



## COLLABORATION FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

### WHO IS THE MEP?

The Massachusetts Education Partnership (MEP) was established in 2012 by the American Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts, Massachusetts Teachers Association, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Massachusetts Association of School Committees, along with the Rennie Center and representatives from three of the Commonwealth's most prominent research institutions: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University, and the University of Massachusetts Boston. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education also sits on the governing board as a non-voting member.

### WHAT IS THE MEP?

The Massachusetts Education Partnership works to improve student learning and success through collaborative labor-management-community relations in school districts. Since its founding, the MEP has directly engaged 115 school districts, or almost one-third of all districts in the Commonwealth, as well as numerous regional and national partners. The MEP exists to support district labor-management teams that include superintendents, union presidents & school committee members as they collaborate to:

- Advance student achievement and success;
- Increase teacher engagement and leadership in school and district governance; and
- Develop and sustain more effective policies, structures and practices.

### WHAT SERVICES CAN DISTRICTS ACCESS THROUGH MEP?

The MEP offers services and programs to foster and support improved labor management relationships between school committee, district, and teacher union leaders with a focus on improving student achievement and post-secondary success. Any leader in a public school district in Massachusetts is welcome to inquire about the program offerings available through the MEP. Whether you are a superintendent, a union president, or a school committee leader, starting a dialogue with MEP is always an option. Our MEP facilitators are current or former district leaders, mediators, and labor representatives who are experts in labor management collaboration and are focused on helping districts identify actionable solutions through a collaborative process.

A variety of options are available to district leaders and teams:

**MEP Annual Conference:** Attend MEP's Annual Conference and learn from peers about effective strategies for employing collaborative practices to develop and implement reforms that improve teaching and learning in your district.

**Conflict Resolution:** District, school committee and union leadership teams are like marriages and even the best marriages sometimes need counseling. Enlist a MEP facilitator to serve as a neutral third party to help resolve a current conflict and to help avoid future conflicts from damaging morale and halting progress through improving communications and strengthening relationships.

**Joint Leadership Workshop:** Are you a new superintendent or union president? Has your district had significant changes in your school committee recently? Or, maybe more than one of these changes has occurred recently. If so, this is an excellent time to participate in a workshop, offered by a MEP facilitator/trainer, designed to build respect, trust and the skills necessary to increase district & union leadership team effectiveness.

**Current offerings include:** Interest-Based Teaming for Student Achievement, Building Strong Cultures to Lead and Sustain Reform, Collaborative Problem-Solving in Action, Building Effective School-Community Collaborations, Having Difficult Conversations, and Creating a Culture of Dialogue. Workshops guide individuals or teams through the different aspects of the process of Labor-Management Collaboration at the district level, and provide tools and resources for future work.

**The Interest-Based Bargaining Institute:** The Interest-Based Bargaining Institute (IBBI) offers training and facilitation to school districts wishing to transform the way they engage in collective bargaining. The Institute's IBB program was developed to provide an alternative approach for collective bargaining, the IBBI offers interested districts a one-day training (eight hours) with exercises and bargaining simulations meant to build the negotiation team's understanding of IBB. After the training, participants caucus as separate teams to decide whether to adopt IBB for their upcoming negotiations. If the parties mutually agree to proceed with IBB, then the IBBI provides one day (eight hours) or two half-days (four hours each) of facilitation. For more information, or to apply, please see embedded application here.

**Joint Labor and Management Strategic Planning and Program Design:** The MEP has substantial experience working with local leaders to promote meaningful discussion among stakeholders, develop workable plans that enjoy broad support, and ensure effective implementation of sustainable reforms. Working with an MEP Facilitator will help teams collaboratively design and execute a strategic

planning process that has a clear district vision, measurable goals and an achievable action plan.

**The District Capacity Project (DCP):** The District Capacity Project (DCP), builds the capacity of Massachusetts' school districts to design innovative projects to improve teaching and learning. DCP teams work together to identify strategies in order to effectively implement reforms that are being advanced at the state and local level. A MEP Facilitator will help your team:

- Collaborate on an extended innovation or reform initiative that centers on improving student learning;
- Use data to maintain focus and drive action plans;
- Build new labor-management structures and relationships that extend beyond district leaders to form the foundation for sustainable, systemic, high-impact, collaboration;
- Initiate difficult discussions, keep meetings and teams productive, and maintain momentum;
- Invite community organizations to co-lead on the ground efforts to improve student learning, and involve community leaders in district leadership teams.

## HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

Once the key leaders—the Superintendent, the President of the teachers union, and the Chair or Vice Chair of the school committee—agree to participate in one of our programs, the MEP will send a representative to meet with team members to 1) learn about their interests and aspirations, 2) provide information about current projects and available services, 3) and help the team to consider possible next steps. There is no cost for this initial meeting.

## CONTACT

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