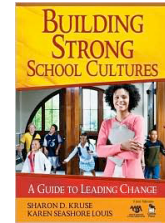


**MESPA Book Read: 2009-2010**  
**A Collaboration Among Minnesota Education Administrators:**  
**MESPA, MASSP, and MASA**



*Building Strong School Cultures: A Guide To Leading Change*  
(Sharon D. Kruse and Karen Seashore Louis)



MESPA, MASSP, and MASA (representing Minnesota elementary, middle, and secondary school principals, and district superintendents) are uniting in a yearlong study to develop integrated school cultures that engage educators with their colleagues and communities. The book *Building Strong School Cultures: A Guide to Leading Change* (Sharon D. Kruse and Karen Seashore Louis) will serve as our guide.

This practical handbook shows school leaders how to build a climate of collaboration with staff, teachers, and parents as well as how to develop connections with foundations, business groups, social service providers, and government agencies.

The goal in this collaboration of education administrators is to help districts work together, rather than continuing to too often have schools go their separate ways. School culture is our strength; it is the way to improve educational achievement for all children. If we do not strengthen culture, we will continue to unduly focus on test scores -- which is only part of the complex formula in helping students achieve. With all Minnesota education administrators working together, within and between districts, we will strengthen our schools.

The authors call on principals to create a viable, sustainable school culture using organizational learning and trust to involve the professional community and to affect teaching and learning. This presents a leadership approach that integrates teachers, parents, and community members into a coherent team. The authors examine schools that have achieved lasting cultural change and present practical strategies for:

- Diagnosing and shaping a school culture
- Revising leadership functions to broaden decision-making processes
- Rethinking organizational structures
- Supporting continuous improvement while ensuring stability

This is a year-long professional development opportunity with many paths. MESPA members may choose to take part in some or all of the options: read the book, take part in blog (Web-based) discussion led by Mary Hanson (MESPA Ed Ad Committee chair), attend Institute feature session with Dr. Seashore, attend spring regional seminar (held in conjunction with MASA and MASSP), and/or take part in local district planning. In addition, MESPA divisions may opt to hold one or two book discussions at division meetings (led by Ed Ad Committee representatives); Dr. Seashore will prepare a study guide.

## Obtaining book

- Individuals may buy books on their own through Corwin Press, Barnes & Noble, Amazon, etc.: Corwin's price is \$31.95 + 5.95 for shipping and handling = \$38.
- Or individual may order books through MESPA. MESPA will order books in bulk at a discount; cost with shipping and handling = \$30.
  - MESPA will take in member book orders: online order, fax, paper (mail).
  - Order sent to Corwin when MESPA receives member payment (check).
  - Corwin will mail books to members within the week.

## Obtaining CEUs

- **Read book = 10 CEUs for reading and responding to the book**  
MESPA members read the book, complete a Reading Response form, and submit it to their division Educational Advisory Committee representative who will distribute CEUs.
- **Book discussions**  
**MESPA Division meetings = 3 CEUs per three-hour division discussion**  
Depending on interest, divisions may hold one or two book discussions at a three-hour division meeting. Dr. Karen Seashore Louis (book author) will create a study guide. The division Educational Advisory Committee Representative will distribute CEUs after each discussion.  
  
**MN Education Administrator Book Blog = 3 CEUs**  
Facilitated by Mary Hanson, MESPA statewide Educational Advisory Committee chair. Open to all members of MESPA, MASA, and MASSP. This will be an expansion of division-level book discussions. Participants must register to join the blog and respond with at least six posted comments. The chair of the Educational Advisory Committee will distribute 3 CEUs to eligible participants at the close of the school year's discussion.
- **(tentative) ½ day regional meetings = 3 CEUs**  
Four meetings, one each in four geographic regions, held late Feb, early March. Meetings are for administrators and teams from schools, districts.  
Focus on chapters 6 and 7.  
*Having read and explored the book, how can we move ahead?*  
Superintendents may attend or "man the district" so that all principals can attend, with the goal being more organic-level follow-up planning then taking place in each district.