

PRINCIPAL VIEW

The Professional Voice of MESPA



Principals Supporting Principals





Jillayne Flanders
Interim Executive Director



Principals Supporting Principals, our MESPA vision for this school year, and our intended vision for years to come. This edition of Principal View is designed to inform you about our up-coming Spring Conference May 4, 5, and 6 in Hyannis MA, highlight the importance of our Annual Meeting during the Conference and the transitions coming to **your Principals' Association, and serve as an introduction to my work with MESPA before we get to meet at the conference.**

The focus of our Spring Conference is to offer strategies and resources as well as support to our principals in the essential areas of professional and personal growth, renewal, mental health and mindfulness. We have invited gifted speakers Ellie Drago-Severson, Chip Wood and Pamela Seigle, who have a wealth of experiences working with leaders in high stress situations, and I am certain their insights will bring new vitality to you in your many roles as a school leader.

In concert with these distinguished keynotes, we are offering nearly 20 varied sessions all presented by current in-service principals and assistant principals, again reinforcing our theme of Principals Supporting Principals. With passion and knowledge directly from their school experience, you will have the opportunity to listen, discuss and process many facets of our challenging yet rewarding jobs.

You will also notice built in "Wellness Hours." Again, utilizing the expertise of our own principal members, we are offering attendees opportunities for meditation, strolls, muscle relaxation and jogging with your peers.

As I hope you have read in the recent MESPA MEMO, our association is in the midst of some exciting changes. I admit, these new opportunities may feel unnerving to members who have had the security of a state-wide assembly of dedicated colleagues offering support, counsel and comradery for over 90 years, but your leadership is taking bold steps to re-energize your association for your benefit.

The Annual Meeting at 8:00 a.m. Friday, May 6, at the Conference is your opportunity to participate in discussion and votes that will lead MESPA into this new vision. Your Board of Directors, with the guidance of your Executive Director, will be present to answer your questions about our separation from NAESP, the on-going talks with the MA **Secondary School Administrators' Association (MSSAA), the sale of our building in Marlborough, and the transition plan for your next Executive Director, Rick Rogers.** Your VOTE and participation is essential.

In closing, being your Interim Executive Director since January has been exhilarating, exhausting, challenging, and awesome. Working with the incredibly dedicated staff: Vickie Ellison, Brenda Elmes, and Frank Hefler is a joy. I've learned things I never needed to know in my 37 year career as a principal and teacher, but I've also learned that communication, honesty and a quirky sense of humor are essential skills in almost every situation. These are challenging times for MESPA, but I fully believe that what comes next will be an institution that continues to serve elementary school principals in Massachusetts in their effort to bring the best to our children and our school communities.

Thank you for your trust!

Jill Flanders



President's Message

*Denise Fronius, Principal
Stony Brook Elementary School, Brewster*

Happy April! **Despite the blustery "winter" weather going on outside my window as I write this, yes, it's April 3rd** and snowing, I am comforted knowing it is in fact spring which represents a time of growth and renewal. Like the buds on trees, bulbs popping out of the ground and the sounds of peepers at dusk, so too are the students in our schools enthusiastically demonstrating signs of growth and pride as their teachers skillfully prepare them for the subsequent grade.

While each of us went into education for a variety of reasons the one common denominator is that we want to cultivate growth. We recognize this profession is about people and relationships. We can each remember the one teacher who stood out among all the others when we were in school. Students will remember the teacher who believed in them, who cared about them as individuals and who took the time to get to know them on a personal level.

As administrators, we must do the same with our teachers and staff. We need to believe in them, make personal connections and help them grow to reach their full potential.

The person who made a difference in my life, helped me to grow and guided me to become a principal was Nick Feldman, who first hired me to be a kindergarten assistant. At this time, he knew I was going to college to become a classroom teacher (all while raising three young children). Nick and I often had good conversations about education. He asked me a lot of reflective questions, gave me good advice and provided opportunities to branch out beyond the kindergarten classroom.

Nick hired me to be a first grade teacher when I graduated college. At that point, he first encouraged me to lead school-based committees and then district-level committees. My comfort level was in the classroom with six year olds, not leading veteran colleagues, but I trusted him because I knew he would not ask me to do anything I could not successfully do.

In 1999, Nick encouraged me to enroll in MESPA's Certification Program for Administrator Licensure ~ CPAL. That winter, Nick decided to retire and encouraged me to complete the year as interim principal at my school. Leaving the classroom was an incredibly difficult decision, and again I trusted him because I knew he believed in me. Nick made a difference in the lives of so many teachers, students and parents. I miss his counsel and thought-provoking questions.

When I completed my administrator licensure program, Nick gave me the book, Leading with Soul by Terry Deal. **Nick's advice was simple.** Listen to people and make sure they know you care about them. I have followed his advice and hope he is proud of the principal I have become. Below are a few other pieces of advice Nick wrote to me and tucked inside the cover of, Leading with Soul.

Take Command~General Norman Schwartzkopf
Take it Easy~The Eagles
Take Care of People~Terry Deal
Take Care of Yourself and Have Fun~Nick Feldman

I hope Nick's words of advice to me have resonated with you as well.

Wishing you health and peace in the good work you do each and every day.





John Quinn, NAESP Representative

Election Results Are In!

Congratulations are in order for Eric S. Cardwell. Eric is principal of Besser Elementary School in **Alpena, Michigan and was recently elected Vice President of NAESP's Board of Directors. He has** been a member of NAESP since 2000 and has served on its Board of Directors since 2013. Eric has also held memberships with the Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association and the Les Cheneaux Education Foundation. There were also other NAESP Zone elections and the following individuals were elected to the Board of Directors: Deborah H. Frazier, principal of Harrison Road Elementary School in Fredericksburg, Virginia, will represent Zone 3 principals in Washington, D.C., Maryland, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia.

Sharon K. McNary, principal of Richland Elementary School in Memphis, Tennessee, will represent Zone 4 principals in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Paul Wenger, principal of Jordan Creek Elementary School in West Des Moines, Iowa, will represent Zone 6 principals in Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin. The Board of Directors also appointed Schwanda Jackson, principal of East Coweta Middle School, as the new Director At Large, Middle-Level, Minority.

ESSA and What It Means To You.

As you know, The No Child Left Behind Act has been replaced by ESSA—The Every Student Succeeds Act. This new law takes full effect in the 2017-2018 school year. The Every Student Succeeds Act passed both chambers of Congress with strong bipartisan support. I encourage you to look up the new law and familiarize yourself with the many key elements. This law provides an unprecedented opportunity to support high quality early childhood education and educators working in Pre-K-3, particularly with alignment of standards, curriculum and instruction. The law also acknowledges the important role of principal leadership in early childhood education and joint efforts across early learning settings and school-based contexts to address the needs of young children.

Jill and John Go To Washington!

One highlight of being the State Representative to NAESP is attending the annual National Leaders Conference in Washington D.C. Jillyane Flanders and I were able to meet with legislators on Capitol Hill to discuss the implementation and federal funding of the Every School Succeeds Act (ESSA). Principals from all across the country were there to make sure that Congress continues to play an active role in the oversight of the law. We were delighted to have the opportunity to meet personally with Senator Elizabeth Warren and Congressman Joseph Kennedy. We made sure to capture the moment with a couple of photos.



I hope to see you at this year's MESPA Spring Conference in Hyannis, MA from May 4—6, 2016.

I also hope you will join me in attending the NAESP National Conference in National Harbor, MD from July 6—8, 2016.

Both conferences offer great workshops and fabulous guest speakers.



Principals Supporting Principals...

From Incoming Executive Director Rick Rogers

Greetings!

Principals Supporting Principals. That has been the theme for MESPA's work over the past year promoted by our Interim Executive Directors Rich Burchill and Jill Flanders. They got the message right.

I am thrilled to have the opportunity to lead MESPA during this time of transition. Having worked as a principal in both suburban and urban Massachusetts schools for the past 27 years, I am passionate about the principalship. And I understand first-hand the pressures and demands that principals face every day.

Our organization is at a crossroads. Our two Interim Executive Directors and the Executive Board have worked tirelessly this year to help us regain our financial footing. A merger with the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association (MSSAA) is still under negotiation and likely will take several months to be finalized.

Renew Your Membership!

Meanwhile, our association will continue to serve you. So, please renew your membership for next year *at our new reduced rate*. Help keep our organization viable during the transition. I promise you that you will see and feel the benefits.

Plans for Next Year

When I come on board this summer, my job will be twofold. First, we will continue to plan and provide professional development and support for principals in the coming year. In addition to conference and workshop opportunities, we need to build on recent efforts to use social media as a means for sharing best practice and providing support to principals across the state. We need to expand our outreach to newer principals and assistant principals. We need to increase our presence in urban districts and provide more regional offerings. And we need to tap into the vast knowledge and experience of our retired members and make MESPA the go-to clearinghouse for coaching – the first place that superintendents turn to for coaches.

Second, I will work with the Executive Board to continue working toward a merger with MSSAA and ensure that elementary principals have a strong voice in a newly constituted professional association. A new organization promises to provide elementary principals access to expanded opportunities in the near future.

Stop By and Chat on the Cape

I hope to see you at the Spring Conference on the Cape in May. I will have a table set up near registration. Stop by and **introduce yourself. And share your thinking about what you would like from MESPA and a new principals' association.** We are here to serve and support you. I look forward to doing just that in the years ahead.

Cheers,

Rick Rogers

rickrogers409@gmail.com

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____ I am a new member (1st year) of MESPA.

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Website: www.mespa.org

Blog: <https://mespa2016.wordpress.com/>

COUNTY DIRECTORS NEEDED

The MESPA Board of Directors currently has openings for County Directors of Hampshire County, Plymouth County, and Suffolk County. Responsibilities include:

- * Attend eight Board of Directors meetings a year (held on Friday mornings from 8:30—11:30AM at the MESPA Education Center, Marlborough.
- * Hold a minimum of two county meetings a year. Meetings are held in a school, restaurant, or other site in the county and can be focused on one issue or be a free-flow discussion and sharing. We have a number of sponsors who would be happy to provide breakfast or lunch. MESPA staff would help with emails and such.
- * Help organize principal support groups in the county if members are interested. We will provide training on leading the groups.
- * Assist in membership efforts across the county.
- * Develop a committee of other principals willing to work with the County Director in support of principals in the county.

County Directors are full voting members of the MESPA Board of Directors. If you are interested in becoming the County Director of one of the open positions, please contact David Keim, County Coordinator, at keimd@holliston.k12.ma.us or Denise Fronius, MESPA President at: froniUSD@nausetschools.org.

YOUR COUNTY DIRECTORS



Samuel Hein,
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OPEN POSITION,
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 Tel:
 Email



Peter Bachli,
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David Barner,
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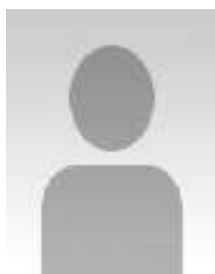
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Susan Whitten,
Worcester County Director
 Marion E. Zeh Elementary School
 33 Howard Street
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swhitten@nsboro.k12.ma.us



A place for reflections...

My name is Brenda Muraos and I am an assistant principal at The Fred W. Miller Elementary School in Holliston, MA (Grades 3-5). This is my first attempt at writing a blog. I have been challenged by my newly found PLN on twitter to blog every two weeks. I'm looking forward to sharing thoughts and new learnings in this format.

How to get into classrooms and focus on learning!

I accepted a personal challenge this week to "drop anchors of learning" which involved the following:

- Set aside two hours to visit classrooms – visit at least 15 over the course of the week
- Focus on what you are learning from the teacher during the observation
- Drop an ANCHOR of LEARNING... tell the teachers what YOU learned from THEM

Be sure to share how it goes using the #LeadLAP challenge all week

While I was only able to truly do this on Monday morning (when other meetings I had were cancelled), I did it and learned so much from many different educators. It was interesting to change my focus from observing and providing feedback, to "just" being a learner.

Following my visits, I wrote an email to staff to explain what I was doing and what my takeaways were. I shared the following anchors of learning with them:

Here's what I learned in just the first two hours of school today:

- * the importance of publishing and celebrating student work at the completion of a unit
- * allowing students to share builds community
- * how read naturally can be used to support comprehension and fluency- how the data can be used to provide real-time feedback to students
- * students appreciate being given independence, but knowing you're there to help if they need it
- * asking students to be giraffes in the hallway is a creative way to get them to walk quietly

Does anyone have any tricks to be able to do this more?

You can find Brenda's Blog at: <https://sites.google.com/a/themuraos.com/leaders-and-learners/home>