

POWER *of* PLACE

LEARNING COMMUNITIES



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Last week, U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon ordered state education agencies to “certify compliance” with anti-discrimination laws as a condition of continuing to receive federal funding.

Some states and local districts have already complied, effectively wiping out all programs that address diversity, equity, and inclusion. New Hampshire has even launched a **website** listing out their school districts and identifying those that have pledged to comply, and those that have not.

Thankfully, there are other states - including Massachusetts - that have stood their ground. Education officials in Minnesota and New York refused to comply with the administration’s order, while California and Vermont told its schools they need not respond. Chicago’s mayor promised to sue over any cuts to federal funding.

And earlier this week Massachusetts Secretary of Education and Interim Commissioner

Patrick Tutwiler issued a bold and defiant statement, pledging that our state will “continue to promote diversity” in schools. The Commonwealth’s schools, he noted, are already in compliance with anti-discrimination laws.

“Massachusetts is home to the best K-12 schools in the country,” he wrote in his **April 9 letter to the U.S. Department of Education**. “We know that having people of diverse perspectives and backgrounds—as educators, administrators, and leaders in our education system—is a strength, not a flaw. It is a reason for our success, not a barrier to it.”

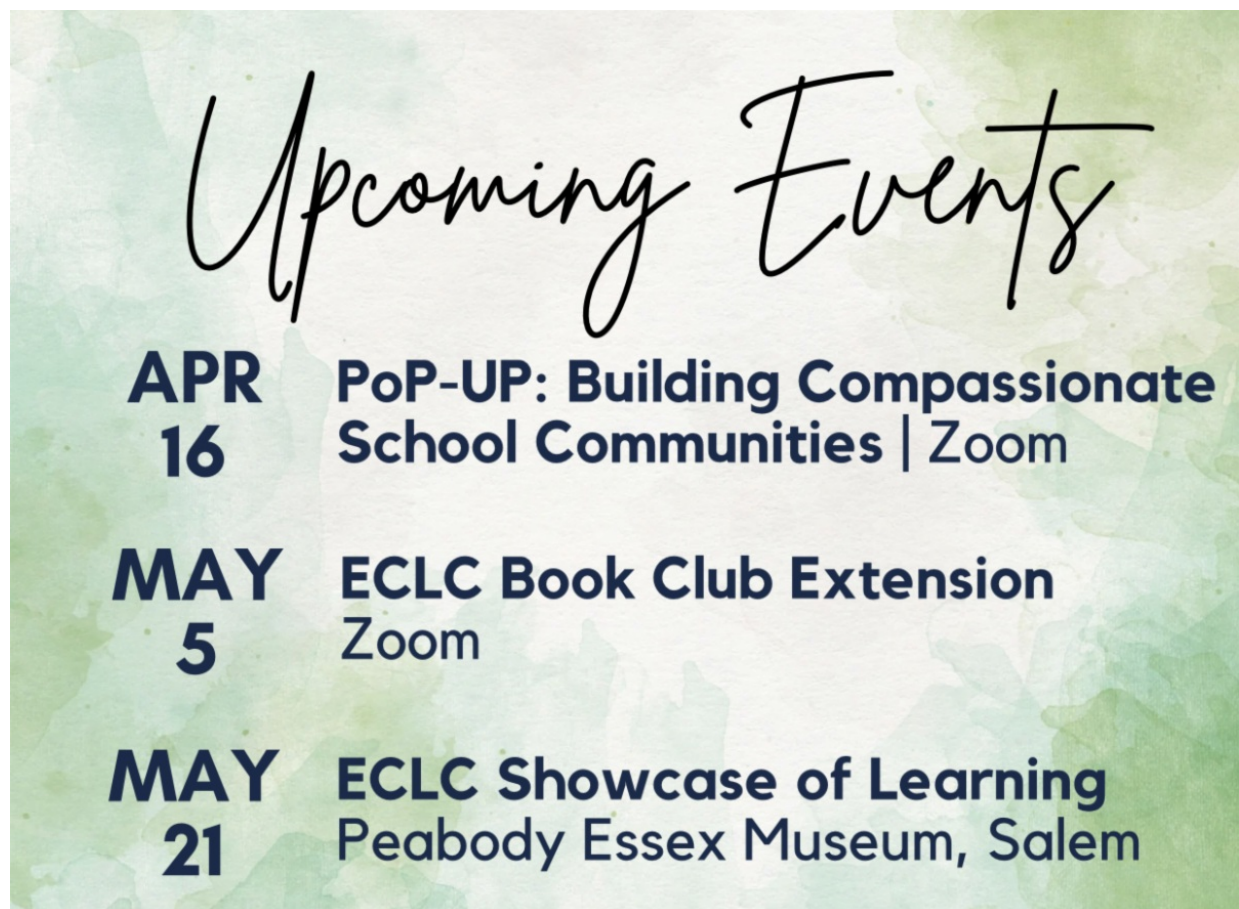
And just yesterday, Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell joined 15 other U.S. attorneys general and the Governor of Pennsylvania in suing the Trump Administration to restore states’ access to Department of Education programs that support low-income and unhoused students, and provide funding for other services to address the long-term effects of the pandemic on K-12 students. We are so grateful to the Secretary and the Attorney General for staying true to the values of inclusion that we all share.

We know from research and experience that belonging is a pre-condition for achievement, especially for young people who have been historically marginalized because of ability, appearance, race, language, income, gender, or religion. At Power of Place and our flagship, the Essex County Learning Community, we know that effectively teaching, learning, and leading across differences is an essential step in creating a compassionate, inclusive, and well-functioning society. We as educators must learn, model, and teach what it means to live peacefully, to interrogate the assumptions we all carry, and when necessary, to engage in what Amanda Ripley calls “good conflict.”

My hope is that we all take pride in the strength of the Commonwealth’s leaders. Despite the missives coming out of Washington DC, I hope that we can all work together to continue to build a society that welcomes, appreciates, and makes space for everyone.

In connection,

Jane



**5/21 Spring Showcase:
Register Now to Present or to Attend**



Showcase of Learning
A Celebration of Community

MAY 21, 2025 | 4:30-7:30 PM
PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM



Register to present



RSVP to attend

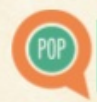


PoP-Ups at ECLC
Register Now



The Children's Room
caring grief support for children, teens, and families

&



Essex County
LEARNING COMMUNITY


Building Compassionate School Communities:

Creating a Grief-Supportive Culture



April 16, from 4-6 pm on Zoom
[Learn more and register here](#)

How do you approach concerning student behavior??



Join us to talk through
some collaborative
proactive solutions at the
next ECLC Book Club



May 5, 4-5:30 pm on Zoom
[View suggested readings and
register here](#)

Opportunity for the ECLC Community



**Learn More and
Apply Here!**

The Educating All Learners Alliance is launching their 2025 New Champions Fund Opportunity. The EALA New Champions Fund is an annual unrestricted competitive sub-grant and year-long mentorship to support leaders of color, or allies of the equity in education movement, who are actively working to support students with disabilities, including students who are marginalized or come from underserved communities and those experiencing poverty.

Mental Health Blog Series with Craig Harris: Part 6



Don't miss this week's blog post by Craig Harris, former Director of Counseling and SEL at the Swampscott Public Schools and long-time head of emotional disability support programs for students. Harris has written a 7-part blog series for Power of Place that delves into his framework for organizing mental health services. Today, we feature Harris' sixth post in the series: "[Right Time I](#)"

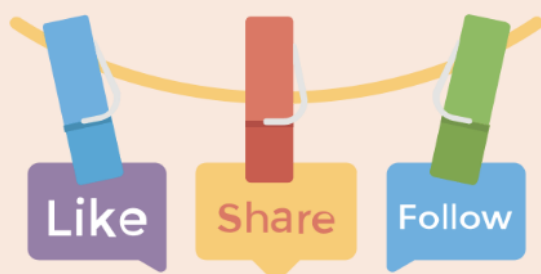
Winter Gathering Photo Gallery

The ECLC community gathered on April 7 for "Tapping into the Wisdom Within," our long awaited Winter Gathering. This year we flipped the script and offered sessions designed and led exclusively by Essex County educators. The day served as a welcome reminder of the depth of wisdom across our educator community, and convinced us to do this again. Stay tuned later this year for opportunities to lead sessions in the future!



[Click here to view full photo gallery from Tapping into the Wisdom Within.](#)

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Power of Place is on LinkedIn and Facebook!

Follow us for photos, links to resources, upcoming opportunities, and more.

Resources



Students Are Feeling Burned Out. Here's How You Can Help

School doesn't have to be a "grind" for teens. But a new report explores the pressures many teens face in their academic lives, how it impacts their education and mental health, and the role parents and adults play in applying and limiting that pressure. Unpacking Grind Culture in American Teens: Pressure, Burnout, and the Role of Social Media, was co-authored by the **Center for Digital Thriving**, one of the Ed School's emerging research and innovation labs housed at Project Zero. Written in partnership with Common Sense Media and the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University, the study asked 1,545 teens ages 13–17 about the specific pressures they face, and how people and technology impact those pressures for better and, often, worse.

Read the full article **here**.



Three tips to foster teacher self-efficacy and sustainable coaching

Everyone likes to feel valuable, needed, and in-demand, and it's understandable that coaches may perceive being needed as evidence of their impact of coaching. Too often, however, it may be a sign that teachers are overly dependent on the coach's advice, judgment, or praise of their teaching. This kind of dependency keeps the coach busy, but it stands in the way of teachers developing a strong sense of self-efficacy and confidence in their ability to understand and meet the needs of all students. It also can result in some teachers monopolizing the coach's time and attention, leaving other teachers without consistent access to coaching support.

Get their tips **here**.



Sense of Belonging

A sense of belonging allows us to feel included, respected, and supported in school. It is heavily tied to our own identities, supports the development of a positive identity, and is context and culture-dependent. Particularly among culturally and historically marginalized students, school settings have the potential to be a supportive environment, fostering positive identity development; however, they also may be a source of adversity, when trust and belonging are not established. Students who feel a stronger Sense of belonging in school typically have greater self-efficacy and academic success.

Read the full study **here**.



The Education Table Podcast: Scaffolding Executive Function Skills

Executive function is one of the most essential skills we can teach our students—it helps them plan, problem-solve, and navigate the world independently. These cognitive processes are critical for fostering purposeful, motivated learners. But executive function skills don't just develop on their own. They need to be explicitly taught and scaffolded—for both students and adults. In this episode, Katie Novak dives into the pivotal role of executive function in education and explains why it's key to building learner agency.

Listen to the podcast **here**.

Just for Fun

When a teacher wants to know if there are any questions, she doesn't mean any question. She wants to be asked about the thing she's teaching. So if she's teaching you about Mexico, don't ask if "Bubbles" is a good name for a hamster.



Russ

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

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