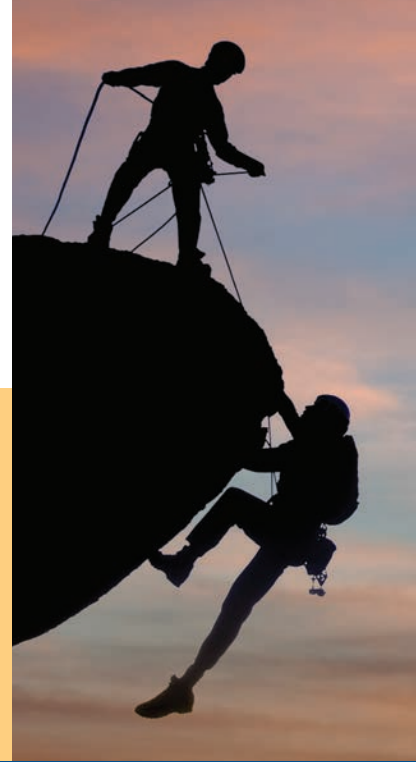


# AT A GLANCE

# TRUST IS CENTRAL TO LEARNING CULTURES



## What is trust?

One critical element to supporting collaborative learning in schools and school systems is the presence of trust. "Trust is an individual's or group's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open," according to Megan Tschannen-Moran, who reviewed literature from several fields to find a common definition of trust.

Source: von Frank, V. (2010, Fall). Trust matters — for educators, parents, and students. *Tools for Learning Schools*, 14(1), 1-3.

## Five elements of trust

### Benevolence

Confidence that one's well-being or something one cares about will be protected by the trusted party.

### Honesty

Acceptance of responsibility for one's actions.

### Openness

The extent to which relevant information is shared.

### Reliability

Consistency of behavior; knowing what to expect from others.

### Competency

Ability to perform as expected according to standards appropriate to tasks.

Source: Hoy, W.K. & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2003). The conceptualization and measurement of faculty trust in schools. In W. Hoy & C. Miskel (Eds.), *Studies in leading and organizing schools* (pp. 181-208). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

## Higher levels of trust = higher student achievement

Anthony Bryk and Barbara Schneider cemented educators' understanding of the importance of trust with their longitudinal study of 400 elementary schools in Chicago. They looked at trust between teachers and principals, parents, and school leaders. Thanks to their research, we know that schools with low trust scores had a one-in-seven chance of academic improvement. Yet half of the schools

that scored high in relational trust improved academically. Most notably, "schools with chronically weak trust reports throughout the period of the study had virtually no chance of improving in either reading or mathematics."

Source: Bryk, A.S. & Schneider, B. (2003, March). Trust in schools: A core resource for school reform. *Educational Leadership*, 60(6), 40-45.

## How do leaders nurture trust?

*Becoming a Learning System* (Learning Forward, 2014) outlines three concepts leaders use to build trust in an organization:

Source: Hirsh, S., Psenick, K., & Brown, F. (2014). *Becoming a learning system*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

### Leaders demonstrate coherency.

Their words, actions, body language, and emotions all say the same thing to other educators.

### Leaders recognize how their actions affect themselves and others.

They exhibit honesty and do what they say they will do. They are authentic in their words to others.

### Leaders are self-aware and nurture their own positive attributes.

They presume that others hold positive intentions and they have the best intentions for others.