Trust in Schools: Teacher Trust and Adequate Yearly Progress

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ABSTRACT

Trust among stakeholders at a school has been linked to the academic success of students. This quantitative causal comparative study involved examining the relationship between teacher-reported trust and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results for 59 schools, across 12 school districts in south Georgia. Certified teachers from each school completed an online survey, which asked them to rate the extent to which they disagreed or agreed with statements pertaining to trust using a Likert scale rating of 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). A trust in principal and trust in colleague rating was assigned for each school. Next, each school's AYP results were collected and coded numerically. A number (1 to 5) was assigned to schools based on their AYP results.

A statistically significant correlation between teacher trust in colleagues and a school's AYP result was found, $r_s(59) = .50$, $p < .001$. Also, a significant correlation between teacher trust in colleagues and teacher trust in principal was found, $r_s(59) = .62$, $p < .001$. Finally, analysis of the data showed a significant correlation between trust in colleagues and the reported effectiveness of the school's Professional Learning Community (PLC), $r_s(59) = .31$, $p = .02$. These findings indicate a need to identify and improve trust between stakeholders within schools. With schools under pressure to meet AYP requirements, improving the trust between colleagues and between teachers and the principal may help strengthen collaboration and improve the culture of a school, with a possible outcome of increased student achievement.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was two-fold. The first purpose was to identify the levels of teacher-reported trust in principal and among colleagues within several school systems and investigate if a correlation existed between the levels of reported trust and the school's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report. Second, the researcher wanted to identify possible factors within these schools that contributed to differing levels of trust among teachers.

For decades, federal and state laws have focused on school improvement (La Morte, 2005). The demands on school systems to improve teacher quality, reduce the dropout rate, close the achievement gap, increase parental involvement, and integrate technology continue to grow. The most recent of these demands has come in the form of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. This act requires schools and school systems to show AYP each year, with the overall goal to have all students performing at or above grade level by 2014 on standardized tests (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2003).

According to the Georgia Department of Education (2010a), AYP is a measurement of three categories within a public school system during a given school year: participation, academic performance, and a system selected indicator, such as attendance or graduation rates. Participation is measured at

the school level and with all student groups larger than 40 students. It requires 95% participation within each group or school as a whole on both the Language Arts and Mathematics tests. Currently in Georgia, academic performance is assessed in five subject areas, but only reading/language arts and mathematics scores are used to determine AYP. To meet NCLB requirements, each state is required to create a standards-based curriculum and assess this curriculum using a standardized achievement test. AYP is determined in part on the school's performance on the standardized achievement tests.

In 2007, the state of Georgia selected for 67.6% of students to meet or exceed the base score set for the Mathematics Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT), 73.3% for the Language Arts CRCT, or 74.9% of students to meet or exceed the base score in Mathematics on the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) and 87.7% in Language Arts on the GHSGT in the academic performance category (Georgia Department of Education, 2007). Each year, the percentages required to meet or exceed the base score increases. For Georgia, "all student groups, schools, school districts, and the State as a whole [must] reach this goal by 2013-2014" (Georgia Department of Education, 2010a, para 4).

As a state, Georgia did not meet AYP for the 2007-2008 school year due to academic performance of many subgroups and failure to meet the second indicator set by the schools (Georgia Department of Education, 2007). To achieve the 100% proficiency level by 2013, schools are changing many of their

current practices and looking for ways to increase student achievement for all groups of students, including students with disabilities, students who are economically disadvantaged, students with limited English proficiency, and students of various ethnicities. Increasing student achievement for all subgroups is necessary in order to meet AYP.

Schools are working diligently to achieve AYP and avoid being labeled a School in Need of Improvement (NI). This label refers to schools that receive Title I funding but did not meet the goals set by the state in math and reading for the past two years. Not meeting AYP forces schools to seek additional help and allows students to transfer to other public schools within the district (Georgia Department of Education, 2010a). Many reform movements are being implemented across the country to help school systems consistently achieve AYP and improve student achievement for all subgroups within the school systems (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

School reform movements are intended to change and improve current educational practices (Schmoker, 2004). Unfortunately, these reform movements are often top-down, meaning that decisions are made by policy workers in federal or state departments and are enforced by central office employees or school principals but have little to no involvement or input from teachers (Ingersoll, 2007; Page & Page, 1994). Even at the turn of the twenty-first century, Fullan (2001) purported that “top-down change doesn’t work” (p. 66). He continued by stating

that if top-down reform is demanded, as with NCLB, “assertive leadership (including teacher leaders) is required” (p. 67). Not including teachers in the decision making process undermines the reform. If change is to occur, top-down reform must be combined with feelings of ownership by the involved group of teachers. To meet the goals set by NCLB by 2014, schools must change and this change requires teachers to work together, sharing the responsibility to implement the new reform processes (Conzemius & O’Neill, 2001; Fullan, 2001).

For too long, teachers have worked in isolation (Anderson, 2002; Burney, 2004; DuFour, 2004; Fullan, 2001; Leo & Cowan, 2000). However, more recently, schools have attempted to alleviate this problem by creating Professional Learning Communities (PLC). A PLC is a group of professionals who collaborate to identify areas a school needs to improve on and then work together to improve the school for everyone (Mawhinney, Haas, & Wood, 2005). These professionals focus on five aspects of school improvement. They are: shared values and vision, collective learning and application, supportive and shared leadership, supportive conditions, and shared personal practice. Even with great leadership and a shared vision, sharing personal teaching practice is necessary for a dramatic increase in student achievement (Mawhinney et al., 2005). According to Fullan (2001), when teachers interact with other educators the interaction influences how they teach. The interaction is necessary for schools looking to improve. To interact in this professional manner, trust is a needed component, and trust in each other is necessary for school improvement.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) concluded that schools with little or no trust [in peer/professional relationships] have almost no chance of improving. Experts on relational trust recognize that while most teachers agree that sharing information is beneficial and that this practice would be helpful to improve their teaching, sharing is also risky and a high level of trust is necessary before colleagues accept this change in teaching practice (Leo & Cowan, 2000). Currently, only a few studies examining the level of trust between teachers and principals and among teachers in schools have been conducted. Additionally, these studies were completed in mostly urban school districts. These studies focused on trust as the major factor determining the extent to which teachers work together to improve teaching and overall student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Kochanek, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). According to daCosta (1995), collaboration between teachers is a key element to improving teacher quality and ultimately student achievement. However, if schools want meaningful and effective collaboration the trust levels between colleagues must be high, and there must be a level of mutual respect (daCosta, 1995).

The degree of trust within a school system varies due to many factors. A previous study by Bryk and Schneider (2002) indicated that racial conflict among teachers, a predominately African-American student population, and a racially mixed student population were factors that negatively affected the trust levels within a school. They also found that schools with a student population of less than 350 reported higher levels of trust. Factors such as school level

(elementary, middle, or high) or school type (private, charter, or public) may be related to trust level. Within schools, teacher experience and principal leadership style may affect the level of trust. To increase collaboration among teachers in Georgia's school systems, collecting data on teacher-reported trust, both in the principal and in colleagues, could be beneficial. Determining factors that affect a teacher's willingness to trust other teachers and the principal may aid improvement efforts for schools looking to improve collaboration among their teachers. Increased collaboration is expected to increase test scores, thereby resulting in schools meeting and maintaining their AYP status.

Theoretical Framework

Trust has long been studied in the fields of sociology, public health, psychology, and political science (Ward & Meyer, 2009). Not until the 1980s and 1990s did researchers begin examining how trust affects the capacity of a school's staff to improve. With the NCLB Act of 2001, an emphasis has been placed on ascertaining what schools can do to improve student achievement. Theoretical and empirical studies have investigated the role that trust has on the ability of school employees to implement necessary school reform and on the achievement levels of the students attending these schools (Azari, Hassanzadeh, Sharabi, & Siamian, 2008; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001; Houtte, 2006; Kochanek, 2005; Rock & Appold, n.d.; Tschannen-Moran, 2004b).

Currently, few researchers have examined the role of trust in schools.

According to Kochanek (2005), “only two sets of researchers have persistently explored the operation of trust in schools…Hoy and his colleagues…[and] Bryk and Schneider” (p. 6). While large longitudinal studies have been conducted in urban schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a), few studies have focused on rural areas. Both research groups have found that the level of trust within a school greatly affects the school’s overall functioning and the ability of the stakeholders to work together within the school (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a).

These large scale studies, as well as other smaller studies on teacher trust, have typically involved teachers completing surveys concerning trust. Questions ask participants to rate how much they agree with a particular statement involving trust. These statements include issues surrounding trust, such as benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competency. Researchers typically asked participants to rate a statement using a Likert scale. Each answer was marked and the responses were used to identify the strengths and weaknesses within a school across many issues pertaining to trust (Azari, et al., 2008; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard, et al., 2001; Houtte, 2006; Kochanek, 2005; Rock & Appold, n.d.; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a).

Therefore, to gather general knowledge on trust levels in south Georgia schools, a descriptive study using comparative analysis, may be useful for schools within this Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) district. RESA is an organization funded by state boards of education and local school districts.

The agency provides training, resources, and support to school systems within a certain area of the state (Green, n.d.). Data from these surveys may help in identifying the current levels of teacher-reported trust in principal and teacher-reported trust in colleagues within a school and the data could be compared against the data from other schools in the district. School systems that fail to assess the levels of trust between faculty and principal and among the faculty risk overlooking a key component required for the successful implementation of PLC, which is trust. Likewise, school systems with a low degree of teacher-reported trust in principal and teacher-reported trust in colleagues may be ineffective in collaborating with one another, which in turn impacts student achievement. Identifying trust levels and then working to improve those levels within a school may improve collaboration between stakeholders, which may increase student achievement (Rock & Appold, n.d.).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive study was to identify the level of teacher-reported trust in principal and teacher-reported trust in colleagues within several school districts in a south Georgia RESA district and examine the relationship between the level of trust reported and the school's AYP report, one measure of student achievement. The researcher intended to identify potential factors within these schools that may have contributed to differing levels of trust and suggest areas that these school systems needed to address to improve trust among faculty members and the principal and ultimately increase the number of schools

making AYP.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions investigated in this study are as follows:

Research Question 1. What is the relationship between teacher-reported trust in the principal and a school's AYP results?

Research Question 2. What is the relationship between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and a school's AYP results?

Research Question 3. What is the difference between teacher-reported trust in principal and grade level taught (elementary, middle, high)?

Research Question 4. What is the difference between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and grade level taught (elementary, middle, high)?

The hypotheses identified in this study are as follows:

Null Hypothesis 1 - No relationship between the level of teacher-reported trust in the principal within a school and the school's AYP results will exist.

Hypothesis 1 - The level of teacher-reported trust in the principal will make a significant difference in the school's AYP results.

Null Hypothesis 2 – No relationship between the level of teacher-reported trust in colleagues within a school and the school's AYP results will exist.

Hypothesis 2 – The level of teacher-reported trust in colleagues within a school will make a significant difference in the school's AYP results.

Null Hypothesis 3 There is no difference between teacher-reported trust in the principal and the school level (elementary, middle, and high).

Hypothesis 3 – There is a significant difference between teacher-reported trust in the principal and the school level (elementary, middle, and high).

Null Hypothesis 4 – There is no difference between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and the school level (elementary, middle, and high).

Hypothesis 4 – There is a significant difference between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and the school level (elementary, middle, and high).

Definition of Terms

Trust – “Trust is one’s willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, honest, open, reliable, and competent” (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a, p. 17).

Teacher trust in principal – The level of trust teachers have in the principal at their school, which is influenced by the actions and behaviors of the principal as he or she interacts with teachers (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a).

Teacher trust in colleagues – The level of trust between teachers at a school, which is influenced by the actions and behaviors of the teachers as they interact with one another (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a).

Distrust – The actions or behaviors or the lack of actions or behaviors between stakeholders which causes one stakeholder to feel unable to rely on the other or to lose confidence in that person’s concern for others (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a).

Professional Learning Community – “A professional learning community (PLC) is defined as a school in which the professionals (administrators and

teachers) continuously seek and share learning to increase their teaching effectiveness for students and act on what they learn" (Hord, 1997, p.1).

No Child Left Behind - "The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) —the principal federal law affecting education from kindergarten through high school…[and] is built on four common-sense pillars: accountability for results, an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research, expanded parental options, and expanded local control and flexibility" (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 1).

Adequate Yearly Progress - "Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is an individual state's measure of progress toward the goal of 100 percent of students achieving to state academic standards in at least reading/language arts and math. It sets the minimum level of proficiency that the state, its school districts, and schools must achieve each year on annual tests and related academic indicators" (U.S. Department of Education, n.d., para 1).

Teacher collaboration – "When two or more people engage in an activity with shared goals and shared processes" (Dillon, n.d., para 3).

Certified Teachers – In the state of Georgia, the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) is responsible for certifying all public school employees. "No such personnel shall be employed in the public schools of this state unless they hold certificates issued by the Commission certifying their qualifications and classification in accordance with such regulations" (Georgia Professional

Standards Commission, 2010, para 3).

Head Building Principal – “The highest-ranking administrator in an elementary, middle, or high school” (Buckner, 2002, para 1).

School Culture – The “beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that characterize a school in terms of: how people treat and feel about each other; the extent to which people feel included and appreciated; and rituals and traditions reflecting collaboration and collegiality” (Center for Improving School Culture, 2004, para 2).

Participants

A study population consisting of certified teachers from a local RESA district was asked to participate. This study population included a total of 73 schools (42 elementary and primary, 17 middle, 11 high, and 3 alternative schools) within a south Georgia RESA district, consisting of 12 school districts. Permission was obtained from all 12 superintendents. All certified teachers within these districts were asked to complete the online survey.

Research Methodology

In this descriptive study, a modified version of a trust survey developed by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) was administered electronically to teachers in a south Georgia RESA district (see Appendix D). The survey included: demographic questions, including certification, age, race, gender, years in teaching, highest degree obtained, years at the current school, subject taught, whether the participants taught at an elementary, middle, high, or alternative

school, and 16 questions pertaining to relationships between the principal and colleagues and between colleagues at a school. Also, one question pertaining to the PLC at the school was asked. The data were disaggregated by demographic components for comparison among respondents. The researcher then identified the levels of teacher-reported trust in principal and teacher-reported trust in colleagues in school systems across the RESA district and examined the relationship between trust levels and AYP results.

A pilot study of four people at the researcher's school allowed the researcher to test the online survey instrument and determine the difficulties participants had accessing the technology, using the online survey, and comprehending the questions.

Significance of the Study

Currently, research studies comparing trust between teacher and principal and among teachers are limited. While large longitudinal studies have been completed in urban schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), few studies have focused on rural schools. The findings from this study are expected to benefit schools in a south Georgia RESA district. By learning how significant trust is for a faculty, school systems may determine a need for professional development in this area. As trust levels improve, faculty may discover that examining personal practice with colleagues might not be as intimidating as was once thought and allow PLCs to operate as intended. Through the sharing of personal teaching practices and increased collaboration, the instruction that students receive each day from their

teachers may improve, ultimately increasing student achievement.

Limitations of the Study

The research study contains threats to internal and external validity. The focus of this study consisted only of school systems in a south Georgia RESA district and, therefore, readers should only generalize findings to this selected study population. Survey data were collected on a voluntary basis and may not be representative of the entire teacher population of the schools. Validity was also threatened due to misreported or unreported data. Also, because the survey was self-reported, a possibility exists that the actual beliefs of the teacher did not coincide with the response given. Participants completed the survey only once at the end of a school year. Due to the fact that the end of the year is often a very stressful and hectic time for educators, a possibility exists that these factors influenced how the teachers responded to questions concerning trust in the principal and colleagues. Finally, because this survey was administered electronically, the computer literacy of the participants and the availability of computers to the participants may have affected the results, thus impacting the validity of the study (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001).

Organization of Remaining Chapters

Following Chapter 1, the introduction and outlining of the study, Chapter 2 will contain the review of literature surrounding the topics of professional learning communities and trust in schools. Prior studies on the effects of trust will be discussed. Chapter 3 will describe the research methodology, including the

participants, the survey instrument, the research design, and limitations. Chapter 4 will be research findings along with tables. Finally, Chapter 5 will include the conclusion and discussion of the study, along with suggestions for future research.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter 2 contains a brief review of the literature related to PLCs, trust, and the role that teachers and principals have in the success or failure of a school community. The literature review will outline the importance of trust within a school and how student achievement is the result of effective collaboration among the many stakeholders within a school. As education reform continues, pressure is being placed on school districts to increase student achievement. Principals and teachers must strive to improve a school's effectiveness, working together to increase student achievement. Trust is a necessary component of collaboration. The many levels of trust and the need for trust within schools, as well as ways to improve trust within schools, will be discussed.

Education Reform

Education reform has been a concern among policy makers for many decades. Over time, as mandated reform movements have come and gone, educators across the country have developed the "this too shall pass" approach to education reform (DuFour, 2004, p. 1). One cause behind this type of reform thinking is that reform ideas and terminology are often used in education without a true understanding of the actual concept behind the phrase (DuFour, 2004; Hord, 1998). One recent example is the PLC. According to DuFour (2004), "the

term [PLC] has been used so ubiquitously that it is in danger of losing all meaning" (p. 1). Fullan (2001) agreed, stating that "the phrase 'learning organization' is one of the most used and most superficially understood terms in the change business" (p. 269). As schools across the nation began to form PLCs, many schools simply created a committee of school personnel and declared they would serve as the school's PLC. These PLC groups often held meetings which focused on operational procedures and building camaraderie between staff members, yet failed to implement a PLC according to the suggested research (DuFour, 2004).

DuFour (2004) believed that the problem with most reform movements is that they lack profundity. Schools, aiming to improve test results, enthusiastically launch a reform effort without understanding the concepts behind the reform. DuFour stated that this lack of understanding causes problems with the implementation of the reform, which leads school leaders to believe that the reform efforts did not work. Subsequently, the reform effort is abandoned and schools begin to search for the next reform effort which promises results and ignites a new enthusiasm that reinitiates the process. This pattern has been the case with many schools attempting to implement a PLC. Hipp and Huffman (2002) suggested that this pattern occurs because few schools are able to move from conceptualization of a PLC to the implementation a fully functioning PLC, due to the amount of time and effort that is required to create a PLC that truly aids the school. Therefore, how can schools avoid the superficiality of most

reform efforts within education and engage in a lasting, successful reform effort? According to DuFour (2004), educators must focus on the true concepts behind the reform, examine the big ideas, and stay with the reform effort until the reform becomes a part of the school's culture. Furthermore, Bryk and Schneider (2002) stated that for schools to achieve positive results, all stakeholders must work together.

Professional Learning Community Model

Research concerning PLCs has been readily available within educational journals and books (Anderson, 2002; Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Bloom & Stein, 2004; Bullough, 2007; DuFour, 2004; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Flemming, 1999; Hipp, 2001; Hord, 1998; Huffman & Hipp, 2000; Lasiter, 1996; Leo & Cowan, 2000; Martin-Kniep, 2004; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). DuFour implemented the first PLC in 1983 at Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Illinois. The model was successful, and schools across the country began to see significant improvements in student achievement as a result of implementing a PLC (Rock & Appold, n.d.).

Although many variations to the definition exist, Stoll et al. (2006) defined a PLC as "a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way, and operating as a collective enterprise" (p. 4). Hord (1998) identified the following five dimensions that she believes are necessary to create and maintain a successful PLC: shared values and vision; collective learning and

application; supportive and shared leadership; supportive conditions; and shared personal practice by educators.

One of the first areas of a PLC to be developed within a school is creating a shared vision. All stakeholders agree on a “collective commitment to guiding principles that articulate what the people in the school believe and what they seek to create” (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). This vision is a critical component of a successful PLC, and the focus of the vision should be student learning. The major steps to creating a shared vision involve formulating a formal vision statement with input from staff members, gaining support as the school works to implement the vision plan, and placing focus on initiatives that will reflect the vision plan (Leo & Cowan, 2000).

A second area of a PLC to be developed within the school includes collective learning and application. This step focuses on members of the PLC addressing problems within the school and seeks to determine what professional training is needed. Subsequently, members undergo training in the areas the PLC felt needed to be addressed within the school. The training is discussed and implemented for the betterment of the student body. If implemented correctly, this process aids in strengthening the bond between faculty members and maintains the focus on the school vision by placing the focus on what can be improved within the school and having the members learn strategies together instead of complaining about weaknesses (Leo & Cowan, 2000).

When continuing Hord’s five dimensions of successful PLCs, the next step

in working to create a PLC is supportive and shared leadership, which is a critical component to its success. Principals and other school leaders must allow other staff members to share in the decision making, and the school principal should encourage staff members to take on leadership roles. This encouragement may cause members of a PLC to believe their opinions are valued and thereby are more willing to support initiatives. This dimension also leads to collective focus on the school's vision (Leo & Cowan, 2000).

Another necessary dimension of PLC, according to Hord (1998), is the establishment of supportive conditions. This dimension relates to two areas: structural and faculty relations. Structural concerns include: size of school, layout of classrooms, time allowed to meet, and methods of communicating. Faculty relations involve building respect, trust, expectations for improvement, and care for all members within a school. PLCs can be more productive in accomplishing the goals of the school and in maintaining the school's vision when supportive conditions are established, such as allotting time to meet, convenience of meeting locations, and respect of the members of the PLC (Leo & Cowan, 2000).

The last area of Hord's five dimensions of a PLC to be developed is shared personal practice. When implemented correctly, this method of shared personal practice can assist the school as a whole, as well as the teachers involved, in increasing overall student achievement by improving the quality of the teaching within the school (Leo & Cowan, 2000). Before teachers feel comfortable accepting critical feedback regarding their teaching, high levels of

trust between teachers and the principal and teachers themselves are necessary. “Trust plays an important role in overcoming barriers to building a professional learning community” (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a, p. 123). Removing barriers and improving trust is necessary if a school wants to create an effective PLC. Marzano (2003) identified a correlation between an effective PLC and an increase in student achievement. Improving student achievement should be a goal for all schools. Therefore, schools must determine trust levels within the school to establish fully functioning, effective PLCs and ultimately improve student achievement.

Trust

For decades, teaching was considered a private and isolated occupation (Anderson, 2002; Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Burney, 2004; DuFour, 2004; Fullan, 2001; Lasiter, 1996; Leo & Cowan, 2000). However, researchers state that for school improvement to occur, collaboration with all stakeholders is necessary and schools should adopt a professional development model that incorporates more collaboration among staff (Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Peterson, 1994). Yet many staff members are resistant to change and feel vulnerable as schools require more and more collaboration (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Huffman & Hipp, 2000). Teachers who are not accustomed to discussing what takes place in their classrooms may be hesitant to share for fear of criticism or consequences and worry more about self-protection than the issues surrounding education (Burney, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). This fear and self-protection is understandable,

yet teachers must be assured that sharing is okay and be comfortable speaking openly about concerns and areas of weakness. Therefore, as schools work towards collaboration, teachers, principals, and members of the PLC should note that a certain degree of trust is required before stakeholders can be expected to discuss issues relating to school improvement (Kochanek, 2005; Lasiter, 1996). As the faculty begins to understand that learning and growing professionally as a whole is the ultimate goal, the initial fears of being scrutinized begin to disappear and trust ensues (Bloom & Stein, 2004).

What is trust? Although difficult to define, most people agree that trust is a word used to explain a reliance on other people to help care for them and people or things that are valuable to them instead of hurting or damaging something that is valuable to the other person (Goddard et al., 2001; Hipp, 2001). This reliance is dependent on a person meeting another's expectations by providing care or caring for something he or she considers special. In many educational settings, one of the most commonly used definitions of trust is by Tschannen-Moran (2004a). She defined trust as "one's willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, honest, open, reliable, and competent" (p. 17). "Trust is a glue that holds things together, as well as a lubricant that reduces friction and facilitates smooth operations…[but it] involves risk" (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a, p. 38). Similarly, Bryk and Schneider (2002) used the term relational trust to explain the exchanges between stakeholders within the school and argue that this trust requires respect, competence,

personal regard for others, and integrity. Trust is comprised of many facets, yet some of these facets are more important than others in educational settings (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). Benevolence is the facet of trust that describes the expectations that the people involved care and have each other's best interests in mind when making decisions. Honesty is best explained by the consistency of one's promises, words, or actions over time. As a person shows that the words and actions harmonize, trust develops. Openness is the sharing of information and power. In schools, this facet of trust is important in the school improvement process. Reliability is the facet of trust that allows for relaxation as people become aware that a person will be dependable and consistent in making choices regarding the situation. The final facet of trust describes competency, meaning whether the individual possesses the skill needed to carry out the task. Within a school system, competency is also an important facet of trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) agreed with Tschannen-Moran (2004a) in many of the descriptors. They used the word competence as well. Personal regard for others can be paired with benevolence, and integrity can be paired with honesty and openness (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). However, one difference between the two definitions of trust is that Bryk and Schneider (2002) specifically addressed respect as a requirement in trusting relationships. In schools, social interaction between all stakeholders is critical. The tone in which communication is exchanged affects the trust levels between

parents, teachers, and administration. Respect among the parties is a necessary component to collaboration and the forming of a PLC (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Distrust

Discussing trust without distrust is nearly impossible. Trust "can be altered instantly with a comment, a betrayed confidence, or a decision that violates the sense of care one has expected of another" (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a, p. 63). Nearly all teachers can identify a situation where they have felt betrayed by another faculty member. When this betrayal occurs, trust slowly erodes. Hargreaves (2002) offered a concise description when he stated:

> After intense or repeated experiences of betrayal, teachers tend to withdraw to their own classrooms, stay away from difficult colleagues, avoid interaction with them, and distance themselves psychologically from what they are experiencing. Betrayal creates negatively experienced conflict. The danger is that teachers then avoid any kind of conflict, or the interactions that might lead to it, altogether. In this respect, intense or repeated betrayals break the bonds of professional interaction and social belonging that make professional community possible. (p. 404)

In regard to betrayal, Tschannen-Moran (2004a) agreed with Hargreaves (2002), stating that betrayal affects teachers by causing them to be unwilling to share ideas or teaching strategies, thus negatively impacting their decision to share for years to come. When colleagues feel betrayed, they often remove themselves from the people they felt betrayed by, creating less interactions among the

faculty. Hargreaves (2002) believed that when teachers isolate themselves they lessen the chances of collaboration and therefore lessen the possibility of the school improving. Due to the tendency of teachers to want to avoid others who cause the betrayal, betrayal inhibits school improvement. Betrayal can have detrimental effects on a faculty. Tschannen-Moran (2004a) explained these types of effects:

> When teachers in a school do not trust one another, they are likely to be guarded in their interactions. Energy is diverted from common goals and channeled into self-protection. Collaboration deteriorates. Teachers may go through the motions of grade-level or department meetings, but there is little real joint decision-making or collaboration. Teachers' collective sense that they have what it takes to promote student learning is reduced when distrust overtakes a school and motivation consequently suffers. Schools fraught with poorly handled conflict are likely to suffer from lower trust. The processes involved are reciprocal, resulting in a spiral of distrust. Greater collaboration, stronger collective sense of efficacy, and constructive conflict resolution are more likely when trust is present; however, they also foster the conditions that make for greater trust. (p. 132)

To avoid betrayal, Hargreaves (2002) believes school systems need to examine the cohesiveness of staff. One method is to begin by examining the trust levels at the school (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). If trust levels are low, schools should work to identify the reasons why teachers have felt betrayed in

the past. By doing so, schools may avoid future feelings of betrayal and improve the trust among staff members (Hargreaves, 2002). More drastic measures may need to be taken in schools with extremely low levels of trust (Kochanek, 2005).

In certain severe circumstances, replacing certain staff members and hiring a more cohesive, competent team will dramatically improve the trust among a faculty (Kochanek, 2005). “Incompetent teachers not only harm the children in their classrooms, but they also call into question the dedication and competence of the entire staff” (Kochanek, 2005, p. 21). However, in most cases, schools can focus on improving staff relations without needing to replace staff members through implementing specific strategies designed to improve trust among the staff (Kochanek, 2005).

Need for Trust

Researchers of trust in schools have identified a positive relationship between trust and school effectiveness, which means that the improvement of trust can lead to improved student learning (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Kochanek, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). Therefore, any school planning large reform efforts needs to examine the level of trust among the stakeholders, as trust improves the day-to-day functioning of schools and fuels school change. Improving trust alone will not solve all problems within a school (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Kochanek, 2005). Kochanek (2005) states that whereas “trusting relationships are not a substitute for student-centered, academically challenging instruction or a more participatory governance structure, they can be

seen as the groundwork necessary for such interventions to succeed schoolwide" (preface). Building trusting relationships between stakeholders within a school, therefore, is one aspect of a PLC that should be developed if student achievement is to improve.

Several types of relationships exist within a school (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). According to Bryk and Schneider (2002), schools are already organized around role relationships: teacher with students, teachers with other teachers, teachers with parents, and teacher with their school principal. Each role has set obligations and expectations. As stakeholders work and interact together, they learn more about each other and are able to predict reactions, behaviors, and responses from those around them. Learning more about each other fosters trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). However, trust is never static; trust involves consistent affirmation. To maintain a current level of trust or improve trust, stakeholders must continually meet people's expectations and fulfill obligations. The two primary stakeholders within a school are teachers and principals; secondary stakeholders are students and parents. The relationships between these groups are critical in the functioning of the PLC (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Teacher Trust in Principal

The principal, or leader of a school, plays the most significant role in creating and maintaining a culture of trust within the school (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Kochanek, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). The principal is obligated to

function as a visionary, a role model, a coach, a manager, and a mediator (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). The teachers of the school must trust the principal to act responsibly, communicate openly, and make decisions based on what is best for the school. Surveys can be used to measure the level of trust between the principal and the teachers. The Principal-Teacher trust survey simply rates the level of trust between the principal of the school and the teachers employed at that school. Using this survey, Tschannen-Moran (2009) found a correlation between principal trust and faculty trust suggesting "that the principal may set the tone for the quality of relationships among the adults in the building. Where faculty trust in the principal was high, faculty trust in colleagues tended to be higher" (p. 24). This information suggested that the most integral trust relationship is the relationship between the principal of a school and the teachers at the school. However, trust levels between teachers may also be critical as well for schools looking to improve student achievement.

Teacher Trust in Colleagues

"Trust among the teachers in a school makes it more likely that the school will function as a professional learning community" (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a, p. 134). Considering that collaboration is a necessary component to the success of a PLC, trust must be necessary among the teachers in a school for collaboration to occur. Therefore, examining the levels of teacher trust in colleagues within a school may help a school to determine the ability of the staff to collaborate and work together as a PLC. If the culture of the school is lacking in trust, specific

efforts must be made to improve the trust among the faculty (Hipp, 2001).

Studies on teacher trust in colleagues have indicated that teacher trust in colleague levels, not teacher trust in principal, are a strong predictor of student achievement performance within a school (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2004b).

Levels of Trust

A school's culture is affected by the level of trust between stakeholders. Yet, trust has many levels (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Kochanek, 2005; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). The level of trust that exists does impact the amount of reform or improvement that takes place. Trust levels within a school range from complete distrust to high levels of trust, but are ever changing (Hipp, 2001).

Distrust is on the far end of the continuum of trust, with distrust on the far left and total trust on the far right. Distrust makes people fear taking risks. In situations where there is distrust, stakeholders may even feel the need to intentionally deceive others to protect themselves or their career. Distrust has a negative effect on how a school operates because communication is guarded and therefore ineffective for forming professional learning communities (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a).

Still on the left side of the continuum is the concept of congeniality and operating harmoniously. While being respectful to others is important, always agreeing with others is not a way to build professional trust. In fact, congeniality actually inhibits school improvement as the failure to point out areas that need

improvement impedes growth (Dunne & Honts, 1998). Therefore, when stakeholders refrain from saying what they feel is important to address in relation to school improvement, professional trust fails to exist.

Some schools have moved beyond congeniality, but are still operating somewhere in the middle of the trust continuum, never fully reaching the optimal level of trust. In these relationships, “teachers may trust each other as friends without trusting the professional competence of one another” (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). Bryk and Schneider (2002) referred to this exchange as a low risk exchange. In low risk exchanges, employees are respectful of one another but very little professional collaboration exists. According to Bryk and Schneider (2002), these exchanges are safe and do not require large amounts of trust between stakeholders.

> Teachers may say good morning to each other and generally act in a friendly manner. They may collaborate with colleagues around a few decisions, such as the organization of major field trips and assemblies, but the core work of teaching is either carried out privately in individual teachers' classrooms or externally controlled by central offices and state bureaucracies. (p. 31).

Leo and Cowan (2000) state that another characteristic of low risk exchanges is that the collaboration tends to be more informal. Teachers may share successes, frustrations, and solutions in the copy room or in a brief hallway discussion. Although teachers may interact informally, very few planned meetings take place

where the goal is school improvement. Whereas this informal discussion is a start in building collaboration and trust, true professional learning comes from schools where trust levels are the highest.

On the far right on the trust continuum the highest levels of professional trust exist. When high levels of trust are present, staff members are more willing to take risks. Teachers in schools where high levels of trust are present often observe each other teaching and participate in peer evaluations. These peer evaluations makes them vulnerable to one another, yet the teachers understand that the constructive criticism is intended to help improve the quality of instruction (Kochanek, 2005). For this reason, “schools with a high level of trust among the faculty are more likely to benefit from teacher collaboration and constructive responses to conflict” (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a, p. 133). This type of collaboration would be too intimidating for schools without such high levels of trust. In fact, schools with high levels of trust and strong professional learning communities sometimes savor conflict because this conflict can often bring about the most positive outcomes for the school (Hargreaves, 2002). While conflict can be upsetting, conflict can also spur change. Conflicts can create tension, but what separates schools with true professional trust is the way that conflicts are revered and resolved. Schools with true professional trust value a certain amount of conflict, as this conflict allows the stakeholders to consider various options and often leads to decisions that are well thought out. While some stakeholders may be disappointed in the final outcome, trust is able to be restored as stakeholders

agree that decisions are made based on a shared vision of school improvement (Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). Trust, therefore, allows for healthy disagreement about the best ways to improve student learning (Hargreaves, 2002). This healthy disagreement is the basis of a strong PLC and leads to school reform. Because a high level of trust is required for people to agree that conflict is a part of achieving desired results and not a personal attack on one's character, "reform is likely to progress faster in high trust contexts" (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p. 33). As schools attempt to improve test scores and overall student achievement, examining the levels of trust among faculty should be a priority.

Factors Affecting Trust

Early researchers who focused their studies on trust found several structural factors within a school which affect the trust level in the school. Four structural factors that negatively impacted faculty trust were racially mixed faculty, a predominately African-American student population, a racially mixed student population, and an economically disadvantaged student population (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard, Salloum, & Berebitsky, 2009). One structural factor that seemed to positively impact faculty trust was a school size of less than 350 students (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Kochanek, 2005). According to Kochanek (2005), initial structural barriers are altered by social factors over time and affect trust levels.

> Although these barriers exist and people initially decide to place their trust with those who share physical and social similarities to them… trust will

> not grow if it is not validated by subsequent actions. Unless social similarity is accompanied by respect, competence, integrity, and personal regard, the initial bond created by social and physical characteristics will fade away (p. 9).

School leaders, therefore, can benefit through awareness of trust research that has been conducted and use this research to guide trust studies within their schools to determine what steps are necessary to improve trust, with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement. Researchers on trust are examining potential factors that impact trust ratings within schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard et al., 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a) . As more research on trust is completed, schools will gain insight schools as to the importance of trust and the factors that affect the level of trust within the schools. These studies aim to improve the effectiveness of our schools.

Trust and School Effectiveness

A limited number of published studies on trust in schools exist. Bryk and Schneider (2002) are considered one of the first authors to study trust in schools. The first study on trust in schools developed in part due to the passing of a mandatory school reform act. Following the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988, schools across the state of Illinois were undergoing extensive reorganization to improve collaboration among school employees and the community. As a part of the reform act, local school councils were being implemented. These councils gained much of the responsibilities that were previously held by employees

working in central offices of school systems. The idea behind the council was that incorporating more involvement from the community through the use of these councils was necessary to improve the performance of the urban schools in Chicago. Although all schools created a local school council, the councils' successes in improving the schools' performance varied greatly. Councils experienced dramatically different results within the individual schools, therefore Bryk and Schneider decided to implement a study examining the differences in the approaches taken by each school and the significance of relational trust to the school's effectiveness in implementing school improvement. This study became one of the most extensive on trust to date.

The data reported by Bryk and Schneider (2002) consisted of both qualitative and quantitative elements. The study began after many field observations in which comments were made about lack of trust or presence of trust in either the failure or success of certain reform movements. As a result of these comments, the concept of studying a school's trust level and relating this trust level to a school's effectiveness emerged. The results of this 10-year study were that schools in the top quartile of academic performance over several years consistently rated the levels of teacher trust in colleagues and teacher trust in principal as strong or very strong, whereas schools in the bottom quartile of academic performance over several years typically rated trust levels of teacher trust in colleagues and teacher trust in principal as minimal or none (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) also found that racial and ethnic tension within a school faculty correlated to low levels of reported trust. Also, in regard to the student population, trust was negatively affected by high student transfers and turnovers, a racially mixed student body with no dominant group, schools with enrollments higher than 350 students, and student bodies that were predominately African American. This study was the foundation of many trust studies in schools across the nation (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Almost simultaneously, Hoy and many of his colleagues at Ohio State University began work on trust in schools. Hoy and Kupersmith (1985) gathered data from 944 teachers in 46 elementary schools concerning the authenticity of the principal and how the principal's authenticity related to trust among teachers in the school. The researchers identified that there was a significant correlation between the two, as well as the overall effectiveness of the organization. From this finding, Hoy and Kupersmith (1985) continued to expand their studies on faculty trust and the principal's role in school effectiveness. Hoy, Tarter, and Witkoskie (1992) surveyed teachers and determined that a supportive principal fosters trust between the faculty and principal of a school. However, the researchers also discovered that trust among colleagues was directly linked to overall school effectiveness. The research by Hoy et al. led to more studies on the importance of trust in how well a school operates.

Building upon this knowledge, Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, and Hoy (1994) studied teacher trust in principal and in colleagues to determine what most

impacted the school climate of several middle schools. They studied three behaviors of principals: supportive, directive, and restrictive and three behaviors of teachers: collegial, committed, and disengaged. Their work helped to gain a better understanding of how school climate is affected by the behaviors of the faculty within the school.

After years of researching trust, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) wanted to create a survey instrument that could be used to study the effects trust had on schools. Decades of previous literature on trust were examined and Hoy and Tschannen-Moran identified five key areas that affected a person's ability to trust others: benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness. Based on these areas, questions on trust were written. Following several tests for validity and reliability, a new survey instrument was created. The researchers found that trust in colleagues, trust in principal, and trust in clients (parents and students) were all somewhat correlated. Their survey gave future researchers interested in studying trust an instrument to assess the levels of various groups within a school, but the researchers agreed that additional qualitative studies were needed as well.

Tschannen-Moran (2001) reported work on collaboration and the need for trust. Her belief was that collaboration and trust require one another to work properly. To test this hypothesis, she developed two surveys. One survey measured trust and the other survey measured collaboration. The surveys were administered to 45 schools in an urban district. Results showed that there was a

positive relationship between trust and collaboration between all three groups surveyed: principal, colleagues, and parents. All correlations between collaboration and trust were statistically significant. Surprisingly, Tschannen-Moran (2001) revealed that when trust is high among parents and teachers, collaboration between all parties is greater. However, when trust is low between parents and teachers, collaboration diminishes across all groups and school employees are more reluctant to work together. The researcher suggested that schools further examine trust and the relationship between trust and collaboration, since increased collaboration is likely to improve student achievement.

Goddard et al. (2001) studied the relationship of trust levels and various differences between 47 urban elementary schools in the midwest United States all within the same district. They sought to investigate how trust was related to student achievement, socio-economic status, and race. The researchers found that trust levels among the schools varied significantly. They examined the relationship between trust levels and the other school characteristics (student achievement, socio-economic status, and race). Goddard et al. (2001) found that teacher-reported trust in colleagues and students was significantly correlated to student achievement in a positive way. They also found that the socio-economic status and race of students also negatively correlated to teacher-reported trust. Trust levels were higher in schools that had fewer students receiving free or reduced lunch or fewer African-American students. While analyzing the data, the

researchers found that even with these differences in student populations, trust levels alone could predict the school's student achievement scores and outweighed other student characteristics.

Tschannen-Moran (2004b) also examined the relationship between trust and student achievement at the middle school level. Sixty-six Virginia middle schools (urban, rural, and suburban) participated in the quantitative study. The survey measured the trust each group (faculty, principal, parents/students) had on one another using a six-point Likert scale. The student achievement data were taken from the results of the end-of-year eighth grade tests. Tschannen-Moran (2004b) found that teacher trust in colleagues correlated to student achievement ($r = .61$), but that teacher trust in principal was unrelated to student achievement ($r = .14$). Another interesting finding was that the proportion of students receiving free or reduced lunch had a negative correlation to teacher trust in colleagues. ($r = -.61$). This correlational analysis identified that where trust was higher, student achievement was also higher. However, where trust levels were low between colleagues, student achievement also was low. The researcher believes this correlation is due to a continuous cycle of low student achievement resulting in people blaming each other and leading to more blame and distrust. This low student achievement also lowers trust, which continues the cycle of repetitive blame and failures.

A qualitative study by Hargreaves (2002) used interviews and discussion groups within 15 schools in Canada to identify how trust and betrayal affects

stakeholders within a school. A significant portion of the study involved participants describing "particular episodes of positive and negative emotion with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents" (Hargreaves, 2002, p. 397). Data were coded and themed to identify three major types of betrayal in schools: contractual, communication, and competence. The three types of betrayal can threaten school improvement as trust is erased with each instance. Each type involves a different type of betrayal often seen in schools. If PLC focus on meeting the contractual, communication, and competence trusts of stakeholders, feelings of betrayal can be avoided.

According to Hargreaves (2002), the first of these trusts is contractual trust. Contractual trust means meeting one's professional obligations. Generally, teachers expect other teachers to be dedicated to the profession and be committed to the success of the students, even if the success requires working extended hours. Communication trust is also important. This type of trust refers to the effectiveness of a faculty's communication. Mistakes made by faculties include not disclosing enough information, gossiping, lying, and intentionally bringing shame to another co-worker. Competence trust is the final type outlined in the study by Hargreaves (2002). Competence trust involves the proficiency of staff members to perform the job responsibilities. Although informing a principal of incompetent staff is important, problems arise when little regard is given to the feelings of the individual. Issues such as dealing with incompetent staff require a delicate balance of professionalism and compassion. By identifying types of trust

and betrayal in schools, Hargreaves (2002) helped to identify which areas schools should prioritize in order to build fully functioning PLCs that collaborate effectively to increase student achievement within the school.

Azari et al. (2008) conducted a quantitative study to determine the relationship between collaboration and trust. To gather their data, they surveyed principals and teachers in Iran working at the high school level. The participants included 44 principals and approximately 300 teachers. Azari et al. (2008) found a statistically significant correlation between teacher trust in principal and the level of teacher collaboration at the school. They also found a statistically significant relationship between principal trust in colleagues and teacher collaboration, and teacher trust in colleagues and teacher collaboration, at the school. Similar to results reported by Tschannen-Moran (2001), Azari et al., (2008) found that low levels of teacher-reported trust in colleagues resulted in little to no collaboration, yet high levels of trust resulted in frequent collaboration. However, Azari et al. (2008) also noted that the gender of the teachers was a predictor in determining the reported level of trust between teachers and principals. Females rated trust between the teacher and the principal higher than males. Azari et al. (2008) emphasized the importance of trust, as this trust is needed for successful collaboration. Likewise, collaboration is a necessary component to establishing a fully functioning PLC.

Adding to the research on the effects trust has on schools, Tschannen-Moran (2009) found that teacher professionalism and school management are

also related to trust. In a quantitative study conducted in 80 middle schools, surveying over 2300 teachers, Tschannen-Moran (2009) identified that school management, or the way in which a principal leads his or her staff members, is strongly related to how teachers rate their trust in the principal and also how they rate the professionalism of other teachers. In other words, if a principal is controlling and bureaucratic, the rated trust in the principal is generally lower, as well as the rated professionalism of teachers within the school. However, principals who allow teachers to exercise their professional judgments are more likely to be rated with a higher level of trust. In addition, teachers working in these conditions report higher levels of trust in colleagues and report a higher sense of teacher professionalism. Tschannen-Moran (2009) points to the need for focus to be placed on the leadership styles of the principals within schools to allow for more input from staff members.

Goddard et al. (2009) furthered the research on the effect of school composition and achievement in relation to trust. The researchers conducted a survey using a random sample of schools with similar characteristics of all elementary schools within the state of Michigan. Data were gathered to determine the socio-economic status of the students, the size of the school, the location of the school, the racial mix of the students, and the prior student achievement data. Goddard et al. (2009) agreed with previous studies that trust was negatively related to low socio-economic status, larger school size, and a diverse racial mix. However, when researchers controlled these factors they

discovered that a large portion of the trust rating was unrelated to those factors. Trust, therefore, “is a strong independent positive predictor of academic achievement” (Goddard et al., 2009, p. 16). This study is significant for schools with structural concerns, such as a large student body population, diverse races, and socio-economically disadvantaged students. While many stakeholders have worked to address structural concerns, they may wish to place focus on improving the trust levels within the school rather that structural concerns when aiming to improve student achievement (Goddard et al., 2009).

Suggestions to Improve Trust in Schools

Using the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, Reeves, Emerick, and Hirsch (2007) found that “an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect was strongly correlated with overall student performance at the elementary, middle, and high school levels” (p. 1). For schools, these results emphasize the need for placing a focus on improving trust within the school. Practices that foster trust include adopting a shared vision, sharing the decision making, and creating a leadership team that actively supports teachers. Reeves et al. (2007) outlined six ways schools can cultivate trust:

1. The vision statement of the school should reflect what happens daily at the school.
2. Teachers should be involved in decision making and management of operations at the school.
3. The school should utilize a school improvement team to promote the

vision of the school through communication.

4. Principals at the school are encouraged to openly interact and listen to teachers.
5. Principals should set professional expectations for behavior of teachers and then treat the teachers as professionals.
6. Finally, teachers and principals should share success stories often, as it builds a support system.

More specifically, the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration [NCPEA] (2009) stated that consensus processes aid trust building in schools. Consensus requires that all participants have a chance to express their opinions. This process is typically performed in groups using circles to make sure that each participant in included. This process encourages listening and shows that all voices are valuable. However, according to NCPEA (2009), school systems should not assume that:

> school leaders possess the necessary knowledge and skills to foster and maintain the trusting relationships that result in higher student achievement. Nor … that teachers, support staff, and parents are aware of how to participate in basic human interactions in ways that foster trusting relationships. The consensus practices … offer promising and accessible tools for those intricately involved in schools in developing strong learning communities and, in fact, communities of leaders (p. 8).

Training on consensus processes is available through workshops and selected

readings which may be a necessity for schools with low levels of trust.

Brewster and Railsback (2003) recommended several areas of leadership which principals could focus on to improve trust within a school including: (a) demonstrating integrity; (b) showing a personal concern for staff; (c) creating open communication with staff; (d) modeling effective communication; (e) accepting input from staff on important decisions; (f) supporting staff members with innovative ideas; (g) encouraging staff with dissenting views to speak up; (h) valuing the work the staff does each day; (i) maintaining necessary supplies needed for teaching; and (j) replacing ineffective teachers. Teachers can focus on including all faculty when focusing on visions of the school, welcoming new teachers, creating opportunities to work together collaboratively, increasing communication, strengthening staff relationships, and incorporating professional development models that bring staff members together. These practices can help to regain trust in a school where trust was lacking. Whereas there are many obstacles to trust, one significant obstacle is the previous experiences within a school. By identifying and incorporating practices that are aimed at improving the trust among staff and the principal within a school, the school begins taking the steps necessary to ultimately improve student achievement (Brewster & Railsback, 2003).

Summary

The research on trust in schools is expanding but is still in the early stages. Trust studies in rural educational settings are limited. What has been

proven already is that trust plays a much more significant role in school reform than was once thought (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard et al., 2009; Hoffman et al., 1994; Hoy et al., 1992; Kochanek, 2005; Leo & Cowan, 2000; Reeves et al., 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a; Tschannen-Moran, 2009).

Previous researchers have focused on how structural factors, such as socio-economic status, racial mix, school size, and location of schools or instructional factors, such as the implementation of certain curricula or standards correlate to student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Leo & Cowan, 2000; Kochanek, 2005; Goddard et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). Significant findings from this research are that racially mixed faculty, a predominately African-American student population, a racially mixed student population, and an economically disadvantaged student population negatively impacted trust, while a school size of less than 350 students positively impacted trust levels.

Additionally, over the past few years, researchers have established that more than structural or instructional factors, the relationships among the principal, faculty, students, and parents are critical in the success or failure of a school working to improve student achievement. (Goddard et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). These findings highlight the need for further examination of the relationships between stakeholders at a school and the need for trust when aiming to improve student performance.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Using comparative analysis, the researcher examined the relationship between trust, student achievement, and demographic data pertaining to the public school teachers in a south Georgia RESA district. Utilizing a quantitative survey allowed the researcher to reach a larger number of public school teachers and permit comparisons of the trust levels of the various schools and school systems. The research also compared various demographic sub-groups to responses within the survey. Using quantitative comparative analysis, which is often used in the field of sociology as a method to compare subgroups to one another, the researcher investigated the relationship of trust to student achievement within various schools and districts (Marsh, 1964).

Participants

All certified teachers in a south Georgia RESA district were asked to participate in this descriptive study. The study population included teachers from 12 school districts. This study population consisted of a total of 73 schools (42 elementary and primary, 17 middle, 11 high, and three alternative schools) within the RESA district.

Ethical Considerations

Approval for use of human subjects in this study was obtained from

Valdosta State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix A). In addition, superintendents of each of the 12 school districts were asked to approve the study within their districts (see Appendix B). Only public school teachers in districts which the superintendent granted approval were surveyed. Following superintendent approval, principals of each school were sent an e-mail concerning the survey (see Appendix C). Principals were asked to forward the e-mail, which contained a unique survey link, to all certified teachers within their school. Teachers were asked to complete the online survey. The instructions informed participants that the survey was voluntary and anonymous. The researcher assumed that public school teachers who completed the survey had given their consent to participate. The individual survey data were collated or grouped by schools and school districts for the purpose of analyzing the results. However, the names of schools or school districts were not used in the dissertation. All data were managed by the researcher to complete the dissertation and will be discarded three years after completion.

Instrumentation

The *Omnibus T-Scale* developed by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) is a 26-item instrument designed specifically to assess trust levels among stakeholders in a school: principal, teacher, parent, and student. "The reliabilities of the three subscales typically range from .90 to .98. Factor analytic studies…support the construct validity of the concept" (Hoy, 2010, para 3). For this study, a modified version of the instrument was used and focused only

on principal and teacher trust. Therefore, only 16 of the 26 items were used that included those items dealing with faculty trust in the principal and faculty trust in colleagues. Another eight demographic questions were asked including age, race, gender, years in teaching, highest degree obtained, years at the current school, subject taught, and whether the participant taught at an elementary, middle, high, or alternative school. Finally, one question regarding the school's PLC was asked. A copy of the survey is found in Appendix D.

Also included in the study were AYP results for all schools in the district. Schools were assigned a number (1 to 5) to correspond with their AYP status. Schools that did not meet AYP for the 2010-2011 school year were assigned a 1 or a 2. A score of 1 indicated that the school did not meet AYP for two or more consecutive years. A score of 2 indicated that the school did not meet AYP for the 2010-2011 school year, but met AYP for the previous year. Schools that met AYP for the 2010-2011 school year were assigned a score of 3 to 5. A score of 3 was given to schools which met AYP for the 2010-2011 school year, but did not meet AYP the previous year. A score of 4 was given to schools which met AYP for two consecutive school years. A score of 5 was given to schools which met AYP for three or more consecutive years. AYP data can be found on the Atlanta Journal Constitution (2011) website.

Design of the Study

Using a causal comparative study, the researcher examined the relationship between trust and AYP results at each school. Several advantages

to using causal comparative research exist. First, this type of research can be used to examine relationships between groups on a large scale. These data can add to existing theories in education and build a stronger foundation for the theory. Secondly, this type of research is fairly inexpensive and can be completed over a short period of time. Causal comparative studies do have limitations. In causal comparative studies, the validity of the data is threatened because researchers are unable to control variables within groups, As if often the case with causal comparative research, the effect may not be due to the presumed cause. Also, other variables may account for the effect or the relationship could be bidirectional, meaning two items being compared affect each other. Causal comparative studies are common in education and help to provide data to advance the understanding of new theories. Causal comparative studies enable collection of large amounts of data concerning trust from many different schools within the south Georgia RESA district in a short amount of time and their advantages outweighed their disadvantages (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001).

The researcher used the modified *Omnibus T-Scale* survey created by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) to gather information on trust, both teacher trust in principal and teacher trust in colleagues within each of the public schools in a south Georgia RESA district. The trust results were compared to a school's AYP results to see if a correlation existed between trust level and AYP status. Other demographic factors were also analyzed to enable comparisons between subgroups of the study population.

Procedures

After receiving IRB consent, an e-mail letter was sent to all 12 superintendents within a south Georgia RESA district which explained the study and asked their permission to survey teachers within their school districts. Following each superintendent's approval, the head building school principals was notified of the study and informed of the process. The researcher communicated via e-mail with the principals to arrange a 3- week time frame for teachers within the schools to complete the online survey. Using mass e-mails, the researcher sent an e-mail to head building school principals that contained a link to the online survey and asked principals to forward the link to all certified public school teachers at their school. To increase the response rate, three reminders (one after the first week, one after the second week, and one the day before the 3-week window ended) were e-mailed to school principals showing the number of responses to the survey for the school. The researcher provided the link for the survey during each e-mail reminder and asked the head building principal to remind teachers of the survey.

Additionally, the researcher e-mailed the superintendents of each school district every week. The researcher provided them with the number of survey responses at each school in their district and also provided the survey link for each school. These emails to the superintendents increased the number of schools that participated due to the fact that the superintendent requested the principals forward the survey link to the teachers at their school.

Data Analysis

This study was a comparative analysis study focusing on the relationship between trust and a school's AYP report. Participants were asked to complete an online survey regarding their beliefs about the trust, both in the principal and between colleagues at the school in which they worked. These responses were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences [SPSS IBM Corporation Version 19.0, Chicago, Illinois] (IBM SPSS Inc., 2011). Next, a Faculty Trust in the Principal score, which determined the level of trust between the faculty at a school and that school's principal, was calculated by adding the total average from the responses to survey question statements 10a, 10c, 10e,10g, 10h, 10k, 10m, and 10p, and then dividing this total by 8. The responses to survey question statements 10c, 10h, and 10p were reversed scoring. A Faculty Trust in Colleagues score, which determined the level of trust among faculty members at a school, was calculated by adding the total of survey question statements 10b, 10d, 10f, 10i, 10j, 10l, 10n, and 10o, and then dividing this total by 8. Suvery question statement 10f was reversed scoring. Next the researcher calculated the standard score for trust in the head building principal using the formula: 100(Faculty Trust in Principal score - 4.42)/.725 + 500 and the standard score for trust in colleagues using the formula: 100(Faculty Trust in Colleagues score - 4.46)/.443 + 500 (Hoy, 2010). This score provided normative data, which allowed the researcher to see how trust in schools in a south Georgia RESA district compared to one another. Collecting this information allowed the

researcher to determine what recommendations needed to be made for each school to continue to improve the trust levels at the school with the ultimate goal being to improve the effectiveness of the school and increase student achievement.

The researcher used Spearman's Rho Coefficient to examine the correlation between the level of trust reported and factors such as AYP status. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the relationship between trust and school level (elementary, middle, or high). Demographic data such as certification; age; race; gender; years in teaching; highest degree obtained; years at the current school; subject taught; whether the participants taught at an elementary, middle, high, or alternative school; and the functioning of the PLC within the school were also be examined to determine if any factors significantly affect the trust levels within the school.

Schools were assigned a score of 1 to 5, based on whether they did not meet AYP or met AYP. A score of 1 or 2 indicated that a school did not meet AYP; a score of 3 to 5 indicated a school did meet AYP. The researcher sought to determine if schools that had scores 4 or 5 as an AYP score also had high trust levels or if high trust scores do not correlate with high AYP scores.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this comparative analysis study was to examine the relationship between trust (both teacher trust in the principal and teacher trust in colleagues) and student achievement (as defined by a school's AYP report), as well as identify if other factors, such as school level, may be contributing to the trust levels within the school. A quantitative survey was selected. This design was selected because a survey allowed for a greater number of schools to be included in the study. The participation of a large number of schools enabled comparisons of trust levels across the school districts and correlations of trust levels to other factors within the schools. These findings are included in Chapter 4. Also included is demographic information on the 12 school districts included in the study to describe the population living in the south Georgia RESA district.

Background Information

Demographic information on the 12 districts in a south Georgia RESA area was derived from the 2010 Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Individual school information, such as free/reduced lunch percentages and Title I status were obtained from the Georgia Department of Education (2010b) website.

Table 1: *Population Data of the 12 Districts*

		Race (%)			
District	Population	White	African-American	Hispanic/Latino	% HS grad.[a]
1	17,600	58	35	6	69
2	19,300	83	11	5	68
3	16,200	58	35	5	80
4	45,500	59	22	17	72
5	17,200	65	27	6	73
6	4,000	63	4	29	66
7	8,500	70	26	2	63
8	10,100	69	24	5	75
9	109,200	56	36	5	83
10	40,100	59	29	10	75
11	9,000	54	42	3	63
12	54,500	43	51	4	77
Mean	29,267	61	29	8	72

[a]Percent of high school graduates over 25 years of age.

Although the 12 districts are in south Georgia, the populations living in these districts are quite different (see Table 1). The population size of the 12 school districts varied significantly (9,000 to 109,200). Most of the 12 districts were comprised predominately of White and African-American populations. However, several counties also had a large Hispanic/Latino population.

Graduation rates within these districts differed by approximately 20%, with 63% being the lowest and 83% being the highest percentage of high school graduates over 25 years of age. Furthermore, a difference of approximately $10,000 was found in the median household incomes across these 12 districts ($28,500 to $38,100). The percent of the population living below the poverty line varied from 21% to 28% (see Table 2).

Table 2: *Socioeconomic Data of the 12 Districts*

District	Median Household Income ($)	% Below Poverty Line
1	28,700	26
2	33,000	23
3	31,700	22
4	30,800	22
5	31,200	22
6	28,500	27
7	35,600	23
8	37,000	21
9	38,100	24
10	35,000	27
11	29,000	28
12	32,000	28
Mean	32,550	24

Schools in this RESA district were somewhat similar in terms of socio-

economic status (see Table 3). All 12 school districts had multiple schools receiving Title I funding, ranging from 55% to 100% of schools in each district. The percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch ranged from 31% at the lowest school in one district to 99% at the highest school in another district. Of the 12 school districts in this study, only one district had all schools in the district make AYP. The percentage of schools making AYP ranged from 25% to 100% (see Table 3).

Table 3: *School Information on the 12 Districts*

District	% Title I funded Schools	% Free/Reduced Lunch[a]	% Achieving AYP
1	100	74-82	50
2	75	65-74	25
3	100	77-81	50
4	100	52-99	54
5	75	61-72	25
6	100	61-74	100
7	67	65-74	33
8	75	67-78	75
9	55	31-78	73
10	100	53-82	55
11	67	69-82	33
12	100	57-95	56

[a]A range of the percent of students receiving free/reduced lunch from schools in

the district.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected using an online survey, titled *Trust Survey*, which included survey questions from the *Omnibus T-Scale* developed by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003). Permission to use the *Omnibus T-Scale* was received from Dr. Wayne Hoy (see Appendix E). The survey consisted of nine demographic questions: (1) certification; (2) years taught at the school; (3) years taught total; (4) level of education; (5) gender; (6) race; (7) age; (8) level of school (elementary, middle, high, alternative); and (9) primary subject taught (see Appendix D). Following the demographic questions, survey questions pertaining to trust were asked The survey statements were rated using a 6-point Likert scale with the phrases: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Agree, or Strongly Agree (coded 1 through 6, respectively). Eight statements (10a, 10c, 10e, 10g, 10h, 10k, 10m, and 10p) related to teacher trust in the principal. Eight statements (10b, 10d, 10f, 10i, 10j, 10l, 10n, and 10o) related to teacher trust in colleagues. The last statement (10q) related the effectiveness of the PLC at their school.

All 12 superintendents were e-mailed a letter on April 8, 2011, describing the project. Following permission from superintendents, the project was sent to the Valdosta State University's IRB. Due to the type of data being collected, the project was exempt from full IRB review (see Appendix A). A presentation of the study was also given at one of the RESA Board of Control meetings. Following

the meeting and several follow up e-mails, written permission from all of the superintendents was given, allowing the data collection to begin.

Following approval from the superintendents of each school system, surveys links were sent to the principals of each school via e-mail (see Appendix B). A message explaining the purpose of the survey, along with the request to forward the link to all certified teachers was included. An initial e-mail was sent to principals on May 1, 2011. Follow up e-mails reminding principals of the survey were sent three times over the three week window, beginning May 6, 2011 (see Appendix C). Using mail merge, principals and superintendents were able to see how many teachers had responded to the survey and were able to encourage teachers to participate in the study before the survey was closed. Survey data were saved and imported into the SPSS database.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to test the ease of use of the online survey. Four people at the researcher's school were e-mailed and asked to follow the link provided to complete a survey. These four volunteers provided feedback to the researcher on the survey instrument. Following the pilot study, the school name was eliminated from the title and a distinct website link for each school was used to help reassure teachers of their anonymity. Also the font size was increased to help with readability, and a question was added to the beginning of the survey that asked if the person was a certified teacher. This question was added to ensure that only responses by teachers would be counted, as most principals

would be forwarding the link to the entire staff, including cafeteria workers and custodians, as well as teachers.

Missing Data

Despite receiving permission from superintendents to survey their school districts, not all principals forwarded the online survey link to their teachers. Following the initial e-mail to the principals, three additional e-mail reminders were sent asking them to forward the online survey link. No data were received from 13 schools. Additionally, because all responses were voluntary, some questions were unanswered, causing some surveys to be unusable.

Study Population

This south Georgia RESA district consisted of 12 school districts, comprised of 73 schools. All districts (73 schools) agreed to participate. However, responses were only received from 60 schools representing a response rate of 82%.

Data Analysis

Individual responses to questions were analyzed for comparisons. Demographic data were examined to gain a better understanding of the participants.

Table 4: *Demographic Data on Teachers in a South Georgia RESA District*

Characteristic	N	%
Sex		
Male	203	13

Female	1339	86
Race		
White, Non-Hispanic	1,371	89
African American	127	8
Hispanic	15	1
Highest Degree Awarded		
Bachelor	483	31
Master	693	45
Specialist	296	19
Doctorate	22	1
Age		
20-30	280	18
31-40	428	28
41-50	448	29
Over 50	378	24
Grade Taught		
Elementary	783	51
Middle	462	30
High/Alternative	284	19
Teaching Experience in Years		
1-3	183	12
4-6	216	14

7-9	137	9
10-12	173	11
13-15	161	10
16 or more	627	40
Years at Current School		
Less than 1	107	7
1-3	331	21
4-6	353	23
7-9	143	9
10-12	160	10
13 or more	430	28

Individual survey responses were aggregated and the data were averaged for each school to make the school the unit of analysis. For individual responses in which questions skipped would have altered the average trust rating, listwise deletion was used, due to the limitations of computing the mean. This deletion ensured that trust averages were accurate and not lower due to missing data or altered due to assuming a median score of 3.5 for unanswered questions.

Table 5: *Reported Normative Trust Scores*

	Normative Trust Scores				
Trust Group	300	400	500	600	700
Colleague	4	14	29	12	1
Principal	2	13	26	19	0

When analyzing Normative Trust Scores the researcher found that some schools had much lower trust ratings than others. Similarly, some schools had must higher ratings than others (see Table 5). Other data collected consisted of the schools AYP data for the year 2010-2011 (Atlanta Journal Constitution, 2011). These data were also entered into the SPSS database for analysis. (see Table 6).

Table 6: *AYP Ratings of Schools*

	AYP Rating				
Score	1	2	3	4	5
Schools	17 (29%)	11 (19%)	1 (2%)	4 (6%)	26 (44%)

To identify school level, survey responses from elementary and primary schools were assigned a rating of 1. Reponses from middle schools were assigned a rating of 2. Responses from high and alternative schools were assigned a rating of 3. This rating allowed for comparison between schools type and trust levels. By aggregating the data, comparisons among all schools in a south Georgia RESA district could be made (see Table 7).

Table 7:*Schools By Level*

	Level of School			
Level	Elementary	Middle	High	Alternative
Schools	33 (55%)	17 (28%)	9 (15%)	1 (2%)

Findings

Findings reported in this study address the research questions and

hypotheses initially presented in the Introduction, Chapter 1.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between teacher-reported trust in the principal and a school's AYP results? Spearman's Rank Order correlation was conducted on the data due to the presence of ordinal data. No statistically significant correlation was found at the .05 level, $r_s(59) = .22$, $p = .09$. Null Hypothesis 1 could not be rejected because the calculation was only slightly positive and statistically insignificant. Therefore, there existed no evidence to suggest that the level of teacher-reported trust in the principal was related to the school's AYP results.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and a school's AYP results? Spearman's Rank Order correlation was also conducted for this question. A statistically significant correlation was found at the .01 level, $r_s(59) = .50$, $p < .001$. The calculation identified a moderately positive and statistically significant result. With this analysis, strong evidence existed to reject Null Hypothesis 2. Therefore, there was evidence to suggest that trust in colleagues increases as the school's AYP status increases.

Research Question 3: What is the difference between teacher-reported trust in principal and grade level taught (elementary, middle, high)? An ANOVA was conducted to determine if a difference between school level also indicated a difference in teacher-reported trust level in principal (see Table 8).

Table 8: *Teacher Trust in Principal by School Level*

Grade Level	M	SD
Elementary	549.90	67.62
Middle	545.04	91.65
High	562.07	53.89

No statistically significant results were found (F(2,59) = .17, *p* =.84). The effect size of .23 was considered low according to Cohen (1998). With these results, Null Hypothesis 3 could not be rejected. Therefore, no difference between teacher-reported trust in principal and school level was found to exist.

Research Question 4: What is the difference between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and grade level taught (elementary, middle, high)? An ANOVA was conducted to determine if a difference between school level also indicated a difference in teacher-reported trust level in colleagues (see Table 9).

Table 9: *Teacher Trust in Colleagues by School level*

Grade Level	M	SD
Elementary	558.57	84.53
Middle	505.81	89.76
High	531.86	36.19

No statistically significant results were found (F(2,59) = 2.43, *p* =.10). The effect size of .60 was considered medium according to Cohen (1988). With these results, Null Hypothesis 4 could not be rejected. Therefore, no difference between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and school level was found to exist.

However, the mean trust rating for elementary schools (mean = 558) and high schools (mean 539) was noticeably higher than the mean trust ratings for middle schools (mean = 505).

Summary

Analysis of the data indicated that teacher trust in colleagues is correlated to the school's AYP result,($r_s(59) = .50$, $p < .001$. No statistically significant correlation existed between trust in the principal and the school's AYP result. However, a statistically significant correlation does exist between teacher-reported trust in principal and teacher-reported trust in colleagues, $r_s(59) = .62$, $p < .001$, indicating that when reported trust in colleagues is rated high, reported trust in principals is also rated high.

No statistically significant difference was found between school type and trust in principal. This indicated that the type of school (elementary, middle, or high) in which a teacher taught did not lead to a statistically significant difference in the reported trust in principal level. No statistically significant difference was found in teacher-reported trust in colleague and school level. Trust levels amongst colleagues are not significantly different at different school levels (elementary, middle, or high).

Discussed in this chapter were the data analysis and findings on trust in schools in a south Georgia RESA district. Trust ratings of both the principal and colleagues were compared to the school's AYP results and to school level (elementary, middle, or high) (see Appendix F). Correlations between colleague

trust and AYP results were found. No differences were found between trust and school level (elementary, middle, or high).

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between trust, both teacher trust in principal and teacher trust in colleagues, and a school's AYP results, one measure of student achievement. The guiding research questions were: 1. What is the relationship between teacher-reported trust in the principal and a school's AYP results? 2. What is the relationship between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and a school's AYP results? 3. What is the difference between teacher-reported trust in principal and grade level taught (elementary, middle, high)? 4. What is the difference between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and grade level taught (elementary, middle, high)? The study was completed to determine the role trust (both teacher trust in principal and teacher trust in colleagues) has on the success of a school in terms of student achievement. Also examined was whether other demographic factors, such as school level, impact trust levels at a school.

Study Synopsis

In an attempt to improve schools, various reform movements have been implemented over the past several decades. The latest of these reforms is No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2003), which claims that all children should be performing at or above grade level by 2014. Schools that are not making the

gains in academic performance on standardized tests are receiving needs improvement labels. If schools fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for several years in a row, major school restructuring, including large staff turnovers, is possible (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The goal of most school systems is to make the necessary reforms as a team to meet the requirements for AYP and avoid Needs Improvement (NI) situations which result in mandatory restructuring.

The researchers on school improvement highlight the importance of collaboration, using leadership teams that include administration, teachers, parents, and community partners (DuFour, 2004; Fullan, 2001; Hipp & Huffman, 2002; Hord, 1998; Marzano, 2003; Mawhinney, et al., 2005). These teams, often called Professional Learning Communities (PLC), focus on identifying the needs, visions, and goals of the school. There can be many PLCs within a school building. These teams work to implement school improvement goals, and collaborate to improve the school. When implemented properly, Marzano (2003) found a correlation between an effective PLCs and an increase in student achievement. Creating an effective PLC can be complicated. Hord (1998) identified five dimensions required for effective PLC. These dimensions included shared values and vision, collective learning and application, supportive and shared leadership, supportive conditions, and shared personal practice. A PLC requires collaboration between all members. Tschannen-Moran (2001) published a finding relating collaboration and trust. She found a significant correlation

between the collaboration and trust. Because PLCs require members to collaborate, or work together instead of in isolation, a high level of trust in needed to implement an effective PLC. According to Bryk and Schneider (2002) and Tschannen-Moran (2004a) trust must be high amongst the faculty for PLCs to be implemented successfully.

According to Bryk and Schneider (2002) and Tschannen-Moran (2004a), trust is considered multifaceted, with many factors affecting the degree in which people are able to trust others. Trust is used to explain the ability of people to rely on others to help them care for other people or things of value instead of hurting or damaging something or someone that is valuable to the person. In schools, trust is related to stakeholders being able to show concern for others, follow through on promises, share information, be dependable, and be competent in their job. Trust levels are never constant. Any changes can alter the trust levels in a school; however, over time trust levels can be improved with effort from all involved. While trust levels between teachers and principal and among colleagues cannot replace academic instruction, they provide the necessary framework for increasing the collaboration amongst stakeholders when discussing student achievement goals (Kochanek, 2005).

The research on trust in schools is limited. According to Kochanek (2005), only two major research groups have studied trust in schools in depth. They are Bryk and Schneider (2002) and Hoy (1999). Over time, smaller scale studies on trust have emerged (Azari et al., 2008; Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Goddard et

al., 2009; Hargreaves, 2002; Hoffman et al., 1994; Reeves et al., 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2004b, Tschannen-Moran, 2009). These researchers have added to the research on trust. Among the significant findings are that leadership styles of the principal is correlated to collegial trust, teacher trust in principal did not impact student achievement scores, teacher-reported trust in colleagues was correlated with teacher collaboration and with increased student achievement scores. Additionally smaller student populations, higher socio-economic levels, and homogenous race among students were correlated with higher trust ratings at schools. In 2009, Goddard et al., found that accounting for all other factors, trust alone is a strong predictor of increased student achievement. Because much of this research was in urban areas and none had been done in the south Georgia region, research in this area was needed to explore trust levels within the region.

To test if teacher-reported trust in principal and teacher-reported trust in colleagues was correlated to student achievement in the south Georgia region, a survey was administered electronically to a study population consisting of 12 school districts in a south Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) district. The district consisted of 73 schools; however, responses were only received from 60 schools. The response rate was 82%.

Findings

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between teachers reported trust in principal and a school's AYP results? The aim of this question was to

examine if a correlation between teacher trust in principal and a school's AYP result existed. Because the survey data were gathered using a Likert scale rating, which was ordinal data, Spearman's Rank Order Coefficient was conducted. Using Spearman's Rank Order Coefficient, the researcher found a slightly positive, yet statistically insignificant relationship between trust in principal and a school's AYP status, $r_s(59) = .22$, $p = .09$. Thus, no evidence was found to reject Null Hypothesis 1 and the data supported the rejection of Research Hypothesis 1. No significant relationship between teacher-reported trust in the principal and a school's AYP status was found to exist.

Research Question 2*:* What is the relationship between teachers reported trust in colleagues and a school's AYP results? The purpose of this question was to determine if a correlation existed between teacher trust in colleagues and a school's AYP result. Spearman's Rank Order Coefficient showed a moderately positive and statistically significant relationship between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and a school's AYP result $r_s(59) = .50$, $p < .001$. These findings give evidence to reject Null Hypothesis 2. Evidence existed to support Research Hypothesis 2. A significant relationship exists between teacher trust in colleagues and a school's AYP result.

Research Question 3: What is the difference between teacher-reported trust in principal and grade level taught (elementary, middle, high)? The goal of this question was to see if teacher-reported trust varied between school level. The researcher found no statistically significant findings, $F(2,59) = .17$, $p = .84$

from an ANOVA. No evidence was found to support Research Question 3; therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. No relationship between teacher-reported trust in principal and school level was found to exist.

Research Question 4: What is the difference between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and school level (elementary, middle, high)? An ANOVA was conducted and no statistically significant differences were found, $F(2,59) = 2.43$, $p = .10$. The analysis revealed no significant differences between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and school level. Due to the results, no evidence to reject Null Hypothesis 4 was found. Therefore, Research Hypothesis 4 had to be rejected. No relationship between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and school level (elementary, middle, high) existed. However, the mean trust rating for elementary schools (mean = 558) and high schools (mean = 539) was noticeably higher than the mean trust ratings for middle schools (mean = 505).

Conclusions

The lack of correlation between teacher-reported trust in principal and AYP results is in agreement with results found by Tschannen-Moran (2004b), who found that teacher trust in the principal was not related to student achievement. This finding should not be misinterpreted. While the teacher-reported trust in principal did not directly correlate with AYP status in this study, the researcher did find a significant correlation between trust in colleagues and trust in principal. Therefore, teacher-reported trust in the principal is still a part of a school's climate. This correlation between principal trust and teacher trust is

consistent with previous findings by Azari et al. (2008); Hoy and Kupersmith (1985); Hoy et al. (1992); and Tschannen-Moran (2009). Previous researchers have found that certain characteristics of a principal foster trust building among the teachers within a school, but principal trust does not directly impact student achievement. This relationship seems to be true for this research as well.

This analysis of the data points to the importance of the leader of a school to not be controlling and bureaucratic or incompetent, as previous research has found that these traits decrease a principal's trust rating (Hoffman et al., 1994; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Therefore, if schools are aiming to improve and achieve AYP, one area to focus on would be improving the trust between teachers and principal by examining the leadership style of the principal within each school focusing on traits that include being competent, supportive, open to communication, and having integrity (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hoffman et al., 1994; Hoy et al., 1992; Reeves et al., 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2009).

The findings on the statistically significant correlation between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and AYP results supports previous studies by Bryk and Schneider (2002); Hoy et al. (1992); and Goddard et al. (2009). They found that student achievement scores were affected by trust levels among colleagues at a school. In this study, higher trust in colleague ratings correlated with higher AYP scores and lower trust in colleague rations correlated with lower AYP scores. The research supports previous studies and identifies the importance of

trust in increasing collaboration among colleagues. This collaboration should lead to discussions aimed at improving student achievement and meeting AYP requirements. The correlation between trust in colleagues and AYP status does not imply causation. However, examining trust in colleague levels at a school may be beneficial for schools looking to increase student achievement.

Of the two research questions comparing trust (one with principal and one with colleagues) with AYP results, a statistically significant correlation existed between trust in colleagues and AYP status and no statistically significant correlation existed for trust in principal and AYP status. This correlation implies that trust in colleagues is a better indicator of student achievement in the form of AYP status than trust in principal. Most research to date has focused on the role of the principal in the success or failure of a school. These findings indicate a need to further examine the role of trust in colleagues and the success or failure of a school.

No significant difference was found between teacher-reported trust in principal and school level in this study. This finding indicates that reported trust levels in principal vary greatly, but is not determined by the type of school in which the principal works. Because trust levels varied significantly, the researcher assumed based on prior studies concerning principal trust that other traits such as communication style, professionalism, and competency of the principal, are more likely to affect reported trust in principal than the grade level in which the principal works (Hoy et al., 1992; Reeves et al., 2007; Tschannen-

Moran, 2009). Prior researchers have found leadership ability of the principal to greatly impact trust levels within the school (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hoffman et al., 1994; Hoy et al., 1992; Reeves et al., 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2009). This previous research indicates a need for superintendents and school board members to examine the leadership abilities of the principal at a school. From the present analysis, leadership abilities, more so than grade level of the school at which the principal works, appear to more significantly affect the trust ratings reported in the principal.

No difference was found to exist between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and school level (elementary, middle, and high). However, analysis of the data indicated that teacher-reported trust in colleagues was higher at the elementary and high school level than teacher-reported trust in colleagues at the middle school level.

No prior studies were found on the relationship between trust and school level; yet, prior studies on trust indicate that trust ratings are higher in schools with 350 students or less (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Kochanek, 2005; Leo & Cowan, 2000). Size more so than grade level may be the factor leading to this difference because elementary schools tend to be smaller than middle and high schools. These data may be beneficial, as they may help to explain why elementary school ratings are higher than middle and high school ratings. However, because high schools were also higher than middle schools and student populations tend to be larger in high schools, this explanation seems

unlikely. Perhaps other factors influence trust more than size or grade level. Goddard et al. (2009), also contends that trust is more strongly affected by other factors besides size of student populations, socio-economic status of students, or racial mix of students. This finding could explain why high schools, which often have larger student populations, had higher trust ratings than many middle schools. As a result of the findings concerning the differing trust levels reported at the elementary, middle, and high schools, examining personal factors that impact trust ratings among colleagues may further our understanding of what alters trust ratings between colleagues within a school and could help to identify why elementary and high school ratings were higher than middle school ratings. While correlation does not imply causation, the identification of factors affecting trust would still be of benefit to schools.

Of the research questions regarding school level (elementary, middle, and high) and reported trust in principal and colleagues, trust in principal ratings showed no distinct differences with regard to school level and trust in colleagues levels were highest at the elementary level. This finding indicates that some condition at the elementary school is responsible for higher trust amongst colleague ratings but does not affect trust in principal ratings. Perhaps the difference is related to the size of the student population, as many prior researchers have pointed to size being a factor affecting trust among colleagues (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard et al., 2009; Kochanek, 2005; Leo & Cowan, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 2004a). The difference may also be the physical layout

of the elementary schools that differ from the layout of middle and high schools. Elementary schools tend to be smaller in size and classrooms are closer together. This closeness in proximity to one another may aid in collaboration and improve trust (Leo & Cowan, 2000). Yet the difference could be unrelated to these factors. Could some personality trait that is characteristic of many elementary educators exist that aids in collaboration? Prior studies by Azari et al. (2008) and Tschannen-Moran (2001) have found a correlation between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and collaboration. This correlation would imply the collaboration at the elementary level is greater than at the middle or high school level. According to the results of this study, increasing collaboration in all schools, through professional exchanges that slowly build trust, will also improve student achievement. The success of PLCs correlated to increased collaboration and increased trust.

Recommendations

A significant finding of the research was that teacher-reported trust in colleagues showed a statistically significant correlation to AYP status. Also trust in colleague ratings at the elementary schools were higher than trust in colleague ratings at the middle and high school levels. As a result of the findings, the researcher suggests training and professional learning for teachers on how trust can be improved. During these training sessions, factors impeding trust should be discussed, as well as factors that have improved trust in other schools. The researcher also recommends that principals attend these training sessions so

that they are also made aware of the types of changes needed to improve trust levels in the school. Principals should also work with their teachers by discussing what barriers exist to improving collaboration and making the necessary changes to facilitate collaboration and trust building.

Additionally, because trust ratings were higher at the elementary school level, the researcher recommends further examination into what factors led to higher trust ratings among colleagues at the elementary level. The relationship between collegial trust and student achievement is significant for schools. In the era of school accountability, any factor that correlates to increased student achievement should be explored in depth.

For schools looking to improve trust and increase overall school effectiveness, two additional findings may be helpful. One was that teacher-reported trust in principal is not correlated to AYP status, but is correlated to teacher trust in colleagues. Prior studies (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hoffman et al., 1994; Hoy et al., 1992; Reeves et al., 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2009) revealed that the principal sets the climate of a school, including expectations in regards to collaboration among the faculty. Therefore, a need for effective principals in all schools wanting to increase student achievement appears to be necessary. While the relationship is not a direct one, the principal trust correlated to trust in colleague ratings which also correlated to AYP results. These correlations imply that leadership ability of the principal indirectly affects trust ratings. Therefore, as school board members consider

hiring new administrators, interview questions that are scenario-based and involve questions related to a principal's ability to communicate, show personal integrity, and involve teachers in the leadership decisions, may help to increase the number of more qualified administrators working in a school system.

Furthermore, for schools where teacher trust in principals was low, a survey completed by teachers may be a way to identify areas for improvement in a principal's leadership ability. These areas, identified by Brewster and Railsback (2003), are personal integrity, personal care for staff, accessibility, ability to communicate effectively, and ability to seek input from staff. A good principal also encourages risk taking by staff members, values dissenting views, gives support to teachers, provides necessary supplies, and replaces ineffective teachers after attempts to improve the teaching have not worked. Examining the areas in which the principal was rated weak would assist the principal in learning what improvements could be made to improve the school culture and trust between the principal and teachers within the school.

Alternatively, instead of the leadership abilities of the principals impacting teacher trust, higher quality teachers within a school may impact the leadership ability of the principal. This idea would imply that instead of the principal setting the tone for how a school operates, an effective group of teachers may instead set the tone for how a school operates thereby influencing the principal's leadership style. Perhaps the relationship is more symbiotic than hierarchical, with teachers, who have often been teaching in a school for longer than the

principal has been leading at the school, setting the overall school climate. According to Tschannen-Moran (2009), teacher-controlled schools may be possible if the professionalism of the teachers is high and the principal is less bureaucratic. This relationship allows for teachers to make more of the decisions surrounding instruction within a school, based on mutual trust between the teachers and the principal. This type of relationship requires teachers to act in a professional manner. The researcher recommends examining the reasons why principals adopt certain leadership styles over others and what impact teacher behavior has on how principals adapt their leadership style for a particular faculty. This examination may further understanding of the role each faculty member has on the overall trust ratings at a school.

Another finding was between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and the teacher reported functioning of the school's PLC. In this study, a significant correlation was found between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and the reported effectiveness of the school's PLC. This finding was also consistent with the findings of Tschannen-Moran (2004b). As a result of this correlation, the researcher recommends that schools whose trust ratings were low should hold workshops and professional development on methods they could implement to improve trust amongst colleagues. If collaboration within the PLC is desired, improving trust will be necessary to allow teachers to feel comfortable expressing themselves freely and without fear of betrayal by other teachers or the principal.

Limitations

The *Omnibus T-Scale* Trust Survey designed by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) has a reliability rating for each trust dimension (principal and colleague) between .90 and .98. Factor analysis also supports the construct and discriminate validity of the concept (Hoy, 2010). However, the study population consisted of a small number of teachers in a southern, rural area only. Therefore, generalizing findings to other populations is not suggested.

Several limitations of the study exist. Validity may have been threatened due to misreported or unreported data. The results may not reflect the entire school's perceptions of trust, because participants volunteered to participate and not all teachers at a school responded. Also, because the survey was self-reported, a possibility exists that the actual beliefs of the teacher did not coincide with the response given. Additionally, this survey was administered electronically and the computer literacy of the participants and the availability of computers to the participants may have impacted the results, thus impacting the validity of the study (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001).

Furthermore, the study was given at the end of a school year. While this time of year does have the benefit of giving everyone time to establish some trust in new principals, the time of year is often a very hectic, stressful, and unsettling part of the year. Teachers are often told about budget cuts (involving job cuts), forced changes (either within a school or a transfer to another school within the district), contracts, test scores, and even other required surveys. A possibility exists that these stressors affected how the teachers responded to questions

concerning trust in the principal and colleagues. One way to avoid this concern over the validity of future studies would be to administer the same survey at different times in the school year.

Future Research

Further research is needed on the role that trust plays in a school. One suggestion would be to extend this study over the course of several years. Repeating the survey over several years at the same school would help to show stronger evidence of the effect trust has on student achievement. While the results did indicate a correlation between trust and AYP results for one year, the researcher would be interested to see if this correlation held true over several years. When data show consistent patterns over a longer period of time, the results are more reliable (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001). More reliable data could be gathered if teachers were surveyed multiple times within a school year and the results were averaged rather than only once at the end of the year.

Qualitative studies to further examine why teachers in the elementary schools have higher trust in colleagues ratings than teachers at the middle school level would also be of benefit. In-depth interviews with teachers at elementary schools and middle schools may identify themes which help to generate more knowledge of what teachers identify as being necessary in order to trust colleagues. Ethnography of an elementary school, where collaboration is strong and trust is high, may shed light on why trust is higher in elementary schools than middle or high schools.

Another possible study would be to examine the relationship between the length of time the principal has been at the school and the trust ratings at that school. When a new principal is assigned to a school, time may be needed for teachers to develop trust in the principal. Further research to see if a correlation exists between the amount of time a principal has been in a particular school and the teacher-reported trust in principal may be needed. A mixed-method approach may be beneficial to survey the teachers in a school followed by open-ended questions to research the reasons teachers have for trusting or not trusting a principal or colleagues.

Finally, the researcher suggests that this comparative analysis study should be expanded and conducted in other school districts to examine if similar results are found for a larger number of schools. By expanding the number of schools surveyed, the research on trust expands, including how trust affects student achievement and overall school effectiveness.

Researcher Reflections

Interest for this topic originated when the researcher was a middle school teacher trying to create the best possible learning environment for the students. Collaborating with other teachers made the researcher's job easier. As a part of the group, the researcher shared instruction ideas, materials, teacher-created handouts, and tests. The researcher also analyzed student performance and offered advice when asked. The collaboration was more informal than formal, and room for improvement in the process was apparent. This realization led to an

interest in the elements of a strong collaboration and how this collaboration impacts student achievement.

The interest in trust in principal and colleagues, as it relates to collaboration and student achievement, was spawned by a personal verbal attack made towards the researcher during a teacher workshop. The verbal comments were intentionally hurtful and made the researcher question how much information should be shared, as this sharing does make a person exceptionally vulnerable when around people who do not work in a professional manner. These experiences heightened the researcher's interest in the research. However, these experiences also created some bias. The researcher had a preconceived notion that collaboration would lead to increased student achievement and that a high level of trust was required for collaboration to work effectively.

The researcher assumed, based on prior research on trust, that there would be a correlation between trust and AYP status. As a middle school educator, the researcher also had a preconceived idea that the middle school trust levels would be high as a result of the teachers collaborating as a team, simply by the design of the middle school concept, which groups teachers together into teams to provide a cohesive group for middle school students. The data surprisingly revealed that middle school teachers reported the lowest trust ratings in colleagues. The standard deviation for middle school trust levels was significant, indicating that some middle schools had high levels, while other

middle schools were dramatically lower. For the researcher, these data highlight a need for training on trust and collaboration in schools prior to expecting teachers to work well in teacher teams. As a result of the study, the researcher is more interested in educating school districts on the importance of trust in relation to student achievement, specifically trust in colleagues, and offering trainings on ways to improve trust within a school.

Summary

This comparative analysis study explored the relationship between teacher-reported trust levels (both in principal and in colleagues) and a school's AYP results. The study also examined the relationship that school level (elementary, middle, or high) had on the teacher-reported trust levels, both in principal and in colleagues. The theoretical framework concerning trust was that trust was one factor that contributed to the success or failure of a school in terms of student achievement. This framework led to a comparative analysis study of 12 school districts to examine how reported trust ratings of both the principal and colleagues correlated to student achievement, in the form of AYP results.

Electronic surveys were sent to 73 schools. Individual responses were collected and collated with other individual responses from a school. Demographic data were gathered to gain a better understanding of the study population. These responses were summed and averaged to examine relationships between trust and student achievement and trust and school level.

Among the 60 schools that participated in the study, a statistically

significant correlation was found between teacher-reported trust in colleagues and student achievement, as measured by the school's AYP results. No correlation was found between teacher-reported trust in principal and AYP results. However, a significant correlation was found between teacher-reported trust in principal and teacher-reported trust in colleagues. These findings are consistent with findings of previous researchers on trust and student achievement.

While no distinct differences were found between school level (elementary, middle, and high) and reported trust levels in either the principal or colleagues, reported trust levels among colleagues teaching at elementary schools were slightly higher than those at the high and alternative schools, and much higher than those at the middle school level. These findings somewhat support the findings of researchers who report higher trust levels at smaller schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard et al., 2009). However, most high schools tend to be larger than middle schools, yet reported trust ratings were higher at the high schools. In agreement with Goddard et al. (2009), the researcher believes that other personal factors more so than physical factors affected trust at the various schools.

The researcher suggests a need for professional development for teachers, administrators, and leadership teams on how to build and maintain trust. Analysis of the data also highlights the need for effective leadership within a school. When hiring new principals, all facets of what makes an effective

school leader should be examined. For principals currently employed, surveys completed by teachers that rate the principal on all leadership traits would help to identify areas of improvement for principals looking to strengthen their trust ratings.

As a result of findings revealing that the correlation between principal trust and colleague trust and between colleague trust and AYP results is significant, the researcher believes that both principal trust and colleague trust must be high for there to be a positive relationship to student achievement. Extensive work is required to improve reported trust levels in schools and will require significantly large amounts of time. However, with the aim of improving student achievement at the forefront of schools, the commitment is needed. With schools, principals, and teachers being held more accountable for student achievement, as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2003), increased collaboration and trust among all stakeholders is required for schools to better meet the needs of the students that they are serving.

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APPENDIX A:

Valdosta State University's
IRB Exemption Letter

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
for the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-02693-2011 **INVESTIGATOR:** Jasmine Adkins

PROJECT TITLE: Effect of trust on student achievement

DETERMINATION:

√ This research protocol is exempt from Institutional Review Board oversight under Exemption Category(ies) 2. You may begin your study immediately. If the nature of the research project changes such that exemption criteria may no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research.

□ Exemption of this research protocol from Institutional Review Board oversight is pending. You may **not** begin your research until you have addressed the following concerns/questions and the IRB has formally notified you of exemption. You may send your responses to irb@valdosta.edu.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS:

Although not a requirement for exemption, the following suggestions are offered by the IRB Administrator to enhance the protection of participants and/or strengthen the research proposal. If you make any of these suggested changes to your protocol, please submit revisions so that IRB has a complete protocol on file.

Barbara H. Gray Date: 4/29/11
Barbara H. Gray, IRB Administrator
Thank you for submitting an IRB application.
Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu or 229-259-5045.

Cc: Dr. Don Leech (Dept. Head)
Dr. Shirley Andrews (Advisor)

Form Revised: 09.02.2009

APPENDIX B:

E-mail Correspondence with Superintendents

Initial e-mail to superintendents:

April 8, 2011

Dear Superintendents,

My name is Jasmine Adkins and I am a doctoral student at Valdosta State University. I am in the process of completing my dissertation and I am writing to request your permission to survey the teachers in your school district.

My dissertation focuses on the importance of teacher trust, both in each other and in the principal of the school in which they work. The current research on trust in schools indicates that there is a positive relationship between trust and school effectiveness, in other words that the improvement of trust levels in schools can lead to improved student learning. “Trust among the teachers in a school makes it more likely that the school will function as a professional learning community” (Tschannen-Moran, M., 2004a, p. 134).

With your permission, I plan to contact the principals in your district and use an electronic survey to collect data pertaining to trust levels. Only 25 questions will be asked and all responses will be kept confidential. A copy of the survey is attached. Thank you for your consideration of this project. A summary of collected data will be shared upon request. This data may be a topic of discussion with your staff as you begin the upcoming school year. I plan to attend the May 5 Board of Control meeting to speak further on this project. To gain

approval for research at Valdosta State University, I must have your permission. If you will allow me to survey your district, please reply to this e-mail stating your permission. I look forward to meeting you on May 5.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Adkins

Tschannen-Moran, M. (2004a). *Trust matters: Leadership for successful schools*. SanFrancisco: Jossey-Bass.

Follow up e-mail to superintendents who hadn't given permission by May 5, 2011:

Dear Superintendent _____:

This is Jasmine Adkins. I met you today at a South Georgia RESA Board of Controls meeting. I am hoping to receive permission from you to survey your school district. The survey is very short. I will share a summary of the data I collect. Please reply to this e-mail stating whether or not I have permission to survey your district. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Adkins

E-mail to Superintendents (with links for each school)

Superintendent _____,

Thank you for allowing me to survey your district. These are the links for each of the schools. It is important that the correct link be sent to each school. Thank you again for agreeing to participate.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Adkins

Certain Middle School	http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/unique linka/
Certain Elementary School	http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/unique linkb/
Certain High School	http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/unique linkc/
Certain Primary School	http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/unique linkd/

APPENDIX C:

E-mail Correspondence with Principals

Initial e-mail to Principals

May 1, 2011

Dear Principal (Principal's Name),

My name is Jasmine Adkins, and I am a student at Valdosta State University. Superintendent (Superintendent's Name) gave me permission to survey all schools within the (Specific) School District. All schools in the (Particular) RESA district have been asked to participate. Please have **all certified teachers** within your school complete the electronic survey pertaining to trust levels. They may access this survey by clicking on the following link:

http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/(uniquelink)

This survey should take less than 5 minutes. The survey will be available electronically for 3 weeks. Please forward this e-mail or survey link to all certified teachers at your school. I appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Adkins

Second e-mail to Principals

May 6, 2011

Dear Principal _____,

I wish to express my appreciation to you and your staff for the responses to the trust survey. Currently ____ teachers have completed the survey. The survey will be available electronically for approximately 2 more weeks. I will send you

another update next week on the number of responses from your school. Thank you so much for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Adkins

Third e-mail to Principals

May 13, 2011

Dear Principal (with no responses),

Only days remain for all certified teachers to complete the survey on trust. I know this is a very stressful and busy time in the school year; however, this survey will take **less than 5 minutes** to complete. I am counting on you to make the link available to your teachers. Your superintendent, _____, gave me permission to survey schools in your district. Please forward this link to your staff:

http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/(unique link)/

Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Adkins

May 13, 2011

Dear Principal (with responses),

I thank you for your willingness to participate in this trust study and for sending the link to your faculty. **Only days remain for all certified teachers to complete the survey on trust**. I know this is a very hectic time in the school

year for you and for your teachers. Currently ___ teachers in your school have completed the survey. Please remind teachers about the survey and forward this link again if needed: http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/(unique link)/

I appreciate all of the teachers who have already responded. Thank you so much for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Adkins

Final e-mail to Principals:

May 23, 2011

Dear Principal _____,

Thank you for your participation in the survey. ___ teachers in your school have completed the survey. The survey will remain available online until June 1, 2011. Enjoy your summer. I appreciate your assistance with this survey:

http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/(unique link)/

Sincerely,

Jasmine Adkins

APPENDIX D:

Survey

Trust Survey

Page 1 - Heading

You are being asked to participate in a survey research project entitled "Effect of Trust on Student Achievement," which is being conducted by Jasmine Adkins, a doctoral student at Valdosta State University. This survey is anonymous. No one, including the researcher, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take the survey, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your completion of the survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 or older.
Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Jasmine Adkins. This study has been exempted from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-259-5045 or irb@valdosta.edu.

Page 1 - Heading

Directions: Complete questions 1-9 by selecting the answer that best describes you as an educator.

Page 1 - Question 1 - Rating Scale - One Answer (Horizontal)

Are you a certified teacher?

Yes	No
□ 1	□ 2

Page 1 - Question 2 - Rating Scale - One Answer (Horizontal)

How many years have you taught at this school?

< 1 year	1 - 3 years	4 - 6 years	7 - 9 years	10 - 12 years	13 or more years
□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6

Page 1 - Question 3 - Rating Scale - One Answer (Horizontal)

How many years have you been a teacher?

1 - 3 years	4 - 6 years	7 - 9 years	10 - 12 years	13 - 15 years	16 or more years
□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6

Page 1 - Question 4 - Rating Scale - One Answer (Horizontal)

What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

Bachelor degree	Master degree	Specialist degree	Doctorate degree
□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4

Page 1 - Question 5 - Rating Scale - One Answer (Horizontal)

Are you:

Male	Female
□ 1	□ 2

Page 1 - Question 6 - Rating Scale - One Answer (Horizontal)

Are you:

African American	Asian	Hispanic	White, Non-Hispanic	Native American	Biracial or Multiethnic
□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6

Page 1 - Question 7 - Rating Scale - One Answer (Horizontal)

Please mark your age:

20 -30	31 - 40	41 - 50	Over 50
□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4

Page 1 - Question 8 - Rating Scale - One Answer (Horizontal)

Please mark the type of school at which you currently teach:

Elementary/Primary	Middle/Junior High	High	Alternative
□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4

Page 1 - Question 9 - Rating Scale - One Answer (Horizontal)

Please mark the teaching position that best describes you this school year:

Self-contained classroom – teach all subjects	Specific subject-English	Specific subject-Math	Specific subject-Reading	Specific subject-Science	Specific subject-Social Studies	Other specialized area (art, music, physical education, special education, gifted, drafting, etc.)
□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6	□ 7

Page 2 - Heading

Directions for question 10: Please indicate the extent that you agree or disagree with each of the statements below about your school in a range from (1) strongly disagree to (6) strongly agree. This survey is designed to gain a better understanding of the relationships in your school.

Page 2 - Question 10 - Rating Scale - Matrix

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A: Teachers in this school trust the principal.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
B: Teachers in this school trust each other.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
C: The teachers in this school are suspicious of	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6

most of the principal's actions.						
D: Teachers in this school typically look out for each other.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
E: The teachers in this school have faith in the integrity of the principal.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
F: Teachers in this school are suspicious of each other.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
G: The principal in this school typically acts in the best interests of teachers.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
H: The principal of this school does not show concern for the teachers.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
I: Even in difficult situations, teachers in this school can depend on each other.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
J: Teachers in this school do their jobs well.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
K: Teachers in this school can rely on the principal.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
L: Teachers in this school have faith in the integrity of their colleagues.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
M: The principal in this school is competent in doing his or her job.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
N: The teachers in this school are open with each other.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
O: When teachers in this school tell you something, you can believe it.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
P: The principal doesn't tell teachers what is really going on.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6
Q: This school has a functioning and effective professional learning community.	□ 1	□ 2	□ 3	□ 4	□ 5	□ 6

Thank You Page

Thank you for completing this survey!

APPENDIX E:

Permission to use *Omnibus T-Scale* Survey

Hi Jasmine--

You have my permission to use our t-scales in your research. It would be best to use the *Omnibus T-Scale* because it is shorter and does the job as well or better than the longer t-scale.

Good luck in your research.

Wayne

Wayne K. Hoy
Fawcett Professor of
Education Administration
www.coe.ohio-state.edu/whoy

7687 Pebble Creek circle, #102
Naples, FL 34108
239 514 3907

On Feb 12, 2008, at 2:09 PM, Jasmine Adkins wrote:

Dr. Hoy,
My name is Jasmine Adkins, and I am a doctoral student at Valdosta State University in Georgia. I am beginning work on a dissertation on teacher trust. I am writing to request your permission to use the t-scale and *Omnibus T-Scale* surveys you have posted on your website. I am very interested in the topic of trust as it relates to education. Please let me know if this is okay with you. Also, if you have any recommendations as to other research I should examine, please let me know.

Sincerely,
Jasmine Adkins

APPENDIX F:

Data on the Schools

School Data

School	Normative Trust in Principal	Normative Trust in Colleague	AYP Rating	School level
School 1	650.78	642.69	5	1
School 2	340.34	382.05	1	2
School 3	655.12	560.76	5	1
School 4	603.45	595.94	2	1
School 5	631.72	587.1	1	3
School 6	622.65	542.89	2	2
School 7	508.5	581.92	5	1
School 8	614.48	542.89	1	3
School 9	410.72	448.56	2	2
School 10	557.01	496.56	1	2
School 11	511.03	536.56	5	1
School 12	498.39	503.65	1	3
School 13	544.11	409.37	2	2
School 14	370.23	363.24	2	1
School 15	520.61	534.28	1	3
School 16	609.69	560.76	5	1
School 17	516.34	485.94	1	1
School 18	568.82	493.84	2	1
School 19	458.08	530.73	5	1
School 20	615.01	592.8	5	2
School 21	567.83	505.98	5	2
School 22	577.13	537.25	1	3
School 23	613.56	555.56	5	1
School 24	674.83	737.58	5	1
School 25	652.2	622.81	5	2
School 26	610.17	671.28	5	1
School 27	587.79	611.19	5	1
School 28	464.1	553.84	1	3
School 29	607.85	488.87	1	2
School 30	497.42	514.4	1	1
School 31	446.86	487.08	5	1
School 32	498.26	551.88	4	1
School 33	548.17	487.32	1	3
School 34	647.73	687.01	5	2
School 35	568.06	582.83	4	1
School 36	592.64	663.28	5	1
School 37	607.47	573.79	2	3
School 38	493.79	459.99	2	2
School 39	511.03	678.33	2	1

School 40	520.44	469.77	5	1
School 41	626.34	572.52	4	2
School 42	488.05	603.09	5	1
School 43	541.77	509.03	5	1
School 44	572.46	472.51	1	3
School 45	637.83	607.49	5	1
School 46	548.97	603.45	5	1
School 47	571.38	568.78	5	1
School 48	467.15	517.62	4	2
School 49	524.68	539.42	5	1
School 50	475.4	460.66	5	1
School 51	558.7	354.67	1	1
School 52	609	629.96	2	1
School 53	477.65	452	1	1
School 54	586.16	525.96	3	3
School 55	529.84	355.68	1	2
School 56	426.74	402.43		2
School 57	527.37	551.35	1	2
School 58	573.01	620.37	5	1
School 59	628.97	562.33	2	2
School 60	567.07	598.38	5	1