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# Establishing and Maintaining Collective Faculty Trust in the High School Principal

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ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING COLLECTIVE FACULTY TRUST
IN THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

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Abstract

This study explored the process by which high school principals established and maintained collective faculty trust in the principal (FTP). High school principals face the challenge of establishing FTP in settings generally larger than their colleagues in elementary and middle schools which can impact the level of trust. The rich descriptions from participants about the process by which they established and maintained FTP adds to the limited qualitative literature about FTP, especially in the context of high schools. The findings from this study can serve as a guide to new and experienced high school principals as they establish and maintain FTP. By establishing a culture of mutual trust and respect, high school principals can impact student achievement and, potentially, the graduation rate and preparedness for post-secondary education.

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List of Abbreviations and Pseudonyms

ACT            American College Test

ACGR           Adjusted cohort graduation rate

AFGR           Averaged freshman graduation rate

ESSA           Every Student Succeeds Act

FTC            Faculty trust in colleagues

FTP            Faculty trust in the principal

NAEP           National Assessment of Educational Progress

NCES           National Center for Education Statistics

NCLB           No Child Left Behind

PLC            Professional Learning Communities

SES            Socioeconomic Status

TELL           Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning

VoIP           Voice over Internet Protocol

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

**Introduction to the Problem**

There were two neighboring high schools, similar in size and demographics. Both were identified in the bottom half of the state high schools for student achievement. However, one school's reform efforts led to significant gains in student achievement while the other high school's reform efforts led to little or no improvement. It is imperative to identify why one high school was successful while the other was not. The reason may be related to trust.

Trust is a necessary component of effective schools and can lay the foundation for school reform efforts (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Cosner, 2009). Trust impacts the instructional capacity of a school and can lead to increased student achievement (Adams, 2013; Adams & Forsyth, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a). Understanding the process for establishing and maintaining trust within a school community could have significant implications for student achievement.

Early research regarding trust in schools began with Hoy and Kupersmith (1984) at Rutgers University around collective faculty trust and authentic leadership. Hoy continued research around the issue of school trust at The Ohio State University beginning in 1994. He and his colleagues conducted studies and developed instruments around the concepts of faculty trust, collective trust, and academic optimism. In the 1990s Bryk and Schneider, through the University of Chicago, began research around school improvement in Chicago. Their studies lead to *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement* (2002). This work emphasized the role that trust plays in increasing student achievement. Beginning in 2001 Adams and Forsyth, researchers at the Oklahoma State, added to the literature regarding trust in schools by looking at how trust develops between all members of the school organization including students and

families. This work examined the quality of social relationships in schools and how trust can be established in school communities and lead to improved student achievement. Much of the research on school trust is based on the studies of these researchers.

**Statement of the Problem**

School principals must attend to a set of challenging responsibilities (Crow, 2006; Forsyth & Adams, 2014; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015) was developed from a review of empirical research as well as from the experiences of educational leaders in order to guide professional practice. It states, "the 2015 Standards have been recast with a stronger, clearer emphasis on students and student learning, outlining foundational principles of leadership to help ensure that each child is well-educated and prepared for the 21st century" (p. 2). School leaders are called to set a vision; adhere to ethical standards; strive for equity; support curriculum, instruction, and assessment; include the community; develop the professional capacity of others; engage families; manage the school; and focus on improvement with the aim of increasing student achievement and preparing students for the future.

**Accountability for student achievement.** There has been an increase in accountability for student achievement through United States national legislation such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and, more recently, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (No Child Left Behind, 2001; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). ESSA was signed into legislation by President Obama in December of 2015 as the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965). To comply with legislation, schools must show academic progress of all students through

yearly testing and accountability for results. Results are published and schools are classified based on school-level and subgroup achievement.

There are multiple measures used to gauge student academic progress. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) produces a yearly report, *The Condition of Education* (Kena, et al., 2016), detailing the progress of education and student achievement in the United States. The section, "Elementary and Secondary Education" (pp. 112-209), reports The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results in reading and math at grades 4, 8, and 12. Table 1.1 below displays the results indicated by the percentage of students who scored below basic standards in reading and mathematics during the 2016 school year. Meeting basic standards indicates partial mastery of fundamental skills in the content matter. Students scoring below basic standards have not met partial mastery.

Table 1.1

*National Assessment of Educational Progress 2016 Math and Reading Scoring Below Basic*

| Academic Year | Reading | Math |
|---|---|---|
| Grade 4 | 31% | 18% |
| Grade 8 | 21% | 29% |
| Grade 12 | 28% | 38% |

Two methods used to measure the public school graduation rate in the United States include: the averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR) and the adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR). Both measure the percentage of public school students who attain a regular high school diploma within 4 years of starting 9th grade. The AFGR uses aggregate student data while the ACGR uses detailed student-level data. The AFGR rate for 2012-2013 was 82%. The ACGR for 2013-2014 was also 82%. While these figures represent an all-time high for public high school

graduates, a significant percentage of students have not completed the requirements for a high school diploma.

One of the highlights of ESSA (2015) was the focus on career and college readiness for all students. The United States legislation called on schools to align standards and teaching with the knowledge and skills students need to be successful after high school. High schools must produce graduates who are college and career ready. Reports by several nonprofit organizations aimed at improving student achievement and college and career readiness indicated that many high school graduates do not meet college readiness standards (Achieve, 2016; ACT 2016; Bromberg & Theokas, 2016). An *Education Trust* report found that 47% of 2013 graduates were missing necessary course preparation for college and/or career readiness (Bromberg & Theokas, 2016). "The Condition of College & Career Readiness" (ACT, 2016) found that only 26% of students taking the American College Test (ACT) met the four College Readiness Benchmarks.

**Leadership impact on student achievement.** School leadership is important because of the impact on student learning. Leadership is related to student achievement through specific leadership styles and practices that impact teachers, their working environment, and relationships (Hallinger & Heck, 1996, Leithwood, Jantzi, & Patten, 2010; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008; Sun & Leithwood, 2015; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004). A meta-analysis of the impact of leadership on student achievement identified leadership behaviors associated with an increase in student achievement and found the principal can have a substantial effect on student achievement (Waters et al., 2004). Results from a study based on a national survey of teachers indicated that instructional leadership, shared leadership, and trust in the principal have a positive relationship to student learning (Louis et al., 2010).

**Trust and leadership.** Principal leadership is essential to establishing a trusting environment through interpersonal relationships as well as through establishing a vision and taking action to realize the vision (Byrk & Schneider, 2002). Recent studies have pointed to collective trust as an important factor in school reform efforts, instructional capacity, and student achievement (Adams, 2013; Cosner, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a). Collective trust is defined as the "trust that groups have in individuals and in other groups" (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011, p. 3). One of the collective trust relationships within a school is between the principal and the faculty. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015a) found that when faculty trust in the principal is high, student achievement is also high as a result.

**Trust development.** Researchers have identified five facets that contribute to trust in schools; benevolence, reliability, honesty, openness, and competence (Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2000) multidisciplinary analysis of trust literature proposed the definition of trust as "making one vulnerable to another party or group based on the confidence that the other will act with benevolence, reliability, honesty, openness, and competence" (p. 556). Subsequent research by Hanford and Leithwood (2013) affirmed these facets of trust specific to teacher trust in the principal. They analyzed 18 empirical studies to determine the characteristics and practices most associated with teacher trust in the principal. They found that competence, consistency and reliability, openness, respect, and integrity were the most salient characteristics related to teacher trust in the principal.

Other factors that contribute to the development of faculty trust in the principal include:

- leadership behaviors and styles (Angelle 2010; Hoy & Kupersmith, 1984; Hoy, Tarter, & Wiskoskie, 1992; Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010; Tarter, Sabo, & Hoy, 1995; Tschannen-Moran 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a),

- social exchanges (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Kochanek, 2005),

- enabling and empowering school structures (Adams, 2013; Forsyth & Adams, 2014; Freire & Fernandez, 2016; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001), and

- contextual conditions (Adams, 2008; Forsyth et al., 2011).

These factors support the development of faculty trust in the principal.

## Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the process by which high school principals established and maintained collective faculty trust in the principal (FTP).

**RQ 1.** How do high school principals describe the process of establishing collective faculty trust in the principal?

**RQ 2.** How do high school principals describe the process of maintaining collective faculty trust in the principal?

## Significance of the Study

It is necessary to understand the leadership practices that build trust and how principals can implement these practices, due to the continued focus on improving achievement. Studies have identified leadership characteristics, styles, and other factors associated with high faculty trust in the principal; however, there is a gap in the peer reviewed literature regarding the process by which these practices are implemented and the process by which trust is established and maintained (Hanford & Leithwood, 2013; Kutsyuruba, Walker, & Noonan, 2016; Leis & Rimm-

Kaufman, 2016; Makiewicz & Mitchell, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2014a; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a).

**Research significance.** This study offered to fill a void in research specific to understanding the process of establishing and maintaining FTP in high schools as well as add to the limited body of qualitative research in the area of FTP.

Recent studies highlight the need for additional research regarding trust in schools and, specifically, FTP (Hanford & Leithwood, 2012; Kutsyuruba et al., 2016; Lesi & Rimm-Kaufman, 2016; Makiewicz & Mitchell, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2014a; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a). Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015a) state in their study regarding high-performing schools, that

> we need greater understanding of the dynamics that foster faculty trust in the principal. An understanding of the conditions and processes that enable teachers and administrators to learn to trust each other and cooperate together is critical as schools are increasingly faced with the volatility of changing expectations (p. 86).

Tschannen-Moran (2014a) advocated for additional understanding about how trust plays a role in reform and organizational change. She stated, "We need to know more about the mechanisms for building initial trust, whether a school leader is entering a building where heretofore trust has been low or whether the principal is assuming leadership of a high-trust learning community" (p. 76). Makiewicz and Mitchell (2014) indicated that few studies have analyzed the antecedents of FTP. They propose further research regarding the specific behaviors of the principal that lead to high FTP and how this knowledge can guide a principal's actions.

There has also been a lack of research about maintaining trust once it has been established or reestablished once broken. Kutsyuruba, Walker, and Noonan's (2016) study

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focused on trust in the principalship finding trust to be salient in the following areas: personal, relational, decisional, educational, organizational, and moral. The authors suggested further research to understand how trust can be created and sustained as well as what leads to a breakdown in trust.

There is a need to understand how principals build FTP in high schools. One of the neglected areas of study has been the difference between elementary and secondary schools (Day, 2011). Day suggested that the larger size of secondary schools the greater implications for school leadership. A study about the impact of leadership on student achievement found a difference between leadership in elementary and secondary schools (Louis et al., 2010). They asserted that influencing student achievement is easier at the elementary level than at the secondary level. In their recommendations for practice, the authors suggested providing additional support for secondary school leaders to establish leadership that works in larger, more complex settings.

Very few studies regarding trust and FTP have been set exclusively in high schools. Two recent studies focused on high schools (Cosner, 2009; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009). A quantitative study of 84 secondary schools located in Flanders, Belgium, found that organizational culture, size, and composition affect the level of trust within a school (Van Maele, & Van Houtte, 2009). The authors contended that the context of the school should be considered when building trust. It is not clear if the findings would be similar in the United States. Cosner (2009) studied how high school principals support collegial trust between teachers, but not specifically at how principals build FTP. She found that principals can have a significant impact on the instructional capacity of a school by supporting collegial trust.

Adams's (2008) findings regarding trust formation in schools suggested that quantitative research has dominated the study of trust in schools and that more qualitative research is needed to increase the understanding of how trust is established. There has been limited qualitative research about FTP, and most of it has been set in elementary schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, Kochanek, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2014b). One recent qualitative study involved 177 principals at various school levels in Canada and looked at the importance that principals place on establishing, maintaining, and sustaining trust (Kutsyuruba et al., 2016). Responses of the principals in the study tended to describe the behaviors needed to build, maintain, and sustain trust. For example, building trust takes time, effort, and consistency. Maintaining trust was seen as more difficult involving such behaviors as open communication and shared decision-making. The participants indicated that principals must be instrumental in sustaining trust through modeling and enforcing values. While this study described the importance that principals placed on trust and what behaviors were important in each stage, the principals did not describe the process of building and maintaining trust.

**Practical significance.** This study is significant in the field of education because of its possible impact on instructional capacity and student achievement. Understanding the processes and mechanisms by which leaders establish and maintain trust may help improve instructional capacity as well as the reform efforts aimed at increasing high school student achievement and college and career readiness.

Results may have implications for the training and mentoring of aspiring and new school leaders. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015a) suggested that, "school leaders and those who prepare future school leaders would do well to attend to the growing body of research suggesting the importance and nature of leadership behaviors that foster positive and productive climates"

(p. 87). Principal preparation and mentorship programs can highlight the need for building collective trust and offer practical suggestions for aspiring and new principals. Leis and Rimm-Kaufmann (2016) contended that the next step in research should be teaching principals how to build trust with their teachers.

Building collective trust is a high leverage, low cost reform effort (Adams, 2012). High leverage efforts create impact by allowing people to work smarter. Adams asserted that building trust is an inexpensive reform effort. Without trust, it is unlikely that other school reform efforts would succeed.

**Definition of Terms**

The following are definitions to key terms used within this study.

Adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) – "An estimate of the on-time 4-year graduation rate derived from aggregate student enrollment data and graduate counts" (Kena, et al., 2016, p. 182).

Averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR) – Percentage of students who graduate within 4 years of starting 9th grade for the first time derived from detailed student-level data (Kena et al., 2016).

Collective trust – A social property of a group. "Trust that groups have in individuals and in other groups" (Forsyth et al., 2011, p. 3). The context of the group is essential to understanding how trust operates within the group.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – The 2015 Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015).

Faculty trust in colleagues (FTC) – One of the collective forms of trust within the school setting. This form of trust measures the degree to which colleagues trust one another through the five facets of trust (Hoy &Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Faculty trust in the principal (FTP) – One of the collective forms of trust within the school setting. This form of trust measures the degree to which faculty members trust the principal through the five facets of trust (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – The 2001 Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) – "an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve" (DuFour et al., 2013)

Socioeconomic Status (SES) – "one's access to financial, social, cultural, and human capital resources. Traditionally a student's SES has included, as components, parental educational attainment, parental occupational status, and household or family income, with appropriate adjustment for household or family composition" (Cowen et al., 2012, p. 4). Schools in the United States measure SES through qualification in the National School Lunch Program (Cowen et al., 2012).

Trust – "making one vulnerable to another party or group based on the confidence that the other will act with benevolence, reliability, honesty, openness, and competence" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000, p. 556)

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) – "technology that allows you to make voice calls using a broadband Internet connection instead of a regular (or analog) phone line" (United States, Federal Communications Commission, 2017)

**Organization of the Remainder of the Paper**

Chapter one established the research problem and its significance. Chapter two reviews literature relevant to this study beginning with the impact of the school principal. The review continues with literature about organizational trust and collective trust providing a theoretical foundation for the study. It concludes with literature pertaining trust in schools, the impact of FTP, and the development of FTP. Chapter three describes the research procedures and methods. Chapter four presents the findings. Chapter five discusses the findings and the implications for practice and additional research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter two reviews literature relevant to this study. It begins with the impact of the school principal highlighting the significance on student achievement. The review continues with literature about organizational trust and collective trust providing a theoretical foundation for the study. It concludes with literature pertaining to trust in schools, the impact of faculty trust in the principal (FTP), and the development of FTP.

### Impact of Principal on Student Achievement

Several meta-analysis studies have established a link between leadership practices and student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood & Louis, 2011; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Louis et al., 2010; Marzano et al., 2004; Robinson et al., 2008). Early research regarding the impact of leadership on student achievement began with Hallinger and Heck (1996). They identified 40 studies between 1980-1995 that examined the relationship between school leadership and student achievement. They found that leadership had a positive, indirect impact on student achievement through specific practices such as setting a vision and establishing goals. Likewise, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2004) established a link between 21 leadership practices and student achievement.

The Wallace Foundation funded significant research related to leadership and student achievement. The first Wallace study found that leadership is second to teacher instruction among school related factors on student achievement. Leadership was found to impact student achievement indirectly through others within the school organization. Three recommended sets of core practices necessary for successful leadership include: setting direction, developing people, and redesigning the organization (Leithwood et al., 2004). In the subsequent Wallace study, shared leadership and instructional leadership were found to help create a learning

organization with an increased instructional capacity that impacted student learning (Louis et al., 2010). Similarly, Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) found leadership practices that are tied directly to teaching and learning have a significant impact on student learning. Instructional leadership was found to have more of an impact on student learning than transformational leadership. The authors identified five dimensions of leadership: setting goals and direction:

- resourcing strategically;

- planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum;

- promoting and participating in teacher learning and professional development; and

- ensuring an orderly and supportive environment.

They found each was associated with higher student achievement, but found that planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum as well as promoting and participating in teacher learning and professional development had a higher impact on student achievement than the other dimensions. These most impactful dimensions are associated with instructional leadership.

Recent research findings supported collegial leadership and instructional leadership as having a positive impact on teacher professionalism (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a). Tshannen-Moran and Gareis established a more direct link with principal leadership and student achievement. The authors found a direct interrelationship between principal trustworthy leadership behaviors and student achievement. These leadership behaviors contributed to the academic press in a school which is an environment where teachers set high expectations, create an environment for learning, and assist struggling students to meet the high expectations (Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy, 2000).

**Collective Trust**

Collective trust, unlike trust between individuals, is a social property of a group (Forsyth et al., 2011; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Kramer, 2010; Kramer & Tyler, 1996; McEvily, Weber, Bicchieri, & Ho, 2002; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Lewis and Weigert argued that trust is a sociological construct because trust is only necessary as part of social relationships. It is a fundamental component of society because of the complexity, uncertainty, and vulnerability in social relationships. Trust is established through social interactions and has cognitive, emotional, and behavioral bases. A study of collective trust found that levels of trust can be impacted by group identity and that individual and collective trust are separate, but related constructs (McEvily et al., 2002). Individuals use group identity as a basis for determining trust in members of the group. Trust in members of a group is influenced by the overall trustworthiness of the group. Likewise, trust can exist within society or an organization through shared membership in the group and through shared beliefs, values, and goals (Rousseau et al., 1998). The context of the group is essential to understanding how trust operates within the group.

**Organizational Trust**

Much of the foundational understanding of trust comes from studies regarding trust in a variety of organizations (Dirks, 2006, Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Kramer & Tyler, 1996; Lewicki & Bunker, 1995; Lewicki, Tomlinson, & Gillespie, 2006; Mishra, 1996, Reina & Reina, 1999). Lewicki and Bunker (1995) and Lewicki et al. (2006) examined how trust is established and develops overtime in interpersonal relationships within organizations. They developed a model of trust development in the workplace based on three types of trust: calculus-based trust, knowledge-based trust, and identification-based trust. Calculus-based trust refers to an ongoing calculation or trust determined by the outcomes from "creating and sustaining the relationship

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relative to the costs of maintaining or severing it" (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995, p. 120). This type

of trust creates consistency in behavior because the parties fear the consequences of not doing

what they say that they will do. Knowledge-based trust relies on information about the other

party and the ability to anticipate what the other will do, leading to predictability. This type of

trust develops over repeated interactions. Identification-based trust develops when parties are

able to identify the wants and desires of the other. Parties protect the interests of each other.

Most workplace relationships will move to the knowledge-based stage. Some may not move to

the identification-based stage. Workplace relationships may experience a decline in trust. This

can occur because of a single incident or due to a gradual decline in trust over time. Broken trust

can be repaired, but it may be more difficult once trust has reached a high level of emotional

attachment (Reina & Reina, 1999).

While the model of Lewicki and Bunker (1995) focused on interpersonal relationships

within an organization, Kramer and Tyler (1996) focused their research on collective trust within

organizations. They asserted that trust is a collective property of a group within an organization,

and it is also a social decision. Decisions by the group to trust or not are based on the possible

benefits or risks. Members of the group expect that their trust will be reciprocated. This

reciprocal nature of trust can help trust grow through each interaction. Kramer and Tyler also

examined how the dynamics and the leadership of an organization influence trust. They found

that organizational structures and styles of leadership have a significant impact on trust within

the organization. Kramer (2010) furthered the understanding of collective trust within

organizations. He argued that trust of individuals is impacted by group membership and that trust

is developed through social interactions, observations, and cognitive processing about the

trustworthiness of others.  Leaders impact collective trust through various mechanisms including

leader attributes and actions as well as the management of meaning of trust within the organization. Kramer concluded that collective trust is an important resource within an organization because of its social capital and relationship to organizational effectiveness.

Mishra (1996) studied how trust operates within organizations in response to crisis. In his interviews with 33 managers from more than a dozen firms, he found that trust and distrust played a significant role during times of crisis. Through his review of the literature and the interviews with managers, Mishra developed the definition of trust as "one party's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the belief that the latter party is 1) competent, 2) open, 3) concerned, and 4) reliable" (p. 265). These dimensions encompass the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of trust. He found that trust is established through the four dimensions to become a singular construct. His work was influential in subsequent studies regarding the understanding of trust.

In their landmark study, Dirks and Ferrin (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of research completed over four decades regarding trust in leadership. They developed a framework for trust in leadership that encompassed the leader-follower relationship, leadership characteristics, and the antecedents and consequences of trust. Antecedents of trust included the leader actions and practices, follower attributes, and relationship attributes. Trust in the leader was impacted by the basis of the relationship and the character of the leader. Consequences of trust in the leader included organizational outcomes related to organizational citizenship behaviors, and job performance, as well as job performance and commitment to the leader and the organization.

While each of these studies has contributed to an understanding of organizational trust, none of them studied the impact of trust in schools. Trust must be considered within context (Rousseau et al., 1998, Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007). Although they are helpful, the

findings from organizational research may not be directly applicable to trust in schools.

**Trust in Schools**

The first cluster of research regarding trust in schools began with Hoy and Kupersmith (1984) at Rutgers University around collective faculty trust and authentic leadership. Hoy continued research around the issue of school trust at The Ohio State University beginning in 1994. He and his colleagues conducted studies and developed instruments around the concepts of faculty trust, collective trust, and academic optimism.

A second cluster of research regarding trust in schools started with Bryk and Schneider in the 1990s at the University of Chicago with their research around school improvement in Chicago, Illinois. Bryk and Schneider (2002) conducted a longitudinal study of over 400 elementary schools in Chicago. They found that relational trust within the school community is necessary for school reform. They identify four characteristics that establish relational trust: respect, personal regard, competence in core role responsibilities, and personal integrity. Trust grows through interactions and perceived intentions and sense of obligation.

A third cluster started at the University of Oklahoma with Forsyth, a former student of Hoy, and Adams. Forsyth and Adams (2004) added to the literature by looking at how trust develops between all members of the school organization. They focused on the referents of parents and students and how trust can be established in school communities.

**Collective trust.** Collective trust in schools focuses on the shared trust beliefs within the school organization (Forsyth et al., 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014a; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009). Collective trust is a "stable group property rooted in the shared perceptions and affect about the trustworthiness of another group or individual that emerges over time out of multiple social exchanges within the group" (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, p. 22); it is the formation of trust at

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the group level.

The theory of collective trust in schools includes the trust established between the referents of trust: trustors and trustees. Trustors included faculty, students, parents, and the principal. Trustees include principal, colleagues, clients, and the school organization (Forsyth et al., 2011). Collective trust is established through social exchange, and group consensus is formed regarding levels of trust within the organization. Three contextual elements enable the formation of collective trust: external, internal, and task. External context includes the outside influences that shape values, attitudes, and expectations. The external context can influence a group's capacity to trust. Internal context includes the structure and culture within an organization that impact values, attitudes, and expectations. These internal contexts can include an organization's leadership, goals, evaluation, and facilities. Task context is the charge of the group that influences the level of trust needed in order to be effective. Forsyth et al. (2011) argued that the task context of schools is complex involving the interdependence of various groups. Each of these contextual elements influences the formation of collective trust within the school.

Collective trust becomes a shared belief and group norm within the school, and the level of collective trust will have consequences for the effectiveness of the school (Louis, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2014a; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009).

**Forms of collective trust.** Forms of collective trust are defined based on the relationships between the referents of trust. Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) identified eight forms of collective trust that have been operationalized and studied empirically. They defined the forms of collective trust by the trustor group: faculty, parent, and student. There are four forms of faculty trust: principal, colleagues, clients (parents and students), and the school. Forms of parent trust include principal and school. Finally, forms of student trust include principal and teachers. Some

possible forms of trust such as student trust in student or parents have not been operationalized and are not included in the forms of collective trust.

Recent research has established relationships between forms of trust relationships. Tschannen-Moran (2014a) studied the interconnectivity between five different trust relationships within the school: faculty trust in the principal, colleagues, and clients; parent trust in schools; and student trust in teachers. In this quantitative study of 64 elementary, middle, and high schools, the author found that the levels of trust between these referents were significantly and positively related to each other and that they were significantly and positively related to student achievement in reading and math.

**Facets of trust.** In their multidisciplinary analysis of trust literature and factor-analytic study, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) identified five facets of trust: benevolence, reliability, honesty, openness, and competence. They proposed the definition of trust as "making one vulnerable to another party or group based on the confidence that the other will act with benevolence, reliability, honesty, openness, and competence" (p. 556). The authors asserted that when parties are interdependent, there is a need for vulnerability. The interdependent parties need to be reassured that others will act in their best interest, with benevolence. According to Tschannen-Moran (2014b) the facet of honesty involves one's character, integrity, and authenticity. Openness is related to open communication. Trustworthy leaders make themselves vulnerable through sharing information as well as through sharing influence and control. Reliability is associated with the consistent display of trustworthy behavior. The facet of competence is closely related. The leader must be skilled and follow-through with tasks in order to be trusted.

**Measurement of faculty trust in the principal (FTP).** Hoy and Kupersmith (1984)

developed two trust scales to measure two forms of faculty trust, FTP and faculty trust in

colleagues (FTC). The trust scales were refined later by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) in the

development of the Omnibus T-Scale. This instrument measured FTP, FTC, and faculty trust in

clients. The sub-scale of FTP contains eight statements related to the facets of trust. Teachers

respond to the items on a six-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Table

2.1 shows the connection between the eight statements and the facets of trust.

Table 2.1

*Sub-Scale of Faculty Trust in the Principal and Facet of Trust*

| Facet of Trust | Sub-Scale of Faculty Trust in the Principal |
|---|---|
| Vulnerability | 1. Teachers in this school trust the principal. |
| | 2. The teachers in this school are suspicious of most of the principal's actions. |
| Honesty | 3. The teachers in this school have faith in the integrity of the principal. |
| Reliability | 4. The principal in this school typically acts in the best interests of teachers. |
| | 5. Teachers in this school can rely on the principal |
| Benevolence | 6. The principal of this school does not show concern for the teachers |
| Competence | 7. The principal in this school is competent in doing his or her job |
| Openness | 8. The principal doesn't tell teachers what is really going on |

## Impact of Faculty Trust in Principal

After creating an instrument to measure trust, researchers sought to establish a link between FTP and FTC to school effectiveness which was defined as the ability to adapt, support staff, meet goals, and increase student achievement. Hoy, Tarter, and Witkoskie (1992) found a direct, positive relationship between faculty trust in colleagues and school effectiveness, and an indirect, positive relationship between FTP and school effectiveness in elementary schools. In a similar study, Tarter, Sabo, and Hoy (1995) found that both FTP and FTC were positively related to school effectiveness in middle schools. As researchers looked more closely at the impact of

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socioeconomic status (SES) on student achievement, they found that the effects of FTP and FTC on school achievement were almost erased when SES was factored (Hoy & Sabo, 1998). However, FTP and FTC still had a positive impact on school health and climate. Another study found a positive relationship between FTP and teachers' perceptions of influence in decision-making (Tschannen-Moran, 2001) and a moderate, positive relationship between FTP and organizational citizenship (Tschannen-Moran, 2003). These studies showed a positive impact of trust in schools, yet additional research was needed to establish a link between trust and student achievement.

During this same time period, researchers at the University of Chicago explored the impact of trust on schools. When Bryk and Schneider (2002) conducted their longitudinal study of the improvement and organizational capacity of elementary schools in Chicago, they discovered the salience of trust in school reform. From a relational trust perspective, the authors found that relationship trust is a necessary ingredient in effective school improvement efforts. They explored multiple trust relationships including: Principal-Teacher, Teacher-Teacher, Teacher-Student, and Teacher-Parent. Specific to principal-teacher trust, Bryk and Schneider found that these relationships have an imbalance of power which creates vulnerability. Principals can control many aspects of teacher working conditions such as teaching assignments and access to resources. Trust between the principal and teachers can decrease the sense of vulnerability and create positive conditions for school improvement. Bryk and Schneider found a significant and positive relationship between principal-teacher trust and student achievement. They also found that schools with higher trust relationships were more likely to show growth in student achievement over time. The researchers were able to control for other factors such as teacher background, student racial and economic background, and stability of student body. They found

that relational trust was still strongly linked to school improvement. Thus, trust served as an antecedent for school reform efforts aimed at increasing student achievement.

**School climate.** FTP has strong, positive relationship to school climate (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2003; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a). Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland (2003) found that FTP was related to an open and healthy school climate. Principals can build trust through collegial leadership by being open with teachers, treating them as colleagues, being friendly, and setting high and reasonable standards. In a recent study by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015a), survey data was collected from teachers in 64 elementary, middle, and high schools in two school districts, one urban and the other suburban. School climate indicators of collegial leadership, teacher professionalism, academic press, and community engagement were measured through the Organizational Climate Index (Hoy & Sabo, 1998). The authors found that FTP was related to a positive school climate. A follow-up to the Chicago studies (Bryk & Schnieder, 2002) established a positive relationship between a healthy school climate and academic improvement, and found that school leaders are instrumental in creating a healthy school climate, especially through trust (Bryk et al., 2010).

**School capacity.** A culture of trust sets the right conditions for creating and sustaining instructional capacity within a school (Adams, 2013; Cosner, 2009; Forsyth & Adams, 2014; Gray, 2016). Instructional capacity encompasses the resources within the school that support teacher effectiveness as well as the social processes within the school that facilitate professional learning (Adams, 2013). It impacts collective efficacy, faculty trust in colleagues, and instructional programs (Forsyth & Adams, 2014, p. 89). Adams (2013) conducted a quantitative study by surveying teachers and students in 85 elementary, middle, and high schools in an urban

district of a southwestern state in the US. The results of the study indicated that collective trust is a social indicator of the instructional capacity of a school and that collective trust has a direct effect on school performance. The author suggested that building collective trust can serve as a high-leverage resource for school reform. Further analysis of this data set suggested that FTP impacted organizational predictability, which in turn impacts instructional capacity leading to improved student achievement (Forsyth & Adams, 2014). Organizational predictability happens through centralized, professional structures that enable the work of teachers. Principals can create organizational predictability by establishing a trusting environment that supports teachers. Similar results were found in a study of 81 elementary schools in Alabama (Gray, 2016). School effectiveness is supported through collective faculty trust in the principal, colleagues, and clients, as well as collective efficacy and enabling school structures. Trust was found to have the strongest impact on organizational effectiveness.

Principals can support school capacity through the cultivation of faculty trust in colleagues (FTC) (Cosner, 2009; Kochanek, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2014a; Youngs & King, 2002). Tschannen-Moran (2014a) found that FTP was highly correlated with FTC. Administrators can encourage FTC through establishing a climate of high trust. The researcher also found that a climate of trust is positively related to student achievement. In a qualitative study with 11 principals regarded as having strong organizational capacity building, Cosner (2009) found that principals viewed establishing FTC as central to their capacity building work. They saw cultivating FTC an important resource for building overall school capacity.

**Teacher professionalism, professional community, and efficacy.** Teacher trust in the principal is related to teacher professionalism, professional community, and efficacy (Cranston, 2011; Hallum, Smith, Hite, J., Hite. S, & Wilcox, 2015; Kosar, 2015; Liou & Daly 2014;

Tschannen-Moran, 2009, Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a). Teacher professionalism is characterized by a collective focus on student learning with importance placed on professional expertise and judgment. In a quantitative study of 80 middle schools, Tschannen-Moran (2009) found that teacher professionalism is positively related to the professional orientation of school leaders and to faculty trust. Principals establish trust by using a professional orientation, indicated by greater flexibility and collaborative decision-making, rather than an authoritative orientation. This type of leadership allows teachers to also trust their colleagues. When teachers trust their principal, they are more likely to trust their colleagues. Principals can build trust in order to foster teacher professionalism.

In a quantitative study of 282 teachers in 20 primary schools in Turkey, Kosar (2015) indicated positive and significant relationships between teacher self-efficacy, trust in school principal, and teacher professionalism. In a qualitative matched case study that included a total of 12 focus groups of teachers from two similar schools, researchers discovered several themes associated with trust and collaboration (Hallam et al., 2015). Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were able to build trust when principals had extended trust to the teachers. Teachers indicated that principals impacted trust within the PLC by allowing for team autonomy. This was related to the competence of the principal in the understanding of the PLC model and the needs of teachers.

Principals impacted trust within the PLCs by sharing the decision making with teachers in regards to team formation. A mixed-methods study found that high teacher-teacher trust was correlated with high principal-teacher trust in high performing schools (Liou & Daly, 2014). They also found this relationship to be reciprocal, the more teachers were able to engage in meaningful, professional dialogue with colleagues, the more they trusted the principal.

Using a naturalistic inquiry approach with 12 principals in Canada, Cranston (2011) explored the role of trust in PLCs. During focus groups and individual interviews, five themes arose:

> trust develops as teachers are in relationship; relational trust requires establishing group norms around risk-taking and change orientation in order to foster a safe, comfortable climate for professional growth; relational trust supports effective collaboration; the principal is central in establishing a climate of trust; and the faculty requisite trust of the principal is paramount (p. 64).

The principals in the study expressed that FTP takes time to develop through daily interactions with teachers by being authentic, consistent, supportive, and by keeping communication open and transparent.

**Student achievement.** Recent studies have suggested an indirect and direct relationship between FTP and student achievement (Forsyth & Adams, 2014; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014a; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015b; Zeinabadi, 2014). In a study of over 3,000 teachers in 64 economically and racially diverse schools in the US the relationship between faculty trust in the principal, school climate, principal leadership behavior, teacher professionalism, academic press, and community engagement was explored (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015b). They found "a direct interrelationship between principal trustworthiness and leadership behaviors and student achievement. But we also saw evidence of an indirect influence of principal trustworthiness and leadership behaviors on student achievement through elements of school climate" (p. 83). Tschannen-Moran (2014a) found that, when combined, the set of trust variables (FTP, FTC, faculty trust in clients, parent trust, student trust) had a significant, positive

impact on student achievement in math and reading. The author suggested that principals set the tone for a culture of trust that leads to higher student achievement.

Forsyth and Adams (2014) conducted a qualitative study with data collected from 85 schools. The study found a small, indirect impact of FTP on student achievement mediated through organizational predictability and instructional capacity when controlling for social composition of a school (SES and race). Similarly, Zeinabadi (2014) found that FTP has an indirect impact on student achievement mediated through organizational citizenship behaviors. "When there is trust between a teacher and principal, the teacher will be more willing to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors" (Zeibabadi, 2014, p. 415). The study indicated that organizational citizenship behaviors have a direct and significant impact on student achievement.

Survey and student achievement data from over 100 schools within nine states was part of a mixed-methods project funded by the Wallace Foundation to explore the impact of school leadership (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011). The researchers found a positive relationship between FTP and student achievement in math. They also found that shared leadership practices have a positive impact on student achievement in math.

Research with principals in Canada proposed a model to show how leadership influences student learning through Four Paths (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010). Each path contains multiple variables that impact student learning. The variables include academic press and disciplinary climate (Rational Path), collective teacher efficacy and teacher trust in others (Emotions Path), instructional time and PLCs (Organizational Path), and computer at home and adult help at home (Family Path). They also found that Rational Path, Emotions Path, and Family Path had positive relationships with student achievement. Further analysis of The Four Paths Model contended that FTP plays a significant role as a mediating variable in student achievement

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through three variables: academic press, collective teacher efficacy, and PLCs (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015b).

**Development of Faculty Trust in the Principal**

Adam's (2008) review of the empirical evidence of trust formation in schools from 1984-2007 resulted in a general theoretical model portraying how trust develops in schools as well as models about trust development regarding the different forms of collective trust (teacher-teacher, teacher-principal, teacher-client, parent-school, parent-principal). Adams reviewed 18 studies that explored the antecedents of teacher-principal trust and identified multiple variables related to the development of teacher-principal trust. These variables were grouped into the following categories: contextual conditions, trust mechanisms (behavioral and cognitive), and discernments of trust. Contextual variables included teaching experience and racial composition of the school. Behavioral trust mechanisms included leadership styles and behaviors while cognitive trust mechanisms were related to teacher feelings about enabling school structures, engagement of other teachers, as well as teacher professionalism and collegiality. These trust mechanisms facilitate teachers' discernments of trust facets and impact their perceptions of the trustworthiness of the principal. Figure 2.1 shows teacher-principal trust through the relationships and interactions of the following areas: contextual conditions, behavioral and cognitive trust mechanism, and discernments of trust facets.

Figure 2.1

*Teacher-Principal Trust*
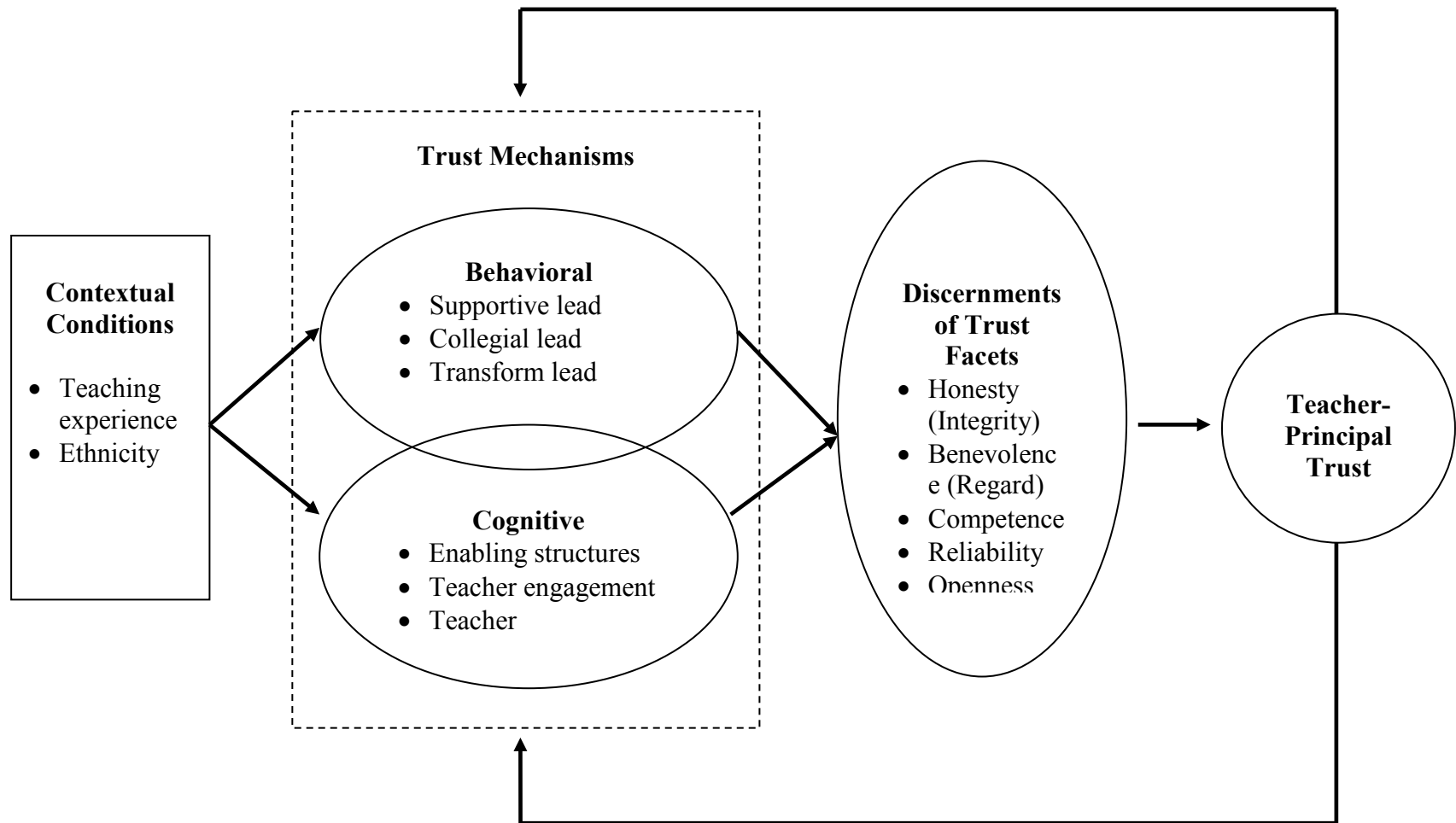


Adams, 2008

**Contextual conditions.** Adams (2008) identified the external characteristics that impact trust in each of his models of the forms of collective trust. Three of the 16 studies related to teacher trust in the principal examined contextual factors impacting trust (Bryk &Schneider, 2002; Forsyth, Adams, & Hartzler, 2007; Hoy et al., 2003). Adams identified teaching experience and ethnicity as the external contextual conditions that influence FTP. Bryk and Schnieder (2002) found that ethnic composition of the school community mattered in teacher trust formation, but the economic status of the school did not impact teacher trust in their study of Chicago elementary schools. Trust in the principal was lower when there was racial conflict among staff. Teacher stability in a school was also correlated with levels of trust. However, strategic removal of ineffective staff had a positive impact on trust. In addition to these factors, Bryk and Schneider also found that previous academic achievement levels were correlated with high teacher trust in the principal. However, this finding was not affirmed by Forsyth, Adams, and Hartzler (2007). They found that prior academic performance did not impact the level of FTP. The socioeconomic status of the student population was not correlated with FTP (Forsyth & Adams, 2007; Forsyth, Adams, & Hartzler, 2007; Hoy et al., 2002). "The external context of schools can present challenges to developing cohesive relationships, but as long as internal conditions support cooperative and interdependent transactions among school members, collective trust can exist" (Forsyth et al., 2011).

**Cognitive trust mechanisms.** Adam's (2008) model of principal-teacher trust development identified three cognitive mechanisms that influence FTP. These include enabling school structures; teacher perception of other teachers' level of engagement, collegiality, and professionalism; and a teacher's propensity to trust. Cognitive mechanisms are group level beliefs about the capability of the school (Forsyth et al., 2011).

Schools are centralized and formalized with degrees of decision making, policies, regulations, and rules. The formalization ranges along a continuum from hindering to enabling (Gray, Kruse, & Tarter, 2016; Hoy, 2003). When teachers perceive the school structures as supporting their work, they are thought to be enabling (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Structures include rules and regulations as well as hierarchical and decision-making processes. Enabling school structures are related to high FTP (Adams, 2013; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Louis, 2007). Forsyth and Adams (2014) found that enabling school structures and FTP impact organizational predictability which increases instructional capacity and, indirectly, student achievement. The authors suggested that principals place more emphasis on trust-building and deemphasize controlling mechanisms.

FTP is impacted by teacher perception of other teachers' level of engagement, collegiality, and professionalism; and a teacher's propensity to trust (Adams. 2008). Engaged teacher behaviors had a positive impact on FTP (Tarter, Bliss, & Hoy, 1989). Collegial teacher behavior was strongly correlated with FTP in a sample of 87 middle schools including 2,777 teachers (Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, & Hoy, 1994). The authors cautioned the interpretation of this finding and not to assume causation. Rather than causation, Van Maele, Van Houtte, and Forsyth (2014) suggested that collegial behavior and FTP may be mutually reinforcing. FTP may influence collegial behavior, and collegial behavior may further increase FTP. Teacher professionalism is also associated with FTP. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (1998) study of middle schools found that teacher professionalism combined with collegial leadership impacted FTP. In a more recent study of 2,355 teachers in 80 middle schools, Tschannen-Moran (2009) found that when principals took a professional leadership orientation teachers were more likely to identify colleagues as professional. The researcher also found faculty perceptions of

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colleagues' professionalism was moderately related to FTP. Thus, in theory, there are reciprocal relationships between these variables (Tshannen-Moran, 2009).

Organization trust literature cites one's propensity to trust as a factor contributing to trust within an organization (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Kramer, 2010; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). People differ in their willingness to trust others and this trait remains stable over situations, especially prior to having data regarding the trustee (Mayer et al., 1995). Dirks and Ferrin suggested that one's propensity to trust impacts how individuals perceive and interact with their leaders at first. One's propensity to trust can impact the development of FTP (Adams, 2008; Day, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2014b). Several factors may impact the disposition of a group to trust within the school context (Forsyth et al., 2011). Homogeneity and productive social exchange increase trust while size and complexity of the group and the volatility of exchange within a group decrease trust.

**Behavioral trust mechanisms.** Byrk and Schneider (2002) stated that the principal's actions are key to establishing relational trust within a school. Their actions combined with a strong school vision can lead a school forward. In Adam's (2008) model of teacher-principal trust development, principal leadership style is a behavioral trust mechanism. Leaders who are supportive, collegial, and transformational are more likely to build trust. Leadership styles that have been identified as having a positive relationship with high trust include supportive, authentic, transformational, collective, and instructional. These leadership styles are not mutually exclusive; leaders may employ aspects of different leadership styles (Forsyth et al., 2011).

*Supportive and collegial leadership.* Hoy, Tarter, and Witkoskie (1992) sought to find a relationship between trust and school effectiveness. They found that supportive school leadership behaviors: authentic concern for teachers, openness to ideas, and respect of teacher competence,

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led to increased FTP. A similar study with middle schools also found that these supportive

principal behaviors were related to FTP (Tarter et al., 1995).

Much like supportive leadership, collegial leadership refers to behavior that is friendly,

supportive, open, and guided by norms of equality. This style of leadership focuses on

relationships. A study of 86 middle schools with responses from 2,741 teachers, found that

collegial principal behaviors were correlated with high FTP (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). In

a recent study the authors collected survey data from 3,215 teachers in 64 elementary, middle,

and high schools in two school districts, one urban and the other suburban in the US (Tschannen-

Moran & Gareis, 2015a). They found that collegial principal leadership was strongly correlated

with high levels of FTP.

*Transformational leadership.* There is a high correlation between the transformational

leadership behaviors and trust in the leader (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2003,

Zeinabadi & Rastegarpourb, 2010). Transformational leadership centers around individual

influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. A

transformational leader inspires and motivates others through challenge and persuasion to do

more within the organization. Transformational leaders are often thought of as charismatic and

visionary (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

*Authentic leadership.* Principals who exhibit authentic leadership behaviors

(accountability, openness, candor, treating others with respect, responding situationally) are more

likely to be trusted by their faculty (Hoy & Kupersmith, 1984). Authentic leaders also exhibit

self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral reasoning

(Bird, Wang, Watson, & Murray, 2012). This quantitative study examined the relationship

between authentic leadership, teacher trust in the principal, teacher engagement, and teacher

intention to return to their position. The authors found a strong relationship between all four factors.

   *Collective leadership.* There are several leadership styles that fall into the shared leadership umbrella: collective, shared, and distributed. These leadership styles involve the influence of others on decision-making with the organization. In the Wallace Foundation report, the authors distinguished between various forms of collective leadership styles (Louis et al., 2010). Collective leadership involves all of the stakeholders that have influence including the leader, teachers, staff, students, and parents. Shared leadership involves those that are accountable for student achievement: principals and teachers. Distributed leadership focuses on how leadership is distributed throughout the organization and who is responsible for specific tasks and outcomes. While there are subtle distinctions in these definitions, each of these leadership styles involve the leader sharing the decision-making and responsibility with others. In their review of the literature, "school leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed" (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008, p. 34).

   Collective forms of leadership are associated with higher FTP (Angelle, 2010; Day, 2011; Ghamrawi, 2011; Leis & Rimm-Kaufman, 2016; Tschannen-Moran, 2014a). Trust was necessary for distributed leadership, and distributed leadership strengthened teacher empowerment and trust in a case study of a middle school in the Mountain Ridge School System (Angelle, 2010). "Mutual trust between the administration, the faculty, the students, the parents, and the community strengthened the organizational culture" (Angelle, 2010, p.12). The study revealed that distributed leadership led to a greater teacher efficacy, an increase in trust among all stakeholders, and greater job satisfaction. A case study of 20 schools in England found that principals are less likely to implement distributed leadership practices early in their tenure at a

school and that trust in the school grew as leadership was distributed (Day, 2011). The author also found that the trust was reciprocal. As the school leader trusted the teachers with more leadership responsibilities, the more the teachers trusted the leader.

Similar results were found in a qualitative study in Lebanon where a distributed model of leadership lead to higher trust (Ghamrawi, 2011). The study also found that there must be initial trust for teachers to assume leadership roles, affirming the reciprocal nature of trust-building. Shared leadership was linked with increased trust in the principal (Tschannen-Moran, 2014a). The principal shows vulnerability by extending decision-making responsibilities to teachers. However, some ineffective leaders use a contrived form of shared leadership to avoid undesirable tasks. This can lead to lower trust and possibly distrust in the leader.

Three actions of the principal led to increase FTP in a comparative case study of three low trust elementary schools: acknowledging existing conflict, prioritizing relationships, and shared decision-making (Leis & Rimm-Kaufman, 2016). The school in which the principal involved teachers in the final decision-making rather than the principal always making the final decision saw a more significant growth in FTP.

***Instructional and learning-centered leadership.*** Instructional leadership focuses on managing the instructional program: curriculum, instruction, and student learning. Instructional leaders can support teacher professional development, curriculum development, and teacher supervision and evaluation (Blase & Blase, 2003; Handford & Leithwood, 2013). Instructional leadership has been linked to higher student achievement (Hallinger, 2011; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010; Mitchell, Kensler, & Tschannen-Moran, 2015; O'Donnell & White, 2005; Robinson et al., 2008). Instructional leadership behaviors are associated with high FTP (Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a; Tschannen-Moran &

Gareis 2015b). Closely related to instructional leadership is learning-centered leadership. The dimensions of this leadership style include: vision for learning, instructional program, curricular program, assessment program, communities of learning, resource acquisition and use, organizational culture, and social advocacy (Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2006). Learning-centered leadership has also been associated with higher FTP. A doctoral dissertation study of 59 schools found that 60% of the variance in FTP was related to learning-centered leadership (Farnsworth, 2015).

**Stages of FTP Development**

Adams' (2008) model explored the conditions that lead to teacher-principal trust, but it did not address the process by which trust develops. Researchers have begun to explore the stages of FTP development. Tschannen-Moran (2014b) did not identify specific stages of trust development, however, the researcher differentiated between initial trust and authentic trust, also referred to as establishing and maintaining trust. Trust violation and restoration also play a role in the development of trust. Kutsyuruba and Walker (2015) proposed a framework for understanding the stages of leadership trust development in schools. Their model takes an ecological perspective, viewing schools as

> living systems —inherently unstable, interdependent networks that cannot be understood
> through mechanical analytical processes, but through a holistic interpretation of how a
> school's social systems, created by the people within it, interconnect, develop and
> progress (p. 107).

In reflection upon Adam's (2008) model of collective trust, Kutsyuruba and Walker sought to understand how trust is maintained, sustained, broken, and restored. Their dynamic model states that school leaders must model and mediate the stages of trust: establishing, maintaining,

sustaining, breaking and restoring. The authors described maintaining trust as an ongoing process and sustaining trust about making trust last. In a subsequent study, Kutsyuruba, Walker, and Noonan (2016) used maintaining and sustaining more interchangeably. This suggests less differentiation between maintaining and sustaining.

**Establishing trust.** New principals face many challenges as they assume this leadership role (Gentilucci, Denti, & Guaglianone, 2013; Lee, 2015; Northfield, 2014; Northfield, Macmillan, & Meyer, 2011; Spillane & Lee, 2014). Perceptions of new principals regarding perspectives of their new roles were examined in a recent study (Gentilucci et al., 2013). Several themes emerged during the interviews with principals. New principals were optimistic and idealistic as they started their new jobs. They indicated several challenges including stress and time management, and creating positive working relationships, as well as a need for support and mentorship. Perspectives about their roles changed over the course of the first year. They learned that the position of principal does not automatically result in organizational power and that power established by example and knowledge was more likely to lead to productive relationships and trust.

Two studies used data from a larger mixed-methods study of two cohorts of new elementary principals in Chicago (Lee, 2015; Spillane & Lee, 2014). Lee (2015) found that transitions are shaped by the context of the situation in the school. Transitions can be planned or unplanned as well as have differing levels of continuity with the previous principal. Lee (2014) found that

> It is evident that new principals face distinct problems of practice depending on the nature of their transitions. The more planned the succession, the greater the amount of information about the school and its members that the new principal is likely to have.

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And the more continuous the intended trajectory is for the school, the less resistance the

new principal is likely to face (p. 278).

Likewise, Spillane and Lee (2014) found that new principals faced issues related to their ultimate

responsibility that resulted in issues of practice related to high levels of task volume, diversity,

and unpredictability.

A recent qualitative study examined the role that trust-building plays in the transition of

new principals (Northfield, 2014). The principals were interviewed during the first month of the

school year and questions explored how beginning principals developed relationships and built

trust. These 16 educators were first- or second-year principals in eight elementary schools, five

middle schools, and three high schools in Canada. These new leaders found that the context of

the transition impacted their ability to build trust. They viewed trust as an ongoing process that

included three dimensions of task ability: knowledge/skills, competence, and consistency; and

three dimensions of interpersonal ability: integrity, care for others, and character. The new

principals viewed trust building as an intentional and action-oriented. While this study examined

how new principals built trust, the study was not able to explore how the principals maintained

and restored trust.

Kochanek (2005) explored the trust-building process of three principals in Chicago

elementary schools in a mixed-methods study. One was a new principal in a high-trust school,

the second was an experienced principal in a new position in a school marked by high conflict

and hostility, the third had been an assistant principal in the school before becoming principal.

Kochanek described trust-building as a developmental process. The researcher used the relational

trust view of Bryk and Schneider (2002) in which trust is based on discernments of respect and

personal regard as well as competence and integrity. Trust grows through positive interactions.

Based on the case studies, Kochanek recommended that principals begin by fostering low-risk exchanges that are social in nature or through easily accomplished tasks. These low-risk exchanges can reduce vulnerabilities and set the stage for more high-risk exchanges such as strategic planning and addressing classroom instructional practices.

Tschannen-Moran (2014b) explored the cases of three elementary principals, new and existing, in Chicago. The author underscored the importance of building initial trust. The researcher discussed the initial impression-making period followed by more intense exploration. During this commitment period, new principals rely on institutional supports such as the trust that is inherent in the position as well as the formal structures of a school that support trust including norms, values, and policies. New leaders can also build trust based on reputation. New relationships are built on a social context, and previous reputation may ease the trust-building process. The disposition of others to trust also plays a role in trust-building. Other factors such as values, attitudes, and mood of the school may impact the development of trust. Leaders must pay attention to the facets of trust as they work to establish trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2014b). "The principal's values, attitudes, and behaviors have a significant influence on the culture of the school" (Tschannen-Moran, 2014b, p. 254).

**Maintaining trust.** Once trust is established, it must be maintained. In their discussion about the stages of trust development, Kutsyuruba and Walker (2015) argued that trust must be supported through continued trustworthy behaviors and through recognition of the value of the relationship. A qualitative study of 25 principals in Canada found that principals considered the maintenance of trust to be more difficult than establishing trust (Noonan, Walker, & Kutsyuruba, 2008). However, the authors did not discuss the specific actions the principals took to maintain trust. Kochanek (2005) suggested that deeper trust is built through high-risk exchanges.

Kochanek advocated for implementing formal structures such as grade-level meetings or committees with a shift of control from the principal to the teachers. Her study of three elementary schools in Chicago is one of the few qualitative studies about trust development and maintenance. Similarly, Tschannen-Moran's (2014) case studies of three elementary school principals were conducted the first year in the principal position at the school. Like Kochanek, Tschannen-Moran found that authentic trust developed over time through increased frequency and duration of interactions.

**Breaking and restoring trust.** Trust is fragile because it involves interdependence, vulnerability, and risk (Rousseau et al., 1998). The ecological model of trust development included the stages of breaking and restoring trust (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015). School leaders can be the violators or the victims of a breakdown in trust. The authors stated,

> Despite the fact that most betrayals are minor, the effects of betrayal can be lasting and aggregate to reach a critical mass or tipping point. Subtle betrayals may seem innocent and unimportant, yet can morph into more severe hurts and contribute too much to the negative feelings that employees have toward their bosses, to each other and to their organizations. Not keeping one's promises, gossiping and hoarding pertinent information are everyday occurrences that translate into the sense of betrayal (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015, p. 115).

The restoration of trust can be a long and difficult process. The ecological model incorporated the trust-building framework of Lewicki and Bunker (1995) where rebuilding trust is a two-way process involving the violator and the victim. School leaders can rebuild trust through open communication and through overtly displaying the five facets of trust.

Walker, Kutsyuruba, and Noonan's (2011) qualitative study of 177 Canadian principals explored the fragility of trust in schools and the principalship. One-third of the principals indicated that trust was extremely fragile in their setting. Principals described having to deal with trust issues related to teachers such as conflicts, miscommunication, and misusing school resources. The principals also stated that broken trust can undermine the efforts of the school.

Reina and Reina (1999) offered seven steps for those healing from betrayal of trust in the workplace: observe and acknowledge what has happened; allow feelings to surface; get support; reframe the experience; take responsibility; forgive self and the others; and let go and move on. Principals can be both the violators and victims of broken trust. Tschannen-Moran (2014b) discussed the process of restoring broken trust through the steps of admit, apologize, ask for forgiveness, and amend ways. Other skills that help restore trust included adopting constructive attitudes and actions, setting clear boundaries, communicating clearly, and using conflict resolution strategies. Walker et al. (2011) recommended that principals also attend to broken trust between others in the school.

**Conclusion**

This chapter presented the conceptual framework of the study and included literature about the impact of leadership on student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1996, Leithwood, Jantzi, & Patten, 2010; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008; Sun & Leithwood, 2015; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004), the construct of collective trust (Forsyth et al., 2011; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Kramer, 2010; Kramer & Tyler, 1996; McEvily, Weber, Bicchieri, & Ho, 2002; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998), and trust in organizational educational settings (Dirks, 2006, Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Kramer & Tyler, 1996; Lewicki & Bunker, 1995; Lewicki, Tomlinson, & Gillespie, 2006; Mishra, 1996, Reina & Reina,

1999; Forsyth et al., 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014a; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009). It specifically examined one form of collective trust, FTP (Hoy & Kupersmith, 1984; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

The review of the literature found that FTP impacts school climate (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2003; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a); school capacity (Adams, 2013; Cosner, 2009; Forsyth & Adams, 2014; Gray, 2016); teacher professionalism, professional community, and efficacy (Cranston, 2011; Hallum, Smith, Hite, J., Hite. S, & Wilcox, 2015; Kosar, 2015; Liou & Daly 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2009, Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a); and student achievement (Forsyth & Adams, 2014; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014a; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis 2015b; Zeinabadi, 2014).

The literature review included a development model of FTP (Adams, 2008). In this model, FTP is developed through discernments of the facets of trust through contextual conditions (Bryk &Schneider, 2002; Forsyth, Adams, & Hartzler, 2007; Hoy et al., 2003), cognitive trust mechanisms (Bryk &Schneider, 2002; Forsyth, Adams, & Hartzler, 2007; Hoy et al., 2003); behavioral trust mechanisms (Forsyth et al., 2011); and the discernment of trust facets (Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). The review of the literature also examined the stages of trust development and found the stages of trust development: establishing, maintaining, and breaking and restoring (Kochanek, 2005; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015; Tschannen-Moran, 2014b).

Chapter three describes the research procedures and methods. It includes the theoretical framework, research questions, respondent selection, setting, instruments and measures, data collection procedures, data analysis, limitations and delimitations of methodology, and ethical

considerations. Chapter four presents the findings. Chapter five discusses the findings and the

implications for practice and research.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

**Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the process by which high school principals establish and maintain collective faculty trust in the principal (FTP). While quantitative research has found leadership behaviors associated with collective FTP, this method of inquiry was not fully able to explore the process of establishing and maintaining FTP (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Forsyth et al.; 2011, Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Hoy et al., 2003; Kochanek, 2005; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015; Tschannen-Moran, 2014b).

**Research Method and Design**

This study employed a multicase design. According to Merriam (2009), the interpretation of a multicase study can be more compelling than a single case study. In this study, examining the experiences of multiple individuals provided generalizations about the process of establishing and maintaining trust. Multicase studies provide the opportunity for comparisons.

Case studies are defined by study within a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). Bounded systems have delimitations, boundaries around what is studied. Unbounded systems have finite possibilities. This study looked at the experiences of high school principals in establishing FTP. In this case, there were a finite number of high school principals.

Case studies may represent typical or atypical examples. Flyvbjerg (2006) asserted that typical or average cases may not yield the best information. Atypical cases may provide more insight. The cases in this study represented were atypical. Rather than interviewing principals in low, medium, and high trust schools, this study explored how principals have established and maintained collective trust in schools where the principal has been identified as having established a climate of high mutual trust.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study stemmed from both constructivist and pragmatic worldviews. Pragmatists are interested in the practical consequences of actions and seek solutions to problems (Cherryholmes, 1992). Pragmatism is centered on action and usefulness. Pragmatists place a premium on practical knowledge (Klenke, 2008). They understand that truth is what works at the time and must be understood within a specific context. What works in one setting may not work in another (Creswell, 2014). The pragmatic worldview fit with one aim of this study, to provide guidance to secondary principals in establishing and maintaining trust.

This study also borrowed from a constructivist worldview. According to Creswell (2014), constructivists believe that individuals construct meaning through their experiences. This worldview relies on the participants' views of the situation. Constructivists use qualitative data to explore their topic. The researcher relied on open-ended questions so that individuals could share their experiences. In this study, the researcher was interested in how principals described their experiences with establishing and maintaining FTP.

**Research Questions**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the process by which high school principals established and maintained collective faculty trust in the principal (FTP).

**RQ 1.** How do high school principals describe the process of establishing collective faculty trust in the principal?

**RQ 2.** How do high school principals describe the process of maintaining collective faculty trust in the principal?

**Respondent Selection**

This multisite case study used unique, purposeful sampling. This type of sampling seeks to study cases that are atypical, not reflecting the average (Merriam, 2009). The unit of analysis for this study was principals of high schools in which the faculty had indicated a high level of satisfaction with the principal's leadership and a high level of trust and mutual respect in the school. This sample was unique because it did not represent the average, but represented the principals who were successful in establishing high, mutual trust.

The high schools were located in states which administered the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL, 2011) survey instrument in 2015 or 2016. These states included Colorado, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, and Oregon. Independent analysis found the TELL survey to be reliable and valid through data from 286,835 educators and 11 states across the United States (Swanlund, 2011). TELL results are publically accessible.

The school leadership construct of the TELL survey is defined as the "ability of school leadership to create trusting, supportive environments and address teacher concerns" (TELL, 2011). Q7.1 asks educators to rate how strongly they feel about statements related to school leadership. Results from this section were used to identify high schools with leaders who have earned a high level of satisfaction from staff and established a high level of trust and mutual respect in the school. Using results from high schools in Colorado, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, and Oregon, the following criteria was used to identify the principals: schools with 93% or more responding affirmatively to the statement, "There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school" as well as 93% or more respondents responding affirmatively to the school leadership construct indicator, "The school leadership consistently supports teachers." This criterion identified 79 high schools.

The purposeful sample of respondents was 10 head high school principals chosen from a list of principals as described above. The potential sample was reduced by the criteria of the principal serving in their current building for three or more years. Principals serving three or more years have had the time to establish and maintain trust.

**Setting**

Each participant was interviewed individually over the internet or by phone in a setting in which they felt comfortable. In most cases a school office was used. Participants were encouraged to select a space in which they were at ease sharing during the interview. A school office setting was used by the researcher in communicating with each participant via Voice over Internet Protocol or by phone.

**Instruments and Measures**

This study employed a semi-structured interview protocol. Merriam (2009) discussed the role and structure of interviews in qualitative research. The level of structure falls on a continuum. The semi-structured interview allowed for a mix of structured and unstructured questions and for the researcher to respond to the situation. Bogdan and Bilken (2007) offered the following suggestions for the semi-structured interview process: build rapport at the beginning, define the purpose, make assurances of confidentiality, ask open-ended questions (some predetermined), listen carefully, ask clarifying questions, and refrain from judgment. This study used a semi-structured interview with a set of questions as the data source. This allowed the researcher to begin with a list of questions, ask questions in an order that was influenced by the participant responses, and ask probing questions to participant responses.

The field test was conducted in multiple steps. The researcher field tested the questions with four current Minnesota principals, found through professional connections of researcher and

considered to be strong leaders. First, the list of questions was emailed to the principals to obtain feedback. The feedback guided the revisions to the interview questions. The revised questions were field tested by conducting interviews with three Minnesota high school principals, also found through professional connections of researcher and considered to be strong leaders. The interview field tests provided information on the length of time and number of questions appropriate for a 60-minute interview. In addition, the researcher determined which questions elicit the richest, most detailed responses. Based on results of the first two interviews, the questions were modified and the number of questions was reduced in order to elicit richer descriptions about the process of establishing and maintaining trust. Questions were modified based on suggestions of the interviewees. These interviews were not included in the data of this study.

The interview questions are included in Appendix A. The questions were based on the research themes and objectives.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Once a pool of respondents was identified using the above criteria, the researcher contacted the potential respondents by email (Appendix B). If a potential participant did not reply within one week, a follow-up email was sent (Appendix C). Affirmative respondents received a phone call or email with a copy of the phone script to review the purpose of the study and the process of consent (Appendix D). Confidentiality was assured and the process for protecting the respondent's anonymity was explained. This included the use of a confidential transcription service, the deletion of personally identifiable information, and the storage of data on the hard-drive of a password-protected computer. The informed consent letter (Appendix E) was emailed to participants and collected prior to the interview. Interviews were conducted via a

Voice over Internet Protocol or a phone call if there were technical issues. Three interviews were conducted by phone, two due to technical difficulties and one due to respondent request. Participants received the questions in advance to allow the principal to reflect on his/her answers. The interviews were recorded.

After the interview, the researcher made a journal entry and noted any initial impressions. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) offered suggestions for reflections after gathering qualitative data including speculations about analysis, perceptions about the interview process, thoughts about ethical dilemmas, and any thoughts about the researcher's frame of mind during the process.

**Data Analysis**

The interviews were transcribed by a professional transcription service. The researcher reviewed the transcriptions and corrected any errors made by the service. The researcher removed identifying information such as names of teachers, the school name, school programs, as well as specific information about the respondents. Once all identifiers and potentially identifying information had been removed, transcripts were saved on the researcher's computer hard-drive. Respondents were asked to verify the transcripts for accuracy. One minor correction was made based on the feedback of a respondent. A term used to describe personnel reduction was changed to the correct term used in the respondent's statement.

The transcripts were uploaded into MAXQDA 12, a data-analysis software. The researcher followed processes for analyzing qualitative data as suggested by Saldaña (2016). The researcher read through each interview twice to gain a sense of the overall themes. In order to answer each research question in this study, the responses in each interview were coded by RQ1 and RQ2. While the interview questions served as a guide, the researcher found that respondents often commented on establishing and maintaining trust within the same response. The researcher

read each interview twice and coded line-by-line for the each of the research questions. Responses that were not related to the research questions, such as introductory information, were not coded.

The researcher employed two first cycle coding methods, descriptive coding and process coding. Descriptive coding involved reading through transcripts several times to identify segments of data that were useful and the assigning descriptive codes to the segments. The researcher used the "splitter" approach by identifying smaller bits of data rather than larger sections in order to describe the nuances of the respondents' experiences. For example, in a response to the question about the facets of trust; a respondent might talk about honesty, then benevolence, and back to honest again, and then include information about his/her leadership style. Applying the splitter method allowed for separate coding of each of the ideas.

Because the purpose of this study was to explore the process by which high school principals establish and maintain collective faculty trust in the principal (FTP), process coding was used as the next step. Process coding uses gerunds to describe human action. The researcher used the initial descriptive coding as a guide. What was initially described as "benevolence" was coded as "showing benevolence". The initial process code list contained 53 codes.

After the first cycle coding methods, the researcher used focused coding to identify broader categories (Saldaña, 2016). Process codes were reviewed for possible redundancies, collapsing, and frequency in order to establish these broader categories. Names were assigned to each of these categories. For example, the process codes of "demonstrating honesty, showing humility, leading consistent with values, and being authentic" were combined to the category of demonstrating honesty. This broad category for these codes was supported through Tschannen-

Moran and Gareis's (2015a) discussion of the facets of trust. Each interview was reviewed four times through the focused coding process resulting in 29 categories.

Once these categories were established, the researcher worked with an independent coder with the goal of establishing a coding agreement of at least 85%. The analyst reviewed the codebook, and the researcher and independent analyst coded one interview with the resulting agreement of 79%. The researcher met with the independent analyst to review the codebook and clarify definitions. For example, the definition of competency was reviewed and modified so that it also specified actions related to "making and taking time" and "walking the walk" as supported by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015a).  Two more interviews were coded resulting in agreements of 90% and 92%.  The list of codes is included in Appendix F. The code system categories and concept maps were sent to the participants as a member check to ensure they captured their experiences. No adjustments were indicated. The researcher kept a detailed notebook of the coding process to serve as an audit trail.

**Limitations and Delimitations of Methodology**

There are limitations to multi-site case studies. The results of this study may not be generalizable to other principals and schools. The purpose of this study was to describe the process by which secondary principals establish and maintain FTP. Because the respondents in this study were atypical, rated as strong leaders with mutual trust and respect with their staff, the sample did not include the experiences of leaders who have not built a culture of mutual trust and respect. There were also limitations to the selection process of using results from the TELL survey. This method excluded principals from states where the TELL is not administered or has not been administered in the past two years. The TELL was chosen because it is a nationally recognized instrument that includes information about the level of trust in a school.

The researcher did not live in a state that administers the TELL survey. This impacted how the interviews are conducted. It may have been more difficult to establish rapport with the participants through the use of VoIP, and it may have been more difficult to get answers to more sensitive questions. In order to establish rapport and assure confidentiality, participants were allowed to choose the time and their location for interview, and all individually identifying data was removed from transcripts. This allowed them to share openly.

**Ethical Considerations**

There are several ethical considerations in qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). The considerations that apply to this study included participant privacy, researcher reflexivity, and reliability and validity of data and findings. The researcher participated in the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). This training focused on ethics in research. The researcher obtained CITI certification prior to conducting this study.

**Participant privacy.** Participants were assured of privacy through the consent process (Appendix D). However, because of the small sample and selection criteria, it is possible that a participant may be identifiable. Every precaution was taken to maintain the privacy of the participants. Names and other potentially identifying information were removed from transcripts. Only the researcher had access to the identity of the participants, and this information was password protected on a hard drive.

**Researcher reflexivity.** According to Merriam (2009), researchers need to explain their "biases, dispositions, and assumptions" (p. 219). This helps the reader understand the position the researcher brought to the study as the instrument of research. The researcher was a practicing high school principal. The experiences of the researcher may have impacted the interpretation of the data. The researcher placed a high value on FTP and has experienced the process of

establishing and maintaining FTP. This may have impacted the researcher's impression of the participants' experiences of building and maintaining FTP.

The researcher participated in a self-reflection exercise by answering all of the research questions before conducting interviews in order to highlight potential areas of bias. The researcher also engaged in peer review as suggested by Merriam (2009). This involved having a practicing high school principal read through data, code system, and concept maps to determine if the findings seemed plausible. Finally, the researcher kept a reflective research journal recording the research process that illuminated potential bias as well as served as an audit trail.

**Reliability and validity of data and findings.** According to Merriam (2009), the goal of qualitative research is not to be able to replicate research findings, but to ensure that results are consistent with the data. The researcher used peer review and a reflective journal with an audit trail to ensure reliability. Peer review was used during this study to ensure that the identified themes were consistent with the data. The reflective research journal with audit trail detailed how the researcher conducted the study, identified categories/themes, and arrived at conclusions. The researcher also employed a member check by sharing transcripts, identified themes, and results with participants to ensure they captured their experiences. Corrections were made as necessary.

## Chapter 4: Results

**Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore the process by which high school principals established and maintained collective faculty trust in the principal (FTP). Respondents included high school principals who were identified by their faculty as having built a high level of trust and having displayed effective leadership. Respondents participated in interviews via VoIP or by phone and were given opportunities to provide feedback regarding the data collection and analysis.

**Discussion of the Sample**

The sample included 10 high school principals from the United States. These principals were identified through results of the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL, 2011) survey instrument given in 2015 or 2016 in the states of Colorado, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, and Oregon. Criteria for inclusion included the following:

- 93% or more responding affirmatively to the statement, "There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school."

- 93% or more respondents responding affirmatively to the statement, "The school leadership consistently supports teachers." This statement was considered the construct indicator for effective leadership in the TELL Survey.

- Three or more years as administrator in their school.

A total of 79 high school principals in the five states met the first two criteria. In order to enhance transferability (Merriam, 2009), the list of qualifying principals was separated by state. The schools in each state were given a number, and these numbers were entered into a random

number generator. The researcher determined if the principal had been an administrator in the building for three or more years through information on the school website or by phone call to the school. The qualifying participants were invited to participate via email (Appendix B). If there was no response within a week, a second email was sent (Appendix C). If there was no response to the second email, the researcher moved to the next name on the list in the state.

The participants in the study included principals from four of the five states. Two principals from the fifth state had initially agreed to participate. After further inquiry, it was determined that one of these principals had not been an administrator in the building for three or more years. The other principal cancelled the scheduled interview two times and then determined that participation was not possible. No other principals in that state agreed to participate. The researcher had previously exhausted the list of potential participants in two of the other states. The final two participants were obtained from the remaining two states. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the respondents and occurred during April and May of 2017. The duration of the interviews ranged from 45 to 79 minutes.

**Participant Demographics**

Due to the small sample and the necessity to protect privacy, the researcher collected minimal demographic data of the respondents. Seven of the participants were male and three were female. This mirrors the national demographics of high school principals in the United States 69.9% male and 30.1% female (Goldring, Gray, & Bitterman, A., 2013). Five of the participants had been assistant principals in the school prior to becoming the head principal, and five were new to the school. Two had been a head principal in their previous school. One had served as a superintendent. Each respondent was given a pseudonym to protect his/her identity. The names were chosen using every other letter of the alphabet except "Q" and, other than

indicating gender, were in no other way related to the name of the participant. The researcher determined that providing additional information regarding the school contexts could jeopardize anonymity. An overview of the data collection is included in Table 4.1

Table 4.1

*Respondent Data Collection Overview*

| Respondent pseudonym | Gender | Date of interview | Duration of interview |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alan | Male | 4-6-17 | 62 minutes |
| Chris | Male | 4-7-17 | 46 minutes |
| Ethan | Male | 4-12-17 | 61 minutes |
| Greg | Male | 4-14-17 | 65 minutes |
| Ian | Male | 4-19-17 | 48 minutes |
| Kay | Female | 4-24-17 | 52 minutes |
| Mary | Female | 4-26-17 | 48 minutes |
| Owen | Male | 4-27-17 | 45 minutes |
| Randy | Male | 5-24-17 | 52 minutes |
| Teresa | Female | 5-31-17 | 79 minutes |

**Introduction to the Themes**

The researcher entered the transcript documents into the software program MAXQDA12 for the purpose of identifying units of meaning, organizing into categories and themes, and creating visual representations of the data. Initial analysis identified 53 process codes. This list was grouped into 29 categories. Twenty-three of the categories occurred in seven of the 10 interviews and are included in the results. Figure 4.1 shows all categories and their presence for

respondents by research question. A square indicates the code was used for that respondent at least one time during the interview section for the research questions.

Figure 4.1

*Coding Categories for each Category by Respondent*

The categories were grouped into six major themes. Five themes occurred in each of the 10 interviews. The five themes included Understanding Contextual Conditions, Charting the Course and Beginning, Displaying the Facets of Trust, Enabling School Structures, and Leading. Table 4.2 summarizes the themes and their related categories. Each theme was described in detail in this chapter. The themes stand independently, yet are interwoven and strengthen each other.

Table 4.2

*Process of Establishing and Maintaining Collective Faculty Trust in the Principal (FTP).*

RQ 1. How do high school principals describe the process of establishing collective faculty trust in the principal?

| Understanding Contextual Conditions | Charting the Course and Beginning | Displaying Facets of Trust | Enabling School Structures | Leading |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <ul><li>Reflecting upon the experience of the principal</li><li>Understanding the context of the transition</li><li>Gathering information</li><li>Understanding the base level of FTP</li></ul> | <ul><li>Creating an entry plan</li><li>Establishing and articulating mission, vision, and values</li><li>Developing relationships with staff</li><li>Developing relationships with students and the student body</li></ul> | <ul><li>Demonstrating benevolence</li><li>Demonstrating honesty</li><li>Demonstrating openness</li><li>Demonstrating competency</li><li>Demonstrating consistency/ reliability</li></ul> | <ul><li>Evaluating, sustaining, changing, and creating enabling structures</li><li>Making decisions</li><li>Developing and evaluating teachers</li><li>Achieving academic success</li></ul> | <ul><li>Focusing on teaching and learning</li><li>Sharing leadership</li></ul> |

| RQ 2. How do high school principals describe the process of maintaining collective faculty trust in the principal? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Displaying Facets of Trust | Enabling School Structures | Leading |
| <ul><li>Demonstrating benevolence</li><li>Demonstrating honesty</li><li>Demonstrating openness</li><li>Demonstrating competency</li><li>Demonstrating consistency/reliability</li></ul> | <ul><li>Evaluating, sustaining, changing, and creating enabling structures</li><li>Making decisions</li><li>Hiring</li><li>Developing and evaluating teachers</li><li>Achieving academic success</li></ul> | <ul><li>Sharing leadership</li></ul> |

**Answering the Research Questions**

      **RQ 1.** How do high school principals describe the process of establishing collective faculty trust in the principal?

      **Understanding contextual conditions.** The theme of Understanding Contextual Conditions was shared by all 10 respondents. Categories that were shared by at least seven of the 10 respondents were included in the discussion of this theme. These categories included reflecting upon the experience of the principal, understanding the context of the transition, gathering information, and understanding the base level of FTP.

      *Reflecting upon the experience of the principal.* The experience of the principal played a role in the process of establishing trust. Five of principals had been an assistant principal in their building before taking the position of head principal; five were new to the school. Ethan who had been an assistant principal in the school commented,

> I think it was advantageous that I was assistant principal for a couple of years in many
>
> ways. Although as my predecessor used to say, 'when you're the assistant principal in the
>
> school it has the advantage that they know you. It has the disadvantage that they know
>
> you.'

Alan had been a principal in a few of the schools within the same school district.

> I think that just having a positive reputation and always trying your best in all previous
>
> jobs is a good thing because your reputation does follow you and precede you. I was
>
> lucky to have some folks know me for that reason.

Others reflected on what they had learned from their previous positions such as serving in an unhealthy district, gaining experience as an assistant principal under a very supportive and encouraging principal, or having a successful teaching career.

***Understanding the context of the transition.*** Most of the principal positions were open because of a retirement or the principal leaving for a promotion to district leadership. One school had a revolving door of principals for the past 10 years, and one participant was opening a new school. Each of the principals underscored the importance of understanding the context of the transition from the previous principal. Although, some commented that they did not want to have too many preconceived notions about the school. Alan had been an assistant principal in the building and said,

> The culture and climate in our building was terrible. The kids didn't want to be here, the teachers didn't want to be here, our attendance rates were awful, our behavior referrals were through the roof. I mean, it was terrible.

Ethan's situation was different,

> I think it would be accurate to say that many of the staff entered a sort of gentle mourning period for my predecessor who was a very popular, very experienced principal. He'd been in the school for over 20 years. I don't think there was anybody in the school that he hadn't appointed. So, he had a pretty close relationship with everybody.

When one school was split into two schools, teachers did not want to be part of the new school. Ian, the principal of the new school had spent a year preparing for the opening of the school. "In many ways, I was a symbol of breaking the school apart because I was the only employee for that first year."

***Gathering information.*** Nine of 10 principals expressed the importance of gathering information when establishing trust. The tenth principal had served for as an assistant principal in the school. For principals, gathering information was about listening and learning. Ethan summed up the common sentiment, "The way I expressed it was I tried to set myself to receive

rather than transmit at the beginning." Respondents mentioned specific actions such as using surveys, reviewing documents, or meeting with staff. Alan asked faculty to respond to three questions and write them on a notecard. The first was something positive about their teaching experience, next a negative experience that they had, and, finally, something about them that they wanted him to know.

> I asked that the previous principal not look at their responses and that I wanted those before the end of the year. I asked very specifically that it will be put on note cards because the previous principal left me their notes on each person, and I did not look at those. I think that under the umbrella of authenticity that I like to use as I did as a teacher and also as a leader is that you have to be authentic. To be authentic, preconceived notions can't be there. I didn't want my staff to think I was prejudging them.

Kay's advice to new principals was to

> set aside some time in the summer to meet with every staff member, not just the teachers, every staff member, and listen. I think far too often, building leaders go in with a preconceived plan based on something that they learned out of a book.

***Understanding the base level of FTP.*** Nine of the 10 principals indicated a low level of FTP in the previous principal. Teresa was an assistant principal in a neighboring district and called a teacher in the school before she interviewed for the head high school principal position.

> He said that I was walking into a very tumultuous time because the principal had made some changes that did not settle well with the teachers. What bothered the teachers is the principal had asked for their input and it seemed as though everything that they had requested was everything that he did not do. He said, 'you're just coming in at a bad time.

I'd love to have you be principal here, but you are walking into a bad situation. You're

walking into a lot of misgiving and trust. We don't trust that man.'

Randy expressed experiencing a low base level of FTP as well,

The trust in their former principal, in my opinion, was very low. I think that they were

comfortable with the former principal because they were able to do what they wanted to

do during that tenure. I think that I walked in and there was low trust between staff and

administration, but also there was low trust between my school and the school district.

There was very much this ... we are one high school district, and the high school was kind

of an island and then the rest of the district did their thing. That was what I encountered

in the beginning.

**Summary of understanding contextual conditions theme.** Each of the principals

expressed the importance of understanding the contextual conditions that are related to entering

the position of head high school principal and laying the foundation for establishing trust.

Principals carried their own experiences to the situation, understood the circumstances and

conditions of the transition, gathered information, and evaluated the base level of FTP in the

previous principal. Almost all of the principals encountered a low level of trust when they began

their new position.

**Charting the course and beginning.** The theme of Charting the Course and Beginning

was shared by all 10 respondents. The categories included creating an entry plan; establishing

and articulating mission, vision, and values; developing relationships with staff; and developing

relationships with students and the student body.

*Creating an entry plan.* Three of the 10 respondents indicated the development of a

formal entry plan, and four indicated more informal plans. Three of the 10 principals mentioned

an explicit plan to establish trust. Kay expressed the advantage of starting her position in the spring. "I was able to come in and observe, listen, and develop and design a plan that I would implement the following fall. So, I feel like that was just like a gift to me." Chris was hired as the high school principal just shortly before the start of the school year and did not have the luxury of time to create an entry plan. However, he and his assistant principals created a general, three-year plan. "We were going to build relationships with the staff first. Then we were going to get the staff to care about building relationships with the students, and then we were going to build relationships with our community and stakeholders." Alan also included the intentionality of trust-building in his plan.

> I took a lot of time over the summer to develop my opening message. In the first slide, it had a number one on it and then the next slide had the word trust, and that was the number one thing that I wanted to establish.

For most participants, the entry plan was more general and included plans for establishing relationships rather than intentionally establishing trust.

*Establishing and articulating mission, vision, and values.* Nine of the 10 principals indicated the importance of establishing and articulating the mission, vision, and values of the school. This category also included the use of symbols to convey the vision.

Kay stated, "I inherited a staff of very good teachers and very seasoned professionals. And they just needed somebody who had a vision for them." Most respondents indicated that focusing on the "why" of the school helped teachers develop trust in them. Greg said,

> We established a new mission, and one thing I can tell you, every kid in our school can tell you our mission statement, all of them. It's to empower students to be college and/or career-ready, and that's it. That's what we base all our decisions on.

Similarly, Ethan expressed the mission of his school as

> Changing the real life chances of students. Now some of the parents say shouldn't we be improving the real life chances of students because we don't want to change them going down, do we? I say I was hoping you would infer that the change is for the good. I think people will tell you that that's what I'm relentlessly saying. We've got to raise the achievement because it impacts real lives. The kids are going out into the world; we're their last best chance. If we don't equip them to handle the world, to impose themselves on the world as opposed to having the world imposed on them and being subjected to every conspiracy theory that they hear, who else is going to do it? This is our job.

In referring to the opening of the new school, Ian discussed the importance of symbols. Each of his teachers was given a symbolic gift to represent the foundation of the new school. He planned a staff party and used symbols to signify unity.

> The symbolic piece, I think the story around community, we had a lot of input. I was bringing in quite a few community members to help share the story and honor the past while also looking forward to the future. It wasn't my voice; it was multiple people's voices involved.

***Developing relationships with staff.*** Each of the 10 respondents indicated the importance of developing relationships with teachers in order to establish trust. Mary offered this advice,

> Build relationships quickly. Get to know people. Let them know you. I'm very open and honest, and I talk about my kids. I ask about their kids. And I think you have to build those relationships and open yourself up to those relationships.

For Teresa, the relationship building was helped by a district action. The district hosted gatherings for the staff and the community to meet the new principal. Chris gave a specific example of how he began to build relationships with teachers.

> The very first thing I ever did, which I didn't intend it at the time, but it proved to be one of the key things for me. I made a point every single day to meet with teachers during their prep, not officially. I made sure that every week I got to every teacher and would literally walk to their room, ask them what they needed, how their weekend was, how were their kids doing, really trying to find and build relationships with those teachers as people. I found out later that that had really paid off for me because they found me as somebody who cared about them as people first and then as educators and that I believed that my job was to help them become successful.

Owen's summary about relationship building and establishing trust included not only staff, but students as well. "Build strong relationships with your teachers, and with the kids, too. It's all 100% about relationships."

     ***Developing relationships with students and the student body.*** Eight of the 10 principals indicated that building relationships with students and the student body contributed to the establishment of FTP. Chris' actions provided an example of how relationship building with students can impact FTP.

> I ate lunch with every single freshman that year. So, two days a week, I would invite six freshmen to my office. We would order sandwiches; a local restaurant donated them. That was still just about building relationships. It was intended to build relationships with the freshmen, but the word got out. Staff liked that as well, so they saw what we were about was building relationships.

The actions of the other principals such as crafting the message for the opening letter to students, focusing on student relationships in their opening staff meeting, creating an impactful first day of school, tutoring students, assigning themselves as a teacher for a student advisory class, and learning every student's name were all believed to contribute to FTP.

**Summary of charting the course and beginning theme.** Respondents indicated the importance of planning and starting right, whether the plan was formal or not. Actions within each of the categories; creating an entry plan; establishing and articulating mission, vision, and values; developing relationships with staff; and developing relationships with students and the student body contributed to establishing FTP. The categories of establishing and articulating mission, vision, and values and developing relationships with staff contained the most coded segments, and implementing actions early in their tenure was believed to be important in establishing trust.

**Displaying the facets of trust.** The theme of Displaying the Facets of Trust was shared by all 10 respondents. This theme included the categories of demonstrating benevolence, demonstrating honesty, demonstrating openness, demonstrating competency, and demonstrating consistency/reliability. Figure 4.2 shows the number of coded segments of each category in this theme. Larger squares indicated a larger number coded segments of the category by participant.

Figure 4.2

*Coded Segments for each Category in Displaying the Facets of Trust by Respondent*

| Code System | Alan 1 | Chris 1 | Ethan 1 | Greg 1 | Ian 1 | Kay 1 | Mary 1 | Owen 1 | Randy 1 | Teres... | SUM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ▼ Displaying the Facets of Trust | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Extending trust to faculty | | | | | | · | | ■ | · | | 5 |
| Demonstrating benevolence | · | ■ | ■ | · | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | · | ■ | 69 |
| Demonstrating honesty | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | · | ■ | ■ | · | 77 |
| Demonstrating openness | · | · | · | · | ■ | ■ | · | · | · | ■ | 65 |
| Demonstrating competency | ■ | · | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | · | ■ | ■ | ■ | 101 |
| Demonstrating consistency/reliabili | ■ | · | ■ | · | · | · | ■ | · | · | · | 33 |
| Σ SUM | 41 | 40 | 20 | 43 | 31 | 23 | 22 | 24 | 34 | 72 | 350 |

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***Demonstrating benevolence.*** This category included actions that showed either personal or professional care as well as actions that showed empathy or gratitude. Each of the principals indicated actions that demonstrated benevolence. Teresa provided very concrete examples of how she and her assistant principal had demonstrated benevolence.

> We have a Christmas luncheon and everybody gets a Christmas card, not with our names signed, but we sign a message. Valentine's Day, we have the 'We Love Our Staff Cart'. The cart is just a box of candy on the top and a wheeled cooler with bottled water and soft drinks is in it. We interrupt their class and we cut out a red heart and we write two lines of why we love them…As we walk through the room we hand them the valentine, and then they get to pick a drink and a snack. I always watch for those things to go on sale. It might cost each of us 50 dollars to do that, and you'd think you just gave them a million.
>
> I will write a thank you card to every staff member… I will have those all ready to mail to go out July 1. They'll get them around the middle of the summer. I've done that every summer.
>
> I think it's those things that to a new principal you need to recognize what your staff members are contributing to your school because, ultimately, your success is based on the success of the students in the classroom. That effect on the students is from the teachers. As the building leader, you really have to observe what is going well, be visible, and take the time to show appreciation to your staff. I think that helps to develop those levels of trust.

Similarly, Owen shared his actions for showing benevolence.

There's things you just do on the way, like teacher cookouts and buying teacher lunches and covering their plan for them or covering their class so they can have an extra plan one day, whatever the case may be, taking the restroom duty for them, covering their class so they can get to a doctor's appointment.

Other respondents described actions for showing benevolence such as making sure staff know that family comes first, inquiring about their families, asking teachers what they need to be successful in the classroom and then providing for them, supporting teachers during meetings with parents, making gratitude part of faculty meetings, and showing empathy and support during times of personal struggles.

*Demonstrating honesty.* Every respondent expressed the importance of demonstrating honesty. This category included actions such as telling the truth, matching words and actions, being authentic, and showing humility. Kay's thoughts summed up the importance of honesty.

There's no other way. They know that they're going to get the truth from me, and sometimes that's not easy, but that's the truth. And I feel like not telling the truth is playing with people's livelihood, and that's not the right thing to do.

Respondents indicated that honesty was something that needed to be a constant. Teresa said, "The honesty piece, I think it's just a reflection of what you do every day."

Many respondents indicated that being humble was an integral part of demonstrating honesty. Randy stated,

I think people see honesty in their leadership when their leadership's not afraid to change their mind or not afraid to admit when they've made a mistake…When you're willing to stand before your staff and say, 'Guys, I messed up here. I shouldn't have done this. I had great intentions, but you know what, it didn't work out well, and for those of you it

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caused extra work on, I'm truly sorry.' It builds you a lot more trust and support from your faculty because they see you as being willing to admit your mistakes, and they see you as being honest.

Like several respondents, Chris indicated the importance of matching actions with one's words.

I think that's one of the keys is when you say something, you have to do it. High school teaching staff, they're looking for that. When you stand up in front of them and say, 'This is what I care about, and this is what I do.' They're looking for that to not be true all the time, so I was very careful about that... I think the honesty part goes hand in hand with being transparent. So, when a teacher comes to you and says, 'Why are we doing this?' you have to have a good reason, and you have to be upfront and honest with them, even if it's not exactly what they want to hear. If you believe in it, they'll still trust that it's the right thing to do.

Many principals shared the thought that honesty and openness go hand in hand.

*Demonstrating openness.* The category of demonstrating openness included actions such as having an open door policy and being open with information as well as the actions of listening and communicating. Kay expressed the importance of demonstrating openness in establishing trust, "When we become open, we become vulnerable. And when we're vulnerable to one another, that I think, really builds trust. It's the only way I know how to be." Many of the respondents indicated that they had an open door policy so that teachers would feel comfortable coming to them and sharing information.

Openness had not always been the practice in some of the high schools. For example, Chris described what had been a closed-door scheduling process in his school.

That was one of the things I changed in my first year. The board was open. There were lots of signs around it that said, 'Do not touch.' I'm moving the little magnetic strip around, but everybody could come in and look at it. They could give input about whether that worked for them or not.

That openness made a big difference because people could actually see when they would come in and say, 'I really need these two classes back to back.' I could explain to them why I can't have it because it messes up three classes down the road. That paid off. Teachers really appreciated that. They didn't always like the answer, but at least because we were open about it, they would understand it.

Openness with communication was deemed an important part of establishing trust. Mary stated,

You've got to make sure you're communicating with them. Like, when they feel like they don't know what's going on. That's another thing that staff, they don't like that. They like to know what's going on, and I try to do a pretty good job of keeping them informed.

Likewise, Ian explained the ways in which open communication played a part in his building.

It didn't take long within that first year or two to know that it's all about getting out of your chair, out of your office, out of your email, and walking down and having conversations with people… I think that's my big message. One of our core values is effective communication, and it says, 'Effective communication. We have meaningful conversations to move our community forward.' That is essential.

The other piece that's important to transparency is that we have this one-stop shop that has our every agenda. (Shared Google Doc on the screen) We had our finance meeting.

They click here. They get to put in info, what's most valuable in terms of funding. But

everything is open. This is our calendar. Any teacher in the school can add to this.

Respondents shared other actions that conveyed openness such as taking the time to listen to

staff, sharing information at staff meetings, having weekly communication through a newsletter,

writing articles for the local newspaper, and being upfront and sharing serious issues with staff.

*Demonstrating competency.* The category of demonstrating competency included actions

related to job task performance of the principal as well as the sub-codes of walking the walk,

taking and making time, being present and visible, cultivating respect, setting high expectations,

and holding staff accountable. Each of the principals indicated the importance of showing

competency in establishing trust. As shown in Figure 4.2, this category contained the most coded

segments in the theme of Displaying the Facets of Trust.

Respondents indicated that their past experience helped them display competency. Most

of the respondents had been teachers before entering administration. Teresa shared,

I think many years in the classroom is always been one of my buy-ins for people. I wasn't

someone who shot to administration real fast. I was very slow in that. In my last year of

teaching, I received the outstanding mathematics teacher award. I have that hanging.

People have noticed it. I don't say anything, but people have noticed it and commented on

it.

For Chris, competency was something that needed to be displayed over time.

I think that has to be earned. If you walked in the door the first day and tried to show all

these things that you could do, they're not going to buy it. You have to prove it. That's

what we tried to do.

One way respondents showed competence was by being knowledgeable. Ethan spoke of the importance of being knowledgeable and versed in research.

> Before you do something, research that it works. Know what has been discovered about this thing you propose. If there is no research, ask yourself, 'Am I better paying more attention to things that are proven to work, or is this the moment to do a little bit of experimental work?' There would never be progress if people didn't experiment.

Other actions that displayed competence included setting high expectations and holding staff accountable. Kay's thoughts encapsulated these ideas. "I have high expectations, but I don't ask people to do anything that I wouldn't be willing to do." Likewise, Greg shared his thoughts regarding how having high expectations and holding teachers accountable contributed to establishing trust. He cautioned against sharing blanket statements with the staff.

> I tell them every year, at the beginning of the year, all of my expectations. We have our beginning-of-the-year meeting. I lay out all the expectations, and then I tell them, 'This is the last time you'll hear a blanket statement about all this. If you're not doing something that we expect, I will talk to you individually.'
>
> So, word gets around. I just started e-mailing… I just e-mail them individually. 'Please post grades.' It doesn't take long for word to get around that, 'He will address the issues that need to be addressed individually. He's not going to go it with everyone.'

Other actions that contributed to competency were visibility and making and taking time. Alan said, "Well, I'd say visibility equals credibility, so be there." Visibility was important for seven of the 10 respondents. Respondents indicated the importance of attending events and being present during the school day. Teresa shared her overall thoughts about actions that displayed competency and contributed to the establishment of trust.

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My visibility at events, in the hallways, in the parking lot, I pride myself on trying to

know each student's name. You know, I think the competency comes from walking

alongside of them, and just continuing to stay dedicated to the profession by time

commitment. They know that I'm here late. They can see when my emails are being sent.

Sometimes the whole staff email comes through, I don't have to tell you this, but a whole

staff email might come through at 11:30 at night. It might come through at midnight. It

might come through at 5:00 in the morning. It's trying to stay on top of the game and

keeping that communication open that I think instills that level of competency in their

eyes.

*Demonstrating consistency/reliability.* The category of demonstrating consistency/

reliability was shared by all of the respondents. This category included actions related to

consistency, reliability, and following-through. All of the respondents indicated the importance

of being consistent, but most indicated that consistency does not always mean treating everyone

or every situation the same. While the category of consistency and reliability was deemed

important, it had the fewest coded segments in relation to the other facets of trust.

Ian described the role of consistency in establishing trust within the context of the new

high school. "I think just the consistency was so key: consistent communication, consistently

positive in this narrative, consistently value driven." Likewise, Mary indicated the importance of

consistency.

If you have an unpredictable type of a personality or leadership, they won't trust you

because they're not sure what you're going do next. I think they know I'm pretty

consistent with what I do and my actions and how I behave and support teachers and just

adore these kids.

For several of the respondents, consistency was important when managing student discipline. Teresa stated,

I pride myself on consistency. Always have, even as a classroom teacher. What you do for one, you have to do for the other. Making a decision for one, is that a decision you'd be comfortable for somebody else? I know with discipline because, like I said, my assistant principal started from classroom teaching that first year, as I did as an assistant principal. You really want to make sure you're doing everything right. You know? If we had a discipline issue, we would always go back to the code of conduct. Where does this fall? Where does this fall and what should the penalty be?

Some respondents also discussed the difficulty with displaying consistency, especially with student discipline. Chris explained,

If a teacher sends a kid down because they did whatever, X, Y, or Z, they may see that that kid was treated differently than another kid that did the same thing, and they would question that. That would be difficult. Those were difficult conversations to have, that could deteriorate trust. I don't know. That might have been one of the things that I struggled with throughout my building level experiences, the consistency part, because I've always felt that not every situation could be dealt with the same. I guess that's consistent in itself. I think that's what we always stuck to, is for us at that time, it was about building relationships, and sometimes we had to handle each situation differently…The consistency was in our values and what we believed in, and we always referred back to that.

Being reliable and following-through was important for respondents as they established trust. Mary shared her thoughts about the relationship between reliability and establishing trust.

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"What staff want to see from their leader is they want to see that what you say is what you do, that you follow through, that you back them. They need to see those kind of things, and then they'll start to trust you."

**Summary of displaying the facets of trust theme.** Each of the respondents indicated the importance of actions that displayed the facets of trust. The most coded segments occurred in the category of displaying competency. The categories of displaying benevolence, honesty, and openness had similar numbers of coded segments while the category of displaying consistency had the fewest coded segments. Principals indicated that displaying the facets of trust was something that occurred on a daily basis and happened over time. Trust was established through these actions.

**Enabling school structures.** The theme of Enabling School Structures was shared by all 10 respondents. Enabling school structures are policies, procedures, decision-making, and other structures that teachers view as enabling their work (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). The categories evaluating, sustaining, changing, and creating enabling structures; making decisions; developing and evaluating teachers; and achieving academic success were shared by at least seven of the 10 respondents. Figure 4.3 shows the coded segments for each category by participant.

Figure 4.3

*Coded Segments for each Category in Enabling School Structures by Respondent*



| Code System | Alan 1 | Chris 1 | Ethan 1 | Greg 1 | Ian 1 | Kay 1 | Mary 1 | Owen 1 | Randy 1 | Teres... | SUM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ▼ Enabling School Structures | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Sustaining, modifying, and creating | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | · | ■ | ■ | 56 |
| Hiring | | | | | · | | | | · | · | 3 |
| Developing and evaluating teachers | ■ | ■ | ■ | · | ■ | · | | ■ | ■ | ■ | 35 |
| Making decisions | · | ■ | · | ■ | ■ | ■ | | · | ■ | ■ | 45 |
| Achieving academic success | | · | ■ | ■ | · | | · | | · | · | 11 |
| Σ SUM | 23 | 16 | 8 | 18 | 11 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 27 | 29 | 150 |

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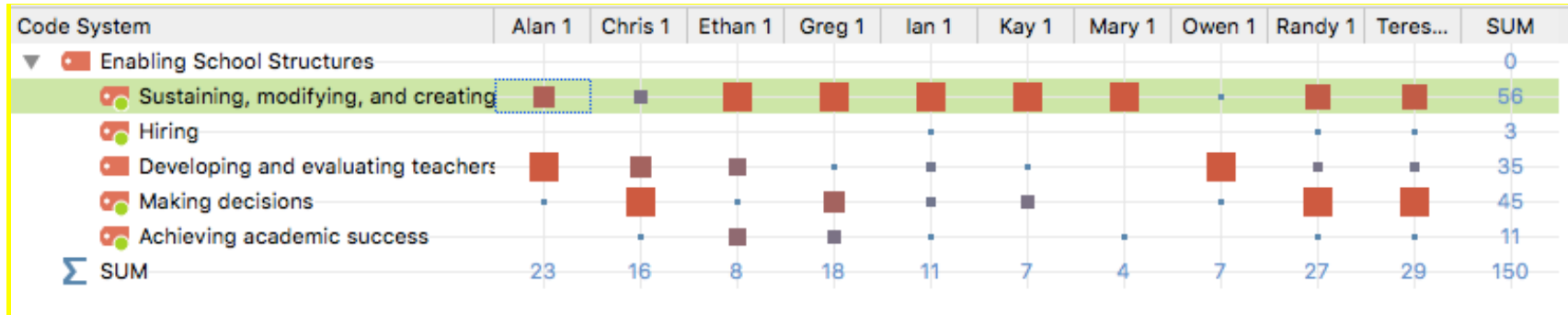
***Evaluating, sustaining, changing, and creating enabling structures.*** Other than in the brand new high school, principals in the study entered positions with structures already in place. Kay described the need to evaluate current structures.

> You've got to see the protocols and procedures, and then make a priority list. What can you keep? What do you need to get rid of? But if you go in and begin making massive changes, it disrespects what was there. It disrespects the people who put it there. And some of those people may still be in your building.

Likewise, Ethan stated, "I didn't have any ambitions to immediately start doing things very differently."

Some respondents indicated the need to change existing structures or to create new ones. Chris modified existing structures.

> I didn't change a ton of the structure, but I changed how they were run. In the past, the leadership team had been a sounding board only. The principal would call them in, say, 'These are things we're doing. What do you think?' Then may or may not even go with the recommendation of the leadership team. We changed it to, it was partly a sounding board, but we made a conscious effort that if we asked their opinion, we listened and used it. Our leadership team meetings were preparing for that next Wednesday [staff meeting]. It was about what do you need? What does the staff need, and then how are you going to present it?

Alan shared his experience,

> To be honest with you, I felt like I needed to dismantle a lot of the structures. There was a practice and a policy for everything among my very close circle. I mean, the previous

principal told you whether you crumpled or folded your toilet tissue before you use it,

that's a joke, but there was a policy for everything.

For example, Alan created the structure of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). The former principal had excluded the assistant principals from the school's instructional team. During the summer he met with each person on the team and shared the new structure.

I explained my reasoning. I explained that I value them, that I'm going to observe with them, that I'm going to work with them, and they're going to be my main delivery of professional development in small groups, but they're not going to be my ILT. That was a really big structure that was not in place, that scared me to death because in every other school in which I've served, some of those people have been added to it but never at the exclusion of the assistant principals who felt totally uninvolved in the building. It's just weird to me. That was a structure that I had to add, otherwise, I don't think that I could have been effective.

*Making decisions.* The process of how important decisions were made impacted the establishment of FTP. Respondents described the need to make decisions based on values, gather input on decisions, share decision-making, and make quick decisions when needed. Alan explained the importance of decision-making in his role as principal,

We have to make more decisions than a business person does. By time they go to the bathroom and get their coffee and read the newspaper, people in education have made 100 critical decisions about people by 9:00 in the morning.

Greg iterated the importance of making decisions based on the mission and values of the school. "It's about the kids, and we're going to make decisions based the kids."

Like some of the other respondents, Randy entered a situation where the former principal had made all of the decisions.

The beginning months of my tenure were very overwhelming because I didn't feel like there was a decision that could be made in this school without somebody running it by me. It wasn't my choice, but it was little things like, 'What are we going to do at the pep rally?' You know, let the pep club sponsor decide what to do at the pep rally. Why are you asking me? It was just everybody came to me for everything, and you had to be very careful there, because when the principal's making all of the decisions, the principal is the easy person to blame and to be upset with and things of that nature.

Respondents described the preference to get input before making most major decisions. Alan said,

Most of the time, the answers are right there in your building, from the people that are in the trenches, that are doing the work, and allowing them the opportunity to voice their opinion and to feel like that they have a true voice in what you're doing.

Yet, sometimes decisions need to be made without much input. Teresa said, "I think it's some of the quick decisions you make sometimes that help people trust you."

***Developing and evaluating teachers.*** This category was shared by nine of the 10 respondents. Respondents talked about the necessity of strong professional development for teachers and the need for the principal to be involved through guidance or through direct delivery. Chris shared,

I'm not a stand and deliver type of person, which the previous couple principals were. So, one of the other things that we do that's important, we have PD time every Wednesday. Students are released an hour early, and that was always stand and deliver, and I did

almost none of that. We would work with our teacher leadership team. They would do all

the presenting. All the work was done by them based on things that they wanted.

Alan had a similar approach by involving a team, but would take a more active role at times.

We have faculty meetings where I'll teach a lesson on the trigonometric functions, and

it'll be terrible because I won't use any access, I won't redirect with concise statements, I

won't provide explanation that's inclusive, and I won't provide praise that's elaborative.

Then I'll have a math teacher I just observed do those three things masterfully, and then

have him teach the same lesson, and not many of my teachers know all the trig functions.

Then he'll present the same lesson using all those parts of access and then I'll say, 'Hey,

love you all, but now when I come in your room, you're planning better and include

access for all kids and rigor does not equal confusion.'

Professional development of teachers did not include just the workshops, but supporting teachers

individually. While Ethan's teachers did participate in more structured professional learning, he

said, 'Pin your principalship on individual coaching. Raising the standards of the whole school

by working with individuals.'

The formal observations and evaluations of teachers played a significant role in the

establishment of trust. Evaluation was described as a required action of the principal, and if done

right, could support trust. Alan described how his approach to teacher observations and

evaluations helped him establish trust with his teachers. He was open and transparent about how

he would implement the evaluation requirements.

One of the ways that I said I wanted to display trust with them is that, while we all have a

shared observation system, they don't really know me as an observer. So, that the first

observation of everyone is going to be announced. Then after that, because our policy

manual says that there'll be a mix of announced and unannounced observations, that after

that first observation, their next observations will be unannounced. There were things like

that that I gave as examples of how I want to build that trust and what my expectation is.

Ethan's views on the formal observation went even further.

> I say 'I'm telling you frankly, I'm not interested in evaluation beyond one narrow
>
> purpose. The narrow purpose is that if one needs to build a case that someone is doing the
>
> work of teacher and is unfit to the work of teacher, then the evaluation system is probably
>
> the way to go on that…
>
> So here's what we're going to do with evaluation. We're going to put it into a lead lined
>
> casket and I'm going to go out into the school grounds at night and I'm going to dig a big
>
> hole, I'm going to put it in there and cover it up. That's how much attention we're going to
>
> pay with it. Now here's what we're going to do. We're going to address the interesting
>
> question of how each of us can be a little bit better, given how good we're already doing.'
>
> That's our approach to evaluation.

However, not all teachers were able to meet expectations, and principals needed to address poor

performance. Randy had teachers who were not performing to the expected standards.

> I went through and used our school's corrective action plan program for staff members
>
> that were not doing what they needed to do in the classroom, or their behavior was
>
> unprofessional or unethical. That usually makes waves through the school, but it builds
>
> trust with your teachers who do a good job, your teachers who take this profession very
>
> serious. They appreciate the fact they have a boss addressing ineffectiveness and
>
> unprofessional behavior.

Teresa's approach was based on negative experiences of having to let teachers go in the past. She did not want to go down that path again unless absolutely necessary.

> I have recognized that the energy to spend documenting to get rid of is the same as the energy to help make better. When you're trying to make somebody better, you have to be honest with them. You have to tell them what needs to be improved upon. If a person isn't ready to hear that or work on that, they're going to leave.

*Achieving academic success.* The category of achieving academic success was shared by seven of the 10 respondents as a contributing factor to the establishment of trust. Academic success allowed teachers to see that the enabling structures of the school had impacted student achievement. Greg highlighted the impact that academic success had on the establishment of trust.

> I think that the success that we had early. We give the PLAN test to all sophomores. We used to, we don't anymore, but our PLAN composite had been very low for the whole class of sophomores. We did a prep program during our academic time for 30 minutes every day, to prep those sophomores for the PLAN test. We went up by [several] points. It was the highest in our region. We were in the top of the state… They saw the success that we had early from that, and they were like, 'Hey, this guy knows what he's talking about.'

**Summary of enabling school structures theme.** Each of the respondents shared the theme of Enabling School Structures. How teachers perceived the school structures' impact on their jobs also impacted the establishment of FTP. Principals described the need to evaluate existing structures and decide whether to sustain, modify, or change these structures. They also shared the impact that decision-making had on the establishment of trust. Most described the

need to gather input, but make quick decisions when necessary. Most respondents used the formal observation and evaluation of teachers as a way to establish FTP. Finally, early academic success supported the establishment of trust.

**Leading.** The theme of Leading refers to the principal's leadership style. When asked about their leadership style, seven of the 10 respondents gave descriptions of leadership styles found in literature such as instructional, collaborative, transformational, situational, and servant. The other respondents used more general terms such as relational, inspirational, and organized. However, when coding for leadership style, the researcher also coded behaviors that were strongly associated with a specific leadership style. For example, when a principal described their direct participation in professional development and their strong focus on teaching and learning, this was viewed as instructional leadership and coded as focusing on teaching and learning. Figure 4.4 shows the categories and their coded segments by respondent. Most principals espoused more than one style. Two leadership categories emerged as being important to establishing trust; focusing on teaching and learning and sharing leadership. Seven of the 10 principals described their leadership style or leadership practices as focusing on teaching and learning. Seven of the 10 principals described their leadership style or leadership practices as sharing leadership.

Figure 4.4

*Coded Segments for each Category in Leading by Respondent*



| Code System | Alan 1 | Chris 1 | Ethan 1 | Greg 1 | Ian 1 | Kay 1 | Mary 1 | Owen 1 | Randy 1 | Teres... | SUM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ▼ Leading | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Focusing on teaching and learning | ■ | | ■ | ■ | • | | ■ | | ■ | • | 16 |
| Sharing leadership | ■ | ■ | | ■ | • | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | 19 |
| Leading based on context and situa | ■ | | • | | | | | | | | 4 |
| Transforming through leadership | • | | | | ■ | | | | • | | 5 |
| Serving through leadership | | • | | | | | | ■ | | | 3 |
| Σ SUM | 8 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 5 | 47 |

101
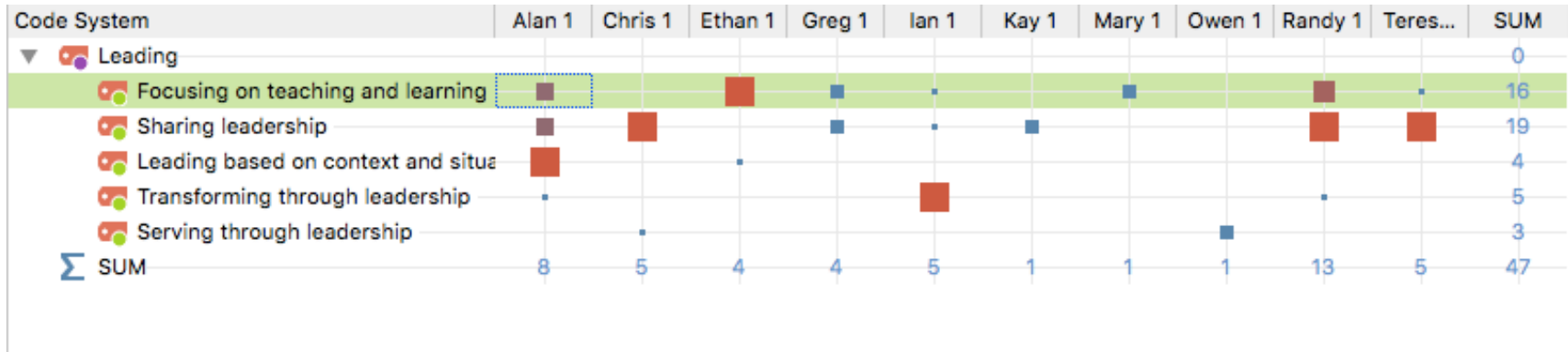
***Focusing on teaching and learning.*** This category was used when the principal indicated their leadership style as instructional or when they described leadership practices aimed at improving student learning by strengthening instructional practices. Randy described his focus on teaching and learning.

> Another thing I started doing was visiting classrooms early on, and I started talking with folks about instructional practices… I also wrote articles and submitted them in our local newspaper about academics. That was different. For many years the only thing we had been worried about was how the basketball team was doing and what was going on athletically at the school. When I began to write articles about college and career readiness and ACT benchmarks and productive struggle in life and graduation rates. I started writing about that; that began to turn heads and make people ... I think it helped people in the community to see that, 'Wow. This is certainly something; we have to make sure in our rural community our kiddos are getting a first class education.'

Greg also spoke of needing to change the focus back to teaching and learning.

> I would have a different teacher present some type of instructional strategy, or we would talk about policies and procedures in their classroom and different, just the basics. For some teachers, they didn't need it, but I would visit them beforehand and said, 'Listen, you don't need this. I understand, but I need you to be onboard. I need you to help me, because we've got a long way to go.'

Similarly, Mary shared the importance of focusing on instructional practices.

> I am not going to understand AP European history very well, but they all know that I do understand, well I have a very good instructional background, that's probably another strength of mine. I very much understand instruction, and I try to support that with them.

I actually try to fit in an instructional tip in every staff meeting. I have to try to keep that at the forefront, too.

*Sharing leadership.* This category included leadership practices that were described as shared, collaborative, or participatory. This category was used when respondents described the involvement of staff in leadership through formal or informal means. Seven of the 10 respondents described these types of leadership practices as part of establishing trust.

Teresa described the difficulty she had when trying to implement a more collaborative leadership style.

[My assistant principal] was a teacher in this school for nine years. He and I started together in the administrative roles the same year. He said that my approach was very different from the previous principal. My approach is when there are big issues that are going to affect the classroom or there are certain programs that we're looking at, I do want their input. They were very reluctant to say anything, very, very non-responsive. It took almost six months for them to actually realize I really wanted to hear what they had to say.

Chris also described the change the level of participation of teachers in the school leadership.

I truly believed in a shared leadership model, so we backed away as much as we possibly could. The leadership team meetings were situations where we could send them down a certain direction that we want to go. Then that would get them excited about it, and they would run with it because they felt like they actually owned it.

Others described actions such as developing teacher leaders through their Professional Learning Community (PLC) structure, having teachers lead professional learning, and balancing responsibilities with their assistant principals as actions that helped to establish FTP.

**Summary of leading theme.** Principals indicated that focusing on teaching and learning

as well as sharing leadership helped to establish FTP. The principals implemented a mix of

leadership styles, but these emerged as most important.

Figure 4.5

*Concept Map of Establishing FTP*



**Understanding Contextual Conditions**

Reflecting upon the experience of the principal

Understanding the context of the transition

Gathering information

Understanding the base level of FTP

**Charting the Course and Beginning**

Creating an entry plan

Establishing and articulating mission, vision, and values

Developing relationships with staff

Developing relationships with students and the study body

**Displaying the Facets of Trust**

Demonstrating benevolence, honesty, openness, competency, and consistency/reliability

**Enabling Structures**

Evaluating, sustaining, changing, and creating enabling structures

Making decisions

Developing and evaluating teachers

Achieving academic success

**Leading**

Focusing on teaching and learning

Sharing leadership

**Collective FTP**

**RQ 2.** How do high school principals describe the process of maintaining collective faculty trust in the principal?

The themes that emerged for maintaining FTP were Displaying Facets of Trust, Enabling School Structures, and Leading. These themes were shared by all respondents.

**Displaying the facets of trust.** All respondents shared the theme of Displaying the Facets of Trust. The categories of demonstrating benevolence, demonstrating honesty, demonstrating openness, demonstrating competency, and demonstrating consistency/reliability remained, but their relative importance changed for some of the respondents.

***Demonstrating benevolence.*** Nine of the 10 respondents mentioned that demonstrating benevolence supported the maintenance of trust. Showing care for staff both personally and professionally was deemed important. Ethan said, "As I have grown in experience over many years, I have become more relaxed and at ease in the role and can exercise benevolence." For Owen, benevolence had always been the most important.

> I would suggest that they are all very important, but maybe the most important to me is benevolence. I have always felt like my two most important jobs every single day is to serve our students and serve my teachers, and I have tried to make sure I do it in this order. Therefore, I do not think it has become more important for me; it is just that I see it as maybe the most important… Just continue to make sure they know you care.

Mary shared that benevolence had continued to be important as she maintained trust, and that benevolence became part of the staff culture.

> We've had some tragedies on our staff. One of my staff member's [close relative] passed away just about a month ago. This staff just pulled together, and we pulled together

money and food for the family and just supported each other. I think it's just kind of what we are. We take care of each other here.

*Demonstrating honesty.* Eight of the 10 respondents shared that demonstrating honesty was important for maintaining trust. Telling the truth and being authentic were some of the actions that displayed honesty. Chris stated,

[honesty has] probably bought me the most trust with my staff. I think back about the hard conversations, those things that you know as a principal, there's certain decisions that you make that you can start the clock ticking on you losing that trust. Just being straightforward and honest has helped me maintain that, even in those tough situations.

Showing honesty through humility continued to play an important role in maintaining trust, and it was easier for some respondents to show humility once trust had been established. Kay shared, "If there's something that I don't know or a question that I can't answer, I'm not afraid to say, 'I don't know that, but I'll find out for you.'"

Likewise, Randy said,

You have to be very humble. If you're humble, it protects you from developing an over-inflated ego where you start to think it is because of you. That's the worst thing that can happen to a principal is that you begin to think that success is all about you. Then people are going to see you as very arrogant and obnoxious. They're not going to trust you. They're going to not be happy at all.

*Demonstrating openness.* All of the respondents indicated that demonstrating openness was important as they maintained trust. They shared that their staff expected them to be open with information and available when needed. Teresa stated that openness had become the most important facet over time,

The openness, the approachability. I think that's a valuable trick to hold onto. You know? With the openness comes a certain level of emotional control. Sometimes a teacher might come in here, and you think, 'oh my gosh, they're coming in here again.' Just staying open and listening without interjecting my opinion too quickly.

Principals shared the need for transparent communication. Randy stated that continued, open communication helped him maintain trust,

Every Friday morning, my teachers, my staff receive a weekly email from me with an update from the previous week and what's going on the following week, and a newsletter with everything that's going on the next week. Something easy that they can print off and hang on their board by their computer. My parents and community, they receive a weekly email blurb from me that's talking about the week that they're in and the following week, and what's coming up in the school. It's always very positive and motivational. I take that email, and I copy it over on our school website so the people that don't get it on email can get it on my school website and read it. I do a weekly radio segment where I'll just update our entire community about the great things going on in our school.

Greg affirmed the need to be open with communication,

I am probably too open and too transparent, to a fault, to be honest with you. I don't have any secrets. I mean, I probably give our staff more information than they need. If something's wrong in the school, I communicate it.

Kay discussed the reciprocal relationship that openness had played in maintaining trust. The level of overall trust grew over time,

I would say that as the years have progressed, as I've become more familiar with my

staff, I've also become more open.  I am an open person, but the more comfortable I am

with someone, the more open I become. I think that is probably true with my staff, too.

**_Demonstrating competency._** Nine of the 10 respondents indicated that demonstrating

competency was important for maintaining trust. Competency continued to be the category with

the most coded segments within the theme of Displaying the Facets of Trust. Alan shared that

trust had become more important over time,

> As I learn more things, I can use competence with greater leverage. The important thing
>
> is that staff know the reason competence increases is due to all I learn each day by
>
> observing them. Classroom observation has always provided me that competence has
>
> become more important in relation to my years of experience with strategies and ideas to
>
> share. I am impressed daily with the wonders of people. With these experiences, my level
>
> of competence grows each day, and I can speak with greater authority; and, imparting
>
> feedback is always easier/mitigated with genuine acts of benevolence.

Kay described the importance of demonstrating competency by working hard and being

dedicated to the craft,

> If I'm lame-ducking my way through, that's going to lose trust really fast. And I think that
>
> far too many of my colleagues find opportunities to be out of the building that aren't
>
> working for the building, and I think that that destroys any trust that they could build.

For Ian, many of his actions demonstrated competency as he maintained trust. For example, "I

teach an intervention class, like it's boots on the ground. I'm right there beside them… I think

part of the trust is really having high expectations and allowing people to explore the journey

with you."

***Demonstrating consistency/reliability.*** Eight of the 10 respondents indicated the importance of demonstrating consistency/reliability for maintaining trust. Principals shared that it was easier for the faculty to anticipate their actions and count on them because they had displayed consistency and reliability in the past. Chris said that consistency had become more important since his first years.

> We made a point to be as consistent as possible. Staff then became comfortable in their actions because we constantly focused on the same things in our mission and vision. I think it really helped with trust because when something came up, staff would have a pretty good idea how we would handle things.

Mary shared the importance of demonstrating all of the facets of trust consistently in order to maintain trust.

> They are all critical in my opinion, but I think as time has gone by I see consistency as a major quality for a leader. I think if you act in kindness and with well meaning, you are honest and open and prove your competence, what is most important is that you have all of those qualities and characteristics on a consistent basis.

**Summary of displaying the facets of trust theme.** Each respondent shared the theme of Displaying the Facets of Trust, but differed on the relative importance of each facet and how the facets had helped to maintain FTP. Competency continued to be the most often coded facet in this theme. In terms of relative importance, competency, honesty, and openness were mentioned more often than benevolence and consistency/reliability as being important to maintaining trust. Most respondents concurred that showing all of the facets on a consistent basis was still important; some facets had just become more important as they sought to maintain trust.

**Enabling school structures.**  The theme of Enabling School Structures was shared by all 10 respondents. The categories evaluating, sustaining, changing, and creating enabling structures; making decisions; hiring; developing and evaluating teachers; and achieving academic success were shared by at least seven of the 10 respondents.  Figure 4.6 shows the number of coded segments for each category by participant.

Figure 4.6

*Coded Segments for each Category in Enabling School Structures by Respondent*

| Code System | Alan 2 | Chris 2 | Ethan 2 | Greg 2 | Ian 2 | Kay 2 | Mary 2 | Owen 2 | Randy... | Teres... | SUM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ▼ Enabling School Structures | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| Sustaining, modifying, and creating | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | · | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | 44 |
| Hiring | | | ■ | · | · | · | · | · | · | ■ | 15 |
| Developing and evaluating teachers | ■ | · | ■ | · | ■ | ■ | · | ■ | · | · | 43 |
| Making decisions | · | ■ | ■ | · | · | ■ | ■ | ■ | · | ■ | 50 |
| Achieving academic success | | | · | · | · | · | ■ | · | ■ | · | 18 |
| Σ SUM | 5 | 3 | 25 | 20 | 22 | 27 | 25 | 17 | 13 | 13 | 170 |

112
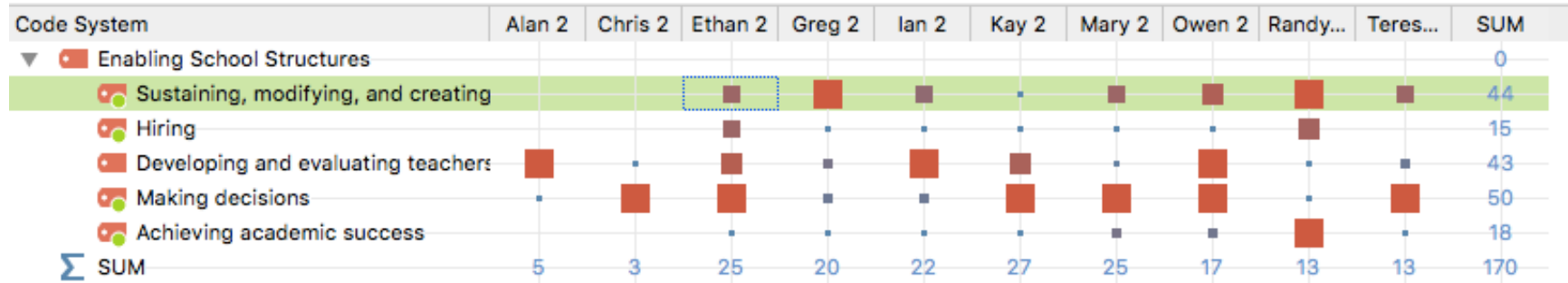
***Evaluating, sustaining, changing, and creating enabling structures.*** After principals had established trust, they described an increase in changing and creating enabling school structures. Eight of the 10 principals discussed the implementation of new structures. Two structures that were mentioned by several respondents were interventions and PLCs. Mary discussed the interventions implemented in her school.

> Well, one thing that I think the teachers actually liked is I started noticing a lot of students receiving Fs and, believe me, I like looking at data better than grades because that is not what RTI's based off of. However, in a high school that's how you receive credit. We don't want kids not getting the credits to graduate… So what we ended up doing, me and my assistant principal we started it last year, is every Monday we run a grade report and kids that have two more Fs at that time have to come in for lunch tutoring. And when I first started this effort last year I would, and my school's only about 240 kids, I would have over 70 kids on that list. And now, this week, I think I have 18… And I think the teachers really appreciate the fact that me and my administration are willing to do things like that that's not taking out of their time, not adding to their workload, but it is supporting them in their classrooms to make sure kids are getting those credits and doing the work because we ultimately want them to learn.

Ethan discussed how his style had changed over time when considering the implementation of a new structure.

> To think of something that we had considered in the last year or two, beefing up our SAT prep. I brought that to the group feeling pretty strongly that it was a good thing to do, and that we should spend more time on it. There was considerable push back on that idea. It was pushed back with good reasons. I think people watched me change my ideas.

Other respondents discussed actions such as creating an intervention framework, creating an intervention period, implementing interventions for SAT or ACT prep, and implementing advisory structures or guided study periods that support students socially and academically.

Another structure that was mentioned by several principals was PLCs. Some modified their PLCs while others implemented PLCs as a new structure. Kay talked about how they took the time to do it right.

> We took a lot of our teachers to the PLC conference, and we also did the book study. And then, like I do with everything, I adapted it to what would work for our school. And, so that's what we did. Lots of the professional development was done by me in staff meetings.

Greg commented about taking it slowly and making sure to do it right. Their structure evolved over several years.

> Now we have weekly PLCs, and that's where this whole trust thing comes in, is because I am creating the time for you to do this work on what I call 'my time.' I'm not asking you to stay after school, so they're all in a much better mood. I think that's part of the trust issue, I think, it has kind of helped with that. They know that I'm trying to help them.

Ethan was not as supportive of PLCs and had implemented a different, yet similar, structure of teacher communities.

> They focused on one main strategy really; feedback, and it's many facets. Then the teachers spend two years in those communities led by a facilitator thinking about the ways in which they give feedback and how to check for understanding, then trying it out and coming back next month and saying 'you know what? I never even got around to it.

Note to self, make sure I do more about it the next one.' Then just relentlessly on and on and on.

*Hiring.* The category of hiring became important as principals maintained trust. Ethan described what he felt was one of the most important things to maintaining trust.

What I frequently hear is [the principal] trusts us to do the job. It's true. But what that doesn't reveal is that first of all, you have to build a team that you can trust to do the job. So I have got rid of 20 year veterans, put a lot of pressure on people who were around for a very long time to the point where they'd had enough and left… Perhaps surprisingly, people don't want to do a job where they're not valued. So, they say, 'yeah I'm going, I'm done.' So over the years, it was quite a lot of that sort of work that had to be done, but with each new appointment that I made, for the most part, I made plenty of wrong decisions as well. For the most part we went up and up and up. So I now have a group of people who I could say, I think this is a decision that's just best left close to the action. I think you know more about this than I do, why don't you decide? I'll have my say and there will be certain things that I'll need to push hard on. For the most part, people know that I trust them to do more with the job. That, I think, makes them feel good about themselves. When you feel good about yourself, you're more inclined to feel good about somebody else. Then I'm the beneficiary of that. Does that make sense?

Randy also underscored the importance of hiring as contributing to the maintenance of trust.

I think the first thing you do as a principal, is every time somebody leaves your team, you replace them with the most talented person you can find. You replace them with people who are committed to teaching and learning…I would say 90% of the hires that I've made

in my tenure have worked out to be really good for this building. They've been believers in kids. They've been on board with doing whatever we need to do for kids.

Likewise, Kay discussed how creating and maintaining a stable staff helped to maintain trust.

One of the things that has been a beautiful thing in this building is we rarely turn over staff. I've had five or six people retire, and one person move because of family. But I retain the teachers over and over. I rarely have to hire. So I have that group of people who trust me and I trust them. We've worked together so long. And I have some fabulous young teachers who come in when those people retire, and they have become key leaders in my staff, and on my staff. Instead of looking for these great content people, I look for people who love teenagers and want to build relationships. If I feel like they're relational in an interview, that's a bump up. It's more about the relationship to me than it is the content. Because you and I both know, give us a textbook and we can go before any classroom and teach just about anything.

Having staff who are committed to the vision, mission, and values of the school contributed to maintaining trust, especially when the principal was able to hire staff that fit into the plan.

*Developing and evaluating teachers.* Developing and evaluating teachers remained important as respondents maintained trust. Many shifted from large group presentations to other formats of professional development. Ethan shared,

Teachers are really crushed for time to properly prepare, especially if they're supposed to be collaborating with other people. It's always here's another thing to do, here's another thing to do. I know that I have a lot of good will from staff because I'm not summoning them to the theater every week to give them a 25-minute talk on how to do this particular thing better.

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Likewise, the professional learning for Ian's teachers became more collaborative and reflective.

> We do these twice a year; every teacher in the school gets a day to walk around and see
> other teachers all day. Then they reflect on our own blog. Every teacher in the school is
> on this shared document showing reflection… This is all just this openness. We also ask
> teachers to reflect schoolwide on literacy practices, but [there is also] choice. They get to
> go wherever they want. We do that twice a year. Next year we'll be doing it eight times,
> but it'll be shorter bursts, so that's important to transparency. New teachers, the first thing
> we do is get them into the classroom, so that first couple weeks to see everyone else.
> They also reflect. They do a reflection on that shared document. They do their own
> reflection. There it is, really powerful; and everyone sees it.

Evaluating teachers continued to play a role as principals maintained trust. Chris shared a tough situation that he thought might have hurt the FTP, but found it helped to maintain trust.

> We had a teacher who was an absolute rock star, one of the better teachers I've ever
> worked with. Kids loved her. Staff loved her, and she made a really stupid mistake. We
> had to non-renew her. One, it wasn't what I wanted to do, but it was what I needed to do,
> and I knew that it would hurt the trust. People would question, 'Are we going back to
> previous leadership where people would just disappear, and nobody knew why?'
> Luckily, staff had enough trust in us to believe that we were just making the right
> decision. As a matter of fact, one of our toughest teachers actually stood up in a staff
> meeting, because it was getting out there. It was water cooler talk. He stood up and made
> a point, to the staff said, 'We don't always know what's going on behind the scenes. The
> last years have been the best years I've had as a teacher here. I would guess that it's been

that way for you, so we just have to trust that they're doing the right thing.' It was an amazing moment in our staff, but it was a tough situation.

Teresa shared a situation about a teacher who was unhappy with her assignment for the following year.

> I told her, 'I fully expect that you're looking for another job because you're hoping to get upper level and it doesn't look like you are.' But, her response was, 'I want you to help me get better because I know you'll make me better.' I value that. She's going to come back with some hard stuff, but I can do that.

The trust Teresa had established had made it possible for this teacher to ask for help, and it contributed to the maintenance of trust even in a tough situation.

> *Making decisions.* Principals indicated that they still preferred to get input from staff before more making decisions, but now found they could make some tough decisions on their own without eroding trust. Chris explained how he shared idea with his teacher leadership team,

> I try to stay six months ahead and go to the teacher leadership team and get their ideas, 'How can we make this? How do we improve writing in our school? I don't know exactly how we're going to do it. I need your help. How do you see us improving writing at the high school? How can we do it within our current structure? What do we need to do?' Then in that meeting, they'll say, 'We'll take it back to our departments and we'll get back with you. Yeah, I think we need to do this. I think we need to require each department to write once a quarter, and English is going to do this. English is obviously writing, but we're going to do this, that, and the other.'

So, that's kind of how we do it. I'll make [the final decisions], if they need to be made. If

we don't come to some type of consensus, they know that I'll make the final decision

about what direction we're going to go.

Similarly, Kay explained how decision-making and its impact on trust evolved,

We are pretty collaborative, but here's the thing, this staff has grown to trust me so much

that if I need to make a decision right now, they will follow it. They're not argumentative,

they are ... We have a wonderful trust relationship. And it's very apparent in this district,

the high school is doing great things, and I think it's because this staff is willing trust the

decision I have to make without their input or with their input.

Sharing the decision-making was still deemed the best way to maintain trust, but principals could

make the tough decisions as needed without changing the level of FTP.

*Achieving academic success.* Continued or new academic success helped to maintain

FTP. Ethan shared how their success over time contributed to the maintenance of trust.

As a consequence of the [state assessment growth measures], we came in the top of the

state one year. I think we were near the very top one year for growth. I think that

surprised everybody. They hadn't realized that they were that effective. Then they had

this really gold standard award that proved to them that they were doing very well.

Because previously ... Because we're a school that serves kids who live in poverty and 40

percent of our kids English is not their first language, so in some ways we're up against it.

We're a genuinely comprehensive school because we've got the kids of the orthodontists

and the lawyers as well. So, when those two awards came through, I think it really made

people feel that they were part of a quality institution. Then they start talking like that and

are part of it.

Kay shared a similar story.

> In our state, it's all about the graduation rate. And I have one of the highest in the state. My superintendent is proud of that; he's very proud of that. That looks good. What did we do to turn it around from that low to now we're a four out of five, and we're in the top 10% of the four-year cohort and five-year cohort rate in the state. What did we do to do that? So my phone often rings for that, too. What did you do? I tutor, in my office, senior students who are close, but not close enough. And so I set aside time, I stay after school, I do whatever it takes, to one-on-one tutor those students to get them through. It sends a strong message to the staff about how important graduation is… I think that really bring us good will from the community. And that is that, we are not just educators, we are citizens, and a diploma means one thing to us as an educator, but it means something different to us as a citizen.

**Summary of enabling school structures theme.** As principals maintained trust, the theme of Enabling School Structures was shared by all 10 respondents. After time, principals felt more comfortable in modifying existing structures or implementing new ones. While shared decision-making remained essential, principals also found they could make tough decisions alone. Hiring and maintaining a consistent staff as well as responding to underperforming staff were significant for maintaining trust. Continuing or achieving academic success was also deemed important.

**Leading.** Each of the respondents shared this theme and indicated that their leadership style helped them to maintain trust. Sharing leadership emerged as the category that was most important in maintaining trust; it was shared by seven of the 10 respondents.

Teresa shared the importance of being a collaborative leader and developing teacher leaders as she maintained FTP.

> I think I have a collaborative approach to my leadership style. I like to look at data, number one. I like to look at what's working and what needs help. When I realize the areas that need help, I take that to the team that's involved. [I'm] not a top down leader. So, for example with math, it does bother me that we consistently don't hit these numbers in math. I said, 'What do you guys think we should do?' You listen. They came up with those ideas for the boot-camp, and I thought that was a great idea. Teachers teaching the ACT rotation class, we do that with the juniors. I'm really trying to develop more of that teacher leadership in our building. That was a big void here, because I can understand it now. They didn't feel like their opinions mattered. Now I'm trying to develop more leadership within the staff is what I'm trying to do.

Ethan shared his thoughts about leadership and his role,

> I have a theory about leadership style which is that it's contingent on the state of the school. Another way it's referred to is situational management. One can concede from the school it's kind of out of control and people are doing what they want and doing it badly. It really needs Genghis Khan to confront and address that. Then as I think as institutions evolve, schools evolve and they become staffed with professional, informed teachers and other workers, then they need a very different approach. I think we are at that point now that we have a highly evolved institution. What it needs is ... There's a phrase used to the British Prime Minister, primus inter pares, and it means first among equals. I think that's more my role. One of the things I say to people is I will absolutely make the final decision about many, many things, but my final decision probably won't be the first thing

I thought of because I've got the sense to realize that first ideas and thoughts are often garbage. But when they go through a process informed by the contributions of other people, then they can become better or be abandoned. So, it's not a democratic leadership style, but it's participative and consultative.

Similarly, Mary shared how her collaborative leadership style created an environment where teachers feel free to give input because they know she values it. For example,

The math teacher said, 'You know, I don't think it's being communicated very well when kids have in school suspension. I like to know that because I come down here, and I talk to the kid and make sure they have their work. When I don't, they're sitting down there and they're missing out on a day of instruction.' …So I said, 'Okay, that is a great feedback. From now on here's a new process. We will email the teachers as soon as we know that a student's in ISS, and it'll better communication.'

They gave some feedback on how we run freshman orientation, I think it was last year, and we got that feedback and my counselor and I revamped how that day went, and it was great. We took their feedback, and it was improved. So they know they can say things to me, and I'll consider it and usually do it.

**Summary of leading theme.** While all respondents shared the theme of leading as they maintained trust, the category of sharing leadership emerged as integral during the process of maintaining trust. The principals continued to find ways to gather staff input and involve teachers in leadership roles. Figures 4.7 shows how these three areas, Displaying the Facets of Trust, Enabling Structures, and Leading result in collective FTP.

Figure 4.7

*Concept Map of Maintaining FTP*



Displaying the Facets of Trust

Demonstrating benevolence, honesty, openness, competency, and consistency/reliability

Enabling Structures

Evaluating, sustaining, changing, and creating enabling structures

Making decisions

Hiring

Developing and evaluating teachers

Achieving academic success

Leading

Sharing leadership
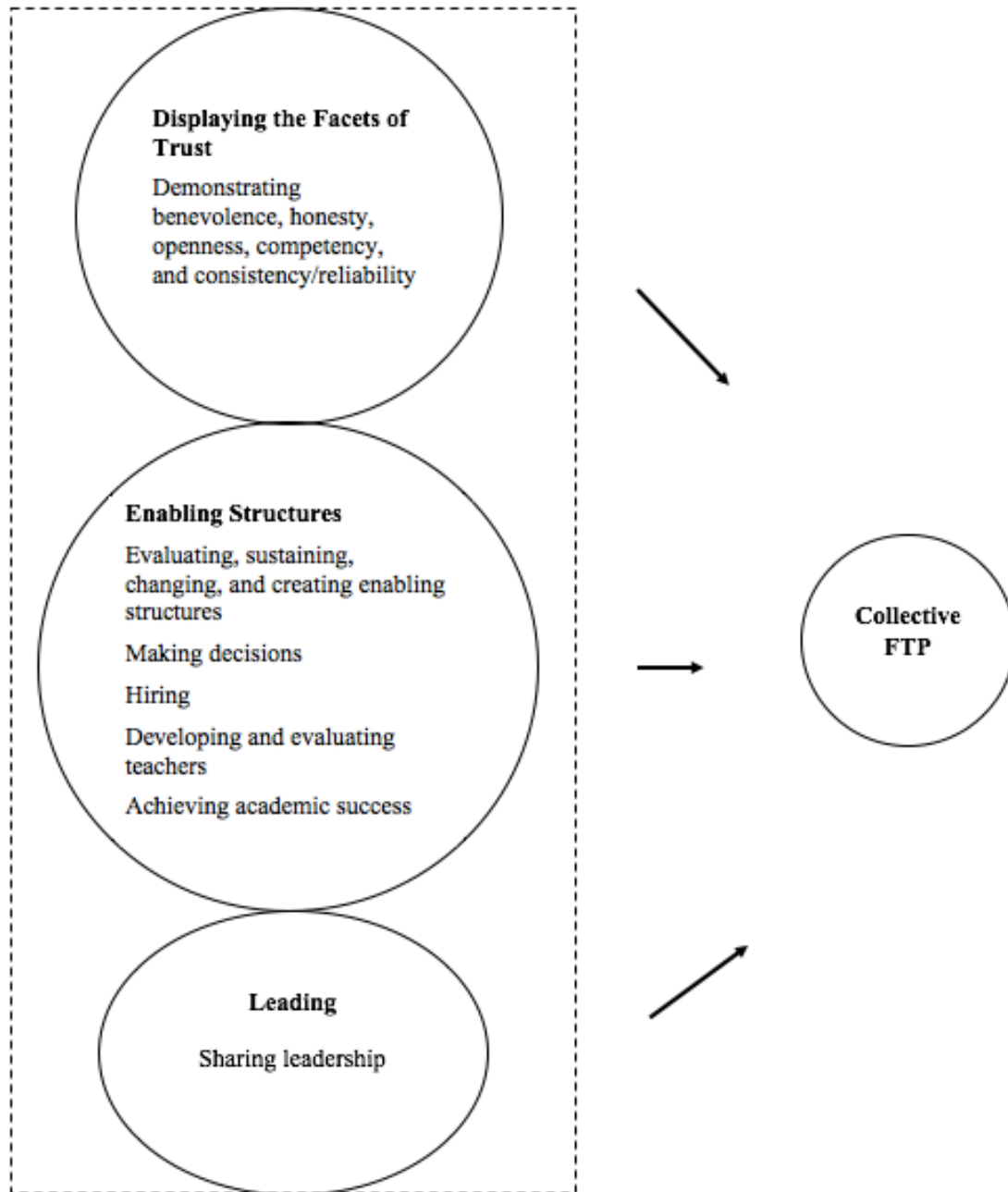
Collective FTP

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

**Overview of the Study**

This study explored the process by which high school principals establish and maintain collective faculty trust in the principal (FTP). The respondents included high school principals who had developed a high level of trust with their faculty, were deemed to be effective leaders, and had been administrators in their building for three or more years.

Ten respondents participated in this study. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews via VoIP or telephone. These interviews were transcribed, coded for units of meaning through descriptive and process coding, and then analyzed for categories and themes. Five themes emerged as salient to the processes of establishing and maintaining FTP. These themes included Understanding Contextual Conditions, Charting the Course and Beginning, Displaying the Facets of Trust, Enabling School Structures, and Leading. This chapter includes the analysis of the findings.

**Research Questions**

The purpose of this qualitative, multi-site case study was to explore the process by which high school principals established and maintained collective faculty trust in the principal (FTP).

**RQ 1.** How do high school principals describe the process of establishing collective faculty trust in the principal?

**RQ 2.** How do high school principals describe the process of maintaining collective faculty trust in the principal?

**Conclusions**

**Establishing and maintaining trust.** High school principals describe varied methods of establishing and maintaining collective FTP, but each share the themes of Understanding

Contextual Conditions, Charting the Course and Beginning, Displaying the Facets of Trust, Enabling School Structures, and Leading as they establish trust. Themes of Displaying Facets of Trust, Enabling School Structures, and Leading continue as principals maintain trust.

There are not major differences between the actions that principals take to establish FTP and actions to maintain FTP after the initial themes of Understanding Contextual Conditions and Charting the Course and Beginning. Respondents indicated that trust develops over time; every year the level of FTP deepens. The actions that establish trust must be sustained in order to maintain trust. One respondent likened maintaining trust to not "letting off the gas pedal." This finding aligns with the findings of Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015b), "trust must be maintained, once established, through repeated and consistent behavior of the school leader." (p. 269).

**Understanding contextual conditions.** Principals need to understand the contextual conditions surrounding their new position. This theme aligns with previously conducted research findings. External, internal, and task contextual conditions impact the formation of collective trust within a school (Forsyth et al., 2011). External context includes the outside influences, internal context includes the structure and culture within an organization, and task context refers to the complexity of the work.  Specific to FTP, Adams' (2008) model suggested the two contextual elements that influence FTP were teachers' years of experience and ethnicity of the school. While principals in the study do not mention these two factors, they did refer to the internal contextual elements of the transition from the previous principal and the base level of FTP with the previous principal. The principals' own experiences impacted how they experienced these factors and how they approached entering the position of head principal. They

gathered as much information as possible without focusing on any preconceived notions about the school.

Five of the 10 respondents had been assistant principals in their building prior to taking the head principal positions. Yet, four of these principals gathered information in ways similar to those who had not been in the building. This seemed to be related to the low level of trust that existed in the building. Formally gathering information demonstrated the principal's separateness from the previous principal. Most principals gathered information intentionally through surveys and face-to-face meetings. Through this process, they not only gathered information, but they began to develop relationships with the staff as well.

Eight of 10 principals indicated that they had entered a low base-level of FTP in the previous principal. One principal entered the position after a well-loved principal retired. One experienced a low level of trust as teachers entered the brand new high school. This base level of FTP was probably not typical. Results from a recent study of 64 schools indicated that there were significant variations in the levels of FTP in these schools ranging from low to high trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2014a). It is unclear whether or not it is easier for a new principal to establish trust in a low or high trust school. A teacher's propensity to trust impacts the level of FTP (Adams, 2008; Tschannen-Moran, 2014b). However, in some cases, a low level of trust may say more about the principal than the faculty. Tschannen-Moran (2014a) discussed the need to know more about building initial trust in these different situations. "We need to know more about the mechanisms for building initial trust, whether a school leader is entering a building where heretofore trust has been low or whether the principal is assuming leadership of a high-trust learning community" (p. 76). The results from the current study suggest that principals who

are deliberate in their actions can build trust with their faculty when the base level of trust had been low.

**Charting the course and beginning.** Results from this study suggest that principals should include actions that build trust into their entry plan of the head high school principal position. Most principals in the study had not created a formal entry plan when starting their new position, although, several had developed informal plans. Three of the 10 principals intentionally planned to build trust when they began their position. Alan was the most explicit with his opening presentation to staff. "In the first slide, it had a number one on it and then the next slide had the word trust, and that was the number one thing that I wanted to establish." The need to lead strategically through planning and setting a vision has emerged as important to the trust-building process during principal succession (Northfield, 2013; Northfield, Macmillan, & Meyer, 2011).

Nine of the 10 principals indicated the importance of establishing and articulating the mission, vision, and values of the school. The setting of the vision and mission and then putting it at the forefront throughout the year impacted FTP. This finding aligns with Bryk and Schneider's (2002) assertion that principals build a trusting environment through interpersonal relationships as well as through establishing a vision and taking action to realize the vision. The principals in this study not only set the vision and mission, but modeled them through their daily words and actions.

The participants' focus on building relationships with staff as they began their position of head principal was not a unique finding. Building of relational trust with individuals supported the development of collective FTP. Makiewicz & Mitchell (2014) found that increased frequency of interactions between principals and teachers was associated with increased FTP. For example,

Chris' actions of making sure to connect with each teacher every week helped him establish relationships and increase FTP. A notable finding was that establishing relationships with students and the student body supported FTP. There is an interconnectedness between the different trust relationships in schools (Tschannen-Moran, 2014a). Tschannen-Moran suggested that the principal sets the tone for all trust relationships in a school and found a significant, positive relationship between FTP and Faculty Trust in Clients (students and parents). Perhaps, when teachers observed the principal developing relationships with clients, this increased FTP.

FTP has been shown to have a strong positive relationship with school climate (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2003; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a). Only three principals in the study mentioned a specific focus on school climate and culture in the discussion of establishing trust. Six of the 10 principals mentioned school climate and culture in the discussion of maintaining trust. Consequently, the category did not meet criteria to report as a finding. The principals who mentioned climate and culture felt very strongly about its contribution to FTP. In starting in his position, Greg told his staff, "We have got to get on the same page, and we've also get the culture and climate right." Likewise, Owen said,

> I think the big thing is, is number one, they knew I trusted them to do their jobs, and also, they knew that I had their back. I wasn't going to put them before a kid, whether that was discipline or whatever. I was not going to put any adults in this building before the kids, but I think they respected that from me, that I was going to advocate for kids and advocate for them, in that order. That's what I was going to do every day, no matter what that looked like. I think that was the biggest part in establishing a positive culture here.

**Displaying facets of trust.** Results from this study indicate that principals who display the facets of trust consistently can establish and maintain high FTP. The facets of trust are well established in literature (Forsyth, el al, 2011; Handford & Leithwood, 2013; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Mishra, 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Each respondent demonstrated benevolence, consistency/reliability, honesty, openness, and competence while they established and maintained trust; however, the respondents differed in the relative importance of the facets for their leadership and FTP.

As principals established trust and demonstrated benevolence, they focused on both personal and professional care. Actions that displayed benevolence to the staff as a whole were mentioned by most respondents. Tschannen-Moran (2014b) suggested that principals can show benevolence by exhibiting regard for employee needs and rights, supporting them to meet expectations, and appreciating their work. Principals in the study planned staff gatherings, sent thank you notes, covered teacher duties, and created a culture of celebration. Teresa's example of the "We Love Our Staff" cart that she and her assistant principal wheeled around the school on Valentine's Day exemplified the benevolence that the principals in the study showed their staff.

Most principals in the study discussed the strong relationship between honesty and openness, generally in the context of communication. Honest and transparent communication was essential to establishing and maintaining FTP. One notable finding was that seven of the participants referred to the need to be humble and show humility, a behavior related to the facet of honesty. Mary shared, "I never, ever pretend I'm not flawed. And I will be the first to say if I do something wrong and I'll say it to them, 'I didn't do that right. I messed up on that.'" This vulnerability with staff helped principals establish FTP.

Principals placed a high value on showing the facet of competency, the most coded segments in the theme of Displaying the Facets of Trust. The category of competency included skills and actions related to the job task performance of the principal as well as the sub-codes walking the walk, taking and making time, being present and visible, cultivating respect, setting high expectations, and holding staff accountable. The emphasis on competency was supported in a study of high and low trust schools (Handford & Leithwood, 2013). The authors found that competence was the most often mentioned facet contributing to the trust of the principal. Most principals in the current study indicated that their competence was displayed in their knowledge of instructional practices and their involvement with professional development and support of teachers. This facet was developed over time and played a significant role in the establishment and maintenance of FTP.

One intriguing finding is the emphasis the participants placed on time. The concept of time is related to competency through such actions as working hard, getting the job done, and meeting deadlines (Forsyth et al., 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015b). Time was emphasized as very important to establishing and maintaining FTP. Some of the principals' actions included dedicating time to the school by starting the day early and ending late, taking time to have important conversations, creating time in the schedule for teachers to meet, and protecting the time of teachers by running interference for them.

While mentioned less by the participants than the other facets of trust, consistency/reliability was cited by participants as important for maintaining trust. Chris shared,

Consistency became more important since my first years. We made a point to be as consistent as possible. Staff then became comfortable in their actions because we constantly focused on the same things in our mission and vision. I think it really helped

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with trust, because when something came up staff would have a pretty good idea how we would handle things.

Reliability is shown through actions over time as teachers ascertain if the principal's words and actions match and if the principal will follow through on his/her word (Handford & Leithwood, 2013, Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis 2015b). Principals in the study mentioned the need to balance consistency with accounting for individual needs. This aligned with the sub-code of acting consistent with values. As Ian shared, "Consistency was so key: consistent communication, consistently positive in this narrative, consistently value driven."

When referents of trust have high levels of trust for each other, trust is said to be reciprocal (Forsyth et al., 2011). Parties become vulnerable when they are interdependent and extend trust to one another (Van Maele, Van Houtte, & Forsyth, 2014). While the idea of extending trust did not emerge in the discussion of the findings of establishing and maintaining trust, five of the 10 respondents did mention the importance of extending trust to their teachers. Owen shared the importance of extending trust to his teachers as he established FTP.

I trusted them to be the experts and to do what was right by kids. I really felt like that from the beginning that the teachers knew that I trusted it in them to do what was right, whether it's delivering content, whether it was best practices, whether it was supervising kids. They knew right off the bat for me, where I stood with those things, and they knew that I trusted in them.

**Enabling structures.** Principals need to ensure that school structures support the work of teachers in order to establish and maintain FTP. Enabling school structures are policies, procedures, decision-making, and other structures that teachers view as supporting their work (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). For principals in this study, the evaluation of

enabling structures happened as they gathered information when starting their new position. Common approaches included honoring the past, not changing structures too much, modifying structures that did not support the work of teachers and students, as well as changing structures.

The decision-making process was a category emphasized by most of the participants. They indicated that gathering input, acting on that input, and developing leaders were all important in establishing and maintaining FTP. The idea of shared decision-making played a prominent role when participants discussed their leadership styles. Sharing leadership was a highlighted practice. Principals noted the ability to make quick decisions as contributing to FTP. Participants shared examples when they were required to make major decisions on their own or when their decisions differed from the input given by the faculty. Once trust had been established, it was easier for principals to make these decisions and have their faculty trust the decision, especially when they were transparent about the process.

Principals indicated that PLCs/teacher collaboration teams and systems of interventions helped to establish and maintain trust. Recent studies indicate that PLCs have a strong relationship to FTP (Cranston, 2011; Hallum, Smith, Hite, J., Hite. S, & Wilcox, 2015; Liou & Daly, 2014). Principals in the study shared that creating time for teachers to collaborate helped to foster FTP. Their focus on students and creating systems of interventions also supported the development of FTP. As teachers benefitted from these structures, the principal shared that they were more likely to trust them.

The category of hiring was an unexpected finding. There is limited research in the trust literature about how hiring plays a role in the establishment and maintenance of FTP. Bryk and Schneider (2002) described the hiring actions of a principal at a Chicago elementary school. The principal was able to hire teachers that shared his vision, and this helped to create a faculty with

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strong relational trust. Ethan shared that creating a staff that one trusts to do the job is essential to maintaining FTP. When hiring,

> If you get somebody who is very skilled in their craft, then they're going to produce good results across the building. Then, the school acquires a reputation being a good place to work, and so you get into a virtuous circle.

Participants in the study discussed the process of teacher evaluation as playing a role in establishing and maintaining FTP. Previous research indicated that principals should be "visibly involved in instructional work; should create a sense of trust such that teachers are willing to discuss instructional issues with them during formal and informal supervision" (p. 479, Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Principals viewed the evaluations system as a tool to support conversations with teachers about instruction and to help them grow in their practice. The facets of openness and honesty played a role in these conversations. When teachers did not meet expectations or behaved in ways that were not acceptable, principals followed the disciplinary process, sometimes resulting in the dismissal of a teacher. Some principals had not anticipated that letting go of ineffective teachers would result in increased FTP. Recent studies about teacher supervision and evaluation have started to explore the relationship of supervision and evaluation with trust (Mette, Anderson, Nieuwenhuizen, Range, Hvidston, & Doty, 2017; Mette, Range, Anderson, Hvidston, & Nieuwenhuizen, 2015; Range, 2013). These studies suggest that there needs to be trust between the principal and the teacher in order to facilitate a conversation about growth rather than one focused on evaluation. A trusting relationship allows the principal to help teachers celebrate strengths and work on areas of growth, ultimately resulting in improved instruction and student achievement. This sentiment was shared by Ethan.

I think the way you help teachers to get better, is by good professional development, but not too much of it, and individual coaching. So, myself and my now two assistant principals, plus an instructional coach visit classrooms, not as frequently as we intend to but we try. We say, 'you know I think the very next best thing that you can be working on that would contribute to you being an even better teacher tomorrow than you are today would be this particular thing. What do you think about that? Is that something you can work with?' So you have that kind of conversation.

It's the two of you, teacher and the supervisor sitting side by side puzzling about something that's really quite complex. One of the problems with evaluation systems is that getting written in states is that you've got principals going into recommendations and judgements about work that the teachers know very well that the principals couldn't do it themselves. That undermines the system. Then, you've got, I don't know how many check boxes, 92 or something. Nobody ever got better by being told here's 92 things you need to work on. Work on one thing.

A compelling finding within the theme of Enabling Structures was the role that academic success plays in establishing and maintaining FTP. Principals indicated that academic success contributed to high levels of FTP. Recent studies have shown a positive relationship between academic success and FTP (Forsyth & Adams, 2014; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2014a; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis 2015b; Zeinabadi, 2014). Academic success has been described in these studies as a positive outcome of high FTP. The concept of reciprocal causality describes the reciprocal relationship between trust and its outcomes; they reinforce each other (Adams 2008; Forsyth et al., 2011). This suggests that FTP contributes to academic success and that academic success also increases FTP.

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**Leading.** Results from this study suggest that no single leadership style is necessary for establishing and maintaining FTP. Principals in this study described differing leadership styles, and principals indicated borrowing from various leadership styles. This finding was consistent with literature. Leadership styles that have been identified as having a positive relationship with high trust include supportive, authentic, transformational, collective, and instructional (Hoy & Kupersmith, 1984; Leis & Rimm-Kaufman, 2016; Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010; Tschannen-Moran, 2014a; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a; Zeinabadi & Rastegarpourb, 2010). These leadership styles are not mutually exclusive; leaders may employ aspects of different leadership styles (Forsyth et al., 2011).

Two leadership categories emerged as being important to establishing trust; focusing on teaching and learning and sharing leadership. These leadership styles were each shared by seven of the participants. Sharing leadership emerged as the leadership style that was important for maintaining FTP. For four of the principals, transformational leadership became more prominent in maintaining FTP. They were more willing to make changes once trust had been established. For example, Randy shared,

> I do feel like I'm a transformational leader. I continually look at whatever organization I'm a part of, and I continually analyze its effectiveness. Can it be more effective? It can. We can always be more effective and more efficient and do a better job. I've never been willing to settle…
>
> The business world, you don't make a lot of ... Apple did not become a juggernaut because they settled for something they did in 2005. They have continued to reform every single year and not let their proud ego stop them from doing that. The school world is no

different. Just because I brought in this wonderful idea in 2012 doesn't mean it doesn't need to be modified in 2014 to be better.

The leadership styles of the participants were evident in their everyday actions. Principals expressed their instructional leadership through setting high expectations for student achievement, giving direction for and participating in professional development, and through thoughtful teacher supervision and evaluation. They expressed their collective/shared leadership style through decision-making, developing teacher-leaders, and focusing on relationships. While not explicitly stated as their leadership style, many showed leadership actions associated with authentic and collegial styles. These actions included showing concern and respect for teachers, being open to ideas, respecting teacher competence, holding teachers accountable, and responding situationally.

**Experiencing challenges to the levels of FTP.** While this was a theme in the trust literature (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015; Lewicki & Bunker, 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998; Tschannen-Moran, 2014b; Walker, Kutsyuruba, & Noonan, 2011), this did not emerge as a theme in this study. Two principals discussed the challenges to levels of trust as they began their positions. As Ian was opening the new school, many of the teachers did not want to be there.

I think there were four or five individuals that just simply did not want to be at this school. For them, they really, I think of outright sabotage to a degree. I think people knew that there was, they knew that what those individuals were doing was unhealthy… None of them are here. No. One of them is still here; but that teacher came on pretty quickly. Really, I think we had some success that first year that helped. I think just the consistency was so key: consistent communication, consistently positive in this narrative, consistently value driven.

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Similarly, Randy experienced early challenges to level of trust. The base level of FTP was low and student achievement was low. He focused on building relationships, being open and honest, sharing leadership, improving teaching and learning, changing structures, and leading by example. Some of the teachers who were not supportive left the school. Over time, his school went from a bottom performing school in the state to a top 10% school. The level FTP increased.

Four principals expressed challenges to the levels of trust once it had been established. One was more significant, related to letting go of a well-liked teacher. Two other situations were also related to letting go of teachers, but the magnitude of the challenge to FTP was not as great. One principal expressed a challenge related to district level leadership. These principals each said that positively managing these challenges resulted in even higher levels of FTP.

Each of the participants in the study received responses of at least 93% or more in agreement with the principal having established an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. It could be deduced that principals in this category who experienced significant challenges to the level of FTP would have successfully restored any broken trust. None of the principals in the study indicated that any of their actions had destroyed trust.

**Implications for Practice and Research**

This study explored the process by which high school principals establish and maintain collective FTP. Trust is a necessary component of effective schools and can lay the foundation for school reform efforts (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Cosner, 2009). Trust impacts the instructional capacity of a school and can lead to increased student achievement (Adams, 2013; Adams & Forsyth, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a). Principal leadership is essential to establishing a trusting environment (Byrk & Schneider, 2002). When faculty trust in the

principal is high, student achievement is also high as a result (Makiewicz & Mitchell, 2014;

Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015a).

This study found that principals established and maintained trust through the themes of

Understanding Contextual Conditions, Charting the Course and Beginning, Displaying the Facets

of Trust, Enabling School Structures, and Leading. The principals employed a myriad of

practices as they established and maintained trust. The actions of theses principals can serve as a

guide to principal preparation programs, new principals, and practicing principals. In addition,

the findings of this study offer opportunities for further research.

**Recommendations for Practitioners**

**Principal preparation programs.** Preparation programs for principals would benefit

from including a focus on how principals can establish and maintain trust with their faculty.

Principal candidates should demonstrate competencies related to the themes of Understanding

Contextual Conditions, Charting the Course and Beginning, Displaying the Facets of Trust,

Enabling School Structures, and Leading. Learning from the actions of principals who have built

a high level of FTP should be a necessary component of any principal preparation program.

**High school principals beginning a new position.** New head high school principals,

whether new to a building or not, should be intentional in establishing FTP. The themes of

Understanding Contextual Conditions and Charting the Course and Beginning are essential as a

principal begins a new position. The actions and narratives of the principals in this study could

serve as a guide as principals seek to understand the context of the transition from the previous

principal and the context of the school through gathering information. Components of an entry

plan include intentional trust building through establishing and articulating mission, vision, and

values; developing relationships with staff; and developing relationships with students and the

student body. A focus on Displaying the Facets of Trust, Enabling School Structures, and Leading becomes essential for establishing FTP. The actions and narratives of the principals in this study can provide excellent ideas for principals as they lead their school to a high level of FTP.

**Experienced high school principals maintaining FTP.** The actions and narratives of the principals in this study can serve as a guide for principals who have established or seek to establish a high level of FTP. As one participant described it, leaders cannot afford to "let their foot of the gas pedal." "Trust must be maintained, once established, through repeated and consistent behavior of the school leader" (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015b). Experienced principals with high levels of FTP should continue to focus on Displaying the Facets of Trust, Enabling School Structures, and Leading. While this study focused on high school principals, it is likely that many of their actions could guide principals at other school levels as they seek to establish and maintain FTP.

**District-level leadership.** Trust is a high-leverage resource and is a necessary component of school reform efforts (Adams, 2103). District-level leaders who support high school and other principals should be aware of the role that trust plays in school reform. District leaders can support building principals as they establish and maintain trust. They would be wise to devise mentorship programs for their new principals that incorporate discussions regarding FTP. District surveys of staff should include questions regarding levels of trust so that principals can understand their current level of FTP and take steps to increase it.

## Recommendations for Academics

This study adds to the limited body of existing literature specific to understanding the process of establishing and maintaining FTP in high schools as well as adds to the limited body

of qualitative research in the area of FTP. The sample in this study was 10 high school principals who had developed a high level of trust with their faculty, were deemed to be effective leaders, and had been administrators in their building for three or more years. More research is needed to fully understand how principals establish and maintain FTP. Additional studies about understanding the processes by which principals establish and maintain trust could include more principals or explore different geographic areas. Studies could also compare:

- principals' actions at different school levels (elementary, middle, high school),

- principals' actions entering low and high FTP schools,

- principals' descriptions of building trust and teachers' descriptions of their experience, or

- principals' actions of those who had built high FTP and principals who had not established high FTP.

This study also highlighted the need for studies related to specific themes and categories that emerged. Questions for further study include:

- How does formal versus informal entry planning for the principalship impact the establishment of FTP? What are the components of an effective entry plan for establishing FTP?

- How does FTP play a role in teacher supervision and evaluation?

- How does the reciprocal causality of academic success play a role in establishing and maintaining FTP?

- How does principal trust in clients (students and parents) impact FTP?

**Concluding Comments**

This study explored the process by which high school principals established and maintained collective faculty trust in the principal (FTP). High school principals face the

challenge of establishing FTP in settings generally larger than their colleagues in elementary and

middle schools which can impact the level of trust. The rich descriptions from participants about

the process by which they established and maintained FTP adds to the limited qualitative

literature about FTP, especially in the context of high schools. The findings from this study can

serve as a guide to new and experienced high school principals as they establish and maintain

FTP. By establishing a culture of mutual trust and respect, high school principals can impact

student achievement and, potentially, the graduation rate and preparedness for post-secondary

education.

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# Appendix A: Interview Questions

| Theme | Research Objective | Questions |
|---|---|---|
| Stages of Trust Development: Establishing and Maintaining Trust | To understand how principals establish FTP when starting in a new school or position. | When you started the position of high school principal, what actions did you take to establish a relationship with your faculty? |
| | To understand how principals describe the process of maintaining FTP. | If you had a formal entry plan, did it contain specifics actions for building trust? What were those actions? |
| | | After the first two years, did you do anything specific to maintain trust? |
| | | Have you experienced any challenges to the level of FTP? If so, how did you address those challenges? |
| | | What advice would you give to new principals about how to create an entry plan that includes ways to establish FTP? |
| Cognitive Trust Mechanisms: Enabling Structures Teachers' Propensity to Trust | To understand the structures that principals put into place that facilitate higher FTP. | How would you describe the level of FTP when you started this position? |
| | | Were there any existing structures in place that supported the establishment of FTP? |
| | | What are some of the formal and/or informal structures that you have put into place that may have helped increase FTP? When did this occur? |
| Behavioral Trust Mechanisms: Leadership Styles | To explore the leadership style of the principal and practices related to FTP. | How do you describe your leadership style? How is that visible in your daily actions and decision-making? (Can you give me a specific example?) |

| Theme | Research Objective | Questions |
|---|---|---|
| Discernments of trust: The Facets of Trust | To understand how principals display the five facets of trust. | The impression of the principal's benevolence, honesty, openness, competence, and consistency all contribute potently to the trust that the faculty place in the principal.<br><br>Think about your first 1-2 years in your building, what were the most important actions you took to display any of these facets of trust?<br><br>Have any of these facets become more important in your work since your first years in the school? |

**Appendix B: Email Script**

My name is Brenda Damiani, and I am a doctoral student at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota. I am also principal of a Minnesota high school. You are invited to participate in a study about how principals establish and maintain trust with their faculty.

You were selected as a possible participant because data from the TELL survey indicated that you have built high mutual trust with your faculty. You are uniquely positioned to provide valuable information about how principals build trust.

If you agree to participate, I will follow-up with a phone call. At that time, we can discuss assurances of confidentiality and the consent process. We will schedule an interview that will take place via a Google Hangout or Skype. The interview should take an hour or less.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brenda Damiani

**Appendix C: Follow-Up Email Script**

My name is Brenda Damiani. I am following up regarding a recent email that I sent. I am a doctoral student at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota. I am also principal of a Minnesota high school. You are invited to participate in a study about how principals establish and maintain trust with their faculty.

You were selected as a possible participant because data from the TELL survey indicated that you have built high mutual trust with your faculty. You are uniquely positioned to provide valuable information about how principals build trust.

If you agree to participate, I will follow-up with a phone call. At that time, we can discuss assurances of confidentiality and the consent process. We will schedule an interview that will take place via a Google Hangout or Skype. The interview should take an hour or less.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brenda Damiani

**Appendix D: Phone Script**

My name is Brenda Damiani, a doctoral student at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota, and a principal of a Minnesota high school. I am following up to an email I sent you earlier this week. Thank for considering participation in this study. You were selected as a possible participant because data from the TELL survey indicated that you have built high mutual trust with your faculty. This gives you unique perspective about how principals build trust.

The interview will take approximately 60 minutes, and it will be recorded for transcription purposes. I will conduct the interview at a time of your choice. You will receive a copy of the transcription to check it for accuracy. I will also contact you following the interview to ensure that I am representing your ideas accurately.

Confidentiality is highly valued. All participant names and identifiers will be deleted from transcripts, and transcripts will be identifiable only by a number. Transcripts will be stored on the hard-drive of a password-protected computer to which only I have access. No one will be identifiable in any written reports or publications.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your relationship with Bethel University, and your information will be destroyed. There are no risks for participating in this study, nor will there be any compensation for participation. If you are willing to participate, I will send you an informed consent letter to sign.

**Appendix E: Informed Consent**

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH WITH HUMANS

You are invited to participate in a study about collective faculty trust in the principal. I hope to learn more about how principals establish and maintain trust with their faculty. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because the results of the TELL Survey indicated that you have built a high level of trust with your faculty.

This research is being conducted by Brenda Damiani, a high school principal in Minnesota and a doctoral student at Bethel University in Minnesota. The research is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. There are no monetary incentives for participation.

If you decide to participate, I will I will contact you to set up one interview that will be conducted through a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and is expected to last no longer than an hour. I will contact you sometime after the interview to share the interview transcript, discuss developing themes, and check with you to see if my understanding was correct.

There are no anticipated discomforts other than the possible discomforts that may be associated with being interviewed and recorded for transcription purposes. The estimated total time for the interview and subsequent review of the transcript is no more than a total of two hours. All identifiable information will be withheld, and there are no risks expected. Possible benefits to participating may be time for reflecting on current practices of building trust and leadership.

Any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified to you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable, and only aggregate data will be presented. The interview transcript will be stored on a password-protected computer to which only I have access, and interview transcripts will then be used for data analysis purposes.

Your decision to participate will not affect your future relations with Bethel University or me in any way. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without affecting such relationships. Should you experience discomfort, you could, for example, skip a question, stop the interview, or ask to continue or consult at a later date.

This research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel's Levels of Review for Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participants' rights or wish to report a research-related injury, please call Brenda Damiani (763) 923-9021 or my Bethel Faculty Advisor, Dr. Tracy Reimer (651) 635-8502. You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

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You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

_____
Signature                                    Date

_____
Signature of Investigator

**Appendix F: Code System**

Understanding Contextual Conditions:
- Reflecting upon and learning through experience of the principal: Includes the previous experience of the principal and how this might impact leading the high school.
- Understanding the context of the transition to new head principal: Awareness of how/why there was a change in the high school principal position.
- Gathering information: Actions used to gather information about the school. Includes talking to and surveying staff.
- Understanding the base level of FTP: Awareness of the base level of faculty trust in administration/previous principal gathered through survey or conversations.
- Recognizing the context of high school: Discussion of the position of head high school principal and its difference from other levels.

Charting the Course and Beginning
- Creating an entry plan: Planning for the entry into the high school principal position and the beginning of the school year either formally or informally. Includes any intentional trust building plans.
- Establishing and articulating the mission, vision, and values: Words and actions that focus on the mission, vision, and values of the school. Also included symbols.
- Developing relationships with staff: Any interactions with staff that are specifically about building relationships.
- Establishing relationships with students/student body: Any interactions with students or the student body that are specifically about building relationships.
- Promoting a positive school culture/climate: Any actions to build a positive school culture for staff or students.

Displaying the Facets of Trust
- Extending trust to faculty: Actions that extend trust to faculty. Generally, trusting them to do their jobs as teachers and as experts in their content.
- Demonstrating benevolence: Includes actions that show care for staff both personally and professionally. Also includes showing thanks and gratitude.
- Demonstrating honesty: Actions that display honesty, telling the truth, matching actions and words, being authentic and showing humility.
- Demonstrating openness: Actions that show openness such as an open door policy, revealing information, listening, and communicating.
- Demonstrating competency: Actions that show competency in the role of the head principal. Also includes actions such as walking the walk, taking and making time, being present and visible, cultivating respect, setting high expectations, and holding staff accountable.
- Demonstrating consistency/reliability: Actions that display consistency, consistency with values, reliability, and follow-through.

Leading
- Focusing on teaching and learning: Leadership actions/style that display instructional leadership, focusing on the core tasks of schooling: appropriate curriculum, improving instruction, managing school context, and improving student learning.
- Sharing leadership: Leadership actions/style that share the decision-making with faculty, can be formal or informal.
- Leading based on context and situation: Leadership actions/style based on the context of the situation.
- Transforming through leadership: Leadership actions/style that is transformative, seeks change, and seeks to empower and inspire.
- Serving through leadership: Leadership actions/style that focuses on serving students and staff, often referred to as servant leadership.

Enabling School Structures
- Sustaining, modifying, and creating enabling structures: Enabling school structures are structures regarding decision-making, hierarchy, rules and regulations, and formal structures. This includes actions that evaluate, sustain, modify, or change existing structures.
- Hiring: Hiring faculty.
- Developing and evaluating teachers: Actions related to professional development, observing, and evaluation of teachers. developing, and evaluating of teachers.
- Making decisions: Actions that are related to the decision-making process of the principal, how important decisions are made in a school.
- Achieving academic success: Refers to academic success of school, improvement in student achievement based on test scores.

Experiencing Challenges to the Level of FTP
- Experiencing challenges to the level of FTP: Any events that may have impacted the level of FTP and actions to repair broken trust.