

PARTNERSHIP CASE STUDY

*... Organizing a
Partnership...*

MAPLE: Midwest Alliance for Professional Learning and Leadership

*Executive Director,
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Active Partners:

- Associated School Boards of South Dakota
- Black Hills Special Services Cooperative
- Black Hills State University
- DIAL Consortium (Dakota Interactive Academic Link)
- Dakota State University
- Department of Education and Cultural Affairs (DECA)
- Chiesman Foundation
- Learning Organizations for Technology Integration (LOFTI)
- Northern State University
- School Administrators of South Dakota
- South Dakota Board of Regents
- South Dakota Education Association
- South Dakota State University
- Technology and Innovations in Education (TIE)
- Visions Tec Web
- University of South Dakota

<http://www.midwestmaple.org/home.asp>

MAPLE is a collaborative community of education partners focused on professional development for teaching, learning, and leadership.

Positioned as a regional, non-profit entity, MAPLE's purpose is to establish a collaborative structure for continuously improving educational systems by building the capacity of educators and other constituents. Initially, four interrelated roles are identified for MAPLE: a) advocacy, b) research and development, c) clearinghouse, and d) service provider.

This document presents an organizational structure for facilitating MAPLE's operation for the period noted as Phase II (2003-2004).

PROTOTYPE CRITERIA

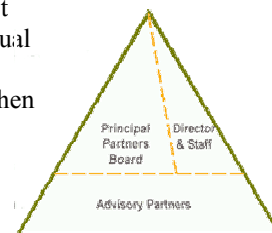
The criteria for the structure included:

- An organizational structure that facilitates the purpose of MAPLE, that is, a collaborative community focused on professional development.
- An organizational structure that values the diversity of partners yet is manageable for accomplishing the work effectively and efficiently.
- An organizational structure that fits the needs of an emergent organization, that is, a structure that is effective, flexible, and dynamic.

PROTOTYPE OVERVIEW

The structure identifies three levels of leadership. At a governance level, MAPLE is led by a Principal Partners Board. This board is comprised of a core group of leaders representing key partners and constituents. At a broader, advisory level, MAPLE is guided by a larger group, the Advisory Partners. The Advisory Partners is comprised of entity representatives with a vested interest in the education community and professional development. The Principal Partners Board is a subset of the Advisory Partners.

The day-to-day operation of MAPLE is led by a Director and a small central staff. The majority of MAPLE work is accomplished through a host of consultants engaged on a contractual basis. While external consultants (out-of-state) are involved to strengthen and enhance the work, most of MAPLE's activities are conducted by professionals employed by partner entities.



The Advisory Partners offer input to the Principal Partners Board and Director. The Principal Partners Board serves as the decision-making body that empowers the Director to lead and carry-out the day-to-day operation of MAPLE.

ADVISORY PARTNERS

As an alliance, MAPLE is comprised of a group of partner entities with a vested interest in the educational community and the system of professional development. The purpose of the Advisory Partners is to ensure broad-based, stakeholder input and support for MAPLE and related activities. The role of the Advisory Partners is to support the MAPLE work by:

- Providing advisement about the professional development needs of the educational community,
- Offering input/feedback that helps shape and assess MAPLE activities,
- Contributing resources for funding or facilitating MAPLE activities as appropriate, and
- Acting as advocates by raising awareness and sharing information about MAPLE activities.

The Advisory Partners meet at least annually with the specific outcome of providing input and feedback to the Principal Partners Board and MAPLE Director.

The composition of the Advisory Partners would evolve over time as awareness and interest in the MAPLE work grows. Given the purpose of MAPLE, it is appropriate and desirable that the Advisory Partners will include groups such as:

- Associated School Boards of SD
- School Administrators of SD
- South Dakota Education Association
- SD Board of Regents
- Public universities
- SD Department of Education and Cultural Affairs
- Technical Institutes
- K-12 Schools
- Educational Cooperatives
- Distance Learning Consortia
- TIE—Statewide membership/service organizations
- Tribal Colleges
- Private Colleges/Universities
- SD Parent Teacher Association
- Small Schools Coalition
- ESD + 5
- SASD “affiliates” such as SDSSP, SDESP, SDASCD
- Curriculum associations such as SD Science Teachers Association, SD Teachers of Mathematics
- Foundations such as the Chiesman Foundation, West River Foundation

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS BOARD

Because MAPLE potentially encompasses a very large and diverse education community, it is important to evolve an organizational structure that is broad and large while at the same time being manageable and efficient. In order to accomplish that dual purpose, the MAPLE structure is comprised of a small “executive committee” referred to as the Principal Partners Board as well as the large “advisory group” referred to as the Advisory Partners. Members of the Board are charged with the responsibility of representing the interests of the education community regardless of their respective organizational affiliation or role. The purpose of the Principal Partners Board is leadership and decision-making for MAPLE operation and activities. The Board is comprised of a core group of leaders whose role is to:

- Represent the interests of the Advisory Partners and the educational community regarding the system of professional development,
- Clarify vision, mission, and roles of MAPLE,

- Develop and support policies that facilitate the purpose of MAPLE,
- Identify needs and priorities for the MAPLE work,
- Develop plans that respond to needs and maximize resources,
- Ensure alignment of the MAPLE work with purpose and mission,
- Ensure accountability of the MAPLE work and resources,
- Serve as champion of MAPLE and advocates of collaboration.

The Principal Partners Board would meet at least quarterly throughout the year with the specific outcome of setting direction, reviewing progress, and making decisions. The output of the Board would empower the Director to carry-out the day-to-day leadership and operation of MAPLE.

The membership of the Principal Partners Board for Phase II (2003-2004) includes a key group of leaders invested in South Dakota's educational community. The composition of the initial Board reflects individuals affiliated with a diversity of education entities. In order to keep the size of the Board manageable, the Board membership does not include specific designees for every organization associated with South Dakota's education community. The Board members are expected to function as a voice for the larger education community rather than a representative for a specific entity. Thus, an Advisory Partner member is empowered to approach any Board member or MAPLE Director with input and feedback about tMAPLE's operation and activities.

MAPLE DIRECTOR AND CORE STAFF

MAPLE is a complex entity and the Principal Partners Board is comprised of busy individuals with full time employment. Thus, it is imperative the Principal Partners Board empower a Director and Core Staff to act on decisions, lead the work, and facilitate MAPLE activities that ensure ongoing progress toward MAPLE's purpose. With the support of the Core Staff, the Director will:

- Facilitate and implement Principal Partners Board meetings, processes, and decisions.
- Facilitate the Advisory Partners' meetings, processes, and input.
- Be the "keeper" and foremost champion of the vision for the MAPLE.
- Represent MAPLE's interest with the education community and larger community.
- Hire and/or contract Core Staff and consultants as appropriate.
- Direct internal and external communications about MAPLE.
- Manage the fiscal operation of MAPLE.
- Document and report MAPLE operation and activities.
- Facilitate the evaluation of MAPLE operation and activities.

FISCAL STRUCTURE

MAPLE will operate as a non-profit entity. MAPLE will gain immediate non-profit status by affiliating with the West River Foundation (WRF). WRF is a non-profit organization serving as an umbrella for other non-profit entities that address education and economic development needs. MAPLE will enter into a cooperative agreement with WRF. Under the agreement, WRF will provide MAPLE with fiscal services and liability coverage. In addition, WRF agrees to allow MAPLE's governing body to make all decisions related to MAPLE's activities and to pay all MAPLE expenditures as allowed by law.

A primary source of initial funding is the Learning Organizations for Technology Integration (LOFTI) grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education. It will be the goal of MAPLE leadership to establish a funding structure that reflects a diversity of funding sources. Thus, MAPLE operation and activities may be supported by partner contributions, service/participant fees, contracts, and grants.

