robinson reminded the committee that Mrs. Presser recommended limiting the size of the screening committee to 11-13. We are currently at 15 members.

Mrs. Nazzaro cautioned the committee not to change the parameters and wants to be transparent. We have to trust the process. Mrs. Gaffen feels the parent pool has a corporate feel and agrees with Mr. Brandt to add Theresa Wiggins. Mr. Parks concurred. Mr. Wise feels the process was followed and we should stick with who has been recommended.

Mr. Wise read a comment from the live chat from Sherilla Lestrade:

*“I am a special education para at the high school, A METCO parent and have a middle school student”*

Committee members thought that the selection committee would vet the applicants and bring the recommendations to the full committee for discussion.

Mr. Wise read a comment from the live chat from Mike Monahan:

*“I suggest selecting the best candidates are more important than sticking to a policy or prior decision dedicating to a specific number of candidates. If we are fortunate enough to get more great candidates than we ever expected, increase the number of selectees to get the broadest and most diverse set of qualified candidates and related backgrounds. A*

*larger number of qualified candidates is more important than a line in the sand number. Also - you should have an odd number so there is a potential tie breaker”*

**Mr. Brandt moved to amend the list to include Theresa Wiggins as the 16<sup>th</sup> member. The amendment was seconded by Mr. Parks.**

Mrs. Dowd shared that this was a very thought out process with guidance from the consultant. It is tougher to come to a consensus with a larger group. She said the six members of the School Committee alone make the decision on the screening committee.

Mr. Brandt shared that there are currently 16 people on the screening committee so adding another member would give an odd number.

Mr. Brandt amended his original motion - **amend the list to include Theresa Wiggins as the 17<sup>th</sup> member. Mr. Parks seconded.**

**The vote on the motion carried 4-2. Mr. Brandt, Mrs. Gaffen, Mr. Parks, Mr. Robinson voting in favor. Mr. Wise and Mrs. Nazzaro voting against.**

**The vote on the amended original motion carried 5-1. Mr. Brandt, Mrs. Gaffen, Mr. Parks, Mr. Robinson, and Mr. Wise voting in favor. Mrs. Nazzaro voting against.**

Mr. Wise read a comment from the live chat from Alicia Williams:

*“Can people potentially profit from the district be on the district? Is it a conflict of Interest? people WHO\* COULD”*

Mrs. Dowd answered that it may be possible and would check with Mrs. Presser. Mr. Wise followed up saying that this committee appointment is for a set period of time. Mr. Robinson added that the first meeting of the screening committee will include OML, conflict of interest and Robert’s Rules training.

Second Reading and Approval of Policy JI – Student Rights and Responsibilities

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Brandt, to accept the Second Reading and Approval of Policy JI – Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Mr. Wise began the second reading.

**Mr. Parks moved, seconded by Mr. Brandt to suspend further reading of Policy JI. The roll call vote carried 6 – 0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

Dr. Doherty said there were no changes based on the conversation of the last meeting.

**The motion carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson**

Continued First Reading of Policy IMB – Teaching about Controversial Issues/Controversial Speakers

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Brandt, to accept the Continued First Reading Policy IMB – Teaching about Controversial Issues/Controversial Speakers**



Dr. Doherty said that he met with Mr. Brandt and Mrs. Nazzaro regarding concerns brought up at the last meeting and made changes.

Discussion regarding the changes was held. Revisions were offered to be included for the second reading.

Mr. Brandt would like to reach out to student groups for feedback on this policy.

Mr. Wise read a comment from the live chat from Tom Quinn:

*“Does this allow for too much straying from the in class curriculum? Organic conversations around students concerns should and will happen.”*

Mr. Wise read a comment from the live chat from Alicia Williams:

*“What will be the consequences on breaking or violating these policies?”*

Dr. Doherty said the policy will become part of the handbook.

Mr. Brandt asked how violations are handled with staff. Dr. Doherty said it would be part of the educator evaluation process in the professionalism standard.

Mr. Wise would like feedback from the administrators.

**Mr. Wise read the original motion again. The roll call vote carried 4 -2. Mr. Brandt, Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Gaffen and Mrs. Nazzaro voting in favor. Mr. Wise and Mr. Parks voting against.**

E. New Business

First Reading of Policy BDF – Advisory Committees to the School Committee

In discussion with Dorothy Presser it was determined that the Superintendent Screening Committee is not a sub-committee of the School Committee, it is better as an advisory committee. We currently do not have a policy for advisory committees.

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mr. Parks, to accept the first reading of Policy BDF – Advisory Committees to the School Committee**

Mr. Wise began the first reading of the policy.

**Mr. Brandt moved, seconded by Mr. Parks to suspend further reading of Policy BDF. The roll call vote was 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson**

The committee offered revisions to the proposed policy. The Chair and Superintendent will consult with legal counsel regarding the suggested revisions.

**The roll call vote was 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson**

Approval of the 2021-2022 School Year Calendar

Dr. Doherty said that feedback from the RTA has been incorporated. The question regarding snow days was addressed. DESE has not offered guidance on snow days therefore, we have included them in the calendars. The RTA asked about changing

Columbus Day to Indigenous Persons Day. This has not become an official holiday at this point but if it does, we will change.

**Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Mrs. Nazzaro, to approve Calendar A & B for the 2021-2022 school year with which calendar will be used will be determined at a future date.**

Mr. Wise pointed out a typo and asked if we need snow days on the hybrid calendar. Dr. Doherty said we are keeping both calendars consistent.

Mr. Gaffen asked, if we do not include snow days could we look at starting after Labor Day.

Mr. Parks read an email from Laura Fusco:

*“Hello,  
It appears that the color coding is wrong on Calendar B. It shows that this week Cohort B was in person but it was actually Cohort A in person this week. So unless the in person weeks change after the new year it may be wrong going forward.  
Laura Fusco  
68 Haystack Rd”*

It was pointed out that we were discussing next year’s calendar and not this years calendar.

**The roll call vote was 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson**

F. Old Business (out of order)

Winter Hybrid Learning Update

Dr. Doherty began with health and safety beginning with information on the Mask Up campaign in town. He went on to update the committee on the cases in the schools pointing that we have not had any in school transmissions. We continue to follow the MDPH quarantine guidelines rather the CDC. We await guidance from DESE as the MDPH guidelines apply to schools.

Dr. Doherty shared information on winter sports. The EEA and MIAA developed guidelines for winter sports. The Middlesex League Athletic Directors and Superintendents modified the guidelines to include 10 games, masks required and no spectators. Sports that will be played are basketball, hockey and gymnastics. The committee discussed concerns that no spectators would be allowed at the contests. Dr. Doherty reiterated that this is not a Reading decision, it is a league decision made in the best interest of the health and safety of the participants.

Mrs. Nazzaro feels that these are unnecessary restrictions and Reading needs to take a stand and pull out. Chair Robinson feels the league was lazy in making this decision and needs to roll up their sleeves to come up with creative ideas.

Mr. Wise read comments on the live chat from:

*“ jennifer Fichera 69 Richards road. - as a parent of a a winter sport athlete I am kindly asking what involvement the school committee has in making the rule where no spectators will be permitted to Middlesex games. Specifically referring to the space in*

*Burbank there is more than ample space to socially distance one parent per player. Can you please discuss how the decision was made and what criteria was used? And what documents were leveraged as well as stats used to make this determination as it seems to not be in line with MIAA recommendations”*

Karin DiNapoli

*“My question is in regards to our Senior athletes at RMHS. I'm a parent of a senior basketball captain. The Middlesex League's decision to ban all spectators from winter sporting events doesn't seem fair to our senior athletes. Given the facility we are lucky enough have here at RMHS, could this ruling be revisited to allow one parent per player to attend? This can safely be done if we utilize the balcony of the field house for a small group of socially distant parents. The health of our players and coaches are of utmost importance but as a food establishment owner in town, I know for sure that we have the space needed to safely add a small group of parents while still following all CDC protocols. The seniors are giving up so much already can't we work to try and restore their support on the sidelines for the 5 home games they are able have? As a small group of senior parents, what can we do to try and have this ruling revisited? Thank you!”*

Alicia Williams

*“Please let the parents decide if they feel safe going to watch their students play. These rules for sake of rules. Hockey rinks are big enough, If they don't feel safe, they don't have to go. Give them the option to attend.”*

Kristen Granara

*“As far as Tom has mentioned, blocking off stands. We are already doing this! Why can i watch my 9 year old squirt hockey player at Burbank. Stands are currently blocked off with socially distanced spots for seating. Contact tracing is done with check ins at the door. Masks are mandatory. We have been doing this since September without any outbreaks. This is unacceptable. I urge you to go back to the middlesex league and ADs for a reconsideration.”*

Mr. Parks read an email from Steven Sullivan:

*“ December 2, 2020 An open letter to the elected and appointed leadership of the Town of Reading: Notwithstanding what is happening in the World, our Country, our State and in our Town as a result of the complete disruption and carnage of COVID19, I feel compelled to write this letter today. I know as town and school administrators, elected and appointed, your lives have been upside down during the last 9 months. I want you to know that I sincerely respect your commitment to our kids and to our community. With that I feel obligated to communicate to you, that I humbly disagree with the recent decision not to allow any spectators to attend varsity and sub-varsity sporting events this coming Winter 2020/21 season. Winter sports will be played at various types of venues including gyms, basketball courts and ice hockey rinks. Each have their own capacity for spectators. Some certainly larger than others. I contend that each and every one of these venues can accommodate a modest amount of spectators that can be appropriately socially distanced, with the mandatory personal protective equipment covering their face and hands. I feel that with the advent of a vaccine, and strong personal discipline, we can get through this winter sports season without keeping all parents, guardians and siblings away from their student athlete's interscholastic contests. I respectfully ask you to reconsider your decision not to allow spectators at winter sporting events. It has been a terrible year, our families need to be with*

*and support each other right now. Thank you in advance for your consideration. With Kind Regards, STEVEN R. SULLIVAN (617-283-7616) 41 Colburn Road:”*

Dr. Doherty updated the committee on hybrid learning. He updated the group on staff vacancies. He went on to the status of hybrid learning in the district. All grades now in hybrid learning or partial hybrid learning model. Preschool and some high needs students: 5 days/week in person; Kindergarten: 4 days/week in person, 1 day/week remote; Grades 1-8: Hybrid Cohort A/B week in person/week remote model with Fridays remote for all (except some high needs) Grades 9-12: Partial Hybrid.

Dr. Doherty will be sending out a survey to parents, staff and students on hybrid learning next week and will hold focus group sessions in January.

Dr. Doherty reviewed the high school partial hybrid model pointing out the positives which include strong synchronous remote instruction for 6 of 10 days, high needs students in person, two days in person/10 days, consistency in schedule. Challenges include two days in person versus four, two days of live streaming while teacher is teaching to in person classes as well. Other concerns include maintaining the balance of a strong remote program, maintain a safe healthy in person environment, and maximize the in-person experience.

The RMHS Staff are meeting with students at risk to shift their schedules to more in person.

Dr. Doherty thanked his central office administrators as well as the administrative assistants for the amazing job they have done.

He pointed out the Northshore Education Consortium Annual Report that was included in the packet. He referred the committee to page 19 of the report to point out the cost effectiveness of belonging to a collaborative.

The Town has announced a rent/mortgage assistance program in collaboration with the Reading Cooperative Bank. He will send out the press release. Funding is part of the Cares Act Grant that expires at the end of the month.

In an effort to allow the band to hold indoor rehearsals special masks have been purchased to allow students to play instruments inside, socially distanced.

The Daily Time Chronicle had an article on the food distribution program, He encouraged all to read it.

Mr. Brandt asked about staff leaves that are ending at the end of the month. Dr. Doherty said some staff are coming back while others will take a leave until the end of the year.

Mr. Gaffen asked about high-risk students more in-school time. Dr. Doherty said decisions are based on the first quarter grades.

Mr. Wise is concerned about the social-emotional well-being and asked if the high school schedule would be adjusted.

Mrs. Nazzaro asked about the status of the high school paraeducators. Dr. Doherty said we still have 9 vacancies.

G. Public Comment

None

1. Routine Matters

a. Bills and Payroll (A)

Warrant S2121	11.19.20	\$63,133.89
Warrant S2122	11.21.20	\$79,339.32
Warrant S2123	12.03.20	\$41,815.74
Warrant P2111	11.27.20	\$1,748,595.11

b. Calendar

2. Information/Correspondence

Mrs. Nazzaro asked for clarification on the social media coordinator calendar.

3. Future Business

4. Adjournment

Adjourn

**Mrs. Nazzaro moved, seconded by Mrs. Gaffen, to adjourn. The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Parks, Mrs. Gaffen, Mrs. Nazzaro, Mr. Wise, Mr. Brandt and Mr. Robinson.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

**NOTE:** The minutes reflect the order as stated in the posted meeting agenda not the order they occurred during the meeting.

Link to meeting video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7bYbi4VEEY>

John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

82 Oakland Road  
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Christine M. Kelley  
Assistant Superintendent

Jennifer A. Stys, Ed.D.  
Director of Student Services

Gail Dowd, CPA  
Chief Financial Officer

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee

FROM: John F. Doherty, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: November 16, 2020

TOPIC: Reports

As part of the Administrator reports we will update the committee on the following:

Dr. Stys – a recent ruling on a pending Office of Civil Rights case and the updated Program Guides

Mrs. Kelley – Update on the Curriculum Guides

Dr. Doherty - Reading Public Schools 2020-21 enrollment as well as the 2021-22 incoming kindergarten numbers to date.

If you have any questions, please contact me.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, REGION I  
5 POST OFFICE SQUARE, 8<sup>th</sup> FLOOR  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02109-3921

December 10, 2020

Dr. John F. Doherty  
Superintendent  
By email: John.Doherty@Reading.k12.ma.us

Re: Complaint Nos. 01-16-1355, 01-17-1027, 01-17-1358  
Reading Public Schools

Dear Superintendent Doherty:

The U.S. Department of Education (Department), Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has completed its investigation of the complaints we received against Reading Public Schools (District). The Complainant alleged that during the 2015-2016 school year, the District discriminated against her son (Student 1) on the basis of disability when the District artificially inflated his grades (Allegation 1); provided him answers to the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) (Allegation 2); and failed to implement his Individualized Education Program (IEP) regarding: mental health counseling services (Allegation 3a), and extended school year services during summer 2016 (Allegation 3b). The Complainant alleged that during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years, the District failed to implement Student 1's IEP regarding: speech/language services (Allegation 4a), reading services from a reading specialist (Allegation 4b), and a language-based program (Allegation 4c).

The Complainant also alleged that during the 2016-2017 school year, the District discriminated against her daughter (Student 2) on the basis of disability when the District failed to implement Student 2's IEP regarding: speech/language services (Allegation 5a), and extended school year services during summer 2017 (Allegation 5b). Lastly, the Complainant alleged that during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years, the District failed to implement the IEPs of other Reading Memorial High School (School) students by not providing them reading special education and related services from a reading specialist (Allegation 6a), speech/language special education and related services (Allegation 6b), and a language-based program (Allegation 6c).

OCR enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), 29 U.S.C. Section 794, and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. Part 104, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from the Department. OCR also enforces Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II), 42 U.S.C. Section 12131 *et seq.*, and its implementing regulation at 28 C.F.R. Part 35, which prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities by public entities, including public education systems and institutions, regardless of whether they receive federal financial assistance from the Department. Because the District receives federal financial assistance from

the Department and is a public entity, OCR has jurisdiction over it pursuant to Section 504 and Title II.

In reaching a determination, OCR reviewed documents provided by the Complainant and the District; and interviewed the Complainant. After carefully considering all of the information obtained during the investigation, OCR found insufficient evidence to support Allegations 1, 2, 3(a), 3(b), 4(c), and 5(b); obtained credible information indicating that the Allegations 4(a), 4(b), 5(a), 6(a), and 6(b) are currently resolved; and found Allegation 6(c) to be so speculative that OCR cannot infer that discrimination may have occurred or is occurring. OCR's findings and conclusions are discussed below.

### **Legal Standards**

The Section 504 regulation, at 34 C.F.R. § 104.4, and the Title II regulation, at 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(a), provide that no qualified individual with a disability shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under the District's programs or activities on the basis of disability.

When investigating an allegation of different treatment, OCR first determines whether there is sufficient evidence to establish an initial, or *prima facie*, case of discrimination. Specifically, OCR determines whether the District treated the Student less favorably than similarly situated individuals without disabilities. If so, OCR then determines whether the District had a legitimate, nondiscriminatory reason for the different treatment. Finally, OCR determines whether the reason given by the District is a pretext, or excuse, for unlawful discrimination.

The Section 504 regulation, at 34 C.F.R. § 104.33, requires school districts to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability in its jurisdiction. An appropriate education is regular or special education and related aids and services that are designed to meet the individual educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of students without disabilities are met and that are developed in compliance with Section 504's procedural requirements. Implementation of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is one means of meeting this standard. OCR interprets the Title II regulation, at 28 C.F.R. §§ 35.103(a) and 35.130(b)(1)(ii) and (iii), to require school districts to provide a FAPE to the same extent required under the Section 504 regulation.

In investigating a denial of a FAPE under Section 504, OCR first looks at the services to be provided as written in a student's plan or as otherwise agreed to by the student's team. If OCR finds that a district has not implemented a student's plan in whole or in part, it will examine the extent and nature of the missed services, the reason for the missed services, and any efforts by the district to compensate for the missed services in order to determine whether this failure resulted in a denial of a FAPE.



### **Findings of Fact and Analysis**<sup>1</sup>

During the 2015-2016 school year, Student 1 was in the eleventh grade while Student 2 was in the ninth grade.

#### *Allegation 1: Grade Inflation for Student 1*

The Complainant alleged that the District inflated Student 1's 2015-2016 school year grades to move him out of the program sooner. The District denied this allegation and stated that Student 1's grades were commensurate with his performance. While the Complainant did not provide any particular examples of coursework or exams where Student 1 performed poorly but received a higher grade, she generally contended that the District should not have given the Student passing grades because his evaluations showed that he was not making academic progress. OCR did not identify evidence to establish that the Student's grades were inflated. While OCR understands the Complainant's concerns, without more, OCR has insufficient evidence to conclude that the District treated Student 1 less favorably than similarly situated individuals without disabilities by artificially inflating his grades.

#### *Allegation 2: MCAS Testing for Student 1*

The Complainant alleged that the District wrongly provided Student 1 answers to the 2015-2016 MCAS, when he was in the eleventh grade. In support of this allegation, the Complainant alleged that Student 1's scores on the 2014-2015 MCAS were too high as compared to his 2013-2014 MCAS scores. Although it is undisputed that Student 1 took the MCAS in the tenth grade (2014-2015 school year), the District denied that Student 1 took the 2015-2016 MCAS as an eleventh grader. The District's contention aligned with OCR's review of the MCAS participation requirements, which indicate that students must take the MCAS in grades 3 through 8, and grade 10; not grade 11. Based on this information, OCR has insufficient evidence that the Student took the 2015-2016 MCAS, and thus has insufficient evidence that the District wrongly provided him answers to that exam on the basis of disability.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Allegation 3(a): Mental Health Counseling Services for Student 1*

The Complainant alleged that the District denied Student 1 a FAPE by failing to provide Student 1 with the mental health counseling services contained in his IEP. During the course of OCR's investigation, however, the District and the Complainant both confirmed that Student 1's IEP, which was effective from March 30, 2015 to March 30, 2016 (2015-2016 IEP), did *not* include mental health counseling services, nor did the IEP team agree to provide this service. The Complainant argued to OCR that the IEP *should* have included this provision. While OCR understands this concern, OCR has insufficient evidence to conclude that the District failed to

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<sup>1</sup> OCR limited the investigation of Student 1's allegations to alleged discriminatory acts which occurred on or after March 20, 2016, because the complaint was filed within 180 calendar days of the date of such alleged discrimination.

<sup>2</sup> To the extent that the Complainant has raised concerns about Student 1's 2014-2015 MCAS scores, this allegation is untimely.

implement Student 1's IEP by not providing mental health counseling services, and thus OCR has insufficient evidence that the District denied Student 1 a FAPE.<sup>3</sup>

*Allegation 3(b): ESY Services for Student 1*

The Complainant alleged that the District denied Student 1 a FAPE by failing to provide him with ESY services during summer 2016 contained in the 2015-2016 IEP. While the Complainant and the District agreed that Student 1's IEP included ESY services and that they were not provided, they dispute the reason for the non-delivery. The District asserted that the family elected not to attend the ESY sessions even though the District provided them detailed information about the location of these services. The District explained that it has a standard practice of providing this information directly to the parent, but acknowledged that it did not retain a copy of any written notification materials sent to the Complainant for Student 1. This explanation was consistent in part by information received by the Complainant, who explained to OCR that Student 1 was unable to attend ESY sessions because football practice was at the same time; however, the Complainant also disputed receiving information about where and how to receive his ESY services, even after asking for it at or after the May 2016 IEP team meeting where this topic was discussed. Based on these facts, OCR is unable to resolve the conflicting information provided by the Complainant and the District and therefore has insufficient evidence that the District denied Student 1 a FAPE by failing to provide the Student the opportunity to receive ESY services.

*Allegation 5(b): ESY Services for Student 2*

The Complainant alleged that the District denied Student 2 a FAPE by failing to provide her with ESY services during summer 2017 contained in Student 2's 2017-2018 IEP. The District's data indicated that in May 2017, Student 2's team convened to develop her 2017-2018 IEP, which included 2x60 minutes per week of ESY services in specialized reading from July 10 to August 10, 2017. The District's data showed that on June 6, 2017, the District provided the Complainant a copy of Student 2's 2017-2018 IEP and procedural safeguards, and informed the Complainant that she must sign and return the IEP no later than July 6, 2017. The District asserted that although it offered ESY services to Student 2, the District was "legally prohibited" from providing the services to Student 2 because the Complainant did not provide consent until after the service period ended. The Complainant signed Student 2's 2017-2018 IEP on August 28, 2017 and according to the District, she returned it on August 29, 2017. The District's correspondence showed that in October 2017, the Complainant asserted that the District did not inform her about Student 2's ESY services, even though it was mentioned in the IEP, until months too late. Although the Complainant did not sign Student 2's 2017-2018 IEP until August 2017, the Complainant does not dispute the District's contention that she was provided a copy of IEP in June 2017 and asked to return it on July 2017. Based on these facts, OCR cannot

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<sup>3</sup> To the extent that you disagree with the District's decision to not include mental health counseling in Student 1's 2015-2016 IEP, OCR generally does not review or second-guess individual evaluation, placement, and other educational decisions as long as the District follows the procedures required by Section 504. You do not allege that the District failed to follow the procedures required by Section 504. Disagreements over a student's evaluation, services, placement, or educational program are more appropriately addressed through an impartial hearing, such as a due process hearing.

conclude that the Complainant was not aware of the fact that the District had offered Student 2 ESY services and declined to provide consent until after the District planned to provide them. In the absence of any other information, OCR has insufficient evidence to conclude that the District failed to implement Student 2's IEP by not providing ESY services.

*Allegations 4(b) and 6(a): Denial of Reading Services for Student 1 and Other Students*

The Complainant alleged that during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years, the District denied a FAPE to Student 1 and at least two other School students by failing to provide them with reading services contained in their IEPs, because the District did not employ a reading specialist at the time to provide such services.

With respect to other students, OCR's investigation indicated that there were gaps in the reading services provided, but that the District resolved this concern by offering compensatory services. Specifically, the District's data indicated that during the 2015-2016 school year, the District contracted with two reading specialists who served School students on a weekly basis – but not biweekly, as required in student IEPs, until April 2016, when the specialists provided services to the School twice per calendar week. The District's data indicated that in October 2016, the District hired a new reading specialist while continuing to look for a teacher certified in the Wilson Reading or Ortho Gilligam programs. However, the District's data also indicated that in September 2017, the District offered compensatory services to all students who had not received reading services as stipulated in their IEPs.

With respect to Student 1, OCR's investigation indicated that the District and the Complainant entered into a settlement agreement that provided Student 1 with additional reading services to resolve concerns regarding any gaps in services provided in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. Specifically, the District and the Complainant agreed to amend Student 1's IEP to allow a Special Education teacher to provide reading services three times per calendar week until the end of the 2015-2016 school year. For the 2016-2017 school year, the District agreed to fund 100% of Student 1's tuition to attend the Landmark School (Landmark), as an out-of-district day placement, where he would receive specialized reading services and other instruction; and, if he did not attend Landmark, then it agreed to reimburse the Complainant for reading services provided by a private third-party reading specialist through the end of that academic year (i.e., until June 30, 2017). The evidence indicated that Student 1 returned to the School for the 2016-2017 school year, and in December 2016, the District and the Complainant agreed that Student 1 would receive reading services at the Lindamood-Bell Center for up to two hours a day, five days per calendar week (or, a three-fold increase in services as stipulated in the IEP). These changes were reflected in an amended IEP. The documentation provided by the District demonstrated that the Lindamood Bell Center sent the District weekly invoices to collect payments that totaled \$25,187.23 for providing approximately 300 hours of reading instruction to Student 1 during the remainder of the 2016-2017 school year (i.e., from December 12, 2016 to May 19, 2017).

Section 108(k) of OCR's CPM states that OCR will dismiss an allegation if we obtain credible information indicating that the allegation is currently resolved. In addition to the information above as to Student 1 and other students, OCR also obtained information indicating that the

District currently employs eight Reading Specialists to provide reading services to students. For these reasons, OCR is dismissing allegations 4(b) and 6(a) as resolved.

*Allegations 4(a), 5(a), and 6(b): Denial of Speech/Language Services for Student 1, Student 2, and Other Students*

The Complainant alleged that during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years, the District denied a FAPE to Student 1, Student 2, and other students at the School by failing to provide them with speech/language services contained in their IEPs. Specifically, the Complainant claimed that during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years, the School employed a speech teacher that did not hold a teaching license from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or a speech-language pathology license from the Board of Allied Health Professionals. The District represented that it employed speech/language providers during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years with appropriate credentials, and provided information indicating that it provided such services until the speech/language provider took an unexpected medical leave from March 17, to April 24, 2017. OCR's investigation indicated that the District contracted with a private speech pathologist to continue providing students with speech/language services within 10 days of the speech/language provider's leave (i.e., before the end of March 2017), to provide services until the provider returned in late April 2017. The District's data did not indicate whether it provided compensatory services to other impacted students for the ten calendar days in March when a provider was not available.

As to Student 1, the District confirmed that Student 1's IEP included speech/language services until December 2016, when it was amended to no longer include speech/language services to facilitate his receipt of learning services at the Lindamood-Bell Center. As to Student 2, the District acknowledged that it provided only 10 of the 17 speech/language sessions required by Student 2's IEP in spring 2017, but asserted that it offered seven make-up sessions which Student 2 cancelled or did not attend.

OCR is dismissing Allegation 4(a) pursuant to Section 108(k) of OCR's CPM, because the information available indicates that the allegation has been resolved. As noted above, the information indicates that the parties amended Student 1's IEP to remove speech/language services in order to facilitate receipt of related learning services by a private provider at the District's expense. As to Allegation 5(a), OCR learned that the District offered Student 2 with make-up services equivalent to the number of services that she allegedly missed (seven total). Therefore, on these facts, OCR considers this allegation resolved as well, pursuant to Section 108(k) of the CPM. As to Allegation 6(a), although OCR did not identify documentation demonstrating that make-up services were provided to other students, OCR did not identify sufficient information to demonstrate that these services were not provided; and even if not provided, OCR did not otherwise identify sufficient evidence demonstrating that delayed or lack of services during this 10-day period, by itself, was sufficient to deny a FAPE to other students at that time.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> To the extent that the Complainant challenged the credentials of the District's speech/language providers, Section 108(l) of OCR's CPM states that OCR will dismiss an allegation if OCR previously dismissed or closed the same or similar allegation based on the same operative facts against the District. This allegation was previously dismissed

Lastly, the District submitted documentation demonstrating that it has since provided Section 504 trainings covering implementation issues to District staff. Specifically, the District's data shows that in the fall 2019, the District provided 504/Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Student Support trainings, which both covered the need to provide a FAPE by implementing IEPs and Section 504 plans. The District also demonstrated that in October 2019, it finalized a Section 504 Manual, which covered IEP and Section 504 plan implementation.

Accordingly, OCR finds that Allegations 4(a), 5(a), and 6(b) are currently resolved.

*Allegation 4(c): Language-Based Program for Student 1*

The Complainant alleged that the District failed to implement Student 1's 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 IEP by not enrolling him in a language-based program. OCR's investigation indicates that Student 1 left the language-based program when he was in the 9<sup>th</sup> (2013-2014 school year) or 10<sup>th</sup> (2014-2015 school year) grade, and that Student 1's 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 IEPs did not include a language-based program. Although the Complainant acknowledged that Student 1's 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 IEPs did not include a language-based program, she contended that the District should have enrolled Student 1 in a language-based program. The District's data showed that the Complainant did not attempt to raise these concerns when his team was developing the 2015-2016 or 2016-2017 IEPs. Because Student 1's 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 IEPs did not include a language-based program and OCR did not identify any evidence indicating that the team otherwise agreed to provide it, OCR has insufficient evidence to conclude that the District failed to implement Student 1's IEP by not providing a language-based program.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, to the extent the Complainant raised allegations about the District's 2014-2015 language-based programming, these allegations are untimely.<sup>6</sup>

*Allegation 6(c): Language-Based Program for Other Students*

The Complainant contended that during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years, the District failed to enroll at least five other students at the School in a language-based program even though their IEPs required it. OCR found that the only basis for the Complainant's allegation was Student 1's experience in the School's language-based program during the 2014-2015 school year, and that the Complainant had no information about the School's language-based

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because Section 504/Title II does not regulate the type of staff that a District may hire, the licensing credentials of District staff, or govern the types of representations the District makes to parents.

<sup>5</sup> OCR would also like to note that to the extent that the Complainant disagrees with the District's decision to not include a language-based program in the 2015-2016 or 2016-2017 IEPs, OCR generally does not review or second-guess individual evaluation, placement, and other educational decisions as long as the District follows the procedures required by Section 504. The Complainant does not allege that the District failed to follow the procedures required by Section 504. Disagreements over a student's evaluation, services, placement, or educational program are more appropriately addressed through an impartial hearing, such as a due process hearing.

<sup>6</sup> OCR notes that the Complainant did contend that she did not file the complaint earlier because she did not know that the District was not providing Student 1's reading services. However, even if OCR applied the Complainant's waiver request to this allegation, it would still be untimely because the Complainant filed these complaints more than 60 days after she became aware of the District's alleged discriminatory acts. Specifically, the Complainant provided a copy of her Bureau of Special Education Appeals hearing request that was filed in February 2016 and showed that she was aware that the District was not providing the Student's reading services at that time. However, the Complainant did not file the relevant complaints until September and October 2016.

program during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years. Upon a fuller review, OCR has determined that the Complainant's concerns about the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 language-based program are speculative, as they are not based in any information about the School's 2015-2016 or 2016-2017 language-based program. Accordingly, OCR is dismissing Allegation 6(c) pursuant to Section 108(b) of OCR's CPM because it is so speculative that OCR cannot infer that discrimination may have occurred or is occurring.

### **Conclusion**

This concludes OCR's investigation of the complaint. This letter should not be interpreted to address the District's compliance with any other regulatory provision or to address any issues other than those addressed in this letter. This letter sets forth OCR's determination in an individual OCR case. This letter is not a formal statement of OCR policy and should not be relied upon, cited, or construed as such. OCR's formal policy statements are approved by a duly authorized OCR official and made available to the public. The complainant may have the right to file a private suit in federal court whether or not OCR finds a violation.

The complainant has a right to appeal OCR's determination concerning Allegations 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 4c, 5b, and 6c within 60 calendar days of the date indicated on this letter. In the appeal, the complainant must explain why the factual information was incomplete or incorrect, the legal analysis was incorrect or the appropriate legal standard was not applied, and how correction of any error(s) would change the outcome of the case; failure to do so may result in dismissal of the appeal. If the complainant appeals OCR's determination, OCR will forward a copy of the appeal form or written statement to the recipient. The recipient has the option to submit to OCR a response to the appeal. The recipient must submit any response within 14 calendar days of the date that OCR forwarded a copy of the appeal to the recipient.

Please be advised that the District may not harass, coerce, intimidate, discriminate, or otherwise retaliate against an individual because that individual asserts a right or privilege under a law enforced by OCR or files a complaint, testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding under a law enforced by OCR. If this happens, the individual may file a retaliation complaint with OCR.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, it may be necessary to release this document and related correspondence and records upon request. In the event that OCR receives such a request, it will seek to protect, to the extent provided by law, personally identifiable information which, if released, could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abra Francois', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Abra Francois  
Compliance Team Leader

cc: Attorney Michael Joyce  
Nuttall, MacAvoy, & Joyce, P.C.  
[mjj@snclegal.com](mailto:mjj@snclegal.com)

**READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
2020-2021  
ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENT AND CLASS SIZE - COHORTS**

	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>TOTAL ENROLLMENT</b>
<b>Barrows</b> No. of Students Class Size	45  16-14-15	56 A 36 B 18 Remote 1(A) – 1(B)	60 A 21 B 38 Remote 1(A) – 0(B)	66 A 20 B 45 Remote 1(A) – 0(B)	53 A 31 B 20 Remote 1(A) – 1(B)	77 A 35 B 38 Remote 2(A) – 2(B)	<b>357</b> A 143 B 159 Remote 6(A) – 4(B) K 45
<b>Teachers</b>	3	3	3	3	3	4	19
<b>Birch Meadow</b> No. of Students Class Size	41  13-14-14	73 A 35 B 33 R1mote 2(A) – 3(B)	61 A 27 B 27 Remote 2(A) – 5(B)	54 A 26 B 19 Remote 6(A) – 3(B)	62 A 40 B 12 Remote 9(A) – 1 (B)	57 A 42 B 15 Remote 0	<b>348</b> A 170 B 106 Remote 19(A) – 12(B) K 41
<b>Teachers</b>	3	4	3	3	3	3	19
<b>Eaton</b> No. of Students Class Size	80  39 (FD) 12-12-13  19 (HD- In person 22 (HD) Remote	67 A 41 B 17 Remote 5(A) – 4(B)	75 A 35 B 33 Remote 4(A) – 3(B)	63 A 14 B 41 Remote 4(A) – 4(B)	44 A 18 B 19 Remote 3(A) – 4(B)	64 A 40 B 16 Remote 5(A) – 3(B)	<b>393</b> A 148 B 126 Remote 21(A) – 18(B) K 58 Remote K 22
<b>Teachers</b>	4.5	3	4	3	2	3	19.5
<b>Killam</b> No. of Students Class Size	50  32 (FD) 16-16  18(HD) In person	79 A 37 B 36 Remote 3(A) – 3(B)	67 A 28 B 26 Remote 6(A) – 7(B)	63 A 19 B 39 Remote 2(A) – 3(B)	67 A 41 B 20 Remote 3(A) – 3(B)	70 A 28 B 33 Remote 8(A) – 1(B)	<b>396</b> A 153 B 154 Remote 22(A) – 17(B) K 50
<b>Teachers</b>	3	4	4	3	3	4	21
<b>Wood End</b> No. of Students Class Size	25  12-13	40 A 18 B 20 Remote 2 (A)	52 A 16 B 30 Remote 2(A) - 4(B)	41 A 19 B 20 Remote 2(B)	44 A 23 B 21 Remote 0	45 A 22 B 20 Remote 3(B)	<b>247</b> A 98 B 111 Remote 4(A) – 9(B) K 25
<b>Teachers</b>	2	2	3	2	2	2	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>1741</b>
<b>Total Teachers</b>	15.5	16	17	14	13	16	<b>91.5</b>

12.15.20



**READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**2020-2021 School Year - COHORTS**

								Six	Seven	Eight	Total					
Coolidge								143/ 24	131/ 21	125/ 21	<b>399</b>					
Cohort A								46	127	39	<b>212</b>					
Cohort B								90		79	<b>169</b>					
Remote A								2	4	5	<b>11</b>					
Remote B								5		2	<b>7</b>					
Parker								176/ 22	157/ 20	162/ 20	<b>495</b>					
Cohort A								82	75	75	<b>232</b>					
Cohort B								79	63	71	<b>213</b>					
Remote A								6	10	12	<b>28</b>					
Remote B								9	9	4	<b>22</b>					
Total Middle								319	288	287	<b>894</b>					
												Nine	Ten	Eleven	Twelve	Total
RMHS												299	302	292	331	<b>1224</b>
Cohort A												250	244			<b>494</b>
Cohort B														238	279	<b>517</b>
Remote A												49	58			<b>107</b>
Remote B														54	52	<b>106</b>
Secondary Total																

# READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT AND CLASS SIZE 2021-2022 PROJECTIONS

*Please note: The class assignments and grade configurations may change based on enrollment. Kindergarten enrollment is based on current kindergarten registrations and projected RISE special education program assignments to kindergarten.*

	<b>K (FD)</b>	<b>K (1/2 Day)</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Barrows</b> No. of Students Class Size	50	4	54
<b>Teachers</b>			
<b>Birch Meadow</b> No. of Students Class Size	44	6	50
<b>Teachers</b>			
<b>Eaton</b> No. of Students Class Size	52	9	61
<b>Teachers</b>			
<b>Killam</b> No. of Students Class Size	65	7	72
<b>Teachers</b>			
<b>Wood End</b> No. of Students Class Size	36	2	37
<b>Total</b>	247	28	275
<b>Teachers</b>			

12.10.20

John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Christine M. Kelley  
Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching

82 Oakland Road  
Reading, MA 01867  
Phone: 781-944-5800  
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Gail S. Dowd, CPA  
Chief Financial Officer

Jennifer A. Stys, Ed.D.  
Director of Student Services

Kerry M. Meisinger, J.D.  
Human Resources Director

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee

FROM: John F. Doherty, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: December 15, 2020

TOPIC: RMHS/Guidance Update and Student Handbook Review

At our meeting on Thursday evening RMHS principal Kate Boynton and RMHS Guidance Director Lynna Williams will provide updates from the Guidance Department and work done on the student handbook since the School Committee approved it initially in September.

If you have any questions, please contact me.



# Reading Memorial High School

## MEMO

To: Dr. John Doherty, Superintendent  
From: Ms. Kathleen Boynton, Principal  
Date: December 14, 2020  
Re: Changes to the 2020-21 Student Handbook Part 2

### Overview:

The RMHS School Council met in November and December and discussed the first several sections of the RMHS handbook. School Council unanimously agreed to the following changes to the Handbook which were also approved by the RMHS faculty during the 2019-2020 academic year and confirmed again this school year. The changes during this revision step occurred in the Academic Section of the Handbook. Below are outlined changes made along with the rationale. School Council will continue to meet over the course of the year and will propose additional changes in the spring and summer which will fully complete the Handbook revision process.

Section/Topic	Proposed Change	Rationale
Section III part B Bell Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Replace 2020-21 Bell Schedule with updated one that has the new Friday schedule</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Friday schedule changed and needed to be updated</li></ul>
Section III part C. Graduation and Promotion Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RMHS will now issue credits at the end of the academic year, not the end of the semester</li><li>• We will still have quarter, midterm and semester grades, but not the issuing of</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This will streamline the transcript for college applications as it is easier for them to read</li><li>• By awarding credit by semester, many students who have failed first quarter or first semester give up on second</li></ul>

	credits until the end of the year or course	<p>quarter or semester because of the loss of credit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full year awarding of credits, keeps students engaged in their classes with the possibility of passing the year even if they have an off quarter</li> <li>• There is no flexibility right now for students with significant medical issues to medically waive a quarter to help them get back on track</li> <li>• The current transcript is confusing to colleges and also to DESE for state reporting (we already have to convert our semester-based reporting to year end for the DESE reports)</li> </ul>
Section III part F Grading System and Associated Honors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep A+ on the transcript but weight A and A+ the same (consistent with UMass GPA formula)</li> <li>• Remove F- as a grade category</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This adjustment results in a more accurate GPA</li> <li>• F- seems overly punitive to students who have already failed a class</li> <li>• Guidance and Administration have access to the course average, which is the determining factor for summer school so F- is not really needed</li> <li>• Colleges and other organizations are confused by F-</li> </ul>

<p>Section III part H Weighted GPA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop calculating and communicating decile and class rank</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class rank and deciles produce unnecessary stress and competition among students</li> <li>• Not calculating and communicating rank or decile has proven to be a benefit for students in the college admissions process</li> <li>• The RMHS Guidance department surveyed over 70 colleges last year and the majority said most high schools do not report class rank or decile rank anymore and colleges do not consider it an important factor in admissions</li> <li>• The Guidance department surveyed 27 other neighboring high schools in Massachusetts and 21 out of the 27 do not provide any type of rank. The remaining schools are moving to eliminating it in the next year or two</li> </ul>
<p>Section III part H Weighted GPA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RMHS will transition to using the UMASS GPA Calculation formula that is widely used among state schools and other 4-year colleges around the nation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our current GPA formula is confusing</li> <li>• Our current GPA formula is discriminatory towards students in lower level classes by taking .3 points away</li> <li>• Colleges do their own GPA calculations</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will have a more accurate GPA using the UMass formula</li> </ul>
Multiple Sections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change “Parent” to Parent/Guardian”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This edit was made throughout the document to create consistency and inclusive terminology</li> </ul>

# **Student Handbook 2020-2021**



## **Reading Memorial High School**

62 Oakland Road  
Reading, Massachusetts 01867  
Phone: (781) 944-8200  
Fax: (781) 942-5435  
Ms. Kathleen Boynton, Principal

<https://www.reading.k12.ma.us/memorial/>

"We believe our work centers on the pursuit of knowledge and the cultivation of intellectual, emotional and physical well-being."

*Paper copies are available for view in the Main Office*



September, 2020

Dear Members of the Reading Memorial High School Community,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year. This year will be different than any other school year we have experienced as we navigate through the Covid-19 pandemic. Teaching and learning will happen in new and unfamiliar ways as we transition in and out of remote and hybrid models of education. This handbook includes helpful information, policies, and procedures about our high school that reflect the traditional brick and mortar in school experience. It also includes our behavioral expectations for students, which is designed to keep all members of our high school community safe and secure that are also applicable to the virtual classroom. As part of our Core Values and Beliefs, we expect all RMHS students to act with **respect** towards all members of the school community, take **responsibility** for their actions, **persevere** through challenges and exhibit **scholarship** in their studies. RMHS is a great place. Here, we value our students and see them as individuals. However, we must all be responsible and contribute to a culture of respect, safety, and tolerance. Know that upon entering and exiting this building you represent Reading Memorial High School, a school rich in tradition yet unafraid to embrace change.

It is important that all students feel safe to learn and grow academically, socially, and personally. As you plan for the upcoming year, I encourage you to take advantage of opportunities, as they are plentiful here at the high school. The rules, as outlined in this handbook, are in place to make your high school experience a safe one. Know that each year is a fresh start for our students. Take advantage of that fresh start. I look forward to getting to know the students of Reading Memorial High School. Thank you in advance for your help in keeping our school a safe place to achieve inside and outside of the classroom.

With Respect,

Kathleen M. Boynton  
Principal

## **Handbook Disclaimer**

The laws, School Committee policies, and school rules stated in this handbook are intended to ensure the safe, orderly, and educationally sound operation of Reading Memorial High School. In addition to these written provisions, there may be times where, to further insure the safe, orderly, and educationally sound operation of the school, the school administration may enforce a standard of conduct upon students that furthers this end. Furthermore, the school administration has the right to enforce any law, ordinance, or school committee policy not written in this handbook. If a new law or ordinance, or school committee policy is passed, it supersedes current rules. In addition, please also note that there have been many changes in our school due to COVID-19. Not all changes may be reflected in this handbook. Further information on changes regarding health and safety may be found in the [Reading Public Schools Fall Reopening Plan](#).

The Reading Public Schools strives to provide a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment in which all students can thrive and succeed in its schools. The Reading Public Schools prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation and ensures that all students have equal rights of access and equal enjoyment of the opportunities, advantages, privileges, and courses of study.

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# I. RMHS Core Values and Beliefs

The primary goal of Reading Memorial High School is the preparation of students to be literate, skilled, creative, healthy, competent and informed citizens-appreciative of the arts; capable of critical thinking and problem-solving; and able to function intellectually, emotionally and physically within a complex, interdependent and pluralistic world.

The Core Values that guide all members of the RMHS Community and all of our actions and decisions are:

- RESPECT
- RESPONSIBILITY
- PERSEVERANCE
- SCHOLARSHIP

As educators, we believe our work centers on the pursuit of knowledge and the cultivation of intellectual, emotional and physical well-being. We help our students enhance their ability to think by teaching the symbols and concepts through which thought, and creativity take place, and by developing the skills for using those symbols and concepts. The uses of intelligence with which we are concerned include critical thinking, observing, information gathering, processing and evaluating, listening, logic, computation, oral and written communication, and the application of these skills in decision-making and problem solving. We help our students by imparting knowledge of their bodies and providing opportunities for physical activity.

We believe that a positive learning community:

- is safe, caring, consistent, fair, flexible, open and democratic.
- meets the needs of all students through educational programs that promote individual fulfillment in a variety of ways as well as encompasses the complex interdependence of the world and the community.
- achieves educational excellence in an environment which promotes the free and open exchange of ideas; encourages mutual respect, creative expression and problem-solving skills; fosters human dignity; and recognizes and respects racial, ethnic, cultural and sexual differences.
- promotes individuality; nurtures self-esteem, health and well-being; and encourages participation in a democratic society.

We believe that the education of our young people is the shared responsibility of the school, student, family and community.

## II. Expectations for Student Learning

- **Students will Act Effectively and Responsibly**
  - Students will use sound reasoning to defend their own actions, thoughts and decisions.
  - Students will demonstrate an understanding of the need to act responsibly and ethically in making life decisions related to economics, civics and health related behaviors
  - Students' actions and thoughts will demonstrate an awareness of their place as citizens in a global society.
  
- **Students will Search for Knowledge and Understanding**
  - Students will pursue learning with persistence as demonstrated through reading, comprehension, and interpretation in an effort to effectively access information and deepen their understanding and quality of their work.
  - Students will demonstrate cultural literacy.
  
- **Students will Communicate with Clarity**
  - Students will communicate clearly and effectively in written form.
  - Students will effectively articulate in oral form a stand on issues and support their position with credible information and cogent arguments.
  - Students will use technology to communicate responsibly and effectively.
  
- **Students will Think Creatively and Critically**
  - Students will demonstrate flexibility in his/her thinking by considering multiple solutions to a problem.
  - Students will work collaboratively with team members to produce/create complex, well-conceived answers and solutions.

# III. Academic Information

## A. 2020-2021 School Year Calendar

Approved by School Committee  
Date: 8.06.20

JULY						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	ESY	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

AUGUST						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	ESY	7	8
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	T					

SEPTEMBER						
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6	H	T	T	T	T	12
13	T	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

OCTOBER						
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				1	2	3
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11	H	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
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15	16	17	18	19	C	21
22	23	24	1/2	H	V	28
29	30					

DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	V	H	26
27	V	V	V	V		

H	Holiday
T	Staff Training Day-No School for Students
1/2	PreK-12 Early Release (All released at 11:00 AM)
R	Remote Learning Day
V	Vacation
	Cohort A/Grade 9/10 In Person
	Cohort B/Grade 11/12 In Person



### Reading Public Schools 2020-2021 SCHOOL CALENDAR

July 6 Extended School Year Begins  
August 6 Extended School Year Ends  
August 31 Teacher In-Service Day  
September 1-4 Teacher In-Service  
September 7 Labor Day-No School  
September 8-11 Teacher In-Service Day  
September 14 Teacher In-Service Day  
September 15 First Day of School - Students  
September 15-18 Orientation Week/Kindergarten Screening  
September 18 Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown  
September 19 Rosh Hashanah  
September 20 2nd Day of Rosh Hashanah  
September 27/28 Yom Kippur- Begins at sundown on the 27th  
October 9 Teacher In-Service Day  
October 12 Columbus Day- No School  
November 3 Election Day-Remote Learning Day  
November 11 Veteran's Day-No School  
November 20 Teacher In-Service/Cont. Day  
November 25 Grade PreK-12 Early Release (11:00 a.m.)  
November 26-27 Thanksgiving Recess  
December 10 Hanukkah begins at sundown  
December 24-31 Holiday Recess  
December 25 Christmas Day  
December 26 Kwanzaa  
January 1 New Year's Day- No School  
January 4 School Resumes  
January 15 PreK-12 Early Release  
January 18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day-No School  
February 1 1/2 day K Switch/Start of 2nd semester - HS & MS  
February 5 Chinese New Year  
February 15-20 President's Day/Winter Recess-No School  
March 19 Teacher In-Service Day  
March 28 Palm Sunday; Passover begins at Sundown on March 27th  
April 2 Good Friday  
April 4 Easter  
April 12 Ramadan begins at Sundown  
April 19 Patriots Day/Spring Recess-No School  
April 25 Orthodox Palm Sunday  
May 2 Orthodox Easter  
May 14 Eid al-Fitr  
May 28 Teacher In-Service Day (tent)  
May 31 Memorial Day-No School  
June 6 RMHS Graduation  
June 17 Last Day of School, PreK-12 Early Release (11:00 a.m.)

JANUARY						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
						2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

FEBRUARY						
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28						

MARCH						
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28	29	30	31			

APRIL						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

MAY						
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	T	29
30	H					

JUNE						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
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13	14	15	16	1/2	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

**Bold Faced Holidays** are designated as major non-national religious holidays as defined in School Committee Policy IMDA. No one time events, athletic competitions, auditions, tests, quizzes are scheduled for these days. Long term assignments will not be due on the day of or the day after one of these holidays.



## B. RMHS Bell Schedule 2020-21

HYBRID SCHEDULE						
Time	Day 1 (Monday)	Day 2 (Tuesday)	Day 1 (Wednesday)	Day 2 (Thursday)	TIME	Friday-Remote Schedule:AM Synchronous Classes
8:30-8:40	Community Time (10) - SEL activities both In person and remote	Community Time (10) - SEL activities both In person and remote	Community Time (10) - SEL activities both In person and remote	Community Time (10) - SEL activities both In person and remote	8:30-9:00	A Block (30)
8:40-10:00	A (80)	Flex (80)	A (80)	Flex (80)	9:05-9:35	B Block (30)
10:00-10:08	Passing Time (8)	Passing Time (8)	Passing Time (8)	Passing Time (8)	9:40-10:10	C Block (30)
10:08-11:28	B (80)	E (80)	B (80)	E (80)	10:15-10:45	D Block (30)
11:28-11:36	Passing Time (8)	Passing Time (8)	Passing Time (8)	Passing Time (8)	10:50-11:20	E Block (30)
11:36-1:36	C (80)	F (80)	C (80)	F (80)	11:25-11:55	F Block (30)
	Lunch Block: C Block Day 1 / F Block Day 2 - See Below for Lunch Schedule				12:00-12:30	G Block (30)
1:36-1:44	Passing time	Passing Time	Passing Time	Passing Time	12:30-1:00	Lunch
1:44-3:04	D (80)	G (80)	D (80)	G (80)	PM-Asynchronous for Students	
						WIN Block (What I Need) Asynchronous for students - this is time students are expected to complete missing work, study guides/reviews

## C. Graduation and Promotion Requirements

Each student who successfully passes all of the required courses listed in the table below, in addition to receiving passing scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Subject Tests in English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science will earn a diploma from Reading Memorial High School. Students are enrolled in major academic courses based on teacher, counselor, and parent/guardian recommendations.

English: 4 years	Math: 3 years
Science: 3 years	Social Studies: 3 years
Foreign Language: 2 years	Business/Technology: 1 year or 2 semesters
Physical Education: 4 Semesters	Health Issues: 1 Semester (11th grade)
Intro to Health: 1 Semester (9th grade)	Fine and Performing Arts: 1 year or 2 Semesters

- The [MassCore](#) strongly recommends 4 years of math for all students

All students must pass 90 credits in order to graduate from Reading Memorial High School. Also, Seniors must pass a minimum of 19 credits during their senior year.

Course credit is awarded on a yearly basis. Semester 1 includes Term 1 and 2 and the mid-year assessment. Semester 2 includes Terms 3 and 4 and the end of year assessment. Only the final course grade will appear on the transcript.

- All students must carry between 23-25 credits per year, unless approved and signed off by the administration.
- 1 credit course - meets 3 or fewer times a cycle for a semester
- 2 credit course - meets 4 or more times a cycle for a semester

<b>CREDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR PROMOTION AND GRADUATION</b>	
End of Grade 9	18 Credits
End of Grade 10	40 Credits
End of Grade 11	65 Credits
End of Grade 12	90 Credits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students must pass a minimum of 19 credits during senior year</i></li> </ul>	

## D. Course Selection Process

The Program of Studies is posted on the RMHS webpage and updated every year. The Program includes a description of every course to be offered in the next academic year. Students are required to make their first choices and alternates on the course selection sheets provided and then to have these selections signed off by teachers in the appropriate department as well as by a parent/guardian. In the event that a student does not submit a course selection sheet, a schedule of courses will be devised by the student's guidance counselor working in cooperation with an assistant principal.

## E. Course Changes

It is recommended that students choose courses carefully with the advice of their current teachers and counselors. If a student finds a course difficult, s/he may request to transfer to a more appropriate level of the same course. Schedule changes should be made by the counselor during the first week of each semester. After that, the process for requesting a course change is as follows:

### ***Student or parent/guardian-initiated request***

- A change request should be directed to the student's guidance counselor who will discuss the request with the student and outline the process to be followed.

- The student and parent/guardian will begin the process by discussing the change request with the classroom teacher. Efforts to be successful in the course will be considered. Meeting with the teacher of the course for extra help and completion of assigned work are evidence of effort
- The department chair will approve the change request.
- The counselor will make the schedule change and inform the new teacher receiving the student of the reason for the change.
- The student must continue to attend the originally scheduled course until s/he is notified that the schedule change has been finalized by the guidance counselor and, if necessary, the appropriate administrator.
- The parent/guardian will be made aware when a schedule is changed.

***Teacher, counselor or administrator-initiated request***

- The change request should be directed to the appropriate guidance counselor.
- The teacher or administrator will discuss the change request with the student and parent/guardian.
- The department chair will approve the change request.
- The counselor will make the schedule change and inform the new teacher receiving the student of the reason for the change
- The parent/guardian will be made aware when a schedule is changed.

Students wishing to drop a year-long course must seek permission from the assistant principal. A grade of “WF” will be assigned to any course that is dropped after the third week.

## F. Grading System and Associated Honors

The permanent transcript includes all end of year course grades. Transcripts sent as part of the student’s college application process report only the final grades for grades 9-11. Transcripts sent during senior year also include Quarter 1 and/or Semester 1. Quarter 3 senior year grades are sent as needed.

**Report Card Grade Scale**

A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76

C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	0-59
P	Pass
N	No Credit
I	Incomplete *
X	Medical Excuse
W	Withdrawn
WF	Withdrawn and failure - no credit given

- **Note on Incomplete Grades:** Work is incomplete because of illness or other verified reason. Incompletes must be made up within two weeks of the end of the quarter. Those not made up within two weeks may be considered failures. A student is not eligible for the honor roll until all work is made up.
- **Summer School Eligibility:** Students who receive a failing grade of 50-59 are eligible to take summer school to make up course credits. Students who receive a failing grade below a 50 (0-49) must retake the failed course the following school year.

## G. Honor Roll

Honor Roll is computed at the end of each quarter. Honor Roll is calculated in the following way:

- Quarterly grades are the basis of honor roll.
- There must be a minimum of 5 graded courses.
- There can be no "Incompletes."

HIGH HONOR ROLL	HONOR ROLL
All grades of A- and above	All grades of B- and above

## H. Weighted Grade Point Average

RMHS will no longer be communicating Class Rank or Deciles on student transcripts beginning with the class of 2021. Both Weighted and Unweighted GPA will be communicated on the student's official transcript. RMHS has adopted the University of Massachusetts Weighted GPA

Scale which will be implemented beginning in March of 2021 for the graduating classes of 2022, 2023 and 2024 and all subsequent graduating classes.

### **Unweighted Grade Point Average**

The Unweighted Grade Point Average (GPA) includes all graded courses taken at RMHS and is based on a 4.0 scale. Unweighted GPA will also be reported on transcripts.

### **Weighted Grade Point Average / Weighting Scale**

- Only courses taken during the school day at RMHS are included in the calculation of GPA. Credit towards graduation may be awarded for courses taken at other high schools, summer school, night school, colleges, etc., but those courses are NOT included in the calculation of GPA.
- Exceptions may be made for a student who has exhausted a sequential program of courses offered at RMHS.
- The GPA calculation is cumulative and year end grades for the calculation.
- Courses taken on a Pass/Fail basis will be awarded credits but are not included in the calculation of cumulative Grade Point Average.
- Most elective courses (such as those in business, art, music, and PE/wellness) are not leveled. They will therefore be assigned no weight and will not be included in the calculation of the Weighted Grade Point Average.
- There are multiple levels of weighting given to classes in the English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Foreign Language and Science Departments as well as in Accounting 1, Honors Accounting, and AP Art. Courses are weighted according to their level of rigor. For example, an Advanced Placement course carries a higher value than a College Preparatory course. Course levels and corresponding weighting are as follows:

Grade	College Preparatory		Honors		AP	
	Unweighted	Weighted	Unweighted	Weighted	Unweighted	Weighted
A/A+	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.5	4.0	5.0
A-	3.7	3.7	3.7	4.2	3.7	4.7
B+	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.8	3.3	4.3
B	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.0	4.0
B-	2.7	2.7	2.7	3.2	2.7	3.7
C+	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.8	2.3	3.3
C	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.0	3.0
C-	1.7	1.7	1.7	2.2	1.7	2.7

D+	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.8	1.3	2.3
D	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	2.0
D-	.7	.7	.7	1.2	.7	1.7
F	0	0	0	0	0	0

## I. Academic Honors Speakers for Graduation

The Valedictorian and Salutatorian are named at the end of third quarter or the beginning of fourth quarter senior year based on their weighted cumulative GPA. At a minimum, a student must be enrolled as a full-time student at RMHS throughout both junior and senior year to be eligible for Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

## J. Grade Reporting/Report Cards

Students, parents and/or guardians can access student grades via their log-in to plusportals at any time. Grades will be updated via student's plusportals account at least four times during each quarter (roughly every 2-3 weeks). Mid-quarter grades and quarterly report cards are posted online for all students. Year-end report cards will be sent electronically at the start of the summer. Paper copies are available upon request.

## K. Mid-Year and Final Exams

- Exams are scheduled for 4 days at the end of each semester (in January and in June). Two exams are scheduled per day.
- Semester-length courses generally have a 2 hour exam which counts for 20% of the student's semester grade. In courses where an exam may be inappropriate, an alternative evaluative activity is scheduled. In courses that meet every other day, appropriate assessments are scheduled.
- Students are not required to be in school except when they have a scheduled exam.
- The usual school support services are available to students during exam days.
- For the 2020-2021 Academic Year, there will be no separate mid-year or final exam schedule due to the 80 minute block scheduling. Teachers may choose to use class time to administer an exam or may elect to assign an alternative assessment in lieu of a traditional exam.

### Senior Exam Exemption Guidelines

Seniors who earn an average of at least a B through the end of 3rd quarter (83-86), and have been absent less than 6 days during second semester will be exempt from taking the final assessment.

- The only absences that will be considered excused for the purposes of exam exemption include: illnesses documented by a physician, bereavement, field trips, school-

sponsored exam (for example, AP exam) or extreme personal circumstances if verified and approved by administration.

## L. National Honor Society

Selection to the RMHS Chapter of National Honor Society conforms to the guidelines set by the National Council. Eligible students are invited to provide information to the RMHS Faculty Council to support their candidacy for membership. The selection process is open to juniors and seniors who meet the following criteria:

- The student must maintain a weighted GPA of 3.5. The average is calculated based upon grades in five college preparatory departments: English, Math, Social Studies, Science and Foreign Language. However, low grades in subjects not included in the GPA will be considered a character issue to be considered by the Faculty Council.
- The student must have devoted a minimum of 40 hours during the past year to community service. Service must be documented and verified by a supervising adult.
- The student must have fulfilled a minimum of 2 significant leadership roles in school or community activities since starting high school. Leadership must be documented and verified by a supervising adult.
- The student must be considered of outstanding character. A letter of reference attesting to the student's character is required. (Outstanding character is demonstrated by: honesty, integrity, responsibility, respectfulness, fairness, citizenship, and behavior consistent with school rules and public law.)
- Students meeting the scholastic criterion for membership are asked to submit a portfolio showing that they fulfill the other three criteria. Teachers are given a chance to submit their observations about how well individual students meet the criteria. The National Honor Society Faculty Council then selects those students who will be inducted into the society. The portfolio requires a statement by the student regarding any discipline issues beyond the classroom that involve the high school administration or police since the start of high school. Any violation of school rules or public law substantial enough to result in suspension from school will be grounds for not considering a student for selection as a member until at least 12 calendar months have passed.

Once selected, members are expected to continue to meet the selection criteria. Each member must:

- Maintain a 3.5 GPA
- Volunteer at least 20 hours of service every 6 months
- Fulfill at least one significant leadership role each year
- Participate in RMHS chapter activities
- Continue to demonstrate good character.

A member's records will be reviewed at the start of each semester. Not meeting the above standards will leave the member subject to the possibility of probation for a semester. Should non-compliance extend into another semester, the member will be considered for dismissal from the Society and a hearing will be scheduled. Any report of flagrant violation of either school rules or public law by a member will cause the Faculty Council to:

- Review the report.
- Hear the member's account of the situation.
- Determine whether probation, dismissal, or no action is merited.

## **TIMELINE FOR POTENTIAL NHS MEMBERS**

1. At the end of sophomore year, students who have a GPA of 3.45 or above are invited to a meeting to learn about the criteria for selection to NHS.
2. At the end of first semester, juniors who meet the academic eligibility requirements are notified of a meeting explaining the selection process with instructions and the deadline for submitting a portfolio, usually due by mid-March. The induction ceremony is held in May.
3. In September, seniors who are academically eligible are notified of the opportunity to submit a portfolio in time for a fall induction ceremony.

### **Contact Information:**

Information about the selection process and downloadable forms are available online. Contact the NHS faculty advisors, Ms. Heather Lombardo or Ms. HollyBeth Murphy for more information.

## **M. Century Club**

The Century Club is an annual recognition of academically outstanding students in the high school. All courses are included in the selection of Century Club members. There is no application process. To be eligible a student must have completed a minimum of 10 credits (freshmen 11 credits) during each of the first three-quarters of the current school year. Students with I (Incomplete) grades or with more than two effort marks of 3 or 4 during the current year will not be eligible. The eligible students with the highest unweighted grade-point average are automatically selected: 40 seniors, 30 juniors, 20 sophomores, and 10 freshmen. Students selected are inducted into the Century Club as a part of the high school's annual Awards celebration at the end of the year.

## **N. Summer School**

While we hope for all of our students to be as successful as they can be, some students benefit from additional instruction and reinforcement during the summer months. Summer school is recommended for students who have failed required courses but have earned a semester average higher than or equal to a 50% (F). Students whose average is 49% or lower must repeat the course and are not eligible for summer school. Guidance has information on approved summer school options at RMHS and other sites.

- Credit is only awarded for courses previously failed at RMHS.
- The original grade and the summer school grade appear on the student's transcript.
- Summer school grades have no effect on weighted GPA
- All make-up work done during the summer vacation shall be subject to evaluation within two weeks after the fall opening of school.

## **O. Financial Obligations**

Students who owe the Reading Public Schools money for lost or damaged books, for vandalism damage, or for another reason will be expected to pay as promptly as possible. The parent/guardian(s) of students owing bills will be notified in writing via e-mail. All outstanding financial obligations must be resolved before the next season in order for students to participate in extra-curricular activities and athletics. Students will be able to participate in the graduation ceremony only after any outstanding financial obligations have been resolved. Families for whom



athletic and/ or co-curricular activities user fees present a hardship may apply for fee waivers through the Federal Free and Reduced Meals (FFRM) program. Please see the Financial Assistance Information document on the RMHS web page. Applications for the FFRM are found online under Food Services. .

User fees are payable each season at the Athletic/Student Activities Department, Room 220. Checks are payable to: **Town of Reading**. The online payment system [ESchool](#) is the preferred method of payment. The fee is due by the first week of each season.

### **Library Books and Materials**

Students who fail to return library materials can use materials in the library, but will not be permitted to sign-out overnight books or materials until they have settled their debts.

### **Other Material or Equipment**

Students who lose equipment that has been issued or loaned to them, such as gym locks, will not be issued replacements until they have settled their debts.

### **Damaged Property**

Students who owe money for breakage due to negligence or vandalism will be expected to make restitution. If restitution as a single payment is not possible, the student and the building principal will make an agreement on how and when restitution will be made.

## **P. Student Records**

The Reading Public Schools complies with applicable federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to Student Records. Those laws and regulations are designed to ensure a parent/guardian's and eligible student's rights to access, inspect, and to request amendment of the child's student record.

The Massachusetts Student Record regulations and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) apply to educational records maintained by a school on a student in a manner such that he or she may be individually identified. The regulations divide the record into the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript includes only the minimum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress. This information includes name, address, course titles, grades, credits, and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school system for at least sixty (60) years after the student leaves the system.

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school system about the student. This may include such things as standardized test results, class rank, school sponsored extracurricular activities, and evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons. The temporary record is destroyed no later than seven (7) years after the student leaves the school system.

The following is a summary of major parent/guardian and student rights regarding their student records:

**Inspection of Record:** A parent/guardian, or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least fourteen (14) years old, has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent/guardian or student within ten (10)

days of the request, unless the parent/guardian or student consents to a delay. In the event the parent/guardian/student requests copies of a student record, the District may charge the parent/guardian(s)/student for said copies at the District rate.

**Confidentiality of Record:** With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the parent/guardian, student, and authorized school personnel are allowed to have access to information in the student record without specific, informed, written consent of the parent/guardian or the student.

**Amendment of Record:** The parent/guardian and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, with limited exception under state and federal law, the parent/guardian and student have the right to request that information of the record be amended or deleted. The parent/guardian and student have a right to a conference with the school principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent/guardian and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to higher authorities in the school system.

**Directory Information:** Federal law requires that the District release the names, addresses and telephone listings of students to military recruiters, institutions of higher education and businesses with which the Reading Public Schools are contracted to conduct business upon request for recruitment and scholarship purposes without prior consent. In addition, the District may release the following directory information about a student without prior consent: a student's name, address, telephone listing, date of birth, major fields of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, post-high school plans and directory information such as homeroom assignments. However, in all instances, parent/guardian(s) may request that such directory information not be released without prior consent by notifying their school building office in writing by the end of September of each school year.

**Destruction of Records:** The regulations require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, be destroyed a certain period of time after the student leaves the school system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. Before any such information may be destroyed, the parent/guardian and student must be notified, and have an opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before its destruction.

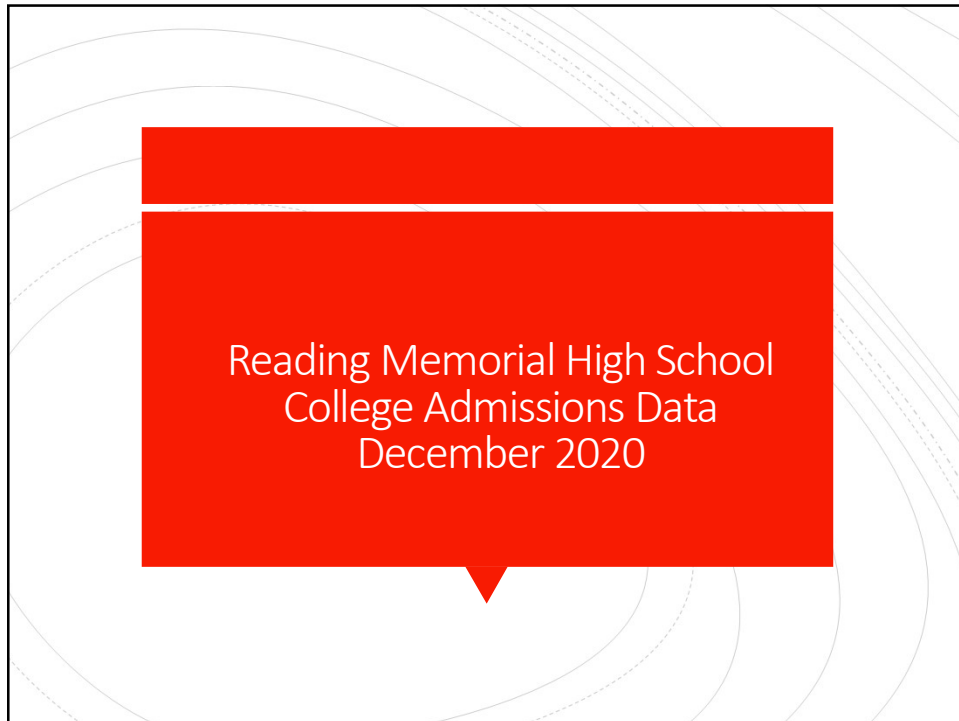
**Transfer of Records:** It is the practice of the Reading Public Schools to forward the student record of any student who seeks or intends to enroll, or already has enrolled in another public school district, if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. The parent/guardian or eligible student has the right to receive a copy of the school record that is forwarded to the new school.

**Non-Custodial Parents:** Unless there is a court order to the contrary, a non-custodial parent (parent without physical custody of the student) of any public school student has the right, subject to certain procedures, to receive information regarding the student's achievements, involvement, behavior, etc. A non-custodial parent who wishes to have this information shall submit a written request annually to the child's school principal. Upon receipt of such a request,

the principal shall send written notification to the custodial parent by certified and first class mail that the records and information will be provided to the non-custodial parent in twenty-one (21) calendar days unless the custodial parent provides documentation of the non-custodial parent's ineligibility to access such information. In all cases where school records are provided to a non-custodial parent, the electronic and postal address and other contact information for the custodial parent shall be removed from the records provided. Any such records provided to the non-custodial parent shall be marked to indicate that they may not be used to enroll the student in another school. Upon receipt of a court order that prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school will notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent. M.G.L. c.71, §34H, 603 CMR 23.07.

**Third Party Access:** Authorized school personnel, to include: (a) school administrators, teachers, counselors and other professionals who are employed by the school committee or who are providing services to the student under an agreement between the school committee and a service provider, and who are working directly with the student in an administrative, teaching, counseling, and/or diagnostic capacity; (b) administrative office staff and clerical personnel, employed by the school committee or under a school committee service contract, and whose duties require them to have access to student records for purposes of processing information for the student record; and (c) the Evaluation Team which evaluates a student, shall have access to the student record of students to whom they are providing services, when such access is required in the performance of their official duties. The consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student shall not be necessary.

**Complaints:** A parent or eligible student has a right to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-5901, (202) 260-3887 or with the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, 781-338-3300. If you have any questions regarding this notice, or would like more information and/or a copy of the Massachusetts Department of Education Student Record Regulations, please contact the building principal.



1

Our beliefs

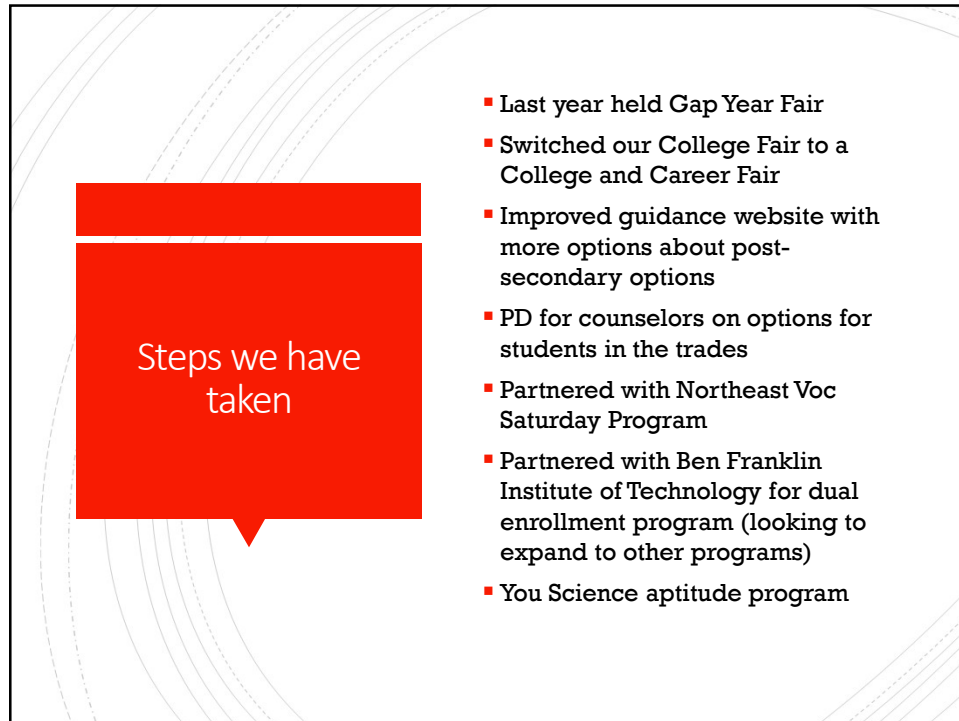
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**Every student is an individual. We want to celebrate and honor each of their differences as it applies to post-secondary planning.**

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**College is one of the many options after graduation. It is not the only one and it is not always the best option for every student.**

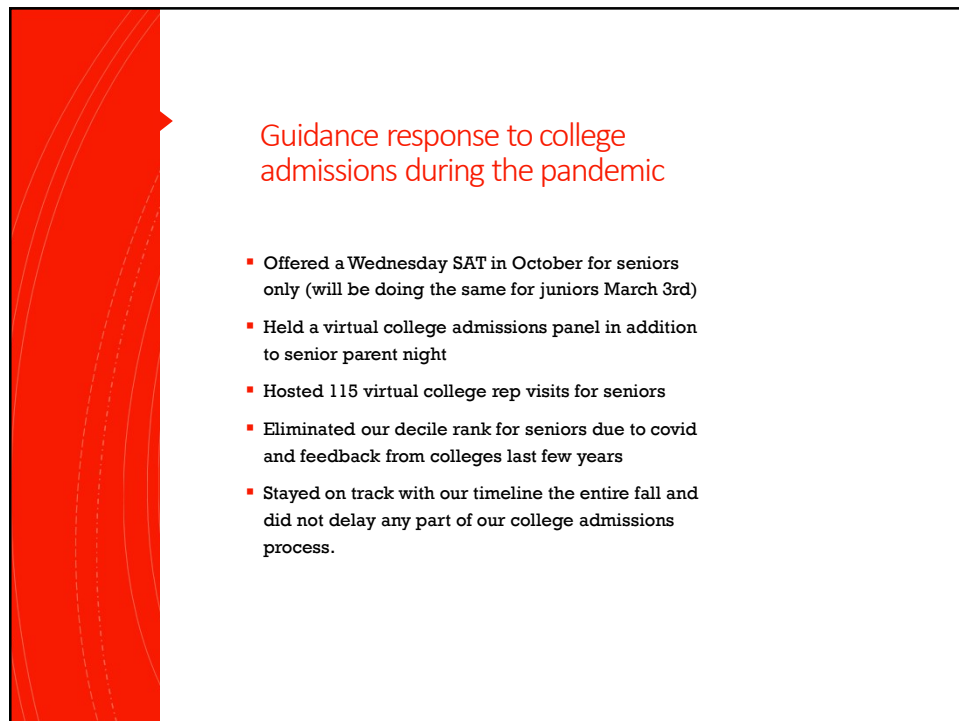
2



Steps we have taken

- Last year held Gap Year Fair
- Switched our College Fair to a College and Career Fair
- Improved guidance website with more options about post-secondary options
- PD for counselors on options for students in the trades
- Partnered with Northeast Voc Saturday Program
- Partnered with Ben Franklin Institute of Technology for dual enrollment program (looking to expand to other programs)
- You Science aptitude program

3



Guidance response to college admissions during the pandemic

- Offered a Wednesday SAT in October for seniors only (will be doing the same for juniors March 3rd)
- Held a virtual college admissions panel in addition to senior parent night
- Hosted 115 virtual college rep visits for seniors
- Eliminated our decile rank for seniors due to covid and feedback from colleges last few years
- Stayed on track with our timeline the entire fall and did not delay any part of our college admissions process.

4

	% Class of 2019	% Class of 2020
4 year	87.2	80
2 year	7.5	5
Prep/ technical	.9	3
Employed other	4.4	12

5

- 103 different 4 –year colleges
- 76% stay in New England
- 52% stay in Massachusetts
  - 47% attend State Schools (much higher compared to past years)
- 7% New York
- 17% outside of New England and New York

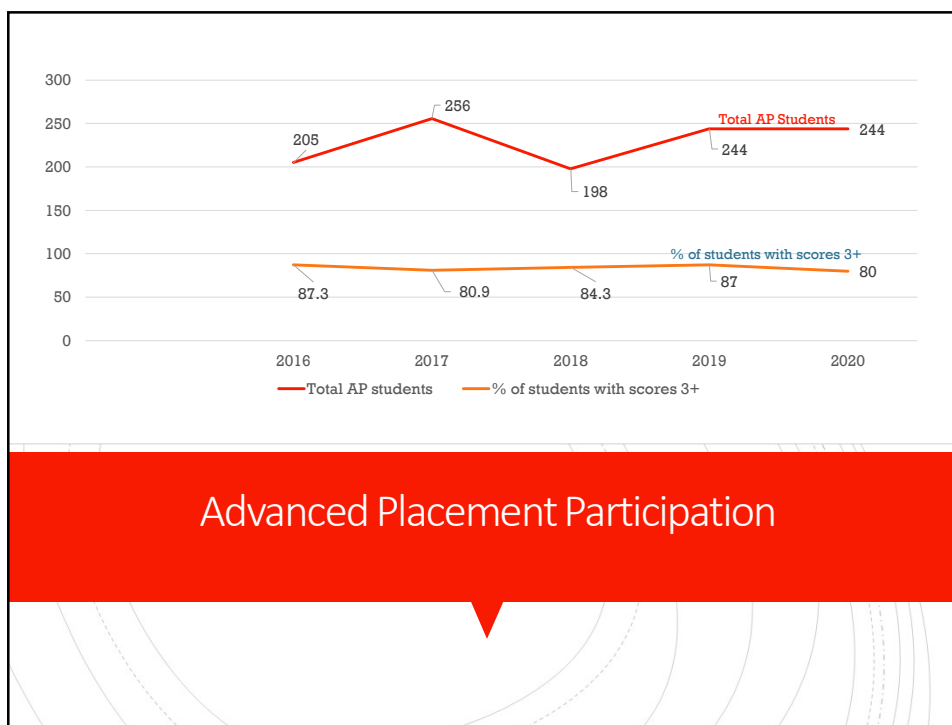
Where  
our  
students  
go.....

6

### SAT College Board Mean SAT's cores

	# of students in class	Critical Reading	Math
2018	269	590	595
2019	320	587	593
2020	329	584	588

7



8

## AP Scholars

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>AP Scholars</b> scored 3+ on 3 or more exams	21	34	21	31	29
<b>AP Scholars with Honors</b> - scored 3.25+ on all exams taken and scored 3+ on 4+ exams	17	17	08	14	15
<b>AP Scholars with Distinction</b> - scored 3.5 on all exams and scored 3 or higher on 5 or more exams	20	15	24	22	26



John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Christine M. Kelley  
Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching

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Gail S. Dowd, CPA  
Chief Financial Officer

Jennifer A. Stys, Ed.D.  
Director of Student Services

Kerry M. Meisinger, J.D.  
Human Resources Director

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee

FROM: John F. Doherty, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: December 15, 2020

TOPIC: Second Reading and Approval of Policy BDF – Advisory Committees to the School Committee

At our meeting on Thursday night, the committee will hold the second reading of Policy – Advisory Committees to the School Committee. I have incorporated the changes that were suggested during the first reading.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

The following general policies will govern the appointment and functioning of advisory committees to the School Committee other than the student advisory committee, which is governed by the terms of the Massachusetts General Laws.

1. Advisory committees may be created by the School Committee to serve as task forces for special purposes or to provide continuing consultation in a particular area of activity. However, there will be no standing overall advisory committee to the School Committee.
2. If an advisory committee is required by state or federal law, its composition and appointment will meet all the guidelines established for that particular type of committee.
3. The composition of task forces and any other advisory committees will be broadly representative and take into consideration the specific tasks assigned to the committee. Members of the professional staff may be appointed to the committee as members or consultants, as found desirable.
4. Appointments to such committees will be made by the Committee; appointment of staff members to such committees will be made by the School Committee upon recommendation of the Superintendent, designee, or School Committee Chair (if it is an advisory committee where the Superintendent is not a participant)-
5. Tenure of committee members will be one year only unless the member is reappointed.
6. Each committee will be clearly instructed as to:
  - a. The length of time each member is being asked to serve.
  - b. The assignment the School Committee wishes the committee to fulfill and the extent and limitations of its responsibilities.
  - c. The resources the School Committee will provide.
  - d. The approximate dates on which the School Committee wishes to receive major reports.
  - e. School Committee policies governing citizens, committees and the relationship of these committees to the School Committee as a whole, individual School Committee members, the Superintendent, and other members of the professional staff.
  - f. Responsibilities for the release of information to the press.
7. Recommendations of committees will be based upon research and fact.

8. The School Committee possesses certain legal powers and prerogatives that cannot be delegated or surrendered to others. Therefore, all recommendations of an advisory committee must be submitted to the School Committee.

9. Advisory committees created under this policy are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

The Committee will have the sole power to dissolve any of its advisory committees and will reserve the right to exercise this power at any time during the life of any committee.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [30A:18-25](#)

CROSS REF.: [JIB](#), Student Involvement in Decision-making

John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee

FROM: John F. Doherty, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: December 15, 2020

TOPIC: Student Opportunity Act Plan Approval

At our meeting on Thursday night, I will ask the School Committee to approve the Student Opportunity Act Plan. As you recall, at the meeting on April 16, 2020, the School Committee voted to indefinitely postpone the SOA feedback to such a time that we need to provide to the state. We have received guidance from the state that the application window has been reopened.

As part of the process, each school district is required to submit a three-year student opportunity plan. Prior to the submission of the plan I would like to give School Committee members the opportunity to give me any feedback on the plan. I have attached a copy of the plan for your review.

If you have any questions, please contact me.



# READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Student Opportunity Plans (School Years 2021-2023)

### [Abstract](#)

The Student Opportunity Act (SOA) implements the recommendations of the 2015 Foundation Budget Review Commission and includes other provisions to benefit our public schools. As part of the SOA, districts are required to submit three-year, evidence-based plans aimed at closing persistent disparities in achievement among student subgroups. The Reading Public Schools will be using the “short form” version of the plan (see below) because it will be receiving less than \$1.5 million in incremental Chapter 70 funds in FY21 budgets.

John Doherty  
Superintendent of Schools

## Reading Public Schools

### Student Opportunity Plans SY2021-2023

#### ➡ Commitment 1: Focusing on Student Subgroups

**Which student subgroups will require focused support to ensure all students achieve at high levels in school and are successfully prepared for life?**

As referenced in our District Improvement Plan, our theory of action states that If the Reading Public School District strategically allocates its human and financial resources to support high quality teaching, prioritizes a commitment to the academic, social, and emotional needs of our students, emphasizes the hiring and support of effective staff who have the capacity to collaboratively learn, thoughtfully analyzes measurements of school performance and provides differentiated support, then students will make effective progress and be appropriately challenged, graduating from high school ready for college, career, and life as contributing citizens in a global society. Additionally, in our analysis of our district data, our students with disabilities, High Needs, English Language Learner, African American, and Hispanic students are not as successful on the MCAS outcomes as their peers. Our analysis also shows that if a student is in more than one of these subgroups, the increased likelihood that they are not as successful as their peers.

#### ➡ Commitment 2: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Close Gaps

**What evidence-based programs will your district adopt, deepen, or continue to best support the closure of achievement and opportunity gaps? What resources will you allocate to these programs?**

The Reading Public Schools currently has the following three District Improvement Plan goals:

##### **Strategic Objective A-Redesigning School (2020-2021 School Year)**

Based on our work since March, 2020, the school district will build a foundation of teaching and learning practices, infrastructure changes, assessment practices, and operations efficiencies to prepare schools for current conditions and future challenges in a post-pandemic world. This strategic objective may be extended based on the trajectory of the pandemic.

##### **Strategic Objective B-Coherent Instructional Systems (2020-2023 School Years)**

Based on qualitative and quantitative data analysis, the school district will evaluate and refine standards-based instructional systems to meet the needs of all learners. Please note that state standardized data will look different and may be less available in a post pandemic world.

##### **Strategic Objective C-Supportive and Safe Learning Environment (2020-2023 School Years)**

Based on quantitative and qualitative data analysis, the school district will review our equity and social justice practices, analyze student social emotional growth, and refine systems of support to ensure a healthy and successful learning community while meeting the unique needs of students.

Moving forward in SY2021-SY2023, we will be focusing on the following evidence-based programs as defined by DESE:

1. **Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum (E and F).** Access to high-quality, standards-aligned curricular materials is a critical component of the student learning experience, with growing evidence that curricular materials matter particularly for those students experiencing opportunity and performance gaps.

A recent study of student assignments revealed that students spent the bulk of their time in school completing assignments that were not grade-appropriate, the result of materials that were not standards-aligned and expectations that were too low. The report observes: “Students spent more than 500 hours per school year on assignments that weren’t appropriate for their grade and with instruction that didn’t ask enough of them—the equivalent of six months of wasted class time in each core subject” ([TNTP, 2018](#)). In classrooms where students were given curriculum materials and assignments that were appropriate for their grade, the researchers concluded they gained nearly two months of additional learning compared to their peers ([TNTP, 2018](#)).

Additional evidence suggests that providing teachers with access to high-quality, standards-aligned curricular materials can prompt improvement in student outcomes, including effects that are: 1) comparable to over half a year of additional learning ([Kane et al., 2016](#)); 2) about 1.5 times the difference between an average teacher and one at the 75th percentile ([Chingos & Whitehurst, 2012](#)), and 3) greater than the difference between a new teacher and one with three years of experience ([Kane, 2016](#)). We need to ensure all students have access to grade-appropriate, standards-aligned curriculum.

As we align our curriculum to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, we will be focusing our curriculum purchases, professional development, and instructional practices in the following areas over the next three years:

- Continue implementation of a seven-year curriculum overview and examination cycle in all curriculum areas.
- Develop and implement a five-year special education program review cycle.
- Develop entrance and exit criteria for students entering district special education programs as appropriate.
- Completion of curriculum guides, PreK-12.
- Complete implementation of social studies curriculum standards.
- Review and pilot curriculum material in Grades K-6 mathematics.
- Commit resources to focused and aligned professional development opportunities on meeting the needs of diverse learners for administrators, teachers and support staff.
- Implement Universal Design for Learning across the school district.
- Work with TAP Committee to review new teacher evaluation rubrics for implementation in 2021-2022 school year.
- Select and implement a high-quality universal screening assessment for K-5 students in literacy and mathematics.
- Using DESE guidelines develop and implement a process on Early Literacy Screening.
- Implement revised elementary standards-based report card.
- Develop and implement a plan to improve literacy skills, K-5, with an emphasis on early literacy skills in Grades K-3.

<b>FY21 Budget Items</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Foundation Category</b>
Curriculum Material	\$194,050	Instructional Materials, Equipment, and Technology
Professional Development Expenses	\$ 92,921	Professional Development
Evidence Base Program Identified by DESE	Support Educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum	
SOA program categories:	Increased or improved professional development (E) and Purchase of curriculum materials and equipment	

	that are aligned with the statewide curriculum frameworks (F)
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2. **Research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades.** Researchers believe that it is possible for over 90 percent of children to become skillful readers by grade 3, if they receive appropriate instruction ([Castles, Rastle, and Nation, 2018](#); [Foorman, 2001](#)). Providing such instruction to meet the needs of all diverse learners in a school requires a suite of instructional practices that enable teachers to provide high-quality, differentiated instruction. These practices include: adoption of high-quality instructional materials, use of valid assessments, provision of interventions to students who need them, and ongoing professional development and learning for teachers.

### *High-Quality Program Components*

#### Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

A comprehensive approach to early literacy begins with adoption of high-quality literacy core curricular materials that have evidence (e.g., [CURATE](#), [EdReports](#)) demonstrating that they are aligned to standards and to research-based reading instruction ([Kane et al., 2016](#), [National Reading Panel, 2000](#)). A valid, reliable, normed assessment for early reading is also necessary to track all students' progress, to identify students at risk for reading difficulties, and to intervene when necessary ([Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton, 2012](#)). When data indicates that a student is not making adequate reading progress, appropriately trained staff should provide research-based interventions that match the student's learning needs ([Gersten et. al., 2009](#)). Finally, research clearly points to the need for strong content-area learning (in subjects such as science, history/social science, and the arts), as these content areas support the knowledge development that is the backbone of reading and writing ability (see [Knowledge Matters](#) for detailed research citations). Thus, a comprehensive approach to early literacy will include adoption of strong content-area curriculum and training for teachers.

#### Staffing and Scheduling

It is often necessary for schools to make structural changes that enable a comprehensive, research-based approach to early literacy. Some schools may need to revamp the schedule so that sufficient time is available to implement all components of a high-quality core literacy program and content area learning (such as mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts), with time also allocated for supplemental interventions, ongoing collaborative professional learning, and planning by teacher teams. Schools may need to hire additional qualified staff to provide interventions to students or to enable the scheduling described above.

#### Professional Learning and Leadership

Professional learning is a key aspect of implementing evidence-based early literacy practices. Both school leaders and teachers benefit from training on the implementation of high-quality curricular materials, including in-depth initial training and ongoing implementation support ([Blazar et al, 2019](#)). PreK-3 teachers also benefit from training on early reading content pedagogy in order to understand and respond to individual student literacy needs. This training is particularly impactful when a high-quality, evidence-based curriculum is in place.

In our District goals for the 2020-2023 school years, there is a specific goal on literacy instruction, with a focus on special education literacy. The goal is as follows:

**During the 2020-2023 School Years, we will improve our literacy evaluation process, enhance our reading instructional strategies, and structure our progress monitoring more effectively for students who are struggling readers. Based on our work, we will see progress as evidenced by reviewing previous case studies of students who struggled with Tier 2 interventions and comparing the following: an increase in identifying struggling readers earlier, students demonstrating growth on their IEP literacy goals, and fewer out of district placements with specific learning disabilities.**

The steps taken to address this goal over the next three years are as follows:



1. Training with Dr. Orkin and Crafting Minds for Team Chairs and School Psychologists, Reading Specialists, Special Education and Curriculum Administration and selected principals consisting of:
  - Professional development virtual workshops regarding characterization, morphology, categorization, executive functioning, and using learning standard entry points.
  - Research and align a consistent battery of sensitive reading assessments for initial evaluations & reevaluations to target specific areas of reading (i.e., phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary) & use results to drive specific reading instruction.
2. Select and implement a high-quality universal screening assessment for K-5 students.
3. Using DESE guidelines develop and implement a process on Early Literacy Screening.
4. Determine & implement consistent progress monitoring practices for various specialized reading instructional practices (i.e., phonological awareness, decoding, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary).
5. Identify specific reading benchmark assessments to be given 2-3 times a year & train staff how to administer the benchmark assessments for the Bridge program.
6. Coach staff to chart & share progress with families & use it to drive instructional practices
7. Initial Training in early literacy as part of the Crafting Minds Training of Sped Teachers, Reading Specialists, SLPs, School Psychologists, Team Chairs, Principals, and Administrators. It introduces the subtypes frameworks, related assessments, and works through case studies. In addition, there is a module that addresses Orthographic Mapping and trains participants in the use of the phonological awareness screening test (PAST) and instructional routines to build students' sight word recognition.
8. Order Reading materials to ensure that appropriate target instructional practices are utilized at every level and aligned with regular education literacy practices.
9. Provide appropriate training to staff in how to implement new reading programs and assessments.
10. Work with the District SEPAC to develop parent trainings in the basics of reading.
11. Implement an evaluation protocol based on the Crafting Minds training to be completed by the special education team when a specific learning disability in the area of reading is suspected or part of a three year re-evaluation.
12. Hire a Special Education Literacy Coach which will be focused on improving reading practices in all special education programs and settings.
13. Implementation & Coaching with Crafting Minds – In the second year staff examine the use and familiarity with key assessments (additional training is available as necessary in the administration and interpretation of the CTOPP, RAN, TOWRE & GORT). School-based coaching will also be provided to support the use of the graphic organizer for newly assessed and existing students with reading goals. Coaching can extend into instruction. One key goal of this year is to collect school-based and district-wide data regarding the subtypes of student with reading goals in order to make data-driven decisions when investing in curricula, training, and supplemental resources.
14. Sustainability & Connecting to General Education with Crafting Minds - Over the course of the third year responsibility for interpretation will be released to teams. General Educators will receive training in common learning profiles, needs, and accommodations/modifications for students with reading goals. Ongoing coaching for those delivering small group and specialized instruction as necessary.
15. Communicate updates regularly via meetings and newsletters.

FY21 Budget Items	Amount	Foundation Category
Professional Development Regular Day	\$92,921	Professional Development
Professional Development Special Education	\$15,000	Professional Development
Evidence Base Program Identified by DESE	Research based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades.	
SOA program categories:	Increased or improved professional development (E) Purchase of curriculum materials and equipment that are aligned with statewide curriculum frameworks (F) Expanded early education and pre-kindergarten programming within the district in consultation or in partnership with community based organizations. (G)	

- 3. Diversifying the educator/administrator workforce through recruitment and retention.** A growing body of educational research supports the positive impacts of teachers of color on short- and long-term academic outcomes of students of color. Specifically, the research finds that having a single teacher of color can boost academic achievement, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment for students of color ([Gershenson et al., 2017](#); [Cherng and Halpin, 2016](#)). In light of these findings, recruiting and retaining a diverse and effective educator workforce is a promising strategy for districts.

In addition, a growing body of educational research ([Griffin and Tackie, 2016](#), [Carver-Thomas, 2018](#), [Dixon, et al., 2019](#)) demonstrates the importance and need to develop inclusive school environments for students and staff to support the retention of a diverse teacher workforce. The research indicates that inclusive school environments include characteristics such as:

- Shared or collective decision-making
- Opportunities for growth and development such as mentorship programs and access to professional development
- Cultivation of relationships with students and families to strengthen the school community

Our teacher and administrator workforce does not mirror our student population, especially with our students of color. In the FY21 budget, an HR/Payroll administrative assistant has been added which will allow our Human Resources Director to allocate more time to recruitment and retention. This includes the development of a three year induction program for all teachers new to Reading.

Our district has developed a goal as part of the District Improvement Plan which states the following:

During the 2020-21 school year, the Reading Public Schools will begin a three-year plan to develop and implement a talent diversification and leadership development strategy. The success of this plan will be evidenced by an increase in pipeline development, recruitment, and retention of staff of color. Through the implementation of this plan, we will see an increase in staff of color by 100% (6 to 12) by the end of the 2022-23 school year and an increase in Reading staff who have been promoted from a teaching position to a leadership position (i.e. curriculum coordinator, department chair, assistant principal, team chair, principal, central office administrator). Currently, we have 10 former Reading teachers who are in leadership positions.

The action steps in the plan are as follows:

1. Hire a Human Resources Director

2. As part of entry plan, HR Director will review hiring and recruitment practices through interviews, focus group sessions, and surveys.
3. Create a diversity hiring committee consisting of teachers, paraeducators, and administrators.
4. Develop a value proposition for potential staff of color. The value proposition is a set of attributes that candidates and employees perceive as the value they gain through employment in an organization. These include tangibles (benefits, compensation, career pathways) and intangibles (culture, support, system, and mission).
5. Conduct an internal audit of our current talent management process which includes an assessment of diversification for pipeline development, recruitment, and retention.
6. Pipeline Development
  - a. Increase the number of student teachers in the district and student teachers who are individuals of color, PreK-12.
  - b. Increase the number of paraeducators in our district who are individuals of color.
  - c. Provide paraeducators with Bachelor's Degrees access to teacher preparation professional development.
  - d. Develop education coursework for Seniors who may be interested in pursuing a teaching degree.
7. Recruitment
  - a. Prioritize recruitment through LinkedIn, Talent Ed, Indeed, and other recruiting websites.
  - b. Audit all recruitment materials, including the website, job descriptions, and job postings to ensure the district's commitment to diversity is clearly communicated.
  - c. Identify and participate in job fairs that focus on recruiting teachers of color.
8. Retention
  - a. Conduct qualitative data gathering through surveys or focus groups with teachers of color to ensure that they feel valued.
  - b. Use the educator evaluation process and the mentor program to support teachers progress.
  - c. Publicly recognize teachers.
  - d. Continue to provide teachers opportunities for dialog and discussion through open door policy, staff forums, and office hours.
9. Based on the audit, adjust our talent practices and create a long-term diversification strategy.
  - a. Develop an Aspiring Leadership Program for Teachers.

<b>FY21 Budget Items</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Foundation Category</b>
1.0 FTE HR/Payroll Administrative Assistant	\$60,000	Administration
Mentor Stipends	\$66,500	Professional Development
Evidence Base Program Identified by DESE	Diversifying the educator/administrator workforce through recruitment and retention	
SOA program categories:	Hiring school personnel that best support improved student performance (D) and Diversifying the educator and administrator workforce (H)	

4. **Facilities improvements to create healthy and safe school environments (J).** Over the next few years, the Reading Public Schools will be improving the safety and security of their current school facilities and exploring options to increase classroom space for preschool, full day kindergarten, enrollment increases, and indistrict special education programs. Below are some of the projects that are being implemented.

- Three new modular classrooms at Birch Meadow Elementary School were added in October, 2020 to address enrollment and increased enrollment in special education programs (FY21).
- Implementation of security enhancements to improve the safety and security of our facilities for our students and staff (FY21 and 22). The security features will improve access controls and cameras at school buildings while maintaining the learning environment for all students.
- In FY20, an elementary school space and enrollment study was completed which presented several options to solve the growing need for educational space to address programmatic needs of full day kindergarten, indistrict special education programs, and preschool. This will be an ongoing community discussion over the next several months.

<b>FY20 and FY21 Capital Budget Items</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Foundation Category</b>
Modular Classrooms	\$1,250,000	Operations and Maintenance
Town and School Building Security Project	\$4,500,000	Operations and Maintenance
Evidence Base Program Identified by DESE	Facilities improvement to create healthy and safe school environments	
SOA program categories:	Any other program determined to be evidenced based by the commissioner (J).	

## **Moving Forward**

**Because this is a three year plan, we are including areas that are not currently funded, but may be explored in future budget years.**

- 5. Expanded access to full-day kindergarten (D, F, G).** According to research over the past three decades, full-day programs have led to stronger achievement, fewer gaps between student subgroups, decreased remediation in subsequent years, and better developed social/emotional skills (Cooper et al., 2010; Raskin, Haar, & Zierdt, 2011). Students are less likely to be retained a grade if they attend full-day kindergarten (Cryan, Sheehan, Wiechel, & Bandy-Hedden, 1992). This not only saves scarce resources but prevents the negative academic and social outcomes associated with retention (Gullo, 2000; National Association of School Psychologists, 2011; Sheehan, Cryan, Wiechel, & Bandy, 1991). The positive impact of full-day kindergarten has been demonstrated with a number of specific populations, including English learners, at-risk students, and rural students (Bingham & Hall-Kenyon, 2013; Davies & Cress, 2010). In several studies, full-day kindergarten accelerated the growth of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch (Raney, 2014; Zvoch, 2009). Over the past 30 years, differences in student outcomes between full-day kindergarten and half-day kindergarten have become more pronounced (Cooper et al., 2010). The daily addition of three hours of instruction in kindergarten amounts to another half-year of instruction, which allows for broader and deeper curriculum coverage, a variety of instructional groupings, and diagnosis and intervention of learning challenges (Davies & Cress, 2010; Elicker & Mathur, 1997). Students who receive this additional dosage of kindergarten instruction show better literacy outcomes than their half-day peers (Raskin et al., 2011; Zvoch et al., 2008). The full-day offering also changes the structure of teachers' workload in ways that create economies for improved learning. In a half-day structure, teachers have two class sections of students. However, since teachers in a full-day program are preparing materials and communicating with the families of half as many students, more time is available for deeper levels of planning and family outreach.

Reading is one of the few communities in Massachusetts that does not have tuition free full day kindergarten. Currently, 90% of our students are in a tuition based full day kindergarten program which creates educational and logistical challenges for our students. Over the next few years, we will be exploring options as to how we

can provide access to full day kindergarten for all students. Currently, this would require an additional \$1,200,000 to our operating budget.

Future Budget Items	Amount	Foundation Category
Tuition Offset to Budget for Full Day Kindergarten	\$1,200,000	Classroom and Specialist Teachers; Administration
Evidence Base Program Identified by DESE	Expanded access to full-day, high-quality kindergarten	
SOA program categories:	Hiring school personnel that best support improved student performance (D); Purchase of curriculum materials and equipment that are aligned with the statewide curriculum frameworks (F); Expanded early education and pre-kindergarten programming within the district in consultation or in partnership with community based organizations (G)	

6. **Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, computer science, enrichment, strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers (B and D).** Districts and schools have the opportunity to consider strategic scheduling that can accomplish two goals: increase enrichment opportunities for students and additional time for teachers to collaborate.

Enrichment opportunities for students serve to bolster student achievement and improve school climate and culture. For example, a [study](#) conducted by Columbia University found that middle school students who participated in at least three years of in-school arts instruction scored significantly higher in creative thinking and self-reported higher rates of positive attitudes towards school and learning than did their peers who received less arts education. Other [reports](#) suggest participation in enrichment opportunities as part of the school day builds collaboration skills and persistence. Further, [research](#) demonstrates that children from more advantaged backgrounds are more likely than economically disadvantaged students to have access to a rich array of extracurriculars, clubs, sports, and other opportunities after school, and thus academic enrichment programs have the potential to increase educational equity.

Common planning time for teachers, when focused, well-structured, and well-facilitated, [promotes achievement](#), a strong professional culture, and collective ownership of student outcomes. Studies include the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [turnaround research](#), which credits “intentional practices for classroom instruction,” such as focused professional development and collaboration, as an effective strategy in closing performance gaps.

For more than 30 years, elementary students in Reading have been dismissed two hours earlier than the regular dismissal time on Wednesdays in order to be able to provide necessary planning time and professional development for teachers. In a future budget, it should be explored to increase staffing in the arts, computer sciences, and other enrichment activities so that planning and professional development opportunities are scheduled during the regular school day and thus eliminating the Wednesday early release day at the elementary schools.

Future Budget Items	Amount	Foundation Category
Increased elementary staffing to arts, computer science and enrichment	\$600,000	Classroom and Specialist Teachers
Evidence Base Program Identified by DESE	Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment, and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers.	
SOA program categories:	Increased opportunity for common planning time for teachers (B); Hiring school personnel that best support improved student performance (D)	

7. **Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs (C and D).** Increasing school staff and building partnerships with community-based organizations that provide services and supports to meet the holistic needs of students can increase students' and families' access to needed services.

Research shows that early intervention for children and youth with mental or behavioral health needs can prevent more serious problems in young adulthood and beyond. Providing services (both remedial and preventive) for children in or through schools can address a number of these barriers and may be less expensive than alternative delivery models.<sup>1</sup> For example statistically significant positive effects of counseling were recorded on multiple fronts among third graders, including student learning, student social-emotional skills, teacher perceptions of school climate, and teacher attendance. Some evidence also suggested early counseling had long-term benefits on student behavior through high school ([Reback 2010](#)). Moreover, a research study on counselors in Massachusetts ([Mulhern 2020](#)) found that improving access to effective college counseling may influence high school graduation rates, college attendance, and college graduation rates, and may be a promising way to help students overcome challenges related to low socioeconomic status.

In future budget years, this is an area of need where we need to increase our school adjustment counseling staff at the elementary level, improve academic interventions through tutoring at the middle and high school level, and increase guidance and behavioral health counseling services at the middle and high school level. This would be embedded staff in each school to coordinate supports and services for students.

Future Budget Items	Amount	Foundation Category
Increased counseling and academic intervention staff PreK-12	TBD	Guidance and Psychological
Board Certified Behavior Analyst	TBD	Guidance and Psychological
Evidence Base Program Identified by DESE	Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs	
SOA program categories:	Social services to support students' social-emotional and physical health (C); Hiring school personnel that best support improved student performance (D)	

<sup>1</sup> Committee on School Health, School-based mental health services, Pediatrics, 2004; 113; 1839, doi: 10.1542/peds.113.6.1842.

### **Commitment 3: Monitoring Success with Outcome Metrics and Targets**

**What metrics will your district use to monitor success in reducing disparities in achievement among student subgroups? Select from the list of DESE metrics or provide your own. (Please note that targets will be added to this section once SY2020 data is released this fall).**

1. DESE outcome metrics:
  - ✓ Accountability classification
  - ✓ ELA mean student growth percentile
  - ✓ Mathematics mean student growth percentile
  - ✓ ELA achievement
  - ✓ Mathematics achievement
  - ✓ Percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders completing advanced coursework
  - ✓ Extended engagement rate for high school completion (five-year cohort graduation rate plus the percentage of students from the cohort who are still enrolled)
2. Custom district metrics
  - ✓ Engagement, Safety, and Environment Sections of the Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) Survey

### **Commitment 4: Engaging All Families**

**How will your district ensure that all families, particularly those representing the student subgroups most in need of support, have the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the district regarding their student needs?**

- ✓ At the school level, where appropriate and necessary, staff will implement home visiting programs to increase dialogue between school and families.
- ✓ Each school holds open house and back to school night events for all families.
- ✓ Weekly school and district newsletters sent to all families.
- ✓ Weekly office hours during different times of day at different school sites with the Superintendent of Schools.
- ✓ District leaders attend monthly SEPAC meetings.
- ✓ School and district leaders hold meetings with METCO parents in Boston at least twice a year.
- ✓ Beginning in SY2021, district leaders will meet with the PTO Presidents quarterly.
- ✓ During SY2020 and 2021, schools and district will engage families in the portrait of graduate work where a vision of the skills and dispositions that we want our students to have when they leave high school will be generated.

☐ **By checking here, I certify that our district has engaged stakeholders in our district in accordance with the Student Opportunity Act.**

**Please summarize your stakeholder engagement process, including specific groups that were engaged:**

- ✓ Hold at least one community listening session during March
- ✓ Send out an online survey to gather feedback
- ✓ Present information at SEPAC meeting for feedback
- ✓ Have School Committee hold a public comment section at one of the meetings
- ✓ Have school leaders get feedback at a staff meeting

☐ **By checking here, I certify that our district's school committee voted on our Student Opportunity Act Plan.**

• **Date of Vote:**

**Outcome of vote:**

John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Christine M. Kelley  
Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching

82 Oakland Road  
Reading, MA 01867  
Phone: 781-944-5800  
Fax: 781-942-9149



Gail S. Dowd, CPA  
Chief Financial Officer

Jennifer A. Stys, Ed.D.  
Director of Student Services

Kerry M. Meisinger, J.D.  
Human Resources Director

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee

FROM: John F. Doherty, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: December 15, 2020

TOPIC: Informational Letters

I have included two letters for your information in the packet. The first letter is a joint MASS/MASC letter to Governor Baker regarding current status of school district openings. As you can imagine, there is a lot of frustration and emotion regarding this topic. The second letter was released by the Middlesex League AD's and Superintendents regarding the upcoming winter season. The current position is that initially spectators will not be allowed and this, and whether or not we play games will be reviewed in late December, prior to the start of the season.

If you have any questions, please contact me.





**masc**

December 8, 2020

The Honorable Governor Charlie Baker  
Massachusetts State House, Room 360  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker:

You know as well as anyone how difficult it is to lead through a pandemic. Every day, you undoubtedly hear from outspoken critics who believe the current State restrictions go too far and should be eased or lifted, and you hear from equally outspoken critics who believe the State has not gone far enough and should impose even tougher restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. For the past nine months, you and your team have had to make incredibly difficult decisions, and you have consistently stated that your actions are always based on the best scientific advice and the latest public health data.

Given your first-hand experience of that enormous leadership challenge, we find it particularly baffling that you do not appear to understand or empathize with the similar circumstances facing the leaders of public school districts throughout Massachusetts.

The members of our two associations – Superintendents and School Committees from across the Commonwealth – have expressed deep disappointment, frustration, and at times outrage at the messaging you have repeatedly delivered in news conferences and in the press, urging school districts to bring more students back to in-person learning. Whenever you issue these blanket statements, many of our members report that they immediately hear from parents, demanding that their students return to school full time, often citing support for their position from the highest elected official in the State.

If only it were that simple. For the past nine months, we have consistently affirmed that we share your belief that children benefit most from in-person learning. No one disputes that remote and hybrid learning pale in comparison to the full experience of students being in school with their teachers and classmates. Throughout the spring and summer, our members worked diligently to devise reopening plans that would bring as many students as possible back into school buildings *within the limitations of the health and safety protocols prescribed by the State*. District leaders, in partnership with families and staff, crafted several plans for a variety of scenarios, and those plans were reviewed and critiqued by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The most challenging requirement – ensuring six feet of social distancing among all children and adults at all times – made it impossible for most schools to return to full in-person learning. As a result, many districts had no option but to begin the school year with hybrid or remote learning models. The conditions that required those decisions in August remain largely the same today. Yet, despite our adherence to the process and guidelines established by your administration, you continue to question why more districts don't simply bring all students back.

What is conspicuously absent from your calls for reopening the schools is any mention of the role teachers' unions have played – and continue to play – in these decisions. In every community across the Commonwealth, reopening plans required the approval of the local teachers' union. School Committees and Superintendents engaged in extensive negotiations with labor leaders to arrive at a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that spelled out, often in painstaking detail, the terms and conditions of each plan. In many cases, districts that were fully prepared to move forward with hybrid models faced such strong resistance from the unions that they had to shift to full remote learning, despite parents' explicit preference for some in-person instruction.

Why then, Governor, when you publicly insist that school districts offer more in-person learning, is that challenge not extended to the teachers' unions, who are often the primary obstacle to that objective?

In fact, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents asked you in August to provide leadership at the State level to prevent labor unions from stonewalling reopening plans, which you did not support. At any point, you could have convened the leaders of the State's largest teachers' unions to urge their cooperation in providing more in-person teaching and learning, but you have not. Instead, you have relegated that responsibility to local school district leaders – and then disparaged them for not achieving the results you desire. In several communities, union leaders have taken votes of "no confidence" in School Committees and Superintendents over implementation of the reopening plans, but again, these tactics appear to merit no public objection from your office.

Now, more than ever, we need elected officials at all levels of government to deliver a unified message about the complexity of this public health situation and to work together to educate the public about the vast array of variables that must be considered when setting public policy in response to the pandemic. Instead, our members find themselves continuously trying to correct misinformation and educate their constituents about the unique circumstances in each community and the complex set of factors that contributed to the learning model adopted in each district.

As you continue to lead Massachusetts through this ordeal, we respectfully ask that you demonstrate and articulate a more nuanced understanding of the challenges school districts face and the options at our disposal. As always, our members welcome the opportunity to meet with you to collaborate on a statewide strategy to meet the needs of the families and communities we proudly serve.

Sincerely,



Glenn Koocher  
Executive Director  
Massachusetts Association of School Committees



Deborah Davis  
President, MASC  
Member, Northeast Metropolitan Vocational  
Technical School Committee



Thomas Scott, Ed.D.  
Executive Director  
Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents



Robert N. Baldwin, Ed.D.  
President, MASS  
Superintendent, Fairhaven Public Schools



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

We, the school leaders of the Middlesex League Conference (MLC), share a common commitment to keeping our students, staff, and community safe during the current health crisis. We also know that the commitment to safety extends beyond the impact of COVID-19, and includes the physical, social, and emotional health of our students. As part of that commitment to student safety, we understand the important role that athletics plays in our students' lives and aim to balance the ability for students to participate athletically with the need to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in our schools and communities.

On November 20, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) Board of Directors voted to approve sport-specific modifications for the 2020-2021 winter season. These modifications include basketball, gymnastics, ice hockey, skiing, and swimming and diving, but do not include wrestling, indoor track, winter cheerleading, and dance, which have been moved to future seasons. The modifications also set a new start date for the winter sports season of December 14, 2020.

As MLC leaders, we have continued our regular meetings that began in early October, and have developed the following two-phased approach to the upcoming winter season:

**Phase I (Practices/Tryouts) – Starts December 14**

- The winter sports season for practices/tryouts will begin no earlier than December 14.
- Individual schools will make decisions about the timing for beginning practices/tryouts based upon the local context of each school community.
- Over the four weeks of Phase I, schools will assess the effectiveness of sports modifications and cleaning protocols, as well as the trajectory of the virus, to determine if athletics can proceed to Phase II – Interscholastic Competitions.

**Phase II (Interscholastic Competitions) – Starts January 2 or later**

- Interscholastic competitions can start no earlier than January 2 but may be pushed to January 11.
- Schedules will be designed, by sport, to match only two communities in a given week.
- Initially, spectators will not be permitted to attend any indoor competitions. We will be meeting as a League prior to the start of interdistrict competitions to finalize whether the competitions can occur as well as the status of spectators.

We are hopeful that we will be able to continue to have athletics, including interscholastic competitions, among our member schools this winter, and we urge the members of our communities to practice proper health protocols (mask wearing, physical distancing, etc.) so that our student athletes can have the opportunity to compete.

Sincerely,

Eric M. Conti, Superintendent, Burlington Public Schools  
Glenn Brand, Superintendent, Wilmington Public Schools  
Julie Hackett, Superintendent, Lexington Public Schools  
Julie Kukenberger, Superintendent, Melrose Public Schools  
John Doherty, Superintendent, Reading Public Schools  
Matt Crowley, Superintendent, Woburn Public Schools

John Macero, Superintendent, Stoneham Public Schools  
Deanne Galdston, Superintendent, Watertown Public Schools  
Douglas Lyons, Superintendent, Wakefield Public Schools  
John Phelan, Superintendent, Belmont Public Schools  
Judy Evans, Superintendent, Winchester Public Schools  
Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent, Arlington Public Schools

John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Christine M. Kelley  
Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching

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Gail S. Dowd, CPA  
Chief Financial Officer

Jennifer A. Stys, Ed.D.  
Director of Student Services

Kerry M. Meisinger, J.D.  
Human Resources Director

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Reading School Committee

FROM: John F. Doherty, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

DATE: December 15, 2020

TOPIC: Email Correspondence and Other Information

Please find attached for your information, copies of email correspondence and information received by School Committee members and Central Office Administrators from community members as well as other pertinent information. We have included our responses, if applicable, as well.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

## Engelson, Linda

---

**From:** Robinson, Charles  
**Sent:** Monday, December 7, 2020 12:03 PM  
**To:** Geoffrey Coram  
**Cc:** Engelson, Linda  
**Subject:** Re: Spectators

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi Geoffrey:

Thank you for the email. I appreciate the feedback. Hopefully we can consider something.

Chuck Robinson

---

**From:** Geoffrey Coram <gjcoram@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 5, 2020 8:28 PM  
**To:** DG School Committee <SchoolCommittee@reading.k12.ma.us>; DG School Committee <SchoolCommittee@reading.k12.ma.us>  
**Cc:** Doherty, John <John.Doherty@reading.k12.ma.us>  
**Subject:** Spectators

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Reading Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

Dear School Committee:

I think it is an uphill battle to ask Dr. Doherty and/or Mr. Zaya to reverse a unanimous decision by the Middlesex League to prohibit spectators at the winter sports games, a decision which that body made in the interest of safety of students and employees during a pandemic.

However, I do sympathize with parents of seniors. Can the games could be televised by RCTV? Even if this is just setting up a static camera before the game to catch the whole court, rather than bringing in additional people to operate the cameras during the game. I know that some distant relatives were able to watch the RMHS Drama Club's performance because RCTV helped make a YouTube video for the fall show. It would be great to have something similar for winter sports.

I also wonder if there might be a way to allow spectators at the last game of the season, to do a sort of "senior night" as a special event. (Perhaps even two parents or members of the household could be allowed for seniors.) This would be a compromise between no spectators ever and having them at all games.

Thanks.  
Geoffrey Coram  
Ridge Rd.

## Engelson, Linda

---

**From:** Robinson, Charles  
**Sent:** Monday, December 7, 2020 12:00 PM  
**To:** Engelson, Linda  
**Subject:** Fw: Spectators at winter sports

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

---

**From:** Robinson, Charles <Charles.Robinson@reading.k12.ma.us>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 7, 2020 2:59 PM  
**To:** Mary Gilligan <mdgilligan8@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Spectators at winter sports

Hi Mary and Joe:

Thank you for the email and feedback.

Chuck Robinson

---

**From:** Mary Gilligan <mdgilligan8@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 6, 2020 6:31 PM  
**To:** DG School Committee <SchoolCommittee@reading.k12.ma.us>  
**Subject:** Spectators at winter sports

CAUTION: This email originated from **outside of Reading Public Schools**. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

Hello committee members

I am writing to ask that you work with our superintendent and athletic director to have them reconsider not allowing spectators at winter sports. The science does not back up this decision. At a minimum, they should consider 1 senior parent per player.

Thank you for helping get this resolved.  
Mary and Joe Gilligan

## Engelson, Linda

---

**From:** Kara Miele <karamiele@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 4, 2020 7:29 AM  
**To:** Zaya, Thomas; Doherty, John; DG School Committee  
**Cc:** Michael  
**Subject:** Sports spectators

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Reading Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

I ask that you reconsider the no spectator rule for winter sports. As a working registered nurse I fail to see the benefit of this rule. As minors I believe these children need parental supervision (having experienced a situation where my son broke his leg). Furthermore I don't believe allowing 2 parents into the rink, wearing a mask and socially distancing will pose any hazard whatsoever. A hockey rink is a perfect place to spread out given its size. Thank you for your consideration.

Kara Miele

Sent from my iPad

## Engelson, Linda

---

**From:** Mom Fichera <jenfichera@me.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 5:07 PM  
**To:** DG School Committee  
**Subject:** No Spectator Rule Winter Sports - Request for change

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from **outside of Reading Public Schools**. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

Hello School Committee Members,

I hope this email finds you and your families well. I am writing on behalf of all Winter Sport Athlete's and their parents. We are asking you to reconsider and do all you can to allow spectators at winter sporting events. This decision goes against the MIAA as well as CDC recommendations. Using the Girl's varsity team as an example, we have approximately 14 players, if the rule was to allow 1 spectator per player the potential is no more than 35 "fans" in a hockey rink. This more than reasonable to socially distance in an area that size.

On a emotional front these seniors specifically have been stripped of so much. To take away having a parent watch their last season is unthinkable. They lost half of their junior year, grades and athletics, they lost SATs and ACTs, they haven't visited colleges, the most they have been in the school building is 6 days since last March. We need to fight for them on this and it is not a big ask and can be done safely.

Please do what you can to revise this decision.

Kind regards.

Jennifer Fichera  
69 Richards Road  
Reading, MA 01867  
617-513-6580



## Engelson, Linda

---

**From:** Matthew Donnelly <mattd@themaidsma.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 4:50 PM  
**To:** DG School Committee; Zaya, Thomas; Doherty, John; Boynton, Kathleen  
**Subject:** Winter Sports

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from **outside of Reading Public Schools**. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

Town of Reading School Leadership:

Thank you very much for your commitment, care, and leadership over the past incredibly challenging ten months. I applaud your dedication to the welfare and education of the children in our community.

I am thrilled to learn that Reading has elected to participate in high school sports, including having a delayed season in some cases. However, I respectfully would like to express my disagreement with the decision to not allow spectators at RMHS winter sports events.

We are currently challenged with protecting our families during this pandemic, while also fostering the mental health for parents, educators, our children, and the community as a whole. When I think of high school sports without spectators various pictures run through my mind....a nervous high school freshman participating in their first sports event, only to not have family support....a high school senior participating in their final season of formal play in a sport after a lifetime of practice and work, only to not be able to share that moment with parents or guardians. The shared emotions for the students, families, and community are huge aspects of high school sports. Joy, nervousness, accomplishment, and even disappointment are all healthy shared feelings. At a time like this the shared experience of high school sports couldn't be more important.

Over the past six months I have experienced indoor and outdoor facilities watching my children play baseball, softball, ice hockey, and indoor volleyball in town, school, and club organizations. I have one child at RMHS, and another at Bishop Fenwick, providing a unique perspective on high school sports during COVID. Early on, organizations and facilities had to make up the rules. As time went on facilities in MA followed the EEA standards, which provided a reasonable and uniform guideline for all. Hockey rinks now allow parents / guardians plus siblings, but do require check in, as well as information for contact tracing. Fenwick followed the same rules for indoor volleyball.

The EEA standards, along with the MIAA guidelines are reasonable (both listed below), and have proven to be successful. Reading and the ML12 should adhere to accepted standards and guidelines, and not place more draconian restrictions on our students, families, and communities.

In full disclosure, for the past twenty five years I have operated a regional business that specializes in cleaning for health and disinfection of public facilities, private commercial enterprises, and residential facilities across eastern New England.

Regards,

Matt Donnelly  
246 Charles Street  
617.953.3575

**MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
WORKPLACE SAFETY and REOPENING STANDARDS FOR BUSINESSES and OTHER ENTITIES  
PROVIDING YOUTH and ADULT AMATEUR SPORTS ACTIVITIES – Phase III, Step 2 Amended on  
November 6, 2020 Effective on November 7, 2020 (Updated on 11.19.20)**

Indoor Competition Capacity Limits: o No more than 25 players on any surface/playing area for team/group sports. o If an indoor facility has a chaperone or spectator viewing area which allows for at least six feet social distancing between spectators and the presence of spectators plus players, coaches, referees, and facility/activity workers does not cause the facility to exceed more than 50% of the maximum occupancy for the indoor facility, then spectators for players under 21 years old are allowed to attend. Spectators are limited to 2 adults (parents/guardians or chaperones) and siblings of a participating player. o Spectators must wear facial coverings and maintain six feet of social distance at all times. o No spectators are allowed for sports and activities played by individuals 21 years and older. • Multiple Playing Surface Capacity Limits: o For facilities with multiple fields, surfaces, courts, courses etc. the above capacity limitations for Outdoor Competitions & Tournaments and Indoor Competitions shall apply per playing field, surface, court, etc., provided that there is adequate spacing for at least six feet social distancing for all individuals, including those at adjacent fields, surfaces, courts, etc. o Activity Organizers should set Competition and Tournament schedules with a time buffers to prevent the overlap of competitions or overlap of players/spectators from adjacent fields/surfaces/courts at any one time and to allow for disinfecting of equipment and cleaning of commonly touched surfaces, if necessary. Games should end in a draw if time expires. o For facilities with multiple fields, surfaces, courts, courses etc. Facility Operators and Activity Organizers should mark off designated areas for spectators for each field, surface, court, etc. to minimize the overlap of spectators from adjacent fields, surfaces, courts, etc.

**MIAA RULES MODIFICATIONS AND GUIDELINES**

Spectators – Spectators must practice social distancing (6 feet between individuals) between different household units and accept personal responsibility for public health guidelines. The number of spectators is determined in compliance with EEA, DESE and DPH guidelines.

Matt Donnelly

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## Engelson, Linda

---

**From:** Robinson, Charles  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 1:19 PM  
**To:** brianconnor200@comcast.net  
**Cc:** Engelson, Linda  
**Subject:** Re: RMHS Winter Season

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi Mr. O'Connor:

Thank you for the email and feedback. We are the guidelines set by the Middlesex League. We will look to see if there are going to be an deviations from those. Thank you.  
Chuck Robinson

---

**From:** brianconnor200@comcast.net <brianconnor200@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 1:21 PM  
**To:** Zaya, Thomas <Thomas.Zaya@reading.k12.ma.us>; Doherty, John <John.Doherty@reading.k12.ma.us>; DG School Committee <SchoolCommittee@reading.k12.ma.us>  
**Subject:** FW: RMHS Winter Season

**CAUTION:** This email originated from **outside of Reading Public Schools**. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

Good morning.

I am the parent of a high school athlete. I have received your email correspondence and I have received the correspondence below. The information is mixed and confusing. I will appreciate the facts and the truth, as I am interested in attending winters sports where appropriate for me as a parent.

Appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to learning the clarification.

Thank you,

Brian O'Connor

Brian O'Connor  
Brianconnor200@comcast.net  
Mobile – 781.227.7688  
[www.linkedin.com/in/brian-o-connor-7791278](https://www.linkedin.com/in/brian-o-connor-7791278)

---

**From:** Eric Pennucci <epennucci@tgttransportation.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 2, 2020 6:31 PM  
**To:** Kevin and Barbara Mulvey <kmulvey082@comcast.net>; jeffaborn@outlook.com; jeffbouch2009@hotmail.com; cbranson@athenahealth.com; laurasplummer@yahoo.com; peggycalvani@gmail.com; fourcoulters@gmail.com;

rjcrosbyjr@yahoo.com; dcrowley1966@yahoo.com; brad.esposito@johnstonesupply.com; fahey.michael@verizon.net; JulieFantasia314@gmail.com; tgiardina28@gmail.com; k.goodreau@comcast.net; jhannabury@gmail.com; scott.hardin@theappraiserguy.com; kjj67@comcast.net; Jaimeajones@aim.com; melissa\_higgins1@hotmail.com; BrianLearned@comcast.net; ckmeehan@yahoo.com; kevin.murray11@gmail.com; brianconnor200@comcast.net; rjokeefe74@mac.com; Tschultz\_215@yahoo.com; erinos73@hotmail.com; Sharon.tango@hotmail.com; avanmagness@gmail.com; vilmunen@verizon.net; jvitarisi@comcast.net; julienwilson@comcast.net; barber194@icloud.com; mikepalermo@me.com; nquinnod@gmail.com; stefwalsh17@yahoo.com; suzannemiller584@comcast.net; p.demild@verizon.net; rob@readingconstructioninc.com; dancelawyer1@aol.com; ccprez11@yahoo.com; mboyle1959@aol.com; brian@fogartyloans.com; comeara1@comcast.net; kpthomson@verizon.net; Tristanmoreau8@gmail.com; darin.mcfarland@gmail.com; davelynch1959@yahoo.com; dmffogarty@comcast.net; dp5239@gmail.com; dvedder@comcast.net; ginaandtedmartin@gmail.com; 'RICHARD OKEEFE' <rjokeefe74@me.com>; stevesullivan01867@gmail.com; giulioti@verizon.net; jwvedder@comcast.net; kilduff91@gmail.com; kim.moreau.m.ed@gmail.com; mariacasarano@verizon.net; mattd@themaidsma.com; molly\_thornton@yahoo.com; murphyboys@comcast.net; pwright123@gmail.com; r.demild@verizon.net; richlucasjr@gmail.com; robd1370@hotmail.com; susan.mcfarland@gmail.com; tjohnson90@comcast.net; tomquinn16@comcast.net; tomwalsh24@yahoo.com; zessis00@gmail.com; kristendonovan7@gmail.com; dml@ncclenterprises.com; joe@profitmanagementinc.com; Rey@juggernautpower.com; donovane@cleanharbors.com; Shannon@throughmylenz.com; lauriegoodwin@comcast.net; donovane429@gmail.com; ericjaneane@gmail.com; jmcheech19@yahoo.com; khannabury@gmail.com; kgranara@comcast.net; jgoodwin32@comcast.net; rgranara18@gmail.com; EDufton@aps1.net; sumnerdiane55@gmail.com; paulapicano@me.com; psumner555@gmail.com; Elizabethdufton@comcast.net; 'Kathy Donnelly' <kathydonnelly525@gmail.com>; ljnichell02@gmail.com; 'Ciccariello, Joe' <Joe.Ciccariello@fmr.com>; shannonfratto@gmail.com; lmeehan1@comcast.net; 'Giardina, Mark' <mark.giardina@hpe.com>; wilsonlandscape@comcast.net; szessis@gmail.com; timbusick@yahoo.com; hanifanjr1@verizon.net; 'Jay Peledge' <jpeledge@gmail.com>; melanie.lawhorne@yahoo.com; 'Gmail' <dana.santucci@gmail.com>; 'Paul Santucci' <paul@truenorthrealty.net>; stevesullivan01867@gmail.com; michael\_fabiano@hotmail.com; darrenemery1@verizon.net; ericafreeman@verizon.net; 'RICHARD OKEEFE' <rjokeefe74@me.com>; drummey@rocketmail.com  
**Cc:** karamiele@comcast.net; m.miele@comcast.net; Jamsieg10@yahoo.com; jnell26@yahoo.com; kfmulveylaw@comcast.net

**Subject:** RMHS Winter Season

Good evening everyone, sorry for hijacking this email list but by now I am sure most of you have read the email from RMHS sent this morning at 11:17 regarding the winter athletic season. There has been a decision to not allow spectators of any kind at these winter events. Based on the information provided in the email some of this information is false specifically where it mentions "Due to venue capacity, local and state ordinances the Middlesex League will NOT be allowing spectators". In addition there is a link that was provided in the email [http://www.miaa.net/contentm/easy\\_pages/view.php?sid=38&page\\_id=317](http://www.miaa.net/contentm/easy_pages/view.php?sid=38&page_id=317) where you can find information from the MIAA on Winter Athletics then specifically hockey. The MIAA has set up rules regarding spectators which states they will use the guidance of the MA Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) there is a link provided to the EEA guidance on the MIAA Hockey link. The guidance makes no mention of zero spectators as a matter of fact it states "presence of spectators plus players coaches referees and facility workers does not cause the facility to exceed more than 50% of the max occupancy for the indoor facility then spectators for player under 21 years old are allowed to attend, spectators are limited to two adults parents/guardian sibling of the participating player". FYI max attendance at Burbank is 950. I learned today from emailing Tom Zaya, the RMHS Athletic Director that the superintendents and AD's from each of the 12 teams that make up the Middlesex League are the group that voted against allowing spectators. Their decision is not based on the EEA's recommendations. When I asked why, I was told "we felt it was needed to have a successful winter season". That reasoning does not have any science behind it as the players who are with the parents all day long are then endangered when we are 100 feet away in the stands?? This makes no sense. I am asking everyone to send emails to both Tom Zaya [Thomas.Zaya@reading.k12.ma.us](mailto:Thomas.Zaya@reading.k12.ma.us) along with Superintendent John Doherty [John.Doherty@reading.k12.ma.us](mailto:John.Doherty@reading.k12.ma.us) 781-944-5800 x 849 to express our concerns. This is adding unneeded frustration to an already frustrating situation and they need to reverse their decision.

We will need to support of everyone including those in the other Middlesex League towns if we want this to be successful.

I appreciate your time.

Regards

Eric Pennucci

## Engelson, Linda

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**From:** dml@ncclenterprises.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 10:04 AM  
**To:** Robinson, Charles  
**Cc:** Engelson, Linda  
**Subject:** Re: Sports

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Thank you for your response, it's just very frustrating when people say follow the science and then it seems like nobody does.

Dennis Lawhorne  
NCCL Enterprises, LLC  
60 Concord St  
North Reading, MA. 01864  
Suite 4  
dml@ncclenterprises.com

On Dec 3, 2020, at 9:56 AM, Robinson, Charles <Charles.Robinson@reading.k12.ma.us> wrote:

Hi Mr. Lawhorne:

Thank you for the email and feedback. Reading's decision was based on the Middlesex League guidelines are not our own. We will review with the Athletic Director and be back to you as to whether there is anything we can do. Thank you.

Chuck Robinson

---

**From:** dml@ncclenterprises.com <dml@ncclenterprises.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 12:17 AM  
**To:** DG School Committee <SchoolCommittee@reading.k12.ma.us>  
**Subject:** Sports

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To Whom it May Concern,

I am a Reading resident and have been for more than 20 years. I have had two stones go through the Reading School system and one still in it.

Does say the least I am disappointed in the decisions you are all making regarding sports in school for that matter.

I truly wish you would follow the science even Dr. Fauci says these kids should be in school and if you look at the numbers as it relates to sports they don't justify your actions. I implore you to revisit this. We are not happy as parents with the decisions that you folks are making.

We will definitely be looking for other options at the next election.

Please consider making adjustments to these decisions. Put the kids back in school and let them play their sports.

Dennis Lawhorne  
NCCL Enterprises, LLC  
60 Concord St  
North Reading, MA. 01864  
Suite 4  
dml@ncclenterprises.com

## Engelson, Linda

---

**From:** Matthew Donnelly <mattd@themaidsma.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 7, 2020 11:53 PM  
**To:** Doherty, John; Boynton, Kathleen; Zaya, Thomas; DG School Committee  
**Subject:** Fwd: LETTER TO THE EDITOR - READING

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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Matt Donnelly  
Charles Street  
617.953.3575

Matt Donnelly  
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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Matthew Donnelly** <[mattd@themaidsma.com](mailto:mattd@themaidsma.com)>  
Date: Mon, Dec 7, 2020 at 11:45 PM  
Subject: LETTER TO THE EDITOR - READING  
To: <[reading@dailytimesinc.com](mailto:reading@dailytimesinc.com)>

This letter is in response to the *"Letter to the Editor"* from Nancy Docktor, PMHNP-BC, in the Daily Times Chronicle on December 7th:

On December 7th, Ms. Nancy Docktor, PMHNP-BC provided commentary on the Dec. 3rd school committee meeting in a letter to the Daily Times Chronicle.

Ms. Docktor's brief commentary about spectators at winter RMHS sports events on Dec. 7th came across as politically convenient, headline grabbing, and sensationalized. At the same time she took the discussion out of context by not including relevant background information on the subject in her letter.



Ms. Docktor attacked school committee members, stating; **"...several members of the Reading School Committee believe that parental enjoyment of youth sports should be valued above human life"**. Defaming the volunteer members of our school committee in this manner is disturbing, not productive, and certainly not professional. This divisive, anger filled, rhetoric has no place in OUR community of Reading Ms.Docktor - **especially** in this trying year.

Parents and community advocating spectators at winter sports are doing so with safety in mind, adhering to state guidelines. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) has set forth standards for spectators at winter sports events, which were then adopted as the guidelines by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA).

Contrary to the subject matter experts, the MA EEA and MIAA that spent the better half of the fall working on this subject, Dr. Doherty, and Mr. Zaya were part of the Middlesex League's UNANIMOUS decision to ban all spectators at winter high school events.

Everyone has to keep in mind the Covid-19 pandemic is a fluid situation. In this context, based on science and data the MA EEA and MIAA can and should change standards and guidelines as deemed necessary, which the Middlesex League and RMHS would be REQUIRED to adhere to immediately. To quote the Parents of Middlesex League Winter Athletes:

**Parents of Middlesex League Winter Athletes**

**@johnsmi01469273**

**There's a misconception that the student athletes & parents who want [#fansinthestands](#) are asking to change the rules. NO! What we're asking is that the HS leagues follow the guidelines of MIAA & EEA as well as the facilities that are already open to spectators. No more no less.**

**11:06 PM · Dec 5, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone**

Ms. Docktor, I hope this provides a broader perspective of the topic, in a hospitable and constructive manner.

Following the MA EEA and the MIAA is the prudent and efficient path for Dr. Doherty and Mr. Zaya, especially at a time when energies of school staff would be best spent on safely returning students to RMHS, in at least the true hybrid model presented to the town, families, and students.

Matt Donnelly, RMHS '90  
Charles Street  
Reading MA

**Matt Donnelly**

**The Maids / Donnelly Service Group Inc.**

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## Engelson, Linda

---

**From:** Kelley, Christine  
**Sent:** Monday, December 14, 2020 4:24 PM  
**To:** Quackenbush, Connie; Doherty, John; DG School Committee  
**Cc:** Shankland, Richele; Engelson, Linda; Leonard, Heather  
**Subject:** RE: Teacher meeting for tomorrow

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hello Connie,

I know that you received a reply from the STEM Coordinator, Heather Leonard on Friday but I would like to formally respond to your email since it was written to Dr. Doherty and the School Committee.

Last Friday afternoon there was time set for middle school departments to meet by subject led by Curriculum Leaders. Our department, the Learning & Teaching department did ask for Curriculum Leaders to save 30 (or less) minutes for a common activity as part of your team meetings' agenda. The common activity was to engage with teams about common assessments as it is a next step after our curriculum guide work that has been recently completed. Our reasoning is that it is important to be sure teachers can work from common vision/understanding before engaging with an activity. Our District Improvement Plan presented by Dr. Doherty to the School Committee, includes a common assessment goal. The plan is to work as teams in small ways to build understanding and a common vision/plan so that by next year, we will have common assessments ready.

The rest of the department time for last Friday (approximately 1.5 hrs) was determined by your peers, the Curriculum Leader Teachers. The curriculum leads have stepped up to provide support, leadership, and facilitation to their departments – while also ensuring that their perspectives as teachers provide an important frame for identifying work that needs to be done that is supportive of teacher needs. If your curriculum lead had identified working on assessments, this work was not mandated by the district.

As a district leader, I am well aware of the stress and pressure that our teams are feeling. This year has been so hard on everyone. We have all had to shift and grow in ways that we could never have predicted. Our team has dedicated all of our professional development time to supporting our teams including adjusting teaching, using technology, bolstering student engagement, and assuring equity in our work. Our roles have and continue to be supportive. We strive to work on the essential question of “how do we meet the needs of all of our students?” It is important for us to work together to check on students' social emotional state but also very imperative that we seek information that will help guide our instruction.

The Learning and Teaching Team as well as your building principal are always available to talk and listen to your concerns. It is always important for staff to come to us directly when concerns come up. I hope that you are well and I wish you a healthy and happy holiday season.

Best,

Chris Kelley

---

**From:** Quackenbush, Connie <Connie.Quackenbush@reading.k12.ma.us>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 10, 2020 6:58 PM  
**To:** Doherty, John <John.Doherty@reading.k12.ma.us>; DG School Committee <SchoolCommittee@reading.k12.ma.us>

**Cc:** Shankland, Richele <Richele.Shankland@reading.k12.ma.us>

**Subject:** Teacher meeting for tomorrow

Good Evening,

Tomorrow, I will be spending my teacher meeting time making a common assessment for sixth grade middle school science. I'm sitting here trying to wrap my head around what would be the reasoning behind this.

There is a pandemic going on. Teachers are struggling to create comprehensive lessons that are interesting and can reach remote students and students who cannot gather in close groups as we've known in the past. We are living in a cultural revolution where hate has all too often become a norm. As teachers we care about these things and are trying desperately to support our students and our colleagues.

It is my understanding that we are working on these common assessments because it is in the district Improvement plan. Is it not possible to look beyond a printed document and see what is right in front of us? Can't we dedicate time to these more urgent matters?

I implore you to ditch the plan for tomorrow and give us time to do what is desperately needed at this moment. Maybe we need time to get off the treadmill and share with each other what is working and what is not working. Maybe we could just explore some new ideas that we could try. Maybe we could just breathe.

There was much talk in the beginning of the year about how to take care of students and ourselves. I can assure you, no one has had time for these simple needs. Why not offer them now?

Sincerely,  
Connie Quackenbush

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## Engelson, Linda

---

**From:** Robinson, Charles  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 10, 2020 12:35 PM  
**To:** Alex Shikhanovich  
**Cc:** Engelson, Linda  
**Subject:** Re: Censorship at RMHS

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi Alex:

Thank you for the email and feedback. We appreciate your feedback as we discuss our policies. Thanks.  
Chuck Robinson

---

**From:** Alex Shikhanovich <alexshikhanovich@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 10, 2020 1:17 AM  
**To:** DG School Committee <SchoolCommittee@reading.k12.ma.us>  
**Subject:** Censorship at RMHS

CAUTION: This email originated from **outside of Reading Public Schools**. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender email address and know the content is safe.

Hello Members of the School Committee,

As a student at RMHS, I greatly oppose the new rules regarding censorship. If we are unable to trust our highschool students with the discussion of mature and controversial topics, the school is failing to prepare the student body for the adult world. Learning to discuss these topics in a respectful manner is a part of being a responsible adult. The intention of these changes seems to be to create a safer environment for discussion but, instead it solves the problem by making it harder to have the discussions in the first place. Helpful clubs like the GSA and Politics Club would either be shut down or extremely limited. This would essentially silence student voices, and prevent the spread of ideas. As a member of the RMHS politics club, I can attest to the fact that it has been a learning environment, and not one that encourages bullying and discrimination. This club has allowed me to share and develop my ideas while teaching me to effectively use rhetoric. To limit a club that has led to this level of voluntary personal development, would be counterproductive.

## 2020-21 School Committee Calendar Topics

*Please note that this calendar may change depending on the status of the current health crisis and/or availability of presenters and topic material in consultation with the Chair*

*An Asterik\* indicates office half hour for this session at 6:30 p.m. All meetings will be in the RMHS Schettini Library unless noted.*

Date	Topic	Group
<b>July 9*</b>	Discuss Elementary Space Plan Reorganization	Administration School Committee
July 26	RMHS Class of 2020 Graduation	
<b>July 29</b> <b>Remote</b>	Back-to-School Plans Superintendent Search Process	Administration School Committee
<b>August 6</b> <b>Remote</b>	Preliminary School Reopening Plan Vote	Administration
<b>August 20</b> <b>Remote</b>	First Reading Policy EBCFA — Face Coverings First Reading Policy IHBHE Remote Learning Executive Session	School Committee School Committee
<b>August 27</b> <b>Remote</b>	Executive Session School Reopening Plan Second Reading Policy EBCFA — Face Coverings Second Reading Policy IHBHE Remote Learning	Administration Administration School Committee School Committee
September 1	Primary Election	
<b>Sept. 10</b> <b>Remote</b>	Book Discussion Reopening Plan — Athletics & Extra-Curricular	School Committee Administration
<b>September 23</b>	Financial Forum	Finance Committee
<b>September 24</b>	Fall Reopening Update Equity Book Discussion FY20 End-of-Year Summary Preliminary Discussion of District Improvement Plan	School Committee
<b>October 1</b> <b>Remote</b>	Superintendent Search — Interviews of Selected Proposers	School Committee
<b>October 7</b>	Financial Forum II	Finance Committee
<b>October 15</b> <b>Remote</b>	Appointment of Superintendent to Collaborative Boards First Reading of Policy ECAF First Reading of JLCB First Reading of Policy AC Approval of RMHS Student Handbook	Administration School Committee School Committee School Committee Administration
October 21	Financial Forum III	Finance Committee
<b>October 29</b> <b>Remote</b>	Fall Reopening Update Second Reading of Policy ECAF Second Reading of JLCB Second Reading of Policy AC Enrollment Update	Administration School Committee School Committee School Committee Administration

<b>November 2</b> Remote <b>5:00 p.m.</b>	Superintendent Search Process	School Committee
<b>November 5</b> Remote <b>Social Media Coordinators</b> <b>Gaffen</b> <b>Nazzaro</b>	Elementary Space Refresher District and Superintendent's Goals Introduction Second Reading of Tabled Policy JLCB Second Reading of Tabled Policy AC	Administration Administration School Committee School Committee
<b>November 19</b> Remote	Curriculum Update District and Superintendent's Goals—Vote First Reading Policy II First Reading of Policy IMB FY21 Budget Update	Administration Administration School Committee School Committee CFO
<b>November 23</b> Remote	Superintendent Search Process	School Committee
<b>Week of November 30</b>	Superintendent Search—Advertising Finalized Position Posted	School Committee
<b>December</b>	Finance Committee/Select Board FY22 Budget	
<b>December 3</b> Remote <b>Social Media Coordinators</b> <b>Wise</b> <b>Parks</b>	Introduce New HR Director School Calendar Superintendent Search—Appoint Preliminary Screening Committee Second Reading Policy II Continued First Reading of Policy IMB First Reading of BDF—Advisory Committees to the School Committee	Administration Administration School Committee  School Committee School Committee School Committee
<b>December 7</b> Remote	Permanent Building Committee Meeting	
<b>December 17</b> Remote	FY22 Prebudget Presentation RMHS Student Handbook Update & Review/Guidance Update Student Opportunity Act Second Reading of Policy BDF—Advisory Committees to the School Committee	Finance RMHS  Administration School Committee
<b>January 5</b> <b>4:00 p.m.</b> Remote	Superintendent Search—Screening Committee Orientation	School Committee
<b>January 6</b>	Superintendent Search—Application Deadline	School Committee
<b>January 7</b> Remote <b>Social Media Coordinators</b> <b>Robinson</b> <b>Brandt</b>	FY22 Budget Discussion FY21 Capital Plan School Improvement Plan Review	Administration
<b>January 11</b> Remote	Superintendent Search—Screening Committee meets to Select Semi-Finalists to be Interviewed	School Committee

<b>January 14</b>	FY22 Budget Discussion – Regular Day & Special Education	Administration
January 19 & 20	Superintendent Search – Screening Committee Interviews Semi-Finalists	School Committee
<b>January 21</b>	FY22 Budget Discussion Public Hearing on FY22 Budget Questions	Administration School Committee Administration
January 23	Superintendent Screening Committee Semi-Finalist Interviews	School Committee
<b>January 25</b>	FY22 Budget Discussion Final Vote	Administration School Committee
<b>January 26</b>	Superintendent Search –Interviews of Semi-Finalists	School Committee
January 27	Superintendent Search – Concludes Interviews of Semi-Finalists and Finalist Selection	School Committee
<b>Week of February 4 – 10</b>	Superintendent Search – Site Visits	School Committee
<b>February 11</b> <b>Social Media Coordinators</b> <b>Gaffen</b> <b>Parks</b>	Kindergarten Update Portrait of Graduate Update Superintendent’s Evaluation Process Superintendent Search - Vote to Appoint Superintendent	Administration Administration Administration School Committee
<b>February 24</b>	Finance Committee	FY22 Budget Presentation
<b>March 3</b> <b>Social Media Coordinators</b> <b>Robinson</b> <b>Nazzaro</b>	Finance Committee Town Hall – 7:30 p.m.	FY22 Budget Meeting
March 10	Finance Committee Town Hall – 7:30 p.m.	Vote TM Articles
<b>April 8</b> <b>Social Media Coordinators</b> <b>Wise</b> <b>Brandt</b>	Superintendent Evaluation Cycle	School Committee
<b>April 29</b>	Superintendent Evaluation Process School Choice SOA Plan Presentation and Discussion	Superintendent Superintendent Superintendent
<b>May</b>	Finance Committee Meeting	Finance Committee
<b>May 13</b> <b>Social Media Coordinators</b> <b>Gaffen</b> <b>Nazzaro</b>	Capital Update	Finance
<b>May 27</b>	SEPAC Presentation Quarterly Personnel Update Quarterly Financial Update	SEPAC Human Resources Finance



<b>June 6 (RMHS Field House)</b>	Graduation	School Committee
<b>June 10* Social Media Coordinators Robinson Wise</b>	FY 21 and 22 Budget Superintendent Evaluation	Administration School Committee
<b>June 17</b>	Teacher/Staff Recognition Declare Surplus Equipment Curriculum	Teachers Finance Administration
<b>July 1</b>	Reorganization Discuss Elementary Space Plan	School Committee School Committee

DRAFT