The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) is continuing to develop and share this newsletter during the COVID-19 pandemic and throughout the 2020-2021 school year. This edition primarily includes a number of updates on items listed in the September edition (e.g., with registration links or funding opportunity details that are now available and posted). As schools, districts, teachers, students, and families navigate an especially challenging school year, we hope that these resources are helpful and welcome any feedback.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please email the Office of Student and Family Support at achievement@mass.gov.

Racial Consciousness Institutes - Update

Online registration and dates are now available for the 2nd pathway (in November): Anti-Racist Family Engagement.

The Department is partnering with The Equity Imperative for virtual professional development opportunities throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Join us in a learning
series to support the use of tools in your racial equity journey. This series is offered through five learning pathways (topic areas). Each learning pathway will have three virtual sessions (two hours each), aligned with Equity Imperative’s theory of action to **Illuminate, Indicate, and Navigate**.

**Pathway #2: Anti-Racist Family Engagement.** This virtual three session (2 hours each) professional development will support participants in unpacking the research on effective family engagement and developing strategies to ensure family engagement is aligned with an anti-racist approach. The dates for this pathway are **November 5, 12, and 19** – all from 2:00-4:00pm.

For more details, see the [online registration form](#). If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Student and Family Support via [achievement@mass.gov](mailto:achievement@mass.gov).

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**Elementary School Principals PD and Networking - Update**

The Elementary School Principals PD and Networking Series [flyer](#) is now available on our [Early Learning website](#) with more dates and details, including the [registration link](#) for the Tues., Oct. 27 statewide kick-off event.

The Department’s Early Learning Team and the Massachusetts School Administrators’ Association (MSAA) is hosting a series of networking and professional development opportunities for elementary principals (Preschool-3rd grade) during the 2020-2021 school year. The theme for this year’s series is **Creating a Caring Community: Caring for Ourselves and Our Staff Using a Trauma-Informed Lens.** Please contact a member of the Early Learning team ([achievement@mass.gov](mailto:achievement@mass.gov)) with any questions.

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**Strengthening Social and Emotional Skills during COVID-19 - Update**

[Online registration](#) is now available for the Webinar - Strengthening Social and Emotional Skills during COVID-19: Addressing Problems of Practice – Wed., Oct. 21 - 2:00-3:30pm

Educators across the Commonwealth are putting in place a range of programs and practices to promote students’ social and emotional skills to help alleviate stress, anxiety, and isolation in the COVID-19 context. This interactive workshop is designed to support these efforts by helping educators improve and address challenges related to SEL practices. Participants will select and explore specific problems of practice through brief expert presentations, facilitated peer-learning discussions, and hands-on explorations of key resources.

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**Grant Opportunity - Integrating Social and**
Competitive grant (Fund Code 151) Funding Opportunity (RFP) details are now live.

The goal of this federally funded program is to build school and district capacity to:

- Engage in explicit teaching and learning of social and emotional (SE) skills/competencies that are integrated and applied throughout all subject areas using service-learning (SL); and/or
- Measure students' SE skills and competencies and effectively use data to identify areas of need and support students to develop specific skills/competencies within a tiered system of support.

Applications are due Tues., Nov. 10, 2020. Please register online for one of the scheduled grant information sessions (Tues., Oct. 20th 12:00-1:30pm or Wed., Oct. 21st 9:30-11:00am) to learn more about this opportunity.

Youth Mental Health First Aid Training - Update

The Department’s Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training sessions are now full, but we are still taking requests for district-specific sessions for later this year. Email achievement@mass.gov if you are interested in more details, or you can make a request through the online registration page. The YMHFA training helps teachers and other school staff to recognize and support students who may be experiencing mental health or substance use challenges and/or may be in crisis, and if needed, to refer them to mental health services.

For Your Information

Lights On Afterschool

Lights On Afterschool, the national celebration of afterschool programs, will be held this year on Thurs., Oct. 22, which Governor Baker has proclaimed Lights On Afterschool Day. Afterschool programs have been particularly critical during COVID-19, as many have provided virtual programming, cared for children of essential workers, and provided meals and learning support during school closures, remote learning time, and/or out-of-school time.

Department of Public Health Survey on COVID-19’s Impact

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) is committed to better serving communities by learning about their experiences through the COVID-19 Community Impact Survey. The survey will help DPH learn about needs across the state so the agency can plan resources and supports. The survey takes about 10-15 minutes to complete. It is
for anyone ages 14 and older and is completely anonymous. It is offered online in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese. The survey is available at: www.mass.gov/COVIDsurvey.

**Family survey from Boston Children’s Hospital/Children’s Mental Health Campaign**

Boston Children’s Hospital and the Children’s Mental Health Campaign have developed a survey about families’ experience with school-based services and supports for the social, emotional, and behavioral health and well-being of their children and family. Families’ opinions are critically important and will guide the direction of the Children’s Mental Health Campaign’s work. All participation is voluntary, and all responses are anonymous. Parents/caregivers can skip any questions that they do not feel comfortable answering. Please contact Daniela Reyes at daniela.reyes@childrens.harvard.edu or 617-919-3069 with any questions.

**National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) – 25th Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health**

The National Center for School Mental Health is hosting a free virtual conference focused on equitable and effective school mental health. Thurs., Oct. 29, 12:00-3:00pm. Register online.

**NCSMH Upcoming Webinars:**
The National Center (NCSMH) also has a number of upcoming free webinars, along with recordings from webinars that took place earlier this year. Examples of upcoming webinars include:

- *Promoting Educator Well-Being: Understanding and Combatting Compassion Fatigue, Burnout and Secondary Traumatic Stress* – Wed., Nov. 4, 3:00-4:00pm
- *Addressing Racial Stress and Trauma* – Wed., Dec. 2, 3:00-4:00pm
- *Trauma Responsive Care for Younger Students* – Wed., Jan. 6, 3:00-4:00pm