

National SAM® Innovation Project (NSIP)

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What is SAM? SAM is a professional development process using a unique set of tools to change a principal’s focus from school management tasks to instructional leadership—activities directly connected to improving teaching and learning. Over 700 schools in twenty-one states contract for SAM services.

Does it work? Yes. Independent and external research has determined that principals gain the equivalent of 27 extra days of instructional leadership time in their first year using the SAM process. (PSA, 2011) By the third year the gain of instructional leadership time exceeds 55 days. The process is designed to help the principal be reflective about how to best work with teachers to improve teaching and learning.

How do you know how a principal spends time? The SAM process uses a unique data collection process called Time/Task Analysis™ to determine how much instructional, management and personal time a principal uses. The principal is “shadowed” for five days with data collected every five minutes. This creates a time use baseline. The principal then uses TimeTrack™ to begin increasing instructional time each day. The shadowing is repeated annually as an external check on progress.

What is a SAM? A SAM is a person or team of staff members who meet with the principal each day to schedule instructional leadership time, reflect on impact and develop a First Responder™ structure in the school. Some schools elect to hire a new staff member for this role. Many use existing staff, usually a secretary, principal or teacher leader. Most schools use a team approach, for example: a secretary and assistant principal. *SAM: School Administration Manager*

First Responders™? The life of most school leaders is interrupt driven. The SAM process identifies staff members who should be the first to try to deal with management issues instead of immediately pulling the principal from instructional work. The SAM team works to create management systems within the school to manage the management so the principal can stay engaged in activities designed to improve teaching and learning. NSIP surveys of parents, students and staff at

SAM schools reveal that the management is better accomplished when the First Responders™ system is in place and the principal increases instructional engagement.

What is *TimeTrack*®? TimeTrack is a cloud based calendar that the principal uses like a lesson plan. The calendar tracks the time the principal spends with individual and groups of teachers and provides specific detail of the interactions. TimeTrack records and charts are used in a daily meeting with the principal and SAM team to determine next steps and track time use.

How was the SAM process created? The Wallace Foundation funded the initial work. Mark Shellinger, a former teacher, principal and superintendent, created the process and tools. The initial pilot showed promising results and a positive correlation with student achievement. The Foundation supported replication, development and research for nine years. Mark now directs the National SAM Innovation Project (NSIP), a non-profit corporation providing SAM implementation and support services for more than 700 schools and principal supervisors in twenty-one states on a fee for service basis.

Is the SAM process expensive? No. NSIP contracts with districts and schools at an annual rate, or fee, that usually declines each year as capacity is developed locally. SAM is not a program. It is a professional development process a principal uses to do the good work the school and district has determined will best help students. The first year fee for a school is \$12,900 and includes services for the principal, assistant principals and SAM team members. This fee can decrease by up to 30% each year as capacity is developed at the school and district level.

What services are included? NSIP starts with a readiness training workshop for the principal and SAM team. Once the school community and principal have completed the readiness steps, Time/Task Analysis™, or shadowing, is conducted for one week. NSIP then provides two weeks of on-site training and support to implement TimeTrack, the daily meeting and First Responders. NSIP continues this support with monthly visits by a Time Change Coach and professional development support. The annual service fee also covers all expenses for the SAM team, except airfare, to attend the NSIP annual national conference.

How can my school or district begin the SAM process? Start with a visit to the NSIP website, www.SamsConnect.com Then, view video interviews with SAM principals and teams and take a look at the research reports. Click on the **Contact Us** link to schedule an implementation planning session.

