



MESPA New Principal Mentorship Program

“What principals value most from their coaches is the opportunity for reflective conversations, emotional and moral support and the affirmation that they are doing a good job.”

-Report on the New Administrators’ Institute

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Purpose: The MESPA New Principal Mentorship Program provides an **unconditional, confidential, practical support system** for beginning principals -- incorporating National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Leading Learning Communities standards.

Selection of new principals: All new principals who are members of the Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association (MESPA) may participate in this individualized support system.

Selection of mentors: Mentors are MESPA National Distinguished Principals, NAESP PALS (national principal mentorship certification program) principals, and NISL Minnesota Principals’ Academy principals. Mentors volunteer their time and experience and receive 15 administrative CEUs.

Pairing of mentors and new principals: New principals and mentors are matched using the following criteria: location; ability to meet regularly; type of school (size, grade level configuration, etc.); gender; or the new principal may select a mentor of their choice.

Timeline and expectations: It is required that the new principals and their mentors have monthly contact (if not more frequently) with a goal of three face-to-face meetings during the year. The partners will collaborate with each other to address areas of interest and need, such as: observation/evaluation of staff; budget; scheduling; instructional leadership; professional development. Fifteen CEUs will be granted to the new principals and mentors at the completion of the program.

Mentor and new principal profiles will be completed at the beginning of the year, in order for the pairs to better know each other. Mentors and new principals will keep a log of their meeting times, places, and purpose of the meetings. New principals will keep a reflective journal.

Testimonials

- At first I was hesitant, but I am glad that I did participate. Some people have a negative impression of mentorship as a corrective process, but this program is tailored to meet the principal’s needs and creates new networks for support.
- There were two very helpful aspects of the mentorship program: the opportunity to get the perspective of a veteran administrator on a variety of topics; and the opportunity, through my mentor’s facilitation, to connect with other school administrators.
- As a first year principal, I found it very lonely in the building. It was helpful to have a person to bounce ideas off of. She let me know that I wasn’t crazy for thinking the way I did.
- I enjoyed having a veteran who was generous in sharing her time and expertise in different areas. It was nice to know that when a question came up I had someone I could count on to provide some guidance. Coming from a small district where I was the lone elementary principal, having that support was invaluable.
- I appreciated having a mentor to call or meet with when I needed another perspective or a listening ear. It was very helpful when I needed advice, or a reminder of the many scenarios that were common to all principals and best practices for handling those effectively. Hearing stories from his experience as a principal also gave anecdotes to remember throughout the year.
- My mentor provided a great deal of support in working in the role of the manager.

All participants receive a copy of the NAESP book *“Leading Learning Communities: Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do”* and 15 administrative CEUs.

Questions? Contact the MESPA office at 651-999-7310; toll free 1-800-642-6807.

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