COLLEGIAL TRUST FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF K-12 GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Margaret Vostal

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green
State University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

December 2020

Committee:

Christy Galletta Horner, Advisor

Dryw Dworsky
Graduate Faculty Representative

Kristina LaVenia

Chris Willis

Kelly Wohlgamuth

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ABSTRACT

Christy Galletta Horner, Advisor

Closing the gap between academic achievement of the highest and lowest performing students has been a target of state and federal legislation for almost two decades. Currently, public school leaders and teachers operate in a system in which student achievement data are tied to the performance evaluations of districts, schools, teachers, and principals. This high-stakes environment has engendered a climate in public education in which leaders and teachers must collaborate to deliver effective instruction or suffer ramifications for their failure to do so.

Because relational trust supports effective collaboration between teachers, leaders of school reform should attend to relational trust to support reform efforts. But building relational trust during times of school reform may be difficult because a high stakes environment may not be conducive to collaboration. Therefore, school leaders may be faced with a paradox: trust building may jeopardized by the reform efforts for which trust is needed.

The purpose of this study was to explore collaboration among teachers during school reform. Specifically, this study investigated collaboration between general and special educators, teachers' perceptions of leader support for collaboration, and leaders' perceptions of teacher collaboration. Participants in this study included 35 teachers and nine leaders from elementary, middle, and high schools in one school district.

Results indicated that general and special educators often struggled to build relational trust. General and special educators who experienced trusting relationships, however, promoted symmetry between their roles and developed norms to support collaboration. Further, leader and teacher participants in this study both supported the notion that a trust paradox exists, suggesting

that accountability pressures complicate trust building among colleagues. Participants identified several leader behaviors that were supportive of collaborative relationships among teachers as well as leader behaviors that did not support trust building. Findings from this study may offer guidance for leaders who want to support teacher collaboration to improve student achievement.

I dedicate this project to my son, Charlie, and my husband, Brooks. Charlie, I appreciate your unwavering support of me during this degree process (and will hold you to your promise to become the third Dr. Vostal in our family). Brooks, I now understand just how hard it was for you to complete your degree *and* be a good spouse and father. I'm so grateful that you encouraged my research, answered my many questions, and kept us fed while I finished just one…more…page. I look forward to us finally aligning our research agendas. You are my favorite collaborator.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank my advisor, Dr. Galletta Horner, for teaching me about qualitative research. It's been my privilege to learn under your very capable guidance. What a joy to work with an advisor who taught me about the power of perceptions and the responsibility of researchers who try to capture them. I also thank Dr. LaVenia for your continued support and understanding during our work over the past few years. Researching with Drs. Galletta and LaVenia as part of the Emotional Labor Lab was the best learning experience for which I could have hoped. Your benevolent enthusiasm for my research, reliable optimism, honest feedback, openness to my perspective, and scholarly competence was instrumental to my degree success. You both have my trust.

I thank the rest of my committee, Dr. Dryw Dworsky, Dr. Chris Willis, and Dr. Kelly Wohlgamuth for their support and attention to my work. I am grateful for your willingness to share this research journey with me. Kelly, I'm especially appreciative that a colleague with whom I started the doctoral program could be part of my completion many years later. I am also grateful to Dr. Pauken and Dr. May for their guidance and support of me during my early years in the program. My path through this degree was not quite as linear as I'd thought it would be when I started in 2011. But looking back, I think my progress happened as it should: those bumps in my degree road eventually led to unexpected opportunities. Thanks to all of the faculty who helped me through the bumps and included me in the opportunities.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

For almost two decades, schools in the United States have faced federal legislation that has focused on standards-based reforms designed to shrink the achievement gap between the highest and lowest performing students (Easley II, 2011; Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 ushered in an era of accountability in public education in which schools standardized curricula, tested students annually, and measured students' growth toward *adequate yearly progress* (AYP), the degree to which schools helped all students achieve grade-level proficiency (Ladd, 2017). Because NCLB required test scores of traditionally low-achieving students (i.e., students with disabilities, low-income students) to be disaggregated, schools' AYP ratings highlighted the discrepancy between high and low achieving students (Mintrop & Zane, 2017). Furthermore, districts' compliance with NCLB was virtually guaranteed because schools' Title I grant funds for low-income students were dependent on districts' fulfillment of NCLB accountability mandates (Ladd, 2017). In other words, schools were required to demonstrate improved achievement of low-performing students or risk losing funding for programs that supported low-achieving students (Levine & Levine, 2012). Annual sanctions against school districts that did not demonstrate AYP served as incentive for school leaders to improve achievement for all students (Mitani, 2018).

More recently, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) initiative that accompanied the Obama administration's Race to the Top (RTTT) reform effort continued public education's accountability-driven mindset (Tienken, 2011). Accountability pressures drilled down to teachers during RTTT, mandating that classroom-level student achievement progress was reflected in individual teacher evaluations (Rutkowski and Wild, 2015). And public education's reform

initiatives are currently shaped by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 which emphasizes school leaders' responsibility to address academic inequity (Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017).

In 2017 the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) responded to ESSA's mandate with a strategic plan for school improvement that addresses inequity in Ohio's schools. In fact, the report begins by recognizing

> The state's education system is not effectively meeting the needs of specific groups of students, such as African American, Hispanic, English learners (EL), economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities. The state's achievement gap has been evident since the state began disaggregating data over 15 years ago (Ohio Department of Education, p. 4, 2017).

In an effort to close the achievement gap between high and low performing students, ODE identified ten priorities to guide school reform efforts. The first three priorities focus on school personnel and supports to ensure efficacy of teachers and leaders (Ohio Department of Education, 2017). Further, the newly published Ohio Standards for Principals places the responsibility of school improvement squarely on the shoulders of its leaders, calling for leaders to create structures that support collaboration to build staff capacity and accomplish student achievement goals (Ohio Department of Education, 2018). In short, if Ohio's school leaders want to reach annual achievement goals, they must improve systems that have consistently failed low achieving students. To do so, leaders must follow the state's directive to foster collaboration among teachers. And ODE outlines ramifications for leaders whose schools fail to make progress, such as compulsory attendance at Ohio Principals Academy (Ohio Department of

Education, 2019). Further, during the 2019-2020 school year, schools that repeatedly demonstrated poor performance (e.g., report card grades, designation in bottom 10% of district performance state-wide) were penalized by ODE. Ohio's Ed Choice program mandated that failing schools fund private school tuition for any students who opted into the Ed Choice program (Ohio Department of Education, 2020), adding financial burdens to already struggling schools. In an era of school reform, school leaders and teachers are under a great deal of strain to quickly improve student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Datnow, 2011). Ohio has mandated collaboration become a tool for leaders of school reform (Ohio Department of Education, 2018), and accountability pressures may offer fertile ground for leaders to promote purposeful collaboration among teachers. The purpose of this study is to explore collaboration between teachers and the way school leaders can best encourage successful collaboration to close the achievement gap.

Theoretical Framework

When leaders attempt to promote collegial collaboration, they must understand that schools are social organizations; relationships among teachers dictate the way learning and knowledge are disseminated among the faculty (Moolenar, 2012). In this way, successful implementation of school reform relies on a web of learning that occurs among teachers (Adams & Forsyth, 2009; Datnow, 2011). Furthermore, trust is a critical component of the collaborative work required by leaders of school reform (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000) because teachers and leaders must depend on each other to disseminate change (Cosner, 2009; Louis, 2007). Trust supports collaborative change efforts in many ways including: (a) reduced uncertainty, (b) facilitated shared problem solving, (c) increased voluntary implementation of reforms, and (d) solidified commitment to students (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Friend (2000) succinctly defined

collaboration as "...the conduit through which professionals can ensure that students receive the most effective educational services to which they are entitled" (p. 131), and trust is one way to help ensure effective collaboration. Because collaboration is required for school improvement and successful collaboration is grounded in trust, Bryk and Schneider (2002) called trust a “moral resource for school improvement” (p. 34).

Collegial Trust

In general, trust between leaders, teachers, students, and parents helps promote school effectiveness (Adams & Forsyth, 2009), but trust among teaching colleagues plays an especially important role in school reform efforts because it increases teachers' knowledge exchange, coordination, and job satisfaction (Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). High levels of trust between teachers make it easier for school improvement efforts to be initiated and sustained (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Moolenar, 2012). Trust helps leaders implement school reform because teachers who trust each other are able to exchange information to make sense of instructional change (Moolenar, 2012). Trust’s support of communication and sharing of information bolsters collaborative reform efforts that result in benefits such as positive school climate, increased school capacity, and improvements in students’ reading and math achievement (Cosner, 2009; Goddard, Salloum, & Berebitsky, 2009; Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997, 2000).

Trust’s ability to support collaboration is especially important because many current reform initiatives (e.g., standards curriculum alignment, mentoring of new teachers, inclusion of students with special needs) rely on formal collaboration, which means that interdependencies among teachers are frequently a requirement of school improvement (Friend, 2000; Moolenar, 2012). But when one party is unable to fulfill a desired outcome alone and must rely on another

to achieve desired outcomes, a shift to interdependency tends to be accompanied by a sense of vulnerability (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997). Vulnerability, in turn, sets the conditions for trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997) because trust encourages the risk of interdependence by providing psychological safety to mitigate the vulnerability that accompanies that risk (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Cosner, 2009; DiPaola & Guy, 2009). In other words, when trust between two parties increases, vulnerability decreases.

Components of Trust

Bryk and Schneider (2002) asserted that relational trust develops through one party's repeated discernments of another party's social behavior. Criteria for these discernments are comprised from four categories: (a) respect, recognition of the importance of another's role; (b) competence, abilities related to desired outcomes; (c) personal regard for others, care to reduce another's vulnerability, and (d) integrity, consistency between words and actions (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2000) defined relational trust's components in five facets including: (a) benevolence, (b) reliability, (c) honesty, (d) openness, and (e) competence. There is some congruity between these two sets of relational trust constructs. For instance, Bryk and Schneider's (2002) personal regard for others is similar to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2000) benevolence. Honesty and integrity are also similar constructs, and both research teams included competence as a characteristic of trust. In this study, I used Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2000) facets of trust to ground my examination of teachers' perceptions and offer a brief explanation of each facet of trust below.

Benevolence. The way in which one person puts the needs of another before his or her own needs is benevolence (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Benevolent behavior (e.g., taking time to listen, choosing to help when it's not convenient, thanking someone for his or her work)

demonstrates a sense of caring or good will toward another party. It's also important to note that benevolent actions are never exploitative (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Reliability. The predictable consistency of a person's behavior over time communicates reliability one who is making judgements of trust. But it is important that reliability is accompanied by benevolence, so that it demonstrates dependability that is positive and welcome (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Reliability can be signaled when one party makes his or her intentions explicit to promote another party's recognition of reliability.

Honesty. A person's authentic integrity, characterized by an alignment of word and deed, demonstrates honesty to others (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). In this way, honesty encompasses both a sense that a person will report facts truthfully and keep his or her promises. Honesty also includes behavior that demonstrates a person's sense of personal accountability, signaled by a willingness to accept responsibility for mistakes (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Openness. The degree to which two interdependent parties are able to share information suggests openness (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). It is important that people are able to share appropriate, relevant information while maintaining benevolence to ensure that the focus of the behavior remains rooted in good will. Openness also includes behavior that indicates acceptance of others' ideas, signaled by a person's willingness to accept help and advice, not just give it (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Competence. If one party possesses the skills needed to fulfill another's expectations, then he or she will be judged to be competent (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). People can help cultivate judgments of competence by choosing to support others in areas that align with their own skill fluency, so people are not in a position of skill building while trying to initiate trust in competence. But it's important for actors to maintain honesty by their willingness to

admit their lack of skill; saying "I don't know" is preferable to inflating actual competence (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

In sum, during situations of interdependence there is potential for trust to develop (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Trust building occurs when one party's expectations are met by another party's behavior (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Through repeated social interactions, one party may judge the actions of another, weighing these actions against components of trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Trust helps schools run more effectively (Adams & Forsyth, 2009), in part because trust supports collaboration among teachers (Cosner, 2009; Louis, 2007), which may be particularly critical during school improvement efforts (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Therefore, focusing on trust between teaching colleagues may be of critical importance to leaders of school reform.

Vulnerability and Perspective Taking

Even though collegial trust is desirable for schools engaged in school improvement, the trust building process is complex and fragile (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). In fact, the gulf between a state of vulnerability and a state of trust can be substantial. Because the shift from vulnerability to trust requires repeated judgements of another's behavior, trust takes time to develop (Bryk and Schneider, 2002), and feelings of vulnerability can linger (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). When trust is not yet established, there is potential that one party will not protect the interests of another party. For example, parents have expectations for teachers' behavior toward students (e.g., care, safety); when these expectations are met, trust grows. If, however, a teacher behaves in a way that does not align with parent expectations (e.g., arrives late to school repeatedly), then parents may question if their interests (i.e. child) will be protected. Parents in this situation may continue to feel vulnerable as they try to understand the reasons why teacher actions are not aligning with

parent expectations. Development of trust, then, includes a party's repeated judgements of "how and why others go about the process of fulfilling obligations" until one is sure that behaviors align with one's expectations (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p. 22).

Bryk and Scheider (2002) and Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) primarily conceptualized trust and its components from the perspective of the vulnerable party; expectations and discernments of another's behavior both come from the dependent party's side of the trust equation. Yet Tschannen-Moran (2004) acknowledged that trust can be deliberately created, which seems to suggest that trust building may actively include both parties in the trust equation. Findings in Vostal, Horner, and LaVenia (2019) indicated that trust could be conceptualized both from the perspective of the dependent party and the party on whom dependence was placed. When parties are vulnerable, they are in a position to judge the trustworthiness of another party; parties who recognize the vulnerability of another are in a position to demonstrate trust to the dependent party (Vostal, Horner, & LaVenia, 2019). Further, Vostal et al. (2019) posited that one's ability to recognize the vulnerability of another and demonstrate trustworthiness may rely on *perspective taking*, adopting the viewpoint of another (Fresko, Reich, Sjoo, & Lonroth, 2013; Park & Raile, 2010; Warren, 2018).

At a very basic level, people who work together appreciate colleagues who have the ability to see other's points of view because perspective taking lays the foundation for effective communication between colleagues (Park & Raile, 2010). But perspective taking may be an especially critical skill for teachers. Workers in caring professions (e.g.., teaching, nursing, social work) are expected to show empathy to their clients (Fresko, Reich, Sjoo, & Lonroth, 2013), and perspective taking is a prerequisite for empathy (Warren, 2018). Therefore, expectations for teachers' professional behavior may include perspective taking.

In short, perspective taking may be a necessary component of trust building because it helps parties be aware of another's vulnerability during interdependence. And when one party recognizes the vulnerability of another, he or she may be primed to demonstrate trustworthy behaviors in an attempt to reduce vulnerability and promote continued interdependence. Rather than conceptualize trust only as a process in which behaviors may or may not be judged in alignment with expectations, those who want to cultivate trust can take the perspective of another, recognize that party's vulnerability, and repeatedly demonstrate trustworthy behaviors (Vostal, Horner, & LaVenia, 2019).

Trust Paradox

However, even those who want to cultivate trust building may not always be able to do so. In fact, during times of reform, development of trust may be especially difficult (Ramirez, 2011). It is important for school leaders to understand trust's fragility during reform initiatives. While many current school reform initiatives (e.g., co-teaching, core standards alignment) benefit from collegial collaboration (Friend, 2000; Moolenar, 2012), the accountability measures that schools face (e.g., high-stakes testing, state report cards) place pressures on schools that put collegial trust in jeopardy (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Ramirez, 2011).

In this way, a *trust paradox* can form: trust may be jeopardized by the very reform efforts for which it is needed. For instance, a school that receives a poor state report card grade on annual Gap Closing measures may feel pressure to improve performance of low achieving students. In response to this pressure, the school might, for example, decide to implement a new literacy or math intervention to help increase student achievement. In order for the interventions to be successful, teachers must share information (e.g., formative assessment data, promising lessons) with colleagues. But teachers may be reluctant to share information because they may

want to avoid blame for low report card grades. Accountability introduces an element of comparison and competition that may lessen trusting behaviors (Ramirez, 2011) and increase behaviors that focus on self-protection. Self-protection is marked by behaviors such as monitoring of colleagues' teaching (e.g. active comparison, benchmarking) and expending energy to protect themselves against failure (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2011). This protective, watchful behavior is in sharp contrast to the instructional risk taking required for school improvement. The trust paradox suggests that establishing collegial trust for collaboration in a high-stakes environment may not be successful.

Integrative Leadership

Principals who operate under the bind of the trust paradox may benefit from an approach to leadership that prioritizes collegial collaboration. Integrative leaders keep people–not tasks or organizational vision–at the center of their focus and spend their energies on trust building among colleagues in order to accomplish shared goals (Huxham & Vangen, 2000). Leaders who adopt a network perspective and attend to collaboration may be well positioned to unite colleagues even in the face of problems (Silvia & McGuire, 2010). Typically applied to leaders who organize colleagues across sectors (e.g., multi-agency efforts in government; public health and emergency services), integrative leadership is also gaining traction as a way to engender collaboration within organizations (Crosby & Bryson, 2010).

Indeed, the tenets of integrative leadership outlined by Crosby and Bryson (2010) may be well matched with the leadership demands placed on Ohio’s school leaders as outlined by ODE’s strategic plan and standards for principals. First, integrative leaders must take advantage of the opportunity for change that a crisis may offer. Next, integrative leaders must understand that change efforts are more likely to be successful when collaboration occurs across group

boundaries. While school principals may only lead one agency, within a school building there are multiple formal (e.g., grade level, subject area) and informal (e.g., coaches, faculty who eat lunch together) delineations that may function as distinct groups (Kochanek, 2005) and require deliberate efforts from leaders to bridge between groups. Finally, Crosby and Bryson noted that integrative leaders must pay attention to shared spaces–both physical and intellectual–in order to promote collaboration (2010).

One educational setting in which the tenets of integrative leadership may align particularly well with school administrators' objectives is in middle schools. The Association for Middle Level Education's (AMLE) "This We Believe" position paper asserted that school leaders must involve faculty in collaborative teams that draw teachers from different subject areas. The paper goes to detail that leaders should create collaborative structures, such as common planning times for teachers that support productive learning environments (AMLE, 2010). In fact, the middle school movement was the impetus for some collaborative educational constructs. For instance, the term *interdisciplinary* was first used in 1982 to describe the unique, interwoven structures of middle schools, and learning environments that embraced common planning time, flexible scheduling of students, and cross-subject collaboration between teachers were categorized as part of the middle school concept in the 1990s (Kruse & Seashore Louis, 1997; Schaefer, Malu, &Yoon, 2016). Middle school teams often include teachers from core subject areas (e.g., math, language arts, science, and social studies) and support service providers such as special educators and school counselors (Kokolis, 2007) that work collaboratively to create a responsive, resilient learning environment for students (Ellerbock & Kiefer, 2014). In this way, middle school teams may be akin to the teams led by integrative leaders: though they are comprised of members from different disciplines, they come together for a common purpose.

Moreover, middle schools' interdisciplinary structures may require middle school administrators to attend to people-centered leadership, similar to integrative leaders. Because effective teams are a complex arrangement of teachers sharing knowledge, offering different expertise, communicating effectively, and sharing space, middle school leaders must promote open communication and trust building to ensure team efficacy (Clark & Clark, 2006). When done well, middle school leaders' efforts to promote trust can help leaders harness the power of collaborative teams to leverage school improvement initiatives (Clark & Clark, 2006). In contrast to other educational settings in which teachers may be divided by grade levels (i.e., elementary schools) or subject areas (i.e., high schools), middle schools may offer a useful example of cross-disciplinary faculty teams. Certainly, not all middle school leaders are able negotiate the demands of interdisciplinary collaboration and trust building; uniting parts into a whole is no easy task (Silvia & McGuire, 2010). But when led well, middle schools may serve as a model of integrative leadership within education.

Purpose of Study

Leaders who want to make improvement at the school level likely need to consider improving collaboration at the teacher level. And while there is a robust body of literature spanning more than thirty years that examines trust from a quantitative perspective (e.g., Tarter, Bliss, & Hoy, 1989; DiPaola & Guy, 2009; Louis & Murphy, 2017), there is a scarcity of qualitative studies that examine collegial trust. Seminal works by Bryk & Schneider (2002) and Tschannen-Moran (2004) have qualitatively examined the big picture of school trust, including trust between teachers, students, parents, and leaders. While those studies are helpful models of qualitative research in relational trust, they did not focus on the potentially tense relationship between colleagues and leaders facing accountability pressures. In order to explore the trust

paradox, it may be especially important to research teachers who face the most pressures (i.e., teachers of subjects that are tested, teachers of students who struggle academically) and the leaders who help to shape their collaboration in the face of accountability pressure. The purpose of this study was to explore collegial relationships between general and special educators with an aim to help leaders develop trust among teachers to build school capacity. My research questions were as follows:

- How do general education teachers and special education teachers perceive the function of trust in their collaborative relationship?
- How do general education teachers and special education teachers perceive school leaders' support for collegial trust building and collaboration?
- How do school leaders perceive collaboration between general and special educators?

While this study was grounded in the robust literature base on collegial trust, I explored new, qualitatively examined collegial trust territory. Therefore, it was particularly helpful for me to cast a wide net as I approached this exploration. I employed a case study design to select participants that were bound by a particular situation (Lichtman, 2010) in order to collect several cases of collaborative relationships between general and special educators. Yin (2003) asserts that case study designs are particularly helpful to research phenomenon in which context may inform understanding of a phenomenon. In this way, case studies embrace variables surrounding a phenomenon; unlike an experiment, case studies don't attempt to control variables (Yin, 2003).

Because the aim of my research was to explore collegial trust, it was useful for me to examine cases from different settings in an effort to understand how the phenomenon of collegial trust between general and special educators was informed by contexts with rich differences. My primary method of data collection was to interview teachers, but some contexts also allowed for

observation of shared planning time and co-taught classes, as well as collection of artifacts that were products of collaboration. Finally, I explored teachers' and leaders' perceptions of collaboration, paying special attention to the tenets of integrative leadership as part of leaders' reform efforts.

Significance of Study

Ohio leaders currently operate under a set of professional standards that directs them to build collaborative structures between teachers in order to build instructional capacity and a state-wide strategic plan that requires leaders to show measurable improvements on gap closing between high and low performing students in order to remedy inequity in schools (Ohio Department of Education, 2017; 2018). Understanding how teachers experience trust and collaboration may help Ohio's school leaders fulfill the objectives outlined by ODE. It is important to remember that ODE's principal standards and strategic plan priorities are aimed at better outcomes for students: even though this study examined perceptions of adults, it has the potential to benefit children.

Delimitations

General and special education teachers likely feel high-stakes accountability pressures and are required by law to collaborate in order to fulfill included students' Individualized Education Plans (IEP). I included general education teachers of tested subjects (e.g., math, language arts) and non-tested subjects (e.g., art, music) in this study because their collaborative demands may be perceived differently. For instance, English teachers must (a) collaborate with special education teachers since core subjects are required for graduation, (b) the collaboration has the potential for increased pressure because core subjects are tested on state tests, (c) and the struggles of students in core subjects can be particularly difficult because students' areas of

disability may correspond to learning outcomes (i.e., students with reading disabilities in text-heavy classes like language arts and social studies). In contrast, art teachers may have students with disabilities included in their classes, but may not feel the same pressure to collaborate since their classes aren't required for graduation nor are they part of annual high-stakes testing. In this way, I examined collaborative relationships that have a tremendous amount of potential for tension as well as ones that are likely low pressure. While it was not feasible to interview teachers from all grades and subject areas, looking at teachers of tested and non-tested subjects informed my understanding of the trust paradox. Still, the sample of participants I interviewed only represented general and special educators' perspectives from this district. Similarly, the perceptions of leaders I shared in the study represent leaders in this district; they are not true of all leaders.

Limitations

The scope of the study's exploration of trust was limited to the perceptions of school leaders, colleagues who collaborate with each other, and those colleagues' perceptions of their leaders. These perceptions may have been shaped by factors other than collegial trust, such as school climate or student populations. Another limitation was that while case study design may have been well suited for an initial exploration of collegial trust between general and special educators, I will have to rely on future studies to attempt to capture the phenomenon of collegial trust.

Definition of Terms

The following list contains terms used in this study:

Accountability: An expectation of federal and state governments that school districts are held to common standards for student achievement. Further, the notion of accountability includes

annual, rigorous testing of student achievement and detailed reports of school performance to the public (Mintrop & Zane, 2017; Mitani, 2018).

Collegial Trust: A form of relational trust in schools that functions between educators who hold positions of similar power (i.e., teacher/teacher; teacher/counselor) within a school (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

Collaboration: The process of working with one or more colleagues to accomplish a shared goal. Collaboration exists formally (e.g., co-teaching assignments, committee work) when it is assigned by school leaders and informally (e.g., planning a lesson with a colleague) when it emerges from the teacher level (Friend, 2000; Tschannen-Moran, 2000).

Gap Closing: The ability of schools to meet the needs of traditionally low-performing students. This includes students termed by ODE as "most vulnerable" based on their income level, race, or disability (Ohio Department of Education, 2019).

Individualized Education Plan (IEP): Students diagnosed with a disability are entitled to receive individualized accommodations and/or modifications to their instruction. An IEP is legally binding and must be reviewed annually in order to maintain compliance with federal mandates under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (McCombs-Tolis, 2002).

Integrative Leadership: Leadership that is oriented to toward people instead of toward tasks or organizational objectives. Integrative leadership seeks to unite disparate groups in order to solve complex problems that benefit from collaborative efforts. (Huxham & Vangen, 2000).

Organization of Remaining Chapters

Chapter two of this dissertation includes a brief literature review of accountability, and teacher collaboration with a more extensive review of collegial trust. While my review includes studies in which more than one type of relational trust (i.e., parent/teacher, teacher/student,

teacher/leader, teacher/teacher) were measured, I am restricting my examination of those studies to the portions that examine the nature of trust between teachers. Chapter three of this study focuses on my research methods in which I outline the constructivist underpinnings of my case study approach. I also explain the types of coding I used during data analysis, paying special attention to qualitative analysis of social network relationships. Chapter four outlines the results of my data analysis. Chapter five discusses the implications of my results and the way in which these implications may inform the current conversation surrounding school improvement, accountability, and equity in education.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Accountability Legislation

In 1965, Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in order to improve education for underserved students by consolidating authority for public education at the federal level (Egalite, Fusarelli, & Fusarelli, 2017; Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017). But while subsequent reauthorizations of ESEA (e.g., NCLB, RTTT) have mostly held to the principle that centralized influence on public education may help schools address inequity, 2015's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) marks a major shift in policy by giving educational authority back to the states (Jennings, 2018). Still, even as ESSA represents a shift toward state control, its commitment to evidence student achievement through high-stakes testing upholds the accountability climate in which schools have functioned since the passing of NCLB in 2001 (Jennings, 2018; Mintrop & Zane, 2017). In short, current educational policy in the United States maintains pressure on schools to demonstrate student achievement gains but removes federal guidelines about how states make those gains happen (Egalite, Fusarelli, & Fusarelli, 2017).

For example, according to a report issued by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), ESSA requires states to identify a category of low performing schools every three years, essentially keeping states' education systems in cycles of continuous improvement while offering states the flexibility to determine the nature of consequences for low performing districts (2015). States also have room to craft a scope of school performance that includes both academic and nonacademic (e.g., school climate, safety) measures, though ESSA requires that academic measures be given more weight in state evaluations (ASCD, 2015; Marsh, Bush-Mecenas, & Hough, 2017). Flexibility under ESSA extends to states' remedies for underperforming students identified by subgroup disaggregation:

while states must identify underperforming subgroups, their responses to identified inequities may differ greatly (Egalite, Fusarelli, & Fusarelli, 2017). Ohio, for instance, (a) set an achievement goal that at least 80% of students–even subgroups–must score proficient or higher on state tests in order to meet an academic indicator (e.g., grade 3 reading, Algebra 1) on district report cards; (b) created Prepared for Success as a nonacademic performance indicator of career readiness; and (c) required schools that fail to move from the lowest three categories of achievement within four years to receive additional supports for improvement, including a Comprehensive District Review led by the state (Ohio Department of Education, 2017).

Implications of ESSA for Special Education

Because the goal of ESSA is to continue ESEA's mission to eliminate educational inequities, ESSA pays particular attention to groups of students who traditionally perform less well than typical students (e.g., students of color, English learners) and has several mandates that are specific to the achievement of students with disabilities (Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017). One way that ESSA attempts to promote equity is by requiring that 95% of all students are tested on annual exams (Agoratus, 2016; ASCD, 2015). Ohio has specified that 95% threshold be met for every student subgroup (Ohio Department of Education, 2017), raising the standard beyond the federal requirements. It is important to note that under ESSA, only 1% of students with disabilities (i.e., the students with the most severe disabilities) may be given an alternative state assessment (Klein, 2015), but even alternative assessments for students with severe cognitive disabilities must still align with state academic standards (Agoratus, 2016). ESSA has effectively created circumstances in which most every student, regardless of their individual needs or challenges, is delivered the same curriculum, assessed with the same measures, and held to the same standards.

Interestingly, widespread implementation of the Response to Intervention (RTI) model of identification of and support for students with disabilities has implications for these uniform ESSA mandates (Tindal & Anderson, 2019). Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) in 2004 permitted RTI as a method to identify students with specific learning disabilities (Zirkel, 2017). Under the RTI model, all students receive quality instruction as part of Tier 1, students who need targeted interventions move into Tier 2 and are monitored against classroom averages, and if students do not make sufficient progress in Tier 2, they move into Tier 3 with ongoing, intensive supports (Dexter & Hughes, n.d.). It is a system designed to be timely and responsive to students' needs. The fluidity of RTI means, for example, that students who are designated part of a students with disabilities subgroup (i.e. receiving Tier 3 services) as part of ESSA mandates may move out of that subgroup (i.e., back to Tier 2 or Tier 1) as part of an effective RTI system. But there is no way to capture those achievement gains on state tests; in effect, those gains are lost as students leave the subgroup (Tindal & Anderson, 2019). Tindal and Anderson further assert that annual state tests lack the sensitivity to see gains that might be made, for instance, by students with specific learning disabilities, which places additional pressure on schools and districts who are unable to capture student achievement growth with state tests (2019).

This problem is compounded by states' teacher evaluation systems that link student achievement to teacher ratings: since gains from students in subgroups may not be as robust as those made by typical students, some teachers are reluctant to work with students in subgroups (Morgan, 2016). Ohio's Teacher Evaluation System, rebooted under ESSA as OTES 2.0, requires that a significant portion of each teacher's evaluation (i.e., between 35 and 50%, as determined by districts) is based on student growth over the course of school year (Ohio

Department of Education, 2019). For Ohio's teachers of students with disabilities, the accountability picture is bleak. First, ESSA mandates testing of nearly all students. Second, state accountability measures may fail to adequately capture growth of students with disabilities. Third, teachers' evaluation ratings are based on student test scores. In an era in which student test scores purport to prove teachers' worth, teachers of students with disabilities find themselves in a precarious situation where the work they've done may not be reflected on the evaluations they receive.

Implications of ESSA for School Leaders

In what was perhaps an unintended consequence of accountability measures, annual assessments of student growth and teacher performance have generated unprecedented amounts of data and, under ESSA, school leaders are charged with disseminating complex data to their constituencies (Marsh, Bush-Mecenas, & Hough, 2017). It is important to note that one of the mandates of ESSA specifies that data analysis be collaborative in nature (ASCD, 2015), and the responsibility for creating systems for collaborative data analysis resides with school leaders (Egalite, Fusarelli, & Fusarelli, 2017; Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017). Ohio's Principal Standards echo ESSA's focus on leaders' collaboration efforts, requiring school leaders to build faculty capacity through collaboration and shared leadership (Ohio Department of Education, 2018). In this way, ESSA has prompted school leaders to craft systems that help educators contextualize student achievement data as part of shared instructional goals.

Collaboration for School Improvement. While school structures have traditionally been a barrier to collaboration (i.e., teachers teaching alone for several hours a day), increased complexity of teaching during the era of accountability makes teachers and leaders much more open to collaboration so they can better grapple with state and federal demands (Kohnen &

Whitacre, 2017; Sutton & Shouse, 2016; Tschannen-Moran, 2000). This is a time in public education in which the impetus to work together may be very compelling for teachers who want to show achievement gains on their evaluations. How teacher collaboration happens, however, is at the discretion of school leaders (Jao & McDougall, 2016). For instance, leaders may fulfill mandates for collaboration by simply allotting time for collaboration among teachers to occur or requiring shared decision making, which can seem contrived (Datnow, 2011; Glazier, Boyd, Hughes, Able & Mallous, 2016). A more meaningful form of collaboration occurs when teachers initiate conversations in order to resolve real problems (Glazier et al., 2016). For instance, teachers might choose to work together to create lessons to prevent school bullying or increase parent volunteerism. These are real problems that teachers can tackle together, typically without a lot of guidance or oversight from leaders (Glazier et al., 2016).

But the form of collaboration that is the most intense–indeed, the form that may offer the best chance to grapple with complex, data-driven decisions–is what Glazier and colleagues term *critical colleagueship* (2016). When collaboration is most successful, leaders help teachers develop systems to delve more deeply into problems, embrace ambiguities in the data, and address teachers' insecurities that may be obstacles to change (Kohnen & Whitacre, 2017). Sadly, critical colleagueship is not typical in schools, even though it is the type of collaboration teachers often desire (Glazier et al., 2016).

But when teachers join together to look at student achievement data across classrooms, it can be difficult not to compare results from one teacher to another, which can dampen teachers' willingness to collaborate (Ramirez, 2011). In Ohio, teachers are rated as accomplished, skilled, developing, or ineffective as part of OTES (Ohio Department of Education, 2019), yet these labels may invite comparisons between teachers and make teacher insecurities more acute. The

challenge, then, is for school leaders to create conditions that encourage collaboration even in the face of reform efforts that may diminish them.

Trust for Collaboration. One of the obstacles to meaningful collaboration may be a lack of trust between teachers, especially if leaders are hoping to engage teachers the potentially threatening comparison of student achievement data (Jao & McDougall, 2016). Trust between colleagues may be a necessary ingredient for successful collaboration (Tschannen-Moran, 2000). In a study of 50 elementary schools within a large, urban district in a midwestern state, Tschannen-Moran measured the correlation between collaboration and trust among and between students, teachers, and leaders and found a strong relationship between collaboration and trust. In fact, Tschannen-Moran found trust and collaboration are reciprocal processes: strength and growth in one tends to predict strength and growth in the other (2000). Leaders who want to comply with state and federal mandates for teacher collaboration may be well served by efforts to cultivate trust as they work to reach their school improvement goals (Tschannen-Moran, 2000).

For example, *co-teaching*, pairing a special and general education teacher together to share instruction in an inclusive classroom, is a form of collaboration that is frequently used to address mandates for students with disabilities to have access to the general curriculum on which they will be assessed annually (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2017). On the surface, co-teaching looks to be a form of collaboration that meets the definition Glazier and colleagues set forth for critical colleagueship: it aims to solve a real and complex problem (i.e. preparing students with disabilities to meet academic standards) and structures long-term partnerships to wrestle with the aims of student achievement. Yet, though co-teaching is sometimes described as a marriage, some co-teachers feel that they’re in an arranged marriage, forced by school leaders to share

planning, instruction, and assessment of students in a tension-filled relationship (Friend, 2008; Pugach & Peck, 2016). Trust is a key component of successful co-teaching, because at their core, collaborations like co-teaching are fundamentally relationships between teachers (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2017).

Trust has been shown to be foundational for teacher learning because it encourages sharing, feedback, and willingness to ask for help among colleagues (Cosner, 2009). In schools that in which trust is strong, decisions about how to measure growth and change during reform are far less contentious than in schools with low levels of trust (Louis, 2007). Schools with low trust compromise teacher collaborations and, in fact, instances of low trust or distrust may create a snowball effect of continued and growing absence of trust that impedes change (Louis, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). In times of change and reform, trust creates a safe environment for teachers to collaboratively experiment with new instruction (Moolenar, 2012), so that trust undergirds shared instructional risk taking required from teachers during school improvement.

Review of Collegial Trust Research

Therefore, in an era of school accountability in which collaboration between faculty members is frequently required to achieve school improvement objectives, trust may be a useful construct for school leaders to understand. To guide my review of literature, I adopted the structure of Van Maele, Van Houtte, and Forsyth (2015) that offered an overview of trust in schools and organized studies in those that aimed to: (a) define the construct of trust, (b) explore antecedents to trust, or (c) examine consequences of trust. Van Maele and colleagues' review, however, focused on all types of trust in schools (e.g., students, parents, leaders) while my review will focus solely on trust between faculty members. And though all forms of relational trust are important to build a school culture that best supports student learning, the focus of my

study was collegial trust between collaborating faculty and the implications of collegial trust for principals leading school improvement efforts.

Moreover, I adopted terminology that departs from Van Maele, Van Houtte, and Forsyth (2015) in an attempt to precisely capture the nature of results from the portions of trust research that specifically address collegial trust. I chose the term *supports* to categorize studies in which researchers examine environments in which collegial trust is likely to develop. There was no single term to describe the conditions that lead to development of collegial trust (e.g., *aspects* in Tarter & Hoy, 1988; *predictors* in Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss & Hoy, 1994; *components* in DiPaola & Guy, 2009; *environments* in Schwabsky, 2014; *antecedents* in Van Maele, Van Houtte, & Forsyth, 2015). I chose to use supports as a term to describe the contexts that undergird trust development without necessarily ascribing causality to these contexts.

Similarly, while Van Maele, Van Houtte, & Forsyth's (2015) use of *consequences* denoted a direct relationship between trust and school-level outcomes, my choice of the term *benefits* was an attempt to frame trust's usefulness that honored Adams and Forsyth's (2009) contention that trust is supportive of conditions that allow for realization of reform goals. My use of the term benefits was perhaps an especially important distinction for the current study in which I focused on collegial trust, versus studies of trust in students (i.e., where the connection between trust and achievement outcomes is more direct). And yet, the benefits of collegial trust that have been studied may be critical for school leaders who want to create a culture in which improvement efforts are likely to succeed.

Methodology and Framework

There have been two main branches of studies on trust in schools: those that came from Hoy and colleagues at Ohio State University and those from Bryk, Schneider, and their

colleagues at the University of Chicago (Van Maele, Van Houtte, & Forsyth, 2015). The advent of the study of trust in schools began with the seminal study by Hoy & Kupersmith in 1985 in which they created *Trust Scales,* an instrument designed to measure trust among different groups in schools. Hoy & Kupersmith's Trust Scales have guided the majority of trust in schools research for the past 40 years. I therefore confined my search to the years following Hoy & Kupersmith's 1985 study and the wealth of research that emerged in its wake.

To complete this review, I employed a search methodology using terms "trust" and "teachers" and/or "faculty" and used EBSCO to search education-related academic scholarly databases (e.g., ERIC, Education Research Complete) to locate studies that address faculty trust. I then screened studies to find ones that specifically address trust between teachers. Though studies included in this review often also measure other types of faculty trust (e.g., faculty and clients, faculty and principal), I will only discuss components of the study that directly address trust between colleagues. Finally, I coded studies according to the organization (i.e., construct, antecedent, consequence) modeled in Van Maele, Van Houtte, & Forsyth (2015) using my terminology (i.e., construct, supports, benefits).

Of the studies I found, 48 met the criteria for inclusion in this review (see Appendix A). It is important to note that during my search, I did not come across any studies that specifically address trust between general and special education teachers. Further, of the 48 of studies included for review, only 11 employed qualitative methodology. Therefore, the focus of my study addresses a gap in the literature and the methodology of my study will bolster the collection of qualitative work in faculty trust.

Construct of Trust in Schools

When Hoy and Kupersmith began their exploration of trust in schools, their goal was to move away from general examinations of trust to more specific, targeted exploration of specific components that contribute to trust (1985). The product of their work was a measure of trust in schools that enabled decades of researchers to conceptualize trust as a multidimensional construct. Studies over the past 40 years have both supported and challenged the findings of Hoy and Kupersmith. In fact, there is a very current and active discussion about how to define trust in schools, what is needed to encourage trust, and what comes from faculty who trust one another (e.g, Adams & Miskell, 2016; Hallam, Dulaney, Hite, & Smith, 2015; Romero & Mitchell, 2018). Thus, questions regarding collegial trust are still important in today's educational climate.

In its most basic form, trust is defined as confidence in the outcome of events (Tarter, Bliss, & Hoy, 1989), but trust extends beyond basic predictability to fulfilment of desirable outcomes (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). Trust can be used as a verb when it describes the faith one party shows another party; it may also be a noun that describes the product of a successful extension of faith (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). While these broad definitions of trust certainly apply to schools, trust's specific function and formation within schools is important to the understanding of how trust is defined in schools. Trust can function in many arenas within a school setting, influenced by the context created by school factors (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009). First, trust in schools can be *contractual,* bound by a documented agreement, such as contracts between teachers' associations and school districts that govern work requirements (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Bryk and Schneider (2002) argued, however, that while contractual trust may capture some limited, prescribed functions of trust in school, this type of trust does not best represent the complex and interrelated scope of

schooling. Second, trust can be *institutional*, functioning between groups of individuals (e.g., parents, community members) and the school as a whole based on groups' expectations of appropriate behavior (Louis, 2007). At the institutional level, trust manifests as a collective belief that the school will fulfill its obligation (Adams & Forsyth, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997). Third, trust that exists within a school is *organizational*, functioning as a general reflection of cohesiveness between groups in an institution (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2009). Finally, trust that functions between individuals in the form of sustained relationships (e.g., student and teacher, teacher and parent, leader and teacher) is *relational* (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

In 2016, Kutsyuruba, Walker, and Noonan asserted that "due to its complex and multifaceted nature, there is no one, agreed-upon definition of trust in the literature" (p. 345). The following chronological overview of the definition of trust in schools supports the assertions of Kutsyuruba and colleagues. But this overview also highlights some salient, consistent features of trust in schools that may serve as helpful guideposts for the current study.

Hoy and Kupersmith's (1985) study conceptualized trust as a construct experienced differently by different work groups, taking the first step toward parsing trust as a multidimensional construct. Hoy and Kupersmith broke ground in the study of trust by targeting the way in which trust was experienced by different work groups. The instrument they developed to measure trust tested the amount of trust in three reference groups (e.g., leaders, teachers, parents) and the degree to which trust among the groups correlated with each other. The important takeaway for school leaders from Hoy and Kupersmith (1985) was that trust is a specific construct, it can be reliably measured, and it doesn't function the same for all groups within schools.

Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) built on this research. They established vulnerability as a prerequisite to trust and identified five facets that contribute to a general understanding of trust. First, *benevolence* primes development of trust as it establishes good will within a relationship and *reliability* captures the sense that good will remains consistent and predictable (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). Next, *openness and honesty* both address issues of integrity: openness refers to the way in which relevant information is shared appropriately, and honesty includes a person's ability to keep his or her word. Finally, *competence* is a facet that refers to the level of skill a person holds.

Also in 1999, Ebmeier and Nicklaus conceptualized trust as part of what they termed *teachers' affective relations*, beliefs teachers hold about their experiences in schools and how those beliefs contribute to teachers' willingness to participate in school improvement efforts. In 2000, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy examined distrust and the way in which the five facets of trust may align with roles of the people involved in the trusting relationship. For example, teachers may value benevolence more than openness when deciding to trust their principals.

In 2002, Bryk and Schneider completed their landmark study, *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement*, and posited that judgments of trust emerge from four *discernments* (i.e., versus facets) of behavior, including: (a) respect, (b) competence, (c) personal regard for others, and (d) integrity. Bryk and Schneider also introduced the concept of *symmetry* and *asymmetry* in relational trust to describe the way in which the power held by parties in school may affect trust with another party. This idea expanded on Hoy and Kupersmith's (1985) idea that trust is experienced by different groups in different ways and offers useful language to understand Tchannen-Moran and Hoy's (2000) assertion that different facets of trust weigh differently among different role groups. Bryk and Schneider (2002) asserted that trust between

teachers is a unique example of symmetrical power in a trust relationship (i.e., different than trust and power between teachers and students or leaders and teachers), and this parallel power may influence their trusting relationships.

Adams and Forsyth (2009) advanced understanding of trust by testing the degree to which trust directly affects outcomes that benefit schools. They concluded trust sets conditions favorable for outcomes that support learning and school improvement. But far from undermining trust's import, they found trust's contribution is so powerful that it mitigates the effects of poverty on student performance. In 2011 Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy distinguished between interpersonal relational trust (for which only two parties are required) and collective trust (held by members of a group about another group or an individual). Lee, Zhang, and Yin (2011) studied trust among teachers in China and briefly discussed the way in which trust may differ in Eastern and Western cultures.

Even very recently, researchers have sought to better understand the concept of trust. Hallam, Dulaney, Hite, and Smith (2015) built on the work of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) and asserted trust should be divided into two categories: *relational trust* that includes the facets of benevolence and openness and *competency-based trust* that includes the facets of competence, reliability and honesty. And in 2016, Adams and Miskell found that teacher trust of district administration was a unidimensional construct (i.e., could not be broken into facets). While Adams and Miskell did not study faculty trust in colleagues, their assertion that trust can be conceptualized as a holistic construct challenged previously held understandings of trust and solicited a rebuttal from Romero and Mitchell (2018) in which they dissected Adam and Miskell's methodology, found it flawed, and asserted that the three-dimensional construct (i.e., benevolence, competence, integrity) from Romero's (2010) unpublished dissertation was still

valid. Finally, Benade (2018) found that accountability systems designed to increase the public's trust in schools have undermined relational trust among teachers. In doing so, Benade speaks to the fragile nature of relational trust and the need for a school climate that protects and nurtures collegial trust.

Implications of Trust Construct for School Leaders

Research about the construct of relational trust in schools presented a nuanced picture of interdependent relationships. Most researchers (e.g., Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Romero & Mitchell, 2018) agreed that trust is not a one-dimensional concept; it is made up of multiple components. These components were evaluated by parties who were vulnerable and must depend on another party, though how researchers described these trust evaluations occurring differed slightly from one family of researchers (e.g., Hoy and colleagues; Bryk and colleagues) to another.

What remained undisputed among researchers who have defined the trust construct is the changing nature of trust. In fact, a central tenet of the construct of trust is its malleability; trust truly is in the eye of the beholder. Because schools are filled with people that have distinct, interdependent relationships (e.g., teachers and students, teachers and teachers) defined by each person's responsibilities (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), the development and utility of trust may differ from person to person. For instance, parents depend on teachers to provide quality instruction to their children, principals depend on teachers to deliver required curriculum, and teachers depend on students to complete assigned tasks. All of these parties must depend on another party to accomplish their educational objectives; there is a gap between their objectives and their ability to fulfill them alone. But the way in which each of these role groups makes

judgements of trust is based on individual needs and vulnerabilities during times of interdependence.

Trust can be thought of as a bridge that forms from a dependent party's expectation of desired outcomes to the eventual fulfillment of those expectations by another party (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). But when a bridge of trust is built, it can’t form without a party on the other side of the bridge; it requires some reciprocity between the two parties (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001). The trust bridge extends from the vulnerable party to the party that must fulfill the expectation. During the construction of a trust bridge, trust evolves and may be viewed as *provisional*, when any breach may cause the party extending trust to sever the bridge of trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997). When trust continues over time, it is *knowledge-based*, developed through repeated interactions in which expectations and outcomes align (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997). The way in which each party fulfills–or does not fulfill–their obligation during interdependence creates a behavioral history that serves as a knowledge base for the formation of trust (Adams & Forsyth, 2009; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Cosner, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997). Because of this, the quality of trust changes over time as the dependent party forms a cumulative judgment the other party’s behavior (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Cosner, 2009; Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999).

In this way, appreciation for the changing, fragile nature of trust is central to the definition of trust. Because trust develops based on repeated social interactions, the nature of trust changes naturally as new interactions between trusting parties add to–or detract from–the quality of trust between interdependent parties. School leaders, then, may benefit from understanding how trust’s mercurial nature, fluctuating through time and differentiated by role groups, may make it seem elusive to leaders. At its core, trust is complex and slippery.

Supports for Development of Trust

Once researchers had established the construct of trust and how to measure it, they immediately began to study what factors in schools favored collegial trust development, searching for supports that make trust likely to grow. Some of this research showed that trust has a reciprocal relationship with another variable (see Appendix A). For example, teacher collaboration both supports and is a benefit of collegial trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2000). Collegial trust promotes a sense of organizational justice in schools, and a sense of organizational justice also cultivates collegial trust (Hoy & Tarter, 2004). Similarly, collegial trust creates a safe atmosphere for teachers to engage in school change efforts, but the solidarity among teachers who engage in change efforts yields greater collegial trust (Louis, 2007).

But authors of several studies through the years have used multiple regressions to predict how trust could be cultivated by some other factor. I have divided these factors into three categories: (a) school conditions, (b), teacher behaviors, and (c) leader behaviors. I offer a summary of studies in each category below.

School conditions can be important supports for the development of collegial trust. Several studies show components of the school environment supported collegial trust (see Table 1). For example, Tarter and Hoy (1988) found both higher school health and faculty morale predicted higher collegial trust. Tarter, Bliss and Hoy (1989) found that certain aspects of school climate (e.g., openness, engaged teacher behavior, teacher frustration) correlate with trust in colleagues. And DiPaola and Guy (2009) found a strong relationship between faculty's perceptions of justice and faculty trust in colleagues.

Van Maele & Van Houtte (2009) found that schools with a value culture (e.g., religiously affiliated schools) enjoy higher collegial trust. The same study found that while schools with a

high population of students with low socioeconomic status (SES) predict low collegial trust, schools with low SES and high immigrant population predict higher collegial trust. In a subsequent study, Van Maele and Van Houtte (2011) found trust in colleagues is lower in public schools than private schools.

Teacher behaviors also play a critical role in the development of collegial trust. Teacher professionalism (Tschannen-Moran, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997), authenticity (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997), and optimism (Schwabsky, 2014) all predict collegial trust. In contrast, Sweetland and Hoy (2000) found that the more teachers engage in *truth spinning*, varnishing the truth to make it sound better, the less collegial trust will be present. Van Maele and Van Houtte (2011) found teachers' shared beliefs about the teachability of students predicted high collegial trust. Schools in which teachers have relationships with a large number of colleagues have higher collegial trust (Moolenaar, Karsten, Sleegers, & Daly, 2015), and schools in which teachers who participate in professional learning communities (PLC) have higher collegial trust (Gray, Kruse, &Tarter, 2016).

Leader behavior, in contrast to teacher behavior, has a less clear influence on collegial trust. Principals' behavior, when measured directly, has been repeatedly shown to have no relationship with collegial trust (e.g., Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss & Hoy, 1994; Tarter, Bliss & Hoy, 1989; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997; Smith & Flores, 2015). There are, however, structures leaders have the power to implement that can support collegial trust. Hoy and Sweetland (2000) found that leaders who employ enabling bureaucracies (e.g., rules and policies that lead to problem solving rather than conformity) enjoy collegial trust. Ebmeier and Nicklaus (1999) found that a model of collaborative supervision increases collegial trust. Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2011) found that trust in colleagues improved almost a standard deviation

after appreciative inquiry (AI) was introduced to district schools. The (AI) model focused on existing strengths to tackle school improvement objectives, and these results held for over a year after the AI intervention finished.

Implications of Trust Supports for School Leaders

Once school leaders understand that judgments of trust are individualized and everchanging, they can begin to appreciate why leaders cannot singlehandedly make teachers trust one another. After all, teachers' trust judgements of their colleagues would be continually influenced by the actions of those colleagues; leaders are not in a position to control teachers' interactions. Leaders are, however, in a position to create conditions in which trust development between teachers may occur.

Leaders who aim to promote collegial trust need to begin by shifting teaching from its traditional orientation as an individualistic task by creating conditions that offer opportunities for encounters among colleagues (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). One way to support collegial trust development is to structure shared time for teachers to meet (Cosner, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2009; Hallam, Dulaney, Hite, & Smith, 2015). Opportunities for teachers to interact promotes development of collegial trust that is supported by teachers' social networks in schools (Moolenaar, Karsten, Sleegers, & Daly, 2015). Teachers' relationships are typically formed into subgroups with other teachers with whom teachers feel the most kinship (Kochanek, 2005; Moolenar, 2012; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). In schools, distinctions of similarities may be formed around perceptions of kinship such as shared teaching philosophies, grade level assignments, or tenure within the school (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997). This kind of trust–rooted in perceptions of kinship–may be instrumental to school improvement efforts if it enables

teachers to share lessons, expectations about student achievement, and assessment tools (Moolenar, 2012).

Kochanek (2005) suggested scaffolding teachers' opportunities to build trust into low and then higher risk encounters. Low-risk interactions are social, tend to happen naturally each day (e.g., eating lunch together or sharing playground duty), and may also take place during collaborative tasks that are relatively easy to accomplish such as putting up a bulletin board display with a colleague (Kochanek, 2005). These low-risk interactions offer colleagues opportunities to display trustworthy behaviors such as benevolence or openness. Higher-risk interactions, such colleagues as working together on a curriculum revision committee, allow for repeated, more intense judgments of trust. Leaders who facilitate ongoing, skill-based collegial tasks give teachers chances to display trustworthy behaviors such as competence or reliability that can only be judged over time. Kochanek (2005) advised school leaders to provide teachers with plenty of low-risk opportunities before initiating high-risk activities.

Promoting collegial trust is no easy task for leaders. Teachers are apt to view leaders' structured efforts to promote collegiality as contrived (Datnow, 2011). Contrived collegiality is marked by leaders' assignment for colleagues to meet in a controlled time and place, typically to fulfill the requirements of external demands (Datnow, 2011). In contrast, critical colleagueship offers teachers genuine opportunities to problem solve together help (Glazier et al., 2016). Critical colleagueship may help "deprivatize" teaching (Cosner, 2009, p. 256). Further, norms that support increased direct interaction between teachers (e.g., time for each teacher to talk, prohibiting the grading of papers during meetings) promoted the likelihood of trust-building exchanges (Datnow, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997). Increased direct interaction also increases the likelihood that teachers will discover similarities with their colleagues of which

they had been previously unaware. Leaders may not be able to guarantee collegial trust, but they can guarantee teachers have opportunities to interact in meaningful ways, a social network perspective that may support the development of collegial trust.

Benefits of Collegial Trust

Many studies have correlated trust among colleagues with desirable outcomes (see Table 1). These studies offer insight in into the complexities of systems within schools that work together to yield school improvement; there was no one fix among this literature that led directly to school improvement. I will discuss studies in which the benefits of trust are realized in: (a) improvements to school climate, (b) gains in school improvement, and (c) reduction of teacher stress.

School climate gains have been found to be one benefit of collegial trust. Teachers who trusted their colleagues are more likely to engage in what DiPaola and Hoy (2005) termed *organizational citizenship behavior*, when teachers extend themselves to help their colleagues, which in turn leads them to feel more confident taking risks. Other studies supported collegial trusts' influence on teacher's mindset, including teachers' ratings of school effectiveness (Tarter & Hoy, 2004), organizational justice (Hoy & Tarter, 2004) and *collective teacher efficacy*, the degree to which teachers felt that faculty can help students achieve (Forsyth, Barnes, & Adams, 2006). These studies aligned with Tschannen-Moran's findings that trust between teachers promotes collaboration (2000) and professionalism (2009) in general.

In addition, some studies showed teacher culture outcomes of collegial trust that were more closely connected to school improvement goals. In 2007, Louis found that trust between teachers helped leaders' vision of school improvement goals gain traction among teachers. And Cosner's 2009 study of school principals suggested that cultivation of trust between teachers was

worth the efforts of school leaders since it was a force to increase school capacity. Zayim and Kondacki (2015) found that collegial trust predicted teachers' readiness for change. Both Kutsyuruba, Walker, and Noonan (2016) and Louis and Lee (2016) found that collegial trust supported the organizational learning and instructional risk taking that is needed to shift teachers' practice. And Lee, Zhang, and Yin (2011) found faculty trust in colleagues was a significant predictor of teachers' commitment to students.

Finally, collegial trust has been found to have stress reduction benefits as well. School improvement can also cause stressors among faculty, but collegial trust can help faculty stay resilient during change efforts. Dworkin and Tobe's (2015) discovered collegial trust reduced teacher burnout during the stress that accompanied school improvement and accountability pressures. Daly (2009) similarly found collegial trust mitigated effects of accountability threats for schools sanctioned under accountability measures. Teachers who experienced collegial trust were more likely to be optimistic (Schwabsky, 2014) and found supports for communication in *odds-beating schools*, where school performance far exceeded expectations due to intensive improvement efforts.

Implications of Trust Benefits for School Leaders

School leaders should experience strong returns on the investments they make in the cultivation of collegial trust. Trust is essential for school improvement (Adams and Forsyth, 2009; Goddard, et al., 2001, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Yet the pressures that accompany reform efforts may actually compromise trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Louis, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2011). In Ohio, those pressures include public accounting of school performance on annual state report cards, evaluation of teacher performance that is tied to student achievement, and supervision of low

performing districts from ODE. Arguably, the central tenet of current educational reform–accountability–may itself cause distrust. Specifically, implementation of strict controls and monitoring procedures can undermine school improvement efforts by compromising trust (DiPaola & Guy, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997, 2000). If trust is defined as a "willingness to be vulnerable under conditions of risk and interdependency," (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000, p. 551), then state and federal governments are apparently unwilling to risk their own vulnerability by trusting teachers. Regardless of the motivations behind reform mandates, educational reform's accountability measures may be viewed as distrust of teachers since these mandates require the strict controls and monitoring that are indicative of distrust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

School leaders, however, have the power to set the stage for collegial trust to grow (Cosner, 2009; DiPaola & Guy, 2009; Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999; Louis, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Once a leader helps to cultivate a climate of collegial trust, it can become so powerful that it defines the school climate (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997). Collegial trust can help teachers weather stress because teachers know that they can depend on their colleagues (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997). Further, the norm of reciprocity created by collegial trust facilitates the day-to-day dependencies inherent among teaching colleagues (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). These kinds of dependencies can be as small as covering classes for one another or as significant as contributing sick days to teacher in need (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

Consistent cultivation of collegial trust yields ongoing benefits for school improvement efforts in the form of teachers' increased willingness to collaborate, share knowledge, and join together to help students learn (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). In fact, consistent collegial trust promotes the likelihood that teachers will extend beyond the duties of their work

requirements without expecting recognition for extra effort (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Moreover, when collegial trust is high, teachers perceive greater professionalism from their fellow teachers (Tschannen-Moran, 2009), which in itself is a sense of kinship likely to further yield collegial trust.

CHAPTER III. METHODS

The purpose of this study was to explore trust between general and special education teachers and the ways teachers perceive leaders can best encourage collaboration between colleagues who work together to improve achievement for underperforming students. To that end, I asked three research questions:

1. How do general education teachers and special education teachers perceive the function of trust in their collaborative relationship?
2. How do general education teachers and special education teachers perceive school leaders' support for collegial trust building and collaboration?
3. How do school leaders perceive collaboration between general and special educators?

In chapter three, I will first explain the rationale and design of the research study as well as the way in which my theoretical framework of relational trust informed the research design. Next, I will address participant selection, data collection and data analysis. I will also address the subjectivities I brought to the study as a researcher, threats to the study's validity, and steps I took to protect the validity of the study. Finally, I will discuss how I attempted to develop relational trust with participants to support alignment of my theoretical framework and research design.

Rationale for Study Design and Paradigm

The current study was conducted as part of a larger study on teachers' emotional socialization in partnership with an Ohio school district categorized by Ohio Department of Education as *suburban*, districts with average student population and low student poverty (Ohio Department of Education, 2019). The study included teacher and leader participants from three elementary, one middle, and one high school. I employed a case study design in which my

interview protocol of my trust study was encompassed in the larger emotional socialization study so that interviews were as efficient as possible.

I specifically chose a case study design so that I studied my subject (i.e., trust between teachers) within multiple contexts (i.e., elementary, middle, high schools) and embraced diverse sources of data (Yin, 2003). For example, because general and special education teachers at the middle and high school co-taught classes, observations of co-teaching were useful source of data. But because the elementary special education teachers often pulled out students for intervention, it was more meaningful for me to observe collaboration during team meeting sessions with general and special education teachers. Lichtman (2010) asserted that case study design was particularly well suited to a study in which participants in a particular situation (i.e., general and special education teacher collaborators) may be in different settings (i.e., multiple buildings, grade bands, school leaders). Yin (2003) explained that case study was useful when it isn't clear how context may play into participants' experiences of the situation being researched. Because of this, the comparison and contrast of data among and between settings offered potential for rich analysis. Further, the way in which case study design is embedded in context helps translate research into practice as context-specific findings may be more meaningful for practitioners (Butler, 2011).

In addition, constructivism was a paradigm that was well matched for a case study design in which multiple contexts contributed to multiple perceptions of trust**.** My research on trust was situated in a constructivist paradigm for two reasons. First, I contended that trust theory manifested through an inherently subjective construct. A dependent party's (a) willingness to trust and (b) interpretation of another party's behaviors, in turn formed (c) a personal evaluation of that party's trustworthiness. The construction of a trust bridge was necessarily different for

each relationship because of the particular combination of history and experiences that both parties brought to the trust building process. While the literature has framed trust theory in terms of reliable facets that form a cohesive construct of trust, these facets may be informed by experiences and beliefs of both parties (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). In this way, formation of trust was akin to *multiple knowledges,* in which factors such as culture and gender influence ways of knowing (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Second, the iterative nature of trust formation also lent itself to a constructivist perspective. The strength of the trust bridge changed over time as knowledge was gained by the dependent party through repeated interactions with the party that is to be trusted. Because of this, trust "thickens or thins" over time as the dependent party formed a cumulative judgment of another party's behavior (Cosner, 2009, p. 255).

I explored the way in which participants' relationships with colleagues contributed to collegial trust by examining perceptions of teachers and leaders. I investigated the way in which participants constructed meaning (i.e., identified their place(s) in a social construct, explained their perspectives) about their relationships. In other words, adhering to the principles of constructivism helped me better represent individual participants' meaning making about trust and collaboration.

Alignment of Research Design and Theoretical Framework

During this study I attempted to explicitly connect my case study design to my theoretical framework of relational trust. The focus of the study was relational trust and collaboration between teaching colleagues. I had an opportunity to design this case study in a way that aligned to the five facets of trust (i.e., benevolence, competence, openness, reliability, honesty; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999) in order to build trust with participants as collaborators in this study. In other words, my study of participants' trust perceptions was possible in part due to my efforts to

build trust with participants. I adhered to the definitions of the facets of trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000) outlined in chapter one.

I paid particular attention to my research procedures to ensure I built trust with participants that aligned with these five facets of trust. For example, beginning the research project by taking time to listen to participants' concerns and goals demonstrated benevolence as I showed interest in participants' needs. Following my listening with a timely paraphrasing of participants' concerns and goals (e.g., in an email or shared document) demonstrated behaviors of reliability, and returning to those goals and concerns predictably during data collection and after data analysis helped to build a knowledge-base of trust of my reliability (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

Another way that trust research aligned with my research design was in the potential vulnerability of participants during data collection. In a qualitative study, participants may feel vulnerable as they share their lived experiences, and researchers have an obligation to protect participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). To explore the possibility of vulnerability of participants in this study, I engaged in perspective taking (Fresko, Reich, Sjoo, & Lonroth, 2013; Park & Raile, 2010; Warren, 2018). First, participants sharing perceptions of leaders, colleagues, and policies may have required them to extend trust to me, as a researcher. Next, they depended on me to keep what they said confidential. Further, participants may have chosen to participate in the study in hopes that the research will ultimately benefit the school, so they also depended on me to use my research in a way that is positive and productive for their school. Dependence on another party sets the stage for trust to develop (Tschannen-Moran, 2004) as trust helps alleviate the vulnerability that accompanies risks of dependence (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Cosner, 2009; DiPaola & Guy, 2009). As I recognized the perspective of participants, I saw their potential

vulnerability. I consequently recognized my responsibility to demonstrate trustworthy behaviors to participants.

Alignment of research design and theoretical framework is supported in the literature. For example**,** Butler and colleagues (2004) described involving participants in their research design process in a study about teacher collaboration. And their distinction of collaboratively designed research rested in the prepositions authors used to describe the study: instead of doing a study *on* teachers, they completed a study *with* teachers (Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, & Beckingham, 2004). In the current study, I encouraged participant collaboration; participants' familiarity with school structures and practices meant they made meaningful contributions to case study design. Miles and Huberman (1994) noted that researchers often have a basic framework of research design (i.e., in what settings to find the situation, which actors are involved) but may leave their design framework open-ended to develop as research progresses. I will address specifics of participant collaboration below, as part of data collection and analysis.

Participant Selection

Participants in this study (IRB 1503328; See Appendix B) included teachers and leaders from three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school in a single suburban school district in Ohio. I'll first discuss how teacher participants were recruited and share the profiles of participants. Then I'll discuss leader recruitment, their roles, and the profiles of the schools they led in the district.

Recruitment for the study happened in two ways. Teacher participants were recruited as part of a professional development workshop for the district I conducted in conjunction with other presenters. We asked teachers to indicate on their end of workshop evaluation if they would be willing to participate in a research study. Also, as part of the larger research study on

teachers' emotions, teachers had the opportunity to complete an online questionnaire. At the end of the questionnaire, participants could indicate their willingness for a follow-up interview. To incentivize participation in the study, teachers were offered a $30 Amazon gift card in return for their participation in an in-person interview. Also, in an attempt to encourage participation from teachers, I offered to meet with interview participants before, during, or after school, on or off campus.

Participants represented a range of general education teachers (i.e., from tested and non-tested grades and subjects) and special education teachers. Grade band and school building differences among participants allowed me to explore different models of special education service delivery (e.g., co-teaching, small group intervention) which may have influenced trust and collaboration among participants. I included participants for interviews who taught in subjects and grade levels that were assessed on annual state tests (e.g., grades 3-8 English Language Arts and Mathematics; Algebra I and II) in order to select feedback from teachers who may have been more likely to experience accountability pressure. Additionally, I interviewed general education teachers who did not teach subjects tested on state assessments or grade levels but who collaborated with special educators (e.g., kindergarten, foreign language teachers who have students on an IEP in their classrooms who require accommodations) who provided meaningful comparisons to teachers in tested subjects. I interviewed 32 general and special education participants; three more teacher participants were interviewed by researchers on the emotion socialization study team for a total of 35 teacher participants. There were 17 general educator participants who taught in core subjects, 10 general educators who taught in elective subjects, and 8 special educators in the study.

I also asked building and district-level leaders (i.e., principal, special education coordinators) to participate in the study so I could learn about their perceptions of collegial collaboration. These participants were recruited for the study when I attended two meetings for administrators at the district offices. I explained the purpose of the larger study on teacher emotions and the research I planned to do on relational trust among teachers. After the meeting, I emailed school leaders to ask them to meet with me before, during, or after school, on or off campus. While I offered an Amazon gift card as incentive for the study, the school leaders refused payment for their participation. I enlisted nine leader participants including five building principals, two assistant principals, and two special education coordinators.

Teacher and leader participants came from schools that served students in multiple grades and differed on the type of ways teachers delivered intervention to students with disabilities (e.g., resource room, pull out). They also differed slightly in administrative structure: while all of the schools were assigned a special education coordinator (e.g., one assigned to all three elementary schools, one assigned to the middle and high school), some schools had both an assistant principal and principal. These schools also varied in the accountability pressures the school faced as a result of annual state report card grades. Specifically, the schools differed in their Gap Closing grades, which range from a B to an F. Two of the elementary schools and the high school had low report card grades over multiple years and were required to engage in an Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) mandated and monitored by the Ohio Department of Education. Participant school profiles are summarized in Table 1.

Data Collection

During this study, I collected three types of data: (a) interviews with general education teachers, special education teachers, and school leaders (b) artifacts from school buildings such

Table 1

Profiles of Participants' Schools

School	Grades	Leaders	Collaboration Structures	Intervention Service Delivery Model	ODE Gap Closing Grade
Lafayette Elementary	PreK-5	Principal	Weekly teacher-based team meetings	Inclusion with pull out intervention	C
Oak Elementary	K-5	Principal	Weekly teacher-based team meetings	Inclusion with pull out intervention	F (OIP)
Ferndale Elementary	K-5	Principal	Weekly teacher-based team meetings	Inclusion with push in intervention	F (OIP)
Middle School	6-8	Principal and Assistant Principal	Daily shared planning period	Inclusion with resource room	B
High School	9-12	Principal and Assistant Principal	Weekly teacher-based team meetings	Inclusion with co-teaching, resource room	D (OIP)

as pictures of bulletin boards, and (c) notes from observations of participants during collaborative activities. Interview transcripts were from meetings with general and special education teachers as described in the above sections. My collection of artifacts and opportunities to observe teachers were a result of collaborations with participants during interviews. For example, when I was walking from a teacher's classroom after one interview, I asked to see the teachers' lounge and asked permission to take pictures. Or, during a meeting with a leader, I asked for a copy of the document she was describing to me.

Interviews. Semi-structed interviews followed a protocol with questions designed to explore the following: (a) how participants define trust, (b) why trust or does not develop between colleagues, (c) how participants perceive support for collaboration from building and/or

district leaders, (d) how resource allocation may affect perceptions of trust and collaboration, and (f) concept maps, images, or metaphors that capture collegial trust and collaboration. For a list of questions included in the interview protocols, see Appendix C. Interviews took about an hour and can took place at a location of the participants' choosing (e.g., at school or off campus). All data was collected during the 2019-2020 school year.

Interviews were an opportunity for me to build relational trust with participants by adhering to the facets of trust. For example, one of the primary elements of the trust facet openness is that only relevant and appropriate information is shared with others. During data collection, I made it clear to participants that my ethical obligation to confidentiality prohibited me from sharing their experiences in a way that would reveal their identity. In looking out for participants' interests (i.e., benevolent behavior) I may have protected participants' vulnerability and promoted trust. Conversely, if during interviews I had refused to share any of my own experiences, I may have damaged trust in terms of openness. Being open with others–risking your own vulnerability–takes steps toward encouraging trust that may be returned to you (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). This openness was supported by Rubin and Rubin's (2005) recommendations for *responsive interviewing,* in which they stated, "Because the researcher is asking for openness from the interviewees, reciprocity suggests he or she reveal something of themselves" (p. 34). Similarly, during the interviews, I gave participants opportunities to verify that I had accurately captured what they said. I used repeated paraphrasing during interviews to demonstrate reliable checks for understanding to participants (Maxwell, 2013). I demonstrated honesty when I shared with participants that they were better suited to help me decide how and where my research took; my willingness to acknowledge personal limits signaled integrity (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Finally, I attempted to demonstrate competence when I flexed with

my research design in response to participants' suggestions (i.e., I was competent enough to be comfortable with a research design that was not predetermined).

Observations. In addition to interviews with participants, I conducted observations that helped me better understand trust between general and special education teachers. I observed participants in each of the three grade bands (i.e., PreK-5, 6-8, 9-12). I relied on participants' suggestions to flesh out the types of context-specific observations I collected within the case study framework. For instance, after an interview with a special education participant, I was invited to observe collaborative instruction during a co-taught language arts lesson between her and her general education co- teacher. Similarly, after an interview with a general educator at an elementary school, I was invited to observe a grade-level team meeting with four teachers. Finally, I observed a student activity (i.e., not academic) that co-led by two special education teachers at the high school. Participants in all of the observations were in well-established collaborations that had existed over multiple months.

Artifacts. Again, study participants were a source of ideas for data collection. They offered ideas for artifacts I collected that represented products of collaboration. For instance, at the middle school, a participant shared the google doc lesson plants she and her co-teacher use during co-planning (See Appendix F). I didn't know this artifact existed until she shared it with me. Similarly, special education participants shared their weekly collaboration schedules with me; these were artifacts participants suggested I use in the study. teachers may have developed tools to aid collaboration such as checklists or forms. In addition, I asked participants to craft artifacts as part of our interviews. Most participants created concept maps to help me understand kinship groups as part of their interview, though when the interviews were running long, I chose

to eliminate my request for this artifact. I collected 25 kinship maps from the 35 total teacher participants.

During this study I collected multiple forms of data within multiple contexts over time. I interviewed both leaders and teacher participants, observed teachers during collaborating, and examined artifacts produced during collaborations. And during it all, I attempted to demonstrate trust to participants. I kept researcher memos (Maxwell, 2013) to help me stay grounded in my intent to align procedures with trust facets as I progressed through the case study.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data included multiple approaches to embrace the various types of data from the study. First, interviews were transcribed verbatim using REV, a transcription service. Second, I reduced the data (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson, 2008) to create segments of transcripts that pertained only to perceptions of colleagues and leaders. Next, I coded data to explore how my research questions were addressed. I followed an iterative process of code development (Saldaña, 2016), coding and recoding data to create codebooks. When the codebooks were completed, I enlisted and trained a research colleague on the codebooks, sharing examples and nonexamples of data for each code. Finally, using Dedoose, I conducted IRR tests with a research colleague to assess the degree to which we agreed on codes in the codebooks for the study. When we established a reliability agreement of 80% (Miles & Huberman, 1994), we coded the interviews. I'll describe the coding process for each research question below.

To answer my first research question regarding trust between general and special educators, I used structural coding (Saldaña, 2016) during first-cycle coding of participants' interview transcripts. This allowed me to examine participants' comments about their experiences with collaboration; second-cycle axial coding (Saldaña, 2016) helped me identify

reasons for participants' opportunities (e.g., why they did not have time to collaborate) and for participants' enthusiasm (e.g., why they enjoyed co-teaching). My colleague and I achieved high interrater reliability on this codebook (Cohen's Kappa = .93).

Next, because kinships support trust (Kochanek, 2005), I analyzed kinship maps as part of research question one. To begin my analysis, I used a holistic coding approach (Saldaña, 2016) to divide kinship maps by grade band (i.e., elementary, middle, high). Within grade bands I then grouped maps of participants who taught elective subjects, participants who taught core subjects (e.g., math, language arts), and special education teachers. This categorization allowed me to mix and remix maps into different groups (e.g., core and elective teachers in elementary grades; all elective teachers across grade bands) and helped me see a few patterns among kinship maps. I then used Hoy & Tschannen-Moran's (1999) definitions of facets of trust (i.e., benevolence, reliability, honesty, openness, competence) to apply literature-based codes (Saldaña, 2016) to interview transcripts, artifacts (e.g., photos of wall posters), and observation notes. This allowed me to explore ways in which participants' interview responses reflected facets of trust. My colleague and I also achieved high interrater reliability on this codebook (Cohen's Kappa = .84).

To answer my second research question regarding teacher's perceptions of leader support for collaboration, I again used structural coding (Saldaña, 2016) to distinguish between the types of leadership actions teachers described. Iterative coding during first and second cycles helped me examine the ways in which participants' examples of leader behaviors reflected one type of leadership or another. Pattern coding (Saldaña, 2016) allowed me to identify categories of leader actions and connect them to leadership types found in first cycle coding. During IRR, my colleague and I achieved a Cohen's Kappa of .90.

Finally, to answer the third research question regarding leaders' perceptions of collaboration, I primarily analyzed transcripts from leader interviews but also analyzed a few artifacts I collected during my talks with leaders. First cycle coding for research question three was descriptive; I used phrases to describe what leaders' comments were about (e.g, barriers to collaboration, outcomes from collaboration) in a manner that aligns with Saldaña (2016) instructions for descriptive coding. Second-cycle axial coding helped me categorize reasons behind the four major descriptive codes I applied to leader interview transcripts. My colleague and I also achieved high interrater reliability on this codebook (Cohen's Kappa = .84).

Researcher Subjectivities

I started out my career as a high school English teacher assigned mostly general education classes with two sections of what were labeled *Skills Improvement,* tracked as classes for the lowest performing students. In the 1990s, in my suburban Chicago district, inclusion of special education students meant putting a few typical, but low-performing students into a class of students with disabilities. Really, it was a self-contained special education class that included a few typical students. I had no training in special education, no paraprofessional assistance, and no co-teacher to help me. It felt like uphill slog to get academic and behavioral support for my students. I was in a room full of students who struggled to learn, teaching in the basement of the high school–where they put "those kids" to learn.

That teaching experience led me to pursue a Master's degree in School Counseling. As a counselor, I was able to coordinate services for students and take action to help students (and teachers) who were struggling in school. Later, when I became a Student Services Coordinator, I frequently was called to facilitate relationships between general and special education teachers. I found that general education teachers felt they worked all day only to have their after-school

hours be filled preparing lessons and meeting about students. They shared with me that they felt it unfair that special educators were able to take time *during* the day to get their paperwork and meetings done. Conversely, special education teachers often shared they felt their general education colleagues were unwilling to bend to meet students' needs. It was my experience that the disconnect between these two groups of teachers was a frequent cause of discord and likely thwarted collaboration needed to help students. My frustration with collaboration between general and special educators is what spurred my desire to study teacher collaboration.

Because of the tensions I've witnessed while I was a K-12 educator, I likely have developed assumptions about the nature of general and special education collaboration. As a researcher, I may have been biased to suspect fragile or broken trust among general and special educators. During my interviews, I frequently found my suspicions of problematic collaboration were confirmed. Conversely, I was pleased to discover participants who genuinely experienced successful collaboration with colleagues. These examples of strong collaboration were instructive, offering insight into how leaders may best support trust building among colleagues. While I acknowledge my assumptions and biases, I found that examples and non-examples of successful collaboration–and experiences in between–were useful data to better understand how trust functions among colleagues.

Furthermore, in the three roles I've experienced (teacher, counselor, intervention), I saw myself as an advocate for students first and foremost. Helping colleagues was simply a vehicle to help students get the support they needed. As such, I tended to resent educators who don't do (what I think) they should do to help students. When I was a counselor, empathized with my colleagues and helped them with their stressors so that we could all work to help kids. There were three interviews in which I was close to losing patience with participants who put their

needs before students' needs. I checked myself during and between interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) to make sure I didn't let my biases inform my interaction with participants.

In spite of the biases I may bring to my research from my time in K-12, I believe my K-12 background is also an advantage to me as a researcher. I feel I had a good understanding of the challenges involved with successful collaboration. I've experienced resentment between general and special education as I've worked for over two decades in different schools (i.e., private and public, elementary and secondary). During interviews, I understood the professional language of both general and special educators and the tools each group uses in their role. As a counselor, I tended to be empathetic and asked questions that help me better understand perspective of participants in my interviews.

Validity Threats and Protections

Threats to my validity rested primarily in the quality of the data I collected, especially in interviews. Because I prompted teachers to create graphic organizers and or images to help them think deeply about their relationships with colleagues, I may have solicited richer responses during the interviews. Making kinship maps often took some time; affording participants time to make meaning with concept mapping may have given them a chance to dig more deeply into their experiences than a question/answer scenario alone. Similarly, I found the use of image metaphors to solicit rich responses from participants. It could be that when participants attempted to contextualize their experiences using metaphor they were able to express nuances of their experiences they might not have otherwise. For instance, during one interview, a participant described the relationship she had with her special education colleague using the metaphor of a tree. When I asked how the three metaphor captured their relationship, she described "seasons" of experiences (i.e., some growth, some leaf dropping) that helped me understand the ups and

downs of their collaboration. In this way, I think the opportunities I gave participants to think through their responses may have helped me collect rich data.

Further, gathering multiple types of data (i.e., interviews, observations, artifacts) may have helped validate themes seen across multiple data sources (Maxwell, 2013). I also collected report card data about schools from ODE, documented teaming schedules and special education service delivery models for each building, and analyzed interviews, artifacts, and observations. This allowed me to triangulate my data, what Maxwell (2013) described as use of multiple methods of data to address validity threats. While this may not have eliminated all threats to validity, observations, for instance, would not be suspected of self-report bias in the way that interviews might have been.

Additionally, factors other than collegial trust (e.g., school climate, levy campaigns) may influence teacher relationships. Despite these limitations, I hope that the breadth of the case study produced some insights into the relationship between general and special educators. Results from this study, even cautious ones, may help support teachers who struggle under accountability pressures and strained trust with colleagues.

Relational Trust Between Researcher and Participants

One of my goals in this study was to connect *what* I researched (i.e., relational trust) to *how* I conducted my research. To that end, I viewed participants as colleagues of sorts; as a former teacher and school counselor it felt natural to connect with participants as colleagues in the field of education. I would have, I hoped, a kinship with teacher and leader participants. Part of my research for this study attended to my deliberate efforts to build trust with participants. I reflected on my trust building efforts with researcher memos during data collection; I will discuss my efforts to build trust with participants in the following sections.

Attempting to Create Trust

I met with school leaders in late September when district leaders invited me to attend two leader meetings, one for elementary leaders and one for secondary leaders. While there was some support among district leaders for the study we were hoping to conduct in the district, in the secondary meeting our efforts were directly challenged by building principals. Bob, the high school principal, questioned the worth of investigating teachers' emotional and relational experiences if we didn't have solutions ready to fix the problems. In September, I was feeling apprehensive about adding this research as another task to the plates of teachers and leaders.

Information Gathering. In an effort to build relationships with leaders, I met with each school leader individually to learn about their teachers' needs. I talked with them about their school climate and new curriculum initiatives (See Appendix C). Leaders generously shared an hour or more of their time; these sessions were very helpful preparation for my meetings with teachers.

First, these meetings helped me learn about each school through the eyes of leaders. For instance, when I met with high school leaders in October, the school was feeling very fresh grief about a student who had committed suicide in the school building that August. All of the school leaders also expressed apprehension about the upcoming levy vote on the November ballot. Previous levies had failed; the school district was desperate for voter support for a new centralized elementary building. Next, leaders shared the district's new curriculum initiatives with me. This helped me understand acronyms used in the district (e.g., MSTV, RIMPs), language skills that helped me better connect with teachers during interviews.

Demonstrating Benevolence and Reliability. Although building trust happens over time, I wanted to prime interviews with demonstrations of facets that could be judged quickly.

First, it was important for me to demonstrate benevolence to participants. I offered to meet with leaders and teachers on or off campus, before, during, or after school. In this way, I tried to show participants that I understood that taking the time to participate in this research was an extra burden for them. The offers I made to accommodate teachers' schedules were an attempt to demonstrate benevolence. Several participants chose to meet off campus; I had almost daily meetings at Grounds for Thought for several weeks. The coffee shop environment worked well; participants relaxed with a coffee and a donut or brownie. I felt good that I could demonstrate benevolence in this small way.

Further, I tried to promote reliability by sending follow up emails and reminder emails. If a teacher indicated their willingness to participate in the research study (e.g., as part of completing online questionnaire), I would send a follow up email to explain the in-person interview process. If the teacher responded favorably, I would send an email to arrange our meeting; if they did not respond to the initial email, I sent a follow up invitation. At the start of each week, I sent reminder emails to each participant who was meeting with me, confirming the day, time, and location of the interview. Finally, after each meeting, I sent a thank you email follow up. These repeated emails were demonstrations of reliability.

Demonstrating Openness and Competence. When talking with teachers and leaders, I felt it was important for me to reinforce kinships by demonstrating openness. Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggested that researchers must recognize participants' vulnerability when asking them to share information. One way to promote trust to alleviate participants' vulnerability was by reciprocating participants' openness. It was a learning experience for me to find a balance between empathetic sharing and maintaining focus on participants' experiences. For instance, I liked to preface my request for participants to draw a kinship map and choose a metaphor image

with the reminder that I was a former English teacher. My sharing often prompted a connection (e.g., teasing for my subject specialty; affinity for figurative language). Other times, I might have shared my experience (e.g., how tired I used to be after three nights of parent/teacher conferences) as a way to show understanding of participants' sharing.

During meetings with participants, I tried to demonstrate competence. For instance, I double recorded each session (i.e., phone and laptop) and organized my materials in a binder so I had quick access to consent forms and visual aids (e.g., printed out images). I also tried to be sure I asked follow-up questions (e.g., how do you accommodate students on IEPs without supports) and used ODE terms (e.g., OIP, Ed Choice, SLOs) to demonstrate competence to participants. In addition to promoting competence, using educator-specific language was also a kinship reinforcer. I literally was speaking their language.

Finally, I attempted to follow the advice of Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, and Beckingham (2004) who asserted that researchers who study collaboration may want to attempt collaboration with participants. When I met with participants, I often asked them for suggestions of ways I could explore trust building among teachers. According to Butler and colleagues (2004), my willingness to seek advice on data collection from participants was collaborative, and from a trust perspective, accepting advice demonstrated openness. Participants were often fantastic collaborators, offering to show me teacher spaces like the faculty lounge where I collected artifacts (e.g., pictures of bulletin boards, handouts) or inviting me to observe teaching. One pair of co-teachers shared the google docs they used to co-plan lessons (See Appendix E); another invited me to attend a school district trivia night. These were unexpected collaborative contributions from participants, and I was grateful for them.

Factors That Compromised Trust

One of the first challenges I met during data collection was that I broke my ankle on January 8, the first week I started interviews. I never missed a meeting, but I did have to have my husband drive me to each of my 41 interviews. In the early days of my injury, when I was struggling with crutches, he carried my materials into the school or coffee shop for me so I could be set up on time to promote reliability. While a broken ankle did not directly compromise trust, the inconvenience made me take extra steps to be sure I didn't compromise my reliability or benevolence with participants.

Events in the district also made trust building more challenging. In November, the school levy campaign failed. When I was scheduling initial meetings, I expressed my upset about the levy failure in email exchanges. In January, Bob, the high school principal, was suspended for two weeks. The story participants shared with me was that Bob sided with a teacher against a parent complaint. When the parents contacted the superintendent, the district realized Bob did not notify the superintendent about the complaint; Bob was suspended for failure to follow the district's communication protocol. Around the same time, the high school conducted a drug sweep which locked down the building. None of these events unilaterally compromised my trust building with participants. For instance, I had an interview scheduled with a teacher at the high school, but when I arrived, the police had blockaded the parking lot for the drug sweep. When I emailed the teacher to let him know I couldn't get in the building, he explained that the teachers didn't know the sweep was coming. They went into lock down, not knowing what was causing the alarm. My heart went out to them. Teachers only knew they were in lock down; they had no idea if there was an active shooter in the building. During our rescheduled meeting we talked about the lockdown as we walked to his classroom; I expressed my empathy and understanding.

Again, while the event did not cause me to lose trust directly, failure to acknowledge these kinds of events may have compromised trust from participants.

But I actually lost trust from participants in February when I was unable to deliver the gift cards they'd been promised as payment for their participation. After a series of frustrations with BGSU purchasing and Amazon, I found a loophole in the policies that had prohibited me from purchasing gift cards (i.e., electronic cards, physical cards in bulk). Unfortunately, by then some participants had lost patience waiting more than a month for gift cards and emailed me to share their frustrations. Our research team worked in a mad rush the following week to organize gift cards to teachers. Gift cards were accompanied by an apology letter, which allowed me to demonstrate honesty by taking responsibility for my mistake. Dr. Galletta even purchased chocolate bars to go in each envelope; this was a way to offer added benevolence to participants. The schools closed the following week because of COVID-19; I was grateful teachers were paid before school closings.

Sometimes I struggled to build trust with participants. One interview was a three-hour meeting in which the participant shared many stories of his rebellion within public education. Another participant spent 20 minutes sharing just her work history with me, focusing mostly on a traumatizing experience teaching in a charter school. Another participant kept me in the hall for 30 minutes after the interview explaining how colleagues had complained about him and how he'd surveyed each of his students to prove he wasn't a bad teacher. He showed me each index card his students had filled out in response to the survey of his teaching. These interviews were uncomfortable. I wanted to build trust with these participants, but I suspected their agenda for the meeting might have been in conflict with mine. In each case, I struggled to stick with the protocol, balancing my impulse to offer empathy to them with my need to complete the interview

protocol. I don't think I did a great job trust building with these three participants, but it was a learning experience for me as a researcher.

Successful Trust Building

I was pleased to develop trust with several participants. For example, multiple participants cried during the interviews. I'd like to think that in part, their willingness to show emotion was in response to the initial trust we'd built. I learned to carry tissues (i.e., benevolence, reliability, competence) to help participants who cried.

Another indicator of trust came to me as expressions of gratitude from participants. For instance, one elective area teacher at the middle school emailed me to thank me for the interview and offered to recommend to her colleagues that they participate in the study. We added two more participants because of this connection. One participant felt so comfortable after our talk she asked me if I thought she'd make a good adjunct instructor in special education at BGSU. I enthusiastically supported her interest and she hugged me in thanks. An elementary general education participant sent me a thank you note after she got her gift card. In part it read, "I was happy to help and to get to know you a little bit. Good luck as you continue your doc!!" A participant from the middle school emailed me and shared, "Thank you, Meg. Again, I appreciated talking with you and felt very validated after our conversation. This is important work you're doing!" A third emailed back with an affirmation of benevolence, saying "You are so sweet. Thank you." In almost all of the interviews, I left feeling good about the conversation we had and the connection I'd made; it was gratifying to know those feelings were reciprocated.

In total, these data supported the idea that trust between researcher and participants was a complicated construct. I believe I consistently demonstrated benevolence and openness to participants, but my reliability was threatened by the gift card mistake. This gift card blunder

also may have compromised judgements of my competence but offered me an opportunity to demonstrate honesty when I apologized. Further, events like the levy failure and school lockdown may have made participants feel frustrated, which could have lessened their willingness to take to time to share their experiences with me. I learned I can't control everything in an environment to support trust building. I'm not sure how much my efforts to build trust fell outside expectations for all researchers (e.g., reminder emails, thank you notes), but as a trust researcher, thinking about my construct as I collected data felt like an ethical alignment of theory and practice.

CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

To answer my first research question regarding the perception of trust in collaborative relationships between general and special education teacher participants, I examined participant interview transcripts, participant-drawn kinship maps, notes from observations of participants in collaborative activities, and artifacts (e.g., school documents, pictures of bulletin boards). Themes from these data included participants': (a) experiences with collaboration, (b) sense of kinship with colleagues, and (c) perceptions of facets of trust. I will discuss these themes in the next section.

Experiences with Collaboration

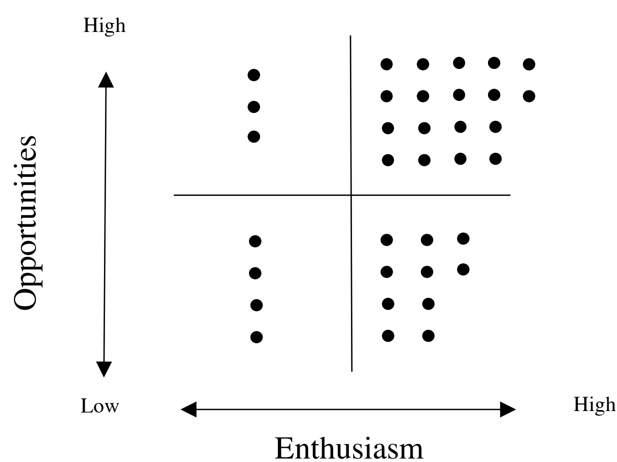
I asked general and special educator participants to share their perceptions about collaborating with their counterpart (i.e., general ed with special ed and vice versa). In this discussion of results, when the referent is a general educator, *counterpart* indicates the special education colleague with whom they collaborate; if the referent is a special educator, *counterpart* indicates the general education colleague with whom they collaborate. Participants shared a range of experiences that differed in terms of amount of opportunities to collaborate with colleagues and feelings about those collaborations. Collaboration varied both in terms of quantity and quality, and so my first round of coding separated comments that talked about how they collaborated (i.e., when, how often) and comments that spoke to enthusiasm for collaboration. Next, within these two categories, I further coded frequency of collaboration and level of enthusiasm. Participants who met more than was required (e.g., daily, a few times a week) were coded as high opportunity to collaborate; those who met once a week or less were coded as low opportunity. Participants whose comments were mostly positive (i.e., only one negative

comment or no negative comments) were marked high; those whose comments contained more than one negative were marked low.

Participants' experiences were plotted as points on two axes: opportunities and enthusiasm. In this way, participants' experiences fell into four quadrants that differed in terms of frequency of collaboration and enthusiasm toward collaboration. I have documented the quadrant of each participant in Figure 1; each participant is represented by a dot.

Figure 1

Participants' Collaboration Experiences



High Opportunity/Low Enthusiasm

Participants in the high opportunity/low enthusiasm quadrant were in roles in which frequent collaboration between general and special education teachers was expected but had not gone well. Their quadrant might be captured by the phrase "*I have to but don't like it.*" This quadrant included two participants who were special educators at the middle school and one who was a core subject teacher at an elementary school.

Interestingly, all felt that their counterpart didn't understand their daily responsibilities. One of the special educators explained:

> So, and I think that that is one side of things that the Gen Ed does not always understand or see because we're still going from classroom to classroom to classroom to classroom, trying to keep up with all of the stuff that's being taught in those classrooms, making sure that we know when we walk in, what's going on in Math, what's going on in Science, what's going on in Social Studies. But then, at some point throughout the day we still have to figure out when are we doing IEPs, when are we doing progress reports, when are we doing ETRs, when are we... So it's all of that.

The other special educator in this quadrant expressed her frustration when she imagined what her general education colleagues thought of her work. She spoke in a sarcastic voice, imitating her counterpart saying, "Well, I'm a Gen Ed teacher and I'm responsible for 120 students and you're just this person that's only responsible technically to this many students." She perceived her counterpart to be dismissive of her job.

Similarly, the general educator in this quadrant explained her frustration with collaboration using much the same language as the special education participants in this quadrant, sharing:

> But then the other part too is I've noticed, and it's just in little things where I'll pick up, where [the special education

> teacher] only feels responsible for the fifth graders who are on an IEP, which she has a very big case load, it makes sense. But I know I feel like any student at [my school], I'm there to help where she would say, "Well, that's not my student. Or these are my students."

Overall, these three participants expressed resentment toward their counterparts, and this resentment seemed to stem from perceptions that their counterparts did not not value the work they did.

It is important to note that though the predominance of negative comments placed these three participants in a High Opportunity/Low Enthusiasm quadrant teachers, they did share limited positive experiences with non-counterpart collaborators. The elementary general education teacher shared that she had a good collaborative relationship with a colleague who taught the same subject area as her, noting her colleague had more experience and expertise. She explained, "So I'm going to want to talk to her because I know that she can help me. I can know we're on the same page. So with that time, we've built a little bit better relationship with it." While her collaboration with a special education colleague had not been good, she experienced positive collaboration with a general education colleague. Her bad experience hadn't completely shaped her opinion about collaboration in general.

By the same token, one of the special educators–while choosing an image that captured the essence of her collaboration with general educators–shared she felt that relationship was like climbing a mountain. When I asked if she was climbing the mountain alone, she revealed:

> No, I'm climbing that mountain with other intervention specialists in the building because I feel like on every team,

> because, I mean, we've talked about it at meetings and stuff before. On every team, they have relationships where that works really well and relationships that probably aren't as strong.

Her statement indicated that she knew some general education/special education relationships could be good. Further, her statement showed a camaraderie with her special education colleagues; they were climbing the mountain together. During her interview, she shared multiple negative comments about her collaboration with general educators, placing her firmly in the high opportunity/low enthusiasm quadrant. But her comments also indicated that she held positive feelings about collaboration with other special educators.

The other special educator participant remained vehemently negative in almost all of her comments. When I asked her to conceptualize her relationships with general educators as an image, she did admit that she had one co-teacher that she saw as a "warm cup of coffee" because she looked forward to their time together. But she chose the umbrella to conceptualize her relationship with most other general educators. With them, she felt she had to "hold the umbrella and let the shit rain down." When I asked her to explain what the "shit" was, she explained that general educators frequently denied students the accommodations afforded to them in their IEPs. From her perspective the "shit" included assignments and instruction from general educators who wanted to "just see what [students on IEPs] can do." But this participant said, "No, we know what they can do. It's in their IEPs." As a result of general educators' flouting of legal accommodations for students, she felt she needed to hold that umbrella and "pull all my kids in and protect them and think, okay, once we get out of here, I'll just cover it all again in resource."

Across the high opportunity/low enthusiasm quadrant, participants viewed their own work with esteem, but were suspicious of the work of their counterparts.

High Opportunity/High Enthusiasm

Participants in the high opportunity, high enthusiasm quadrant considered themselves lucky to co-teach or perceived strong ties to their collaborators. The phrase that may best capture their experiences is "*I do and love it.*" Participants in this quadrant included teachers from every building and both special and general educators. Every type of collaboration (e.g., co-teaching, teaming) was perceived by at least some participants as positive. For instance, teachers at elementary schools primarily collaborated within grade level team structures. At the middle school, teams were interdisciplinary (i.e., included core subjects and special education). At the high school, teachers may have co-taught or have assigned support from a special educator. The data suggested that all collaboration structures could support a positive experience. It is also important to note that this quadrant contained the greatest number of participants, producing especially rich data. I'll divide these results by first examining participants' perceptions of their opportunities to collaborate. Then I'll examine their enthusiasm for collaboration, including benefits to teachers and students described by participants.

Opportunities to Collaborate. Participants in this quadrant described the frequency of their collaborations with their general or special education colleagues. For example, participants who co-taught referenced that regular collaborative interaction in their statements. One general educator shared how daily collaboration helped her and her counterpart reach struggling students:

> We do a lot of reflection on a daily basis for certain kiddos.
>
> Okay, this kid might need a little more reinforcement, or

> we're going to give this kid half the work, or maybe we need to back off on them a second. We do that pretty much daily.

Another co-teacher described how she and her counterpart got in sync each period they taught together. She said, "we're really good at reading each other's faces and knowing, okay, I'm going to do this because she's obviously busy with that." Yet another co-teacher said the collaboration she had with her co-teaching partner was so consistently unified each period of class she felt they were like a married couple: "we're like Mom and Dad."

Participants who in the high opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant who did not co-teach shared strategies they used to create opportunities to collaborate. Two special educators on different teams shared that both teams had a group text: "Our team just kind of texts throughout the day if there's something that's going on." A participant from an elementary school shared how their grade level team used google docs to bridge the gap between in-person meetings. She said:

> When we would meet, they were willing to offer their insight and share where they were at, how things were going in their room, the successes, the failures and then as far as we would plan homework together. We had to create it so then she would create her half and I would create my half and we would put them together. When we met, it was always ready to go.

Another elementary school general educator shared that at her school, teachers on the same team had a shared planning time, but also had the same lunch and recess assignments. Those extra

shared times afforded multiple opportunities to collaborate during the day even though they only had one shared planning time. Collectively, these data show that frequent collaborators use both planned and unplanned time as opportunities to collaborate.

Enthusiasm for Collaboration. Participants in the high collaboration/high enthusiasm quadrant enjoyed the collaboration they had with their colleagues. I grouped their comments into two categories that describe why they were pleased with their collaboration experiences. Several participants shared reasons that expressed benefits to teachers, such as increased efficiency or a sense of camaraderie. Participants also shared that they appreciated collaboration because of benefits to students. I'll discuss two forms of benefits in the next sections.

Benefits to Teachers. Several participants related feelings that collaboration helped them feel less isolated. An elementary school general education teacher shared that collaborating helped her feel like "we're all in this together." A general educator from the high school echoed the sense that collaboration helped her feel aligned with colleagues. In her case, she benefitted from her sense that her co-teacher was a joint decision maker. She said,

> And if there's ever any issues that come up, we face it together. We have a kiddo whose parent complained and we're both like, "Okay, how are we going to deal with this? Agreed? Okay, that's how we're dealing with it."

And one special educator captured the way he benefitted from collaboration by likening his collaborators to a good cup of coffee. He shared, "I'm thinking the good people I work with pep me up, they get going, they get me excited to be here. I enjoy being around them." This participant was clear that he chose the coffee metaphor because he felt addicted to coffee just like he was addicted to good collaboration with colleagues.

Sometimes participants shared that their positive collaborative relationship had a profound impact on them professionally. For example, a special educator said that for her, the co-teaching collaboration marked a shift in her career:

> When I started co-teaching with [my co-teacher], it was like a dream come to true, because I finally was able to get to some of the instruction, where I was able to plan lessons, and I was able to have my input recognized and even just validated, I guess….That is just such a huge relief to have that type of situation going on, because it changes your whole role as an intervention specialist.

For her, the co-teaching collaboration changed her professional identity from an assistant to the general education teacher to a collaborator with parity. She noted that parity had only been a dream prior to her co-teaching collaboration. Conversely, a lack of parity drove a general education participant to express gratitude for collaboration with his team's special educator. He talked about how much he relied on his counterpart for intervention help, even though he was the more veteran teacher. He shared, "And we just clicked somehow. I don't know, we just do. I call her coach." Another elementary general educator shared a similar sense of reliance on her assigned special educator: "I feel like I can trust her to have my back, and I can go to her for advice about what to do for a student, so I feel like she has helped me to become a stronger teacher." These participants expressed that collaboration allowed them to experience professional growth as teachers.

Finally, a participant at the high school who taught in a core academic area but did not have an assigned special education teacher also appreciated his counterpart. He said he felt

frequent support from his assigned collaborator could be expressed using the metaphor of a tree. When I asked him why he chose the tree to represent his collaboration with special education he said,

> I think I'm going to say that we're the leaves and all that stuff, and the only reason I say that is because we're the ones that everyone sees, but they are definitely behind the scenes helping out so much and doing a lot of things…. A good support system, the roots, colleagues and other people to help, hold you up.

In this way, he seemed to capture the feeling that as a general educator he could not do his job (i.e., be the visible leaf on the tree) without the roots provided by interventionists. Across all of these participants, collaboration experiences were integral to their role as a teacher.

Benefits to Students. Many participants spoke in terms of the student outcomes that could be realized through successful collaboration. One high school special educator shared:

> I just think we see it in the success of our students. Our students have been really successful in their meeting their goals, transitioning them to the next level of certain things, and I just think that that's where it's like okay, what we're doing is working. Whatever system we got going, it's we're moving and grooving.

A high school general educator echoed this sense of forward motion with student instruction saying, "We always talk about where we're at and making progress through the content."

Other participants specifically referenced the benefits of collaboration for students who struggle. An elementary school general educator summarized the way special educators were critical to her team's work with struggling students. She viewed the team's special educator like a key because, "like a key in a lock, they fill a gap or a hole that we as the classroom teachers can't fill. Don't have the ability, or the knowhow, or the time, or whatever to fill... Like, I know that they do things that I can't." A high school core subject teacher appreciated overcoming students' obstacles through collaborative efforts, saying, "I have that relationship with my co-teacher, here, and several other members of the department. We can just meet briefly, identify a problem, identify the solution, come back in a week, and have it taken care of." An elementary general educator also shared that commitment to overcoming obstacles with students. He said discussions with his special education counterpart sound like, "Here's what I'm doing. Here are these people that have these accommodations. How can we best make this work for everybody? Me, you and the kids?" Another participant experienced a similar exchange of ideas between counterparts who are trying to reach struggling students. She said, "And I respect his opinion, he respects my opinion. I feel like we're able to move forward. We focus on what's specifically going on and address some things that come up that we weren't anticipating."

One middle school special educator talked about the way that his positive team experience made him more willing to try new strategies to help students. He shared, "Yeah, if it's a team of people I work with and I trust a lot, I feel like I can like, 'Let's try this thing I'm really excited about.'" A high school special educator felt similarly about her co-teacher. She stated that her co-teacher "does have different ideas than me, and one person can't get all this done, but two people put their heads together and things start happening." This was a frequent

refrain among participants; the synergy that comes from successful collaboration can be realized in improved lessons and intervention, both of which are a boon to students.

Some teachers described this synergy as a sense of shared mission with their counterpart. An elementary general educator described the way she was able to "mesh" with her special education counterpart to reach their mutual "end goal." A teacher of core subjects at the high school chose a coffee cup image to capture her collaboration with her co-teacher. She shared that even though they might not order the same flavor of coffee, they were fundamentally aligned in their goals for student outcomes. She described:

> So, I might have ordered the macchiato and she might have the caramel something or maybe there's nothing in hers. But, we're all going to the same thing. We're all going for the same goal. We all want the same child to be successful. It's just the flavor of how we get there is going to be different. Oh, yeah. The shared mission's there.

In sum, participants in the high opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant felt their colleagues fortified their teaching experience. Further, participants linked their enthusiasm to student outcomes. Collaborators in this quadrant were allies to share burdens, friends to buoy spirits, and partners to help deliver better instruction.

Low Opportunity/Low Enthusiasm

Participants in the low opportunity/low enthusiasm quadrant were in roles in which frequent collaboration between general and special education teachers was not expected and not desired. Their attitude is represented by the phrase, "*I don't and don't want to*." There were four participants in this quadrant: two subject area teachers from the high school, an elective area

teacher from the middle school, and an elective area teacher from an elementary school. These participants expressed a similar lack of connection with colleagues and also shared a sense that they did not have enough time to collaborate.

Lack of Connection. One general educator from the high school shared that he did not collaborate with special education teachers because he taught high level classes (e.g., honors, Advanced Placement) where there were not typically students on IEPs. While he did not express a desire for increased collaboration, he also shared that he did not feel closely connected to any of his coworkers. I asked him who he could talk to at school if something frustrating happened during his day. He shared that if something bad happened during his school day, he didn't have a colleague with whom he felt comfortable sharing. He said, "If it was really frustrating, it would just go home."

The other high school teacher in this quadrant was similarly socially isolated. He shared his reluctance to engage fellow teachers, even in casual conversation. He said:

> Unless you're one of the few that are part of the golden club of people, that all very much get along because of their common ties, probably sports, most of the conversations are placid, meaningless, small talk. "How are you?" "Good." "Good, weather?" "Good." There's nothing. There's nothing of substance. There's nothing that's valued in those conversations.

These participants did not perceive that had colleagues that felt like friends and allies.

One participant rejected collaboration in any form, preferring to retain independence. He shared how he decided what lessons to teach, and was vehement about his independence, saying,

“nobody dictates what I do in my room except for me.” He also explained that he regularly “bucked the system.” I asked him to elaborate and he said:

> Don’t go to IEP meetings, which is probably the capital offense in education, because the IEP meetings is so foundational for the student. IEPs are a joke, they are. Shouldn’t every student have an individualized educational program?

With these words, the participant expressed strong advocacy for all students, but simultaneously did not appear to value established collaborative mechanisms such as IEP meetings. Furthermore, this participant explained that though he was assigned a special education co-teacher last year, he chose the mountain image to characterize their relationship because they were like tectonic plates. He explained, “There was never this growth. It was just a collision.” Though they came to trust each other a bit, he acknowledged that his special education co-teacher “really didn’t like that our co-teaching method wasn’t necessarily co-teaching. It was one teach, one support because I’m very much the commanding presence. I am very much the teacher in the room.” This participant openly acknowledged his reluctance to collaborate; he took pride in his ability to work independently.

Other participants in the low opportunity/low enthusiasm quadrant did not choose to work independently. Rather, the participant from the middle school who taught in an elective subject expressed that a lack of connection with colleagues was a consequence of teaching stand-alone specialty subjects (e.g., choral music, band, drawing). She shared, “So we are very isolated in some ways, including bad ways, because we can have better control on what we are doing….But downside is we are not making a lot of connection with other people.” In fact, she

said she only had interaction with special education teachers if she reached out to one with a specific question. She likened their relationship to an umbrella because:

> Well, I will have it handy, but it's not carrying with me 24/7. Like, let's say for my real umbrella, I have one in my car because I know that is the only time I will need it. Or, you know. That is pretty much it. I would not carry that in my purse, but I know where they are and I know when I need it, it's there.

While this participant didn't seem to feel animosity toward special educators, her words indicated that her special education colleagues were something she would only need to access occasionally, and only when there was a specific problem to address.

The elementary school participant in this quadrant felt similarly disconnected to special educators. When she was asked what image best captured her relationship with special education colleagues, she shared, "I would say the key, because I feel like that opens the door – To where, some of the times the doors are closed, and that would open the door and the gateway to where we need to be." And when I asked if she felt she had that key, she replied, "I don't have a master key. My key only fits certain doors." She continued to explain her frustration with the collaboration between special and general education using the key that opens doors metaphor:

> I think it's opened a crack, then shut, forgotten about. Unless it's something that we've mandated to do. But professionally, emotionally, I think a lot of that gets left in the by the wayside. Just because of the nature of this business. I even hate using that word. But it is a business,

> unfortunately, and it's become a business and it shouldn't be. I don't think it should be, because that concept, to me, that leaves a whole different mindset of, "We have to worry about the bottom line," that kind of stuff. Okay, I get that, but these are our kids. You know?

She seemed to be trying to express a disconnect between her child-centeredness and her special education colleagues' focus on mandated instruction. Participants in the low opportunity/low enthusiasm quadrant all experienced a lack of connection to colleagues. However, sometimes this lack of connection was circumstance (e.g., teaching assignment) and sometimes by choice.

Lack of Time. Both high school teachers perceived a general lack of time during their workday, which may have compounded these participants' ability–and possibly desire–to collaborate. One of the high school participants was assigned to a subject area team, but he shared that a lot of teachers in his department coached, so they had to use their assigned shared planning period to prepare classroom tasks *and* coaching tasks; there wasn't time for collaborative work. The other high school core subject area teacher in this quadrant felt similarly. He shared he did not value time with his subject area team because those meetings were "probably the most pointless meetings that we have during the week, a waste of half my planning period on Thursdays."

The middle school participant didn't seem to find collaboration an important priority in teachers' schedules. She shared "One period is planning. The other is collaboration. One period is lunch. So you leave four periods with students….And I think it's not the best use of time." She went on to say that collaboration is something that could happen occasionally, because it "needs to be done somewhere not when you have a school day. Maybe a PD day." She explained that

even though she was assigned to a team of colleagues for the purpose of collaboration, "with my schedule and my colleagues'…[we're] just never able to make it happen." Regardless of the specific reason, these participants shared a belief that collaboration wasn't a priority given the other tasks they had to do.

Low Opportunity/High Enthusiasm

Participants in the low opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant were teachers who did not have planned access to collaborators (e.g., core teachers who did not co-teach or core plus/elective teachers). A sense of longing dominated their comments, and the phrase that might best capture their sentiments is *"I wish I did."* Participants in this quadrant came from four of the five schools in the district. Only one teacher taught a core subject; the rest taught elective subjects. There was one special educator in this quadrant. There were a few themes from these interviews including participants feeling: (a) isolated from colleagues, (b) a hierarchy within staff, and (c) desire for more collaboration. I'll discuss each of these themes in turn.

Isolated from Colleagues. One of the most striking themes of comments from participants in this quadrant was their perception that they were isolated from colleagues. While comments suggested that this lack of connection applied to relationships with counterparts, their sense of isolation was all encompassing. For example, seven of the 10 participants in this quadrant specifically referred to their geographic separation from the rest of the school. Four of the participants used the term "island" to describe the lack of connection they felt to colleagues. Some of this isolation seemed to stem from the nature of their subject matter. For instance, choral music, band, and orchestra at the middle and high school are located down a hallway that is distant from academic classrooms; this is by design so that the noise of these classes doesn't impact others. One of the participants talked about her classroom placement saying, "I'm sort of

in a no man's land because there's a cluster of classrooms this way and then there's lockers and classrooms this way, but then there's me in my, like Harry Potter closet kind of." Another elective area teacher talked about her frustration that the only other elective teacher in her school had a classroom at the other end of the building; she suspected that teacher felt like she was on an island, too.

This geographic separation appeared to have consequences for these participants' ability to interact with other teachers. One high school teacher in this quadrant said, "There's times where I don't see teachers until... I only see them at staff meetings, once a month." Another participant shared that he wondered if his classroom's location was responsible for the lack of communication he had with special educators. He said, "maybe just because of proximity, because we're away from all the academic needs. I think that is a barrier in itself, because it's not as easy to stop by a room and say, "Hey, just letting you know ...." In addition, the inability to interact with colleagues–even informally–may be compounded for elective teachers who travel between schools. Teachers of certain subjects, such as orchestra and band, split their time between the middle and high school. They described that they lost some of their chances to interact with colleagues because they have during-school travel time.

It is interesting to note that the perception of isolation was shared by elective teachers and the special educator participant in this quadrant, despite the fact that the special education classroom was centrally located. She taught students at the middle school with moderate to severe disabilities. Her students were not part of a grade level student team, even though they were included in some general education classes. The special educator participant talked about the difficulty of mingling with general educators when she checked on her students. She felt this difficulty was compounded by her colleagues' attitudes toward her and her students. She shared:

> I'm kind of on an island and every now and then I get to go the mainland and see what's going on. So when I go to the mainland, there are few people that are in the gen ed that I would trust with whatever. But there are few that when I would say some... I don't even really talk a lot about things because I just don't feel that they understand it….some are just wanting to lock the door and not let me come in.

In this quadrant, participants' perceptions that they were different from core subject area teachers contributed a sense that they were isolated in the school.

Hierarchy Within Staff. In addition to feeling isolated, participants shared their perceptions that they were lower ranking faculty. Indeed, even the words they shared the district used to describe their roles denotes a hierarchy: "core" teachers are from math, language arts, social studies and science; elective area teachers are termed by the district as "core plus." One of the participants explained, " As elective you feel a little lesser than." She even joked that her colleagues weren't sure she had the same four-year teaching degree that they had; she thought they assumed elective teachers "couldn't get a real job or whatever." Another elective teacher echoed the sentiment that core area colleagues looked down on elective teachers:

> It's exhausting to always, I think I have to advocate for yourself and your value…..It's very difficult to feel like you have the esteem of your colleagues and the respect from your group that you deserve from your colleagues when they don't understand what you do.

Participants' concerns about the perceptions of their colleagues extended to counseling staff and administrators who schedule students. One participant shared, "sometimes we just feel like the dumping grounds because we just get a lot of, 'Okay, we don't know where to put them during this period, so here you go.'" And one participant pointed out that this sort of treatment of elective area teachers "is prevalent across the district, at least at the elementary."

One way elective area teachers feel the hierarchy in schools is that they perceived they don't merit attention from special educators. Elective area teachers described the lack of support from special educators as pervasive and acute. One teacher said, "we just never see them." Another participant used almost the exact same words saying, "I literally don't see them." Yet another shared, "I get an intervention specialist, not even like give me IEP….Or say, "Hey, you've got my kid. You might want to look in the cume file." This same participant went on to posit that this lack of support from special educators meant "I think in terms of electives, for many intervention specialists, it's just like we're providing them with a planning period."

What was clear, however, was that participants in this quadrant felt like they needed help from special education teachers. For instance, one participant confessed, "I feel very lost sometimes, but I also try to see how the kids are without even knowing who's on IEPs." Another participant talked about how difficult lack of special education support is for her when she explained how challenging her classes can be saying, "My sixth period class, I had 26 students. One of them was kicked out from another classroom that was at a totally different grade and then nine on IEPs." Two participants in this quadrant likened their relationships with special educators as computers because their interactions were never face to face, and at best, they had access to one-sided extraction of information (e.g., a list of students who have IEPs).

Some participants in this quadrant who taught elective subjects understood why they may not be a priority for support from special education colleagues. One participant talked about having to reach out to a special educator when she needed help with a student. She shared, "I don't want to feel like I'm bothering them per se because I know they're so busy and I feel like okay, I'm choir, they need science to graduate, do you know what I mean?" An elementary school elective area teacher felt similarly. When I asked who gets attention she said, "If you are a value-added kind of person. You're teaching math, you're teaching something like that. There's a hierarchy there." These comments emphasized how accountability pressures as contribute to the hierarchy among staff. One used the ODE term "value-added" to describe teachers who teach in subjects that are tested and for whom annual growth of their students is measured and used as part of their teaching evaluation. The other teacher references graduation, an indicator on the state report card.

At the same time, the special education teacher in this quadrant felt she was lower on the hierarchy as compared to her colleagues. As a teacher of students with severe disabilities, she did not see herself as part of the "core." Given that her students were not included in one of the middle school grade level teams, all named for space exploration crafts (e.g., Pioneer, Apollo, Discovery), she and her colleague created their own team. The participant and her colleague who teaches in the other classroom of students with severe disabilities wryly named their two-person team "Eclipse" as a nod to their separate status. She went on to explain how she felt diminished as a non-core teacher:

> Core subjects, have it all. Even though I do teach core subjects, I still don't have that. And just like we're kind of peons in this and our…It's like we used to have it where

> the inclusion teachers and the gen ed teachers were both on the same line for a class. Well then there's a big to do about that. And so the special ed teachers names were dropped off that co-teaching class. And a lot of people have problems with that because the time it took, it devalued them because they are in there, they are educating, they are doing what they're supposed to.

Participants in this quadrant clearly felt that core subject area teachers were priorities within the district. They felt marginalized and perceived that they were denied access to collaboration.

Desire for More Collaboration. As a group, participants in the low opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant embraced neither isolation nor hierarchy; rather, they were thirsty for collaboration. A teacher from the middle school shared, "I hear a lot of elective teachers say they really miss having teaming." Another middle school participant felt the same, sharing, "I wish that electives teachers were given common planning time. I know that it's difficult, but I wish that there could be some consideration for that." Another participant felt that part of the reason there was a lack of meaningful collaboration was because there was a gap between what schools claimed they were doing to collaborate and what actually happens. He said, "So, we have a lot of things on paper. I don't personally believe that we have a lot that actually is helping us to work together."

Some participants expressed frustration with the lack of collaboration by envisioning how they wished the interacted with colleagues. One middle school participant shared:

> I just want to be able to have a meaningful relationship with colleagues. And I think so much of it is splintered

> either by department or by team, that there isn't that group. And it's like everybody wants to put kids first. But to put kids first, you have to put the adults in charge first.

A participant from an elementary school expressed a similar link between adult collaboration and student outcomes noting:

> See, I think when they say collaboration they say, "Well, all the grade levels need to do that," but it needs to be everybody. It shouldn't just be the grade levels. It should be everyone is collaborating… I don't think that we are there yet, but I guess my wish and what I really try to promote with my own children is that it doesn't matter what subject you're sitting at or doing, but you're all working. I want them to have a great experience, because I want them to be successful members of society.

A participant from the high school revealed the tension between his desire for collaboration and his experiences over the years:

> I tried when I first started and there was just, it was almost a sense of like, you were shamed for getting excited about stuff, or to showing emotions that were, joy and happiness and excitement and trying to bring energy. And it was almost like, "Hey, Hey, settle down, Skippy, that's not how we do things here."… That kind of got beat out of me a little bit. But I still fight my way but just more in my

> classroom. I don't leave my classroom….And that's, and that's where the sadness is because I know that it can be better. It bothers me because I want it to be better, and I try.

As a group, these participants felt isolated and abused by the hierarchies in their schools. Yet, they expressed a desire to experience the collaboration afforded their colleagues and continued to keep a student-centered philosophy despite these challenges.

In total, these data present a picture in which some participants–and their students–benefitted from collaborations with their counterparts. Others perceived bias within the district that left them feeling marginalized. Many participants across quadrants expressed their perceptions of difference between general and special educators' roles and responsibilities.

Kinships Among Collaborators as a Precursor to Trust

An exploration of *kinship*, connections teachers make based on similarities that form a basis for trusting relationships (Kochanek, 2005), speaks to my first research question, about general and special education teachers' perceptions of the function of trust in their collaborative relationship. Because kinships can be based on many professional factors (e.g., tenure in the school, teaching philosophy) and personal factors (e.g., single moms, religious affiliation), finding kinships between general and special educators was uncertain. As part of the interview protocol, I asked participants to draw a concept map that represented their place in the social network of their school. I did not specify what form the map had to take (e.g., Venn diagram, flowchart), though most teachers drew kinship maps that were concept webs, depicting themselves in the center of the map and their social connections radiating outward from the center (See Figure 2). I examined the maps to explore patterns among grade bands and general and special educators. These results are shared in the next sections.

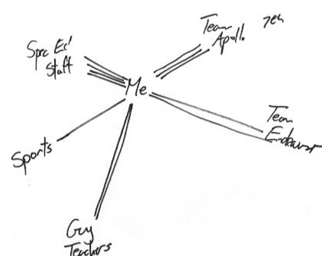
Grade Band Patterns

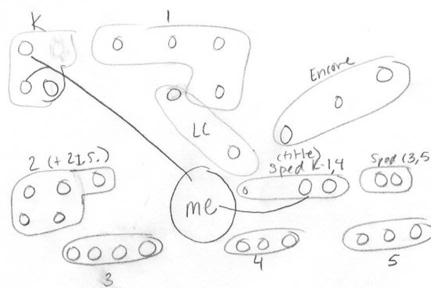
Middle and high school participants' kinship maps reflected large, diverse social networks. They frequently crossed grade and/or subject area boundaries, including relationships with other teachers with whom they coached or shared co-curricular responsibilities. Middle school participants' maps depicted that their kinships were influenced by school geography (e.g., team hallways, friendships with teachers in neighboring classrooms). But participants from the high school drew maps that reflected kinships from across the building, breaking geographical boundaries. For example, several high school participants shared they ate lunch in either the upstairs or downstairs faculty lounge, and that those teacher spaces drew teachers from different parts of the building. One participant dubbed the upstairs faculty lounge as "arts and entertainment" while the downstairs lounge was "sports and science." In this way, high school participants' networks may have benefitted from spaces that invited a cross section of teachers to mix together. Other participants from the high school also acknowledged this lunch time social arrangement; one participant noted she purposefully divided her lunch periods, eating in both lounges each week so she could maintain friendships with a diverse group of co-workers. Conversely, participants from the middle school drew kinship maps that depicted networks that were grounded in their interdisciplinary teams and shared hallway spaces. Middle school participants' maps crossed subject areas, but only as far as their interdisciplinary teams extended; they remained geographically constrained to their team's hallway.

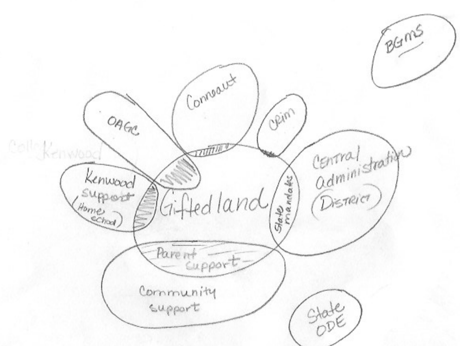
Participants from elementary schools tended to draw maps that depicted small, tight-knit kinship groups. These social networks were frequently based in grade level teams which were often reinforced by school geography (i.e., adjacent grade level classrooms). For instance, one

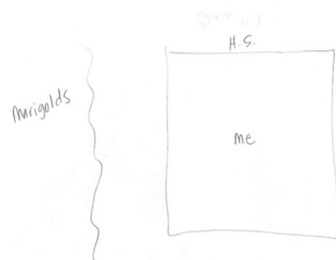
Figure 2

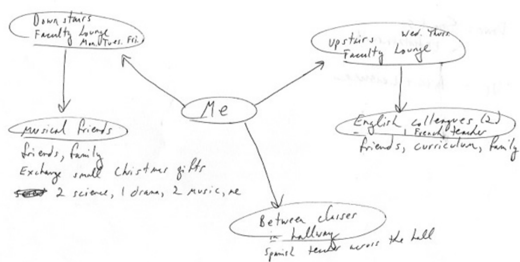
Examples of Kinship Maps

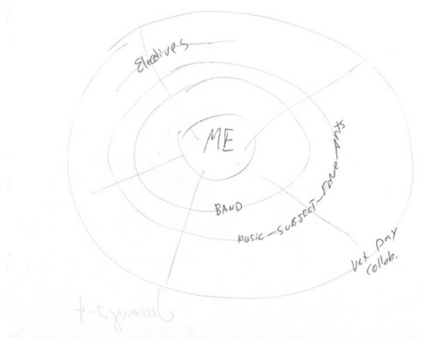












participant shared that as a teacher in a mobile classroom, she had two kinship groups: the teachers in the mobiles near her and her grade level team. Another participant shared that she rarely interacted with teachers in the wing of the school opposite her. For this teacher participant, grade level kinships were closely linked to school geography that bifurcated classrooms for grades kindergarten through second from grades three through five. Some elementary teachers tended to draw maps that reflected connections to their side of the school, creating an "us" and "them" distinction.

In fact, distinctions between "us" and "them" were displayed on 19 of 25 kinship maps. One by-product of kinships is the potential to perceive *otherness*, a distance from those who are not within the kinship group (Kochanek, 2005). Figure 2 includes examples of these types of maps. For instance, one participant drew his map with an elongated oval at the top of the paper. He said this was the "cloud of the administration darkening the school" and contrasted that group with the tight circles that represented his kinships. Another participant drew a bubble for her kinship group labeled "feisty ones" and another to whom she had no connection labeled "show up and do their job go home" to describe the distinct social groups in her building. One high school participant drew her map as a giant square with her inside of it. She said she had walls around her, though when I expressed empathy for her sense of isolation, she shared that she felt a limited kinship with a few other teachers who held a positive, forward-thinking outlook. She termed these colleagues as "marigolds" as a nod to the way she perceived they were good "companion plants" in her garden. Still, she added another squiggly line to show the distance between her square and these limited kinships (See Figure 2). Of the 19 maps that depicted otherness, 13 of them were from middle or high school teacher participants.

Elective area teachers were an exception to middle/high school and elementary kinship patterns. Across grade levels, teachers of elective subjects reported social networks that were almost exclusively linked to their specific subject area (i.e., choir, art, band) and did not reflect kinships outside of their elective area. One teacher drew his map as a series of concentric circles in which he was alone in the center and only other band teachers were connected to him. In the next ring were other music teachers, and teachers in any elective subject were in the next ring out. Finally, in the most distant ring were teachers with whom he had collaborated on a school assembly project. Another participant drew her map as a series of narrowly overlapping Venn diagrams, depicting the slivers of interaction she had with many groups while making clear her sense that she operated on an island (See Figure 2).

Even elective area participants who drew maps that showed a wider variety of groups within the school (e.g., coaches, “good ol’ boys”, subject area teachers) emphasized that their connection was primarily with teachers in their specific elective discipline. For example, while a few participants drew kinship maps that acknowledged they knew teachers from different groups, they marked the line that connected them to their specific elective discipline much heavier and darker to show the strength of those connections. In other words, elective area participants’ social networks tended to be extremely narrow: choir teachers only connect with other choir teachers, band with other band teachers, art with other art teachers. They did not report having kinships with other elective areas (e.g., foreign language, technology). Further, many of them experienced geographic isolation that reinforced their narrow networks. Elective teachers reported that they traveled between schools (e.g., teaching orchestra for grades 5-12) or their elective area necessitated separation from other classrooms (e.g., band rooms distanced because of noise).

Overall, grade band patterns for middle and elementary participants typically reflected their school's geographic distribution of classrooms by grade level. High school participants maintained kinships with their classroom neighbors, but drew maps that broke geographic boundaries. Both middle and high school participants' maps included coaching and co-curricular kinships. Elective area participants at all grade levels depicted very limited kinships.

General and Special Education Patterns

In order to fully explore research question one, I was curious to see if general and special educators' kinship maps would have patterns of reciprocity that might offer a clue to their shared perceptions of trust and collaboration. Said another way, I wanted to see if maps revealed kinships that indicated a cultural norm of collaboration between general and special educators. It is important to note that these maps came from participants in different schools and grade levels; there was no chance that maps would show actual reciprocity between any two counterparts. Rather, these results captured patterns of perceptions across schools, subject areas, and grade bands.

One finding was that no elective area participants–regardless of grade band or school–listed a special educator on their kinship maps. Similarly, no special education teacher listed an elective area teacher on their kinship maps. This suggests that the absence of kinships between special education and elective area participants was a reciprocal perception.

In contrast, there were differences in patterns (i.e., no reciprocity) in the kinship maps drawn by special education participants and general education participants of core academic subjects across all grade bands. Most general education participants (8 of 13) did not depict a special education teacher as part of their kinship groups. Among the participants who did include a special educator, one was a high school teacher who said he had an unusually strong friendship

with the special education teacher who had been assigned to his sections of Algebra I in the previous school year; they became friends outside of school. Even though they were no longer assigned to work together during this academic year, their kinship remained.

A few elementary participants also included special education teachers on their kinship maps. These participants drew maps in which special education teachers were included in or closely adjacent to the links to their grade level teams. For instance, one fifth grade participant drew a bubble for his team but within that bubble there were two bubbles to depict his two grade level colleagues and a third bubble to depict the special education teacher assigned to work with fifth-grade teachers. These elementary participants perceived kinships with special education counterparts; they drew them as part of the grade-level team.

Special education participants' kinship maps depicted connections to their general education counterparts. Every special education participant drew maps that included general education teachers as part of their kinship groups. Most special educator participants' maps showed distinct groups of general and special education teachers, but all special educator participants drew physical links on their maps to general education teachers. For instance, one participant emphasized the strength of his connection to different kinship groups with the number of lines he used to connect himself to the labels on his map. For this participant, he felt a one-line strong kinship to teachers who were interested in sports, two-line strong kinships to teachers who were male or taught in his grade level, a three-line strong kinship with his specific six-person team within his grade level, and a four-line strong kinship to all special educators in his building (See Figure 2). This map is representative of a kinship pattern among special education teacher participants overall: their closest kinships may be with their special education colleagues, but they also perceive kinships with general educators.

In sum, kinship maps among special and general education participants tended to be lopsided. Special educator participants perceive kinships with general educators, but general educators do not typically reciprocate that kinship. Across all kinship maps, patterns of social networks emerged based on school geography and subject area. Kinship maps revealed some information about precursors for trusting relationships. In the next section, I'll examine participants' perceptions of trust.

Facets of Trust Among Collaborators

My first research question focused on participants' perceptions of trust between general and special education teachers. I found Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2000) facets of trust to be a useful way to examine the three types of data I gathered to answer this question (See Chapter I). In the following sections I'll briefly reiterate definitions of each of the five facets of trust. Then I'll discuss how data from participants' interviews, my observations of collaborating colleagues, and artifacts I collected during school visits speak to each of the five facets of trust.

Benevolence. Tschannen-Moran argued *benevolence* to be essential to any trusting relationship (2004). A central component of benevolence is that "one can count on another to act in one's best interest" and that "one's well-being or something one cares about will be protected" (2004, p.19). Therefore, a critical component of benevolence may be the ability to perceive another's best interest or see what another party cares about. Tschannen-Moran (2004) talks about the importance of both parties in a trusting relationship working to *understand*, a notion that includes acceptance of another party's "interests, attitudes, and beliefs" even if we do not agree with the other's party's perspective (p.161).

Interviews. Comments about colleagues' benevolence comprised 23.5% of all trust-related comments from interviews, second only to comments about colleagues' competence

(32%). But comments from participants in this study were divided almost equally between positive and negative. That is, there were as many comments that addressed a participant's sense of benevolence from a colleague as those that addressed a lack of benevolence from a colleague.

Many of the comments that expressed a lack of benevolence were centered in general and special educators' perceptions that their counterparts did not understand the work they did. For instance, some participants were very open about their lack of understanding of their counterparts' roles. A high school elective teacher shared:

> I don't know what they do daily. You know what I mean? I honestly know they're down there, I know they have their case loads. I know that I hear they're always overworked is what I hear from them. But do I actually understand their job? I don't really think I understand what they do.

A special educator from the high school agreed with that assessment when she shared, "because I can honestly tell you right now, I bet you 95% of the gen ed teachers in this building have no idea what is going on in these two rooms, none whatsoever." An elementary teacher of core subjects explained that she felt there was a basic lack of understanding from both general and special educators, which she called a "breeding ground for disagreement." Some participants tried to find reasons to explain the lack of benevolence between general and special education. One special educator targeted accountability pressures as the cause of conflict. She shared, "I feel that most everyone in this building is kind and caring and they want to do well as an educator, but I think the testing piece and the data piece is what is superseding their judgment to have empathy with others." One of her special education colleagues agreed: "I think some of it

comes from [general educators] feeling all this pressure sometimes that they are responsible for all of the success and you're hindering that somehow, instead of helping it." Another special educator explained it this way, "I think that education in and of itself has exhausted us and it has forced us to get away from the respect issue because we're all so tired." Her statement appeared to blame the institution of modern education, not individuals in her school. A special educator at the middle school shared she has experienced lack of benevolence from her general education colleagues who failed to maintain professionalism: "I've had instances where I've had a teacher come in and yell at me in front of other students, so that right there is demeaning me in front of students." While this is an extreme example, it contributed to a picture in which stress levels were high and teachers may have resorted to unkind behavior toward their colleagues. Taken together, these participants' comments were similar because they each expressed an acceptance that kindness and care for others–hallmarks of benevolence–were glaringly absent.

When I asked participants to compare their responsibilities with those of their general or special education counterparts, one special educator remarked that she felt that a comparative culture between general and special educators may be at the root of their lack of benevolence. She advised, "We have to not compare whose job is worse or better and not get into that," and noted that teachers tended to "maliciously" disrespect each other. But several participants expressed a sense of disparity between the roles of general and special educators. A general education participant explained how much of her job she takes home with her (e.g., lesson planning, grading) and contrasted her responsibilities with her counterpart, saying, "I often feel that, well [the special educator assigned to her] is not taking work home, so your job must be really easy." One elementary teacher described the difference between her responsibilities and those of special educators:

> But, being the classroom teacher just, there's a physical responsibility that's not there for the intervention specialist because they're not a home room teacher. And then, like, in the morning, first thing, they don't have to be in their room right as soon as the kids come down. They can finish making their copies. They can finish their conversation. They can finish whatever they're doing. And the same thing with transportation. Like, "Oh, where's so and so? They didn't get on the bus. Blah, blah, blah." Things like that that just, they're small things, but they seem to add up.

But a special educator had an opposite interpretation of the contrast between general and special education responsibilities. He shared a specific instance when he felt his general education counterpart didn't understand his work or have his best interests in mind:

> I had a conflict earlier this year with a teacher who I was late getting to her class because I was in a meeting, finishing the meeting and talking to a parent afterwards. And I was 15 minutes late to class and she was really upset with me about it. So what do you think I was doing? Like just skipping or what? It's insulting that you would even ask me like, "Where were you, why weren't you in my class on time?"

The comments from the general educator reflected her resentment that she did not have flexible time in her day the way that her special education counterpart did. Conversely, the special

educator resented his counterpart's demand to adhere to a fixed schedule, a request that may be difficult when meeting with parents who do not follow a bell schedule.

Not all comparative comments were negative. One elementary general education teacher explained without judgement, "She has bigger jobs to do. I have more humans that I'm responsible for, but she has bigger responsibilities because she has these legal documents that she has to make sure she meets." While the general educator understood their jobs were different, she did not express resentment about the difference. Another general education participant agreed: "I don't think anybody's one job is harder than the other, but it's very different and the tasks are different."

Despite the differences in responsibilities, some participants experienced benevolence with their counterparts. A few general and special education participants spoke about their counterparts' ability to demonstrate care and kindness. One general education participant spoke of her assigned special educator saying, "She's willing to jump in and she is just really helpful, but she's a friend." Her words suggested a relationship in which her counterpart's kindness rose to the level of friendship. Another teacher spoke of the way her assigned special educator helped her accomplish her goals with students because they had a shared sense of purpose. Because these teachers shared their mission to help students, one's interest was the other's interest. When there was shared interests between participants, benevolence was naturally reinforced.

Other participants described perceptions that their counterparts worked against benevolence. Two special educators shared they felt exploited by their counterparts, a direct violation of benevolence (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). One shared, "I feel like they're all for themselves more than me" and another special educator echoed similar concerns, saying, "There's sometimes their own agenda, I guess, with how they want to look to administration."

These statements moved beyond an absence of kindness or lack of benevolence and spoke to potential harm that happens when one party's needs are prioritized over another's.

Overall, while there were some comments from participants that expressed understanding of each other's role, there were very few participants that spoke to a sense that they were cared for by their general or special education counterpart. It is important to note that from all of the comments that expressed benevolence between general and special educators, only one of those comments came from a special educator. Unfortunately, most comments about benevolence seemed grounded in the lack of goodwill general and special educators afforded one another.

Observations. During my observations of teachers, however, I was able to see demonstrations of benevolence between colleagues. For instance, the teachers who co-led a student activity at the high school repeatedly showed care to each other in two distinct ways. First, they offered support to one another when a student or paraprofessional in the room was causing frustration. For instance, one student picked a scab on his knee until it bled. This caused the activity to stop while the paraprofessional at that table got a bandage for the student. As the teachers redirected the rest of the students (now distracted by the bloody knee), one teacher gave a quick eye roll and smile to the other; the other teacher returned a smile. It was a moment of connection between the two of them, a way they could communicate support during a small class management situation. Another time, a student needed to be taken from the room to calm down. When the teacher and student returned, the other teacher gave her partner a quick squeeze on the shoulder, which was met with a grateful smile. These non-verbal signals served as a shorthand to express benevolence toward one another.

The next way these teachers showed benevolence was when they came together for shared positive statements every so often. When students finished a card design, the two teachers

met to look over the cards together. One said, “These are so cute!” and the other echoed “Yeah, these turned out so cute!” They smiled at each other, stood close, and rubbed elbows with each other. I saw them do this smiling elbow rub several times during the session as a shared affirmation of the success of the activity. It seemed to be a way for them to express joy and include the other in their moment of happiness. In this way, the teachers took time to promote goodwill for each other, a sign of benevolence.

The teachers I observed in the elementary team meeting also displayed benevolence to one another. For example, when the team’s discussion turned to state testing, the team leader turned to one team member and said, “we don’t want reading to be on your lap.” Another teacher chimed in, saying, “we need to switch it up so we can help you.” The nods and verbal affirmations (e.g., “for sure” and “totally”) suggested that the team was protective of each other’s relative teaching load. They understood the pressure facing one of their colleagues. The team looked out for her best interests and offered to help to protect her workload.

Artifacts. At each school building, I spent time in shared teacher spaces (e.g., staff lounge, mail room) to examine how facets of trust may have been promoted in these shared spaces. At one elementary building, I saw multiple representations of teachers’ efforts to connect with one another. First, in the staff lounge, there was a bulletin board devoted to “Staff Shout Outs” so that teachers could recognize the good deeds or accomplishments of their colleagues (See Appendix D). Tschannen-Moran (2004) noted that expressions of appreciation or acknowledgement of good work demonstrate benevolence. While I couldn’t know who wrote the “shout outs” or if they were ever shared between general and special educators, the system to promote thanks or praise to others was supportive of a benevolent culture. Similarly, at the middle school, there was a laminated poster in the front office that displayed staff quotes about

why they were proud to work at the middle school: six of the 25 quotes were connected to collaboration or appreciation for colleagues (See Appendix D). Though these comments may not be about general and special education collaboration specifically, they also spoke to a culture of benevolence.

I also saw displays that promoted trust in spaces that were shared by teams (i.e., not typically frequented by the whole staff, but not private spaces). For instance, one wall poster I saw suggested daily affirmations for teachers and listed, “I will show love to colleagues and students” as its top pledge. Another affirmation promised, “I will show kindness to others” while a third stated, “I will do good for others despite circumstance” (See Appendix D). While one wall poster was certainly not a reliable system for demonstrations of benevolence, public reminders to promote benevolence may have indicated teachers’ awareness of or desire for positive collegial relationships.

Taken in total, observations and artifacts presented a picture in which teachers supported benevolent relationships (e.g., staff shout outs, statements of understanding). But interview data suggested participants have experienced obstacles to benevolent behavior. Stress from accountability pressures, lack of understanding of another party’s best interest, and promotion of self-interest were barriers to benevolent behavior. Still, some collaborators (e.g., grade level teams, co-activity leaders) experienced benevolence from their colleagues.

Competence. Perceptions of *competence* are grounded in one party’s ability to accomplish interdependent tasks to the expectation of another party (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Whereas benevolence’s care and good intentions set the stage for trust to develop, competence is equally critical to the development of trust. A lack of competence can erode trust and, to some degree, invalidate established goodwill (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). There is some fluidity,

however, with demonstrations of competence. Being honest about the limits of one's ability may mean judgements of other trust facets weigh more heavily than competence (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Said another way, there is room for forgiveness of imperfect competence.

Interviews. Participants commented on the competence of their colleagues more than any other trust facet; competence comments comprised 32% of all trust-related comments. Almost all of the comments that lauded the competence of colleagues came from general educators who addressed the intervention competence of their special education colleagues. One elective area teacher talked about the competence of special educators to work with low-performing students saying, "they have the skill and I don't." Another general educator agreed that special education teachers have skills to work with struggling students that general education teachers are missing: "It's very important to me that if you're an intervention specialist, there are things that you should be doing that I cannot do." Yet another general educator described the competence of special educators by acknowledging her own lack of competence:

> I definitely don't think I have even just the education to access some of how LD specifics, how low some of our readers and mathematicians and things like that are. Like, I don't even think I can fully comprehend some of how low they are.

An elective area teacher summarized special educators' competence this way: "we can go to them to help unlock the mysteries of the students." There was a sense of not-knowing that was pervasive in these general educators' comments; special educators were somehow expert in a way that general educators could not even grasp.

But not all special education teachers felt general educators' confidence in their competence. One special education teacher recalled how she felt during co-teaching, "And then when as an intervention specialist trying to question an activity or something, I was viewed as my points weren't valid and that it just was kind of like, 'who are you and why are you making this difficult for me'?" Another special educator echoed this concern saying, "I think, my feeling as a special ed teacher is that gen ed teachers see us as their assistants. We're there to help students, not to teach or something like that." Yet another special educator described her frustration when general educators did not accept her advice to work with challenging students. She recalled a time a general educator asked her for help and her counterpart's refusal to try what she suggested. She remembered asking, "Well, have you tried this, this, and this?" and the reply of her general education counterpart, "What? I'm not doing that with them right now," and the special educator's sense of frustration, "Okay, well this is my area of expertise. I'm trying to tell you. I want to help you…." A general education teacher from the elementary school acknowledged the way special educators may feel diminished by their general education colleagues sharing, "I think the biggest obstacle is just, the intervention specialist feeling whether or not they're really part of that classroom, or whether or not the teacher of that classroom sees them on the same level as them." In short, while some general educators perceived special educators possessing a skill set they lack, some special educators perceived that their general education colleagues diminished or rejected their expertise.

One area in which general educators specifically addressed a lack of competence from special educators was when special educators were asked to teach content (e.g., math, science). Teachers of core subjects at the high school shared that their special education colleagues struggled to master content that is being taught to students. One teacher shared:

> Okay, so last year was difficult because so much is the key, because that teacher came in very, "Let's be equals. I'll grade half the assignments, let's share the work." Sounded great, and he did manage the homework system pretty well. I didn't have to do a lot of that, but then I realized that he wasn't grading assessments accurately…And awkward, and I talked to my principal, because I'm like, "These grades aren't right. They're not representing what kids know"… I said, "I'll just grade all the tests now." And we talked a lot about the homework, and I was like, "You can't do this. This is not..." And so I started grading all the assessments. And then I did ask my principal. I said, "I'm happy to co-teach but I do not want to teach with him next year."

Two core subject teachers from the high school shared that special education counterparts asked for help to master content, so the general educators were actually in the position of teaching special educators. One admitted it was an additional stressor for him to pre-teach content to his co-teacher. As a result, he ended up defaulting to letting the special educator focus solely on intervention, "but a lot of the times it was like, 'Okay, can you just analyze better supports for the kids that are losing those foundations, because that's your skill set.'" This focus on lack of content area expertise was confined to comments from teachers of high school core subjects, but general education teachers from middle and elementary also commented on their frustration with general incompetence of special educators. One teacher shared, "You felt like you were banging

your head….I cannot make that teacher do everything that they're supposed to do." Incompetence from counterparts was clearly frustrating to come general educators.

But when co-teachers worked together over multiple years, they seemed able to find a balance of shared content and intervention expertise. One high school core subject teacher felt comfortable with small differences in content knowledge of her co-teacher sharing, "And he doesn't do it exactly like I would do it, however he does a very nice job. And the kids listen, and they move forward, and they're able to handle what he's explaining. And I trust what he's doing." An elementary teacher was more effusive in her praise:

> I feel like I've been able to rely on her to help on this assessment or that assessment because we co-teach. She knows a lot about my students because she works with some of my students. She understands what I value as a teacher. She knows my work ethic. We've worked together for several years.

A strong co-teaching relationship was also lauded by a high school content area teacher who explained how she and her special education counterpart divided work:

> "Hey, what are we doing today? Do you want to teach this today? Do you want to assist today? Let's split the class, let's do it this way." And knowing that she can teach [core content] curriculum, that's fine. Yeah, you go teach these kids today. You can take them wherever you want or you can leave them in the room, and knowing that she's going to get it done.

For other collaborators, accountability pressure may have contributed to heightened judgements of competence. Some special educators seemed concerned they weren't doing enough to help students. One veteran general educator expressed confidence in the competence of her early-career assigned special educator even when the special educator didn't have confidence in herself saying she, "doesn't feel like she knows what she's doing, but she knows what she's doing." But on the other hand, two teachers specifically referenced the stress that came from an incompetent counterpart in an era in which student progress is reflected on teachers' evaluations. One general educator shared:

> Because if there's somebody who I don't think they're doing a good enough job, it's going to ultimately come down on me too when that kid doesn't make the growth that he should make this year. And I like to do my job and I like to do my job well. And so if you're going to stop me from doing my job well enough, some action needs to be taken.

Her frustration that her counterpart's ability to teach would affect her performance evaluations meant she was willing to take action to address incompetence. Similarly, another teacher explained the need for shared competence when she explained the value-added growth teachers were required to show the state saying, "Well, because honestly, both of your names are on the paper, and it's not just one person's job or the other job. You both are responsible for that child's learning." Taken together, these comments suggested participants were aware of the link between competence, collaboration, and student growth that influenced evaluations of teacher performance.

Observations. In contrast, I was invited to observe a co-taught language arts lesson in which the general and special education teacher seemed comfortable dividing their responsibilities equitably, sharing both content and intervention roles. In the co-teaching observation, the general education teacher and special education teacher shared a content lecture, students' guided practice, and small-group work for a lesson in which sixth grade students learned about themes in literature. The teachers used slides to organize their lecture to students and traded off providing explanations of the slides to students. This shared instruction signaled a level of trust in each other's competence: the special education teacher, while not expert in language arts, was trusted to offer instruction and lead discussion around their topic. Similarly, I watched the two teachers circle the room to provide extra support to students. The teachers used a "thumbs up/thumbs down" system so students could signal to teachers when they needed extra help to understand their work. The general education teacher offered intervention help to students; that role was not reserved for the intervention expert of the team. Because the teachers equally shared their roles (i.e., content instruction and intervention) they were demonstrating competence to each other.

When I observed the elementary team meeting, I also witnessed expressions relating to competence. For instance, the team demonstrated several instances in which their competence as teachers was implied as a contrast to their leader's incompetence. For instance, at one point, the team discussed a student who was refusing to get on the bus. One teacher shared a conversation with a teacher in a different grade level who was concerned about a student. Despite a directive from their principal not to follow up, she said "I don't give a shit. I'm going to ask what's going on." The team's non-verbal response to this act of noncompliance was clear: team members all sat a little taller, shoulders were straightened, and they nodded vigorously. It was as if they were

bracing themselves for a confrontation by proxy, standing in solidarity with their rebel colleague against their school principal. There was a sense of righteousness to this exchange, that the teachers were perhaps more ethical than the leader who had apparently shut down teachers' efforts to investigate student struggles.

Another time a team member mentioned that their principal would not attend an upcoming IEP meeting because of a scheduling conflict. The team seemed relieved by that announcement (i.e., relaxed shoulders, sighs) and quiet comments suggested they'd do just fine on their own. The team seemed to hold a similar view of district administrators' lack of competence: when the team leader shared that the district was starting a system to organize conversations about student concerns, there were plenty of eye rolls and sarcastic comments about how it would be awfully nice to know what other teachers had discussed about a student (e.g., past interventions, conversations with parents). The tone of the team, though, was that this too-little-too-late effort by district administration was typical. The teachers didn't express outrage or surprise, they shrugged it off as another way in which they lacked basic supports for their jobs. Similarly, the team leader shared that a school level google doc was going to be restricted because teachers had been inputting too much data on the document. The team leader shared that the new, less collaborative system would be easier on the secretaries who had to organize the documents. The team took that announcement without much reaction. Their lack of surprise suggested they perceived this as another instance of teachers doing their part (e.g., discussing struggling students, inputting data to shared document) but incompetent leaders failing to do their part.

In sum, these data suggest that competence is a complicated facet. Both special and general educators shared their disappointment with the incompetence of their colleagues and

leaders. Some special educators carried the weight of their general educator counterparts' lack of faith in their competence. But there was also a component of the data that suggested competence of special educators is revered by general educators that was linked to general educators' admission of their own lack of intervention competence. Finally, co-teachers may have struggled to find a balance between content and intervention expertise, but positive co-teaching relationships relied on successful navigation of division of labor.

Reliability. Reliability is an important component of trust because it makes benevolence dependable (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Repeated demonstrations of desired behaviors (e.g., skills that meet expectations, expressions of appreciation) encourage formation of trust (Bryk & Schneider 2002). It is important to note that judgements of reliability stem from the dependent party's perspective: even when others may have good reasons for unreliability, trust can be compromised (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). And when reliability is high, productivity may increase because energy can be diverted to the task at hand rather than wondering if another party will come through (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

Interviews. Comments about colleagues' reliability comprised 21.5% of all trust-related comments from interviews. Both general and special educators shared comments about reliability that were closely linked to benevolence. These statements mostly addressed collaborators' reliable willingness to protect their counterparts' interests. For example, one general educator said he valued that his co-teacher told him, "I will go to bat for you any day." A special educator shared, "I always felt like I could trust what was going on and I didn't feel like she was going to change anything or throw me under the bus for something dumb." Both teachers' comments spoke to their sense of a perceived threat. In the first example, there was an implied lack of security, a reason one would need to "go to bat" to protect another. In the second example, the

teacher was grateful his co-teacher would not throw him "under the bus" which suggested that colleagues publicly placing blame on co-workers was a possible outcome of collaboration. This reliable protection from threat (i.e., care for the interests of another) addressed a central tenet of benevolence.

But several general educators addressed the unreliability of special educators, a perception that was based in the sporadic communication they had with special educators. Specifically, participants who taught non-tested subjects experienced this lack of reliability. One noted the difficulty of relying on special educators sharing, "It is really hard because some of them come into our classrooms, some of them don't," while another general educator admitted that any communication with special educators needed to start with him: "When I can flag them down in the hallway, and ask them a question, or shoot them an email, that is the level of contact we have." One teacher tried to temper her observation with understanding, saying "I literally don't see them. But again they are busy. They're either physically in another room or doing their reports or whatever." Yet another remarked, "Last year, I didn't know if the special ed teacher was coming or going. I didn't know if she was going to be here or not." In addition, three general educators characterized their relationship with special educators by likening it to a computer because their communication was never face-to-face and the overly general information they retrieved about students on IEPs (e.g., a list of students on IEPs) wasn't contextualized enough to be helpful.

Special educators understood they were often perceived as unreliable. One special educator seemed frustrated by her inability to be perceived as reliable saying, "So-and-So was having a major meltdown. So-and-So is here. And you know what? I couldn't make it to social studies on time…." Another special educator commented:

> So then when we're supposed to be in a classroom, then we're getting pulled because we're supposed to be somewhere else. And then that teacher is upset because, well, you were supposed to be in my classroom this period and why aren't you there?

She went on to express her desire to be perceived as reliable sharing, "I don't want them to doubt whether or not I'm going to do my fair share of work. I never want someone to feel that way and I don't want to make someone to feel that way." Taken together, these special educators and general educators agreed that special educators' lack of reliability was an issue.

On the other hand, a few general educators who had positive relationships with special educators specifically cited their mutual reliability as central to the success of the relationship. One high school general educator shared:

> I think it's critical to establish a relationship and trust with your co-teacher/intervention specialist. That way you're on the same page. Like what are the expectations, what do we need to do to get this kid where they need to go. And like I said before, with the characteristics that you asked, intervention specialist needs to be reliable, so do I. It has to happen or we're going to fail the student.

An elementary teacher had a very similar viewpoint about the need for collaborators to have a mutual sense of reliability. She shared that she appreciated that she and her assigned special educator benefitted from:

> Having frequent check-ins and being able to be just constantly putting your heads together, changing the plan when needed obviously, but also sticking to it so that you can, at the end of the day, have that data and just really having the students' best interests in mind through the whole process.

Another teacher who enjoyed a successful co-teaching partnership shared:

> We do collaborative lessons where we meet every Thursday, and we collaborate on what we're going to do the week after. She even introduced this lesson planning sheet for me that has it highlighted the parts that I'm going to do, the parts that she's going to do, and that was a game changer even when we started doing lessons together.

For teachers who had positive relationships, the reliability of the processes they used (e.g, annotated lesson plans, data collection) while collaborating seemed important to them. Furthermore, teachers who perceived reliability from their collaborators linked their reliability to positive student outcomes.

Observations. When I observed the general and special education co-teachers of a shared lesson, I was able to witness demonstrations of reliability between the two. For instance, I noticed they had a system to signal to one another as they shared front-of-room instruction. While one teacher stood near the slide show screen, the other would move through the room, redirecting students who had gotten off task. Then, with a nod, the teacher at the front would pass a virtual lecture baton to the other who would move to the front of the room. The transitions

were seamless, and the two had a rhythm to their exchange that suggested these lecture hand offs were well practiced and reliable.

The elementary team I observed used shared Google calendars and documents as reliable supports for their meetings. They had a shared electronic agenda and a system of note taking for their discussions. These mechanisms weren't explained during the meeting; they were norms that all team members expected to be used. Another instance that spoke to the team's reliability was when the team leader ended the meeting with a suggestion to look at next week's calendar because "There are some things for us to think about." Her suggestion was met with a chorus of "No!" and laughter. The shift to events on next week's docket and teammates' shared rejection of the need to face them felt like a well-practiced joke. This team not only used tools to promote reliable team meeting structure (i.e., agenda, note taking), they also had reliable jokes to accompany the close of the meeting. The joke, to me, seemed evidence of the reliability of the meeting structure: because team members knew what would be coming, they are able to enact their routine comic exchange.

Artifacts. Participants from the middle school shared their weekly teaming schedule with me, a system that promoted reliability among its members. The seventh-grade teams dedicated each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday shared teaming periods to meetings that included general education teachers in the four core areas and each team's two special education teachers. In these meetings they discussed whole team instructional planning (e.g., cross-curricular planning, curriculum pacing) and concerns about students. Each Friday, a school counselor and principal or assistant principal joined the meeting to learn about student concerns and/or instructional needs. On Tuesdays, the teams used planning time to meet with their grade level subject peers. For instance, one participant explained, "the 7th grade intervention specialists get together to

problem solve, or I meet with the other math teachers if I need to get extra help with a concept." Thursdays were for what this participant labeled "collaboration days," a term he used to describe the co-planning and co-grading that co-teachers did together.

He went on to share, however, that this very reliable schedule was sometimes disrupted to allow for parent meetings. For instance, he noted that his team was "in the middle of 4 ETRs and 7 IEPs, which have taken up 15 different teaming periods to plan and meet with the student team." He explained that, "We do try to keep Fridays free of those meetings, so we can at least meet as a team one day with a principal and a counselor." On one hand, this artifact illustrated the team's lack of reliability. Because of the extensive time needed to plan and execute students' *Evaluation Team Report* (ETR), meetings conducted to evaluate students' initial eligibility for special education services and repeated every three years to determine continued eligibility, or IEP meetings, teams' schedules were regularly disrupted. On the other hand, the existence of a schedule dependable enough to be contrasted with disruptions suggested reliability of a sort. And the teams' commitment to protecting Friday teaming time with counselors and school leaders also suggested that while perhaps not all components of the schedule were irrefutably reliable, some components of the weekly schedule–in this case, Friday leader time–were reliable.

On the whole, these data collectively suggested that reliability can be fragile. General educators, special educators, and school leaders perceived that reliability (e.g., communication, punctuality) may be difficult given daily demands of special educators. But teachers who experienced reliability from colleagues appreciated dependable goodwill from their counterparts. Successful collaborators embraced norms, processes, and schedules that promoted reliability. This reliability was mutually beneficial for collaborators and supported student outcomes.

Openness. Openness is rooted in the sharing of appropriate and relevant information that engenders reciprocal sharing from another party (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Openness may play a particularly strong role in the trust of collaborators working to help students who struggle. Tschannen-Moran (2004) asserts, "Where communication flows freely, problems can be disclosed, diagnosed, and corrected before they are compounded" (p. 26). It is also important to note that openness is closely connected to vulnerability: the act of sharing your thoughts and feelings with another is deeply personal and can feel risky without trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

Interviews. Comments about colleagues' openness comprised 15% of all trust-related comments. General and special education participants who experienced positive collaborative relationships remarked on the giving and taking of advice that was central to their collaboration. Several participants talked about openness with their general or special education counterpart in a way that acknowledged their personal vulnerability in the situation. For example, a general educator at the high school shared the following about her special education co-teacher:

> And there are things that I'll turn to him and say, "Okay, help me out here. I don't know what to do next with this." I did that today. There was a kid that we were working on asking some questions and having him explain some things. I'm like, "All right, I'm not getting anywhere, [name of co-teacher]. Can you help me out here?"

Not only was she asking for advice, a central tenant of openness, but as part of her request for help, she was comfortable enough with him to be vulnerable and admit her lack of success with a student. Similarly, an elementary general educator talked about how she reached out to special educators for help, saying ""I've tried this, and I've done this…." In doing so, she shared what she had done that hadn't worked and asked for more suggestions, again an expression of openness that was grounded in a willingness to be vulnerable. Another elementary teacher got

even more specific about the way openness contributed to the relationship she had with her assigned special educator:

> She came in here today, and I feel like I can say anything I need to say to her. So she and I are chill with each other. We can say anything we need to say. I just sent her an email, and I was like, "I need to send this. I need you to read it before I send I because I need you to check it."

She acknowledged her willingness to expose herself to her colleague's criticism and linked the way they're "chill" to their ability to address both their own needs and potentially the needs of their students. A special educator also was grateful for the way she and her co-teacher could "bounce ideas off of each other" and another special educator shared that good co-teachers were "respectful of each other's opinions." Because participants' comments addressed asking for or taking advice from another, they also supported the idea that openness was reciprocal in nature.

Conversely, one special educator talked about a past co-teaching situation that lacked openness. She shared:

> That co-teaching ... The planning really didn't happen. I would go in, and the teacher would just tell me, "This is what we're doing. This is how it's going to be." Honestly, it was more of I would come in, and I would assist.

In this way, the participant linked the lack of openness (i.e., refusal to exchange ideas about the lesson) with her demotion to assistant. Another special educator talked about general educators who were reluctant to have students on IEPs included in their classrooms and, as a result, were "a little bit standoffish" with her, signaling their lack of openness to her support. While the

special educators who shared these comments related them to me in terms of their interactions with adult colleagues, the implications for decreased services to students seemed clear: when general and special educators couldn't share advice and ideas with one another, they could be providing less than ideal supports for students. One special educator explained his reluctance to share intervention ideas for students with behavior problems this way:

> When I have teachers I don't trust as much, I won't throw that out there because I don't want to get the, "Now that's not going to do. Blah, blah, blah."… I'm definitely more cautious…Like I was saying I don't like to throw out the big ideas with them.

This participant drew a direct line between a teacher's ability to be vulnerable enough with a colleague to share an idea and the potential impact on student success.

Observations. During my observation of the co-led student activity at the high school, I witnessed demonstrations of openness between the two teachers. Students were making cards for Valentine's Day to be sold at the school store, and the teachers openly discussed how they wanted to approach issues that came up. For example, when one of the card designs proved to be a little difficult for the students to execute, the teachers discussed how to quickly modify the design with each other, one offering an idea that was accepted by the other. Similarly, when a student became ill, they talked about how to handle it (e.g., let her rest, take her to get her temperature taken) and made a joint decision. These types of back-and-forth discussions indicated they were open to each other's ideas and advice.

During my observation of the elementary team meeting, I noticed they devoted a section of their agenda to sharing concerns about students. They had a list of five students that they

discussed each week; team members checked in with each other to share what each was seeing with these students. For instance, during the discussion of the second student, one team member noted with concern, "I think he's losing weight." The team agreed that the student looked different, though one pointed out that his new, better fitting clothes might be making him look thinner. This exchange was met with nods from the team and a note in the agenda for all of them to keep an eye on this student's weight. When they discussed the fourth student on their list, one team member asked, "I've noticed [this student] is anxious in class. Are you guys seeing that?" In this way, she was open with her concern and invited open sharing about her concern from her teammates.

In short, successful collaborations relied on openness, marked by a give-and-take of advice and information sharing. Openness helped teachers work together to address issues with students; part of that process included a teacher's willingness to be vulnerable with a colleague about what had not worked in the past or a new idea they might have. Both general and special educators seemed grateful for the collegial support offered through open exchanges.

Honesty. Characterized by alignment between one's words and one's actions, honesty captures a sense that a party will do what they say they will (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). In this way, honesty encompasses promises that are kept, but also includes one's ability to apologize and take responsibility for mistakes (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Tschannen-Moran (2004) notes that honesty can be compromised in favor of conflict avoidance: reluctance to give unvarnished feedback or hold others accountable is a form of dishonesty. Because of this, honest conversations can be uncomfortable ones.

Interviews. Honesty was the trust facet on which participants commented the least, comprising 7% of all trust-related comments. One general educator used the image of an apple

tree to create a useful metaphor for honesty between her and her co-teacher. She shared, "You need to prune it for it to grow strong and healthy…it's like growing pains almost. You have to adjust, you have to, and we're both really good at rolling with the punches." This participant acknowledged the honest conversations that seemed like pruning to her: it's a painful cut that can result in better long-term health. A special educator explained the utility of honesty in a similar way:

> We're able to talk honestly about students who there's a lot to talk about. And we can talk about them honestly with nobody's feelings being hurt with no like, it doesn't sound like you're making accusations. It's not like "Well, you're not doing this, you're not doing that." So when I can work with the colleagues I trust the most and we can work on a kid's problems, things come out of that really easy.

This participant also recognized how honesty could be sometimes painful but ultimately created an environment which was healthier and more effective.

A general educator at an elementary school also used a tree to conceptualize her collaborative relationship. For her, the tree was useful as a way to link ownership of mistakes to growth. She shared:

> We're all educators. We're all growing. We're all learning, so we're all going to make mistakes. That's part of education. That's part of growing, and instead of picking on those things like, "Oh, we all make mistakes as

> educators and teachers or whatever." So how do we grow
> from that? How do we move forward?

Each of these participants connected honesty to their ability to make progress. The first was able to "adjust" when needed, the second spoke to the way honesty led to good work on students' problems, and the third wanted honesty about mistakes to propel forward momentum. For these teachers, honesty was a key to productivity.

A few participants shared situations in which honesty was absent. Two general educators at the high school shared experiences about special educators who they felt were dishonest when administering tests to students with test-taking accommodations. To be clear, neither of these teachers questioned the students' accommodations; they respected the need for the student to get supports. What bothered them was that they felt the special educator hinted at answers for the students while proctoring the exam. One teacher admitted he felt his "work was being undermined" and shared that his experiences with dishonest special educators made him suspicious of all special educators. The other teacher seemed to hedge about dishonest colleagues sharing, "I think if you spend all your time second guessing, you've lost sight of the goal. Unless it's maybe outright." Conversely, a special educator shared his frustration with general education colleagues who did not come to him with concerns, preferring instead to take issues straight to the principal. In this case, a colleague's inability to have an honest conversation–perhaps to avoid conflict–undermined this participant's trust in his counterpart.

Observations. The teachers in the elementary team meeting demonstrated honesty to one another when they talked about a student who was struggling. It was clear that this student was one who had been brought up before; all of the team members agreed he was having "another rough week." What marked the honesty of the conversation was the way in which the teachers

were very forthright about the approaches they tried during the previous week to help this student. One teacher described two different approaches (i.e., supportive, demanding) she used to try to get the student to complete work, but admitted neither was successful. Two of the other team members agreed that they'd also tried being supportive with no success, and a third team member wondered if they needed to be even more demanding with clearer expectations. Three of the teachers shared how their approach did not work with the student; they took responsibility for their actions and did not shift blame (e.g., talk about parents, lack of sleep, hunger). There seemed to be a shared understanding that effective intervention for struggling students required forthright discussions about what was and was not working. It was important to note that these honest admissions of failure were met with benevolent understanding from team members. All of the team nodded and expressed empathy to the teacher who led the discussion; the combination of honesty and benevolence seemed to be a powerful combination for their team dynamic.

These elementary teachers were similarly honest in their discussions about upcoming state testing. One remarked that she needed to review formative assessment data to see where students needed extra instruction. She noted, "I know extended response is bad." The others offered to add practice in extended response in each of their classes (i.e., math, social studies, science). Again, the teachers demonstrated a willingness to own student deficits and accept responsibility for the extra instruction that was needed.

As I left the observation, the team leader walked me to the door. I thanked her for letting me sit in and complemented the team's productive and supportive vibe. She shared with me that the team dynamic had improved drastically since the school had emerged from the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) mandated for failing schools by ODE. She noted that if I'd been at the same meeting three years ago, I would have seen a very tense meeting with an administrator

present and no one laughing. She shared she was grateful that they'd moved back to what she called "real collaboration" again. It could be that the team's willingness to be honest with each other was supported by the school's move from OIP; testing pressure and accountability measures may have lessened teachers' willingness to have honest conversations about student achievement.

Taken together, these data about honesty suggested that while it may be painful to offer critical feedback or admit mistakes, these honest actions built trust between colleagues. Also, breaches of honesty may have been difficult for teachers to overcome. Finally, teachers' ability to be honest with one another may have spurred professional growth that ultimately benefitted students.

Comments about all five trust facets depict a complicated trust picture overall. Benevolence was largely lacking among special and general educators, and positive judgements of reliability were similarly sparse. Comments about competence included some which lauded expertise of special educators' intervention skills, while others addressed special educators' lack of content knowledge. Participants that enjoyed ongoing collaborations with teams or co-teachers expressed appreciation for open exchanges of ideas to improve instruction. Participants linked honest feedback from colleagues to growth as teachers.

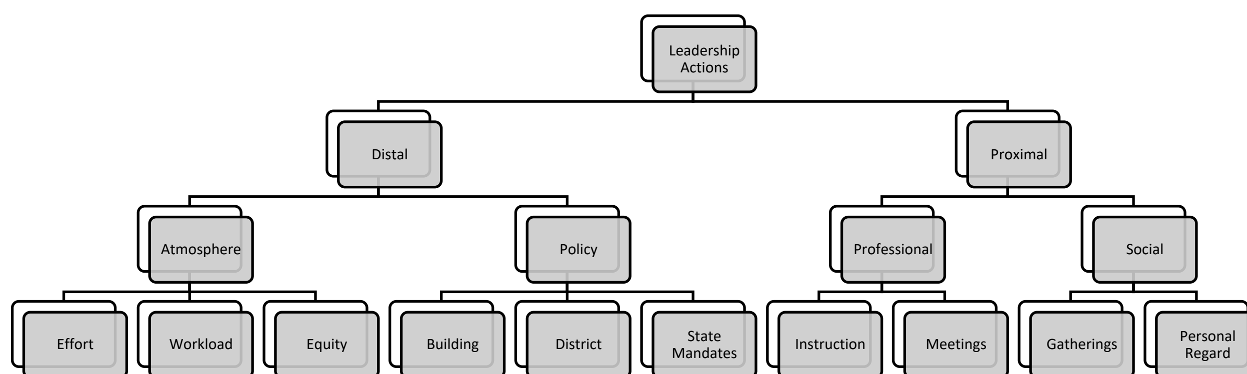
Teachers' Perceptions of Leader Support for Collaboration

To answer my second research question regarding general and special education teachers' perceptions of school leaders' support for collegial trust and collaboration, I talked with participants about their school leaders. Participants often described ways in which leaders directly participated in efforts to build collaboration among teachers. I termed participatory actions as *proximal leadership*, a term that included leadership that happened near teachers;

teachers were able to view this leadership in person. Proximal leadership was reported in professional contexts (e.g., instructional advice to teachers, style of meeting leadership) and in social contexts (e.g., gatherings or expressions of personal regard toward teachers). Participants also described other leadership factors I termed *distal leadership*, in which leadership happened out of the eye of teachers. These comments included general perceptions teachers had about leadership that lacked specific evidence (i.e., "just the way it is") and policy decisions that were made by leadership. Distal leadership seemed connected to the general atmosphere of the school (e.g., workload, equity toward staff) and policies at the building, district, and state level. Proximal and distal leadership were not perceived by participants as different in terms of their ability to affect teachers' collaboration; both were equally powerful leader actions (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Organization of Leadership Actions



Proximal Leadership

Participants who shared their perceptions of leaders' proximal actions were typically describing in-person interactions they had with their school leaders. Sometimes these actions

were one-on-one and sometimes in small or large groups (e.g., team meetings, staff meetings). Frequently, perceptions of leaders' proximal leadership came with value judgements from participants. For example, leaders who were viewed as highly participatory were perceived to be good leaders. One middle school participant shared her perception that school principals were willing to become involved with instruction at a classroom or even student level saying, "Our administration's really great about like trying to figure out what's going to work, what's not going to work." A participant from an elementary school felt the same way about her principal sharing, "I think just in general, she's very present. She's a very there and very engaged." In this way, participants expressed approval for principals' proximal leadership; teachers appreciated leaders who were visible and interacted with teachers.

Yet within the scope of proximal leadership, there were some tensions between participants' perceptions. For instance, participants seemed to place a lot of value on leaders' ability to serve as instructional leaders; they clearly connected these proximal actions to increased collaboration between teachers. In contrast, participants tempered their approval of leaders who organized social gatherings as a means to support collaboration. Similarly, there was a distinction between leaders whose meeting norms failed to encourage collaboration and leaders' who demonstrated personal regard for teachers. I'll share results related to proximal leadership in sections that illustrate tensions that emerged among themes.

Instructional Leader vs. Party Host. Leaders who knew and understood the demands of teachers' classrooms were highly praised by participants. One participant at an elementary school shared,

> I think one of the biggest things is that he truly cares about
> the students. I think that seeing that we're on mission with

> him… he is going to be an instructional leader. He's going to come in and he's going to give me ideas on how to make this lesson better or he's going to praise me if he thought it was a great lesson and that's all fine and great, but I think not feeling like I have to handle the student problem so that he can come in and see that everything's hunky dory. He's more in it in the trenches with us. He wants that kid to succeed as much as I do.

Another participant from the same elementary felt a similar solidarity with her principal; she contrasted the "expectations of the administrators and the level of support that you're given from them" as a big improvement from what she'd received in a district in which she'd taught previously.

Two participants shared that their school leaders each offered excellent instructional support because they were so familiar with teachers' instructional strengths. This familiarly allowed leaders to match teachers to internal mentors. For example, when one participant who was new to teaching struggled with some aspects of instruction and classroom management, she went to her principal to get ideas about how to improve her teaching. He suggested she take a professional day to observe other teachers in the building that were expert in the areas in which she struggled. First, this teacher felt her principal was enough of an instructional leader to ask him for teaching advice. But she was really impressed that he knew his staff's teaching well enough to be able to schedule a full day of classroom observations for her. Another participant explained an exchange with her principal, "I've witnessed him coming in and saying, "I think this person should really work with this person." Here's a strength I've noticed of yours. I want

you to really pair up with this person" and went on to note that this type of internal mentoring for specific needs helped build collaboration between teachers.

The middle school leader was praised by another participant because he set aside time during staff meetings for teachers to demonstrate instructional strategies they'd found to be helpful. And another participant shared that at the middle school they used a "pineapple chart" posted in the mailroom to advertise to other teachers when they're using a particular instructional technique and would welcome observations from colleagues. These types of systems to promote regular exchange of knowledge between teachers seemed to be appreciated at two levels: first, because the leader was taking direct action to support instructional efforts, and second, because it facilitated teachers' connections to one another. One participant summed up why this type of proximal leadership was so powerful for her:

> We've learned from his example that he's going to have
> our backs and we're going to be able to trust him to help
> with a situation when it gets to a level that we can't handle.

Leaders who knew what was happening in classrooms were able to help teachers support each other and, ultimately, gained the trust of teachers who saw their leaders as a welcome safety net.

In contrast, teachers did not connect leaders' efforts to gather teachers together for social occasions benefitting collaboration in the same way. When I asked participants to share the ways in which leaders support collaboration between teachers, participants from schools who did not identify principals as instructional leaders cited their school's social meetups as ways leaders connected teachers. But the language participants used to describe the import of social gatherings was typically not effusive.

For instance, one participant described efforts of her leader to organize in-school gatherings for teachers and said that beyond "little things like that…I can't say that I really feel like she's the driving force of some of that connecting." A participant from the same school described how teachers at these gatherings "just chit chat before we have to go back to our classrooms." This participant pointed out that these gatherings weren't sufficient to support collaboration. She suspected that while her leader thought they were enough to promote meaningful connections, they were not.

Several teachers used ambiguous language to describe how they felt about social gatherings. Four participants tempered their descriptions with "kind of" or "maybe" to indicate their lack of clarity about the purpose of these gatherings. Two others described gatherings but concluded their comments with "or whatever" to indicate their ambivalence. The most frequently used adjective to describe gatherings was "nice" but it was often diluted with the acknowledgement that gatherings were frequently poorly attended. Participants weren't opposed to social gatherings, and they may have seen them as an expression of appreciation from leaders (e.g., "staff feel supported"). But because gatherings tended to be infrequent and attendance was unpredictable, participants did not link social gatherings to improved collaboration.

In short, these data suggested that while participants acknowledged leaders may organize social gatherings as a way to show teachers appreciation, gatherings were not a reliable way to promote meaningful connections between staff. In contrast, leaders who: (a) were in classrooms enough to understand teachers' instruction, (b) were well versed in teachers' instructional strengths, and (c) leveraged their knowledge of (a) and (b) to support teachers' improved instruction were highly valued. In the end, distinctions between leaders' actions may come down

to an issue of consistency: leaders who were regularly present in classrooms became fluent enough with instructional practices to support collaboration.

Leaders Who Want to Listen vs. Leaders Who Want to Be Heard. Participants expressed appreciation for leaders whose proximal leadership helped teachers feel their voice was heard. On the surface, individual voice may seem in conflict with promotion of collaboration. But participants seemed to suggest that leaders' ability to help teachers feel validated as individuals (e.g., during meetings, in one-on-one conversation) was linked to connection between teachers.

At meetings, leaders who established norms and procedures to promote a relaxed dynamic were praised by participants. One participant explained that at his school's staff meetings, "there's a vibe of, I guess camaraderie, chilling" that he felt promoted the sense that the staff were collegial, friendly, and shared a joint mission. Another participant talked about a practice at her school's staff meetings that promoted connections:

> They do these things at the faculty meeting, it's run by a math teacher, hold two-minute praises. So, she sets the timer for two minutes and you just say something good that's happening. Oh, my son graduated from college, our house got finished, we're having a baby in February, whatever. Two-minute little praises with each other. So, that helps you to get to know people.

Even though her principal didn't organize or lead the activity, this participant linked this practice to her leader because it was supported as part of their staff meeting.

But some principals' proximal leadership during meetings was cause for participant upset. A participant criticized her leader's meetings because she felt the message was, "we need to get out of here on time, let's get out of here as soon as we can." She explained that accelerated pace meant problems weren't fully discussed which "creates tension between the staff." She shared how this practice was personally frustrating to her because "there's things that we try to deal with at staff meetings and it just became... I tried to speak up and I felt like I was shot down." I asked if there were norms to structure input from staff members at meetings and she said, "No. Nothing." In this case, her leaders' lack of meeting norms left her vulnerable to attack from colleagues; she felt unprotected.

Another participant expressed a similar complaint about leaders who don't solicit feedback from teachers during meetings. For her, leaders' refusal to ask for input on curricular initiatives was demoralizing. She shared, "Not that they're not good strategies to use, but it's not like somebody says, "well, what do you think about it because you've got a really right wide breadth of experiences..." As a result, the meetings felt very "top down" to her because they lacked time for feedback. For these participants, not being heard by their leaders made them feel devalued as professionals. Two general educators from the same school shared the sense that staff meetings were simply about sharing information, so much so that many staff felt they could be eliminated in favor of email communications. These meetings seemed to exemplify leaders who wanted to be heard, and therefore did not promote connections among staff.

Conversely, leaders who structured safe opportunities for critical feedback may have allowed teachers a chance to connect with their colleagues. One participant explained, "and last year one of our administrators came to our special education meeting, and I know that a lot of us were able to then vocalize our feelings at that meeting." It was important for her to be heard, but

also to be heard in conjunction with colleagues who felt the same way: she was one of several expressing “our” feelings, a collegiality that may have helped her feel safe in a contentious situation. This meeting was an example of a leader who was willing to listen.

Participants also appreciated leaders who created a safe space to share concerns one-on-one. One elementary school participant contrasted the way she felt about her current principal with those under whom she’d worked previously. She explained how with a prior principal she felt, “The last person you can turn to is your leadership, so that was really challenging.” She went on to say that she credited her current principal’s approachability with the change in her school’s overall staff climate:

> The whole emotional tone of the building has really changed. I think that when teachers were as stressed and overwhelmed as they were previously, it was almost like nobody could trust anybody because it was your own workload was so suffocating that to see another colleague struggling just almost made it even more unbearable because it was like you can’t help them, they can’t help you.

This participant drew a direct line between teachers’ ability to feel safe and supported by their leaders and teachers’ capacity to trust colleagues. Another participant talked about the way her leaders were a “safe space” for her and how much she appreciated their support for her collegial connections, saying to her, “It’s really good that you made these connections and that you can talk to these people.” For her, having leaders who were willing to listen supported development of relationships with colleagues.

For some participants, connecting with a leader on a personal level was important. One middle school participant shared that he felt personally supported by his leaders who are "friendly guys" and encouraged teachers to take personal days when they needed a break. Another participant praised her leader because she made herself available whenever her teachers needed her. A third participant elaborated on why it was important for her to feel a sense of personal regard from her principal:

> For me personally I think this is kind of a sidebar, but that was something that was challenging under our previous leadership was that I felt like I had to come in and I had to perform. I was a teacher and that was all I was. I'd feel like I am so much more than that and I need for the people that I work with to recognize that in me. I want them to ask about my kids. I want them to notice a different shirt that I have or a haircut that I got.

These participants shared an appreciation for proximal leadership that connected with teachers beyond their professional capacity. These participants perceived that leaders who saw teachers as people–not only as employees–demonstrated a sense of personal regard for their staff. Leaders who demonstrated personal regard recognized that teachers may need breaks or a shoulder to lean on. These leaders related to teachers as whole people by acknowledging the insignificant (e.g., a new shirt) and celebrating the significant (e.g., children). Of note, the same principals who were praised for their ability to demonstrate personal regard for teachers were the same principals who were valued as instructional leaders.

Some leaders were notable because of the lack of personal regard perceived by participants. One teacher talked about how the one-on-one meetings she had with her principal drove her away from collegiality. When I asked her how her leader supported collaboration among teachers, she shared, “Unfortunately, I can think of some non-examples, where she’ll talk about other people or other teams to another person or another team.” These meetings may have lessened this participant’s willingness to connect with colleagues because her leader was fomenting discord among the staff. Another participant joked about this same leader’s inability to promote collaboration saying, “It’s not what I would say and put it on a poster board of like what a good principal would do to help facilitate team bonding.” In these cases, the participants felt their leader’s actions were detracting from collegial collaboration. Ultimately, leaders who took the time to listen to teachers and even encourage critical feedback were lauded for their support of collaboration. Other leaders who were perceived to be more interested in their agenda or rumor mongering than hearing from their staff, were criticized for diminishing collaboration. In other words, participants appreciated leaders who encouraged teachers’ voices instead of their own voices.

Looking at proximal leadership overall, these data painted a picture in which collaboration grew when leaders invested time to understand teachers’ instructional needs and strengths. Further, leaders who made time to hear concerns from teachers–either in groups or in private conversation–communicated to teachers that they were safe to express disagreement. This, in turn, may have supported an environment in which teachers were able to build relationships with their colleagues. Successful proximal leadership connected teachers in a way that may be foundational for teachers’ collaboration. In contrast, one teacher explained her staff’s lack of connection to each other this way:

> Instead of having these arrows go inside, the arrows go outside. Nothing is really unifying us, and I think that drains our spirit. There's nothing in the middle that's like this warm, fuzzy heart.

It may be that teachers need leaders whose direct actions create a unifying warmth and who function as the heart of the school.

Distal Leadership

Comments coded as distal leadership were characterized by the lack of participatory behavior of the leader; there were no leader actions to witness firsthand. Some comments about distal leadership centered on participants' perceptions of the atmosphere their schools. These comments suggested participants perceived leaders to be overworked. At the same time, participants expressed frustration about leader priorities. I'll discuss the relationship between perceptions of leader workload, efforts, and equity below. I'll follow that section with a description of participants' perceptions of the policies that affected collaboration between teachers.

Leader Workload and Priorities. When I asked participants to share with me what their leaders did to support trust and collaboration among teachers, many participants spoke to the reason their leaders might not be doing more to support collaboration. In this context, several participants expressed their perception that principals were stretched thin by leadership responsibilities. Participants labeled leaders as "overworked," "underwater," and "up to their head and shoulders" with responsibilities. One elective area participant noted that her leaders are "being pulled in so many different directions" as an acknowledgement that multiple demands prevented her leaders from attending to teacher collaboration. A special educator echoed this

sentiment saying, "I think they are just so busy with everything that they're doing," while a core subject teacher excused her leaders by noting, "but they've got a lot on their plate." Two participants from different schools shared the sense that their leaders would do as much as they could to help teachers collaborate if only they had the time to do so. With these statements, participants expressed understanding rather than blame, offering understanding for leaders' competing priorities.

Some participants' understanding extended to expressions of care for overworked leaders. One middle school elective teacher shared that while she felt like she needed emotional supports to do her job, she asserted, "I think [leaders] need it too, to be honest." In fact, one participant shared how unfair he felt it was that his principal had led the school without an assistant given that, "she has a hundred less students than the middle school." This teacher went on to say that his principal "worries about the health and welfare of her staff sometimes to the detriment of her own health and welfare." These participants' statements moved beyond understanding toward leaders as they advocated for leaders' needs.

While some participants shared their understanding of leaders' workload, other participants expressed their frustrations about the way leaders did not attend to supports for collaboration. Several comments reflected what participants perceived as a disconnect between goals and reality. One special educator noted, "So I think our administration understands how the concept of teaming works, but I don't know how well it is actually utilized." A general educator voiced a similar complaint saying, "So, we have a lot of things on paper. I don't personally believe that we have a lot that actually is helping us to work together." A third participant, an elective area teacher, pinpointed what she perceived to be the reason for the disconnect sharing, "They talk a lot about how important [collaboration] is, how necessary it is. I feel like sometimes

I don't know that they understand all the interpersonal interworking." Yet another noted that although his leaders stressed the importance of collaborating with colleagues, at his school there "really isn't a lot of follow up about whether or not we're continuing that relationship." These participants' comments focused on the discrepancy between policies and attitudes that were not backed up by leader actions. In this way, these comments highlighted the potential for distal leadership to be insufficient without proximal leadership to actively implement policies.

Two participants–one core subject and one elective subject–specifically used the term "removed" to describe their leaders' relationship to teacher collaboration. One participant shared her frustration with her principal's lack of effort saying, "We don't necessarily take it personally, but we wonder how hard do you really try?" Another participant at the same school felt that any collaborative efforts came from teachers, noting, "As a staff, we try to do more. …I don't know that it really comes from her." A participant from a different school had a similar perspective about his leaders. He stated, "They are great. I like them. In terms of promoting trust and collaboration, I'm not sure that they do much at all." Again, these comments reflected participants' general sense of dissatisfaction with leader support for collaboration; they did not offer specific examples to illustrate lack of leader effort. These participants couldn't name anything that was good, so they felt it was not great.

Not all participants were frustrated with leaders' efforts to support collaboration. One general education participant contrasted his perceptions of his current principal with one he'd worked under in a past district. This participant appreciated that his leader:

> Starts from the assumption that the teacher is doing what they need to do to be a more effective teacher, as opposed

> to some that are like, "Well, you got to spend some time explaining to me why you're doing the thing."

Another general education participant expressed approval for her leader in comparison to a past principal. The participant wasn't clear on how her leader helped teachers feel more comfortable working together, but she was clear it had happened:

> I think he's probably doing a lot behind the scenes that I don't even recognize, but I definitely feel that since his leadership, which began in August, there's been a huge shift in the building. There's been a night and day shift.

Both of these participants praised their leaders' efforts to support teacher collaboration in comparison to leaders under whom they'd worked previously. Like other participants, these comments reflected strongly held beliefs about leaders even as they remained slightly ambiguous. Even when comments about leaders were positive, participants' inability to point to specific leader actions emphasized the distal nature of the leadership. These participants formed wholistic judgements of their leaders' effort that, in the retelling, were divorced from proximal leadership examples.

Special educators and elective area participants frequently noted that leaders did not prioritize collaboration across all teachers. These comments focused on distal leadership in that they described conditions in their school as a sort of status quo; it was just the way it was. For instance, an elective area teacher from an elementary school was upset elective teachers weren't included in collaboration. She expressed her frustration that "It shouldn't just be the grade levels. It should be everyone is collaborating" and went on to assert that working together means "Everybody. It doesn't matter if you're the custodial. It doesn't matter. We're all here." This

participant felt she was speaking for many non-core colleagues whose collaborative needs were minimized by leaders. Similarly, several special educators perceived leaders' focus on core subjects left special educators feeling like second class citizens. For example, one special educator commented that when special educators had issues collaborating with general education teachers, it was not always addressed. She shared, "Not that it's swept under the rug, but it's just not always the most important thing." Another special educator felt similarly sharing, "They act like they care, but at the same time, we're not a priority." Both participants felt that other leader priorities took precedence over the problems special educators were having working with general education counterparts.

Another special educator made comments that suggested her administrator's distal leadership prioritized some teachers over others. She explained that teachers of some subjects received preferential treatment from leaders. At her school, it was:

> Like a hierarchy of things. I don't even know if that's the right thing where we're kind of like the peons. Core subjects have it all. Even though I do teach core subjects, I still don't have that. And just like we're kind of peons in this…

Yet another special education teacher echoed this sentiment, saying that in her building it often "looks like we're less important" than general education teachers. These participants frequently connected comments about feeling less valued than core area teachers with comments about leader workload, suggesting that leaders' competing priorities contributed to a lack of equity among staff.

In summary, while some participants acknowledged positive aspects of distal leadership that could be going on behind the scenes, comments about leaders' efforts and priorities coded as distal leadership were predominantly negative. Though participants expressed understanding of leaders' burdens, they did not forgive leaders' failings. For several participants, their leaders did not uphold teachers' expectations for collaboration support. Sometimes these perceptions were shared across general and special education, but special educators and elective area teachers felt particularly marginalized by leaders.

Policies Related to Collaboration. Policies at the state, district, and building level were also coded as part of distal leadership because participants frequently perceived policies as part of their school's status quo. Participants often discussed improved or diminished collaboration as an unintended consequence of policies. This separation from in-person leader decision making was another way policies were perceived in contrast to proximal leadership.

Many participants commented about collaboration in conjunction to mandates from ODE as part of the district's assignment to OIP for under-performing districts. Districts under OIP are directed to implement school improvement that "brings educators together through collaborative team structures to learn from each other" (ODE, 2019). The most prominent collaborative structure cited by participants were their Teacher-Based Teams (TBTs) that were formed of grade level teams at elementary schools, interdisciplinary teams at the middle school, and subject area teams at the high school. Several core area and special education participants commented on the lasting collaborative effects of OIP mandates. For instance, one general educator shared, "having finished our OIP process, we have still held onto the teacher-based team model." Three participants commented that teachers were "forced" into TBTs by ODE, though one noted "we still do it anyway just because it's good practice." Other teachers talked about systems from OIP

that they still used with their teams such forms for TBT agendas provided by ODE. Participants did not express active resentment toward TBTs or even OIP beyond comments that acknowledged TBTs were mandated collaboration. State mandates were one example of leadership participants accepted in spite of the fact that they did not witness leaders' decisions around these mandates.

While teachers across the district agreed that teacher teams were there to stay, participants differed in their reactions to building-level policies. Many participants connected the master schedule to their ability to collaborate with colleagues. For instance, a special educator at the middle school appreciated his leaders "building a structure" that allowed for a daily teaming period, while core subject teachers at the high school similarly valued their shared planning period with department members.

But two special educators talked about policies that may have perpetuated disparity between general and special educators and in doing so, lessened effective collaboration. One policy at the middle school specified special educators were assigned laptops while core subject teachers were given both laptops and desktop computers. Similarly, both general and special educators' names used to be listed on students' schedules for co-taught classes, but then special educators' names were dropped from the schedule. In both cases, participants expressed that these policies happened without warning or explanation. These leadership decisions, made without teacher participation, linked them to other forms of distal leadership.

Some distal leadership decisions were acknowledged to produce positive unintended consequences. At the high school, three teachers talked about how the principals' policy for teachers to stand outside of their classrooms during passing periods (i.e., an effort to supervise

students in hallways) had the unintended effect of creating new relationships between teachers. One teacher explained:

> And then we have, I guess, what I would call hallway culture. One of the things that the administrators have asked us to do is to help them and stand in our hallways between classes, and more teachers are beginning to do that. One of my colleagues had commented that it's actually kind of fun because now she's starting to have chats with people…

Another teacher at the high school talked about how she and her classroom neighbor have become friends as a result of their hallway supervision together multiple periods each day sharing, "she and I have learned a lot about each other because we've sort of been forced to do it." Another positive effect of distal leadership was reported at the elementary schools. When teachers were moved from teaching one grade level to another, they maintained positive collaborative relationships with their previous team. A special educator explained, "one teacher may have moved a grade level…but then the initial friendship that she had or he had at one grade level have stayed with some of the ones from the first grade level." In this way, collaboration between teachers may be supported by policies that did not include collaboration within their aims.

In contrast to the appreciation some participants came to feel about distal leadership at the state and building level, very few participants shared positive perceptions of policies at the district level. In fact, multiple participants contrasted their approval of building leadership with their disapproval of district leadership. Three participants specifically addressed the way they felt

district leadership undermined building leaders. An elective area teacher explained how her building leader's efforts were thwarted at the district level so their school couldn't progress. She shared:

> I think it's very difficult for him to be seen and move forward with what he wants to do as a leader because what we hear back, I'm also on the building leadership team, is, "Well, we were going to go ahead with this, but district is going to do it for everybody next year, so they don't want us to get ahead of everybody."

A special educator echoed this sentiment saying, "as a staff, we don't understand about what his hands are tied on and what he's allowed to do from the top down." Other teachers pointed to district leadership's failure to support them during parent complaints, especially when district leaders sided with parents over building leaders and teachers. One teacher explained the way district leadership impacted school-level practices saying, "and that comes across to the staff as micromanaging," which left teachers feeling discouraged. Two high school teachers spoke specifically about how district policies created differences in teaching loads among different schools. One core subject teacher explained:

> They used to have department chairs, but then they decided that it was too expensive to maintain a department chair. So they cut the funding for that. And so now we no longer have department chairs. And that was the same rationale as to cutting the supervision, that you could do it cheaper.

These teachers both felt the strain that policies to eliminate department chairs and supervision duties had for high school staff. Without middle level organizational supports and a supervision period to accomplish instructional tasks (e.g., planning, grading), teachers were forced to use their planning period to accomplish instructional tasks and collaboration with colleagues. In the views of these teachers, reduced collaboration was a natural consequence of losing supervisory duties.

For better and for worse, policies impacted teachers' perceived ability to collaborate, even when collaboration was not an explicit aim of the policy. In general, participants had come to accept and even appreciate the mandated teaming required by the state. And while participants were mixed in their approval of building level policies and the way they supported collaboration, most participants felt that district policies detracted from teacher collaboration.

In total, comments about distal leadership were marked by strongly held perceptions of leaders and policies. Often participants could not pinpoint why they held the beliefs they did; distal leadership was described as part of the fabric of their school experiences. Distal leadership happened *to* them; proximal leadership happened *with* them.

Leaders' Perceptions of Collegial Collaboration

In order to address my third research question regarding leaders' perceptions of collaboration between general and special educators, I met with five building principals, two assistant principals, and the two special education coordinators for the district (i.e., elementary and secondary coordinator). In the section below, I'll address leaders' perceptions of: (a) kinships among their staff, (b) supports for collaboration, (c) barriers to collaboration, and (d) outcomes of collaboration. I will the pseudonyms for schools presented earlier in Table 2 and pseudonyms for leaders.

Kinships

While many leaders were able to share detailed information about personalities and connections within kinships (i.e., why the kinship formed), some leaders could only share a big-picture view of social networks in their school. Almost all leaders agreed kinships existed in their schools. Bob, the high school principal, was the only leader who did not readily answer my question about kinships; he suggested I talk to teachers to find out about their social networks. However, his assistant principal, Reed, explained the kinships he saw at the high school and the secondary special education coordinator contributed to the high school picture. Therefore, I was able to learn about kinships at all five buildings.

Types of Connections Among Staff. Both Ian and Jacob, principal and assistant principal from the middle school, quickly pointed to their team structure (i.e., two interdisciplinary teams at each grade level) as an obvious example of middle school staff kinships. Ian shared, “Our teams are very strong. They have group texts going, they’re going to dinner on the weekend.” Josh, the principal of Oak Elementary, had insights into his staff despite having only been leading the school for a few months when we talked. He shared that at Oak, there is an “old guard” kinship of veteran staff, a “young moms club,” and teachers new to the profession in each grade level who “are just trying to figure it all out.” Alyssa from Lafayette Elementary felt that while teachers within grade levels at her school may not feel kinship toward one another because “philosophically, I think some of the teachers don’t align, so they struggle a little bit,” she saw kinships across “first, second, third, fourth–they have friends on different grade levels and they do things together.”

Some leaders pointed to issues of proximity that aided or inhibited kinships. For instance, Ian shared that at the middle school, team kinships are reinforced because each grade level has

their own lunchroom in their wing. This means teachers don't often travel outside of their grade level wings. At Ferndale, Diane also saw geographic distinctions between lower and upper elementary grades. She shared, "But this wing is more close as a group. When we have things, they always come and they'll be the ones on Friday, have chair races in the hall and stuff." She also explained that there is a copy machine in each wing of the school, another factor that contributed to teachers' informal daily connections being determined by school geography.

Otherness. Sometimes leaders perceived that kinships did not emerge between colleagues even if they shared characteristics that suggested they should form a kinship. For instance, Diane, the principal from Ferndale Elementary, offered descriptions of the social dynamic between teachers on each grade level team. The school had three sections of classrooms at several grade levels, and often two teachers were close. A third teacher was left out of the collaborative kinship. Diane explained that at fourth grade two teachers have excluded a "third person that just came on board last year, who's sweet as can be and…it's hard but, she's working on the other two." In fact, only at first grade did Diane note cohesion among the entire grade team where "all three work together and they're very supportive of each other." At Ferndale, otherness existed within almost every grade level team. Even though grade level teams offered a structure that supported kinship (i.e., shared curriculum, shared testing responsibilities), at Ferndale there was typically a teacher who did not feel kinship on each grade team. Diane's descriptions of grade level teams illustrated the concept of *otherness*, the way in which kinships can create exclusion to those not in the group.

Similarly, Ashley, the principal from Lafayette Elementary, saw how otherness existed at her school. She shared:

> Our fifth-grade team is unique. They're the most veteran, I would say. All of them have been here for a significant amount of time but they also, I feel like, intimidate others. If there's a decision that needs to be made, the staff automatically thinks that that team got to make it. It's really strange; even if that's not true.

At Lafayette, teachers in grades first through fourth mixed beyond grade level boundaries to form kinships that contrasted with the veteran, long-lasting kinship of the grade five teachers. Further, Ashley noted otherness manifested in the influence the grade five team wielded in the school.

Ian also pointed out the way that the closeness of teams at the middle school could lead to exclusion of others not on the team. He explained:

> The flip side of teaming could be that it could be very clique-y. You take the good with the bad with how it is good that the teams are very close but then you see the teams so close that, I don't know if you asked our eighth-grade teachers, "When's the last time you walked down and talked to some of our sixth-grade teachers?" I don't know when that would've been, unless you ran into them in the hallway or at a staff meeting.

Ian seemed to recognize the benefits and consequences of close kinships among teachers. He also noted that teams could be a little competitive with each other; a comparative culture may have exacerbated perceptions of otherness.

Jacob pointed to another type of kinship and otherness at the middle school. He saw a distinction between general education teachers at every grade level and special educators as a whole. He shared, “there are strong connections at the grade level teams. With that said, I would kind of caveat or note…when the tests are bad or the gap isn’t closing, we think everyone just turns and looks at [special educators].” Collectively, Jacob and Ian’s comments illustrated how kinships and otherness can overlap: teams can feel kinships, but when test scores are published, kinships of general educators solidify and otherness against special educators is reinforced.

Josh noted that kinships based on testing pressure existed at his school. At Oak Elementary there was a sense of otherness for third grade teachers that contrasted with kinship of the rest of the staff. To Josh, third grade teachers stood out as their own kinship group because, “I feel third is still the grade level that has the most pressure. Now remember, third grade it’s tested.” His inflection indicated that “tested” for third grade was extreme compared to other grades. He went on to explain, “They’re tight, but with that, they’re also the one area I would say that we see turnover. I mean they just get stressed out.” In this way, a teacher’s assignment to third grade promoted their otherness, but this otherness shifted to new staff when teachers cycled out of third grade.

In short, most leaders agreed that kinships existed among teachers and that kinships could create otherness for those excluded from kinship groups. Further, leaders saw the way kinships were influenced by variables such as testing pressure and school geography. Finally, leaders recognized that kinships and otherness may have been related to perceptions of accountability.

Supports for Collaboration

While kinships were organic connections between colleagues that formed through natural affiliations, leaders also shared their experiences with deliberate supports for collaboration.

Leaders offered supports to teachers individually, but leaders also shared how they paid attention to a school-wide vision of collaboration. In the next section, I'll discuss leaders' (a) targeted supports for teachers, (b) recruitment of collaborative faculty, and (c) group supports.

Targeted Supports for Teachers. Several leaders shared the way in which collaboration among teachers needed to be supported directly with individuals or small groups. Sometimes, leader supports came in the form of troubleshooting issues around collaboration. For instance, Diane from Ferndale Elementary shared that when teachers struggled on their teams, she worked with them one-on-one. Diane explained, "And we'll sit and we'll brainstorm. I did that with that kindergarten teacher. We sat here and she cried with me. And we talked about some ways to go back to the team and how she could be more of a team player." Ashley shared that teachers at Lafayette seemed to struggle with systems to help their teaming be effective (e.g., agendas, norms for sharing, goal setting). She planned to meet with each team to develop systems that team members could embrace. She saw this intervention having two benefits:

> I'm going to have certain grades come in for a half day and just sit and work through all the things to A, make sure that they feel support and have all their questions answered but, also, that they get to... I would be facilitating the teaming piece, the culture-building piece.

Both Diane and Ashley understood that part of their role as leader was to facilitate adult relationships. Ashley also saw that work working through challenges as a team and having a troubleshooting process actually helped build collaboration among team members.

Ian shared that at the middle school, he thought that attending to individual teachers' needs was critical for collaboration to work. He shared, "I think that's where I need to put a lot

of my emphasis. If I'm taking care of them, they're going to take care of the kids." He went on to say that he and his assistant principal, Jacob, worked together to match individual teachers with committee assignments that best fit teachers' strengths. He offered a recent example saying, "I invited a teacher, the other day, on the building leadership team, and they're not quite sure if it's for them." He went on to say that his ideal was to have every teacher matched to a collaborative initiative, and he admitted, "it's one of those things where that's a goal. That's a vision and we're striving for it; we're not there." Josh from Oak Elementary agreed with Ian's perspective. He shared that as a leader it's important to be present for teachers. He said, "I'm there at their door and I also spend most of my time I possibly can, walking in their rooms, doing a lot of walkthroughs down the halls, being in the lunchroom…. The teachers know that I have their backs." In this way, Ian and Josh saw that it was important for leaders to targeted supports to individual to realize collective goals.

Recruitment of Collaborative Faculty. When asked what BGSU could be doing to better prepare teachers, several leaders cited their hope that teacher candidates would graduate with skills that helped them collaborate with colleagues. For instance, both special education coordinators identified interpersonal skills as critical for special educators. Ellen shared "they need to be able to have good conversations with people" and specifically noted that the ability to have difficult, honest conversations was important for special educators. Cathy, her secondary coordinator colleague, spoke to the need for special educators to be open-minded, "Because I feel like that helps develop relationships. If you can be accepting of people that do things differently than you."

But leaders saw that the need to work collaboratively extended beyond special educators. Josh spoke plainly that collaboration was a critical skill for new teachers:

> I mean, if a teacher can't collaborate, they're not going to survive….Some of the questions we ask are like, what are some examples you used or have done with collaboration with a colleague to be able to create a lesson. How do you use resources like a reading specialist or a special ed teacher? Where do you see them and how do you see yourself? Or how much co-teaching have you ever done? These are all questions that help us get to a place of like, "Okay. Do they have that exposure to understand how this is going to be a team player?"

Diane from Ferndale echoed Josh's perspective, sharing, "I guess they need to know that you're not going to go in your little room and teach. That there's no longer an option. You have to be willing to sit down with the team." Ian agreed. He said that when the middle school interviewed for faculty positions, "we pay real close attention to the leadership skills and the collaboration skills and those kinds of things because that's key. You have to be able to work with your teacher colleagues." Leaders expressed a goal to hire new teachers with collaboration skills because those skills will help teachers weather the demands of the career. Also, these leaders seemed clear that collaboration was an expectation, not a choice for new teachers.

Group Supports. Leaders also talked about supports that moved beyond interventions for individual teachers and attention to hiring collaboratively-minded teachers. Frequently, these were efforts for large groups or staff-wide initiatives. For example, several leaders talked about the ways they organized social events for staff. At Oak Elementary, Josh worked in conjunction with teacher-led social committees to host gatherings. Josh explained, "So last night we had a

rumba dance class." Other times they'd suggest a meet up at a bar or Josh would say, "we're going to go have ice cream over at Sundae Station." These events were frequent but not always on the same day, so no teachers were excluded from the events due to scheduling conflicts.

The high school also pointed to social events as a way to connect staff. Reed shared that Bob organized events for staff, explaining, "He usually does, two or three times a year, "Hey, guys. It's Friday. Let's meet at..." Bob, however, admitted he did not think he did enough to offer social opportunities for teachers. "But I don't see large groups of people having fun outside of school and perhaps that's my ... Maybe that's what I need to do probably. You make the activity available and if they come, they come." Bob and Reed both made a distinction between off campus socializing and on-campus gatherings. For instance, Bob said, "We had a faculty meeting last Thursday and we just got a cake and had a little class, the equivalent of an elementary class party. And I think people appreciated that." Reed elaborated on their efforts saying that the leaders knew teachers deserved some fun. He explained that the high school faculty was struggling with everything from a suicide of a student at the start of the year to the lack of air conditioning in the building. He said the staff meeting party was Bob and Reed's way to say:

> Just, "Thank you. It's been..." With the suicide, with... we always have heat in the building, but it still takes it toll on you. You're wearing out and, by the time Friday, you're tired. "Thank you for that. We know there's a lot on your plate."

In this way, Bob and Reed conceptualized gatherings as a way to show appreciation for staff.

At Ferndale, Diane bridged social gatherings and professional meeting by sponsoring a book club for teachers each year. Teachers could choose to attend or not attend, and the book was a non-fiction selection that was education related. She shared that even though the book club was relaxed, "I'm always trying to improve our task, our skills." These leaders believed that teachers should have opportunities to connect beyond school day collegial interactions.

But other leaders spoke specifically about their efforts to support collaboration with large scale structures or policies. For instance, Ashley shared a new flowchart she'd created that specified the expectations for communication between general and special education teachers (See Appendix G). Prior to this policy, general education teachers may or may not have consulted with a special education colleague when they had concerns about a student; instead, they may have reported concerns to an administrator who then facilitated the intervention process. The new policy, however, required interaction between general and special education, and in this way, promoted reliable collaboration.

Ian and Jacob shared how they have helped the middle school teachers refine their teaming process to best use their collaboration time. Jacob explained the norms they have standardized for teams:

> They submit an agenda before each week and that lines up what they're going to do for the week ahead. As part of the teaming, they have student updates where I can go into the meetings and our counselors, so we're meeting with the teams once a week, which is great because we all have a different perspective on the kids. That allows me, when a

> parent calls me and asks about kids, that's how I get to
> know the kids.

Ian and Jacob have established norms with their teams (i.e., weekly agendas; student updates) that supported good teaming. These norms also supported Ian and Jacob's tasks as leaders (e.g., knowing students who are struggling).

As a principal new to Lafayette, Ashley had to establish more rigorous expectations for teaming with her staff in order for collaborative teams to work well. She told her teachers, "You will be at all the TBT meetings. You will be at all the planning meetings. That is the expectation." She also had to instruct them how to establish goals for the team and use an agenda to drive their meetings. From Ashley's perspective, teachers complied without complaint and quickly realized the benefits of heightened expectations for collaboration. Ashley shared feedback from teachers who said, "Wow. This is what it was supposed to be like?"…I didn't know that's what TBT meetings were supposed to be like." Similarly, Bob explained how adjusting the master schedule has supported teacher-based team attendance at the high school. He said, "we've given teachers in every department that same planning period. And I think that has helped." Ashley and Bob both changed the expectations for their teachers, and both had a sense it has improved collaboration.

At the middle school, Ian and Jacob sought regular feedback from teachers to ensure teams were productive. For instance, he shared that three years ago they instituted a policy so that subject-area teams met together once a week. Previously, all teaming time was dedicated to their interdisciplinary teams, but Ian and Jacob realized that subject area teachers (e.g., seventh grade math, sixth grade science) would benefit from collaboration one day a week.

For example, at the middle school, Ian and Jacob structured their building-level team to function as a safety net for teacher-level teams. He said:

> One of the primary responsibilities of the building leadership team is to know the temperature for our teacher-based teams. Our department-level teams are called our teacher-based teams, or TBT, for short. It's their responsibility to know the temperature, to be talking with their colleagues, and to know what TBTs are running well, functioning as they should, and what TBTs are struggling and not working as they should. We report that out at every single meeting and then, we problem-solve from there. We've had our building leadership team attend teacher-based teams before and... I don't know if mentor's the right word, but be there to help work through things.

Ian and Jacob have refined their teaming process so much that they have established checks and balances to ensure the health of their teams. At the teaming-intensive middle school, Ian and Jacob felt a responsibility to ensure the daily teaming time was used productively. Ian explained, "we're only as good as our weakest TBTs and we need everybody functioning on a high level." At the middle school, Ian clearly identified teaming as central to their efforts; collaboration was the lynchpin of their work.

Overall, leaders shared several examples of supports they offer to teachers. While some focused on social gatherings as a way to support teachers, other leaders talked about instructionally linked supports. Targeted supports for individual teachers, hiring of

collaboratively-minded staff, and clear expectations for staff were all useful ways leaders promoted collaboration.

Barriers to Collaboration

But several leaders recognized that despite their best efforts to support collaboration, they were frequently faced with challenges. In fact, many leaders shared similar perceptions about factors that were barriers to successful teacher collaboration. Of the 79 total comments from leaders regarding barriers to collaboration, 27% addressed lack of time, 26% were about teachers' attitudes, and 24% addressed accountability pressures (e.g., state testing, OTES). I'll discuss leaders' perceptions of the three main barriers to collaboration in the next section in order of prevalence.

Lack of Time. Most of the school principals talked about the difficulty of making time for teachers to collaborate. Many spoke of this barrier to collaboration in terms of the burden of teachers' workloads. For instance, Josh from Oak Elementary talked about teachers he felt were on the brink of burnout:

> I've got a first grade teacher that I know is rolling in at 7:00
> and not leaving until 7:00, and that's every day, and I'm
> trying to, "Okay, stop. Go home." I've said, "Let me help
> you with that and now you need to go ahead, call it a day."
> So I worry about our younger teachers not connecting
> because feel like they don't have the time to do that.

From Josh's perspective, teachers who were new to the profession may have been overwhelmed with the tasks to meet daily demands of their jobs (e.g., lesson planning, grading). He was concerned that because of this workload, new teachers may not have made time to collaborate.

Ashley saw a similar trend at Lafayette and admitted that in the two and a half months that they'd been in school, she had yet to see two teachers having an informal hallway conversation. In fact, she shared a story of the literal burdens her teachers were carrying:

> The other day was so crazy, to me. I had a teacher walking to the teacher's lounge and she had a million manuals stacked up on her arm and they were all of our new things that she's learning. To see it like that, like that, right there, I was like, "Oh, my God." She had her Second Step. She had her Being a Writer. She had Being a Reader. She had Math in Focus. She had Words Their Way; all in her arm.

For Ashley, it was upsetting to see how the district's new initiatives weighed teachers down. That teacher wasn't headed into the lounge to talk with colleagues; she was going to study curriculum. In this way, Ashley and Josh saw teachers' work habits preventing collaborative relationships.

At the high school, there were similar concerns about the lack of time teachers had. Reed voiced concerns over teachers at the high school who were "feeling the pressure." Bob agreed, noting, "I mean, look at a teacher's day, they teach six classes, they get a 50-minute planning period ... So in their planning period they were pretty much making sure that they're keeping their head out of water." Because teachers at the high school taught six out of seven periods in a school day, their planning period was the only time they had to make parent phone calls, grade papers, or lesson plan. When ODE mandated teacher-based teams as part of the OIP process, the district "encroached upon teachers' planning time with the TBT period." Reed explained how recent changes in district policies had affected teachers' time to collaborate:

> The negative is when we started a TBT, we were on a different schedule. We were on an eight-period schedule. Teachers taught six of eight; one planning, one duty. We were able to make it, in the schedule, where their duty was split between study hall or TBT, so they had dedicated TBT time, during the day, to meet. It was fantastic. We were told we had to go from an eight-period to seven-period schedule. We lost that ability. Now, their TBT comes through some of their contractual prep time which, because most TBTs have made up of somebody who coaches, either before or after school, or daycare before school. They TBT during their prep time, during the day, so they lose a prep a week.

Notably, middle school leaders did not comment about lack of time or teachers' workload. Their core subject and special education teachers taught five of seven periods, with one planning and one teaming period each day. Ian explained the importance of dedicated collaboration time saying, "I would fight tooth and nail if the district wanted to remove it because I think it's extremely important and research shows it's effective." For Ian, time for teachers to meet during the school day was a critical component of collaboration. Overall, most leaders agreed that teachers' full schedules meant collaboration was pushed aside in favor of more pressing tasks.

Teacher Attitudes. But while scheduled meeting time may be critical to support collaboration, time by itself was not viewed by leaders as sufficient to guarantee successful collaboration. Ian explained:

> Some people think collaboration or teamwork is like, "I'm going to share my opinion and if you don't like it, I'm going to share it anyways and that is what it is," and that creates dissension. That doesn't help. People who can respectfully disagree and problem-solve in a way of, I don't know, sharing ideas but knowing that maybe your idea isn't the best idea; so, to be open to learn, I think, is key.

Ian's comments addressed a second barrier to successful collaboration: teachers' attitudes. Cathy, the secondary special education coordinator, also perceived that teachers' unwillingness to be open to colleagues' ideas functioned as a roadblock for collaboration. She explained her frustration with special educators:

> But some of our intervention specialists are like, "I'm doing everything right. You're doing it different, so you're wrong, I'm cool." I just think there's different ways to do, there's more than one way to do it. Right?

Bob suggested that teachers' willingness to work with colleagues may be especially difficult at the secondary level. He pointed out that in high school, "it's not like in elementary school where it's rah, rah kind of thing. I don't think you see that dynamic here." Reed offered examples of teachers at the high school who thwarted collaboration among the teams. He explained that they have one teacher who "goes rogue more often than not" and veteran teachers "who don't necessarily see the importance" of teaming. Bob offered his take on high school collaborative culture, sharing, "We in high schools have our own little fiefdoms and we don't really want people encroaching upon our fiefdom." Cathy, the secondary special education coordinator, saw

the same difficulty with middle and high school teachers. She shared, "people groomed in that, they want to be a middle school teacher, or they want to be a high school teacher because they, they are a little more independent, I think." Cathy and Bob perceived that lack of enthusiasm for collaboration was part of a personality attracted to teaching at the secondary level.

But Ellen, the elementary special education coordinator, saw similar problems at Ferndale Elementary. She explained, "The climate there has always been, ever since I can remember, the people that worked at [Ferndale] would always be like, "Ugh, it's really difficult here." Ellen observed that climate firsthand. She shared, "When I go there, there's a lot of teachers talking badly about the principal. And the principal talking badly about the teachers." Ellen believed that negativity could impact collaboration. She felt that while some teams were cohesive, others were more "I'm going to do this, you're going to do this, we're both going to stay in our lanes." Diane, the principal at Ferndale, may have not be aware of teachers with poor attitudes on some of the teams. She explained:

> They're there, but they don't like me to know about them.
> They know it would be beneath my expectations of them.
> So later somebody will say, "Well, didn't you know that
> she hasn't been talking to her or whatever?" And I'm like,
> "Oh, they wouldn't let me know."

Diane acknowledged that her expectations as a leader may have prevented teachers from sharing when teachers' attitudes disrupted teams.

The middle school may have also experienced a similar environment in which school leaders may not have understood team dynamics and teachers' attitudes as much as the special education coordinators. For instance, Cathy shared, "the middle school has complained…about

them not feeling that they're really co-teachers" and clarified that she felt only one middle school team had productive general and special education relationships. But Ian offered a slightly different view:

> Now, when you dig into it, all relationships have things they can work on. If you talk to the intervention specialists, specifically, they would say that, at times, they feel like they're just an extra person in the classroom or they're not being used to their full potential. If you talk to the gen ed teachers, they may vent, at times, that the intervention specialist isn't taking the initiative and being an active member of the classroom. I think those cases are rare.

Both Ian and Cathy acknowledged that there were difficulties between general and special educators that may have affected successful collegial collaboration. But similar to the situation at Ferndale, there may have been a discrepancy between the perceptions of the school principals and the special education coordinators. Regardless of their specific perceptions, leaders agreed that teachers' attitudes were part of the successful collaboration equation.

Accountability Pressures. While time and teachers' attitudes were factors within schools that may have affected collaboration, leaders also perceived that external factors affected teachers as well. Specifically, leaders spoke to the many layers of accountability demands placed on teachers. According to the leaders in this study, teachers felt accountability pressures that began with student achievement at the classroom level, continued with state report cards, and culminated with OTES, the teacher evaluation system in the state linked to student performance gains.

Ashley noted that accountability pressures were felt by teachers from the first pieces of student data gathered each year. She spoke about Lafayette's universal screening data (i.e., AIMSWeb) which is reported three times a year as an early detection system for students who need intervention. But when teachers gathered to discuss results of those screenings, she saw teachers start to take the results personally. She explained that when they shared student data as a staff, "If you're showing, 'All these kids are in the red. They're not doing well,' that itself, already, feels icky." Ashley perceived that teachers whose kids were performing below grade level standard (i.e., "in the red") felt upset about those data.

Josh said that the teachers at Oak knew their situation was dire. Oak's universal screening showed that "right now for incoming third graders, that we're at 29% of them that are on level for kindergarten." Knowing that those data suggest an uphill battle, Josh argued, could make teachers feel overwhelmed. "The issue is when we're having students that come in that are so low and trying to get them where they need to be, it's very hard." Furthermore, Josh explained that the timeline of mandated testing was relentless. We met during the first week of October, and he explained the assessments teachers had been working on that fall:

> We have a grade card that our final day for our first quarter grades is coming up October 18th, and then all of that has to be finalized and approved by the 21st of October. We have SLOs due by the 18th. We just finished up our K-3 Literacy assessment that had to be closed by September 30th. So now teachers are in the process of, when I say process of writing RIMPs, unfortunately were already meeting together in groups and they know exactly what to do….

Josh's perception of pressures on teachers included many state mandated measures. For instance, "SLOs" referred to Student Learning Objectives, which was a student achievement target teachers set to measure the amount of growth a student made in their class. Tracking students' growth during the course of a school year allowed the state to measure the impact a teacher has on student learning (ODE, 2015). Josh also referred to RIMPs, which are the Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan that ODE requires for any student who is not on track to be on grade level "within 60 days of receiving the reading diagnostic results." (ODE, 2019, p. 11). Ellen, the elementary special education coordinator, offered the following example of the way testing mandates affected teachers: "There are people that honestly, the first week of October, have not really started instruction." Josh and Ellen both believed that teachers felt testing had eclipsed instruction.

Diane's perceptions matched Josh and Ellen's. She shared that "over testing is the number one" deterrent to collaboration. When I pushed her to explain the connection between over testing and reduced collaboration, she explained that less testing would affect, "Time. It would give us time and more joy in our teaching. I think it takes away the joy." Reed also saw that testing had a negative effect on teachers. He admitted that they did not dig into student data too much. He shared, "We don't hit them hard. We ask they do their jobs. We ask that they work hard and we hope the rest takes care of itself, but to beat somebody over a flawed system..." Reed's frustration with the "flawed system" of state mandates translated into an unwillingness for leaders to add pressure to teachers.

Ellen contrasted the pressures teachers felt today with state accountability from a decade ago. She explained how things have changed from her perspective:

> Honestly, I think we were doing some things really, really well when I was first here. When I first came here. I would love to get back to some of that. But there weren't, at that time, we weren't in OIP, so we didn't have the pressures of making sure we had TBTs and BLTs and DLTs, that wasn't there. Nobody was doing OTES, there were not SLOs. So people didn't ... It just didn't seem as stressful. Honestly a decade ago, it didn't seem as ... That wasn't the feeling… But there was more of this ... It just felt like there was more time to do things together, and talk to each other, and work together, and plan together.

Ellen saw a shift in teachers' collaboration that she attributed to increased accountability from the state. Ashley saw a similar connection. She explained that accountability measures made student data comparisons a central feature of many team meetings. But Ashley saw a downside to data-driven discussions. At Lafayette, she saw accountability reducing teachers' desire to collaborate. She explained:

> I think it's very obvious in the TBT meetings or even in their planning meetings. It's just bringing up a suggestion or asking a question, and how it's responded to; if people are quick to snap back or defend themselves, then that person doesn't ask again or they become very quiet. I feel like the TBTs and we're trying to create the culture of sharing and like, "This is what I did," and "This is what's

> working for me. See what you can do," but it's like that's very hard to do and I think one of the reasons for that is we're always being evaluated; we're always being judged. We want to be better than the next. That's a human-nature thing but OTES has also created that, and so, here we are trying to put that in place but we have all these other things that are going against it.

From Ashley's perspective, there was a tension between collaboration and accountability. Teacher evaluations tied to student growth (i.e., OTES) promoted defensiveness in teachers. Because of this, OTES was "going against" teachers' willingness to collaborate with colleagues to improve instruction.

One other factor beyond the three main barriers to collaboration emerged as a frequent talking point among leaders. Comments about staff turnover comprised 10% of comments about barriers to collaboration. Ian talked about their challenges around teacher retention because "it's hard to compete when you can go somewhere else and get a $10,000 increase." Ellen commented that this was the first year there wasn't a new special education teacher at Oak in a very long time. In fact, it was so unusual, "we all rejoiced at our first meeting" that they'd been able to retain their new teachers. Bob said the high school has also struggled to keep special educators. And Josh offered this startling statistic about the district, "Over 40% of our staff has turned over in the last four years." High levels of teacher turnover may have compounded the three main barriers to collaboration.

When taken together, leaders' perceptions about barriers to collaboration painted a picture of teaching that is hobbled by state mandates and burdened with instructional initiatives.

Perhaps because of these barriers, leaders may also have struggled to build collaborative spirit among some staff members. And these barriers may have been especially frustrating for leaders who knew that if they could find a teacher who managed the mandates, executed the curriculum, and developed relationships with colleagues, they may lose that teacher to another district.

Outcomes of Collaboration

In spite of these barriers–or perhaps because of these barriers–the benefits of collaboration resonated with leaders. Some leaders cited increased camaraderie among staff members as a central benefit of collaboration. Ian explained that at the middle school, collaboration "helps with the climate because you can share ideas, you can troubleshoot together, you can problem-solve together." Diane also perceived that collaboration could translate into improved climate, what she referred to as a "sense of family" among staff.

Ellen felt like camaraderie among staff crossed typical special and general education boundaries. She shared "I'll see a group of third grade teachers in there eating lunch together. Like socially even, and the intervention specialists are part of that." Ellen credited professional collaboration among special and general educators as the reason behind those social connections between teachers. In fact, Reed pointed out from his perspective, improved relationships between general and special educators was a main benefit of collaboration. He noted that in the past, "We had to referee fights between the reg ed and special ed teachers, four or five years ago. We're not really doing that anymore. They seem to be on the same page." Improved collaboration had led to reduced conflict among general and special educators; they were now able to "be on the same page" which could translate to improved services for students.

By the same token, Josh specifically saw improved instruction as a result of collaboration between special and general educators in at Oak Elementary. He shared the example of one

special educator who helped teachers in kindergarten and first grade. He explained, “she works alongside the teachers, pulling in new strategies that might just be slight tweaks and will help the kid be able to grasp that foundational skill and then continue on.” Josh noted that collaboration between general and special education teachers may have relieved some of the accountability pressure teachers faced. He explained the process that happened when Oak teachers identified struggling students:

> They get that, “Hey, this is a collaborative process that we have. “Let’s lay all the cards out.” All those cards of course pieces of data of kids and where they are and saying, “Okay. Who are the kids that need the most help?” “Well one out of my class, two out of yours.” Okay so now we’re going to have them go with special ed teacher for obviously if they are identified with needs to get their minutes, but then also maybe get them double dealt with our title or reading specialist and then that way we can see some of those pieces of growth.

For teachers at Oak, sharing student data led to collaboration with intervention specialists, an effort that Josh hoped would lead to student growth measured by SLOs and state testing.

Like Josh, Ian also saw students with disabilities benefitting from successful collaboration between general and special educators. He talked about general and special educators who co-taught in tested subjects. He shared, “because of the intervention specialists and the relationships that they have with the co-teachers, that really strengthens the instruction in the core class.” Again, leaders saw the connection between successful collaboration and student

success in subjects that were tested. Reed also saw improved instruction for students who struggled. He explained that at the high school, they shifted special educators to focus only on one content area, which he felt allowed for improved collaboration between general and special educators. He shared, “Now, they’ve worked together so much, they can really do an actual co-teaching model in this area. We’re working toward it. We’re getting better.” Josh, Ian, and Reed all perceived that improved instruction for students who struggled was an important outcome of successful collaboration.

Ellen noted that preschool teachers were, in her opinion, the very best collaborators. In the district’s preschool, housed at Lafayette Elementary, Ellen viewed collaboration between general educators, special educators, and even other service providers (e.g., speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists) as virtually seamless. For Ellen, the primary benefit of seamless collaboration was a classroom that truly included all students with disabilities. She described the full inclusion classroom setting in which students on IEPs received services right next to–or even with–typical students:

> You would never walk into that room and know who’s identified and who’s not. And you would not even understand, you wouldn’t be able to pick out, wow that kid’s receiving specially designed instruction right now, but they would be, and you would never know.

Ellen praised teachers who were able to thoughtfully balance the needs of students with disabilities and typical students. She was the only leader who specifically addressed full inclusion as an outcome of successful collaboration.

Several leaders connected collaboration among teachers to improved student learning overall, not just for students who struggled. For example, Josh and Ian both saw that collaboration allowed teachers to share their best instruction with their colleagues. Ian explained that collaboration promoted a give-and-take between teachers. Teachers shared the struggles they were having with a student or lesson and offered help to colleagues who were struggling in another area. Josh noted:

> They do definitely have a bond, and I think they communicate most out of a grade level where they're firing emails back and forth with each other like, "Oh, okay. This is what I got. What you guys doing for this here?"

Bob said this type of information exchange happened at the high school, too. He shared, "When teachers see other teachers really doing good things, that kind of ... And I hate to use the word synergy, but that cumulative effect, it becomes very positive." These leaders all felt that collaboratively, teachers created improved instruction that was shared across teams.

In sum, these data suggested that leaders recognized the benefits of collaboration for teachers. First, they appreciated the interpersonal connections among teachers that emerged from professional collaborations. But teachers who worked well together also worked well for students. Leaders perceived that both students with disabilities and typical students benefitted from successful collaborations among teachers.

Overall, leaders perceived that while successful collaboration yielded many benefits, there were barriers to collaboration that were difficult for leaders to overcome. Lack of time, accountability pressures and teacher attitudes were all barriers to collaboration with which

leaders struggled. Still, several leaders attempted to offer supports for collaboration both to teachers directly and by prioritizing collaboration in school structures.

CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore collegial relationships between general and special educators. Implications of this study may help leaders leverage teacher collaboration to support school improvement efforts. To that end, I explored perceptions of general education teachers, special education teachers, and leaders to understand how these role groups contributed to trust among general and special educators. Results from this study suggested that trust building between general and special educators was complicated, but leadership focused on collaboration may have supported collegial trust. I will discuss challenges to trust building in the next section followed by a section on the role of school leaders in trust building. Finally, I will address implications for school leaders, limitations to this study, and suggestions for future research.

Challenges to Trust Building Between General and Special Educators

My first research question focused on teachers exclusively, asking how trust functioned between general and special educators. Trust between teachers is essential for effective collaboration (Tschannen-Moran, 2000), and special and general educators are required to collaborate to fulfill accommodations and modifications for students on IEPs (Friend, 2008; Pugach & Peck, 2016; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2017). Trust develops when one party fulfills the expectations of a vulnerable party over time through repeated demonstrations of trustworthy behavior (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). A person’s ability to recognize another’s vulnerability may be supported by perspective taking (Fresko, Reich, Sjoo, & Lonroth, 2013; Park & Raile, 2010; Warren, 2018) and lead to demonstrations of trustworthy behaviors (Vostal, Horner, & LaVenia, 2019). Trustworthy behaviors are comprised of five facets including: (a) benevolence, (b) reliability, (c) competence, (d), openness, and (e) honesty (Tshcannen-Moran & Hoy 2000).

Therefore, part of my exploration of trust included how general and special educators perceived demonstrations of trust facets from their counterparts. Results from this research question indicated participants' trust experiences varied in terms of opportunities they had to collaborate and the enthusiasm teachers felt for collaboration. Results also indicated that teachers' kinship group patterns were varied, suggesting different social network connections among general education core subject teachers, general education elective subject teachers, and special educators. Finally, participants' perceptions of relationships with their counterparts indicated that while all five facets of trust were present, they were weighed differently by general and special educators. In order to address these results from research question one in total, I will first discuss the connection between participants' perspective taking and their ability to build trust with colleagues. Then I will discuss the way in which vulnerability of participants is connected to symmetry of power within general and special educator relationships.

Limited Perspective Taking May Limit Trust

A central finding from my first research question was that demonstrations of some facets of trust were hampered by participants' inability to understand the best interests of their counterparts. For instance, though protecting the best interest of another is a central tenet of benevolence (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000), comments from general educators suggested that they may not fully understand the roles and responsibilities (i.e., interests) of their special education counterparts. Several general educators participating in the study expressed frustration with what they perceived to be disparity between the responsibilities of general and special education teachers (e.g., class party responsibilities, adherence to bell schedules). Special educators also expressed frustration with their general education counterparts. Special educators noted that general educators' agendas sometimes marginalized special educators. These results

suggested that trust building may be difficult to establish between general and special educators: though benevolence is foundational to development of trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2004), many participants in this study seemed unable to regularly demonstrate goodwill to their counterparts.

Another factor that may have compounded general and special educators' difficulty to build trust was the way participants judged the competence of one another. First, several general educators expressed that their own ability to work with struggling students was in sharp contrast to special educators' abilities. Some general educators could not "fully comprehend" the needs of students with disabilities, presenting a picture in which general educators lacked understanding of the process of intervention. It is not unusual for general and special educators to perceive a gulf between their relative areas of expertise that can make collaboration difficult (DaFonte & Barton-Arwood, 2017). Findings indicated that among the participants in this study, perceptions of this gulf existed. In some ways, this gulf may appear to have benefitted trust building because it meant that general and special educators acknowledged each other's competence. But general educators' lack of understanding about intervention may have meant their judgements of special educators' competence were inflated. To paraphrase one participant, special educators were the key that "unlocks the mysteries" of students, making the abilities of special educators sound almost magical. General educators who were in awe of special educators' intervention expertise were also distanced from interventions and the students that received them. This perception was evidenced by language that emphasized interventions were not part of general educators' expertise (e.g., "they have the skill and I don't," "there are things that you should be doing that I cannot do") that made general educators' involvement in intervention sound like an impossibility. This sense of not-knowing among some general education participants may have contributed to perceptions of special educators' competence that were unrealistic.

Beyond issues with benevolence and competence, participants' comments in this study indicated a complicated picture of reliability among general and special educators. In fact, the tension between general and special educators' inability to protect the interests of their counterpart and general educators' perhaps inflated perceptions of special educators' competence may have come to a head around issues of reliability. Several general education participants commented on the lack of reliability from special educators (e.g., did not communicate regularly, did not initiate contact with general educators). One participant noted he had to "flag down" special educators in the hallway to connect with them while another remarked he never knew if his counterpart from the previous year was "coming or going." Special educators were aware their counterparts judged them to be unreliable, and, to an extent, understood these judgements. Special education participants shared the ways in which their job responsibilities (e.g., student behavior crisis, parent meeting) made it difficult to stay reliable for their counterparts; this frustrated special educators. In total, the intersections between judgements of benevolence, competence, and reliability indicated knotty trust relationships among general and special educators.

Taken together, comments about participants' benevolence, competence, and reliability suggested a fundamental lack of understanding between general and special educators that: (a) impeded benevolence, (b) led to uninformed judgments of competence, perhaps inflating special educators' competencies, and (c) contributed to shared frustrations about special educators' inability to remain reliable to general educators. At a very basic level, participants' shared experiences indicated that general and special educators were not able to perspective take with one another; as a result, participants' judgements of benevolence, competence, and reliability may have been shaped by their limited perspectives of their counterparts. Perspective taking may

have an important role in trust building because it serves as a gateway to understanding another party's vulnerabilities (See Chapter I). In his 2018 study, Warren argued that teachers' perspective taking came in two forms. *Imagine self* (IS) occurred when one adopted the perspective of oneself in another's situation (i.e., puts self in the shoes of another); this form of perspective taking relied on one's own experiences (Warren, 2018). But *imagine other* (IO) occurred when one was able to take the perspective of another person and imagine how they would act in that situation (Warren, 2018). In this way, Warren (2018) posited IO as the potentially more powerful form of perspective taking because it promoted expressions of empathy that began with understanding of one's own failings. In other words, teachers who engaged in IS perspective taking were still seeing the situation through their own eyes, which may have inhibited their ability to recognize their own complicity in the situation at hand. When teachers shifted to IO perspective taking, they were more likely to see their own failings and were willing to extend themselves to remedy the given situation (Warren, 2018).

General educators' inability to perspective take with special educators may have stunted demonstrations of benevolence and also may have contributed to inflated perceptions of counterparts' competence. At best, it seems that general educators were stuck in IS perspective taking, unable to imagine the work special educators did and consequently unable to protect special educators' interests. Looking at facets of competence and benevolence together, special educators' expertise was desired, but mostly from a general education agenda that lacked goodwill toward special educators. General educators may have been viewing situations from a general education perspective, which may not have allowed them to consider demands outside of the bell schedule. Special educators expressed that their responsibilities to manage extreme student behaviors or communicate with upset parents did not adhere to a strict bell schedule.

Then, general educators' IS perspective taking–and therefore lack of IO perspective taking–seemed to manifest in upset about their counterparts' unreliability. When special educators did not fulfill general educators' expectations of reliability, it reflected both general educators' lack of understanding (e.g., not understanding what might make them late to class) and general educators' heightened disappointment that they did not receive supports they needed. In this study, participants' apparent struggles to perspective take with colleagues may be of particular concern because perspective taking is a professional expectation for persons in caring professions (Fresko et al., 2013). If participants in this study were unable to perspective take with their colleagues (i.e., persons in a similar role group), they may also be challenged to perspective take with students and their families. Fresko and colleagues (2013) asserted, however, that perspective taking is a skill that can be learned; this will be discussed as an implication for leaders later in this chapter.

It is important to acknowledge that while the tensions between benevolence, competence, and reliability were prevalent among participants, several participants shared experiences of trusting collaborations with colleagues. Participants in this study who had: (a) positive benevolence judgements of their counterparts, (b) understood and shared intervention and content competencies, and (c) experienced reliability tended to be in long-term collaborative relationships. These participants were in the high opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant and were fertile ground for evidence of judgements of benevolence, competence, and reliability between general and special educators. This evidence came from interviews and was corroborated by my observations of collaborators. For example, when I observed long-term collaborators, I witnessed demonstrations of benevolence that likely relied on IO perspective taking. During my observation of a co-led class activity, when one participant finished dealing with an upset

student, her partner gave her a squeeze on the shoulder. Similarly, when I observed the team meeting, I saw that when one team member was faced with a testing burden, her teammates moved to share instruction with her to alleviate her burden. I would argue that what I witnessed in these observations was IO perspective taking. Teachers who were able to step away from their own demands and expressed care for the interests of colleagues were likely engaging in IO perspective taking. They subordinated their own perspective to see what their colleague needed and moved to provide it.

I also found corroboration for high opportunity/high enthusiasm participants' comments with artifacts shared with me. Co-teachers who found their counterpart to be competent and reliable shared some processes that they used to promote understanding. For example, one co-teaching pair used google docs to co-plan lessons that addressed both content and intervention needs. Their lesson plan template reserved space for attention to both general education content standards and needed accommodations for students with disabilities. It also used color coding to divide instruction to students equally among both co-teachers. A general educator also shared the way in which she helped her counterpart master content, an effort she relayed helped her counterpart "get it done" competently and reliably. One artifact that supported special educators' ability to similarly "get it done" was the content planning grid shared by an interdisciplinary team. By planning lessons a month at a time and sharing those plans on a team google doc, the team promoted reliability; special educators knew what lessons needed their support. The contrast between high opportunity/high enthusiasm participants' experiences and the experiences of other participants suggested that ability to IO perspective take may be linked to regular opportunities to collaborate. That is, only when participants experienced long-term collaborations with a counterpart were they able to develop systems and habits to perspective

take, recognize the vulnerability of their counterparts, and demonstrate trustworthy behaviors to mitigate vulnerability.

Symmetry Reduces Vulnerability

To be clear, while repeated opportunities to collaborate may be necessary for IO perspective taking to pave the way for trust building, opportunities alone are not sufficient to promote perspective taking. Some participants in the high opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant commented on the contrast between former negative collaborative partnerships and their current positive ones. Despite regular opportunities to collaborate, trust did not develop in these former negative partnerships. It was perhaps their former unproductive collaborations that made the shift to perspective taking and trust building so profound for these participants. For one special educator, it was a "dream come true" when she finally experienced trusting collaboration with her co-teaching partner. The reason this shift to trust may have felt profound for that special educator was because it lessened her vulnerability. Indeed, she expressed that she felt "validated" as part of a trusting collaboration with her co-teacher because it changed her role as a special educator: instead of being relegated to the role of assistant, she was regarded as an equal teacher.

Vulnerability may be an important factor to examine when considering power dynamics between teachers (See Chapter II). For Bryk and Schneider (2002) all role groups in schools (i.e., leaders, teachers, students, parents) maintain different levels of power, but "all parties in school role relations remain vulnerable to each other" (p. 27). For instance, while leaders have more power than teachers (i.e., have an asymmetrical relationship), leaders may feel vulnerable to teachers when they have to rely on them to carry out leaders' objectives (e.g., implement new curriculum, monitor student assessment data). Similarly, teachers and students have an asymmetrical relationship, but teachers may still experience vulnerability when they rely on

students for things such as good behavior in class or homework completion. Overall, leaders wield the most power in schools, followed by teachers, and then students and parents. But again, all role groups experience some level of vulnerability with one another (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Trust between teachers, however, is a unique example of symmetry among role groups in schools; they share similar amounts of power and similar vulnerabilities (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). This sense of parallel power and vulnerability can manifest in teachers' *generalized reciprocity*, an expectation that colleagues will help each other complete tasks (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Generalized reciprocity happens daily among teachers in ways large and small. For instance, a teacher who needs to run to the restroom might ask a colleague to watch their class while they are gone; this same teacher might reciprocate by making copies when a colleague is running short on time. A teacher might ask a colleague to create lesson plans for them if they were sick and needed a substitute; in turn, that teacher might reciprocate with willingness to attend a meeting for a colleague who has a conflict. Bryk and Schneider (2002) asserted that these daily exchanges of interdependencies were what contributed to teachers' sense of symmetry with one another. Teachers saw themselves in the same role as their colleagues so they knew that when they extended themselves for a colleague it would likely be reciprocated. In this way, teachers had the potential to lessen each other's vulnerabilities: generalized reciprocity functioned because teachers understood each other's needs and could offer help when colleagues were vulnerable.

In the current study, symmetry and generalized reciprocity were apparent between both general and special educators in the high opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant. For instance, several general educators commented that their counterparts were particularly helpful when they

had problems with students because they discussed problems and faced them together. One general educator used a metaphor of a tree to describe his relationship with his counterpart: one was the leaves and the other the roots, but both were equally important to help the tree (i.e., effective instruction) live. Many teachers in the high opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant expressed their symmetry with counterparts in terms of the instructional goals they were able accomplish. One teacher's comment that "two people put their heads together and things start happening" captured a sentiment shared by many participants in this quadrant. Another called her co-teaching instructional momentum "moving and grooving," and several others shared the experience that collaborators helped keep instruction moving forward. Like the "dream come true" participant, some special educators in the high opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant expressed appreciation for symmetry with their counterparts in terms of their ability to contribute to instruction. One participant felt that when he experienced symmetry with his general education colleagues, he felt comfortable suggesting ideas for instruction and knew he was delivering better services to students because of it. For these participants, part of their symmetry was the shared distribution of instructional tasks, arguably a form of generalized reciprocity. In sum, these participants enjoyed symmetry with their counterparts that manifested in shared decision making and outcomes both of which they perceived to benefit student instruction.

Some general educators shared perceptions of asymmetry among special and general educators. For example, one participant remembered how painful it was to have to confront her principal about her co-teacher's grading errors on students' papers. Three general educators characterized their special education counterparts as computers because they only functioned as marginally reliable sources of information. Another general educator lamented that his counterpart helped students cheat, which he perceived diminished his instructional integrity.

These examples of asymmetry also depicted relationships in which generalized reciprocity was likely absent; there was no give and take between teachers who did not see their counterparts as equals. Overall, perceptions that suggested an imbalance of power between general and special educators placed special educators in the subordinate role.

Perceptions of special educators' subordinate role were shared by special educators. Even when special educators perceived that general educators were negligent, they still perceived general educators to hold more power. When one special educator characterized her general education counterpart's instruction as a "shit storm" from which she had to protect students, her solution was to reteach content during students' resource room period, not attempt to change the general educator's instruction. Several special educators shared that general educators dismissed their contributions to instruction, either presenting them with already completed lesson plans, rejecting special educators' intervention advice, or dominating meetings and marginalizing the voices of special educators. Sometimes asymmetry was expressed in terms of special educators' perceptions that they–and their students–were not welcome in general educators' classrooms. One special educator shared that she felt her counterpart thought she was "hindering" success in the classroom instead of helping it. Another special educator shared that her counterpart yelled at her in front of students, suggesting an imbalance of power. Several special educators spoke about their experiences being relegated to the role of classroom assistant (e.g., passing out papers, monitoring student behavior), making asymmetry explicit. One general education participant understood asymmetry existed between counterparts because she noted that it can be tough for special educators to know whether the "teacher of that classroom sees them on the same level as them." This comment was interesting for two reasons. First, it acknowledged that perceptions of asymmetry were shared among general and special educators; asymmetry was not just a case of

hurt feelings among special educators. Second, the comment of the general educator suggested that the general educator in the inclusive classroom was the one to make judgements of symmetry or asymmetry between counterparts. It painted a scenario in which general educators held power in the inclusive classroom, so even if they extended symmetry to their special education counterpart, general educators were still the ones with the power to do so. In other words, the relationship between general and special education was inescapably asymmetrical. In sum, these special education participants perceived asymmetry with their counterparts that challenged their identity within their role group. When special educators held less power, they stopped functioning as teachers and became, at best, assistants.

Asymmetry was also indicated on teachers' kinship maps. While all of the special educator participants in the study depicted general educators on their kinship maps, only five of the 13 core subject general educators' maps depicted special educator kinships. These patterns of unreciprocated kinship offered additional evidence of the asymmetry between special educators and core subject general educators. Though special educators saw themselves as kin to core subject teachers, most core subject teachers did not perceive that kinship. Next, none of the general educators who taught elective subjects depicted special educators on their maps. This suggested another area of asymmetry among teachers in this study. While special educators perceived themselves to have less power than general educators, teachers of elective area subjects perceived themselves to have less power than core subject teachers because they did not merit the attention of special educators. Several teachers of elective subjects expressed that they felt their needs were not a priority for special educators because their classes weren't tested or needed for graduation; one commented that when students on IEPs were in an elective class, it basically functioned as a planning period for special educators.

One thread that ran through participants' experiences of symmetry and asymmetry was the vulnerability of both parties. For instance, teachers in asymmetrical relationships expressed that interactions with their counterparts exacerbated their vulnerabilities. Special educators' roles were diminished until they no longer felt they could be called teachers; general educators felt the integrity of their instruction was threatened by asymmetry with their counterparts. In contrast, co-teachers who had positive relationships with their counterparts shared their joint approach to student problems. One general educator shared that when she was not able to "get anywhere" with a struggling student, it was a relief to turn to her co-teacher for help. Conversely, special educators who may have felt vulnerable teaching unfamiliar content had general educator collaborators who were willing to teach them content so they could function as symmetrical instructors in class. So, when these participants faced stressful issues (e.g., challenging content, classroom management problems, parent complaints) in which teachers might be experiencing vulnerability, their collaborator was a source of support. In other words, the symmetry between collaborators lessened their vulnerability because they shared troubleshooting and problem solving. In these cases, symmetry–evidenced by generalized reciprocity–reduced vulnerability: teachers who perceived symmetry also perceived reduced vulnerabilities. And reduction of vulnerability is a hallmark of trusting relationships (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Therefore, symmetry may have supported trust building among participants in the high opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant.

Overall, while several general and special educators in this study experienced positive relationships, many did not. But themes with positive and negative relationships remained fairly consistent. Participants who did not experience positive relationships (i.e., either low opportunity or low enthusiasm) felt their counterparts did not understand their roles and responsibilities

within school. The lack of benevolence they experienced was marked by their counterparts' inability to perspective take and extend even the most basic goodwill. These relationships were also characterized by their asymmetry, in which special educators were almost always perceived to be in a subordinate role. As a result, teachers in asymmetrical relationships did not benefit from generalized reciprocity and may have felt vulnerable because they perceived their integrity as educators was threatened by their counterpart.

In contrast, participants in the high opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant perceived that their counterpart was able to effectively perspective take and demonstrate benevolence. This perspective taking may have been akin to Warren's (2018) IO perspective taking, the ability to see a person's situation as that person would. For these participants, counterparts were able to demonstrate repeated goodwill, a benevolence that likely paved the way for their trusting relationship. Collaborators from this quadrant shared experiences that suggested their symmetry aligned with Bryk and Schneider's (2002) expectations of generalized reciprocity between teachers, which was unique among special and general educators in this study. Further, participants in the high opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant shared perceptions that suggested symmetry reduced vulnerabilities between both general and special educators. In this way, participants in the high opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant may have experienced the reciprocal nature of trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2000; Hoy & Tarter, 2004; Louis, 2007).

Role of Leadership in Collegial Trust Building

My second and third research questions addressed contributions to collegial trust from leaders in schools. Trustworthy behavior among teachers may be especially important for leaders engaged in school improvement efforts (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) because trust promotes communication and information sharing among teachers (Moolenar, 2012). Trust among teachers

primes schools to make changes that will, in turn, create conditions to support increased student achievement (Cosner, 2009; Goddard, Salloum, & Berebitsky, 2009; Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997, 2000). And, due to state and federal mandates (e.g., Gap Closing, Ohio Principal Standards, ESSA), collaboration between general and special educators required for interventions to struggling students may be a top priority for leaders. However, the same accountability pressures that may make collegial trust a priority for leaders also make collegial trust less likely to develop (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Ramirez, 2011), which may create a trust paradox. Further, because leaders' behaviors cannot singlehandedly create trust among teachers (e.g., Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss & Hoy, 1994; Tarter, Bliss & Hoy, 1989; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997; Smith & Flores, 2015), leaders may need to focus on changes to school conditions (e.g., Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999; Hoy & Sweetland 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2011) to overcome a trust paradox. Integrative leadership may be one way leaders can promote a person-centered leadership agenda (Huxham & Vangen, 2000) to support development of trust during school improvement.

Trust Paradox and Collegial Trust

To discuss the role of leaders in the development of collegial trust, I will draw from teacher and leader participant perceptions (i.e., research questions two and three) because overlaps and discrepancies between these two sets of data may offer insights for a discussion on leadership. Teachers and leaders in this study both supported the notion that a trust paradox existed. At a very fundamental level, in this district, accountability measures affected collaboration because the district's repeatedly poor performance on state report card indicators mandated teacher collaboration (e.g., OIP). On the surface, a shift to collaboration sounds antithetical to the trust paradox: accountability measures supported increased collaboration. For

example, the middle school, already teaming-intensive, readily embraced state-mandated TBTs. Ian and Jacob supported collaboration by requiring team agendas be submitted to leaders, assigning teacher mentors to teams that struggled, and they attended team meetings weekly. But at other schools, TBTs looked more like contrived collaboration (Datnow, 2011) than the more meaningful, teacher-driven critical colleagueship collaboration (Glazier et al., 2016; See Chapter II). For instance, when Ashley joined Lafayette Elementary, she had to make attendance expectations for TBTs explicit and help teams learn to make goals and agendas for the first time. At the high school, Bob arranged the master schedule to accommodate TBT time, but a participant from the high school noted, “So, we have a lot of things on paper. I don’t personally believe that we have a lot that actually is helping us to work together.” Another participant remarked about the discrepancy between leaders’ understanding of teaming and their ability to make it meaningful. Comments like these suggested that some examples of collaboration within the district were closer to contrived collaboration than critical colleagueship.

Even when teams attempted to move away from contrived collaboration, the trust paradox may have worked against their efforts for genuine collaboration. For example, Jacob at the middle school suggested that while collaboration is usually strong among their interdisciplinary teams, when the school received poor marks for Gap Closing, staff members blamed special educators. Jacob perceived that accountability measures diminished collaboration because failure to make student gains expected by the state engendered finger pointing among the staff. A special educator from the middle school expressed her perceptions of blame from general educators. She shared that collaboration with general educators was difficult because general educators “don't want the score that could be represented from [students with disabilities].” This participant perceived that accountability pressures made teachers see

struggling students as threats to their state-mandated, value-added scores, and as a result, compromised collaboration between general and special educators.

In another example of the trust paradox, Ashley felt that OTES was responsible for the finger pointing and defensive posture of some of her teachers. Because OTES linked student achievement data to teachers' evaluations, it introduced a comparative culture in which teachers benchmarked against one another. From Ashley's perspective OTES fed into teachers' "human nature" to want to be better than their colleagues. An elementary participant agreed that OTES had changed the relationships of teachers, saying, "it's going to ultimately come down on me too when that kid doesn't make the growth that he should make this year" as she explained how an incompetent special education counterpart could prevent her from achieving job performance goals. Another general educator directly linked accountability to the state's value-added requirements for student achievement in core subjects noting, "both of your names are on the paper" as part of her explanation why competence from her special education counterpart was so essential. Because OTES and Gap Closing disaggregated student achievement data by teacher or student subgroups, they created adversarial tensions among the staff. These tensions in turn, diminished some participants' willingness to see colleagues as collaborators. At best colleagues were competitors, at worst they were liabilities.

In addition to Gap Closing and OTES pressures, teachers of highly tested grades also felt intense pressure. Josh noted that accountability demands diminished collaboration at Oak Elementary. Josh spoke to the grueling schedule teachers in tested subjects maintained; Ellen agreed that many elementary teachers were not able to begin instruction until October because of testing demands. For instance, Josh described his third-grade team as "tight," but noted pressures of state testing at third grade meant teachers cycled out of that grade frequently. The team could

not maintain consistent membership over time; revolving membership may not have been supportive of meaningful collaborative relationships. Diane from Ferndale also suggested that testing pressure was a main deterrent to effective collaboration at her school because it took away the joy in teaching. One elementary participant described a climate of personal agendas when she shared that at her school "everybody is out for their own good," which suggested that teachers' personal agendas took priority over collaborative work. Ellen, the special education coordinator for the elementary schools, agreed with the perception that accountability has lessened collaboration over time. She perceived that a combination of OIPs, SLOs, and OTES has made the district feel different than it did a decade ago. In the past, she felt that teachers were less stressed and had more time to talk with one another.

In sum, teachers and leaders shared perceptions that suggested the trust paradox existed in their district. For many participants, accountability pressure felt like they were trapped in systems that prioritized scores over meaningful growth and, as a result, created a comparative culture among teachers. Participants perceived that teacher evaluations pitted colleagues against each other. Others saw that Gap Closing scores created a bias against low-performing students and the teachers assigned to support them. And several participants commented on the way that accountability pressure lessened teachers' ability to connect with one another. Accountability pressures in many forms threatened collegial collaboration, which in turn, likely made it more difficult to accomplish the shared work required during school improvement.

Leader Actions Supportive of Collaboration

When participants discussed leaders' actions with me, they shared how they felt collaboration was supported by some leader actions more than others. These leader actions were both proximal (i.e., with teachers or in front of teachers) and distal (i.e., out of the view of

teachers). Some leaders' comments aligned with teacher participants' perceptions, while other leaders' comments highlighted a disconnect between what teachers valued and what leaders prioritized.

Proximal Leader Actions. For example, some teachers and leaders both addressed the ways leaders understood and responded to the needs of teachers, actions coded in results as proximal-professional. Teachers described these proximal-professional actions primarily in terms of how they connected to classroom instruction. Participants appreciated leaders who were able to stand alongside their teachers to figure out what would "work" for students. An Oak Elementary teacher described the way her principal's instructional leadership meant he was "in the trenches" with her. This participant's war imagery was particularly fitting for Oak, whose repeatedly low report card grades had placed the school on OIP and designated it as Ed Choice. Arguably, the participant perceived instruction for Oak students as an uphill battle (e.g., 29% of third graders at kindergarten level; Gap Closing grade F). But she was thrilled that her leader was fighting right beside her. At the middle school, the report card profile was not as dire as at Oak elementary, but multiple teachers at that school praised their leader's ability to know staff strengths well enough to match teachers with internal mentors to build instructional capacity. Leaders from these schools expressed their perceptions that personal attention to teachers' needs was their priority, confirming participants' perceptions of their leadership. Ian from the middle school commented about his teachers, "If I'm taking care of them, they're going to take care of the kids." Josh at Oak shared, "I also spend most of my time I possibly can, walking in their rooms, doing a lot of walkthroughs down the halls, being in the lunchroom…. The teachers know that I have their backs." The congruence between teachers' perceptions of these leaders and the

priorities leaders expressed suggested that some proximal-professional leader actions were supportive of collaboration.

From a trust perspective, proximal-professional leader actions may support collaboration because these actions may have been a form of leaders' perspective taking (Warren, 2018) with teachers. Among collegial relationships in this study, perspective taking promoted understanding and primed collaborators for demonstrations of benevolence and further trust building between counterparts. But the effect of perspective taking from leaders on collegial relationships was less clear. Teachers who praised the proximal-professional actions of their principals were from the high opportunity/high enthusiasm group. It could be that proximal-professional actions in these buildings reduced vulnerabilities among teachers and in doing so, served as a foundation for collaboration. One high opportunity/high enthusiasm participant explained that her principal was "going to have our backs and we're going to be able to trust him to help with a situation when it gets to a level that we can't handle." Other participants appreciated Ian's ability to match them with collegial mentors (e.g., observe other teachers in the building) to address their instructional challenges. When Josh had his teachers' "backs" he was insulating them from the potential blame that can occur during instructional risk taking and promoting trust (DiPaola & Guy, 2009). Similarly, Ian's support of teachers' professional growth may have served to promote trust among staff because it promoted instructional sharing and openness (Tarter, Bliss & Hoy, 1989; Ford, 2015). Furthermore, Tschannen-Moran (2004) asserted that leaders who promoted care and cooperation in their schools were more likely to foster trust among teachers; in fact, she specifically cited the practice of teachers observing one another as a way to promote collegial trust. For leaders at Oak and the middle school, their care may have manifested in taking the perspective of their teachers to protect their interests. These leaders were "in the trenches" with

teachers, knowing instruction and arranging internal mentors to promote teachers' professional growth, which may have acted as a safety net for teachers. To some extent, leaders' perspective taking may have offered protections to teachers when they were feeling vulnerable; one participant even described her leaders as "safe space." And when teachers felt safe, they may have been willing to risk interdependence with their counterparts to build collegial trust. Therefore, proximal-professional actions may engender a safe leader/teacher relationship that supports safe teacher/teacher relationships.

Less effective supports for collaboration may have come from proximal-social actions. Some school leaders cited staff gatherings as a way to promote collaboration. Josh described ice cream and happy hour events at his school, Diane hosted an annual holiday party, and Bob and Reed hosted bowling outings and on-campus staff parties. At the high school, Bob even apologized for not doing more to organize social gatherings. But overall, teacher participants did not view social gatherings as a way to support collaboration. When I asked teacher participants what their leaders did to support collaboration, some participants mentioned leaders' proximal-social actions like parties. Several participants used lukewarm language (e.g., "nice," sort of," "whatever") to describe social interactions. Elementary teacher participants from Ferndale described weekly coffee chats as a "little thing" that teachers did together; they did not describe it as an effective support for collaboration. Leaders, too, acknowledged that social gatherings may have been ineffective in general for a couple of different reasons. Reed, the assistant principal, at the high school admitted events were poorly attended. Ashley, at Lafayette Elementary, commented that her teachers weren't inclined to gather informally or even take time for chats before school because they were all too focused on work. Even though leaders

mentioned social gatherings as one way to promote collaboration, overall, social gatherings were perceived by both teachers and leaders to be ineffective supports for meaningful collaboration.

As a whole, proximal actions had the power to support teacher collaboration and collegial trust building. Specifically, leader actions that reduced teachers' vulnerability and support their growth may have promoted collegial trust by engendering a safe collegial climate. Proximal actions focused on interactions that weren't grounded in instruction were perceived to be less powerful ways to support trust building and collaboration.

Distal Leader Actions. In the same way that proximal leader actions differed in effectiveness, some distal actions were perceived to be more effective than others. For instance, at Lafayette Elementary, Ashley instituted a referral flowchart to clarify expectations for the RTI process (See Appendix G). Because the flowchart outlined expectations for predictable collaboration, it had the potential to promote demonstrations of openness and reliability between general and special education teachers. First, the act of following the steps of the flowchart may have served as demonstrations of reliability between general and special education teachers. When someone is reliable, we can count on them for what we need (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). Specifically, the flowchart suggested that after general education teachers had exhausted strategies to help struggling students (e.g., differentiation), they should consult with intervention specialists (i.e., special education teachers) to find new suggestions to help the student. Special education teachers may have judged general education teachers to be reliable if they had followed the flowchart's direction to attempt in-class supports before seeking help from special educators. One participant at Lafayette noted that prior to this policy (i.e., Ashley's assignment to their school) he didn't know if his assigned special educator was "coming or going," but under

this policy he regularly relied on his assigned special educator to discuss how they would divide instruction so it was best for students.

Ashley's flowchart prompted general education teachers to seek advice, which may have primed a demonstration of openness between general and special education teachers. Openness is grounded in the sharing of relevant information as well as the giving and taking of advice (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). The flowchart directed teachers to engage in an open exchange as both teachers collaborated to find strategies to help struggling students. Two participants from Lafayette lauded the openness they had with their counterparts: one specifically used the term "openness" to describe their collaboration, while another noted she and her counterpart could say anything to each other. In short, though the presence of the Referral Flowchart does not guarantee demonstrations of trust, it was an example of distal-policy actions that could have supported teacher collaboration.

In contrast, other distal actions may have been less powerful supports for collaboration. One distal action that teachers perceived to be insufficient on its own to promote collaboration was shared teaming time. Though shared planning time is often cited as a requirement for effective collaboration (e.g., Cosner, 2009; Tschannen-Moran, 2009; Datnow, 2011; Hallam, Dulaney, Hite, & Smith, 2015), in this study, time alone did not seem sufficient to promote teachers' collaboration. One participant from a school whose leaders structured shared teaming time noted that despite this policy, he did not feel his leaders did much to support collaboration. Another participant described what he perceived as a discrepancy between what was "on paper" (i.e., policies to support teaming) as compared to what actually happens. Yet another participant commented that despite a schedule that allowed time for shared teaming, there was not a lot of follow up from leaders. For participants like these, there was a disconnect between time to

collaborate and effective collaboration. Further, several participants described barriers to effective collaboration that existed during team meetings. Examples of factors that inhibited collaboration during meeting time included: (a) accelerated pace of meetings that exacerbated conflict among staff, (b) lack of norms that promoted communication during meetings, (c) failure to ask for feedback from staff, and (d) rumor mongering among staff. Because of factors such as these, leaders who simply scheduled time for collaboration to happen may not have done enough to make sure collaboration was effective.

In this study, one school stood out as an example of leader actions that both supported shared meeting time and productive collaboration during that time. Ian and Jacob at the middle school were able to discuss leader actions that supported collaboration of their staff in a much more sophisticated way than their leader colleagues from other schools. Their relative sophistication may have been in part due to teams' integral role at their school; interdisciplinary teams are a foundational part of middle school philosophy (Clark & Clark, 2006; See Chapter I). For instance, when Ashley took over at Lafayette, she had to make TBT attendance required for teachers and taught them how to use agendas for their meetings. In contrast, Ian and Jacob described the long-standing policy that teams submitted a weekly agenda that was aligned with future instructional goals. Middle school teams also had embedded weekly time to learn about student concerns that teachers at the middle school described as a sort of sacred time they sought to protect, despite schedule conflicts that arose from IEP meetings. Moreover, Ian described how they had tweaked their teaming time over the years to be more responsive to teachers' needs. For instance, three years ago Ian and Jacob scheduled a day a week for subject area teachers to meet and align lessons, an investment Ian believed had paid off in terms of assuring parallel educational experiences for all students. They also instituted internal quality checks for teams,

asking building-level team representatives to report on the health of their teacher-based teams. When Ian and Jacob learned teams were having challenges, they assigned teachers to attend those TBTs to aid with trouble shooting and conflict resolution.

Ian and Jacob's strategies were in sharp contrast with Bob's limited ability to report on TBTs at the high school. He explained that shared planning time among department members was new, and he thought it was helping collaboration. Reed explained a bit how shared teaming time was compromised at the high school. Though the middle and high school share a subject-driven instructional schedule (i.e., periods of the day divided into subject specific classes), the high school did not have teaming time in the same way the middle school did. At the high school, teachers taught six out of seven periods of the day. Middle school core subject teachers, in contrast, taught five of seven periods; they were afforded both a teaming period *and* a planning period every day. Bob and Reed explained to me that high school teachers used to also be assigned a supervision period (e.g., study hall) in which teachers could accomplish instructional tasks such as grading, but the current district administration recently assigned supervision to hourly workers instead of teachers. As a result of that distal-district policy, the high school did not seem able to prioritize teaming and move toward the sophisticated leader support for team collaboration evidenced at the middle school.

The middle school leadership teachers and leaders describe reflects an alignment with the tenets of integrative leadership (See Chapter I). Silvia and McGuire (2010) studied the way leadership behavior integrated parts of an organization into a productive whole and found that person-centered leadership behaviors defined integrative leadership. Integrative leadership included person-centered actions such as protecting workers' welfare and brainstorming with workers (Silvia & McGuire, 2010). The teachers who worked under Ian and Jacob perceived

them to be protecting their welfare (e.g., helping with instructional challenges, supporting their growth as teachers) and Ian and Jacob most expressed that those person-centered behaviors were their priorities as leaders.

Overall, both proximal and distal leader actions seemed to have the power to support collegial collaboration. Perceptions of teachers and leaders in this study aligned around the usefulness of proximal-professional actions that served to inoculate teachers against the vulnerabilities that accompany instructional challenges. Distal policies that supported teacher collaboration (e.g., procedural expectations for collaboration, scheduled time) also seemed to resonate with leaders and teachers. But scheduling time for teachers may not have been enough on its own to support collaboration in a meaningful way. In this study, only the middle school principals emerged as leaders who were able to discuss complexities of teacher collaboration and the ways leader actions supported it consistently.

Implications for School Leaders

In this study, teacher experiences and leader actions formed a complex picture of collegial trust between general and special educators. But teachers' perceptions of their interactions with their counterparts appeared to offer some insights to how and why some relationships flourished while others struggled. That is, contrasts in this study between the positive experiences of collaborators in the high opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant and participants whose experiences were negative both informed understanding of collegial trust. Also, both teachers' and leaders' perceptions of leader actions offered some additional insights into leadership that supports collaboration. Taken together, these collective insights may suggest implications for leaders who want to build trust to support effective collegial collaboration.

First, leaders who engage in school improvement may benefit from awareness of the trust paradox. Supporting collaboration in high-stakes environments may be complicated by the comparative culture engendered by accountability measures. Further, because typically low performing students present challenges for leaders who aim to show achievement gains, it may be important for leaders to focus on collaboration among teachers who support struggling students. Understanding collaboration between general and special educators and the way the trust paradox manifests among them may support school improvement efforts.

Next, leaders may want to explore how attending to perspective taking among colleagues may support trusting relationships that bolster collaboration. Specifically, because general and special educators' roles and responsibilities differ, leaders' efforts to support collaboration may benefit from work to promote perspective taking between general and special educators. Professional development for general educators to learn more about the daily work of special educators may promote general educators' ability to take the perspective of their counterparts. While many special educators are literally included in general education classrooms, general educators are not included in much of the work special educators do. Therefore, helping general educators learn about special educators' work that happens out of the view of general educators (e.g., parent meetings, IEP paperwork, one-on-one interventions) may help alleviate perceptions of asymmetry among special and general educators. Furthermore, leaders may want to attend to perspective taking between general education core subject teachers, special education teachers, and general education elective subject teachers. Elective area teachers may experience asymmetry with both their general and special education colleagues; leaders' work toward collegial trust should pay attention to the needs of teachers in elective subjects. Efforts that leaders make to support symmetry among their staff has the potential to increase generalized

reciprocity and reduce teachers' vulnerabilities. Similarly, actions to promote perspective taking and symmetry may support trust building and collaboration.

When leaders are prioritizing their efforts, they may want to consider a focus on proximal-professional actions and distal-policies that support collaboration. Proximal-professional actions require leaders to participate in instructional conversations; teachers perceiving leaders are "in the trenches" is critical. Leaders should prioritize policies that systematize collaboration (e.g., flowcharts to direct collaboration) and support norms for effective teaming (e.g., agendas). Leaders should not totally dismiss proximal-social actions; social gatherings may be meaningful ways for leaders to show appreciation for staff or celebrate with them. Leaders should not, however, expect social gatherings will provide an effective, predictable segue to collaboration among colleagues.

In total, implications for leaders are grounded in the types of person-centered actions found in the integrative leadership model. Person-centered leader actions focus on relationships and individuals' needs over tasks and organizational mission (Huxham & Vangen, 2000). In this study, Ian and Jacob's leadership of the middle school was illustrative of the types of person-centered integrative leadership that effectively unites workers. Attention to teachers' welfare, soliciting feedback, and maintaining healthy team dynamics are all person-centered leader actions demonstrated by Ian and Jacob that align with integrative leadership.

Limitations

The perceptions of teachers and leaders in this study were limited to those from one district. Within this district environment were a complex combination of community factors (e.g., student preparedness for school, levy supports) and state and local policies (e.g., OIP, curricular initiatives) that contributed to the collaboration climate in each building. While this

study serves as an example of the way general and special education relationships can be strained, other districts with less accountability pressure or more community support might see a different picture of trust between general and special educators. It is also possible that teachers were drawn to participate in this study because they had strong feelings about collaboration. Participants may have experienced poor trust from colleagues or felt that their trusting relationships were a great support for them as professionals; strong opinions about collaboration may have accounted for some of the tensions documented in the study.

Also, a limitation of the study stems from the coding for the quadrants. For instance, participants could have made one negative comment about current or past collaborations and still be coded as high opportunity/high enthusiasm. This is representative of reality: participants in the high opportunity/high enthusiasm quadrant could have had a negative comment about current or past collaborations and still have overall positive perceptions about collaboration. Future research could examine successful collaborations in greater depth to explore these nuances.

Future Research

This study indicated that the trust paradox existed, but it did not advance a solution for the trust paradox. More investigation is needed to see if the person-centered tenets of integrative leadership are helpful to alleviate the trust paradox. Crosby and Bryson (2010) noted that a need for integrative leadership often stems from crises. Indeed, integrative leadership was useful during emergency management of events like natural disasters that require cooperation between multiple agencies (Crosby & Bryson, 2010). While poor state report card results may not rank as an emergency at the same level as a hurricane, for leaders of schools facing continued state oversight (i.e. OIP) and loss of funds (i.e., Ed Choice), accountability pressures might feel like a

very real crisis. Future research on integrative leadership's utility for the trust paradox be helpful for school leaders during reform.

Also more research is needed to understand the degree to which general and special educators are able to adopt the perspective of their counterparts. Specifically, research that attends to Warren's (2018) IO perspective taking may promote understanding of a foundational piece of trust between colleagues. Further, because perspective taking is required for empathy among caring professions (Fresko et al., 2013), investigating general and special educators' perspective taking abilities may support their work with students and parents as much as it does with colleagues.

Conclusion

Leaders in Ohio operate under an educational system that demands accountability from teachers and leaders in the form of demonstrated student achievement gains (Ohio Department of Education, 2018). But accountability systems in which teachers and leaders must prove their worth engender an overall climate in education that is low trust (Dworkin & Tobe, 2015). Leaders who aim to accomplish school improvement goals may benefit from efforts to build trust among teachers (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). And efforts to support trust between general and special educators may be particularly helpful because collaboration is required for these teachers (Friend, 2008; Pugach & Peck, 2016; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2017). While leaders cannot singlehandedly create trust between teachers, leaders can create conditions that support trust building among teachers (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Leaders' attention to trust building among general and special educators may be critical for teachers in the current era of accountability. One teacher in this study used the metaphor of a tree to describe collaboration between her and her counterpart. She said the tree symbolized their

relationship, and she saw weather that affected the tree as “outside forces” they had to deal with. This teacher summed up their collaboration in a way that was applicable to many participants in this study. She shared that though their relationship tree was “pretty healthy, pretty growing” she noted that “weather” always threatened their tree. This participant neatly captured the state of accountability in Ohio and the way teachers grapple with it saying, “It's very windy in Ohio, so we're doing our best.”

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APPENDIX A. HISTORY OF COLLEGIAL TRUST IN SCHOOLS

Date	Authors	Study Purpose	Design	Participants/ Setting	Collegial Trust Results	Results Type
1985	Hoy & Kupersmith	Conceptualization of trust in schools, creation of Ominbus T Scale, and exploration of trust's relationship to authenticity	Factor analysis; Correlational	944 elementary school teachers in NJ	• All dimensions of trust were related to each other (trust in principal, colleagues, organization) • Authenticity is significantly correlated with all forms of trust	Construct
1988	Tarter & Hoy	Exploration of aspects of chool health and trust in colleagues	Correlational	75 schools in New Jersey	• Higher school health predicted higher collegial trust • Morale and principal influence were best predictors of collegial trust • Resource support is not related to collegial trust	Supports
1989	Tarter, Bliss & Hoy	Measurement of relationship between trust in principal/trust in colleagues and school climate	Correlational	72 secondary schools in New Jersey	• Openness of school climate correlated with trust in principal and trust in colleagues • Principals' supportive/directive leadership is not correlated with faculty trust in colleagues • Engaged teacher behavior is correlated with trust in colleagues • Teacher frustration is also correlated with trust in colleagues, but	Supports

					• Only engaged teacher behavior has a significant, independent effect on faculty trust in colleagues • Faculty trust in colleagues is correlated with trust in principal	
1994	Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss & Hoy	Examination of faculty trust and organizational climate	Correlational	87 middle schools in New Jersey	• Trust in colleagues is related to collegial and disengaged teacher behavior • Trust in colleagues is not related to leader behavior • Trust in colleagues is not related to commitment to students	Supports
1997	Tschannen-Moran & Hoy	Measurement of teacher and principal authenticity on development of trust	Correlational	2741 teachers from 86 middle schools form a northeastern state	• Teacher professionalism predicts collegial trust • Teacher authenticity predicts collegial trust • Principal behavior does not predict collegial trust	Supports
1999	Ebmeier & Nicklaus	Estimation of the effect of collaborative leadership on five affective variables of teachers, including collegial trust	Experimental design with random assignment of teachers to a control and treatment group	90 principals in training and 346 teachers from 72 schools in the Midwest	• Collaborative supervision increases teachers' trust, commitment, desire for collaboration, and expectations.	Supports

1999	Hoy & Tschannen-Moran	Examination of faces and referents of trust, development of measurement tool, and testing of the tool's ability to predict collaboration with parents	Factor analysis; Correlational	50 schools	• Trust is comprised of five faces (benevolence, competence, reliability, honesty, and openness) and factor analysis confirms they form a unitary construct • Faculty trust is comprised of three factors: a) faculty trust in principal, b) faculty trust in colleagues, and c) faculty trust in clients • The three factors are related to each other	Construct
2000	Sweetland & Hoy	Development of truth spinning measure; examination of truth spinning and faculty trust	Correlational	116 schools from five states	• Higher truth spinning predicts lower collegial trust	Supports
2000	Hoy & Sweetland	Examination of enabling bureaucracies on collegial trust	Correlational	116 schools from five states	• Enabling bureaucracies predict higher collegial trust	Supports
2000	Tschannen-Moran	Trust and collaboration	Correlational	898 teachers from 50 elementary schools in an urban district	• Faculty are more likely to collaborate when trust is present • Relationship between trust and collaboration is reciprocal	Benefit & Supports
2000	Tschannen-Moran & Hoy	Importance of trust, meaning of trust, dynamics of trust,	Literature Review	Theoretical and	• Facets of trust include willingness to risk, confidence, benevolence,	Construct

		and prior research on trust		empirical studies	competence, reliability, honesty, and openness	
2001	Smith, Hoy, & Sweetland	Explores if/how components of school health predict collegial trust	Correlational	98 high schools in Ohio	• Morale made a strong, independent contribution to collegial trust • Academic emphasis did not have an independent relationship with collegial trust	Benefit & Supports
2002	Bryk & Schnieder, 2002	*Trust in Schools*	Case study	Chicago Public Schools	• Trust consists of four discernments (respect, competence, personal regard for others, integrity) • Lack of integrity undermined relational trust • Uncertainty about faculty roles led to lack of trust • Shared commitment to students leads to high relational trust	Construct
2002	Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland	Trust and Organizational climate; creation of Organizational Climate Index	Instrument development, Correlational	97 high schools in Ohio	• Faculty trust in colleagues was related to organizational climate (collegial leadership, professional teacher behavior, and achievement press) • Professional teacher behavior predicts faculty trust in colleagues	Benefit & Supports
2004	Hoy & Tarter	Faculty trust and organizational justice	Correlational	75 middle schools in Ohio	• Faculty trust in colleagues was independently related to organizational justice	Benefit & Supports

					• Professional teacher behavior was significantly related to trust in colleagues	
2004	Tarter & Hoy	Explores enabling school structures and a culture of trust	Correlational	145 elementary schools in Ohio	• Collegial trust (as part of a culture of trust) predicts teacher's ratings of school effectiveness • Trust is a necessary condition for teachers' collective efficacy	Benefits
2004	Tschannen-Moran	*Trust Matters*	Case Study	3 principals in low SES/high minority elementary schools	• Principals' orientation to conflict (i.e., likely to engage; likely to avoid) inhibits trust formation • Balancing relational and task aspects of leadership lead to trust formation	Supports
2005	DiPaola & Hoy	Examination of the factors that contribute to organizational citizenship	Correlational	75 middle schools in Midwest	• Collegial trust is significantly related to cultivation of organizational citizenship behavior	Benefits
2005	Kochanek	*Building Trust for Better Schools*	Case study	Principals from 3 elementary schools	• Kinships among teachers influence relational trust • Leaders should structure low-risk then high-risk activities to build trust	Construct & Supports
2006	Forsyth, Barnes, & Adams	Examine effectiveness patterns in schools	Correlational	79 elementary, middle and high schools in Midwest	• Collegial trust was strongly correlated with collective teacher efficacy and enabling school structure	Benefits

					• Collegial trust was not significantly correlated to academic performance • Patterns of trust support or inhibit effective school structures	
2006	Hoy, Gage, & Tarter	Trust and Mindfulness	Correlational	75 middle schools	• Faculty trust in colleagues is a predictor of school mindfulness	Benefits
2007	Louis	Exploration of how trust effects teachers' willingness to implement school reforms	Qualitative	5 high schools in different districts	• Trust can help leaders' improvement visions gain traction with teachers • Trust creates a safe atmosphere for change • Teachers' solidarity created more trust and cohesion during change	Benefit & Supports
2009	Adams & Forsyth	Testing of theoretical model of the structural relationships among contextual factors, trust, social conditions, and school performance	Descriptive statistics for school level variables; correlational	79 elementary, middle and high schools in Midwest	• Effect of trust on conditions underlying effective performance is stronger than its direct effect on school performance	Benefits
2009	Cosner	Development of an understanding of leaders who build school capacity	Qualitative: interviews and examination of artifacts related to school capacity	11 Wisconsin high school principals nominated for expertise in	• Cultivation of trust is a critical resource for building of school capacity and trust building is a worthy exercise for school principals	Benefits

				developing school capacity		
2009	Daly	Exploration of accountability structures and trust	Mixed methods (correlational and focus groups)	252 teachers in 8 schools in year 2 Program Improvement under NCLB and 201 not under PI	• Integrity and risk independently predicted a lower threat-rigid response in PI schools • PI schools experience less integrity and comfort with risk • Demographic variables are not significant	Benefit & Supports
2009	DiPaola & Guy	Examination of the relationship between organizational justice and school climate and school climate and faculty trust	Correlational	36 public high schools in mid-Atlantic	• Strong correlation between faculty's perceptions of justice and faculty's trust in colleagues • No independent relationship between faculty trust and organizational justice	Supports
2009	Tschannen-Moran	Exploration of teacher professionalism as a predictor of trust	Correlational	2355 teachers in 80 middle schools in a mid-Atlantic state	• Collegial leadership predicts greater teacher professionalism • Teacher professionalism predicts collegial trust • Trust also predicts higher teacher professionalism	Benefit & Supports
2009	Van Maele & Van Houtte	Examination of School Characteristics' influence on trust	Correlational	2104 secondary school teachers in Flanders	• Forms of faculty trust are interrelated and shared at the school level • Value culture (e.g. Catholic school) predicts collegial trust	Supports

					• Low SES schools predict low collegial trust • Low SES with high immigrant student populations predict higher collegial trust	
2011	Lee, Zhang, & Yin	Exploration of faculty trust in colleagues and commitment to students	Correlational	660 teachers from 33 primary schools in Hong Kong	• Faculty trust in colleagues was a significant predictor of teachers' commitment to students • Faculty trust in colleagues was a significant predictor for teachers' collective efficacy on instructional strategies and student discipline	Benefits
2011	Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran	Longitudinal exploration of trust & appreciative inquiry (AI) intervention	Case Study, Group Design	124 teachers from struggling school district in Midwest	• Trust in colleagues improved almost a standard deviation after AI was introduced to district • These results held for over a year after AI intervention finished	Supports
2011	Van Maele & Van Houtte	Examination of trust and homogeneity of staff culture	Correlational	2104 secondary school teachers in Flanders	• Trust in colleagues is lower in public schools than private • Higher SES predicted higher trust in colleagues • Women are more likely to trust colleagues than men • Teachers' shared beliefs about the teachability of students predicts high collegial trust	Supports

2014	Gray, Mitchell, & Tarter	Exploration of collegial trusts' relationship with professional learning community (PLC) development	Correlation	3700 teachers from 67 schools in southeast US	• Teacher trust in colleagues predicted PLC development • Enabling school structures also predicted PLC development • Teacher trust in colleagues is the most important relationship in PLCs	Benefits
2014	Schwabsky	Examination of teachers' trust, optimism, and individual citizenship behaviors	Correlational	370 teachers in Israel	• Collegial trust predicts projective individual citizenship behaviors (those teachers believe their colleague will enact) • Collegial trust did not predict projective individual citizenship behaviors • Teachers' optimism was related to collegial trust	Benefit & Supports
2015	Dworkin & Tobe	Exploration of effects of school accountability mandates and their relationship with teacher morale, burnout, and trust	Correlational	Large school district in Houston	• Collegial trust had a significant effect on teacher burnout	Benefits
2015	Ford	Examination of role of trust in reform processes experienced by Success for All schools	Correlational	1170 teachers from 29 elementary schools	• Shared instructional experiences among teachers has a strong relationship with collegial trust •Teacher/leader hiring has a strong relationship with collegial trust	Benefits

2015	Hallam, Dulaney, Hite, & Smith	Examination of the evolution of trust in school learning communities under challenging conditions	Case study; grounded theory	27 teachers from intermediate school	Competency based trust (reliability, honesty, competence) developed before relational trust (benevolence, openness).	Construct
2015	Moolenaar, Karsten, Sleegers, & Daly	Examination of the influence of social networks on faculty trust	Correlational	759 teachers and principals from 49 Dutch schools	• Demographic variables (age, gender, tenure) were not related to collegial trust • Teachers' individual high out and in-degree relational activity predicts relational trust • Larger team size predicted higher collegial trust • Density of relationships predicted higher collegial trust • Centralization did not predict collegial trust • At the school level, high reciprocity predicted lower levels of collegial trust	Supports
2015	Smith & Flores	Investigates principals' influence on collegial trust	Correlational	1923 teachers from 29 middle schools in Texas	• Principal influence did not predict faculty trust in colleagues	Supports
2015	Tschannen-Moran	Exploration of correlations between types of trust among faculty	Correlational	64 elementary middle and high schools	• All five factors of trust are interrelated to each other	Benefits

				in mid-Atlantic state	• Combined regression of five trust factors explain 78% of variance in student achievement • Faculty trust in leader is related to faculty trust in colleagues	
2015	Van Maele, Van Houtte, & Forsyth	Review of trust as an issue of equity in education	Literature review	Multiple studies	• Two main research branches (Hoy & colleagues and Bryk & Scheider) focus on trust in schools • Studies either attempt to define and measure trust, explore antecedents to trust, or examine consequences of trust	Construct
2015	Zayim & Kondacki	Examination of relationship between collegial trust and readiness for change	Correlational	603 teachers from 53 schools in Turkey	• Elementary schools are more willing to collaborate for change than high schools • Collegial trust predicts readiness for change	Benefit & Supports
2016	Edward-Groves, Grootenboer, & Ronnerman	Exploration of teachers' perceptions of middle-level leaders, professional learning, and relational trust	Ethnography	Elementary school in rural NSW, Australia	• Relational trust allows middle level leaders to create spaces for collaboration and trust building which in turn supports change	Benefit & Supports
2016	Gray, Kruse, & Tarter	Exploration of correlations between collegial trust, enabling structures, and academic	Correlational	3700 teachers and 190 principals	• Collegial trust did not demonstrate a significant effect on development of PLCs • PLCs did correlate with enabling structures, collegial trust, and academic emphasis	Supports

		emphasis and their explanation of PLCs				
2016	Kutsyuruba, Walker, & Noonan	Principals' trust brokering	Phenomenology	177 Canadian principals	• Culture of trust necessary for inquiry, learning, and risk taking • Trust supports teaching and learning	Benefits
2016	Louis & Lee	Exploration of relationship between elements of school culture and teachers' capacity for learning	Correlational	3579 teachers in 9 states	• Collegial trust is predictive of organizational learning	Benefits
2017	Lawson, et al.	Trust and communication in odds-beating schools	Mixed method case study	Nine elementary schools in New York	• Cultivation of trust from school leaders is a key facet of policy implementation in schools with high student achievement and low SES	Benefits
2018	Benade	Developing understanding of the way reflective practices demonstrate collegial trust	Qualitative interviews and focus groups	30 educators from New Zealand primary and secondary schools	• Vulnerability is a prerequisite to reflective practice • Accountability systems have undermined trust in professional relationships	Benefits
2018	Romero & Mitchell	Trust as a single or multi-faced construct	Factor analysis	849 teachers in an urban school district	• Adams and Miskell reject three-facet definition of trust from students (benevolence, competence, integrity) and trust in principal •There are at least three components of trust	Construct

APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Educational Foundations, Leadership & Policy

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Hello, my name is Dr. Kristina LaVenia, and I am an assistant professor at Bowling Green State University. My colleague, Dr. Christy Galletta Horner, and I are conducting a study about how teachers and administrators conceptualize the "emotional labor" of teaching. In other words, in the workplace, teachers have to make decisions about how to deal with their feelings and whether to show what they are feeling to others. The purpose of our study is to learn more about emotional display rules and patterns of emotional acting within schools, identifying the processes through which they are communicated, and comparing these characteristics and processes across schools. We hope to use this information to support teachers and administrators for future decision making. Your participation in this study will involve answering an online questionnaire. We will also invite some participants to participate in face-to-face interviews or focus groups. The risks of participation in this study are not greater than what you encounter in everyday life.

Although there are no direct benefits of participation, this could be a chance to reflect on how you make decisions about whether to show or hide your feelings in the classroom.

What does the study involve?

If you agree to participate in this study, we will ask you to participate in face-to-face interviews.

To thank you, we will give each participant $40 worth of office supplies.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time, you wish to withdraw from the study, you are free to do so without penalty. Your decision to participate will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University, other teachers and administrators, or the investigators.

Your privacy is very important to us. You should clear your internet browser and page history after completing the online questionnaire. Some employers may use tracking software; you may want to complete the survey on a personal device to ensure privacy. The information you share with us will be kept strictly confidential. Only members of the research team will have access to these data. We may use direct quotes in the research report(s), but no identifying information will be used. Information (your answers to the questions) will be stored on hard drives and online storage with password protection.

The risk of participation is no greater than that experienced in daily life. You can contact the Institutional Review Board, Bowling Green State University, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant.

550 Education
Bowling Green, OH 43403-0250

Phone: 419-372- 7377
Fax: 419-372-8448

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EFFECTIVE 03/30/2020
EXPIRES 10/11/2020

The Chair,
Institutional Review Board,
Bowling Green State University,
(419) 372-7716
Email: (orc@bgsu.edu)

In case of you have any questions about this study or any concerns during the course of the study, please feel free to contact us:

Dr. Kristina LaVenia
(419) 372-7276
Email: klaveni@bgsu.edu

Dr. Christy Galletta Horner
(419) 372-0247
Email: cgallet@bgsu.edu

Declaration of Consent

I have been informed the purpose, procedures and risks involved in this study. I am aware that the information I give will be kept confidential and will be used only for purposes of this study. I have also been informed that my identity will not be revealed. I have been informed that my participation in the study is voluntary and I am free to withdraw from the study at any point. By electronically signing this document by clicking "yes," I agree, I am giving consent to participate in the study.

☐ YES, I give my consent to participate in this study

☐ No, I do not give my consent to participate in this study

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APPENDIX C. INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Leader Interview Protocol

1. First, could you please tell me a little about your career? How long have you been in this leadership role?
2. How many teachers do you have total? How many special education teachers? What is your service delivery model (e.g., pull out, co-teaching)?
3. How would you describe the climate of your school (for coordinators, teachers with whom you work)?
4. Are there initiatives or reform efforts in which your school is actively engaged (e.g., roll out of new curricula, adoption of RTI, PBIS)?
5. What kinds of things do you feel your school does well? What are some points of pride for you?

We're engaged in this partnership so we can look at teachers' emotional and relational experiences. Next, I'd like to talk with you about stressors and supports.

6. What kinds of pressures or stresses do you think weigh on your teachers? How do you know about how your teachers are feeling?
7. What kinds of pressures or stresses weigh on you as a leader?
8. The latest state report cards show the high school with a D overall and an F in Gap Closing. How did you process that information with your teachers?

9. Students with disabilities was an area of concern on the report card. How well do you feel your general and special education teachers collaborate?

10. We know that teachers in schools are more likely to collaborate with those they feel kinship. What kinds of kinship groups (e.g., grade level teams, veteran teachers, coaches) do you think exist at your school?

11. How would you characterize the trust that exists between your teachers? How do you know when teachers don't trust each other?

12. What kinds of supports are you able to offer teachers who want to collaborate? In an ideal world with unlimited resources and time, what kinds of collaboration supports do you WISH you could offer?

13. When you think about hiring new graduates to teach in BGCS, what kinds of emotional and relational competencies do you hope they have to contribute to a positive school climate?

Teacher Interview Protocol

1. First, could you please tell me a little about your teaching career? What do you teach and/or what grade(s)? How long have you been teaching?

2. How do you know when a colleague is trustworthy? Can you share a story of a time when you had to depend on a trustworthy colleague to do something you couldn't do on your own?

   - If you are confiding in a trusted colleague, do you try to maintain emotional display rules? Why or why not?

3. How do you know when a colleague is NOT trustworthy? Can you share a story of a time when you had to work with an untrustworthy colleague? How did it turn out?

4. In schools, teachers are more likely to trust teachers with whom they feel kinship (e.g., shared interests, teaching style, subject/grade level). What kinships exist in your building? Draw a graphic organizer to represent the social networks in your building. Be sure to put yourself on the map.

5. What do your building leaders do to promote trust and collaboration between colleagues?

6. **(For general education teachers)** How do you compare the responsibilities and resources (i.e., daily tasks) of special and general education teachers?

- If you were to try to capture the nature of the relationship you have with special education teachers as an image or metaphor, how might you describe it? For example, which of these images (show photos) captures the relationship? Why?

OR

6. **(For special education teachers)** How do you compare the responsibilities and resources (i.e., daily tasks) of special and general education teachers?

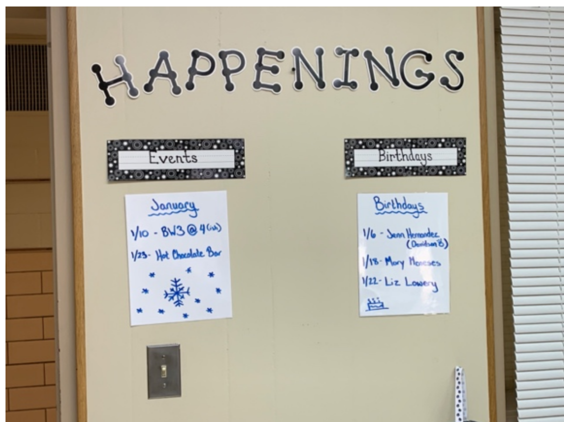
- If you were to try to capture the nature of the relationship you have with general education teachers as an image or metaphor, how might you describe it? For example, which of these images (show photos) captures the relationship? Why?

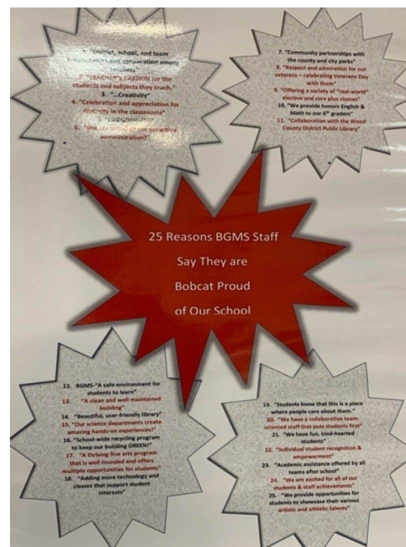
7. Do you think trust is needed between special and general education teachers, and if so, why?

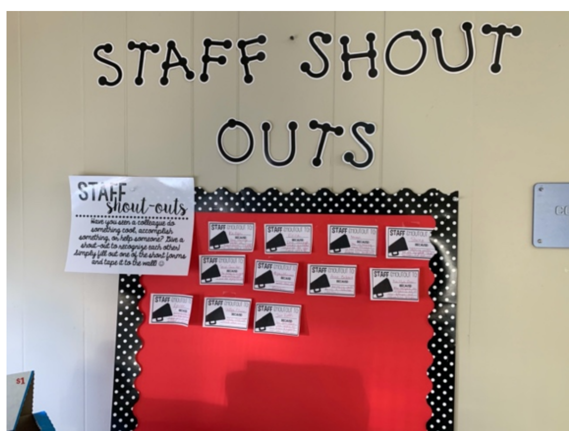
8. Are there any unique barriers to trust between special and general education teachers and if so, what are they?

9. Is there anything else you'd like to add that I didn't ask about?

APPENDIX D. ARTIFACTS OF BENEVOLENCE







APPENDIX E. RELIABLE TEAM PLANNING

Pioneer Collaboration

Subject	Monday 12/9	Tuesday 12/10	Wednesday 12/11	Thursday 12/12	Friday 12/13 Ellie out
English	Newsela - Previewing & Fix Up Strategies Review	Newsela - Get the Gist Review	RACE Strategy Review with *Refugee*	Q2 Common Check - Citing Textual Evidence	Library
Math	Coordinate Grid -Plotting Shapes	Coordinate Grid -Line Segments -Roll the Dice Game	Coordinate Grid -Reflections	Coordinate Grid Practice	Coordinate Grid Assessment
Science	Finish Density Notes? Begin Density Gizmo	Density Gizmo	Finish Density Gizmo Exit Ticket	Density: Sink or Swim	Density: Sink or Swim
Social Studies	Finish Chapter 5 (Sections 5.7, 5.8, 5.9)	Characteristics of a Civilization activity	Begin Chapter 6 (Akkadian Empire)	Continue Chapter 6 (Babylonian Empire)	“The Last Quest of Gilgamesh” story

APPENDIX F. COMPETENT CO-CREATED LESSON PLAN

6th Grade Co-Taught English, Period 4
Date: 1/23/2020

Materials to Prep:

- *Number the Stars* books (class set)
- Theme Reboot Flipgrid:
  - Modeling video & PPT
  - Planning Document
  - Class Period Flipgrid Boards
- Exit Ticket: Theme Check #2 (Post-Assessment)

Pre-Assessment data:

- 56% of students accurately identified what a theme is
- 87% of students accurately identified at least one theme from the current novel

Post-Assessments:

- Exit ticket
- Planning document
- Flipgrid video with partner
- Flipgrid response

Focus on these points!

- Theme mini-lesson
- Flipgrid modeling

RL.6.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgements.

SL.6.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Learning Objectives for the day:

- Students will accurately define theme as it is used in a novel.
- Students will accurately identify one (1) theme from *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry
- Students will accurately describe the one (1) theme on the planning document, using details from the text.
- Students will accurately create a Flipgrid video of at least 30 seconds, but no more than 1 minute and 30 seconds, portraying the chosen theme.
- Students will video respond to at least one other Flipgrid video of a peer or group of peers.
  - In the response video, students will comment on the theme, stating if they agree or disagree and provide at least one reason to support their opinion.
- Students will collaborate together in small groups of 2-3 students, discussing the theme from the novel and their opinions.

Learning Outcomes for the day:

- Students will know the definition of theme as it is used in a novel.
- Students will know at least one theme from the novel, *Number the Stars.*
- Students will have a comprehensive understanding of the theme and how it is

portrayed in the novel, with a knowledge of specific details from the text.
- Students will have the ability to create a visual and kinesthetic representation of the theme from the novel.
- Students will strengthen the ability to inquire and comment on other peers' interpretations of different themes chosen.
- Students will learn how to collaborate and communicate about theme in their small group.

Student Accommodations:
- Teacher check-ins with groups of students and with students on a 504 plan
- Visual and verbal directions
- Modeling with visuals - Flipgrid videos of myself doing 2 examples on Flipgrid
- Formative checks throughout the lesson to check for understanding (1-5 scale for understanding, thumbs up/down for readiness to move forward in the lesson)

Time: 47 Minutes	**Activity**	**Notes**
Warm Up PPT on the board	• Read the agenda • Paper crew pass out *Number the Stars* books • Pick up a paper from the front, put your name on it, but do not start it yet • Pick up ONE sticky note from the front, write down ONE theme from *Number the Stars* and put your sticky note on the Parking Lot board in the back of the room - write your first name on it	
3	Check page #s from required 20 minutes of reading from previous day/night (Wednesday)	
5	Explain the objectives of the day. Discuss what a theme is in a book. Call on students, write down student definitions on Smartboard, students write down definition on planning document. Call on students and write down common themes from novels	Use MSTV strategies--turn and talk, agree/disagree, add on, etc.
5	Show the "Theme Reboot" videos as a model.	
5	Tell students their agenda for the day - Planning document (10 minutes) - Flipgrid video recording (10 minutes) - Peer responses (10 minutes) Put students in groups of 2, let students move if needed	
10	Students collaboratively complete the planning document, detailing the one (1) theme they decide on from the book. Each student must write out their own	Check in with each group to ensure themes are

APPENDIX G. INTERVENTION REFERRAL FLOWCHART