

Preliminary Academy Information

(St. Paul, MN -- June 27, 2006) During the 2005 Legislative Session, Senator Steve Kelley sponsored a bill to develop an academy for K-12 public school principals. The University of Minnesota and Minnesota Department of Education were named in the legislation to implement the program - to be known as the Minnesota Principals' Academy.

MESPA is pleased to announce that Alice Seagren, Minnesota Commissioner of Education, has selected the National Institute for School Leadership program (NISL) as the executive development program for our Minnesota Principals' Academy.

P. Fred Storti, MESPA Executive Director, has researched NISL and been a part of the discussion with Commissioner Seagren -- as well as talked with Dr. Vincent Ferrandino, our NAESP executive director who served on the NISL advisory board, and with Nadya Higgins, his counterpart in Massachusetts where NISL was implemented earlier this year. There is no doubt that the NISL curriculum is well-designed and based on extensive research into leadership in education, business, military, and other enterprises. The research base and content is irrefutable.

The goal of the initial training, which begins this September and will be held at the TIES Education Center in St. Paul, will be to train a leadership team of approximately 50 principals, administrators, and consultants in a "train the trainer" model. This leadership team of certified NISL trainers then will train cohorts of principals from their school districts or regions around the state.

District support and involvement by superintendents and school boards will be critical to the success of the Minnesota Principals' Academy. This rigorous 29-day training program begins September 2006 and concludes in August 2007. The cost of the training will be covered by the MDE. Mileage and lodging expenses will be borne by the school district for each participant.

The University of Minnesota K-12 Consortium is responsible for outreach, applications, selection, and implementation of the initial NISL leadership team cohort. Kent Pekel, who led strategic planning for the St. Paul public schools and was a candidate for St. Paul

superintendent, was named executive director of the University's new Consortium for Post-secondary Academic Success. The Consortium will coordinate and oversee the Minnesota Principals' Academy. Pekel begins this new position July 1, 2006.

Tom Peters, the American writer and expert on business management practices (co-author of *In Search of Excellence*) has said, "Management is about arranging and telling. Leadership is about nurturing and enhancing." According to Storti, "The Minnesota Principals' Academy will enhance the principalship by expanding the knowledge base and collegial possibilities for all principals -- and MESPA will wholeheartedly collaborate with this extraordinary professional opportunity."