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Factors that Build and Sustain a Relationship of Trust between School District Superintendents and Principals

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Factors that Build and Sustain a Relationship of Trust between School District

Superintendents and Principals

A Dissertation by

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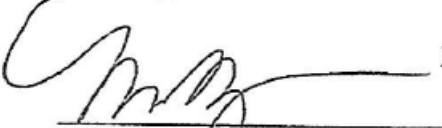
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ABSTRACT

Factors that Build and Sustain a Relationship of Trust between School District
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by Donna Kellogg

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the factors that facilitate the building and sustaining of a trusting relationship between experienced superintendents and principals. An additional purpose of this study was to determine what similarities and differences exist between superintendents and principals perceptions of the factors that build and sustain a trusting relationship.

Methodology: This was a qualitative phenomenological comparative design to first determine the lived experiences of 16 total participants, eight superintendents and eight principals from both San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. Face-to-Face interviews were conducted and responses from the total of 16 questions were coded to analyze.

Findings: The findings of this study included identifying the factors and actions that superintendents take to build and sustain a trusting relationship with principals. Based upon this study the results indicated that there were a number of factors that affected and influenced the maintenance and sustainability of trust. Including but not limited to, open communication, building trust, extension of trust and building relationships.

Conclusion: Open, honest, transparent communication in the form of various modalities that enabled the building and maintaining of trust were the most important factors in the establishing and sustaining of a relationship of trust between school district superintendents and principals. A wide variety of communication skills are critical,

especially for the superintendent, for the health of the relationship between the principals and superintendents.

Recommendations: Further research is advised. Descriptive studies of the identified factors that establish and maintain trust should be replicated with a larger set of data with the goal of impacting the current programs used to train those in leadership positions. Further recommendations include continued research on trust relationships in educational relationships: principals/teachers, teachers/students, county superintendents/district superintendents and superintendents/school boards.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The evolution and development of the superintendent/principal relationship in present day public school settings is an important and complex partnership. The expectations and perceptions of the public increasingly place education in general, and educational leadership in particular, under great scrutiny (Hughes & Karp, 2004). As West and Derrington (2009) supports that it is a necessity based on the demands of leadership to create and build the superintendent/principal team. It is imperative that these two team members support each other, work collaboratively, while focusing on alliance to build the team. Understanding where the relationship has come from and how it arrived at its present state is important to any study of superintendents, principals, and their relationship to one another.

The world we live in is progressively becoming a complex, globalized, media-driven society. Today's kindergartners will graduate high school in 2029, yet we have no idea what the world will look like in five years, let alone 13. However, as educators we are expected to prepare our students for that world. The students we educate now will face a myriad of issues including global warming, starvation and poverty. Students in the United States will need to have communication skills as well as the ability to create change in their personal lives and the world around them, socially, politically, and economically (Belanger, Wollenzin & Kennedy 2013).

Education, now more than ever, plays a significant role in the preparation of our youth for the job market and for adult life in general. College and career readiness has now become the foremost focus of school districts. "Giving young people the tools and knowledge to realistically plan for their futures is a primary goal of education" (Hughes

& Karp, 2004, p. 2). Now more than ever there is a need for school districts to

implement programs that address the growing needs of our country and a global

economy. For district and site administration this is a new and different time for leading

learning. Not only are there big changes ahead for education but there is also increased

scrutiny and criticism targeted at public education. There is a new found energy behind

school reform. Readers of daily newspapers may assume that based upon the articles on

education that schools are just now in crisis. As a matter of fact, for the last 50 years

public education leaders have expressed concern about the direction in which our schools

are headed. As Swanson (2008) reports in *Cities in Crisis,* America faces drop-out rates

at a critical level. Throughout the nation almost one in three high school students in the

United States do not graduate with a diploma. Upwards of 1.2 million students drop out

every year. That equates to 7,000 students each school day – one student every 26

seconds. This problem is even more serious among minority students, with almost 50%

of Hispanic and African American students failing to complete on time.

Many attempts have been made to reform and improve education, from the Civil

Rights Act of 1964, the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965 to Title 1

and later the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA). These reforms were

followed by the inception of Title IX and most recently the implementation of school

choice which is based on the premise that parents ought to choose what school their child

attends. *In Manager's not MBA's,* Minitzberg (2004) reminds us that, "Effective

leadership inspires more than empowers, it connects more than it controls, it

demonstrates more than it decides. It does all this by engaging itself above all else and

consequently others" (p. 143).

Throughout all of these changes the role of the superintendent and principal has also evolved from separate roles in district administration to one of a partnership in education. Benjamin Franklin observed that getting the 13 separate colonies to become one was like getting 13 bells to ring simultaneously. This is a similar challenge for a superintendent facing the charge of bringing multiple site principals together as a team that implements programs and makes positive changes that are necessary in today's educational world. The relationship between superintendent and principal is vital to implementing and sustaining the necessary changes to public education that lead to increased student achievement. The superintendent/principal relationship has a direct impact on students and staff and is the cornerstone to a successful relationship and trusting bond between the superintendent and principal. When trust is present in this relationship principals are more willing to take risks, show greater job satisfaction, as well as positively impacting organizational teams and leadership effectiveness. Conversely, low levels of trust can threaten innovation, problem solving, collaboration, relationship building, and efficiency (West & Derrington, 2009).

The failure to have a productive and trust based relationship between superintendents and principals can create not only a poor working environment but an unproductive organization as well. There is limited research on trust between superintendents and principals. There is a gap in literature that involves the issue of trust between superintendent and principal. As leaders of their educational organizations, superintendents are the primary persons responsible for engendering trust and as a consequence, enabling their schools to realize the benefits of high-trust organizations, including job satisfaction and innovation along with the willingness to take risks (West &

Derrington, 2009). Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) recommend that, leaders create an atmosphere where people constantly learn from each other as they face internal and external realities. Treating each other as leaders in the making is the best way to attract and retain great people who will in turn make the organization great.

The development of this important relationship begins with the superintendent taking the lead role. West and Derrington (2009) write that the superlative superintendents, "tune into their principals, know their schools, initiate change, respond to calls for assistance, and team successfully" (p. 519). The principal, in his or her realm, also has responsibility to trust and develop trust in their own environment. Whitaker (2013) points out that, "Effective principals know that positive change in their schools is up to them" (p. 22). The superintendent/principal relationship, one of the most powerful in a school district, is based upon the knowledge that they need each other to successfully achieve district goals. The superintendent/principal, interdependent team needs to focus, communicate and trust in order to be successful.

Background

Education in America began during Colonial times. Subjects such as writing, simple math, reading, poems and prayers were taught to upper class children. Children in poor families did not receive the same education. They instead went into apprenticeship programs lasting three to 10 years (Chesapeak University, n.d.). It wasn't until the 1840s that an organized educational system was developed when Horace Mann and Henry Barnard were instrumental in helping to create a statewide common-school system with the goal of creating educational opportunities for all children (as cited in Chesapeak University, n.d.). "They also argued education could preserve social stability and prevent

crime and poverty" (Chesapeak University, n.d., 19th Century Education: The Common School Movement section). Common-school advocates worked to establish publically funded elementary education. Mann and Barnard also advocated for accountability of schools to state and local school boards.

The first schools in America were unregulated and eclectic with no standard educational or administrative procedures. According to Goldin (1999), at its start the U.S. system of education was distinctly egalitarian and with the exception of enslaved children, she notes that, "Americans eschewed different systems for different children, and embraced the notion that everyone should receive a common, unified, academic education" (p. 2). Elementary education at this time was offered in one or two room school houses and there was no standard curriculum.

With the expansion of a new nation, many states turned to New England and their township model that they helped establish. However, many new states were too rural which prompted them to create smaller jurisdictions. When school districts were first counted by the Office of Education in the 1930s they numbered approximately 128,000 (Goldin, 1999). As late as 1948 there were still 75,000 one room school houses in the United States. There is a tremendous difference between the past and present. Today our classrooms are filled with highly qualified educators along with up to date technology utilized to engage students in 21st century learning. The 20th century saw the advent of inclusion, and the continued push for the idea of education for all. By 1910 kindergarten was implemented in most schools. From 1900-1996 the percentage of teenagers who graduated from high school increased from 6% to 85% (Chesapeake University, n.d.).

Statement of the Research Problem

High trust relationships in an organization can result in a positive environment in which each party is enabled to feel empowered to take risks in an effort to creatively move the organization forward. This is true in school organizations and is particularly important in superintendent/principal relationships. Trust is a complex issue that is earned through exhibiting reliability, competence, and integrity. It is to the benefit of any organization, particularly school districts, to embrace the power of trust. According to West and Derrington (2009) "A superintendent's trustworthiness affects a principal's willingness to provide that extra contribution or effort so essential to a successful school district" (p. 624). Trusting relationships have been shown to be essential to high performance in organizations in many settings. Taking the initiative to build high trust cultures is an important part of any leader's role and responsibility. Initiating the personal traits and behavior necessary to develop and nurture trust is one of the hallmarks of well led organizations (Blanchard, Olmstead, & Lawrence, 2013). In the complex and changing environment that school organizations exist in at present, trust is a factor that allows the members of the organization to be proactive on the organization's behalf without the worry of being second-guessed for taking action. Organizations that do not have the element of trust can become paralyzed by inaction without it (Anderson 2012).

Trust as an element of successful organizations has been studied in a number of environments and it is clear that trust is an important element in making an organization strong (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). However, the trust relationship between school district superintendents and the principals they work with has not been studied. The problem this study examines is a gap in the literature specifically related to factors that make

superintendent/principal relationships positive and productive, along with examining significant differences between the superintendent and principals in regards to building and retaining trusting relationships.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological comparative study was to identify and describe the factors that facilitate the building and sustainability of a trusting relationship between experienced superintendents and principals. An additional purpose of the study was to determine what similarities and differences exist between superintendents' and principals' perceptions of the factors that build and sustain a trusting relationship.

Research Question (RQ)

This study was guided by the following RQ: *What factors do experienced current and former superintendents and principals identify as important to developing and maintaining trust?*

Research Sub-Questions (RSQs)

1. What factors do experienced current and former superintendents identify as important in building and sustaining a trusting relationship between a superintendent and principal?

2. What factors do experienced current and former principals identify as important in building and sustaining a trusting relationship between a superintendent and principal?

3. What similarities and differences exist between superintendents' and principals' perceptions in regards to factors that build and sustain a trusting relationship?

Significance of the Problem

The superintendent-principal connection is one of the most powerful links in a school district. Building trust within this relationship can unleash this power in which the superintendent and principal create the best environment for student success. West and Derrington (2009) state, "It is this team that ultimately determines the schooling outcomes of young people in communities across this country" (p. 58).

The research in this study is important as it will address the gap in literature concerning the trusting relationship between superintendents and principals and what is needed to, "create trust, resonance, and an environment where people can tell the truth" (McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnstone, 2008, p. 2942). The results of this study will provide educational leaders with information that will improve trust relationships by identifying specific factors that will engender trust between superintendents and principals leading to improved performance and job satisfaction in educational organizations. "The ability to build trust is the defining competency for leaders in the twenty-first century" (Blanchard et al., 2013, p. 1062). Many organizations are turning to the building of high trust cultures. "With trust, creativity flourishes, productivity rises, barriers are overcome, and relationships deepen" (Blanchard et al., 2013, p. 1062).

The research in this study will also provide information on how superintendents and principals can forge powerful, positive, trusting relationships. "Principals benefit from a job culture that inspires, directs, and supports. Effective superintendents provide vision, set the tone for team interactions, and model success strategies for their principals" (West & Derrington, 2009, p. 369). Superintendents are responsible for creating environments in which principals flourish. Identifying the factors that promote

strong superintendent/principal relationships is significant to facilitating success in school districts nationwide.

Definitions

Superintendent. Highly visible chief executive officer of schools. (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005).

Principal. Overall instructional leader of a school site (Fullen, 2014).

Instructional Leadership. Specific actions by a superintendent or principal that are intended to make a direct or implied impact upon student achievement at a site or district wide.

Trust. The ability to demonstrate competency, act with integrity, care about others and maintain credibility (Blanchard et al, 2013).

Interpersonal Trust. Willingness to accept vulnerability or risk based on expectations regarding another person's behavior (Boram, 2010).

Systems Trust. The ability to demonstrate competency, act with integrity, care about others and maintain credibility (Covey, 2008).

Delimitations

The study is delimited to current and former superintendents and principals with five or more years of experience in their field and that have been acknowledged as Superintendent or Principal of the Year at the local, county, regional, or state level in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, California.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I of this study provides an introduction, background, and research questions. Chapter II focuses on the literature pertaining to the research questions and

problem statement. Chapter III reviews the population, instrumentation, and data

collection based upon the research questions and design. Chapter IV presents the data

and findings and Chapter V provides a summary of findings, conclusions, and

recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents the review of the relevant literature that supports this study by identifying themes linking school superintendent and site principal trust building and maintenance of trust. This review of literature identifies existing research on education in America that has been used to examine the superintendent/principal relationship in terms of building and maintenance of trust as well as any gaps that may exist within this topic. This review examines the evolution of public education, along with the role of superintendent, role of the principal, and the superintendent/principal relationships West & Derrington (2009) created a curriculum for team leadership some of which include:

- The desire to build a belief system in which both parties believe time spent in team building provides an understanding as to why there is an importance to team learning.

- Adjustment of attitude. Collaborative team work requires a foundation of trust. Team work should include the sharing of a risk free environment of successes and failures.

- Discussing and developing norms that guide team interactions that are positive.

- The team seeking to improve the gathering of feedback, data, and the effort in new learning.

The researcher further examined the issue of trust and the role it plays in organizations and in professional relationships as well as the various ways in which trust is enlisted and maintained in educational settings.

Background of Education in America

Education in America began during Colonial times. The colonists quickly realized that, "Simply teaching children to read and write at home and in church was insufficient" (Education News, 2013, p. 1). Beginning with the founding of the Boston Latin School in 1635 colonists began to establish public schools. The first schools in America were unregulated and eclectic with no standard educational or administrative procedures. According to Goldin, (1999) at its start the U.S. system of education was distinctly egalitarian and with the exception of enslaved children. She notes that, "Americans eschewed different systems for different children, and embraced the notion that everyone should receive a common, unified, academic education" (p. 2). Elementary education at this time was offered in one or two room school houses and there was no standard curriculum. "The first colonial public schools' coursework went no further than today's grammar school curriculum" (Education News, 2013 p. 1). Subjects such as writing, simple math, reading, poems and prayers were taught to upper class children. Children in poor families did not receive the same education. They instead went into apprenticeship programs lasting three to 10 years (Pulliman & Van Patten, 2016). Pulliam and Van Patten (2013) note that, "Generally the educational aims of colonial schools and teachers represented stability, tradition, authority, disciplined and pre-ordained value systems that were marks of idealism and classical realism" (p. 92). Religion played a major role in education in America as Pulliam and Van Patten state that the role of religion was significant in colonial schools and colleges, in both the administration and curriculum implemented in these institutions. It was during the national period that sectarian authority began to shift. In the same manner that school

districts give authority to school boards, the colonial governments granted the establishment of schools by private individuals as well as religious groups.

Despite the exclusion of education from the Constitution, revolutionary statesmen made a number of proposals for a national school system. Through multiple attempts to organize education in America including an attempt by the American Philosophical Society in which in 1795 offered a prize for the best essay on a plan for a national educational system. Pulliam and Van Patten (2013) noted that all the plans that were submitted were, "Founded on the theory that a public system of education is necessary for a free and self-governing republic" (p. 124). In spite of the interest, Congress rejected all plans for a national system. It wasn't until the 1840s that an organized educational system was developed. Horace Mann and Henry Barnard were instrumental in helping to create a statewide common-school system. Their goal was to create educational opportunities for all children. They also argued education could, "Preserve social stability and prevent crime and poverty" (as cited in Pulliam & Van Patten, 2013, p.125). A s previously noted, early education took place in one or two room school houses, Horace Mann was instrumental in changing this system by looking to other countries in which students were segregated by age. In 1848, Mann looked to the Prussian System and implemented 'age grading' in the Massachusetts' schools. Based upon its success it quickly became the norm in public education. With the development of the new nation, the township model of school organization that was created in New England spread to several states. However, many newer states were too small for this model, and instead created smaller jurisdictions.

Common-school advocates worked to establish publically funded elementary education. Mann and Barnard also advocated for accountability of schools to state and local school Boards. In 1857 the NEA (National Education Association) was established to influence the development of schools and education. Since then the NEA has been vigilant in playing a vital role in determining the conditions in which teachers and children work and learn. Over 100 educators across the nation came to a centralized cause to unite as one voice for public education (Holcomb, 2006). The desire for structure and accountability in school systems has been present since the earliest era of schools in America.

With the beginning of the Civil War educational progress was put on hold until the end of the conflict, after which the Department of Education was established in order to help states establish effective school systems (Pulliam & Van Patten). By 1873, state school systems developed laws for the organization, including school tax and State control. Before World War I education in American public schools consisted of elementary school for eight years and four years of high school. "Wars are by no means the most significant checkpoints in educational chronology, but the period between the Civil War and the first World War was the era for the development of the modern American school system" (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2013, p. 174).

There was a remarkable expansion of public schools during the first half of the 20th century as almost all children attended elementary school. By 1910 kindergarten was implemented in most schools and in 1911 the first Montessori school opened. Eighty percent of teenagers were enrolled in high school. Through the 1930s and 1940s most all of American children were afforded access to education (Mondale, 2002)

With the advent of the 1950s American schools were showing excellent promise for the baby boomers of the post war era. However, there were still tremendous inequalities in education in America. Women, Mexican-Americans, Native Americans, and African-Americans found their experiences to be fraught with discrimination. Some of this unrest led to Brown vs. The Board of Education of Topeka in 1954, a landmark case that led to the desegregation of African-American students (Mondale, 2001). During the course of school development in the 20th century, the battle to implement equal education opportunities has been at the forefront. Most recently, American education has seen federal mandates such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top both setting goals and timelines for student achievement. In addition, Common Core Standards have been adopted by some states, posing extensive impact on students, teachers, school site principals and district achievement (Urban & Wagoner, 2014).

There is a tremendous difference between the past and present classrooms in America. At the forefront of this new world of education is technology. The technological evolution has had a huge impact on education. Rapid globalization and changes in technologies require that our schools produce students with 21st century skills such as collaboration, innovation, communication, creativity, communication, innovation, and critical thinking skills (Schrum & Levine 2015).

As we look forward to the 21st century our schools will be educating kindergartners to be successful in a world that is changing at the speed of light. The world we live in is becoming a progressively complex, globalized, media-driven society. Today's kindergarteners will graduate high school in 2029 yet we have no idea what their world will look like in five years but we are expected to educate and prepare students for

that world. The students we educate now will face a myriad of issues including global warming, poverty, and starvation. Students in the United States will need to have communication skills as well as the ability to create change in their personal lives and the world around them socially, politically, and economically (Belanger et al., 2013).

Evolution of the Role of Superintendent

In the beginning of public school education, the roles of superintendent and principal were non-existent. State Boards ran schools, followed by local Boards both without professional help. Given the fact that education was not mentioned in the constitution, the responsibility fell onto the states. The educational needs of communities were supported by small amounts of money allocated by state legislatures which in turn also passed laws for public education. As the accountability became too burdensome for these "school committees" a paid state official was designated, thus the beginning of the superintendency (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2013).

In 1837 Buffalo, New York and Louisville, Kentucky established and maintained the first official positions of local superintendents. By 1870 more than 30 cities enlisted a superintendent to run their schools. These state superintendents were basically in the position of collecting data and distributing funds allocated by the state. School officials worked under an organizational structure that included few guidelines and expectations. They were left largely on their own to tackle administrative leadership with limited guidance on community interactions (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2013).

Throughout the early years of education, from the Colonial Period through the Civil War the American administrator in the educational system worked within an environment which lacked the protective structure of the school administrator. The

superintendent's position, if it existed, was seldom clearly defined as to role and responsibility and authority to act was weak. The position was often ceremonial and did not hold any substantial power to act. As Pulliam and Van Patten (2013) noted, "The state superintendent of free schools or common schools or the state superintendent of public instruction, as the office was sometimes called, often had very feeble powers" (p. 146).

In the latter part of the 19th century the role of superintendent was in a transitional stage, moving from paternalistic, almost ministerial type role indicative of earlier in the century, towards more of a management role that would evolve in the next century (Urban & Wagoner, 2014). Much of this need coincided with the movement towards graded schools and away from one- room school houses which in the past had been overseen by a teacher/principal. As multi-graded systems were implemented the role of the superintendent grew to include the development of a uniform curriculum that could be executed district wide. (Kowalski, 2013).

"Much of the work of the recent reform movements seems less a process of wholesale transformation and more the optimization of a 19th century education system originally intended to deliver a fundamental education to a largely homogeneous population" (Harvey et al., 2013, p. 13). The world of education is changing, along with student demographics, critical thinking, college and career readiness and other skill areas necessary for students to succeed in work and life. The position of the superintendent has changed as well. "Hess and Meeks found both school boards and superintendents agreeing that raising student learning across the board (76.5%), closing achievement gaps among sub groups (69.9%) and improving teaching (67.5%) were either very urgent or

extremely urgent priorities" (as cited in Harvey et al., 2013, p. 674). Current reform

literature points towards the connection of high-performing schools that are also

characterized by deep levels of shared trust (Harvey et al., 2013).

The role of superintendent today has been described as a leader in a new age and a

different world. A superintendent must lead within a governance structure that is less

than ideal. In some ways it is an impossible job. The superintendent is "An educator,

manager, budget maker, public servant, politician, community leader, and local preacher"

(Harvey et al., 2013, p. 855). These areas are always subject to criticism by the

community, employees, and the Board.

It is not certain what the role of the superintendent will be in the future, however,

it is clear that it will no longer be overseeing and managing schools. The role is evolving

and will continue to evolve. As Houston (2001) observed, the new imperative that "all

children be taught" (p. 4) will call for greater educational leadership from the

superintendent. Further, the uncertain political climate that now surrounds schools will

require the superintendent to be proficient in politics and the art of persuasion, the

modern superintendent will need to have the ability to create and maintain relationships.

"He or she will be a superintendent of learning who will have to navigate an uncertain

terrain with skill and finesse" (Houston, 2001, p. 4).

Evolution of the Role of Principal

Much like the position of the superintendent, the position of principal was born

out of a need for a supervisor in growing communities. This lead manager was the

combination of teacher and school manager. Before the principal's office was

established school leaders were left to work under a marginal administrative structure.

With little or no administrative standards to follow the early school leaders could only address the most basic of school operations (Rousmaniere, 2013). The position of principal in American education evolved from the principal teacher who was responsible for overseeing the older students. This role continued as a teacher with administrative duties then as an administrator whose duties also included the supervision of teachers. In the early manifestation of the principalship, the principal did administrative duties while at all times maintaining a classroom and community connection (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2013).

During the middle of the 19th century the principalship was formalized into an administrative position. Along with giving the principal greater authority, accountability and monetary compensation, there was the establishment of entry requirements to the position along with required training. This reform movement also took the focus of the position out of the classroom and placed it into the centralized office. It was during this reformation that the need to have supervision of teachers was identified as being critical. In 1865 Boston schools superintendent John Philbrick assigned principals to oversee all teachers to help build a cohesive teaching system and to help bring structure to a teacher's assigned tasks (Rousmaniere, 2013).

In public schools in America the creation of the role of principal significantly changed the organization of a school. It went from that of being a group of students supervised by a teacher, to a group of teachers supervised by an administrator. The principal's position has become that of middle management in which there is a balancing act between school site and district office. "Yet by nature of their background and role as educators, principals have always been concerned with student learning, and principals

across time have played a pivotal role in shaping the educational culture of schools"

(The Atlantic, 2013. p. 3).

Principals share many tasks with the superintendent, but at a site level. "They are

expected to run a smooth school, manage health and safety, innovate without upsetting

anyone, connect with students and teachers, be responsive to parents and community, and

answer to their districts, and above all, deliver results" (Fullan, 2014, p. 6). The role of

principal has always been to implement educational policy delivered by the state and to

"maneuver, buffer, and maintain the stability of the school culture the local level" (The

Atlantic, 2013, p. 126).

The position of principal since its inception has always been one in which the

expectations of duties go well beyond the job description. A national study was

conducted in 1926 to attempt to decipher the different roles of a principal. The study

determined that in most instances it was difficult to differentiate where one job stopped

and another began, especially in small communities in which the principalship involved

multiple demands as well as the responsibility of teaching (Rousmaniere, 2013).

Superintendent/Principal Relationships

The early relationship between the superintendent and principal was hierarchical

in nature. One in which the principal was expected to follow directions from the

superintendent without any input as to what would be implemented at their sites. During

the 19th century it was a common practice for school boards and superintendents to

develop specific teaching guidelines and curriculum systems and then direct the principal

to implement these systems (Kowalski, 2013). In the 1870s, Kowalski (2013) notes that

Samuel King, Portland, Oregon's first superintendent maintained this hierarchy of power by developing his own curriculum for students and methods for teaching. "Superintendent King demanded that principals follow his strict guidelines in their supervision of teachers in everything from when to open the windows to what temperature to maintain the classrooms" (p. 22). From this time forward the relationship between principal and superintendent was driven by the hierarchy mind set of the superintendent. Kowalski, (2013) observed that as late as 1987 the superintendent was seen as having absolute control and authority over a principal, from observing and evaluating to using social pressure to influence principals to conform to desired characteristics.

The relationship between the superintendent and principal has changed over time. Instead of the strictly subordinate role initially played by the principal, he/she is now expected to make decisions and take action in the best interest of their school site as issues specific to the site arise. The superintendent, on the other hand, is seen as more collaborative and inclusive in decision making than in prior eras (Houston, 2011). This is not to say that the principal has total free reign at their site nor does it mean the superintendent has given up the positional authority of the office to direct the district. It does mean that the positions are not set in opposition to one another but, rather, are seen as partners in the mission to reach high achievement for students. In order for these changing roles to work, trust between the principal and superintendent is essential (West & Darrington, 2009).

The strength of the superintendent and principal relationship begins with the superintendent's initiative that is to believe their positive relationship with principals will

result in the ability to obtain the district wide reaching of goals (West & Derrington, 2009). Trusting relationships have shown to be essential to high performance in organizations in many settings. Taking the initiative to build high trust cultures improves the bottom line. When trust is present in an organization there is creativity, a rise in productivity, no barriers, and a deepening of relationships. Trust becomes a must have instead of a nice to have (Blanchard et al., 2013).

However, the superintendent/principal relationship can be inconsistent, especially in school districts that have experienced multiple superintendents over the course of time. The exercise of power can range from the desire to tightly control principals in a centralized, directive, environment to a more facilitative, collaborative environment (Kowalski, 2013).

On a positive note, based upon the Wallace Foundation's publication, *Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk About School Leadership*. the authors of the study found that across the nation superintendents and principals exhibited a can-do spirit embedded in their confidence that together they can make a difference. They believe leaders count in the education of students (Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, Foleno, & Foley, 2016).

Schools in the United States are in a constant state of reform. Over the last few years there has been an inundation of new initiatives from Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to Professional Learning Communities (PLC), all designed to produce students who graduate ready to compete in a global economy. The role and impact on a school district through all of this reform lands squarely on the shoulders of the superintendent and principal team. "Healthy team dynamics transforms an assortment of individuals into

a cohesive group that grows in competence and prepares the team to realize its mission"
(West & Darrington, 2009, p. 23). In order for a school district to move forward into the
21st century the learning model must change,

> This requires a strong degree of collaboration on the part of a district team which
> is made up of superintendents and principals. It is imperative that this team
> develop a climate of trust in one another in order to collaborate. (Anderson, 2012,
> p. 12)

Trust as an Aspect of Human Relationships

> *I don't ask for much I only want trust, and you know it don't come easy*

> -Ringo Starr c. Starling Music

One of the most basic components of any human relationship is that of trust.
Goals, especially in a team situation, cannot be achieved without it (Richardson, 2016).
As Covey (2008) wrote in *The Speed of Trust*, "Trust is a 24/7, 365 day impact on our
lives. It touches every aspect of our personal and professional lives" (p. 395). Trust is
not always easy to define. According to Harvey and Drolet (2006), "Trust is much like
love - we know it when we see it, but we are not sure what creates it" (p. 59). The
Definition of trust can be as elusive as the definition of love. Many describe trust as a
feeling, or knowing that someone will be there for them. It is the creation of trust that
can be equally ambiguous. The ability to understand and build trust requires the
utilization of the tool of authentic conversations. This is what is needed to establish and
maintain trust. Trust is the foundation of any positive human relationship. By its
definition it is the belief and confidence in a person's strength, character, and truth.
(Flores & Salmon, 2001).

Cuddy's (2015) research on presence is based on the idea of believing in and trusting yourself. Presence is her term for the authentic "you" your real, honest values, feelings, and abilities and trusting in yourself for as she notes, "If you don't trust yourself how can others trust you?" (p. 5). She also notes that, "Powerlessness undermines our ability to trust ourselves. If we don't trust ourselves, we can't build trust with others" (p. 115). Cuddy's research also led her to conclude that receiving trust from others allows for positive interaction and the accomplishment of goals. Cuddy links trust as a conduit of influence and the idea of being present leads to the establishment of trust. She concludes that presence is the medium through which trust progresses and ideas travel. If someone you are trying to influence doesn't trust you, you're not going to very far. Great ideas without trust are impotent.

The Development and Maintenance of Trust

Trust is an important building block of any relationship. Any team needs trust in order to achieve their goals. As Richardson (2016) notes, in order to obtain trust one needs to learn to trust others. The author continues to state that through delegating responsibilities to others, acknowledging strengths in people, and sharing your life story with those you work with you begin to establish essential trusting bonds with those that you work with (Richardson, 2016). Richardson furthers suggests that the creation of a reputation of trustworthiness is key to building successful relationships. By showing consistency in your work, values, and principles you are building the reputation of high integrity which ultimately leads to being deemed trustworthy. Authors Bradberry and Greaves (2009) advise that trust is something that takes time to build, can be lost in seconds, and may be our most important and most difficult objective in managing our

relationships. As noted in *Politically Intelligent Leaders*, authors White, Harvey, and

Kemper (2007) state that building trust involves constructing a strategy to implement

trust within an organization. One cannot simply expect trust due to the position that is

held. "Trust must be built with the things that you do…your behavior" (White et al.,

2007, p. 9). White et al. continue with the idea of trust building in terms of strategies for

building trust that includes the internal environment along with the belief that trust plays

an important part in the ability to build that relationship which in turn contributes to the

ability to perform a job effectively.

According to Harvey and Drolet (2005), there are five conditions that chronicle

trust and the ability to create and maintain it in professional relationships which include:

- Interdependence: Mutual need creates a balance and a basis of trust. The

  more the need for each other in both our perceptions and realities the greater

  the ability to build trust.

- Consistency: The ability to consistently "walk the talk." Actions and

  behaviors that reflect your words bring about trust.

- Honesty: Those who choose to be dishonest in terms of lying, cheating, and

  double –dealing will be found out in the long run. Dishonesty can also be

  exhibited as "forgetting" to tell the truth. Honesty and integrity are the

  building blocks of trust.

- Affability: Likeable people are more likely to enlist trust from those around

  them. A leader in this instance needs to move beyond being "one of the

  group" to exhibit substance that proves professional integrity.

- Extension of Trust: According to the old aphorism "those who give trust, get

trust", illustrates the importance of extending trust. The fear of giving trust

may result in being perceived as a less-trusted person. (pp. 59-65)

These five identifiers of trust in an institution produce a high probability of trust in

organizations.

According to Flores and Solomon (2010) there are three types of trust. Simple

trust, blind trust, and authentic trust. Simple trust can be reflective. Simple trust can also

be defined as basic trust. It is a trust devoid of reflection, scrutiny or justification. It can

arise out of the absence of reason to distrust or naiveté. All too often simple trust, a

transparent ideal, turns out to be not worthy of trust. Although when lost it should be

seen as a time of reflection and examination into the intricate and complex element of

human trust relationships. Self-deception describes blind trust, whereas authentic trust

can be reflective and honest. Unlike simple trust, blind trust is not innocent. There have

been experiences of violation, betrayal, and reasons to distrust. However, there is the

tendency to deny the evidence and be self-deceptive. Authentic trust develops through

interactions and conversations with others. Authentic trust between people is an

invitation to acknowledge and discuss trust issues which is absent in blind trust. The

single most component to authentic trust is self-conscious commitment. It raises the

question of self-identity, relationships and the issues of trust. In the end authentic trust

takes into consideration some form of vulnerability which includes an awareness of risk

and vulnerabilities and above all the choice to be in this type of relationship. Any of

these trust scenarios rely on counting on other people and examining the exposure to

vulnerability and risk (Solomon & Flores, 2001).

Developing trust with others requires self-awareness which provides the foundation for self-confidence. This state of presence enables leaders to enlist the trust of others by exhibiting to others that they know who they are and what is important. If this quality is consistent it is reassuring to those they interact with and can be very reassuring in times of change (McKee et al., 2008). Authentic trust, according to Flores and Solomon (2001) doesn't deny distrust but transcends it. In the *Politically Intelligent Leader*, the authors White, Harvey and Kemper (2007) discuss the important attributes of a leader's personality that help to build trust. Speaking and acting in a consistent manner, dealing honestly with others while extending trust, and are sociable and approachable you begin the trust building process. Disregarding any of this process can lead to a breakdown of trust which leads to a breakdown of the building blocks which include leading teams and individuals to go from good to great.

According to Richardson (2016), there are three different factors that are inherent to finding someone trustworthy. First, is the situation in which we meet somebody a social event, office, or shadowy back alley? The location lends itself to the development of finding somebody to be trustworthy. The second element is the identity and our relationship to the person who conducted the introduction. Then finally we look to our peers for final approval or disapproval of the new person.

Developing trust with others, according to McKee et al., (2008) requires self-awareness which provides the foundation for self-confidence. This state of presence enables leaders to enlist the trust of others by exhibiting to others that they know who they are and what is important. If this quality is consistent it is reassuring to those they are in contact with and it can be inspirational in times of change.

Once trust is established there is a need to maintain it. White et al. (2007) advise that managing trust includes the following:

- Exhibit interdependence.

- Continue to speak and act in a consistent manner.

- Honesty in all actions.

- Connections with all involved.

- Extended trust to others. (p. 32)

Another way to enlist and maintain the trust of others is to provide for the needs of others along with acting in an honest manner towards others. Behaving in a forthright, affable position encourages an environment of trust building. Giving trust to others enables others to entrust you. Trust becomes a building block that enables the constructing of good teams to become better people (White et al., 2007). Author Moua (2011) advises leaders to demonstrate vulnerability. This leads to the creation of space that is inviting to others and offers more meaningful communication.

Authors Bradberry and Greaves (2009) of *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* discuss using self-awareness and self-management skills to begin building trust. Sharing with others something about yourself, parts at a time can begin to lay the groundwork for trust building. Bradberry and Greaves continue to advise that it is important to continually monitor your level of trust of others and others' level of trust in you. This relationship they note takes time. They encourage the use of self-awareness skills to deepen trust by listening to others about how they feel and what needs to happen to build trust (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). These two authors maintain that by asking you are acknowledging to the other person the importance of your relationship with them. This will bring about a

deeper level of connections with others. Bradberry and Greaves also discuss the value of

transparency and openness in building and maintaining trust. They maintain that

transparency and openness produce a climate of trust. This helps others feel like they

have a connection, are trusted and respected in their organization rather than being told

what to do without understanding the why.

In *Beyond Change Management,* Anderson and Ackerson-Anderson (2010a)

discuss the importance of walking the talk of change and the importance of a leader being

able to acknowledge openly missteps or mistakes along the way. The authors point out

that this simple step, especially among subordinates, is a powerful tool in building trust.

The authors make a note of the fact that as humans we all make mistakes. The true

mistake is trying to cover it up or to not acknowledge it. This issue of non-transparency

creates a culture of inauthenticity. This type of behavior can lead to stifling openness,

honesty, and learning. The authors also consider the importance of being open, caring,

and demonstrating a willingness to share their inner personal selves in an effort to

promote a high level of trust amongst others.

Brilliance by Design author Halsey (2011) notes that leaders that engage others in

the collaborative process ignite enthusiasm and develop a sense of safety for making

mistakes and learning from them. This creates an environment of trust and respect that is

mutual. The author also indicates that the creation of environment that feels safe, builds

trust. One key factor in doing this according to Halsey is listening to people's stories.

Building in time to listen to others and share experiences is instrumental in building an

environment of trust; listening is an important skill as a leader to develop. The author

continues to suggest that the building of trust involves giving others sufficient

opportunities to "win" with exceptional opportunities to act upon concise and actionable directions that allow for the leader to provide for great content and materials that ensure a safer learning environment.

McKee et al. (2008) asserts that when decisions are guided by values the result is that people trust quickly, the leader will be given latitude because of consistencies and the openness to hold people at the center of a value system in which they feel open to leadership decisions. Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, and Switzler (2012) discuss the fact that people often assume that trust is something you have or do not have. Either you trust someone or you do not is important to deal with the trust issue aside from the person. These authors continue to offer the advice that it is important in establishing a foundation of trust it is imperative to be firm on stated expectations and be flexible enough so that if "something comes up" you open the door for collaboration.

Patterson et al. (2012) stated, people often assume that trust is something that you have or don't have. Either you trust someone or you don't. It is important to deal with the trust issue aside from the person. In establishing a foundation of trust, according to Patterson et al. it is important to be firm on stated expectations and be flexible enough so that if something comes up you open the door for collaboration. As authors Flores and Solomon (2001) notes, talking about trust can be difficult but it is so essential to have conversations regarding trust, and trusting, in that this is the only way to create, cultivate and recover trust amongst individuals and groups.

Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson (2010a) note that during times of transformation people are asked to go into the unknown. This generates anxiety and fear. Leadership must manage these feelings through trusting relationships to help guide

through the change process in order to move an organization forward through its natural resistance. According to Blanchard et al. (2013) organizations are pushing forward with the idea of building high trust within their organizational culture. There is strong evidence that this focus on trust provides for smart institutions to proactively build high trust organizations.

The Loss and Regaining of Trust

Just as there are many ways to enlist and sustain trust there are equally as many ways to lose and regain trust. When there is a loss of trust in the organization authors Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson (2010a) note that one of the first reactions by the leadership team is containment and distancing. This is called the "time would heal" option. As the authors note, this does not lend itself to the resistance and anger leaving the organization. The next step for some of those in leadership is to send out a reassurance to others in the organization that everything is fine and the future looks bright, a *just get over it and move on approach* (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010a). As the authors summarize, the best way to handle the situation is to set up listening sessions in which everyone has a chance to express themselves and be heard. Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson note that it is important that the leadership understands the importance of inviting all comments in a confidential, unconditional listening environment. After a few months the organizations' employees had regained their trust in large part due to the fact that the leadership came across as authentic, truly hearing and responding to those that had experienced a lack of faith.

According to Flores and Solomon (2001) the loss of trust is a breakdown that focuses a lens on the entire community of how things are or are not working. It is akin to

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being "on the fence" when opportunities for an organization can go either way, renewal or danger involved not just losing trust but giving up on the idea of trust itself. It also opens up the possibility of establishing a trust that is more authentic, and indestructible as a dedication to the relationship that is mutual and open.

The loss of trust also comes as a result of leaders not willing to walk their talk especially when the leadership wants to initiate change. In *Beyond Change Management* the authors Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson (2010a) discuss the idea that when leaders establish a pattern of disconnect between what they say and what they do it established a calculable path to failure. Increasing distrust and the resistance of employees to participate in change. Walking the talk for change is essential for leaders to implement transformation in their organizations. Leaders need to be willing to talk of desired change and model their walk of desired change. Leaders who are unable to do this risk establishing distrust.

Another example of leadership changing trust in an organization comes from Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson (2010b) in which the authors note that a sense of unrealistic urgency on the part of leadership can result in distrust. Wanting speed is not the same as a state or federally mandated deadline. While employees will understand these deadlines they will not tolerate what seems to be a fabricated deadline on the part of the leadership. According to the authors, developing a realistic timeline with identified milestones is critical. Owens (2012) notes that it is imperative that there is a trust in the process.

There are instances when it is the leader that does not trust. This absence effects the team as a whole. Kouzes and Posner (2006) imply that when there is this type of

absence of trust from the leader, there is more work that does not get done. The leader

who does not trust others finds themselves having to do more work themselves while

feeling compelled to check up others. This begins a cycle of leadership having less faith

and confidence. The more a leader expresses distrust the less the others on in the leader's

organization give in return. In addition, the authors comment that one of the top

obstructions to success in a career is the inability to trust others. These authors continue

to discuss the matter of trust breakdown. Perhaps people fail to do their assigned jobs,

this could be viewed as betrayal. Or there are times when some let leadership down or

vice versa. If a leader begins to send out signals of distrust it is time for leadership to go

back to working on and building sustainable trust relationships.

Low levels of trust can threaten innovation, problem solving, collaboration,

relationship building and efficiency. These costs are recognized as a "hidden tax" on an

organization, creating fear, resistance and disengagement. In Lencioni's (2002) *The Five

Dysfunctions of a Team*, the author uses the story telling method to describe the strengths

and weaknesses of teams. The lead character in his book describes the absence of trust as

the first dysfunction of a team. The character notes that, "trust is the foundation of real

team work. And so the first dysfunction is the failure on the part of the team members to

understand and open up to one another" (p. 43). This character continues to note that, "It

(trust) is an absolutely critical part of building a team, in fact, it's probably the most

critical." (Lencioni, 2002, p. 43). Lencioni continues with the observation that in order to

create trust, the team has to be in it for the good of the team. Teams that lack time and

energy within their group. There is a reluctance to take risks. This can result in low

morale for teams that exhibit low trust. Trust can break down quickly when the process

of decision-making excludes people's input. However, trust can also breakdown when a team can't make decisions in a responsive way to get results because team members take it personally if a decision is made without them.

Owens (2012) examines the idea that too often leadership does not trust the "doers." Those that are entrenched in the organization and may have a far better understanding of the organizations strengths and weaknesses. Owens goes on to observe that there may be many more in an organization that are not in management but want to contribute ideas and innovations are valuable. These are the individuals in the trenches that have a better understanding of the need of the organization and have a better understanding of the problems. However, there are time when the leaders of the organization doubt the employee loyalty, intelligence and determination. There comes a time when those in leadership need to trust these "doers." As a manager it is important to lead these people into roles of competency and empowerment. When others feel a sense of direction and empowerment you as a leader have removed the constraints on innovation and the door is opened. In order for the "doers" to share their ideas leadership needs to empower and give these individuals a feeling of being trusted. Owens continues to share that if trust can be built enough times and in many different ways it will enlist the possibility that will enable people to either trust you or bring them to the point of possibility to trust your innovations and work to implement them.

The following advice is offered by Patterson et al. (2012), trust does not have to be universally offered. In truth, it is usually offered in degrees and is very topic specific. The authors continue to advise to deal with the trust around the issue not around the person. Also, do not use your mistrust as a club to punish people. If they have earned

your mistrust in one area don't let it bleed over into your overall perception of their

character (Patterson et al., 2012). Bradbury and Greaves (2009) observe that

acknowledging how decisions will affect others provides transparency and openness

which allows for people to feel trusted, respected and have a connection to the

organization rather than being kept in the dark and told what to do. While Flores and

Solomon (2001) write about trust building in which most of the literature on trust looks at

trust as an attitude or as part of the social media. These authors believe that many

important parts of trust are disregarded such as conversation, communication, and

negotiations.

Trust Relationship between Superintendent and Principal

The superintendent-principal relationship is one of the most important and

potentially effective alliances in a school district. This is a team that fundamentally

determines the educational outcomes of students throughout the country (West &

Darrington, 2009). West and Derrington (2009) also note that district leadership teams

are often seen as a frustration or failure due largely in part to the lack of trust between

superintendent and the principals. The authors continue to discern that there are times

when a communication issue arises between superintendent and principal and the crux of

the problem stems from a lack of confidence between the superintendent and principal.

There are times when the intended message is not received in the way it was meant due to

the fact that the underlying trust attributes are not there. The authors continue to note that

the trust between those that are sending the message and those receiving creates the

difference between effective and non-effective communication. Trust or the absence

there of determines whether or not the principal—superintendent team is considered to be a strong or a weak team.

West and Derrington (2009) further state their belief that the trustworthiness of a superintendent affects the willingness of a principal to go the extra distance to provide contributions that accelerated the efforts of a successful school district. However, a lack of trust blocks the district leadership team from working effectively with each other as well as the superintendent. West and Derrington continue to discuss that theorists in leadership note that building trust is one of the primary components in which supervisors maintain a positive influence on subordinates which leads to the effect of a superintendent trustworthiness affecting a principal's willingness to provide the extra effort that is a beneficial aspect to the success of a school site and district.

The issue of trust is imperative in any relationship. The trust between superintendent and principal is no exception. "The stronger the trust the more effective the team and the higher the energy available to reach organizational goals" (Harvey & Drolet, 2006, p. 58). In order for a school district to move forward into the 21st century learning model change must happen. This will require collaboration on the part of a district team made up of superintendents and principals. This team must develop a climate of trust in one another in order to collaborate. One of the benefits of a trusting relationship is the empowerment of others to feel they can take risks and become the leaders they see themselves as being. "Authentic leaders develop genuine connections with others and engender trust. Because people trust them, they are able to motivate people to high levels of performance by empowering them to lead" (George & Sims, 2007, p. 237).

Lencioni (2002) notes that without trust there is no conflict in ideology in which there is engagement in open dialogue that is constructive. Without a trusting relationship there is only harmony that is artificial in nature. Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) suggests that if the expectation is that someone will be untrustworthy they are closely monitored. This makes it difficult to develop trust due to the fact that if you are being closely watched there are no opportunities to show you can be trusted. The authors go on to suggest that there is evidence that shows that if people are put in situations in which those on an authority position expected cheating, more do cheat. Given the complexity of trust it is recognized that varying perceptions of team players may lead to interpretations and misinterpretations of a leader's message. Some of the red flags include avoidance of responsibility for actions, excusing or blaming others, lack of transparency and lack of fact checking. Some of the presence of trust indicators include team collaborations when they are in a trusting mode. Signs of a high trust environment include no fear in expressing thoughts, opinions, and feelings. Honest communication, keeping promises, and commitments and honest forthright communication with transparency of information (Lencioni, 2002).

West and Derrington (2009) point out that leadership scholars support that the building of trust is a positive influence that supervisors can have over their colleagues. The level of a superintendent's trustworthiness affects how willingly a principal will be to make the extra efforts and contributions that are fundamental to the success of a school district. A lack of trust keeps team members from working effectively with the superintendent and others involved in the organization.

Portraits of Trust

In the superintendent-principal relationship, West and Derrington (2009) suggest that there are five basic attributes of a superintendent that paint a portrait of trust and their effects on a principal. The first two being benevolence and caring which the authors note have been prioritized as the top two attributes of trust. Both of these characteristics help to create an environment of protection and caring about the well-being of others in which the superintendent is willing to "go to bat" for the principals.

Competence comes in second as being one of the most specified definitions of trust. True competence comes from the ability to exhibit skills of human relations such as being an active listener and being able to solve problems and conflicts.

In a survey evaluating superintendents, principals ranked interpersonal relations as the highest ranking attribute that is necessary for a superintendent to be an effective supervisor, while professional intelligence was their lowest ranking attribute (West & Derrington, 2009).

Openness includes open communication and team decision making in which the superintendent shares with principals and invites them to become active participants in problem solving. This in turn creates a sense of a superintendent-principal team.

Reliability is another attribute that is highly sought after in a superintendent because when trust is dependable the cultivation of trust can begin. Consistent behavior leads to the ability for a superintendent to find a foothold into which trust can infiltrate.

Trust building between a superintendent and principal takes time. Interpersonal trust is an assumption that takes place between these two individuals. It provides a balance between risk and vulnerability. Subordinates who trust supervisors are more

willing to accept this risk. Given the fact that they hold confidence in their supervisors'

trustworthiness as exemplified in their behavior (West & Derrington, 2009).

Trust Variables for Research Questions

The leadership team distinguishes itself from any other team in the district (West

& Derrington, 2009). Through policies and procedures they influence their districts

decision making and operations. White et al. (2007) advise that managing trust includes

the following:

- Exhibit interdependence.

- Continue to speak and act in a consistent manner.

- Honesty in all actions.

- Connections with all involved.

- Extended trust to others (p. 32).

These factors have a direct impact on student learning and on organizational trust

as it relates to a school district and the reciprocal trust relationship between

superintendent and principal and the associated variables.

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Research Gap

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This literature review described and identified what trust is, the importance of

trust, and the positive impact trust has on individuals, relationships and organizations.

However, the literature does not speak directly to the issue of what factors influence and

sustain trust in superintendent/principal relationships. This study will address that gap in

the literature.

Summary

The literature review reflects studies conducted in areas ranging from the history of education, the roles of superintendent and principal, the implications of trust, loss and regaining of trust, and the role trust plays in the relationship between the leader and mid-management along with the positive effect on organizations that a strong trust relationship provides. In order to help better understand and organize the research that has already been conducted, a literature matrix was created (see Appendix A).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter presents the outline for the research and methodology used in this study. The purpose statement discusses and provides the justification for the study along with the research questions essential to the issue that is being researched. The research design, population, sample, data-collection procedures, and data analysis process are presented as well. Finally, the limitations of the study are presented.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological comparative study was to identify and describe the factors that facilitate the building and sustainability of a trusting relationship between experienced superintendents and principals. An additional purpose of the study was to determine what similarities and differences exist between superintendents' and principals' perceptions of the factors that build and sustain a trusting relationship.

RQ

This study was guided by the following RQ: *What factors do experienced current and former superintendents and principals identify as important to developing and maintaining trust?*

RSQs

1. What factors do experienced current and former superintendents identify as important in building and sustaining a trusting relationship between a superintendent and principal?

2. What factors do experienced current and former principals identify as

important in building and sustaining a trusting relationship between a

superintendent and principal?

3. What similarities and differences exist between superintendents' and

principals' perceptions in regards to factors that build and sustain a trusting

relationship.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative phenomenological comparative design to first

determine the lived experience of superintendents and principals with respect to the

development and maintenance of trust and then to compare the responses of both groups

to determine similarities and differences.

Qualitative phenomenological research describes the meaning of a lived

experience (MacMillian & Schumacher, 2014). The utilization of a qualitative

phenomenological design allowed for the researcher to utilize the interview process in

order to examine the lived experience of initiating and maintaining a culture of trust and a

trusting relationship between district superintendents and site principals. Qualitative

phenomenological research is appropriate for this study because it utilizes methods of

inquiry such as in-depth interviews to explore and understand the lived experience of the

participants. The interview technique allows for the researcher to investigate the

"human" side of an issue.

Qualitative comparative studies investigate the relationship of a dependent

variable, in this case trust, to determine if the variable differs between groups

(superintendents and principals) (MacMillian & Schumacher, 2011). The comparative

approach allowed the researcher to explore the similarities and differences between the

responses of superintendents and principals regarding trust. The qualitative comparative

approach is appropriate as it takes the phenomenological information gained to a higher

level of analysis.

Qualitative research concerns itself with, "The importance of looking at the

variables in the natural setting in which they are found. Detailed data is gathered through

open ended questions" (Black, Bryman & Futing, 2004, p. 607). Qualitative inquiry (QI)

allows for the research to take place in a real-world environment, where "a commendable

characteristic of QI is its preservation of the natural setting" (Correo, 2015, p. 2).

Qualitative research is appropriate for this study because it takes into consideration

people and their experience. "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the

meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the

experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 2009, p. 13).

Qualitative research also contributes to this study by providing the ability to

observe and query situations that are relative to the topic in a day to day situation. "The

product of a qualitative inquiry is richly descriptive. Words and pictures rather than

numbers are used to convey what the researcher has learned" (Merriam, 2009, p. 16).

The primary source of inquiry in this qualitative research is that of the interview.

The researcher will provide interview questions to selected current and former San

Bernardino/Riverside County, California district superintendents and site principals. The

interview process allows for the researcher to interact in a realistic, meaningful manner.

"Interviewing is often the primary data collection strategy in qualitative studies. Getting

good data in an interview is dependent on asking well-chosen, open-ended questions that

can be followed up with probes and requests for details" (Merriam, 2009, p. 17).

Population

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a population is defined as a "group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn into which results can be generalized" (p. 129) for a larger demographic portion of society.

The population for this study is all current and former district superintendents and site principals in the state of California (see Tables 1 & 2). Both superintendents and principals are required to adhere to all the new regulations that the state and federal governments have adopted.

Table 1

California Superintendents Current/Former

Superintendents	Current	Former
California	1046 (ED Data)	748 (ACSA)
Total	1046	748

Note. ACSA = Association of California School Administrators.

Table 2

 California Principals Current/Former

Principals	Current	Former
California	11,709 (CDE)	5,311 (ACSA)
Total	11,709	5,311

Note. ACSA = Association of California School Administrators.

Target Population

A target population for a study is the entire set of individuals chosen from the overall population for which the study data are to be used to make inferences. The target population defines the population to which the findings of a survey are meant to be generalized, and it is important that target populations are clearly identified for the purposes of research study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

The target population for this study is all current and former district superintendents and site principals within the Riverside and San Bernardino Counties of California who have at least five years of experience in their position and who have been recognized as local, regional, or state superintendent or principals of the year (see Tables 3 & 4).

Table 3

Riverside/San Bernardino County Superintendents Current/Former

Superintendents	Current	Former
Riverside	23	15
San Bernardino	33	19
Total	56	34

Table 4

Riverside/San Bernardino County Principals Current/Former

Principals	Current	Former
Riverside	308	98
San Bernardino	378	102
Total	686	200

There are 56 district superintendents, 34 former superintendents, 686 site principals and 200 former principals in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties at present.

Sample

A sample is a small subset of the population used to infer things about the population as a whole (Field, 2013). To select the sample for this study a combination of purposeful and convenience sampling was used.

Patton (2015) described purposeful sampling as a strategic selection of

"information-rich cases to study, cases that by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated" (p. 215). Purposeful sampling is used when the researcher chooses participants who are representative of the broad topic and who have relevant information regarding the topic of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The purposeful sampling approach made it possible for the researcher to gain insight on a topic that is relevant to all participants. The purposive criteria used to select potential participants for this study were:

- Must be a current or former district superintendent or site principal within Riverside or San Bernardino Counties of California.

- Must have had at least five years of experience in their position.

- Must have been recognized as local, regional, or state superintendent or principal of the year.

- Is willing to participate in the study.

Convenience Sampling selects participants based upon "the basis of being available or expedient" (MacMillian & Schumacher, 2011, p. 137). The researcher used convenience sampling to select eight superintendents and eight principals after the purposeful sampling process had identified those participants that met the selection criteria.

McMillan and Schumaker (2010) describe sample size as follows:

Although there are statistical rules for probability sample size, there are only guidelines for qualitative sample size. Thus, qualitative samples can range from 1 to 40 or more. Typically, a qualitative sample seems small compared with the sample needed to generalize to a larger population. (p. 328)

After approval by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) (see Appendix B) the researcher selected a sample group of eight district superintendents and eight site principals from San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, California. The superintendents and principals serving as the participants for this study were selected from the target population if they met the selection criteria.

Sample Selection Process

Utilizing the San Bernardino and Riverside County school district directories and the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) retired administrators' lists, the researcher was able to utilize the information to select participants from both counties. San Bernardino and Riverside have a combined 56 districts located within their boundaries which consist of elementary, K-12 and high school districts.

The researcher chose to select 16 participants, four principals and four superintendents from each county, to allow for the opportunity to conduct in-depth interviews with all participants. Eight superintendents and eight principals meeting the criteria were chosen for a total of 16 participants. The selection process was conducted as follows:

- All current and former superintendents and principals in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties with five or more years of experience were identified and placed on a list by county.

- From the overall list, all current and former superintendents and principals who had been named local, regional, or state Administrator of the Year in their position were identified.

- Eight superintendents, four from each county, were selected by convenience from the list of qualified participants.

- Eight principals, four from each county, were selected by convenience from the list of qualified participants.

- The selected superintendents and principals were contacted to secure their participation.

- Once a participant agreed to participate they were provided with Participants' Bill of Rights, Participation Letter, and Informed Consent Documents (see Appendix C).

- If a superintendent or principal declined participation a replacement was selected using the same process.

The researcher contacted each participant at their place of work before conducting the interviews to explain the purpose of the study, present the interview questions beforehand to each participant, and secure informed consent from each individual.

The preference for participants are those that are the most highly qualified regardless of retired or still working.

Instrumentation

The researcher was the primary instrument for data collection for this study. As such, the researcher had to prepare to be objective, unbiased, and consistent in the delivery and execution of the interviews. Since the researcher controlled the development of the interview instrument, scheduling and delivery of the interviews, and implementation of the interview data gathering process, care was taken to assure personal bias did not affect the administration of the interviews. Colleagues familiar with but not

a part of the study observed the researcher's behavior, reviewed the interview instrument, and gave guiding feedback to eliminate and manage any biased behavior on the researcher's part (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2014).

Interview Instruments

The interview protocol used was a list of interview questions developed from the literature review by the researcher. A similar but separate instrument was developed for each group, superintendents and principals (Appendices D & E). The theoretical basis for the questions was the elements of trust from White et al. (2007) advising that managing trust includes the following:

- Exhibit interdependence.

- Continue to speak and act in a consistent manner.

- Honesty in all actions.

- Connections with all involved.

- Extended trust to others (p. 32).

The list of questions was designed to elicit responses that could then be used to analyze and determine any themes and similarities between superintendents and principals that would further enhance the study of the issue of trust between district superintendents and site principals.

As previously noted, the researcher personally contacted and met with district superintendents and site principals to allow for the researcher to discuss the goals and intent of the study as well as present participants with a copy of the questions that would be discussed during the subsequent interview.

Prior to each interview the researcher presented each participant with the BUIRB Research Participant's Bill of Rights. Each participant was asked to sign the Informed Consent form. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that, "Informed consent is achieved by providing subjects with an explanation of research, an opportunity to terminate their participation at any time with no penalty, and full disclosure of any risks associated with the study" (p. 118). Each participant received a packet from the researcher that included the Bill of Rights, Informed Consent form, description of study process, and confidentiality as well as an Audio Release form, agreeing to be recorded during the interview (see Appendix F).

Reliability

A researcher can make assurances about the reliability of their instruments by focusing on consistency. Roberts (2010) explains that, "Reliability is the degree to which your instrument consistently measures something from one time to another" (p. 151).

Since the researcher is essentially the instrument for data collection in the interview process, the essential component to ensure reliability in qualitative research is for the researcher to maintain neutrality and consistency throughout the research process. Patton (2002) reports that, "Any credible research strategy requires the investigator adopt a stance of neutrality with regard to the phenomenon under study" (p. 51). It is imperative for the researcher to not compromise the study with personal values or beliefs. Patton (2002) further states, "The neutral investigator enters the research arena with no ax to grind, no theory to prove (to test but not to prove) and no predetermined results to support" (p. 51). The researcher took every possible measure to uphold the highest degree of neutrality in this research study.

Pilot Test

In order to secure the reliability of the research questions and interview process, the researcher conducted a pilot-test of the Superintendent/Principal Trust Interview questions. Roberts (2010) states that a pilot test is used to "determine reliability and validity" (p. 28) in preparation for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting your data. The pilot-test was conducted during the course of two separate interviews. One with a district superintendent and the other with a site principal who were not participants in the study. During each of these interviews a third party was present to observe the process and to give feedback to the researcher on the interview process.

The researcher began each pilot interview with an overview of the study and its purpose. Utilizing the set of interview questions developed by the researcher which the researcher had provided to each participant ahead of time, the researcher read each question to the participants and allowed adequate time for thoughtful responses. Afterwards the researcher met with the third party observer in order to obtain feedback in regards to the interview process and with the participants to determine clarity of the questions, directions, and process. Based upon the results of the pilot test and the participants' and observer's feedback modifications to the questions and process were made as appropriate.

After the pilot-test was completed the researcher discussed the results with the committee chair. The researcher then took into account the suggestions made by the chair and applied the proposed changes before moving forward with the actual changes.

Validity

Roberts (2010) states that "validity is the degree to which your instrument truly measures what it purports to measure. In other words, can you trust that findings from your instrument are true?" (p. 151). The content validity for the research questions was developed through the literature review for this study. The variables related to trust that were used as a basis for the research questions were identified and explained as a part of the literature review. Those variables are from White et al. (2007) advising that managing trust includes the following:

- Exhibit interdependence.

- Continue to speak and act in a consistent manner.

- Honesty in all actions.

- Connections with all involved.

- Extended trust to others (p. 32).

During the collection and analysis of data, the researcher took additional steps in order to enhance the validity of the study.

Data Collection

Prior to any data collection the researcher obtained the necessary permission from BUIRB to conduct the study.

All data collection by the researcher was completed through the one to one interview process. Patton (2012) reflects upon interviews as "open ended questions and probes yield in-depth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge. Data consist of verbatim quotations with sufficient content to be interpretable" (p. 4).

All interviews remained confidential. These interviews were given approximately 60 minutes to complete. The respondents were interviewed in person by the researcher. The researcher acquired an Audio Release form from each respondent to allow for the audio-recorded version of each interview to be utilized by the researcher for follow-up data collection. The researcher acquired a minimum of 16 respondents for this study, eight district superintendents and eight school site principals. Each participant received a copy of the interview questions prior to their scheduled interview with the researcher. Both participant groups received questions based upon the positions they currently maintain. The researcher developed two sets of interview questions for this study, one for the district superintendent and one for the site principals. However, both sets of questions focused on the perceptions of the participants concerning the implementation and sustainment of trust between the superintendent and principal. These interviews took place in each individual's office or a place of their choice. For the maintenance of validity and reliability each interview was audio-recorded so that the researcher could obtain verbatim transcripts.

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data following the constructs of Bamberger, Rugh and Mabry (2012) in which "data analysis involves identification of patterns in the data from which understandings must be developed and interpretations constructed" (p. 356).

Coding is the key activity to analyzing qualitative data. The process of coding involves the organization of data through bracketing text segments and word representatives. Then taking the data that has been collected and processing it into

categories that are labeled (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell (2014), codes should be viewed in three different categories.

1. Codes that a reader may expect based upon common sense and past literature on the topic.

2. Codes that were not anticipated and come across as a surprise.

3. Codes that are unusual and may be of interest to the reader.

Creswell goes on to note that that the coding system allows for data to be presented in a concise manner.

RQ 1 – Superintendents

      Individual analysis. The transcripts of data for each interview question were carefully reviewed, coded, and placed into matrices by interview question to identify major themes and specifics. The major themes for each respondent were identified and displayed in a data frequency table to assist in the final step of analysis.

      Group analysis. A comprehensive matrix of all superintendent data was created so that the themes and patterns from the entire group of superintendents could be displayed and analyzed.

RQ 2 - Principals

      Individual analysis. The transcripts of data for each interview question were carefully reviewed, coded, and placed into matrices by interview question to identify major themes and specifics. The major themes for each respondent were identified and displayed in a data frequency table to assist in the final step of analysis.

Group analysis. A comprehensive matrix of all principal data was created so that the themes and patterns from the entire group of superintendents could be displayed and analyzed.

RQ 3 – Similarities and Differences

The data from the analysis of RQs 1 and 2 was placed into overall comparative matrices by research and interview questions. Similarities and differences in the comparison were identified, recorded and placed in a table to show the comparisons.

Inter-Rater Reliability

In order to guard against researcher bias, two colleagues who were familiar with the study also reviewed, coded, and placed the data into matrices. The results of the inter-rater coding were compared to the researcher's coding and then results were discussed and modified to reflect a consensus for the final coding.

Limitations

The biggest area of concern with this study is the size of the sample and rate of response. The validity and reliability of a study relies on a population that is large enough and has an adequate response rate. The small sample size, which was limited to eight superintendents and eight principals within the San Bernardino/Riverside Counties could present difficulties in the ability to generalize to a larger population.

The researcher had no control over the honesty and openness of responses by the participants. Therefore, the accuracy of results was dependent upon the researcher's assumption that all participants were accurately depicting their perceptions. Although the researcher could not determine the candidness of the participants, when necessary, follow-up and clarification techniques were utilized with each participant during the

interview process to ensure the collection of the most accurate data. Additionally, the

nature of the subjects studied could have had an impact on the findings that were not

consistent with the literature.

Finally, the researcher herself, having served positions, had to take steps to

remain neutral and not reveal any preconceived biased regarding the topic.

Summary

This chapter reflected the methodology of this study, including the purpose and

research questions. This chapter also presented the research design, population and

sample, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis procedures. Limitations were

also presented. Chapter IV presents data and findings from the study and Chapter V

identifies and discusses major findings, conclusions, course of recommended action, and

future research recommendations.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The purpose of this phenomenological comparative study was to examine the factors that facilitate and sustain trusting relationships between principals and superintendents and how those factors support sustainability of trusting relationships between superintendents and principals within the San Bernardino and Riverside Counties in California. Chapter IV of this study reviews the purpose and research questions, methodology, and population/sample and concludes with a presentation of the data.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological comparative study was to identify and describe the factors that facilitate the building and sustainability of a trusting relationship between experienced superintendents and principals. An additional purpose of the study was to determine what similarities and differences exist between superintendents' and principals' perceptions of the factors that build and sustain a trusting relationship.

RQ

This study was guided by the following RQ: *What factors do experienced current and former superintendents and principals identify as important to developing and maintaining trust?*

RSQs

1. What factors do experienced current and former superintendents identify as important in building and sustaining a trusting relationship between a superintendent and principal?

2. What factors do experienced current and former principals identify as
    important in building and sustaining a trusting relationship between a
    superintendent and principal?

3. What similarities and differences exist between superintendents' and
    principals' perceptions in regards to factors that build and sustain a trusting
    relationship.

Methodology

The qualitative methodology chosen for this study was a phenomenological study
exploring the lived experiences between superintendents and principals. This
methodology was appropriate for the purpose of this study as it sought to describe the
trust building relationships between superintendents and principals.

For the purpose of this study the researcher met with superintendents and
principals located in both San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. These interview
opportunities were recoded and transcribed through Rev Application and transcription
services. Following the interviews the researcher used the NVivo coding software to
identify nodes and respond to themes which resulted in data that addressed each research
question.

Population Sample

Target Population

A target population for a study is the entire set of individuals chosen from the
overall population for which the study data are to be used to make inferences. The target
population defines the population to which the findings of a survey are meant to be

generalized, and it is important that target populations are clearly identified for the purposes of research study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

The target population for this study is all current and former district superintendents and site principals within the Riverside and San Bernardino Counties of California who have at least five years of experience in their position and who have been recognized as local, regional, or state superintendent or principals of the year.

Population

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a population is defined as a "group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn into which results can be generalized" (p. 129) for a larger demographic portion of society.

The population for this study is all current and former district superintendents and site principals in the state of California. Both superintendents and principals are required to adhere to all the new regulations that the state and federal governments have adopted.

There are 56 district superintendents, 34 former superintendents, 686 site principals and 200 former principals in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties at present.

<center>Sample</center>

A sample is a small subset of the population used to infer things about the population as a whole (Field, 2013). To select the sample for this study a combination of purposeful and convenience sampling was used.

Patton (2015) described purposeful sampling as a strategic selection of "information-rich cases to study, cases that by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated" (p. 215). Purposeful sampling is used when the

researcher chooses participants who are representative of the broad topic and who have

relevant information regarding the topic of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The purposeful sampling approach made it possible for the researcher to gain insight on a

topic that is relevant to all participants. The purposive criteria used to select potential

participants for this study were:

- Must be a current or former district superintendent or site principal within
  Riverside or San Bernardino Counties of California.

- Must have had at least five years of experience in their position.

- Must have been recognized as local, regional, or state superintendent or
  principal of the year.

- Is willing to participate in the study.

Convenience Sampling selects participants based upon "the basis of being

available or expedient" (MacMillian and Schumacher, 2011, p. 137). The researcher

used convenience sampling to select eight superintendents and eight principals after the

purposeful sampling process had identified those participants that met the selection

criteria.

McMillan and Schumaker (2010) describe sample size as follows:

Although there are statistical rules for probability sample size, there are only

guidelines for qualitative sample size. Thus, qualitative samples can range from 1

to 40 or more. Typically, a qualitative sample seems small compared with the

sample needed to generalize to a larger population. (p. 328)

After approval by the BUIRB the researcher selected a sample group of eight

district superintendents and eight site principals from San Bernardino and Riverside

Counties, California. The superintendents and principals serving as the participants for this study were selected from the target population if they met the selection criteria.

Sample Selection Process

Utilizing the San Bernardino and Riverside County school district directories and the ACSA retired administrators' lists, the researcher was able to utilize the information to select participants from both counties. San Bernardino and Riverside have a combined 56 districts located within their boundaries which consist of elementary, K-12 and high school districts.

The researcher chose to select 16 participants, four principals and four superintendents from each county, to allow for the opportunity to conduct in-depth interviews with all participants. Eight superintendents and eight principals meeting the criteria were chosen for a total of 16 participants. The selection process was conducted as follows:

- All current and former superintendents and principals in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties with five or more years of experience were identified and placed on a list by county.

- From the overall list, all current and former superintendents and principals who had been named local, regional, or state Administrator of the Year in their position were identified.

- Eight superintendents, four from each county, were selected by convenience from the list of qualified participants.

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- The selected superintendents and principals were contacted to secure their participation.

- Once a participant agreed to participate they were provided with Participants' Bill of Rights, Participation Letter, and Informed Consent Documents.

- If a superintendent or principal declined participation a replacement was selected using the same process.

The researcher contacted each participant at their place of work before conducting the interviews to explain the purpose of the study, present the interview questions beforehand to each participant, and secure informed consent from each individual.

The preference for participants are those that are the most highly qualified. Regardless of retired or still working.

<h1 style="text-align:center">Instrumentation</h1>

The researcher was the primary instrument for data collection for this study. As such, the researcher had to prepare to be objective, unbiased, and consistent in the delivery and execution of the interviews. Since the researcher controlled the development of the interview instrument, scheduling and delivery of the interviews, and implementation of the interview data gathering process, care was taken to assure personal bias did not affect the administration of the interviews. Colleagues familiar with but not a part of the study observed the researcher's behavior, reviewed the interview instrument, and gave guiding feedback to eliminate and manage any biased behavior on the researcher's part (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2014).

Interview Instruments

The interview protocol used was a list of interview questions developed from the literature review by the researcher. A similar but separate instrument was developed for each group, superintendents and principals. The theoretical basis for the questions was the elements of trust from White et al. (2007) advising that managing trust includes the following:

- Exhibit interdependence.

- Continue to speak and act in a consistent manner.

- Honesty in all actions.

- Connections with all involved.

- Extended trust to others (p. 32).

The list of questions was designed to elicit responses that could then be used to analyze and determine any themes and similarities between superintendents and principals that would further enhance the study of the issue of trust between district superintendents and site principals.

As previously noted, the researcher personally contacted and met with district superintendents and site principals to allow for the researcher to discuss the goals and intent of the study as well as present participants with a copy of the questions that would be discussed during the subsequent interview.

Prior to each interview the researcher presented each participant with the BUIRB Research Participant's Bill of Rights. Each participant was asked to sign the Informed Consent Form. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that, "Informed consent is achieved by providing subjects with an explanation of research, an opportunity to

terminate their participation at any time with no penalty, and full disclosure of any risks associated with the study" (p. 118). Each participant received a packet from the researcher that included the Bill of Rights, Informed Consent form, description of study process, and confidentiality as well as an Audio Release form, agreeing to be recorded during the interview.

Presentation of Data

The research questions focused on specific factors and various ways that superintendents in San Bernardino and Riverside counties build and sustain relationships of trust between themselves and site principals. The data were organized to reflect codes that emerged in response to the five RSQs.   RSQ5 included five additional factors that identified specific actions that exhibited the presence of trust in the organization. Each figure illustrates the factors and various ways in which superintendents build and sustain trust between themselves and principals.

The first set of data represents the response to the RSQs from principals in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. The second set of data represents the response to the RQs from superintendents in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. The third set of data represents a comparison of the two study groups and their responses.

Tables 5 through 13 and Figures 1 through 9 reference responses from principals to the individual interview questions concerning the building and maintaining of trust relationships between principals and superintendents. Tables 14 through 22 and Figures 10 through 18 reference responses from superintendents to the individual interview questions concerning the building and maintaining of trust relationships between superintendents and principals.

Principal Survey-Data Results

The study was guided by the following RQ: *What specific actions does a superintendent take to build and sustain a trusting relationship between principals and superintendent?*

Interview Question 1

Interview Question 1 asked: *What specific actions does a superintendent take to build and sustain a trusting relationship between principals and superintendents?*

Question 1 asked principals to reflect upon actions taken by the superintendent to build and sustain trusting relationships. Site visits, safe environment, open communication, face-to-face communication and relationship building were the highest coded factors. With communication and relationship building the most frequently coded factors (see Table 5 and Figure 1).

Site visits. An opportunity for superintendents to visit school sites, do classroom walk-throughs, and visit with all staff, certificated and classified. Principals 1 and 4 specified that this was important to them. Principal 4 stated, "*He [the superintendent] gets by the schools, you sit down, you talk, and very often together when nothing's really needed, just to build things*." Principals viewed these site visits as a way to build relationships.

Safe environment. For principals a safe environment meant that the principals felt free to share ideas and think outside the box. As Principal 3 said, *"Without fear or retribution."* Principal 5 indicated that what was important to her is that the superintendent would always, *"Have her back."* Principal 4 expressed an appreciation for her first meeting with the superintendent in which he expressed many words of

encouragement as she started her new job as principal. She felt that the superintendent trusted her from the beginning. He expressed to her that if she "*screwed up"* it was ok because, as he stated, *"We all screw up and it's ok."* Principal 4 indicated that she felt her superintendent had a realistic view of humanity.

Open communication. This was the highest identified action that principals indicated superintendents did to build and sustain a trusting relationship. Principals perceived open communication to mean, *"getting input and feedback from the principals and listening"* (Principal 2). *"Open, honest communication"* (Principal 3). As Principal 5 indicated that, *"You always knew where you stood. There was no hidden agenda. You knew what was expected of you and you knew were you stood."* Principal 6 indicated that she felt like she could contact the superintendent at any time and that the superintendent made every effort to try and understand her and her situation. All participants, 1-8, expressed an appreciation for superintendents communicating updated district information.

Face-to-face communication. This is an opportunity for superintendents and principals to meet one on one together. Half of the principals indicated that this was an important part of trust establishment between themselves and the superintendent. Principals 1, 2, 4, and 8 all said that they appreciated one on one time with the superintendent. *"I think it's about getting input and feedback from the principals and listening. I also think it's that one on one time"* (Principal 2). Principal 8 commented that, *"I appreciated personal conversations in which they [the superintendent] communicated their vision."*

Relationship building. From the perspective of the principals this was seen as the superintendent creating opportunities to build relationships between themselves and the principals. As principal 3 indicated, *"The first thing is building a relationship with somebody where you get to know them on a personal level so that you find out where their strengths and needs are."* Principal 8 indicated that it was important to them for the superintendent to communicate their belief that he was doing a good job. Principal 6 expressed that her superintendent made her feel very welcomed. As well as trying to understand where she was coming from as a principal as a way to build trust.

Table 5

Codes for Specific Actions Superintendents Take to Build and Sustain a Trusting Relationship

PRINCIPALS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Site Visits	4
Safe Environment	9
Open Communication	24
Face-to-Face Communication	8
Relationship Building	18
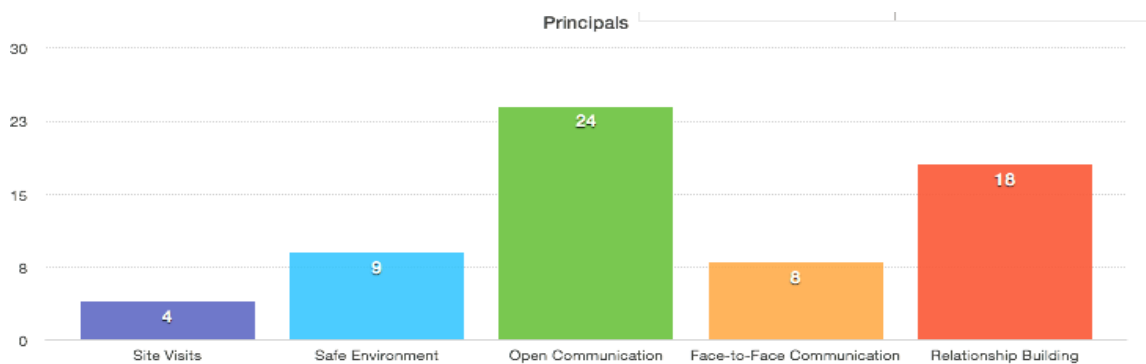
Figure 1. A visual representation of identified actions that superintendents take to build and sustain a trusting relationship between themselves and principals.

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RSQs

The Interview Questions 2 through 5 sought to answer the RSQs which were:

1. What factors do experienced current and former superintendents identify as important in building and sustaining a trusting relationship between a superintendent and principal?

2. What factors do experienced current and former principals identify as important in building and sustaining a trusting relationship between a superintendent and principal?

3. What similarities and differences exist between superintendents' and principals' perceptions in regards to factors that build and sustain a trusting relationship.

Interview Question 2

Interview Question 2 asked: *What factors do you consider to determine the level of trust between yourself and the superintendent?*

Question 2 examined what factors principals considered to determine the level of trust between principals and superintendents. Factors that principals stated were open communication, establishing and maintaining relationships and authenticity. Establishing/Maintaining of trust and open communication were the two most frequently coded factors (see Table 6 and Figure 2).

Open communication. For the purpose of this question the principal's perceptions were that the superintendent was open and honest with them when it came to communication. As principal 7 expressed, "*She makes sure that we [the principals] are made aware of issues happening in the district and with the board.*" The principals also

indicated that open communication included accessibility. Principal 5 noted that, "*I can pick up the phone right now and call the superintendent. If she's not available, I know by the end of the day that I'll have a call back from her, and that even if she doesn't give me the answer that I want, I know that I'll have an answer.*"

Establishing/maintaining relationships. The principals very much valued the superintendent establishing and maintaining a relationship with them. This meant finding out about them personally and their life away from the school site. Principal 4 noted, "*He's very personable and he'll talk to you about anything. Walk along the sidewalk, walking to a meeting, he'll chat with you as you go about anything.*" Principal 2 expressed that, "*It's just that connection, that really knowing me and supporting me, both inside of work and out.*" Principal 5 expressed that, "*She came in right away and made me feel valued. I think that's the biggest piece. I actually felt valued as an administrator. I feel that my voice matters.….Just having the casual relationship of how's your family doing? How are your kids?*" (Principal 6).

The extension of trust also came into the relationship building/maintenance phase of this relationship. To the principals this meant that the superintendent gave trust without judgement and that it was a prolonged relationship. As principal 4 indicated, "*He says he trusts you, and you see that he trusts all the people around you too.*"

Authenticity. To principals this meant superintendents being their true selves and keeping their word. As noted by Principal 6, "*I think follow through. Do they do what they say they are going to do?*" Principal 3 stated, "*There is a caring spirit, putting that into practice themselves. They're not just telling what you should be doing. They're actually doing it alongside you.*" Principal 4 observed, "*He walks the talk.*"

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Table 6

Codes for Factors Associated with Superintendent's actions determining the level of trust between superintendents and principals

PRINCIPALS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Open Communication	12
Establishing/Maintaining Relationships	14
Authenticity	3
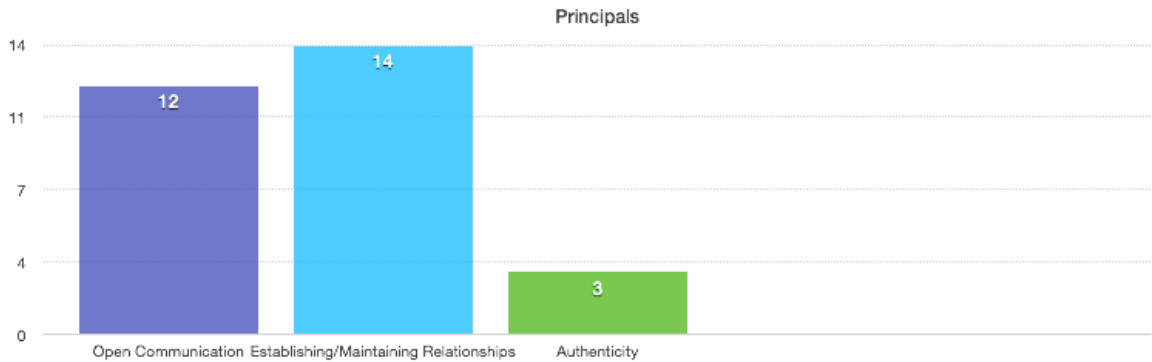
Figure 2. A visual representation of identified factors that contribute to the success of superintendent actions determining the level of trust between superintendents and principals.

Interview Question 3

Interview Question 3 asked: *What factors would you associate with the superintendent's success in establishing and maintaining trusting relationships between the superintendent and the principals?*

Question 3 asked principals what factors they associated with a superintendent exhibiting success in establishing and maintaining trust relationships. Factors included open communication, establishing and maintaining relationships and authenticity. Open

communication and establishing and maintaining relationships were the highest coded factors (see Table 7 and Figure 3).

Relationship building. The principals spoke about relationship building as coming from the superintendents in terms of connections, a caring spirit and feeling valued, "*It's just that connection, that really knowing me and supporting me, both inside of work and out*" (Principal 2). "*A caring spirit and somebody who has remembered what it's like to be there themselves*" (Principal 3). "*I actually feel valued as an administrator. I feel like my voice matters*" (Principal 5). Principal 6 expressed the importance of the superintendent making a point to establish a causal relationship, just a "*How's your family doing? How are the kids? What are you working on? Just having conversations that are not work related and building on demonstrating that you care about people and that those relationships are important to you.*"

Integrity. Principals 4, 5 and 6 all indicated that they thought integrity and authenticity was important in establishing and maintaining trust relationships with their superintendents. From authenticity of speeches to modeling integrity and doing what they say they are going to do, leading through their actions.

Communication. Principals 1, 3, 5 and 7 all agreed that communication was important to their establishing and maintaining trusting relationships, "*I guess it goes right back to open communication to all stakeholders. I just think it's open, honest, communication. It's all about visibility and accessibility. My superintendent is very direct, she is a straight shooter when it comes to communication*" (Principal 5).

Table 7

Codes for Factors Associated with Superintendents Successfully Establishing and Maintain Trusting Relationships between Superintendents and Principals

| PRINCIPALS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Relationship Building	8
Integrity	6
Communication	8
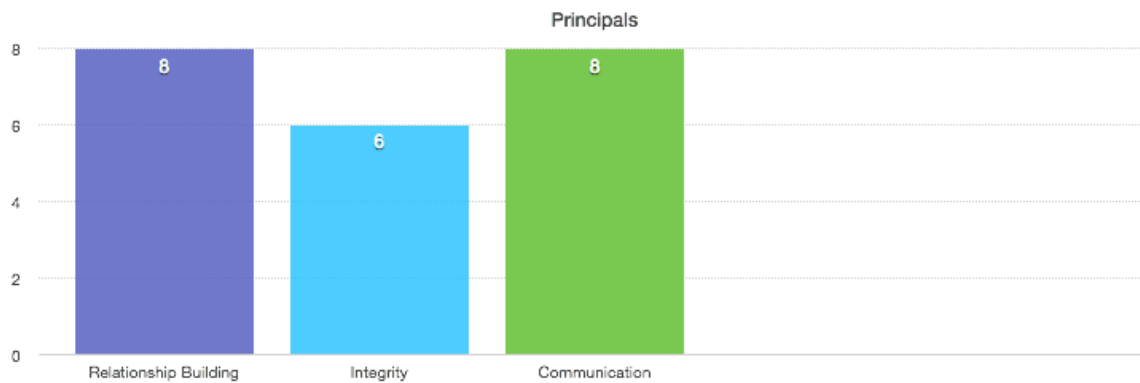
Figure 3. A visual representation of identified factors that superintendents take to establish and maintain trusting relationships between superintendents and principals.

Interview Question 4

Interview Question 4 asked: *What types of communication does the superintendent successfully utilize to help build and sustain a high level of trust between yourself and the superintendent?*

Question 4 addressed the principals on the types of communication that superintendents utilized. The principals noted communication in general, site visits, support and the highest coded factor amongst principals was diversified styles of communication (see Table 8 and Figure 4).

Communication. The respondents to this question voiced an overall sense of the technicality of communication. Principal 4 indicated that they appreciated a consistency in communication. An appreciation that the district, "*Is starting to send out one consistent weekly memo*" (Principal 4). Also, the consistency of calendared meetings. As Principal 7 stated, "*This is our year, this is when we are getting together...she really sticks to it, there are not a whole lot of changes.*" Principal 7 also voiced that their superintendent keeps them apprised in serious situations as to what is happening, providing talking points, and what the superintendent needs in terms of the principals help with communication.

Support. Support from the superintendent in terms of communication according to the principals meant giving "a head's up" or "watching their backs." Principals 1 and 4 expressed their ideas of support from the superintendent as, "*As long as it was not illegal or unethical, the superintendent would back you publically and then call you in later to say, "What were you thinking? Don't do that again."* They, [the superintendent], "*Kept your back so that you didn't lose the trust of your own people. There's never any judgement, even with clerical staff. It's just, hey we've got a parent. We told them to come to you. Just so you know.*" Principal 8 communicated that they felt support came in the manner of, *"The superintendent has to communicate that me is good enough."*

Site visits. As in past code references, site visits encompass an opportunity for superintendents to visit school sites, participate in classroom walk-throughs, and visit with all staff, certificated and classified. Principals 1 and 2 expressed what the importance was of the superintendent visiting school sites. "*When the superintendent visits it is the opportunity for them to show that they haven't forgotten what it's like to run*

a site, and that a principal knows you haven't forgotten that. As a superintendent you're there a lot, you're coming by a lot. He goes out of his way to shake your hand, to say "hello" and it's not just me. I see him consistently doing that throughout the organization. Coming into a classroom and meeting teachers for the first time. He takes the time to talk to people. He remembers things. Really his one on one presence is amazing" (Principal 2).

        Communication: Diversified styles. Within this category the principals indicated four different means of communication with the superintendent. Texting, emails, phone calls, and face-to-face communication. Texting was the lowest reported form of communication with two references out of eight amongst the principals but was still seen as a key form of communication. Emails were referenced by half the principals as a quick way to send out a communication from the superintendent's office to them as principals. Principal 3 noted that it depended on the content of what was being delivered and if that was an appropriate way of delivering the message. Half of the principals indicated that they were fine with a phone call from the superintendent. Half again of the principals (2, 3, 4, and 5) noted that the description of face-to-face communication needed to be discussed and described. As some principal's comments have been described as, *"I think there needs to be face-to-face communication. I think that face-to-face dialogue is important. Sometimes I need to sit across the table from you and hash things out. Communication wise I think face-to-face is the most common"* (Principal 9).

Table 8

Codes for Types of Communication that are Successful for Superintendents to Help Build and Sustain High Level Trust between Principals and Superintendents

PRINCIPALS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Communication	8
Support	8
Site Visits	8
Meetings	15
Text, email, phone calls, face-to-face	30
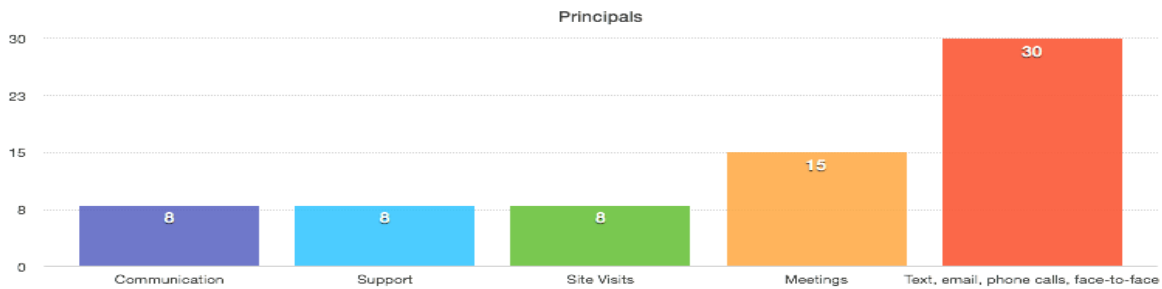
Figure 4. A visual representation of identified types of communication that the superintendent successfully utilizes to build and sustain a high level of trust between superintendent and principal.

Interview Question 5

Interview Question 5 asked: *How does the following factor exhibit the presence of trust in your organization?*

Interview Question 5 was broken down into five categories: (a) Exhibiting interdependence, (b) Speaking and acting in a consistent manner, (c) Displaying honesty in all actions, (d) Maintaining connections with all involved, and (e) Extending trust to others. Data on each of the five categories will be presented independently

Interview question 5a. This question inquired of principals how interdependence is exhibited as the presence of trust. Support, team work, accessibility and exhibiting

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trust are all factors identified by principals with support reported as the highest coded

factor (see Table 9 and Figure 5).

       Teamwork. For principals in this instance teamwork for them meant working

together with the superintendent to solve problems and achieve goals. Principal 7

referred to a time when the superintendent, "*Really worked with me when I had to get rid*

of a classified employee over time and it took five years." Principal 6 voiced that, "*She*

[the superintendent] does take into consideration the input of the principals when making

decisions and making sure we work together to accomplish certain things in the district."

       Support/accessibility. Listening was also seen as an important component in

working together. Principal 6 communicated that, "*The superintendent really tries to*

listen and see what our perspectives are, and we work together as a team to solve certain

issues or things we are dealing with. I think that's where the interdependence is." For

principal 6 the superintendent has begun to support her through the mentoring process,

"*We have one-on-one meetings. When they are mentoring meetings, they're in a neutral*

place, for example at a coffee shop or some other place. We do face-to-face meetings,

phone call meetings or phone calls, text messages and then email."

       Exhibiting trust. Principal 6 noted that her superintendent did exhibit trust by

way of, "*I do think she does extend trust to others because she does trust us to do our*

jobs. She's not micromanaging us. She knows that each of the principals in our district

have our own personalities and our own leadership styles, and she allows us to lead in a

way that is comfortable for us. I think that's where the trust comes in."

Table 9

Codes for Factors Associated with Interdependence Exhibiting the Presence of Trust in the Organization

PRINCIPALS	SOURCES/REFRENCED
Teamwork	8
Suppport	16
Exhibiting Trust	7
Accesibility	2
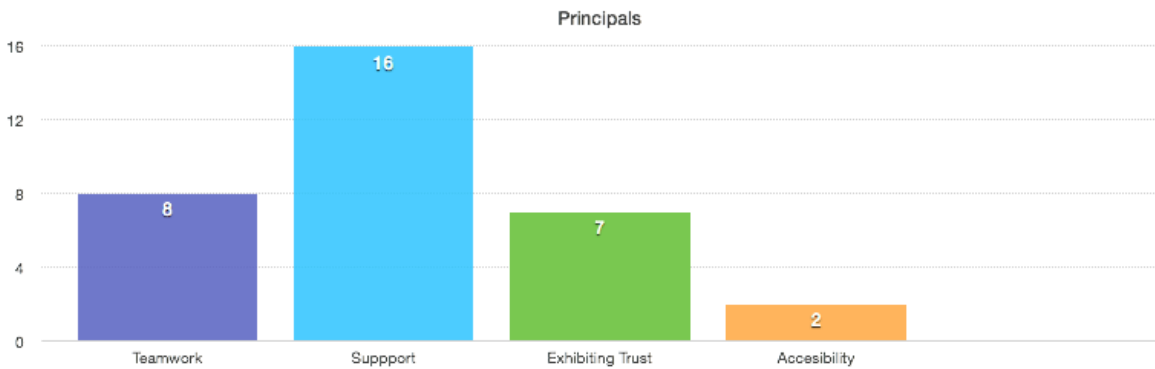
Figure 5. A visual representation of identified factors that contribute to interdependence exhibiting the presence of trust in the organization.

Interview question 5b: Question 5b addressed principals in how they perceived the superintendents speaking and acting in a consistent manner. Principals indicated that both follow through and consistency as well as exhibiting trust as factors, with follow through and consistency being the most frequently coded factors (see Table 10 and Figure 6).

Follow through/consistency. The concept of follow through and consistency for principals also included superintendents being a person of their word. Principals 2 and 5 expressed that they, "*Yes, absolutely saw consistency and follow through with the*

superintendent." Principal 5 commented that her superintendent, *"Is very much walking the talk and she's following through with a lot of things that she's promised that she is going to do. If she says she's going to do it she follows through with it she's very consistent."* Consistency also touched upon the politics of the position of superintendent and how it related to consistency in relationships with principals. Principal 1 noted that, *"There isn't big swings in position by the superintendent. You don't line up to support your superintendent, and then a few weeks later the whole thing has changed. You stay with the mission, you stay with the focus, and that the politics are kept in check, because that tends to be what sends the shift, both in mood and in position, into politics. You want to feel that the superintendent's strong enough to weather the politics and do the right thing."* Principal 8 observed that, *"I've seen some waffle on their [superintendents] previous stands out of political fear or motivation."* Principal 3 summed up this concept by stating, *"You need to be a person of your word. I think you need to say what you mean and mean what you say."*

Exhibiting trust. Two principals stated that speaking and acting in a consistent manner relies on exhibiting trust. Trust lies within the superintendent granting trust to principals. Principal 4 noted that, *"He says he trusts you and boy, does he show it."* Principal 5 communicated that giving control back over to site based leadership was a significant trust motion by the superintendent.

Table 10

Codes for Factors Associated with Speaking and Acting in a Consistent Manner Exhibiting the Presence of Trust in the Organization

PRINCIPAL	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Follow Through/Consistency	22
Exhibiting Trust	4
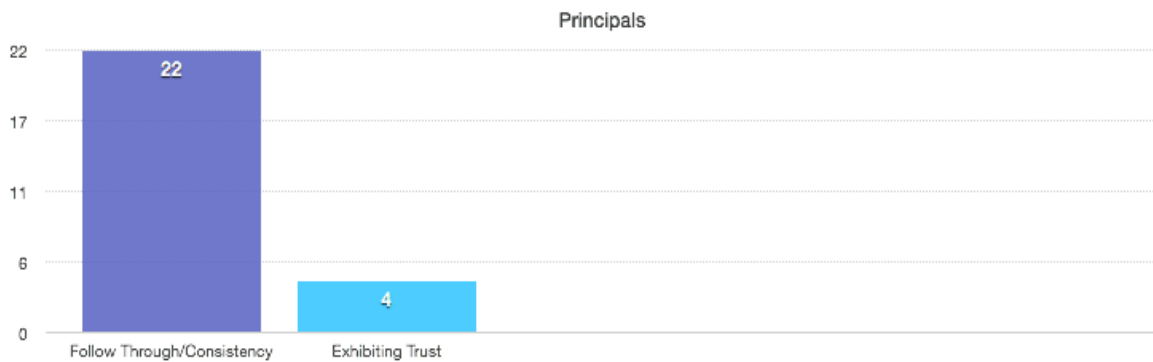
Figure 6. A visual representation of identified factors that contribute to speaking and acting in a consistent manner that exhibits the presence of trust in the organization.

Interview question 5c. Principals communicated their perceptions about superintendents displaying honesty in all actions which exhibit the presence of trust which included honesty about mistakes and the highest frequency factor, communication (see Table 11 and Figure 7).

Honesty about mistakes. The principals that noted this in their answers felt strongly that a superintendent's willingness to admit making a mistake or taking a misstep and then willing to discuss it was important in developing trust. Principal 1 reflected, "*The superintendent that I respected the most would readily admit if she'd made a mistake. She'd say, "I screwed up, but here's what I learned from it." This is what I would do next."* That went a long ways towards people going, "*She's human, so I screw up, she does too."* Principal 3 noted that because her superintendent had modeled this behavior in the past, she in turn found herself exhibiting this same behavior with her teachers, "*Being willing and able to say, you know what, in retrospect I can see where I've said something to a teacher and I've gone back and reflected on it and thought, I don't think that was accurate now that I'm thinking about it. So going to them (the teachers) and saying, you know what, I've given some thought to that last conversation*

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we had and I'm not feeling settled about my answer. I've done a little more research and this is what I should have said."

    Communication. According to principals, communication affects the superintendent's ability to entrust principals. Principal 3 voiced that, "*Having that balance about being truthful and honest, but also not elaborating beyond what is necessary."* Principal 4 and 6 noted that the feeling of confidentiality enhances the feeling of trust with the superintendent. "*That's where I found that trust comes into play. If it's a personnel issue then you can't say anything about it. He's built that trust with most everybody it sounds like that you are trusting that whatever is happening, it's the right thing to do. I also feel comfortable enough that I can share things with her without feeling like she is going to share them with someone else. That's confidence."* Principal 7 mentioned that, "*I don't really see dishonesty. I think they will say something I'm not able to talk about. Then there is the unspoken confidence that we will keep it confidential."*

Table 11

Codes for Factors Associated with Displaying Honesty in All Actions Exhibiting the Presence of Trust in the Organization

PRINCIPALS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Honesty About Mistakes	5
Communication	12
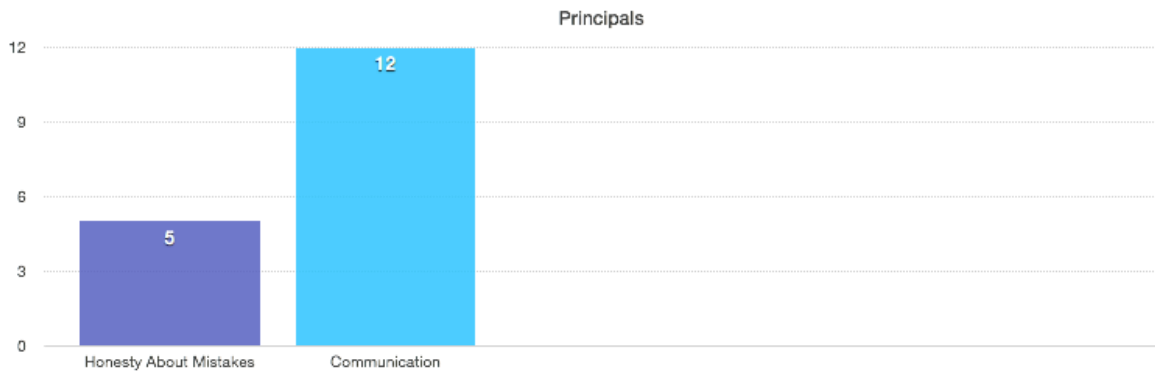
Figure 7. A visual representation of identified factors that contribute to the display of trust in all actions exhibiting the presence of trust in the organization.

Interview question 5d. Question 5d addressed maintaining connections with all involved. The factors cited by principals included site visits, face-to-face communication and building relationships which contracted the highest number of frequency codes (see Table 12 and Figure 8).

Site visits. In terms of superintendents maintaining connections, several principals indicated that site visits were important in the building of trust in the organization. Principals 4 and 5 noted that site visits by the superintendent also added to the positive tone of relationships between sites and the superintendent. "*His visits to schools are always good. We always walk around and he sees what's going on. The teachers know he's coming. They're not scared and they're excited that he's coming to see what they're doing. It's really cool*" (Principal 4).

"*As a matter of fact, right now she (the superintendent) is going to every single school site and meeting with every single staff. Her goal since she is new here is to meet every employee within the district within a certain amount of time*" (Principal 5). Principal 8 recounted that his current superintendent, "*Has been on campus more than all of my superintendents over my 20 years as principal. It means a lot to know he cares.*

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Even when I don't get my way (which happens a lot!) I know there must have been a

reason because I trust him."

   Face-to-face communication*.* This is an opportunity for superintendents and

principals to meet one on one together. Three-fourths of the principals identified this

factor when identifying the factors that lead to maintaining connections leading to the

presence of trust in the organization. Principal 1 acknowledged, "*I like face-to-face, it's*

so important. I know that's the hardest, most challenging thing for anyone in our

positions from principal up. We're pulled in so many directions." Principal 4 reported

that just the fact that the superintendent goes out of his way, *"Just making sure he's*

saying hi all the time, asking how things are going." Principal 5 reported that when her

new superintendent arrived to the district she (the superintendent) created an initiative

called "start stops" at every single school and with every department. *"Basically it was a*

way for her to get around to all sites and meet people face-to-face in the least amount of

time" (Principal 5).

   Building relationships*.* From the perspective of the principals this was seen as the

superintendent creating opportunity to build relationships between themselves and the

principals. Principal 2 recounted participating in a three day charitable event in which

she sent her superintendent pictures of her team and, "*He sent words of encouragement. I*

wasn't texting him all day long, but the fact that he was interested, the fact that he

supported, the fact that he cared meant a lot. Then he followed up with me at the last

leadership meeting, "How are you feeling? How did it go? I'm so proud of you." It's

just the connection, that really knowing me and supporting me, both inside of work and

out." Principal 3 observed that building relationships takes time, "*Again, it's time. Time*

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is one of our most precious commodities. To invest in your people, take time to be

intuitive to what may be going on with them." She also acknowledges that she uses the

same relationship building model that her superintendent has demonstrated with her with

her teachers, "*Pulling them aside when necessary for a word of encouragement or being*

open to them, and if you're not accessible at that moment acknowledging that I believe

what you have to say is important. Right now I'm not able to do that, but can we meet? I

try to do that with my teachers, where I say right now I'm not able to give you the

attention that I think your question deserves. Can you hold that thought until tomorrow

like three or two, and then we can chat?" (Principal 3).

Table 12

*Codes for Factors Associated with Maintaining Connections with all Involved Exhibiting
the Presence of Trust in the Organization*

PRINCIPALS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Site Visits	6
Face-to-Face	6
Building Relationships	13
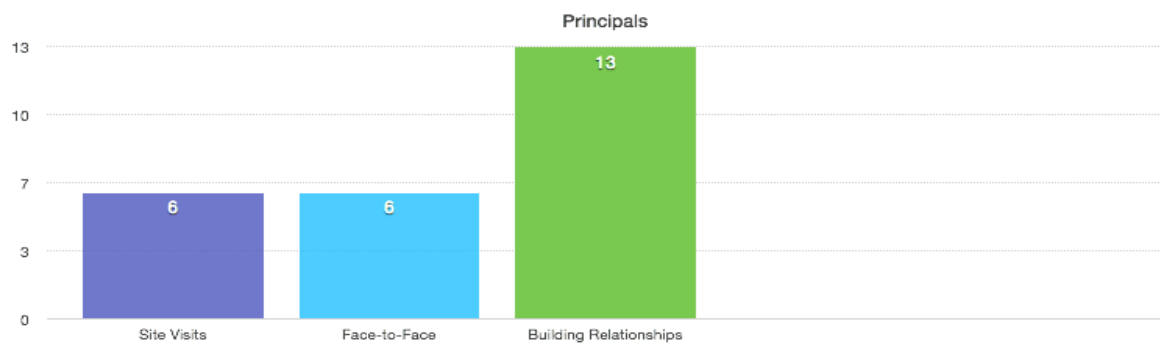
Figure 8. A visual representation of identified factors that contribute to maintaining
connections with all involved exhibiting the presence of trust in the organization.

Interview question 5e. This question addressed the extension of trust as a factor of exhibiting trust in the organization. Principals responded with the factors of communication and the higher ordered factor of extension of trusting relationships (see Table 13 and Figure 9).

Extension of trusting relationships. The principals expressed that the extension of trust could be exhibited in a number of ways by the superintendent. Principal's 1, 3, 4, and 6 perceived the extension of trust by the superintendent as not micro-managing. "*Not micromanaging every detail of what happens. Having a knowledge of it, and an awareness of it but allowing people to even learn from their mistakes sometimes*" (Principal 3). "*I do think that she does extend trust to others because she does trust us to do our jobs. She's not micromanaging us. She doesn't dictate us every step of the way*" (Principal 6). Principal 1 stated that, "*You are going to do a better job when you feel somebody has put this in your hands.*" For principals the extension of trust also meant that superintendents also allowed for individuality in leadership. Principal 4 stated that her superintendent "*knows that each principal in the district has their own personalities and leadership styles, and she [the superintendent] does allow us to lead in a way that is comfortable for us.*" Principal 3 voiced that, "*By treating us as professionals. By trusting that we're going to make wise and informed decisions. Trusting their instincts. Trusting their professionalism. Allowing them to maybe try some things that are outside of the box, believing in them.*" For principal 4 there was the sense that it was ok to fail. "*With my superintendent it was I trust you right off the bat, until someone would give him a reason not to. It's like an innocent until proven guilty kind of thing.*" Principal 4 continued, "*Even that whole idea if we all screw up was just enough to say, okay I can try*

some stuff and if I fail, he's not going to put me straight back to who knows where. It's ok to trust him as long as I align myself with what the priorities are."

 Communication. Extension of trust from the superintendent to principals included an aspect of communication for the superintendent. The principals noted a more personal approach with this particular factor. Principal 1 reflected, "*I think that the only thing is that a superintendent or leader in general, your staff has to know you as a person. They have to know what you're interested in, what you like. I think it makes you more human."* Principal 1 also noted that, "*I think having a sense of humor is very important. I think you've got to have a sense of humor in all your interactions. I don't mean be a silly clown, but I just mean simply that you, even in the most difficult situations, need to be able to bring a little humor, to bring the humanness to it."* Principal 2 spoke to the need for a superintendent to be transparent in their communication as well as having integrity of the spirit and heart, *"He speaks from the heart. This is what my definition of what an excellent superintendent is, and I honestly believe that our superintendent is phenomenal. He's transparent. He speaks from the heart. You know what his core values are. He's consistent. When he says he's going to do something, he's going to do it. He's approachable. The door is always open. We're all teachers at the end of the day. It's not, "I'm the superintendent, you're just a mere whatever. It's truly, we're here for the students and we need to work hard for them."* This authenticity and integrity are qualities that lend themselves to principals accepting the baton of leadership knowing that there is a partnership with the superintendent forged in trust.

Table 13

Codes for Factors Associated with Extending Trust, Exhibiting Trust in the Organization

PRINCIPALS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Extension of Trusting Relationships	31
Communication	9
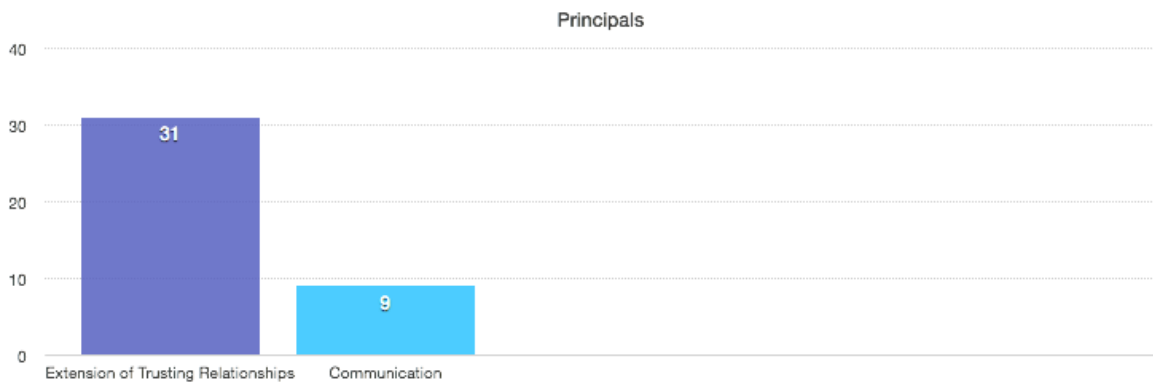
Figure 9. A visual representation of identified factors that contribute to extending trust, exhibiting trust in the organization.

Superintendent Survey-Data Results

Tables 14 through 22 and Figures 10 through 18 reference responses from superintendents to the individual interview questions concerning the building and maintaining of trust relationships between superintendents and principals.

The study was guided by the following RQ: *What specific actions does a superintendent take to build and sustain a trusting relationship between principals and superintendent?*

Interview Question 1

Interview Question 1 asked: *What specific actions do you take to build and sustain a trusting relationship between yourself and principals?*

Question 1 addressed the various actions that superintendents take to build strong

trust relationships. This includes the most frequent factors noted as relationship building

and communication. Both factors were noted as frequent with relationship building

emerging as having the highest factor (see Table 14 and Figure 10).

Relationship building. As principals attested to relationship building as an

important component to building and sustaining trust, so do superintendents.

Superintendent 3 expressed that it was the superintendent's job to create an environment

in which principals felt "safe." As she noted, "*I think it is the responsibility of the*

superintendent to create a safe environment, to make certain that the principal knows

that when I meet with them" (Superintendent 3). This superintendent also feels that there

should be times in which there is no agenda when talking with a principal. "*I think it's*

important for the superintendent to say to a principal, "This is your time to ask me any

questions. Tell me what's going on. Anything I need to know?" I think it's important

that you say this is a safe place, and then demonstrate that by not going back to cabinet

and saying, "Can you believe what Mr. Smith told me down at the high school?"" The

idea of superintendents getting to know principals on a personal basis also parallel

principal sentiments about this aspect of trust building. *"One of the things I try to make*

sure I do in building a relationship with principals is I try to get to know them. At the

very beginning, when someone is appointed as a principal I meet with them one on one

and listen to them" (Superintendent 1). As principals noted they appreciated when

superintendents expressed interest in their personal lives, superintendents mentioned

delving into principals personal lives as a way to build their relationships with them. *"As*

I'm building a relationship I try to remember details either about their family or a

passion that they have so when I see them it's, "Oh, how's your daughter's soccer

going?" so, just listening to them" (Superintendent 1).

Communication. In terms of communication, superintendents found it just as

important as principals when it came to establishing and maintaining trust.

Superintendents wanted to establish with their principals the feeling that they could freely

communicate with them, *"I always felt like it was important that they knew they could*

contact me and we could talk about anything. In some cases we talked about stress,

personal issues that they were facing at home. I think that's the kind of thing you do."

(Superintendent 3). Other superintendents expressed the idea of responsiveness to

principals. *"Another action is to be responsive. All the principals had my cell phone*

number. They know that I text and they can call me 24/7. When you're a principal and

you're facing a problem that you've never faced before, or it involves a union and it could

be controversial for the district, you need to talk to somebody and you need to talk to

them now. It can't be "I'll get back to you in two days" (Superintendent 1).

Superintendent 4 described his evaluation of communication's effect on trust

building as, *"You know if you have a trusting relationship with your principals, in some*

more so than others. Part of this is just the level of engagement, the level of frequent,

authentic conversation."

Table 14

Codes for Specific Actions Superintendents Take to Build and Sustain a Trusting
Relationship between Themselves and Principals

SUPERINTENDENTS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Relationship Building	8
Communication	6
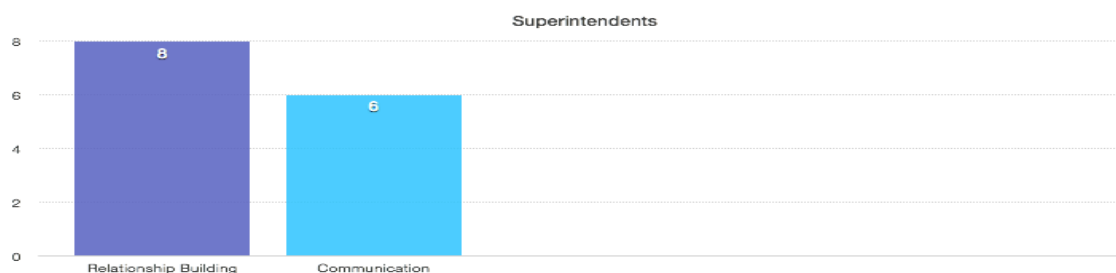
Figure 10. A visual representation of identified actions that superintendents take to build and sustain a trusting relationship between themselves and principals.

Interview Question 2

Interview Question 2 asked: *What factors do you consider to determine the level of trust between yourself and the principals?*

Question 2 sought to identify factors that superintendents determined to gauge trust levels. These factors included, communication and relationship building , which exhibited the most frequently identified factors (see Table 15 and Figure 11).

Communication. For the purpose of this question the superintendents focused on communication as a key component to determine the level of trust between themselves and principals. One superintendent described this situation as, "*The principals willingness to be honest, and confide in me, to identify problems and either ask for help or just give me a heads up and say I'm working on it. I think it takes a lot to say I have this big issue at school, but I got it or I need help with it.*" (Superintendent 5). Another superintendent responded by noting their belief about respecting individuals and respecting their opinions and feedback. As Superintendent 4 concluded, *"Letting the individual know how you feel and respecting her or his opinion and how that individual might feel and respecting his or her opinion. Sometimes we have to agree to disagree,*

which can be challenging and can create distrust when not handled in a respectful manner."

Relationship building. Relationship building in terms of determining the level of trust between superintendents and principals, for superintendents meant to them a variety of factors. For superintendent 2 it related to the size of the district that determined the closeness of their relationship with the principals, *"It depended on the size of the district. If the district was small and intimate, then it behooved me to have a relationship, to relate to those principals, and to stay close so that when something happened and they didn't understand it, it was important to me to give them the whole picture so that they could take ownership."* According to Superintendent 3 it was dependent upon a principals behavior in terms of what questions they brought to a meeting that exhibited levels of trust, *"Usually, it's by the questions they ask me. When I feel a principal comes prepared for the meeting and they have serious questions about the organization or relationships with people, relationships with my cabinet members, when they start asking really deep questions, then I feel like I think the relationship has grown to the point where we are actually making headway here."*

This superintendent also felt that it was his responsibility to establish a relationship with principals that reached outside of the work place. *"Many times I would start talking about personal things. You get to find out about their relationships with their spouses, and troubles they're having with their children. Sometimes you have to go to the personal side, and when they feel they can trust you, then they'll go to the professional side. It doesn't work all the time. Sometimes people have that guard up, that you are the superintendent and I'm not going to confide in you. You have to be able*

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to live with that. You can't force it. It doesn't work with everybody, even though you want it to. I want to work with everybody, but that doesn't mean wanting makes it happen. You can't will it to happen and you can't demand it." Superintendent 3 also reflected that vulnerability as a leader lead to relationship/trust building in a superintendent/principal relationship: *"By being vulnerable as a leader, I think that you can help other leaders. I don't think you can teach leadership unless you want to be vulnerable enough to talk about your own shortcomings and the areas of work that you need as a leader. I've found that to be helpful, working with principals to be able to break through, that they are most willing to talk about areas that they're struggling with when they hear me do the same."*

In terms of determining the level of trust between superintendent and principal, superintendent 8 stated that, *"Relationships are built on honesty, trust and consistency. The superintendent needs to use group skills, as well as one-to-one skills when working with all employees to foster the development in all these areas."*

Table 15

Codes for Factors Associated with Superintendents Determination of Trust Levels between Themselves and Principals

SUPERINTENDENT	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Communication	4
Relationship Building	10
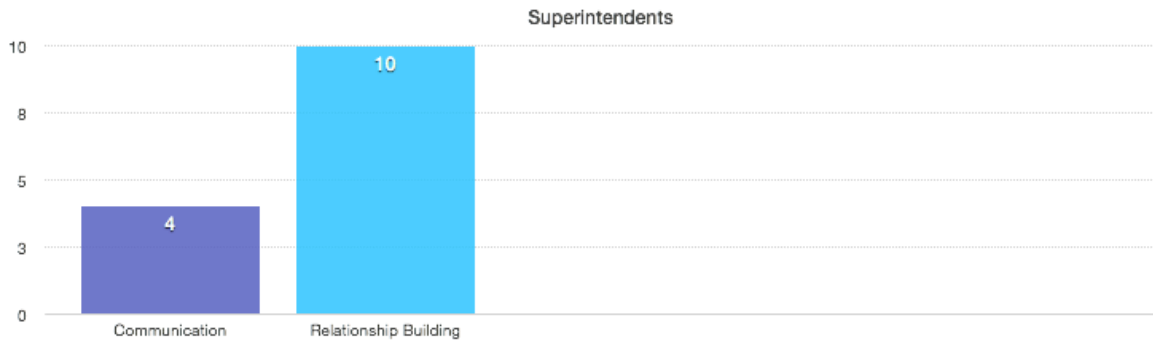
Figure 11. A visual representation of identified factors that determine the level of trust between superintendents and principals.

Interview Question 3

Interview Question 3 asked: *What factors would you associate with the superintendent's success in establishing and maintaining trusting relationships between superintendents and principal.*

Question 3 sought to derive perceptions from superintendents as to factors associated with success in trusting relationships. Factors included communication, integrity and the highest identified factor of relationship building (see Table 16 and Figure 12).

Communications. Superintendents associated the building of trusting relationships with them reaching out to principals and establishing authentic means of communication. All superintendents indicated that communication, whether it was technology based or face-to-face were important in establishing and maintaining relationships with principals.

Integrity. Superintendents felt that integrity was an important factor in their position and relationship with principals. Superintendent 4 expressed that, *"When I first came on board, I made a promise to myself. I said, "I'm going to be my authentic self. If my authentic self doesn't fit here, I don't want to do it."* Superintendent 1 continued with

their thoughts about integrity, *"Integrity is very important. Just like a relationship you have with your spouse or your children, it just doesn't exist, you have to work on it."*

Relationship building. This factor was important to superintendents in terms of getting to know principals on a personal level, coaching or mentoring them through a difficult circumstance, or just talking casually with a principal getting to know them and their families better. Superintendents 6 and 8 discussed their ideas about relationship building. *"One-on-one meetings with principals at each site on a regular basis, frequent site visits and classroom walk-throughs, independent surveys providing honest feedback to help build a culture of support with principals"* (Superintendent 6). *"I really coach them through what they know to be their good thinking. When there is a problem, confronting that with empathy and understanding and really coaching them through when there are mistakes made"* (Superintendent 8).

Table 16

Codes for Factors Associated with Factors Superintendents Successfully Establishing and Maintaining Trusting Relationships between Superintendents and Principals

SUPERINTENDENTS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Communication	9
Integrity	7
Relationship Building	13
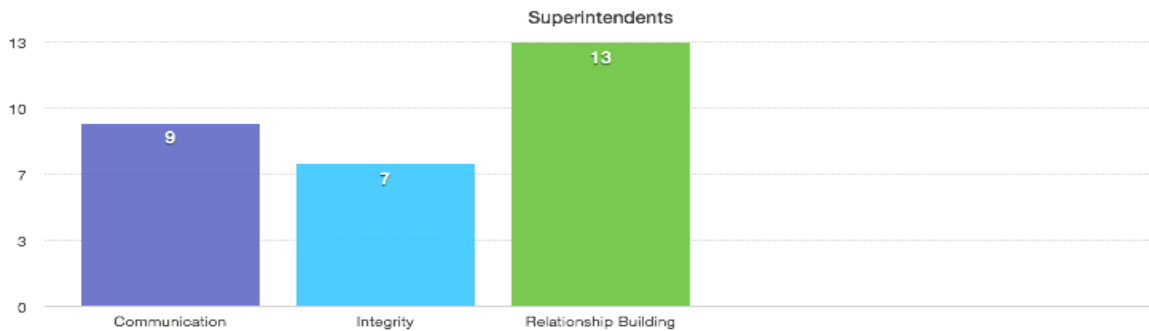
Figure 12. A visual representation of identified factors that superintendents take to establish and maintain trusting relationships between superintendents and principals.

Interview Question 4

Interview Question 4 asked: *What are the various ways in which you promote communication? What types of communication do you utilize to help build and sustain a high level of trust between yourself and principals*

Question 4 sought to identify the positive use of communication that superintendents utilized to promote trusting relationships between themselves and principals. Transparency, means of communication/technology, meeting participation, face-to-face and site visits were the actors that were identified, with means of communication/technology being the most frequently coded (see Table 17 and Figure 13).

Transparency. To the superintendents that I interviewed transparency was something that was important to them and they understood this was an area that they needed to be mindful about and follow up on. Superintendent 5 voiced that, *"We're trying to be very deliberate so that the interpretation of what we say is not only reflected in the memo, but also in the minutes, so that we share those out as a reflection of what was talked about in our meeting."* Superintendent 2 also explained that, *"You're willing [as a superintendent] to take the tough conversations...in turn you expect your principals*

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to do the same thing. It's easy to say that this is a personnel confidential matter, we can't talk about it. All that makes people feel is you have something to hide. I think it's important in terms of modeling that communication as a leader that you communicate often and early." Superintendent 1 noted that, *"I think when you tell them [the principals] what you're doing, why you're doing it and explain it as not going to be how we do things, that we did it for this point in time you gain trust. You send the message that they are worth communication to and that they are worth understanding the direction of the district."* Superintendent 1 also noted that they, *"Took the time to give the why and what the challenges and rationale were."* Superintendent 2 described that, *"When I became superintendent I really thought I needed a forum to be able to say to people, "Hey a board member thinks this is a big deal. What are you thinking? Where are you at?" So that I had some information also to give back to the board, but also that they knew that, that might be coming down the pipe."* Superintendent 2 noted on the power of communication and the need to share information, *"Information can become powerful if you don't give it up. If you just hold it, you have the power but that's not good for the organization. You need to let it go and move forward."*

Means of communication-technology. This particular area focused on the means in which superintendents communicated with principals in terms of the use of technology in order to increase positive communications to help build and sustain a high level of trust between superintendents and principals. Superintendents identified four areas in which they used technology to increase communication with the principals. Cell phones/phones, Twitter, texting, and emailing.

Superintendents 2-7 all expressed using either a cell phone or regular phone call to communicate with their principals, *"There was a little bit of a rub when I first came here. They all had district cell phones and my expectation is that thing is on 24/7. They all have a cell number. I call them. I feel like anybody could pick up the phone. I could, or any of the principals could in order to communicate"* (Superintendent 3).

Twitter accounts. Two superintendents stated that they use Twitter as one avenue for communicating with their principals. Superintendent 7 explained how Twitter is a positive avenue for her to communicate between herself and her principals, *"I think we are really strengthening communication through our Twitter feed."* Superintendent 7 also explained, *"I can name 10 principals and what they are doing on a daily basis because I follow them on Twitter. I'm retweeting their stuff and that's actually becoming the biggest joke in the district is how active we've all been and how we all can stay connected."* Superintendent 7 also expressed further the positive aspects of Twitter accounts, *"I feel like I'm seeing their school day through their eyes and kind of like how you talked about your classroom. It's like I get to see their school by not being there. Their PTA meeting, their Fall Festival, being in their class walkthroughs. They're Tweeting those things. Their staff development. I'm feeling like I'm getting a good sense of what they are doing."*

Texting and emails. Five out of eight superintendents indicated that texting is an avenue that they use to promote communication between themselves and the principals. Superintendents 3-7 referenced texting as a way towards direct communication with their principals, *"I use text messaging for only positive things or a heads up."* Superintendent 7 revealed that they do not use texting to forward critical messages. Superintendents 3, 6,

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and 7 all agreed that emails helped to further positive communication between themselves and principals. *"I expect them to be on that, especially my front-line administrators and the principals"* (Superintendent 3). Superintendent 6 mentioned that their communication with principals has been, *"Increasingly via email."* Superintendent 7 remarked that, *"Yeah, if we have issues going on I'm always sending out emails."*

A common theme amongst superintendents in terms of means of communication revolved around listening and accessibility. Superintendent 6 indicated that they routinely ask, *"What are we doing well? What do we need to do better?"* Superintendent 6 continued with one of the strategies that works for them, *"I think not being defensive, because a lot of times the things they have to say may challenge my own initiatives or my own personal preface about how things go, and I really want to hear their thoughts. I also think that telling my stories and listening to theirs is all a part of how you get good communication."* Superintendent 7 voiced that, *"If they [the principals] don't give us their authentic voice about how things are happening at their site, we won't get it."* Superintendent 7 continued with how good listening can turn into good coaching/mentoring situations. *"I think being as clear in my communication I can possibly be, anticipating their information needs, and answering their questions before they ask them by kind of wearing that lens, then making sure I'm a really good listener and I don't jump to conclusions or answers when they do honor me by calling me with the situation that needs attention. That I really coach them through what they know to be, what their good thinking is. When there is a problem confronting that with empathy and understanding and really coaching them through when there are mistakes made."* Superintendent 1 stated that communication is, *"A system that you learn over time. The*

communication has to be consistent, it has to be genuine. To really have an authentic

dialogue, two ways, people [have] to be comfortable to speak the truth to you."

   Meeting participation. Six of the eight superintendents regarded meeting

participation as a way to promote the building of a trusting relationship between

themselves and the principals. The role that superintendents played in meetings

involving principals varied from partial participation to leading the meeting.

Superintendent 1 described their role in principal meeting as, *"I have asked our Ed.*

services team to make sure that I have a piece on the leadership, every principal's

meeting. The first 30 minutes they do some announcements, but the first 30 minutes of

our principal's meeting without fail, I have not missed any of them. I do a leadership

piece." Superintendent 1 continues*, "...the second quarter of the year I talk about being a*

leader, what does that mean and I integrate that with my expectations. I also give them

tips, we role-play and I tell stories so that the leadership communication is at every

principals meeting. I do believe it's authentic." Superintendent 4 noted that they

participate in a principal's meeting once, twice a month, *"I always go in and spend about*

the first hour and a half or so, I get in early to have a conversation with the principals,

just 'How are you doing?'" Superintendent 5 runs their principal meetings and minutes

are taken. *"The principals bring what others have shared with them. We would take*

minutes and they would distribute them amongst their peers, elementary and secondary.

That seemed to have helped with some of the 'we don't know what's going on at the

district level'." Superintendent 7 has created a meeting in which principals are given an

overview of what is going on in the district at a board level. *"Principals also attend*

Board Review meetings, that's probably our tightest group. That room is a confidential

meeting and that's where it can be an hour to an hour and a half after a board meeting.

It's where we go over all the items that the board is dealing with."

    Face to face communication/site visits. The superintendents saw site visits as not

only a way to keep in touch with what is going on at each site but as an opportunity to

engage in one-on-one, face-to-face communication with principals. As Superintendent 2

mentioned, *"What I would do to promote communication, would be to take the time to go*

out into the schools and meet with the principals." Superintendent 4 reported that*, "I'm*

at school sites probably three days a week. When I'm there, it's not an hour, half a day at

least. I try to get into as many classrooms as possible." Superintendent 3 echoed that

sentiment, *"What I would do to promote communication would be to take the time to go*

out into the schools, to the principals." Superintendent 4 used site visits as an

opportunity to connect with the principals and explore what was happening at sites while

acknowledging time is an important factor in staying connected, *"You have to spend time*

with people. I do unannounced visits and I make sure that I am very diligent at bonding.

There are many things that come up in a superintendent's world that would take your

schedule away if you're not out at the schools then you can't really say you know what's

going on and then you won't be able to be there to support, so the time is very

important." Superintendent 5 articulated that the success to positive communication with

principals is to hold one-on-one meetings with principals on a regular basis.

Superintendent 1 noted that face-to-face communication helps to build a high level of

trust when expressing the "*why*" on tough decisions.

Table 17

Codes for Factors Associated with Superintendents Promotion of Communication as related to Building and Sustaining a High Level of Trust between Themselves and Principals

SUPERINTENDENTS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Transparency	29
Means of Communication	49
Meeting Participation	14
Face-to-Face	7
Site Visits	6
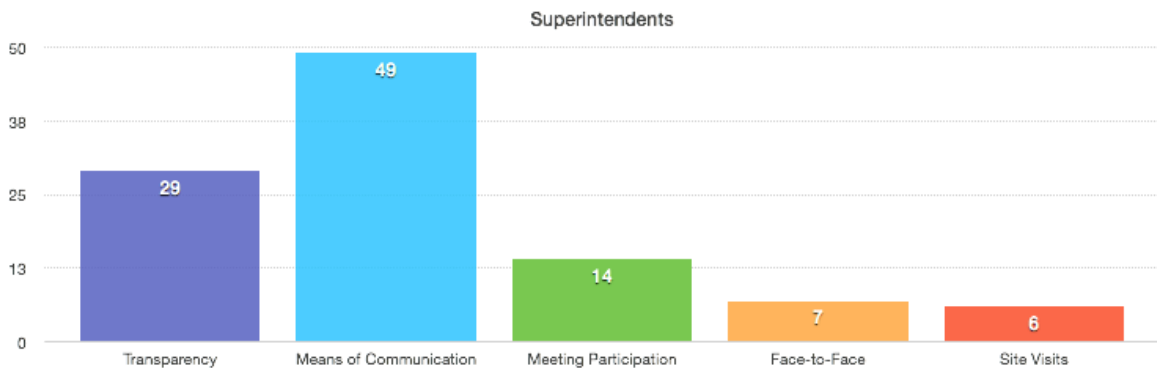
Figure 13. A visual representation of identified factors that contribute to the success of Superintendents promoting successful communication that establishes and maintains a high level of trust between themselves and the principals.

Interview Question 5

Interview Question 5 asked: *How does the following factor exhibit the presence of trust in your organization?*

Interview Question 5 was broken down into five categories: (a) Exhibiting interdependence, (b) Speaking and acting in a consistent manner, (c) Displaying honesty

in all actions, (d) Maintaining connections with all involved, and (e) Extending trust to others. Data on each of the five categories will be presented independently

Interview question 5a. Superintendents were asked how interdependence is exhibited in the presence of trust. The most frequent factors identified were autonomy, providing support and trusting leadership (see Table 18 and Figure 14).

Autonomy. The superintendents interviewed for this study stated in their responses that they believed in allowing site principals to be given autonomy to do what is best for their sites. As Superintendent 1 described, *"We empower the site principals to do what they need to do, as long as you support our goals, our evaluation, and goal-setting, we don't tell them what they need to do. They understand as long as you provide what you need to provide as a principal, and you have this conversation with your staff and whatever goals you establish fits this we'll support you."* Superintendent 7 expressed their support, *"I think what I try to do is that I believe the people on the front lines have the best answer, the best solutions. As an organization we have to figure out how to pose the problem so that we're getting those solutions back and in a manner that they can be used."* Superintendent 8 agreed that it was important to, *"Allow for personal style and to let the principals do their job."* Superintendent 1 allows for autonomy but with some degree of discussion with principals. *"There are many things that the principals can do but they are still held to the same outcomes. Here are the metrics, here are the outcomes, you say you want to get there. One of the things that I try to do is you tell me why your approach is going to work, what research is it based on? Then the buy-in because the principal has that leadership and if they haven't even trusted their staff to buy-in then they are not going to get there. Even with the best of plans."*

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Providing support. The superintendents in this study noted providing support to the principals as both emotional and economical, while modeling what providing support at this level looks like. *"I was dependent on keeping their world from being rocky because then the energy comes out of the classroom. I had to depend on them and work with them to get it focused"* (Superintendent 2). Superintendent 3 acknowledge what they thought was the importance of superintendence publically owning mistakes of principals. *"Everyone knows that the principal messed up. Both to the board and to the public you own that mistake. You never throw anybody under the bus. When you do that, I think you build a sense of trust, and interdependence, and family."* Superintendent 4 noted the economic side of providing support: *"What we do from the top level is providing simple, clearly defined missions and goals. When we have LCAP money and we provide $50.00 per student, in addition to other money I just say to the principal, "You decide how you want to spend it.""* Superintendent 6 expressed a collaborative conversation of support between superintendents and principals, *"I think the extent in which people can really come in and say, "This is what it's like to live in my world and do what you are asking me to do. This is how it plays out. Some of this is intended, and some of it is not intended, and I want you to understand the unintended parts and help me navigate that"* and then really listen to each other. Realize at the end of the day, we have a superordinate goal."*

Trusting leadership. Trusting leadership in terms of interdependence for superintendents involved many factors, including trusting the system and trusting those that are in leadership positions to make good choices. Superintendent 3 commented that, *"It is imperative that I can trust my administrators. I always tell people we can fix any*

problem; what we can't fix is lying. If you lie to me you're gone." Superintendent 1

commentated, *"I think there's quite a bit of interdependence and that really does reflect*

how much you trust your leaders is by allowing them to make some decisions."

Superintendent 7 described the effects that a lack of trust can have on interdependence.

"Interdependence doesn't happen unless there's trust, because if people can't trust each

other then they will refuse to open up and work collaboratively with people."

Superintendent 7 continues*, "If there is not trust there or they feel one person is holding*

back or one of those groups refuses to participate then I just notice nothing ever

happens."

Table 18

Codes for Factors Associated with Interdependence Exhibiting the Presence of Trust in the Organization

SUPERINTENDENTS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Autonomy	16
Providing Support	15
Tusting Leadership	19
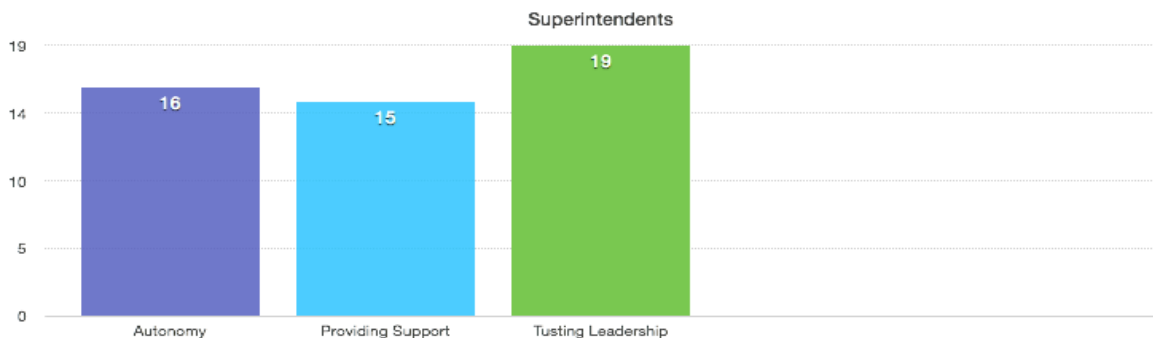
Figure 14. A visual representation of identified factors that contribute to interdependence exhibiting the presence of trust in the organization.

Interview Question 5b

Interview question 5b addressed superintendents and how they perceived themselves speaking and acting in a consistent manner. The factors most frequently identified were genuineness and modeling expected behavior (see Table 19 and Figure 15).

Superintendent 3 summed up the other superintendents' thoughts and feelings in which they described speaking and acting in a consistent manner. *"Speaking and acting consistently are key to developing trust, whether as a principal or superintendent. Someone has to lead the organization, so it is key that the superintendent demonstrate these in all of his/her interactions. Saying things consistently is important, but not nearly as critical as acting consistently."* Superintendent 3 continued, *"Acting and speaking consistently are important. Yet one slip on the honesty scale and the rest goes down the drain. It is critical for superintendents and principals to act in an honest manner even when the truth hurts. Telling the truth early and often are indispensable."* The superintendents reflected on what it meant to be genuine in their workplace. Superintendent 1 recounted that, *"I think over time people are looking to see who are you. They are looking for genuineness, and that's where I feel speaking and acting in a consistent manner shows how genuine you are and that can be a motivator for people you are meeting."* Superintendent 6 noted that, *"Speaking and acting in a consistent manner, that speaks to credibility, and that's like the number one virtue of an effective leader is someone that can be counted on to mean what they say and say what they mean. I think that part of what I really strive to do is make sure that I know what my values are, and that my actions are aligned, my decisions are aligned. Then being bold enough to*

challenge myself or to allow somebody else to challenge me when I operate in a way

that's not consistent with a value I've put out there."

      Modeling expected behavior. The superintendents that I interviewed agreed that modeling expected behavior in terms of speaking and acting in a consistent manner was important not only for the relationship with principals but the expectation that it would then serve as an example that would reflect on the principal's behavior with their staff. Superintendent 2 verbalized that, *"Not only do you have to speak and act in a consistent manner but you have to model how you're expecting them to speak and act on a consistent basis. To me that is one of the best things. I'm not going out there saying one thing and then you and I come in this room then I say something totally different."* Superintendents 2, 4, and 5 echoed the same sentiment, *"The other thing is that I modeled, I'm setting the tone for what's going to happen in the district at that time"* (Superintendent 2). *"You have a chance to model that consistent mannerism. For me in my head, it's always modeling what I want them to model. For me really, it is consistently emulating what I want them to emulate with their people. There's no other way to do that other than just time and people seeing it play out over and over again where your values are the same. The transparency I think is the same. Hopefully they talk with their teachers in some similar type of way"* (Superintendents 2).

      Superintendent 7 utilizes modeling when they have made a mistake, *"If I screwed up, it was incumbent upon me with principals to admit it because they were going to at some point screw up too."*

Table 19

Codes for Factors Associated with Interdependence: Speaking and Acting in a Consistent Manner

SUPERINTENDENTS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Genuineness	11
Modeling Expected Behavior	15
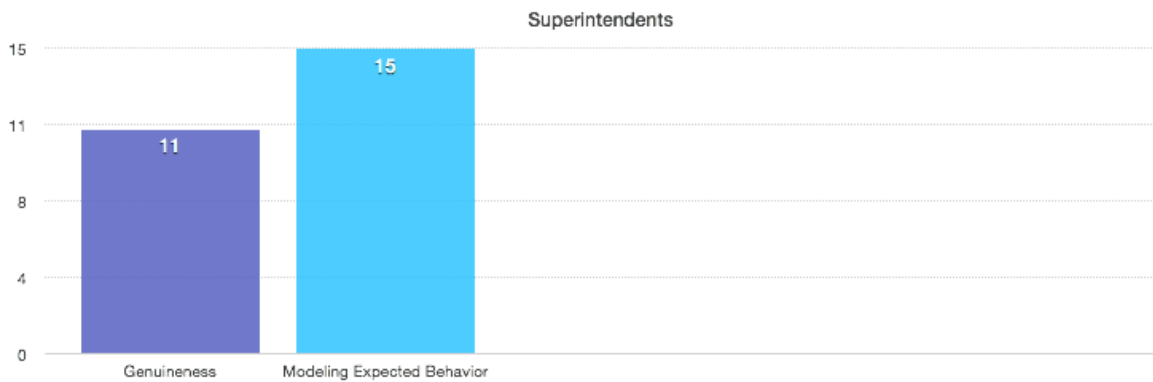
Figure 15. A visual representation of identified factors that contribute to speaking and acting in a consistent manner exhibiting the presence of trust in the organization.

Interview question 5c. Superintendents communicated their perceptions of themselves displaying honesty in all actions which exhibits the presence of trust. Superintendents identified modeling expected behavior and transparency as factors, with transparency having the highest frequency (see Table 20 and Figure 16).

Modeling expected behavior. As in past responses superintendents felt that it was important to be a role model in displaying honesty in all actions and being their authentic selves publically. Superintendent 4 acknowledged, *"I just think by modeling that it's not in terms in consistency. There's no effort, really. I'm just being me and the best of me that I can be."* Superintendent 1 defined honesty as being a high priority, *"When you*

display honesty in all actions, in addition to being honest, telling the truth, but it also means to me, admitting when you've made a mistake... Being open to say I'm human, so that's a high priority." Superintendent 4 also spoke of authenticity and modeling it for others to show their authentic selves, *"What I learned is it doesn't matter how authentic I think I am or want to be. I learned that there's still this professional title. As much as you want to engage people, and you want reciprocation, it doesn't come all that easily because their still looking at you as superintendent. It doesn't change the fact that I'm going to behave, like I said I'm going to be my authentic self."*

   Transparency. The superintendents that participated in this research felt transparency was an obligation to both themselves and those that they worked with. Superintendents 5 and 6 expressed that being honest and transparent can be complicated, *"Being honest is the easy part, being transparent in how you arrived at decisions is more complicated because in order to trust that you're being honest they kind of have to understand the process behind that. I share as much as I can and talk about as much as I can"* (Superintendent 6). For superintendent 5 being transparent also meant admitting to mistakes made, *"Yeah when I screw up I tell them I do, I do."* Superintendent 8 summed up their opinion about honesty as, *"I can only control my own honesty and consistency. What's important is that I am always honest and truthful to myself."*

Table 20

Codes for Factors Associated with Displaying Honesty in All Actions Exhibiting the Presence of Trust in the Organization

SUPERINTENDENTS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Modeling Expected Behavior	7
Transparency	13
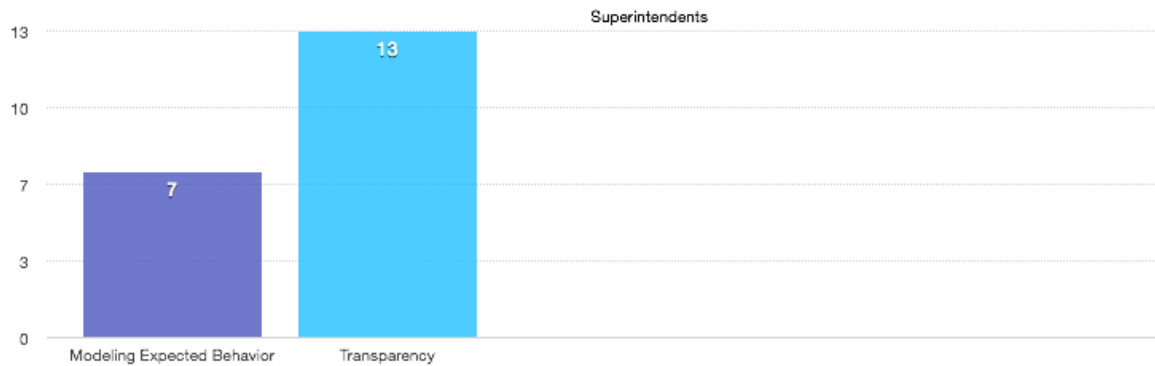
Figure 16. A visual representation of identified factors that contribute to the display of honesty in all actions exhibiting the presence of trust in the organization.

Interview question 5d. Question 5d addressed maintaining connections with all involved. The factors cited by superintendents included building relationships, site visits and communication. Building relationships and communication were the most frequently coded (see Table 21 and Figure 17).

Building relationships. Superintendents agree that building and maintaining relationships is important to their organization. Superintendent 1 acknowledges that maintaining connections can be a challenge, *"Maintaining connections is the most difficult. You have to be deliberate to maintain it and that takes a lot of effort so with a superintendent the challenge is time. Having time to do it. You have good intentions but if you don't have time to keep that connection going it could be two months and there's a principal you haven't seen or talked to or touched basis with."* Superintendent 8 advised that, *"It takes everyone working together, even with or without the board, site levels can go sideways."* Superintendent 2 had the opinion that part of building relationships included nurturing the principal's strengths, *"Superintendents should be able to read people's strengths and weaknesses. I much prefer to nurture the strengths and let the person, give them the freedom to use those strengths. Things blossom, and then hopefully*

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that goes from the principals to the teachers to look for their strengths, where they are, and they don't try to make them all fit in the same box."

Site visits. Superintendent 7 indicated that site visits were important to them. *"I do site visits a lot. I 'm not always good with names but I'm pretty good with faces. I try to make sure I say hi, really good eye contact, talking to people, trying to smile. Letting them know I've never forgotten what is like to be at a site."* Superintendent 3 spoke about how it was good to visit sites during the good times and the bad. *"I go down and talk about what they're thinking about and not be afraid to engage in the conversations of the day when things go well and more importantly when things don't go well. When a school has failed usually you see the leader down there and the superintendent down there. It means someone is in trouble. I think it's good to not be there when someone is in trouble and to be there when things go well, be the cheerleader."*

Communication. The superintendents spoke about communication taking many forms. Superintendent 3, *"I'm one of those people who believes that all employees, not just managers need to know as much about what's going on in the district as possible. I would rather over communicate."* Superintendent 1 indicated the various forms of communication that they utilize by stating *"In our district we have 40 site leaders, so you deliberately reach out. Then you have to try and study how they want to communicate. Some just want the email, some want you to drop by, some want hugs or skype. You just need to find out how they want to be communicated with. That helps build trust making sure you're differentiating their needs."* Superintendent 6 advised that they used communication circles in which they would try to get to all groups so that no one was left out, *"Maintaining communication with all involved, I really take time using*

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communication circles. So that principals don't hear from teachers about some new

something going on." Superintendent 6 continues with, *"Maintaining connections has to*

do with clear, concise, and targeted communications in a really strategic way. It doesn't

happen by accident. There's a lot of thought that goes into that."

Table 21

Codes for Factors Associated with Maintaining Connections with all Involved Exhibiting the Presence of Trust in the Organization

SUPERINTENDENTS	SOURCES/REFERENCES
Building Relationships	10
Site Visits	4
Communication	10
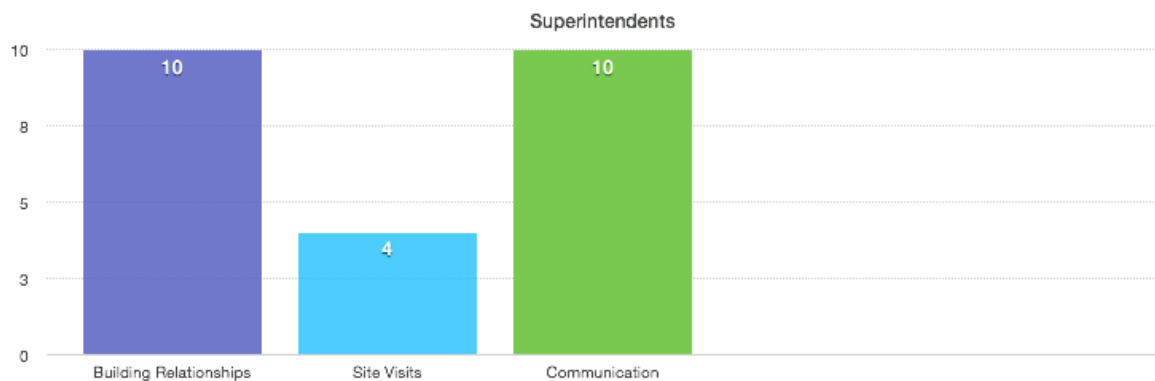
Figure 17. A visual representation of identified factors that contribute to maintaining connections with all involved exhibiting the presence of trust in the organization.

Interview question 5e. Question 5e addressed the extension of trust as exhibiting

trust in the Organization. Superintendents responded with the factors of autonomy,

assumption of trust and being supportive (see Table 22 and Figure 18).

Autonomy. Superintendents believed it was important to give autonomy to the

principals, *"They're trusted to run their own ships"* (Superintendent 7). Superintendent 5

reflected that, *"Sometimes it's as simple as I trust you. You can fix this, go ahead, you don't have to report back to me. Sometimes it is just reaffirming them as a leader. I ask them their input. They realize I value their opinion because I think valuing people and trust go hand in hand."* Superintendent 2 felt that a principal's desire for autonomy was dependent on the principal themselves*, "For the principal, it depended upon their sense of security with themselves. If they felt secure and when I empowered them they weren't intimidated and stuff didn't get out of control."* Superintendent 4 discussed what he thought the principals wanted, *"I believe the principals absolutely want autonomy. No principal wants you to tell them what to do. Not even the brand new ones. What they do want is clarity and direction."*

    Extension of trust. When asked about the extension of trust to others the superintendents were in agreement that it was their responsibility to be the first to initiate and maintain this part of their relationship with the principals. Superintendent 6 described their thoughts, *"One of my favorite leadership axioms is, 'In the poker game of trust leaders ante up first.' I am continually forcing myself to assume positive intent and trust in the person sitting across from me even when I'm pretty sure they don't deserve it."* This superintendent continued to explain, *"I still do it. I still do it. I do it mindfully knowing I'm taking a risk, but I don't know how else to build trust than to assume people's trust."* Superintendent 3 explained their philosophy of extending trust as, *"I send leaders a lot of confidential information and asked that they keep it close to them. I'm not talking about employee issues or negotiations. Extending trust is just what I was talking about in that you have to trust people to give them information. I believe in trusting people until they prove untrustworthy, as opposed to they need to prove their*

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trustworthiness." Superintendent 1 expressed a similar belief, *"I feel that's an area I can grow in. I trust myself because I know me, so extending trust to others goes back to where we started at the beginning with relationship. What kind of relationship do we have and that trust is earned. So what you are looking at as a superintendent is to see that this person has earned your trust. I usually try to trust everybody until you show me that you need a little bit more guidance."*

   Providing support. Superintendents understood their role in providing support to principals as an extension of trust. *"I address things, I don't go back and start talking about the person, when I hear something I try to address it. That to me is a different way of extending trust, to extend it and don't let my own disappointments or personal weaknesses stop me from extending it. The other part of trusting and extending trust to others is forgiveness"* (Superintendent 1). Superintendent 8 summed up the supportive relationship between principals and superintendents as, *"One of the superintendent's biggest challenges is relationships with principals. It requires a lot of time and energy."* Tables 23 through 31 and Figures 19 through 27 reflects a comparison of the two study groups principals and superintendents and their responses to the interview questions concerning the building and maintaining of trust relationships between principals and superintendents.

Table 22

Codes for Factors Associated with Extending Trust, Exhibiting Trust in the Organization

SUPERINTENDENTS	SOURCES/REFERENCED
Autonomy	7
Assumption of Trust	13
Supportive	16
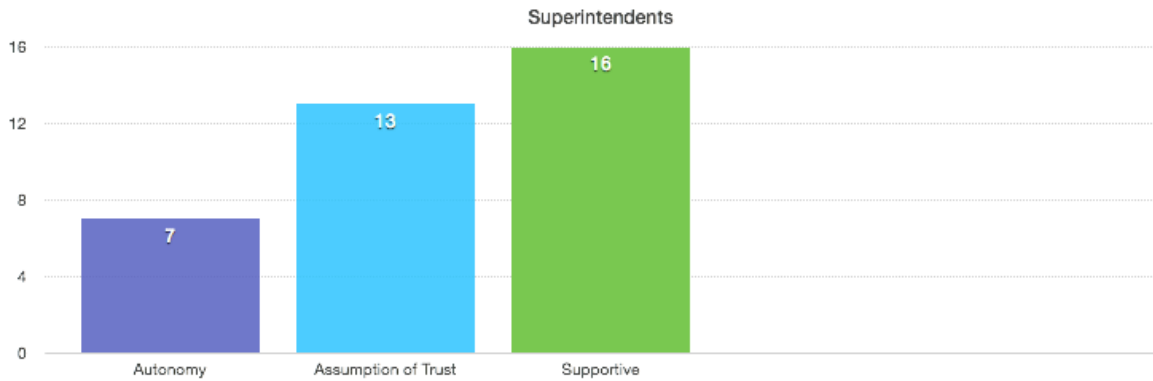
Figure 18. A visual representation of identified factors that contribute to extending trust, exhibiting trust in the organization.

Data Results

Comparison of the two Study Groups

Tables 23 through 31 and Figures 19 through 27 reflects a comparison of the two study groups principals and superintendents and their responses to the interview questions concerning the building and maintaining of trust relationships between principals and superintendents.

The study was guided by the following RQ: *What specific actions does a superintendent take to build and sustain a trusting relationship between principals and superintendent?*

Interview Question 1

Interview Question 1 asked: *What specific actions does the superintendent take to build and sustain a trusting relationship between superintendents and principals?*

Question 1 addressed the various actions that superintendents take to build strong trust relationships. Factors noted by both superintendents and principals were communication, relationship building, other miscellaneous factors (see Table 23 and Figure 19).

Communication. Between superintendents and principals communication ranked the highest in terms of building and sustaining trust between the two groups. Both entities agreed that open, honest communication was important. Superintendents were aware that it was their responsibility to create an environment that encouraged open communication.

Relationship building. Both superintendent and principal groups each mentioned that there was an importance for superintendents to reach out and get to know the principals away from their professional lives, expressing interest in their personal lives including their families. Each group acknowledged that this was also a way for superintendents to get to know the principals strengths, and superintendents indicated that they used this knowledge to help principals grow professionally.

The principals indicated a group of "others" that they felt fell under this question including, site visits, safe environment, and face-to-face communication. The superintendents acknowledged all of these in response to other interview questions.

Site visits. Principals noted that site visits were important in terms of building and sustaining trusting relationships.

Safe environment. For principals a safe environment meant that they were free to try new things and think outside the box without fear of retribution.

Face-to-face communication. Half of the principals indicated that this was an important component to relationship building. The principals indicated that this was both a professional opportunity for the superintendent to communicate their vision, but also for there to be relationship building opportunities.

Table 23

Frequency Table for Superintendents and Principals for Specific Actions Superintendents
Take to Build and Sustain a Trusting Relationship between Superintendents and
Principals

DESCRIPTION	COMMUNICATION	RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	OTHER
Principal	24	18	21
Superintendents	6	8	0
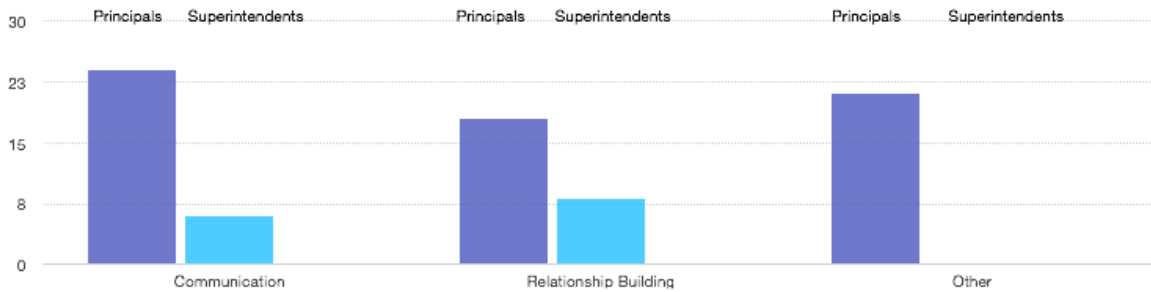
Figure 19. A visual representation of a frequency table of identified actions that
superintendents take to build and sustain a trusting relationship between superintendents
and principals.

Interview Question 2

Interview Question 2 asked: *What factors do you consider to determine the level*

of trust between superintendents and principals?

Question 2 sought to identify factors that the superintendents and principals

determined the level of trust between each other. These factors included communication,

relationship building and authenticity (see Table 24 and Figure 20).

Communication. For this factor both superintendents and principals felt

communication was necessary in determining the level of trust between superintendent

and principals. The principals noted that they liked the ability to be accessible to the

superintendent and that they shared issues and happenings in the district. The

superintendents explained that they believed in communication that brought them together with principals both personally and professionally.

Authenticity. Some principals noted that this was important in terms of the superintendents being their true selves. Superintendents addressed this in further interview questions.

Table 24

Frequency table of identified factors that contribute to the success of superintendents actions determining the level of trust between superintendents and principals.

DESCRIPTION	COMMUNICATION	RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	AUTHENTICITY
Principals	12	14	3
Superintendents	4	10	0
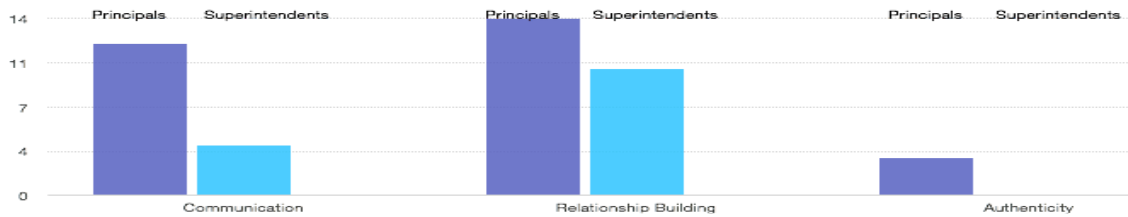
Figure 20. A visual representation of a frequency table of identified factors that contribute to the success of superintendents actions determining the level of trust between superintendents and principals.

Interview Question 3

Interview Question 3 asked: *What factors would you associate with the superintendent's success in establishing and maintaining trusting relationships between the superintendent and principals?*

Question 3 sought to derive perceptions from superintendents and principals as to the factors of the superintendent's success in establishing and maintaining trusting

relationships. Factors included relationship building, integrity and communication (see Table 25 and Figure 21).

Relationship building. Both superintendents and principals noted this as a factor for establishing and maintaining trusting relationships. The superintendents more so than the principals due in part to many superintendents expressing their understanding that it was their responsibility to initiate, build and maintain this part of their relationship with the principals. Many superintendents developed a purposeful structured means of establishing and building their relationship with principals. Other superintendents took a more casual conversational approach. All principals interviewed expressed their appreciation that superintendents took a concerted effort to establish and maintain these relationships.

Integrity. Superintendents and principals expressed integrity and the superintendents being their authentic selves has an important factor in their trust relationships. Superintendents noted that integrity also included confidentiality with principals both in their sharing confidential information with principals or nurturing relationships with principals in which they [the principals] felt comfortable sharing information with the superintendents. Principals expressed appreciation for the superintendents being their true, authentic selves openly both as a means to build upon a trusting relationship, do what they say they are going to do and modeling what integrity looks like.

Communication. Superintendents and principals closely agreed on the need for communication between themselves. Superintendents referenced the means in which they communicated both formally and informally. Principals noted their desire for

superintendents to be open and honest with them. Both groups expressed the importance

open lines of communication on a frequent basis.

Table 25

*Frequency Table for Superintendents and Principals for Factors Associated with
Superintendents Success in Establishing and Maintaining Trusting Relationships between
Superintendents and Principals*

PARTICIPANT	RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	INTEGRITY	COMMUNICATION
Principals	8	6	8
Superintendents	13	7	9
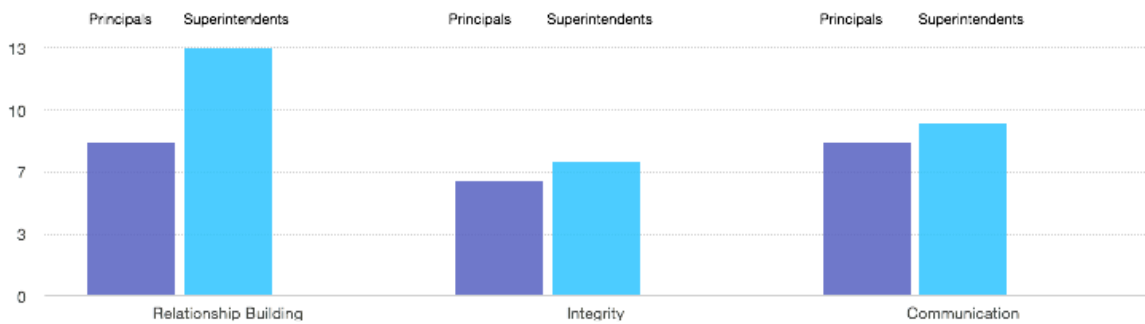
Figure 21. A visual representation of a frequency table of identified factors that
superintendents take to establish and maintain trusting relationships between
superintendents and principals.

Interview Question 4

Interview Question 4 asked: *What are the various ways the superintendents*

promote communication? What types of communication does the superintendent utilize

to help build and sustain a high level of trust between the superintendent and principals?

Question 4 sought to identify the positive use of communication between

superintendent and principals. The identified factors included communication,

meetings/site visits and transparency/support (see Table 26 and Figure 22).

Communication. Both groups expressed the importance of communication in terms of the frequency and the diversified use of different ways/technology to achieve the goal of on-going communication between the superintendent and principals.

Superintendents and principals agreed that the frequency and quality of communication was important in terms of keeping everybody updated on what was happening and why. This went both ways. The superintendents appreciated site updates as did the principals appreciated district updates. Both groups agreed that the "why" something was happening was as important as the "what" was happening. Each group reported that a variety of modalities were used to promote communication in their districts. From Twitter, Facebook, texting, and emails to cell phone calls, and face-to-face meeting and visits, communication appears to play a large part in the superintendent/principal trust relationship.

Meetings/site visits. Superintendents took the opportunity to utilize meetings as a way to either address a group of principals as whole or to include principals in other meetings as a way to promote inclusiveness and increase communications with that group district wide. Some superintendents verified that they would take some time out of a principals meeting to address them personally and give district updates, while others used the opportunity to promote professional development for their principals. Other superintendents indicated that including principals in cabinet meetings as well as board update meetings, gave principals the opportunity to express themselves or the other principals that they represented. Site visits were seen as another opportunity by both superintendents and principals as a way to further enhance a trusting relationship by

having the opportunity to meet face-to-face and discuss the issues at hand while keeping

in touch with each site.

      Support/transparency. The principals perceived support from the superintendent

in terms of communication as giving them "a heads up" or "watching their backs." For

some principals the expectation was that the superintendent would back you publically

but reprimand you privately if necessary. Most superintendents touched upon this same

topic and agreed that they should take the fall for the principal but at the same time let the

principal take the credit for successes at their site. Transparency to the superintendents

interviewed, was an important part of their position and that it was something that they

needed to be mindful about. Communicating often and early was something that most

superintendents thought was imperative to their organization.

Table 26

*Frequency Table for Superintendents and Principals of Identified Factors that
Contribute to the success of Superintendents Promoting Successful Communication that
Establishes and Maintains a High Level of Trust between Superintendents and Principals*

PARTICIPANTS	COMMUNICATION	MEETINGS/SITE VISITS	TRANSPARENCY/ SUPPORT
Principals	38	23	8
Superintendents	48	27	29
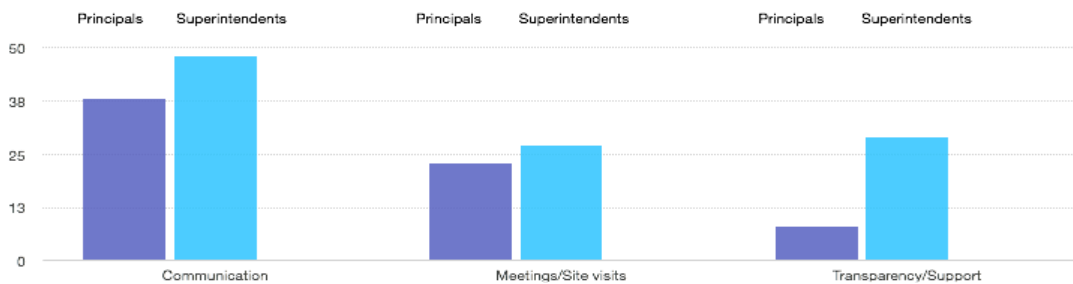
Figure 22. A visual representation of a frequency table of identified factors that
contribute to the success of superintendents promoting successful communication that
establishes and maintains a high level of trust between superintendents and principals.

Interview Question 5

Interview Question 5 asked: *How does the following factor exhibit the presence of trust in your organization?*

Interview Question 5 was broken down into five categories: (a) Exhibiting interdependence, (b) Speaking and acting in a consistent manner, (c) Displaying honesty in all actions, (d) Maintaining connections with all involved, and (e) Extending trust to others. Data on each of the five categories will be presented independently

Interview question 5a. Question 5a inquired of superintendents and principals how interdependence is exhibited as the presence of trust. Factors included teamwork vs. autonomy, support and exhibiting trust (see Table 27 and Figure 23).

Teamwork vs. autonomy. In this instance there was a difference between superintendents and principals. Superintendents spoke mostly of granting autonomy to their principals, realizing the importance of presenting this opportunity of extending autonomy to the principals in their district. There was a consensus of understanding that the principals knew what was best for their site and that the superintendent's job was to be there for support but to get out the way and not micromanage sites. The superintendents reflected that they trusted the principals enough to grant them the autonomy necessary to successfully lead a school site. The principals however focused on what they perceived as the importance of teamwork in relation to the superintendent. The principals did not bring up the idea of wanting to be autonomous or expressing this to the superintendent during the course of our interviews. They did however remark about the importance to them about teamwork with the superintendent. Utilizing the idea

of teamwork to solve problems and achieve goals. With the superintendent listening to

them and working together to move school sites and the district forward.

Support. All principals expressed appreciation for superintendent support. The

fact that superintendents were willing to listen to them and see their perspective was

important to the principals. They understood their role in the district as part of a team

and noted that when superintendents encouraged and supported team work amongst

principals as well as with the district level team it was seen as a positive effort to move

the district forward. The superintendents saw supporting the principals very much like

the principals perceived support but added providing resources that the principals needed.

Two superintendents noted during their interviews that they felt in order to show support

for principals, the superintendent should be willing to publically shoulder mistakes that

principals may make and then address it with them privately. One superintendent

mentioned that conversely it was also important to make sure principals are

acknowledged for successes.

Exhibiting trust. For principals exhibiting trust was a matter of the superintendent

being a person of their word and admitting when a mistake had been made.

Superintendents expected the same from principals and acknowledged that

interdependence, trust and collaboration are necessary for districts to improve education

and support for their students.

Table 27

Frequency Table for Superintendents and Principals for Factors Associated with
Interdependence Exhibiting the Presence of Trust in the Organization

PARTICIPANTS	TEAMWORK VS AUTONOMY	SUPPORT	EXHIBITING TRUST
Principals	8	18	7
Superintendents	16	15	19
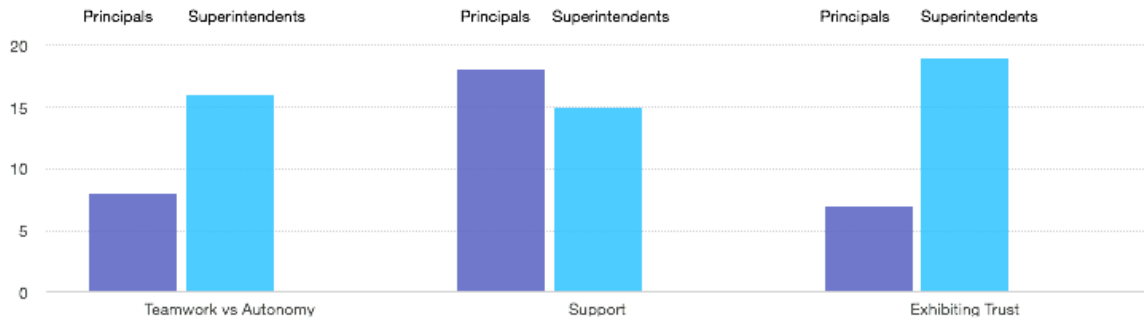
Figure 23. A visual representation of a frequency table of factors associated with interdependence exhibiting the presence of trust in the organization.

Interview question 5b. Question 5b addressed superintendents and principals in how they perceived the superintendent speaking and acting in a consistent manner. Factors cited by both superintendents and principals included follow through/consistency, genuineness and modeling expected behavior (see Table 28 and Figure 24).

Follow through/consistency. In interviews with superintendents and principals the question of interdependency surfacing as speaking and acting in a consistent manner was a question that showed differences in thought between superintendents and principals. For principals follow through and consistency was important in the fact that the superintendents "walked the talk." and that there was follow through with their stated promises of actions. One principal noted that consistency by the superintendent was important so that they would stand behind them at all times with no surprises. No superintendents addressed this point specifically in my interviews.

Genuineness. Again, principals felt that genuineness came in the form of being truthful and honest on the superintendent's part. For superintendents this was an area that they thought was particularly important in terms of creating and maintaining trust. Superintendents perceived genuineness and speaking and acting in a consistent manner as an alignment with credibility which drew itself to a way to motivate others.

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Modeling expected behavior. The superintendents that were interviewed all expressed a desire to, and model the importance of modeling expected behavior of speaking and acting in a consistent manner. Since the expectation was that principals would follow suit and begin to speak and act in a consistent manner at their sites.

Table 28

Frequency Table for Superintendents and Principals for Factors Associated with Speaking and Acting in a Consistent Manner Exhibiting the Presence of Trust in the Organization

PARTICIPANTS	FOLLOW THROUGH/ CONSISTENCY	GENUINESS	MODELING EXPECTED BEHAVIOR
Principals	22	4	0
Superintendents	0	11	15
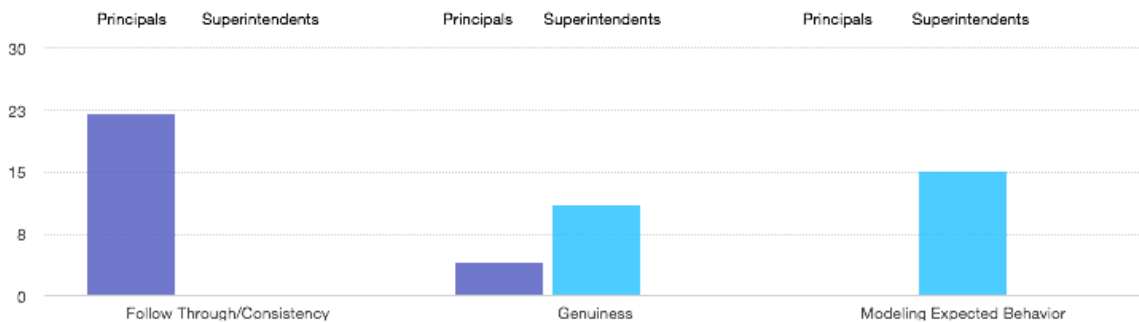
Figure 24. A visual representation of a frequency table of identified factors associated with speaking and acting in a consistent manner exhibiting the presence of trust in the organization.

Interview question 5c. Superintendents and principals communicated their perceptions on the superintendent's displaying of honesty in all actions which exhibits the presence of trust. Factors included transparency, communication and modeling expected behavior (see Table 29 and Figure 25).

Transparency. Both principals and superintendents expressed that honesty and transparency were important in developing and sustaining a trusting relationship. Each

group linked the building of trust to the ability of the superintendent to admit when they made a mistake and to express to others what they learned from it.

Communication. The principals identified this factor as it related to the superintendent's having enough confidence in the principals to entrust them with confidential information. The superintendents did not specifically identify communication as a factor of this particular question.

Modeling expected behavior. The superintendents as in past responses felt it was necessary for them to model expected behavior to the principals. With the expectation being that the principals would then behave in the same manner with their site staff. The principals noted superintendent's honesty and appreciated transparency but did not specifically identify this factor within this question.

Table 29

Frequency Table for Superintendents and Principals for Factors Associated with Displaying Honesty in all Actions Exhibiting the Presence of Trust in the Organization

PARTICIPANTS	TRANSPARENCY	COMMUNICATION	MODELING EXPECTED BEHAVIOR
Principals	5	12	0
Superintendents	13	0	7
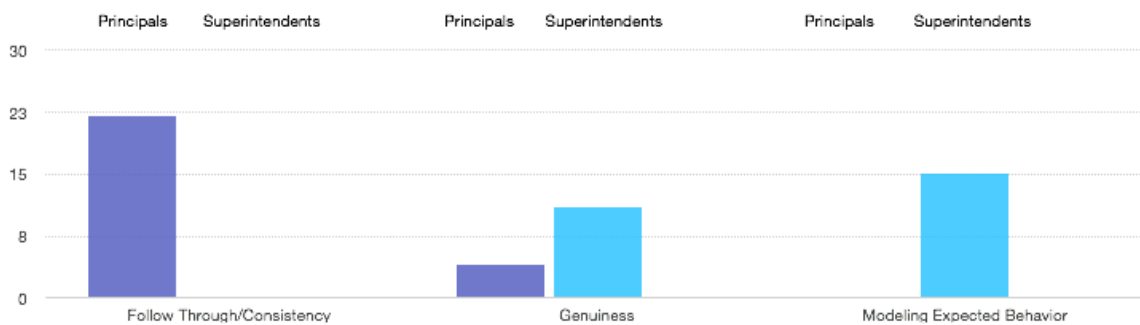
Figure 25. A visual representation of a frequency table of identified factors that contribute to the display of honesty in all actions exhibiting the presence of trust in the organization.

Interview question 5d. Question 5d addressed maintaining connections with all involved. The factors cited by both superintendents and principals included building relationships, site visits and communication (see Table 30 and Figure 26).

Building relationships. Both superintendents and principals expressed that building relationships was a factor in maintaining connections. Principals and superintendents noted that it was the superintendent's responsibility to build and maintain the relationship between the two. Superintendents expressed that maintaining relationships with principals was important but difficult in terms of how much time was needed to nurture the relationship.

Site visits. Superintendents and principals identified site visits as a factor in maintaining connections with each other. The principals had a higher response rate, six to the superintendent's four. The principals noted that they felt site visits were a positive way for the superintendent to maintain connections within the school site and staff as well as themselves. The superintendents indicated that they enjoyed site visits, but indicated that time was a factor in not being able to visit as often as they would like.

Communication. Superintendents and principals both noted that communication was a key factor in maintaining connections, superintendents more so than principals. Superintendents indicated that they utilize various forms of technology in order to maintain connections with principals while principals indicated that face-to-face communication with the superintendent was important and meaningful to them.

Table 30

Frequency Table for Superintendents and Principals for Factors Associated with Maintaining Connections with all Involved Exhibiting the Presence of Trust in the Organization

PARTICIPANTS	BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS	SITE VISITS	COMMUNICATION
Principals	13	6	6
Superintendents	10	4	10
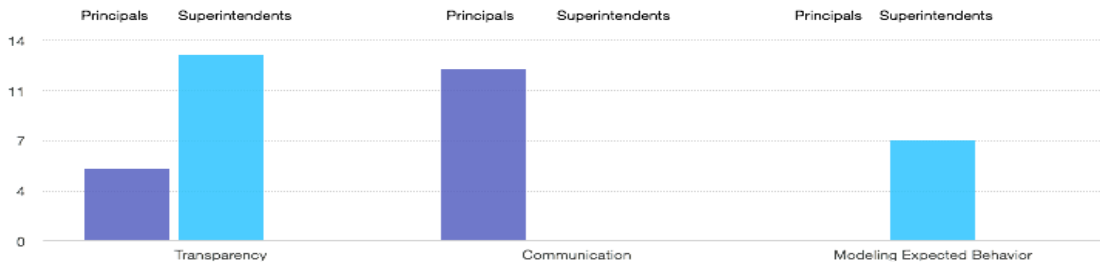
Figure 26. A visual representation of a frequency table of identified factors that contribute to the display of connections with all involved in exhibiting the presence of trust in the organization.

Interview question 5e. Question 5e addressed the extension of trust as exhibiting trust in the Organization. Superintendents and principals responded with the factors of extension of trust/autonomy and supportive/communication (see Table 31 and Figure 27).

Extension of trust/autonomy. Principals and superintendents both indicated that the extension of trust could be exhibited in many different formats. Principals felt that the superintendent extended trust through treating principals as professionals and extending autonomy for principals at their sites. Superintendents also agreed that granting principal's autonomy was an extension of trust as well as the assumption that principals can be entrusted until they prove otherwise.

Supportive/communication. Both principals and superintendents indicated that the extension of trust involved superintendent support and communication. Superintendents indicated that being supportive included addressing issues as necessary with principals and providing support both professionally and with district resources. Principals noted that communication from the superintendent was important. They indicated that open, honest, transparent communication was important.

Table 31

Frequency Table for Superintendents and Principals for Identified Factors Displaying Extending Trust Exhibiting Trust in the Organization

PARTICIPANTS	EXTENSION OF TRUST/AUTONOMY	SUPPORTIVE/ COMMUNICATION
Principals	31	9
Superintendents	20	16
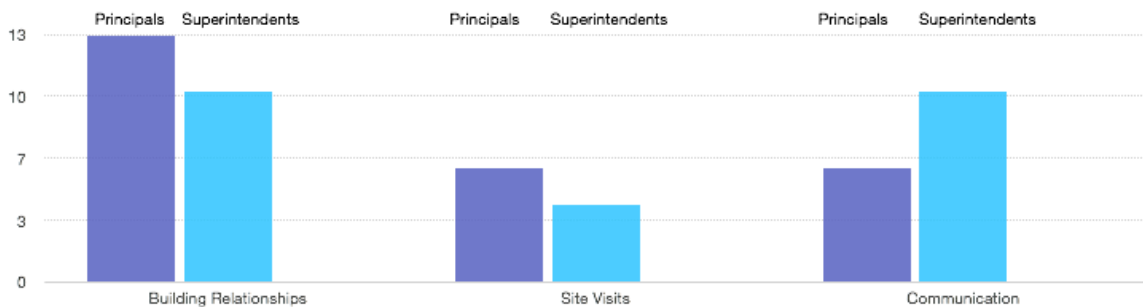
Figure 27. A visual representation of a frequency table for identified factors displaying extending trust exhibiting trust in the organization.

Summary

Chapter IV presented the data and findings collected for this study. This study focused on the lived experiences of superintendents and principals through a phenomenological comparative study and the factors that build and sustain trusting

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relationships between superintendents and principals. The population for this study was current and former district superintendents and site principals in the state of California.

The target population was current and former district superintendents and site principals in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties in California. A total of eight principals and eight superintendents from San Bernardino and Riverside Counties in California participated.

The main research question asked, "*What factors do experienced current and former superintendents and principals in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties identify as important factors in developing and maintaining trusting relationships*." Three sub questions further defined the lives experiences: (a) factors that are important to current and former superintendents in building and sustaining trust, (b) factors that are important to current and former principals in building and sustaining trust, and (c) similarities and differences between superintendents and principals in factors that build and sustain trusting relationships.

A list of nine interview questions was presented to each participant. Interviews took place in a face-to-face semi- structured environment. The interviews were recorded and transcribed utilizing the Rev application. Copies of transcribed interviews were then analyzed by the researcher using NVivo software to gain insight on emergent themes or codes as well as to organize the codes and themes in a consistent manner as they related to the interview questions.

Findings indicated that superintendents and principals were close in their perceptions of trust building and maintenance of trust between superintendents and principals.

The most coded themes revolved around communication/transparency, support, relationship building and extension of trust. Superintendents frequently addressed their opinion that they saw themselves as role models and were dedicated to modeling expected behaviors to principals with the thought that principals would in turn model the expected behavior at their sites. Communication and relationship building were the two most coded factors amongst principals and superintendents in terms as building and maintaining trust relationships. For both principals and superintendents communication involved various forms of communication including the use of technology as well as the importance of transparency by the superintendent, in particular the admission of mistakes and communicating lessons learned. Relationship building was viewed by the superintendents and principals as a crucial "building block" of their relationship. It was equally important and meaningful between the two groups that the superintendent took the time to get to know the principals on a personal level.

Participants answered the interview questions based upon lived experiences past or present. Some superintendents cited past experiences as a principal that shaped how they now communicate and interact with principals in the present.

Chapter V presents conclusions, implications and recommendations for further research based on these findings.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this phenomenological comparative study was to examine the factors that facilitate and sustain trusting relationships between school district superintendents and site principals currently serving or have served in the past in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties in California. An additional purpose of this study was to determine what similarities and differences exist between superintendents and principals perceptions of the factors that build and sustain a trusting relationship between the superintendents and principals. The overarching RQ asked, *"What factors do experienced current and former superintendents and principals identify as important to developing and maintaining trust."* This broad RQ was followed by three sub-questions that narrowed the scope to identify specific factors and actions that superintendents take to build and sustain a trusting relationship.

The qualitative methodology was used to identify specific factors and actions that superintendents take to build and sustain a trusting relationship with principals. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used to collect data. The population for this study consisted of district superintendents and site principals who currently serve or have served in the past in California. The target population for this study was current and former district superintendents and site principals within the San Bernardino and Riverside Counties in California. There was a total of 16 participants combined. The sample population consisted of eight principals and eight superintendents equally divided between the two counties, four superintendents and four principals from each county participated.

Major Findings

The major findings of this study are organized by RSQs.

RSQ1

RSQ1 was: *What Factors do Experienced Current and Former Superintendents Identify as Important in Building and Sustaining a Trusting Relationship between a Superintendent and Principal?*

The data indicated that superintendents all identified many factors that led to the building and sustaining of trust between themselves and principals, there were three themes that emerged as important to them. Communication/transparency, relationship building, and modeling expected behavior.

Communication/transparency was noted by superintendents as being an important factor in establishing and maintaining trust with principals. Superintendents felt that it was important to establish and maintain communications utilizing a variety of forms including phone calls, texting, emails, and face-to-face conversations. Two of the eight superintendents had started to utilize Facebook and Twitter in addition to the previously noted forms of communication. Superintendents also felt that their communications needed to be honest and transparent and that they felt an obligation to themselves and their staff, including principals to admit when they had made a mistake and subsequently express what they learned from their mistake. Relationship building was another major factor that superintendents responded to. They felt that taking the time to get to know the staff at their sites including principals on a personal level was a key factor in establishing and maintaining trust. All superintendents felt that finding the time to have conversations with principals about them personally, family life, interests outside of work and their

personal dreams and goals was difficult but well worth it in terms of building relationships. Modeling expected behavior was the third important factor that superintendents noted as being a valuable component to the establishment of and maintaining of trust with principals. This, for all superintendents, was considered to be a purposeful action in which the superintendents expressed that they would not only model expected behavior in various situations and that it was the hope that this same behavior would carry over to principal's interactions with the staff at their site.

RSQ2

RSQ2 was: *What Factors do Experienced Current and Former Principals Identify as Important in Building and Sustaining a Trusting Relationship between a Superintendent and Principal?"*

The major findings indicated that principals articulated three major areas identified as having factors and actions that identified the specific factors and actions that superintendents take to insure the building and sustaining of trusting relationships. Open communication, building relationships, and extension of trust. Open communication/transparency was the highest identified action that principals indicated superintendents did to build and sustain a trusting relationship. The principals expressed that they wanted the superintendent to give them open and honest feedback as well as listen to them and their ideas. This was perceived by the principals that they were valued by the superintendent. Like the superintendents, the principals identified building relationships as a common thread in not only establishing a trusting relationship but maintaining it as well. The principals felt, as did the superintendents, that it was the superintendent's job to reach out to principals and establish the personal relationship.

Principals indicated a great appreciation for superintendents that went out of their way to get to know them on a personal level away from their professional selves. Extension of trust was another factor that principals indicated that helped build and support a trusting relationship. All participants expressed that extension of trust was important to them in that the superintendent did not try and micro-manage them, trusted them to make good decisions, as well as giving them opportunities to think outside the box and try new ideas without fear of retribution.

RSQ3

RSQ3 was: *What similarities and differences exist between superintendents and principal's perceptions in regards to factors that build and sustain a trusting relationship?"*

When examining the results, each interview question produced similar and different results. Overall there were many more similarities than differences. The differences in number of responses appeared to be a result of how both principals and superintendents perceived their role in the superintendent principal relationship. The factors that produced the highest number of agreements between the two groups overall was communication, relationship building, and extension of trust/autonomy. Communication was by far the highest indicated factor by both superintendents and principals of building and sustaining trust in the relationships between the two groups. It was indicated by the interview results that both entities agreed that the communication needed to be open and honest and involve varied forms of communication including email, phone calls, texting and most valued by principals face-to-face communication. Relationship building was a close second to communication as a factor that both entities

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agreed upon as a factor for building and maintaining trusting relationships. Relationship

building was a thread that wove through most all of the questions asked during the

interview process. Both superintendents and principals agreed that it was the

superintendent's role to reach out to principals to establish and maintain this relationship.

The superintendents varied on the model they used to establish this relationship but all

principals expressed appreciation when a superintendent made the concerted effort to

establish and maintain a personal relationship away from their professional lives.

Extension of trust and autonomy was an additional factor that each group indicated as

important in maintaining trusting relationships. Both principals and superintendents

perceived this as granting autonomy to principals and trusting them professionally.

In terms of differences there were very few between principals and

superintendents. In all the differences observed included teamwork vs. autonomy, follow

through/consistency and modeling expected behavior. Both groups defined autonomy as

a positive in which superintendents gave autonomy to principals. While the principals

expressed appreciation to superintendents for extending that measure of independence to

them they verbalized during interviews that they valued the concept of teamwork more in

terms of the superintendent providing time and support for principals to work together in

a collaborative environment. The second difference observed was in connection with the

interview question concerning speaking and acting in a consistent manner, exhibiting

trust in the organization. The principals expressed their ideas in terms of the importance

of superintendents "walking the talk" and following through on promises of actions.

While no superintendents verbalized this same response to this particular question they

did address this factor and action in subsequent questions. Finally, the third difference

was noted in two questions by superintendents only. Displaying honesty in all actions and speaking and acting in a consistent manner. This factor was modeling expected behavior. All superintendents expressed that to them this was an important factor in building and sustaining a trusting relationship with their principals. The superintendents saw this as an opportunity to demonstrate their expectations as well as the desire for the principals to follow suit back at their sites. No principals noted this as a factor specifically as a response to this question but some did note in subsequent questions the superintendents as a role model for them.

Unexpected Findings

During the data collection process there were a few unexpected findings. Based upon a review of literature I found that while much was written about actions and factors that successfully promote the building and sustaining of trust relationships between superintendents and principals, there was some literature that pointed to the large number of districts that are lacking this trust relationship of this leadership team and therefore are unable to move forward into providing students optimum educational opportunities. Although my sample size was relatively small (16) I found no evidence of a dysfunctional relationship between superintendents and principals. Happily all principals reported feeling confident and well supported in their relationship with the superintendents. Another finding that was unexpected came from one superintendent that had been in a school district for three years and was working on building a trust relationship with her principals. She expressed some frustration in terms of getting the principals to embrace a trust relationship with her and to encourage them to take responsibility for their own sites. She reported that the principals just wanted her to tell

them what to do, that they were more comfortable with that concept. One of her group readings was on trust and she indicated that they were suspicious as to why they were all reading a book about trusting relationships. The situation in the district was different from any of the other districts that I had conducted interviews in. All other principals expressed a desire and were appreciative that their superintendents gave them the autonomy that they had. Finally, many superintendents felt that their very title was an impediment to establishing genuine, trusting relationships with the principals, that it somehow had a stigma attached. This surprised based upon every principal expressing and appreciating the positive relationship they had with their superintendents.

Conclusions

Based upon the findings of this study as supported by literature, it is concluded that the building and sustaining of trust relationships between superintendents and principals is a complicated, time consuming, dance. It is concluded that there are a multitude of factors and actions that lay squarely on the shoulders of the superintendent to be responsible for building and maintaining. This relationship is considered to be one of the most important in a school district. Without trust between superintendent and principal there is only compliance by the latter and no motivation or inspiration to try new ideas. The relationship between superintendents and principals has changed over time, from a strictly subordinate role to a position that is expected to make decisions and take actions that are in the best interest of their sites. The role of superintendent has evolved into one of collaboration and inclusiveness of decision making at a district wide level. The partnership of principal and superintendent has become one that seeks to bring the best programs for students to a school district. Ultimately, this team can successfully

forge a powerful alliance and has the ability to ultimately create the roadmap to the success of positive programs and initiatives that provide exceptional educational experiences for student.   Superintendents must be the ones to initiate this powerful relationship between themselves and principals in order to achieve district wide goals. The research shows that trusting relationships are essential to high performance in and the nurturing of creativity in organizations. This requires that superintendents and principals develop a high degree of collaboration as a district team and develop a climate of trust in order to be successful. In the five conditions according to Harvey and Drolet (2005) that chronicle trust and the ability to create and maintain it in professional relationships, every superintendent that participated in this study was an example of each of these attributes:

- Interdependence: Mutual need creates a balanced basis of trust.

- Consistency: The ability to consistently "walk the talk."

- Honesty: Honesty and integrity are the building blocks of trust.

- Affability: Likeable people are more likely to enlist the trust of those around them.

- Extension of trust: "Those who give trust get trust."

The encouraging factor is that all principals interviewed reported these same findings.

The research also indicated that building trust included building relationships in which there is a give and take of sharing some things about yourself as a way to begin laying groundwork for trust building. The participants in this study all responded positively to this factor when presented to them in the interviews that were conducted. Some of the research suggested that it was important for leaders to openly acknowledge

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missteps or mistakes along the way, especially among subordinates was a powerful tool in building trust. Once again principals in this study reported that their superintendents exhibited this behavior. Finally, the research also suggested that leading and engaging others in the collaborative process ignites enthusiasm and develops a sense of safety for making mistakes and learning from them. The superintendents who participated in this study indicated that they encouraged principals and provided opportunities for collaboration amongst themselves and giving them a voice in district level meetings. Principals responded that they felt their superintendents positively encouraged them to think of new ideas and they felt that they had the support from the superintendent that it was ok to fail.

Overall this research indicates that there is an overwhelming indication that principals and superintendents in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties that participated in this study are already deeply dedicated to the building and sustaining of a trusting relationship between principals and superintendents.

Implications for Action

Based on the results of this study, implications are based on a couple of conclusions drawn from the findings. First there seems to be a discrepancy between the findings from this research study and what the larger body of published research is indicating, in which there was the suggestion that the trust relationship between principals and superintendents is broken in many districts. The implication is that there needs to be professional development developed in which these two groups are brought together to practice and build trusting relationships in some type of team building exercises over a period of time. This would be a means of purposefully initiating trusting

relationships in a structured manner to those districts that have yet to achieve it.

Secondly, I believe that a new system of training superintendents should be put in place.

While there are several ACSA supported trainings such as the Superintendent's Institute,

Leading the Leaders, and coaching mentors. I believe there needs to be added on to new

superintendents training some type of opportunity for new superintendents to go out and

interview experienced superintendents. This would go beyond the now expected training

through ACSA programs and the county superintendents meetings in which from my

experience are very helpful but can be somewhat intimidating as a new superintendent.

It's duly noted that the professional life span of a superintendent in a single district is

about three years, yet the time given for superintendents to come in and make changes to

a school district is five years. I believe that a meaningful action for a new superintendent

would be to have access and interview a number of superintendents. Granted, some

superintendents are given the luxury of a former superintendent as a mentor but that is

just one person. I believe that first time superintendents could benefit from the interview

process involving several superintendents. The power of experience could guide new

superintendents and hearing the stories of experienced superintendents could help to

shape and inspire a new superintendent's vision.

Recommendations for Further Research

It is recommended that future research surrounding this topic be completed in the
following areas:

- Explore building and sustaining trusting relationships as they relate to the
  superintendent and the school board.

- Explore building and sustaining trusting relationships as they relate to principal /teacher relationships.

- Explore building and sustaining trusting relationships as they relate to teacher /student relationships.

- Explore building and sustaining trusting relationships as they relate to county superintendents/district superintendent relationships.

- Explore superintendent principal relationship within the same school district to identify a correlation in perceptions of the building and sustaining of a trusting relationship.

- Explore background training/knowledge of district superintendents in relation to understanding of building and maintaining trusting relationships with principals.

- Replicate the study using superintendents and principals of similar size districts.

- A study that identified the principals' responsibility in the establishment of a trusting relationship with superintendents.

- A study of the impact of the generational differences on trusting relationships between superintendents and principals.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

When I started my doctoral program I was interested in understanding the relationship of trust building and maintenance of trust between superintendent and principal from a superintendent's point of view I was interested in how I as a superintendent could change and nurture this relationship as well as understanding how to

maintain it. I now view this relationship from a holistic point of view and that the

implications are far reaching into every relationship involved with education. It is not

just the relationship between principals and superintendents, while important, equally

important are the relationships between all staff members working with students.

Principal/teacher, teacher/student, principal/site staff, superintendent/district staff, and

superintendent/board members. All deserve the same attention and dedication in order

for students to thrive.

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APPENDIX A

Literature Matrix

	History of Education	Role of Superintendent Principals	Superintendent Principal Relationship	Development and Maintenance of Trust	Loss and Regaining of Trust	Trust Relationship Between Superintendent and Principal
American Public Education: An Origin Story.(2013)	X					
A Brief History of Education in the United States(1999)	X	X				
The History and Social Foundations of America (2013)	X	X				
Answering the Call: The History of NEA, Part 1 (2006)	X					
The Story of American Public Education (2002)	X					
American Education: A History (2014	X	X				
Leading 21st Century Schools. (2015)	X					

	History of Education	Role of Superintendent Principal	Superintendent Principal Relationship	Development and Maintenance of Trust	Loss Regaining of Trust	Trust Relationship Between Superintendent and Principal
What do 21st Century Learners Need to Succeed? (2013)	X					
The School Superintendent		X	X			
The Superintendent Fieldbook (2013)		X				
The Principal's Office (2013)		X				
Leadership Teaming: Superintendent Principal Relationship (2009)			X			X
The Process of Leading Change (2012)			X			
The Speed of Trust (2008)			X			

	History of Education	Role of Superintendent Principal	Superintendent Principal Relationship	Development and Maintenance of Trust	Loss Regaining Of Trust	Trust Relationship Between Superintendent and Principal
Building Trust in Business, Politics, Relationships, and Life (2001)				X	X	
Presence: Bringing Your Boldest Self to Your Biggest Challenges(2015)				X		
Trust: Trust Yourself: A Simple 10 Step guideline to Build Trust in Yourself and Trust in Others (2016)				X		
Emotional Intelligence 2.0 (2009)				X	X	
The Politically Intelligent Leader(2007)				X		
Building Teams, Building People(2006)				X		X
Becoming a Resonant Leader(2008)				X		

	History of Education	Role of Superintendent Principal	Superintendent Principal Relationship	Development and Maintenance Of Trust	Loss Regaining of Trust	Trust Relationship Between Superintendent and Relationship
21st Culturally Intelligent Leadership				X	X	
Beyond Change Management (2010)				X		
Brilliance by Design(2011)				X		
Crucial Conversations (2012)				X	X	
Trust Works (2013)				X		
The Change Leader's Roadmap(2010)				X		
Creative People Must be Stopped(2012)				X	X	
A Leader's Legacy(2006)					X	
The Five Dysfunctions of a Team(2002)				X	X	X
True North (2007)						X
Hard Facts(2006)						X

BUIRB Bill of Rights

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.

2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.

4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.

5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.

7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.

8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form

INFORMATION ABOUT: Factors that Build and Sustain a Relationship of Trust between School District Superintendents and Principals.

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Donna Kellogg Ed.D. Candidate

PURPOSE OF STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Donna Kellogg a doctoral student from the Brandman school of Organizational Leadership at Brandman University. The purpose of this research study is to explore the factors that build and sustain a relationship of trust between school district superintendents and principals. This high trust relationship can result in a positive environment in which each party is enabled to feel empowered to take risks in an effort to creatively move a site or a district forward. The purpose of this study is to identify and describe the factors that facilitate the building and sustainability of a trusting relationship between experienced superintendents and principals. Additionally, there is the purpose of to determine if differences exist between superintendents' and principals' perceptions of the factors that influence and sustain a trusting relationship.

 This study will examine in the gap in the literature specifically related to factors that make this relationship positive and productive, along with examining significant differences between the superintendent and principals in regards to building and retaining trusting relationships.

By participating in this study I agree to participate in a one-on-one interview. This one-on-one interview will last between 30 – 60 minutes and will be conducted in person. Completion of the interviews will take place during the month of September, 2016.

I understand that:
a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the Investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researcher.
b) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input may help add to the research regarding the factors that build and sustain a relationship of trust between the superintendent and principal. Findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study and will provide new insights about the trust relationship experience in which I participated. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.

c) If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Donna Kellogg at dkellog1@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at 909-754-2385; or Dr. Phil Pendley (Advisor) at pendley@brandman.edu.

d) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the Investigator may stop the study at any time.

e) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent

process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the "Research Participant's Bill of Rights." I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

Signature of Participant or Responsible Party

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX D

Superintendent Interview Script and Questions

Researcher: Donna Kellogg

Research Title: Factors that Build and Sustain a Relationship of Trust Between
School District Superintendents and Principals

Study Subjects: Superintendents

Interview Script:

1. Introduction of myself.
2. Tell me about yourself.
3. Are there any questions you would like to ask before we begin?

Interview Questions:

1. What specific actions do you take to build and sustain a trusting relationship between principals and superintendents?

2. What factors do you consider to determine the level of trust between yourself and the principals? Can you describe a situation that worked well for you?

3. What factors would you associate with your success in establishing and maintaining trusting relationships between yourself and the principals?

4. What are the various ways in which you promote communication? What types of communication do you utilize to help build and sustain a high level of trust between yourself and the principals?

5. How do the following factors exhibit the presence of trust in your organization (White et. al.):

   a. Exhibiting interdependence.
   b. Speaking and acting in a consistent manner.
   c. Displaying honesty in all actions.
   d. Maintaining connections with all involved.
   e. Extending trust to others.

APPENDIX E

Principal Interview Script and Questions

Researcher: Donna Kellogg

Research Title: Factors that Build and Sustain a Relationship of Trust Between School District Superintendents and Principals

Study Subjects: Principals

Interviewer Script:

1. Introduction of myself.
2. Tell me about yourself.
3. Are there any questions you would like to ask before we begin?

Interview Questions:

1. What specific actions does the superintendent take to build and sustain a trusting relationship between principals and the superintendent?

2. What factors do you consider to determine the level of trust between yourself and the superintendent?

3. What factors would you associate with the superintendent's success in establishing and maintaining trusting relationships between yourself and the superintendent?

4. What types of communication does the superintendent successfully utilize to help build and sustain a high level of trust between yourself and the superintendent?

5. How do the following factors exhibit the presence of trust in your organization (White et. al.):

   a. Exhibiting interdependence.
   b. Speaking and acting in a consistent manner.
   c. Displaying honesty in all actions.
   d. Maintaining connections with all involved.
   e. Extending trust to others.

APPENDIX F

Audio Recording Release Form

AUDIO RECORDING RELEASE FORM

The use of audio recording may be used during the course of this research in order to ensure accuracy of verbal transactions. The investigator does not anticipate the use of these tapes beyond the scope of the initial research project.

a) Listening to the audio recordings will be limited to the investigator.
b) The purpose of the audio recordings will be to ensure the accuracy of verbal statements has they are transcribed into written statements.
c) All audio recordings will be electronically erased within six months of the initial recordings.

_____
Signature of Participants or Responsible Party   Date

_____
Signature of Principal Investigator   Date