

THE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS OF SCHOOL OFFICIALS
AND HOW THEY ENGAGE
PARENTS IN TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS
IN HIGH ACHIEVING TITLE I SCHOOLS

by

ASHLEY B. HOSEY

ROXANNE MITCHELL, COMMITTEE CHAIR

PHILLIP WESTBROOK
ANGELA BENSON
DAVID DAGLEY
ALAN WEBB

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the Department of Education
in the Graduate School of
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2014

Copyright Ashley B. Hosey 2014
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to understand the behaviors and attitudes displayed by school officials in building trusting relationship with parents in successful Title I schools. Four school sites within the same school district were chosen for this study. The study was a qualitative action research study. Four participants were interviewed at each school site (a total of sixteen participants were interviewed). All interviews were transcribed and coded for common themes. Based on the results of the study, recommendations were made for school officials and school organizations who seek to building trusting relationships with parents.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to everyone who helped me complete this journey. A special thank you to my family and especially my supportive wife Natalie, daughter Cassidy, newborn son Donovan, all of my encouraging friends, my supportive family and my encouraging students (SCHS GO Eagles!) who would not let me quit. “Without struggle there is no progress”. (Frederick Douglass)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank and acknowledge the members of my committee for their help and effort in this process: Dr. Dagley, Dr. Webb, Dr. Benson, and Dr. Westbrook. I would personally like to thank my chair Dr. Roxanne Mitchell for all her help, motivation, and helpful pushing to get me through this process.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Research Questions.....	2
Purpose of the Study	3
Significance of the Study	3
Assumptions.....	4
Limitations	4
Delimitations.....	5
Summary	6
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
Introduction.....	8
Trust Defined	8
Organizational Trust	9
Trust in Schools	11
Organic Trust	11
Contractual Trust	12
Relational Trust.....	12

Collective Trust.....	14
School Leadership.....	17
Parental Involvement	20
Parent Trust.....	23
Distrust /Broken Trust/Trust Repair	26
Summary	30
CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY	32
Introduction.....	32
Research Questions.....	32
Research Design.....	33
Setting of the Study.....	34
Participant Selection	36
Data Collection	37
Data Analysis	37
Ethical Considerations	38
Summary	38
CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS OF THE STUDY	39
Case studies.....	40
Langston Sixth Grade Academy	40
Sampson Middle School	44
Capital Middle School	48
Oak High School.....	53
Data Analysis	56

CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION.....	64
Introduction.....	64
Discussion Research Question 1.....	65
Comments.....	84
Conclusion.....	86
REFERENCES.....	88
APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	91
APPENDIX II: CODING CHARTS.....	93

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Although there is evidence and research to the contrary, many school leaders and teachers continue to work in isolation (Kohler-Evans 2013). Conversations and interactions with outside stakeholders are in short supply but meaningful conversations between parents and the school must take place in order for schools to be successful and for schools to improve (Kohler-Evans, 2013). To improve school achievement, collaboration is encouraged in the school organization with teachers and staff but also with parents in the decision making processes of the school (Tschannen-Moran 2001).

Parent involvement can have an influence on school functions. In a study conducted by Karakus and Savas (2012) it was found parental involvement influences how teachers interact with students. The more parents were involved, the more trust teachers developed in parents and their students. The higher the level of trust, the more teachers used a more humanistic orientation towards their students. This study revealed a relationship between parental involvement and the building of trust in how teachers respond to students, which can impact student learning and achievement.

However, all of these aspects of parent involvement and collaboration, whether in decision making or interactions with teachers, are perpetuated by trust. In order for parents to be involved in school they must have a relationship based off of trust. Epstein's (2002) research showed that where there are strong schools to family relationship, school improvements can be

made. Epstein's research also went on to show that leadership both at the school and district levels can have a positive impact on the relationship between the school and families.

Statement of the Problem

To be an effective school leader, a leader must use sound practices which develop strong relationships to help school improvement. For school leaders the plethora of possible strategies can make decision making very difficult. In addition time, money and resources can be wasted and spent on programs and practices which in the end do not work or yield results. Parental involvement is important to school and student success. In order to have parental involvement parental trust must be created.

School leaders need proven strategies which will build strong relationships with parents and community stakeholders. School leaders need to understand which strategies, practices, and programs can be used to build trusting relationships with parents within their school organization. School leaders must also see and understand their roles in creating these trusting relationships and the steps necessary to build them.

Research Questions

This study was be guided by and sought to answer the following research questions: 1. What are the attitudes of school officials towards parents and building trusting relationships with parents in high achieving schools? 2. What are the behaviors displayed by school officials towards parents in high achieving schools? 3. How do school leaders address issues of broken trust and distrust with parents in high achieving schools?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes and behaviors of school officials and the practices they used to build and sustain parental trust. Establishing parental trust can lead to parental involvement which is a main ingredient in school success. The purpose of the study was to examine how four schools identified as high achieving Title I schools build trusting relationships with parents and community stakeholders. Title I schools are federally funded schools based on seventy-five percent or higher of the student populations qualifying for the federal free and reduced lunch program.

This study clarified and showed there are different attitudes, behaviors, practices and procedures used by school officials in the high achieving Title I schools which can be replicated at others.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant in the benefit it provides to school leaders in identifying strategies for building trusting relationship with parents and community stakeholders. This study has provided school leaders with good practices and best practices which have been implemented in successful and challenging schools. The study was also significant for district level and county level leaders by allowing them to examine factors which can be implemented and replicated district wide. The study also revealed common practices and best practices for building trusting relationships with parents across different schools and demographics. This study has added to the literature on building trust between parents and the school.

Assumptions

The practices and strategies school leaders use to build relationships with parents and families were understood and revealed through interviews. The practices employed at schools with higher achievement may be different from those of schools with lower achievement. The interviews conducted with the principals, assistant principals, counselors, and parent liaisons differed based on the perspective of each, individual, their roles in the school, and their personal experiences with parents.

Limitations

There were several limiting factors to the conducted study. The first limitation was that of time. The time limit was a limitation in the depth of the data and understanding of the problem or process over an extended amount of time or the range of an entire school year. This study was only conducted to capture a brief time period instead of following the participants over the course of the entire school year. The second limitation of the study was the seasonal nature of school systems. Schools and school personnel do not fully function during the months of May through August with schools being closed and limited staff available during the summer months. This study was conducted during the summer months which may have limited access to participants and time with participants. In addition to the seasonal nature of school the perception of school officials may have been slightly different than if studied during the school year or at peak school operation. During the summer vacation period school officials tend to be more relaxed and have a more optimistic and positive outlook which may be an advantage for the researcher during interviews or may skew the information received.

Another limitation to the study was the point of view and perception of the persons interviewed. The perceptions studied came from school personnel only. Neither parent

perceptions nor student perceptions were studied or considered. The collective staff perception was not being studied either due to the time of the school year and because access to school personnel is limited. Also the limitation of the study was that the information was based on the perception and interpretation of the school official. This interpretation may have differed from the perspective of the parent.

Final limitation was the exclusiveness of the schools categories as high performing Title I schools by the State of Georgia. The study was conducted among schools in the same district because of similar governance structures, support structures, and rules and procedures. However, due to the high standards required to be on the list of high performing Title I schools some districts do not have multiple schools on the list and if they do they are not all at the same school level. The schools chosen were on different levels. The schools selected were chosen from the Georgia list of high performing Title I schools. The list of schools is very exclusive and there are few Georgia districts with multiple schools at the same level for comparison. This also presented difficulty in choosing schools within the same school district with the same governance structures.

Most of the schools listed are elementary schools, followed by middle schools and with very few high schools on the list. The study was designed to research middle school or high school level. The district chosen had the only four schools on this list which were not elementary schools.

Delimitations

The study of attitudes and behaviors of school officials and their practices to build parental trust is a large topic. This study limited the scope of the research to school leadership and officials who engage parents. Due to the constrictions of time there were no interviews of

teachers, students or parents. The study was conducted during the summer months which made access to student, teacher, and parent participation limited. The participants chosen for inclusion in this study usually work during the early and late summer months and are more accessible. Also due to the constraints of time there were not quantitative portions of the research to acquire additional data. Once again the summer vacation period limited the number of participants who can be accessed and lowers the percentage and likelihood of receiving complete participation.

Summary

The body of literature and research repeatedly showed that parental involvement was key to the success of a school. However increasing and gaining parent involvement is facilitated on establishing trusting relationships between the school and the parents. The body of literature showed that the school organization and leadership play a very important role in establishing the trusting relationship through intentional and deliberate action (Tschannen-Moran 2004). However with the increasing diversity of our community and the increasing diversity of our learners the questions of how to build these relationships has not been sufficiently studied.

In order to understand how schools build trusting relationships with parents we must understand what types of processes and practices are being used in various schools. Studying closely the variations of practices and procedures across different schools allowed an understanding of how successful schools build trusting relationships with parents. A closer examination and study also revealed the factors that school officials can influence through their attitudes, behaviors, practices, procedures and programming.

The second chapter reviews the literature encompassing organizational trust, collective trust, parental trust in school, leadership roles and trust, relational trust and broken trust. The third chapter outlines the methods for the research study and the process used to gather data. The

fourth chapter summarizes and analyzes the results from the study. Finally, the fifth chapter summarizes the research results and makes suggestions based on the results.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify effective structures and practices which build trusting relationships between the school organizations and the parents they serve. Moreover this study aimed to examine the actions and the attitudes of the school officials in setting forth these policies, programs and practices and how it may or may not affect the trusting relationship. The researcher reviewed provided background and theories related to the building of trust. The literature focused on what was categorized in five areas: a) trust within a school organization, b) the role of leadership in building trust, c) parental involvement d) the theories of relational trust and e) distrust and broken trust.

Trust Defined

For any relationship to be productive there must be a level of trust. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran(1999) defined trust as an individual's or group's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent ,reliable, competent, honest, and open. Trust must be found within the school organization (faculty trust) and outside the school organization with the community, parents, and other stakeholders in order for a school to build strong relationships and partnerships. At some level vulnerability, risk, and interdependence are found in trusting relationships and must be addressed (Forsyth 2011).

In order to have a functional trusting relationship cooperation is needed. People must work together and feel that that they are able to work together for a common goal. In order to have cooperation, trust must be present (Hoy, 1999, p.186). Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) identified five facets of trust: benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty and openness (p.186). Benevolence is the confidence a person has that the person or their valuables will be protected; reliability is the degree that the person or organization can be counted on or depended on in times of need; competence is the level at which the person or organization will perform at the expected level of ability; honesty is the degree to which the word or promises of the person or organization be counted on as reliable; openness is the degree that the person or organization is willingly to share information and resources.

Organizational Trust

In order to understand trusting relationships within an organization Kramer and Tyler (1996) considered the dynamics of trust in an organization on three levels: the macro level, the meso level, and the micro level. The macro level describes the influence of the organization has as a whole on trust within the organization (Kramer 1996). It is at this level that organizational structures, practices, and policies influence, encourage, or hinder the formation of trusting relationships. The meso level is a study of the social interaction or patterns within an organization (Kramer 1996). It is at this level that social exchanges among groups or individuals within the organization are studied to understand how trust is built among members of the organization. Finally the micro level describes the individual psychological needs and tendencies related to trust (Kramer 1996). It is at this level that trust is studied on an individual basis to understand what individual needs must be addressed for individuals to trust. Dirks & Ferrin (2001) conducted an empirical study on trust in an organization and what the benefits could be

on the attitudes, perception, behaviors and performance outcomes within and their research indicated that trust has important benefits for organizations.

Kramer and Tyler (1996) described three ways through which trust can be produced or created in organizations: process-based, characteristic based, or institutional based. In process based, trust is created through a series of exchanges, personal experiences, and through satisfied expectations. Repeated positive exchanges and personal experience increase the level of trust (Kramer 1996). Characteristic based- trust is based on shared or preferred similarities between individuals such as background, age, ethnicity, status, or financial achievement (Kramer 1996). The final dynamic described by Kramer and Tyler (1996) is institutional based in which trust is based on the status or social connection to an organization.

Kramer and Tyler (1996) describe trust in an organization as compared to a simple function in mathematics ($\text{Trust} = f\{\text{embedded predisposition to trust, characteristic similarity, experiences of reciprocity}\}$). This function of trust is created by some combination or interaction predisposition to trust individuals, based on perceived similarities, and positive repeated experiences. Thus by this function trust can be increased or decreased through increasing or decreasing positive interaction and experiences or increasing perceived similarities which will in turn affect the individuals' predisposition to trust (Kramer 1996).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) discussed the microdynamics of trust which describe the different perspectives on trusting relationships. They summarized these theories into three perspectives. First trust is a mathematical determination in which individuals decide the degree to engage or not engage with another individual or group based on risk. The second is based on the relationship between an individual and another individual or organization and the better the relationship and the longer the relationship the greater the trust. The third perspective is based on

a shared set of beliefs between individuals and if the individuals share a common set of beliefs prior to entering into the relationship (2002).

Trust in Schools

Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) reported the findings from three studies conducted by The Ohio State University, the University of Chicago, and the Oklahoma State and University of Oklahoma. The Ohio Studies were a series of studies conducted by researchers such as Hoy and Tschannen-Moran to advance the understanding of trust in schools such as faculty trust, transformational leadership, organizational citizenship, faculty trust in the principal, faculty trust and bullying (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011). The Chicago studies were a series of studies on trust conducted by Bryk and Schneider (2002) which examined relational trust. The Oklahoma Studies were a multi-year study on trust started by Forsyth and Barnes in 2001. The student produced many predictors and patterns associated with trust in schools, SES, parents, student and parent relationships, and school level trust (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011). Faculty trust in parents and students were very consistently related to student achievement regardless of the socio economic status, previous achievement, and other demographic variables (Forsyth 2011).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) identified three types or forms of trust that can be found in institutions: organic trust, contractual trust, and relational trust.

Organic Trust

Organic trust is a trusting relationship that is based on the unwavering and wholehearted belief of the individual in the moral authority of an institution (Bryk 2002). This type of trust would be found in institutions that were small, private and mostly religious in origin. In such institution where organic trust is prevalent, the beliefs of the individuals and institution must be

shared because those beliefs govern and control the work of the organization (Bryk 2002). Because of the shared beliefs and the limited membership of the organizations which facilitate organic trust, complete obedience is the rule and dissent is not tolerated (Bryk 2002).

Contractual Trust

Bryk and Schnieder (2002) stated the most common context for trust among modern institutions and organizations is contractual trust. The relationship between individuals and organization is based on a contract or clearly stated terms of the relationship in terms of expectations, services rendered, and exchange of information (Bryk 2002). This type of relationship because of the formality clearing allows individuals to evaluate the success of the relationship reducing the level of risk and increasing the level of trust. If one individual or organization fails to uphold their part of the contract, legal action can be taken to address the concern. This type of relationship does not work well with education. Bryk and Schneider (2002) provide several reasons to support this position. First education is not a single product or service to be purchased or render. Second the diversity of students and families would prevent any uniformity in services or outcomes. Thirdly even if educational best practices could be standardized, the monitoring of the practices would be difficult (Bryk 2002).

Relational Trust

Bryk and Schneider (2002) introduced a theory of relational trust which is based on social exchanges, roles, and relationships within a school organization. Relational trust in a school organization is defined by the role and exchanges of teacher with students, teachers with teachers, teachers with parents, and teachers with the principal. Relational trust describes the degree of simultaneous respect between two groups based on an understanding of expectations

and responsibilities. When parents share with the teachers a common understanding of the parent responsibility and the teacher's responsibility it is describe as synchrony (Byrk and Schneider 2002). The synchrony between these perceptions and actions does not happen by chance but must be grown over time and with repeated positive interactions (Adams, Forsyth, and Mitchell 2009). However for relational trust to grow and be sustained, both groups must observe that the other group is behaving consistently with these mutual held views or expectations.

Based on these two forms of trusting relationships, Bryk and Schneider (2002) proposed a third form which would be more applicable to school institutions called relational trust. Relational trust focuses on the multiple interpersonal exchanges which occur in a school. Every school is filled with a related and connected set of dependent relationships between students, teachers, principals, administrators, and parents (Bryk 2002). Relational trust is based on these relationships and the roles that individuals play in the school. Each individual in their role plays a part to maintain their obligation and the expectations of them while maintaining expectations of other individuals in their roles (Bryk 2002). Byrk and Schneider (2002) noted that in order to maintain and to grow relational trust a synchrony of the mutual expectations and obligations must be maintained and achieved. In relational trust relationships when there is a disagreement or violation of the expectations, individuals will withdraw their trust which will weaken the relationship.

Byrk and Schnieder (2002) explored four criteria which are fundamental to the establishment of relational trust: respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity. Respect is demonstrated by respectful interactions which are guided by listening and the consideration of others' opinions. Competence is demonstrated in the ability of one group to carry out their roles and responsibilities. Personal regard is demonstrated by the willingness of

one group to extend themselves beyond the basic context of the established role and relationships. Integrity is demonstrated through the ability of one group to fulfill its promises and word.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) conceptualized relational trust into three levels: intrapersonal (individual's perception of others), interpersonal (their roles as defined in the organization), and organizational levels (the consequences the roles have on the organization). The researchers described relational trust as an organizational property because it is based on the exchanges among the participants in the organization and has consequences on the functioning of the school and its ability to create change (Bryk 2002).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) stated through their research that relational trust was a resource for school improvement. They defined four ways in which school improvement could be impacted by relational trust building. First change in any organization has risks for all members of the organization. However the presence and building of relational trust reduces the sense of uncertainty and vulnerability that individuals can feel as they undergo organizational change (Bryk 2002). Second the cost of transactions from decision making is reduced in organizations with high trust in one another. Third in a school with high relational trust individuals understand their role and know what is expected of them on a daily basis and will perform accordingly. Finally relational trust maintains an ethical mandate among individuals in the organization to work on the benefit of the students.

Collective Trust

Hoy studied the dynamics of faculty trust within schools. Faculty trust was measured as collective rather than individual faculty members. The study found that Faculty trust is positively related to a school's collaboration with parents in school decision making. This

finding was supported by the study showing that the greater the faculty trust the stronger the parental collaboration on school decisions. However the study also revealed that when the faculty of a school trusts parents, collaboration is at its greatest (Hoy 1999). The level of trust within a faculty will dictate the level of trust and trusting relationships established with community and parents (Hoy 1999). Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) defined Collective trust as a property of a group of individuals based on their shared perceptions about the trustworthiness of another group. In a school organization collective trust can be formed from the following groups: students, teachers, parents, and principal/administration (Forsyth 2011).

Collective trust within a school organization is essential in increasing school performance and closing the achievement gaps because it creates an environment for quality instruction and learning (Adams 2013). Of the countless school improvement strategies according to Adams (2013), collective trust is a “high leverage resource” meaning it is a low cost or capital strategy which will yield the most in positive results (p.376). The products of school organizations , teaching and learning, are developed by relationships and interactions which are not possible when trust is absent in an organization(Adams 2013).While trust has a direct effect on school performances it also has a great indirect effect on the collective efficacy of an organization which effects teaching and learning (Adams 2009).

The research of Tschannen-Moran (2001) showed that trust is necessary to nurture collaborative relationships. In schools it has been found that there is a correlation between trust in colleagues and collaboration between colleagues (Mitchell, Ripley, Adams, & Raju 2011).Schools with a high level of trust were found to have a high level of collaboration. Moreover in schools where there were high level of trust between the school and parents there was a greater degree of collaboration with the school and parents.

Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) reviewed the research on trust within organizations as well as the effect of collective trust on school improvement. They found that there were common threads that ran across all disciplines and organizations when it came to trust.

Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) used seven ways to measure collective trust in a school:

1. Faculty trust in principal;
2. Faculty trust in colleagues;
3. Faculty trust in clients (students and parents);
4. Parent trust in school;
5. Parent trust in principal;
6. Student trust in faculty; and
7. Student trust in principal.

In their analysis of the research on forming collective trust, Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) found two noteworthy points to describe the necessary conditions for establishing a culture of collective trust. First, the research showed that internal conditions of an organization such as positive culture, positive culture, and collective trust can mediate or compensate for the external conditions of a school organization such as socio economic factors (Forsyth 2011). In relations to a school organization collective trust and a trusting environment can be built even in the face of dire external conditions such as poverty which are beyond the control of the school organization. Second, trustworthy behaviors are not separate from thoughts and feelings (Forsyth 2011). Collective trust is built by observable actions or behaviors which do not rely on shared thoughts and beliefs by groups outside of the organization. This means that collective trust can be built even when there are conflicting beliefs and thoughts among groups outside the organization as long as all parties agree on the mission of the organization (Forsyth 2011).

School Leadership

The principal is the leader of the school organization. This leadership is critical to the success and failure of the organization. The degree to which a principal facilitates trust in the school organization is related to the instructional success of the school organization (Adams 2013). In order for a school organization to be productive a level of trust must exist between the faculty, administrators, and the teachers. The principal is the catalyst for creating the trust needed for the organization to thrive. Regardless of the socio economic status of a school the principal has a key role in establishing a trusting environment and when this is accomplished it fosters student identification or connection with the school (Mitchell, Forsyth, & Robinson 2008). Moreover when students trust the principal and parents trust the school, they are more likely to value school (Mitchell, Forsyth, & Robinson 2008). Schools are organizations and all organizations have hierarchies and structures. Tschannen-Moran (2004) suggested that the responsibility of taking the lead in building and sustaining trust relationships belongs to the person at the greatest level in the hierarchy or with the greatest power in the hierarchy. Subordinates in an organization have more vulnerability and are more critical observant in their trust assessments of their supervisor, managers, or leaders (Tschannen-Moran 2004). Principals therefore have more power in the school organization and bear more responsibility for establishing, creating, maintaining, and nurturing a trusting environment.

According to Tschannen- Moran (2004), trustworthy principals set the tone for trust behavior in the school organization. To be a trustworthy , a principal must be known as a person of good will, must be honest and fair in dealings with all members of the school organization, and be willing to accept responsibility for his/her actions(Tschannen-Moran 2004). A trustworthy leader must also promote trust within the school organization by being sensitive to

the needs of the students, staff, and parents and being visible and accessible as well(Tschannen-Moran 2004).

Administrators and teachers need the support of community and parents in order to educate the diversity of learners in schools (Mitchell, Ripley, Adams, & Raju 2011). Horvat, Curci, & Partlow (2010) found that principal leadership impacted parental involvement. The principal's leadership and management style dictated the type of parental relationship and involvement in a school. The style of principal leadership also determines the success of collaboration with parents. Furthermore this study revealed that while the principal is responsible for managing the relationship with parents, parents can also bear responsibility in shaping the relationship between the school leader and parents. Effective leaders must understand the "context" in which their school and community exists in order to build supportive community relationships (Horvat, p.724). Principals and administrators must establish and stress the importance to their staff of involving parents in genuine discussions and providing the opportunities to do so (Mitchell, Ripley, Adams, & Raju 2011).

The level of collaboration and atmosphere of trust within a school organization is depended on the principal or school leadership. Mitchell ,Ripley, Adams, & Raju(2011) found in a study that trust of the principal was correlated with collaboration with the principal and that when teachers trust their principal and colleagues they are more likely to collaborate on instruction and instructional decisions(Mitchell, Ripley, Adams, & Raju 2011). Principals or administrators who want to establish a culture of trust must establish and engage in trustworthy behavior and communication because the level of trust in the principal correlates to the degree of trust between teachers within the building and between teachers and parents (Mitchell, Ripley, Adams, & Raju 2011).

It is the responsibility of the principal as the leader of the school to establish trusting relationships with parents and students which is done by creating a trusting environment (Mitchell, Forsyth, & Robinson 2008). Interestingly enough a study conducted by Donmenz (2010) concluded that principals establishing positive trusting relationships with students and parents experience less professional burnout. Therefore not only is establishing trusting relationship and an atmosphere of trust important for the school organization and parents, it is important for the career of the principal.

Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) recognized the importance of the principal and leadership in building and maintaining collective trust in a school organization. Principals must minimize conflict and clashes while increasing the positive cooperative interactions which focus on common beliefs in the organization (Forsyth 2011). Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) also stated that the role of leaders in a school organization is to remove barriers which restrict parents, create conflict, prevent interactions, and interfere with the professionalism of teachers. In order to build and sustain collective trust in an organization, leaders and principals must build structures which support positive social interactions among the groups of the organization. In terms of building collective trust within the school organization, Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) stated four guidelines for leadership practice in a school organization.

First, principals should establish trust in the principal (or leadership) by being trustworthy. Trustworthiness is defined by the degree that the person is honest, open, reliable, competent, and benevolent (Forsyth 2011). Second a principal must be a leader and not a manager because leadership invests and builds capacity (Forsyth 2011). Thirdly a leader must model organizational citizenship. Organizational citizenship is defined by Forsyth, Adams, and hoy (2011) as behaviors which show a selfless commitment to the school mission and

organization. Lastly leaders can affect collective trust by developing a culture of trust and optimism (Forsyth 2011). A principal can create this trusting culture by establishing social conditions which promote learning, internalized responsibility, outreach to parents, high expectations of academic standards, and professional community which focuses on collaborative work (Forsyth 2011).

Kramer and Tyler (1996) found that leaders and managers in organization can directly influence the formula for the function of trust within the organization. A leaders' or managers' philosophies, beliefs, and attitudes set the predisposition for trust in organizations. Secondly, Leaders set the organizational structures and policies which can affect perceived similarities or dissimilarities between the groups and individuals in the organization. Thirdly leaders can increase or decrease the opportunity for positive or repeated exchanges among the members of the organization (Kramer 1996).

Parental Involvement

Research has shown that there is a link between parental involvement and student academic achievement (Fan 2001, Hill 2009, Barnard 2004, Jeynes 2005 & 2007, Machen 2005) and evidence of a relationship between parental involvement and student academic outcomes. Parental involvement must be an integral part of the school organization and not an outside influence (Epstein, Galindo and Sheldon 2011). In order to do this there must be a concerted effort on the part of the school organization to action towards positive parent involvement. Epstein, Galindo, and Sheldon (2011) describes the concept of overlapping spheres of influence which the greater the collaboration between home, school and community the more benefit are realized in student learning.

Fan and Chen (2001) stated that there are inconsistencies in the research on parental involvement because of the varying definitions of parental involvement and measures of student achievement (Fan 2001). Because of the broad definitions they suggested that a better definition of parental involvement should include parent aspirations, communication, supervision, and participation. Fan and Chen (2001) compared these dimensions of parental involvement against the following measures of student achievement: math, reading, social studies, science, GPA, test scores. The results of their meta-analysis indicated that there is a stronger relationship between parental involvement and student achievement when student achievement is measure by grade point average or other general indicators rather than by individual academic subject (Fan 2001). Furthermore Fan and Chen (2001) found that the weakest correlation between parental supervision at home and achievement and the strongest correlation between parental aspirations for their students' education and achievement.

Epstein, Galindo, and Sheldon (2011) described in their research a framework created by Epstein for six types of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Parenting is achieved by helping families create a caring, nurturing, and supportive home environment for their student. Communicating is created by establishing clear two way exchanges between the school and parent about their specific student's progress. Volunteering is the recruiting and organizing parent help at school or home. Learning at home is established by ideas to families on how to support students with homework or school work. Decision making is created by having parents serve on school committees. Collaborating with the community is facilitated by synthesizing community resources to support student achievement.

In a meta-analysis on research involving parental involvement in middle school and student achievement, Hill and Tyson (2009) found that the relationship to academic achievement varied based on the type of parental involvement. They found that parental involvement defined as homework checking, assistance and supervision has the lowest level of effect on academic achievement. Parental involvement defined by parent visits to school, volunteering at school, and attending school events had a moderate or mild effect on student achievement (Hill 2009). Like Fan and Chen (2001) they found that the strongest relationship between academic achievement and parent involvement was parental involvement defined by communicating academic expectation, goals and purpose of academic achievement, and the value of education.

In a study by Barnard (2004) that followed elementary students through high school found that parental involvement at the elementary level was strongly correlated with lower rates of high school dropout, higher rates of on time completion, and highest level of education completed. Jeynes (2005 & 2007) conducted Meta analyses of parental involvement research for urban students and his findings supported the findings aforementioned and strengthen the case for parental involvement to increase student achievement.

Epstein (2005) describes four perspectives on ways schools must organize in order to have effective parental involvement activities. Parental involvement requires leadership at multiple levels within and outside of the school organization such as state, district, and building level leadership (Epstein 2005). Parental involvement is a part of the school organization. Schools must plan for parental involvement just as they plan for classroom instruction and school improvement. Parental involvement is acknowledges that there is a shared responsibility for student success. Parental involvement programs must be inclusive and not exclusive.

Parent Trust

According to Tschannen-Moran (2001) to increase parental involvement, schools must collaborate with parents. Collaboration can lead to more school improvement and school achievement; however, a trusting relationship is required for effective collaboration (Tschannen-Moran 2001). According to her study there was a link between collaboration and trust and the higher the level of trust the higher the level of collaboration.

By Hoy and Tschannen-Moran's (1999) definition of trust parents must be willingly to risk vulnerability to the school organization and likewise the school organization to the parent. Parents risk vulnerability in the sense of allowing the school organization to have influence and control over the education of their children and school risks vulnerability by allowing parents to have input in the school organization.

Forsyth, L.B.Barnes, & Adams(2006) explored organizational trust from the perspective of the parents who are external parts of the school organization to get insight on what parents need to have trust in the organization. They found that while a school's success was dependent on several external factors the external trust perceptions are significant contributors to that success (Forsyth, Barnes, and Adams 2006). Adams and Forsyth (2009) found that trusting relationships between the parents and teachers can help schools minimize the effect of poverty on the student performance. In order to maximize performance there must be an effort to build trust with parents and the school organization. Although in schools of high poverty and other debilitating social conditions building trusting relationships with parents is harder, the outcome can be high in terms of positive achievement outcomes (Adams & Forsyth 2009). Relationships and interaction between the school and parent which are void of trust can cause tension and can disrupt effective instruction.

Mitchell, Ripley, Adams, & Raju (2011) found that collaboration between teachers and parents is often low because of the reluctance on the part of teachers to allow parents to participate in instructional decisions. It was further found that the collaboration and trust with parents and students was negatively connected to the school level. The collaboration decreases as students enter middle school and high school and the likelihood of teachers collaborating with parents is often less with the parents of the students who are the most at risk (Mitchell, Ripley, Adams, & Raju 2011). The reason for the decline of parental trust over the course of school can be contributed to the change of school structures as a student moves from one level to the next. In the lower levels such as elementary school, parents have fewer teachers to whom to communicate, interact, or build a relationship (Adams & Christenson 2000). This is in contrast to the upper levels of schooling where students have multiple teachers and parents must build multiple relationships, communicate with multiple teachers, and interact with multiple teachers across multiple semesters (Adams & Christenson 2000).

Trusting relationships and interactions between the parent and school can enhance instruction and learning (Adams & Christenson 2000). Adams and Christenson found that there was a significant connection between the attendance, credits earned per year, grade point average of a high school student and parent trust (Adams & Christenson, 2000). Tschannen-Moran (2004) stated that when principals, teachers, students, parents, and all members of the school organization have good trusting relationships, school success is very likely. However in the absence of the trusting relationships, members disengage from the educational process (Tschannen-Moran (2004). In order to build trusting relationships with parents, school officials must communicate to parents their competency, ability to care for their students, their methods

for teaching, the willingness to follow through on their commitments to parents, and their honesty (Tschannen-Moran 2004).

Adams and Christenson (2000) found that not only does trust between teachers and parents declines from elementary to secondary but parents tend to be more trusting than teachers. According to Adams and Christenson this is because parents have more at stake personally than the teacher and they do not have the same credentials to be on par with the teacher's profession. Their research also found that improving communication between school and parents could enhance trust relationships and that trust had a correlation with school performance for high school students (Adams & Christenson, 2000).

Forsyth (2006) found that parents and community perceptions of trust were a significant predictor of school effectiveness. The community trust is very important in predicting school outcomes. These researchers identified "classic ineffective trust-effectiveness pattern" which was the combination of low Socio economic status, low parent trust, and low teacher trust and at the other end of the scale "classic effective trust –effectiveness patterns" which were the combination of high teacher trust, high parent trust, and high socioeconomic status (p.137). However, their research demonstrated that schools with low socio economic status can be effective when there are strong trusting relationships with parents (Forsyth 2006).

Research confirmed that parent trust does differ across schools in the context of social environment of the school (Adams, Forsyth, and Mitchell 2009). However the study also indicated parents more likely perceived schools as trustworthy when they were given as sense that their opinions mattered in decision at school. Parents' ability to build trust is affected by the extent of opportunities parents have to make judgments about the trustworthiness of the school (Adams, Forsyth, and Mitchell 2009). Personal experiences were found to be a more important

factor in shaping parents perceptions of the school than contextual conditions and schools can create trust building experiences for parents (Adams, Forsyth, and Mitchell 2009). These experiences can be a more important factor than the uncontrollable demographic conditions of a school.

Parent trust is more dependent on established norms than on specific classifications of the school as high poverty, high performing, low performing, or at risk (Adams, Forsyth, Mitchell 2009). Creating opportunities which bring parents into the decision making process is a powerful way to build trusting relationships with parents. Their research indicated that without opportunity for frequent interactions with teachers, administrators, and parents will not develop the emotional connections with the school which form trusting relationships (Adams, Forsyth, and Mitchell 2009).

Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) stated in their review of research on collective trust that parents share a large responsibility in building positive collective trust in an organization. It was suggested that when parents were more committed to their child's educational needs, supportive of the learning process and interacted positively with the school, collective trust between teachers and parents was stronger (Forsyth 2011). The responsibility of positive collective trust is divided among all of the groups in the school organization: leadership, teachers, students, and parents.

Distrust /Broken Trust/Trust Repair

Kramer & Tyler (1996) stated that trust can be violated when a person does not act consistent with values or when expectations are unmet. They further stated that violations of trust harm the civic order or the social identity of persons in the relationship. The damage of the civic order are violations of the agreed upon rules, procedures, expectations or obligation (Kramer &

Tyler 1996). The damage to the civic order is perceived as a violation of the trust between an individual and the organization. Civic order is damaged when there are people who feel that there is a violation of rules, violation of honor, or abuse of authority (Kramer & Tyler 1996).

According to Kramer and Tyler (1996) in an organization rule violations are seen as break in trust. When established rules are broken or ignored, changed after the fact or when contracts are breached, individuals lose trust in their organization. Honor violations are described as when others are treated inconsistently with understood ethics or organization norms (Kramer & Tyler 1996). Kramer and Tyler (1996) stated that in organizations honor violations occur in five ways: shirking of responsibilities, broken promises, lying, stealing ideas or credit from others, disclosure of private confidences and secrets. Abuse of authority is another way that trust is violated in an organization. Abuse of authority occurs when a person in the position of authority is intolerable or corrupts (Kramer & Tyler 1996). Being over critical, over demanding, harsh, cruel, or insensitive to subordinates are examples of an intolerable authority figure. The corrupt authority figure is described as using their authority for selfish purposes which are contrary to the best interest of the company or the subordinates (Kramer & Tyler 1996).

Kramer and Tyler (1996) outline seven responses to trust violations in an organization: revenge fantasies, doing nothing, private confrontations, identity restoration, social withdrawal, feuding, and forgiveness. These seven responses can affect the organization in positive and negative ways. Kramer and Tyler (1996) state that no matter the response to the trust violations that some harms and violations appear to do irreversible harm to trusting relationships.

There times when trusting relationships are broken and not functioning relationships. In these instances trusting relationships must be repaired or mended. According to Tschannen

Moran (2004) damaged trust can be repaired however restoration of trust is an intense process. The start of the process of repairing is to understand the cause of the broken trust.

Tschannen-Moran (2004) describes repairing trust as two way process in which all parties in the relationship must see the benefit and value in restoring the relationship. In each incident of broken trust there is a violator and a victim who both have different roles in the rebuilding of the trust (Tschannen-Moran 2004). Tschannen-Moran (2004) states that trust repair can be initiated by either the victim or the violator but the violator must engage in the steps of absolution: admitting fault, apologizing, asking for forgiveness, and changing your ways.

Once the decision to repair broken trust has been made, Tschannen-Moran (2004) describes factors which help facilitate the restoration of trust. Good communication, being reliable, using persuasion instead of coercion, setting clear boundaries, communication of promises and credible threats, and using conflict resolution strategies are all ways to facilitate trust repair accordingly to Tschannen-Moran (2004). Because trust is critical to an organization when trust has been broken efforts must be made to restore the relationship. The goals and mission of an organization will unlikely not be met if trust is broken (Tschannen-Moran 2004).

In order to repair trust there must be a commitment to the process of repair. According to Lewicki & Bunker (Kramer & Tyler 1996) trust repair is a bilateral process which requires both the violator and violated to work together in a committed process. Each party can only show commitment to the process of trust repair by being willingly to invest in the process, understand and value the benefits of a restored relationship, and recognize that the benefits outweigh the alternative of not having the relationship (Kramer & Tyler 1996).

Lewicki and Bunker describe four steps in repairing trust that both the violator and the victim must engage in. The first step is the recognition of the initial act which violated the trust.

The second is to understand what caused the violation of trust and what lead to the action which destroyed the trust. Next is admitting that the action taken was disruptive and ultimate destroyed the trusting relationship. The final step is to take responsibility of the effects of one's action beyond the initial action. The violator and the victim must engage in these four steps together in order for the process to be meaningful and productive. However, after these steps are taken there is a series of additional steps which lead to the repair of the trust.

To rebuild the relationship of trust, Lewicki & Bunker stated that there must be a request or an offer of forgiveness, offer of apology, or form of atonement (Kramer & Tyler 1996). Lewicki and Bunker go on to explain that a trusting relationship is a balance of expectation and responsibilities and violation of trust shifts the balances in the relationship. The violator is attempting to restore the proper balance by apologizing and displaying actions which reinforce the sincerity of the apology. However, after this crucial step, trust repair can be unpredictable in the outcome. Lewicki and Bunker (Kramer & Tyler 1996) state and describe four possible alternative ways or courses that trust repair can and will proceed.

In the first possible scenario, the victim will not accept any conditions, or reason for rebuilding the relationship. In this alternative, the violation may have been so great or hurtful that the victim may feel that the relationship cannot be repaired (Kramer & Tyler 1996). However, the violator may still proceed at their attempt to rebuild the relationship by performing actions which show the victim that they are sincere in their desire to rebuild the trusting relationship.

In the second scenario, the victim wants to repair the relationship, however, the victim gives unreasonable or outrageous terms or conditions for participation in the trust repair process. This alternative will only lead to success if both parties can negotiate successful terms (Kramer

& Tyler 1996). In the third possible scenario, the victim accepts the overture of apology from the violator but does not require any terms or condition to participating in repair. Moreover in the fourth scenario similar to the third scenario, the victim acknowledges and accepts the overture of apology from the violator but in this scenario they set reasonable terms and conditions for their cooperation in rebuilding the trust relationship (Kramer & Tyler 1996).

The repairing and rebuilding of trust can be very complex and complicated but Lewicki and Bunker summarized the necessary steps and possible outcomes in the process of trust repair (Kramer & Tyler 1996). There are a few considerations to contemplate before deciding to engage in trust repair. One the ability of individuals to forgive and move on varies from individual to individual but the higher the ability the easier the process of repair. Second the larger the trust violation the more difficult it is to repair the trust relationship and the lower the rate of successful trust restoration. Lastly the more or higher degree that the character of either party is challenged or is found lacking , lower the probability that the trust will be repaired or restored(Kramer & Tyler 1996).

Summary

Since the implementation of the “No Child Left Behind” Law building relationships between the school and the parents and community have been at the forefront of educational reform and restructuring (Epstein 2005). Strong collaborative relationships between schools and parents affect school academic outcomes and achievement. The research and body of literature clearly shows that in order to build strong relationships between schools and parents trust must be built and maintained by the school organization. Strong leadership is essential to building trusting relationships and producing an atmosphere in which trust can thrive.

The study that I propose is essential to this body of research because while the research shows connections between building trust within a school organization, with parents and community members and school achievement, there is no pertinent data on what strategies and types of programs principals or school leaders can implement to do this. Nor is there research that show if particular strategies are perhaps successful at some school and not at others. My proposed study will look for intentional strategies, programs, and practices which are used to build parent trust in schools. Moreover my study will seek to discover links or correlations between the types and number of practices at high achieving schools versus those at low achieving schools. My study will be guided by and seek to answer the following questions:

1. What is the attitude of school officials towards parents and building trusting relationships with parents in high achieving schools?
2. What are the behaviors displayed by school officials towards parents in high achieving schools?
3. How do school leaders address issues of broken trust and distrust with parents in high achieving schools?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

A qualitative study was chosen to understand how schools build trusting relationships with parents. Parental trust and the perception of parental trust by school officials is a multifaceted topic with many variables. It was hoped that this method of research allowed subjects to be more descriptive about their personal experiences and perceptions. Trust is personal in its perception and practice. A trusting relationship is based on many factors but perception of the persons in the relationship is important to understanding the overall relationship. Therefore documenting the personal perspective and perceptions of the participants was important. Also the attitudes and behaviors displayed by one or both parties are critical in building trusting relationships. Although a valid and efficient method of data collection quantitative methodology was not fitting to achieve this goal. Interviews allowed for more personal inflection and reflection as well as personal insight into the research questions. Also by using the qualitative method the researcher was able to probe for deeper meaning and understanding which can be limited by multiple choice response questionnaires.

Research Questions

This research study was be guided by and sought to answer the following research questions: 1.What were the attitude of school officials towards parents and building trusting relationships with parents in high achieving schools? 2. What were the behaviors displayed by

school officials towards parents in high achieving schools? 3. How did school leaders address issues of broken trust and distrust with parents in high achieving schools?

This study was based on the premise that there are specific attitudes and behaviors used by school officials to create and establish trusting relationships with parents. It was assumed that higher achieving schools had different attitudes and behaviors for establishing trusting relationships with parents than low achieving schools. In fact the researcher suspected that the research will reveal that there are in fact more practices used by school officials in high achieving schools in an attempt to build trusting relationships with parents. It was also assumed that there would be a difference in the strategies and practices used by principals based on their years of experiences or types of experiences.

Research Design

The research was designed around a series of interviews of study participants. Interviews were conducted using adapted questions about trust. The interview questions were created using the five facets of trust: benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran 1999). The list of interview questions are located in Appendix I.

These twenty questions allowed the interview participant to elaborate on the practices and strategies that they used to build trusting relationships with parents. The questions were designed to allow the participant to reveal their personal practices, attitudes, and behaviors as well as the practices, attitudes, and behaviors of the school and other personnel. The interviewer also reserved the right to ask follow up or questions for clarity which are not listed above as official questions. The interviews were scheduled at the time convenient for the participant and will be take a maximum of sixty minutes. The interviewer interviewed each participant twice to follow up on the data gathering and to provide clarity on comments and data received. Each

interview started by asking participants their level of education, total years of experience in education, and the number of different school locations they have worked during those years of experience. This allowed for later identification but also comparisons and contrasts.

Setting of the Study

The framework of this study examined the attitudes and behaviors of school officials towards building trusting relationships with parents at high achieving Title I middle schools within the same school district. Most of the literature on the subject is based on elementary schools. The schools were chosen to show a diversity of demographics, enrollment size, geographical location but common issues and achievement in the same school district. A School District in the metro Atlanta area of Georgia was the district which served as the location of this study. This School District was chosen because of the diversity of schools as well as its diversity of school achievement. In this district there were schools which were nationally recognized for their achievement while other schools struggle with their achievement. From this point the district will be referred to as the Southern School District.

The Southern District was considered a high achieving school district; however there were schools within its district which would be considered low achieving. There were also varying degrees of socioeconomics, diversity, instructional delivery models and populations within the school district's schools. Each of the schools in the Southern district had its own strategic plan for student achievement which encompasses the goals, foci and desires of each school and each school's community. Although the Southern District had a district strategic plan which each school supports, each school had different goals and strategies for achieving the district goals. These differences can lead to divergences in the practices, look, and feel of each school and the school community. Each school was shaped and influenced by the school

community which surrounds and supports the school. The school community being the parents, community stakeholders, business partners, the school staff, the school support staff and the students. It is the divergence and similarities of practices and school cultures which I was hoped to yield significant data results.

Schools which are designated by the State of Georgia as Title I schools share similar socioeconomic makeups which sets them apart from other non-Title schools. In order to be a Title I school the percentage of students who qualify for Federal Free and reduced lunch program must be at least seventy –five percent of the total population. A high percentage of students receiving Federal Free and Reduced lunch indicate low socio economic status of students and families within the school which can lead to some challenging circumstances for the school. Each Title I school receives federal funding to help raise the achievement levels of the students in the school. The state of Georgia publishes a list of high achieving Title I schools each year based on gains in student performance and achievement. The Title I high achieving schools are placed in two categories: High Performing School and high Progress School.

A Highest-Performing School is a Title I school among the 5% of Title I schools in the State that has the highest absolute performance over three years for the “all students” group on the statewide assessments. A Highest-Performing School must have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the “all students” group and all of its subgroups in 2011. A school may not be classified as a Highest-Performing School if there are significant achievement gaps across subgroups that are not closing in the school. A High-Progress School is a Title I school among the 10% of Title I schools in the State that is making the most progress in improving the performance of the “all students” group over three years on the statewide assessments. A school may not be classified as a High-Progress School if there are significant achievement gaps across

subgroups that are not closing in the school. It is my hope that studying the practices in these successful yet challenging schools will yield practices which are significant to building trusting relationships with parents.

Participant Selection

The four school site locations were chosen based on the Title I list from the above mentioned school district. The four schools chosen were considered high performing Title I schools which will give similar comparisons of diversity and socioeconomics for the study. Because the list was very exclusive and rigorous there were not many districts that had multiple schools at one level on the Highest Performing List. A district may have had multiple schools on the High Progress list but usually there are no more than 3 to 4 schools per district. In order to accomplish this research with the maximum time spent on gather data versus time traveling, the researcher chose a district with multiple High Progress schools.

The Southern School District had a total of forty three schools designated as Title I schools (29 elementary, 12 middle schools, and 2 high schools). The District had no schools on the Highest Performing School list but the District had five schools on the High Progress School list (1 elementary, 3 middle, and 1 high school). The researcher chose 4 of the 5 schools to conduct the research (all 3 middle schools and either the elementary school or high school).

At each site location four participants were for interview: a principal, assistant principal, school counselor, and a school parent liaison. These participants were chosen by their level of interaction with parents: The principal of the school was chosen to give their perspective of the overall school organization, an assistant principal for their perspective in dealing with student and family issues such as discipline, a school counselor for their perspective of dealing with the

aspirations of families and the issues which arises, and a parent liaison for their perspective of someone tasked with engaging parents

Data Collection

Data and information was gathered through a series of face to face interviews. Each participant was interviewed separately. Through a set of structured open ended questions, participants shared their knowledge and all interviews were recorded for transcription and coding. Data was also collected through notes in a field journal during each interview. Data analysis was conducted as an activity simultaneously with data collection and analysis was based on data reduction and interpretation. All recorded interviews were transcribed into documents. The data collected from the interviews was coded and reviewed for themes and key terms or repeating statements. Each participant interviewed received a follow up interview which will allowed participants to add to their answers, provide clarity on answers, reflect on answers given, and to review the answers given for accuracy. The final data was collected, coded and analyzed after the second round of interviews. Data was collected between the months of May 2014 and June 2014.

Data Analysis

The data collect once transcribed was reviewed and coded for recurring themes and phrases. The data was reviewed to look for similarities of practices at the same school from different participants, different practices at the same school form different participants, similar practices from participants from different schools, and different practices from participants at different schools. The transcribed interviews were reviewed for similar statements which showed the attitude of the participants towards parents, trust, parental involvement, leadership in

trust relations, and school achievement. Phrases and segments with reference to building relationships and techniques for building relationship were also reviewed. The transcribed data was reviewed for unique perspectives, practices, techniques, and attitudes towards parental involvement. Through this process of review of the data it was also hoped that patterns would emerge which will showed the experiences of each participants in relation to good strategies for building parent relationships and negative strategies for building parent relationships and the experience gained and lessons learned.

Ethical Considerations

As described in Creswell and as common with qualitative research involving participants to be interviewed the following was considered: 1) all research objectives were articulated verbally and in writing for participants. 2) written permission to proceed with the study were secured from participants, 3) a waiver of consent were sought from the IRB, 4) the participant were kept informed of all data collection devices, 5) the transcriptions of participant's interview were available to the participants, 6) the participants' rights and wishes were considered when choices are made regarding reporting data, and 7) the final decision regarding participant anonymity rested with the participant.

Summary

In summary a total of sixteen interviews were conducted over four different school locations. Each interview yielded one transcribed document of the interview. The transcribed interviews were coded by use of standard coding practices for qualitative research. The data for the study were pulled and gleaned from these documents and used for comparisons and contrasts of practices.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes displayed by school officials towards parents and building trusting relationships with parents. This chapter is the result of the interviews conducted at the four chosen school sites and the chosen school officials at each site. Each school was chosen for exhibiting academic school success under similarly difficult circumstances which are common to low socio economic school. This chapter presents the research data results from the conducted interviews. The data presented in this chapter will highlight individual contributions and school practices as well overall themes which were observed.

The findings in this research were consistent with the literature on trusting relationships and school improvement. Byrk and Schneider (2002) found that the building of relational trust in a school organization in a school and school community is the key to school improvement. Their field study was based on three different communities in Chicago. It found that the relational trust is a social resource for school improvement and that there was a link to relational trust to school productivity.

In the University of Chicago Studies (Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy 2011) argued that trust did not directly affect the academic performance of a school but fostered the conditions which promoted the activities which directly affect learning such as 1) orientation to innovation, 2) outreach to parents, 3) professional community, and 4) high expectations and high academic

standards. The results of the research conducted at the High performing Title I school reflect the results from the Chicago Studies.

Hoy (1991) stated that in order for there to be cooperation trust must be present and built. This research supports this finding. In those schools where trust was built cooperation was gained between the school and parents.

Kramer (1996) stated that repeated positive exchanges and personal experiences increase the level of trust which this research also verified. The participants in this research increased the number of positive interactions and increased the level of trust between the school and parents.

Case studies

In order to determine the attitudes displayed in high achieving Title I schools, four high achieving schools were chosen within the same school district ,therefore each serving under the same district expectations and leadership. The goal of the interviews at each school site was to examine the attitude towards parents from various leadership positions within each school organization to determine similarities and differences within each school organization. At each school four school officials were interviewed: the principal, an assistant principal, a professional counselor, and the school parent liaison. In order to highlight and discuss the results of the sixteen interviews, a description and narrative of each school was composed based on the interviews and data of each site location.

Langston Sixth Grade Academy

Langston Sixth grade Academy is a single level middle school which serves approximately 518 students. The student population of the school is 57.7% African American, 36.9% Hispanic and 3.5% Caucasian. At Langston 89.8% of its student population classified as

economically disadvantaged and has a student transiency rate of 34%. Langston has been on the High achievement Title I school list for the state of Georgia for three consecutive years. Langston is led by Principal Cain. Due to the nature of a single grade level school, parent relationships are harder to form due to the fact that the staff only has their students and parents for one school year. However, Assistant Principal Boseman, Counselor Valentine, and Parent Liaison Sharp contribute to Lindley's efforts to build and facilitate relationships with the parents of Langston.

Principal Cain expressed his belief in parental involvement and its importance to student success and the success of the school.

It goes without saying that I believe research indicates that students that have parents that are involved and that participate in their education are more successful so when you talk about the perception of the importance of parental involvement, it's essential. Once again, when our students that are successful you can directly tie in their success to parents that are involved, parents that have the opportunity to come to the school and do check and see what's going on to check behind them at home in terms of their homework.

I'm not saying that students that don't have that are not going to be successful but I've always believed that the students that do have whether it be a single parent, two parents, or grandparent, just some figure at home, an adult at home that can help them and be involved in their education that they're going to have a better chance of being successful.

My perception of parental involvement is that it is an essential component of a student's success.

Counselor Valentine echoed Principal Cain's comments and added that why she felt that there must be good relationship between school and home. "Children tend to perform better that way, if they know that there's that connection. It shows the child that the parent thinks education is important, as well. Also, on the school's part, it shows the child that we value their parents' opinion." However, while agreeing with his colleagues Assistant Principal Boseman offered a different perspective on defining what parental involvement actually is in practice.

I think it's [parent involvement] extremely important. However, I do think it's viewed differently by different people. If you have an after school program, a tutoring program, just because the parent cannot come in and witness and observe it, just the fact that they picked them up is participation and it is involvement, and I think we have to broaden our horizons to stop considering just giving money to the PTA is participation. I think it's extremely important, but I also think it comes in many different forms.

Like other schools Langston has its barriers and issues which impede and interfere with positive parent relationships. Principal Cain discussed the lack of time for sustained parent relationships based on the structure of the school.

Here's what's difficult. Here at LSGA, we are a single grade level school so I have a new crop of parents every year so incumbent upon us to continue to get the word out about what we're doing here and I really rely heavily on previous parents sharing the good things about LSGA so it doesn't take as much time to reestablish trust year after year.

Counselor Valentine shared what she perceived as initial barriers that have to be overcome to establish good parent relationships.

Sometimes, they [parents] like to ask, "What kind of school is this? There are fights all the time." Pretty much, my answer is, "Yes, we fight, but there are not fights all of the time. Those children are disciplined accordingly."

They'll say, "What about this school's test scores?" Whatever they read on the internet, or they've heard, sometimes, in their neighborhood. You just try to reassure them that everyone is doing their best to educate the children. Yes, we sometimes have issues. I always say that it's, pretty much, 10% of our student population that utilized all of the resources. These are the same kids going the administrator, the counselor, the school social worker. We're doing the outside recommendations for them, as well.

At Langston due to the perceived reputation in the community and the limited time with the parents, there is a sense of urgency and proactivity when it comes to establishing and building positive parent relationships. The focus at Langston from the principal down is on communication of information frequently and often. Principal Cain describes how he is proactive in communication and meeting parents:

Last year, I started doing a Sunday night call blast. I'll do a Sunday night call blast every Sunday at six o'clock. I try to make it a point to be consistent in that effort, in that regard because, I think, it speaks to the reliability standpoint. It speaks to the reliability issue and standpoint in that parents know that they're going to hear from Principal Joshua every Sunday.

I started doing coffee and conversations with the principal to have those conversations with parents about things that they want to talk about. I don't always have a preset agenda but I allow them to come and help build that agenda, help set that agenda and the direction in which the conversation is going to go in.

Over the past two years, we've been holding town hall meetings at the Southside Rec Center on Flags Drive to do just that, to share relevant information concerning our tests scores, our initiatives here, how we're spending our Title 1 dollars, getting their input on how to spend Title 1 dollars.

Likewise Assistant Principal Boseman reinforces his principal's direction on communication. He also goes a step further by applying this to his approach to student discipline.

Being proactive instead of reactive all the time. That shows them a lot. You see a kid slipping in their grades or he's been suspended, and he's come back to school, it's proactive to meet with that kid when he comes back. Sometimes I've even called while they're suspended, just wondering how he's handling it, how he or she is handling it, how's everything going, and then when they get back, follow up and try to be proactive and try to make sure they don't make the same mistake that they made that got them in trouble in the first place.

Parent Liason Sharp who also is a part time classroom teacher discussed ways in which she is proactive with parents and sharing information:

By having a relationship from the beginning with them [parents]. We try to call parents at the beginning, not just when the child is bad or whatever, not doing what they're supposed to do. We try to make contact with the parents when they're doing well, also. Every weekend, my grades are on Synergy. Every Monday, it's very seldom that it's not there, so I'm very reliable as far as grading is concerned, and also as far as making contact. Once you make that contact, and they know that you're grades are going to be there on time, instead of waiting until the end of the quarter, you know what I'm saying, towards the semester. For the child, that's what being honest, also, so the parent would know what to expect. There's nothing that they won't already know, if they're keeping up with the child's grades. If they're not keeping up with the child's grades, I always try to make contact with the parent, also.

Counselor Valentine added to ways that they are proactive in their communication with parents:

If their child has been absent a couple of days, the teacher may call to check up on the child, and they understand, "They value my child." These are people that I can trust. You

may have a class of 30 children, overall, for a middle school teacher, you may actually teach 100 or 120 kids. This teacher has realized my child is absent; they're calling to check up on my child.

Principal Cain's emphasis on communication clearly is the vehicle for building relationships with parents at Langston. This sentiment is reflected in the actions of the other officials interviewed. Principal Cain believes that this has been the key to their success at Langston:

As principal here at Langston Sixth Grade Academy, I don't try to hide anything when it comes to our data or test scores or areas of weaknesses as well as our areas of strength. I think, one example of displaying that you're honest and that you will be honest with them is the regular communication piece, having those hard, those difficult conversations with parents. Transparency also helps to build that honest relationship with them as well and just simply keeping them in the loop of what's going on here at the school, give them an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process as well also helps go a long way.

This is my third year here at the school and I think, I'm hearing more parents say, "Your reputation is starting to precede itself" and that's a good thing because that means, to me, that they're hearing about the good things and that they're willing to be trusting of the school in a more expedient fashion than if there were not some good things going on here.

Sampson Middle School

Sampson Middle school is a full middle school grades sixth through eighth which serves approximately 992 students. The student population of Sampson is 42.6% African American, 44.1% Hispanic, and 6.4% Caucasian. Eighty seven percent of the student population is classified as economically disadvantage and the student transiency rate is 35%. Sampson is led by Principal Kent. Assistant Principal Wayne, Counselor Prince, and Parent Liaison Lane work and contribute to Sampson efforts to engage with parents.

Under the leadership of Principal Kent, there has been an emphasis on the importance of positive interactions with parents by all staff. Principal Kent stated his belief that how you interact with parents makes the difference in the type of relationship you build with them over time:

Any time you have an interaction with a parent you're either building that trust or you're taking it away. I think part of the answer has to do with the fact of as a building leader it's very important to communicate to the staff that any time you interact with a parent you are always wanting to build, you're always wanting to leave deposits, you're always wanting to make those connections with the parents because they say is the perception of what the school is on the community, so there's that component.

You've got a lot of dynamics in play and that's why it's so important that you're communicating to your staff that any time you're interacting with a parent build on that relationship, make it stronger, because you have to deal with all situations. A lot of times you deal with ones that aren't pleasant, aren't fun, and aren't really going to build relationships, but if you handle it in a professional way they can at least respect the process.

In the beginning of his tenure as principal, Principal Kent shared that the majority of the times he interacted with parents initially was for issues dealing with discipline and he met parents when they were at their most upset and frustrated with the school. He knew that he had to change this dynamic and build better relationships with parents based on positive interactions:

In middle school typically broken relationships come around discipline. I think a lot of times parents just want to be heard. It's so important to be able to call the parent in, have them sit down, and typically I like to have that conversation twenty-four hours after the parent is aware; they're upset; they're angry; because it allows the parent to go home, process what happened, talk with their child. When they come back the next day, they've got a little more sense of calm with them, so that wait time I think is very important.

I like to sit down and I just allow the parent; I don't say anything. The first fifteen minutes, I just let them go. They kind of get it all out there and I think you can just literally see that energies kind of leave them. Just being a listener. The decision has already been made, unless that parent is going to bring something to the table that's going to totally change why they're upset, which typically isn't the case. A lot of times they don't even want out of the charges. They just want to be heard.

Principal Kent and his staff took their focus on positive interactions in a completely different direction. With his staff he purposeful created positive recognitions and opportunities for positive parent interactions with the school.

The first thing we did was our awards ceremony at the end of each nine weeks. That was kind of the beginning of building that relationship, is to say we value your kids. They got all A's. Come up on stage. We're going to give you a little pin and give you a little lanyard, have some cake; be able to start having those conversations.

The other thing is we started Wall for Academic Success. Our kids that scored in the exceeds category for writing; there were twelve of them, so we got them this leather-bound journal and we gave it to them in the cafeteria in front of their peers. Everybody loved it. It's really starting to recognize kids for successes. One of the things we're going to do this year is on each hallway we are going to have a chart of all the kids that exceeded on the CRCT. So if you exceeded in reading, we're going to have your name up on the wall. If you exceeded in writing, we're going to have your name on the wall, just to really start pushing and promoting the successes here.

We always look for opportunities where we can recognize kids, so at the end of each; last year at the end of each nine weeks we'd have all A awards, all A/B awards, and perfect attendance awards. The theater is packed. All we do is the kids walk across the stage, we give them a little pin and shake their hand and say congratulations, thanks for your hard work. We'll have cake after the ceremony. The parents love it. It's really about just who doesn't love having their child being recognized? I think the more we can do activities like that, the more that builds that community participation and involvement.

Assistant Principal Wayne agrees with his principal on the importance of positive interaction with parents. He often deals with parents concerning student discipline but has found ways to even make those hard conversations more interactive and positive. Even during his discipline conferences he makes sure that all information concerning the child is available for the parent including attendance, grades, and even special education information. Assistant Principal Wayne speaks with parents about their other concerns about their students besides discipline and answers as many question as he cans while inviting the parent to come back for other events. He believes in taking advantage of every opportunity to get a parent into your building so that a more positive relationship can be built and misinformation can be corrected:

...if parents don't come into the building they don't have some idea of what goes on and they're just driving by all their left with as what they might hear to dinner conversation from a child. That is often inaccurate, words just partial and I'm sure that our kids talk about good or bad things with those folks but often parents don't go beyond on that conversation to find out if it's, that's really the case.

The more that we can get access to the parents and ...the parent that comes to the front door, that's an opportunity to engage them in a conversation about volunteering or about some aspect of our education plan, in the instructional program, you got to do it. Take advantage of everything ...One thing on the simplest level, moving our honor

celebration from what use to be just a pizza party at the end of the day to a full scaled like evening with the parents, we have packed house.

We have an opportunity to display or showcase something in the ...extending your vision into the community through those parents because they hear you talk about what's going on or they see what's going on.

Counselor Prince believes in positive interactions with parents and her department of counselors to do their part to engage parents and bring them into the building. She describes that in addition to frequent communication via multiple sources such as phone, emails, letters, and blogs her fellow counselors create programs designed to engage parents:

This year, we're implementing coffee with counselors. That will be an early morning 8:15 to 9:15 program. We found that parents are more likely to come early in the day and just be a little bit late for work as oppose of having a leave today or leave work early. We're going to do that in the morning and we're going to at least do them quarterly. Each one will have a topic.

Then we're going to implement some evening events this year. We want to do a health line that actually covers all types of health issues whether it's mental health, physical health. That's something that we're working for in the Spring. We also want to do which we did last year as well. We had Prevention intervention. They came out and did an evening program about bullying and tolerance and the affect, causes and how parents can help in the process. Because that's one of our big issues in middle school is bullying.

Long time Parent Liasion Lane has send a change in parent relationships at Sampson over the time she has served there. She described that the process of county attendance zone redistricting change the dynamic of parent involvement overnight. The change in attendance zones removed many of the active parent leaders who were established at Sampson. Her job as parent liaison has been to find those opportunities to grow new parent leaders and to give parents opportunities to be involved:

They [parents] went from being hosts to being guests. Now we're trying to show them around and trying to make them feel welcomed and comfortable. Where before they were comfortable because they were the host. It evolved to that point. What we're trying to do now is bring them back in, back into that host situation. They [parents] come and they keep coming back so that's important. They're welcomed guests and we're trying to get

them to see that they're actually our partner. Like you're really our partner, you really are stakeholder. Not just for your child but the whole building is.

Principal Kent summarizes why parent involvement is so important to student success at

Sampson:

It's something to be said for a parent and a child to be on the same page with the classroom teachers. If you have a parent that's involved, that knows the teachers, that trusts the teachers, that when the child has gone home and they do have; oh, we have to do this because of; so we get a day off. The parent goes I don't know if that's true or not, because you have that relationship. I think if you don't have that relationship, you don't know how that person is, and the child would come home and say yep, no homework again this week and you're just like wow, I guess they don't give homework as opposed to wait a second, I know that Mr. Turner. I know he loves to give homework.

I think it's critical. It kind of sends the message to your child that we're going to hold you to a very high standard; me as a parent and your child's teachers as well, because ... It's funny, we had a kindergarten teacher for my second daughter and she said when your kids come home, if you believe half of what they tell you, I'll believe half of what they tell me. That line stuck with me. I thought you know what, that is so true. As kids come home, that story is so blown open to craziness that happened and you're like oh, my gosh, I'll give the school a call. You have the conversation and you're like that didn't happen that way. Be involved. Know your teachers. Teachers, know your parents. Work together to move that child forward, because it's not easy, especially middle school.

Capital Middle School

Capital Middle school is a sixth through eighth grade middle school which serves approximately 1435 students. The student population of Capital is 42.6% African American, 44.1% Hispanic, and 8.8% Caucasian. At Capital 79.2% of the student population is classified as economically disadvantaged and the student transiency rate is 33%.Capital is led by Principal Thompson. Assistant Principal Jones, Counselor Noles, and Parent Liaison Gomez contribute to the efforts at Campbell to involve and inform parents.

Principal Thompson expressed the importance of parental involvement at Capital middle "because we can do as many different programs as we can find, but if the parents aren't

supporting it and there not those conversations going on at home, it's not going to be fully implemented because it has to be school and home together for it to be successful.” Assistant principal Jones supports the importance of parental involvement in student success and the role that a school must play in reaching out to parents to guild good relationships:

Parent involvement is huge. One of the difficult things at a Title I school is a lot of times our parents are working parents and sometimes they're single parents, so we've got to find ways to outreach to those parents and to make connections with those parents, that may be different than other schools, so it's a lot of times, when we have meetings, we have to consider that we have parents that are going to be working late. We have parents that may have difficulty with transportation. All of those things are things that we've got to consider as a school when we're trying to outreach to those parents and when we make decisions.

A lot of it goes back to the decision making process, making sure that we make it easy for our parents to be a part of it as opposed to building a wall that they have to get across. A lot of times, elementary schools do a phenomenal job of breaking down that wall and allowing parents to come in, and what we're trying to do as a middle school is to not set up this gigantic barrier in sixth grade that parents have helped, have helped, have helped, and then all of a sudden, no, we're now in a sterile middle school or a sterile high school, but open up those gates and make those connections just like the fifth grade parents have at our local elementary school.

Parent Liasion Ms. Gomez, a Columbian born and native Spanish speaker, also stresses the importance of parent involvement and positive parent relationships however; she offers a reason that many of her students with families of South and Central American origins have difficulties with involvement:

It's very important. The problem is the parents believe the school has all the responsibility about education, and that's not true. In Spanish [some Latin countries], there is difference between teaching and education. The teachers teach, the parents do education. Education is basic values: respect, honesty, tolerance, but they have to work together. I call my attention to the families and say, “Okay, this is the second house for your kids but you're the first teaching, educators, and teachers”.

Principal Johnson express that his observation was that to improve parent relationships there must be more outreach by the school and opportunities for parents to come into the school

and participate in the school. In his first year as principal he noticed some things at Capital which he felt indicated a breakdown of trust between the school and the parents:

There were really no parent volunteers in place when I came to Capital Middle. I think that there was perhaps a lack of trust there, but I'm trying to open those doors right now. We have a volunteer program now that we've developed. We're slowly getting more participation. The Watchdog Dads, that's really taking off. We had a huge response from that...when I proposed that to the faculty, they were extremely excited about the opportunity to get more parents involved. There has not been a history of a lot of parent involvement, of volunteers coming into the school, but as I've opened that door this year, the teachers are very excited about the opportunity because they know the value of getting that team development. Right now, we're dipping our toes into it, and we're going to build on what we've started. ..we have a series of principal chats where I'm going to be available to parents just for them to come in, kind of an open door policy, but it's a scheduled open door issue, so that they understand they can come in, ask questions and get some answers. Those are a series of chats that are already scheduled. I'm trying to send the message about my availability and my reliability.

Counselor Noles describes that the demographic makeup of Capital middle school has required different approaches to getting parents into the school, comfortable at school and involved with the school:

We also do something that's really cool at the school, we do a multi-cultural week/night so we have Power over Prejudice, they [students] do a training at Georgia Tech, they come back and so we have a club here and then we have a big multi-cultural week. We found out a couple years ago that we had students from over fifty different countries. We have a talent show that night and then we have parents that come in. It's really successful, we have parents that come in and bring a dish from their country of origin and I mean, the cafeteria is full, we must have a hundred different dishes. That's probably our biggest night, how we really get involvement. It's really cool because just the diversity that's involved and of course the awesome food. That's one of our best things that we do here as far as getting the most parent participation I think. Other than the first meet and greet night.

Assistant Principal Jones indicated that establishing good parent relationships requires establishing a good reputation in the community and with the parents of the community. In being honest, fair and reliable he feels that you slowly build a good reputation thereby build better relationships where parents trust and support the school.

In dealing with parents and dealing with honesty, it's like I always go back to the restaurant analogy. You can claim that you're honest and you can claim that you have good food, but unless they've experienced it, they're not going to believe it and so a lot of that comes with reputation. There's no quick fix with parents' perception of you in the community and once you develop a good perception, just like with a restaurant ... if a restaurant develops a good perception, you go back even if you have a bad meal because everybody says it's good and everybody says it's the place to be, and that's the same thing with the school, so it's about developing relationships over a long period of time and not just one or two acts of honesty. It's being real. It's letting parents see who you truly are and letting them know and understand that you're a person of integrity and that you value fairness...

Reliability has a lot to do with follow through. It goes back to that whole reputation thing. If you develop that reputation that number one, if a parent calls, you call them back. You deal with the situation. You have follow through and fairness. If you do that on a consistent, clear basis, and you do that with everyone, it's one of those things where every day several times a day you're checking your voice mail, making sure that parents are contacted.

Capital middle school has learned to use community resources, community momentum, and community strengths to grow positive parent relationships. Principal Johnson and assistant Principal Jones both discussed using community outlets to promote and spread positive message about Capital and as tools to invite parents to participate in discussions and give feedback to school staff. Assistant Principal Jones describes the concerted outreach method of recruit and informing parents:

We have very strong ties with our PTA, with our school council, and those are two areas that I work on and have worked on for the past couple of years, and they are a very large part in the decision-making process and in the idea of figuring out what the school needs are, how we address those school needs, so in particular the PTA. One thing that we've worked on with them very heavily is our perception in the community, and so we've connected with a lot of other groups.

There's one group called the Smyrna Wave which they are a group of parents that are sending out the good news about the community and so we've got our PTA and they're working with them. We have a group of parents at Sky Elementary School that we've been working with to make connections with so that they understand what the middle school is like and that middle school's not as scary as what a lot of the perception in the community has been about it.

We do school tours once a month and we've done that for the past two years, where parents in the community come in and we've had parents as young as with kindergarten students that want to see, do I want to come to this middle school or do I want to move or do I want to go to Woodward? Parents are making those decisions

earlier and earlier, and what we want to do is have an open and honest relationship with them, show them the school, show them what it's like here on a day to day basis, get into the classes and let them see that there are a lot of great things going on here at Capital.

If you want your kids to come here, it's certainly an option for you, and so we try to reach out to the community through the PTA and through those groups. We also, through the school council, are trying to reach out and continue to improve our perception among the community. We have service groups that we work with and we're trying to really have a strong service component this year.

Principal Johnson describes the importance of allowing parents to give feedback and input is to building stronger relationships with parents:

I have a great school council that gives me a lot of feedback. We also have parent representatives on the Title 1 committee and our SSP committee. The PTSA is pretty active here in addition to the Jack Coleson council. We have several parents that are a part of that. They're very visible in school, so a lot of opportunities for feedback and input from different community members.

We definitely need feedback into our goals and the strategies that we're using. We try to get a lot of feedback for that Title 1 Plan, so that we are clear about what we're using the money for and that we have input from parents as to what they see as the priorities. That helps us to be more productive when we're all on the same page.

At Capital Middle, Principal Johnson and his staff are trying different approaches to ring parents into the school to build great trusting relationships. One of the interesting ways that they are doing so is by recruiting the student to be a bridge between the teacher and the parent through student lead parent conferences:

...one of the things that we do here is student lead conferences during Conference Week for middle schools. While we're talking about a student leading it, it helps to build the trust between the parents and the teachers because one of the things that we've made sure to implement is that the teacher recognizes all the positive things that their students are contributing to the class.

The fact that the student gets to lead that conversation between the parents and the teacher builds that bridge of trust. While the question is about parents and teachers, I really see the students being the link between the two.

Oak High School

Oak High school is the only ninth through twelfth grade school in the study. It is the only secondary school in the district to make the high achieving Title I school list in the district. Oak is led by Principal Morales. Oak high school is the oldest high school in the district serving approximately 1997 students. Over time there has been a significant change in the neighboring community in terms of socioeconomics, and diversity of student population. The student body is 53.5% Hispanic, 36.1% African American, and 6.4% White. The surrounding neighborhoods are no longer majority of houses and homes but of apartment complexes. At Oak 88.4% of the student body is classified as economically disadvantaged and the transiency rate at Oak is 41.9% making it one of the highest transiency schools in the district. Principal Morales without hesitation states his thoughts on the importance of parent involvement in schools and his struggles with involving his parents:

Great schools have great parent involvement or high parent involvement, so I think it's critical. It's a struggle at times to work around so many different people's schedules when you have 2,000 students. I would say 50% of those parents work in the evenings, so what we traditionally think a 7:00 meeting is perfect for everyone, that's not necessarily true. Because you do have a large percent of your student body parents who work afternoon shift and therefore cannot be at an afternoon meeting.

Sometimes when we can be available for parents during the school day because that's the time that they are off and give them those opportunities when we can. Of course with school going on, so it's not always doable to hold a PTA meeting at 10:00 in the morning, but we could provide information and parents could be involved while not being here at the actual meeting.

Assistant Principal Casey, Counselor Wilson, and Parent Liaison Ruiz contribute to the struggle at Oak to engage, involve and build relationships with their parents. Assistant Principal Cain added to the sense of the importance of parental involvement to their success as a school:

...it's a necessity. You cannot function as a school without it. Parental involvement looks very different on all different levels, though, because sometimes you want that parent there all the time.

The parental involvement has to be here, especially with our kids that are struggling. Especially with our kids that are going to school. Every single kid needs that parental involvement to help take care of them.

Counselor Wilson described parental involvement as teamwork that is crucial to student success. “We need parents checking in with our students and talking to them because education doesn’t end at 3:30pm when they walk out our door, so I think it’s one of the largest pieces, other than teacher teaching”.

Inherent to parental engagement are issues of broken relationships and difficulty connecting with parents. Ms. Ruiz described best the issues of repairing broken relationships, actors which contributed to broken relationships and difficulty of rebuilding relationships with parents:

Four years ago, I started working here at Oak High School. My experience with the parents was almost non-existent. Because parents were very concerned because two years before I started working here they had an experience where there was an open house and the police decided to have traffic stop. They were detaining parents up here in front of the school asking for driver's licenses, and ID, etc.

The majority of our parents are undocumented. A lot of families suffered from that experience. After that, getting parents to come to school was a very difficult. Because we had to gain their trust again. I think we have done so far. It's been a little bit difficult.

Ms. Ruiz goes on to describe other challenges that she faces in building relationships between the majority Hispanic parent population and the American style of school. She states that students are migrating from different areas of Central America. “We have a lot of people that are coming from El Salvador, Honduras mainly. They come from very rural places and Spanish is their second language because they speak [regional] dialects”.

Despite the difficulties of parental engagement at Oak, the leadership and officials are not deterred in the mission to building positive relationships. Each person interviewed provided alternate courses of actions for every hindrance encountered in building relationships with

parents. Mr. Morales describe how he changed his rules for parent meetings and appointments to accommodate parents:

I know many of my parents work hectic schedules, sometimes two and three jobs. When they come here it's not that I tell them to come back in two hours or make an appointment with my secretary. If I'm available and they need to see me, I make myself there for them, so that hopefully they know that can rely on me when their child's here for eight hours a day. Just the open-door policy when I can. That's not 100% of the time, but if 50% of the time that they come up they can see me. I think that that shows that I'm trying to work with them and be reliable to them.

Assistant Principal Casey expressed the need to have all of the information a parent may need whenever she has the chance to meet with parents about their student:

When I meet with parents, everything's there. When we meet with how to help their kid, we can go from helping parents, some parents even just learn the language. We have classes for that, to help them out. All the way to what are options if a kid's at that point if he's 20 years old, ready to age out, what are his options and how can we help him to get there. We have all that information ready. We can go from point A to point B.

Counselor Wilson expressed a sense of urgency and importance of not wasting any contact and interaction with parents at any time:

If a parent comes to meet with me, I put them first unless there's an extenuating circumstance with a student obviously, but if I'm working on some papers or looking up a student or something that I can do later, I drop what I'm doing and I let the parent know that they are important and I bring them into my office, so parents never really have to wait with me.

I actually make it a point every time I discuss or meet with a parent, either first time or repeatedly, no matter what, I always make sure that they have my direct contact information and I always assure them that I return every afternoon, at 3:30, I sit down and I check my voice mails and I return every single call that afternoon or that evening. There's absolutely no question.

For example, if I have a parent come in and just wanting to meet me or touch base or whatever it may be, I always ask them if they're logged into Synergy which is what allows our parents to view their kids' grades, and if they don't, I personally walk them to our parent liaison who sets them up with that. I also, every single time I have a parent in my office, I touch base on everything going on so I literally will pull up and I'll say, oh, discipline's looking great, attendance, oops, we're not doing so great on this class, hang on.

Then I print out their grades and I talk to them about everything that the student is doing and how their grades are doing and how they're progressing, but then I also further that by asking if there's anything else that they need and always saying that I have an open-door policy and if you ever want any information about your student, please let me know because I reinforce that team aspect.

At Oak because of the combined effort of many, they are starting to see some signs of increased parent involvement. Each of the officials interviewed mention the excitement of having a full slate of serving PTSA officers for the first time in many years. Mr. Morales expressed his excitement as such "For the first time in as far as I can see back, at last over a decade, Oak High School has a full PTA as far as offices. We have increased membership to higher than it's ever been that we can see". Each of the interviews discussed not only providing services and educating their students but also educating and providing services for their parents as well:

There are resources for parents through community in schools. We offer classes for parents here at our school through our parent liaison in Title 1. Even teaching English to parents that don't speak English. Oak High School becoming more of a place that parents can come also to get their needs met, not just their students.

Data Analysis

All of the study participants at each site school were asked their opinion and perspective on building trusting relationships with parents. The interview transcriptions and researcher notes were coded and analyzed. The researcher used a typological analysis as described by Hatch (2002). Hatch (2002) described typological analysis dividing everything observed into groups or categories on the basis of some canon for disaggregating the whole phenomenon under study. The researcher the divided the coding analysis of the transcribed interviews into three categories based on the responses of the participants: 1) actions displayed during parent interactions, 2) actions/values displayed which were consistent with the five facets of trust, and 3) methods used

to engage parents. The researcher coded the frequency of words or phrases which appeared in interviews under each category [see Appendix II].

The research data which resulted showed the four major themes which emerged from the interviews: a) an aggressive pursuit of positive interactions with parents, b) positive common values as a rule, c) creative and multiple platforms for parental engagement and involvement, and d) a value of the interaction time with parents.

Theme 1: Aggressive Pursuit of Positive Interaction

Throughout the interviews from participant to participant and site to site, there was the clear common theme of aggressive pursuit of positive interaction with parents. At each site there were deliberate efforts to communicate and interact with parents with positive news and positive information. As many of the participants expressed, often interactions with parents happen over negative events such as student discipline or behavior issue and poor performance or grades. Each of the school sites and participants recognized that positive interactions built strong positive relationships where parents trust the school and staff and engage in their student's education. Each principal found ways to communicate the good news and to bring parents into the school for good events. Each counselor and parent liaison discussed the importance of phone calls, emails, and other means of positive contact.

In addition at each school participants describe ways in which to make negative interactions become positive interactions. Assistant Principal Casey described such an opportunity:

We had a student come in for a disciplinary infraction. The father came in and it was very negative about Oak High School and really the school district in general. He sat there and he said that all they did was defeat their child. They kept putting their kid down and everything else.

During that time that he sat in here and I said, “Don’t cluster everybody together. Don’t put us all in the same pot. Each of us are individuals.” I said, “So what is that you want that will help your child succeed?”

He just talked and I just listened for a while. He sat there and he said, “I want to make sure that my kid is not a discipline kid, that’s not how people identify him. I want them to identify him as,” ... John was the kids name ... “I want them to know him as John.” I said, “That’s fine. I’ve never dealt John before. John, I’m Mrs. Casey.”

Ms. Casey went on to describe that out of this negative interaction she gained a positive relationship with the parent who went on to become an advocate for the school. Each participant who relates having a negative encounter that they were able to turn into a positive interaction describes using the same techniques. First, they recognized the frustration of the parent as being valid to them and therefore did not take a defensive position with the parent. Secondly, they let the parent talk and express themselves uninterrupted. Thirdly, they listened to what the parent had to say and what they needed to express. Finally they helped the parent resolve the issue as best they could and they followed up with the parent to build the relationship. Principal Johnson described a time he discovered a broken relationship and how he took steps to turn the negative into a positive interaction:

Recently, we have had a fight. The administrator gave the parent the consequence that they felt was appropriate based on discussions that we had, and the parent was unhappy with that consequence. It happens. That parent, rather than meeting with me, went above me and went to the area superintendent and superintendent and so forth. It was clear to me that there was a lack of trust there and that the relationship wasn't healthy.

Instead of just ignoring it and moving on, I reached out to that parent. I explained exactly why the decision was made, didn't change the decision, but I invited them to come in and talk about it, to express their concerns and for me to give a full explanation of why the consequence needed to stay the same.

By the end of that meeting, we were on the same page. We knew how to plan moving forward to prevent these things in the future and felt good about that relationship. It was just about taking that extra time.

In each of the school sites and participant interview there was a shared expressions of values or traits that must be displayed in interactions with parents in order to build trusting

relationships. Values terms such as honesty, fairness, respect, transparency, and consistency were mentioned at every school site and almost every interview. Honesty, being honest, telling the truth had the highest frequency of use overall all of the interviews followed by respect, being respectful. Counselor Wilson describes how honesty is important in building good positive relationships with parents:

...the way that I talk to my parents is I always tell them that there's no point in me misleading them because that's going to end badly in the end, so I'm very honest. For example, if a student is having issues in school, I don't sugar coat it. I do use the sandwich method, so I say the positive first, but then I tell them that I'm going to be real with them and I want them to understand that the reason I'm telling them this is because a student in the school, it's a partnership. For example, if there is an issue in class, I say, okay, they're really great in this class, but this is our issue, and then this is how we can fix it, so I want you to know it, but we can fix it and I think that the fact that I bring about the issue, but also maybe some possible solutions, I think they see that I am being honest because I'm not just sugar coating things and I'm being honest, but I'm also being supportive in that honesty.

Mr. Jones talked about displaying respect and fairness as a key to building positive relationships based on trust:

A lot of parents don't typically enjoy the fact that sometimes you have to give consequences and you have to have consequences, but ...I can very easily give fair and consistent discipline to a student in any given situation. Even in the areas that tend to be gray, we can find an area where we feel like that it fits into the code of conduct and discipline is fair. If you're fair and if you treat the students with respect, and if you treat the parents with respect, then things tend to go your way... They may leave mad, but at least you can be respectful to them and in that circumstance, they come back and they let us know that you know what? I may have been rude to you. I may have had a bad attitude, but I appreciate how you treated us, so it's about having mutual respect and if you do that, then they'll trust you.

Theme 3: Creative and multiple Platforms for Parental Engagement and Involvement

At each school site and in each interview, it was apparent that the participants believed in engaging parents using multiple platforms. Because of the expressed desire and need for parent engagement and involvement for student and school success, participants used traditional

platforms and a blend of creative platforms to create opportunities to engage parents in positive interactions which they felt would lead to positive and strong relationships. Each school participants shared numerous programs created for the purpose of creating the opportunity to engage parents in a positive atmosphere. Coffee and chats with the principal, coffee and chats with the counselors, open house nights, meet and greets, honors awards ceremonies, curriculum nights, international festival celebration, parent volunteer opportunities, school council meetings, PTSA meetings, and parent feedback forums are just some of the programming designed to create a platform to build positive parent relationships. Mr. Cain at Langston Sixth grade Academy expressed a sense of urgency to communicate with parents and engage with them. He shared his willingness to leave his school building and meet parents in the community just to build positive relationships:

...we've been holding town hall meetings at the South Cobb Rec Center on Six Flags Drive to do just that, to share relevant information concerning our tests scores, our initiatives here, how we're spending our Title 1 dollars, getting their input on how to spend Title 1 dollars. Just making sure that they have a say, those parents that aren't able to make it all the way to the school or reluctant to come to the school for any reason, we've done a fairly decent job of just going out into the community and sharing information with them.

Mr. Jones also revealed the creative side of staff and their willingness to engage parents through activities for their student:

I think, as it relates to encouraging the trust in relationship between parents and teachers would be our clubs. We revitalized our clubs and organizations here last year and we have a number of different clubs that are very active...In these particular programs, the teachers have decided to sponsor. It helped to encourage the trusting relationship between the parent and the teacher because in every particular club , parents are [a]key component or a central component because the sponsor has asked them to volunteer to come and see what's going on to take part in learning students greatest attributes.

Participants also discussed and shared ways that they use their communication tools to create a platform for positive engagement with parents. Each participant at each school site

discussed and revealed ways of using technology such as emails, blogs, websites, and call outs to inform and share information. While also using traditional communication means such as letters, phone calls, and face to face meeting and conversations as a chance to engage positively. Mr. Jones at Capital Middle school discuss using community based communication groups and networks to spread the positive word and being proactive to parents who had not yet decided to send students to Capital Middle school:

There's one group called the Smyrna Wave which they are a group of parents that are sending out the good news about the community and so we've got our PTA and they're working with them. We have a group of parents at Sky Elementary School that we've been working with to make connections with ...We do school tours once a month and we've done that for the past two years, where parents in the community come in and we've had parents as young as with kindergarten students that want to see, do I want to come to this middle school...let them see that there's a lot of great things going on here at Campbell.

Mr. Wayne at Sampson Middle school expressed the urgency for positive interaction platforms and the willingness to do whatever is necessary to bring parents into the conversation:

...you have to create more opportunities, you have to, I believe you extend your hours of accessibility and our parent contract and parent involvement plan has tried to do that.

...We have Child Care, when parents, so they can concentrate on our discussion. We have opportunities for parents to come in, eat with their children so they're not missing a meal, so that I can continue right in. I think that when it comes to involvement, you've going to cover all the details and you've going to think about what makes this a friendlier place with what logic dictates that you need to do to encourage that involvement to as a big part of the plan.

Theme 4: Value of Interaction time with Parent.

Throughout the interviews conducted with the participants, there was a theme of valuing the interaction time with the parent. Multiple participants discussed providing as much information as possible when the parent granted them face to face interaction time. Participants saw this as their one opportunity to establish a rapport that would become a positive trusting

relationship. With each of the school sites having at least 30% transiency rates, the time and interaction with parents, even irate ones, is valuable. There was an obvious emphasis on not wasting the time or the opportunity to connect or establish a relationship with a parent.

Participants discussed having open door policies and flexible schedules to accommodate parent work schedules. Assistant principals discussed using time to discuss discipline infractions to share academic information with the parent as well other services to help the student. Counselor Wilson at Oak High school described how she made every minute of a parent interactions count as an important step in creating a longer lasting positive relationship. Her description is in alignment with the other participants and the using time with a parent to its maximum:

I brought the parent in and we actually sat down and talked about what issues she had had with Oak and the staff and everything like that like and discussed how we could fix that. I even took a step further where we are in almost constant communication now via email. She's got my email. She's got my phone, and I introduced her personally to each of her students' teachers so that they felt that connection, that they felt they weren't just on their own island a little bit.

...just making sure that I showed them that they were important, so I said, okay, let me take these extra steps. Obviously a parent can figure out who their kids' teachers are, but I took the extra step to say hang on, let me introduce you and I even took the step to talk to the teachers and say this is a very involved parent. We want to encourage that so please make sure you reach out with this parent and make sure that you're in touch with them.

...I always ask them if they're logged into Synergy which is what allows our parents to view their kids' grades, and if they don't, I personally walk them to our parent liaison who sets them up with that. I also, every single time I have a parent in my office, I touch base on everything going on so I literally will pull up and I'll say, oh, discipline's looking great, attendance, oops, we're not doing so great on this class, hang on.

Then I print out their grades and I talk to them about everything that the student is doing and how their grades are doing and how they're progressing, but then I also further that by asking if there's anything else that they need and always saying that I have an open-door policy and if you ever want any information about your student

Summary

Each of the study participants displayed a passion and skillful knowledge of their role in their school organization. Each of the sixteen participants understood the importance of positive trusting relationships with parents and community stakeholders. Most importantly each of the participant understood how important they were in creating these positive relationships. Their passion turned into aggressive pursuits to engaging parents in positive interactions. Each participant understood and demonstrated that they could not serve a passive role in building parent relationships. Participants aggressively sought out parents by invitation, designed programs, communication or going where parents were located philosophically or geographically. This active pursuit of positive relationship even extended to engaging in a negative interaction with the hopes and mindset to turn it into a positive interaction.

Each of the participants at each school site shared common values which they displayed to every parent in every interaction. These common values displays were catalyst in establishing trust and rapport with parents even in difficult confrontations and circumstances. All of the participants displayed exceptional creativity in the creation of platforms to engage parents. Furthermore they use a multitude of platforms simultaneously to engage parents.

At each school site each of the sixteen participants showed a high value was placed on the interaction time that they had with parents regardless of how long or how brief. No opportunity with a parent was ever wasted and was viewed a one shot opportunity to change a mindset, building a trusting relationship, and win over an ally.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study was designed to answer the following research questions: 1) what are the attitudes of school officials towards parents and building trusting relationships with parents in high achieving schools? 2) what are the behaviors displayed by school officials towards parents in high achieving schools? and 3) how do school leaders address issues of broken trust and distrust with parents in high achieving schools?

Building trusting relationships are part of school achievement. The school sites chosen for this study demonstrated high achievement under some similar difficult and /or restrictive circumstances. In order to be successful in a Title I school or schools with low socioeconomics, attitudes and behaviors of school officials are expected to be different from other officials at other schools. The purpose of this study was to identify effective structures and practices which build trusting relationships between the school organizations and the parents they serve.

The findings in this research were consistent with the literature on trusting relationships and school improvement. Byrk and Schneider (2002) found that the building of relational trust in a school organization in a school and school community is the key to school improvement. Their field study was based on three different communities in Chicago. It found that the relational trust is a social resource for school improvement and that there was a link to relational trust to school productivity.

In the University of Chicago Studies (Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy 2011) argued that trust did not directly affect the academic performance of a school but fostered the conditions which promoted the activities which directly affect learning such as 1) orientation to innovation, 2) outreach to parents, 3) professional community, and 4) high expectations and high academic standards. The results of the research conducted at the High performing Title I school reflect the results from the Chicago Studies.

Hoy (1991) stated that in order for there to be cooperation trust must be present and built. This research supports this finding. In those schools where trust was built cooperation was gained between the school and parents.

Kramer (1996) stated that repeated positive exchanges and personal experiences increase the level of trust which this research also verified. The participants in this research increased the number of positive interactions and increased the level of trust between the school and parents.

Discussion Research Question 1

What are the attitudes of school officials towards parents and building trusting relationships with parents in high achieving schools?

In order to have a functional trusting relationship cooperation is needed. People must work together and feel that that they are able to work together for a common goal. In order to have cooperation, trust must be present (Hoy, 1999, p.186). Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) identified five facets of trust: benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty and openness (p.186). All of the participants expressed an understanding of the importance of building trust with parents. The protocol questions number 2 through 6 asked each participant how they exhibit each of the five facets of trust in interactions with parents.

1. Describe an example(s) of how you demonstrate to parents that you are honest and that you will be honest with them?
2. Describe an example(s) of ways you demonstrate to parents that you are reliable?
3. Describe way(s) that you show parents that you are competent in your duties?
4. Describe how you communicate or show parents that they can count on you to act in the best interest of their child?
5. Describe how you demonstrate to parents that you are willing to share all relevant information concerning their student's education with them?

In response to protocol question number 2, participants displayed numerous examples of showing honesty to parents in order to gain trust and build a trusting relationship. Some through the offering of information, some through admission of errors and mistakes, others through actions and deeds, and other by displaying transparency of motive and actions. Each participant felt that displaying honesty to parents was very important and was the base foundation for building a trusting relationship.

In response to protocol question number 3, participants at each school site provide many examples of ways to demonstrate reliability. Many of the answers center on consistency of actions and deeds, being available and accessible for parents, following through with actions, and following up with the parent with results of actions. Counselor Valentine from Langston Sixth Grade academy summed her response up very succinctly "Whatever I state to the parents that I'm going to do, I do that. I won't state something, if I'm not sure that I'm going to be able to follow through." Other participants demonstrate reliability by being visible and allowing parents accessibility to them when need. Principal Kent from Smitha described the importance of visibility to reliability:

Number one is your attendance. Are you here? Are you visible? Are you in the classrooms? So many times; and I'm just talking about my own network of personal friends, and we've got friends all throughout this district. Parents' biggest complaint is that they don't see the principal, but they're not at the school and that doesn't bother them, but their kids never see the principal. They're not visible. They didn't know the principal's name. It's examples like that I think that that's that reliability piece. Again, I think that starts eroding at that trust block.

Open door policies were discussed by multiple participants as a means of showing reliability and dependability to parents. Most important to many of the participants was showing parents that they would follow through on whatever items were discussed, identified as a need, or as next steps to support them or their student.

In response to protocol question number 4, participants gave varying replies and answers on showing and displaying competency. Most participants felt that competency was demonstrated in the ability to the job well for parents and the ability to answer or find answers to all of their questions. Parent Liaison Gomez state how she demonstrated competency very simply:

When they ask me questions, I know the answer. I go to the next step to try to find the correct answer. When I know about my duties, I try to do them my best. I do the best can I do every day.

Competency did not mean that they would not make mistakes but that they would do their best to give their best to the parent and their student. Assistant Principal Bosemen described how he displayed competency and the reason why it was so important:

Being transparent during the actual process and not just the final decision, because I think investigations, taking time, sitting back, analyzing situations, when parents see you going through that process, I think that's where the competency comes in because they don't just want to hear the final decision that was made, because they want to know that you took a lot of thought and took their individual child into consideration while you were formulating that opinion or developing the decision that you made.

For the participants who were principals, displaying competency mean showing parents that you were willingly to make difficult decisions, have the ability to answer tough questions, and be

willingly to have tough conversations. Principal Morales describe his process for showing competency as such:

I think you show them [parents] the facts depending on what we're dealing with if it's discipline or if it's curriculum. Show them either the policy or the standards that I'm talking about and do my homework in being prepared for the meeting with them so that I do have some background information on the situation and then at the same time be prepared to show the state standards or county policy that I'm standing behind in whatever we're talking about.

In response to protocol question number 5, how do you communicate or show parents that they can count on you to act in the best interest of their child, participants offered many different ways to demonstrate to parents that they were acting in the best interest of the child. Mr. Kent from Sampson middle school responded with relating to the parent as a parent:

You've got to let parents know ... I've got three kids of my own and that's how I operate this school. What would I do if my own child was here? How would I handle this situation if my child did this behavior? You have to be able to communicate to the parents that if there is a problem or issue with the child, that they have several opportunities to correct this behavior.

Counselor Valentine from Langston reinforced the need to share of her personal self to relate to parents and to reinforce the positive about their student:

By stating something positive about the child, even if I have to say something negative. I always warn to the parent with what's negative. Even if I see them out in the community, if I smile and speak to the child, or if I have never met the parent, the child speaks to me, I make the effort to say who I am, so the parent knows who their daughter is speaking to.

In response to protocol question number 6, how do you demonstrate to parents that you are willingly to share all relevant information concerning their student's education with them, participants describe a range of responses. However the majority of them centered round the sharing of information. Principal Morales reveal his way for demonstrating the willingness to share information with parents:

...sharing not just what they've [the student] done wrong or what they failed. Where we're at now and where we want to get to and a map to get to there, so be prepared to show the parent

and student how they get to success. Whether it be behaving or whether it be passing certain classes and then moving on to the next class or different options a student might have to meet that success.

However, in contrast to the participants who say that they would share as much information as possible our counselors said the opposite. The counselors at the school sites reveal that there is confidentiality in the nature of their job and they cannot share all information with parents.

Counselor Lane at Smitha describe how this can be difficult in building trusting relationships but how she compensates for it:

I'm actually not open to share and all of that by nature of being a counselor. We have confidentiality issues. I don't call them issues, my parents call them issues. I'm very clear with parents about those that I speak to. I let them know that there will be certain things that I can't share with them that are always ... If I feel like the child is in danger, or like hurting themselves or that someone is going to hurt them.

In those situations, I will always notify parents, but if the child comes to me and they're talking about anything personal. Even anything academic unless I have their consent to talk to their parents about it, I actually cannot talk to their parents about it. It does get a little tricky with that.

Counselor Noles at Capital Middle echoed this sentiment about confidentiality and communication and sharing with parents:

...some things are confidential with counselors and students, however it's not privileged communication, so as a parent, I mean, the child's a minor, so even though things are confidential that's still the parent, they still need to hear a lot of the information. I guess sometimes parents will call and they'll say, well the child says they can talk to you but it's confidential and I say, well that's just to develop trust with them, so that they feel comfortable coming to us and having an adult to talk to in the building. However, there are certain areas if the child is potentially in danger or if there's something that we feel like a parent needs to know then we will unfortunately have to break that confidentiality. But it's with the best interests of the child.

Discussion Research Question 2

What are the behaviors displayed by school officials towards parents in high achieving schools?

Kramer and Tyler (1996) described three ways through which trust can be produced or created in organizations: process-based, characteristic based, or institutional based. In process based, trust is created through a series of exchanges, personal experiences, and through satisfied expectations. Repeated positive exchanges and personal experience increase the level of trust (Kramer 1996). Relational trust focuses on the multiple interpersonal exchanges which occur in a school. In each of the school sites the participants seemed aware of the need to increase positive interactions with parents. The participants understood that the more positive interactions the stronger the trusting relationship would be with the parent.

Therefore at each school there was a concerted and orchestrated effort to create platforms, programs, and interactions that would be create positive interactions with parents. When the principals were asked protocol question 18, what programs or practices have you encouraged to promote increased parent involvement and trust, they answered very quickly and easily. Principal Kent at Sampson responded with the following programs focused on getting parents into the school building for positive things:

The first thing we did was our awards ceremony at the end of each nine weeks. That was kind of the beginning of building that relationship, is to say we value your kids. They got all A's. Come up on stage. We're going to give you a little pin and give you a little lanyard, have some cake; be able to start having those conversations.

The other thing is we started Walls for Academic Success. Our kids that scored in the exceeds category for writing; there were twelve of them, so we got them this leather-bound journal and we gave it to them in the cafeteria in front of their peers. Everybody loved it. It's really starting to recognize kids for successes. One of the things we're going to do this year is on each hallway we are going to have a chart of all the kids that exceeded on the CRCT. So if you exceeded in reading, we're going to have your name up on the wall. If you exceeded in writing, we're going to have your name on the wall, just to really start pushing and promoting the successes here.

Principal Cain at Langston Sixth Grade academy discussed his ideas for bring parents into the school to be proactive and help their needs:

I was able to hire a full-time parent liaison. Just by the virtue of the fact that I now have someone in a full-time capacity serving in that role, some of the programs that we are looking to get off the ground this year is having parents come in during the school day and to take part in some English courses, to take part in some targeted outreach activities to afford them the opportunity to actually sit in on some classes and to see what's going on so that they are better equipped to help their students. We weren't able to do that in previous years because we didn't have a parent liaison actually working during the school day. Now that we have that, actually, he's also bilingual. It would definitely help to get in more of our Hispanic families as well.

Principal Thompson at Capital Middle described his method to increase positive parent contacts with his parents and his school staff:

There were really no parent volunteers in place when I came to Campbell Middle. I think that there was perhaps a lack of trust there, but I'm trying to open those doors right now. We have a volunteer program now that we've developed. We're slowly getting more participation. The Watchdog Dads, that's really taking off. We had a huge response from that.

Principal Morales describe his plan and strategy for creating positive parent interactions:

Two years ago when I was in my second year and did not have a PTA board, it became very frustrating to me. I made it a mission to somehow, some way find a parent who would take the president job and then recruit other parents to become involved. Through time that's happened, so I think that spread to other parents, said "Hey, the principal really wants this. Wants us at the school, wants us involved." Again, with Community In Schools, that relationship with them and allowing them to teach parents here at our campus, bringing parents here to learn themselves has been beneficial in the sense they see us during the school day. Their trust builds with us because they see that we want them here.

Discussion Research Question 3

How do school leaders address issues of broken trust and distrust with parents in high achieving schools?

In each incident of broken trust there is a violator and a victim who both have different roles in the rebuilding of the trust (Tschannen-Moran 2004). Tschannen-Moran (2004) states that trust repair can be initiated by either the victim or the violator but the violator must engage in the

steps of absolution: admitting fault, apologizing, asking for forgiveness, and changing your ways. Through the results provided by the participants the school officials in the selected school sites were always willing to engage in repairing broken relationships. The officials even initiated the trust repair when they were neither the victim nor the violator in the original trusting relationship. In many schools, school officials changed but the broken relationships remained. Even if the trusting relationship between the school and a parent was broken by a previous serving school official, our participants willingly assumed the responsibility to repair the relationship. Principal Thompson a fairly new principal at Capital Middle described such a scenario:

The administrator gave the parent the consequence that they felt was appropriate based on discussions that we had, and the parent was unhappy with that consequence. It happens. That parent, rather than meeting with me, went above me and went to the area superintendent and superintendent and so forth. It was clear to me that there was a lack of trust there and that the relationship wasn't healthy. Instead of just ignoring it and moving on, I reached out to that parent. I explained exactly why the decision was made, didn't change the decision, but I invited them to come in and talk about it, to express their concerns and for me to give a full explanation of why the consequence needed to stay the same. By the end of that meeting, we were on the same page. We knew how to plan moving forward to prevent these things in the future and felt good about that relationship. It was just about taking that extra time.

Assistant Principal Jones from Capital Middle school shared and provided more insight into his experience repairing broken trust relationships:

There's been a lot of instances where we've had parents that have had issues with either the school or certain individuals in the school, former administrators all the way up to former teachers, and in the instances where we do have those broken relationships, one of the things that I've found to be kind of the key is to make sure that we start over on a positive note, make sure that the parents understand that there is honesty, make sure that the parents understand that there's communication and make sure that the parents understand there's fairness.

Counselor Wilson from Oak High School shared from her perspective how she engaged in repairing broken relationships which were broken by a predecessor or colleague:

From the counseling perspective, at the beginning of this year, we changed case loads and switched up who had the breakdown in the alphabet, and one of the parents that had been brought to my case load with the shift was on a former counselor's case load who had had a very experience with both teachers and counselors and it was just ... I think it was a lack of communication, effective communication, but through doing that, the way that I repair that is I was mildly aware of the issue, so I personally reached out to the parent.

I brought the parent in and we actually sat down and talked about what issues she had had with Osborne and the staff and everything like that like and discussed how we could fix that. I even took a step further where we are in almost constant communication now via email. She's got my email. She's got my phone, and I introduced her personally to each of her students' teachers so that they felt that connection, that they felt they weren't just on their own island a little bit.

In all cases where participants engaged in repairing broken relationships, they engaged with the parent as if it was a brand new start of a relationship building. The participants emphasized and demonstrated that they were genuine with their attempt at building a trusting relationship and repairing the relationship which had been broken. In all reported incidents by participants this approach worked and the parent became interested in repairing the break in the trusting relationship or beginning a new trusting relationship.

Recommendation for Future Study

Based upon this research study and results, there are several recommendations for future studies which will expand the knowledge and depth of research on the discussion of building trust relationships with parents. The first recommendation for future study would be an expansion of the parameters of this study to include more schools. The schools chosen for this study were chosen for their success in a traditionally difficult learning environment and circumstances (i.e. low socioeconomics). To further understand if the findings of this study were consistent, future studies should expand the number of schools studied. Also the number of

school at different grade levels should also be increased to see if there are any differences presented at each level.

The schools chosen for this study were chosen from the same school district. The purpose for this was to compare schools with the same district governance structure, resources, and leadership. However, in future studies the school sites should be expanded to include schools in different school districts. This will also allow for comparisons of methods, attitudes and behaviors and to see if the results are consistent or if they vary based on district governance, resources, and leadership.

Another expansion of future study in this area would be to diversify chosen school sites by geographic location. The schools in this study were in a suburban school district. Comparison between schools in urban districts, rural districts, and suburban districts may provide additional information and insight into the attitudes and behaviors of school officials and trusting relationships between parents. This comparison will also give data and possibly indications if the geographic location gives an advantage, disadvantage, or has no bearing on the successful building of trusting relationships.

This study conducted research by interviewing school officials to determine their attitudes towards building trusting relationships with parents. The expansion of interviews to include parents may provide another perspective on the attitudes of school officials. Using similar protocol questions may provide the insight into the perceptions of parents who want to build better relationships, have good relationships, or have broken relationships of trust with the school repaired.

Another recommendation of future study would involve the methodology used for research. This study used a qualitative approach only to research. However, it is suggested for

future research to use a mixed method approach for data collection. Using a quantitative approach to gather data from a large group of school stakeholders about the perception of the levels of trust within the school organization and with outside stakeholders would be suggested to gather preliminary data on the perception of the existing culture. This will also include more stakeholders within the school community and school organization. The quantitative data could take the form of a survey which could reflect the protocol questions used for the interview of school officials. This data if collected prior and disaggregated could be presented to the school officials prior to their interviews or after for their comments or interpretations. This mixed methodology could provide some additional dimensions to the discussion and to the level and strength of trusting relationships across the school community.

Additionally for future studies it is a suggestion to include and expand the interviews to include teachers and other school personnel who deal with and interact with parents. This expansion could provide the information on the observation and perceived role that school administrators play in building trusting relationships between parents and teachers. This path of research could provide information as to what school officials can do or not do to help teachers build better relationships with parents. Teachers are usually the members of the school community who benefit directly from having trusting relationships with parents. It would be an advantage to future studies to understand how these relationships affect or do not affect the job that teachers perform , the success of students in their classroom , and most importantly what can school officials do to impact this relationship.

This study focused on school officials at the local school level. A future study, in addition to school level officials, could expand to district level officials. This inclusion in addition to the other suggestions could yield a tier and stratified response view of attitudes in building trusting

relationships with parents. Also the inclusion of the district level officials could provide some data into the resources and support given to school level officials when it comes to building relationships with parents and communities. In addition district level officials can provide insight into their attitudes as it relates to building trusting relationships based on experiences and interactions which would make good comparison with the school level officials and their responses.

This study focused on the attitudes of officials in successful Title I schools. An additional suggestion for future studies would be to expand the study to include Title I schools who are not considered successful. Although this study focused on schools and the positive things that were happening and which are successful, there is a question as to whether or not these things work in all settings. The inclusion of the unsuccessful Title I schools would allow a comparison of attitudes between officials as it relates to building trusting relationships with parents. If the results show that schools do different things then the research results can focus on the things which are not being done, are being done, and their impact. However, if the research study found that the same types of things are happening in both settings with similar attitudes and behaviors by school officials then the questions as to why the results varied may be answered.

The time frame and time constraint of the study is another consideration for future research. If the above suggestions are being considered, expanding the time frame of the research to encompass more of the school year would aid in the data collection and research results. Using a school calendar to allow time to use, administer, collect and analyze quantitative data to maximize the number of responses and maximize participation. And also allow adequate time to interview various groups of persons within and outside of the school organization. The

researcher in this study was limited in the time frame and access to school officials, however, an expanded time frame would allow for more flexibility and inclusion of more participants, thus expanding the depth of data and the research findings.

Implications

The participants in the research study shared their professional opinions and experiences. Through these share experiences an understanding and pattern of their attitudes and behaviors towards building trusting relationships with parents were formed. The findings of the data, the coding of the interviews, and review of the themes which emerged were consistent with the research on trust and trusting relationships. The actions of each of the participants were consistent with actions necessary to facilitate trusting relationships with parents which helped the school facilitate trusting relationships.

The participants were chosen because of their interaction with parents based upon their job description and role in the school organization. The actions, attitudes, and behaviors of school officials such as principals, assistant principals, counselors, and parent liaisons can critically impact the building, sustaining, and maintaining of strong trusting relationships between the school, the parents, and the community. These trusting relationships with parents can be a key or hindrance to the success of the overall school and the students enrolled in the school. Therefore it is important that attitudes and behavior of these officials are aligned with the traits and characteristics necessary to build trusting relationship. To quote from Parent Liason Gomez's interview as she describes the importance of good attitudes by school officials:

The key for me is the first persons in the front office when the parents come in. The attitude and that people decide how the situation [will turn out]. If you're coming and you had a person say, "Hello," with good attitude, the reception is also good attitude. We are here to serve, working with the people, with the students.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study there are recommendations which can be made for school officials who wish to build trusting relationships with parents and facilitate an atmosphere which is conducive for building and sustaining trusting relationships: a) use creative and multiple platforms to engage parents, b) value and maximize all interactions with parents, c) aggressively pursue positive interactions with parents, d) exhibit values which build trust in every interaction.

Use creative and multiple platforms to engage parents

All of the schools in this study were creative in building the platforms used to engage parents. The schools used various programs such as open houses, conference weeks, curriculum nights to get parents to come to their schools. In addition each school site had creative ideas and programs which also drew parent participation such student recognition programs, coffee with principal or counselors, international night celebrations, volunteer opportunities, school tours, and parent resource classes. Most of the school participants mentioned or used multiple communication platforms to inform and connect with parents such as phone calls, automatic call outs, emails, newsletter, text alerts, and web based blogs or sites. Counselor Prince described examples of this used at Sampson Middle:

I've seen a change in teachers' attempts to open communication. ... There's a program called, "Edmoto," where teachers can put or load their assignments and parents can see it and kids can access it at home and it's kind of been our option. This year, it was a mandate. That you [teachers] must have an, "Edmoto."

We also kicked off an initiative to get all parent's e-mails. When they came in to register their students, when they came for open house. We asked all parents for e-mails. I think teachers have been really utilizing those e-mail addresses to communicate which of course builds trust.

We're only five weeks in. I've been in several parent meetings already which have come from the communication of the teachers to the parents. I think that they're starting to make ... Trying to build those relationships.

One school mentioned using community based communication networks to connect with parents and potential parents. One school mentioned using feeder pattern schools events as an opportunity to communicate information about their school to parents as well. Each of the school display creativity in the platforms for engagement and were skillful in using multiple formats simultaneously. Each school created various programs and activities around multiple times and settings to allow for parents with different work schedules and time schedules to participate.

Assistant Principal Wayne talked about how important it is to his school to engage the parents:

The more that we can get access to the parents and like I said at the beginning of our interview the parent that comes to the front door, if that's an opportunity to engage them in a conversation about volunteering or about some aspect of our education plan, in the instructional program, you got to do it. Take advantage of everything but I think that you can't have too much because then it comes diluted so you really have to very, I would say structured and very clean programs. One thing on the simplest level, moving our honor celebration from what use to be just a pizza party at the end of the day to a full scaled like evening with the parents, we have packed house.

That's like 400, 500[parents] sitting in that theater that we have the opportunity PTSA to talk to, we have the opportunity to have casual conversation with the parents in the hallway. We have an opportunity to display or showcase something in the school and it just kind of appear myths from there so you start with something in concerts. You start with something where you can not so much have that kinds of audience but it is, but and you get the word out. You're extending your vision into the community through those parents that they hear you talk about what's going on or they see what's going on.

This example would be some of our parents responding to honestly of the mind. When they realize that teachers were spending extra amount of time outside the school time, outside the classroom, investing with the kids. A group of parents came up and said "I know they do this but I didn't know how and now that I see the impact on my kid, I'm telling other parents, come to this programs, come to school, get your kid involve in a club".

Value and maximize all interactions with parents

Each of the participants at each school showed a value of every minute of interaction time with parents. Administrators, counselors, and parent liaisons expressed the importance of maximum use of the time spent in conversations, meetings, and interactions with parents. The urgency was to use each interaction to build the foundation for a trusting relationship as if the

opportunity may not come again if they did not take advantage of the current interaction. Participants discussed using interaction time to give parents all of the information necessary to support their child (attendance, grades, discipline, and resources), share and show parents their personal commitment to their student's success, to connect parents to various resources, to make sure that parents have ways to communicate with the school, and to set up a follow-up for the next interaction. This style of interaction seemed to work in the favor of the participants by changing perceptions of the parent about school and increasing the likelihood of future positive interactions with the parent. Counselor Wilson demonstrated this trait the best:

What we do, and I encourage my other counselors to do this as well, every time we have a sit down with a parent or a phone call, regardless of what it is, typically it's sitting down when we're having these specific conversations, but I go through the conversation that we might be having. Maybe they're just checking on their kid. They want to know grades, whatever it is. Then I also talk to them about the resources they have on being up to date on their student's education and everything like that and all of their information.

For example, I have this parent come in and just wanting to meet me or touch base or whatever it may be, I always ask them if they're logged into Synergy which is what allows our parents to view their kids' grades, and if they don't, I personally walk them to our parent liaison who sets them up with that. I also, every single time I have a parent in my office, I touch base on everything going on so I literally will pull up and I'll say, oh, discipline's looking great, attendance, oops, we're not doing so great on this class, hang on.

Then I print out their grades and I talk to them about everything that the student is doing and how their grades are doing and how they're progressing, but then I also further that by asking if there's anything else that they need and always saying that I have an open-door policy and if you ever want any information about your student, please let me know because I reinforce that team aspect. You're going to get tired of me saying that, sorry, but it's a big factor for me.

Aggressively pursue positive interactions with parents

Based on participants' responses at the chosen school sites, there seemed to be an understanding that school officials cannot be passive in their pursuit to build trusting relationships and have positive interactions with parents. Each school site and participant displayed an aggressive and proactive strategy and attitude towards seeking positive interactions

with parents. The participants were so aggressive in their pursuit that they would seek to make any interaction with a parent into a positive interaction. This approach showed an understanding that the responsibility of building a trusting relationship with parents and for having positive interaction with parents falls on the school and not the parent. If those positive relationships are to occur, the school officials must pursue them. Principal Kent gave an example of how he created these opportunities:

We always look for opportunities where we can recognize kids, so at the end of each; last year at the end of each nine weeks we'd have all A awards, all A/B awards, perfect attendance awards. The theater is packed. All we do is the kids walk across the stage, we give them a little pin and shake their hand and say congratulations, thanks for your hard work. We'll have cake after the ceremony. The parents love it.

It's really about just who doesn't love having their child being recognized? I think the more we can do activities like that, the more that builds that community participation and involvement.

Counselor Prince from Sampson explained how they created opportunities to engage parents:

This year, we're implementing coffee with counselors. That will be an early morning 8:15 to 9:15 program. We found that parents are more likely to come early in the day and just be a little bit late for work as oppose of having a leave today or leave work early. We're going to do that in the morning and we're going to at least do them quarterly. Each one will have a topic.

Exhibit values which build trust in every interaction

The participants in this study when in interactions with parents displayed values which build trust. In interactions with parents through their actions or deeds, participants made sure to show parents that they are honest, fair, reliable, competent, and open and will act in the best interest of students. If a school official wants to build trusting relationships with parents, they must make sure that members of staff who interact with parents understand the importance of displaying characteristics and values which build trust not erode trust. For example in conversations with parents to demonstrate honesty, admit mistakes which have been made or

misunderstandings which may have occurred. Counselor Wilson stated how she displayed honesty with parents:

...the way that I talk to my parents is I always tell them that there's no point in me misleading them because that's going to end badly in the end, so I'm very honest. For example, if a student is having issues in school, I don't sugar coat it. I do use the sandwich method, so I say the positive first, but then I tell them that I'm going to be real with them and I want them to understand that the reason I'm telling them this is because a student in the school, it's a partnership.

To demonstrate fairness to parents share with parents how decisions are made and the factors which are used to determine decisions and outcomes from the perspective of the school. An example of a way to demonstrate competency and reliability is to be visible to parents and students and to be available to answer parent questions good or bad. Principal Thompson explained his process:

I think, again, it goes back to those chats that I have scheduled, so that they can ask any questions. We've already had one, and there were some difficult questions that came up that I didn't walk away from. I actually addressed them, and discipline was a big part of that. To me, transparency is about acknowledging the elephant in the room and trying to show that you have a plan to address the problem.

Principal Kent explained why visibility was the key to reliability at his school and from his perspective:

I think it starts breaking down that barrier, because there always is that community/school barrier. Because they're not here all day they don't see all of our interactions. If you don't see something, sometimes you can't trust or you can't believe. The more a child can come home and say he[principal] was in our class today or had lunch with us today, then that makes the parent feel reassured that they're bodily there, they talked to my kid. I think that's important.

To demonstrate openness, show parents that you are available and that you are flexible to meet with them. Principal Kent explained why meeting with parents was important to building and repairing relationships:

I think it's important just to make yourself available. As simple of an answer as that is, a lot of times it doesn't happen. We always get so busy and it's like we're I can't meet with that person; somebody else can meet with them. A lot of times somebody else meets with the person and it continues to break bad. It definitely saves you time to take that fifteen or twenty minutes out of your day, meet with the parent, let them know that they're being heard. I think that really helps; at least makes them walk away from the table and say I appreciate you took the time so that time it worked.

Also communicate frequently with parents so that they have information about school events. Principal Cain demonstrated his openness through communication:

Last year, I started doing a Sunday night call blast. I'll do a Sunday night call blast every Sunday at six o'clock. I try to make it a point to be consistent in that effort, in that regard because, I think, it speaks to the reliability standpoint. It speaks to the reliability issue and standpoint in that parents know that they're going to hear from Principal Cain every Sunday. If I fell short in doing that Sunday night call blast then, I think, that I would be seen as not reliable. I try to demonstrate that reliability by doing what I've said I would do and just being a man on my word. If I'm telling a parent that I'm going to meet with them or I'm going to deal with a situation, checked in to something, investigate, just making sure that I follow through and keep them in the loop and to stay in constant communication.

An additional recommendation is to embrace the opportunity to repair broken relationships and broken trust. Each of the participants discussed times when they discovered a broken relationship with a parent and how they set about to repair the relationship. Each of the participants embraced the opportunity to repair the relationship regardless of who broke the trust. Many of the participants dealt with parents who were upset or irate over issues that the participants did not create; however, they still reacted as if it was their responsibility to repair the relationship. None of the participants discussed passing the blame of a broken relationship or shifting the responsibility to another party. When each participant discovered a broken relationship they went to task to repair it and build a new relationship with the parent. The participants met with the person with the broken relationship, listened to their concerns, asked

what the person needed from the school in order to move forward, and each participant followed up on their promises or offers. This was clearly demonstrated by Assistant principal Ms. Casey:

He [parent] just talked and I just listened for a while. He sat there and he said, “I want to make sure that my kid is not a discipline kid, that’s not how people identify him. I want them to identify him as,” ... Carl was the kids name ... “I want them to know him Carl.” We had our conversation and I let the kid be open and honest with me about his background. The father tried to chime in a little bit here and there. I asked the father what it is exactly he wanted. I talked to him about how the policy worked. When he [student] was out for his ten days, we [administrator] called pretty much every other day at least. Of the ten, five days we talked. It was just to setup the trust part. He [parent] believed in that afterwards. Since then, he’s been an advocate for us. We’re interviewing.

Significance of Study

This study has yielded some significant results. To the knowledge of the researcher, there are no published students which document the building of trusting relationships in relations to the five facets of trust: openness, honesty, reliability, fairness, competency, and acting in the best interest of others. This research adds to the literature on trust and building trusting relationships. The research study also illustrates the perception of participants in building trust; moreover, the areas that they felt were important and not what research statistically stated was significant or important. Each participant shared their personal experience which addressed needs of their school or circumstance not the research and literature on trust. This provided comparative analysis of the body of literature with the real world application of theories.

Comments

This section is for items found by the researcher which were unexpected or not a part of the original research plan.

The researcher used some of the suggestions for building parent trust found in the research and interviews with the participants. Using creative platforms to engage parents and

being aggressive in the pursuit of positive interactions with parents were used in the researcher's school site. As principal of a school site, the researcher used the method of communication described by Principal Cain by creating a weekly phone communication with parents to detail weekly events information with parents. This practice yielded a large increase in positive relationships almost immediately. The researcher also created an opportunity to engage parents in a positive interaction by creating a parent summit program. The parent summit was a Saturday program for parents to meet with teachers and administrators to learn and receive information about the school strategic plan, school data, how to support their student academically, how to support students in math, and free resources for supporting students. The program resulted in 92 parent participants who engaged positively with teachers and administrators.

As a result of this creative platform and positive engagement practices, the researcher also repaired a broken relationship with at least one parent. Shortly after the parent summit, the researcher had a meeting with parent. According to the parent there was a broken relationship between the parent and the school based on issues which occurred four years prior. However in the meeting the parent raved about the information received at the parent summit, the communication of information by the school, and the positive experience her youngest daughter was having with the school which was different than what she experienced with her oldest daughter four years ago.

Another point of significance in this study was the response of the participants who were counselors. The counselors at every school site offered a different perspective into building trusting relationship when it came to openness. Each counselor had to create trust with parents even though they were prohibited from being completely open and able to share all information about students due to confidentiality. This caveat of their job description required them to spend

more time working on the other dimensions of trust in order to build trusting relationships with parents. The scenario of the counselor answered the question of how to build trusting relationships when you cannot be open or cannot share all relevant information. In public schools, school officials are often prohibited from sharing certain information with parents and the community due to Federal regulations on the sharing, releasing, and confidentiality of student information under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Through the information provided by each counselor, the research indicated that trusting relationship building can occur even if all five facets are not demonstrated.

The principals in each of the school sites were dedicated to the building trusting relationships. Their actions set the tone for the other officials to follow. In each school the principal's actions mended the broken relationships between the school and parents. In their research Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) recognized this important role of the principal in the collective trust in a school organization.

Conclusion

To improve school achievement, collaboration is encouraged in the school organization with teachers and staff but also with parents in the decision making processes of the school (Tschannen-Moran 2001).

In order for parents to be involved in school they must have a relationship based off of trust. Epstein's (2002) research shows that where there are strong schools-to-family relationships, school improvements can be made. The research conducted in this study supports this statement.

The schools selected in this study showed success in spite of difficult circumstances. The participants who represented the school officials were candid in their responses as to their roles,

behaviors, and attitudes to build trusting relationships with parents. The results show common themes among participants and schools of attitudes and behaviors which can lead to positive trusting relationships with parents.

The participants in the study demonstrated attitudes and actions necessary to build trusting relationships and repair broken relationships. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) defined trust as an individual's or group's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open. The actions, attitudes, and behaviors of the participants and the school organizations reflect this definition of characteristics needed for trust. Schools or school officials wishing to increase and build trusting relationships with parents can replicate these actions.

REFERENCES

- Adams, C. (2013). Collective Trust: A Social Indicator of Instructional Capacity. *Journal of Educational Administration* vol 51 No.3, 363-382.
- Adams, C. M., & Forsyth, P. B. (March 2009). The Nature and Function of Trust in Schools. *Journal of School Leadership* Vol 19, 126-152.
- Adams, C. M., Forsyth, P. B., & Mithcell, R. M. (February 2009). The Formation of Parent-School Trust. *Educational Administration Quarterly* Vol 45 No 1, 4-33.
- Adams, K., & Christenson, S. (2000). Trust and the Family-School Relationship Examination of Parent-Teacher Differences in Elementary and Secondary Grades. *Journal of School Psychology* vol 38 no 5, 477-497.
- Barnard, W. (2004). Parent Involvement in elementary school and educational attainment. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 39-62.
- Barrett, J. D. (2000, December). The Relationship Between Selected Parent Variables and Parental Trust of the School their Child Attends. Arizona State University.
- Bower, H. A., Bowen, N. K., & Poers, J. D. (n.d.). Family-Faculty Trust as Measured with the Elementary School Success Profile. 158-167.
- Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in Schools : A Core Resource for Improvement*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Bryk, A., & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Bryk, A., & Schneider, B. (2003). Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for School Reform. *Educational Leadership*, 40-44.
- Dirks, K. T., & Ferrin, D. L. (2001). The Role of Trust in Organization Settings. *Organization Science* vol 12 no. 4, 450-467.

- Domez, B., Ozer, N., & Comert, M. (2010). Principal trust in students and parents:its relationship with principal burnout. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*(2), 547-550.
- Epstein, J. (2005). Attainable Goals? The Spirit and Letter of the No Child Left Behind Act on Parental Involvement. *Sociology of Education* 78, 179-182.
- Epstein, J. L., & Sanders, M. G. (2006). Prospects for Change: Preparing Educators for School,Family, and Community Partnerships. *Peabody Journal of Education* vol 81 No. 2, 81-120.
- Epstein, J., & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). Present and Accounted for: Improving Student Attendance Through Family and Community Involvement. *the journal of Educational Research* vol 95 No. 5, 308-318.
- Epstien, J. L., Galindo, C. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2011). Levels of Leadership:Effects of Districts and School Leaders on the Quality of School Programs of Family & coommunity Involvement. *Educational Administration Quarterly* vol. 47 no. 3, 462-495.
- Fan, X., & Chen, M. (2001). Parental Involvement and Students' Academic Achievement: a Meta Analysis. *Educational Psychology Review* vol 13, 1-22.
- Forsyth, P. B., Adams, C. M., & Hoy, W. K. (2011). *Collective Trust: Why Schools can't Improve Without It*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Forsyth, P., L.B.Barnes, L., & Adams, C. (2006). Trust -effectiveness patterns in schools. *Journal of Education Administration* vol. 44 No. 2, 122-141.
- Hatch, J. Amos (2002). *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Hill, N. E., & Tyson, D. (2009). Parental Involvement in Middle School: a Meta Analytic Assessment of the Strategies that promote Achievement. *Developmental Psychology* vol 45 no 3, 740-763.
- Horvat, E. M., Curci, J. D., & Partlow, M. C. (2010, November). Parents,Principals, and Power:A historical Case Study of "Managing Parental Involvement. *Journal of School Leadership* 20, pp. 702-727.
- Hoy, W. K., Smith, P. A., & Sweetland, S. R. (Dec. 2002/Jan. 2003). The Development of the Organizational Climate Index for High Schools:Its Measure and Relationship to Faculty Trust. *The High School Journal*, 38-49.
- Jeynes, W. (2005). A Meta Analysis of the Relation of Parental Involvement to Urban Elementary School Student Academic Achievement . *Urban Education* vol 40 , 237-269.

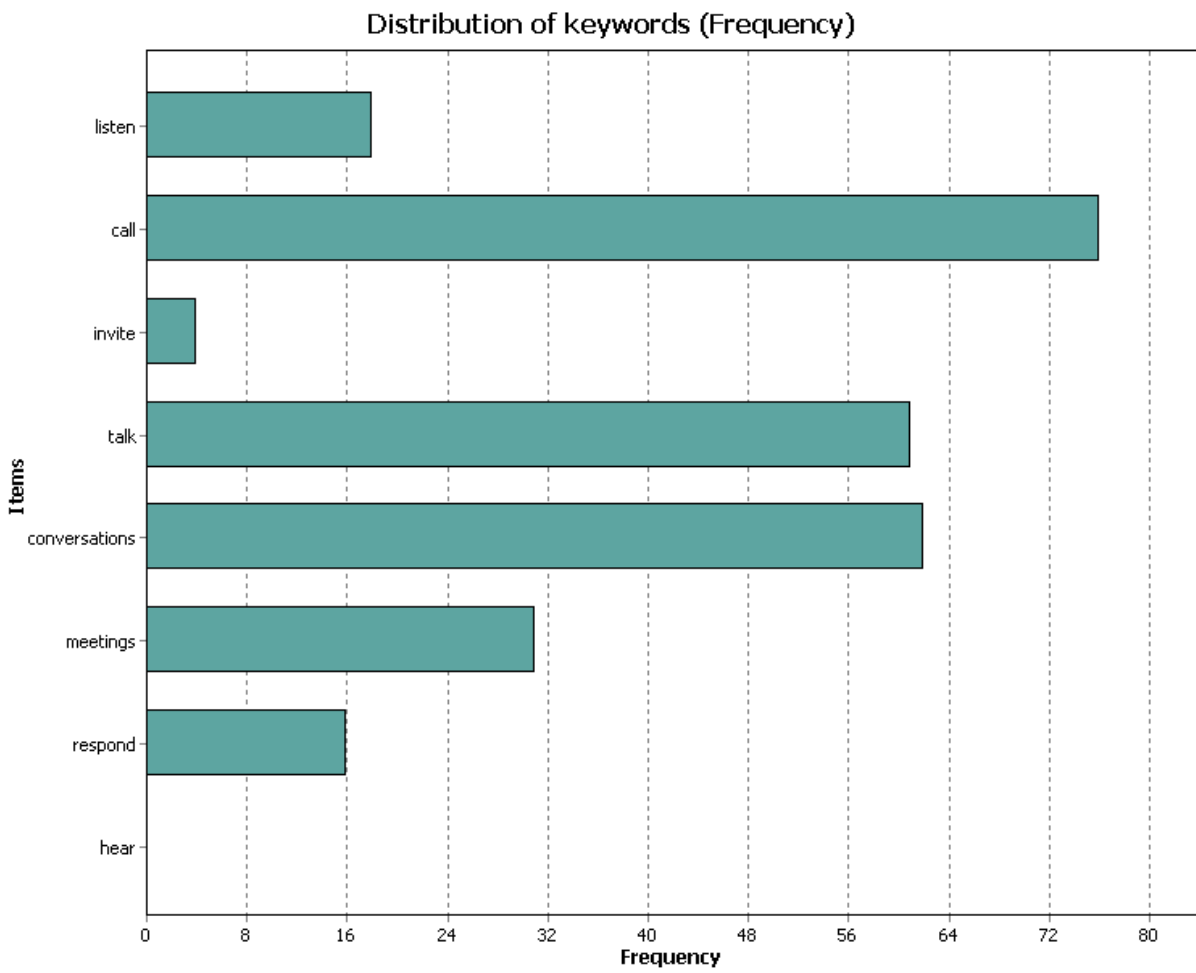
- Jeynes, W. H. (2007). The Relationship Between Parental Involvement and Urban Secondary School Student Academic Achievement: A Meta Analysis. *Urban Education vol 42*, 82-110.
- Jeynes, W. H. (January 2007). The Relationship Between Parental Involvement and Urban Secondary School Student Academic Achievement. *Urban Education Vol 42 No. 1*, 82-110.
- Karakus, M., & Savas, A. C. (2012). The Effects of Parental Involvement, Trust in Parents, Trust in Students, and Pupil Control Ideology on Conflict Management Strategies of Early Childhood Teachers. *Educational Sciences, theory & Practice*, 2977-2985.
- Kohler-Evans, P., Webster-Smith, A., & Albritton, S. (2013). Conversations For School Personnel: A New Pathway to School Achievement. *Education vol 134 no.1*, 19-24.
- Kramer, R. M., & Tyler, T. R. (1996). *Trust in Organizations: Frontiers of Theory and Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Machen, S. M., Wilson, J. D., & Notar, C. E. (2005). Parental Involvement in the Classroom. *Journal of Instructional Psychology vol 32*, 13-16.
- Mitchell, R., Forsyth, P., & Robinson, U. (Fall 2008). Parent Trust, Student Trust, and Identification with School. *Journal of Research in Education vol 18*, 116-123.
- Mitchell, R., Ripley, J., Adams, C., & Raju, D. (Spring 2011). Trust an Essential Ingredient in Collaborative Decision Making. *Journal of School Public Relations vol 32*, 145-170.
- Tschannen-Moran, M. (2001). Collaboration and the need for Trust. *Journal of Educational Administration Vol 39 No.4*, 308-331.
- Tschannen-Moran, M. (2004). *Trust Matters: Leadership for Successful Schools*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass.

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

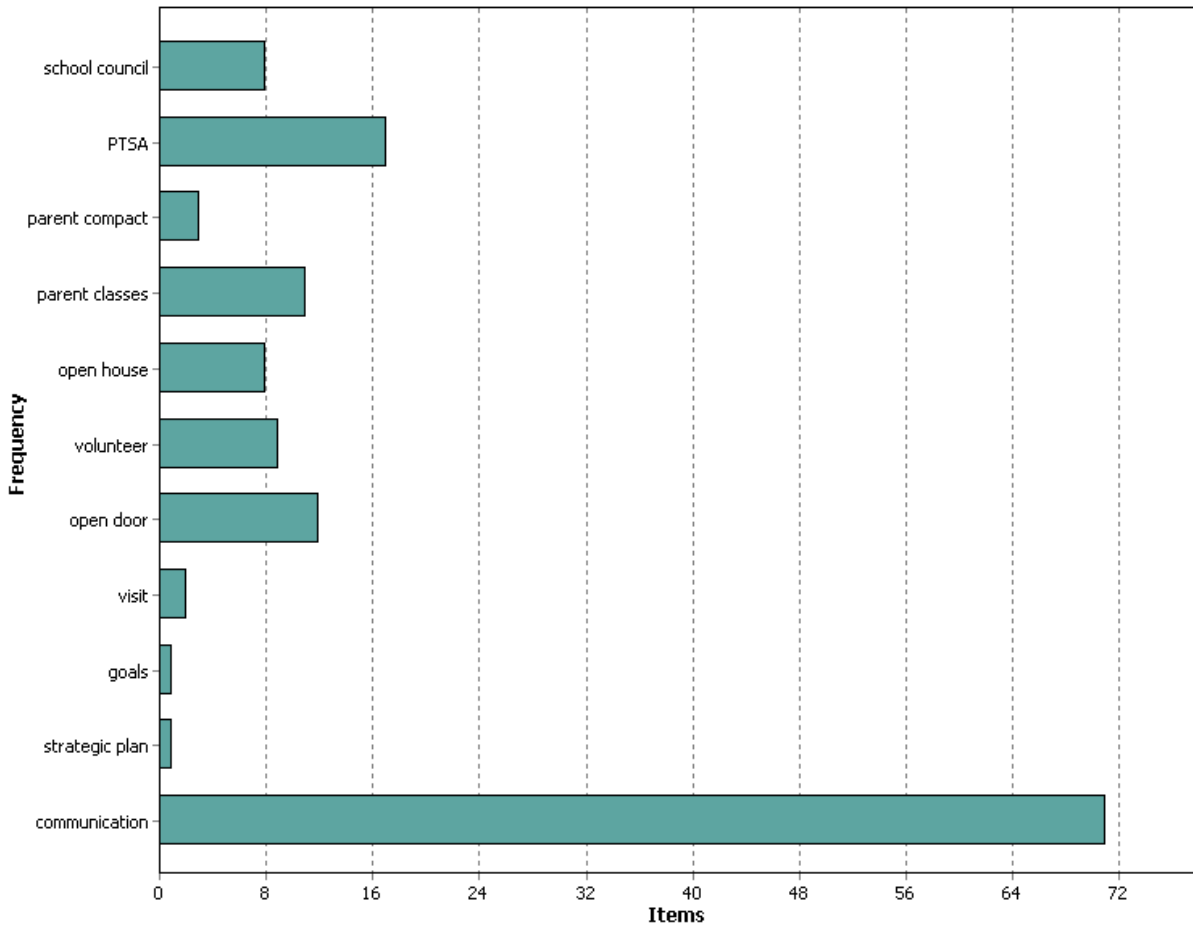
6. Describe an example(s) of when you discovered a broken relationship with a parent and how you repaired the relationship?
7. Describe an example(s) of how you demonstrate to parents that you are honest and that you will be honest with them?
8. Describe an example(s) of ways you demonstrate to parents that you are reliable?
9. Describe way(s) that you show parents that you are competent in your duties?
10. Describe how you communicate or show parents that they can count on you to act in the best interest of their child?
11. Describe how you demonstrate to parents that you are willingly to share all relevant information concerning their student's education with them?
12. Describe any specific programs in place to encourage parent participation or involvement.
13. What is your perception of the importance of parent involvement and participation?
14. What types of decisions should parents participate in?
15. How do parents participate in decision making in this school?
16. How involved are parents in decision making?
17. Are there programs in place that encourage trusting relationships between parents and teachers or between parents and administrators? If so please describe these programs.

18. How would you describe the level of trust teachers and administrators have for parents in this school?
19. How would you describe the level of trust parents have for teachers and administrators in this school?
20. How have these relationships changed over time?
21. Is there anything else you would like to tell me (or you think I should know) about parent and teacher or parent and administrator relationships in this school?
22. Position specific questions:
23. Principals: What programs or practices have you encouraged to promote increased parent involvement and trust?
24. Assistant principals: How has their role of disciplinarian affected their relationship with parents?
25. Counselors: How do you encourage parent involvement and participation or how do you help families realize their aspirations for their children?
26. Parent liaison: What are the specific strategies you use to engage families? So instead of one protocol you will have four protocols. Most of the questions will be shared with one or two questions that address their specific role.

APPENDIX II: CODING CHARTS



Distribution of keywords (Frequency)



Distribution of keywords (Frequency)

