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The second round of grant funding, the ARPA – **School Mental Health Specialists Grant**, closed on April 20th. This grant will provide \$15 million and allow districts to apply for up to \$120,000.00 per district per year in years 1 and 2 (and 70% in year 3) to hire and retain additional school social workers, school psychologists, trauma specialists, behavior technicians, board certified behavior analysts, school counselors, licensed professional counselors, and licensed marriage and family therapists.

The **Summer Mental Health Grant** will be announced on May 15th and provide a total of \$8 Million for the provision of mental health supports during the summer months. Eligibility for this round of grants is not only open to LEAs but also community-based programs and camps operating in the summer.

The DESSA Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Listening Tour: Aperture – the company under contract for the Devereaux Student Strength Assessment (DESSA) is in CT for site visits to districts. It is designed to capture the essence of the great work happening in districts and how the DESSA is used to inform opportunities for growth in SEL work.

Also 2 new components are being rolled out:

1. **DESSA-Educator Self-Reflection Training (EdSERT)** pilot program is designed to help educators give their best to students while caring for themselves. The adult version of the DESSA, EdSERT is a comprehensive set of research-based resources that include self-reflective assessments, personal planning tools, and educator strategies. Educators who participate in EdSERT come to share a common understanding of social and emotional learning with their students and become better equipped to teach and model SEL skills effectively.
2. **DESSA-Student Self-Report (SSR)** is a (high school) student-driven self-rating that delivers real-time results and immediate strategies to incorporate student voice and choice in SEL. The SSR engages students in a reflection of their own social and emotional strengths and empowers them to set their own goals for growth. Capturing student voice has a significant impact on their engagement, motivation, and achievement.

Adopted by the State Board in February - **The Components of Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits (SEIH-K through 12)** represents the knowledge, skills, and habits that form an essential blueprint for students' well-being and equip every student with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college, careers, and civic life. While attention to core academic subjects remains important, social, emotional, and intellectual habits set the stage for all future learning, promoting intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competence.

Connecticut Get Outside and Play day 2023 - The Governor has proclaimed May 26th, 2023 as "Get Outside and Play Day" The purpose of this day is for schools to plan outdoor activities for students and staff to highlight the benefits of such activities on mental health and wellness. As we continue to support students' emotional wellbeing, we encourage school leaders to consider new and innovative approaches for promoting children's mental health. The Department is partnering with the Connecticut Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (CTAHPERD) and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) to support outdoor activities on this day that are inclusive of all students regardless of ability or skill level in physical activity. Suggested resources can be found at: [Get Outside and Play for Children's Mental Health Day Resources](#).

New England School Nurse Conference is an annual event, hosted by one of six New England School Nurses Associations (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, And Vermont). This year the Connecticut Association of School Nurses was the proud host of the NESNCN in Mystic CT. This event brought 200 school nurses together to discuss issues in school health including mental health and school climate and safety presented by CSDE.