VSBA / VSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

From Data to Decisions

Using Evidence to Improve Student Outcomes

PRESENTERS

Bill Kimball & Jack McCarthy

DATE

October 30, 2026



Maple Run Unified School District

SESSION OVERVIEW

Navigating Complex District Decisions

Setting priorities, aligning budgets, and strengthening community trust

THE CHALLENGE

School boards and district leaders face increasingly difficult decisions about programs, staffing, and budgets in a rapidly changing environment.



SESSION FOCUS

This session explores how districts can use data, community input, and continuous improvement to set priorities, make strategic resource decisions, and measure results for students.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Participants will leave with practical strategies for aligning budgets with district goals, making informed decisions, and strengthening community trust.

Maple Run Unified School District

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

Why Did You Attend Today's Session?

"I wanted to know how the board monitors goal attainment."

"I wanted to know how the board determines whether to support a new program and monitors its success."

"Of all the presentations offered, this seemed like the best option to help my organization move forward."

"I didn't know where I was supposed to be, so now I'm stuck in this room with Jack and Bill."



Maple Run Unified School District

DISTRICT OVERVIEW

Maple Run Unified School District

OUR MISSION

Maple Run ensures a meaningful, flexible, rigorous, and safe education for all to thrive and excel.

OUR VISION

At Maple Run Unified School District, we are committed to cultivating a welcoming environment where our students and community can tap into their love of learning.

OUR DISTRICT

- Unified in 2017 following community votes in March 2016
- Four formerly separate school districts
- Serves the Town of Fairfield, Saint Albans City, and Saint Albans Town
- PreK–12 education, including technical and alternative programs

Maple Run
Unified School District

OUR GOVERNANCE

Board

Establishes vision, sets policy, establishes goals, and ensures accountability

Superintendent

Leads district operations and manages the schools

GOVERNANCE MODEL

Governing by Results

Maple Run uses a Governing by Results approach, developed by Mel Gill, that shares similarities with Policy Governance.

Focus

Vision, goals, and results

Leadership

The Superintendent leads district operations and planning.

Accountability

The Board monitors progress through reports, evidence, and reviews.

Reporting

The Superintendent reports to the full Board.



Community Connection

The Board represents community interests and helps set district direction.

LEARN MORE

- MRUSD Board of Directors: https://www.maplerun.org/page/board-of-directors
- MRUSD Board Policies: https://www.maplerun.org/page/policies-and-procedures

Maple Run Unified School District

STRATEGIC PLAN

A Shared Direction for Maple Run

Our five-year strategic plan guides district priorities, decision-making, and continuous improvement.

Maple Run Unified School District

FIVE STRATEGIC GOALS

01 Rigorous Academics and Expectations

02 Consistent Policies to Address Bias and Behavior Issues

03 Support Services for Students and Families

04 Opportunities for Family and Community Engagement

05 Community Education and Action on Inclusion

THE PURPOSE

Align our work and resources with our goals and evaluate progress toward meaningful results for students.



WORK PLAN

Board Annual Work Plan | August–December

AUGUST

- Review Board Annual Work Plan
- Quarterly financial report



SEPTEMBER

- Enrollment and student data
- FY2028 budget drivers and timeline

NOVEMBER

- District outcomes and budget targets
- Community priorities and grant projections
- Educational Session: Hazing, Harassment, Bullying & Retaliation (HHBR) / Title IX

OCTOBER

- Student data, staffing, and financial reports
- Educational Session: School Improvement Metrics & Planning

DECEMBER

- Fall student data and budget presentations
- First draft of FY2028 budget
- Educational Session: Ed Tech – Screen Time

Maple Run Unified School District

PROGRESS MONITORING

How Does the Board Monitor Progress?



Set Goals Together

Worked with the community to develop and approve district goals.

Build Strategic Plan

Engaged families, students, staff, and community members in developing a plan with action steps, resources, and evidence of success.

Monitor Progress

Established a schedule for receiving reports connected to district goals.

Refine Process

Reviewed and adjusted the monitoring process several times with the Board.

Multiple Data Types

Requested a mix of qualitative, quantitative, and “street data” to better understand progress and results.

Maple Run Unified School District

PROGRESS MONITORING

Where Are We Now? The Goal-Monitoring Process

Report Shared
The report is included in the Board packet materials.

Motion to Accept
The Board makes a motion to accept the report into the record.

Report Presented
Leadership Team members present the report and discuss the findings.

Board Discussion
Members ask questions and review the evidence.

Vote to Accept
The Board votes on the motion to accept the report into the record.

Vote to Approve
The Board then votes to approve the report.

THREE GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What changes or trends do you observe in the monitoring report? What evidence supports your assessment?
- What additional data or information identified in the Strategic Plan do you need to determine whether the district has met its goals?
- What can the Board do within its governance role to support the district in achieving the goal?



Maple Run Unified School District

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Connecting Goals, Data & Outcomes

Three program proposals and how each connects to Maple Run's mission, vision, and five strategic goals.

Spring Academy

Middle School Alternative Program

Specialized intervention providing structured social, emotional, and academic growth.

Lighthouse

High School Alternative Program

Flexible pathway tailored for secondary students requiring alternative learning environments.

Summer School

Rigorous Academics

Targeted academic support designed to reinforce core skills and prevent learning loss.

FOR EACH PROGRAM, WE WILL EXPLORE:

- Program Goals & Proposal: Core objectives, alignment with strategic plan, and operational structure.
- Quantitative Data | What the numbers tell us: Measurable outcomes, attendance metrics, and achievement indicators.
- Qualitative Data | What students, families, and staff tell us: Direct feedback, experiences, and community impact.



Maple Run Unified School District

PROCESS

Creating a New Program at Maple Run

A structured, data-informed approach to designing, evaluating, and sustaining strategic district initiatives.

1. Propose Program

To the School Board

- Student learning needs and goals
- Cost modeling and resources

2. Review Data

Comprehensive Analysis

- Quantitative data
- Qualitative data
- Street Data

3. Evaluate Impact

Short-Term & Multi-Year

- Student outcomes & progress
- Program effectiveness
- Mission, vision & strategic goals

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

• Proposals start with identified student needs, paired with realistic financial and resource planning to ensure feasibility.

• Decision-making is driven by balanced data sources, combining district metrics with community experience.

• Ongoing evaluation ensures long-term fidelity to Maple Run's core mission, vision and strategic plan.



Maple Run Unified School District

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Lighthouse: High School Alternative Program

Program Goal: Provide an individualized, flexible educational pathway for students who need additional support to access their education and work toward graduation.

The Proposal

- Establish a smaller, off-site learning environment.
- Provide individualized academic, behavioral, mental health, and social-emotional supports.
- Support students experiencing disengagement or who are off track to graduate.
- Make the program available to general education and special education students.



CONNECTION TO MAPLE RUN'S MISSION & VISION

Lighthouse supports Maple Run's commitment to providing a meaningful, flexible, rigorous, and safe education and cultivating a welcoming environment where students can tap into their love of learning.

Strategic Plan Goals

- Rigorous Academics and Expectations
- Consistent Policies to Address Bias and Behavior Issues
- Support Services for Students and Families

Maple Run Unified School District

Lighthouse: Measuring Student Outcomes

Quantitative Data | Tracking progress, engagement, and completion metrics over time.

School Year	Students Served	Dropout Prevention	Graduation Rate
2022–2023	11	91%	60% (80%*)
2023–2024	20	90%	100%
2024–2025	13	92%	N/A

WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

- Dropout prevention rates remained consistently high between 90% and 92%.
- The reported graduation rate increased from 60% in Year 1 to 100% in Year 2.
- Annual enrollment ranged from 11 to 20 students.

Strategic Plan Goals: Rigorous Academics & Expectations; Support Services for Students & Families.

DATA NOTES & DEFINITIONS

• Dropout prevention criteria include students who met criteria for school non enrollment and/or had critical attendance concerns prior to placement in the Lighthouse program.

• *Year 1's alternate 80% graduation figure represents an adjusted metric that requires additional clarification.

Strategic Alignment

Tracking attendance, dropout prevention, and graduation helps us evaluate student progress and whether Lighthouse is providing the support students need to work toward graduation.



Maple Run Unified School District

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Lighthouse | Qualitative Data

Lighthouse: Student Experiences & Impact

Belonging and Support

Students describe Lighthouse as a place where they feel supported and connected.

Improved Engagement

A smaller setting, individualized support, and a predictable schedule can make attending school more manageable.

Progress Toward Graduation

Eight students have graduated in the two years since the program launched.

"Everything about the Lighthouse makes it easier for me to come to school. The support, the size, and the predictability of the schedule help me a lot."

— Matt Bloom, Lighthouse Coordinator



STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Student experiences help us understand which supports make it easier to attend school, engage in learning, and make progress toward graduation.

Strategic Plan Goal:
Support Services for Students and Families

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Lighthouse | Street Data

Lighthouse: Listening to Student Experience

Look Beyond the Numbers

- **Student Voice:** How do students describe their experience at Lighthouse?
- **Daily Experience:** What helps students feel safe, supported, and ready to learn?
- **Barriers to Learning:** What challenges continue to affect attendance, engagement, and progress?
- **Belonging & Connection:** Do students feel connected to their learning and school community?

KEY QUESTION

What are students telling us they need to attend, engage, learn, and work toward graduation?

CONNECTION TO MAPLE RUN'S MISSION & VISION

Use student experiences to help determine whether the program provides meaningful, flexible, rigorous, and safe educational opportunities for students to thrive and excel.

Listening to student experiences helps us understand whether Lighthouse provides a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment where students can engage in learning and work toward success.

Strategic Plan Goals

- Support Services for Students and Families
- Opportunities for Family and Community Engagement



Maple Run Unified School District

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Spring Academy: Middle School Alternative Program

Program Goal: Provide an individualized, flexible educational pathway for students in grades 5–8 who need intensive behavioral support to access learning, build skills, and experience success at school.

The Proposal

- Create a smaller, supportive learning environment for students in grades 5–6 and 7–8.
- Provide targeted behavioral support alongside academic and social-emotional learning.
- Maintain connections to students' home schools through a flexible, hybrid model when appropriate.
- Develop individualized plans with students and families, including pathways back to their home schools when appropriate.

CONNECTION TO MAPLE RUN'S MISSION & VISION

Spring Academy is designed to provide a meaningful, flexible, rigorous, and safe learning environment where students can build skills, access learning, and work toward success.

RELEVANT STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

- Consistent Policies to Address Bias and Behavior Issues
- Support Services for Students and Families
- Rigorous Academics and Expectations



Maple Run
Unified School District

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Spring Academy: Quantitative Data

Tracking progress, engagement, enrollment, and demand for support over time.

Behavior & Attendance | 2025

- Behavior success measure increased from 33% to 46%.
- Attendance success measure increased from 8% to 38%.
- Individual student results varied, showing the importance of continued support.

Enrollment & Demand

Enrollment Growth

Winter '25: 9 | Spring '25: 13
Fall '25: 14 | Winter '26: 15

Growing Demand for Support

SEL & Restorative Practices Coaching Requests:

- 24–25: 17 requests (full year)
- 25–26: 25 requests to date

Districtwide Behavior Context

- Behavior referrals show highest spikes in September & October across last 3 years.
- Physical aggression is most frequently reported major violation.
- Spring Academy has highest reported behavior rate by school/program.

CONNECTION TO MAPLE RUN'S MISSION & STRATEGIC PLAN

Monitoring behavior, attendance, and enrollment helps us evaluate whether students are accessing the meaningful, flexible, rigorous, and safe education described in our mission.

STRATEGIC PLAN CONNECTION

Consistent Policies to Address Bias and Behavior Issues • Support Services for Students and Families

FINANCIAL MEASURES

Projected out-of-district & tutoring costs: $1,497,176.80

Actual & projected Spring Academy costs (FY25–26): $1,838,616.00

Reported district cost (first 18 months): $341,439.20

Reported savings equivalent: ~4 students



PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Spring Academy | Qualitative Data

Spring Academy: Student, Staff, and Leader Experiences

Student Experiences

- Students describe feeling safer and more comfortable at school.
- Identify smaller classes, supportive staff, and a calming environment as key.
- Report growth in confidence, self-advocacy, and academic learning.
- Express renewed motivation to attend and work toward future goals.



Staff & School Leader Experiences

- Strong collaboration and consistent communication with home schools.
- Individualized behavioral and emotional support helps students re-engage.
- Staff value the close-knit environment and relationships driving progress.
- Families receive proactive communication and support during transitions.

CONNECTION TO MAPLE RUN'S MISSION & VISION

These experiences help us understand whether Spring Academy is creating a welcoming, safe learning environment where students can reconnect with learning and develop their love of learning.

STRATEGIC PLAN CONNECTION

- Support Services for Students & Families
- Opportunities for Family and Community Engagement

DIRECT FEEDBACK & QUOTES

STUDENT EXPERIENCE: *"Since joining, I feel like I want to come to school. My goal is to get into the Tech Center."*

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP: *"They join your table, offering incredible collaboration with the school of origin and a level of communication that is both consistent and helpful."*

STAFF PERSPECTIVE: *"The biggest change I notice in students is that they want to come to school."*

Maple Run Unified School District

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Spring Academy: Street Data

Understanding student and family day-to-day experiences to strengthen support and connection.

Student Voice

- Do students feel **safe, supported, and connected** to learning?
- What helps students want to **attend school**?
- What would students **change or improve** about the program?

Family Voice

- Do families feel **informed, heard, and supported**?
- How well does communication support families **during transitions**?
- What **additional support** would help students succeed?

Daily Experience & Belonging

- Which **relationships, routines, and supports** drive engagement?
- What **barriers** affect attendance, behavior, and progress?
- How to maintain **connections to home schools**?

USING WHAT WE LEARN

Gather student and family feedback regularly and use it alongside behavior, attendance, and academic data to improve the program.

CONNECTION TO MAPLE RUN'S MISSION & VISION

Listening to students and families helps us evaluate whether Spring Academy provides a safe, welcoming environment where students can access learning and develop their love of learning.

STRATEGIC PLAN CONNECTION

Opportunities for Family and Community Engagement
Community Education and Action on Inclusion



Maple Run Unified School District

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Summer Programming | Program Goal & Proposal

Program Goal: Provide students with opportunities to continue learning, explore interests, and stay engaged over the summer while responding to the needs of students and families.

The Proposal

- Expand summer learning beyond traditional short-day camps.
- Offer full-day programming through partnerships with the Saint Albans Recreation Department and community organizations.
- Provide academic opportunities, including credit recovery, literacy activities, and mini-courses.
- Offer hands-on experiences in cooking, outdoor recreation, arts, wellness, and other areas of interest.
- Expand access to books through community partnerships, including the Franklin Grand Isle Bookmobile.

CONNECTION TO MAPLE RUN'S MISSION & VISION

Provide meaningful, flexible learning opportunities that help students stay engaged and develop their love of learning.

RELEVANT STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

- Rigorous Academics and Expectations
- Opportunities for Family and Community Engagement
- Support Services for Students and Families

PANORAMA Case Study: https://www.panoramaed.com/district-stories/summer-slide-maple-run-vt



Maple Run Unified School District

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Summer Programming | Quantitative Data

What the Data Showed & What We Need to Measure

What the Data Showed

- **Academic learning:** Spring-to-fall screening comparisons identified concerning learning loss between school years.
- **Family needs:** Feedback identified childcare as a major barrier to summer learning.
- **Expanded opportunities:** Programming grew to include recreation partnerships, credit recovery, mini-courses, and literacy activities.
- **Community partnerships:** Book access expanded through the Franklin Grand Isle Bookmobile and a free monthly book program coordinated with local pediatricians.

What We Need to Measure

- Student participation and attendance.
- Spring-to-fall academic growth in literacy and math.
- Credit recovery participation and completion.
- Access to full-day programming.
- Program costs, grants, and community contributions.



CONNECTION TO MAPLE RUN'S MISSION & STRATEGIC PLAN

Use data to guide decisions, support academic progress, and provide meaningful learning opportunities.

STRATEGIC PLAN CONNECTION

Rigorous Academics and Expectations

Maple Run Unified School District

PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Summer Programming | Qualitative Data

What We've Heard

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

"This competition taught me how to be a good team leader, how to cooperate, so many things."

— Taylor Olds, SATEC alumnus, reflecting on Cooking Camp

FAMILY FEEDBACK

"What we realized in talking to families is that we completely missed the mark in terms of childcare."

— John Muldoon, Assistant Superintendent, describing family feedback

DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE

"There's a nice menu of options for families to choose from this year."

— Superintendent Bill Kimball, discussing expanded summer programming

CONNECTION TO MAPLE RUN'S VISION

Create a welcoming environment where students can explore interests, build skills, and develop a love of learning.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Opportunities for Family and Community Engagement
Support Services for Students and Families



Maple Run Unified School District

Summer Programming | Street Data

What We Still Need to Learn

Key Questions

- **Student experience:** Which activities help students feel engaged, connected, and excited about learning?
- **Family needs:** Are program hours, locations, and transportation working for families?
- **Access:** What prevents students from participating, and who may be missing out?
- **Academic progress:** How do students describe their confidence and learning after summer programming?
- **Future planning:** What should we continue, change, or add next summer?

How We Can Use This Information

- Gather feedback directly from students and families.
- Review feedback alongside participation, attendance, academic growth, and cost data.
- Use what we learn to improve access, strengthen partnerships, and plan future programming.



CONNECTION TO MAPLE RUN'S MISSION & VISION

Listen to students and families to help ensure meaningful, flexible learning opportunities in a welcoming environment.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Opportunities for Family and Community Engagement • Support Services for Students and Families • Rigorous Academics and Expectations

Maple Run Unified School District

FROM DATA TO DECISIONS

What We're Learning | What We're Learning Across Maple Run

Lighthouse • Spring Academy • Summer Programming

Quantitative Data

What do numerical indicators show about program reach and impact?

- **Participation & Attendance:** Tracking student enrollment and daily attendance trends.
- **Academic Progress:** Measuring growth, credit recovery, and skill retention.
- **Costs:** Evaluating funding, grants, and resource allocation.

Qualitative Data

What do personal experiences tell us about program environment?

- **Student Experiences:** Listening to student perspectives on engagement and learning.
- **Staff Observations:** Insights from educators on daily classroom dynamics.
- **Family Feedback:** Understanding family needs, support, and communication.

Street Data

Whose voices are heard and what do we need to understand better?

- **Inclusion & Representation:** Identifying whose voices are centered and whose are missing.
- **Deep Understanding:** Uncovering root causes and lived experiences.
- **Actionable Insights:** Transforming ground-level feedback into strategic change.

GOAL & PURPOSE

The goal is not just to collect data.
It is to use what we learn to improve student outcomes.



Maple Run Unified School District

FROM EVIDENCE TO ACTION

From Evidence to Action | What Comes Next?

Turning Evidence Into Action

Identify

What are the data telling us?

Listen

What do students and families say?

Prioritize

What needs to change or improve?

Evaluate

Did our actions improve outcomes?



Meaningful. Flexible. Rigorous. Safe.

Keeping Maple Run's mission, vision, and strategic goals at the center of our decisions.

Maple Run Unified School District