

POWER *of* PLACE

LEARNING COMMUNITIES



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

By now, I hope that you have settled into your school year routines, whether in school, the classroom, the district office, or family life. Our daily habits define our existence: Most are automatic, but others must be carefully cultivated.

I was first introduced to the concept of “habits of mind,” in the 1980s when I read the work of authors [Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick](#). They settled on [16 habits](#) that are

essential for developing an active, inquisitive, and curious stance toward the world. Some are strikingly parallel to SEL, such as managing impulsivity, thinking flexibly, listening with empathy.

As important as these habits of mind are the habits of the heart. This concept was made famous in the 1985 book "[Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life](#)," which argues for the importance of community. This book resonates in our COVID-impacted world, as we continue to focus on how we relate to one another both formally and informally.

Power of Place Learning Communities embraces both the habits of the mind *and* the heart. Both are essential for the continuous learning and development of all students, from the youngest children to adults at all stages of the life cycle. We are honored to help you build these habits throughout this academic year and beyond.

With warmth and appreciation,

Jane

Starting next week!

Reimagining Middle School: Walking the Path Together

Middle Schools are "the middle child" in K-12 education. Not quite elementary school, not quite high school, middle school is a space that evokes ambivalence and even dread, in addition to awe and delight. This year we are offering our first-ever "Reimagining Middle School" working group in collaboration with our partners at WPS. We invite you to participate in this year-long cohort experience with your colleagues across Essex County. **Register for our working group [here](#).**

Our first meeting is Monday, September 18, from 3:45 - 5:45 pm, and spots are still available. If you can't join us for the first session, still register to participate in upcoming sessions.

Registration Open!

Reimagining Middle School
Walking the Path Together

Join a working group of 25-30 middle school enthusiasts to dream together about:

- What are the assets of the middle school stage of life? How can we leverage these assets for a more engaged learning experience?
- What are the developmental needs of adolescent learners?
- What is the "typical" middle school experience in America today?
- What is the purpose of middle school?
- Who is drawn to teach and lead in middle school settings? What do they have in common?
- How can the community be part of the middle school experience?

Participate in this year-long cohort experience of:

- coalition building activities;
- site visits to exemplary middle school models; and
- multi-stakeholder visioning activities such as Portrait of the Graduate and Back to the Future protocol sessions.

Register Here:
bit.ly/ReimaginingMiddleSchool

Essex County
LEARNING COMMUNITY

WPS



Spotlight: District Strategic Plans

Most school districts operate under some type of strategic plan, and the best ones are used as a living, breathing roadmap to a clear set of goals. The Salem and Hamilton-Wenham Public Schools have recently completed their 2023-2026 strategic plans (linked below), and both are worth a close read. These plans were created in partnership with their stakeholders and educators, and paint a clear picture for where each district wants to go and how they plan to get there. Both plans are framed around bold - but achievable - goals that reflect each community's priorities, and will guide and define their work through 2026.

Read the Salem district plan [here](#) and the Hamilton-Wenham district plan [here](#).

If you have a strategic plan to share or could use support in developing one, please reach out to us.



Opportunity

Teacher Action Research Fellowship Culmination and Call for Applicants

We are grateful for our partners at [The Teacher Collaborative](#), who lead the **ECLC Teacher Action Research Fellowship**. TARF is an 18-month learning experience that offers a collaborative and generative space for teachers and others in non-supervisory positions (e.g., school psychologists). **Cohort 1** finished their work at the end of the last school year, and together created an [Advocacy Platform](#), which describes their efforts to research, learn about, and pilot strong equity and learner-driven practices, and lays out their priorities and recommendations to peers, district leaders, and beyond. Cohort 1 “graduates” will conduct a workshop at the Fall Gathering on November 7.

Cohort 2 begins this fall!! Please consider nominating a teacher for this powerful leadership experience. **TARF participants receive a stipend, and have the opportunity**

to earn up to 2 graduate credits and up to 10 PDPs per year. [Learn more](#) and apply [here](#).



The poster for the ECLC Fall Gathering features a warm, autumnal color palette with orange, yellow, and brown tones. At the top right is the Essex County Learning Community logo. The main title is "ECLC FALL GATHERING" in bold, followed by the subtitle "Windows & Mirrors: Teaching, Learning, and Leading Across Difference" in a cursive font. A date and time box on the left specifies "Tues, Nov 7 8am-1pm" at Amesbury High School. The central text invites participants to a full day of learning with Dr. Jane Feinberg and workshops on UDL, SEL, Anti-Racism, and Equity. A raffle prize announcement is also included. At the bottom, a section titled "Guest Faculty will include:" lists seven individuals with their names and titles: Jane Feinberg (Plenary Speaker), 23 Teacher Action Research Fellows, Carrie Conoway, Gil Noam, Luis Ortega, Gabrielle Schlichtmann, and Ed Walker.

Save the Date

Nov. 7 ECLC Fall Gathering

Election Day is a PD day in most districts, so at the request of superintendents, this year ECLC is inviting all staff from across our communities together for our first-ever full day of professional learning. Join us on November 7 at Amesbury High School for *Teaching, Learning, and Leading Across Difference*, and learn from field experts on relevant topics including UDL, SEL, making better use of data, and what it means to be a culturally responsive educator, leader, and human. You can [pre-register here](#), and check out the agenda [here](#).

2023-2024 Learning Agenda is Live

The 2023-2024 Learning Agenda is always available to you [online](#), and is updated regularly with dates and registration links. You can pre-register for items that pique your interest [here](#), and we will contact you when registration opens. Please share the link with your peers, and help us spread the word!

Resources and Opportunities in the Field

Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety: Creating a Culture of Care

Christina Pate, Theresa Pfister and Tye Ripma from the Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety have created a guide that provides local, regional, and state education leaders

Psychology Today: Top Parental Concerns? Screen Time and Social Media

A recent poll conducted by the University of Michigan Health C.S. Mott Children's Hospital found that screen time, social media use, and internet safety were the top concerns for parents headed into the new school year. Diane E. Graber, M.A.,

practical information on developing systems and structures to bolster educator well-being through challenging times. Read more [here](#).

author of *Raising Humans in a Digital World*, offers solutions for parents to navigate these concerns. Read more [here](#).

The New Teacher Project: Reimagine Your Workforce Strategy

The New Teacher Project's new talent framework is a comprehensive approach that empowers school and system leaders to develop a workforce strategy that supports all educators to do their best work. Vice President of Service, Learning, and Design, Jamila Newman, shares a video on how you can use their framework to start the new school year strong. Watch the video [here](#).

Learning Forward: How to achieve collective efficacy in a time of division

Steven Katz and Jenni Donohoo of Learning Forward share their thoughts on how leaders and teachers can successfully implement evidence-based practices in their schools and classrooms, while simultaneously managing a whirlwind of operational demands. Read more [here](#).

Just for Fun: Salem's Back to School Video



If you have an event you would like to publicize, please contact us at info@powerofplacelc.org.

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PETER & ELIZABETH
TOWER FOUNDATION

We'd love to hear from you! Contact us at info@powerofplacelc.org to share feedback and let us know any ideas you have for a future newsletter!

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