



Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association

# Regional Principals' Support Groups

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*MESPA believes that school leaders benefit from having a safe and confidential place to share ideas and get support and feedback from trusted colleagues.*

*January 2017 Update*

## Regional Support Groups

*Still accepting new members.*

*Try one out for 4 sessions.*

*Groups may elect to continue next year.*

Region	Location	Meeting Time (once a month)	Facilitators
Worcester/Franklin	Barre	Thursdays 7:30-9:30 am	Julie Vincentson Tim McGillicuddy
Essex	Andover	Thursdays 3:30-5:30	Patricia Barrett Rick Rogers
South Shore	Duxbury	Thursdays 7:30-9:30 am	Erin Wischahn Peter Mello
Southern Middlesex/ Southern Worcester	Holliston	Mondays 3:45-5:45	David Keim Alice Shull
NE Middlesex	Wakefield	Wednesdays 3:30-5:30	Deborah Collura Rich Burchill

## Why Support Groups?

The purpose of the MESPA Regional Principals' Support Groups is to provide professional learning and support for principals to develop and refine leadership dispositions and skills. The recently updated "Professional Standards for Educational Leaders" published by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015) underscores that principals face increasingly complex expectations and challenges. MESPA believes that school leaders benefit from having a safe and confidential place to share ideas and get support and feedback from trusted colleagues around issues related to leadership practice.

As suggested in the literature on "*Critical Friends' Groups*" (National School Reform Faculty - <http://www.nsrffharmony.org/>), groups such as these can contribute to participants' professional growth and strengthen their capacity to develop learning communities. Group members can focus on questions that are both "global and specific to their practice."

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## Why MESPA?

**Trusted Resource:** As the long-time professional association for elementary principals, MESPA is seen by school leaders throughout Massachusetts as a trusted resource.

**Experienced Facilitators:** Each group will be co-facilitated by an experienced, sitting principal and a retired principal/consultant.

**Blended Format:** Groups will meet 8 times face-to-face and utilize Voxer, a free, easy-to-use app that combines voice and text messages to enable asynchronous communication among group members.

## How Support Groups Work:

**Group Membership:** Groups will be comprised of 8-12 participants. In order to maintain confidentiality and provide differing perspectives, membership will be limited to one principal per district.

**Meeting Schedule:** Groups will meet at a regular, specified time 8 times per year for two hours. Group members will be asked to the greatest extent possible, to commit to attend each session. In addition, groups will communicate between sessions using Voxer, an app that combines voice and text messages to enable asynchronous group communication.

**Format:** Each group will identify shared norms and values. Meetings will have an open agenda format with each group member having an opportunity to share issues - both global and specific to their practice. The facilitators will guide the conversation, drawing on the insights and experiences of group members to help engage the group in reflective dialogue and collaborative problem-solving.

**Confidentiality:** In order to provide a safe and confidential place to share ideas and get support and feedback, groups will identify clear norms of confidentiality to ensure that issues discussed in groups are not attributed to members outside of the group

## Cost

MESPA is making these groups available at a low cost as a service to our members.

~~MESPA Members: \$200 / Non-Members \$400~~

**Half-Year Rate: MESPA Members \$100 / Non-Members \$200**

## For More Information:

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