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## Best Practice: Long-Term Commitment to an Organization

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# National & State Initiatives

## **Best Practice:** *Maryland Engineering Challenges*

**Best Practice Nominator:** Barry Burke

**Description of Best Practice:** The Maryland Engineering Challenges are a series of competitions for groups of students in Grades K-12. The Challenges are sponsored by the Engineering Society of Baltimore, the Baltimore Museum of Industry, the Technology Education Association of Maryland, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) with the objective of introducing young people to the role of Engineers in today's society. The competitions involve four main components: (a) written report (sent in two weeks in advance), (b) oral report, (c) design and construction of the entry, and (d) entry's performance at the Museum of Industry. In a typical year, there are three regular challenges at the elementary school level, four at the middle school level, and four at high school level. Additionally, at the high school level, the Wood Bridge Challenge is the regional competition with winners moving on to the finals of the International Wood Bridge Challenge, and an online challenge run by NASA.

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(Note: Mr. Gray is the former Maryland State Supervisor for Technology Education, Executive Director of the Technology Education Association of Maryland, and the Director of the Maryland Center for Career and Technology Education Studies. He is now a visiting lecturer at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore.)

## **Best Practice:** *Long-term Commitment to an Organization*

**Best Practice Nominator:** Philip A. Reed

**Description of Best Practice:** There is no shortage of professional organizations that need active participants. All too often we see one or two people working tirelessly to carry on the mission of the organization. Unfortunately, when these individuals leave, the effects on the organization can be devastating. Organizations need to plan so they have more long-term commitments. For example, the professional society for workforce development, Iota Lambda Sigma (ILS), wrote into their bylaws that the secretary/treasurer position would be a five-year appointment. This was designed to help

maintain consistency with organization policy, finances, and other activities. The approach taken by ILS has worked but probably would not work for all organizations. The best way to generate more ideas that could be shared is to contact those leaders that have provided long-term commitments to organizations. Almost all organizations have someone, such as the Virginia Technology Education Association's Jerry Weddle, who has provided strong, quiet leadership for a sustained period.

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**Best Practice:** *Curriculum Integration through Instructional Materials Development*

**Best Practice Nominator:** Vincent Childress

**Description of Best Practice:** The Technology Student Association's (TSA) competitive events are designed to help teachers provide application opportunities for the technology concepts their students learn in the laboratory. However, in their present form the TSA competitive events guide does not address content. There are teachers that focus on the events and not the curriculum. There are teachers that focus on the curriculum and not the events. In an effort to provide readily available content to support the TSA competitive events and simultaneously promote the *Standards for Technological Literacy* (STL), the National Science Foundation funded the Tech-know Project. The instructional materials are also correlated with the *National Science Education Standards* and the *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics*. Teachers, teacher educators, and business professionals collaborated on the development of instructional materials that represent best practices in instructional materials development. The Tech-know materials provide the curriculum content (STL) and short term instruction that are based upon highly motivational TSA competitive events.

The following link provides more information on the Tech-know Project:

<http://www.ncsu.edu/techknow/>

The following link is to the publisher of Tech-know Project materials:

<http://www.cplearning.com/index.html>

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