

POWER *of* PLACE

LEARNING COMMUNITIES



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Nationwide, too many of our young people grapple with unthinkable crises, challenges, and loss each day. Even as I write this, wildfires continue to rage across Los Angeles, leaving a massive path of destruction. At least three LA Unified schools have already been destroyed, and more than 600,000 students don't know when - or where - they will be able to return to class.

This type of tragedy and uncertainty hits students particularly hard both physically and psychologically. In LA, this will be especially true for the many young people who were already struggling with mental health challenges before the wildfires ever began.

Counselors like Craig Harris help youth navigate through crises big and small every day. The former Director of Counseling and SEL at the Swampscott Public Schools and long-time head of emotional disability support programs for students, Harris is currently a school consultant and counselor in Greater Boston. He recently created a framework for organizing mental health services in school after participating in ECLC's Mental Health

and Restorative Practices project last year. Harris details this framework in his new blog series, “Right Student, Right Service, Right Time.”

We will feature each post of his 7-part series over the next seven newsletters, with the **introduction** featured in today’s edition. To mark the launch of this series, Craig and I talked about some of the lessons he has learned. You can read some of the highlights from our conversation **here**.

The importance of community in every day life - and especially in times of crisis - cannot be overstated. In one of her first posts of 2025, education coach and author Elena Aguilar put it this way: “Communal learning meets our core human needs of connection, competence, and purpose. And having our needs met energizes and inspires us.”

Wishing you all a healthy, safe, and meaningful new year.

In connection,

Jane

Upcoming
EVENTS

JAN 27 **ECLC Book Club**
Zoom

FEB 6 **Winter Gathering**
Wylie Inn & Conference Center

FEB 26 **SEED for Administrators**
Wylie Inn & Conference Center

VIEW OUR COMPLETE
2024-25 LEARNING AGENDA HERE

Registration Now Open!
ECLC 2025 Winter Gathering:

ECLC 2025 Winter Gathering



Tapping into the Wisdom Within

Join us on February 6 for an
inspirational day of workshops led by
ECLC educators!

Featured topics will include:
Strategies for visual learning, working with
transgender students, facilitating learning
communities, and more ... and a celebration
of our Teacher Action Research Fellows.

Learn more and [register today!](#)

February 6, 2025 | 8 am to 3 pm
Wylie Inn & Conference Center
Check-in and Breakfast begins 7:30 am



New!
ECLC Book Club

Join us to explore unique classroom
tools that help students value
human differences



Podcast
Mothers Quest



Manga
My Brain is Different



Graphic Novel
Invisible

January 27. 4-5:30 pm on Zoom
Register today!



ECLC Book Club

**Register Now:
SEED for Administrators**



SEED FOR ADMINISTRATORS



Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED) is a peer-led model for administrators only. This is a space for exploration, reflection, connection and deep learning for school and district leaders.

February 26 | March 5 | March 12 from 8 am to 3 pm
Wylie Inn & Conference Center in Beverly

Register today!



Ongoing Opportunity



Democracy in Dialogue

An ECLC Exploratory
Mini-Grant Experience

As the nation nears its 250th anniversary it is vital for young people to break down barriers and build bridges to better understand the people around them. Join us for a new PD series designed to:

- **Empower and prepare educators** to facilitate conversations between students within their classrooms, schools, and communities.
- **Leverage the power of objects and place in learning**, and help educators learn to build partnerships between local community organizations and their classrooms.
- **Partner and utilize resources and materials** from Essex National Heritage and the Smithsonian to provide a dynamic and meaningful professional development with tangible takeaways and resources.
- **Prompt meaningful dialogue** amongst young people across our communities.

*This series will be led by **Brian Sheehy**,
History Department Coordinator at
North Andover High School*

[REGISTER HERE](#)

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Resources



Why Schools Need to Work for Adults as Well as Kids

When Jal Mehta, Professor of Education at Harvard Graduate School and Co-Director of Deeper Learning Dozen, began observing and writing about school reform in the '00s, there was a frequent refrain among reformers: "Are you in it for the kids or the adults?" The idea was that educators were not serving the needs of kids, unions were obstacles to reform, and that reformers should steamroll recalcitrant educators for the benefit of students. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see this is a deeply flawed theory, and for any kind of organization to thrive in the long run, it has to work for its employees as well as its clients.

Read the full article [here](#).

BROOKINGS

The disengagement gap: Why student engagement isn't what parents expect

One of the biggest challenges schools across the United States face at the start of 2025 is the persistently high levels of student chronic absenteeism. Having skyrocketed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the latest data shows it remains almost double pre-pandemic levels, with approximately one in four students missing more than ten percent of school days each year. Frustratingly, for everyone involved, including school leaders, teachers, families and students themselves, schools have only seen marginal decreases in the years since the pandemic.

Read the full study [here](#).



What Does "Youth Apprenticeship" Mean? The Answer, According to Each State

The term "youth apprenticeship" seems relatively straightforward, but trying to understand exactly what it means can often feel like a dizzying exercise in semantics. Does it refer to youth in Registered Apprenticeship? Pre-apprenticeship? Non-registered apprenticeships designed for high school students? The answer, in some ways, is all of the above. That's because, in the United States, there is no federal legal definition of "youth apprenticeship." In the absence of a

MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED

The film "Most Likely to Succeed," which debuted in 2015 to wide acclaim, is now available for free. It is a powerful documentary examining education in America and inspiring school communities to re-imagine what students and teachers are capable of doing. Ideal for school-wide PD days and community screenings. The first five minutes are an evocative prompt for portrait of a graduate conversations.

Watch the film [here](#).

federal definition, states have stepped in to create their own, and, without federal standards to shape them, these definitions often look quite different from one another.

Read the full study [here](#).

Food for Thought



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

Power of Place Learning Communities | 2 Burlington Woods Drive Suite 100 | Burlington, MA 01803 US

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