

NARRATIVE REFLECTION

CAPE 1: Development and Implementation of a Shared Vision

CAPE 1 connects closely to the kind of administrator I want to become because I believe a school vision should be visible in everyday decisions, not just posted on a wall. My commitment to a shared vision has grown through my work as a special education teacher and through my administrative practicum. I have participated in Tier 1 meetings, reviewed schoolwide achievement and behavior data, and worked with colleagues to identify concerns affecting students. During my CalAPA work, I examined inconsistent literacy instruction for students with moderate to severe disabilities. Looking at the data helped me see that our students needed more consistent comprehension supports, structured discussion, and opportunities to respond independently. Instead of treating this as one teacher's concern, I brought staff together around a common goal of improving student access to meaningful literacy instruction.

This experience taught me that developing a shared vision requires more listening than talking. At first, I sometimes approached leadership by focusing on the solution I believed would work. I now understand that people are more likely to commit to a goal when they help define the concern, study the evidence, and shape the response. Staff members also need to feel safe enough to disagree, ask questions, and admit when a practice is not working. As a future administrator, I will need to make sure the voices of students with disabilities and the staff members who support them are included in schoolwide planning. A vision cannot honestly be called shared if some students are only discussed after the main decisions have already been made.

In my future practice, I will begin improvement work by bringing together student outcome data, staff observations, student and family perspectives, and information about available resources. I will help the team identify a small number of priorities that are understandable and measurable. We will connect each priority to specific actions, responsible staff members, timelines, and evidence of progress. I also plan to revisit the vision during staff meetings, PLCs, classroom visits, and budget conversations so it remains connected to our daily work. If the data show that students are not benefiting, I will work with the team to adjust the plan instead of defending a decision simply because we already made it. For me, servant leadership under CAPE 1 means keeping students at the center, building genuine ownership, and helping the school community move toward a vision that everyone can recognize in practice.

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CAPE 2: Instructional Leadership

CAPE 2 is the standard that most directly reflects my daily work and my reason for pursuing administration. As a teacher of students with moderate to severe disabilities, I have seen how strongly instructional decisions affect access, independence, and confidence. My CalAPA Community of Practice focused on shared interactive reading, a consistent prompting hierarchy, scaffold fading, visible vocabulary, sentence frames, structured academic discussion, and increased wait time. I worked with teachers and paraprofessionals to review baseline information, practice strategies, and monitor student responses. Over time, more students responded independently and remained engaged. At the same time, our results showed that inferencing continued to be difficult. That finding was important because it kept us from claiming that one strategy had solved every reading need.

Through this work, I learned that instructional leadership is not about giving staff a list of strategies and expecting immediate implementation. It involves understanding the learners, selecting practices for a clear reason, supporting adults as they try those practices, and studying the results together. I also became more aware of my own tendency to step in quickly when a student struggles. Increasing wait time and fading prompts reminded me that too much adult help can unintentionally limit student independence. The same lesson applies to leading adults. An administrator should provide direction and support while still allowing teachers to think, problem solve, and develop ownership of their practice.

As an administrator, I will protect time for meaningful collaboration and make sure special education is included in the school's instructional priorities. PLC conversations should move beyond sharing activities and focus on what students are learning, which students are not yet benefiting, and what evidence supports the next step. I will use classroom observations as opportunities to understand instruction and provide useful feedback rather than as isolated compliance visits. I also want professional learning to include modeling, practice, coaching, follow-up, and time to examine student work. When possible, I will help teams track both academic performance and student independence because completion with heavy prompting is not the same as true learning. My approach to CAPE 2 will be grounded in high expectations, practical support, and respect for teacher expertise. As a servant leader, my responsibility will be to remove barriers, strengthen staff capacity, and ensure that students with the most significant support needs receive purposeful instruction instead of simply being present in a classroom.

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CAPE 3: Management and Learning Environment

My experience with CAPE 3 has shown me that strong management is ultimately about creating the conditions in which students and staff can learn safely. In a moderate to severe special education setting, routines, supervision, communication, staffing, and emergency planning cannot be separated from instruction. I have coordinated paraprofessional responsibilities, arranged student escorts and classroom coverage, addressed conflicts between students, and followed individualized health and safety procedures. I have also worked with administrators, the school nurse, behavior staff, security, office staff, and families when student needs required a coordinated response. These experiences taught me that small operational details, such as who is supervising a transition or how staff communicate a change, can prevent a serious problem and protect instructional time.

I have learned that management becomes ineffective when expectations only exist in one person's head. Earlier in my career, I sometimes solved immediate problems myself because it felt faster. However, that approach can create dependence and confusion when the same situation happens again. I now see the importance of clear systems, written responsibilities, predictable routines, and opportunities for staff to ask questions. I also understand that consistency should not mean treating every student exactly the same. Students have different communication, behavioral, medical, sensory, and academic needs. An equitable learning environment combines consistent adult expectations with individualized supports. It also protects student dignity by handling concerns privately and calmly rather than correcting adults or students in front of others whenever the issue can be addressed away from an audience.

As a future administrator, I will use preventive systems instead of waiting for a crisis to reveal weaknesses. I will review supervision plans, emergency procedures, staffing assignments, behavior supports, and campus transitions with the people who carry them out. I will make responsibilities clear, identify backup coverage, and create simple ways for staff to report concerns before they grow. I will also examine discipline, attendance, and incident data for patterns involving time, location, student group, and response so that decisions are based on more than individual impressions. When an incident occurs, I will focus first on safety, then gather information from the people involved, document the response, communicate appropriately, and determine what the system needs to learn. My servant-leadership approach to CAPE 3 is to be visible, prepared, and fair while recognizing the expertise of the employees closest to the work. A well-managed school should feel organized without feeling rigid and safe without losing warmth, belonging, or respect.

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CAPE 4: Family and Community Engagement

CAPE 4 reflects my belief that families are essential partners, especially when decisions involve students with disabilities. Much of my experience has developed through IEP meetings, transition planning, progress updates, health and safety communication, and conversations about student behavior and postsecondary goals. Families often know the student's history, communication style, strengths, fears, and goals in ways that school data cannot fully capture. I have also supported community-based and vocational experiences that help students practice skills beyond the classroom. These experiences have helped me understand that family and community engagement is not an extra event added to the calendar. It is an ongoing relationship built through trust, understandable communication, follow-through, and respect.

One area of growth for me has been moving from simply providing information to creating space for two-way participation. School staff can become so familiar with educational terms and procedures that we may not realize how overwhelming they sound to a family. A meeting is not truly collaborative just because a parent was invited or signed an attendance page. Families need to understand the choices being discussed, see how the information connects to their child, and have a real opportunity to influence the plan. I have also learned not to contact families only when something is wrong. Sharing progress, a successful transition, or a new level of independence builds a stronger relationship and makes difficult conversations more productive when they are necessary.

As an administrator, I will work to make engagement accessible, purposeful, and connected to school decisions. This includes using plain language, providing interpretation and translated materials when needed, offering flexible ways to participate, and following up after meetings. I will ask families and students what communication methods work best for them instead of assuming one method fits everyone. For schoolwide planning, I will involve families, students, staff, and community partners early enough for their feedback to shape priorities, including the LCAP and decisions about services and resources. I also want to strengthen partnerships with transition programs, local employers, community agencies, and organizations that can expand opportunities for students with disabilities. I will review participation patterns to identify whose voices are missing and reach out more intentionally. My commitment as a servant leader is to listen without becoming defensive, honor the knowledge families bring, and be honest about what the school can do. CAPE 4 reminds me that trust is earned through consistent actions, and that students benefit when the adults in their lives work as partners rather than separate systems.

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CAPE 5: Ethics and Integrity

CAPE 5 is central to the type of leader I want to be because administrators make decisions that affect people's opportunities, safety, dignity, and trust. My work in special education regularly requires confidentiality, careful documentation, consistent follow-through, and advocacy for students who may not be able to explain their needs independently. I have had to make decisions during behavioral concerns, staff disagreements, health situations, and conversations where emotions were high. These moments have reinforced that ethical leadership is often demonstrated in ordinary actions: listening before reaching a conclusion, discussing sensitive concerns privately, protecting student information, applying expectations fairly, and being willing to address a problem even when the conversation is uncomfortable.

My understanding of integrity has become more complex through my administrative preparation. Fairness does not always mean giving every person the same response. It means considering policy, context, student need, prior supports, and the likely impact of the decision while avoiding favoritism. I also recognize that my own experiences and assumptions can influence how I interpret behavior. Because of that, I need to slow down, seek more than one perspective, check the available evidence, and separate what I observed from what I inferred. Another important lesson is that avoiding a difficult conversation is not neutral. When leaders fail to address conduct that harms trust or student dignity, they communicate that the conduct is acceptable. Ethical leadership requires both compassion and accountability.

In my future administrative practice, I will use a consistent decision-making process. I will identify who may be affected, review relevant law and policy, gather facts, consider equity and confidentiality, consult when necessary, and communicate the decision with a clear explanation. I will document significant concerns and follow through instead of allowing issues to disappear after the immediate tension passes. I also plan to create a climate in which staff can raise concerns without fear of embarrassment or retaliation. When I make a mistake, I will acknowledge it, correct what I can, and explain what I learned. I will not ask staff to meet expectations that I am unwilling to model myself. As a servant leader, I want people to experience me as honest, respectful, dependable, and student centered. CAPE 5 reminds me that credibility is built over time. Staff and families may not agree with every decision, but they should be able to see that the process was thoughtful, the standards were applied consistently, and the decision placed student welfare above personal convenience.

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CAPE 6: External Context and Policy

CAPE 6 has expanded my understanding of how strongly decisions outside the classroom shape what happens inside it. Through my administrative credential coursework and practicum, I have studied school finance, LCFF, the LCAP, California accountability requirements, student data, personnel practices, and the responsibilities of school leaders. I have reviewed California Dashboard information, participated in WASC and Tier 1 work, and examined how district and state priorities connect to school programs. My finance work was especially important because it showed me that equity-focused funding does not automatically produce equitable outcomes. Leaders must understand which students generate additional resources, how those funds are used, and whether the funded actions actually improve access and achievement.

Before beginning this program, I understood policy mostly through the requirements that directly affected my classroom, such as IEP procedures, safety rules, and instructional expectations. I now see that an administrator must understand the larger political, legal, economic, and community context while still paying attention to the effect on individual students. Policy can provide important protections and consistency, but implementation can become a compliance exercise if leaders lose sight of its purpose. I have also learned that flexibility brings responsibility. Local control allows schools and districts to respond to community needs, but it also requires transparent decisions, meaningful stakeholder engagement, and honest progress monitoring. Administrators cannot rely only on tradition or say that a practice exists because it has always been done that way.

As a future administrator, I will build regular habits for staying informed. I will review updates from the state and district, consult knowledgeable staff when policy questions arise, participate in professional learning, and communicate changes in language that staff and families can understand. Before implementing a requirement, I will ask what problem it is intended to address, who may be affected, what resources are needed, and how we will know whether implementation is working. I will connect budget decisions to measurable student needs and make the relationship between goals, services, spending, and outcomes easier for stakeholders to follow. I will also advocate when a policy creates an unintended barrier for students with disabilities or other underserved groups. My servant-leadership responsibility under CAPE 6 is to translate policy into responsible practice without losing the human impact. Effective administrators must be informed enough to comply, reflective enough to question, and courageous enough to advocate for decisions that are legal, transparent, equitable, and centered on students.