

**Contra Costa County Leadership Academy
Session #7 – Political astuteness**



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**Political Astuteness
&
Graduation**

**Contra Costa
Leadership Academy**

**Session #7
April 11, 2024**

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Reconnect and share:

As a result of your Academy experience, what is one thing you have learned about yourself as a leader, and how do you plan to use that insight?

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Overview

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Team #4 project practice presentation | Debrief coaching conversation #3 | Politics is ... |
| Policy Maker vs. Administrator | Nalbandian and Community Values | Political Values exercise – case study |

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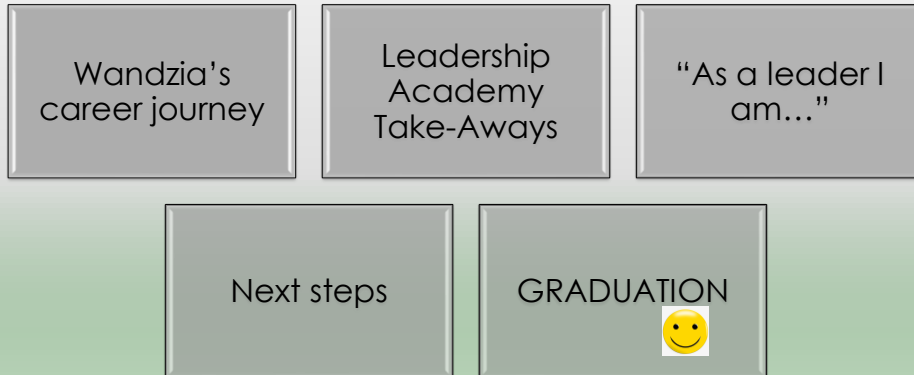
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Overview



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Team #4 Project Run Through

- ▶ Presentation (20 mins max)
- ▶ Content questions (10 mins)
 - ▶ Executive sponsor
 - ▶ All of you
 - ▶ Co-directors
- ▶ Presentation suggestions (10 mins)
 - ▶ Executive sponsor
 - ▶ All of you
 - ▶ Co-directors



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Debrief coaching conversation



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“Politics”

What are the images that immediately come to mind when you think “politics”?



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Politics is all about. . .

- Getting things done in a messy world
- Different groups with often different interests competing for resources & attention

influence
activities and
politics. noun
governance
improving

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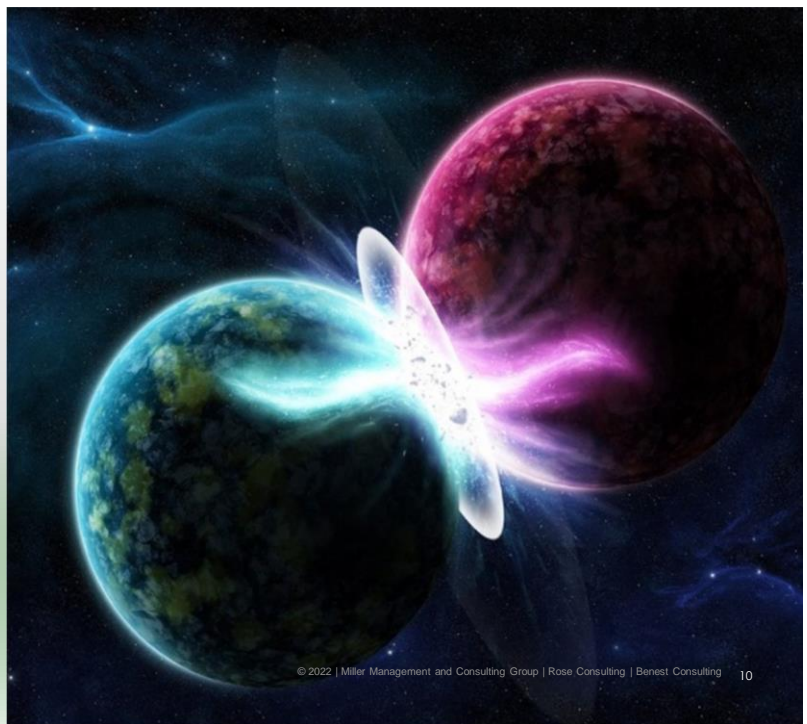
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Policy vs. Administration

Two different worlds

Two different mindsets



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Exercise

Identifying dimensions for policy-makers
and administrators



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Groups

- ▶ Group #1 = **Issues**
- ▶ Group #2 = **Information**
- ▶ Group #3 = **Orientation**
- ▶ Group #4 = **Attention**
- ▶ Group #5 = **Timeframe**
- ▶ Group #6 = **Focus of decision making**
- ▶ Group #7 = **Accountability**
- ▶ Group #8 = **Rewards**

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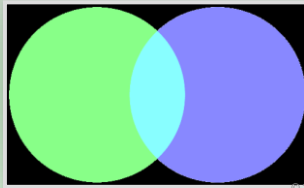
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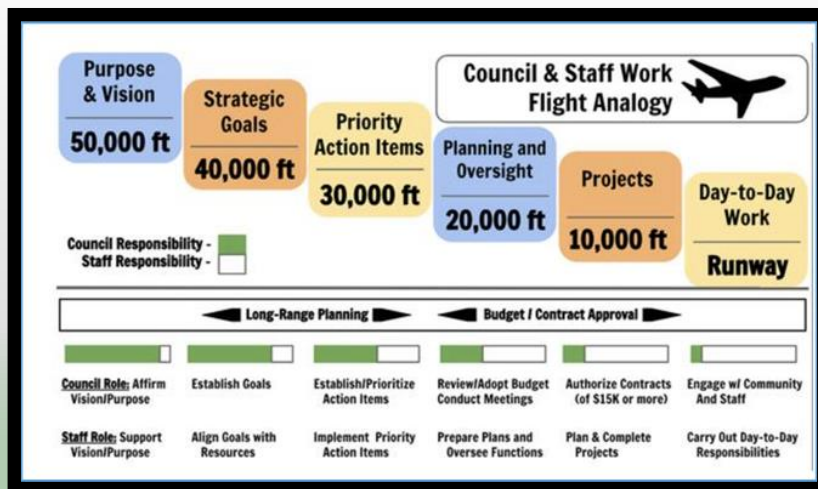
Two Different Worlds

- ▶ Two mindsets
- ▶ The overlap
- ▶ The role of senior managers in navigating the relationship
- ▶ **Key question: How do we become more effective in playing in a policy world?**



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Community Values in Decision Making



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Based on the work of John Nalbandian

Efficiency
Representation
Individual Rights
Social Equity



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Efficiency




-  Ensuring fiscal stability
-  Interagency collaboration and services consolidation
-  Efficient and accountable government systems and procedures
-  Long-range planning and master plans
-  Consideration of cost-benefit studies in decision making
-  Focusing resources on priorities

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Representation



-  Listening & responding to community concerns including specific groups
-  Developing future leaders
-  Surveying citizens as to needs & concerns
-  Empowering neighborhoods
-  Having a clear vision shared by the community
-  Providing for & encouraging public involvement

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Individual Rights









-  Priority on public safety to protect property & people
-  Concern that employees not lose their jobs under privatization
-  Minimal gov't regulations, especially regarding land use
-  Willingness to grant zoning variances to accommodate individuals' needs
-  Business friendly
-  Concern that arbitrary gov't decisions not hurt individuals

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Social Equity



-  Workforce layoff plans which avoid greater impacts on minorities
-  Same quality infrastructure & services for all areas of the City
-  Enforcement of federal & state laws prohibiting discrimination
-  Affordable housing for families & seniors
-  City facilities & programs accessible to disabled
-  Bilingual or multi-lingual staff & written materials

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**Connecting How Values Directly
Influence Decision Making**

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It's Time to Discuss & Vote

- Refer to the handout and identify which community values are in play in this scenario
- Your task as the governing body is to discuss and vote on the issue
- You either approve or deny the application for rezoning and development

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Let's Debrief

- What community values did you identify that are at play?
- Did your group come to an agreement?
 - How easy/difficult was it getting to agreement on how to vote?
 - What supported you in coming to an agreement, or challenged you if you did not have agreement?



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Think Politically
Act
Non-Politically



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Think Politically
Act Non-Politically



Thinking politically

- ▶ Practice “positive regard” - acknowledge values, goals, desires, & reference groups of politician
- ▶ Debrief governing board meetings
- ▶ Develop rapport with political actors
- ▶ Ask policy-makers why they voted the way they did
- ▶ Start with the “why”
- ▶ Frame the issue

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Think Politically Act Non-Politically



Thinking politically

- ▶ Tie ideas to larger agendas
- ▶ Identify & use language that resonates
- ▶ Engage reference group members & constituencies
- ▶ Consider the “best” communicators & presenters
- ▶ Tell the story
- ▶ Know when to push forward or pull back
- ▶ Get political guidance

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Think Politically Act Non-Politically

Acting Non-Politically

- ▶ Treat all governing board members equally
- ▶ Provide info to all - elected officials & interest groups
- ▶ Respect political views of governing board members & acknowledging their interests
- ▶ Provide professional analysis & options



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Think Politically Act Non-Politically

Acting Non-Politically

- ▶ Make professional recommendations in the best interests of the community & organization
- ▶ Avoid taking of sides in policy disputes
- ▶ Accept & support political decisions



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Responding to “Political” Ideas

Options

- ▶ “Sure”
- ▶ “No”
- ▶ “Yes but. . .”
- ▶ “Yes and. . .”



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Wandzia's Story



- ▶ Listen & take a few notes
- ▶ Try to discern some key elements - high points, low points, pivotal points, critical decision points

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Lunchtime...let's eat!



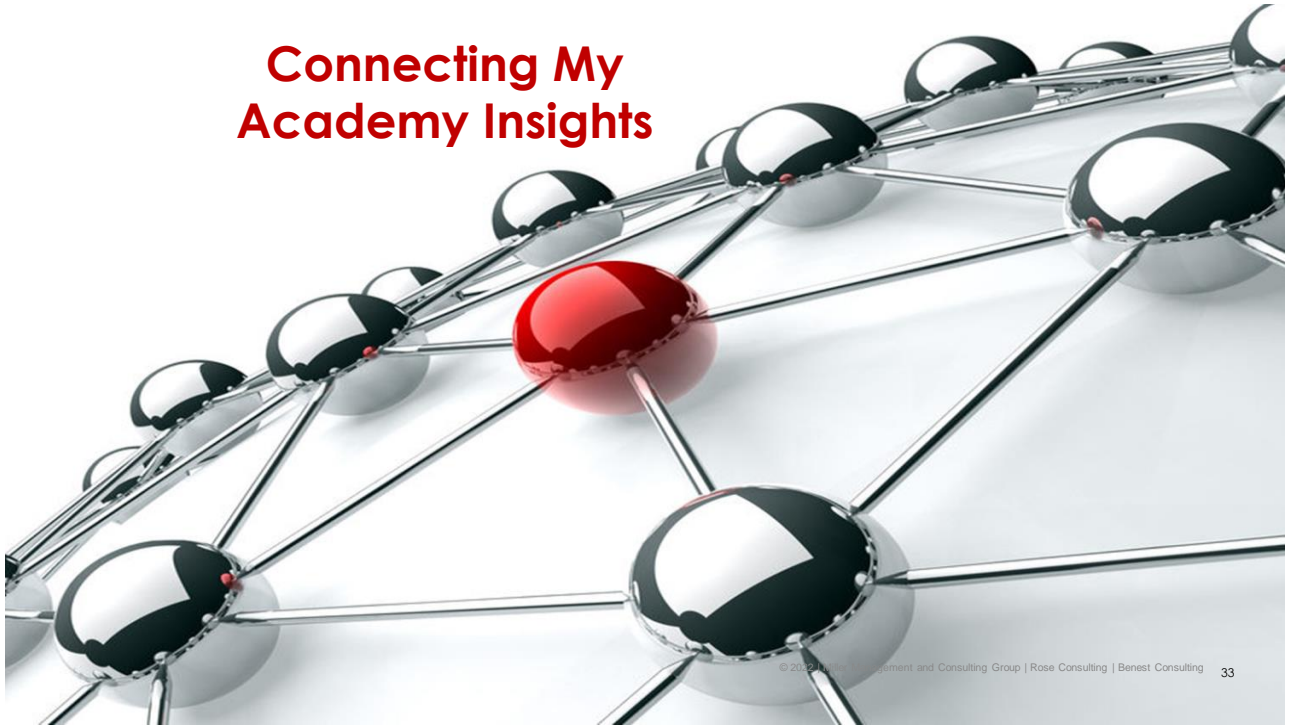
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Connecting My Academy Insights



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Our Academy Path

Building high performing teams

- Group/team dynamics
- Stages of development
- Effective behaviors
- Psychological safety
- Coaching element intro

Nov

Leadership essentials

- Academy overview
- Leadership v management
- Results v relationships
- Nature of challenges
- Leaders start with WHY
- Leadership gifts
- Emotional Intelligence
- Team project intro

Oct

Diversity Uncovered

- Implicit/explicit bias
- Micro/macro aggressions
- Calling "in" vs. calling "out"

Dec

Leadership strengths/talents & values

- Core personal values
- My leadership strengths/talents
- Team project presentations

Feb

Communicating for success

- Framing your ideas
- Storytelling
- DISC

Jan

Mar

Taking charge of your career & Talent development & Development coaching

- Inventory of your assets & how to articulate them
- Employee engagement
- Development Coaching
- Team project presentations

Apr

Political astuteness

- Thinking politically/acting non-politically
- Policy vs. Administration
- Community values & how they influence policy makers
- Team project presentation

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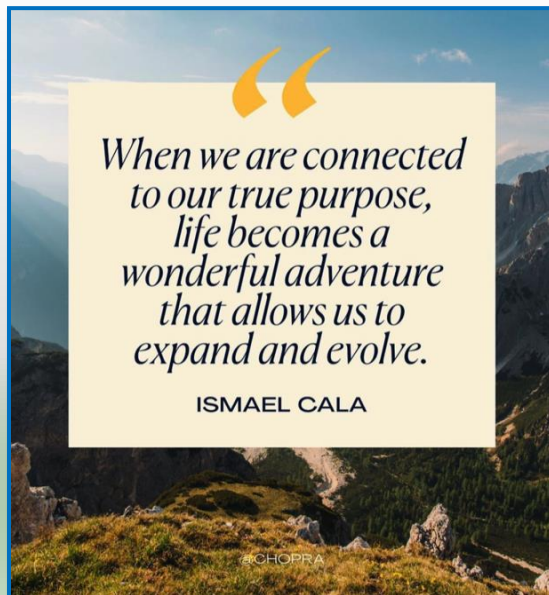
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As a Leader...

I am

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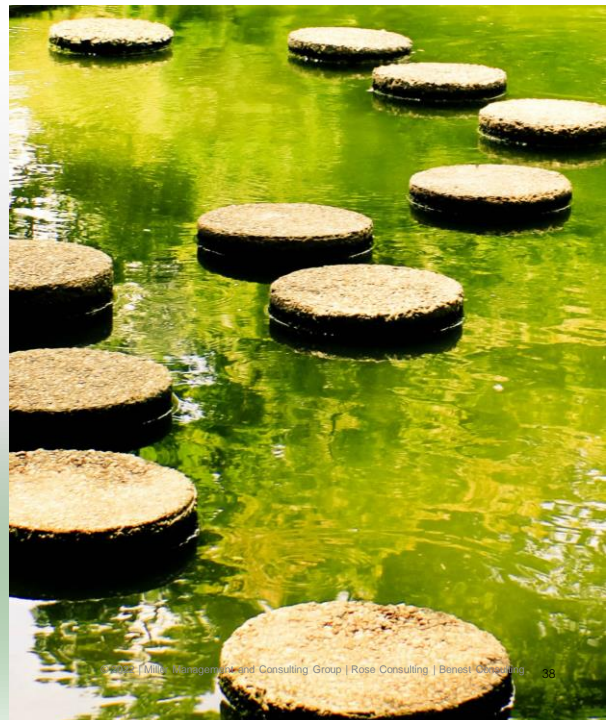
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Next steps

- ▶ Final project presentations
- ▶ CGL program
- ▶ Final coaching conversation
- ▶ Academy survey
- ▶ Academy resources
- ▶ Staying connected
- ▶ Supporting future Academies
- ▶ ICMA coaching program & resources



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**Thank you for a great
Academy journey with you!**

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**Congratulations to
the
Class of 2023-24
of the
Contra Costa
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Academy!**

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