SAM Needs Assessment 2019

Executive Summary

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the specific professional development needs of the practicing school administrators in Montana schools. Information obtained will be used to develop model strategies for the development and delivery of professional development.

Methodology

The annual survey was distributed electronically through a SAM association management software form. The survey is available to all SAM members of each of the 6 affiliates including SAM Institutional Members. Survey questions are not consistent year to year so longitudinal comparisons are made only when the data is aligned for comparability. The 2019 Survey was sent to approximately 1022 members of SAM; 146 participated. The participation rate was 14.3%.

Findings

Of the 146 respondents, the survey was completed primarily (top 5 respondent categories) by superintendents (41.8%), elementary principals (17.1%) or (20.5% with K-8 included), 7-12 principals (8.2%), high school principals (4.8%), middle school principals (4.8%), special education directors (4.8%) and county superintendents (4.1%).

Significant changes to this 2019 survey:

1. Section 1 – The demographic information section was removed from the 2018 survey except for the question, "What is your school's current classification?"

2. Section 3 – Professional Learning and Delivery Models:

   Questions 15, 19-22 were removed:

   - 15. National Conferences
   - 19. Continuing Education through state universities & colleges
   - 20. Continuing Education that is web based
   - 21. Workshops
   - 22. Online Book Study

   Question 27, "Other delivery model(s)? Please specify:" was changed to "What other type of delivery model(s) could SAM consider as a vehicle for Professional Learning? Please specify:"

3. Section 5 – Professional Learning Needs, the following question was added:

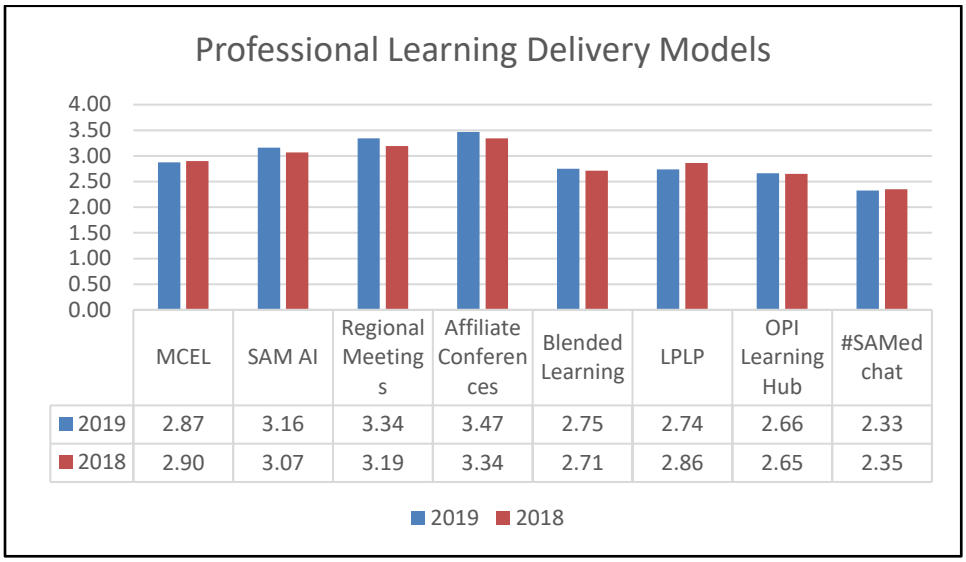
   - 73. Affiliate Community Forums

4. Section 7 – SAM Leaders Professional Learning Program – Question 90 was changed to a text box and a link to a form was added: "If you would be interested in participating in the 2019-20 SAM LPLP as described above, please click on the following link to provide your contact information so we can, in turn, send you follow-up information about the program and how to register - 2019-20 LPLP." The language did not change.

5. Section 8 – Advocacy and Legislative Priorities – Question 98(b). "If no, and you would like to be a part of this effort, please provide your email address so we can include you in the network communications." was changed to a text box that included a link to the SAMLN19 registration form.

Professional Learning Delivery Models

The *Professional Learning Delivery Models* results are in order from highest to lowest value (based on average response score using the rating scheme 4-Great Value, 3-Some Value, 2-Little Value, 1-No Value, Not Applicable):



	MCEL	SAM AI	Regional Meetings	Affiliate Conferences	Blended Learning	LPLP	OPI Learning Hub	#SAMedchat
2019	2.87	3.16	3.34	3.47	2.75	2.74	2.66	2.33
2018	2.90	3.07	3.19	3.34	2.71	2.86	2.65	2.35

Other Suggested Models or Input (Verbatim Responses from Survey):

- prefer face-to-face
- cohort specific- small group outings
- I selected NA on question 12, but that is only because I just signed up for the LPLP
- If we had a statewide educational focus we could host regional PD at schools, think action research / learning walks.
- I understand why we meet as region but I would like to meet with schools of similar size.
- Aggregated webinars (e. g., WestED, ASCD, and the like)
- Facilitating Classification administrators conferences. Where A.D.'s and principals in Class A or Class B meet together.
- I like the variety offered by SAM. My suggestion would be to make MCEL more applicable to building level principals - over the years it has become much more focused on superintendents and school boards.
- I don't know about anyone else, but I listen to a fair number of podcasts for personal & professional growth. I don't know if there's interest in the state on a delivery tool like this. I've thought about starting a podcast relating to Ed Leadership topics.
- Consider using ZOOM in place of escheat as you can add voice, sharing of screens, breakout rooms and more.
- PolyCom
- Have SAM create its own MCEL conference to shift the influence away from MTSBA.
- State or regional conferences
- Webex trainings and or conferences.
- More Superintendent professional development - our regional meeting is the same day as our tribal council meetings, which makes it hard to attend.
- All the ideas presented are good. I am more of a face to face person, but understand the blended works for many of us with scheduling conflicts.

Professional Learning Needs

The *Professional Learning Needs* results are in order from highest to lowest value (based on average response score using the rating scheme 4-Great Value, 3-Some Value, 2-Little Value, 1-No Value, Not Applicable):

Other Suggested Needs and Input (Verbatim Responses from Survey):

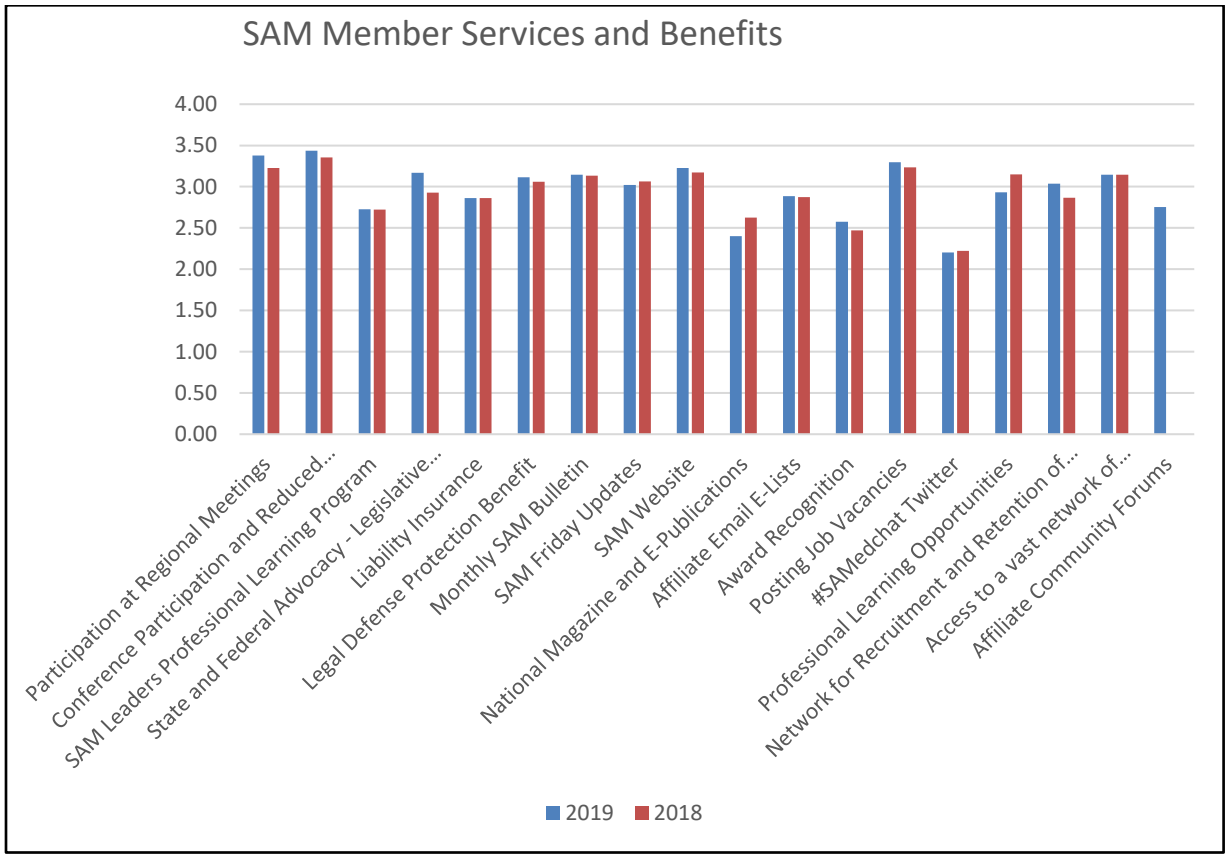
- Family Engagement
- Better Leaders Better Schools, Assessment and Grading
- Transformational Leadership
- Change, A Happiness Culture, Proficiency-Based Learning, Grassroots Influence, Personalized Professional Development
- Special Ed PWN
- Vaping use by students.

Suggested Presenters:

- Jessica Minahan, Elizabeth Kaleva
- Ken Williams, Karen Mapp
- John Gordon - positive motivational
- Thomas Guskey - Assessment and Grading, Danny Bauer - Better Leaders Better Schools
- Google Apps - Dana Grupenhoff (my tech teacher)
- Will Richardson, Bruce Dixon, Shawn Achor, Devin Hughes, Neil O'Flaherty, Corky O'Halloran, Alison Zmuda
- Frank P
- Bonnell St.Goddard, principal at Box Elder, would be a great math instruction leader for Native American schools.

Value of SAM Member Benefits and Services

The *Value of SAM Member Benefits and Services* results are in order from highest to lowest value (based on average response score using the rating scheme 4-Great Value, 3-Some Value, 2-Little Value, 1-No Value, Not Applicable:



Other SAM Benefits/Services Mentioned as Significant (All Verbatim Comments from Survey):

- Face to face networking at conferences
- Network
- Networking
- Networking at regional meetings and at conferences
- Though I know it is not necessarily an intention of SAM, but the SAM professional staff, few as they may be, are a great resource and I sincerely appreciate their insights.
- The class size caucus at the MASS state meetings are very valuable. I hope that is happening at the other affiliate conferences as well.
- SAM staff as a resource is wonderful.
- Having previous administrators in leadership positions at SAM is very beneficial.
- Thanks for increasing the number of women presenters in various forums.
- I can't think of any at this time. It seems as though SAM is providing opportunities for administrators via mediums that can be accessed by everyone that wants, needs, and uses the venues provided.
- New Superintendent Boot Camp!

Suggestions or ideas of other possible services (All Verbatim Comments from Survey):

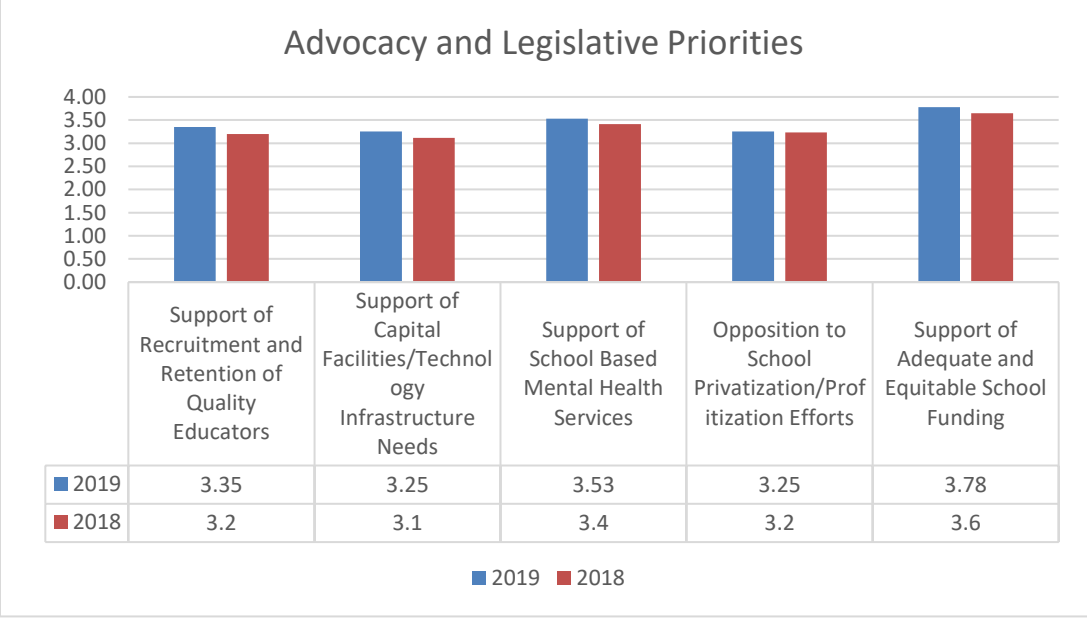
- Resources to share forms and checklists (ex: safety, new employee orientation)
- A list of who to call at local colleges/department heads to find out if they have students looking for jobs in certain areas/fields/licensure areas.
- MCEL more focused on building level principals.
- The Northeast Regional MASS superintendents have good representation of Native American superintendents at their meetings (I am told). It has been my observation that the Native American superintendents in NCMASS do not attend the monthly meetings. We need to work to bridge the gap and work for more inclusion.

Financial

- 140 or 96% of the 146 members who responded have affiliate membership dues paid by their district (the same as in 2018).

Advocacy and Legislative Priorities

The *Advocacy and Legislative Priorities* results are in order of importance from highest ranked priority to lowest ranked priority (based on average response score using the rating scheme 4-Highly Important, 3-Important, 2- Somewhat Important, 1-Not Important, Not Applicable):



Other Advocacy and Legislative Priorities (All Verbatim Comments from Survey):

- Technology Funding Alternative Pathways for Students
- In order by priority: 1) equitable school funding, 2) facility funding, 3) SPED/Mental Health funding, 4) Early Childhood funding
- increasing funds for Early childhood education and special ed ~ are the 2 most important issues for our rural k-8 school
- Early Childhood Education Mental Health Support for Students School Funding
- Mental health
- Special Education Funding Gifted Education Funding
- Early Childhood and Sped funding
- Special Education Funding
- Early Childhood funding, Special Education funding, school safety (gun control), Federal grants.
- Funding for Special Education Cooperatives
- Perhaps it is time to take a look at the accreditation requirements that trigger districts to provide additional administrators. Thinking about the increasing needs in our schools, more and more is being put on the plates of administrators without much coming off of it (mental health support, tech needs, more robust teacher evaluations, more comprehensive bullying strategies, cyber crimes, vape pens, increased awareness and response to sexual harassment and assault). All of this requires more attention and more time at a building admin. level; but we are operating with minimum principal numbers recommended through the accreditation requirements, which were developed to meet the needs of the past.
- Early childhood Education funding P-K
- I would like to see early childhood ed funding, but with enough flexibility built into the system that we can make it work in rural areas and small schools. Special education is a looming disaster in this state, with most SPED co-ops (at least anecdotally) on the edge of being broke. Educator recruitment efforts and school mental health services are hugely important to me right now, as we desperately need ways to get teachers and serve the students that need more mental health support than we can provide.
- Funding the Debt Service Assistance program. The inequalities in the state funding are now exacerbated to inequality again in this area.
- Special Education funding, co-op Sp Ed funding
- Innovation Incubators; Special Education funding; Workforce Readiness Skills;
- Pre k funding
- Within funding - Special Education and Special Education Cooperatives
- Early Childhood Stabilizing Native Communities
- Special Education Funding on inflation
- Funding for SPED cooperatives
- Support of Special Education and funding of Special Education Cooperatives with equity.
- Special Education Funding
- I would like to see the equity issue addressed in the base-funding formula. Until all districts share an equitable portion of their own 80%, that is, each district's levy is near the same percentage statewide, how can the State continue to say that the formula is equitable? It is not equitable when one district provides 40% of their base through the local effort while a neighboring district provides 10%.
- Early Childhood ANB Special Education fully funded - we have an increase in PCA's due to drug abuse on a rise in mothers.
- Special Ed COOP funding
- Special education funding or even something that would bring the requirements back towards the middle. Right now the paperwork and how much schools (teachers and admin) have to do just from a hind end covering standpoint seems to be going too far.

Comments – Other Last Thoughts (All Verbatim Comments from Survey):

- We have a tremendous organization. As additional thoughts arise, I will be certain to share them with the group.
- I appreciate everything SAM does and have been impressed by the strength of this organization. There are many opportunities for personal growth and lots of support exists through this organization. That is appreciated - especially as a new administrator in the state (transferred from Ohio after 28 years).
- Thanks for all you do!
- Sam is able to address the many needs of its members, in part I believe due to your annual surveys. They are well developed and targeted to give you the information you need in order to serve us in the best possible manner. Nice work!
- I would love to see educational leaders in our state become more focused on a couple goals. The sit-and-get conferences style is not as valuable as a sustained and connected plan over 3 years. What does our state data say we need to work on? Probably academic scores of our sub-groups and multi-tiered systems of support. We don't have enough human resources across the state to support the many options we have. Let's move away from the scatter plot approach to professional development.
- Kirk Miller and the staff are excellent to work with.
- Continued advocacy and support for our administrators.
- Perhaps it is time to take a look at the accreditation requirements that trigger districts to provide additional administrators. Thinking about the increasing needs in our schools, more and more is being put on the plates of administrators without much coming off of it (mental health support, tech needs, more robust teacher evaluations, more comprehensive bullying strategies, cyber crimes, vape pens, increased awareness and response to sexual harassment and assault). All of this requires more attention and more time at a building admin. level; but we are operating with minimum principal numbers recommended through the accreditation requirements, which were developed to meet the needs of the past. Help!!!
- Doing great. Minor tweaks, and would rate SAM as outstanding!
- I feel very grateful for everything SAM does for it's members. You are a great team and my needs are being met 100%. Thank you for all you do!
- I really enjoyed the combined winter conference. It was good to see the variety of leaders in one place. Please continue.
- Overall I'm happy with my membership experience. During the upcoming legislative session, I would like to see a lot of transparency. Specifically, I hope our SAM staff will make us aware of both the positive and negative aspects of the funding battle and other issues that come up. If there are bills supported that are going to hurt certain school districts or areas and help others, I expect transparency in that, and information sent out to all so that we can advocate in the best interests of our schools. I feel that last session, information was not as transparent as I would have liked, and I am worried that was to make sure and get everyone on board instead of providing valuable information to all administrators and letting them advocate in the best interests of their districts. Please be careful in separating what is best for the state as a whole in your opinion (or MEA-MFT's or MTSBA, etc...) from the clear, transparent analysis of how certain decisions will affect all the schools you represent.
- Thanks for everything you do at SAM. We have a great organization that supports school administrators well! Thanks!
- A bigger vision of the possibilities and the flexibilities. We have a lot of flexibilities and need more flexibility in teacher licensure, so part of this is advocacy with The Board of Public Education and OPI. Be able to choose a professional development path (e.g. school finance or culture or...) and be part of a group that focused just on that with weekly tips that are generated by the PD path people sharing with all in that PD group.
- I am very satisfied.
- I don't think teacher "recruitment and retention" are as important as this survey seems to make them, it is the decline in the interest in teaching that is the real problem and I don't think SAM can fix that. I have noticed in the past 25 years the significant decline in students in the education program at MSU and the Teacher Career Fair at UM not being anything like it was 25 years ago. There are few teachers available to recruit from our colleges and universities and retaining them is difficult unless you are a higher paying district in a "desirable"

location in Montana. I'm not saying that ignoring the problem is the correct response but why would capable college students want to go into this profession? It seems that few do anymore and very few males especially.

- Thanks for asking!!
- Thank you for your active leadership in supporting schools and their leadership.
- Everyone in public education needs to put the heat to legislators in addressing the funding formula that is failing all school except the ones that are growing hand over fist and have ANB dollars to address paying their people equitably. Education funding is a travesty currently and we need to be able to offer the best and brightest students a living wage, especially in areas that are underserved and rural in nature which adds to the difficulties in recruiting and retaining quality educators and administrators. Simply put you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.
- Thanks for the great work the SAM organization does for education in Montana!
- I would like to enjoy a state event less than five hours from my home district. I realize there are issues with venues, accommodations, etc., but you asked! I've pitched the idea before but, what if SAM was able to pick two or three venues across the state and then hold a real-time interactive event, a la Ted Talks? Each site would receive and send, then, expand that to ND, WY, ID, etc. and share our resources that way.
- SAM is great! Thanks for all you do!!!
- It is good. Keep putting the information in our face so we have to move and reflect on what we are doing. Thanks.
- Even though I don't read every bit of the information in the emails and updates that SAM puts out, I always find that there is information that is useful to me AND I know I can go into the website to find past newsletters if I need to. This organization was also very helpful to me in the LPLP group and I learned a lot from my experience with it. Montana is so spread out and sometimes it is difficult for outsiders to make connections, so the regional meetings are also important for us.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

- SAM members expressed the following as the top 5 in Professional Learning Delivery Models (in order from high to low): *1. Affiliate Conferences 2. Regional Meetings 3. SAM AI 4. MCEL 5. Blended Learning*
- SAM members expressed the following as the top 5 in Professional Learning Needs (in order from high to low): *1. Student Mental Health 2. Instructional Strategies 3. School Law/Special Education (tied) 4. Leadership Skills and Practices 5. School Safety*
- SAM members indicated SAM's legislative priorities seem to be in line with the current Delegate Assembly generated priorities as approved by the SAM membership. Support of Adequate and Equitable School Funding was found to be most important with and average rating of 3.78; Support of Capital Facilities/Technology Infrastructure Needs and Opposition to School Privatization/Profitization Efforts were tied for the least important with average ratings of 3.25 showing that rating scores are very close between all five priorities (.53 variability).
- 68 (46.6%)members indicated that they would be interested in advocacy training to participate more effectively in the legislative session.
- 87 (59.6%) are members of the SAM Legislative Network; of those that are not, 16 have indicated interest in involvement within the SAM Legislative Network.
- Conference Attendance:
  a. 41 (28.1%) have indicated attendance at the 2018 SAM Administrative Institute.
    - Of the 146 respondents, 41 said they attended last year's SAM AI.
      - Of the 102 respondents that answered why not, 61 expressed that the time of the year was reason for not attending, 33 expressed "other" for reasons, 12 expressed too many

conferences, 5 stated it was not relative to their needs and 1 expressed that registration fees were too high.
    - Of the 146 respondents, 82 said they would attend next year's SAM AI.
        - Of the 64 respondents that answered why not, 41 expressed that the time of the year was reason for not attending, 13 expressed "other", 7 stated that there are too many conferences, 4 stated that it is not relative to their needs and 1 stated that registration fees are too high.
    - Of the 146 respondents, 103 said they attended their 2018 affiliate conference
        - Of the 39 respondents that answered why not, 20 expressed that the Time of the Year was reason for not attending, 15 expressed "other", 4 stated that it is not relative to their needs, 2 stated that there are too many conferences, and 1 stated that registration fees are too high.
- 6 members have indicated that they would be interested in participating in the 19-20 SAM LPLP
    - Of 136 that responded to why not, 76 said that a lack of time would be a reason for not signing up for the LPLP program, 19 stated that it would not be relative to their needs, 5 expressed registration fees as a concern and 23 expressed "other" reasons.

Recommendations

- Continue to review previous professional learning offered (including conference topics) to ensure we are including what the attendees would like to learn and explore more options for enhancement. This will have impact on the delivery models/sources/methods and what determines the model of choice among members.
- Continue to schedule SAM affiliate leadership web meetings to help equip region directors with information to build robust agendas for region meetings.
- Apply careful analysis of each SAM member benefit and service suggestions for possible consideration.
- Assess effectiveness of some services and apply any adjustments to make more meaningful, valuable and/or efficient membership experience.
- Employ more strategies to create an awareness of the types of benefits provided through a SAM membership – online brochures, email reminders, "did you know" segments in SAM publications, new member orientation brochures, other.
- Develop strategies to communicate with members about SAM Partnerships, Services, Benefits, Advocacy Efforts, and Professional Learning opportunities. E.g. coordinate web conference for discussion of SAM items with affiliate regional leadership.
- SAM Administrators Institute has been scheduled at its current time of the year (end of July to beginning of August) for a number of years strictly to avoid conflict with other major conferences, avoiding summertime vacation dates, and avoiding start dates of most administrators and schools. Although "Time of the Year" was posed as the number one reason for not attending, solutions to finding a different spot may difficult.
- Continue promotion of the LPLP as a personalized professional learning experience that does not require any additional project or assignment and will assist in an administrator's leadership role without any additional time required – the registered member dictates the time and use of the program for their individual needs.