

# SECTION IV

## How do we create professional community through trust building?

Why is trust important in our school community?

Protocol Process  
Activity



What does the research say about trust?

How do we create a trusting professional community?

protocol Process  
Activity



Processes to foster a conversation about trust.

## **Why is trust important in our school community?**

How do we create a professional community through trust building?

A growing body of research documents a correlation between a high degree of relational trust and student achievement gains. (Trust in Schools Anthony Bryk and Barbara Schneider.) Review these findings in light of our collaborative site-based decision-making model and we see an urgency to understand two complex systems at work in our schools.

Relational trust entails much more than just making school staff feel good about their work environment and colleagues. Schools build trust on a day-to-day, encounter-by-encounter basis. A one time workshop or seminar might help but will not provide the necessary action to achieve relational trust.

The materials that follow will help you to learn more about what relational trust is and how research documents the connection to student achievement.

We invite you to process documents with your staff as a beginning conversation to understanding these dynamics in your school.



## What research says about trust.

How do we create a professional community through trust building?

### **Are Good Social Relationships Key to School Improvement? Summary of Key Points**

Here is a lesson learned from Chicago's decade of school reforms, according to a new book by Anthony S. Bryk and Barbara Schneider, [In Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement](#). The University of Chicago researchers examine the role of social relationships in schools and their impact on student achievement. Their conclusion? That "a broad base of trust across a school community lubricates much of a school's day-to-day functioning and is a critical resource as local leaders embark on ambitious improvement plans,"

Bryk and Schneider contend that schools with a high degree of "relational trust" as they call it, are far more likely to make the kinds of changes that help raise student achievement than those where relations are poor.

Bryk and Schneider take the bold step of seeking empirical evidence that links trust and academic achievement.

Teachers' relationships with each other can often be more challenging than those between teachers and their bosses, the authors found.

The evidence from Chicago suggests that while not all schools with high levels of trust improve- that is, trust alone won't solve instructional or structural problems in schools with little or no relational trust have practically no chance of improving.

In top-quartile schools, three-quarters of teachers reported strong or very strong relations with fellow teachers, and nearly all reported such relations with their principals. By contrast, at schools in the bottom quartile, a majority of teachers having little or no trust in their colleagues, two-thirds said the same about their principals, and fewer than 40 percent reported positive, trusting relations with parents.

Bryk and Schneider found that schools with strong levels of trust at the outset of reforms had a 1 in 2 chance of making significant improvements in math and reading, while those with weak relationships had a 1 in 7 chance of making gains.

Good relationships and trust won't compensate for bad instruction, poorly trained teachers or unworkable school structures, as Bryk and Schneider are careful to note. But by the same token, reform efforts are bound to fail if they ignore the importance of how teachers, principals, parents, and students interact.

The Adaptive School: Developing and Facilitating Collaborative Groups  
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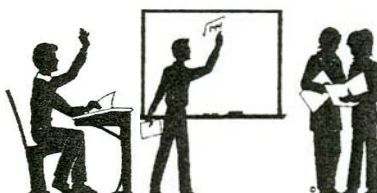


# THE FINAL WORD

- Read – and highlight text
- Designate a starting person
- Person “A: names on item he/she highlighted but does not comment on it
- In round-robin order – other group members comment about the selected item – without cross-talk
- The originating person then gets....  
”The Final Word”
- Repeat the pattern with Person B – C – D – E – F naming items as time permits.

# Professional Community

1. Shared norms and values
2. Collective focus on student learning
3. Collaboration
4. Deprivatized practice
5. Reflective dialogue



Louis, K. S., et. al. (1996). Teachers' professional community in restructuring schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 33 (4),757-798.

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## How do we create a professional community through trust building? How do we foster trust in our school community?

### Protocol Process Activity

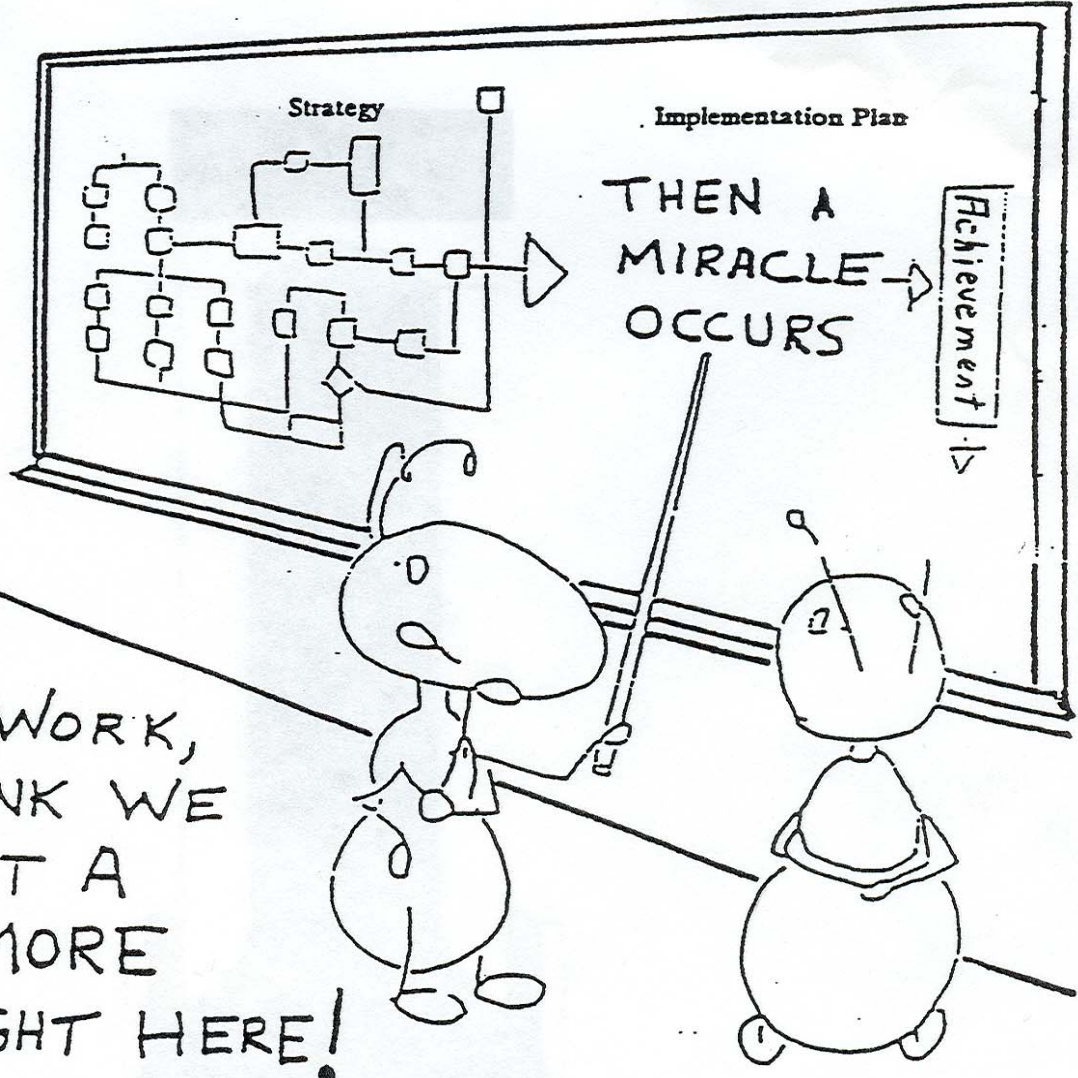


Suggestion: Process the information with regard to your own your own school community. Use the attached Desired State Map and planning guide to provide a discussion opportunity about relational trust at your school.

What evidence would we like to see and hear with regard to a trusting environment in our school? This is the Desired State.

What evidence do we currently see and hear with regard to a trusting environment in our school? This is the Existing State.

# The Change Process

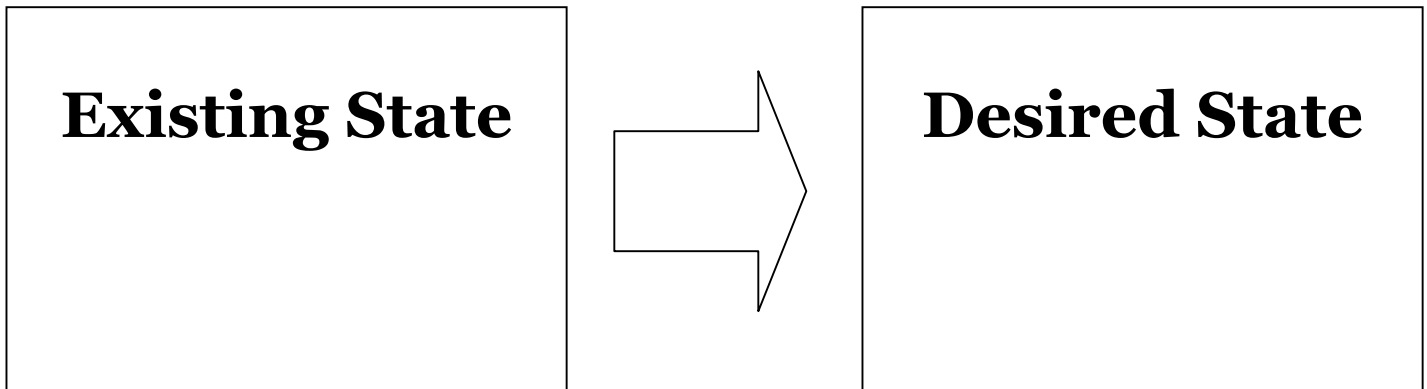


GOOD WORK,  
BUT I THINK WE  
NEED JUST A  
LITTLE MORE  
DETAIL RIGHT HERE!

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How do we foster trust in our school community?**

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Activity

## Desired State Map



### To use the Desired State Map:

1. List the existing conditions.
2. List the desired condition - what you would LIKE things to be like.
3. List internal resources needed to move from the existing to the desired state (knowledge, skills, attitudes, states of mind).

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