Upcoming Dates

- Sept. 26 – (7:00 p.m.) School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent’s Conference Room
- Sept. 27 – (3:30 p.m.) RTA General Meeting in the Endslow PAC
- Sept. 28 – Grade 6 – 12 Early Release; (District PLC Meetings (Elem – 1:15 p.m.; HS & MS – 1:30 p.m.)
- Sept. 29 – (after school) Elementary Building Meetings; (6:30 p.m.) RCASA Annual Meeting in the Endslow PAC
- Sept. 30 – (8:00 a.m.) Mentor Training; Football vs. Lexington
- October 1 – (8:00 a.m.) SAT Testing – RMHS is a test center
- October 2 – Rosh Hashanah begins at Sundown
- October 4 – Rosh Hashanah ends at Sundown
- October 5 – Walk/Bike to School Day
- October 7 – (7:00 p.m.) Football vs. Belmont @ RMHS
- October 10 – Columbus day – No School, Offices Closed
- October 11 – Yom Kippur begins at Sundown
- October 12 – Yom Kippur ends at Sundown
- October 15 – (8:00 a.m.) RMHS – PSAT Testing; (7:00 p.m.) RMHS Choral Fundraiser – Karaoke Night in the RMHS Cafeteria

Reading Public Schools Participates in White House Conference on Trauma

On Monday, September 19th, the Reading Public Schools was invited to attend a Conference on Trauma-Informed Approaches in School: Supporting Girls of Color and Rethinking Discipline at the White House in Washington, D.C. The Conference was sponsored by The White House Council on Women and Girls (CWG), the U.S. Department of Education (ED), the Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality (Center on Poverty), and The National Crittenton Foundation (TNCF). Our district was invited to attend because of the work that we have been doing with trauma-sensitive schools, school discipline, and health supports (including mental health supports). This convening brought together 14 states, the District of Columbia, school districts within those states, key researchers and experts in this topic, and nonprofit partners who have demonstrated a strong commitment to improving supports and outcomes for this vulnerable population. Reading was the only Massachusetts school district that attended and was represented by Superintendent of Schools John Doherty, Director of Student Services Carolyn Wilson, and Director of Social and Emotional Learning Sara Burd. The trip was funded through the five year Federal School Transformation Grant which the district received two years ago.
Although the title of the Conference focused on supporting girls of color, each of the practices discussed are easily transferable to any classroom and any student who has experienced trauma in their lives. There are children in every school district that experience trauma and Reading is no exception. In a study that was conducted by the Center for Disease Control, there is a very strong association between adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and other health conditions. If a child has four or more ACES in their life, they have a much greater chance of dying from one of the seven leading causes of death than children that have less than four ACES because of the biological and chemical changes that occur in their brain due to the stress early in their lives.

The Conference focused on how to reduce the stress associated with ACES and to create school cultures that support trauma informed approaches. Several leaders in trauma sensitive approaches as well as, several Senior White House Officials presented, including John King, Secretary of Education, Catherine Lhamon, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Civil Rights, Dr. Angela Diaz, Director of the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center, Dr. Roy Wade, Jr., Instructor of Pediatrics for Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, and Roberto Rodriguez, Deputy Assistant to the President for Education. There were also a panel discussion with students who have experienced trauma in their lives and how their schools addressed their situations. As part of the Conference, districts and states convened by region to share and discuss best practices related to discipline, trauma sensitive approaches in school settings, and how to eliminate barriers for successful implementation. Districts then had the opportunity to report back out to the larger group for feedback.

Sara Burd Reporting Out Reading’s Best Practices at the Conference
Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to field hockey, girls soccer, girls cross country, swimming, golf, and volleyball for wins this week.
- Special thanks to the RMHS and RISE at RMHS staffs for holding successful curriculum/back to school nights.
- Congratulations to the RMHS Football Team on their victory Friday evening against Winchester, 41-7. The team is now 2-1 and will host Lexington next week.
- Congratulations to RMHS Seniors Julia Hand and Anthony Wright who are this week’s High Five.
- Congratulations to the Barrows Elementary School Food Service Department, who was highlighted in the latest Blog post from the John Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition. You can access the blog here.

The Reading Public Schools is honored and proud to be representing the state of Massachusetts in these national discussions on how to create safe and supportive learning environments for all of our students. The Conference gave our district an opportunity to learn new ideas, as well as share our own best practices in this critical area.

RCASA Presents Film Screening on Student Stress, Sept. 29

The Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse will be celebrating their 10th Anniversary with a film screen of *Breaking Points*, September 29, 2016, from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the William Endslow Performing Arts Center at Reading Memorial High School.

*BREAKING POINTS*, is a short documentary film that raises awareness about the level of stress that high school and college students experience and the unhealthy ways that many of them cope. The film explores behavior that is becoming normalized among students - abusing prescription (Rx) medicines not prescribed to them, including Rx stimulants for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The film was directed by Tucker Capps, known for his work on A&E's "Intervention," and is a part of the Partnership for Drug Free Youth Medicine Abuse Project, a national action campaign with the goal of preventing and addressing prescription medicine abuse among teens.

The film includes candid perspectives from high school and college students and nationally recognized experts, challenging the misperceived "safety" and effectiveness of abusing prescription stimulants without a doctor's prescription.

The film serves as a catalyst to inform discussions about what parents and communities can do to support teens who are struggling to manage stress and anxiety. Along with interviews with high school and college students, the film also features interviews from researchers and field experts.

"Traveling the country to make this film, I've been struck by how the competition to get into college has become so intense, and so insular, that some students really start to lose perspective," said Tucker Capps. "Too many high schoolers and college kids believe that they'd be at a disadvantage if they don't use their friends' prescription stimulants to focus on papers and exams. My hope is that we can point out this trend to parents and educators before it becomes the new norm."

Along with the film screening, the Reading Coalition Against Substance Abuse will feature highlights from their coalition projects and Senator Jason Lewis will discuss a state committee study on marijuana issues.

Learn more via the RCASA website.
Tools for Assessing PLCs

In this Institute for Education Sciences paper, Cynthia Blitz and Rebecca Schulman (Rutgers University) suggest 49 carefully vetted instruments for assessing different aspects of professional learning communities. For starters, they spell out the logic model for PLCs:

- With funding, regular meeting times and locations, clear goals, facilitation, protocols, training, and technology support...
- Teacher teams look at data from common student assessments, identify challenges, set learning goals, compare and share instructional strategies, identify proficient and non-proficient students, decide on effective interventions and extensions, and continuously revise curriculum, pedagogy, and assessments...
- Leading to these outcomes: a culture of collaboration and trust, continued reflection and sharing of effective practices, knowledge dissemination, professional growth, more-effective teaching, continued critical reflection on goals and practices, increased job satisfaction, stronger commitment to the mission, and improved student achievement.

Blitz and Schulman then match 31 quantitative and 18 qualitative instruments with the following PLC variables:

- Beliefs about supportive conditions;
- Efficacy-related beliefs;
- Beliefs about school culture;
- Beliefs about school/PLC functioning;
- Beliefs about school-based change;
- Beliefs about group dynamics processes;
- Beliefs about group dynamics outcomes;
- Perceived level of empowerment;
- Perceived level of school academic optimism;
- Professional development outcomes;
- Instructional practices outcomes;
- Performance outcomes;
- Satisfaction outcomes;
- Team professional development outcomes;
- Group dynamics outcomes;
- Group dynamics processes;
- PLC team culture;
- Knowledge outcomes.

Quote of the Week….

“As long as you’re in my life, I’m not going to let quitting be easy for you. I am going to challenge you, confront you, push you, and coach you...because you’re worth it.”

Chase Meilke, Teacher

Online Resources for Teaching About the Presidential Campaign

In this article in *Education Week*, Madeline Will shares five free classroom resources for teaching and discussing this year’s election:

- Letters to the Next President 2.0 [www.letters2president.org](http://www.letters2president.org) – Students’ letters to the 45th president will be published by PBS member station KQED and the National Writing Project.
- Teaching Tolerance Election 2016 Resources [www.tolerance.org/election2016](http://www.tolerance.org/election2016) – These include a civility contract, civic activities, and PD webinars.
- C-Span Classroom [www.c-spanclassroom.org/campaign-2016.aspx](http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/campaign-2016.aspx) – Primary sources with historical and contemporary video clips and related discussion questions, handouts, and activity ideas.
- Join the Debates [www.joindebates.org](http://www.joindebates.org) – Curriculum materials for collaborative discussions on issues in the campaign and debates.


Reading Public Schools Happenings

**Joshua Eaton Staff Provides Breakfast for Birch Meadow Staff**

Last week, the Birch Meadow staff were pleasantly surprised with a breakfast provided by the Joshua Eaton staff. A special thanks to the Eaton staff for their kindness and generosity!

*Birch Meadow Breakfast Courtesy of Joshua Eaton Staff*
Disney Tweet of the Week

You'll be traveling the road between who you think you are & who you can be. Allow yourself to make the journey.

–Eduard (Princess Diaries)

Coolidge Provides Gift Bags for Reading Police Department

As part of "National Day of Service" the Coolidge homerooms of Lisa Emma, Amy. Kasprzak, Chris Friberg, & Janelle Chiue at Coolidge Middle School made gift bags for the members of the Reading Police Department Department. School Resource Officer Muolo had the pleasure of meeting with some of the students that worked on the project. Thank you Team Infinity!

Coolidge Students with School Resource Officer Mike Muolo

Stepping Stones...

- Congratulations to Killam teacher Lauren Gramolini on the birth of her daughter Paige Elizabeth on September 18th weighing in at 8 lbs., 5 oz. and 21" long.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
  - Nancy Cullen, Special Education Paraeducator, Wood End
  - Christina Keeley; Special Education Paraeducator/Assistant Cheer Coach, Parker/RMHS
  - Debra Lanigan; Social Worker, RMHS
  - Chris Santiano; Long Term Math Substitute, Parker
  - Diane Tzovaras, Special Education Paraeducator, Killam
  - Angel McRae, Extended Day Head Teacher; Killam/Eaton
  - MaryBeth McMahon, Long Term Grade 4 Substitute, Killam
- We have posted a new position. If interested, please visit [https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx](https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx) to view the job detail

<table>
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**Important Websites**

- **Help Desk (To submit a ticket)**
  help.desk@reading.k12.ma.us

- **RPS District Website**
  www.reading.k12.ma.us

- **Access Your Email**
  https://login.microsoftonline.com/

- **Baseline Edge**
  https://baseline.ioeducation.com/Site/login

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**Blazing Trails....**

"**Not Just Better, But Different.**" High school principal, David Geurin shares in his blog post what he does with his teachers in writing evaluative goals for the year. "I challenged our teachers to try to develop a learning plan that has the potential to be a game-changer for their own professional practice and for student learning. It's easy to get in a pattern of just doing mostly the same things but trying to do them a little better. As a result, we may miss great opportunities to do something that would be completely different and possibly transformational for student learning. It could be a game-changer." Read More

"**ASCD Short: Climate and Culture with Todd Whitaker.**" In this animated ASCD short video, author and presenter Todd Whitaker explains how the culture and climate of a school develops, and why it's important to gain an understanding of your school's culture in order to improve it. Read More

"**Brick by Brick: Building a Strong Foundation for Classroom Success.**" "Students don’t care what you know until they know you care." We have all heard this before. This expression manifests itself daily in successful educator and student interactions. In this Inservice post, ASCD Emerging Leader Cheryl Wilson explains what you can learn about building a great foundation from a popular childhood favorite, and she shares seven actions that support the development of positive relationships with students. Read More

"**Chinese Teacher Uses Facial-Recognition Tool to Gauge Student Interest.**" An educator in China is using facial-recognition technology to determine ether his students are interested in lessons. He plans to modify his teaching according to the level of boredom detected. Read More

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**Contact Us**

The Pathways newsletter is published weekly for the Reading Public School Community. If you have anything that you would like to share, please email your information to John Doherty at john.doherty@reading.k12.ma.us

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Regular Education Paraeducator (Office Staff), 35 hours biweekly Birch Meadow Elementary School

Special Education Teacher, 1.0FTE Reading Memorial High School

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Have a Great Week!