

June 27-28 | San Diego



SDCOE EPMO Project Management Summer Camp 2024 *Survey Results*

Overview

- **PURPOSE:** To evaluate SDCOE’s in-person K-12 Project Management Conference (“Summer Camp”) held at Marina Village on June 27-28, 2024. How did we do? The input will help us improve our planning and execution of future in-person events.
- **SURVEY TIMEFRAME:** July 3-10, 2024 (5 business days)
- **# OF RESPONDENTS:** 27 respondents from 22 organizations (42% response rate)
- **EVALUATOR:** Peyri Herrera, SDCOE EPMO Sr. Director, pherrera@sdcoe.net

The following 22 organizations participated in this survey:

Red Cabin – K-8 / 9-12	Orange Cabin – Unified
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buena Park School District • Cardiff School District • Kern High School District • La Mesa-Spring Valley School District • San Rafael City Schools • Solana Beach School District • South Bay Union School District • Yu Ming Charter School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceres Unified School District • Fresno Unified School District (2 respondents) • Palo Alto Unified School District • Sage Oak Charter Schools (2 respondents) • San Marcos Unified School District • Springfield Public Schools • Valley Center-Pauma Unified School District
Green Cabin – COE	Blue Cabin – COE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperial County Office of Education • Loudoun County Public Schools • San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools • San Diego County Office of Education (2 respondents) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inyo County Office of Education • Los Angeles County Office of Education • Santa Clara County Office of Education (3 respondents)

Q3. What 3 words/adjectives/phrases would you use to describe Summer Camp?

Respondents used **47 positive descriptors** to describe Summer Camp.

Top adjectives:


- **engaging (used 13x)**
- **fun (8)**
- **informative (7)**
- **creative (5)**
- **inspiring (3)**
- **organized (3)**
- **collaborative (2)**
- **connected (2)**
- **connection (2)**
- **educational (2)**
- **energizing (2)**
- **interactive (2)**



All other descriptors: aligned, amazing, ameliorating (“my new word just for SDCOE EPMO”), celebratory, diverse, effective, empowering, encouraging, entertaining, focused, friendship, fulfilling, grounding, hit the nail on the head, immersive, inspired, joyful, memorable, moving in the right direction, networking, not overwhelming, phenomenal, practical, prioritize, refreshing, sharing, specific, supported, supportive, teamwork, themed, thought provoking, thoughtful, unique, a surreal experience that I will always remember

Q4/Q5. From your perspective, did we meet our objectives?

The respondents agreed that SDCOE EPMO executed Summer Camp so that event and learning objectives were met.

		Yes	No	I'm not sure
Event Objectives	1. Designed so everyone feels like they belong	100%	--	--
	2. Provided the opportunity to move and have active engagement	100%	--	--
	3. Created opportunities to learn/work in a variety of ways : whole group, small group, pairs/trios, solo	100%	--	--
				
	4. Designed so it is "sticky" (memorable)	100%	--	--
5. Created networking opportunities	100%	--	--	
Learning Objectives	1. Identify their team/department's level of project management maturity	100%	--	--
	2. Classify their projects (define small/medium/large, determine factors)	100%	--	--
	3. Identify how much project management is needed for small, medium, and large projects	96.3%	--	3.7%
	4. Consider how to organize, prioritize, and manage the entire project portfolio	100%	--	--
	5. Identify next steps to implement project management	92.6%	3.7%	3.7%

Q6. Did you leave Summer Camp with a goal or next step that will help implement project management with your team/department?



The participants' responses reflected a commitment to adopting and improving project management practices. The common goals reported are to:

- **Implement project management processes and tools**
- **Enhance existing practices**
- **Classify projects by size**
- **Educate/train team members**
- **Collaborate and exchange ideas with others**

Open-Ended Responses:

Here are the specific responses to "If Yes, would you please tell us a little bit about your goal/next step? If No, would you please tell us what we could have done to better support you with identifying a goal?":

- Absolutely. Here is our plan for the coming year:
 - 1. Centralize active project boards for all Digital Learning, Networking, Data Center, and Operations.
 - 2. Publish a Project Portfolio board.
 - 3. Initiate a project to introduce and standardize project management practices formally, guiding the team through steps one and two of the Project Management Field Guide over the next fiscal year.
 - 4. Create a training plan to: 1. Introduce project management, 2. Discuss why we believe it will enhance operations at SBCSS, 3. Review common language.
 - 5. To support the common language concept, create a list of ideas for embedding PM terms in conversations and communications. This will reinforce the learning.
 - 6. Begin training in October - December.
 - 7. Use Project Portfolio and Project Boards during scheduled meetings and as dictated by the communications plan in each project.
 - 8. Invite additional team members to the next SDCOE training and introduce them at events.
 - 9. Reassess progress in July and determine work towards implementing steps 3 and 4.
- A goal that I am now bringing to our team here in [my district] is to come together as a department and review the activities for seeing what level of project management we are at as a department, and to then classify and see what level of project management our projects need. Doing so is a great starting point to begin implementing PM to our team. Also, being engaged and interactive with the conference has sparked additional ideas on how to bring more PM exposure to our department to establish common terms and review common practices that we establish. (Incentivized PM pop-quizzes via Slack, quick tip posts regarding how to use PM tools, sharing additional resources to the team on a regular cadence)
- As a relatively new PMO, we are continuously redefining what small, medium and large projects are and what type of documents/resources are needed. My goal is to help create a somewhat defined "best practices" for every size project so it's super clear what documents are required for it to be a successful project as well as the type of resources needed!
- As soon as I got back to my office I erased my whiteboard and organized my projects with sticky notes. I plan on implementing Kanban boards to organize my thoughts and projects.
- Classify the sand, pebbles, rocks, and boulders for the SOC.
- Continue building a team based capacity around agile teams. Take my organizations project maturity from level 0 to Level 1 while building common processes for the technology department from level 2 to level 3 singular methodology.
- Getting IT team to be more involved in using project management software.
- Goal: Get more of the team trained. Define projects by size and resources.
- I left feeling inspired to partner with our Project Management Officer to move [our organization] from a 3.5 project management maturity to a 4 by implementing engaging change adoption strategies to increase use of the PM repository to collect much-needed data to assess and support effective capacity building and resources allocation efforts.

- I left summer camp with a good feeling that we are in a good place with our project management maturity and now we just need to keep practicing. I also realized that we're in a position to help others who are just getting started.
- I left with a goal, but I still felt very alone regarding how to implement the next steps. This is largely because I was one of the few participants from outside of California.
- In part, the goal is to determine how to segregate the various sizes of project and for the team to manage each of them with their specific and unique set of attributes.
- We greatly appreciate the collaboration, spirit, and style your group brings to these events. They are inspirations, and we're attempting to embed different aspects into various areas of our work. Thank you.
- We will be having a department meeting this week to review the pebble, rock, bolder concepts, as well as the prioritization matrix. We're going to work on common terminology, and using those analogies, I believe it will be a much more approachable topic.
- Yes- I already used the PRB analogy with the tech team to initiate how to think about projects and to assess what they felt were boulders compared to what I might think. This was insightful to help align ourselves better. I also started a project charter as practice for an upcoming meeting with the Deputy Super about formation of a technology committee and goals for the year. I have better idea about how I can modify anything to suit our needs better. Even though this seems obvious, I don't think I thought about it in this light. This type of thinking helps me to better use aspects of PM more consistently. Next is to check out the Project Plan for my charter!
- Yes! I debriefed my supervisor with feedback from the various interactions I had with others. There were so many great ideas shared. I've connected with others to set-up meetings to learn more about how they are applying project management to their IT departments. My goal is to create templates and processes that can be followed to maximize efficiency in order to achieve greater technology outcomes.
- Yes, Create SOPs for [our organization's] PM team, Create a Project Portfolio, Implement templates (Project Charter, Schedule Template, etc.)
- Yes, I came back to my team ready to continue the conversation about project management with hopes of signing up a few folks on my team to join the next virtual cohort.
- Yes, I intend to involve other team members in this system and adopt more of the system into our technology projects. Currently, we are using Trello to track our projects and communicate to key members. I want to have more stand-up meetings and adopt status reports to some degree.
- Yes, I left summer camp super excited and with the goal of registering for Fall SDCOE Project Management Academy so I can learn and get an even better understanding so that I can be a better project manager in PAUSD and help others in our IT Department with PM.
- Yes, I need to build a better foundation of Project Management.
- Yes, I think that we need to consider implementing project management as our main priority boulder and utilize the project management process to make a plan. Based on the meetings we've had and the goals of the Head of Technology, I think the three departments need to get on the same page and come up with a plan to get the rest of their teams to adopt this mindset. Unfortunately, I'm switching departments and won't be a part of this journey. My next department seems to heavily utilize project management and so my role in that process will be much different. I'm excited to see where I fit it/what the next steps will be for that role.
- Yes, in [our unit] we have a project to deploy our remaining monitors to the organization. I would classify this project as a rock. The PM will create a abbreviated project charter with input from other stakeholders so we can have a successful deployment and have a complete understanding of our objectives and milestones.
- Yes, look at the full scope of the project and categorize it between pebble, rock, or boulder.
- Yes. 1. We will use the knowledge we learned at the camp to build up our fledgling PMO by providing professional learning, standards, guidelines, and templates. 2. We will connect with the participants and exchange ideas. 3. We will explore CITE and see how we can benefit from their offers.
- Yes. It is easier to talk about Project Management to our departments after a few of us attended this camp. We can educate them on the steps and requirements to complete a "project" successfully.
- Yes. Our next goal is to fully implement our PM system and incorporate more processes from the SDCOE PM Toolkit.
- Yes; creating project templates in Monday.com for IT team to us

Q7. Are you interested in responding to some additional optional questions?

- **93%** (=25/27) selected Yes to respond to the additional optional open-ended questions
- **7%** (=2/27) selected No

Q8. Approximately how many new people did you meet? (OPTIONAL)

The Summer Camp participants met anywhere from 4 to 30 new people. The average # of new people met was 17.

Graphed results:

0 new people	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30 new people
0%							
0%	4%	8%	28%	16%	24%	4%	16%

Q9. In what way did having a theme (summer camp, in this case) impact your experience, if any? (OPTIONAL)

The participants' responses indicate a strong positive impact of having a theme, specifically the summer camp theme, on their experiences at the event. Here is a summary of the key points:

- The theme helped create an **immersive environment** that facilitated **better learning and retention**. The detailed and well-executed theme kept participants' attention and **encouraged active participation**.
- The summer camp theme fostered a **sense of camaraderie** among participants, making it easier for them to connect, collaborate, and engage in conversations. It inspired them and created a **sense of belonging** and pride towards the purpose of the event.
- The theme made the event **enjoyable, fun, and engaging**. It brought back positive childhood memories and created a **relaxed and friendly atmosphere** conducive to social interactions.
- The theme made the event **memorable** and left a **lasting impression** on participants.
- Many participants felt it **significantly enhanced the overall experience**. The theme was seen as a refreshing and effective way to deliver content and keep the energy and positivity high.



Based on the significant positive impact of the theme, there is a strong case for continuing to use themes in future conferences, as long as the themes are purposeful and integrated to support learning and create a positive and collaborative environment.

Open-Ended Responses:

- A theme is always **fun** and it helps to make things **relatable** to one topic/subject.
- After attending several [EPMO] events, I don't think the specific theme matters. However, having a theme with the level of detail you do creates an atmosphere where even the most introverted people can find themselves opening up, **connecting, learning, and enjoying the process**. It's the ideal blending of techniques from our friends who began in the classroom and our friends who started in IT. I think it's also one of the incredible benefits that came out of the EdTech pathway, and together, we are all better. [That sounded super cheesy, but honestly, I love what you're doing and spread it everywhere I can]
- Engagement and expectations about the event.
- I believe it made it **more enjoyable**, having strictly the facts wouldn't have been quite as fun.
- I feel like having a theme **makes it feel less "worky"** is the best way possible! It's refreshing to see themes and have activities associated with the theme as well!
- I feel that having a theme brought more **fun** and **commonality** to relate to and have conversations around. Since campers were actively engaging with the theme and there was a common topic for the conference, conversation was much easier to be started and held. The summer camp theme created a **positive vibe** and all individuals that I interacted with seemed to be really enjoying themselves and getting into the theme of being at camp rather than a conference.
- I loved summer camp growing up, so all the analogies and activities allowed me to **connect with the content** as well as allowed the event to provide a **camaraderie** environment for everyone
- I loved the theme because I never went to a summer camp. I always love that the learning experience for the EPMO events are **thematic** and **immersive**.
- I LOVED the theme. It made it more **fun, will help learning stick**, and helped build **community**.
- I think it created **relaxed environment** that allowed people to be more social.
- I think the branding and theme was excellent and **made a huge difference in keeping the energy, positivity and inspiration and goal of the conference at the forefront**. I really liked not having to use a laptop, personally and I liked I didn't have to watch a slides presentation(s). It is easy for IT to get in their heads, grind, or focus on negatives vs positives, as we usually don't hear from folks unless something is not working vs actually working.
- I thought it was corny at first, but you all did such a great job and **COMMITTED to it**, that it made the event so much **more enjoyable** than a sit and get.
- It associated learning with the good old days of being a kid having **fun**.
- It created a **shared experience** through the various traditions of a 'summer camp' experience.
- It helped to connect to **positive memorable experiences** of my childhood.
- It made it more **fun** and **engaging**. The theme was very **well integrated** into every aspect of the program.
- It really impacted me in a great way. I remembered summer camp when I was a child and I expected I have a great time at Project Management. I noticed all the wonderful things at our camp that were geared toward us adult learners. I loved it!
- The detailed Summer Camp experience is absolutely **inspirational** and **energizing**. I am grateful that one of the theme's adjectives was **'Belonging'** because I felt I belonged. I won't mind experiencing the same theme for next year's conference.
- The summer camp theme really **enhanced our experience in a significant way**. It created an **engaging, immersive environment** that fostered a great sense of **camaraderie** and **excitement** among the participants. This was conducive to **collaborative learning**, making our training sessions both more enjoyable and more productive. I was particularly impressed by how the themed activities and discussions kept everyone's attention and encouraged **active participation**. It's not always easy to maintain engagement during training sessions, but this approach really made a difference. Overall, the camp theme made our learning process **more effective and memorable**. It wasn't just about having fun - though we certainly did - it was about **creating an environment where information could be absorbed and retained more easily**. I think your team made an excellent choice with this format, and the results speak for themselves.
- The Summer Camp theme reminded folks about being a scout, and to be **helpful** with each other. This helps us to **be open and share our experiences**.
- The theme allows for **connection** and pride towards a purpose that is meaningful. The [EPMO] team knows how to **create experiences** that delight the audience and hence **creates memories** that matter.
- The theme is the distraction needed to allow space for the learning. Dry, subject only training is less inviting, exciting, and inspiring. **It's just natural for**

people to need a theme, or structure, that enables the real work (learning) to take place.

- The theme keeps everyone **engaged**. It encouraged **team building** and created a friendly competition. This in my opinion kept everyone very **attentive**.

- The theme kept me **engaged** and **open to learning** from other participants by actively listening to each of them.
- The theme was great, but more importantly, the **execution** is what really made the experience fantastic (**the theme was equally enjoyable and well done for the online conference**).

Q10. What did you find most valuable about Summer Camp? (OPTIONAL)

Overall, the participants found the following aspects of Summer Camp most valuable:

- **The collaboration and discussions**
- **The practical application and content**
- **Networking opportunities / Meeting and learning from others / Sharing ideas and experiences**
- **The “no technology” approach**

Open-Ended Responses:

- As a visual and audio learner, I enjoyed the **“no technology” approach** and the **practical analogies** used throughout the workshop activities to help each of us define pragmatic solutions for increasing our organization's project management maturity.
- Having **team members there to chat with** about our projects. And **the resources**.
- **Being with similar districts** and sharing how they are using project management. skills.
- I loved the **networking** opportunity. Also, it is great to see your favorite teachers in person (Peyri, Reesa, and Andrew!)
- I thought the most valuable part of the Summer Camp was that it felt more like a workshop than a conference. The **activities** helped identify the different components and stages of project management, which helped our team get on the same page. The **discussions** were also great and the collaboration was probably the best part. We got to talk to a variety of people, including our own colleagues which allowed us to have these reflective, somewhat difficult, deep discussion in the moment when the material was fresh.
- It was a tie between the value of **the content** that we reviewed and the **networking** opportunity. The content was so relevant and practical for our department. I left camp having a **clear direction** on what our potential next steps will be (pending mgmt approval) and have a clear idea of a roadmap that we can follow to get where we need to go. As for the networking, this conference was



the most that I have ever socialized and a good amount of content that I picked up from networking with others is being worked into the roadmap mentioned above. Since I came to this conference alone, I felt it easier to have conversation with others and network with more people. The **relationships** that began at this conference are so valuable to me and I have already begun collaborating with others that I met at this conference.

- Most; just one. Ok. The **conversations**.
- **Networking** and Project Management in K12 world and **experiences from other entities**.
- **Networking** with my peers who are struggling with the same challenges.
- **Networking**, learning about other districts roadblocks and also **learning new ways to present project management** information to individuals in our district in a fun, unique way.
- **Share outs, networking, and guided discussions**.
- **Sharing ideas** and experiences. I learned how others implement project management in their division's processes.
- **Speaking with other LEAs my size** and what they are doing to implement project management.
- The **booklet** served as a vehicle to jot down the essential learning outcomes along with including

memories that allow one to recall information that matters.

- The **collaboration** and **discussions** during all of the breakout sessions.
- The **connection to others** in K-12 project management.
- The most valuable aspect of Summer Camp was the **interactive nature of the event**, which went beyond typical training sessions. The practical application through **activities, discussions, and strategic planning** was particularly beneficial. Additionally, the opportunity to **network** with colleagues from other K-12 IT school districts, charter schools, and county offices of education provided valuable insights and perspectives that enriched our understanding and approach to project management.
- The most valuable part for me is the **realization** that we need to define a "Start" and an "End" date for a project. This is the only way we can **hold ourselves accountable** for the success of a project,

- The **networking**
- The **networking** and **sharpening the tool**.
- The Pebble, Rock, Boulder **activity**
- The **small group discussion** and promptings for **engagement** with others.
- Thinking about PB from higher level lens vs how to, skills, etc. PLN- Meeting new folks from SoCal as a NorCal rep ([another org] already reached out to me last week). Side note- lots of positive talk around the **caterer** and food offered.
- Two things..1. **Individual conversations** about the topic allowed some **pair thinking** and ideation sharing. 2. **Hearing from others** in their diversity of environment prompted the realization that we need our own unique approach to PM
- What I found most valuable was **meeting and talking with new friends** as we discussed our districts, our project management journeys.

Q11. If we were to run this event again, what might be improved next time? (OPTIONAL)

Ideas for improvement:

- **Introduce specialized sessions such as creating a PMO, getting stakeholder buy-in, leadership panels, and reviews of various project management tools and their pros/cons**
- **Offer 1:1 brainstorming sessions**
- **Adjust Day 2 schedule so it doesn't feel rushed; shorten the lunch break on Day 2**
- **Increase the time to create actionable "takeaway plans"**
- **Offer more pages in the notebook for even more notetaking**
- **Consider having the SDCOE EPMO team support others in leading sessions/discussions to leverage the maturity of the PM community to take more active roles**
- **Rotate groups more often; increase opportunities for cross-collaboration between different types of organizations**
- **Continue with thematic approaches; continue gamification elements (merit badges, team games, backyard activities)**
- **Include more team games and activities**
- **Ensure restrooms are checked and cleaned regularly, especially mid-day**
- **Offer better vegan food options**

CONTACT: Please contact Peyri Herrera, pherrera@sdcoe.net, with any questions about this survey.