

Please direct inquiries to:

Dr. Yamil Sanchez, 484-258-7030

mcelroyc@readingsd.org

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Reading School District's Anne Fisher Honored with 2023 Paving the Way to Educational Success Advocate Award

READING, PA — Anne Fisher, the Reading School District Director of Student Services, has been honored as one of 12 state recipients of the [2023 Paving the Way to Educational Success Advocate Award](#).

This recognition, presented by the [Paving the Way \(PTW\) Conference](#), celebrates Fisher's outstanding commitment to ensuring educational stability for homeless and foster care youth.

Fisher's dedication was highlighted during the 2023 PTW Conference in Pittsburgh, sponsored by Pennsylvania's [Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness](#) (ECYEH) Program. Award recipients were commended for their efforts in addressing vulnerable youth's educational needs, advocating for policy reforms, and removing barriers to education.

"I am incredibly honored to receive this award, but credit truly goes to the entire Reading School District team," said Fisher. "I see myself as an advocate for the invaluable work being done by our entire staff, who are engaged in a collective effort to support the wellbeing and success of our students experiencing homelessness or housing instability."

At RSD, Fisher has been instrumental in leading initiatives to support students experiencing housing instability. A team of 43 social workers strategically placed across all school buildings serve as primary contacts for families navigating homelessness, providing access to crucial support and resources.

Leanne Eckenrode, RSD's Families in Transition Coordinator, is a previous recipient of the same award for her efforts at Reading High School.

Despite a temporary decline in identified students facing housing insecurity during the pandemic due to rental assistance programs, Fisher anticipates a resurgence of students in need as temporary relief programs end.

In recent years, RSD has implemented numerous initiatives to assist students in transition. These include comprehensive outreach efforts, the provision of essential supplies through [Knights' Closets](#) in all 19 schools, and partnerships with [Helping Harvest's Weekender Program](#). There are also plans for Knights' Keep, a drop-in center at the high school catering to students experiencing homelessness, providing shower and laundry facilities.

“Anne Fisher's recognition is a testament to her exceptional dedication, as well as the dedication of our entire team of social workers and support staff,” said Dr. Jennifer Murray, RSD Superintendent. “Anne embodies our district's climate of compassion and support, and this award highlights the impact her efforts have on the lives of our students and their families.”

The Reading School District remains committed to fostering an inclusive educational environment, particularly for students facing housing instability, under the leadership and dedication of Ms. Fisher.

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Note: For a photo of Anne Fisher, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/zmxjvsy6>. Pictured from left to right are two other award recipients; Anne Fisher, RSD Director of Student Support Services; Kristen Hoffa, ECYEH Region 2 Coordinator, Berks County Intermediate Unit; and Storm Camara, ECYEH State Coordinator.