CASH FALL CONFERENCE

Discover Your Purpose & Next Chapter in School Construction

What chapter of your career are you in right now?

A career is not one destination. It is a series of chapters that prepare you for what comes next.

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP · OCT 7, 2026

Lorrie Ruiz · President/CEO, CL Consulting, Inc.

Why This Work Matters

School construction is bigger than buildings. It creates places where students learn and communities invest for decades.

1. Students
2. Teachers
3. Communities
4. Public Investment
5. Long-Term Stewardship

> *Planning, funding, design, construction, legal, finance, administration. Different seats. One purpose.*
>
> — Lorrie Ruiz

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CHAPTER 1

LEARN

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CHAPTER 1 — LEARN

Where My Journey Started

Ruhnau Ruhnau Clarke Associates · Educational Facilities Coordinator 1997–2001

My school-facilities career began here. I helped districts get State agency approvals and access to State school building funding.

What I learned:

- Getting exposure to the industry
- How school projects are designed
- How State agency processes work
- Observing experienced practitioners
- Building relationships
- Learning by doing

KEY LESSON

Your first chapter does not have to define your career. It can teach you how the whole system works.



CHAPTER 1 — LEARN

The People Who Shape Your Career

Mentorship matters…

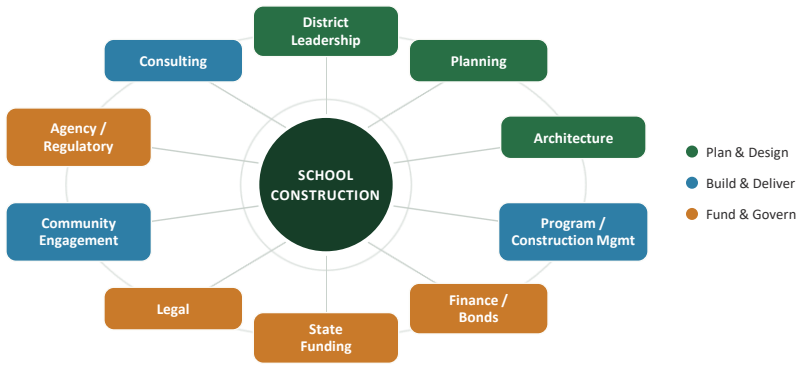
1. Someone gave me an opportunity.
2. I learned by watching experienced people.
3. Mentors often see your capability before you do.
4. In this industry, relationships compound over decades.

> *Who are you learning from right now?*
>
> AUDIENCE REFLECTION

CHAPTER 1 — LEARN

There Is More Than One Career Path

in School Construction



The question isn't only "What job do I want next?" It is "Where in this ecosystem can I create the most value?"

CHAPTER 2

OWN

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CHAPTER 2 — OWN

Then I Crossed the Table

Consultant → District Leader

In 2001, I moved to Irvine Unified School District. I stayed more than 16 years and became Director of Facilities Planning. My responsibilities spanned long-range planning, new construction, modernization, master planning, bond implementation, and site acquisition.

CORE INSIGHT

Working FOR a consultant

taught me one perspective.

Working INSIDE a district

taught me another. I owned the outcome, not just the assignment.

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CHAPTER 2 — OWN

I Didn’t Know What I Didn’t Know

Irvine Unified School District · Director, Facilities Planning
2001-2017

I helped build new schools and modernize facilities for over 30,000 students.

What I learned:

- Understand the challenges
- Learn how to work with students, parents & community
- Planning can be fun
- Everyone works really hard
- Students come first!

Facilities Planner
↓
Assistant Director
↓
Director

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ✓ *13 New Schools*
- ✓ *11 School Modernizations*
- ✓ *Helped pass $319m School Bond*





CHAPTER 2 — OWN
OWN

What Are You Becoming Responsible For?

> *You don't have to be in charge to feel it. Somewhere, something has quietly shifted from a task you complete to something you own.*

AUDIENCE REFLECTION

CHAPTER 2 — OWN

Learn the Whole System

NEED → PLAN → FUND → DESIGN → APPROVE → BUILD → REPORT → AUDIT → LEARN

At Irvine, I owned planning work. That taught me how every box depends on the others.

LORRIE'S LESSON

You don't have to be an expert in every box. But understanding how your box affects the others makes you far more valuable.

CHAPTER 3

MULTIPLY

CHAPTER 3 — MULTIPLY

Then I Started Advising Everyone

CL Consulting, Inc. · President · 2017–Present

In 2017, I acquired CL Consulting. I now lead a team advising California TK–12 districts on facilities planning and State funding, from the first plan to the final audit. I've sat in three seats: the consultant's, the district's, and now the owner's. I bring all three into every room.

What I learned:

- Getting exposure to the industry
- Districts have their unique challenges
- Mentoring my team is a priority
- Observing experienced practitioners
- Building relationships
- Learning by doing

KEY LESSON

One seat gives you a view. Three seats give you a bridge. And people will line up to cross it.





CHAPTER 3 — MULTIPLY

One Career. Three Perspectives

The same industry looks different depending on where you sit.

1 *Learn*

Consultant

FOCUS
Learn the system

ROLE
Support

GAVE ME
Technical exposure

→

2 *Own*

District Leader

FOCUS
Own the outcome

ROLE
Lead

GAVE ME
Organizational responsibility

→

3 *Multiply*

Owner/Advisor

FOCUS
Help others navigate it

ROLE
Advise

GAVE ME
Strategic perspective

KEY LESSON

Each chapter gave me a perspective that became useful in the next one.

CHAPTER 3 — MULTIPLY

Purpose Often Shows Up as a Problem You Keep Solving

PEOPLE BEGIN COMING TO YOU BECAUSE YOU:

- ✓ Make complicated issues understandable
- ✓ Solve funding problems
- ✓ Bring people together
- ✓ See risks others miss
- ✓ Communicate with boards or communities
- ✓ Understand regulations
- ✓ Lead difficult projects
- ✓ Keep teams calm when things go wrong

"

What do people consistently come to you for? That can be one of the earliest indicators of professional purpose.

KEY QUESTION

CHAPTER 3 — MULTIPLY

The Leadership Shift

From Completing Tasks to Protecting Outcomes

Early Career	*"Did I complete my assignment?"*
Developing Professional	*"Did I solve the problem?"*
Leader	*"Did we achieve the right outcome?"*
Steward	*"Did we leave the organization better prepared for what comes next?"*

CHAPTER 3 — MULTIPLY

Careers Are Built One Chapter at a Time

1 **Ruhnau Ruhnau Clarke Associates**
Learn
1997–2001

→

2 **Irvine USD**
Own
2001–2017

→

3 **CL Consulting, Inc.**
Multiply
2017–Present

→

4 **What Comes Next?**

> *Careers often make sense looking backward. Even after decades, you can still be entering your next chapter.*
> — Lorrie Ruiz


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CHAPTER 3 — MULTIPLY

Your Next-Chapter Questions

1. What is this chapter teaching me?
2. Who am I learning from?
3. What problems do people trust me to solve?
4. What part of this work gives me energy?
5. What perspective am I missing?
6. What should I start building now for what comes next?

Keep these in mind during every session that follows today.


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BACK TO THE BEGINNING

What chapter are you in?

Learn. Own. Multiply. Or something new?

ONE MORE QUESTION

What is this chapter preparing you for?

"Your next chapter rarely announces itself. You prepare for it before you can see it."

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What Helps You Get There

Leadership	*How do you move from contributor to leader?*	→	Pathways to Leadership: A Panel Discussion 10:45am
Audience Awareness	*How do you communicate differently depending on who is listening?*	→	K–12 Public Speaking ("Know Your Audience") 12:45pm
Trust	*How do you build credibility with districts and communities?*	→	Communication & Building Trust with your District & Community 1:30pm
Professionalism	*How do you conduct yourself as responsibility increases?*	→	Professionalism 101: How to Advance in Your Career 2:35pm

The rest of today isn't a sequence of unrelated sessions, it's a designed path from purpose to practice.

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Build Schools. Build Relationships.
Build People. Build Your Next Chapter.

Thank you!

Lorrie Ruiz
President/CEO CL Consulting Inc.

Make today part of your next chapter.

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Pathways to Leadership: A Panel Discussion



Lindsay Currier
Riverside COE

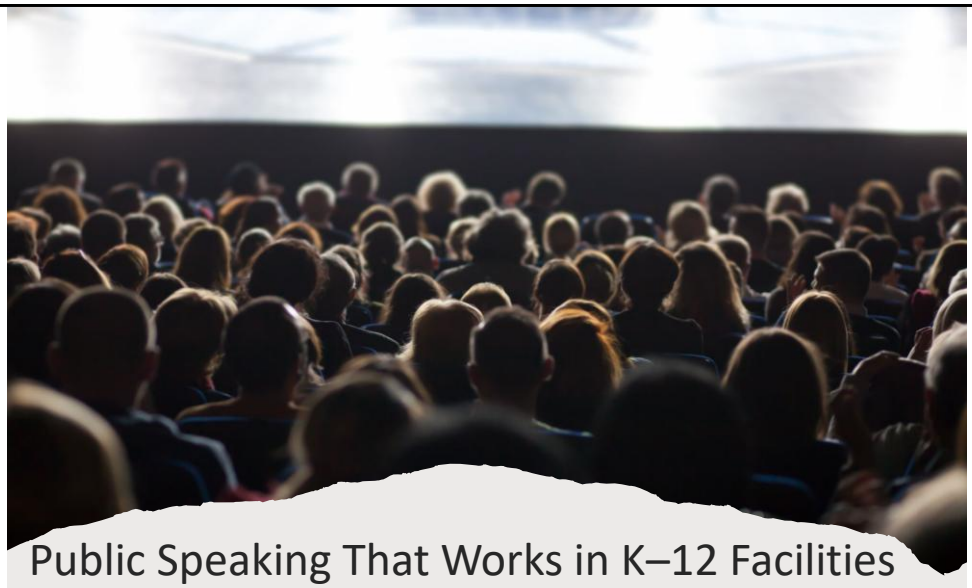


Hannah Dayton
Elk Grove USD



Kevin Fleming
PBK

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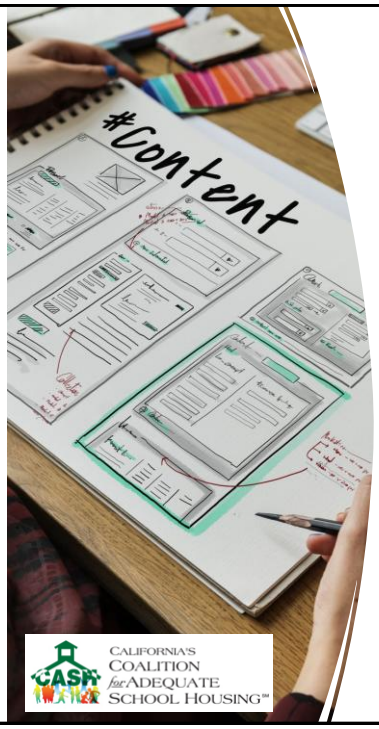


Public Speaking That Works in K–12 Facilities

Trainer Edition with Timing, Models & Visual Guidance

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Workshop Agenda

- Audiences
- Planning
- Delivery
- Body Language
- Practice

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Your Real Audiences

Boards | Superintendents | Community | Facilities | DSA | Partners

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Audience Priorities

BOARDS:
RISK & COST

COMMUNITY:
SAFETY

FACILITIES:
PRACTICALITY

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Case Study:
Bond Program

Board Question:

"How do we control costs?"

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Audience Translation Exercise

Explain one project three ways



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Planning: Start with Why

Purpose before details

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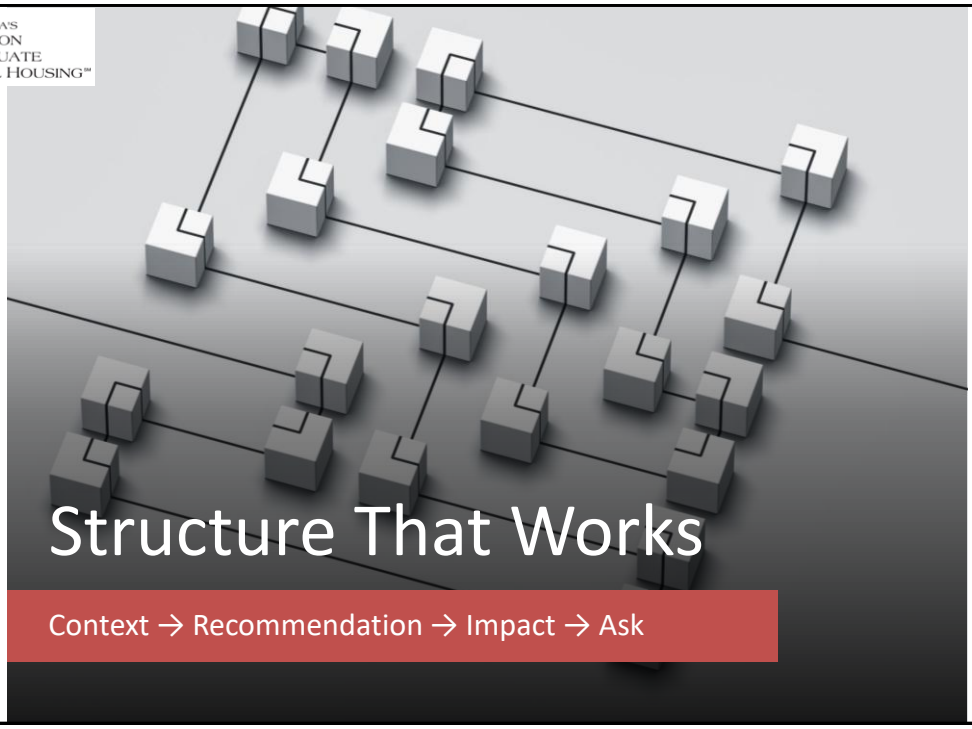
The 3-Question Test

Decision | Risk | Takeaway

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Structure That Works

Context → Recommendation → Impact → Ask

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Case Study: Modernization

Concern:
"Will this disrupt learning?"

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Clear Beats Smart

Outcomes > Jargon

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Body Language



Posture | Eye Contact | Stillness

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Case Study: Portable Classrooms

Concern: “Are portables safe?”

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60-Second Challenge

Board | Parent | Student

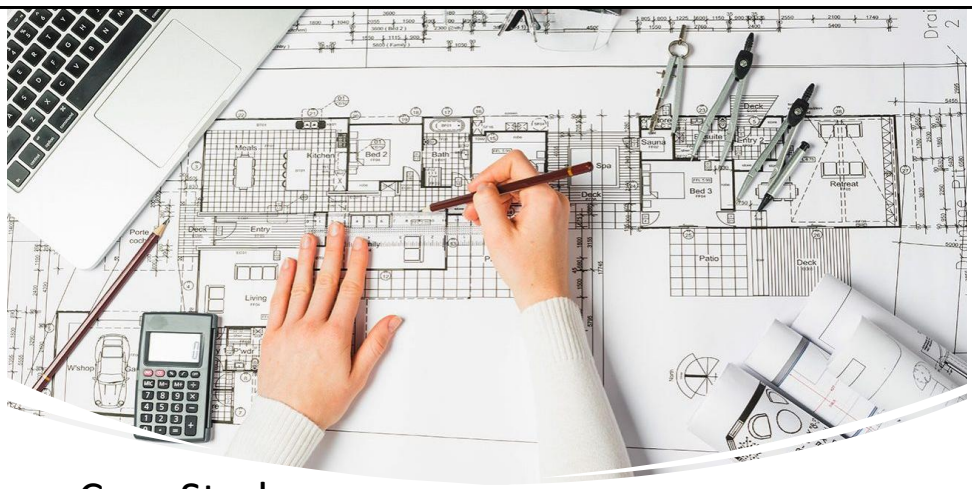
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Case Study: DSA Timelines

Question:

"Why does this take so long?"

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Key Takeaways

Know audience | Lead with why | End with ask

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Communication & Building Trust with Your District and Community

Why Communication Matters

Jeff Becker*, Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools*
Rheia Alschbach*, Poway Unified School District*

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Introductions

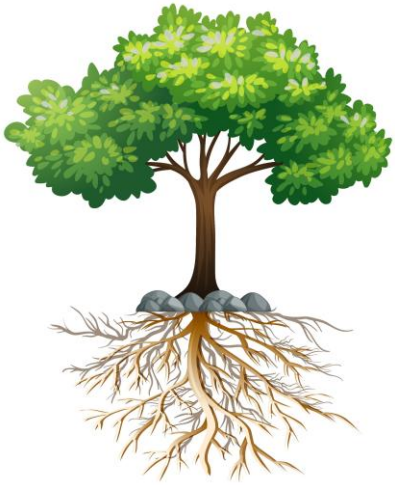


Jeff Becker, Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, Past CASH Chair



Rheia Alschbach, Poway Unified School District, Director of Capital Planning

How do you know you trust someone?



Results

Capabilities

Intent

Integrity

FranklinCovey *The Speed of Trust*

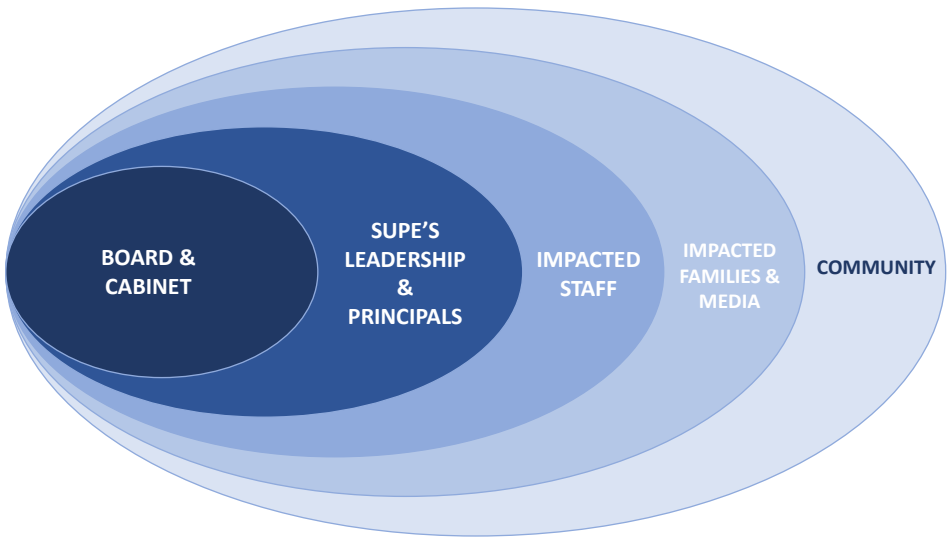
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Communication Behaviors that Build Trust

- Listen First
- Talk Straight
- Create Transparency
- Clarify Expectations
- Keep Commitments
- Deliver Results

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Communication Flow



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Building trust and partnership with families and the community through clear communication, authentic engagement, and a service-oriented culture.

Table Discussion

Where does communication most often break down in your experience? Do you have communication success stories?

- Board/Cabinet ↔ Leadership
- Leadership ↔ Principals
- Principals/Departments ↔ Impacted Staff
- District ↔ Families/Media
- District ↔ Community
- *It depends on the situation*

Good Communication Starts with Knowing…

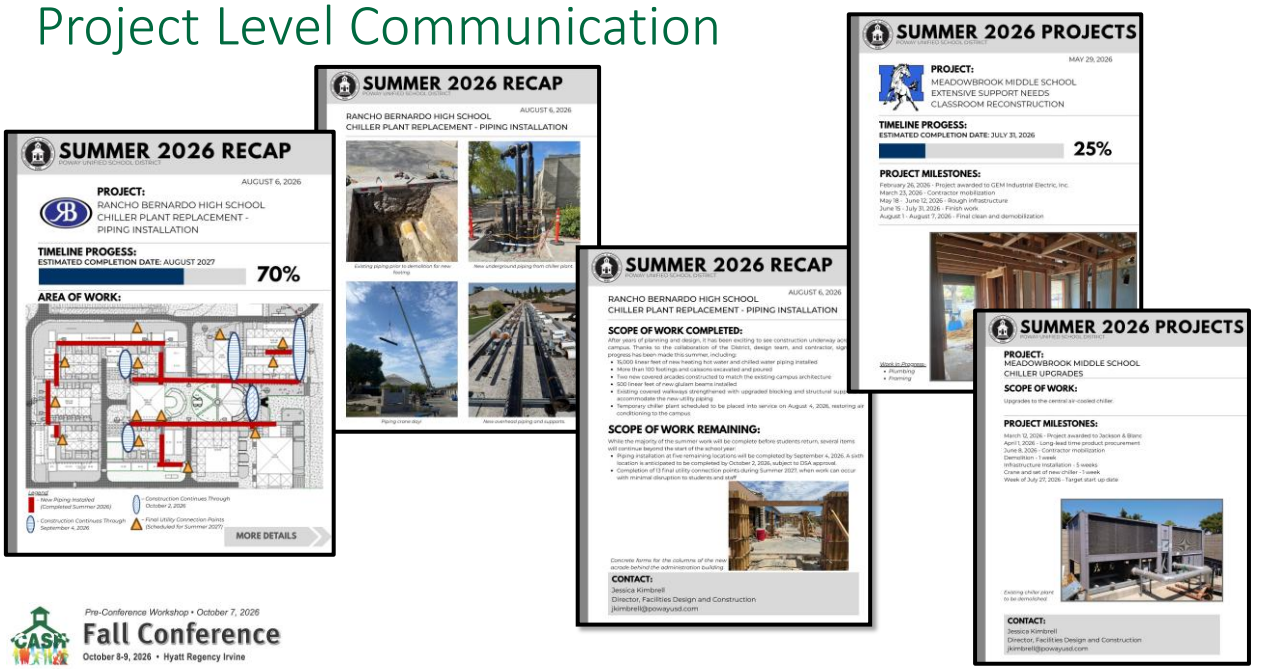
The District's communication structure

- Crisis vs. Department communication

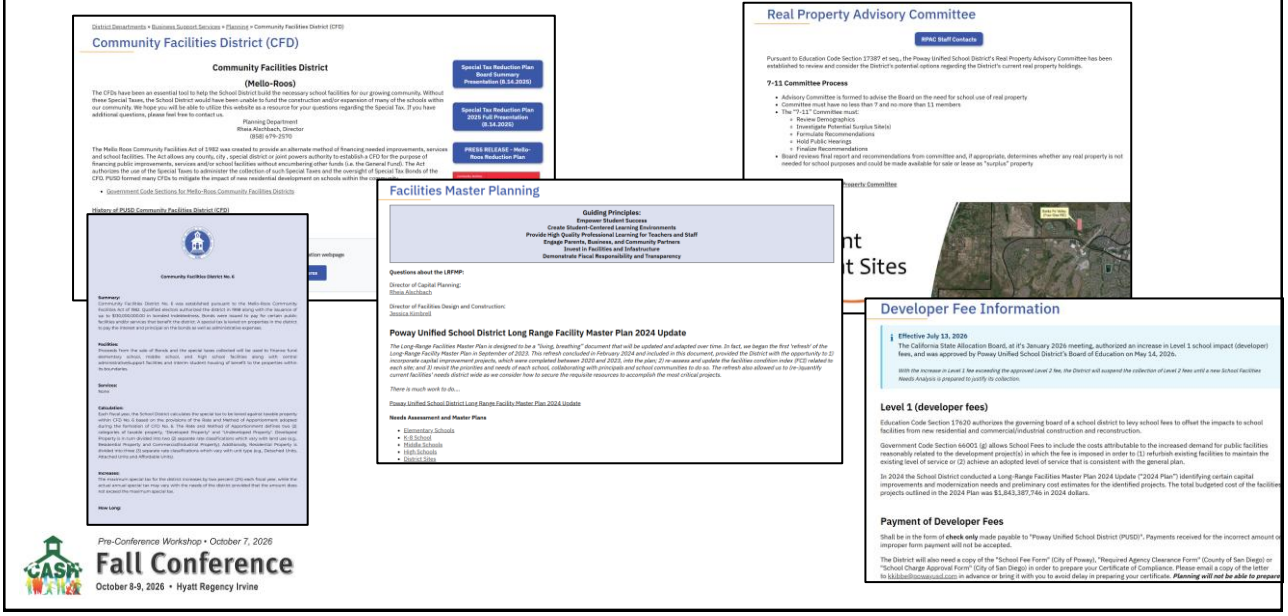
Your role

- Know your work
- Who is your audience
- Know your resources

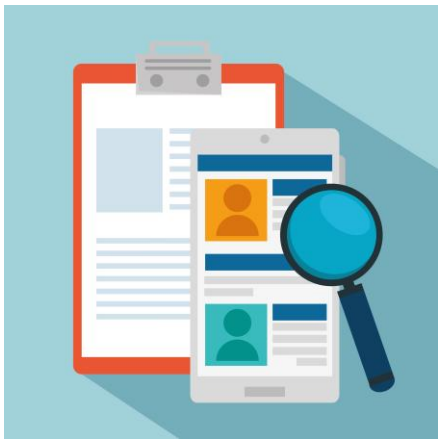
Project Level Communication



Department & Community Communication



Case Studies



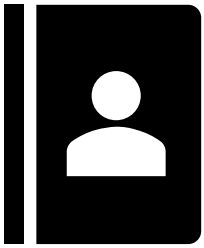
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PROFESSIONALISM 101:

Advancing & Building Your Career

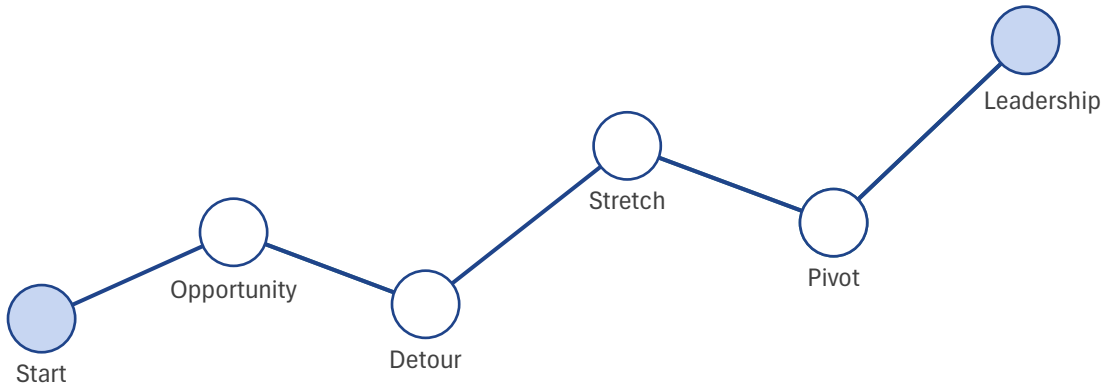
From Doing the Work → to Leading the Work

Presented by *Anne Collins, Lozano Smith &*
Amanda Bonivert, CASH Board Member, Petaluma City Schools

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Career Paths Rarely Look Like a Straight Line

Our stories may be different—and yours should be, too.



Start With the Foundation

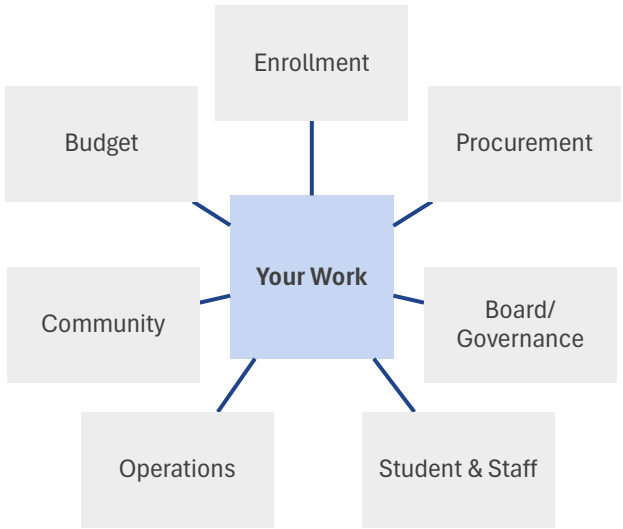
Advancement begins with being excellent at the job you already have.

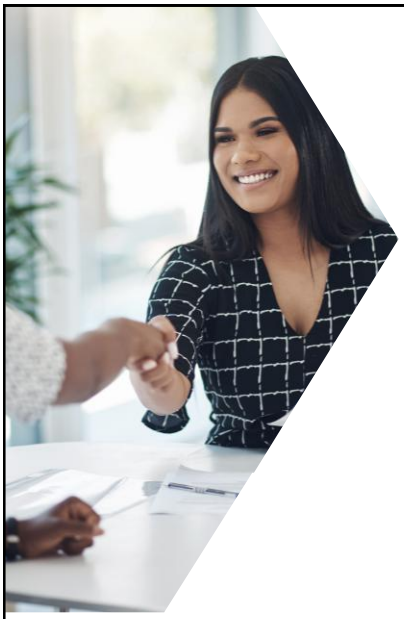


- **Do the work**
- **Build trust**
- **Own your reputation**
- **Serve the internal client**

Get Out of Your Lane

Leadership requires understanding the web—not just your box on the org chart.





Act Like the Next-Level Leader Before You Have the Title.

- Keep learning from the role you're in.
- Ask questions beyond your function.
- Bring solutions—not just problems.
- Take on responsibilities that stretch you.
- Connect your work to students and staff.
- Be patient. Readiness and timing both matter.

The goal is not to leave your lane—it's to understand how your lane connects to everyone else's.

Who Touches This Project?

A new school campus is never "just" a facilities project.



Identify every department or person that touches this project.

- Think beyond construction: finance, HR, IT, educational services, procurement, legal, communications, maintenance, transportation, the Board, community…
- **Next-level leadership = seeing the whole system.**

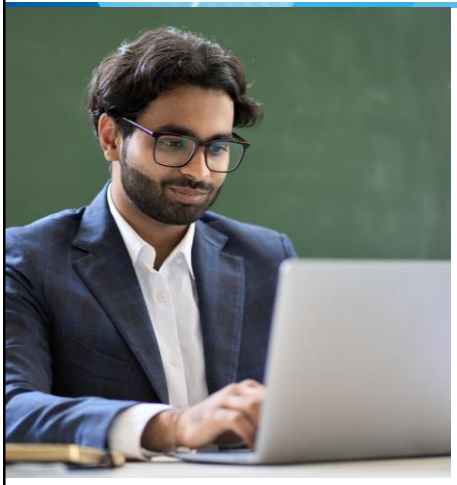
Look Like (and Act Like) You're Ready

People form impressions about readiness long before the position opens.

1. **Presentation**
   Dress for the job you want—not just the job you have.
2. **Communication**
   Clear, concise and appropriate for the audience.
3. **Conflict**
   Disagree without becoming disagreeable.
4. **Composure**
   How you react under pressure gets noticed.
5. **Awareness**
   Read the room: team, leaders, Board and community.

Career Advice That Sounds Right—Until It Isn't

People form impressions about readiness long before the position opens.



"Keep your head down and let your work speak for itself."

"Say yes to every opportunity."

"My boss knows I want to advance."

"I need to prove I'm the smartest person in the room."

The Better Advice Is More Nuanced

1. Do excellent work—and make sure the right people understand your contribution.
   - **Visibility ≠ bragging.**
2. Be selective. Say yes to opportunities that build skill, exposure or relationships.
   - **Busy ≠ strategic.**
3. State your goals. Don't make your supervisor guess.
   - **Ambition needs communication.**
4. Be curious, collaborative and useful—not performative.
   - **Leadership ≠ having every answer.**

Communicate Your Goals

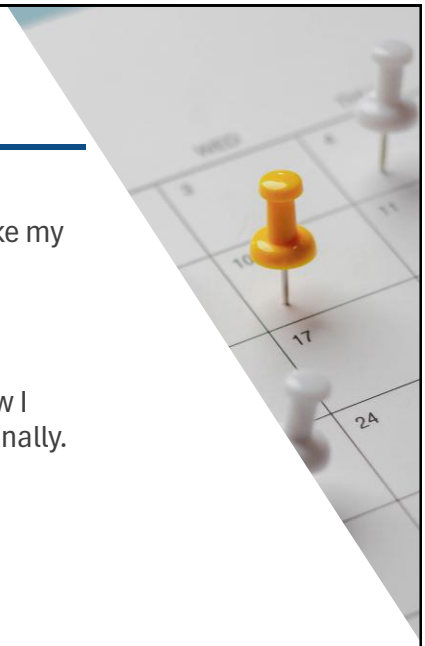
Your career should not be a secret project.



1. **TELL**
   - Your supervisor where you want to go.
2. **ASK**
   - What do I need to demonstrate to get there?
3. **FIND**
   - A mentor—and an "accountabil-a-buddy."
4. **SEEK**
   - Shadowing, stretch assignments, training and conferences.
5. **REPEAT**
   - Ask for feedback, adjust and keep building.

Your 12-Month Career Blueprint

Choose one concrete move in each category.



- **SKILL**
  - One skill I will develop.
- **EXPERIENCE**
  - One responsibility or project I will pursue.
- **RELATIONSHIP**
  - One person or department outside my normal circle.
- **VISIBILITY**
  - One way I will make my contribution more visible.
- **PRESENCE**
  - One change to how I show up professionally.

You Don't Advance Because You've Mastered One Job

You advance because people trust you with what comes next.



EXCELLENCE
Do the work.

CURIOSITY
Understand the system.

PRESENCE
Show you're ready.

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Insights and Revelations



Jema Estrella
CASH Board Member, LACOE

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