

POWER *of* PLACE

LEARNING COMMUNITIES



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

“When people can’t see a path, they stop dreaming of the destination. To ignite their will, we need to show them the way.” This is one of the many standout quotes from ***Hidden Potential*** by Adam Grant, a new book I’ve been reading. Grant is an organizational psychologist who explores the science of motivation, generosity, rethinking, and potential. He draws on scientific studies and human stories to help us see beyond myth and conventional wisdom.

I admit to being somewhat obsessed by the notion of hidden potential. I contend that there are many in our midst who are but one invitation away from more fully expressing who they are and what they can contribute. At its core, education offers us all that invitation – a welcome mat to opportunities, experiences, and supports that build individual and collective capacities. Uncovering students’ hidden potential requires that they be seen, heard, and appreciated in and beyond the classroom.

Just before the holiday, teams from Essex County school districts participating in our Reimagining Middle School working group visited a pilot program at the Collins Middle School in Salem that is, in many ways, revealing students’ hidden potential. Laura Tota will share more about **the visit** later in this newsletter. Students told us that through their experience in the pilot they are more motivated to learn and take risks, unlike the way they felt in the traditional classroom. Many thanks to **WPS Institute**, Salem’s professional development partner, for helping to make our site visit possible.

Hidden potential exists at all levels of the education workforce. Like students, educators need opportunities for growth and development in order to engage in ongoing learning and reflection. Educators also need space to stretch beyond your comfort zone. Just like students, educators

need to be seen, heard, and appreciated in and beyond their school or classroom.

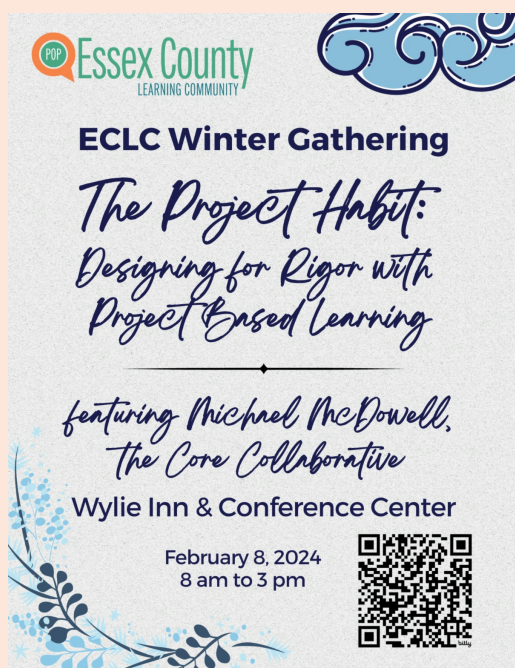
In our celebrity-oriented culture, it seems that only the naturally “gifted” can achieve great things, but that isn’t true. Grant says that growth is not about the genius you possess, it’s about the character you develop. He explores how to build the “character skills and motivational structures, and how to design systems that create opportunities for those who have been underrated and overlooked.” In some ways, the book extends what Carol Dweck offered us in *Mindset*. (If you are interested in reading the book with your colleagues, [here](#) is a list of discussion questions.)

Power of Place is committed to uncovering all of our educators’ hidden potential so that they are able to do the same for students. There is so much potential in all of us - we just need to tap in and give it space to develop.

With warmth and appreciation,

Jane

Save the Date! ECLC Winter Gathering 2024



Essex County
LEARNING COMMUNITY


ECLC Winter Gathering

*The Project Habit:
Designing for Rigor with
Project Based Learning*

featuring *Michael McDowell,*
The Core Collaborative

Wylie Inn & Conference Center

February 8, 2024
8 am to 3 pm



The Project Habit: Designing for Rigor with Project-Based Learning

Life is full of authentic challenges that can only be met with clarity, creative problem-solving, collaboration, and feedback. School should be the same. Looking to close opportunity gaps while providing students with real world, authentic learning experiences? Join us for a day with Project Based Learning (PBL) thought leader **Michael McDowell** to discuss his framework to eliminate systemic opportunity gaps by developing critical 21st century learning skills that will serve our students for life. Register [here](#).

Register Now: SEED for Administrators

A chance for administrators to become stronger anti-racist, justice-seeking leaders

Join us to:

- Develop shared language for talking about power and privilege and helping others to do the same
- Practice structures for building relationships across difference in their own sites
- Build capacity to facilitate SEED structures and frameworks for building relationships across difference in their own sites
- Cultivate relationships with a cohort of peers across districts to build professional networks with thought partners and expand access to a range of ideas and strategies
- Build a commitment to a long-term process (not a

one-time event) for leading for justice (including supporting a SEED seminar at their sites)

Register **here**.

SEED for Administrators



Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED) is a peer-led model, that has - until now - been unavailable to administrators.

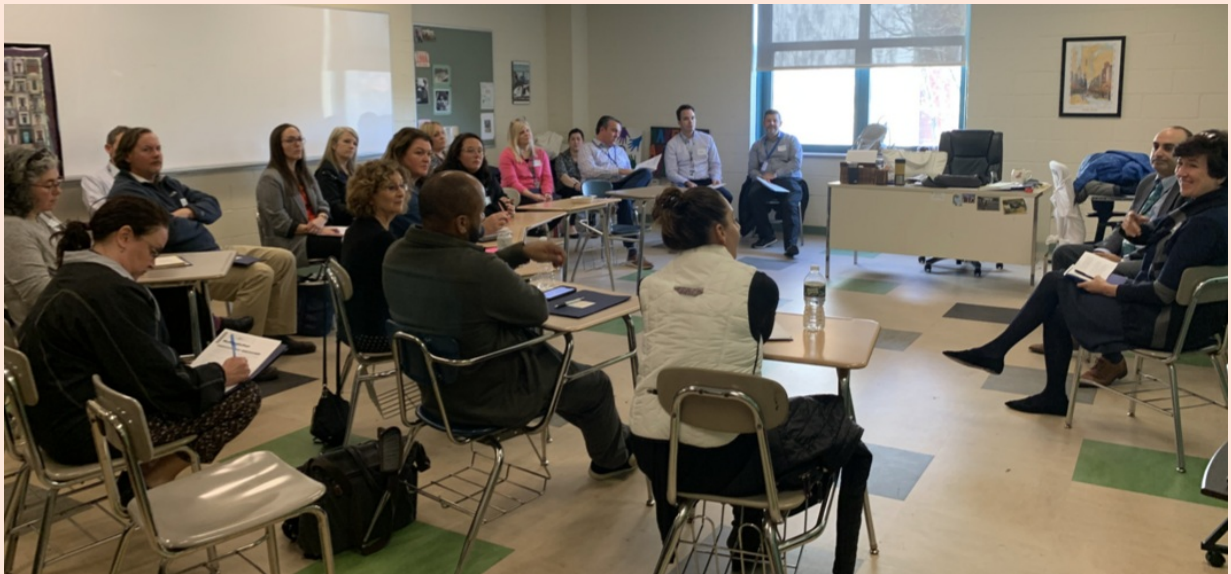
School and district leaders are invited to join us for our new **SEED for Administrators**, and to join their peers in a unique SEED experience.

February 29 | March 13 | March 27
8 am to 3 pm
Wylie Conference Center
Beverly, MA



***Access the updated 2023-2024
Learning Agenda here.***

Blog Post: Middle School Pilot Site Visit



Picture this: A group of 7th graders stand at lab tables, preparing to mix test tubes of liquid together. Their faces light up as the liquids combine and transform from clear to white, and from water-thin to paste-thick. The volume in the room rises as 11- and 12-year-olds begin to excitedly unpack the science behind what they just observed.

Welcome to one moment in the middle of a typical day at Salem's Collins Middle School Pilot Program. On Nov. 16 a group of educators and administrators representing Beverly, Georgetown, and Lynn got to see this experiment - and listen in on the follow up conversations - during a site visit to the pilot program for the Essex County Learning Community's Reimagining Middle School Working Group. Click **here** to read more.

Resources from the Field



Cultivating Justice, Joy, & Genius Through Racial Equity

In this first four parts of this five part series hosted by Paul Gorski, antiracist education advocates **Gholdy Muhammad, Cornelius Minor, Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz,** and **Dena Simmons** share what it means to cultivate justice, joy, and genius through on-the-ground racial equity commitments and actions in schools. The fifth session will bring all four featured speakers together for a joint conversation facilitated by Paul. The series will take place via Zoom on March 7, 14, 21, 28, and April 2, 2024. Join them for five evenings of deep, intimate, real conversations about racial equity in classrooms and schools. Register [here](#).

ScienceDaily®

Your source for the latest research news

How Teachers Would Handle Student Violence Against Educators

For the first time, teachers in a nationwide study have told researchers what strategies they think work best to deal with student violence against educators. Teachers rated suspending or expelling students as the least effective way of addressing violence, despite the popularity of 'zero tolerance' policies in many school districts. Instead, teachers rated prevention policies, such as counseling for troubled students and improving school climate, as the best strategy for dealing with violence. Read the full article and study from Science Daily and Ohio State University [here](#).



Crafting Anti-Racist Narratives for Community Development

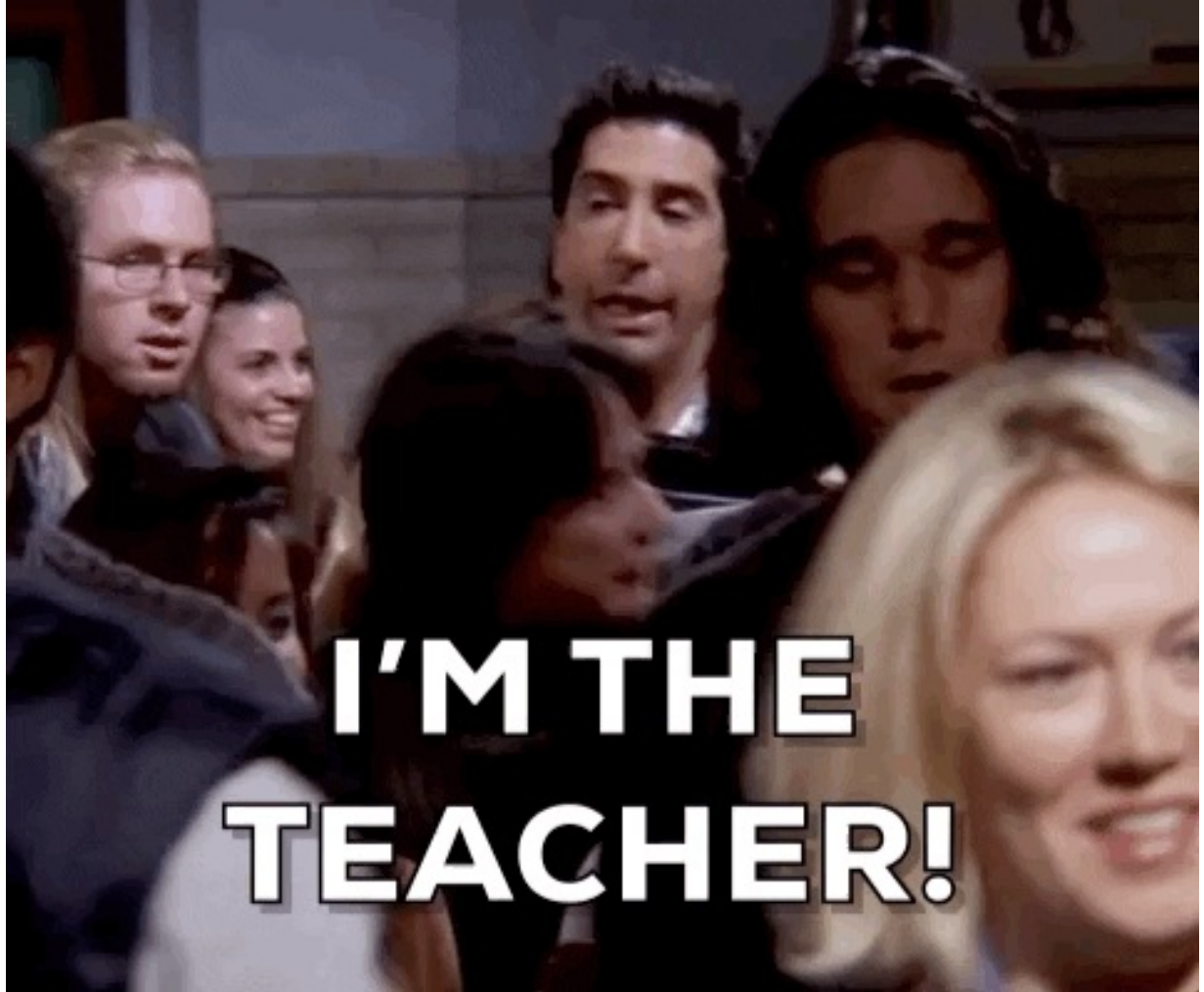
Our partners at Storytellers for Change have just released **this toolkit**, which utilizes storytelling frameworks they have designed that aim to guide you through a five-step process to analyze dominant narratives and devise anti-racist narrative strategies. The toolkit was created in collaboration with ThirdSpace Action Lab, a grassroots solution studio dedicated to prototyping innovative, place-based solutions for socio-economic problems impacting communities of color. You can also access the webinar with the Founder of Storytellers for Change, Luis Ortega, in which joins a panel to discuss these dominant narratives.



Connectivity vs. Loneliness: The Modern Social Life

Chris Miller, a Social Connection Thinker and podcaster for Capture Connection Studios, reflects on the impacts of social connection in the digital space. "I couldn't put the phone down. A lot of us feel that way. We can't turn off the TV, log out of the video game, get away from Instagram... The accessibility, the variety, the excitement - what is it costing us?" Earlier this year, the Surgeon General selected social connection as 2023's national health priority and the World Health Organization is developing a Global Commission on Social Connection. Read more of Chris' blog [here](#).

Just for Fun



*Do you have something “Just for Fun” to share with your fellow educators?
Send it to us at info@powerofplacelc.org.*

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