



The Soul of Leadership: Courage, Presence, and Integrity

A yearlong personal renewal & leadership development program for PreK-12 school leaders

2026-27
Cohort 9 begins October 8, 2026.

PD Hours: 20
Leadership/Administration

Member Fee \$895
Non-Member Fee \$995

MSAA Contact:
vellison@msaa.net

WHY

We lead who we are. As school leaders, we cultivate the culture in our schools. This culture reflects who we are and what we do. Research clearly shows that school leaders have a strong impact on student achievement, school climate and equity work. At the same time, leaders are experiencing substantial stress that can compromise their personal well-being and leadership. The challenges of leading today underscore the need for school leaders who can handle stress, build trust, and develop caring and culturally responsive schools.

WHAT

We invite you to deepen your own development as a leader. The Soul of Leadership develops your capacity for self-awareness, listening, and reflection. We offer school leaders the time, space, and facilitation to do what Parker Palmer calls “the work before the work.” Principals are invited to reflect on their lives and work through contemplative practices drawn from the Center for Courage & Renewal and the fields of mindfulness, social-emotional learning, neuroscience, poetry, and the arts. During in-person retreats and virtual small group sessions, participants experience the value of building relational trust in a group, as well as practices that help leaders strengthen the well-being of their adult and student school communities. Participants receive a 200-page guidebook of protocols that they can bring back to school to facilitate team-building and reflection, and build the muscle for challenging conversations that arise when educators commit to continual innovating for student success.

IMPACT

Since 2018, MSAA has sponsored the Soul of Leadership, which has served over 230 school leaders from a diverse cross-section of districts across Massachusetts. Ongoing program evaluation has found that leaders who participate in Soul of Leadership:

- Develop a stronger sense of purpose and integrity and the courage to live and lead authentically
- Deepen their capacity to be fully present and listen in ways that affirm and heal
- Experience the value of building relational trust in a group, as well as practices that help leaders nurture a collaborative adult culture and an inclusive, anti-racist school community
- Engage in mindfulness practices essential to supporting well-being
- Increase their awareness of how to experience an undivided, balanced life
- Experience collegial support from other school leaders.

Read more about Soul of Leadership in this [Education Week](#) article.

THE EXPERIENCE: HOW IT WORKS



Three In-Person Retreats

Thursday, October 8, 2026 | 8:30-3:30 | Connors Center, Dover
Saturday, December 12, 2026 | 9:00-1:00 | MSAA – Franklin
Thursday, April 29, 2027 | 8:30-3:30 | Connors Center, Dover

Three Virtual Small Group Sessions

- You will be able to choose your day of the week and time (Before/After School).
- Sessions provide the ongoing support of a smaller group and an opportunity to check in and keep the momentum of your experience moving forward.

REGISTRATION

- Register by September 15, 2026. Enrollment is limited to 30.
- [Link](#) to Application 
- [Submit](#) a brief statement of interest and your preferred small group meeting time. 
- Program questions contact rickrogers409@gmail.com
- Registration questions contact vellison@msaa.net

TESTIMONIALS

“If it is true that everything rises and falls on leadership, then the leader must be healthy and whole from the inside out. The Soul of Leadership program provides the school leader with a thoughtful, nourishing approach to the healing of mind, body and soul. Without attention to this dimension, successful school and personal transformation cannot be sustained.”

Ron Walker, Founder - Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color

“Participation in the Soul of Leadership program has been a significant source of strength and empowerment for me...I feel healthier, more grounded, more balanced and more joyful. As a result, I am a more effective leader, better able to meet the needs of those (students and teachers alike) who rely on me to make a positive difference in their lives.”

High School Principal

FACILITATORS

Brenda Maurao has been a dedicated educator for over twenty years, fifteen of which have in-school and district administration in both urban and suburban settings. Brenda has been part of Soul of Leadership since its inception and is committed to embedding this approach into adult communities in schools. She recognizes the importance of being genuine and transparent and taking time to establish relationships. Brenda currently serves as principal at the Miller Elementary School in Holliston. She also serves as a program supervisor for Framingham State University and as an ASCD board member. Brenda is passionate about instructional leadership and building inclusive communities where every learner can thrive.

Rick Rogers is a life-long educator who served as a principal for 29 years in both suburban and urban settings. He co-founded Soul of Leadership with Pamela Seigle and Chip Wood and now serves as program coordinator and facilitator. Rick also works as a visiting senior instructor and practicum supervisor in the Educational Leadership program at Salem State University. He has provided individual coaching to over 30 new and experienced administrators. Rick is passionate about supporting and developing school leaders. He cares about creating culturally responsive and inclusive school communities and cultivating a culture of reflective practice.

Pipier Smith-Mumford has been an educator for over 40 years, starting as a high school guidance counselor, moving to administration as a principal of a 9th grade campus, and then a PreK-8 school. Presently, she is working as a Master Lecturer and Field Director in the Education Leadership and Policy Studies program at Boston University Wheelock College of Education and Human Development while also mentoring new principals, and consulting with area school administrators and faculty on social emotional learning and a sense of belonging for all members of the school community. She has been a facilitator for Soul of Leadership since 2019