20th Annual National SAM Conference

JW Marriott Resort, Summerlin, Nevada

Wednesday, January 13, 2027				
NSIP Board Meeting ~ Garden Suite Arrival of Pre-conference Attendees Registration Welcome Desk: 11:00 AM until 6:00 PM Conference Office and Storage: Castilla				
11:00	6:00	Registration Desk		
6:00	9:00	**Pre-Conference Welcome Dinner Event** **Cascade Ballroom**		
Thursday, January 14, 2027				
7:00	9:00	**Welcome Desk, materials pick-up**		
		Pre-Conference Breakfast 7:00 AM-8:30 AM **Cascade and Patio** *Pre-conference Lunch*: *Noon-1:30 PM* **Cascade and Patio**		
8:30	4:00	**Becca Silver** Leading Through Resistance Grand A 	**Kim Marshall** Out of the office: Mini-Observations Leon 	**Jenn David Lang** Roadmap to Recharge Murica
		Brendan Houdek Speaking with Clarity and Confidence Cataluña A&B 	**Jason Major** Navigating Life as a School Leader Aragon 	**J Roth** Leadership Compression Andalucia
7:00	10:00	**Conference Welcome Dinner Event** **Valencia and Terrace**		

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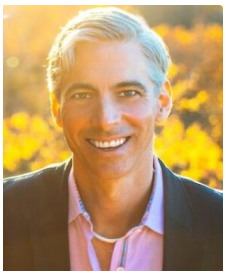
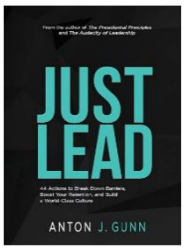
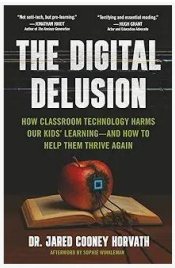
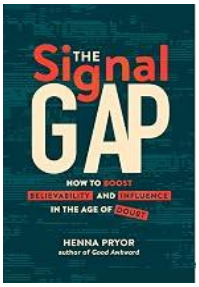
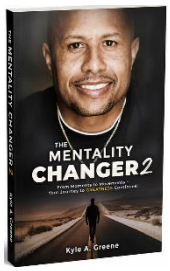
		Friday, January 15, 2027
6:45	7:45	**Breakfast** Grand A&B, Pre-Function Marquis
8:00	9:30	 **Welcome and First General Session** **Manley Feinberg** ***Vertical Leadership Lessons*** **Marquis Ballroom**
9:30	9:45	**Break**
9:45	10:45	**Breakout Sessions** *(Your personalized schedule is on the back of your conference ID)* *Grand A, Grand B, Cascade, Madrid, Murcia, Andalucia, Cataluña A-B, Navarra, Galicia*
10:45	11:00	**Break**
11:00	12:15	**Second General Session** **Anton Gunn,** ***Become Legendary: How Great Leaders Build Trust and Drive Performance*** **Marquis Ballroom** 
12:15	1:45	**Lunch** Valencia Ballroom
1:45	3:00	 **Third General Session** **Jared Horvath** ***The Digital Delusion*** **Marquis Ballroom**
3:00	3:15	**Break**
3:15	4:15	**Breakout Sessions** *(Your personalized schedule is on the back of your conference ID)* *Grand A, Grand B, Cascade, Madrid, Murcia, Andalucia, Cataluña A-B, Navarra, Galicia*
6:30	9:30	**Dinner Event** **Valencia and Terrace**

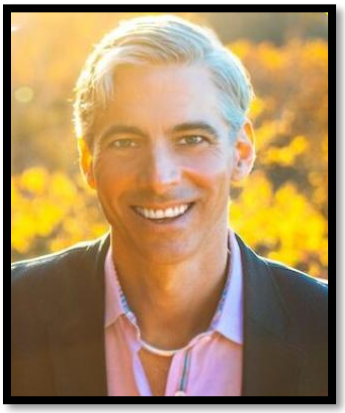
		Saturday, January 16, 2027
7:30	8:45	**Breakfast** Grand A&B, Pre-Function Marquis
9:00	10:30	 ***Recap of the Conference so far: John Antonetti*** **Fourth General Session** ***Henna Pryor, The Signal Gap*** **Marquis Ballroom**
10:30	10:45	**Break**
10:45	11:45	**Breakout Sessions** *(Your personalized schedule is on the back of your conference ID)* *Grand A, Grand B, Cascade, Madrid, Murcia, Andalucia, Cataluña A-B, Navarra, Galicia*
11:45	1:15	**Lunch** **Valencia Ballroom**
1:15	2:30	 **Fifth General Session** ***Kyle Greene, Moments to Movements*** **Marquis Ballroom**
3:15	5:15	**Dinner Party** **Lodge Lawn**
5:00	5:30	Transportation to Bellagio Resort
6:30	8:00	**Evening Event: O by Cirque Du Soliel, Bellagio**
8:00	11:30	Transportation to JW Marriott Summerlin, on the hour and half hour

		Sunday, January 17, 2027
3AM	6 PM	**Departure** Arrive in the lobby for transport to the Airport *two hours* before airline departure time. **Travel Issues: 515-360-6311 Email: Travel@SamsConnect.com**

Featured Breakout Session Speakers, National

 Willow Sweeney	 LaVonna Roth	 Ken Williams
 John Antonetti	 Kim Marshall	 Jenn David Lang

Manley Feinberg is the FIRST of five keynote speakers at this year's *National SAM Conference*



Manley is recognized as an award winning international keynote speaker, business leader, and author whose work has been featured on NBC, CBS, ABC, and Fox, and in *The New York Daily News*, *Entrepreneur, American Express Open Forum* and *World News*. He served two terms as the President of the National Speakers Association, St. Louis chapter and is a Certified Speaking Professional CSP.

During Manley's eleven years with Build-A-Bear Workshop, his leadership direction helped take the revolutionary retail concept from 40 stores to over 400 worldwide, realizing revenue growth from 55 million to over 474 million, and a successful IPO on the NYSE. He built an award winning reputation for implementing business solutions and support that produced measurable results every day. Manley's leadership influence contributed to a workplace culture that landed Build-A-Bear on the FORTUNE 100 Best Companies to Work For® List four years in a row.

Would you like to know more? See below for a video of Manley in action:

Anton Gunn is the SECOND of five keynote speakers at this year's *National SAM Conference*

Anton J. Gunn is a former senior advisor to President Barack Obama and the world's leading authority on workplace injustice. As a professional speaker and leadership consultant, he has worked with more than 400 organizations in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

He has developed and implemented transformational initiatives focused on human capital strategy, diversity & inclusion, corporate social responsibility, and health outcomes for more than 20 million Americans. Anton has a bachelor's and a master's degree from the University of South Carolina, where he also played football. He is a former Resident Fellow at Harvard University and bestselling author of three leadership books.

Would you like to know more? See below for a video of Anton in action:

Jared Horvath is the THIRD of five keynote speakers at this year's *National SAM Conference*

Educator and neuroscientist Dr. Jared Cooney Horvath reveals why digital tools in school consistently undermine learning—and what parents, teachers, and schools can do to push back with purpose.

Our children are struggling.

Schools, once alive with human connection, are now dominated by screens and digital tools. The result is unmistakable: declining performance, fractured attention, and the slow erosion of rigorous thought. For the first time in recent history, children are falling behind previous generations on many key measures of cognitive development.

In The Digital Delusion, neuroscientist and educator Dr. Jared Cooney Horvath reveals how the widespread use of laptops, tablets, and classroom software is undermining how children learn and develop. Drawing on decades of research, he provides practical tools for families to reassess device use at home, equips educators with the means to restore attention-rich learning environments, and helps schools make smarter decisions about technology.

It's a call to reclaim real learning.

Would you like to know more? See below for a video of Jared in action:

Henna Pryor is the Fourth of five keynote speakers at this year's *National SAM Conference*

A new and unnerving reality has emerged: clarity is no longer enough. Hybrid work blurs tone, digital brevity flattens nuance, AI rewrites voices, and trust sits at an all-time low. People aren't just listening to what we say – they are quietly testing whether they can believe us.

In this verification-first world, people don't believe you based on your message alone, but on the signals they receive. When these drift or contradict each other—when there is a gap between your message and your tone or behavior over time—belief quietly degrades. Your message can be perfect…and still fail to do the job.

In The Signal Gap, Henna Pryor reveals the hidden mechanism of modern influence: keeping your signals aligned so people can confidently believe and trust what they hear from you. Grounded in behavioral science and original research, this practical system helps you diagnose and repair the hidden places your influence breaks down and achieve signal integrity.
It's a call to reclaim real learning.

Would you like to know more? See below for a video of Henna in action:

Kyle Green is the Fifth of five keynote speakers at this year's *National SAM Conference*

Kyle A. Greene is one of the most sought-after motivational speakers and educational consultants in the country — but his journey didn't start on a stage. It started in his struggles.

Born to a mother battling addiction and raised by his incredibly strong grandmother Irene, Kyle didn't learn to read until the 8th grade — sitting with his Grandma Clara at an old wooden desk, learning from a dusty encyclopedia. By 16, he was a teenage father while still a student himself.

Life could've written him off. But purpose rewrote his story. Today, those early challenges are the foundation for his mission: to help every student, educator, and leader see that potential is never lost — it's just waiting to be seen.

His style is passionate like Eric Thomas, heartfelt like Inky Johnson, and practical like a master educator who's lived it all. When Kyle speaks, classrooms shift. Teachers remember their "why." Students believe they matter again.

Preconference Sessions

Leading Through Resistance: A Practical Framework for Responding to Pushback and Avoidance- Becca Silver

Resistance can stall strong initiatives, drain leadership time, and leave leaders wondering what else they are supposed to try. You have explained the why, provided support, clarified expectations, and followed up, yet the pushback, avoidance, defensiveness, or surface-level compliance continues. In this interactive, full-day workshop, school and district leaders will bring real resistance challenges into the room and learn a practical process for figuring out what is actually getting in the way. School leaders would never respond to every reading difficulty with the same intervention. They gather evidence, identify the source of the struggle, and match the support to the need. Resistance requires that same diagnostic precision.

Participants will learn how to stop guessing and distinguish between different causes of resistance so they can choose a response that actually fits the problem. Using Becca Silver's Catalyst Mindsets framework, attendees will examine whether resistance is being driven by a lack of value, ownership, belonging, confidence, or belief that improvement is possible. They will work through realistic leadership scenarios and challenges from their own schools and districts, learn how to recognize both obvious and quieter forms of resistance, and practice deciding when a situation calls for greater support, clearer accountability, or both. The goal is not to excuse resistance. It is to help leaders respond to it more strategically and effectively.

This is not a session about becoming more patient with resistance. It is about becoming more precise in how you lead through it. Throughout the day, participants will **practice critical conversations**, **apply diagnostic tools**, e**valuate common leadership responses**, and **build a specific pla**n for a resistance challenge they are currently facing. Attendees will leave with repeatable **frameworks**, practical **language**, and **tools** they can use immediately to reduce defensiveness, address avoidance, strengthen follow-through, and move people from compliance toward greater ownership and commitment.

Roadmap to Recharge: Reconnecting with Your Purpose and Passion for Leading Schools– Jenn David Lang

School leadership is one of the most meaningful roles there is. And yet it is truly demanding. Every principal enters the profession with a deep sense of passion and purpose. Amid the daily demands of leading a school, it's easy to lose sight of that original sense of purpose and energy. In this session you will learn what the research says about sustaining passion, resilience, and fulfillment in educational leadership so you can continue to thrive while making a lasting impact on students, staff, and your school community.

Rather than leave it up to chance, join this interactive session to create your own roadmap to recharge. You will learn ways to reconnect with what brings you energy, meaning, and satisfaction in your work. During the session, you'll experience practical, research-based strategies that can help you lead with renewed focus, energy, and enthusiasm throughout the school year.

Not only will you walk away with strategies you can employ all year long for yourself, but you will also develop a toolbox of skills, knowledge, and activities

you can bring back to your school to help your teachers rekindle their own passion for the job as well.

Speaking with Clarity and Confidence– Brendan Houdek

Over the course of nearly 15 years of conducting corporate training, Brendan Houdek (MA, CCC-SLP) brings together his experience as a speech-language pathologist, an education in philosophy, and a record of success as an executive speech coach.

He teaches effective business communication, executive presence, and vocal production, equipping clients with greater control and flexibility to present themselves professionally and authentically. His training covers not only the technical aspects of speech production, but also presentational performance and perspective work.

This workshop, Speaking with Clarity and Confidence, explores the intersection of effective communication, personal authenticity, and professional objectives. We'll start with an open dialogue, sharing personal experiences and apprehensions about public speaking, and we'll identify how to shift from automatic, ineffective habits toward intentional, impactful communication. By building agency as speakers and addressing habits like vocalized pauses and fidgeting, we'll develop the skills needed to lead your schools with authority and authenticity. This isn't just about presentations or meetings; it's about communicating with confidence anytime, anywhere, on any subject.

Later, we'll cover the essentials of structuring content to ensure your communication is clear, concise, and compelling. We'll explore vocal variety, gestures, movement, and individual style. Most importantly, all participants will have dedicated time to practice these skills and receive personalized feedback. Ultimately, our goal is to provide the tools to embody your most confident, most effective self, ensuring all your conversations foster the teacher practice and student outcomes that SAM teams are dedicated to achieving.

Subplots: Navigating Life as a School Leader – Dr. Jason Major

The main door to the building won't shut completely and the facilities department doesn't believe him. Two staff need mediation about student toileting accommodations. A parent brought a live chicken to dismissal. That's what Jason Major means by subplots—the thousands of little things that we manage that come from the main plot: kids learning things in a safe environment. Those were three that came up in a two-hour period of the first week of this school year.

Jason is a SAM principal in his 11th year as principal of Dever Elementary School in Chicago. Over the last year he has developed a set of core values that help guide his decisions. One of them is "be real." With that in mind, here are some of his previous experiences:

- Math teacher (most fun thing ever, the kids solve tons of math problems, learn things, then we all go home)
- Math coach (Adults are way harder than kids)
- School data analyst (Campbell's Law says high stakes social indicators will be gamed)
- Radio salesperson (please no)
- Admissions counselor for a predatory career college (please, please no)

This workshop has been described as "exactly what" people needed, "group therapy," and "an entertaining workshop with practical ideas." With improv experience, Jason likes to keep plenty of material in his back pocket and see which direction the group wants to go. You may talk about setting boundaries, but take a break to have a rock/paper/scissors tournament.

The overarching themes of the day include:

- The spillover effect of the eight components of the wellness wheel
- The four domains of decision education from the Alliance for Decision Education
- Tools that have helped Jason and tools that haven't but could help others, grounded in the greatest self help book of all-time: The 12 Levers: The Complete Psychological Toolkit for Improving Your Life
- Real stories that remind school leaders that we deal with similar things everywhere, from NYC to southern Illinois
- Connections with people through resonance

Some tools work for some people. Some don't. Some tools become proxies for the actual thing you are trying to do. Some are complete pseudoscience crap.

All participants in this pre-conference session will receive a copy of Jason's book Subplots: Navigating Life as a School Leader, an essay/journal prompt style book written as a companion to get you through the school year. Jason also writes a Substack and hosts a podcast under the same name, and occasionally will do stand-up comedy. You'll leave with at least one new idea and perhaps a new way to think about something that has been bothering you.

Leadership Compression: Protect the Work That Matters Most – J Roth

You know the day that never ends: a calendar built around classroom walkthroughs, strategic team meetings, and student celebrations that gets consumed, hour by hour, by a parent concern, a discipline situation, a staffing emergency, and a fire drill. Every urgent need is handled well, and the most important work still does not happen. This full-day workshop names that pattern as Leadership Compression, the gradual crowding out of strategic leadership by the urgent demands of running a school, and gives you a practical framework for interrupting it. This is a working session, not a sit-and-get session. Bring your TimeTrack and priorities.

In this session, J Roth speaks from experience. A building principal for more than twenty years, J was also a SAM principal, using the SAMs process to analyze how his time was actually spent and to systematically expand his days as an instructional leader. That experience, and his continuing work as a SAMs coach supporting other principals and school leaders, sharpened the central insight of this workshop: school leaders do not lack commitment or work ethic, they lack structures that protect their most important work. J is the author of Leadership Compression: How Intentional Principals Protect the Work That Matters Most and founder of The Principal Partnership.

Through the day, you will audit exactly where your past week's time went, calculate what compression is costing your instructional leadership, and build protection using the book's Clarity, Focus, and Consistency framework. You will leave with tools you built yourself: two or three signed leadership priorities chosen through the Priority Compass, a protected week designed around your walkthroughs and strategic work, and a personal recovery plan for the weeks when everything falls apart anyway. Just as importantly, you will leave with a model you can return to quarter after quarter, year after year, whenever the urgent starts crowding out the

important again. You will walk out with more than notes. You will walk out with a plan you can run on Monday morning.

Out of the office: Mini-Observations – Kim Marshall

A key goal for SAM teams is getting the principal out of the office and into classrooms for substantive observations and then face-to-face affirmation and coaching for each teacher soon afterward. In this pre-conference, Kim Marshall will unpack the key steps in mini-observations, a strategy that has far more impact on teaching and learning than conventional teacher evaluation. Kim developed this system as a Boston principal and used it successfully for almost a decade, then began coaching principals, writing about it, and consulting with schools around the world.

Here are the details of the mini-observation approach:

• Getting an accurate sampling of the 900 lessons each teacher teaches each year by classroom visits that are frequent (about once a month), short (10-15 minutes), systematic, and unannounced;

• Honing observation skills by being humble, curious, and low-tech, deciding on one "leverage point" per visit, and being aware of the bigger picture for each teacher (goals, data, context);

• Connecting with and having maximum instructional impact on teachers by always meeting face to face, affirming effective practices, courageously addressing mediocre and ineffective teaching, crafting a brief narrative summary of each conversation, and using a rubric to sum up teachers' performance at the end of each school year.

TimeTrack is set up to facilitate mini-observations: you can select any of the four TimeTrack descriptors for Seeing instruction, and then an Optional Descriptor for Mini-Observations. You also can use TimeTrack's Connected Events to make the scheduling even easier. Mark Shellinger will visit this pre-conference to guide participants on taking full advantage of this feature.

Kim Marshall, a former Boston Public Schools teacher, principal, and central-office curriculum director, now coaches principals, gives workshops and courses on school leadership, and consults with schools, often on teacher evaluation, time management, and curriculum unit design. He publishes the weekly Marshall Memo, www.marshallmemo.com summarizing the best ideas and research from 60 publications, and is the author of Rethinking Teacher Supervision and Evaluation (3rd edition, Jossey-Bass 2024).