Teacher-School Board Member Trust Relationships and Their Perceived Influence on School Effectiveness

Pamela A. Lenz

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TEACHER-SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER TRUST RELATIONSHIPS AND THEIR
PERCEIVED INFLUENCE ON SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

by

Pamela A. Lenz

Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education

Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for Educational Leaders
School of Education
Duquesne University
May, 2006
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Pamela A. Lenz
2006
Abstract

Despite the attention devoted to school reform in the past century, mandated initiatives enacted by policymakers have wrought few long lasting improvements in education. Throughout the last six decades of reform, federal and state lawmakers have exercised unparalleled sway on student learning, with political agendas taking precedence over breakthroughs in educational pedagogy. Taking a different approach, recent research suggests that systemic reform is more likely to occur at the local level, with schools whose culture fosters positive trust relationships being more effective than their lower trust counterparts. This collective instrumental case study expands upon extant research by examining the perceived influence of teacher-school board member trust relationships on school effectiveness in rural and suburban Erie County, Pennsylvania elementary schools that house Grade 5. Data regarding perceptions of school effectiveness, education related practices designed to improve school effectiveness, and perceptions of teacher-school board member relationships were obtained from an opinion inventory distributed to school board members and elementary teachers and interpreted in light of a National Association of School Boards derived definition of effectiveness, Hoy and Miskel’s school structure typology, and Hoy and Tschannen-Moran’s definition of faculty trust. Interviews concerning the same topics were then conducted with school board members and teachers from one higher and one lower performing school as defined by two-year results on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment and interpreted according to the same frameworks. The analysis of documents and media provided a comprehensive portrait of each school and also served to triangulate data. The predicted effectiveness of
the resulting structures was then compared to the schools’ actual effectiveness as evidenced by standardized achievement test scores and efficacy indicators defined by the National School Boards Association. Analysis pointed to the school having positive teacher-school board member trust relationships as being more effective than the school in which such relationships were lacking. Results also suggested the presence of an indirect model of leadership in which the superintendent’s leadership practices affected the relationship between teachers and school board members by controlling the flow of communication between the two groups.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Circumstances Leading to the Problem

Remarkable advances in many fields of endeavor distinguish the last two decades of the twentieth century. Contact with those around the world occurs in seconds, infants are having surgery in utero, and humans may be identified from a sample of DNA no larger than the period at the end of a sentence. Because of improved relationships, those born in this era have not lived in fear of air raid sirens or the Cold War mentality, but have enjoyed the benefits of numerous scientific and political breakthroughs. Despite developments that include active learning, brain research, and differentiated instruction, similar benefits have not been realized in education. Even given that reforms have been legislated regarding items such as testing, teacher qualifications, and minimum achievement levels, the realization has slowly dawned that such reforms have wrought few improvements in schooling (Danzberger, 1992).

Such a phenomenon is not unique to the 21st century. Federal and state lawmakers have exercised unparalleled sway on student learning throughout the last several decades of education reform, with political agendas taking precedence over breakthroughs in educational pedagogy. Although many states have reported advances in student achievement during the most recent wave of mandated reform (Pennsylvania Department of Education [PA Dept. of Ed.], n.d.a), funding problems, ongoing alterations to the legislation’s implementation, and slower progress than anticipated have called its efficacy
into question. However, as it seems unlikely that federal and state legislators’ actions regarding educational reform will change in the near future, it is the responsibility of those at the local level, both those who enact and implement policy, to work within the existing framework to effect positive change. As such, school board members and teachers must work together as instruments of increased school effectiveness. A brief journey through the history of educational reform reinforces this need; a journey characterized by the words of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

> Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world . . . the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people . . . If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war.

These words epitomize one of America’s most important public issues, one that has not abated but gained in momentum since its rise to the forefront of public policy almost a half century ago; that of educational reform.

*Educational Reform in the United States*

These words, addressed to the American people, capture the essence of the first report regarding school reform since the 1957 launch of Sputnik catapulted Russia to dominance in the field of space exploration. Feeling its position as the world’s technological leader threatened, the United States federal government immediately increased its involvement in educational delivery. Their response to the Sputnik crisis
occurred in the form of the National Defense Education Act, which provided categorical aid to schools for the purpose of improving math, science, and foreign language instruction (Spring, 1991).

Each succeeding decade only served to strengthen the call for reform. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) hallmarked federal legislation of the 1960s. Providing categorical aid in an attempt to improve education for children of the poor, the ESEA connected national policy objectives to education and caused dramatic changes in local school systems (Spring, 1991).

The 1970s, a decade of educational accountability, was characterized by the “back-to-basics” movement. Alarmed at the rising rate of illiterate high school graduates, some states adopted “minimum-competency” laws. Such laws, in addition to other measures, were “designed to ensure that those getting diplomas from the public schools would possess at least rudimentary skills in the three R’s” (Finn, 1989, p. 17).

More focused studies of education began in the 1980s. While each major national study called for the “reform and restructuring” of American education, the 1983 publication of A Nation at Risk crystallized the apparent performance problems of schools in the minds of the American public, particularly those of business people and policymakers (Cunningham & Gresso, 1991; Hoy & Miskel, 2001). This report, released by the National Commission on Education, stated that schools in the United States were performing poorly in comparison with their international counterparts, and recommended that schools be made accountable for the implementation of standards and assessments designed to improve the academic achievement of American students (Amrein &
In 1989, former president George H. W. Bush held an historical educational summit attended by the nation’s governors. As a result, the Bush administration introduced *America 2000: An Education Strategy* (Alexander, 1991) which formulated the first ever set of goal targets for the national education system. In addition to America 2000, the 1990s also gave rise to increased governmental interest and debate regarding the implementation of school vouchers and charter schools.

Contemporary times mark an even more rapid ascent of reform to the forefront of policymakers’ agendas. Most current among national mandates is the January, 2002, reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, better known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) (United States Department of Education [U.S. Dept. of Ed.], n.d.). Among other measures, NCLB requires the implementation of statewide accountability systems based upon challenging standards in reading and math, annual testing for all students in grades 3 through 8, and adequate yearly progress objectives that require all students to reach proficiency within a twelve year period (U.S. Dept. of Ed., n.d.). Such need for reform was voiced in the words of United States Secretary of Education Rod Paige as he testified before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions on February 15, 2001, in support of No Child Left Behind (U. S. Dept. of Ed., n.d.).

It is uncomfortably clear that our system of elementary and secondary education is failing to do its job for far too many of our children - a failure that threatens the future of our Nation, and a failure that the American people will no longer tolerate . . .

Paradoxically, these words, through their striking similarity to those of *A Nation at Risk*
(1983) penned almost 20 years before, demonstrate that concerns regarding school effectiveness have not abated.

Central Theme

What is school effectiveness? The most frequent definition cited by parents, citizens, policymakers, and even scholars is a narrow one, equating effectiveness with academic achievement (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). This definition stems not only from the problems outlined in *A Nation at Risk* (1983), but numerous reports since, in which policymakers have turned to the “quick-fix” approach grounded entirely on standards based test achievement (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000). Test scores, however, should not be the only measure of school achievement (Education Commission of the States [ECS], 1999). In contrast, the National School Boards Association (Bracey & Resnick, 1998) recommends a much broader definition that includes (a) academic attainment beyond that which standards based tests currently measure, (b) job skills and preparation, (c) citizenship, (d) arts appreciation, and (e) the development of character and values. For the purposes of this dissertation, school effectiveness will be defined as the ability of schools to help students develop the aforementioned attributes.

Unlike the more consistent and grounded guidelines that have allowed great advances to be made in medicine and technology, the enactment of assorted, untested mandates as the best route to reform has generated little progress in school effectiveness over the same period of time. While the current system of public schools has effectively educated almost 90% of America’s workers, inventors, authors, scientists, corporate
leaders, artists, and computer technicians (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000), state and federal policymakers continue to decry the failure of United States’ schools, legislating reform in an effort to remedy the perceived problem. Interestingly, though, the 36th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools (Rose & Gallup, 2004) reports that the public, in general, assigns reasonably high marks to public schools. Responses indicate that for schools in their community, 47% of all those responding give them an A or B, 61% of all parents assign an A or B, and 70% of parents provide an A or B grade to the school attended by their oldest child. When given choices regarding the best means of improving the American educational system, the public expects changes to come through the existing system rather than alternatives by a margin of 66 to 26%.

Although originating at the federal and state levels, educational mandates concerning school reform initiatives such as standards and assessments are more likely to be discussed with and influenced by local school board members than state or federal legislators. Given this, perhaps the best place to start realizing advances in the existing system of education is with the often overlooked dimension of policymakers at the local level (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000), for in each community it is the school board who is entrusted to strengthen the educational system (The Education Policy and Leadership Center [EPLC], 2004).

The shift from school boards’ traditional focus on financial, legal, and constituent issues occurred during the 1990s as boards became actively involved in the development and implementation of policies designed to improve student achievement (Hess, 2002;
Land, 2002). Guided by the National School Boards Association and the National School Board Foundation’s urging to make student achievement a major objective of local school boards, state level groups such as the Iowa Association of School Boards, California School Board Association (Land, 2002) and Pennsylvania’s Education Policy and Leadership Center began working to focus boards on academic achievement (EPLC, 2004) through workshops, surveys, and publications. Along with national and state organizations, school board members and district staffs have also expressed the need for boards to concentrate on achievement (Land, 2002). In a 1997-1998 national survey conducted by *The American School Board Journal* and Virginia Tech University, school board members nationwide identified student achievement as a top concern (American School Board Journal [ASBJ], 1998).

Interestingly, at the same time that school boards have been called upon to increase their involvement with student achievement, local control has been reduced due to the federal and state governments’ increased involvement in educational governance (Carol, Cunningham, Danzberger, Kirst, McCloud, & Usdan, 1986; Danzberger, Carol, Cunningham, Kirst, McCloud, & Usdan, 1987; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Kirst, 1994; Olson & Bradley, 1992; Resnick, 1999; Todras, 1993). Throughout the past two decades, state governments have attempted to improve student achievement by passing prescriptive legislation for curricula, competency testing, and graduation standards (Carol et al., 1986; Danzberger et al., 1987, Kirst, 1994; Olson & Bradley, 1992; Resnick, 1999) while the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 greatly expanded the federal government’s role in education (Land, 2002). Critics of school boards claim that such increased state
and federal involvement is necessary because of school boards’ ineffectiveness in producing the academic achievement necessary to guarantee the United States’ future economic viability (Carol et al., 1986; Danzberger, 1994; Danzberger & Usdan, 1994; Danzberger et al., 1987, Kirst, 1994; Todras, 1993; Wilson, 1994).

Conversely, the reform movement has not incorporated school boards as potential facilitators but rather pressured them to react to legislated initiatives, limiting their degree of success (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000). While such policymaking is necessary, boards that engage primarily in reactive efforts or the informal policymaking motivated by political advancement and special interest groups are often viewed as barriers to the professional autonomy that characterizes effective schools (Chubb & Moe, 1991). In contrast, formal board policymaking manifested by systems thinking allows the interrelationship of actions and their potential impact to be seen more clearly (Senge, 1990). Two recent studies demonstrate the positive effects such quality school board governance can have on student achievement. Goodman and colleagues (1997), in a study of 10 school districts in five states found that governance differed between high and low achieving districts, with items such as a focus on achievement and the lack of micromanagement characterizing those that were more successful. Similar results were found by the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) (2000), who also found that positive trust relationships between board members and staff were critical to increased effectiveness. Widespread consensus also exists among school board experts that board members should engage in training and development to improve their individual and collective effectiveness (Carol et al., 1986; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Zimmerman,
Despite school boards’ long history in American public education and the increased attention devoted to their impact on student achievement, few empirical studies exist regarding their efficacy and the role they must play in 21st century schooling. Rigorous qualitative and quantitative research identifying the characteristics that are necessary for school boards to effectively influence student achievement are needed to keep from losing further control over local education (Land, 2002). In fact, school board members are uniquely positioned to coordinate reform in accordance with local needs, performing the role of vital link in making sure that reform actually occurs (Danzberger et al., 1997; Kirst, 1994).

But how is this going to happen, when never before in American history have federal and state governments exercised such influence over student learning, reducing the role of school boards and professional education organizations to that of consultant? The answer may lie in the essence of the reform effort itself, whose emphasis on standards and accountability suggest the importance of systemic change in refocusing the education system on improving school effectiveness (EPLC, 2004). While local school boards must adhere to legislated requirements, by applying principles of quality governance that support the needs of teachers, students, and the community (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000), they establish the mutually supportive relationships necessary for improvement to occur.

Effective leaders recognize these needs and seize occasions for their realization. In likening leadership to the best performing jazz ensemble, DePree (1992, p. 9) says,
The leader of a jazz band has the beautiful opportunity to draw the best out of the other musicians. We have much to learn from jazz-band leaders, for jazz, like leadership, combines the unpredictability of the future with the gifts of individuals.

Like the leader of a jazz band, school board members, as guides of the public school effort, have a wonderful opportunity to bring out the best in their teachers. Creating an environment in which student achievement can be raised to ever higher levels is foremost among school boards’ responsibilities (ECS, 1999). Success in this endeavor is dependent on effective leadership (EPLC, 2004), not that of top-down bureaucracy, but rather an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual support that enables all to realize the district’s vision (ECS, 1999; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Ouchi, 2003). To do so requires a relationship between school boards and teachers (EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000). While it has always been known that teachers are the most important resource a school district provides for its students (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000), it must also be understood that classroom interactions occur in a context highly susceptible to all of the decisions of educational governance (EPLC, 2004).

Recognizing the limitations of mandates in educational improvement, researchers and practitioners have begun seeking new avenues for realizing desired change. Throughout the last decade, scholars have focused on relationships as a strategy for improving school effectiveness at the local level, particularly relationships that exist between school board members and teachers. Through communicating, delegating responsibility, and avoiding the tendency to micromanage, school boards support teachers and display confidence in their ability to effectively educate (ECS, 1999; EPLC, 2004; Gemberling, Smith, & Villani, 2000; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2003; Goodman &
Looking to other disciplines, a growing body of literature extols trust relationships as a catalyst for change. Particularly in business and industry, many organizations attribute their success to a culture of trust (Dyer & Chu, 2003; Freiberg & Freiberg, 1996). Building on this foundation, educational researchers have begun to study teacher centered trust relationships having principals, parents, students, and colleagues as referents. Works dealing with effective school boards have also mentioned trust as an integral element of relationships that lead to improved student achievement (EPLC, 2004; Gemberling et al., 2000; Goodman & Fulbright, 1998; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2003; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Hoy, 2002; IASB, 2001). While little scientific research details teacher-school board member trust relationships as they impact school effectiveness (IASB, 2001), the aforementioned findings suggest that trust relationships may be a means to reform through fostering those attributes most commonly attributed to effective schools. Results such as these lead to an issue thus far unexplored: can trust relationships between teachers and policymakers, specifically school board members, have a similar influence on school effectiveness?

Statement of the Problem

Throughout the past decade, federal and state government has exercised an unprecedented degree of influence over student learning in an attempt to improve the effectiveness of public education. While it is undeniable that many schools have reported
improvements in student achievement (PA Dept. of Ed., n.d.a), some of the difficulties witnessed in previously legislated reform efforts have resurfaced, causing much speculation about the mandate’s efficacy (U. S. Dept. of Ed., n.d.). Since it is highly unlikely that state and federal legislators’ approach to educational reform will change any time soon, it is incumbent on those at the local level to work within the existing system to effect positive change. As DePree (1992) says in speaking of leadership, “the design of the organization should never be gerrymandered to serve the politicians or the bureaucracy of the insiders” (p. 27). Therefore, school boards and teachers must work together as the instruments of change. Two themes become important when embarking on such an endeavor. The first centers on structural concerns including educational reform legislation, with the second focusing on the effect of policymakers’ attitudes on teacher motivation.

A subtlety of the first theme involves the requirements of mandates and their control over much of the American public school reform effort. This control paradox may be examined using Sergiovanni’s (1992) typology of six control strategies. An expansion of Mintzberg’s (1979) classic organizational coordinating mechanisms, Sergiovanni’s typology consists of: (a) direct supervision in which a leader provides directions, closely supervises, and inspects the work of others; (b) standardized work processes where all actions are completed according to a scripted set of instructions; (c) standardized outputs requiring everyone to produce identical products or reach the same level of performance; (d) professional socialization that recognizes individuals’ knowledge base and sense of obligation; (e) purposing and shared values where those working together have a
common mission; and (f) collegiality and natural interdependence in which individuals are considered to be capable of self-management and cooperating with others to accomplish a task. Legislative reform most closely typifies the standardized outputs stratum of both Mintzberg and Sergiovanni. Characterized by the requirement that everyone achieve the same level of performance, this is analogous to the target proficiency percentages of state-level assessments. Sergiovanni, though, views teaching as a multifaceted act involving more than the attainment of standardized outcomes. He proposes the use of collegiality and natural interdependence as a more appropriate approach for teaching, as it transforms teachers from subordinates to self-managers able to meet commitments. While each strategy serves a need, it must be matched to the work’s level of complexity. Such matching is critical, in that “a simple strategy applied to the normally complex work of teaching will simplify the work, with negative effects on what is learned and how it is learned” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 93).

Another nuance brought into play are educators’ personal feelings of worth and how they influence educational reform. One of the best known theories of motivation, that of psychologist Abraham Maslow, is built upon three postulates, that (a) individual needs are universal and hierarchical, (b) unfulfilled needs lead individuals to focus on their fulfillment, and (c) lower-level needs must be mostly satisfied before higher-level needs can be pursued. The foundation of Maslow’s model is six categories of needs arranged in hierarchical levels: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, self-actualization, and knowing and understanding. The needs represented by the physiological, safety, and love and belonging levels are self-evident, with fourth level
esteem reflecting the need for high regard from others, fifth level self-actualization encompassing the achievement of potential, and sixth level understanding evidenced by a high degree of insight. Maslow’s postulates maintain that, before a higher-level need may be realized, those below it on the hierarchy must first be satisfied (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

Perhaps of most significance to the development of self-directed and growth motivated educators is satisfaction of the fourth level esteem needs. At this level, educators strive for professional competence and respect, needs that may only be fulfilled by others (Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Wilson, Robeck, & Michael, 1974). In fact, an early study conducted by Trusty and Sergiovanni (1966) reports that the greatest need deficiencies of professional educators occur at the esteem, autonomy, and self-actualization levels. In a similar manner, psychoanalyst Erik Erikson stressed each individual’s need for the trust and respect of those who surround him in order to develop to his fullest potential (Wilson et al., 1974).

The perceived lack of confidence on the part of state and federal policymakers toward teachers, when viewed in conjunction with the cyclical nature of educational reform mandates, calls for a new way of improving the effectiveness of schools. Despite the popularity of goals, standards, and restructuring, a growing body of literature proposes taking the path less traveled, that of reforming schools from within (Deal and Peterson, 1999). Toward this end, trust has emerged as the foundation of school effectiveness (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993) due to its pivotal role in fostering those attributes by which schools are most often judged to be effective. Ouchi (1981), author of *Theory Z*, maintains that trust is the first step toward improvement, while Sergiovanni
(1992) advocates for learning communities built on the moral authority of shared values and ideals rather than the bureaucratic and technical-rational authorities of an “expect and inspect” philosophy. The subject of increasing attention in sociology, economics, and organizational science (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998), trust relationships are also the common thread interwoven through the fabric of effective schools. The challenge, then, is to transform relationships based on adversarialism and politics to those based on trust, the first step toward effectiveness as well as the foundation of a principle-centered learning environment (Palestini, 1999).

**Purpose of the Study**

Although many laud mandates as the road to school improvement, their lack of success through the past three decades clearly requires that a new direction be taken. Scholars in the social sciences propose that the most successful and productive relationships in all avenues of life are built on trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). This, and theoretical frameworks of psychology, economics, and commerce, suggest the potential for change that trust may have in the field of education as well.

Discourse regarding the value of trust abounds in the literature of business. Ouchi (1981), in articulating how American corporations can meet the Japanese challenge, states that productivity is based on trust. He points out that our reliance on the scientific approach results in people being taken for granted even though the attributes most necessary for business success are relational skills. Deming’s principles of “total quality management” further advance the need for trust. His approach, used in many
organizations, recommends the breaking down of barriers and ceasing dependence on inspection to achieve quality (Rebore, 2004). An example is that of Southwest Airlines, the only airline to post profits from 1990 to 1994 when the rest of the industry suffered a $12.8 billion loss (Freiberg & Freiberg, 1996). Attributing much of its success to trust, the company acted upon the philosophy that trust is a prerequisite to ownership due to its strengthening of self-confidence.

Only recently, though, has the potential of trust and its inherent relationships been recognized as a genuine resource for the improvement of school effectiveness. While trust research in the social sciences literature has to some extent informed educational practice (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998), the potential of trust specific to the field of education has become the focus of a growing body of research. Constituting just a small portion of the educational research literature, significant findings realized in the empirical study of trust in schools has indicated its relevance to school reform. Prominent among these is the necessity of a culture of trust for realizing effectiveness in education (Tarter, Sabo, & Hoy, 1995).

Research up to this point has primarily focused on teacher-centered relationships having principals, parents, students, and colleagues as referents. Central to many of these studies were the development of research instruments and the utilization of such measures to investigate relationships between various dimensions of trust and academic achievement. Having provided a solid foundation, it is incumbent on the research community to begin building on this groundwork; to expand both the referents studied and the scope of trust’s potential impact on education. This study will strike out in that
direction through exploring the nature of trust relationships between elementary school educators and policymakers at the local school board level, followed by an examination of these relationships in light of their perceived impact on educational reform, specifically the improvement of school effectiveness.

The selection of school board members as referents of study, rather than superintendents or those in other educational roles, was made as they are the keystone of local governance, creating policy and charting a district’s future course. Such citizen controlled boards have positive, vital roles to play in systemic educational reform, with some stating that such reform will not occur without the corresponding restructuring of school boards (Danzberger, 1994; Rallis & Criscoe, 1993). In fact, school governance is often perceived as one of the greatest barriers to educational change (Danzberger, 1992; Wagner, 1992). Promoting the creation of conditions necessary to improve the effectiveness of America’s schools calls for different governing behaviors; behaviors uniting to craft a system of effective organization that fosters policies of teamwork and confidence among school board members and staff (Danzberger, 1994; Genck, 1991).

Need for the Study

Those who would like the public to believe that American education is at risk, with student achievement declining massively, fail to cite evidence demonstrating that achievement has actually been growing in modest ways. Such omissions have led the American public to what Berliner and Biddle (1995) term the Manufactured Crisis, a campaign against schools built upon misleading data analysis and the distortion of
research findings. The myths perpetuated by this crisis have led to frequent mandates for reform, many lacking in substance. This is particularly true of reforms stemming from inaccurate information, many of these having little detectable effect.

Such mandates and a lack of progress have left school personnel feeling that state bureaucracies prevent local districts from delivering educational programs that best meet the needs of their communities (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). At the same time, state and federal legislators, not seeing the outcomes anticipated from their mandates, enact additional requirements that distance the relationship of the two groups even more. Such a relationship may be envisioned as a tug-of-war, with educators pulling at one end of the rope, policymakers at the other, and our children hanging on for dear life in the middle.

Over the past decade, empirical evidence has emerged linking trust to school effectiveness (Hoy, Tarter, & Witkoskie, 1992). Studies focusing on trust relations among various combinations of teachers, principals, and parents have demonstrated a positive relationship between trust and increased student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 1996; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001; Hoy, 2002; Tarter, Sabo, & Hoy, 1995; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Trust has also been shown to foster the practices of collaboration, teacher efficacy, general school health, and improvement of instructional delivery requisite to realizing positive organizational outcomes (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard et al., 2001; Hoy, 2002; Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Hoy, Sabo, & Barnes, 1996; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

While findings have indicated its relevance to school reform, empirical studies of
trust in schools are rare (Bryk & Schneider, 1996; Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, & Hoy, 1994; Hoy & Kupersmith, 1985; Hoy, Sabo, & Barnes, 1996; Tarter, Bliss, & Hoy, 1989; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; Uline, Miller, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998). To that end, researchers have indicated the need for future study in both content and methodological realms. Smith, Hoy, and Sweetland (2001) as well as Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998), have indicated the need to study referents of trust other than faculty, principals, parents, and students. In the dimension of teacher-policymaker trust, a true paucity of inquiry exists with the most extensive literature on the subject published by Mike Bottery, Director of the Centre for Educational Studies at the University of Hull, United Kingdom.

Methodologically, where most existing trust research is quantitative in nature, the need exists for that which is qualitatively designed (Bottery, 2003; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). Through the use of case studies and other qualitative means, probing explorations could assist in the gathering of information not typically available through more quantitatively based research methods. Such research might investigate the dynamics of the trusting process; what behaviors elicit trust in the educational arena, why faculty and policymakers do or do not trust, and how such trust may be developed (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999).

Equally important, the current emphasis on trust studies in urban education points to a need for more research focusing on suburban and rural schools. Keedy and Allen (1998) state that rural education is the “forgotten half,” with such schools being beyond the media spotlight and out of school reformer’s minds. This omission constitutes a major policy problem, as almost half of the nation’s schools are rural (Keedy & Allen, 1998).
Although only 20% of school districts enroll more than 3,000 students, most studies of school boards involve these larger, urban districts (Kirst, 1994; Wilson, 1994), a statistic that calls for research focusing on suburban and rural school board members as it is their districts that serve the greatest proportion of students.

Given this information, the instrumental case study with a constructivist paradigm will form the basis of this research. Having as some of its purposes (a) discovery, (b) the construction of meanings, (c) interpretation, (d) revealing the essence of a phenomenon, and (e) acting as a force in public policy making (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1998), such an approach seems well suited to the inquiry’s purpose. Drawing on the work of Stake (1998), an interpretivist approach will be used to describe and understand both teachers’ and school board members’ perceptions of their trust relationships, with these understandings used to build knowledge and theory (Yin, 2003).

An instrumental case study will be employed as it provides the freedom to gain insight into teachers’ and school board members’ perceptions of their trust relationships and the impact of such relationships on school effectiveness (Stake, 1998). The design is also responsive to the case and its circumstances given that it allows continual adaptation as the case unfolds (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). It will be collective, in that eight individual cases will be studied, four each of faculty members and school board members, with the intent to better understand the phenomenon of trust relationships’ impact on school effectiveness and its possible application to an even greater number of cases.
The sample will consist of school board members in Erie County, Pennsylvania, as well as rural and suburban elementary teachers in the same locale. These demographics were chosen in response to the current preponderance of attention devoted to urban education, while the elementary level was selected to narrow the field of interest.

Surveys, semi-structured interviews, and document perusal will be used for data collection and triangulation. An audit trail will provide detailed explanation about data collection, the derivation of categories, and how decisions developed throughout the inquiry.

Consequently, the study of teacher-school board member trust and its relationship to school effectiveness will add to the trust and school effectiveness literature that currently exists. In the words of Karen Louis (2000), trust is “the bridge that reform must be carried over.”

Research Questions

This study seeks the answers to several questions:

1. How do rural and suburban elementary teachers define school effectiveness?

2. How do rural and suburban policymakers at the school board level define school effectiveness?

3. What perceptions do rural and suburban elementary teachers possess regarding trust relationships between policymakers at the school board level and themselves? What perceived impact does this relationship have on school effectiveness?
4. What perceptions do policymakers at the school board level possess regarding trust relationships between rural and suburban elementary teachers and themselves? What perceived impact does this relationship have on school effectiveness?

Objectives

The principal objectives of the present study are to:

1. draw upon existing understandings in defining a new dimension of trust labeled teacher-school board member,

2. introduce teachers and school board members to the concept of trust relationships as a vehicle for reform, sharing findings from previous research and opening a forum for discussion,

3. help build an understanding of perceived teacher-school board member trust relationships from the viewpoints of both teachers and school board members, and

4. examine the teacher-school board member trust relationship to determine whether connections exist between referents’ perceptions of the relationship and their actions as they relate to the performance of their respective duties.

Anticipated Limitations of the Study

The research design calls for a survey of all school board members in Erie County, Pennsylvania. However, a survey of Pennsylvania superintendents and school board presidents conducted by The Education Policy and Leadership Center (EPLC,
2004) between November 2003 and January 2004 resulted in a response rate of only 29%, with most responses being submitted by superintendents. Given this limited response to a well-regarded organization, communication will be of the utmost importance in gaining the greatest survey return rate possible from school board members. In addition, the nature of this study precludes generalizability, instead seeking illumination of the specified phenomenon.

Currently, there are few models of qualitative protocols in this field. While semi-structured interviews will be conducted and subsequent sessions scheduled to obtain missing information (Morse, 1998), some items may possibly be omitted, leaving small gaps in the resulting conceptualization.

Definition of Terms

To enhance the understanding and utility of this inquiry, the following definitions are set forth:

**Academic Achievement** – The quality of a student’s scholarly work as measured in relation to specified quantitative criteria.

**Benevolence** – The confidence that one’s well-being or something one cares about will be protected by the trusted person or group (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

**Bureaucratic Authority** – Authority based on holding an office in a hierarchy (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

**Centralization** – The degree to which authority is not delegated but concentrated in a single source in the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).
Competency – The extent to which the trusted party has knowledge and skill (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Day-to-Day Management of Schools – The running of a school based upon decisions made by individuals who may or may not be physically present on a daily basis.

Faculty – Individuals who possess teacher certification and are directly involved in the delivery of instruction to students.

Faculty Trust – A collective property; the extent to which a faculty as a group is willing to risk vulnerability (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Honesty – The character, integrity, and honesty of the trusted party (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Loose Coupling – The concept that coupled events are responsive, but that each event also preserves its own identity and some evidence of its physical or logical separateness (Weick, 1976).

Mandate - Legislation passed by the general assembly and signed into law by the executive branch that requires school districts to implement directives, programs, or policies in the management of public schools (Lynn, 2003). (Also referred to as legislatively mandated reform)

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) – A revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) enacted on Jan. 8, 2002. Changing the federal government's role in kindergarten-through-grade-12 education by asking America's schools to describe their success in terms of what each student accomplishes, the act contains the President's four basic education reform principles: stronger accountability
for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work (PA Dept. of Ed., n.d.b).

**Openness** – The extent to which there is no withholding of information from others (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

**Policymaker** – An elected official involved in writing and enacting laws concerning public school management.

**Professional Authority** – Authority based on technical competence and expertise (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

**Professional Educators** – Individuals who possess a degree in a field of education and who are involved, either directly or indirectly, in the delivery of instruction to students.

**Proficiency Targets (Adequate Yearly Progress – AYP)** - An individual state’s measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards. “Adequate Yearly Progress” is the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts, and schools must achieve each year (PA Dept. of Ed., n.d.c).

**Reform** – A variety of movements, programs, and recommendations that have been advanced in the interest of improving education.

**Relational Trust** - An engaging but elusive idea of social trust as essential for meaningful school improvement (Bryk & Schneider, 2003).

**Reliability** – The extent to which one can count on another person or group (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

**School Board** - A school board is a legislative body of citizens called school directors, who are elected locally by their fellow citizens and who serve as agents of the state
Legislature. Each board consists of nine members who serve four-year terms of office, without pay (Pennsylvania School Boards Association [PSBA], n.d.).

School Board Member - Although locally elected, school board members are really state officials, acting as copartners with the Legislature. They are designated by school law to administer the school system in each district. School board members may also be referred to as school directors or board members (PSBA, n.d.).

School Effectiveness – The ability of schools to help students develop (a) academic attainment beyond that which standards based tests currently measure, (b) job skills and preparation, (c) citizenship, (d) arts appreciation, and (e) character and values (Bracey & Resnick, 1998).

Trust – An individual 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 (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999).

Willingness to risk – The degree of confidence one has in a situation of vulnerability (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The journey in the study of trust begins with a contextual background that situates the study of trust across several disciplines. First addressed are the psychological foundations of trust in social interactions and motivation. While the concepts discussed are not education specific, knowledge of the conditions that foster growth is integral to any study concerning the realization of human potential.

A brief theoretical perspective follows, consisting of treatises and the first forays into the study of trust relationships. From these general explorations emerges a more focused perusal as businesses begin to replace systems of scientific management with more enabling, trust-based management models. This section concludes with a discussion bridging organizational definitions of trust to the evolution of those that are educationally based, leading the way to the topic of trust in schools.

Narrowing the breadth of inquiry, the final section focuses on the study of trust in schools. First presented is a theoretical framework followed by trust types and their associated schools of study. Next is a discussion of instruments designed to measure trust relationships as well as an examination of research employing these instruments to explore trust relations as they relate to school effectiveness. In-depth analyses of specific trust studies conclude the chapter, along with their significant findings, cautions, and recommendations for future inquiry that form the underpinnings of this investigation.
Psychological Foundations of Trust in Social Interactions and Motivation

Motivation is what causes a person to want to engage in a particular behavior. Psychologists have long recognized that satisfaction of needs is the motivation that drives all actions (Rebore, 2004). One of the best known theories of motivation, that of psychologist Abraham Maslow, describes a hierarchy of needs that must be successfully satisfied prior to self-direction occurring. Maslow espouses that in order for individuals to become more self-directed and growth motivated, they must first have needs for physiological well-being, safety, love and belonging, and esteem satisfied (see Figure 1). Perhaps of most significance in the development of educational professionals is satisfaction of the fourth level esteem needs. In this level, educators strive for professional competence, trust, and respect; needs that may only be fulfilled by others (Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Wilson et al., 1974). An early study conducted by Trusty and Sergiovanni (1966) reports that the greatest need deficiencies of professional educators occur at the esteem, autonomy, and self-actualization levels. In a similar vein,

![Maslow's hierarchy of needs](image)

*Figure 1.* Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory.
psychoanalyst Erik Erikson also stressed each individual’s need for the trust and respect of those who surround him in order to develop to his fullest potential (Wilson et al., 1974).

References to these theories are found in much of the literature regarding successful business and organizational practices. Perhaps the most well known is that of W. Edwards Deming’s “total quality management” (TQM). As a result of disinterest on the part of American businessmen, Deming introduced his approach to the Japanese following World War II (Rebore, 2004). The principles of TQM being extraordinarily successful, Japan rose from post-war devastation to become one of the leaders in the economic world.

Deming proposed that 14 tenets guide the management of human resources. Of these, three demonstrate strong similarities to Maslow’s hierarchy in their emphasis on the importance of esteem in achieving success. By ceasing dependence on inspection to achieve quality, employee ownership is promoted through the valuation and appreciation of the individual (Rebore, 2004). Esteem building is also advanced through Deming’s “driving out fear” and “breaking down departmental barriers,” both of which serve to build the trust that is essential to realizing need satisfaction. Solomon and Flores (2001) voice Deming’s philosophy well, “you don’t just do business. You build relationships. In other words, you develop trust” (p. 100).

Psychological foundations of motivation are also closely intertwined with the functioning of organizational management structures. The more traditional model of authority, prevalent in the early to mid-twentieth century, assumed that workers lacked
the ability for self-direction, resulting in close supervision and a lack of trust (Tyler & Kramer, 1996). More recently, those involved with human resources have argued against such characterizations of workers, citing their need for respect as well as their desire for recognition and belonging (Creed & Miles, 1996). Many contemporary human resource models are beginning to assert that workers can be self-directed, therefore managers must create a work environment in which workers can be trusted (Tyler & Kramer, 1996).

Authority relations govern all hierarchical organizations, whether work, politically, or family oriented (Tyler & Degoe, 1996). Tyler and Degoe (1996) link studies of conflict occurring in all three groups to psychological models of trustworthiness. The first study examined experiences between a random sample of workers in Chicago and their supervisors, another interviewed citizens concerning their views about the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, with the third exploring conflict resolution between undergraduates at the University of California at Berkeley and their parents. All three studies demonstrated the strong influence of trustworthiness in people’s reaction to authorities, as well as its being the major factor shaping willingness to accept decisions in the political setting.

Tyler and Degoe (1996) link these results to the psychologically grounded identity-based model of procedural justice. This model suggests that the way people are treated by authorities provides them with important information about themselves; that a sense of identity is derived from such treatment. These relational judgments are strongly associated to an individual’s willingness to accept authorities’ decisions (Tyler & Degoe, 1996), with defensive avoidance the dominant tendency if needs are not met.
(Cunningham & Gresso, 1993). Similar ideas are expressed by Bottery (2003) and Sitken and Stickel (1996), who state that being trusted is likely to be viewed as a recognition of personal integrity, and that the lack of trust may hurt feelings and threaten professional autonomy. Such implications regarding individual self-esteem and self-worth are evidence of both Maslow’s needs satisfaction hierarchy and Erickson’s theory of motivation.

Theoretical Perspective

Foundations of Trust Study

The most successful, productive relationships in all avenues of life are based on trust (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Long recognized as a fundamental characteristic of interpersonal and intergroup relations, sociologists and psychologists propose that trust is the element that makes organizational work possible (Sitken & Stickel, 1996). Evidence of its significance dates back 2,500 years as Confucius, when asked about government by his disciple, Tzu-kung, responded that three things were needed; food, weapons, and the confidence of the common people. When further asked which were dispensable, Confucius named weapons and food, for “a people that no longer trusts its rulers is lost indeed” (Waley, 1938, p. 164).

The empirical study of trust began in the late 1950s in reaction to escalating suspicions regarding the Cold War and the arms race that resulted from these tensions (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). In what is the first experimental attempt to study trust, Deutsch (1958) uses a variation of “prisoner’s dilemma” to determine the social
situations in which various types of trust will occur. The experiments, conducted in a laboratory setting, calculated the gains and losses made by each party as a function of the choices made by the individual and his partner. The greatest potential gain was realized in circumstances where both parties cooperated, with greater potential loss occurring when one’s cooperative move was exploited by a partner. Deutsch’s study resulted in preliminary definitions of trust and implications regarding the conditions under which mutual trust is most likely to occur.

As the study of trust evolved, scholars in social psychology, sociology, economics, management, and marketing turned their efforts toward their own particular disciplines. The resulting literature yielded a rich diversity of information, characterized by theory and application pertinent to its own unique field. To date, though, little integration of these various perspectives has occurred (Doney, Cannon, & Mullen, 1998), leading to much information but few general principles grounding the study of trust.

The most prevalent theme that emerges from the literature is the existence of different types of trust. Based upon the work of Shapiro, Sheppard, and Cheraskin (1992) as well as that of Lewicki and Bunker (1996), the four primary types are (a) deterrence-based, (b) calculus-based, (c) knowledge-based, and (d) identification-based. Lewicki and Bunker (1996) further suggest that trust types are sequentially connected such that the attainment of trust at one level enables development of trust at the level immediately following.

In deterrence-based trust, measures exist to prevent undesired actions (Sheppard & Tuchinsky, 1996). It occurs when the sanctions that occur for a breach of trust exceed
the benefits of opportunistic behavior. Deterrence is the narrowest form of trust, with high costs and limited involvement between parties. Legal contracts are an example of this type of trust (Rousseau et al., 1998). Deterrence-based trust is sometimes considered a subtype of the next level, that which is calculative in nature.

The second type, calculus-based, is predicated on rational choice and economic exchange; the trustor calculates the likelihood of the trustee performing a beneficial action. This category is based on credible information regarding another party’s intentions or competence (Dasgupta, 2000; Gambetta, 2000; Rousseau et al., 1998). While calculative trust is based both on benefit seeking and deterrence elements, the latter are the more dominant motivators. Such trust is partial and quite fragile (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996). Calculus-based trust often relies on a “proof source” such as a diploma or certificate (Rousseau et al., 1998).

Knowledge-based trust, grounded in predictability, consists of knowing the other party well enough that trustworthy behavior may be anticipated (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996). This trust does not rely on information that is deterrence-based, but on understandings developed through multifaceted relationships during repeated interactions (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Sheppard & Tuchinsky, 1996; Rousseau et al., 1998). Such predictability enhances trust, with reliability and dependability in previous interactions fostering positive expectations about the other’s intentions. Sometimes termed relational trust, knowledge-based trust can give rise to a psychological identity (Rousseau et al.), 1998).

The fourth type is identification-based trust. This, the highest order of trust,
occurs when parties effectively understand and appreciate the other’s preferences and desires. While the personal investment is greater, so are rewards in that a partner may act independently, knowing that his or her needs will be met. Identification-based trust requires no monitoring, instead giving authority to competent employees which, in turn, promotes greater efficiency (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Sheppard & Tuchinsky, 1996). Factors found to strengthen identification-based trust include (a) the development of a collective identity, (b) co-location (physical proximity), (c) the creation of joint goal or products, and (d) a commitment to commonly shared values (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996).

Based upon the theoretical frameworks of scholars in the field as well as their own experiences, models constructed by Shapiro, Sheppard, and Cheraskin (1992) and Lewicki and Bunker (1996) suggest that all of these trust types operate in the development of professional relationships. For such affiliations to be most productive, those involved must effectively understand and appreciate the other’s goals through the realization of identification-based trust. To function at this highest level, Lewicki and Bunker (1996) propose that relationships begin with the most primary type and proceed sequentially until identification-based trust is attained (see Figure 2).

These forms, while not specific to the field of education, are nonetheless relevant to an understanding of the nature of trust that exists between faculty and policymakers. Deterrence-based trust, by definition, would seemingly best portray this relationship. Sanctions in the form of teacher and school accountability are intended to exceed the benefits of inadequately teaching children that which they are expected to know. This is the narrowest form of trust; involvement between the parties is limited and the cost of
breaching trust is high. Its strict controls are incompatible with positive expectations about another party (Rousseau et al., 1998), conditions that can lead to decreased self-worth and esteem.

Embedding the four trust types in Maslow’s psychological foundations of motivation provides a visualization of their interconnectedness (see Figure 3). When acting in a deterrence-based manner, actions are taken to prevent undesired consequences, similar to the behaviors engaged in by individuals to avoid physiological deficits such as hunger and thirst. In calculus-based trust, a person calculates the likelihood of another performing a beneficial action, much like decisions made to protect against danger and fear. Knowledge-based trust works hand-in-glove with Maslow’s love and belonging level, for it is through knowing another party well enough to anticipate trustworthy behavior that a sense of camaraderie and association is established. Finally, identification-based trust shares common elements with both the esteem and self-actualization strata, as the mutual understanding and appreciation of preferences lead to self-respect and the achievement of potential.

![Diagram of types of trust](image_url)

*Figure 2.* Types of trust.
In actuality, the types of trust appear to be the only common stream of thought that runs through the social science trust literature. And even that, on closer examination, yields variations in both terminology and type. Throughout the past decade, cross-disciplinary groups of scholars have published much pertinent information about the construct of trust but, due to the discipline’s infancy, little, if any, has been established as theory. While research from one field is likely to inform several others (Rousseau et al., 1998), developing an integrated model of trust is difficult given the idiosyncrasies in defining trust across multiple disciplines (Doney et al., 1998).

*Trust in Industry*

So how does one bridge the gap? Although the literature presents varied theories, one field has long distinguished itself as a leader in transforming theory into practice. By studying the world of business and the process and product of some industries’ move

![Maslow's hierarchy with trust types embedded](image-url)

*Figure 3. Maslow’s hierarchy with trust types embedded.*
from a bureaucratic to trust oriented framework, a bridge is built from the earlier days of trust theory to its emergence in the field of education.

The first major studies of employee motivation and productivity were those of Frederick Winslow Taylor in the early years of the twentieth century. The most influential person of his time, Taylor formalized the principles of scientific management so as to increase worker efficiency and productivity in the coal and steel industries. At the time of Taylor’s work, managers had little contact with the actual operations of a factory, leaving most production responsibility to the factory’s foreman. Taylor restructured management thought, sharing his ideas with industrial managers who were looking for new ways to increase worker performance (S. J. Liebowitz, personal communication, July 21, 2003). The framework for his organizational theory included (a) a clear delineation of authority in which employees were closely supervised, (b) the setting of employee goals, and (c) motivating workers with incentive schemes (Taylor, 1998).

Not only did Frederick Taylor’s principles of worker motivation affect those in the early 1900s, but continue to have a profound influence on management principles to the current day (S. J. Liebowitz, personal communication, July 21, 2003). Within contemporary operations, managers still use monitoring and control mechanisms, even though high levels of performance are less likely to result. Contrasting with this practice, recent theory argues that employee trust perceptions are crucial, providing a source that may be used to increase competitive advantage (Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998). In a growing body of literature, scholars contend that trust fosters the cooperation necessary to lower the transaction costs of doing business (Creed & Miles, 1996; Hagen
This is perhaps best exemplified by examining professional relationships in eastern cultures.

The practice of trust is greatly influenced by a society’s cultural values (Whitener et al., 1998). Fukuyama (1996) states that the most successful societies, such as those of the eastern world, exhibit trust relationships that extend beyond the family. Following the devastation of Japan in World War II, the country’s economy was virtually nonexistent. Having been met with disinterest by American industrialists, W. Edwards Deming traveled to Japan where he introduced his principles of total quality management with outstanding success. A radical departure from Taylor’s organizational theory, Deming’s model stressed the value of human resources. Of his 14 principles, eight rely on trust relations to build goal-oriented motivation and interdependent work relationships, while the remainder articulate methods for accomplishing such associations. One of the eight, ceasing dependency on inspection to achieve quality, advances that employees are the most critical component in assessing and improving the quality of service. Another, breaking down barriers between departments, fosters the collaboration needed to achieve quality. Additional principles include similar motivational strategies such as instituting leadership, driving out fear, and adopting the philosophy of cooperation. When implemented, these and Deming’s remaining principles enabled the Japanese economy to maximize their resources and become a leader among industrial and business nations (Rebore, 2004).

In addition to lowering transaction costs, productivity is also dependent on trust
Ouchi, in describing how American corporations can match the success of the Japanese, states that the first lesson of productivity is trust. He points out that our reliance on the scientific approach has left people being taken for granted, even though the attributes most necessary for business success are relational skills. Instead of technology, Ouchi proposes that the secret to Japanese success is a management style that focuses on a strong corporate culture. Such culture has a powerful influence throughout an organization as well as a major effect on a business’ success (Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

While academicians have written extensively about the potential economic value of trust, empirical research on the topic is lacking. One of the only studies to examine the relationship between trust and performance in supplier-buyer exchange relationships is that of Dyer and Chu (2003). In their study, Dyer and Chu (2003) investigate the relationship among transaction costs, information sharing, and perceived trustworthiness in a sample of 344 supplier-automaker affiliations in the United States, Japan, and Korea. More specifically, they attempt to determine whether a high level of supplier trust in the buyer results in (a) lower transaction costs, (b) greater information sharing, and (c) better performance. As rationale for their research, the authors state that transaction costs may represent as much as 40% of a business’ economic activity, information sharing can lead to better problem solving, and greater trustworthiness on the part of the buyer can reduce their total costs, increasing profitability.

Dyer and Chu (2003) chose a cross-national sample because of their traditional trust characterizations; Japan as a high-trust environment creating competitive advantage, the United States as lower-trust when compared to Japan, and Korea as having a similar
culture to Japan but its management style influenced by United States’ firms. The sample consisted of three United States, two Japanese, and three Korean automakers as well as a sampling of their Tier I suppliers (those who supply original equipment manufacturers [Armstrong, 2000]). Sampling was conducted through interviews of purchasing executives, sales and engineering vice-presidents, and supplier executives, in addition to other instruments that were not clearly described. While their derivation of transaction costs was clearly explained, Dyer and Chu (2003) did not provide information regarding the validity and reliability of the information sharing instrument or the validity of their trust scale.

Through the use of regression analyses, findings indicate that, when the sample is pooled to include all three countries, greater supplier trust in the buyer is related to lower monitoring and enforcement of exchange partners’ transaction costs, and also to greater information sharing. Results supporting the authors’ hypothesis include a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.66$ that demonstrates the relationship of greater buyer trustworthiness to lower buyer transaction costs and, additionally, that greater buyer trustworthiness is related to better profit performance ($r = 0.65$).

While these results suggest that trustworthiness improves performance, the lack of information necessitates that such findings be interpreted cautiously. However, Dyer and Chu (2003) do advise the reader that they cannot be certain of the direction of causality in the trust and information sharing relationship, and recommend that both longitudinal and similar research in other studies be conducted in the future.
Definitions of Trust

Trust is a complex, multidimensional construct (Mishra, 1996). Throughout the past four decades, over 150 articles have been written on the subject with 16 identified definitions being advanced (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999), including a complex statistical formula in which actions are translated into outcomes and consequences (Bhattacharya, Devinney, & Pillutla, 1998). McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany (1998) state that the word is so broad and confusing “that it almost defies careful definition” (p. 474). Although historical definitions of trust have been discipline specific, some general premises have emerged from the literature (Bhattacharya et al., 1998; Bigley & Pearce, 1998).

Almost every theorist writing about trust has included vulnerability as a key theme (Bhattacharya et al., 1998; Bigley & Pearce, 1998; Mishra, 1996; Rousseau et al., 1998). From the social sciences to economics, trust phenomena is connected to the idea that trustors open themselves to risk as they interact in social situations, relationships, or systems (Bigley & Pearce, 1998). The second premise is based on the presence of beliefs and expectations concerning the trustee (Bhattacharya et al., 1998; McKnight et al., 1998; Mishra, 1996; Rousseau et al., 1998). Such beliefs indicate the trustor’s expectancy that the other party will demonstrate benevolence, competence, honesty, and predictability in a given situation (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). A theoretical framework uniting these premises is found in the work of Mishra (1996).

Mishra’s (1996) framework is based upon qualitative data gathered from automotive industry executives in 1991 and 1992 during a severe downturn in the
industry. Thirty-three top-level managers from more than 12 automotive firms were interviewed regarding factors that would contribute to the organization’s chances for survival as the industry became increasingly competitive. During the semi-structured interview protocol, trust and distrust were mentioned as critical factors affecting the organization’s performance. Following the interviews, Gofer software was used to search all transcripts for references to trust. Four distinct dimensions were identified that also captured the content domain of the trust literature. These dimensions were incorporated into Mishra’s (1996) definition of trust as “one party’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the belief that the latter party is (a) competent, (b) open, (c) concerned, and (d) reliable” (p. 265).

Trust in Schools

_Theory of Organizational Structure and a Model of School Structure_

Mintzberg (1979) defines organizational structure “as the sum total of the ways in which it divides its labor into distinct tasks and then achieves coordination among them” (p. 2). The earliest literature focused on a theory of formal structure characterized by standardized work relationships built around a system of highly directed formal authority. As theorists observed the existence of unofficial work relationships and coworkers’ informal adaptations to each other, formal structures gave way to the idea of an informal structural model. This led to the establishment of the human relations school of thought, whose proponents sought to empirically demonstrate that a reliance on formal structures was, at best, misguided (Mintzberg, 1979). Recent research provides a more
comprehensive view of structure, examining it more thoroughly and applying it to
different types of organizations.

The theoretical basis of most contemporary organizational structures is Weber’s
analysis of bureaucracy (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). Serving as a foundation for studies of the
development and modification of organizational structure, his bureaucratic model also
examines the place of the individual within such a structure (Hall, 1963). Weber’s (1947)
discussion of legal authority enumerates the characteristics of bureaucracies as they
pertain to an organization’s administrative staff. According to Hall (1963), these include:
(a) “a division of labor based upon functional specialization,” (b) “a well-defined
hierarchy of authority,” (c) “a system of rules covering the rights and duties of
professional incumbents,” (d) “a system of procedures for dealing with work situations,”
(e) “impersonality of interpersonal relations,” and (f) “promotion and selection for
employment based on technical competence” (p. 33).

In schools and other organizations, Weber’s components are likely to create
distinct types of rational organization as outlined in Table 1 (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).
The distinction between bureaucratic and professional organizational patterns points to
the potential conflict between authority that is based on holding an office as opposed to
that of technical competence and expertise. In addition, dichotomizing both bureaucratic
and professional patterns into high and low instances of each enables the exploration of
four organizational types as seen in Figure 4.

The first organizational type, Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) chaotic structure has low
levels of both professional consideration and bureaucratic structure. Daily operations are
Table 1

*Two Types of Rational Organization in the School Setting* (Hoy & Miskel, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational characteristics</th>
<th>Organizational patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy of authority</td>
<td>Bureaucratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules for incumbents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural specifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impersonality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical competence</td>
<td>Profe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


typified by confusion, contradiction, and conflict with ineffectiveness being the norm.

Pressure to move to another structural type will often arise.

The authoritarian structure manifests a low level of professional consideration and a high level of bureaucratic structure. Based on position and hierarchy, power flows from top to bottom with a moderately effective result. This structure’s basic principle of operation is disciplined compliance to rules, regulations, and directives applied in an impersonal fashion (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

High levels of professional consideration and bureaucratic structure characterize the Weberian structure, so called because of its similarity to Weber’s ideal. Problem solving is shared among parties and conflict is limited. The organization’s subsystems are loosely coupled, preserving their own identity but responsive to its overall needs. Such a
system is highly effective (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) professional structure consists of high professional consideration and low bureaucratization. Viewed as expert and competent professionals, teachers are powerful organizational decision-makers. Rules and procedures are considered guidelines rather than mandates, and effectiveness is high (see Table 2). Serving as a basis for school development, the typology is useful as organizations attempt to build properties that will improve their own school structures and positively affect student outcomes.

*Foundations of Trust in Schools*

The subject of increasing study in sociology, economics, and organizational science, trust has also become a topic of added importance in education (Tschannen-
Moran & Hoy, 1998). Mishra’s (1996) framework, in addition to an extensive review of the literature, sets the stage for Tschannen-Moran and Hoy’s definition of trust in education. Based on their conceptualization of trust as a complex, multifaceted construct, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy use the term “faces” as a foundation for their definition. Five faces emerged from the literature which, when combined with the vulnerability premise, resulted in trust being defined as “an individual’s or group’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open” (p. 189).

Trust has been called the foundation of school effectiveness (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993) due to its pivotal role in fostering those attributes by which schools are most often judged to be effective. Just as the most successful, productive relationships in life are based on trust, trust relationships are also the common thread interwoven through the fabric of effective schools (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). But what is it that makes a school effective, high student achievement and academic awards or social cohesiveness and students’ social-emotional growth? According to Uline, Miller, and Tschannen-Moran (1998), these variables, and the larger instrumental and expressive functions to which they belong, are all necessary constructs which must be addressed for a school to be effective. No longer should academic achievement alone be the determinant of a school’s success or failure, but rather multiple indicators which measure the diversity of students’ learning experiences (Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Keedy & Allen, 1998).

While empirical studies of trust in schools constitute a small portion of the
Table 2

*Types of School Structures and Their Properties* (Hoy & Miskel, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational property</th>
<th>Chaotic structures</th>
<th>Authoritarian structure</th>
<th>Weberian structure</th>
<th>Professional structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrating principle</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Formal goals and bureaucratic authority</td>
<td>Bureaucratic authority and professional authority</td>
<td>Professional authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Irrelevant</td>
<td>A single set of clear, formal goals</td>
<td>A single set of clear, shared goals</td>
<td>Multiple sets of goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant source of power</td>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Bureaucratic</td>
<td>Bureaucratic and professional</td>
<td>Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making process</td>
<td>Nonrational and individualistic</td>
<td>Top-down and rational</td>
<td>Shared and rational problem solving</td>
<td>Horizontal-rational and incremental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination of instruction</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Administrative enforcement of rules and schedule</td>
<td>Professional standardization of instruction</td>
<td>Standardization of training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected level of conflict</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coupling</td>
<td>Loose</td>
<td>Tight</td>
<td>Moderately tight</td>
<td>Loose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicted effectiveness</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected environment</td>
<td>Dynamic and hostile</td>
<td>Simple and stable</td>
<td>Simple and stable</td>
<td>Complex and stable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

educational research literature, significant findings have indicated its relevance to school reform. Prominent among these is the necessity of a culture of trust for realizing effectiveness in education (Tarter & Hoy, 2004; Tarter, Sabo, & Hoy, 1995). One aspect of such a culture is grounded in the need for positive social relationships among teachers, administrators, students, and parents (Bryk & Schneider, 1996, 2002; Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001; Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, & Hoy, 1994; Hoy & Kupersmith, 1985; Hoy, Tarter, & Witkoskie, 1992; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Smith, Hoy, & Sweetland, 2001; Tarter et al., 1995; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; Uline et al., 1998). Such needs are manifested in federal and state educational policies that call for relationships between families and schools, and also studies that suggest school-family relationships strengthen student achievement (Goddard et al., 2001).

Another cultural aspect is that collective trust fosters the collaboration that is an important ingredient in the management of excellent schools. As plans for school reform increasingly call for parents and teachers to be involved in collaborative decision-making, trust allows all parties to set aside their misgivings and act in an honest and open manner (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Trust has also been positively related to teacher efficacy and the belief in teachers’ abilities to engage in courses of action that lead to school success (Goddard et al., 2001; Hoy, 2002; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Tarter & Hoy, 2004), as well as improvements in instructional delivery (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). A contributing factor to organizational health, trust fosters the interpersonal dynamics that create the
environment requisite for promoting student achievement (Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Hoy, Sabo, & Barnes, 1996). Results of research also point to trust relationships as positive predictors of student achievement, suggesting they may additionally help students overcome some disadvantages of poverty (Goddard et al., 2001).

**Schools of Trust Research**

A review of the literature reveals two major schools of trust research. Due to their points of origin, I refer to them as the Ohio State school and the University of Chicago school. With its source in the 1980s, studies at the Ohio State school are facilitated by Wayne Hoy and colleagues. Quantitatively oriented, this school developed and continues to refine scales associated with the measurement of trust. Research also focuses on interrelationships between trust in teachers, principals, students, and parents, coined “faculty trust,” factors to promote trust, and the study of trust as a vehicle for school improvement. Studies continue to be published by this school, with the authors extending their reach to investigate the relationship of trust to other dimensions known to foster school effectiveness.

Trust research conducted by the University of Chicago school grew from the 1988 Chicago school reform effort begun when the Illinois state legislature placed individual school governance in the hands of local school councils. Coordinated by Anthony Bryk and Barbara Schneider, this school conducted a large-scale study of “relational trust” and student achievement based upon data collected over a 10 year period by the Consortium on Chicago School Research. Bryk and Schneider (2002) use a combination of
quantitative and qualitative data to chronicle the connection between a level of trust and student learning, stating that "trust fosters a set of organizational conditions, some structural and others social-psychological, that make it more conducive for individuals to initiate and sustain the kinds of activities necessary to affect productivity improvements" (p. 116). The results of both schools’ research efforts appear in Table 3.

**Trust Studies in Education**

Increasingly, many educational theorists and researchers focus on identifying those factors which build trust relationships. Items such as openness (Hoffman et al., 1994; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998), collegiality (Hoy et al., 1992; Tarter et al., 1995; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998), and authenticity (Hoy & Kupersmith, 1985; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998) have emerged supporting a professional, rather than bureaucratic, model of organizations; one in which teachers play a pivotal role in effecting student performance (Hoy et al., 1992). In pursuit of these factors, Hoy and Kupersmith (1985) developed trust scales that have since become the anchor from which other measures have evolved. Tested through a pilot study conducted at the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University, alpha coefficients for the three scales (trust in principal, trust in colleagues, and trust in the school organization) were .93, .93, and .82 respectively. A rough validity check correlating each scale with responses to an independent, global question measuring a specific aspect of trust yielded values of .94 (trust in principal), .90 (trust in colleagues), and .64 (trust in the school organization). Conclusions reached were that, having reliability and some validity, the scales were
### Table 3

*Studies of Trust Conducted by the Ohio State and University of Chicago Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust</td>
<td>Trust is moderately correlated among all three referents; principal, teachers, and the school organization</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Urban university, suburban, and rural schools</td>
<td>Hoy &amp; Kupersmith, 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust scales</td>
<td>Trust scales found to be reliable and valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust</td>
<td>Most aspects of organizational health are related to teacher-principal trust and teacher-teacher trust</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Urban, suburban, and rural. (Urban possibly underrepresented)</td>
<td>Tarter &amp; Hoy, 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational health</td>
<td>Greater school health yields greater teacher trust in colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust</td>
<td>Teacher-principal trust is correlated with principal’s supportive behavior and openness, but negatively related to principal’s directive behavior</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Urban, suburban, and rural. (Urban possibly underrepresented)</td>
<td>Tarter, Bliss, &amp; Hoy, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open, supportive, directive, and engaged behavior</td>
<td>Teacher-teacher trust is correlated with teacher engagement and openness, but negatively related to interference from Administrators and other teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust School</td>
<td>Developed model in which supportive principal leadership influences both collegiality and teacher-principal trust. These combine to promote trust in colleagues that influences school effectiveness. Supports Mintzberg’s (1979) professional levels</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Hoy, Tarter, &amp; Witkoskie, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effect effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegial relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust</td>
<td>Teacher-principal trust is most related to open and supportive principal behavior</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Urban, suburban,</td>
<td>Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, &amp; Hoy, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational climate</td>
<td>Teacher-teacher trust is most related to open, collegial, and engaged behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td>and rural</td>
<td>(Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegial relations</td>
<td>Model indicated that 1) supportive leadership led to teacher trust in the principal, 2) collegial relations led to teacher trust in colleagues, and 1 and 2, together, led to school effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>and rural</td>
<td>(Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust</td>
<td>Teacher-principal and teacher-teacher trust is related to school health</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Urban, suburban,</td>
<td>Hoy, Sabo, &amp; Barnes, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational health</td>
<td>Healthier organizational climates yield greater faculty trust</td>
<td></td>
<td>and rural</td>
<td>(Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>Researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational health</td>
<td>General school health is related to student achievement in math, reading, and writing</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Urban, suburban, and rural</td>
<td>Hoy &amp; Hannum, 1997 (Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student achievement</td>
<td>Trust is a component of a healthy and effective school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust</td>
<td>Teacher-principal trust is affected by teacher professionalism, collegial leadership, and authenticity of principal behavior</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Urban, suburban, and rural</td>
<td>Tschannen-Moran &amp; Hoy, 1997 (Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Teacher-teacher trust is affected by teacher professionalism and authenticity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegial leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School effectiveness</td>
<td>Expressive (including trust) and instrumental (objective measures) variables are correlated with perceived overall school effectiveness</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Urban, suburban, and rural</td>
<td>Uline, Miller, &amp; Tschannen-Moran, 1998 (Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive and instrumental variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust</td>
<td>Trust in students and parents combined to form a single factor, trust in clients</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Urban (for part of the study)</td>
<td>Hoy &amp; Tschannen-Moran, 1999 (Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust scales</td>
<td>Trust is moderately correlated among principal, teachers, and clients</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty trust is related to degree of parental collaboration in decision-making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Table 3 (continued).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust</td>
<td>Trust in students and parents combined to form a single factor, trust in clients</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Urban, suburban, and rural</td>
<td>Smith, Hoy, &amp; Sweetland, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational health</td>
<td>Overall index of school health related to faculty trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust</td>
<td>Trust in students and parents combined to form a single factor, trust in clients</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, &amp; Hoy, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student achievement</td>
<td>Trust is a significant predictor of differences in student achievement between schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust</td>
<td>Schools with high trust levels are more likely to have higher levels of collaboration</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Tschannen-Moran, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>A reciprocal relationship exists between trust and collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust</td>
<td>Teachers trust the principal in enabling schools (those that facilitate problem solving)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Urban, suburban, and rural</td>
<td>Hoy &amp; Sweetland, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling school structures</td>
<td>Greater trust in students and parents yields greater student achievement in math</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Urban, suburban, and rural</td>
<td>Hoy, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust</td>
<td>Greater trust in students and parents yields greater student achievement in math</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Urban, suburban, and rural</td>
<td>(Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td>A modest relationship exists between social capital (which includes trust) and academic success</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Goddard, 2003 (Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty trust</td>
<td>Faculty trust among all three referents (principal, teachers, and clients), at both the elementary and secondary levels, may be measured by a single scale</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Urban, suburban, and rural</td>
<td>Hoy &amp; Tschannen-Moran, 2003 (Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of trust</td>
<td>A culture of trust has a positive effect on organizational effectiveness as well as students’ math and reading performance</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Urban, suburban, and rural</td>
<td>Tarter &amp; Hoy, 2004 (Ohio State school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational trust</td>
<td>Schools with greater trust are more likely to make improvements over time</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Bryk &amp; Schneider, 2002 (University of Chicago school)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In top quartile schools: 1) 75% of teachers have strong teacher-teacher relationship (little in bottom quartile schools), 2) nearly 100% have strong relationship with principal (67% in bottom quartile schools), and 3) 57% have strong relationship with parents (less than 40% in bottom quartile schools)
### Table 3 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Researchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust building</td>
<td>1) Principals in low-trust schools are more likely to find low-risk exchanges effective in trust building than high-risk exchanges, 2) The types of parent involvement that promote teacher-parent trust varies with the types of resources parents can bring to the school, 3) Teacher-parent trust is more likely to grow in schools with high levels of parent involvement if the principal acts as a buffer, and 4) The growth of trust between teachers is related to the growth of teacher-principal trust</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Kochanek, 2005 (University of Chicago school)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
citing salient references from the trust literature, the authors furnish a brief history of the study of trust which also functions as a series of warrants, helping the reader to make connections and serving as a foundation for future understanding. Such warrants, though not explicit, are well crafted, combining pedagogy and common experience appropriate to the research community.

Hoy and Tschannen-Moran’s (1999) main premise is clearly stated; they purport to build a conceptualization of trust as a construct with five faces that exist for each of its referents. The term “faces” was chosen as it was felt to best capture the multifaceted nature of the concept as reflected in a body of trust literature spanning four decades. Building upon Mishra’s (1996) definition of trust as “one party’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the belief that the latter party is (a) competent, (b) open, (c) concerned, and (d) reliable” (p. 265), Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) conceptually analyzed the trust literature for recurring themes. This led to the emergence of common threads, from which the authors propose the following faces of trust: benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999).

Each face is discussed as it relates to trust, with such discourse providing examples and evidence which serve as additional support for the argument’s main premise. In turn, these examples are often reasons, evidence, and claims in their own right, all supported by individual chains of rationale and justification that appear to be logical and well grounded.

Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) state that, in addition to multiple faces of trust,
multiple referents of trust exist as well. As their focus involves the usefulness of
determining faculty trust in schools, referents of trust are identified as students, teachers,
principal, and parents. While the authors acknowledge that any number of groups could
be referents, their response for including those chosen is not stated. Presumably these
groups were selected as they are the major, and most directly involved, stakeholders in
education. However, considering that referents such as superintendents and school board
members could also be seen as having a high stake in school outcomes, providing reasons
for inclusion may have added to the study’s clarity and credence.

To test their conceptualization, the authors used trust scales developed by Hoy
and Kupersmith (1985) as the starting point of their endeavor. Found to be valid and
reliable, the methodology for accepting these scales as accurate measures of trust appears
to be sound. However, as the scales did not address the faces of competency or openness,
and no measures existed for assessing faculty trust in parents and students, individual
items were added to the existing scales with sets of items being written for the two
referents. Resulting in six-point Likert response sets, with each facet of trust being
assessed for each referent, the scales’ development progressed through four phases:
(a) reactions from a panel of experts, (b) field testing, (c) a pilot study, and (d) a large-
scale study.

The utilization of four stages, rather than a single procedure, appears to have
provided a useful series of checkpoints at which the authors could evaluate the
instruments and make adjustments prior to proceeding. While the first two phases were
predictable in nature, the pilot study’s use of reverse checking measures indicates Hoy
and Tschannen-Moran’s knowledge of the field and desire to thoroughly ascertain the scales’ validity. The sample used in the pilot study appears to be representative with the choice of a principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation appropriate for the testing of item loading. An unexpected result of this analysis revealed that trust in students and trust in parents combined to form a single factor, labeled “trust in clients” by the authors. Finally, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) performed a content analysis which examined each level of trust to ensure that all faces were represented in each scale. Tables displayed for each referent depict the trust items and the facet they represent, indicating that all faces are present in each of the three scales.

The last phase of scale development involved refining the scales, checking reliability and validity, and the testing of trust hypotheses. While the sample appears to be representative, a review of the literature suggests that this same sample was used by Tschannen-Moran (2001) in a study of collaboration and trust. Although both studies appear well designed and managed, nowhere is there an explanation as to whether the researchers had a dual intent prior to data gathering or if emergent results indicated the opportunity for piggybacked research. Information clarifying this issue would greatly assist interested readers in making informed decisions regarding each study’s worth.

Determining the trust scales’ validity was an important purpose of this final, more comprehensive stage. Having chosen a factor analysis for this purpose, the authors warrant its use by citing Kerlinger (in Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999), a behavioral researcher, who argues that this method is perhaps the most powerful form of construct validation. This is followed by findings that support the scales’ construct validity,
ensuring that all faces of trust are present for each identified referent. Complementing the trust scales, a collaboration questionnaire was also completed in this final stage. In seeking whether relationships exist, and to predict values for the dependent variable based upon a combination of several independent variables, correlation and multiple regression analyses were appropriately chosen for the authors’ purposes. Results from these statistical procedures indicated that the presence of faculty trust in clients overwhelmingly explains the degree of parent collaboration.

Based upon an analysis of the presented information, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran’s (1999) claim that the study’s major aims were achieved seems justified. Among conclusions drawn from the obtained results, those most highly pertaining to the premise of this paper are trifold: (a) that the greater the degree of perceived trust, the stronger the belief that teachers will engage in courses of action that lead to success; (b) that faculty trust in clients is positively related to the degree of parent collaboration, and; (c) the development of an operational definition of trust. In recent years, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003) have streamlined these scales through the development of the Omnibus T-Scale. A single scale that may be used in both elementary and secondary schools, the Omnibus T-Scale is a valid and reliable means of measuring trust for the three referents through separate subscales containing all facets of trust.

A strength of Hoy and Tschannen-Moran’s (1999) initial inquiry, and another reason for its selection as a focus of analysis, is the authors’ recommendation that qualitative analyses be conducted to explore complexities of trust not readily apparent through quantitative means. In my opinion, this lends credence to Hoy and Tschannen-
Moran’s (1999) conclusions regarding the potential of trust in school effectiveness. Though their research on this and other topics is quantitatively based, it appears that their belief in the concept of trust as a resource for increasing school effectiveness is of such strength that they are suggesting a type of study not often accepted by more quantitatively oriented researchers. Their recommendation of case studies and other qualitative methods sets the stage for gathering information not typically available through more quantitatively based research methods. It also provides support for my desire to pursue a more in-depth analysis of trust relations; probing the composition of such relationships and how they impact the improvement of school effectiveness. Hoy and Sweetland (2001) cite the need for more qualitative research as does Bottery (2003), who says that “those external to the process may therefore need to place greater importance and greater trust in practitioners’ qualitative descriptions of their work” (p. 260).

Conceptually uniting with and supporting the research of Hoy, Tschannen-Moran, and others is the longitudinal study of Chicago school reform conducted by Bryk and Schneider (2002). Characterized as one of the “worst in America” by then Secretary of Education William Bennett, the Chicago school system launched a major reform effort in 1988 defined by decentralization through the creation of Local School Councils (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Resulting in diverse local initiatives, the reform created a natural milieu for studying various school change processes and also for investigating the role of trust relationships in improving school effectiveness. Seizing this opportunity, the University of Chicago Center for School Improvement conducted longitudinal case studies of 12 Chicago elementary schools. Drawing on this larger, collegial effort, as well
as quantitative data compiled by the Consortium on Chicago School Research, Bryk and Schneider conducted a three-year study of the role of social trust in school reform.

A complex undertaking, Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) research involved both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The three cases outlined were selected from a field study taking place over a three-year period in 12 elementary schools. The research design included interviews, school and classroom observations, focus groups, and the collection of documents. During the course of the three years, the research teams assigned to each field site conducted more than 200 interviews, attended 150 school activities, spent 24 days in classroom observations, and held nine focus group meetings. In order to ensure a random assemblage of school and community factors, a multilevel sampling plan was implemented to assure variation in structural school characteristics, student characteristics, schools’ access to formal knowledge and technical expertise about school improvement practices, the level of social and financial resources in the community, and the intensity of political activity regarding school matters.

The analysis of the three-year field study was multifaceted, beginning with an examination of field observation notes. To strengthen the analysis, all interviews and observation records for the twelve schools were arrayed in data files and entered into the NUD*IST software program. Keywords including trust, respect, and caring were searched for as were specific interview questions involving individuals’ perceptions of good schools, positive staff, parent, and teacher-student relationships, and elements of school leadership. From the information generated and discussed, three schools were selected that offered the richest opportunity for the development of a grounded theory of
relational trust. Combined with a review of the trust literature, ideas emerged which led the authors to finalize their conceptualization of relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Although described in detail, Bryk and Schneider (2002) advance no definition of relational trust. While somewhat elusive, its basic conceptualization is that of a three level theory (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). At its most basic, relational trust involves discerning the intentions of others within role relations formed by the institutional structure of schooling and the particularities of each individual school community. These trust relations then culminate in important consequences at the school level. So conceived, its elements may be defined in the reciprocal exchanges among those in a school community, with its presence or absence having important consequences for the school’s functioning and capacity to engage in fundamental change (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Quantitative data gathering took several forms. First was the collection and compilation of annual standardized test data administered by the Chicago Public Schools. This information was obtained through access to a test score data base containing more than 400 elementary schools. Concerns about test validity were noted in the context of high stakes accountability initiatives where student retention, an emphasis on test preparation, and other short-term initiatives might be implemented to make “the numbers look better” (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p. 100). The second form of data gathering consisted of teacher surveys given in both 1994 and 1997 designed to measure teacher-parent, teacher-principal, and teacher-teacher trust. Subjected to separate and linked
Rasch Rating Scale Analyses, the relative ordering of item difficulties was shown to remain stable over time. Through use of a hierarchical linear model, correlations calculated between the 1994 and 1997 measures (teacher-parent trust, $r = 0.76$; teacher-teacher trust, $r = 0.80$; teacher-principal trust, $r = 0.62$) lend “reasonable” confidence to the assumption that both measures captured the same phenomenon (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). An examination of the data collected for different schools indicated the existence of substantial variability on these three measures of trust.

The final analytic concern of the study involved examining the link between relational trust in schools and the likelihood of improvement that will result in increased student learning. Although the length of this dissertation precludes a thorough discussion of all instruments and data, a brief description of the school academic productivity profile is necessary to address this final concern. In essence, the function of the productivity profile is to determine whether a school’s contribution to student learning is increasing over time. Bryk and Schneider (2002) developed a profile for each grade level that measured the input status for a grade (the knowledge and skills that students bring to instruction) and learning gain (the amount of gain between input status and the end of the year). A hierarchical linear model allowed productivity trend lines to emerge, and also provided the opportunity for the adjustment of factors besides school effectiveness which may change over time.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) devote several chapters to analyzing and reporting their findings. While the figures that accompany explanations provide clear visualizations, their interpretation would be aided by the inclusion of statistical results in
the body of the text. In their analysis of the relationship between the school productivity indicator for reading and the mean score of the trust composite measure (derived from averaging the results of the three trust scales), it may be seen that while the baseline relational means for improving and nonimproving schools are similar, these means increase for improving schools in 1994 and 1997. Conversely, the relational means decrease for nonimproving schools. Such results are interpreted by the authors to indicate a positive relationship between trust and school achievement. Similar results are found for the relationship between the school productivity indicator for math and the mean score of the trust composite measure.

While these and other results are strong indicators of the positive relationship between relational trust and school improvement, Bryk and Schneider (2002) employ a series of hierarchical multivariate linear models to ascertain whether other variables could be the cause of these findings. After examining items such as ethnicity, socioeconomic level, and enrollment stability, there was no indication that any of these variables confounded the relationship between relational trust and improving school productivity. Due to these and other findings, Bryk and Schneider maintain that there is strong statistical evidence linking relational trust to improved student learning.

Building on the work of Bryk and Schneider (2002), Kochanek (2005) explores the building of positive trust relationships in light of effective schools research. Citing the work of Spillane and Thompson (1997), Kochanek describes effective schools as those that successfully operate as networks, emphasizing the need to develop trusting relationships. Spillane and Thompson write that districts
that had made the greatest strides in reforming their mathematics and science programs were also ones with a strong sense of trust among educators within the district. Trust was crucial because it facilitated conversations about instructional reform among local educators. . . . Trust was also essential for genuine collaboration among educators, enabling them to work together to develop a shared understanding of the reforms. (p. 195)

Kochanek then details the building of such relationships through three semihistorical case studies involving schools that experienced a growth of trust.

In addition to the referents of trust previously mentioned, researchers in the field suggest the need to study trust relationships between teachers and other stakeholders in the field of education. Due to the attention devoted to school reform both in the United States and abroad, policymakers are beginning to receive such consideration, both at the national and local levels. Although at the national level no empirical research yet addresses this question, initial inquiries have begun in the United Kingdom.

In 2001, Estelle Morris, then Secretary of State for Education in England and Wales, spoke about professionalism and trust to the Social Market Foundation in an effort to heal damaged relations with teachers (Morris, 2001). Strained relationships between the government and educators began in the 1980s when legislation enacted a national curriculum, national inspection body, and enforced pay and working conditions. As a result, fewer teachers entered the field and more left prior to retirement (Bottery, 2003). Morris (2001) states that, although governments “have not always rushed to express their confidence in teachers,” (p. 26) those days are being left behind for an era of trust in which teachers and government partner in setting the reform agenda.

Bottery (2003) cites economic, political, and ethical reasons for the apparent lack of trust that exists between educators and the government, not unlike those of the United
States. Concerned with declining tax bases, reform was enacted to ensure that public servants delivered what was needed to achieve the best value, resulting in a perceived assault on professional autonomy. Bottery’s (2003) approach explores teacher-policymaker trust relationships primarily from the psychological level, pointing to the government’s trust judgments as having deep emotional ramifications. Though no empirical study was conducted, Bottery (2004) says that “the evidence seems increasingly clear that when people are trusted, their self-esteem is raised; when they feel good about themselves, they are able to feel good about others and to reach out to them; altruism is then more likely to be seen” (p. 11).

School Boards and Trust

Although educational mandates originate at the federal or state level, responsibility for strengthening each community’s educational system rests with policymakers at the local level, namely school board members (EPLC, 2004). Its members play the role of vital link, making sure that reform actually occurs (Kirst, 1994). With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, school boards are experiencing a heightened responsibility to improve the performance of students (Education Commission of the States, 2002).

Effective school boards focus on increasing learning and raising school effectiveness to ever higher levels. The challenges of accomplishing these tasks in the 21st century suggest the need for more meaningful and dynamic processes of governance; those occurring through policymaking that does not cross into implementation of
educational content or pedagogy, but provides the strong collaborative leadership that is the foundation of high student achievement (Bracey & Resnick, 1998; ECS, 1994; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000). To do so requires high quality teaching and effective school board leadership, especially as school boards are unicameral bodies without the checks and balances inherent in other legislative bodies (EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000).

School boards, acting as local leaders, are responsible for planning, policymaking, communicating, advocating for youth, developing positive relationships with staff, and monitoring progress, personnel, and its own performance while avoiding the micromanagement of school operations (Creese, 1995; ECS, 1994; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Fulbright, 1998; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). As school board members must interact with parents, the public, state and federal policymakers, board colleagues, the superintendent, and school staffs, communication may be viewed as the springboard for creating the support and trust necessary to build an effective educational system (EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Fulbright, 1998; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2003; Iowa School Board Compass, 2000). Of all those working with school boards, teachers, as the most important resource a district provides to its students (Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000), possess great potential to unite with its members to effect change. As increasing attention is devoted to the board’s role in improving school effectiveness, the value of teacher-school board member relationships is emerging as an element common to districts successfully meeting identified goals (IASB, 2001).

Effective school boards are increasingly moving away from bureaucratic systems
and top-down decision-making to a collaborative model of mutual support in which authority is delegated to building and classroom levels (ECS, 1994; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Ouchi, 2003). Requests for input and recommendations elevate the status of teachers, while, at the same time, boards provide the guidance, support, and resources necessary for their success (EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000). Strong boards do not cross into the implementation of content or pedagogy, but serve as advocates for teachers and staff as well as children (Creese, 1995; ECS, 1994; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000).

Historically, mandates have largely ignored local governance, with few states examining the role of school boards in reform (EPLC, 2004). In 2003, The Education Policy and Leadership Center of Pennsylvania (EPLC) (2004) initiated the K-12 Governance Project for the purposes of improving the effectiveness of school boards and increasing the number of citizens motivated and prepared to serve on local school boards. Over nine months, a 20-member group including representatives of school boards, school administrators, school study councils, parents, higher education, and the business community conducted introductory sessions, focus group meetings, and a web-based survey in order to gather views and recommendations for accomplishing the project’s objectives. Among its findings and recommendations, EPLC’s (2004) report advances the importance of ethical relationships and respect for others, echoing findings in groundbreaking research conducted by the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) (Iowa School Board Compass, 2000).

Little scientific research exists that draws connections between governance and
student achievement (EPLC, 2004). One of the few to do so, the IASB Lighthouse Study (2001) identified links between school board practice and student achievement through the use of quantifiable, reliable measures (Iowa School Board Compass, 2000). As Iowa did not have a reliable statewide database from which to identify high and low achieving districts, researchers used the Georgia School Boards Association’s database from which schools could be reliably selected based upon statewide assessments, nationally normed achievement tests, and the state’s high school graduation test. Six Georgia school districts, found to be comparable both to each other and Iowa districts, agreed to participate in the study.

The IASB research team and one consultant interviewed 159 school board members, superintendents, central office personnel, teachers, principals, and assistant principals in three high and three low-achieving districts over a nine-month period (IASB, 2001). The interviews were submitted to a content analysis based upon the presence of seven conditions for school renewal as derived from reviews of research on productive change in education. These conditions included (a) shared leadership, (b) continuous improvement, (c) the ability to create and sustain initiatives, (d) a supportive workplace for staff, (e) staff development, (f) support for school sites through data and information, and (g) community involvement (IASB, 2001; Iowa School Board Compass, 2000). Borrowing terms from the 1989 research of Rosenholtz, districts were then categorized as “moving” if student achievement was far above the norm and on the move, and “stuck” if student achievement was far below the norm and relatively stuck, with such results then assembled into case descriptions of the districts (IASB, 2001).
Findings revealed that the knowledge and beliefs of teachers and school board members in high achieving districts differed significantly from their low achieving counterparts (Iowa School Board Compass, 2000). The content analysis indicated threads of teacher-school board member relationships actively laced through all seven school renewal conditions. However, their presence was most evident in the supportive workplace strand, described as “a supportive workplace that enables all staff to succeed in their roles” (IASB, 2001, p. 9). Districts categorized as “moving” were described as having board members who displayed positive attitudes about personnel as well as a high level of confidence that they would succeed. Teachers reflected this outlook, stating that the district’s leadership was supportive and they were trusted (IASB, 2001). Goodman and Zimmerman (1998; 2000) also mention the importance of trust in school governance and student achievement, recommending that districts “make trust the bottom line” (Goodman & Fulbright, 1998, p. 38).

**Policymaking**

As previously stated, school boards, acting as local leaders, are responsible for planning, policymaking, communicating, advocating for youth, developing positive relationships with staff, and monitoring progress, personnel, and its own performance (Creese, 1995; ECS, 1994; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Fulbright, 1998; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Of these, the board’s primary role is the establishment of policy for governing its elementary and secondary schools (American Association of School Administrators [AASA], 1994; Illinois Association of School Boards, 1998). Through the act of adopting
policies, school boards chart the direction and structure of their districts and prescribe the
actions of all who work within the board’s jurisdiction (Illinois Association of School
Boards).

One of the most venerable of United States’ public institutions, the school board
dates back to colonial times and citizens’ distrust of governments that ruled from afar
with no knowledge or experience regarding local conditions. Also valued because of
Americans’ ambivalence toward experts and expertise, lay school boards are expected to
act as a buffer between citizens and the potential excesses of professional educators
(Danzberger, 1994). As such, school boards often respond to local issues and the interests
of constituents as well as fulfilling state and federal mandates required through their role
However, compliance with such mandates alone is not sufficient for effective school
governance. Rather than acting in a reactive mode, policymaking needs to be integrated
with planning and priorities, providing leadership and direction for a district’s schools
(Illinois Association of School Boards).

The primary work of school boards is its policymaking function. This includes
determining priorities, defining goals and objectives, and assessing achievements in light
of its stated objectives (The Institute for Educational Leadership [IEL], 1986). The
license to govern through the enactment of policies rests with the board as a collective
body, with board members having no individual authority to act (Illinois Association of
School Boards, 1998). Although some boards organize their work through committees,
this seems to work better for homogeneous boards in small communities than for urban
boards with diverse constituencies (IEL).

Formal policymaking progresses through several phases. The first is accomplished as the board evaluates district priorities established through the planning process. Issues affecting students, schools, and the community are identified and the need for policy brought to the forefront by the superintendent, staff, the district’s solicitor, students, parents, members of the community or board members themselves (Illinois Association of School Boards, 1998). Relevant data is then gathered from the superintendent, the board’s chief professional adviser, with input also sought from other affected parties (AASA, 1994; Illinois Association of School Boards).

Following data collection, policy proposals that express the board’s purpose and direction are drafted and reviewed at a public board meeting with the opportunity given for community input. After adequate review and discussion, a vote is taken in a legally called meeting with a quorum of the board present. For a proposed policy to become final, an appropriate majority of the board must vote in favor of its adoption. Finally, adopted policy should include a time and method for periodic review so that the board can integrate its policy agenda into its planning and budgeting process (Illinois Association of School Boards, 1998).

This formal policymaking model is aligned with systems thinking (Senge, 1990), a concept that characterizes the leadership of learning organizations. Built upon the component technologies of shared vision, team learning, personal mastery, and the deeply ingrained assumptions that influence action, systems thinking is a conceptual framework that allows the interrelationship of actions and their potential impact to be seen more
clearly. The increased clarity of such patterns helps afford the vision necessary to implement the effective, systemic change called for by leaders in all quarters of American society (Senge; Danzberger, 1992).

While the procedures of such formal policymaking are the ideal, informal measures of policy creation and adoption also exist. Informal policymaking is often reactive and based upon individual board member interests rather than those of the collective, with board members frequently moving out of their policymaking role into day-to-day district administration that is properly the realm of a professional administrator. While many members perceive their service on the board as motivated by a desire to give back to the local community (Genck, 1991), others view board membership as leading to political advancement (The Twentieth Century Fund/Danforth Foundation, 1992; Wagner, 1992), offering a disapproving voice to the operation of schools, or as a means to plead the causes of special interest groups (Schlechty, 1997). In addition to policymaking as a reaction to state and federal mandates, board members also react to the voice of the taxpayer. While members interviewed by Rallis and Criscoe (1993) talked of meeting students’ educational needs, cost was always in their minds and tended to influence the final vote.

Another aspect of informal policymaking is members’ identification of the board as a political steppingstone, causing them to focus on interests of selected constituents rather than broad education policy. A study of West Virginia boards over a five-year period indicated that only three percent of the boards’ decisions dealt primarily with policy (The Twentieth Century Fund/Danforth Foundation, 1992). In fact, Grady and
Bryant (1991) found that American school boards spent 24 percent of their time dealing with problems involving their own children or those of relatives and close friends. Board members also have no independent sources of information. While their decision-making efforts are dependent upon obtaining accurate information, as laypersons they must often rely on constituent or special interest groups whose data tends to be biased (Rallis & Criscoe, 1993). A study by Feistritzer (1989) revealed that 81 percent of board members felt that superintendents greatly influenced their decisions, suggesting that board members, particularly those who had served more than three years, are more inclined to follow their superintendents’ lead and less likely to support school reform.

The tendency toward micromanagement can also inhibit a board’s policymaking function and efforts toward reform (McAdams, 1997). Becoming bogged down in the minutiae of routine administration, many local boards have lost sight of their role as creators of policy (The Twentieth Century Fund/Danforth Foundation, 1992; Wagner, 1992). In an age where effective schools research points to the granting of greater autonomy to individual schools, informal policymaking based on board members’ personal needs may be viewed as barriers to reform (Chubb & Moe, 1991; The Twentieth Century Fund/Danforth Foundation, 1992). To improve the effectiveness of America’s schools, boards need policies of teamwork and delegation instead of conflict and authority; policies that foster communication, teamwork, trust, and confidence between the school board and staff (Genck, 1991).
Cautions in the Study of Trust

Recent research indicates the relevance of trust to school reform. However, a few caveats should be recognized when interpreting the findings. First, more extensive empirical testing is needed due to the paucity of systematic research that currently exists (Hoffman et al., 1994; Hoy et al., 1996; Hoy et al., 1992; Hoy & Kupersmith, 1985; Tarter, Bliss, & Hoy, 1989; Tarter & Hoy, 1988; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; Uline et al., 1998). In addition, several studies conducted by the Ohio State school appear to have used the same sample of participants, suggesting replication in order to confirm the initial results. This school also states that, although trust is necessary, it is not sufficient to maintain long-term effectiveness (Hoffman et al., 1994; Hoy et al., 1996; Hoy et al., 1992; Tarter et al., 1995).

Somewhat conflicting findings have emerged as well. Goddard’s (2003) investigation of trust as a form of social capital affecting student achievement yielded only a modest relationship, with results limited to math and writing achievement. Yet other studies discuss the importance of variables such as collaboration and teacher efficacy in improving effectiveness (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Goddard et al., 2001; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Tyler and Degoey (1996), citing Williamson, state that “trust, if it is obtained at all, is reserved for very special relations between family, friends, and lovers . . . Commercial relations do not qualify” (p. 346).

Such cautions will be considered during both the design and interpretive phases of this study. As with any field in its infancy, this research is intended to fill a gap in the
existing knowledge base by contributing systematically constructed information to the study of trust and school effectiveness. Additionally, where past investigations have approached the topic from a quantitative point of view that sometimes used the same pool of respondents, this study’s qualitative orientation will provide a conceptual depth not possible quantitatively. In so doing, this exploration will begin to examine many of the caveats arising in the studies of other researchers.

Summary

In Chapter I, the discussion of school reform legislation demonstrated the repetitious nature of reform efforts throughout the past 40 years. Furthermore, the continued call for school improvement indicates that mandated reform has not had the desired results. Recognizing this need, Chapter II explores an alternate path to school effectiveness through the establishment of trust relationships. The review of the literature reveals a body of studies conducted at the school, or micro, level among three groups of trust referents, teachers, principal, and clients (students and/or parents). While this research demonstrates the impact of trust relationships on various facets of improvement in individual schools, the question regarding the effect of trust as a macro-level instrument of school reform remains open. One limitation of the literature to date is that, due to the field’s infancy, the only trust relationships studied have been teacher-principal, teacher-teacher, and teacher-client. Although several studies have recommended using district level administrators as trust referents, this dissertation is the only study that examines the influence of perceived teacher-policymaker trust relationships on school
effectiveness.

Another limitation, found in the work of Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999), is a lack of qualitative study. Recognized by the authors, they state the need for research that probes the nature of trust relationships; how they are established as well as maintained. Interwoven with the absence of qualitative methodology is that many of their studies draw upon information collected from the same sample, calling into question the integrity of different research results. While Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) work is both quantitative and qualitative in nature, it does not address trust relations between faculty and policymakers. The current study will help fill these gaps by delving more deeply into the trust relationships that exist among policymakers and elementary teachers, in addition to their perceptions of what makes a school effective. Although this research could be conducted at any level, elementary teachers were selected due to their slight underrepresentation in the literature and also to narrow the research focus. Personal communications with cited researchers confirm the need for this study.

Theories of psychological motivation suggest that individuals must have certain needs satisfied before engaging in self-directed behavior. As such, teachers’ perceptions of reform as mandates driven by policymakers with little faith in educators’ abilities may prevent current efforts from achieving their desired results. In conjunction with motivational theory, the school structure model indicates that Weberian or professional structures are necessary for a school to realize maximum effectiveness.

To explore the influence of perceived teacher-school board member trust relationships on school effectiveness, this dissertation will present a collective,
instrumental case study to examine the existence, establishment, and nurturing of such relationships, as well as the perceptions of school effectiveness possessed by rural and suburban elementary teachers and school board members in Erie County, Pennsylvania.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This is an instrumental case study designed to explore the potential of trust relationships as a means of increasing school effectiveness. Over the past four decades, major school reform efforts have consisted of legislative mandates that have realized few, if any, long-term results. Based on a growing body of literature in the social sciences that extols trust relationships as a catalyst for change, educational researchers have begun to study teacher-teacher, teacher-principal, and teacher-client trust relations. Findings suggest that such trust relationships may be a means to reform through fostering those attributes most commonly attributed to effective schools. Results such as these at the school (or micro-level) lead to a macro-level issue that is the central question of this study: Can trust relationships between teachers and policymakers, specifically school board members, have a similar influence on school effectiveness?

As a result of the January 2002 passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Dept. of Ed, n.d.), many teachers feel a loss of professional autonomy. When viewed in light of Maslow’s needs hierarchy and theory of motivation, such autonomy, along with respect from others, control, and professional competence, helps to satisfy the self-esteem needs that foster the motivation necessary for educators to realize their full potential (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). This motivation, in turn, serves to optimize educational opportunities for students at all levels. Therein lies the essence of what this study pursues: to ascertain
teachers’ and school board members’ perceptions of their trust relations and to determine the potential of positive trust relationships to improve school effectiveness.

This instrumental case study makes use of the constructivist paradigm within an interpretivist approach to examine the research questions: (a) How do rural and suburban elementary teachers define school effectiveness? (b) How do policymakers, specifically school board members, define school effectiveness? (c) What perceptions do rural and suburban elementary teachers possess regarding trust relationships between school board members and themselves? What impact does this relationship have on their perceptions of school effectiveness? and (d) What perceptions do school board members possess regarding trust relationships between rural and suburban elementary teachers and themselves? What impact does this relationship have on their perceptions of school effectiveness?

The Interpretivist Approach

Referred to by some as a model, several scholars prefer the term approach or persuasion when discussing interpretivist inquiry. Where model suggests a blueprint to be followed, the words approach and persuasion more accurately describe the inquiry as dealing with statements of commitments, purviews, and concerns (Schwandt, 1994).

Interpretivism and constructivism are expressions that frequently appear in discussions of qualitative research. However, their meanings among studies are not constant, but shaped by the intent of the researcher (Schwandt, 1994). Studies exhibiting such varied means of data analysis are easily located in the literature. Regardless of the
particular type of interpretivist approach selected, all focus on the identification of intersubjective and common meanings or, according to Taylor (as cited in Schwandt, 1994, p. 120), “ways of experiencing action in society which are expressed in the language and descriptions constitutive of institutions and practices.”

The type of interpretivist framework selected for data analysis in this study is constructivist. Also known as the constructivist paradigm, Guba describes the framework as a “basic set of beliefs that guide action” (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 26) which comprises the researcher’s ontological, epistemological, and methodological premises. An ontological premise refers to the philosophical assumption about the nature of reality, epistemological to the interrelated relationship of researcher to that being studied, and methodological to the researcher’s conceptualization of the research process (Creswell, 1998). The constructivist paradigm is typified by a relativist ontology consisting of multiple realities, a subjectivist and transactional epistemology in which the investigator and subjects of the investigation interactively create the findings, and a hermeneutical, dialectic methodology that elicits and refines individual constructions through interactions between and among the investigator and respondents (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Similar to the interpretive, constructivist approaches are also marked by multiple uses (Schwandt, 1994). The type used in this study is Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) constructivist paradigm. Beginning with an issue, the inquiry unfolds through a repeating sequence of iteration, analysis, and critique that leads to the construction of a case by the inquirer and respondents. Lincoln and Guba assume that realities are multiple, and
constructed in the minds of individuals. In addition, the paradigm promotes pluralism in that its reality may be expressed in a variety of symbol and language systems (Schwandt, 1994), and is well suited for case study methodology (Greene, 1994).

Present in education for many years, constructivist theories are grounded in the educational philosophy of Dewey as well as the research of Piaget and Vygotsky. While the term is used in different ways, educational constructivism assumes that people create and build knowledge rather than assimilate it from the external environment (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). The presence of this theory within the educational domain makes it an apt point of departure for studying the domain itself, as constructivist researchers are committed to the perspective that knowledge is created, not discovered by mind (Schwandt, 1994).

The need for qualitative study is voiced by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999), who cite their review of the literature when suggesting trust is a complex construct that needs to be examined using multiple methods. They recommend analyses that examine the dynamics of the process of trusting, such as case studies exploring the how and why of trust relationships. This study employs such multiplicity of methods, including case study, participant orientation of the inquirer and respondents, and exploration of meaning with regard to organizational structure and contemporary educational practice. Interviews, documents, and artifacts were interpreted in light of models of school structure to create meaning and build knowledge. The constructivist paradigm acknowledges the role of inquirer as participant, that constructions emerge and are elicited through interactions between and among the inquirer and respondents, and that
values are inescapable in shaping the inquiry outcomes. Considering these functions, the constructivist paradigm is well aligned to investigate this study’s research problem.

The inquirer as participant, unacceptable in positivist and postpositivist research, is inherent in the constructivist approach. Rather than hiding the inquirer’s intent, this paradigm encourages revelation in the interest of uncovering and improving constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). According to Shank (2002), “We are searchers and discoverers and reconcilers of meaning where no meaning has been clearly understood before, and we do not feel that our understanding of meaning is complete until we discover and understand its role in practice and experience” (p. 11). Ethics are intrinsic to this approach, both because of the inquirer’s involvement and the value-laden experiences of all inquiry participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Interpretation takes the form of analytic induction (Huberman & Miles, 1994) through the trends of thematic analysis, meaning generation, confirmation, and synthesis and illumination (Shank, 2002). The analysis does not assume a single, interpretive truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998), but respects the relativist ontology’s possibility of multiple realities.

Frameworks for data analysis and interpretation are Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) school structure model, the Bracey and Resnick (1998) derived definition of school effectiveness, the definition of trust advanced by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999), and the IASB’s (2000) Lighthouse Study. Primary sources requested to participate were all school board members and elementary teachers in rural and suburban Erie County, Pennsylvania schools that house Grade 5. Each of these individuals were asked to respond to an opinion inventory which served as the foundation of semi-structured
interviews with four teachers and four board members selected from the same collection of districts according to procedures detailed in the sampling subsection.

Secondary sources included documents and artifacts such as school district report cards as well as information acquired through the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Standard & Poor’s SchoolMatters.com. Data was then examined based upon emergent themes, categories, and aspects of experience.

Instrumental Case Study

Qualitative case studies are prevalent in the field of education (Merriam, 2001), with the researcher’s intent determining the specific perspective used. While two main approaches characterize the field, the method used in this study most closely parallels that of Stake (1998) in his reliance on a more interpretivist approach with a strong qualitative emphasis (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). However, the exploratory and knowledge building elements of Yin’s (1994) approach are incorporated as well.

Stake (1998) identifies three types of study; the intrinsic, instrumental, and collective case study. Intrinsic case studies are undertaken when a better understanding of a particular case is desired. In an intrinsic case, interest is not directed toward representativeness or a particular issue, but rather the case itself. However, when an issue is the focal point, an instrumental case study is used to obtain insight or refine a theory. Looking at a specific case in such a manner helps the researcher pursue and advance understanding of an external interest. If more than one case is studied jointly so as to inquire into a phenomenon, population, or general condition, it is termed a collective case
study.

The instrumental case was chosen to use within the constructivist paradigm of this study in that “a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory” (p. 88). Such a case is looked at in depth in the expectation of advancing our understanding of another interest. In this study, the primary focus is the perceived influence of teacher-school board trust relationships on school effectiveness. The “issue” is the identified trust relationship with the “other interest” being an understanding of how local school districts might best work within the requirements of legislated educational mandates to effect their desired results. In actuality, this study took on a collective nature, as the instrumental study was extended to several cases jointly in order to inquire into the issue (Stake, 1998).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) used such a collective approach in building their grounded theory regarding trust relationships and student achievement. The authors conducted longitudinal case studies of three Chicago elementary schools that included in-depth analyses of interviews, observations, focus groups, and collected documents. The findings that emerged, along with available quantitative data, resulted in the development of a theory suggesting a positive effect of trust on school achievement. Merriam’s (2002) statement that the descriptive data collected through interpretive case studies may be used to “challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data gathering” (p. 38) suggests that this approach is well suited to a study exploring an alternative to the present method of school reform. In fact, Stake (1998) asserts that “case study can also be a disciplined force in public policy setting” (p. 104).
Stake (1998) maintains that the qualitative case researcher has six conceptual responsibilities: (a) bounding the case, (b) selecting the issues, or research questions, to emphasize, (c) seeking patterns of data that will allow development of the issues, (d) triangulating observations and bases for interpretation, (e) selecting alternate interpretations which may be pursued, and (f) developing assertions or generalizations regarding the case. Such conceptualizations served as the guidelines for this study.

A bounded system demonstrates specificity, with boundaries often designated by time, place, or process, and components interrelated so as to form a whole (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 1998). Two major works of this type are *Children of Crisis* (Coles, 1967) and *Savage Inequalities* (Kozol, 1991). In the former, Coles (1967) describes the plight of poor and powerless children in the twentieth century, bounding the case by time, wealth, and issue. Kozol’s (1991) boundaries are similar, as he discusses the difficulties encountered by poor children in the American education system. The subject of the current research is bounded in much the same manner. Based upon an issues orientation, trust relationships between teachers and school board members serve as its primary periphery. Elements of location and time strengthen this boundary, as the research focuses on trust relationships in Erie County, Pennsylvania within the implementation period of the No Child Left Behind Act (U. S. Dept. of Ed., n.d.).

Another of Stake’s (1998) conceptual responsibilities involves triangulating bases for interpretation by placing an emphasis on the use of different data sources. Yin (1989), in discussing case studies, recommends six forms of data: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. This
research employed documents, archival records, interviews, and also an opinion inventory. The broadest level of inquiry utilized the inventory to gather the opinions of school board members as well as rural and suburban elementary teachers in Erie County, Pennsylvania. From this point the focus narrowed, with four teachers and four board members interviewed using a semi-structured format. Archival records, in the form of district report cards, newsletters, and statistical reports of AYP data, were obtained in addition to public statements issued by board members during their terms of office.

As the information emerged, the researcher chose an interpretive path to follow, reporting “[individual’s] cases as cases that will be compared with others” (Stake, 1998, p. 97). As the study at hand is collective, the first information provided is a within-case analysis containing a detailed description of each case and its emergent themes. Following this is a cross-case analysis, in which themes generated in each individual instance were analyzed across the entire body of cases (Creswell, 1998). The inquiry aimed for consensus, but was open to multiple realities and new interpretation as more informed and sophisticated constructions accrued. These characteristics are well suited to the constructivist paradigm, which moves into the last stage as the researcher adds to a growing “edifice of knowledge” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 114).

The longitudinal study of Chicago school reform conducted by Bryk and Schneider (2002) served as the methodological anchor for this research. A study of much greater magnitude, ideas were extracted from their three cases that catalyzed the researcher’s thinking and also acted as benchmarks throughout the study’s course. First among these is Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) process for selecting the schools that would
be included in the study. Purposive sampling was utilized, with the key factor of their selection being representation. After determining the “modal type” of school that was being examined, Bryk and Schneider (2002) selected several schools that were representative based upon income, diversity, and external support. Next, they chose additional schools that contrasted with this type in order to examine whether context might impact the relationship between trust and student achievement. While the focus of the present study is on individual teachers and board members rather than the school as a collective entity, the selection of participating individuals was based on these same concepts of representation and contrast.

Of the data sources used by Bryk and Schneider (2002), interviews and documents formed the basis of this study. While Bryk and Schneider’s research was founded on three years of fieldwork in which research teams assigned to each site conducted more than 200 interviews, the present study involved interviews with eight individuals. Interviews were semi-structured, with member checking and subsequent protocols emerging from preceding information. A library of documents was also assembled and analyzed. Such documents and media included (a) the Pennsylvania State Report Card, (b) district report cards, (c) school district press releases, (d) school district public relations information, (e) school websites, and (f) Standard & Poor’s SchoolMatters.com. As the study progressed, newsletters, local newspaper articles, and school board members’ published election platforms were added to this list.

Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) field study analysis was multifaceted, with data subjected to the NUD*IST software program and then thematically categorized in what
appears to be the constant comparative method. Since the current study did not intend to develop a grounded theory, a more phenomenological approach was undertaken. The intent of such analysis is to seek out the essence of a phenomenon (Merriam, 2001), in this case the phenomenon being that of teacher-board member trust relationships. Such examination first occurred in within-case analyses, in which the researcher identified themes in the individual cases. The researcher pulled data apart and reassembled the information in meaningful ways, drawing significance from it through direct interpretation. Patterns were sought, with correspondences between categories developing in naturalistic generalizations. After the analyses of individual cases, examination through a cross-case analysis searched for themes among cases to determine themes that were common to all (Creswell, 1998).

Primary Sources

Opinion Inventory

A brief opinion inventory addressing perceptions of teacher-school board trust relationships, that which constitutes school effectiveness, and the juxtaposition of the two, was developed for use with both school board members and teachers. Experts in the field of educational leadership and qualitative inquiry examined the instrument, and necessary changes were made prior to administration.

Following the researcher’s designation as a Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators Fellow, superintendents of each Erie County school district were contacted through the mail and by telephone in order to explain the study’s purpose and
to request their assistance in communicating with the school board regarding their completion of the inventory. The researcher mailed the inventories and informed consent documents to the superintendent and also offered to personally meet with the board to administer the inventory should the superintendent prefer. There was no coding on the inventory, and board members were assured as to the confidentiality of their responses. Self-addressed, stamped envelopes were included with the instruments along with a deadline for their return. All participating superintendents chose to distribute the inventories themselves. Reminder postcards were sent in order to obtain the greatest completion rate possible.

The inventory was also administered to the professional staffs at the 21 rural and suburban public elementary schools in Erie County, Pennsylvania. As it benefited the study’s integrity to involve as many faculty members as possible, the principals of each elementary school were mailed information concerning the nature of the inquiry and asked whether they would administer the inventory (which took no more than 15 minutes to complete) during a faculty meeting in accordance with a brief, scripted set of directions. As most principals have the discretion to schedule such meetings, this seemed an expedient way to obtain participation and ensure the consistency of the scale’s administration. While it could not be guaranteed that all of a school’s faculty members would be present, such a method appeared the best way to maximize the rate of participation. Following the mailing, principals were personally contacted to ask for their assistance, to ask if they had any questions, and to schedule a timeframe in which the meeting would be held. Ethical considerations and confidentiality were stressed.
throughout all phases of this endeavor. With the agreement of the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5, principals were given the option of returning completed surveys to the Intermediate Unit mail room in a pre-addressed, non-identifiable envelope on their scheduled delivery/pick-up day, where they were held until the deadline and picked up by the researcher.

For those principals who agreed to participate, the directions and an adequate number of inventories were sent in advance, so that they could familiarize themselves with the instrument and have time to ask any necessary questions. A brief school demographic questionnaire was also enclosed that they were asked to complete. Following the inventory’s administration, the principal was asked to place the completed instruments and demographic questionnaire in the envelope provided, and return it to the Intermediate Unit or researcher by the determined date. Reminder phone calls were made to ensure the highest possible completion rate, with the researcher administering the inventory to one faculty at the principal’s request.

Documents and Media

“A case study involves the widest array of data collection as the researcher attempts to build an in-depth picture of the case” (Creswell, 1998, p. 123). Documents and media regarding public school districts are a matter of public record and readily available. Due to advances in technology, much current information may be accessed through the Internet. One source that was accessed in this manner was the Pennsylvania State Report Card. Required by the No Child Left Behind Act, the report card is available
on the Pennsylvania Department of Education website and indicates the status of the state’s students on key indicators of academic achievement. In addition to information regarding attendance and graduation rates, the report presents statewide reading and math performance level averages on the Pennsylvania System of State Assessment (PSSA) at the 5th, 8th, and 11th grades and also by subgroups such as gender, race/ethnicity, English proficiency, as well as disability, migrant, and economic status.

District report cards, another requirement of the No Child Left Behind Act, are also a matter of public record. These documents, published annually by each Pennsylvania school district, detail how well the district and its individual schools performed relative to the criteria set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. As part of the law, each school also reports the participation rate of students taking the test, attendance rates for students in grades kindergarten through eight, the graduation rate for high school students, and the number of highly qualified teachers in each building. As in the State Report Card, information is also reported for student subgroups.

Standard & Poor’s SchoolMatters.com is an Internet based report that provides academic, financial, and socioeconomic information about each Pennsylvania school district. Reporting statistics concerning student performance, school environment, community information, return on resources, spending, revenue, and taxes, the website also features tools for comparing schools within the state.

Additional documents were obtained through school district offices, websites, and press releases.
Interviews

Another type of data was gathered in the form of semi-structured interviews with teachers and school board members. The individuals, selected according to the sampling process described in the next section, were contacted by telephone, informed of the research, assured of confidentiality, and asked if they would agree to engage in up to three rounds of interviews to be conducted by the researcher. Those who agreed to participate received a confirming letter and consent form based upon Duquesne University’s Institutional Review Board protocol.

The purpose of the interviews was to gain an understanding of the participants’ perceptions of the trust relationships that exist between teachers and school board members, particularly as they relate to realizing school effectiveness within the requirements established by current educational mandates. Interview questions were based on items such as the conceptual definitions of terms and the school structure framework (Hoy & Miskel, 2001) described in Chapter II. An example of the former originates with Hoy and Miskel (2001), who state, “Many parents and other citizens, government policy makers, and scholars define organizational effectiveness narrowly; they equate school effectiveness with academic achievement” (p. 297). This concept of effectiveness, when contrasted with one that advances the necessity of multiple indicators to measure the diversity of students’ learning experiences (Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Keedy & Allen, 1998), prompted questions such as: (a) what is it that constitutes an effective school? and (b) how successful do think schools have been in realizing the previously mentioned characteristics?
Other questions posed in the first round of interviews dealt with the respondents’ perceptions of existing trust relationships, what has influenced these perceptions, and whether they believe there is any relationship between teacher-school board trust relations and school effectiveness. Succeeding rounds employed member checking and protocols emerging from and building on previous interviews. As suggested by Creswell (1998), each semi-structured interview was initially comprised of no more than five open-ended questions, with clarifying questions added as directed by the participants’ responses. Experts in the field of educational leadership and qualitative inquiry examined the questions, with revisions made as necessary.

Interviews were conducted by the researcher in person, with each interview being recorded and transcribed immediately following. Prior to the analysis of data, a draft of the interview was offered to each participant. While none felt the need to read this draft, all responded to requests for comment clarification and any additional thoughts they wished to share.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select those who were interviewed due to the more limited nature of the research issue, and also because “social processes have a logic and coherence that random sampling can reduce to uninterpretable sawdust” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27). Such sampling involves the intentional selection, as opposed to that which is random, of the cases that will be studied. Even so, the sample may not be entirely prespecified and may evolve as the fieldwork progresses (Miles & Huberman,
The type of purposive sampling employed in this study was that preferred by Creswell (1998), who chooses cases that present different perspectives on the problem. As a collective case study, two teachers and two school board members from each of two schools were involved, the multiplicity of sampling adding confidence to the findings. Although there is no specific recommendation regarding the number of cases that should be included in such a study, Miles and Huberman’s (1994) recommended upper limit of 15 indicates that this study’s use of eight is within reason.

The selection of teachers who present the greatest likelihood of different perspectives were based on the level of proficiency realized by their fifth grade students on the reading and math Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). Based on the researcher’s own experience that teachers in schools not achieving minimum competency levels are subject to more intense pressure and scrutiny than those meeting or exceeding such levels, this factor presents a high degree of confidence that the desired differentiation among teachers’ perceptions of trust relationships will be realized.

Elementary schools included in the study were those that house Grade 5. The Pennsylvania State Report Card was used to select participating teachers. First, schools were ranked according to the average percentages of students who scored in the Proficient and Advanced categories of the fifth grade PSSA in reading and math during the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 school years. The schools with the greatest and least percentages were identified and their respective superintendents contacted, informed of the study’s purpose and confidentiality issues, and permission requested for the school to participate in the study. After one superintendent’s non-response to the call and
another declining to participate, two schools were chosen for the study; one performing in the top and one in the bottom 15% of eligible schools. One principal and one school board member then recommended a pool of teachers to participate in the interview process. In addition to suggesting those who would be willing to participate, the principal was asked to fill out a brief matrix including items such as years of experience, subject(s) taught, grade level taught, and whether the teachers have taken part in school, district, or state level committees regarding educational issues. Based upon that presented in the matrix, two candidates were chosen bearing in mind Creswell’s (1998) disposition to choose cases that present varying perspectives. They were contacted, informed of the study’s purpose and confidentiality issues, and asked to participate in the research. A letter detailing the research was then sent along with an informed consent document. Their participation was finalized upon receipt of the informed consent document.

School board members were chosen from the same high and low achieving districts as the participating teachers. Their superintendents were contacted, informed of the study’s purpose, pertinent methodology, and confidentiality issues, and asked if they would be willing to support the study by sharing an explanatory letter and request for interviews with the board. They were then asked to note the names, gender, and years of service of board members who would be willing to participate in the interview process and also the manner by which these members would prefer to be contacted by the researcher. Two board members from each district indicated their willingness to participate. As with the teachers, the same process of contact and informed consent was followed until the participation of all school board members was confirmed.
Confidentiality

Those participating received a telephone call, or email, and letter that included the purpose of the study, researcher contact information, and a consent form according to the requirements outlined by the Institutional Review Board of Duquesne University. The form assured participants of confidentiality and anonymity in this work or any other research that may emerge from these findings. Each teacher and school board member was assigned a fictitious name that is used in the study. Upon completion of this research, all recordings were destroyed with transcriptions to be destroyed in no more than five years.

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are considered to be either documents prepared by individuals who were not directly involved in an event or those in which authors discuss the work of others (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Sources that discuss the work of others, as presented in the literature review, will be used as a theoretical framework for the study and also as a foundation for its analysis and interpretation.

Data Analysis

The strategies outlined in this section were those chosen for use based upon the topic, selected methodology, and literature regarding the constructivist, interpretive paradigm. Merriam (2001), characterizes qualitative data analysis in the following manner:
Data analysis is one of the few facets, perhaps the only facet, of doing qualitative research in which there is a right way and a wrong way. . . . the right way to analyze data in a qualitative study is to do it *simultaneously* with data collection. (p. 162)

Creswell (1998) visualizes data collection as a circle. His series of interrelated activities, ranging from identifying the site to storing data, emphasizes the iterative nature of the process. Ongoing analysis provided focus and illumination, as it allowed for emerging discoveries and sources as well as encouraging decisions that narrowed the study so that it did not become overwhelming (Merriam, 2001).

Data collection and analysis occurred both in and out of the field, with observer’s comments and memos serving to stimulate critical thinking and reflection (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The primary form of analysis was the construction of categories or themes that captured a recurring pattern throughout the data (Merriam, 2001). Individual cases were the first level of analysis as data was dissected and reassembled, with meaning constructed through direct interpretation. Patterns were sought, and correspondences between categories developed in naturalistic generalizations. This process was then repeated among all cases, with common themes being identified and generalizations developed (Creswell, 1998). In conducting such cross-cases analyses, Miles and Huberman (1994) urge the careful examination of each case’s processes, as “simply summarizing superficially across some themes or main variables by itself tells us little” (p. 205).

Triangulation, member checks, peer examination, and investigator’s position all played a major role in the study. While triangulation drew upon information from different sources to corroborate themes, peer examination occurred in the form of
suggestions and recommendations from the dissertation committee and experts in the field of study. Member checking provided all participants with the opportunity to verify interpretations of their comments and make suggestions prior to the final report, while investigator’s position involved the researcher explaining items such as (a) her assumptions and the theory that underlies the study, (b) her position regarding the group being studied, (c) the basis for selecting participants and a profile of each, and (d) the social context from which the data has been collected (Merriam, 2001). Finally, Merriam suggests the use of an audit trail in which the investigator provides a detailed explanation about data collection, the derivation of categories, and how decisions were arrived at throughout the inquiry.

Summary

This chapter details the approach to qualitative inquiry and methodology upon which this study was based. Modifications to the approach were slight and designed to enhance the integrity of the study while remaining true to its purpose of examining teacher-school board trust relationships and their perceived influence on school effectiveness.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the trust relationships that exist between teachers and school board members and how such relations are perceived to influence school effectiveness. Its goal is to answer four questions:

1. How do rural and suburban elementary teachers define school effectiveness?
2. How do rural and suburban policymakers at the school board level define school effectiveness?
3. What perceptions do rural and suburban elementary teachers possess regarding trust relationships between policymakers at the school board level and themselves? What perceived impact does this relationship have on school effectiveness?
4. What perceptions do policymakers at the school board level possess regarding trust relationships between rural and suburban elementary teachers and themselves? What perceived impact does this relationship have on school effectiveness?

To answer the first two research questions, this chapter will report the results of an opinion inventory sent to school board members and teachers in seven Erie County, Pennsylvania suburban and rural school districts and their respective elementary schools. The inventory recounts the views of the study’s population, and also serves as a backdrop
for more detailed within- and cross-case analyses afforded by eight semi-structured interviews of teachers and board members from two Erie County school districts identified on the basis of their 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 PSSA scores. To assess their alignment with established school effectiveness frameworks, opinions gathered from both methods were compared to the Bracey and Resnick (1998) derived definition of school effectiveness, Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) school structure typology, and the IASB’s (2000) *Lighthouse Study*.

A review of the school effectiveness literature indicates that test scores, such as those currently used by NCLB to determine both student achievement and a school’s efficacy, should not be the only measure of school achievement (Education Commission of the States [ECS], 1999). Rather, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) (Bracey & Resnick, 1998) recommends a much broader definition that includes (a) academic attainment beyond that which standards based tests currently measure, (b) job skills and preparation, (c) citizenship, (d) arts appreciation, and (e) the development of character and values.

Organizational and school structure theory delineates the properties necessary for characteristics of effectiveness to be realized. Hoy and Miskel (2001) point to professional, rather than bureaucratic, organizational types as the structures best suited to achieving effective outcomes. Bureaucratic structures, founded on a hierarchy in which power flows from the school board-superintendent level down to the teachers and where disciplined compliance to directives is the norm, are predicted to be moderately effective. On the other hand, professional structures characterized by distributed leadership, shared
decision-making, and procedural guidelines are predicted to be highly effective (Hoy & Miskel). Descriptions of such structures and their related efficacy levels are also found in the IASB’s (2001) *Lighthouse Study*.

School board members, as policymakers, are in a unique position to coordinate reform measures in accordance with local needs. Studies that specifically addressed the school board’s role in realizing school effectiveness found that success is dependent on effective leadership (EPLC, 2004). Such leadership was not that of top-down bureaucracy, but rather an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual support that requires a relationship between school board members and teachers (ECS, 1999; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Ouchi, 2003). Similar to results achieved in business and industry when such relationships were based on trust, works dealing with effective school boards have also mentioned trust as an integral element of relationships that lead to improved student achievement (EPLC, 2004; Gemberling et al., 2000; Goodman & Fulbright, 1998; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2003; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Hoy, 2002; IASB, 2001). While researchers have studied teacher centered trust relationships having principals, parents, students, and colleagues as referents, this study investigated trust relationships between teachers and school board members as well as the perceived impact of these relationships on school effectiveness.

Interview results are the primary source for answering the final research questions concerning the trust relationships that exist between school board members and teachers along with their perceived impact on school effectiveness. Additional sources reviewed include the Standard & Poor’s SchoolMatters profiles, the Pennsylvania State Report
Card, two District Report Cards, Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) scores, newspaper articles, and school district press releases, public relations information, board briefs, and websites. The semi-structured interview analyses report teacher and school board member responses to questions regarding the improvement of school effectiveness and trust relationships. As with the first two questions, their alignment with established frameworks was compared to the Bracey and Resnick (1998) derived definition of school effectiveness, Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) school structure typology, the IASB’s (2001) *Lighthouse Study*, and also to Hoy and Tschannen-Moran’s (1999) definition of trust. Document and media review was also conducted to gather additional information concerning the target schools’ effectiveness as well as the contextual practice of their school board members and teachers. This review additionally served as a means to triangulate collected data. Results gathered for all questions were then interpreted through the use of a constructivist paradigm within an instrumental case study. Data was examined for patterns, with correspondences between categories developed into natural generalizations that led to the findings reported in Chapter V.

**Opinion Inventory Results**

The School Effectiveness and Teacher-School Board Member Relationships Opinion Inventory was sent to the superintendents of seven suburban and rural Erie County, Pennsylvania school districts whose elementary schools house Grade 5, and also to the principals of those 21 elementary schools in April 2005. The superintendents distributed the inventories to school board members, while principals facilitated their
completion by teachers. The inventory consisted of 31 statements, 8 of which dealt with perceptions of school effectiveness, 11 with opinions regarding the improvement of school effectiveness, and 12 with perceptions of teacher-school board member relationships. As two school districts chose not to take part, two school boards and six schools were eliminated from the study. In another district, the teachers participated but not school board members due to a political issue with which the board was dealing. This resulted in five districts and four school boards taking part in the investigation. Out of the 15 schools housed by these districts, 11, or 73.3%, returned completed inventories (see Table 4). Of the participating districts and schools, 19 school board members returned the inventory for a response rate of 52.7%, with 202 teachers responding for an 80.1% response rate. As the inventory results represent the population of the investigation and provide a backdrop for the within- and cross-case analyses, the response percentages were calculated arithmetically and transported to Microsoft Excel to generate graphic representations of the data.

Table 4

_District and School Participation Rates_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Total eligible</th>
<th>Number eligible participating</th>
<th>Percentage eligible participating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Districts (Board Members)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts (Teachers)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Effectiveness: Questions 1-8

The first section of the opinion inventory listed eight statements for which teachers and school board members were asked to designate the extent to which they agreed that each was a characteristic of an effective school. Respondents were asked to check a box for one of four ratings, Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Responses marked on the line between boxes were disregarded. This, and the fact that some boxes were left blank, resulted in the totaled response for some statements being less than 100 percent. The preponderance of school board members and teachers agreed or strongly agreed to all eight statements, including the three that were not NSBA school effectiveness indicators.

An overwhelming majority of both school board members and teachers agree or strongly agree that helping students achieve Pennsylvania’s Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals in reading, math, and writing (not an indicator) is a sign of school effectiveness (see Figure 5), with one teacher adding the comment that:

Each student is given the opportunity to progress to meet those goals. Whether that child is developmentally ready or whether they have family support can greatly affect the outcome. Progress should be measured on an individual basis comparing the previous year to the current year.

Also pertaining to achievement, the next item sought to discover respondents’ opinions concerning effectiveness as helping students attain academic achievement beyond that measured by the PSSA (e.g., intellectual curiosity and creativity). While most of the board members rated this NSBA indicator as “Agree” or higher, teachers, though agreeing, were not quite as unanimous in their responses (see Figure 6).
Figure 5. Meeting adequate yearly progress goals in reading, math, and writing.

Figure 6. Academic achievement beyond what the PSSA measures.
Concerning the acquisition of job skills and preparation of the work force as a marker of school effectiveness (NSBA indicator), both groups closely concurred on their choice of “Agree” or higher, although school board members’ strong agreement was less than half that of teachers (see Figure 7).

While most board members and teachers indicated a level of agreement that school effectiveness is helping students understand and value the growing diversity of American society (not an indicator), more respondents disagreed with this assertion than with any of the previous statements. While no school board members and only one teacher strongly disagreed with this, 10.5% of the board members did not respond. In the school effectiveness category, this statement also resulted in the greatest disparity between the percentage of teachers who agreed or strongly agreed and the percentage of school board members selecting these same two responses (see Figure 8).

![Figure 7. Acquire job skills and preparation for the work force.](image)
The next two statements yielded very similar response patterns for both teachers and board members. With regard to the development of citizenship as well as the realization of sound physical development and optimal health (not an indicator), school board members were less likely than teachers to “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” that these are components of school effectiveness (see Figures 9 and 10).

Teachers and school board members concurred that effective schools should help students develop an appreciation of the arts. Not only did a vast majority of both parties choose “Agree” or higher, but the percentages of each in this category and also in “Disagree” or lower varied by less than three points (see Figure 11).

Development of character and values (e.g., integrity, responsibility, courtesy, patriotism, and work ethic) is the final statement pertaining to characteristics of school

![Figure 8. Understand and value the growing diversity of American society.](image_url)
Figure 9. Develop citizenship.

Figure 10. Realize sound physical development and optimal health.
effectiveness. With 85.9% of both groups indicating agreement or higher, a preponderance of the teachers felt that character and values education is an important characteristic of an effective school. One teacher commented, “Teachers are trying, but it’s not in their curriculum.” Of all the respondents, only one teacher strongly disagreed with this statement (see Figure 12).

Summary.

School board members and teachers generally agreed that school effectiveness includes all eight of the components presented in the inventory: (a) attaining academic achievement beyond what the PSSA currently measures, (b) acquiring job skills, (c) developing citizenship, (d) developing an appreciation of the arts, (e) developing character and values, (f) meeting Adequate Yearly Progress goals, (g) valuing the diversity of American society, and (h) realizing sound physical development and optimal health, while NSBA lists only the first five as indicators. The greatest level of agreement was in regard to meeting Pennsylvania AYP goals in reading, math, and writing, with only 13 teachers and no board members disagreeing. While still in agreement, board members lent noticeably less support to the areas of understanding diversity and realizing sound physical development than did teachers. In fact, understanding diversity received the lowest percentage of agreement from both groups. One teacher, in speaking of all statements, felt that, “School effectiveness can embody these things, but many of these should be an extension of the academic curriculum, not the purpose.”
Figure 11. Develop an appreciation of the arts.

Figure 12. Develop character and values.
The opinion inventory’s second section consisted of 11 statements about education related practices, 5 of them written to be reverse scored so as to inhibit response pattern bias. School board members and teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed that each could improve school effectiveness using the same “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree” scale as the first section. Once again, responses marked on the line between two boxes and the failure to respond were disregarded, resulting in the totaled percentage for some statements being less than 100.

The first item sought opinions regarding the potential for uniformly following rules, directives, and procedures established at the superintendent/school board level to improve school effectiveness (reverse scored). Both group’s responses were similar, with most selecting “Agree” or higher. One teacher responded with, “Are you kidding?” in reference to the staff being uniformly treated (see Figure 13).

The next question considered establishing positive trust relationships between school board members and teachers. Although all of the school board members and most teachers indicated they agreed or strongly agreed, 11.3% of the teachers expressed a level of disagreement with trust as means of improving a school’s effectiveness (see Figure 14).

More teachers than school board members expressed a level of agreement that delegating most decision-making to the professional staff (e.g., teachers and principals) at the school building level would improve efficacy. Although the difference was not great, the percentage of teachers who strongly agreed was more than twice that of board
Figure 13. Establishing directives at the board level that teachers must uniformly follow.

Figure 14. Establishing trust relationships between school board members and teachers.
members (see Figure 15).

All board members but one, who did not respond, felt that opening lines of communication between school board members/superintendents and teachers would improve school success. A large majority of teachers concurred (see Figure 16).

Regarding adopting board policies to address immediate needs and issues, responses of teachers and school board members were very similar in all categories, with 79.1% of both groups indicating they “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” (reverse scored) (see Figure 17). Varying opinions reemerged, though, as evidenced through responses to creating an environment in which teachers have a high degree of autonomy. Despite the fact that the majority of both groups agreed or strongly agreed, 21% of the board members disagreed (see Figure 18).

Figure 15. Delegating decision-making to the professional staff at the building level.
Figure 16. Opening school board member/superintendent-teacher communication.

Figure 17. Adopting board policies to address immediate needs and issues.
Figure 18. Creating an environment in which teachers have much autonomy.

Opinion was mixed in relation to basing board policy on requests and information provided by interest groups including teachers, the business community, parent organizations, and other external constituencies (reverse scored). While 71.2% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that this could improve school effectiveness, only 42.1% of the school board members felt the same way. Of these board members, none strongly agreed (see Figure 19).

As demonstrated by a combined rating of 76%, school board members and teachers were in overall agreement that establishing a centralized management structure for all school buildings in the district would help to improve school effectiveness (reverse scored) (see Figure 20). However, neither group felt that school board members should involve themselves in the day-to-day management of schools (reverse scored). Board
Figure 19. Basing board policy on requests and information provided by interest groups.

Figure 20. Establishing centralized management for all schools in the district.
members exhibited even greater concurrence regarding this than teachers, with only 5.2% agreeing and none strongly agreeing (see Figure 21).

In matters of culture, though, all school board members and 85.5% of the teachers selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” when asked whether they thought efficacy would improve through the creation of a district culture that actively fostered teachers’ esteem. Despite this concurrence, 25 teachers indicated a level of disagreement (see Figure 22).

Garnering more support than esteem building, adopting board policies that reflect research-based information and known best practices was rated “Agree” or higher by 89.1% of school board members and teachers. Only one board member disagreed that this would assist in improving a school’s effectiveness (see Figure 23).

Figure 21. Involving board members in the day-to-day management of schools.
Figure 22. Creating a district culture that actively fosters teachers’ esteem.

Figure 23. Adopting polices that reflect research-based information and best practices.
Summary.

In summary, statements involving practices which might impact the improvement of school effectiveness amassed more divergent viewpoints than school effectiveness when considered by itself. Of the 11 statements in this section, 6 described practices designed to improve school effectiveness. School board members and teachers expressed agreement with all 6, including (a) establishing positive trust relationships, (b) delegating most decision-making to the professional staff of each building, (c) opening lines of communication between teachers and board members, (d) creating an environment in which teachers are highly autonomous, (e) creating a district culture that actively fosters teachers’ esteem, and (f) implementing policies grounded in research-based information and known best practices. However, teachers and board members also agreed with three statements not found to increase effectiveness: (a) instituting rules and directives that teachers must uniformly follow (reverse scored), (b) adopting policies to address immediate needs (reverse scored), and (c) establishing a centralized management structure for all district buildings (reverse scored); disagreed with school board members involving themselves in the day-to-day management of schools, and had mixed feelings about basing board policy on requests and information received by special interest groups, with teachers in favor and board members opposed.

Teacher-School Board Member Relationships

Twelve statements pertaining to teacher-school board member relationships, six that were reverse scored, combined to form the final section of the opinion inventory.
Using the same “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree” scale as the previous sections, teachers and school board members were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement. As with some prior items, the fact that several participants did not respond to all statements resulted in the totaled percentage sometimes being less than 100.

A great majority of all respondents expressed a level of disagreement concerning board members determining what is taught and the instructional strategies to be used by teachers (reverse scored). The greatest number of teachers, comprising 43.5% of the group, strongly disagreed while only one board member indicated any level of agreement (see Figure 24).

The next item dealt with collaborative efforts between school board members and teachers. Although 79.6% of the teachers conveyed that they Agree” or “Strongly Agree” that few collaborative efforts occur, just 57.8% of the board members responded in kind. Taking into account that this statement was reverse scored, only 18.5% of all those responding felt that collaborative efforts between teachers and board members occur more commonly than not (see Figure 25).

In another reverse scored item, board members and teachers were asked to respond to the statement that school board members do not encourage teacher autonomy. Although variability appeared in the “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree” categories, ratings between groups were similar in the remaining response options. Despite this similarity, opinions differed. Where the majority of school board members disagreed, a 48% majority of teachers agreed that board members do not encourage
Figure 24. Board members determine what is taught and instructional strategies.

Figure 25. There are few collaborative efforts between board members and teachers.
teacher autonomy (see Figure 26). Attitudes also differed concerning school board members working to empower teachers. Where 68.3% of the board members indicated “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with regard to working toward this goal, a 48% majority of teachers chose “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.” This teacher majority, though, was only 3.5% greater than the group of teachers who agreed at some level. No school board member strongly disagreed (see Figure 27).

In seeking viewpoints concerning whether school board members engage in top-down decision-making (reverse scored), board members who agreed did so by only one tenth of a point more than those who disagreed, with one choosing not to respond. Conversely, a clear difference emerged from the teacher ratings, with 61.3% choosing either “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” and 25.6% electing a level of disagreement (see Figure 26.

Figure 26. School board members do not encourage teacher autonomy.
In the same vein, the next statement sought to explore views regarding whether school board members work in partnership with teachers toward a common set of aims. Although a large majority of board members felt this was so, the teachers were almost evenly divided, with 46.4% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 46% expressing a level of disagreement (see Figure 29).

Teachers and school board members were in general agreement that rules and procedures established by school board members are uniform and apply to all teachers (reverse scored). However, the strength of their agreement varied as demonstrated by 78.8% of the board members indicating combined agreement and strong agreement as compared with 56.9% of the teachers (see Figure 30).

![Figure 27. School board members work to empower teachers.](image)
Figure 28. School board members engage in top-down decision-making.

Figure 29. Board members work in partnership with teachers toward common aims.
All of the school board members strongly agreed or agreed that board members support the teaching staff, with 47.3% and 52.6% choosing these respective categories. While the teachers were not as strong in their agreement, a majority of 62.2% rated this statement “Agree” or higher (see Figure 31). The two groups also concurred that there is little communication between school board members and teachers (reverse scored), although 18.3% more teachers felt this way than board members (see Figure 32).

For each of the last three statements, all school board members’ responses were either “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.” Teachers’ opinions for the first of these statements, school board members trust teachers, was quite different, with just over half agreeing or higher. Of the 35.6% who were not in agreement, 8.4% strongly disagreed. It should be noted, though, that 9.8% of the teachers did not provide a categorizeable response (see Figure 33). In contrast, a much larger contingent of teachers, 78.1%, felt that school board members support professional development (see Figure 34). The percentage of teachers’ concurring responses for the final item falls between those of the preceding two statements, as 67.7% “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” that school board members respect teachers (see Figure 35).

Summary.

Statements in this section elicited more variability than those of the two previous sections. A large majority of school board members and teachers disagreed that board members determine what is taught and the instructional strategies to be used by teachers (reverse scored). With regard to the school board (a) uniformly applying rules and
Figure 30. Rules established by board members are uniform and apply to all teachers.

Figure 31. School board members support the teaching staff.
Figure 32. There is little communication between board members and teachers.

Figure 33. School board members trust teachers.
Figure 34. School board members support staff professional development.

Figure 35. School board members respect teachers.
procedures to all teachers (reverse scored), (b) supporting the teaching staff, (c) trusting teachers, (d) supporting staff professional development, and (e) respecting teachers, both groups expressed a level of agreement, with board members’ responses much stronger than those of teachers.

In discussing whether school board members work in partnership with teachers toward common aims, board members agreed while teachers were almost evenly split in their opinions. On the other hand, teachers agreed that school board members engage in top-down decision-making (reverse scored) but the board members’ responses were almost evenly distributed between levels of agreement and disagreement. Although both groups agreed that there are few collaborative efforts (reverse scored) and little communication between teachers and board members (reverse scored), teachers gave a much stronger endorsement to the statements.

The first of two items for which the groups responded differently was the statement, “school board members do not encourage teacher autonomy.” Responses indicated that a slight majority of teachers agreed with this assertion, but that a larger percentage of board members did not. Disparate responses were also recorded for “school board members work to empower teachers.” While board members agreed and teachers did not, the majority response for teachers was once again slight. A teacher, who responded to some, but not all, of the statements in this part of the inventory commented, “I’m sure the school board does much positive concerning the following that we may not be aware of.”
Summary of Findings: Opinion Inventory

Responses to statements presented in the School Effectiveness and Teacher-School Board Member Relationships Opinion Inventory yielded perceptions of (a) school effectiveness, (b) approaches to improving school effectiveness, and (c) teacher-school board member relationships as indicated by suburban and rural Erie County, Pennsylvania school board members and teachers in elementary schools that house Grade 5. The inventory was based upon the Bracey and Resnick (1998) derived definition of school effectiveness, Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) school structure typology, and the IASB’s (2000) Lighthouse Study.

Participants’ responses suggest the acceptance of all statements listed as characteristics of school effectiveness, even though only five are recognized as indicators by NSBA. Of the 11 statements pertaining to the improvement of school effectiveness, respondents agreed with all 6 shown through research to impact a school’s efficacy: (a) establishing positive trust relationships between school board members and teachers; (b) delegating most decision-making to the professional staff at the building level; (c) opening lines of communication between school board members/superintendents, and teachers; (d) creating an environment in which teachers have a high degree of autonomy; (e) creating a district culture that actively fosters teachers’ esteem; and (f) adopting board policies that reflect research-based information and known best practices. Respondents also disagreed with a reverse scored item that is not such a practice; involving school board members in the day-to-day management of schools. However, all those responding did agree with 3 reverse scored statements that have not been found to influence
effectiveness: (a) establishing rules, directives, and procedures at the school
board/superintendent level that teachers must uniformly follow; (b) adopting board
policies to address immediate needs and issues; and (c) establishing a centralized
management structure for all school buildings in the district. Finally, board members
disagreed and teachers agreed with another reverse scored item; basing board policy on
requests and information provided by interest groups including teachers, the business
community, parent organizations, and other external constituencies.

In the inventory’s final section, all participants agreed with four of the six
statements describing teacher-school board member relationships found in effective
schools (a) school board members support the teaching staff, (b) school board members
trust teachers, (c) school board members support staff professional development, and
(d) school board members respect teachers. For the remaining statements that include
school board members’ empowerment of teachers and working with teachers toward a
common aim, board members agreed while teachers did not. Of the characteristics not
related to effective schools (reverse scored), the majority of both groups disagreed with
only one: school board members determine what is taught and the instructional strategies
to be used by teachers. Four reverse scored items were agreed with by both groups,
including (a) there are few collaborative efforts between school board members and
teachers, (b) school board members engage in top-down decision-making, (c) rules and
procedures established by school board members are uniform and apply to all teachers,
and (d) there is little communication between school board members and teachers. Board
members and teachers had mixed opinions about “school board members do not
encourage teacher autonomy,” with the majority of teachers agreeing and board members not.

Table 5 indicates school board members’ and teachers’ combined “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” response percentages for each opinion inventory statement. School effectiveness indicators not recognized by NSBA are designated as non-indicators, with characteristics of teacher-school board member relationships and education related practices not contributors to improving school effectiveness indicated as reverse scored.

Interviews: Within-case Analyses

Acting as the study’s canvas, the opinion inventory provided school board members’ and teachers’ perceptions of (a) school effectiveness, (b) their mutual trust relationships, and (c) how such relationships influence school effectiveness in those districts and elementary schools participating in the investigation. To gain a deeper understanding of these issues, interviews with school board members and teachers were analyzed and blended onto this backdrop.

The researcher conducted eight interviews with representatives from two suburban Erie County, Pennsylvania elementary schools. Two school board members and two teachers from each school were interviewed once, with follow up questions and member checking accomplished via email. School board members were chosen based upon recommendations from district officials, with teachers selected from names provided by a board member (School A) and principal (School B). All interviews were carried out in person, tape recorded, and transcribed. An alias was assigned to each
### Table 5

*Opinion Inventory Agree and Strongly Agree Response Percentages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>School board members</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School effectiveness is helping students:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. meet Adequate Yearly Progress goals in reading, math, and writing as</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>established by the state of Pennsylvania. (Non-indicator)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. attain academic achievement that goes beyond what the Pennsylvania</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System of School Assessment currently measures (e.g., intellectual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curiosity and creativity).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. acquire job skills and preparation for the work force.</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. understand and value the growing diversity of American society.</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Non-indicator)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. develop citizenship (e.g., volunteerism, voting, community service,</td>
<td>73.6%</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abiding by laws).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. realize sound physical development and optimal health. (Non-indicator)</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. develop an appreciation of the arts.</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. develop character and values (e.g., integrity, responsibility,</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>courtesy, patriotism, and work ethic).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improving school effectiveness:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Establishing rules directives, and procedures at the school board/</td>
<td>73.6%</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superintendent level that teachers must uniformly follow (Reverse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scored)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Establishing positive trust relationships between school board</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>members and teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Delegating most decision-making to the professional staff (e.g.,</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers and principals) at the school building level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Opening lines of communication between school board members/</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superintendents and teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>School board members</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Adopting board policies to address immediate needs and issues (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>79.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Creating an environment in which teachers have a high degree of autonomy</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Basing board policy on requests and information provided by interest groups including teachers, the business community, parent organizations, and other external constituencies (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Establishing a centralized management structure for all school buildings in the district (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Involving school board members in the day-to-day management of schools (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Creating a district culture that actively fosters teachers’ esteem</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Adopting board policies that reflect research-based information and known best practices</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Teacher-school board member relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>School board members</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20. School board members determine what is taught and the instructional strategies to be used by teachers. (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. There are few collaborative efforts between school board members and teachers. (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. School board members do not encourage teacher autonomy. (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>$48.0%^M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. School board members work to empower teachers.</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. School board members engage in top-down decision-making. (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>$47.3%^M$</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. School board members work in partnership with teachers toward a common aim.</td>
<td>73.6%</td>
<td>$46.4%^M$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>School board members</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. Rules and procedures established by school board members are uniform and apply to all teachers. (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. School board members support the teaching staff.</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. There is little communication between school board members and teachers (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. School board members trust teachers.</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. School board members support staff professional development.</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. School board members respect teachers.</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M indicates that, while less than 50.0%, this response rate represents the majority.

participant in order to honor confidentiality as well as for the reader’s easier understanding, with the two elementary schools being denoted as School A and School B. Although it is understood that board members act on behalf of an entire district rather than a single school, these designations were chosen to ensure the reader’s understanding that teachers’ comments were being attributed to their elementary school only, and not others in the district. Participants from School A were Linda and Colleen (school board members) and Jane and Nicole (teachers). Cora and Don were contributing school board members from School B, while teacher participants included Barbara and Emily. The interview consisted of five multi-part questions regarding perceptions of (a) school
effectiveness, (b) how successful schools have been at realizing effectiveness, (c) the role of school board members in 21st century education, (d) the type of relationship that exists between teachers and school board members along with the consideration of trust as a component of this relationship, and (e) whether teacher-school board member trust relationships influence school effectiveness.

Questions 1 and 2: School Effectiveness

Each interview began by asking, “What it is that makes a school effective?” and “Which of these items do you feel is most important?” followed by conversation regarding the reasons for their replies. In two cases the first question required clarification, which was provided by a reframing that asked, “How do you define school effectiveness?” In writing about school effectiveness, Wyatt (1996) says:

The task of identifying school effectiveness is not an easy one, either conceptually, technically, or politically. Handled sensitively, the use of school performance information has the potential to contribute considerably to the improvement of schooling outcomes for students. Handled ineptly, the contribution of school effects research will either be irrelevant, or create a conflagration all would have rather avoided.

The complexity that Wyatt (1996) spoke of was reflected in respondents’ collective comments which yielded 20 perceived indicators of school effectiveness. For ease of discussion, these indicators were collated on a matrix and, based on commonalities, reassembled into four orientations; personal, physical, curricular, and financial, with the personal category further subdivided to address matters involving a school’s clients or its personnel (see Table 6). Respondents from both districts were eager to have their voices heard. As a matter of fact, several thanked the researcher for the opportunity to
### Table 6

**Indicators of School Effectiveness as Perceived by Teachers and School Board Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Linda</th>
<th>Colleen</th>
<th>Jane</th>
<th>Nicole</th>
<th>Cora</th>
<th>Don</th>
<th>Barbara</th>
<th>Emily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal orientation:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Client focus)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building esteem</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with disabilities</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting needs of every child</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent involvement</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting community needs</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Personal orientation:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Personnel focus)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualified staff</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff satisfaction</td>
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<td><strong>Physical orientation:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Class size</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>School environment</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td><strong>Curricular orientation:</strong></td>
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<td>Aligned curriculum</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Character education</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Job preparation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts education</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized testing</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extended day options</td>
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<td><strong>Financial orientation:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. X* indicates the response was implied rather than stated directly.*
contribute.

District A: School Board Member 1 (Linda).

District A was home to School A, the elementary school whose 5th grade PSSA scores ranked in the top 15% of the population under study for the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 school years in the population under study. During this 2 year time span, 81.7% of the students achieved AYP in reading while the percentage of students achieving AYP in math was 84.3.

School Board Member 1 (Linda), was the first to be interviewed. She is currently midway through her second term and is serving on the district’s finance and instruction committees after having been school board president during her first term of office. Her responses to the question, “What is it that makes a school effective?” were spread throughout all four orientations. With regard to the personal orientation, Linda mentioned the superintendent’s and principal’s leadership abilities as well as a qualified staff, remarking about the latter, “a highly effective teacher, regardless of the circumstances around he or she, will be able to do great things in the classroom.” As it appeared that she might be interpreting the question as asking for the causes of school effectiveness, the question was reframed to ask for a definition of the term. After thinking about this, she chose to affirm the previously stated items but added standardized testing to her list, commenting:

I think it is important for a school district to be able to . . . score well on standardized testing, I do think that’s a benchmark. . . . I think it would be a sign that [having] not one year of good scores but a trend upward, to look for that.
You will have bumps, in particular if you’re a smaller school, but if you’re a larger school the bumps shouldn’t be as big. That would be a sign of a place that you want to go because they get the idea and they are going to follow through on what the state has mandated.

In conjunction with this, Linda also talked about the importance of aligning the curriculum with standards and benchmarks in addition to vertically aligning the school’s curriculum from kindergarten through Grade 5, “so it isn’t a hit or miss whether you get it or you don’t get it; they are implementing system-wide work in order to get those effective scores.” Interjecting that class-size is important, she added that funding is also vital, as it provides the “equipment, supplies, and facilities so that you have the appropriate learning environment.” When asked which school effectiveness item she felt was most important, Linda’s choice was a highly qualified teacher. Explaining why, she shared her conviction that such a teacher is capable of overcoming almost any obstacle, thereby paving the way for achieving positive results.

The first question was concluded by asking Linda, “Are there characteristics of school effectiveness mentioned by others with which you disagree?” and “Why?” After considering this, she expressed her disagreement with the use of test scores as a single determinant of a school’s efficacy, both due to the scores themselves and their use of attendance rates as a criterion. Linda also voiced concerns about looking at indicators individually rather than in the context of the big picture, stating, “If you show no signs of improvement over a length of time, then perhaps you can look at it as not being an effective school, but everybody needs time to make improvements.”

Still dealing with school effectiveness, the second interview question asked respondents how successful they felt their schools had been in achieving the effectiveness
indicators they listed for the first query. Responding in terms of NCLB and the PSSA, Linda stated that these initiatives had forced districts to look more closely at aligning their curricula which, in the case of District and School A, resulted in increased effectiveness as demonstrated through School A’s high scores. However, she also listed the importance of teacher “buy-in,” and that each teacher should have certain amounts of freedom within his classroom to use his most effective style.

Expanding on the previous topic, the question concluded by asking what is helping to realize effectiveness indicators as well as what might be a hindrance to achieving these ends. Speaking about her own district, Linda feels that the mandated nature and associated consequences of not making AYP are strong motivators. She also believes, however, that teachers’ sense of accomplishment is a key motivator. As far as hindrances, Linda mentioned the financial commitment necessary to effect change and the comparison of different groups of students instead of looking at the progress of each group over time. Ending by sharing her concern regarding students’ life outside of school, Linda commented, “so much of what happens in school depends on what happens outside of school, and that isn’t controllable by us.”

_District A: School Board Member 2 (Colleen)._ 

A two term veteran and former vice-president of District A’s school board, Colleen’s service on the district’s personnel and instruction committees is reflected in the personal and curricular orientations of her responses, with her belief that schools should be held accountable for their budgets extending her responses into the financial
orientation as well. When asked, “What is it that makes a school effective?” Colleen’s replies of personnel and leadership were strikingly similar to that of her counterpart. Appearing that clarification was once again needed, the researcher reframed the question, asking for a definition. After thinking for a minute, Colleen added extended day options, parental involvement, differentiated instruction, NCLB, and standards, commenting, “I think a lot of the reform efforts are good things. . . . but I think there are a lot of school districts that don’t use them correctly, and people come to the wrong conclusion because of that.”

Of all aspects mentioned, Colleen feels “the principal of the school is the most important factor in a school’s success,” for it is the principal who (a) involves teachers in decision-making, (b) promotes teachers’ role as curriculum leaders, (c) uses collaborative methods for solving problems, (d) involves parents in school life, and (e) likes students and serves as their advocate. She voices her concern that United States’ schools are run on a child-deficit model, when we should instead be “looking at what our children can do well” and differentiating instruction to meet their needs.

How successful are schools in realizing the aforementioned goals? In Colleen’s opinion, school boards are increasing their awareness of how to improve:

I think initially when NCLB and the PSSA testing came out everybody was doing the skill and drill stuff and it didn’t work; the scores didn’t improve. Now they’re really starting to ask, “What are the systemic things that we need to do?”

Colleen feels strongly that policies and administrative accountability in the hiring of quality staff is key to achieving school efficacy. When pressed about these issues she cited nepotism policies and reference checks: “You know, when I first came on the board
There were no references because it was too time consuming.

As far as hindrances to achieving effectiveness, she mentioned alternative certification programs and the NCLB special education requirements, emphasizing her disagreement with the latter by remarking, “Oh my gosh, that’s pathetic!”

*District A: Teacher 1 (Jane).*

Hired by the district to use alternative teaching strategies in a multi-age classroom, Jane is passionate about education and enthusiastically shared pedagogical philosophies that spanned all four orientations. Unlike others, though, all of her beliefs led ultimately to meeting children’s individual needs, not surprising given that 12 of her 15 years in education were spent in a private school guided by a highly child-centered mission.

Jane describes her interpretation of school effectiveness by saying, “I’m a firm believer in meeting the needs of every child. . . . You want a child who’s balanced.” Balance, she explains, is a child who is not just academically or physically gifted, but one who is capable socially and behaviorally as well as in areas such as the arts. To achieve balance, Jane believes that children must first learn independence and answer the question, “How do I make choices?” In her opinion, practicing independence is paralleled by the teaching of respect and other aspects of character education that are “so important.” This, in turn, builds a child’s esteem which helps him better achieve his academic potential.

Along with these, Jane believes that several additional items are needed to
completely define school effectiveness. Class-size and school environment have an important place, as do quality staff who are open to new ideas and willing to work with children who have disabilities, thereby meeting the needs of every child. To do this, she espouses the reallocation of funding, feeling that “the top and the bottom get it all, and the Joe in the middle is left to struggle.” While Jane also included testing as an indicator, albeit a mandated one, it was not testing in the traditional sense, but rather opting for every child to be individually tracked. Of everything discussed, Jane chose meeting the individual needs of every child as most important, stating, “Every child is gifted, you just have to find his gift.”

When asked if there were any characteristics of school effectiveness with which she disagreed, Jane voiced her opposition to the government’s implementation of standardized tests including the PSSA, characterizing them as “almost close to Nazi-like” in their effort to make everyone the same. She also expressed displeasure with NCLB and its stand regarding children who do not make AYP, observing:

that child is not being left behind because of the school or because of the parent . . . He’s being left behind because of who he is [disabled]. And how can you give a test, the same test, to a child who’s gifted and say, “Well, OK, this child’s not being left behind, but this one is . . . . You’re going to close the school down . . . what good does that do?”

In discussing whether schools have been successful in realizing the previously mentioned indicators, Jane said, “probably not,” but qualified her response by adding that she believes schools want to do the right things, however it’s an evolving process and they aren’t sure how to make it happen. She goes on to say that, ironically, NCLB is serving as a positive impetus for this educational evolution as it’s forcing teachers to look
at the individual child. Other initiatives, such as looping and multi-age classrooms, are also providing momentum for improvement.

Hindrances to achieving effectiveness were scattered throughout Jane's discussion of educational pedagogy. In addition to the PSSA, she feels there are several items preventing schools from reaching maximum efficacy. Teacher related issues are the first and include tenure, a resistance to change, and the fear of trying new things. Traditional letter grades are yet another impediment to progress, serving to demote rather than motivate. She described the final obstacle as students lacking a sense of self, concluding with, “do your next dissertation on that one and let me know. I’ll get involved in that one, too.”

District A: Teacher 2 (Nicole).

The final participant from District A, Nicole attended school there and has been a district resident her entire life. Employed by District A for 12 years, her perceptions of school effectiveness are oriented toward the physical and curricular, as evidenced by her mention of school environment and, “Unfortunately, of course, test scores; everybody looks at those test scores.” Delving more deeply, Nicole was asked what aspects of the school environment should be considered, and why environment and test scores are critical components of school effectiveness. To the former, she offered items such as friendliness, openness, cleanliness, and things running smoothly, ending with, “the things that are going on on a daily basis other than all those things on paper where everybody says how great they are.” Feeling that the inherent components of a school’s environment
are the most significant indicators of its effectiveness led to her stating that she does not personally feel that test scores are that important but, because of their current focus in the media, to others they are a critical measure of a school’s effectiveness; they are “the ‘thing’ right now in education.” Although Nicole does not believe that environment and test scores are of equal worth, she does deem them indicators of effectiveness as they provide a picture of the school and how it is run.

Probing to see whether Nicole’s philosophy included other effectiveness indicators that might not have come to mind, she was asked specifically about job preparation to which her response was ambiguous. Her reply to being asked if there were indicators of effectiveness mentioned by others with which she disagreed was also ambivalent. Nicole first stated that she is not a great supporter of test scores, but later said that she would definitely look at them.

Nicole feels that her school has been very successful in realizing the indicators of school effectiveness, as the staff incorporates more than just academics into school life. In her opinion, technological advances and the media focus on testing have been factors in their success, although media influence has been a detriment as well. When asked whether there were other hindrances that have impeded her school’s progress, Nicole cited the fast pace and “busyness” of today’s society in addition to the influence of policymakers. With regard to the latter she referenced funding and educational mandates, remarking, “we try things and a couple of years later we’re doing something different . . . I’m going into my 13th year and I’m back to doing things I did way back when. The other teachers are telling me, ‘Just wait!’”
District B: School Board Member 1 (Cora).

In contrast to School A, whose average 2 year PSSA scores were in the top 15% of schools in the study, 5th grade students in School B were in the bottom 15% of the same pool. Although 61.4% of the students achieved AYP in reading and 49.2% in math, the margin was not as comfortable as that experienced by School A, particularly in light of increased requirements occurring biennially until the NCLB mandated goal of 100% proficiency is reached in 2014. The districts also differ in staffing trends within the past year. While District A added staff, District B reduced several staff members from full to part time because of decreasing enrollment in their classes.

First to be interviewed from District B, Cora has served on the school board for 18 years in a variety of capacities, most recently as board secretary and a member of the building and grounds committee. She matter-of-factly shared that her latest bid for reelection, like those of three board colleagues, had been unsuccessful; their losses possibly due to negative campaigning on the part of a teacher whose position had been reduced from full to half time. However, Cora was quick to praise those elected in their stead, saying that her only regret was not being able to see several projects through to their conclusion.

Sharing a viewpoint that draws from personal, physical, and curricular orientations, Cora believes that parent involvement, staff satisfaction, class-size, and test scores are equally important elements that work cooperatively to define school effectiveness. Speaking of test scores as having to be considered, “whether we like to or not,” she is an advocate for small class sizes and understands the significance of staff
satisfaction, saying:

I think teachers who are unhappy communicate that to students. . . . students need teachers who are excited about what they’re doing, who are confident in their ability and their presentation, and who are, for the most part, positive rather than negative.

Asked about the development of character, citizenship, and job skills as well as an appreciation of the arts as components of effectiveness, Cora categorized them as “good things” but did not amend her definition of effectiveness to include them.

Test scores as a sole criterion of efficacy was the only item with which Cora disagreed, “because of the fact that . . . everybody has to pass the same test regardless of challenges to some students . . . so test scores in the district can be skewed . . . you can’t judge on test scores exclusively.”

Cora speaks positively of the district’s successes. Class sizes remain small, parent involvement is high, and they are proud of their test scores. Although she admits, “Our staff grumbles among themselves quite a bit,” she thinks this is because they have no basis for comparison, commenting, ”I think they ought to be required to take a real job in the summer for at least a couple years, and work for a boss, and have to get along with their coworkers.” Cora goes on to explain her feelings by describing each classroom as an independent system controlled by the teacher, and that the wider experience afforded by a “real job” would provide a different perspective for interpreting satisfaction.

Close relationships made possible by the district’s smaller size are, in Cora’s opinion, what fuels their success. However, size is also a hindrance in that it places a greater tax burden on citizens whose millage is already one of the highest in the county, even though the resultant funding is necessary to ensure effective outcomes. This
dilemma is compounded by the fact that one of the district’s largest corporations continually petitions to have their taxes reduced. “There was a time when they paid about a quarter of the school taxes in the district,” Cora said, “it’s much lower than that now.”

_**District B: School Board Member 2 (Don).**_

As board president of District B, Don is a frequent school visitor and volunteer worker for a variety of student activities, even though his children graduated more than five years ago. A member of the building and grounds committee, he is serving his second term of office and is considering running for reelection when his current term expires.

Like Cora, Don’s responses to the question, “What is it that makes schools effective?” centered on the personal, physical, and curricular orientations of district operations. Don began by commenting, “Unfortunately, it’s getting to the point where you look at test scores first,” but added that to truly judge a school’s efficacy it is necessary to go beyond the scores themselves; to see what improvement has been effected over time and how it has been accomplished. In addition to class-size and infrastructure, such as the buildings, grounds, and technology, Don also cites the staff as crucial to a school’s effectiveness, observing its “success rate is definitely in the faces of your staff.”

Including all of these factors because of their visibility as “measuring sticks,” Don deems both the students’ and staff’s feelings of success as the most critical. However, he prefaced this by saying, “I’ll tell you the one that I would probably put least . . . the way
the existing testing criteria is set forth” because all they focus on is “the numbers” rather than long-range outcomes. He also disagrees with NCLB as a means to effectiveness, believing that, regardless of its mandates, there will always be students in the top, middle, and bottom levels of achievement.

In Don’s opinion, the district has been very successful in realizing these components through their ongoing review of policy, infrastructure and physical safety, staff needs, and curriculum. Not only has the district worked to ensure the alignment of curriculum to state standards, but also to “standards that our district has set.” Expanding on this, Don says that while many districts have long-range goals that exist on paper only, District B’s plan is a working document that guides most of their actions.

Notwithstanding their efforts, the district also faces obstacles on their journey. To Don, the major barriers are non-funded mandates or mandates whose funding is discontinued before their complete implementation. He explained that both of these complicate matters as boards scramble to find funds to bring plans to completion and sometimes, even, to fix things that were functioning well before the government intervened.

_District B: Teacher 1 (Barbara)._  

Barbara entered the field of education after raising a family, and recently moved into District B where she began teaching six years ago. An intermediate grade teacher, her observations regarding school effectiveness are oriented toward the personal and curricular. Replying, “This is a tough one,” when asked what makes a school effective,
Barbara paused only a moment before saying, “meeting the needs of students [and] serving needs of the community . . . providing the children with an education that will give them a start in life, socially as well as academically.” Her choice of these responses was based not only on the belief that working with children and “giving them the best education that is possible” is our business, but also the ideal that community members should benefit from schools as much as the students.

Exploring further, Barbara was asked for her perceptions of arts education and standardized test scores as potential characteristics of school effectiveness. Concerning the former, she feels that it is important for students to be well-rounded and that the arts play a part in helping to achieve this end. Test scores, if used to diagnose weaknesses and provide remediation, are also helpful, but she does not believe they should be attached to any type of funding. Nor, does Barbara think, should they be used as the only criterion of school effectiveness. In expanding on effectiveness characteristics with which she disagrees, Barbara mentioned that having to fight for salary and benefits affects the efficacy of many teachers, stating that it can affect “a teacher’s morale.” Referring to the teachers whose positions had been reduced from full to part time, she thought that it might be hard to come in and teach with energy, commenting that “teachers need to have energy; even if you have a bad day . . . you have to be here and give 100% and I think that [having time reduced] would make it difficult to be effective.”

Barbara feels that the elementary school has been very successful in meeting the needs of both the students and community, attributing this to the fact that they have had the same principal for two years after having had approximately nine different
administrators during the three years prior. Speaking of the difference this has made, she said that things “have been so much more consistent and effective . . . things like school discipline and school morale and parent involvement and rapport with the teachers; it’s been great.” Testing and NCLB have assisted as well, with the increased focus on curriculum helping students “not only progress to the next grade, but to be successful on their PSSAs.” Also linked with achieving standards, the school purchased computers and integrated software through a state funded grant that the students use on a regular basis toward the goal of improving their skills in reading and math.

When asked about impediments to success, Barbara listed funding in the sense that the district does not have a curriculum director and so the responsibility for grant writing falls on the teachers. With greater financial support from the government she felt that teachers would not have to spend their evenings writing proposals for private industry and government monies. Responding to a probe for additional obstructions to success, Barbara remarked:

I think having a school board that supports your efforts is important . . . we’ve had some disagreements with the school board, but I think you need to have a school board that can work well with the teachers and the superintendent and the community for effectiveness.

District B: Teacher 2 (Emily).

The last teacher to be interviewed was Emily, an arts education teacher for six years since graduating from college. Having worked in three different schools before returning to Pennsylvania, Emily’s philosophies are based on experiences in all
organizations and contribute to the personal, physical, and curricular orientations of school effectiveness.

Emily’s first response to being asked for characteristics of school effectiveness included the philosophy of school as community, “not just test scores and not just grades, but how happy the kids are, how successful the kids feel that they are.” She added that parent comfort and the school environment are critical as well, reiterating that, although test scores are a factor, they are not the only factor that determines a school’s efficacy. Returning to the issue of school as community, Emily firmly believes that parents, teachers, and children should work together and that even the youngest students should “have a small say” in their education. “You know, it takes a village to raise a child; that’s very true, I think.”

A practice that Emily disagrees with is using test scores to judge teachers’ performance, believing that it often scares teachers into a very narrow interpretation of the curriculum. “Teachers are so different,” she says, “they should be allowed to be creative.”

In consideration of her humanities background, Emily was asked whether components other than academics, such as arts education, should factor into school effectiveness. Her response was strongly in favor, pointing out that for those students who might not be as competent in reading or math, music and art might be “where they shine.” She also agreed that preparation for the workforce and character education are also vital, as children sometimes don’t learn these skills at home.

Emily’s viewpoint regarding schools’ success in realizing these characteristics is
that it is school specific. “I think it depends on the principal, it depends on, well, up here [northern school districts] the school board’s a little more important, and it depends on the teachers and the parents at the specific school.” Regarding her current school, she feels that they are “pretty good” at community building, character education, and including the arts while, at the same time, lagging behind in the areas of school facilities and purchasing current textbooks. From what she hears, Emily thinks that PSSA test scores are getting better each year.

In discussing what fosters their successes, Emily listed collaboration among teachers as well as their work to align curriculum both within and between grades. Although the administration does not include her in these grade level meetings, she would like to be involved so that she can contribute: “I don’t have a curriculum of my own and I’m looking to probably write it, so I need to know these kind of things.” Expanding on this, Emily believes that a lack of collaboration is the greatest hindrance to progress, as communication is very important. When asked if there were any other impediments, she responded that the school’s practice of having children change classes for different subjects might negatively affect their comfort level, but that she didn’t have a firm opinion at this point in time.

Question 3: The Role of School Board Members in the 21st Century

Shifting the focus from schools to school boards, this question explored respondents’ thoughts regarding the role of school board members in the 21st century. In the course of conversation, several related questions were posed as well. These included
whether board members should act individually or as a group, and whether their actions
should be based on personal beliefs or those of their constituents. Last to be considered
were actions thought to be out of the purview of a board member’s responsibility.
Responses were once again placed on a matrix, with actions considered to be board
members’ responsibilities depicted in Table 7, and actions not appropriate to the role of
21st century board members shown in Table 8.

**District A: School Board Member 1 (Linda).**

Linda describes the role of the 21st century school board member as that of
c policymaker. As a responsibility of the position, she considers board members to be
“watching eyes,” overseeing the implementation of policy to ensure that things are
flowing correctly and “adjusting so that we can move ahead.”

Actions within that role set were considered next. In discussing whether board
members should act individually or as a group, Linda states, “I think you can allow only
so much latitude for a cause versus an asset you bring to the board.” But she also thinks
that it is good practice to rely on members’ individual strengths, keeping in mind that
once a decision is made it should be supported as a group, which is sometimes not easy.
In Linda’s words, “You have to be willing to work as a team member.” On the matter of
acting according to personal beliefs versus those of the district’s constituents, listening
and responding to public opinion is imperative in her opinion. However, while the board
invites public input, she admits that it is difficult knowing the attitudes of the thousands
of voters who elected her, commenting that after listening, “you use your overall
Table 7

_School Board Members’ Roles in the 21st Century_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Linda A-SBM</th>
<th>Colleen A-SBM</th>
<th>Jane A-T</th>
<th>Nicole B-SMB</th>
<th>Cora B-SBM</th>
<th>Don B-SBM</th>
<th>Barbara B-T</th>
<th>Emily B-T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policymaking (Steering committee)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possess knowledge of school programs and policy implications</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oversee policy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Building budget</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hiring superintendent</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Note._ A = School A; B = School B; SBM = school board member; T = teacher.

Table 8

_Actions Not Appropriate to the Role of 21st Century School Board Members_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Linda A-SBM</th>
<th>Colleen A-SBM</th>
<th>Jane A-T</th>
<th>Nicole B-SMB</th>
<th>Cora B-SMB</th>
<th>Don B-SBM</th>
<th>Barbara B-T</th>
<th>Emily B-T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Micromanage education related programming and day-to-day school management</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing who to hire (other than central office staff)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate for personal agenda</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Note._ A = School A; B = School B; SBM = school board member; T = teacher.
judgment of the issue,” adding that the administration usually provides the board with a recommendation.

Linda is a vocal opponent of school board members involving themselves in the daily running of schools, feeling that the board’s job is dealing with the big picture, not details:

Actually I think, even our own board, we do a lot of things that are not our responsibility, which is why I would go back to the effective school has to have an effective leader. I think your superintendent would drive how much the board does and doesn’t do. She goes on to say that putting this philosophy into practice is a continual effort; since many board members’ children attend the schools they have a vested interest, wanting things “a certain way.” To remain objective and move the district forward, Linda relies on open communication, remarking that things still sometimes go awry, “You know, you’re really not on the cutting edge if you don’t ever do anything that doesn’t go wrong!”

*District A: School Board Member 2 (Colleen).*

Setting policy is also Colleen’s vision of a board member’s role, along with the added responsibility of knowing how it will affect students. To do this, she feels that board members must be knowledgeable about specific programs and their place within the day-to-day operations of the school district. The philosophy she shares with board members is that “you can’t just be a bystander, because you are the one who ultimately takes the yea or nay vote.”

As a board member, Colleen’s mission is to base her decisions on what is best for
students, which sometimes corresponds with her constituents’ sentiments and sometimes not. In speaking of a fellow board member who is anti-teacher and whose only goal appears to be zero mill tax increases, she asks, “When you don’t care at all what happens to kids, why are you there?” Answering her own question, Colleen voices concern regarding the potential for special interest groups to “take over boards and make their own agendas.”

Considering that boards often have members who possess personal agendas, Colleen is a strong supporter of the law stating that school board members have no power except as a group. While believing that the board and administrators should work together, she thinks that board members often overstep their bounds and become too involved in the daily running of schools, especially in the presence of a weak superintendent. Such practices include boards intruding into matters of curriculum as well as the recommendation of teachers to be interviewed and hired, thereby assuming responsibilities that should be the domain of school administrators. When discussing school board members’ actions Colleen cautions, “I don’t think the board should micromanage, but I think it happens a lot.”

_District A: Teacher 1 (Jane)._  

Jane’s opinion of school board members’ responsibilities differs markedly from those of the board members interviewed. Rather than dealing with policy, she believes their role is to manage finances and hire the superintendent. Her rationale for this viewpoint is a strong belief that non-educators who may be on the board do not have the
expertise and background to be making educational decisions. Jane explains that when hiring the superintendent, the board is choosing a person with the qualifications they think are optimal for the position and district, thereby placing the educational choices in the hands of a chief administrator through which they will filter to the principal, teachers, and other staff members.

Similar to Linda, Jane feels that board members should share their individual views “and then synergize to make one choice.” Once that choice is made, board members should present a unified front or it “crumbles the whole rest of the process.” Spinning off of this, Jane speaks of board members as having big egos that are often hard to abandon. When faced with making a decision, though, Jane says it is essential that they “release their egos,” listen to the voices of their constituents, and judge wisely.

When asked about roles that are not the responsibility of school board members, Jane replied, “I don’t think they should be involved in the running of the schools at all,” adding that daily decision-making should be left to the administration and teachers.

*District A: Teacher 2 (Nicole).*

Nicole agreed with Linda and Colleen, District A school board members, that policymaking should be the primary role of board members in the 21st century. She also agreed with Colleen in that, for policy to be effective, board members need to have adequate knowledge of the district’s programs. Speaking to the practices in her own district she said, “I know ours [school board members] do their homework.”
In discussing the reasons behind board members’ actions, Nicole voiced the benefits of obtaining individual board member’s opinions, but not to the point where “you are so individualized . . . you’re never going to come to a decision.” She also expressed the need for give and take, combining both personal and constituents’ beliefs with available information to make the best possible decisions for the district.

As far as roles that are not the responsibility of board members, Nicole feels that while it is appropriate for them to offer ideas, board members should not involve themselves in day-to-day school management. In providing specific examples of actions outside the scope of board members’ responsibilities, she listed curriculum and the initial stages of the district’s hiring process.

District B: School Board Member 1 (Cora).

Unequivocal when it comes to her philosophy regarding board members’ roles, Cora said, “Policy. Making policy. And when school board members go beyond that they have not understood their role. I think the greatest mistake that they can make is trying to be administrators rather than policymakers.” In addition to allowing administrators to carry out policy, Cora says that board members should also “trust them to do that.” Going one step further, she disagrees with board members who think it’s imperative that they are often visible in the schools, believing this sometimes puts teachers on guard. While an occasional visit for a specific purpose may be appropriate, Cora thinks board members’ time is better spent setting policy.
When asked whether board members should act as individuals or a group, Cora expresses the opinion that individual differences should be aired in private, “but once the decision is made, the majority decision is the board decision,” and that members with special interests should not undermine what the majority has decided. She also feels that it is important to take both constituents’ beliefs and those of board members into account during the decision-making process, as the latter sometimes possess critical information about an issue not shared by the general public. Listening to the varying attitudes of board members is also necessary; in Cora’s words, “If we all come from the same point of view, we haven’t really analyzed the situation.”

Regarding roles that school board members should not assume, “Administration!” was Cora’s emphatic response. Reiterating an earlier statement, she added, “I think we need to be clear on the chain of command.” Only if all other avenues have been exhausted should a complaint be brought to the board, “but that’s the last resort.”

**District B: School Board Member 2 (Don).**

While Don also believes that setting policy is important, he differs from Cora in his opinion that it is indeed necessary for board members to work with the administration and understand the running of the school, but added, “I’m not saying that we’re micromanaging.” Most important, though, is advancing the school’s educational program based upon tangible evidence demonstrating the worth of specific methods and practices. Rather than relying on an administrator’s word that certain programs are reaping desired
results, Don thinks it best that board members witness such results for themselves through direct involvement with the schools.

Like Cora, Don says of the board, “We agree to disagree, as long as the outcome is the most beneficial.” Even so, he does feel there is a little “grandstanding” and that some members can be oriented toward personal issues. However, Don says that the board’s practice of open communication helps to deal with such situations so that, despite any difference of opinions, those whose ideas are vetoed support the majority’s decision. Open communication also allows constituents’ beliefs to be heard and considered in Don’s decision-making process. He describes it as, “finding out for them [constituents] and voting on what I feel is best for them and myself and the students.” The process also works in reverse, by “letting the people understand where the board stands on this or why they came to [a] conclusion.”

Expanding on a previous comment, Don opposes board micromanagement of finance, administration, curriculum, and the social issues of a school. Furthermore, he thinks that board members should not involve themselves in matters of student discipline unless presented by the administration through proper channels.

*District B: Teacher 1 (Barbara).*

Barbara views the school board as a steering committee whose job is to work with the superintendent, school, and community to provide a well-rounded, quality education for children and also help them achieve academic standards. Considering the magnitude of this role, she believes it is appropriate for a board member to act upon personal
interests that are also important to the entire community, but that crusading for personal “vendettas” is unacceptable. Having recently moved into the school district, Barbara wants to have people on the school board who are “going to represent me as a community member and represent me as a teacher;” individuals who are elected based upon their platform rather than popularity or a familiar name.

Not unlike the previous board members and teachers interviewed, Barbara agrees that school board members should not be micromanaging schools’ daily affairs “unless there happens to be someone on the school board that . . . has a degree in education.” She feels that this is the job of administrators, as such responsibilities require expertise and someone who is “trained in that area.”

**District B: Teacher 2 (Emily).**

According to Emily, the primary role of 21st century school board members is making policy as well as decisions about academics and other district programs. As such, she feels it is essential that board members have a working knowledge of educational practices, saying, “I think it’s pretty scary to have people making decisions for schools that don’t know anything about them.”

Echoing the sentiments of several other study participants, Emily agrees that board members should be able to voice individual opinions because of their potential to benefit the school district. However, she also believes that board members with children in the schools are often not objective, sometimes having agendas related to their children’s personal gain. In the end, Emily thinks that board members must act as a
whole, because that is generally the best way to “get things done.”

Regarding responsibilities, Emily says that board members should act in accordance with “the people who have elected them” but “not a special interest group.” And, like everyone else interviewed, she feels that they should not become involved in the day-to-day running of the schools.

Questions 4 and 5: Relationships and their Perceived Influence on Effectiveness

The interview’s final questions address relationships that exist among teachers and school board members as well as their perceptions of how such relationships influence school effectiveness. First explored in question 4 are the types of relationships that exist and each individual’s opinion regarding their most essential component. The question then asks whether trust is an important element in the relationship and, if so, what level of trust is present and whether or not that level is adequate.

Building on these responses, question 5 seeks to discover the respondents’ perceptions of whether such relationships, particularly those involving trust, influence school effectiveness and how. The interview concludes by asking both teachers and school board members to describe what they feel characterizes a trusting relationship between the groups.

District A: School Board Member 1 (Linda).

Linda paused when asked about the type of relationship that exists between school board members and teachers. “It’s a difficult one,” she said of the question, because “we
don’t have a lot of direct communication except through committees or requests for
tings. . . . I probably don’t know 90% of the teachers. . . . if I didn’t have kids in this
district, I’m not sure how I’d know any of them!” After thinking for a bit, though, Linda
categorized the relationship as having a level of respect, and that school board members
and teachers “should” be mutually open to each other’s point of view. Referring to her
tenure as board president, though, Linda said that she went out of her way to be open to
meet with teachers; that “in the leadership role you can have a little bit more
communication . . . but, aside from that, they [teachers] are part of a system and they’re
not the part we have the most contact with.”

In discussing the adequacy of this relationship, Linda remarked, “I think it’s
adequate when you have overall good leadership,” going on to explain that when
administrators do their jobs issues only reach the board level when necessary or if there is
something positive to share. She believes that the district’s current system is well
structured to allow open communication in both directions, with teachers welcome to
attend both committee and board meetings. As a matter of fact, she is surprised at the
small number of teachers who attend, even when the board is “making these big
decisions.” Concerning the board’s awareness of teachers’ roles and responsibilities,
Linda does feel it is helpful that some of the board members have children in the schools
as it provides knowledge of what naturally occurs on a daily basis. Saying that if no one
had school-aged children, it would be difficult to have a feel for things because of the
constant changes taking place in education. “What it was like when we went to school
isn’t what it’s like right now, so you can’t just rely on what you had; you have to rely on
As far as the most important part of teacher-school board member relationships, Linda thinks it might be respect. Believing that teachers must be supported in ways that include salaries commensurate with others in the state, she also feels that board members must depend on teachers’ expertise. Explaining her beliefs, Linda says:

We have to respect them [teachers] as professional educators, and we have to accept who they are and what their role is. They have the key role. I mean, quite frankly, it’s the bottom line; who’s teaching the child in the classroom?

Moving to the concept of trust, Linda once again stopped to think before affirming that it is a critical element in the relationship between school board members and teachers; possibly even the base upon which all else is built. With regard to her own district, she guesses that there is a positive level of trust between the two groups and that the teachers can see, through the board’s actions, that they support a high quality education. However, she also feels that there is always room for improvement, recommending, “We need to both practice a measure of seeing what the other side is living through.”

Next to be discussed was whether teacher-school board member relationships might influence school effectiveness. Linda thinks that they can, based on the fact that the board supports teacher input and that teachers do come forward and speak on behalf of issues, even when they are controversial. She feels that many venues of communication create a relationship that enables this, and doesn’t believe that teachers would speak as openly if they felt their jobs were in jeopardy. Connecting this to effectiveness she says, “If you don’t feel like the board can hear you or listen to you, I do think you can give up
in the classroom; you can give up where it counts the most for us.”

Using this answer as a springboard, Linda was asked her opinion about whether
the level of trust between school board members and teachers influences school
effectiveness. Lending a strong note of support to this concept, Linda reiterated that
teachers:

are on the front line . . . no policy is going to work if in the classroom we don’t
have buy-in . . . and I think a big part of that is the trust level . . . that they trust we
are doing our best . . . and we trust that they’re doing their best.

According to Linda, the foundation of such a relationship is a district structure that
provides for open communication, sharing needed data, professional development,
programming based on teachers’ input, and mutual respect; all evolving from a basis of
trust.

District A: School Board Member 2 (Colleen).

Despite spending her entire career as an educator, Colleen sees teachers’
willingness to change and be part of the solution in a more negative light than she ever
would have thought possible. Speaking with respect to her personal perspective rather
than what she feels are the board’s overall perceptions, Colleen attributes this negativity
to her opinion that teachers often marry teachers, resulting in a narrow point of view that
seldom exceeds their personal experiences. She also feels that because of teachers’
complacency and unwillingness to change, “people are changing [education] for us.”

In light of her comments, it does not come as a surprise that Colleen views the
teacher-school board member relationship as less than adequate. Speaking to how it could
be improved, Colleen referred to the district’s interview process for a new superintendent. As chair of the personnel committee, Colleen invited all teachers to a meeting where they could ask the candidate any questions they wished prior to hiring. In her words, “This was huge to them,” as it involved them in decision-making as well as communicating respect. By such involvement, Colleen believes it is saying, “I really value your opinion . . . and want you to be part of this.” In addition to involving them in making decisions, a practice she feels they do not appreciate but instead take for granted, the board sponsors many professional development opportunities and employee recognitions. On the board side, Colleen strongly advocates that, in order to develop better relationships, members should visit the schools “because so much good is happening that you don’t see if you don’t go in the building.”

Colleen feels that trust is an integral component of teacher-school board member relationships. Unlike the attitude of previous board members, upon taking office Colleen promised never to lie to or surprise teachers, and always to share her voting rationale with them. She says, “I think they respect me for that, and I think they respect other board members who have that perspective.” After citing two examples in which the board and teachers worked together, Colleen characterized the relationship between the board members and teachers as “pretty trusting,” but thinks that it can always improve.

When asked whether teacher-school board member relationships influence school effectiveness, Colleen related what had occurred during the tenure of a previous board that was openly anti-teacher:

The teachers absolutely shut down because they were treated so badly that by the end of the term they didn’t participate in after-school activities, they didn’t want
to work on curriculum. Everything was taken away from them; it was very bad, morale was very, very bad.

Colleen sees how trusting relationships could have altered this experience, and believes that the teachers perceive and appreciate the current board’s effort to utilize those practices that foster trust.

Regarding characteristics of a trusting teacher-school board member relationship, Colleen comments, “I think those top-down approaches that some boards have, they just don’t work.” Sensitive to that, Colleen and the board promote communication, both providing the teachers with information and inviting them “to talk about real issues.” They also espouse including teachers on advisory boards and committees working on issues such as board goals and hiring, where they are given significant input in the decision-making process. The last substitutes for bureaucracy mentioned by Colleen include accountability and respect which, when added to the others, lead her to say, “I think we have a pretty good relationship.”

_District A: Teacher 1 (Jane)_.

Being in the district for only three years, and spending much of that time in her classroom, Jane is not sure what type of relationship exists between teachers and school board members. During her tenure, she has made one presentation to the board and received a form notice inviting her to share any ideas she might have, a note that she felt resulted more from a public relations standpoint than genuine interest. While Jane views the teachers’ link to the board as traditionally traveling through the superintendent, she
feels that “if the board is going to make educational choices, then that board needs to have a direct line to the teachers and listen to the teachers.”

Jane believes that the amount of teacher-school board member contact depends on the size of the district, but at the very least, teachers and board members should be introduced so that they become real to one another. She also feels that mutual trust is essential so as to benefit the district’s educational goals. Similar to her opinion concerning the type of relationship, Jane is not sure about the level of trust that exists between board members and teachers. Due to the constantly changing nature of education, she feels that the teacher-school board member relationship will never stagnate, adding “We can always work on trust. . . . when the work stops is when you become sterile.”

Sharing the philosophy that school board members and teachers must work as a unified front to project the school’s worth to others; she also supports the notion of teacher-school board member trust relationships influencing school effectiveness. She explains her reasoning by stating, “If you’re working in an environment where there’s not trust, if nothing more, there’s an undermining of the energy level.” Concluding her comments on the topic, Jane characterized a trusting teacher-school board member relationship with one phrase, “mutual respect.”

*District A: Teacher 2 (Nicole).*

Having lived and taught in the district for her entire life, Nicole knows almost all of the school board members but does not have a sense for the general relationship that
exists between them and most teachers. However, she does feel that teachers should know who the board members are and, because of increased union involvement in hiring, have a “pretty good relationship with them.”

Building on this response, Nicole was asked if teachers in the district do have a pretty good relationship with board members, to which she replied, “I don’t know, really, how much of a relationship it is . . . they’re doing their job, we’re doing [ours] . . .” Despite her uncertainty regarding the relationship, Nicole believes it is adequate and pretty positive, more so with some board members, but admits that she has no basis for comparison. A feature that she thinks increases board member familiarity with teachers is that board meetings are filmed and viewed throughout the month by a number of teachers. This gives teachers a sense of how individual board members act and, in Nicole’s words, “At least you know what they look like.”

In Nicole’s estimation, the most important component in the relationship between teachers and school board members is also the most basic; familiarity with one another. She also feels that open communication is critical and that the board members in her district “seem very open” to listening to the opinions of others. When asked, Nicole stated that she “definitely” thinks trust is a component of teacher-school board member relationships, especially with regard to confidential matters. Although describing the existing level of trust as “varying,” depending on the individual board member, Nicole personally believes that it is adequate, but acknowledges that the attitudes of some of her colleagues may differ.

Nicole sees a strong connection between teacher-school board member
relationships and school effectiveness:

I know when we went through a few years where we had a lot of conflicts among the school board and the district and the teachers, there was a lot of bitterness in the schools. . . . somebody out there spent a lot of hours with the conflicts instead of doing something that was more beneficial or positive.

If trust is not present, she believes the relationship is adversely affected from the onset, with such conflict filtering from the board, through the superintendent, to the principal, and ultimately to the teachers. Referring to her school’s high test scores, Nicole attributed them to the school’s positive make up and sense of fun, parent involvement, teachers being allowed to individualize instruction, and a strong team ethic. Asked whether this positive attitude trickles down from the board level, Nicole remarked, “I’m sure it does, because when things were going bad . . . it made everything else [less positive, too] . . . there was a little more conflict.”

Concerning characteristics of a trusting teacher-school board member relationship, Nicole thinks that openness to differing points of view and moving away from top-down management are key. Also believing that each group should become acquainted with the other, she recognizes that this is more difficult for board members because of the number of teachers employed by the district.

**District B: School Board Member 1 (Cora).**

“Arm’s length. I think they’re guarded in some ways,” is how Cora describes the teacher-school board member relationship in her district. Although stating that some distance between the two groups is necessary, she believes that board members must communicate and that such exchanges must be honest. Describing the perceived outcome
of what she felt was a lack of honest communication, Cora referred to her thwarted bid for reelection. Stating, “had there been an honesty, or had there been any kind of relationship between the staff and that board, or with that individual,” the teacher might have better understood why his position was being reduced in time and not engaged in the negative campaigning that Cora felt led to her defeat. Regarding reasons why staff members other than those experiencing reduction in time might be wary of being honest or open, she thinks that media coverage of area districts might cause teachers to be afraid of criticism or that the board will believe a student and not the teacher. Also feeling that the strong union system in Pennsylvania creates a union-management role that sometimes interferes with communication, Cora shares, “I’ve been through one teacher strike and it was ugly; it was definitely adversarial and I think that inhibits our communication.”

While she thinks that the current relationship is adequate, Cora is also of the opinion that it could be improved. Changes for the better would most likely occur through the chain of command, as the administrative staff is the most essential component in teacher-school board member relationships, acting as “the liaison between teachers and board.” When administrators keep the board “honestly informed,” she thinks things proceed quite smoothly.

Cora also believes that trust is a critical element in the relationship between school board members and teachers. She feels that, “by and large,” board members want to be fair with the staff but that such an affect must work both ways. She estimates, “there’s probably 70% of trust [for the board] among teaching staff” and, for the most part, board members trust the teachers. Cora adds that, while some teachers are “tired or
burned out . . . on the whole it’s an excellent staff and they’re doing good stuff and our kids are progressing . . . and doing the things that you want them to do when they’re done [graduated].” Stating that their trust relationships are adequate but could be improved, she emphasizes, “administrators are really key in the process . . . both ways . . . to communicate board things to the teachers and also to communicate teacher concerns and so forth to the board.”

Seeing a definite association between teacher-school board member relationships and school effectiveness, Cora commented:

I think teachers who are unhappy communicate that to students. And students need teachers who are excited about what they’re doing, who are confident in their ability and their presentation, and who are, for the most part, positive rather than negative.

Also believing that the level of trust between the two groups impacts parents’ mindsets, she adds, “If we hit them from all sides with the same point of view or with the same direction, it’s got to have a greater effect on the students.”

Cora describes a trusting relationship between school board members and teachers as one characterized by honest communication and “understanding where the other is coming from, even if we don’t always agree;” it bothers her when either teachers or the public feel that they can’t communicate with the board, as she likes to hear what people have to say. While on one hand she feels that the district’s smaller size limits their opportunities, on the other she knows that no one “falls through the cracks. Everybody knows everybody.”
Prefacing his response by explaining that the district had just completed an extremely lengthy negotiation process, Don portrays their teacher-school board member relationship as “good, but teetering on defensive.” Since board members and teachers who are more involved in school life have a seemingly better relationships, though, Don thinks “it depends on the board and teachers themselves,” believing that “the individual board member . . . calls the first shot on that.” Expanding on this thought, his opinion of the relationship is that it is adequate, but could still improve, particularly by board members and teachers becoming more involved in school life. After taking a minute to think, Don listed respect as the most important component of the board member-teacher relationship, believing that it fosters the mutual understanding necessary to get things done. He feels that trust is part of such respect, leading to good communication and the belief that those in charge will attempt to change things for the better.

When asked about the level of trust that exists between school board members and teachers, Don replied, “I think that it is starting to grow and come back to where it was in the past [before the strike and extended negotiations].” He does not doubt that the strike affected the trust between board members and teachers, and believes that each side must work to understand the other group’s position: “Sometimes the board member just does not understand the teachers and their responsibilities, and what the ramifications and limitations are. I think that’s a big part of it.” Don thinks that the level of trust can always improve and, in fact, does change as current board members leave to be replaced.
by the new. Regardless of the faces on either side of the table, though, he feels that
developing trust and respect for each other should be high on the list of priorities.

Speaking about school effectiveness and the relationships between teachers and
school board members, Don comments, “I do think the relationship between the two, the
teachers and the board, are reflected in outcomes.” Going on to explain, Don discusses
how administrators sometimes have expectations of teachers that are impractical and
actually impede the realization of identified goals. Citing the importance of teacher-
school board member relationships, he feels it is necessary for board members to explore
the feasibility of such administrative expectations, saying:

I think that trust in the relationship between the board and the teachers, I won’t
say circumvents the administration and superintendent, but it maybe helps the
whole board make some decisions in reaction to what the administration has
brought forth.

In like fashion, Don believes that the trust relationship that exists between
teachers and school board members influences school effectiveness as well. As an
example, he talks about setting policy that affects a department for which board members
might not have trust in the chairperson or faculty itself: “You’re going to react differently
to what you’re laying down as policy for that department.” Such decisions then filter
down to the teachers, and “you’re going to see some resistance. You’ll see resistance in
the teaching; you’ll see resistance in the learning. I think it does; it starts from the top and
goes all the way down.”

Respect, openness, and a willingness to learn are elements that Don feels are
critical characteristics of a trusting teacher-school board member relationship, not to
mention honesty, listening to others’ opinions, and being very moral: “I think that is a
first base of life.”

_District B: Teacher 1 (Barbara)._  

Echoing Cora’s words, Barbara said, “Everybody knows everybody,” when asked about the relationship between teachers and school board members, and added that this can have its benefits and drawbacks. Beginning with benefits, she mentioned their most recent contract negotiations saying “it was a long, drawn out ordeal, but I think both sides were very effective and they were very professional about how they treated each issue.” Regarding drawbacks, she said that one board member has somewhat tainted the reputation of the whole board but, if that member were taken out of the mix, most teachers would agree that the relationship between the board and teachers was a professional one. Taking into consideration that the domineering board member lost a recent bid for reelection, Barbara has hopes that the board member-teacher relationship will only improve, “not that it was bad before.”

In Barbara’s opinion, the most important element of a successful teacher-school board member relationship is working together for children through open communication. When asked if trust is also an essential component of that relationship, she replied, “Definitely,” explaining that as board members are elected to represent everyone’s best interests, it is necessary to have faith that they will do just that, rather than acting to satisfy personal agendas. On the whole, Barbara believes that the school board members and teachers in her district trust each other to carry out their respective responsibilities, but admits that there was tension when it was announced that several
positions would be reduced to part time. Although she doesn’t see any real flaws in their current relationship, Barbara feels that there is always room for improvement.

As with the others from her district, Barbara supports the concept of teacher-school board member relationships influencing school effectiveness, but is quick to add: “I’m not talking from experience because I don’t know really what it’s like to have an ineffective school board.” Providing an example, she says that when “words are spoken in the heat of arguments, it can only deter the focus on quality education for our students.” In discussing whether the level of trust between teachers and school board members can impact effectiveness, Barbara contradicts several statements made previously. Agreeing that such trust does influence efficacy, she states, “I think there’s a lot of teachers that lost faith in their school board members because of that decision to cut positions. . . . I think it’s going to take time to regain that trust.”

Citing open communication as a characteristic of a trusting relationship, Barbara once again referred to the reduction in full-time positions by remarking that a board should act in the best interests of the students and that it shouldn’t always be “a financial issue.” Although not stated directly, the implication was that while the board said positions were being reduced due to enrollment, it was actually to save funds that could then be used on upcoming projects. Concluding her comments on the topic, she amended her previous statement to include that, not only should board members act in the best interests of students, they should also act in the best interests of the faculty and community as well.
Like the other teacher participants, Emily’s response concerning teacher-school board member relationships in her district was not definitive. Instead, Emily shared that while she is familiar with the names of all school board members, she only really knows the board president and those members who have children in school, with the latter being very involved in school life. Talking about the rapport that exists between the board members who are parents and the teachers, Emily says that the quality of the relationship depends upon the parent, because we have some that are . . . behind the teachers, and then we have some that . . . feel that since they’re on the school board that their children are sort of exceptions to the rules, and that’s not good.

Voicing a sentiment shared by Barbara, Emily communicated the teachers’ displeasure with an individual board member’s expectation of special treatment, saying that it keeps the school from improving as quickly as it could.

Regarding board members who are not visible in the schools, Emily believes the teachers want board members to be aware of what they are doing so that good decisions can be made; but at the same time are thinking, “please don’t try to make decisions for us, and don’t leave us out; don’t go over our heads.” In the same vein, she states the importance of board members visiting and talking to the students so they understand who they are making decisions for. When asked for her thoughts regarding how board members could implement such shared decision-making, Emily spoke from the board’s perspective: “Let’s make a good decision and let’s take the teachers’ opinions into consideration, even if we feel that it’s not going to work out.”

Not surprisingly, Emily feels that open communication is the most essential
component in teacher-school board member relationships. Responding to whether trust is also a component, she immediately stated, “Absolutely,” adding that it is vital to know “that they [board members] have your best interests at heart; not yours [teachers], the kids.” Similar to her opinion regarding the general relationship between teachers and school board members, Emily thinks that attitudes concerning the existing level of trust varies depending on the school board member and the teacher, but says of the majority, “I don’t think they do. I don’t think that they trust the decisions that they [board members] make.” In contrast, though, she feels that the majority of the board does trust the majority of the teachers. Emily does not deem the current trust levels to be adequate, communicating that many teachers share the opinion that some board members are not qualified due to a lack of knowledge about educational practices, while others are simply not respected in the community.

Endorsing the connection between teacher-school board member relationships and school effectiveness, Emily explains: “I think if they’re [teachers and school board members] working together that there’ll be better decisions made on behalf of the kids and then they’ll be more successful.” In speaking specifically of trust relationships and their impact on effectiveness, she reiterates her previous statement but adds that trust relationships go a step further through demonstrating board members’ respect for professional knowledge; a respect that encourages teachers to go even farther in meeting their students’ needs.

Emily describes a trusting relationship between teachers and school board members as one based on respect and cooperation. She feels that communication is
critical along with keeping in mind that it is the students’ interests everyone is working for. Finally, Emily believes it is important to be considerate, thinking of others rather than just one’s own desires, “and that, in turn, you leave your ego behind, because I think that gets in the way sometimes.”

Interviews: Cross-case Analyses

Where the within-case analyses provided individual school board members’ and teachers’ perceptions of (a) school effectiveness, (b) their mutual trust relationships, and (c) how such relationships influence school effectiveness, this study also sought the answers to four research questions:

1. How do rural and suburban elementary teachers define school effectiveness?

2. How do rural and suburban policymakers at the school board level define school effectiveness?

3. What perceptions do rural and suburban elementary teachers possess regarding trust relationships between policymakers at the school board level and themselves? What perceived impact does this relationship have on school effectiveness?

4. What perceptions do policymakers at the school board level possess regarding trust relationships between rural and suburban elementary teachers and themselves? What perceived impact does this relationship have on school effectiveness?
Initially, a cross-case analysis based upon individuals’ roles appeared to be the most logical - one analysis for school board members’ responses and one for those of teachers. Upon beginning this process, though, it quickly became apparent that such an approach was flawed, as almost all of the participants’ responses were situation specific with one teacher even stating as much. The emergence of themes across schools was forced, as most comments were responsive to particular circumstances that were interwoven through the fabric of a school’s culture.

Considering this and the interdependence of responses among each school’s board members and teachers, it seemed appropriate to restructure the analysis and shift the focus to the school level. In so doing, themes emerged naturally and gained meaning as they reflected the interconnectedness of a common culture while still allowing premises shared by teachers or school board members to come into view. The resulting cross-case analyses were organized according to school. One institution, School A, achieved 5th grade PSSA scores that ranked in the top 15% of the population under study for the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 school years. School B, the second organization, scored in the bottom 15% of participating elementary schools during the same period of time. For each analysis, themes generated by school board members and teachers were examined across the entire body of four cases to “understand how they are qualified by local conditions, and thus develop more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanations” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 172). Interview themes from Linda, Colleen, Jane, and Nicole served as the basis for School A’s cross-case analysis, while School B’s analysis drew from those of Cora, Don, Barbara, and Emily.
School A

Questions 1 and 2: School Effectiveness.

The dominant theme emerging from School A was that people are the heart of school effectiveness. Both school board members and teachers wove references to children, parents, staff, and school leaders throughout their commentary. In describing what makes a school effective, Jane was the most direct, stating it is “meeting the needs of every child,” but the comments of others supported this as well. While board member Colleen spoke of the need to differentiate instruction, her counterpart, Linda, talked of teachers getting “the idea” about how best to educate students. On the other hand, Nicole mentioned the importance of the school’s environment, not just the physical, but of friendliness and children having fun as they learn.

Jane conversed at length about children; passionate in her desire to help them achieve balance and independence alongside building esteem and civic responsibility. Her feelings regarding testing as “almost close to Nazi-like” reflected her desire to help each child find his own gift rather than make everyone the same. Echoing this from the board perspective, Colleen said, “This probably sounds real altruistic of me, but [that which is most important to me] are the things that really affect kids.” Although less direct, Linda’s and Nicole’s responses revolved around their respective responsibilities as school board member and teacher, and how these responsibilities impact the lives of children.

Leaders and their leadership provided another example of the value of people to School A’s board members and teachers when defining school effectiveness. Nicole, in
discussing environment, spoke to the leader’s importance in creating a school culture friendly to students, teachers, and the community while, at the same time, laying the groundwork through which attributes such as character and academic skills may be acquired. Although both school board members addressed responsibilities of the superintendent and principal, Colleen stated, “the principal is the most important factor in a school’s success,” providing the example of how a principal serves as the students’ advocate by including parents in school life and collaborating with teachers in matters of curriculum and other school related decisions. Jane expanded on this, mentioning throughout her interview the diverse areas impacted by leaders at all levels, including funding, curriculum, and the development of a quality staff.

All those interviewed concurred that a quality staff is essential to school effectiveness. Saying, “a highly effective teacher, regardless of the circumstances around he or she [sic], will be able to do great things in the classroom,” Linda underscored her belief that quality teachers must be in place to realize more tangible indicators of effectiveness, such as academic achievement. Adding to Jane’s philosophy that teachers must be open to new ideas, Colleen suggested it is teachers’ reluctance to change that often stands in the way of implementing more effective practices. For this reason she appreciates the mandates put in place by NCLB, as they are forcing school boards to increase their awareness of how to improve.

Even the less animate themes identified by School A are linked to its people. Curriculum, most often pictured as inanimate, becomes a living document used as a guide to academic effectiveness. In referring to developing a balance in children, Jane described
the need for an integrated and appropriate curriculum, one that incorporates the arts, civic responsibility, and character education in a way that builds esteem and helps students realize their potential. In like manner, Colleen talked of moving away from a child-deficit model to a systemic model that differentiates instruction and “looks at what our children can do well.” Supported by fellow board member, Linda, and her championing of the horizontal and vertical alignment of curriculum, Colleen also emphasized that the NCLB reform efforts are good, but that many school districts use them incorrectly and come to wrong conclusions regarding their worth. Jane sees the value of NCLB as well, believing that it is serving as a positive impetus for an educational evolution that forces teachers to look at the individual child.

Although many districts view scores on standardized tests, such as the PSSA, and funding as distant cousins of effectiveness, Jane and both board members illustrated how they touch those involved with the educational process. Used the right way, PSSA scores not only act as effectiveness indicators, but also simultaneously benefit a school’s students. In addition to providing board members with desired data such as trends over time, Jane feels they supply diagnostic information in addition to a means of tracking a child’s progress through the years. With regard to funding, Linda and Colleen’s efforts to develop a responsible budget while maintaining small class sizes provides an environment that allows for the differentiated instruction necessary to promote school effectiveness.

The final aspect of the school’s people-centered theme included elements of School A’s culture. While not speaking the term itself, all those interviewed described the
way things are done in the school and district. Nicole went to great length to depict the school’s physical environment; the openness and positive atmosphere one would experience when walking through the hallways. Jane told of the independence and respect practiced in her classroom while Colleen discussed parental involvement. Adding to comments made by the other three, Linda stressed the role of teachers and leaders in creating an environment ripe for planting the seeds through which their effectiveness will be judged.

In examining the participants’ responses to which effectiveness indicator is most important, the person related theme once again became apparent. From the cultural component shared by Nicole, through Colleen and Linda’s mention of the principal and highly qualified staff, to Jane’s focus on meeting each child’s needs, their words supported the district’s mission of providing experiences through which each student may become a responsible citizen and lifelong learner.

The first question concluded by asking the respondents about characteristics often considered to be indicators of effectiveness with which they disagreed. Without hesitation, Linda, Jane, and Nicole voiced their opposition to test scores being used as the sole criterion of a school’s efficacy. Their feelings were supported by Colleen’s aversion to schools being operated on a child deficit model, in which the primary focus is on helping those that struggle attain academic adequacy rather than building on what children do well. Linda’s words provide a succinct summary of the group’s feelings as she cautions against looking at individual indicators “without looking at the big picture.”

To further explore their responses, the second question asked for participants’
opinions regarding how successful schools have been at realizing the previously mentioned characteristics, what has helped them accomplish these goals, and also what has kept them from realizing these ends. Opinions concerning success varied from Jane’s “probably not” to Nicole’s “very successful,” with board members seeing schools edging toward improvement on the continuum. Everyone, though, agreed that accountability measures have forced schools to more closely examine how they are educating their students, a practice that is helping schools to become more effective. Citing specific examples of NCLB’s positive effect, Jane spoke of the increased focus on meeting children’s needs and incorporating alternative learning strategies into daily instruction. School board members remarked on the board’s responsibility for hiring a quality staff, curricular alignment, and more systemic changes that address learning for life. Linda, in particular, talked about the sense of accomplishment realized through achieving NCLB goals while concurrently emphasizing the need for teacher “buy-in,” expressing her belief in the importance of allowing teachers the freedom to make choices about educational processes.

Mandated accountability, though, was also one of three themes that emerged as teachers and board members discussed hindrances to the realization of effectiveness. One reason for this was their perceived inflexibility of the law as manifested through requirements over which schools have little control, along with unrealistic expectations for students in special education programs, imperatives that Colleen considers pathetic. Other explanations were the financial commitment needed to effect mandates along with the feeling that mandates tend to change with the election of a new administration.
The second and third themes regarded as obstacles were personnel and societal issues. Both Colleen and Jane spoke at length about teachers’ resistance to change. Colleen, an educator herself, said, “I never would have believed that it’s so difficult sometimes to get them [teachers] to accept change that is really good for kids. The complaining; it’s unbelievable.” Nicole noted the pace of society and students’ lives out of school as additional impediments to change. Jane agreed, relating children’s individual strengths to a sense of self, “which is one of the things that we’re [society] lacking.”

*Question 3: The Role of School Board Members in the 21st Century.*

Individual responses concerning the roles and responsibilities of school board members merged into a common philosophy in School A. All respondents referred to policymaking as the primary role of board members, emphasizing that attention must be paid to how policy affects students. Nicole, Linda, and especially Colleen discussed that board members must be actively involved in acquiring accurate knowledge about a school’s programs within the context of its daily functioning in order to facilitate the development of informed policy. Although Jane’s attitudes about policymaking were not as direct, she felt that a superintendent hired according to quality practices outlined in board policy would help ensure the administrative competency necessary to enable school effectiveness.

Two additional commonalities were rooted in opinions regarding the underpinning of school board members’ actions. While all saw the merits of capitalizing on board members’ individual strengths to build better policies and programs, they were
quick to add the importance of synergizing to reach a choice and supporting it in a unified manner. School board members and teachers alike noted that, at no time, should special interests guide a board’s actions. They did believe, though, in the necessity of paying attention to constituents’ views as well as those of board members, judging wisely so as to make the best possible decision for the district and its students.

Respondents were also in accord regarding actions that are not the responsibility of school board members. Despite their feeling that board members must actively acquire knowledge about school programs and practices, all expressed adamant opposition to policymakers micromanaging schools. Although all felt that daily decision-making should be left to administrators and teachers, board members mentioned a competent superintendent as a mandatory prerequisite. Explaining, they provided examples of school districts with weak leaders and their respective school board members’ increased involvement in district management. Along with this, everyone interviewed strongly disparaged board members for advancing personal agendas. Characterized best by Jane, to truly benefit students, school board members must “release their egos.”

*Questions 4 and 5: Relationships and their Perceived Influence on Effectiveness.*

A pause before each person’s response intimated that they had seldom contemplated the relationship between school board members and teachers or, for that matter, even acknowledged that one existed. When they did reply, all agreed that they were not sure whether there even was a relationship, citing little direct communication and contact as the reason for their responses. Of the two groups, teachers seemed less
sure of the relationship’s status, but did feel it is important to know who the board members are. Other comments indicated that the board also engages in shared decision-making, applies practices in a manner specific to a situation, and allows for teacher autonomy.

School board members’ remarks, on the other hand, at first reflected negativity. As they conversed and became more involved in the subject, though, a very different attitude emerged. Linda, together with Colleen, spoke of both groups being mutually open to the other’s point of view and the respect that must exist between them for a school to achieve its goals. In School A’s district, collaborative efforts are the norm, with teachers invited to share their opinions about the hiring of a new superintendent as well as being responsible for piloting educational programs and recommending their adoption or termination. The board also supports professional development and provides an array of employee recognitions. Colleen, who first said she saw teachers as much more negative than she would have thought, ended by stating, “so much good is happening that you don’t see if you don’t go in the building.” As with the teachers, these remarks indicate the presence of shared decision-making, teacher autonomy, empowerment, research-based practices, and the building of esteem.

As to the relationship’s adequacy, no consensus emerged in terms of an absolute value. In the course of conversation, though, a number of comments pointed to the need for a direct line of communication between board members and teachers. Supporting Colleen’s call for board members to visit schools, Linda encouraged more direct knowledge as well, saying, “What it was like when we went to school isn’t what it’s like
right now, so you can’t just rely on what you had; you have to rely on what is.” Jane and Nicole also encouraged first-hand knowledge, thinking, at the very least, teachers should be introduced to board members even though much of the communication between the two flows through the superintendent. Even so, board members and Nicole believe that the current board has worked to improve board member-teacher relationships, agreeing to competitive salaries, recognizing teachers’ accomplishments, and inviting increased involvement in educational decision-making. While Colleen feels that teachers don’t appreciate the extent of their collaboration, Linda believes, “we have to respect them as professional educators. . . . They have the key role.”

Where there was a slight hesitation when asked about relationships in general, there was a profound pause after being asked whether trust is a component of teacher-school board member relationships. Each individual’s processing of the question was almost physical, as their faces played through a series of emotions ranging from thoughtful through comprehension to assuredness as they soundly concurred. Responses to being asked about whether trust relationships between board members and teachers are important included Colleen’s “Absolutely,” Nicole’s “Definitely,” and Jane’s comment that trust is essential among all those working toward educational goals. Linda went even farther, saying:

we have the time for the superintendent to meet with the teachers . . . do we put them on committees for the curriculum . . . are they influential in making decisions? . . . if you looked at our district you would say, “Yes, they are. They are very influential.” And do we provide for proper inservice training, do we provide them for a certain amount to go on conferences . . . those are the kind of things [we do], and I think a lot of that is based on trust.

Despite their agreement about the significance of trust in teacher-school board
member relationships, there was no common view concerning the level of trust existing between the groups. Board members and teachers did concur, though, that there is always room for improvement and, in Linda’s words, “that we need to both practice a measure of seeing what the other side is living through.”

The final question served as a vehicle for each participant to weave the interview’s separate strands into a tapestry addressing their perceptions of whether teacher-school board member relationships, principally relationships dealing with trust, influence school effectiveness. Not only were their direct responses to the various parts of this question taken into account, but also their observations throughout the entire course of the interview. Emerging through a synthesis of their thoughts was a relationship rich environment with people at its heart; a theme that shone through each of the following inquiries regarding educational relationships and efficacy.

Linda, Colleen, Jane, and Nicole firmly believe that teacher-school board member relationships influence school effectiveness. Linda explained her belief in terms of School A’s current board practice that encourages open communication and supports teacher input on a variety of issues, even when the issue is controversial. “If you don’t feel like the board can hear you or listen to you, I do think you can give up in the classroom, you can give up where it counts the most.” Colleen supported this view, referring to a previous “anti-teacher” board that treated the teachers badly. In reaction to this the teachers shut down; there were no extracurriculars, no work on curriculum, and morale was “very, very bad.” Referring to this same time from a teacher’s standpoint, Nicole said that when the relationship is negative, people focus on the conflicts and
bitterness rather than doing something positive or beneficial.

Teachers and board members also agreed that trust relationships between the groups influence a school’s effectiveness in many different ways. Colleen’s belief that the teachers perceive and appreciate school board members’ efforts to involve them in decision-making and other practices rooted in trust is seconded by Nicole’s observation that School A and its teachers are given the freedom to individualize, yet at the same time work together to create a culture that is fun. On a more general level, Jane feels that a lack of trust undermines the energy level needed to get things done. Returning to a previous observation made by Linda, she remarked that teachers are on the front line, and that no policy will work without teacher “buy-in.” Elemental to such buy-in, she thinks, is trust; that each group trusts the other to do their best.

Despite Linda’s mentioning of competitive salaries as an important component of the teacher-school board member relationship, the groups’ characterization of a trusting teacher-school board member relationship centered on valuing people. Most important to participants was mutual respect, followed by a move away from top-down management realized through communication, shared decision-making, district support of professional development, and personal accountability. Talk of collaboration, teacher autonomy, empowerment, and a concern for teacher esteem were interwoven through the fabric of the interview by board members and teachers as well, although the board members possessed greater awareness of their value in creating a professional structure. In Colleen’s words, “I think teachers have to be more a part of decision-making. . . . [We need to do things that say to them] I really value your opinion; we want you to be part of
Questions 1 and 2: School Effectiveness.

Two foci characterized School B’s interpretation of school effectiveness. First and foremost was a concern for human resources driven by the goal of student success. References to students, staff, parents, and community members populated remarks made by school board members and teachers. When discussing the components of school effectiveness, Emily stressed the importance of school as community, with a focus on student centered issues including children’s ownership of the learning process and feelings of success. To enable student success, board members conveyed the need for a qualified staff and optimal environment made possible by adequate funding. Parental involvement was added to the mix as well, all the while bearing in mind that the school must also serve needs of the community. The second marker of school effectiveness was standardized test scores, specifically those reported for the PSSA. Although also driven by their goal of school success, respondents primarily viewed them as a separate entity; a product by which the school could be judged.

Emily’s philosophy of school as community represented the student centered aspect of human resources shared by other participants from School B. Her fellow teacher, Barbara, spoke of meeting students’ needs through providing a good start in life, socially as well as academically. Both board members supported this, although the social facet was only confirmed in response to a query from the investigator. In addition to
noting academic achievement, most of the group also mentioned or implied the importance of developing students’ esteem and feelings of ownership in their educational careers. Emily and Don communicated the former as students’ feelings of success, with Emily going on to say that even the youngest children should “have a small say” in their education.

Talk of esteem needs was not limited to students, though. Cora conveyed the significance of staff satisfaction by citing a need for teachers who are excited about their profession and confident in their abilities, asserting, “I think teachers who are unhappy communicate that to students.” Her fellow board member concurred, touching on staff members’ feelings of success. Barbara, also, reinforced this need for satisfaction, but from the perspective of morale being negatively affected by having to fight for salary and benefits as well as reductions in full-time positions. Such occurrences, she believes, would make it difficult to find the energy necessary to be effective.

Other essential human resources contributing to student-centeredness include parent involvement, serving community needs, and funding. By bringing parents into the schools and providing evening classes and other educational opportunities to community members, the school encourages educational partnerships that benefit student success. Funding, although not a human resource, is a vehicle through which the district further supports its focus on students, allowing for smaller class sizes and the safe infrastructures that are school board priorities.

While standardized testing was considered as somewhat of a necessary evil, resultant scores were acknowledged as visible effectiveness indicators. Emily described
their rise in popularity as demonstrated by increased grade level meetings, while Barbara talked about heightened demands for teachers to spend time writing grants in attempts to acquire the technology and materials needed to improve test scores. Agreeing with Emily that they are “part of” school effectiveness, Cora related, “whether we like it or not,” PSSA scores have to be considered.

Through the adage, “It takes a village to raise a child,” Emily synthesizes what she, Don, and Barbara felt to be the most essential effectiveness indicator; that it takes school board members, teachers, parents, and administration, all working together, to provide students with the best possible education and sense of success. Cora did not disagree, but expressed the opinion that no one factor could be considered most critical; that all were equally consequential in creating an effective school.

Paradoxically, one of the school’s markers of effectiveness was also a characteristic with which they disagreed. While test scores were thought to be an indicator, Cora cautioned, “you can’t judge on test scores exclusively.” In agreement with this, Don added the feeling that, regardless of the reform effort, there will always be a top, middle, and bottom group of students, believing that a more prudent course would be to look at a school’s scores over time. Barbara concurred as well, seeing the worth of the tests for purposes of diagnosis and remediation, but not as a requirement for continued federal funding. Alongside all of these, Emily disagreed with using test scores as a measure of teacher performance, feeling that it inhibits their creativity and often scares them into a very narrow interpretation of the curriculum.

Board members and Barbara deemed their efforts to realize effectiveness
indicators as “very successful,” particularly in the areas of class size, parent involvement, and test scores. Emily was a bit more specific, ranking community building, character education, and arts education as “pretty good,” but having up-to-date textbooks and facilities as “not so good.” It also appears that the majority of those interviewed attribute their success to curricular issues. While Don spoke of aligning curriculum to “standards our district has set” in addition to those advanced through NCLB, teachers linked much of the curriculum work to improving PSSA scores, although Barbara also mentioned that NCLB increased the focus on curriculum that, in turn, helped children advance to the next grade. Corresponding with this, Emily remarked that improved collaboration among classroom teachers has led to greater curriculum alignment and, ultimately, enhanced effectiveness. She wishes, however, that special area teachers were also included in such planning as they also have means to help elevate PSSA scores along with a school’s effectiveness.

While only referred to by Don and Barbara, it appears as though leadership has played a role in the realization of effectiveness indicators as well. From the board level, Don described how ongoing policy review and a working plan act as guides for most of the district’s actions. Barbara, on the other hand, cited the recent stability of building level leadership as providing the consistency in discipline, parent involvement, morale, and teacher rapport necessary for moving forward in efficacy.

Obstacles to effectiveness revolved around funding and relationships. Several times throughout the interview Cora referred to the tax burden incurred by district residents while Don voiced opposition to unfunded mandates or funding discontinued
prior to an initiative’s completion. Funding was also on Barbara’s mind, as she shared that the district’s tight budget and lack of a curriculum coordinator necessitated teachers spending much of their own time in writing grants for programs or materials designed to improve results.

Regarding relationships as an impediment to realizing effectiveness indicators, Cora and Emily describe a lack of collaboration and communication. Cora speaks of the staff grumbling quite a bit, caused by what she sees as the nature of educational practice in which teachers work independently of each other in classrooms that they control. Feeling they have no basis for comparison, she suggests that they should experience a real job where they have to work for a boss and get along with their coworkers. In contrast, Barbara believes in the importance of having a school board that supports teachers’ efforts and “can work well with the teachers and the superintendent and the community for effectiveness.”

*Question 3: The Role of School Board Members in the 21st Century.*

Two themes emerged from the collection of responses concerning the roles and responsibilities of school board members, the first of which was setting policy. Although both Cora and Don agreed, beyond this point their opinions differed. Where Cora was unequivocal in stating, “when board members go beyond that [setting policy] they have not understood their role,” Don just as assuredly advanced that board members must have a working knowledge of programs and practices. Striking a balance between the two, Emily discussed the importance of board members having a working knowledge of what
is happening, but not making decisions for teachers, while Barbara viewed the role of policymaker as working with the superintendent, school, and community to provide a quality education that includes helping children achieve academic standards.

Emanating from the first, the second theme addressed achieving standards and advancing the school’s educational programs. Despite the fact that all agreed, an interesting dichotomy presented itself in the opinions of board members. Where Don thought that board members should witness policy results for themselves through direct school involvement rather than relying on the word of administrators, Cora firmly believes that administrators should carry out policy, saying board members should “trust them to do that.”

Board members and teachers alike were in accordance that it is fine for school board members to bring individual interests to the table, but that they must act as a whole in supporting the group’s decisions. It was interesting to note that teachers used the terms “personal interests” or “opinions” when talking of individual concerns, while board members used the phrases “individual differences” and “agreeing to disagree.” Regardless of the specific words used, however, all agreed there was no room for personal vendettas or grandstanding.

With regard to decision-making, the majority concurred that school board members should allow constituents’ and other board members’ beliefs to be heard and considered, but also use knowledge accrued through their tenure to make the best possible decisions for all. Responding from the perspective of district resident as well as teacher, Barbara proposed that board members should vote according to the platform on
which they ran and for which they were elected. Both teachers, though, questioned the objectivity of board members who have children in the schools, alluding to personal experiences in which the expectation of special treatment for these students was the norm.

The final part of this question asked whether there were any actions thought not to be within the purview of school board members. Even though most of those interviewed felt that board members should be acquainted with school programs and what teachers are doing in their classrooms, they unanimously opposed their micromanaging of school operations. Agreeing that the management of a school’s daily affairs is the job of administration, Cora emphasized the “need to be clear on the chain of command.” Don, though concurring, presented contradictory views. In talking about the need to work with the administration and understand the running of the school, he stated, “I’m not saying that we’re micromanaging.” Later, though, he talked of it being best to witness program results personally rather than relying on an administrator’s word. Comments like these suggest that, despite his words, Don’s school involvement may teeter on the brink of micromanaging.

Questions 4 and 5: Relationships and their Perceived Influence on Effectiveness.

Upon reading literally, the group’s responses generated little consensus about the type of relationship existing between school board members and teachers. An inferential reading, on the other hand, combined with remarks made throughout the interviews, yielded more homogeneity than at first apparent.
From the onset, board members agreed that the relationship is guarded due to an adversarial strike and lengthy negotiation process. Discussing the need for honest conversation, Cora commented that the strong union ethic in Pennsylvania sometimes inhibits such communication. Don’s remarks indicated much the same, saying that board members and teachers that are more involved in school life have better relationships, but also “the individual board member . . . calls the first shot on that.”

Although the teachers’ replies were ambiguous, remarks arising during discussion generated a view quite similar to that of board members. Barbara cited the positive outcome of the recent negotiation process but also described drawbacks concerning district size and the resultant familiarity among community members. Speaking of the board, she mentioned a “tainted” member who was not objective and expected special treatment for her school-aged children. Although she commented that if this member were removed from the mix the board would be more professional, her remarks about teachers having to fight for wages, in addition to their reductions in time causing a loss of trust, cast a shadow of doubt on her view of the relationship as professional.

Emily responded that she was “not sure” of the relationship that exists, but thinks the majority of teachers are neutral toward the board as a group. Sharing that teachers would like board members to visit the school to gain a better understanding of what is happening in classrooms, and also listen to teachers’ opinions but not make decisions for them, presumes a relationship with room for improvement. Her reference to the same board member mentioned by Barbara, and that several teachers have commented on the member’s lack of objectivity, suggests the likelihood of this being a recurrent topic of
conversation and that the relationship between board members and teachers is, in fact, guarded.

Thoughts were also congruent regarding the relationship’s most essential component. While phrased a bit differently, responses pointed to communication as central to working together, with both teachers discussing the benefits of open communication and its necessity in helping to reap the greatest educational benefits for students. Citing administrative staff as critical, Cora explained that, as they are the liaison between the board and teachers, honest communication is expected as they relay information from one group to the other. Although Don listed respect as a primary component, his comment that it was fundamental to all else, along with ongoing references to the importance of teacher-board member interactions, signify his concurrence with this response.

Despite the guarded nature of the relationship, everyone felt that it was adequate but could improve. The means of improvement, though, varied from person to person, with each person’s strategy building on their personal philosophy.

When asked whether trust is an important component of teacher-school board member relationships, all stopped to consider their responses. Upon answering, though, everyone was emphatic in agreeing that trust is the gateway to achieving a quality school. Barbara responded that it is “definitely” important to have faith that elected officials will act in everyone’s best interests rather than according to personal agendas, with “absolutely” used by Emily to describe the significance of trust in being able to rely on board members’ having students needs at heart. While Don agreed that trust is part of the
respect that leads to good communication and the belief that those in charge will work to change things for the better, Cora said that trust is critical and must flow in both directions between school board members and teachers.

Responses, though varied, revealed a tenuous level of trust between the groups. Cora’s assessment that there is 70% trust for the board among the teaching staff but that most board members trust the teachers was seconded by Emily who, though thinking there is less than a majority of teachers who trust the board, also believes the majority of board members have trust in the staff. Barbara believes that, on the whole, each group trusts the other to carry out its responsibilities, but also that staff reductions in time have damaged the teachers’ level of trust for the board. Agreeing with Barbara and adding that the strike negatively affected their trust relationship, Don currently sees it starting to grow toward its pre-negotiations state. He further replied that each group must work to understand the others’ position, and that board members’ not grasping the magnitude of teachers’ responsibilities often contributes to trust’s demise.

When asked about the adequacy of the trust level, Cora, Don, and Barbara replied that there is always room for improvement. Attesting to its fluidity, Don pointed out that the level of trust changes as new board members replace the old and, as such, developing trust and respect for each other must be high on the list of priorities. Reiterating a previous remark, Cora spoke to the significance of administrators being the gatekeeper of communication as it flows back and forth between groups. Emily was the only respondent who felt that the level of trust is not adequate, citing some board members’ lack of respect by residents of the community and a dearth of knowledge regarding
educational practices as the reason.

In contrast with some of the previous responses for which associations were not readily apparent, consensus was quickly evident in conversations regarding teacher-school board member relationships and school effectiveness. The first instance concerned whether such relationships influence effectiveness, to which all replied affirmatively. Board members viewed relationships as primarily reflected in outcomes. Sharing that members must understand the demands placed on teachers by some administrative recommendations, Don was careful to explain that this does not circumvent administration, but helps the board in the decision-making process. Cora saw a more direct association, in that unhappy teachers communicate that same attitude to students, an unacceptable condition as learning depends on positive teachers who are confident in their abilities as well as presentation styles. Teachers’ responses focused slightly more on students, with Emily believing that positive relationships lead to better decisions on the students’ behalf while Barbara approached the topic from the perspective of a less than ideal relationship, saying that words spoken in the heat of an argument can quickly deter the focus of a quality education for children.

Similar agreement was reached about trust relationships between the two groups influencing school effectiveness. Cora’s simple statement that such relationships affect mindsets was the tie that bound others’ responses. With regard to policymaking, Don described its filtering from the board through administration to teachers and how, through such a process, a lack of trust can cause a resistance in teaching that ultimately impedes student learning. In like fashion, Emily expressed how board members’ respect for
teachers’ professional knowledge can encourage teachers to go farther in meeting students’ needs. Once again referring to staff reductions in time, Barbara mentioned that the resultant loss of trust could well influence the school’s efficacy throughout the near future.

Respect for one another underscored the group’s opinions regarding the characteristics of a trusting teacher-school board member relationship. Cora’s premise that each must understand where the other is coming from, even if they do not agree leads to a second commonly held imperative; honest communication. Respect also served as an umbrella for other observations, including cooperation, morality, a willingness to learn, familiarity with one another, and consideration. With regard to the latter, Emily stressed the importance of thinking of others instead of oneself, recommending, “you leave your ego behind, because I think that gets in the way sometimes.”

Summary of Findings: Cross-case Analyses of Interviews

The findings in this section addressed all four of the research questions. The first two questions, (a) how do rural and suburban elementary teachers define school effectiveness and (b) how do rural and suburban policymakers at the school board level define school effectiveness, revealed consistencies of thought at the school level as well as the role (teacher and school board member) levels. In the case of the first two questions, analysis at the position level lent itself to the emergence of themes more readily than it did for the other questions due to their drawing on personal philosophies more than situation specific responses.
In School A, the definitions of effectiveness advanced by teachers and school board members were people-centered, with meeting the needs of students at the core. Another effectiveness indicator was leadership, practiced by those who create a culture that fosters the development of academic and character skills while also collaborating with students, parents, the community, and teachers. A quality staff was also listed as an essential ingredient of school efficacy, along with the belief that a highly effective teacher transcends circumstances and is foundational to realizing the more tangible indicators of effectiveness in academics, the arts, and responsibility.

School A also discussed how curriculum, test scores, and funding are integral to achieving student-centered goals. They felt that the curriculum of an effective school is aligned and addresses liberal arts in addition to core academics, differentiating instruction in a way that builds esteem and helps each student realize his potential. In like manner, test scores are not viewed as isolated measures of worth, but provide diagnostic information that helps the school better service its clients as the years progress. Funding was also mentioned as a means by which to improve students’ educational programs, not only through the purchase of materials but also by maintaining the smaller class sizes that facilitate a positive school environment.

Voiced in varying ways, all agreed that meeting children’s needs was the most important efficacy indicator, while they disagreed with the use of test scores as a sole criterion of school effectiveness.

School B’s definition of effectiveness was characterized by two foci, human resources and standardized test scores. Their references to the significance of people were
similar to those of School A, sharing a student-centered philosophy that stressed the need for academic and social development in addition to children’s ownership of the learning process and feelings of success. Despite this similarity, the essence of School B’s philosophy was actually quite different from that of School A; being driven by the goal of student success with people viewed as individuals with a responsibility to carry out in order to meet this goal, thereby fulfilling a specific role in the organization. Esteem needs were discussed in relationship to the staff’s role in helping students acquire a quality education. While one teacher and both school board members discussed the need for confident and enthusiastic personnel, the teacher spoke of morale being negatively affected by the recent reduction in time of professional staff. As with School A, School B also spoke of parent involvement, serving community needs, and the funding of infrastructure upgrades and smaller class sizes as effectiveness indicators contributing to student centeredness.

Although respondents from both schools talked of test scores, School B placed a higher priority on them as indicators of a school’s effectiveness. Teachers, in particular, spent more time discussing the ways in which standardized tests drove their instruction and how they also commanded a good deal of their home lives through time spent writing grants.

The teachers and one board member felt that the most important indicator of effectiveness was the teamwork of school board members, teachers, parents, and the administration in providing students with the best possible education and a sense of success. While all thought test scores were a marker of efficacy, they also disagreed with
using them as an exclusive indicator of a school’s effectiveness.

When viewing these responses from the position level of school board member and teacher, the themes were still apparent although there was less consensus for some of the questions as the responses varied by school. Student centeredness and an emphasis on human resources were still evidenced by school board members as well as teachers, but the focus on test scores was more apparent in teacher comments than those of board members. Teachers continued to agree that students’ needs are the most critical indicator of effectiveness, but no theme emerged when examining board members’ remarks. Everyone concurred, though, that test scores should not be the only determinant of a school’s efficacy.

The final research questions addressed (a) the perceptions of rural and suburban elementary teachers regarding trust relationships between policymakers at the school board level and themselves, and the impact they perceive it to have on school effectiveness, and (b) the perceptions of policymakers at the school board level regarding trust relationships between rural and suburban elementary teachers and themselves, and the impact they perceive it to have on school effectiveness.

To establish the context for their responses, participants were asked to share their opinions concerning the roles and responsibilities of 21st century school board members. Analyzed at the school level, representatives of School A responded in very similar fashion to those of School B. Both schools agreed that a school board’s primary function is policymaking and how such policy affects students, although much of School B’s discussion centered on board members’ level of involvement in school life, a topic which
yielded opposing opinions from the members of that district’s board. Each school also concurred that boards should capitalize on members’ individual strengths, listening to the opinions of board members as well as those of their constituents so as to make wise decisions that are supported in a unified manner. The final item of consensus concerned micromanagement, an action considered by all as not within the purview of a board member’s responsibilities.

Everyone in both schools paused to think when asked about the type of relationship that exists between school board members and teachers. While those from School A were not sure at first how much of a relationship there was, board members from School B felt the relationship was guarded. Statements made by School B’s teachers were ambiguous, with no one mentioning trust as a part of the association, even though many had alluded to it throughout the interviews. When specifically asked for their opinions regarding trust as a component of the relationship, a profound pause ensued, followed by emphatic agreement by board members and teachers from both schools that trust is the essential gateway to reaching educational goals. Those from School A went on to share trust-based practices occurring throughout their district including instances of collaboration, communication, and professional development, all of which foster teacher autonomy and empowerment as well as school-based decision-making. School B spoke of trust as having to flow in both directions, and also being foundational to the respect that engenders positive communication and the belief that those in charge will work to change things for the better.

Regarding the level of trust that exists between teachers and school board
members, School A had no common view but did concur in the importance of trying to understand each other’s points of view and that there is always room to improve the relationship. Respondents from School B also voiced the need for understanding one another and continually improving the relationship, but felt that where most school board members trust the teachers, about 70% of the teachers reciprocated.

Weaving the interview’s various strands into a tapestry addressing perceptions of whether teacher-school board member trust relationships influence school effectiveness, everyone from both schools unreservedly agreed. As with their definitions of effectiveness, board members and teachers from School A described a relationship rich culture that encourages open communication and collaboration along with including teachers as equal partners in decisions regarding curriculum, materials, and hiring. Sharing the belief that these interactions evolve from trust, they also underscore their contributions to morale and the teacher buy-in necessary to achieve effectiveness. School B also agreed that trust relationships between teachers and school board members influence efficacy; primarily in terms of outcomes. The board members and one teacher described trust as the basis of relationships, and how members’ respect for teachers, expressed either directly or filtered through the administration, can influence student learning. Speaking from a different perspective, the remaining teacher explained how the loss of trust resulting from staff reductions in time could negatively influence teacher attitudes and the school’s effectiveness in future months.

Due to the many definitions assigned to trust over the years, the interview’s final question asked respondents to characterize a trusting relationship between teachers and
school board members. Both groups envisioned trust as valuing people, with respect a core component. Other common elements existed as well, such as communication, collaboration, familiarity with one another, and the need for teacher esteem. Differences, though subtle, were also noted. A move away from top-down management was mentioned or alluded to by School A participants through discussions of personal accountability, teacher autonomy, empowerment, district support of professional development, and shared decision-making. Such decision-making, although to a lesser extent, was noted by School B as well, along with morality, a willingness to learn, and consideration for others. In fact, individuals from both schools addressed the importance of working to understand each other.

Documents and Media

In keeping with Stake’s (1998) conceptual responsibility of triangulating bases for interpretation through the use of different data sources, documents and media were assembled and analyzed for emergent themes along with the interviews. Sources included (a) the Pennsylvania State Report Card 2003-2004, (b) Standard & Poor’s SchoolMatters.com, (c) the Erie Times-News, (d) school district report cards, (e) school district newsletters, and (f) school district websites.

The Pennsylvania State Report Card provides information on items such as achievement, accountability, and highly qualified teachers throughout the Commonwealth. School district report cards, in addition to the information included on the state report card, provide the number and percentage of schools identified for school
improvement, how long the schools have been so identified, and statistics that demonstrate how students served by the district achieved on the PSSA compared to students in the State as a whole. Another source, SchoolMatters.com, a web-based national education data service, furnishes in-depth achievement information, financial data, and demographic analyses about public schools, districts, and state education systems. To ensure confidentiality, specific references identifying a particular school or district were omitted.

The examination of documents and media yielded two overarching foci, human and material resources, containing themes that closely matched those emerging through the interviews. While a number of these themes were mentioned, several were more richly represented than others, with some information contributing to more than one thematic area.

*Human Resources*

While meeting the needs of all children was addressed by several documents, the meaning varied depending on the source. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) requires AYP targets for reading and math to be met not only by all students, but also by disaggregated groups comprised of 40 or more students, although schools with fewer than 40 are still held accountable. According to information supplied by PDE for 2004, 96.5% of School A’s Grade 5 population was White, with the remaining percentage being almost equally divided among Black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander. Of this population, 20.9% were classified as having a disability while 13.0%
were economically disadvantaged. While the overall student population and economically disadvantaged sectors made AYP, the achievement of students with a disability was below the target. However, this was not counted against the school as the number of students was less than 40.

Where the definition of meeting student needs advanced by PDE yielded a numerical indicator of academic achievement, District A’s 2004 report card indicated its mission as creating “for all students learning experiences that provide the knowledge and skills necessary to be competent, responsible citizens, as well as lifelong learners.” Containing mandated information concerning academic performance and achievement, District A’s report card went well beyond NCLB requirements in discussing programs, activities, and honors in each of the district’s schools as well as outstanding student achievements. Press releases available on the district’s website also highlighted student accomplishments, not only in regard to AYP, but also academics not measured by standardized tests as well as achievements associated with character and civic responsibility.

Data provided by PDE for School B indicated a Grade 5 student population that was 97.8% White and 2.2% Hispanic, with 26.7% of the population classified as having a disability and 16.7% categorized as economically disadvantaged. As with School A, the overall student population and economically disadvantaged sectors made AYP, while the achievement of students with a disability was below the target. However, this was not counted against the school as the number of students with a disability was less than 40. In reporting AYP, though, the district’s 2003 report card asserted, “A single test cannot
provide a fair picture of whether or not a school is in need of improvement. Our District Report Card provides the other required indicators of student achievement as well as District demographics.”

In an effort to acquire District B’s 2004 report card, a call was placed to its administrative secretary who shared that the card was being worked on and would not be available for several months. As such, the 2003 report card was used for the purposes of this study. Like District A, its Mission Statement also addressed meeting all students’ needs more comprehensively than did PDE’s implied definition, including as goals: (a) preparing students for lifelong change, (b) molding responsible citizens, and (c) providing an inviting and safe environment that fosters curiosity and creativity as well as intellectual and social growth. It is assumed that, in addition to PSSA results, the “other required indicators of student achievement” signified disaggregated results as well as information pertaining to teachers’ qualifications.

The quarterly newsletter published by District B also contained much student centered information. In addition to news concerning student awards and extracurricular achievements, several articles outlined educational activities and projects occurring in each of the schools.

Most references to leadership were indirect and, in the case of District A, dealt with the search for a new superintendent or the election of school board members. In a newspaper article detailing the criteria for superintendent selection, Colleen explained the need for an individual who knows what good teaching looks like; one who was, in past practice, “a good educator.” Expressing similar missions, the outgoing superintendent, in
the 2004 district report card, stressed the need to prepare children to be 21st century leaders and citizens, while the newly appointed chief’s welcoming statement on the district website discusses their leadership in developing a 21st century focus.

The educational goals and philosophies of certain board members were outlined in newspaper articles published prior to their most recent bids for reelection. Where Linda spoke of working together to promote a high quality education while being fiscally responsible and practicing cost-cutting measures, Colleen’s platform was more complex. Also promoting a quality education so as to retain students and remain competitive, Colleen added the importance of curriculum as well as math and reading instruction, particularly the analysis and addressing of areas of weakness. She also emphasized the need to improve hiring practices, hold the administration accountable for decisions based upon research and input from stakeholders, and to observe fiscal responsibility.

District B’s references to leadership appeared in the quarterly newsletter’s message from the superintendent. Speaking of the quality and scope of the district’s educational programs as well as extracurricular activities, infrastructure, and a quality staff, the superintendent thanked everyone for believing in the school system and making it a success.

Regarding leadership at the board level, the one reference to District B’s school board reelection campaigns found in the local newspaper quoted Cora’s desire to see several projects through to their realization. Both districts’ websites listed the names of school board members, with District B also providing contact information. In addition, minutes from committee and school board meetings were accessible through
downloading from both district websites.

Mentions of teacher related issues were found in several sources. Both the Pennsylvania State Report Card 2003-2004 and each district report card indicated that 100% of both schools’ teachers met the criteria for being highly qualified. District B also provided data regarding teachers’ levels of education and experience. Two district publications contained articles pertaining to teachers, with District A’s report card chronicling outstanding achievements of the faculty and staff and District B’s quarterly newsletter providing brief biographies of teachers new to the district. The board’s choice to reduce time for teachers in District B was discussed in one newspaper story, which also reported their decision to hire two teachers at the elementary level. Community and parental needs were addressed through District A’s report card and its comprehensive website, while its quarterly newsletter and a few website services acted in the same capacity for District B.

Material Resources

As previously noted, test scores were published in both Pennsylvania’s report card and that of the district. With both schools having just been phased into the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS), neither has participated long enough to have the longitudinal data necessary to use the system as a means of analysis.

In examining for indicators of effectiveness other than those previously mentioned in the Mission Statement of each district’s report card, District A received a gold rating by relocation experts, ranking it in the top 16% of districts at the national
level. Besides their college board scores and graduation rate, the district was also rated based upon its student-teacher ratio, per-pupil expenditure, teacher salaries, household income, and poverty level. Programming considerations, such as skipping the senior year of high school to attend college and the educational advantages of renovation projects, were also discussed in the local newspaper. In addition, several newspaper articles reported on meeting children’s needs, leadership, and quality staffing; presenting the same themes addressed in the human resources section.

Student-teacher ratio, referred to as class-size by many school board members and teachers, was reported through data provided by SchoolMatters.com. With both districts’ enrollments projected to increase, School A’s ratio was 16.9 students to 1 teacher while District B’s was 16.7 to 1. Over the course of several months, a series of newspaper articles discussed class-size issues as they pertained to building a budget in District A. Toward the beginning of the process, Linda, a board member, spoke out in support of creating a budget that would decrease class-sizes in grades K through 3, describing countywide trends and how smaller classes enhance learning. Ultimately, cuts to the proposed budget reduced the number of elementary teachers hired. On the other hand, the same newspaper reported that, in addition to District B reducing several teachers to part-time, two elementary teachers were hired to keep the sizes of their K-3 classes below 20.

Although alluded to only briefly in District B’s quarterly newsletter, curriculum links on District A’s website led to 13 topics. Of these, eight were district constructed resources for students, staff, and parents with the remaining four providing connections to additional educational resources and organizations.
Infrastructure, while encompassing many diverse systems, was used by those interviewed to refer to school buildings and inherent systems such as cooling and heating. Much press was given to renovation and construction plans for both districts. In District A, several newspaper articles reported on information gathering visits to other schools for design purposes along with grants procured to serve the dual purpose of including environmentally friendly systems from which students can concurrently learn. The district website also provided information on the building design process. Regarding capital improvements in District B, numerous articles appearing in the local newspaper quoted Don, the board president, who spoke in favor of the need for such construction due the current building’s state of disrepair. Additional information concerning the project’s status also appeared in district newsletters and on its website.

Board members from both districts discussed the significance of funding in terms of being fiscally responsible as well as being the vehicle through which all district endeavors come to fruition. While SchoolMatters.com reported the 2004 median income for families in District A as $43,384.00 and in District B as $39,761.00, the 2004-2005 tax bill for a home assessed at $100,000.00 in District A was $1,312.00 while the bill for a similar home in District B was $1,800.00. Despite these current variations, millage increases of .65 and 3.5 were approved for District A and District B respectively, widening the gap even more. Both districts’ report cards along with District B’s newsletter detailed finances and state level tax initiatives, with that of District B being quite comprehensive. Reporting on board members’ deliberations concerning whether to adopt Act 72, which allows school districts to lower property taxes through gaming
revenues, one newspaper quoted Don as saying, “You’re going to get people interested in the money part of it, but not the education.”

Summary of Findings: Documents and Media.

Not only serving as a source for the collection of additional data, the examination of documents and media also functioned as a method of triangulating interpretation. Similar to the cross-case analyses of interviews, these sources yielded an emphasis on two overarching foci, human and material resources. In fact, most of the information gleaned from the various records supported that which was shared during the interviews, with very few contradictory findings.

Of the human resources, student-centeredness played the major role. With meeting the needs of all children at the core of several sources, its meaning varied depending on the resource’s purpose. Where information supplied by PDE indicated that students in both schools, except for those with a disability, were making adequate yearly progress, District A’s report card and District B’s newsletter addressed items beyond that measured by a single, standardized test. Articles in each included references to character education, civic responsibility, and arts education, with their contents describing activities serving to foster skills that students could employ upon entering the work force. Where District A’s report card projected a sense of pride in its students’ accomplishments, District B’s newsletter was more informational in nature, coinciding with interview results in which those from School A spoke directly to the importance of meeting all children’s needs, while most of School B’s respondents inferred its existence
but did not speak of it directly. The concept was also implied through the Mission Statements in each district’s report cards, keeping in mind that District B’s was outdated by one year.

References to leadership, though present, most often occurred tangentially to another topic. The most direct were welcoming statements found in the districts’ respective report cards and newsletter, as well as on District A’s website. Where District A spoke to leadership specifically, District B alluded to its significance within the context of the message. Other leadership references occurred primarily in the form of newspaper articles outlining reelection platforms and containing comments that largely paralleled philosophies that were shared during interviews. A discrepancy, though, was noted in the comments of Colleen, a board member from District A, who spoke during her interview of the drawbacks of functioning from a child-deficit model, but talked of the need to analyze and address areas of student weaknesses in her campaign platform.

Information relating to teachers appeared in documents and media least frequently. The Pennsylvania State Report Card 2003-2004 reported that all of the teachers in both districts were highly qualified as defined by the State. As with its student related articles, District A’s report card promoted the achievements of teachers, supporting comments made by those involved in the study regarding the need for high quality teachers along with the importance of staff recognitions. Although District B talked of staff satisfaction, information in its newsletter was biographical rather than promotional. Concerning the satisfaction of staff, although Barbara talked of staff reductions in time at several points throughout the interview, she did not mention that, in
addition to these reductions, two teachers were hired at the elementary level.

Appearing at first glance that parent and community resources were minimal, the mailing of a district report card and newsletter to each resident’s home indicates otherwise. In addition, district and school websites, particularly that of District A, provided a plethora of information and educational resources. Both districts provided the names of school board members, a schedule of board meetings, and minutes of past gatherings. District B also supplied contact information for members of the boards of education, while District A provided the same for school personnel.

Much of the information regarding material resources was also student-centered, as well as supportive of views shared during the interview process. Newspaper articles reported how District A was connecting renovations to the educational process, where District B’s renovations and construction were discussed mainly from a physical resources standpoint. Low student-teacher ratios were indicated for both districts by Standard & Poor’s SchoolMatters.com, with this priority reinforced by newspaper accounts of teachers being hired in District B and the interaction of the budget process and hiring in District A. Even the gold rating awarded to District A by relocation experts listed class-size as a criterion. Curriculum related items, though referred to more often in interviews with those from District B, were more abundant on District A’s website in the form of links to many student, staff, and parent resources. Finally, newspaper articles discussing household incomes and tax increases reinforced the funding concerns voiced by board members in both districts. With publications issued by both Districts A and B providing constituents with information concerning a new tax initiative, the statement
made by a District B school board member, that many taxpayers would see the initiative in terms of their own personal monetary benefit rather than about its effects on education, underscored his belief that the purpose of education revolves around students.

Summary

Main findings from the opinion inventory, interviews, and document analysis are reported in Tables 9 and 10. Inventory responses reflect the opinions of those who returned the instrument; 52.7% of the board members and 80.1% of the teachers eligible to participate in the investigation. Interview summaries represent the collective beliefs of two board members and two teachers from each of two schools, with a document analysis summary corresponding to both schools that took part in the study. Interpretations of these findings will be the topic of Chapter V.
Table 9

*Opinion Inventory Statement Agreement or Disagreement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>School board members</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School effectiveness is helping students:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. meet Adequate Yearly Progress goals in reading, math, and writing as established by the state of Pennsylvania. (Non-indicator)</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. attain academic achievement that goes beyond what the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment currently measures (e.g., intellectual curiosity and creativity).</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. acquire job skills and preparation for the work force.</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. understand and value the growing diversity of American society. (Non-indicator)</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. develop citizenship (e.g., volunteerism, voting, community service, abiding by laws).</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. realize sound physical development and optimal health. (Non-indicator)</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. develop an appreciation of the arts.</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. develop character and values (e.g., integrity, responsibility, courtesy, patriotism, and work ethic).</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improving school effectiveness:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Establishing rules directives, and procedures at the school board/superintendent level that teachers must uniformly follow (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Establishing positive trust relationships between school board members and teachers</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Delegating most decision-making to the professional staff (e.g., teachers and principals) at the school building level</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Opening lines of communication between school board members/superintendents and teachers</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>School board members</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Adopting board policies to address immediate needs and issues (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Creating an environment in which teachers have a high degree of autonomy</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Basing board policy on requests and information provided by interest groups including teachers, the business community, parent organizations, and other external constituencies (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Establishing a centralized management structure for all school buildings in the district (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Involving school board members in the day-to-day management of schools (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Creating a district culture that actively fosters teachers’ esteem</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Adopting board policies that reflect research-based information and known best practices</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-school board member relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. School board members determine what is taught and the instructional strategies to be used by teachers. (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. There are few collaborative efforts between school board members and teachers. (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. School board members do not encourage teacher autonomy. (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. School board members work to empower teachers.</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. School board members engage in top-down decision-making. (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. School board members work in partnership with teachers toward a common aim.</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>School board members</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. Rules and procedures established by school board members are uniform and apply to all teachers. (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. School board members support the teaching staff.</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. There is little communication between school board members and teachers (Reverse scored)</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. School board members trust teachers.</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. School board members support staff professional development.</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. School board members respect teachers.</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

Interview and Document Analysis Summaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview results:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definitions of school effectiveness:**

- People-centered: X
- Meeting needs of all students: X+  
- Leadership: X+  
- Quality staff: X  
- Curriculum: X  
- Test scores, but not as sole criterion: X  
- Funding: X  
- Esteem building, students: X  
- Small class sizes: X  

**Human resources:**

- Parent and community involvement: X  
- Teamwork: X  

**Roles and responsibilities of school board members:**

- Policymaking: Agree  
- Involvement in daily school operations: Disagree  
- Capitalizing on each board member’s strengths: Agree  
- Taking each board member’s opinions into consideration: Agree  
- Taking constituents’ opinions into consideration: Agree  
- Micromanaging: Disagree  

**Relationships in general:**

- Not sure if a relationship exists: X  
- Guarded: X  
- Believe trust is a critical component: X  

**Relationships, trust:**

- Presence of trusting teacher-school board member relationship: Inconclusive  
- Adequacy of current trust relationship: Could improve  

**Trust-based practices present:**

- Collaboration: X  
- Communication: X  
- Professional development: X  
- Mutual understanding (expressed need for): X  
- Mutual understanding (currently practiced): X  
- Shared decision-making: X  
- Esteem building, teachers: X  

- Believe trust-based practices influence school effectiveness: X  

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227
Table 10 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview results:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships, trust:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify as characteristics of trusting relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing people</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with one another</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteem building, teachers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move away from top-down management</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working to understand one another</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Document analysis:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-centeredness:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting needs of all children:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AYP</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character education</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic responsibility</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts education</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for work force</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present in mission statement</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride in student accomplishments</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct references</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect references</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality teachers:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDE highly qualified</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take pride in teacher accomplishments</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide staff recognitions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice need for staff satisfaction</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demonstrate fulfillment of parent and community needs:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District report card</td>
<td>X+</td>
<td>Outdated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District website</td>
<td>X+</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The context of this study is educational reform and the concept of increasing school effectiveness through establishing local level trust relationships rather than the mandated legislation of state and federal policymakers. Most recent of mandates spanning nearly 50 years, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 serves as the backdrop for this 2005 investigation that seeks to determine the influence of trust relationships at the local level, specifically relationships between teachers and school board members, on school effectiveness. Where policymakers favor legislated reforms that include testing, teacher qualifications, and minimum achievement levels as the means to improving a school’s efficacy, a growing body of literature points to trust relationships as the gateway to the improvement of school effectiveness (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Cunningham & Gresso, 1993; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Kochanek, 2005; Tarter & Hoy, 2004; Tarter, Sabo, & Hoy, 1995; Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Through an instrumental case study designed to obtain insight and advance understanding of the topic, opinion inventories were distributed to school board members and teachers in 21 suburban and rural Erie County, Pennsylvania elementary schools which house grade 5. Interviews were then conducted with two school board members and two teachers from a school whose PSSA scores ranked in the top 15% of the 21 schools, as well as with two school board members and two teachers from a school ranking in the
bottom 15%. This chapter serves to interpret the opinion inventory, interview, document, and media findings presented in Chapter IV, as well as to discuss their implications for practice and future study.

Interpretation of the Survey

*School Effectiveness: Questions 1-8*

The first section of the opinion inventory listed eight statements for which teachers and school board members were asked to designate the extent to which they agreed that each was a characteristic of an effective school. Although only five of the eight statements listed in this section were actual National School Boards Association school effectiveness indicators, the preponderance of school board members and teachers agreed or strongly agreed to all. The order in which teachers and school board members ranked each indicator, along with the percentage that agreed or strongly agreed, is shown in Table 11, with rankings followed by an asterisk designating items that are not indicators of effectiveness.

The statement that garnered the greatest agreement from teachers and school board members involved helping students “meet adequate yearly progress goals in reading, math, and writing as established by the state of Pennsylvania.” Although it was not one of the five NSBA indicators of school effectiveness, 93.7% of the teachers and school board members who completed the opinion inventory agreed or strongly agreed that it is indicative of a school’s efficacy. Respondents did, however, make comments concerning the impact of developmental readiness, family support, and the need to look
### Table 11

**Ranking of Opinion Inventory School Effectiveness Statements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>School Board Member (SBM) Ranking</th>
<th>Percentage of SBM Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing</th>
<th>Teacher (T) Ranking</th>
<th>Percentage of T Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School effectiveness is helping students:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. meet adequate yearly progress goals in reading, math, and writing as</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>established by the state of Pennsylvania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. attain academic achievement that goes beyond what the Pennsylvania</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System of School Assessment currently measures (e.g., intellectual curiosity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and creativity)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. acquire job skills and preparation for the work force</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. understand and value the growing diversity of American society</td>
<td>8*</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>8*</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. develop citizenship (e.g., volunteerism, voting, community service,</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>73.6%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abiding by laws)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. realize sound physical development and optimal health</td>
<td>7*</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>6*</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. develop an appreciation of the arts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. develop character and values</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g., integrity, responsibility, courtesy, patriotism, and work ethic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** * signifies a statement that is not an indicator of school effectiveness.
at scores over a period of time. Although the reasons for this overwhelming response are unclear, it would appear that those working in the school milieu may have become so acculturated to meeting required levels of academic achievement that they do not even question the propriety of the requirement’s presence, instead accepting it as inherent in the fabric of contemporary educational practice. This can be seen in the comments of those from School B, such as one board member’s remarking about school effectiveness: “I guess we have to consider test scores, whether we like to or not.” Even more indicative is a teacher’s response to whether NCLB has helped improve student achievement. Speaking to the benefits of teachers being held more accountable for the curriculum being taught, she commented that the results of such accountability help students gain the knowledge necessary “not only to progress to the next grade, but to be successful on their PSSAs” (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment test).

Such a philosophy is also reflected in the teachers’ ranking an actual indicator, “academic attainment that goes beyond what the PSSA currently measures,” seventh out of the eight statements. Not only is this well below the aforementioned goal of meeting adequate yearly progress, but also below “realizing sound physical development and optimal health,” another non-indicator. Likely a product of districts and teachers narrowing the curriculum so as to focus on standards assessed by the PSSA, it is interesting to note that school board members ranked the more comprehensive academic achievement statement second, with 94.6% indicating a level of agreement. Although not addressed directly, this disparity in ranking might be attributed to the varying nature of school board members’ and teachers’ roles. Where, optimally, both are working in the
best interests of children, board members approach the task from a more theoretical viewpoint while teachers are “in the trenches;” having to work within time constraints that often dictate not teaching that which is not tested. This is supported by one teacher commenting, “School effectiveness can embody these things [the eight statements], but many of these should be an extension of the academic curriculum, not the purpose.”

Paradoxically, the results of a recent national study indicate that there is no convincing evidence that the pressure associated with high-stakes tests, such as sanctions for low scores, leads to increased student progress (Nichols, Glass, & Berliner, 2005).

A contradiction to the supposition that what is tested is thought to be important, is teachers ranking the development of citizenship and character equally in second place out of the eight statements. This is especially noteworthy considering one teacher’s remark that teachers are trying to teach character, but it is not in the curriculum. Such contradictions are indicative of the changes occurring in contemporary educational practice, as teachers strive to meet the requirements of current mandates while trying to hold on to instruction that guides the heart and soul of each child.

With the exception of the non-indicator concerning school effectiveness as meeting AYP, school board members ranked the other two non-indicators, realizing sound physical development and understanding the diversity of American society, at the bottom of their list, although the majority still agreed that they were indicators. It is interesting to note, though, that even though all participating schools’ mission statements contained either direct or indirect references to the NSBA effectiveness indicators, not all school board members agreed that they were hallmarks of an effective school. Although
the confidential nature of the inventory precludes absolute knowledge, it is possible that some of those who disagreed are representative of board members whose comments in the local newspaper indicate actions based upon personal agendas or a primary commitment to zero mill tax increases.

*Improving School Effectiveness: Questions 9-19*

The opinion inventory’s second section consisted of 11 statements about education related practices, based upon the 9 intersecting properties of Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) school structure typology. Of the four structural types represented in the typology, those that are highly bureaucratic may be less effective while structures that are professional have the potential for high effectiveness. Professional structures are described by Hoy and Miskel as loosely coupled organizations with a highly professional staff, multiple sets of goals, a high degree of teacher autonomy, teacher empowerment, and horizontal relations rather than top-down governance. Much of the school’s decision-making is delegated to the professional staff as they work with the administration toward a common set of aims, while rules and procedures are viewed as guides rather than strict formats to be uniformly followed. The statements selected for this section of the inventory were research-based and representative of the professional structure’s organizational properties, with five written to be reverse scored so as to inhibit response pattern bias. The fact that school board members collectively disagreed or strongly disagreed with two statements, and teachers with one, indicates the likelihood that both groups gave thought to their responses rather than recording an answer without
thoroughly reading the statement. As the typology’s properties share common characteristics, most statements contributed to the understanding of more than one property. The order in which teachers and school board members ranked each statement, along with the percentage that agreed or strongly agreed, is shown in Table 12, with an asterisk designating items that were reverse scored.

Of the 11 statements presented, the majority of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with all but 1, involving school board members in the day-to-day management of schools (reverse scored), suggesting their belief in a more professional organizational structure. It is interesting to note, however, that despite the fact that four of the five reverse scored items were agreed with, all of the reverse scored statements were at the bottom of the ranking. Furthermore, these statements were separated from those shown to contribute to professional structures by slightly more than six percentage points, a spread exceeded only by the difference in percentages between the bottom two statements in the ranking.

The school board members, on the other hand, disagreed or strongly disagreed with one more statement than the teachers. In addition to opposing the daily management of schools by board members, they also disagreed with another reverse scored statement, basing policy on requests and information provided by special interest groups. In contrast with the teachers, though, the five statements at the bottom of school board members’ rankings contained two practices supported by research as contributing to professional structures; delegating most decision-making to the professional staff and creating an environment in which teachers have a high degree of autonomy. Although the majority of board members concurred with these two statements, their lower
Table 12

*Ranking of Opinion Inventory Improving School Effectiveness Statements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>School Board Member Ranking</th>
<th>Teacher Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.  * Establishing rules, directives, and procedures at the school board/superintendent level that teachers must uniformly follow</td>
<td>8  73.6%</td>
<td>10  68.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Establishing positive trust relationships between school board members and teachers</td>
<td>1  99.9%</td>
<td>4  87.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Delegating most decision-making to the professional staff (e.g., teachers and principals) at the school building level</td>
<td>7  78.8%</td>
<td>3  88.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Opening lines of communication between school board members/superintendents and teachers</td>
<td>3  94.6%</td>
<td>1  88.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.  * Adopting board policies to address immediate needs and issues</td>
<td>5  78.9%</td>
<td>7  79.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Creating an environment in which teachers have a high degree of autonomy</td>
<td>9  73.5%</td>
<td>5  87.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.  * Basing board policy on requests and information provided by interest groups including teachers, the business community, parent organizations, and other external constituencies</td>
<td>10  42.1%</td>
<td>9  71.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.  * Establishing a centralized management structure for all school buildings in the district</td>
<td>5  78.9%</td>
<td>8  75.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.  * Involving school board members in the day-to-day management of schools</td>
<td>11  5.2%</td>
<td>11  29.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Creating a district culture that actively fosters teachers’ esteem</td>
<td>1  99.9%</td>
<td>6  85.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Adopting board policies that reflect research-based information and known best practices</td>
<td>3  94.6%</td>
<td>1  88.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* * indicates a statement that is reverse scored.
positioning in the ranking, combined with the higher placement of another reverse scored statement, the creation of a centralized district management structure, indicates less acceptance of their importance and a tendency toward a more authoritarian organizational structure. It also intimates a lack of trust toward teachers on the part of school board members, evidenced through their belief that a centralized management system that makes decisions for all district schools is more efficacious than decisions made by the professional staff of individual buildings. On the other hand, as only one tenth of a point separates the five statements at the bottom of school board members’ rankings from those statements in the top positions, this interpretation is tenuous, particularly in light of the fact that 42.9% of the school board members eligible to participate in the study did not return a completed inventory.

Perhaps more relevant is the apparent incompatibility of several responses when examined collectively. Although the majority of school board members and teachers felt that board members should not involve themselves in the day-to-day management of schools, they agreed with the school board/superintendent establishing rules and procedures that must be uniformly followed by teachers in addition to the establishment of a centralized management structure for all district schools, defined as concentrating authority in a single source rather than delegating it to those in the schools (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). Such responses suggest that when posed with a question that directly asks about micromanagement, teachers and school board members oppose this type of control. When presented less directly, though, as part of statements suggesting equality of treatment through traditional and familiar practices, the concept of such control appears
to be accepted, even if the organizational structure is highly authoritarian. Such a
dichotomy suggests that while individuals, particularly school board members, may voice
their opposition to micromanaging school operations, they are, in fact, reluctant to
relinquish control to the professional staff who has the expertise and competence to make
critical organizational decisions.

In discussing this contradiction, however, the fact that 29.1% of the teachers
indicated that it was acceptable for school board members to be involved in the daily
management of schools, as opposed to only 5.2% of the board members, appears
incongruous with the previous argument. Although no clarifying comments were asked
for or offered on the inventory, comments made during the study’s interviews indicated
teachers’ desire for board members to visit classrooms in order to better understand and
appreciate the work of the schools. One such comment was stated by a teacher in School
B: “Be aware of what we’re doing so that you can make decisions for us, but please don’t
try to make decisions for us . . . .” Based upon remarks like this it is likely that some
teachers interpreted the opinion inventory’s statement, “involving school board members
in the day-to-day management of schools,” as indicating the need for board members’
increased knowledge of instructional practices rather than as a reference to the practice of
micromanagement. Such an interpretation could account for a larger percentage of
teachers than expected being in agreement, and also for this percentage being greater than
that of school board members.

Another contradiction appeared in teachers’ and school board members’
agreement with establishing a centralized management structure for all district schools
while also agreeing with creating an environment in which teachers have a high degree of autonomy. Once again, it appears that such an incongruity might be culturally rooted in democratic ideals; those that ensure individuals’ rights but also those that promote the concept of equal treatment for all that one would expect to find in schools operated under strict formats promulgated from the central office. Although not all who agreed with one of these precepts concurred with the other, it would seem that those who agreed with both are more apt to be basing their relationship on a self-centered perspective than on the higher level interactions of a servant leader.

Responses to several other statements yielded interesting results as well. “Basing board policy on requests and information provided by interest groups including teachers, the business community, parent organizations, and other external constituencies,” was the only statement for which each group’s majority had different opinions, with 71.2% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing as compared with 42.1% of school board members. As remarks made by School B’s teachers concerning a board member’s expectation of special treatment for her children suggest their disagreement with policy driven by special interests, it is possible that had this statement not specifically mentioned teachers, thereby eliciting a vested interest, the percentage of educators agreeing would not have been as high.

Also worthy of note were teachers’ responses to improving school effectiveness through “creating a district culture that actively fosters teachers’ esteem” in addition to the establishment of “positive trust relationships between school board members and teachers.” Where school board members unanimously agreed or strongly agreed with
both, teachers’ percentages of agreement were 85.5% and 87.6% respectively. While the absence of unanimity would usually indicate that some of those responding disagreed, it could also mean that past practices have caused them to lose hope in such trusting relationships ever being realized. This is reflected in the words of a School B teacher: “I think there’s a lot of teachers that lost faith in their school board members because of that decision to cut . . . positions . . . . I think it’s going to take a long time to regain that trust . . . if ever.”

*Teacher-School Board Member Relationships: Questions 20-31*

Twelve statements pertaining to teacher-school board member relationships, based upon the nine intersecting properties of Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) school structure typology, combined to form the final section of the opinion inventory. Statements were interpreted in light of the properties’ descriptions and the structure to which that interpretation contributed, keeping in mind that highly bureaucratic structures may have negative effects on student achievement with those that are professional having the potential for high effectiveness.

The statements selected for this section of the inventory were research-based and representative of relational characteristics described in the professional structure’s organizational properties, with six written to be reverse scored so as to inhibit response pattern bias. The fact that school board members and teachers collectively disagreed or strongly disagreed with two statements, and that their majority responses to some statements differed, indicates the likelihood that both groups gave thought to their replies
rather than recording an answer without thoroughly reading the statement. As the typology’s properties share common characteristics, most statements contributed to the understanding of more than one property. The order in which teachers and school board members ranked each statement, along with the percentage that agreed or strongly agreed, is shown in Table 13, with an asterisk designating items that were reverse scored.

While the responses yielded important information about various individual aspects of teacher-school board member relationships, the responses were particularly noteworthy when viewed as part of an interrelated whole. Along with discrepancies among statements within the section itself, disparities between teachers’ and school board members’ level of agreement for individual items also emerged. Responses of both board members and teachers were additionally less definitive for several statements, with as little as one tenth of a point determining the majority opinion for one item.

Beginning with discrepancies within the section, even though board members disagreed with the concept of micromanagement as evidenced by only 5.2% agreeing with the item, “School board members determine what is taught and the instructional strategies to be used by teachers,” latter responses indicated the majority opinion that school board members engage in top-down decision-making. In like manner, board members agree with the statement, “There are few collaborative efforts between school board members and teachers,” but also strongly support the assertion, “School board members work in partnership with teachers toward a common set of aims,” all the while believing, “There is little communication between school board members and teachers.” Unequivocally demonstrating their support for the teaching staff, board members also
Table 13

*Ranking of Opinion Inventory Teacher-School Board Member Relationships Statements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>School Board Member Ranking</th>
<th>Teacher Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20. * School board members determine what is taught and the instructional strategies to be used by teachers</td>
<td>12 5.2%</td>
<td>12 17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. * There are few collaborative efforts between school board members and teachers</td>
<td>8 57.8%</td>
<td>1 79.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. * School board members do not encourage teacher autonomy</td>
<td>11 36.8%</td>
<td>9 48.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. School board members work to empower teachers</td>
<td>7 68.3%</td>
<td>11 44.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. * School board members engage in top-down decision-making</td>
<td>10 47.3%M</td>
<td>6 61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. School board members work in partnership with teachers toward a common set of aims</td>
<td>6 73.6%</td>
<td>10 46.4%M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. * Rules and procedures established by school board members are uniform and apply to all teachers</td>
<td>5 78.8%</td>
<td>7 56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. School board members support the teaching staff</td>
<td>1 99.9%</td>
<td>5 62.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. * There is little communication between school board members and teachers</td>
<td>8 57.8%</td>
<td>3 76.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. School board members trust teachers</td>
<td>1 99.9%</td>
<td>8 54.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. School board members support staff professional development</td>
<td>1 99.9%</td>
<td>2 78.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. School board members respect teachers</td>
<td>1 99.9%</td>
<td>4 67.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* * indicates a statement that is reverse scored. \(^{M}\) signifies that not all respondents answered the question so, while less than 50.0%, this response rate represents the majority.
indicate such support is uniform and applies to all, rather than serving as the guide set forth in Hoy & Miskel’s (2001) professional structure. It is interesting to note that all of the school board members’ majority opinions, including their engaging in top-down decision-making and lack of communication and collaboration, are embedded in a culture that participating board members unanimously describe as one that supports, respects, and trusts teachers.

Discrepancies, though not as many, also emerge among teachers’ responses to various statements. As with the school board members, the majority of teachers believe that board members support them while applying rules and procedures uniformly to all, and also that there are few collaborative efforts between the groups but, in contrast, they work in partnership toward a common set of aims. Perhaps the largest disparity lies in the fact that teachers are collectively of the opinion that board members engage in top-down decision-making, micromanage, and do not work to encourage teacher autonomy while, at the same time, expressing the belief that school board members support, respect, and trust teachers.

It must be noted, though, that although teachers and school board members sometimes share the same response through the majority rule, the level of agreement as indicated by the percentage of those selecting “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” often varies considerably, with the teachers’ majority less commanding on all but reverse scored items where their percentage of agreement was usually higher. There were also a few instances in which both school board members’ and teachers’ majority opinions were less than 50.0% with, in one case, only one tenth of a point separating the majority from the
minority view. Such circumstances indicate the lack of clear consensus, and require the cautious interpretation of results.

Of the six statements describing components of teacher-school board member relationships that contribute to Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) professional structure, or that are research-based contributors to school effectiveness, the majority of school board members agreed with all while the majority of teachers agreed with all except, “School board members work to empower teachers.” Responses to the research-based reverse scored items, though, indicated more perceived deficiencies in the relationship. Of these six items, board members disagreed with only two, indicating their perception that (a) there are few collaborative efforts between board members and teachers, (b) board members engage in top-down decision-making, (c) rules and procedures are uniformly applied to all teachers, and (d) there is little communication between school board members and teachers. Teachers’ responses specified these same perceptions while adding “School board members do not encourage teacher autonomy” to the list.

At first glance, participating board members indicate that 75% of the statements describing research-based relational contributors to professional structures and school effectiveness are present, while the majority of participating teachers believe that 50% are in effect. Examination of the response percentage by category indicates that school board members, as a group, are more unified in their responses than are teachers, suggesting either confidence through knowledge that is actual or presumed, or a variation of groupthink, in which members of the group attempt to conform their opinions to what they believe to be the consensus of the group. Further analysis and the emergence of the
aforementioned discrepancies, though, imply that these percentages are, in actuality, considerably lower, given that only one of the supported attributes, “School board members support staff professional development,” is not contradicted by another statement.

More important than the contradictions themselves, however, are the implications concerning the motivation and belief systems from which they emerge. In the case of school board members, several options present themselves as potential catalysts for these systems. The first is a lack of training regarding board members’ responsibilities. Despite widespread consensus among school board experts that board members should engage in training and development to improve their individual and collective effectiveness (Carol et al., 1986; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000), many districts do not provide or encourage such preparation. Pennsylvania’s Education Policy and Leadership Center actively promotes such training, not only by recommending that each school board support the continuing professional development of its members through the allocation of resources, but also by providing workshops for board candidates and members (as does the Pennsylvania School Boards Association). Without training, many school board members lack the knowledge necessary to establish relationships and engage in practices essential to achieving school effectiveness (EPLC, 2004). The remediation of difficulties caused by training issues may be even more complex for rural and suburban schools, whose distance from workshop locales might inhibit attendance due to financial and time constraints. Both superintendents and school board presidents must recognize this and, if attendance at training workshops is not feasible, provide every new board member with
an orientation to the work of the board and its adopted policies.

Other sources of motivation and beliefs occur in the form of political advancement, acting on behalf of special interests, and the lack of shared leadership. While some school board members may view their post as a steppingstone to higher political office, others perceive it as a means of accomplishing personal interests or vendettas. According to Chubb and Moe (1991), board members who act in such a manner, engaging primarily in reactive efforts or policymaking motivated by political advancement, are often barriers to the professional autonomy that characterizes effective schools. A philosophy that lacks a vision of shared leadership might also contribute to such contradictions. The Iowa Association of School Boards Lighthouse Study (2001), demonstrated that board members in schools whose achievement was relatively stable and below the norm said it was not their job to know about instruction, or based their opinions and actions on what was happening in their own child’s classroom rather than a more informed view.

Although somewhat divergent, all of the foregoing system catalysts are supported by the fact that relational statements with an obvious negative connotation garnered strong disagreement, while those whose undesirability were more subtle in nature allowed board members’ actual philosophies to emerge. The unanimous responses that school board members support, respect, and trust teachers lose credence when viewed in light of the majority affirmation of practices such as top-down decision-making and the lack of collaborative efforts. When combined with the considered options, the contradictory nature and strength of board members’ responses points primarily to a lack
of knowledge, one that results in a lack of trust in teachers’ abilities to serve the best interests of education in their facilitation of the teaching-learning process. It is interesting to note that, in all of the literature reviewed concerning the improvement of school effectiveness and teacher-school board member relationships, the board member is viewed as the initiator of the relational attribute (ECS, 1994; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Fulbright, 1998).

Teachers’ responses, although also manifesting some discrepancies, are not as robust as those of board members nor are there as many. Where some of the inconsistent response pattern is undoubtedly associated with Pennsylvania’s strong union ethic, other possible causes are a lack of knowledge or commitment to the purposes of education. Perhaps more interesting, though, is the decreased robustness of responses when compared to those of school board members. Whereas most school board members have not undergone planned preparation, teachers have completed a course of study designed to equip them with the tools necessary to educate students and contribute to the advancement of school effectiveness. Although teachers operate from many different points on a continuum of efficacy, all have, at the very least, been exposed to training designed to share knowledge regarding the purposes and strategies of instruction. Their receipt of a degree indicates, at a minimum, their understanding of such purposes and instruction which, when combined with experience in the field, serves as a resource for making more informed decisions about educational practices. Given this, in conjunction with teacher preparation programs that have improved over time, it is not surprising that teachers are in a better position than untrained school board members to know what
practices contribute to improving school effectiveness, and can more realistically assess
the current state of such relationships. Considering the continued improvement of teacher
preparation programs, superintendents who may not see the merit in providing board
members with orientations and ongoing professional development, as well as the
proximic, funding, and time constraints that deter rural and suburban board members
from attending workshops, the gap between knowledge possessed by teachers and that of
school board members is likely to widen as years pass, slowing the wheels of progress
rather than improving schools’ efficacy.

The existing gap in training between board members and teachers may also have a
reactive effect on teachers. Seeing themselves as possessing practical experience and the
knowledge represented by their degree, teachers often question having to take direction
from an elected group consisting largely of non-educators. The less robust responses
compiled for teachers in the relationship section of the inventory could well be an
expression of their frustration with a system that gives more authority to laypersons than
trained professionals.

Although the analysis of teachers’ and school board members’ perceptions of
their relationships is informative, it takes on even more meaning when interpreted as
supporting or not supporting their opinions regarding the improvement of school
effectiveness as expressed in the inventory’s second section. To initiate such an
interpretation, items from both inventory sections were analyzed to determine whether or
not their perceptions of how to improve school effectiveness were supported in practice
by opinions regarding teacher-school board member relationships. In addition to
determining whether or not the statements were supported, the difference in the percentage of those agreeing or strongly agreeing that the practice could improve efficacy, and those signifying agreement that the relational attribute was being practiced, was also ascertained. If the relational attribute’s percentage was less than that of the improving school effectiveness statement, the difference was indicated by a negative number, while a positive number indicated the reverse. For example, both school board members and teachers supported the improvement statement, “Establishing rules, directives, and procedures at the school board/superintendent level that teachers must uniformly follow.” However, 5.2% more board members felt it was being practiced than thought it could lead to improved effectiveness, while 11.8% fewer teachers believed it was being practiced in comparison to the percentage who felt it could improve a school’s efficacy. The two school effectiveness statements concerning policy were not associated with any of the relational attributes (see Table 14).

Of the six statements that contribute to a professional structure, “establishing trust relationships between board members and teachers” and “adopting board policies that reflect research-based information and best practices” are supported in practice according to the opinions of both teachers and school board members. Opinions were divided regarding the concept of creating an environment in which teachers have a high degree of autonomy, with board members feeling it is supported in practice while teachers did not. Neither school board members nor teachers felt that two other characteristics of a professional structure, “delegating most decision-making to the professional staff” and “opening lines of communication between board members/superintendents and teachers,”
Table 14

*Interpretation of Teacher-School Board Member Relationship Statements as Compared with Improving School Effectiveness Statements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement Statement</th>
<th>School Board Member Agreement</th>
<th>Teacher Agreement</th>
<th>Relational Attribute Associated with Improvement Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Establishing rules, directives, and procedures at the school board/superintendent level that teachers must uniformly follow*</td>
<td>Supported +5.2%</td>
<td>Supported -11.8%</td>
<td>* Rules and procedures established by school board members are uniform and apply to all teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing positive trust relationships between school board members and teachers</td>
<td>Supported +0.0%</td>
<td>Supported -33.2%</td>
<td>School board members trust teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegating most decision-making to the professional staff (e.g., teachers and principals) at the school building level</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>* School board members engage in top-down decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening lines of communication between school board members/ superintendents and teachers</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>* There is little communication between school board members and teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating an environment in which teachers have a high degree of autonomy</td>
<td>Supported -15.7%</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>* School board members do not encourage teacher autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Establishing a centralized management structure for all school buildings in the district*</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>Supported -27.6%</td>
<td>School board members work to empower teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Involving school board members in the day-to-day management of schools*</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>* School board members determine what is taught and the instructional strategies to be used by teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* * indicates a statement that is reverse scored.
Table 14 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement Statements</th>
<th>School Board Member Agreement</th>
<th>Teacher Agreement</th>
<th>Relational Attribute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating a district culture that actively fosters teachers’ esteem</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td>There are few collaborative efforts between school board members and teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a district culture that actively fosters teachers’ esteem</td>
<td>Supported -26.3%</td>
<td>Supported -39.1%</td>
<td>School board members work in partnership with teachers toward a common set of aims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a district culture that actively fosters teachers’ esteem</td>
<td>Supported +0.0%</td>
<td>Supported -23.3%</td>
<td>School board members support the teaching staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a district culture that actively fosters teachers’ esteem</td>
<td>Supported +0.0%</td>
<td>Supported -17.8%</td>
<td>School board members respect teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopting board policies that reflect research-based information and known best practices</td>
<td>Supported +5.3%</td>
<td>Supported -20.8%</td>
<td>School board members support staff professional development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* * indicates a statement that is reverse scored.

are supported in practice, with the final statement, creating a district culture that fosters teachers’ esteem, supported by both teachers and board members in three of its four relational attributes. It is interesting to note that the percentage of teachers indicating that the relational attributes were being practiced was much lower than the percentage agreeing that their corresponding improvement statements contribute to the improvement of school effectiveness. On the other hand, a negative percentage for two items indicates board members’ belief that the attribute’s actual practice is not as great as it should be, with the practice of another attribute exceeding its potential. The three remaining
attributes show no difference between their practice and potential.

In addition to the six positive contributors, three improvement statements not contributing to a professional structure were also examined. Although both teachers and school board members agreed that teachers should uniformly adhere to rules and procedures and felt that this belief is supported in practice, only the teachers indicated that having a centralized management structure is occurring in reality, even though it was thought by both groups to be important. Neither group perceived involving school board members in the day-to-day management of school as a path to school effectiveness, nor did they feel that it is being practiced. As with the previous improvement statements and attributes, the discrepancy in the percentages of teachers indicating that the relational attributes are being practiced was much lower than the percentage agreeing that their corresponding statements contribute to the improvement of school effectiveness. In general, the gap between an attribute’s practice and its potential is larger for teachers than school board members.

Such mixed results, combined with the contradictory nature of various responses, have several implications. First is that teachers and school board members, when presented with a statement for which there was an obvious politically correct reply, almost always chose what would be considered the “right” response. These replies, however, appeared not always to reflect their true philosophies as evidenced by conflicting responses for statements to which the replies were less obviously “right” or “wrong.”

Another is that the analysis of teachers’ and school board members’ perceptions
of the practical aspects of their relationships, in light of education related practices they believe could improve school effectiveness, points to practice not following theory. Although both groups could identify many properties of professional structures as being necessary for the improvement of school effectiveness, it appears that such practices are not, in fact, being implemented. Where their agreement with many improvement statements indicates belief in a professional structure, their actions sometimes appear to fall into the more comfortable rhythm of traditional school typologies. To determine whether their responses did, in fact, indicate the presence of a highly effective professional structure, they were interpreted in light of its various properties as displayed in Table 15.

Considering that many of the professional structure’s properties were not present, participants’ responses to the teacher-school board member relationship statements were analyzed for each property to determine the school structure best described (see Table 16). The categorization of responses suggest that the current state of rural and suburban Erie County, Pennsylvania teacher-school board member relationships is indicative of an authoritarian school structure as described by Hoy and Miskel (2001), one predicted to result in moderate effectiveness.

Inventory Responses and Definition of Trust

Although school board members unanimously agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, “School board members trust teachers,” the teachers’ responses were little more than half of that at 54.4%. Because of this divergence of opinion, participants’
Table 15

*Presence of Professional Structure Properties in Teachers’ and School Board Members’ Opinion Inventory Responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School board members</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional authority</td>
<td>Not present</td>
<td>Not present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple sets of goals</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional source of power</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Not present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal-rational and incremental</td>
<td>Not present</td>
<td>Not present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardization of training</td>
<td>Not present</td>
<td>Not present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose coupling</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Not present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

responses to teacher-school board member relationship statements were evaluated against Tschannen-Moran and Hoy’s (1998) definition of trust as “an individual’s or group’s willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open” (p. 189). Each statement’s focus was first matched with the definition assigned to one of the faces of trust; benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, or openness. Once the statements were matched, teachers’ and board members’ majority responses were recorded and analyzed (see Table 17).
When examined in such a manner, the percentage of school board members expressing trust in teachers decreased to 72.7%, while the percentage of teachers indicating that they are trusted by board members stayed almost the same at 54.5%. The results of this comparison suggest that the teachers’ collective perception is reliable, as their percentage of agreement to a direct statement regarding the trust relationship is virtually the same as their responses to remarks referencing trust’s various faces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational property</th>
<th>Chaotic structures</th>
<th>Authoritarian structure</th>
<th>Weberian structure</th>
<th>Professional structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrating principle</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant source of power</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination of instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coupling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicted effectiveness</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17

Presence of Trust Faces as Indicated by Participants’ Responses to Teacher-School Board Member Relationship Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face</th>
<th>Statement Number on Opinion Inventory</th>
<th>School board members</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversely, the varying percentages recorded by school board members indicate less reliability as well as the possibility that, when posed with the statement in a direct manner, their responses tend to be more politically acceptable. It also suggests that, when faced with more subtle statements relating to trust’s faces, their replies tend to be more variable and don’t project the same assuredness as when responding to a straightforward statement.
Summary

The opinion inventory presented eight statements regarding characteristics of effective schools, for which respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement on a scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” Although only five of the statements were indicators of school effectiveness as defined by NSBA (Bracey & Resnick, 1998), the preponderance of teachers and school board members agreed or strongly agreed with all.

The statement that garnered the greatest agreement from teachers and school board members was that helping students meet Pennsylvania’s Adequate Yearly Progress goals in reading, math, and writing is an indicator of school effectiveness. Paradoxically, “Attaining academic achievement that goes beyond what the PSSA currently measures,” an actual effectiveness indicator, was ranked seventh by teachers but second by school board members. It was also interesting to note that, while some school board members disagreed or strongly disagreed with various NSBA indicators being characteristics of school effectiveness, all of their schools’ mission statements contained either direct or indirect references to these indicators.

Using the inventory results to answer the current study’s first two research questions, it appears that rural and suburban elementary teachers and policymakers at the school board level define school effectiveness in the same way, as helping students: (a) meet Adequate Yearly Progress goals in reading, math, and writing as established by the state of Pennsylvania; (b) attain academic achievement that goes beyond what the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment currently measures; (c) acquire job skills and
preparation for the work force; (d) understand and value the growing diversity of American society; (e) develop citizenship; (f) realize sound physical development and optimal health; (g) develop an appreciation of the arts; and (h) develop character and values.

The opinion inventory’s second section consisted of 11 statements about education related practices, based upon the 9 intersecting properties of Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) school structure typology. Of the four structural types represented in the typology, those that are highly bureaucratic are predicted to have moderate effects on student achievement while structures that are professional have the potential for high effectiveness. The majority of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with 10 statements, 4 of which were bureaucratic in nature, and board members with 9, including 3 that were bureaucratic. This suggested both groups’ belief in a Weberian organizational structure yielding high efficacy, but also that board members may not have much trust in teachers.

Incongruities among responses were also apparent; mostly evident when a question was asked in a direct manner by one statement and more subtly by another. Particularly intriguing, on the part of the teachers, was that their agreement concerning the fostering of teacher esteem and the establishment of teacher-school board member trust relationships as a means of improving effectiveness was lower than would be expected. While the absence of unanimity would usually indicate that some of those responding disagreed, it could also mean that past practices have caused them to lose hope that such a trusting relationship might be realized.

The final section of the inventory was comprised of 12 statements pertaining to
teacher-school board member relationships, also based on the 9 intersecting properties of Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) school structure typology. As with the previous section teachers’ and board members’ opinions varied, but disparities between their levels of agreement concerning certain items also emerged. In addition, each group’s collective responses were often less definitive. Teachers’ majority responses were less commanding on all but reverse scored items and, because all participants did not respond to all statements, the majority responses of both teachers and school board members were sometimes less than 50.0%, requiring the cautious interpretation of results.

Of the six statements describing components of teacher-school board member relationships that contribute to Hoy & Miskel’s (2001) professional structure, or are research-based contributors to school effectiveness, the majority of board members agreed with all and the teachers with all but one. Responses to the research-based reverse scored items, though, indicated perceived deficiencies in the relationship.

When interpreting teachers’ and school board members’ perceptions of their relationships in light of their opinions regarding the improvement of school effectiveness, the results were mixed, with contradictions once more being in evidence. Such findings might point to participants choosing the politically correct response and also to practice not following theory, despite their ability to converse in conceptually relevant language. The analysis of responses indicated that practice did not indicate the presence of a professional structure, but rather one that was Weberian and predicted to result in high effectiveness.

Responses to teacher-school board member relationship statements were also
evaluated against Tschannen-Moran and Hoy’s (1998) definition of trust. Where 99.9% of school board members and 54.4% of teachers agreed with the direct statement, “School board members trust teachers,” the analysis of statements according to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy’s definition indicated that the percentage of school board members expressing trust in teachers decreased to 72.7%, while the percentage of teachers indicating that they are trusted by board members stayed almost the same at 54.5%. Such results suggest that while the teachers’ collective perception of trust was reliable, board members’ reliability varies depending on whether the topic is approached in a direct or indirect manner.

In sum, the inventory’s analysis suggests that rural and suburban school board members and elementary teachers in northwestern Erie County, Pennsylvania define characteristics of school effectiveness in light of the nation’s educational climate, often foregoing philosophies constructed from sound educational principles in favor of striving to meet the political demands of the day. Using inventory results to partially address the final research questions concerning (a) perceptions that rural and suburban elementary teachers and policymakers at the school board level possess regarding their trust relationships, and (b) the perceived impact of these relationships on school effectiveness, it appears, in summary, that trust relationships between teachers and school board members, while moderately positive from the perspective of school board members, are barely positive from the teachers’ point of view, with their characteristics describing an authoritarian structure that is predicted to be moderately effective in educating today’s youth. The responses of both groups, though, revealed the perception that attributes of
teacher-school board member trust relationships relating to the establishment of a professional school structure could, if practiced, improve school effectiveness.

Interpretation of the Interviews

Where the opinion inventory analysis revealed peripheral views of teacher-school board member trust relationships in rural and suburban elementary schools within northwestern Erie County, Pennsylvania, the interviews provided this instrumental case study with a multi-dimensional perspective, its richness in depth affording the insight regarding teacher-school board member trust relationships necessary to understand their perceived influence on school effectiveness. The instrumental nature of this study was extended to eight individual cases, two school board members and two teachers from elementary school A, whose 5th grade PSSA scores ranked in the top 15% of the population under study for the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 school years, and two school board members and two teachers from elementary school B, whose 5th grade students’ PSSA scores ranked in the bottom 15% of the same population. Each participant took part in one interview, followed by member checking and triangulation that occurred through the perusal of documents and media that included the Pennsylvania State Report Card, school districts’ report cards, Standard & Poor’s SchoolMatters.com, local newspaper articles, and school district websites.

This section first interprets results in the order they were presented in Chapter IV; school effectiveness, the role of the school board member in the 21st century, and relationships and their perceived influence on effectiveness. Research questions are
answered as the work progresses, with each subsection building upon previous interpretations. For each topic, results are compared to theoretical frameworks that are then synthesized to determine the perceived influence teacher-school board member trust relationships have on school effectiveness with regard to the population involved in this study.

School Effectiveness

At first glance, the characterizations of effectiveness from those representing both schools appeared quite similar, yet were different than anticipated in that they reflected visions of school effectiveness rather than quantifiable statements against which a school could more easily be evaluated. For example, instead of citing items such as standardized test scores and operating expenditures per student, participants focused on less measurable issues including leadership and a quality staff. These visions then acted as a framework within which individuals’ beliefs melded into interdependent orientations that served as each school’s unwritten mission and guided their daily operations.

Interestingly, the orientations were the same for both schools, with the respondents’ replies categorizing themselves naturally as personal, physical, curricular, and financial. Objectives that were personal dealt with items that were either centered around a school’s clients or personnel, those that were physical referred to issues of class size and school environment, while curricular and financial orientations included objectives related to the school’s curriculum and funding. Here, though, the nature of each school’s comments began to diverge, leading to a second paradox; that the literal
meaning of each individual’s remarks often ran counter to the principles that emerged from their analysis as part of an interdependent whole; principles that served to guide the organization’s daily actions. One such remark, “staff satisfaction,” made by a board member from School B in response to being questioned about that which characterizes an effective school, was later contradicted by her assertion that teachers would better appreciate the benefits of their posts if they experienced a real job. It is also interesting that meanings of comments such as the “importance of a quality staff,” similar for both schools on the surface, led their organizations down different paths when collectively interpreted and enacted.

School A’s board members were outspoken in their beliefs, as was one teacher. A few of their comments, though direct and critical of the other’s group, were later contradicted by statements that spoke of professional respect for each other’s work and accomplishments. An example was a board member’s statement regarding teachers’ negativity, later followed by her encouraging other board members to visit the schools, stating, “so much good is happening that you don’t see if you don’t go in the building.” Not only did she speak the words, her sincere affect strengthened them, giving rise to the respect for workers mentioned as necessary by Creed and Miles (1996). Although such contradictions are not the focus of this discussion, it is necessary to address them so that the reader is not misled by more apparent, but less significant, surface features.

That which is the focus, though, is School A’s unwritten vision that people are at the heart of school effectiveness, with school board members and teachers weaving references to children, parents, staff, and school leaders throughout their commentary.
This person-centered philosophy does not abandon traditional effectiveness indicators, but transforms them from end results to a covenant of shared values, “one that bonds people in a common cause and transforms a school from an organization into a community” (Sergiovanni, p. 15).

In fact, the development of (a) citizenship, (b) an appreciation of the arts, and (c) character and values, all NSBA effectiveness indicators, were either mentioned or alluded to during the interviews, not as objectives to be quantifiably met, but as values to be constructed and continually refined; the ultimate goal being to provide students with the tools necessary to carry on such learning long after their formal schooling has ended. Their mention in the District Report Card, along with other NSBA indicators, including “academic attainment beyond that measured by standardized tests” and “the acquisition of job skills and preparation for the work force,” substantiated their role as district values. So did the practice of their never being mentioned in isolation, but always as a part of leadership, quality staffing, school culture, and meeting children’s needs. The relationship of such person-centeredness to productivity is reinforced by Ouchi (1981), who says that the scientific approach has left people being taken for granted, even though relational skills are the attributes most necessary for success. By putting people first, School A is affirming the significance of such skills along with the importance of the indicators themselves, helping to build the shared values that will guide students in their journey through the 21st century.

Such a philosophy did not just happen, but is the fruit of leadership that recognizes the need to build a positive school culture. Edgar Schein (1985), an
organizational psychologist, forcefully states the need for such cultural leadership stating, “the only thing of real importance that leaders do is create and manage culture” (p. 2).

Many of School A’s philosophies are supported throughout the literature. Evidenced by school board members, leadership is extended to the professional staff in such a way that both leaders and followers alike are imbued with the authority to raise one another to what Couto (1995) calls higher levels of motivation and purposeful action. In the culture practiced by School A, even less animate indicators such as curriculum and funding are person-centered. This can be seen in one teacher’s description of an integrated and appropriate curriculum as one that incorporates the arts, civic responsibility, and character education in a way that builds esteem and helps students realize their potential. In this sense, curriculum serves as a vehicle for realizing the multiple indicators that measure the diversity of students’ learning experiences (Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Keedy & Allen, 1998). Where effectiveness is described by NCLB as a target score to be attained or surpassed, School A’s respondents disagree with using test scores as a sole criterion of a school’s effectiveness, viewing indicators, instead, as multiple and embedded in positive social relationships created among teachers, administrators, students, and parents; implying the existence of the trusting culture essential for realizing effectiveness in education (Bryk & Schneider, 1996, 2002; Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001; Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, & Hoy, 1994; Hoy & Kupersmith, 1985; Hoy, Tarter, & Witkoskie, 1992; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Smith, Hoy, & Sweetland, 2001; Tarter et al., 1995; Tarter & Hoy, 2004; Tschannen-Moran, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; Uline et al., 1998). Those from School A do, though, see a positive side to
accountability measures, feeling that they have forced schools to more closely examine how they are educating their students, a practice that is helping schools to become more effective.

This is not to say that things are perfect in School A. Board members talked of a colleague acting on behalf of special interests, while a teacher and board member spoke at length about teachers’ resistance to change. Opinions regarding their success ranged from one teacher’s “probably not” to another’s “very successful,” with board members seeing schools edging toward improvement on the continuum. Despite such misgivings, though, it appears that School A’s definition of school effectiveness approaches that put forward by NSBA, perhaps even exceeding it in the concept of effectiveness as shared values.

School A’s characterization of school effectiveness was similar to responses obtained from school board members and teachers who returned the opinion inventory, the difference being that the inventory’s results were concrete and observable while School A’s replies were embedded in conversation that broadly encompassed or implied all of the inventory’s indicators. Although not conclusive, the scope of their definition is promising. According to Hoy and Miskel (2001), parents, citizens, policymakers, and scholars often define school effectiveness too narrowly, equating it with academic achievement and ignoring the school’s role in developing the additional attributes necessary for future success. In addition, School A’s indicators are embedded in a covenant of shared values, one that serves as a beacon to guide its people through the rough seas of 21st century reform.
In beginning the discussion of School A, a paradox was described, one in which the literal meaning of each individual’s remarks belied the principles that emerged from their analysis as part of an interdependent whole. Applying to School B as well, this same paradox was apparent through comments made regarding school effectiveness by a board member and teacher. Where their initial remarks were positive in nature, responses made as they became immersed in the interview indicated a lack of respect for each other’s colleagues. An example was the board member’s statement concerning the significance of staff satisfaction as an indicator of effectiveness. This was later followed by her opinion that teachers should experience a real job where they have to work for a boss and get along with their coworkers, calling into question the presence of respect for workers mentioned by Creed and Miles (1996). Once again, such contradictions are not the focus of this section, but provide a backdrop for the interpretation of School B’s beliefs about effectiveness.

Two foci characterized School B’s interpretation of school effectiveness, a concern for human resources driven by the goal of student success, and standardized test scores. Sounding much like a person-centered philosophy, it is actually quite different, with administrative leadership and a quality staff seen as cogs in the production of student results, with a secondary concentration on parents and other community members as customers to be satisfied. Suggestive of a district philosophy comprised of a one-way flow from teachers to student success, Bryk and Schneider (2002) recommend otherwise, asserting that the presence of reciprocal exchanges among those in the school community have important consequences for a school’s functioning and capacity to engage in
fundamental change.

During the interviews, all NSBA effectiveness indicators were acknowledged; one directly stated and others implied by the participants. When asked about the latter through direct questioning, respondents agreed with and elaborated on them. In contrast with comments made by three of School B’s participants, one teacher’s remarks consistently reflected a student-centered philosophy expressing a values-base similar to that described by School A. Although these concepts were also touched on and described by others representing her school, the majority of their responses focused on student results, primarily standardized test scores. This outlook was reinforced by the District Report Card, whose contents were largely devoted to reporting PSSA scores, implying the presence of NSBA indicators through the mission statement only.

Such an approach is indicative of effectiveness’ narrow definition as outlined by Hoy and Miskel (2001). While implying and agreeing to other indicators, School B’s board members and teachers always returned to academic achievement, even though citing it as a characteristic with which they disagreed. This was further supported by their replies of “very successful” when asked to judge their efforts to realize effectiveness indicators, attributing their success to small class sizes, a high degree of parent involvement, and the achievement of above average test scores, with an emphasis on the latter. Although Hoy and Miskel ascribe this test score emphasis to political factions who see it as having intrinsic value, and also on the availability and publicity of achievement data, this seems to be only part of the answer in the case of School B. In contrast to School A, whose board member participants both have backgrounds in education, board
members representing School B come from the business world where results are observable and more easily quantified. As it is human nature to construct meaning from prior knowledge, it is not surprising that School B’s board members would tend to look at test results to determine the school’s efficacy. Although such a philosophy would not necessarily be shared by the teachers, as time progresses it is easy to become professionally, if not personally, acculturated to a manner of thinking, particularly if one wishes to remain in the good graces of those in authority. One teacher summed this up by saying, “Even with the change in administration that will be occurring, I will probably never feel comfortable expressing my true feelings before the day I retire.”

Relationships also appear to be a possible impediment to the realization of effectiveness indicators. While this will be discussed in more detail in the section on teacher-school board member relationships, the lack of collaboration and communication described by a teacher and one board member deter the formation of the professional structure associated with maximum effectiveness (Hoffman et al., 1994; Hoy et al., 1992; Tarter et al., 1995; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998).

School B’s characterization of school effectiveness was somewhat similar to responses obtained from school board members and teachers who returned the opinion inventory, the difference being that the replies obtained from the representatives of School B did not mention or allude to understanding the diversity of American society or the realization of sound physical health. As such, School B’s collective beliefs closely matched the indicators set forth by NSBA with the exception of their focus on test scores, particularly the PSSA. Although this indicator appears to be the school’s most
compelling, the presence of other criteria mitigates the concern that the students’
education will become too narrowly focused. This will be highly dependent, though, on
personnel, with changes that could occur in school board membership or the teaching
staff having the potential to considerably alter the school’s course.

In summary, while School B’s board members and teachers identified fewer
indicators of effectiveness than those of School A, neither varied much from the
responses obtained on the inventory, reflecting the concept’s elusive nature and
difficulties defining it over the years (see Table 18). The fact that neither school
characterized the term narrowly is promising, as it is often equated with academic
achievement while ignoring the school’s role in developing additional attributes
necessary for future success (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

The greatest difference between the indicators identified by the two schools is that
those of School A are guided by a covenant of shared values, with School B’s appearing
to be more amorphous. Both have been shaped by the culture that they serve, and are a
function of the philosophies and relationships discussed in the next sections.

The Role of School Board Members in the 21st Century

Findings of the Iowa Association of School Board’s Lighthouse Study indicated
that the knowledge and beliefs of teachers and school board members in high achieving
districts differed significantly from their low achieving counterparts (Iowa School Board
Compass, 2000). To help determine their beliefs, each interview participant’s perceptions
of board members’ roles and responsibilities was explored and analyzed on
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School effectiveness is helping students:</th>
<th>Inventory respondents</th>
<th>School A participants</th>
<th>School B participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>meet Adequate Yearly Progress goals in reading, math, and writing as established by the state of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attain academic achievement that goes beyond what the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment currently measures (e.g., intellectual curiosity and creativity)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attain job skills and preparation for the work force</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand and value the growing diversity of American society</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>develop citizenship (e.g., volunteerism, voting, community service, abiding by laws)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>realize sound physical development and optimal health</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>develop an appreciation of the arts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>develop character and values (e.g., integrity, responsibility, courtesy, patriotism, and work ethic)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the school level. Not only did their responses yield information regarding their philosophy of school board governance, through their analysis a picture began to emerge of the organizational structure within which each school operated.

Among those in School A, consensus was reached that board members’ primary role is policymaking, with attention being paid to the ways in which policy affects students. In so doing, they stressed the importance of acquiring accurate knowledge about a school’s programs within the context of its daily functioning but adamantly opposed micromanagement, feeling that daily decision-making should be left to administrators and teachers. Teachers and board members also expressed a belief in attending to their peers’ views as well as those of constituents while, at the same time, taking care not to act according to personal agendas. In fact, board members were quick to point out that they have no individual authority, although they do capitalize on individual strengths. When viewed in light of literature and research stating that boards’ responsibilities should include planning, policymaking, communicating, advocating for youth, developing positive relationships with staff, and monitoring progress, personnel, and its own performance while avoiding the micromanagement of school operations (ECS, 1994; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Fulbright, 1998), School A’s beliefs revealed a philosophy of school board governance in accordance with those of effective schools.

Many statements of practice substantiated School A’s philosophy. Anecdotes regarding student-focused policymaking, acquiring the knowledge necessary to make informed policy, and adjusting policy to achieve forward momentum spoke to the board’s interest in planning, policymaking, youth advocacy, and progress monitoring. Efforts to
develop positive staff relationships were chronicled in stories of the teachers’ voice in curriculum development and the hiring of a superintendent, while various publications and media, along with opportunities for input concerning school-community issues, documented communication with the public. Communication with teachers was less direct, though, usually occurring through the superintendent.

Through discussions of their own performance, board members demonstrated their willingness to self-monitor. In agreement with works regarding effective governance they felt that, although micromanagement should not occur (ECS, 1994; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Fulbright, 1998), board members often get too involved in the daily running of schools, particularly in the presence of a weak superintendent. Instead, they feel daily decision-making should be left to administrators and teachers. There was also mention of a fellow board member whose agenda was not educationally centered, but motivated by a special interest. The board members who were interviewed discussed the strain this placed upon those working toward a quality education for the school’s students and, like Goodman and Fulbright (1998), viewed it as a problem that could lead to less effective governance.

From School A’s philosophy of board governance, a portrait of their school structure began to be painted. At first glance, the school’s structure appears to be professional as described by Hoy and Miskel (2001). Much decision-making is delegated to a staff viewed as professional and as having the expertise and competence necessary to make important organizational decisions. Teachers appear to have much power in decision-making, as demonstrated by the board’s acceptance of their recommendations
regarding the adoption of pilot programs and textbook series, not to mention their inclusion in the hiring of the new superintendent. They are also quite autonomous, as indicated by the respect for individual teaching methods and the lack of scripted programs to be uniformly followed, with micromanagement appearing to be nonexistent. Multiple goals are also in evidence, as can be seen by the presence of multiage classrooms using nontraditional approaches alongside those that are traditionally based, an emphasis on creating a positive school environment, the board members’ desire to effect academic growth at the school level over time, and a teacher’s passion for helping each child find his gift.

Upon using a more powerful lens through which to view their comments, details appeared that might have been missed by less careful analysis. Although much decision-making is delegated to the professional staff, the staff sometimes gives this authority back to those at the top of the traditional hierarchy by not taking advantage of the opportunities that are offered. Such can be seen by the small number of teachers responding to the invitation to attend meetings for the purpose of offering opinions on major issues being considered for adoption by the board. This has not gone unnoticed by one board member who, though not questioning the teachers’ expertise and competence, has questioned their attitude and based some of her actions on this perception. In addition, many of the school goals thought to be separate items by the participants were, in fact, directed toward the overarching objective of improving academic achievement, certainly laudable but not a balanced education as defined by NSBA.

Another factor of note is that, through their own admission, not all board
members and teachers shared the participants’ points of view. This was confirmed through the examination of various documents and media, where statements conflicting with those of the study participants were discovered. While dissenting opinions from teachers were very rare, numerous statements were published from a fellow board member who disagreed with a preponderance of district incentives. These differences of opinion, although concerning a variety of issues, seemed to have funding as a root cause, thereby adding credibility to both school board members’ comments regarding this colleague’s primary goal of preventing tax increases.

Perhaps the most interesting topic, though, was that of micromanagement; particularly the board members’ statement that a district must have effective leadership to deter micromanagement by the board. This was narrowed even more by a board member’s assertion that micromanagement should not occur, but happens much when there is a weak superintendent. As conversation with the board members progressed, the rationale for such thinking came as they discussed the significance of administrators to school effectiveness. Their talk painted superintendents as a gatekeeper of sorts, through whom information flows between teachers and school board members. When superintendents adequately perform administrative duties, the gate serves as a stop-cock, regulating the flow in each direction so as to achieve maximum efficiency. When such duties are not well performed, the gate is weakened, causing board members to pass through in an attempt to regain equilibrium through assuming the responsibilities of the superintendent.

In contrast with the opinions shared by board members, teachers made few
mentions of micromanagement, suggesting that they did not feel that board members tried to control their daily instruction. One teacher did state, though, her feeling that board members who are not educators should not be making policy governing those who had been trained in the profession.

Constructing from this information a meaningful whole, School A’s teachers’ and board members’ beliefs regarding the role of school board members describe a philosophy aligned with guidelines and research describing effective governance. One of the most striking characteristics is that of self-awareness, manifested through both groups’ honest reflection on various aspects of their own practice such as board members’ recognition that they sometimes micromanage. In addition to the determination of the school’s philosophy, the framework of its structure begins to emerge from teachers’ and board members’ descriptions of school board members’ roles.

Beginning with the integrating principle, a dichotomy of authority is in evidence. Teachers, though engaging in many leadership roles, do not have the principal responsibility for integrating the activities of the school, thus situating them on the path from Weberian to a professional structure. With regard to goals, their multiplicity indicates a structure that is professional. Although the governance system affords the teachers considerably more power than that of other districts, the apparent hierarchical mindset of a board member frequently reported on in newspaper articles along with a few similar statements made during interviews suggests that the dominant source of power is both bureaucratic and professional, a hallmark of Weberian structure. Decision-making is similarly Weberian, as teachers are given much say but do not control the process, instead
sharing it with administrators and school board members.

This analysis of properties leads to an emerging framework that meanders between paths of professional and Weberian structure (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). The developing openness, collegiality, and authenticity described by board members and teachers hints of movement toward a professional, rather than bureaucratic model, in which teachers are pivotal in effecting student performance. While the Weberian and professional structures are both predicted to be effective, movement from Weberian to professional is a shift undertaken by few school entities (Hoy & Miskel), and one that could result in the highest possible level of effectiveness.

Similar to School A, those from School B concurred that policymaking is school board members’ foremost responsibility, although its board members expressed divergent beliefs concerning the need to obtain a working knowledge of programs and practices. Another responsibility all agreed with was board members working toward the goal of achieving standards and advancing the school’s educational programs. This also elicited different points of view from board members, with one feeling that the board should trust administrators to carry out policy, and the other recommending that board members witness policy results for themselves through direct school involvement rather than rely on the word of administrators. The same board member later contradicted this statement. Along with the others, he voiced opposition to micromanaging schools’ daily operations, agreeing that such responsibilities belonged to administrators.

Another area of consensus among those in School B included listening to fellow board members and constituents, but using personal judgment to make the best possible
decisions for all. This was closely tied to their unanimous disregard for acting out personal vendettas, although the teachers questioned the objectivity and motivation of some board members whose children currently attend their school. Finally, all those interviewed expressed the belief that all board members should support the group’s decisions.

While these presumptions were evaluated against the same literature and research used with School A, the results were different. As with School A, the philosophies of School B’s respondents were aligned with the planning, policymaking, monitoring of progress and personnel, and youth advocacy components of effective governance, although the depth of response for the latter was less marked. Where communication between the two groups was implied, statements regarding the development of positive staff relationships and avoidance of micromanagement lacked in consistency, while the self-monitoring of performance was never mentioned. When viewed in whole, School B’s beliefs revealed a philosophy of school board governance exhibiting some effective schools characteristics, but closely bordered beliefs that typified more ineffective practice.

Anecdotes shared during School B’s interviews, along with supporting documents and media, provided evidence that these philosophies were, in fact, practiced. A school board member’s comments about “standards that our district has set” and whether students “feel successful” served as examples of the planning, policymaking, and youth advocacy exhibited by boards of effective schools, while communication, thought by board members to be open and free flowing, varied depending on the intended audience.
Where several means of exchange were offered to community members, communication with the staff was more limited, occurring between certain teachers and board members when the latter visited the schools or, more globally, through the superintendent. Staff relationships were strained, as evidenced through comments regarding teacher reductions in time, with self-monitoring of performance not addressed. One board member’s philosophy of micromanagement was contradicted in both word and deed, although his interpretation of such events was phrased as “being actively involved” rather than micromanaging. In contrast, the other board member’s actions firmly supported her belief that administrators should manage the schools while board members enact policy.

Although not mentioned directly, the board member who appears to micromanage alluded to communication as an underlying reason for his actions. The infrequent mention of administrators leads again to the concept of superintendent as gatekeeper of communication flow. The fact that, in School B, the superintendent was virtually absent from comments made by board members, lends credence to the conjecture that the absence of effective leadership opens the way for more directive involvement by those in positions of authority.

Through applying their philosophies and practice of board governance to Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) school structure typology, a framework of School B’s structure begins to emerge. Appearing in sync on the surface, closer examination of board members’ and teachers’ remarks reveal a disjuncture that requires careful analysis to appropriately categorize the school’s organizational properties. A prime example occurs in determining the type of authority that best describes the school’s integrating principle. At the start of
each interview board members and teachers cast each other in a positive light, speaking of strengths and a working relationship shared between bureaucratic and professional authority. The talk by one board member of staff satisfaction and its impact on student learning pointed toward respect for teachers as individuals and professionals, indicating reliance on their expertise and competence. Later, though, as conversation shifted to a different focus, talk of the teachers’ frequent grumbling and her desire that they might sometime have a “real” job disclosed a different attitude, one that spoke less of shared authority and more in favor of a structure that is bureaucratic. Such an outlook also defeated work toward school effectiveness as described in IASB’s (2001) Lighthouse Study, where positive attitudes about personnel were cited as a requisite for efficacy.

Her colleague evidenced a similar shift, but in a different manner. Criticizing the grandstanding engaged in by members of some boards, his later discussion of personal practice as a board member described his enjoyment of the stature incurred by his position. Comments such as, “Before, I think we were taking the advice of [administration], now [we say] show me how you feel that’s best for the district,” expressed his need for first hand knowledge of programs and practices rather than relying on practitioners’ words. They also indicated a level of distrust and a public statement of his own importance, implying a preference for bureaucratic authority despite his words to the contrary.

Disjuncture was present in the words of the teachers as well. The teacher who consistently disparaged the board for staff reductions in time later spoke of the good working relationship that exists between teachers and board members. Her opinions were
also disjointed from those of her colleague in their lack of optimism, although her colleague did express concerns that included a desire for increased board reliance on professional expertise.

Through interpreting their statements in light of the whole rather than as separate entities, the apparent presence of bureaucratic and professional authority gives way to an integrating principle based primarily on authority that is bureaucratic. This, when combined with the formal goals of achieving standards and advancing the school’s educational programs, identifies the property as authoritarian in structure. The formality of such goals, when linked with their singularity of purpose, serve to categorize the goals property as authoritarian as well.

Discussions relating to the school’s source of power also unveiled disjunctures. Speaking of the need to follow the chain of command, one board member cautioned against stepping into the role of administration, her omission of applying the same principle to teachers indicative of a belief in the power of hierarchical practice. Despite words to the contrary, her colleague’s practice of micromanaging also consumed teachers’ power, leaving them the task of delivering instruction while input concerning school operations was received at the board members’ discretion. Teachers’ self-perceptions of power seemed moderate as indicated by their talk of being members of the design committee for school renovations. As there was little mention of their involvement in education related committees, though, such participation appears superficial to the true purpose of education. Even their inclusion on the renovation committee hinted of appeasement, as one board member spoke of their membership, but added, “they are not
going to get everything they want.” Although there was some sharing of power, the power represented by these practices is fundamentally bureaucratic.

A good deal of School B’s decision-making occurs at the school level, where teachers collaborate in grade level meetings to coordinate instruction with the aim of improving students’ attainment of standards and increasing PSSA scores. Based on teachers’ accounts, such meetings are quite productive but fall a bit short of an optimal decision-making process by including only staff who teach academic subjects. From other accounts, some instances of decision-making happen by default, as in the case of the arts education teacher left to write her own curriculum. Board members’ talk of decision-making occurred in relation to school renovations, but more often indirectly through discussions of planning and policymaking. Although no mention was made of teachers having a voice in this process, the discussion was short and there is no conclusive evidence that it did not happen. Taking these various practices into account, it appears that the school’s decision-making process is shared and characteristic of a Weberian structure.

Assimilating these various components into a meaningful whole, School B’s philosophy of school board governance is aligned with some characteristics practiced by effective schools, but is close to the realm of practices engaged in by schools described as less effective by the IASB (2001) *Lighthouse Study*. Of the structural properties discussed, all but one is characterized as authoritarian (Hoy & Miskel, 2001), resulting in School B being categorized as having an authoritarian structure but beginning an evolution toward a Weberian configuration.
In summary, both School A’s and School B’s philosophies and practices of school governance are effective when viewed in light of literature and research stating that boards’ responsibilities should include planning, policymaking, communicating, advocating for youth, developing positive relationships with staff, and monitoring progress, personnel, and its own performance while avoiding the micromanagement of school operations (ECS, 1994; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Fulbright, 1998). Where School A is soundly rooted in this domain, though, School B is close to exhibiting characteristics that would categorize it as less than effective. Regarding the analysis of properties based upon their responses indicating governance philosophies and practices, the framework emerging for School A meanders between paths of professional and Weberian structures, both of which have high levels of predicted effectiveness, while School B is beginning an evolution from the moderately effective authoritarian structure to the highly effective Weberian (Hoy & Miskel, 2001) (see Table 19).

In the case of School A, a higher achieving school, the developing openness, collegiality, and authenticity described by board members and teachers are confirmed by research (Hoffman et al., 1994; Hoy et al., 1992; Hoy & Kupersmith, 1985; Tarter et al., 1995; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998) as progress toward a professional model in which teachers play a pivotal role in effecting student performance. Although their communication with teachers is not direct, the opportunities for interaction between board members and various constituencies serve as the springboard necessary for creating the support and trust necessary to build an effective educational system (EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Fulbright, 1998; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2003; Iowa School Board
Compass, 2000). On the other hand, while some individuals in lower achieving School B manifest more of these characteristics than others, as a whole, they are just beginning the journey. This affirms the section’s opening statement; the knowledge and beliefs of teachers and school board members in high achieving districts differ significantly from their lower achieving counterparts (Iowa School Board Compass, 2000).

Despite the differences between schools, a common theme emerged during the examination of philosophies and structures, the concept of superintendent and effective leadership skills as gatekeeper. Such a premise suggests that leadership channels the flow of communication that serves as the foundation of a school’s structure. When leadership is effective, the gatekeeping functions well, helping to maintain the balance necessary to build the most effective structure. In contrast, with weak leadership the gate gives way under pressure, swinging in the direction of least resistance, upsetting the equilibrium

### Table 19

*School Structure Properties of School A and School B*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrating principle</td>
<td>Weberian→Professional</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant source of power</td>
<td>Weberian</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making process</td>
<td>Weberian</td>
<td>Weberian</td>
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necessary for maximum efficacy. This concept will be explored in the next section.

*Relationships and their Perceived Influence on Effectiveness*

As increasing attention is devoted to improving school effectiveness, the value of teacher-school board member relationships is emerging as an element common to districts successfully meeting identified goals (IASB, 2001). Of all the qualities present in such a relationship, trust has assumed increased significance in education (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998), being called the foundation of school effectiveness due to its pivotal role in fostering those attributes by which schools are most often judged to be effective (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993). To help determine the perceived influence of teacher-school board member trust relationships on school effectiveness, each interview participant’s responses to relationship oriented questions were explored and analyzed on the school level. Their responses answered the final two research questions:

3. What perceptions do rural and suburban elementary teachers possess regarding trust relationships between policymakers at the school board level and themselves? What perceived impact does this relationship have on school effectiveness?

4. What perceptions do policymakers at the school board level possess regarding trust relationships between rural and suburban elementary teachers and themselves? What perceived impact does this relationship have on school effectiveness?
Participants were first asked about the type of relationship that exists between teachers and school board members. Where all questions prior to this had elicited immediate and assured discussion, the pause that ensued from those in School A, though brief, was notable, the time taken to assimilate their thoughts suggesting that this was something they had never previously contemplated. Adding to its import was that their responses, when they did reply, were similar in that all agreed they were not sure whether there even was a relationship, citing little direct communication and contact as the reason for their replies. This is interesting to note, particularly in light of previous conversation in which teachers and board members freely included the other group in their comments and expressed a degree of knowledge about their responsibilities and practices. Such a collective response suggests that their definition of a relationship includes direct contact, a supposition supported by their statement that the groups have little direct communication or contact with each other.

The subject of communication reappeared several times during the discussion of relationships between teachers and board members. Both groups talked of the need for a direct line of communication with each other. Board members underscored this necessity in speaking of members’ tendency to base their actions on a picture of school as it was when they attended, rather than as it is in the 21st century. Teachers felt it imperative to at least be introduced to the board and know who the members are, even though much of the communication between groups flows through the superintendent. This need for professional relationships is found in the literature as well, where the IASB (2001) talks of teachers in effective schools knowing who their board members are, the EPLC (2004)
speaks to the importance of ethical relations, and by Wilkins (1989, p. 41) who says, “Organizational competence typically resides in the relationships, norms, memories, habits, and collective skills of a network of people.” Intermingled with this is research that cites the importance of communication in creating the support and trust necessary to build an effective educational system (EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Fulbright, 1998; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2003; Iowa School Board Compass, 2000). It is interesting to note teachers’ talk of communication flowing through the superintendent, giving rise, once more to the idea of superintendent as gatekeeper.

Other relational attributes also emerged through the discussion of teacher-school board member relationships. Both teachers and board members agreed with the presence of shared decision-making and teacher autonomy, while descriptions of practices by board members included teacher empowerment, the use of research-based practices, and the building of teacher esteem. Although teachers did not mention such practices directly, their accounts of the school’s culture supported these attributes’ presence and also portrayed it as flexible and respectful of professional abilities. Like those presented in the previous section, these properties can also be evaluated against Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) school structure typology. While the presence of shared decision-making is characteristic of a Weberian structure, the added emphasis on teacher autonomy and empowerment indicates the source of power moving from Weberian to professional, with the integrating principle even further along this journey than previously specified. The portrayal of the school’s culture as flexible and respectful of professional abilities represents a coordination of instruction that falls in the Weberian structure, with its loose coupling
indicative of a structure that is professional. Adding these insights to those obtained through the analysis of school board members’ roles points to a school structure well on its way to becoming professional, one in which the predicted effectiveness is high, the expected level of conflict is moving from limited to low, and the expected environment is transforming from stable and simple to one that is stable and complex (see Table 20).

These characteristics and their representation of movement toward a professional structure are supported in the literature and by research as indicators of increasing efficacy. In his work regarding total quality management, Deming talks of ceasing dependence on inspection to achieve quality, driving out fear, breaking down departmental barriers, and most important, employee ownership through valuing and appreciating the individual (Rebore, 2004). Trusty and Sergiovanni’s (1966) finding that professional educators’ greatest need deficiencies occur at the esteem and autonomy levels reinforces Maslow’s theory that esteem needs must be met in order for self-direction to occur (Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Wilson et al., 1974), as well as reinforcing the IASB (2001) finding that a supportive workplace allows the staff to succeed in their roles. Perhaps most significant is that effective school boards are increasingly moving away from bureaucratic systems and top-down decision-making to a collaborative model of mutual support in which authority is delegated to building and classroom levels (ECS, 1994; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Zimmerman, 2000; Ouchi, 2003). These statements, when added to the finding that School A, highly effective as indicated by its PSSA scores and agreement with NSBA school effectiveness indicators, is moving from a Weberian to professional structure, both having high predicted effectiveness, suggest that School A’s
Table 20

*School Structure Properties of School A*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>School A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrating principle</td>
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<td>Weberian→Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making process</td>
<td>Weberian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination of instruction</td>
<td>Weberian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coupling</td>
<td>Professional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...efficacy results from the nature of relationships existing between teachers and school board members.

But what of trust? If the pause that occurred when asked about relationships in general was notable, that which followed being asked whether trust is a component of teacher-school board member relationships was profound. Considering that the teachers and board members had most likely not pondered their general relationship, it is not surprising that the thought of trust as part of that relationship might never have occurred to them. Solomon and Flores (2001) relate such a response to a story of St. Augustine: “The great philosopher, St. Augustine, when asked to define what time was, found himself puzzled. Until he was asked, he knew perfectly well what time was. But once
asked, he had no idea what to say” (p. 3). Such is the case of trust; its importance is widely accepted, but not as obvious in practice as it should be (Sergiovanni, 2005).

Although it took a few moments to process the question, their collective response was emphatic concurrence that trust is essential in the relationships of all those working toward educational goals. One board member enumerated several of the properties discussed earlier in the interview, saying that the majority of such professional authority and shared decision-making is based on trust. This perception is supported in the research of Bryk and Schneider (2002), who say that trust fosters the organizational conditions that are conducive to individuals uniting and sustaining the types of activities necessary to affect improvement in productivity.

Despite their agreement regarding its existence, there was no common view concerning the level of trust currently present. Board members and teachers agreed, though, that there is always room for improvement and that each should practice seeing an issue from the other’s perspective. In addition to the self-monitoring represented by this statement, its mutual understanding is supported by Bottery’s (2003) comment that those outside of education, such as school board members, should place greater value on practitioners’ descriptions of their work.

All School A respondents firmly believe that teacher-school board member trust relationships influence school effectiveness, and supported their beliefs by citing current practices and their impact on efficacy. Open communication, teacher input, teacher “buy-in,” the freedom to individualize, and a positive culture were all mentioned as integral to effectiveness, and all thought to stem from the trust that the majority of each group has
for the other. That these practices are components of school structures that predict high effectiveness has already been established, that they are grounded in trust is corroborated by Cunningham and Gresso (1993) who maintain that trust is the foundation of school effectiveness and has a pivotal role in fostering those attributes by which schools are judged to be effective. Tarter, Sabo, and Hoy (1995) also talk of the need for a culture of trust to realize effectiveness in education, a need that is verified by Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) strong statistical evidence linking relational trust to improved student learning.

More specifically, in the IASB (2001) *Lighthouse Study*, those districts whose student achievement was above the norm and increasing had teachers who felt trusted by school board members.

This school, instead of having student achievement as the primary focus of its teachers and board members, had a teacher-school board member relationship centered on valuing people. Characterized by a move away from top-down management, those interviewed spoke of communication, shared decision-making, district support of professional development, and personal accountability. Also mentioned were collaboration, teacher autonomy, empowerment, and a concern for teacher esteem, but most important of all was mutual respect. The significance of respect, along with ethical relations, was advanced in EPLC’s (2004) study of effective board governance, findings that were echoed in research concerning effective schools conducted by the Iowa Association of School Boards (2001).

Teachers’ and school board members’ trust for one another can also be interpreted according to the definition advanced by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999); an individual
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. Although quantitative trust scales based on this definition are available for determining the trust that exists between teachers and other referents such as principals, colleagues, and clients, the fact that there is no scale for assessing the trust relationship between teachers and school board members requires the use of a qualitative approach.

Beginning with board members’ trust in teachers, comments such as, “so much good is happening,” express benevolence, the confidence that something one cares about will be protected. Feelings that teachers are competent and reliable are attested to by their presence on committees, while their willingness to discuss controversial issues with board members suggests little or no withholding of evidence, pointing to the presence of openness. The status of honesty, defined to include character and integrity, is not so easily determined, however. Although one board member casts doubt upon the teachers’ character through comments about their negativity and resistance to change, her descriptions of their practice, along with articles in the media, tell of teachers going out of their way to help students. The latter, when combined with her colleague’s talk of respecting teachers, suggests that board members do have confidence that teachers are honest, but that such confidence is not as strong as trust’s other attributes. Considered as a whole, the presence of benevolence, competence, reliability, openness, and honesty in their discussions indicates the likelihood that the board members interviewed trust teachers.

Regarding teachers’ trust for board members, the comment made by a teacher that
her colleagues’ attitudes may differ is evidenced in the present study. One teacher participant’s attitudes are grounded in the belief that non-educators should not be making educational decisions. Her responses, predicated on this belief, cast doubt on the presence of benevolence, competence, reliability, openness, and honesty in the relationship. In contrast, though, comments made by her fellow teacher indicate the opposite. The lack of consensus between the two leads to inconclusive results concerning the nature of teachers’ trust for board members. It is interesting to note that the teacher whose beliefs are more positive has been in the school longer and is better acquainted with the board members, while the teacher who questions their presence has only been in the school three years and, by her own admission, spends most of her time in her room.

Evaluated in light of the primary trust types identified by Shapiro, Sheppard, and Cheraskin (1992) as well as Lewicki and Bunker (1996), the trust relationship between School A’s teachers and board members is closest to knowledge-based trust, the third step in the hierarchy. Such trust relies on understandings developed through multifaceted relationships, in which the reliability and predictability in previous interactions fosters positive expectations (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Sheppard & Tuchinsky, 1996; Rousseau et al., 1998). Knowledge-based trust can also give rise to the psychological identity (Rousseau et al.), or professional competence, trust, and respect, that is advanced as being most significant in the development of educational professionals (Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Wilson et al., 1974).

Summarizing the interpretation of results regarding School A, the teachers and school board members consider school effectiveness to include not only academic growth
over time as evidenced through standardized test scores, but also components such as achievement in character, civic responsibility, the arts, and preparation for the work force. Their philosophy and practice of school governance is aligned with those found through research to be effective, while their organizational structure is moving from Weberian to professional, both with high predicted levels of efficacy. Teachers and board members firmly believe that their trust relationships influence school effectiveness, with those board members interviewed indicating trust in teachers. Although the reciprocating relationship is inconclusive, the collective statements of all participants imply a level of trust that promotes the development of the properties comprising a school structure with high predicted effectiveness. Such a philosophy and structure are consistent with School A’s achievement of PSSA scores that rank in the top 15% of suburban and rural elementary schools in Erie County, Pennsylvania.

As with School A, participants representing School B first discussed the general relationship that exists between teachers and board members. Teachers, using anecdotes as a vehicle, described the same guarded relationship that was identified by board members. The attitudes emerging from their descriptions characterized a management-union relationship in which the board assumed the managerial role and the teachers carried out specific tasks. Repeated talk of fighting for wages and staff reductions in time, along with a board member’s comment concerning Pennsylvania’s strong union ethic, indicate the prominent role employer-employee interactions play in their relationship. Considering that the school had recently experienced a strike followed by a lengthy negotiation process, the tenuous nature of the relationship is not surprising, nor is the
resultant lack of professional integrity, felt in varying degrees, by the teachers. Such feelings are discussed in the research of Trusty and Sergiovanni (1966), where the greatest need deficiencies of professional educators were found to occur at the esteem, autonomy, and self-actualization levels, inhibiting teachers’ abilities to optimize their performance. To maximize instructional delivery, however, Maslow’s theory of self-actualization says that teachers must feel professional competence, trust, and respect; needs that may only be fulfilled by others (Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Wilson et al., 1974).

Although one of the board members spoke of the need for this “staff satisfaction” and its corresponding influence on student learning, she also conversed at length about the need for staff members to experience a real job where they had to work for a boss and with coworkers. The duality of these statements, in addition to the conviction with which the latter was voiced, suggests an inconsistency of thought and deed that is most likely as apparent to the teachers as it was to me, and would almost certainly not serve to satisfy teachers’ needs for the professional competence and respect necessary for maximum efficacy.

As the board members and teachers discussed this management-union relationship, much of their conversation pointed to communication as playing a pivotal role, a concept supported by both the EPLC’s (2004) *K-12 Governance* Study and the IASB’s (2001) *Lighthouse Study*. Although all agreed with communication as central to working together, many of their comments described it as a one way transfer of information, with the person being interviewed providing information to another party, seemingly unaware that the exchange could flow in the opposite direction as well. Much
of this would appear to stem from the focus on employer-employee relations and its resultant need deficiencies, as mentioned in the work of Trusty and Sergiovanni (1966). In fact, a great deal of the school’s work seemed to revolve around this concept, consuming much of the teachers’ and board members’ energy and leaving a smaller amount to carry out the responsibilities associated with their positions. The most notable exception to this came from a board member who discussed visiting the schools, talking with teachers and listening to their concerns. His statement that it was board members’ responsibility to initiate such open relationships is supported in research calling for the board to develop positive staff relationships (ECS, 1994; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Fulbright, 1998). Similar to School A, the administrative staff was identified as critical in realizing honest communication. Also similar was the administration’s being described as a liaison, controlling the information that was passed between school board members and the teachers.

Few additional items were mentioned as board members and teachers described their relationship. The teachers agreed that one board member’s actions were oriented around personal agendas regarding her children, while a board member felt that many of the teachers acted in their own best interests. Respect was mentioned as a primary component of the relationship by the other board member, while a teacher stated her feeling that the teachers were neutral toward the board as a whole. All termed the relationship as adequate, saying that it could improve.

Evaluating these properties against Hoy and Miskel’s school structure typology serves to refine and expand upon the preliminary analysis of the previous section.
Characterizations of the relationship are consistent with those identified through the examination of school board members’ roles, resulting in an integrating principle and source of power that is typical of an authoritarian structure. As there was no additional discussion of the goals, this property remained authoritarian while decision-making was unchanged in its movement from authoritarian to Weberian. The belief in bureaucratic attributes alongside teachers’ technical competence indicates coordination of instruction that is Weberian, as does the moderately tight coupling among various parts of the organization. Adding these refinements to the previously identified properties points to a school structure on the move from authoritarian to Weberian, one for which the predicted effectiveness is beginning to move from moderate to high, the expected level of conflict is progressing from moderate to limited, and the expected environment is simple and stable (see Table 21).

School B’s movement toward a Weberian structure is characteristic of Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) theory of school development. This theory proposes that schools are identified as having a certain structure based on their properties and, as the properties exhibit progressively less chaos and bureaucracy, the school increases in effectiveness. Depending upon their structure, schools may move from the least effective chaotic structure to authoritarian, Weberian, and ultimately the highly effective professional structure, with each transition increasingly difficult. School B’s evolution from authoritarian to Weberian represents the midpoint of this complexity continuum, with the change from chaos to authoritarian being relatively straightforward, and Weberian to professional accomplished by only a few.
For School B to continue its movement toward a Weberian structure, positive relationships are vital. W. Edwards Deming, in helping Japan rise from post-war devastation to being a leader in the economic world, voiced this directly in saying, “you don’t just do business. You build relationships” (Solomon & Flores, 2001, p. 100). In the case of School B, one of the board members interviewed is attempting to build such relationships. The fact that newly elected board members will replace some who were viewed less favorably provides hope that progress toward a Weberian structure will continue. In contrast, though, such movement could be delayed if board members continue to create relationships in which they must see things for themselves rather than rely on the word of others.
Psychological foundations of motivation are also closely intertwined with the functioning of organizational management structures. In addition to Maslow’s and Erickson’s theories of motivation (Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Wilson et al., 1974), Creed and Miles (1996) discuss workers’ need for respect as well as their desire for recognition and belonging. Such relational items are the seeds of change, as can be seen in the IASB’s (2001) Lighthouse Study that says a supportive workplace allows the staff to succeed in their roles. At first, both board members’ comments were consistent with providing the support and satisfaction of needs that would steadily move structural properties such as the integrating principle and source of power toward a more Weberian format. As the discussion progressed, though, and conversation became more candid, comments made by one board member implied a lack of respect for teachers while the other member clearly enjoyed the status and power of the position. In addition, the discord in thinking between the two board members along with their descriptions of board practice suggest a lack of philosophical and practical unity that could impede advancement to a Weberian structure if not stopping it altogether. These findings, when considered in light of School B’s high efficacy with regard to NSBA school effectiveness indicators but lower effectiveness in relation to PSSA scores, indicates slow and incremental movement from an authoritarian to Weberian structure that could easily grind to a halt due to the fragile nature of teacher-school board member relationships.

Upon moving to the question of trust as part of teacher-school board member relationships, everyone stopped to consider their responses, even the board member who briefly mentioned it in a previous reply. This pausing to answer, especially when coupled
with the term’s prior use, is a convincing indicator that people seldom consciously contemplate the workings of trust in a relationship, despite their casual inclusion of the word in conversation. Following their reflection, all emphatically agreed that trust is the gateway to achieving a quality school. Statements of explanation included terms such as “communication,” “respect,” “rely on,” “and “flow in both directions;” expressions indicating the interpersonal dynamics that, according to research, create the environment requisite for promoting student achievement (Hoy & Hannum, 1997; Hoy, Sabo, & Barnes, 1996).

A closer examination, though, unveiled a more tenuous level of trust between the groups than existed on the surface. Through their own admission, teachers and board members talked of trust’s decline in the wake of negotiations, staff reductions in time, and actions perceived to have an underlying motive. Such declarations, following discussion of a more positive nature, are consistent with the writing of Solomon and Flores (2001) who offer that people often overestimate the trust that exists in their organization, being polite out of loyalty or fear when, in fact, cynicism and distrust are the prevalent agents at work. Sergiovanni (2005) concurs, saying that even though the significance of trust is widely accepted, it is not as evident in practice as is necessary.

Regarding the adequacy of the existing trust level, everyone replied that there is always room for improvement. In effecting such change, one board member cited the need for each group to work on understanding the other’s position but also felt that the responsibility for initiating improved relationships begins with the board. Supported by EPLC’s (2004) governance study that places the responsibility for school improvement
with school board members, such an opinion is also underscored by the governance study conducted by the IASB (2001) in which board members in effective schools were found to display positive attitudes about personnel as well as a high level of confidence they would succeed. Teachers interviewed in the IASB study reflected this outlook, stating that their district’s leadership was supportive and they were trusted. Talk of leadership was also reflected in comments made by the current study’s second board member, who spoke of administrators’ importance as stewards of the communication flowing between board members and teachers.

All participants agreed that both the relationship between teachers and school board members in general and their trust relationships influence school effectiveness. Everyone spoke knowingly about the domino effect occurring when trust is passed from the board through the administration to teachers whose response is the improved instructional delivery leading to increased efficacy. Research supports this claim, with Bryk and Schneider (2002) providing strong statistical evidence that relational trust is linked to improved student learning. One board member described trust relationships as affecting individuals’ mindsets, a concept that parallels that of Sergiovanni’s (2005) mindscapes, described as the metaphors, theories of practice, and issues that shape a person’s reality. Board members and teachers alike described an optimal mindscape as one based on respect and including honest communication, morality, a willingness to learn, familiarity with one another, and consideration; most of these also components of a professional structure.

To result in effectiveness, though, mindscapes must be translated into action.
From conversations with those representing School B, it appears that such translation is the weak link in converting trust relationships to school effectiveness. Comments focusing on difficult contract negotiations and staff reductions in time suggest a culture that is functioning on the second level of Maslow’s hierarchy, working at satisfying the needs for safety that must be met prior to an individual feeling the motivation necessary to achieve maximum self-direction and efficacy.

Another mindscape was held by school board members, who believe that trust relationships between teachers and board members are primarily reflected in outcomes such as scores on the PSSA. Although standardized test scores are not an NSBA indicator of school effectiveness, this thinking serves to illustrate the impact that mandated legislation has on the work of some schools, transforming a focus on educating the whole child to one that is reduced to a single set of quantifiable statistics that determine the quality of a child’s education, not to mention shaping the course of his future. Such a focus on outcomes, along with negativity toward teachers and some teachers’ feelings of isolation, characterize the school’s trust relationships as closer to those in the IASB’s (2001) “stuck” category, in which student achievement is relatively stable and below the norm of other suburban and rural elementary schools in Erie County, Pennsylvania.

As with School A, the trust between teachers and school board members in School B can be interpreted according to Hoy and Tschannen-Moran’s (1999) definition of trust as an individual 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. Once again beginning with board members’ trust in teachers, comments concerning staff
self-interest, a lack of honest communication, and an implied need to micromanage call into question the presence of benevolence, honesty, openness, and reliability. Mitigated to some extent by the sharing of remarks demonstrating these qualities, the overall sense is that they are lacking in the relationship. Board members do believe in the staff’s competency, however, as evidenced by statements directly attesting to their expertise. Despite the words of a board member and teacher that board members do trust teachers, it appears that such trust is, in fact, wanting, but possibly growing toward a healthier state.

Similar results emerged regarding teachers’ trust in board members. Talk of negotiations and staff reductions in time, implied top-down decision-making, and a wariness of non-educators making educational decisions, indicate deficits in the areas of benevolence, competence, honesty, openness, and reliability. In agreement with assessments made by a teacher and one board member, teachers’ trust in board members appears to be less than what exists when the relationship is reversed, with teachers continuously on guard and questioning board members’ motives. In sum, the trust relationship between the groups is calculus-based, with the trustor calculating the likelihood of the trustee performing a beneficial action (Dasgupta, 2000; Gambetta, 2000; Rousseau et al., 1998). Such trust is partial and quite fragile (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996).

Summarizing the interpretation of results for School B, the teachers and school board members consider school effectiveness to include not only academic growth over time as evidenced through standardized test scores, but also components such as achievement in character, civic responsibility, the arts, and preparation for the work force. While their philosophy of school governance is aligned with that found through
research to be effective, its practice is not in keeping with that discerned through the discussion of board members’ roles, but rather that of the IASB’s (2001) stuck districts as determined through conversations about teacher-school board member relationships. At the same time School B’s structure is inching from authoritarian to Weberian, with its predicted effectiveness currently closer to moderate. Even though both teachers and board members firmly believe that trust relationships influence school effectiveness, reciprocal trust levels are lacking with teachers evidencing less trust for board members than the other way around. In carefully evaluating the statements of all participants, a level of trust is implied that is in accord with a school structure yielding moderate efficacy. Such a philosophy and structure are consistent with School B’s PSSA scores that rank in the bottom 15% of suburban and rural elementary schools in Erie County, Pennsylvania.

**Synthesis of Structure and School Effectiveness**

Combining the interview interpretations for School A and School B into a coherent whole affords a view of their teacher-school board member relationships and how they are perceived to influence school effectiveness. In so doing each of the four research questions will be addressed, bringing the study close to full circle.

In response to the first two research questions, which ask how rural and suburban elementary teachers and policymakers at the school board level define school effectiveness, the teachers and board members from both schools identified or agreed with all of the indicators set forth by NSBA. While those representing School A were in
concurrence with all of the indicators listed on the inventory, even the three that were false, School B’s collective beliefs were an even closer match in their agreement with only one non-indicator, a focus on standardized test scores. It must be mentioned that none of the respondents listed all of the indicators on their own. In fact, after naming two or three, one of which was always students’ performance on the PSSA, everyone stopped to think. Following this pause, some added another item while others indicated their readiness for the next question. At this point the researcher provided some prompts in the form of indicators from the inventory with which the respondent could agree or not. Although each participant responded affirmatively to every prompt, some exhibited more knowledge and went on to discuss the indicator and its importance at length. This behavior reflects the elusive nature of school effectiveness, and also the difficulty defining it over the years.

Perhaps of most significance is that every respondent identified test scores, namely the PSSA, as an indicator of effectiveness, even if they disagreed with its worth. As a matter of fact, all did disagree with its use as a sole criterion of effectiveness while still appreciating some of the improvements to education brought about by the accountability initiative from which it evolved. Especially disheartening about the selection of this indicator is respondents’ feelings of helplessness with regard to halting its continued use. On the other hand, it was inspiring to hear talk of complying with goals while, at the same time, keeping people as the focus of the educational process. All from School A, and teachers from School B, embodied the latter trait, with School B’s board members focused more on their duties and quantifiable results. The greatest difference
between the groups is that the indicators identified by School A appeared to emerge from shared values, with the source of School B’s being more amorphous.

It should also be mentioned that both schools’ mission statements embrace the indicators named by teachers and board members, while many other documents and media sources from School A advanced the same. Although documents and media from School B also touched on these indicators, they emphasized more quantifiable items such as test scores and funding. Information from these various sources served to triangulate that which emerged from the interviews, lending credence to their analysis. The fact that neither school characterized the term narrowly is promising, as its frequent equation with academic achievement often ignores the school’s role in developing attributes necessary for future success (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

The final research questions address two issues: (a) What perceptions do rural and suburban elementary teachers possess regarding trust relationships between policymakers at the school board level and themselves? What perceived impact does this relationship have on school effectiveness? and (b) What perceptions do policymakers at the school board level possess regarding trust relationships between rural and suburban elementary teachers and themselves? What perceived impact does this relationship have on school effectiveness? To answer these questions, perceptions of school board members’ roles as well as trust relationships were analyzed and added to what was known about the school’s efficacy.

Beginning with the role of school board members, both schools’ philosophies are effective when viewed in light of literature and research stating that boards’
responsibilities should include planning, policymaking, communicating, advocating for youth, developing positive relationships with staff, and monitoring progress, personnel, and its own performance while avoiding the micromanagement of school operations (ECS, 1994; EPLC, 2004; Goodman & Fulbright, 1998). School A was particularly strong in the area of board members’ monitoring their own performance. Where School A is soundly rooted in efficacy, though, School B is close to exhibiting characteristics that would categorize it as less than effective. In fact, the upcoming analysis of comments regarding teacher-school board member trust relationships will alter its classification.

To begin the initial determination of each school’s structure, properties emerging from the interviews were analyzed in light of Hoy and Miskel’s (2001) school structure typology. Characteristics of School A, including the delegation of decision-making to the professional staff, teacher autonomy, the presence of multiple goals, and a lack of micromanagement, initially indicated a professional classification. Upon examining the essence of their comments, though, details appeared that could have been missed by less careful analysis. Considering that: (a) teachers sometimes give their decision-making authority away by not participating when given the opportunity; (b) different philosophies and practices are expressed by some teachers and a board member, and; (c) in their own words, board members have micromanaged due to a less than optimal superintendent; School A’s structure was categorized as moving from Weberian to professional, both predicted to be highly effective.

Comments pertaining to school structure made by those in School B exhibited a disjuncture both within and among school board members and teachers. After careful
analysis indicating formal goals and bureaucratic authority, School B’s integrating principal, goals, and dominant source of power were found to be authoritarian. Its decision-making process, though, was shared among teachers, administrators, and board members resulting in a Weberian classification. In looking at the whole, School B was categorized as beginning to move from authoritarian to Weberian, transitioning from a predicted moderate effectiveness level to one that is highly effective.

Perhaps most interesting, though, was a common theme that emerged despite the differences between schools; the concept of the superintendent and effective leadership skills as gatekeeper. Such a premise suggests that leadership channels the flow of communication that serves as the foundation of a school’s structure. When leadership is effective, the gatekeeping functions well, helping to maintain the balance necessary to build the most effective structure. In contrast, with weak leadership the gate gives way under pressure, swinging in the direction of least resistance, upsetting the equilibrium necessary for maximum efficacy.

The final domain to be discussed is teacher-school board member relationships and how such relationships, particularly those involving trust, are perceived to influence school effectiveness. Responses from those representing School A indicated that they had seldom, if ever, thought about a relationship between teachers and board members, most likely due to a lack of direct contact and communication. Upon considering the concept, they once again talked of communication as flowing through the superintendent, but expressed their desire to work on building this professional relationship. Taking into account the additional information gained regarding its structural properties, including
Weberian coordination of instruction and the loose coupling of a structure that is professional, School A was determined to be well on its way from a Weberian to professional structure. Such movement predicts high effectiveness, a level of conflict moving from limited to low, and an expected environment that is progressing from stable and simple to stable and complex. These characteristics, as demonstrated by School A, are supported in the literature and research as increasing school efficacy.

Those from School A feel that trust as part of the teacher-school board member relationship is essential, and named many relational qualities that evidenced its presence. Evaluated in light of Hoy and Tschannen-Moran’s (1999) definition of trust, comments suggest that School A’s board members trust its teachers but that the reciprocal relationship is inconclusive. They also firmly believe that the trust relationships between teachers and school board members influence a school’s effectiveness.

Teachers and school board members from School B described their relationship as guarded, due to a recent strike and lengthy negotiations process. They talked of the need for honest communication and, like those from School A, considered administrators the liaison for communication between teachers and board members. Also mentioned was the desire to improve relationships between the two groups. Yielding further information concerning school properties, their comments unveiled the tight coupling and coordination of instruction typical of a Weberian structure. This, in addition to other comments, indicated a school structure on the move from authoritarian to Weberian, with its predicted efficacy beginning to transition from moderate to high, predicted level of conflict progressing from moderate to limited, and its predicted environment remaining
simple and stable. Such movement could easily halt, though, due to the relationship’s fragile nature.

After stopping to think about teacher-school board member trust relationships, all emphatically agreed that they were vital. Although many of the requisites for such a relationship were cited, these qualities appear intermittently and, along with mention of the strike and negotiation process, suggest a trust relationship that is tenuous. In fact, both groups agreed that the relationship could improve. Evaluated in light of Hoy and Tschannen-Moran’s (1999) definition of trust, their comments suggest a lack of trust between each group and the other, although School B’s board members appear to trust teachers more than teachers trust board members. They also believe that the trust relationships between teachers and school board members influence a school’s effectiveness.

From these findings emerges a profile of each institution of learning. School A, a suburban institution that values people, is characterized by PSSA scores in the top 15% of rural and suburban elementary schools in Erie County, Pennsylvania. This indication of school effectiveness, when coupled with evidence demonstrating their practice of the NSBA school efficacy indicators, points to an organization that is highly effective. School A also exhibits philosophies and practices consistent with effective school governance (EPLC, 2004; IASB, 2001), a structure that is moving from the highly effective Weberian to the equally effective professional (Hoy & Miskel, 2001), and trust relationships between teachers and school board members that are on the positive end of the continuum. The consistency of the predicted effectiveness of School A’s
Weberian/professional structure and their actual efficacy, along with the demonstration of philosophies and practices of effective school governance that include positive trust relationships between teachers and school board members, suggests that School A’s effectiveness is influenced by its teacher-school board member trust relationships.

School B, a suburban institution with a focus on human resources and standardized test scores, is characterized by PSSA scores in the bottom 15% of rural and suburban elementary schools in Erie County, Pennsylvania. Despite this positioning, though, the school is still meeting AYP targets. This measure of school effectiveness, when joined with evidence demonstrating their practice of the NSBA school effectiveness indicators, points to an organization that is moderately effective. School B also exhibits philosophies consistent with effective school governance but practices that are not (EPLC, 2004; IASB, 2001), a structure that is moving from the moderately effective authoritarian to the highly effective Weberian (Hoy & Miskel, 2001), and trust relationships between teachers and school board members that are slightly below the midpoint of the continuum. The consistency of the predicted effectiveness of School B’s authoritarian/Weberian structure and their actual efficacy, along with a slight deficit in the practices of effective school governance that include a lack of trust between teachers and school board members, suggests that School B’s moderate degree of efficacy is influenced by its relationships between teachers and school board members. Their combined analysis suggests the perception that, for these two cases, teacher-school board member trust relationships do influence school effectiveness.

In summary, this study addressed four research questions:
1. How do rural and suburban elementary teachers define school effectiveness?

2. How do rural and suburban policymakers at the school board level define school effectiveness?

3. What perceptions do rural and suburban elementary teachers possess regarding trust relationships between policymakers at the school board level and themselves? What perceived impact does this relationship have on school effectiveness?

4. What perceptions do policymakers at the school board level possess regarding trust relationships between rural and suburban elementary teachers and themselves? What perceived impact does this relationship have on school effectiveness?

The first two questions were answered through an opinion inventory completed by school board members and teachers in suburban and rural Erie County, Pennsylvania elementary schools that house Grade 5, the results of which are presented in Table 22. The answers for Questions 3 and 4, and factors from which these answers were generated, are summarized in Table 23.

Limitations

As a qualitative study, the findings of this research cannot be generalized to a larger population. In fact, it is possible that different school board members and teachers from the same schools might have provided responses leading to interpretations different from those presented.
Table 22

Agreement and Strong Agreement with Opinion Inventory Definitions of School Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage of School Board Members Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing</th>
<th>Percentage of Teachers Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School effectiveness is helping students:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. meet adequate yearly progress goals in reading, math, and writing as</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>established by the state of Pennsylvania*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. attain academic achievement that goes beyond what the Pennsylvania</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System of School Assessment currently measures (e.g., intellectual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curiosity and creativity)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. acquire job skills and preparation for the work force</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. understand and value the growing diversity of American society*</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. develop citizenship (e.g., volunteerism, voting, community service,</td>
<td>73.6%</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abiding by laws)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. realize sound physical development and optimal health*</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. develop an appreciation of the arts</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. develop character and values (e.g., integrity, responsibility, courtesy,</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patriotism, and work ethic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. * signifies a statement that is not an NSBA indicator of school effectiveness.
Table 23  

Factors Leading to Perceptions of Teacher-School Board Member Trust Relationships for School A and School B and their Perceived Influence on School Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors:</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical focus</td>
<td>Valuing people</td>
<td>Human resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized test scores</td>
<td></td>
<td>Standardized test scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of effective governance philosophies</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of effective governance practices</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School structure</td>
<td>Weberian→Professional</td>
<td>Authoritarian→Weberian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicted effectiveness based on structure</td>
<td>High→High</td>
<td>Moderate→High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Characterization of trust relationships

| Actual effectiveness:                |                   |                   |
| Presence of NSBA indicators to characterize effectiveness | All 5 present | All 5 present |
| Academic achievement/effectiveness   | PSSA scores in top 15% | PSSA scores in bottom 15% |
| Made AYP                             |                   | Made AYP          |
| High effectiveness                   |                   | Moderate effectiveness |

Regarding the opinion inventory, a higher response rate from school board members would have increased the likelihood of more equal representation of rural and suburban districts to which the inventory was sent. Although the identities of those who returned the inventories are not known, it is possible that several are from the same district with none being returned from others.

The wording of the interview question that asked respondents to characterize school effectiveness was sometimes answered in terms of the factors that help a school to
be effective rather than the definition of the phrase itself. Even with rephrasing, it was
sometimes necessary to provide an example to help participants understand the type of
response desired. Although it is suspected that the ambiguity of the term itself detracted
from clearly phrasing the question, the use of school effectiveness was necessary because
of the desire to capture more than academic achievement.

Implications and Recommendations

To determine how effective a school is, it is first necessary to determine what
effectiveness is. No matter whether the person asking the question is a government
policymaker, community member, or educator, a definition of school effectiveness must
first be established that is common to all. In reality, many believe that there is a standard
definition for the term, equating school effectiveness with academic achievement.
According to Hoy and Miskel (2001), this is a misconception as school effectiveness also
involves the development of attributes necessary for future success. The search for these
attributes, and a corresponding definition, reveals the problem; for every manuscript that
has been written about school effectiveness, there is also a definition, usually slightly
different from all the rest. The resulting absence of a commonly accepted meaning of
school effectiveness greatly impacts the formulation of plans for its improvement.

This lack of certain understanding is apparent in the current study as well. On the
opinion inventory, one respondent wrote, “It depends how you define school
effectiveness.” Nonetheless, the majority of school board members and teachers agreed
that all were indicators of efficacy, even the three that were not identified by NSBA. The
fact that board members ranked two of the false statements at the bottom of the list as compared with one by the teachers, may suggest their familiarity with these indicators. This would not be unusual for knowledgeable board members, since the indicators were those published by the National School Boards Association. If this is the case, though, it is surprising that they unanimously chose the indicator dealing with Pennsylvania’s AYP targets, as this is also a false statement.

The interviews demonstrate the same lack of understanding, with every respondent, whether they agreed with it or not, mentioning test scores as an indicator. Aside from that, their replies were varied as they attempted to give meaning to the term. Their agreement, when asked if they felt a specific item was an indicator, suggests that it is easier to identify an indicator from a list than to pull it from thin air, which is not surprising given the ambiguity of the phrase. What is surprising, though, is that these teachers and school board members are some of those who have positions in or related to education; if they can not voice a concise definition, who can we expect to do so?

Coupled with this dearth of concurrence is the widespread agreement with achieving AYP as an indicator of school effectiveness, even though it is a false statement. This is especially interesting given that it was rated above an actual inventory indicator regarding the attainment of academic achievement that goes beyond what the PSSA currently measures. Interview responses were quite similar, with everyone citing test scores but no one voicing academic achievement that was all encompassing. Such results suggest that despite what we have learned about the nature of education, despite our desire to provide a well-rounded education, and despite what we know to be best for
children, we have been conditioned to reduce school effectiveness to a single percentage, and in so doing we may be dehumanizing a process that is, conversely, about people. In light of all that we know and all we can become, wisdom indicates the need for a consistent, multidimensional definition of school effectiveness.

Recalling the story of St. Augustine and his inability to describe time brings to mind the elusive nature of trust. Used casually in conversation, when confronted with it directly and asked to discuss its traits we often find ourselves puzzled and unable to identify its place in a relationship. Such was the nature of trust in this study, with the participants not only puzzled regarding its place but perplexed that they were even asked about it at all. Once past their initial surprise, though, each person warmed to the topic, eager to share examples that were both positive and negative. In fact, some respondents labeled it as the source from which other attributes evolved; an interesting statement given Cunningham and Gresso’s (1993) calling it the foundation of school effectiveness. It is even more interesting when realizing that most had never before given thought to trust’s presence in their relationship with the other party.

Where some of those interviewed discussed trust directly, more often than not it was described through anecdotes that detailed the richness as well as frustration concerning some of their relationships. When listening, it was necessary to keep an open mind and wait to analyze until all was said, for direct statements were often contradicted by remarks made throughout the interview process, the whole of which revealed the true essence of the trust relationship. Interwoven with these conversations were comments about respect and belonging along with those that alluded to the esteem of students,
teachers, and board members, giving weight to Maslow’s theory of motivation. Through such discussions the school’s interpersonal dynamics emerged, in the case of School A describing an environment requisite for student achievement, but not quite so for School B. Such a finding is in line with research conducted by Hoy and Hannum (1997) as well as that of Hoy, Sabo, and Barnes (1996) who assert that a culture of trust is necessary for realizing effectiveness in education.

While the part of the interview dealing with trust was short in time, its potential influence is great. Not only can its future study unveil deeper understanding regarding the perceived influence of teacher-school board relationships on school effectiveness, its pointing out the presence of trust to those who had previously not recognized its existence provides a vehicle for realizing the relationships characteristic of schools with effective governance. Furthermore, it affords a cost efficient means of reforming education that is shored in community values and accomplished by those closest to the situation rather than from afar.

From the interviews’ analyses evolved two distinct school cultures, one person-centered with the other focused on human resources and standardized testing. Such unmistakable delineation of cultures was unexpected, as responses were anticipated to be more personal and less related to the workings of the school. This, in itself, poses an interesting question that concerns the interaction of a school’s culture with its people as well as how best to transform a school’s culture when such a change is indicated. Returning to the two schools’ cultures, the person-centered culture of School A is a logical match for structures that are Weberian or professional. Focused on people, rather
than a product, a person-centered culture involves complex, multidirectional relationships that are grounded in values, stewardship, and responsibility. Such a culture, referred to as a community of responsibility by Sergiovanni (2005), has as its center an idea structure and the presence of common commitments that bonds people in a relationship of trust and caring as well as binding them to values, purposes, and responsibilities. The genius of this community, according to Sergiovanni, is its ability to generate distributed leadership as a source of authority rather than hierarchy. When situated beside a Weberian or professional structure, the parallels are obvious in the sharing of power, authority, and decision-making.

On the other hand, School B’s focus is on how people can best be utilized to meet the school’s objectives; a human resources culture centered on standardized testing. In this scenario, people are seen as individuals with a responsibility to carry out, fulfilling a specific role in the organization. In this type of culture there are some who have greater authority and some who have less, but everyone is viewed as having a specific function that seldom overlaps another. Individuals carry out their responsibilities based upon the description of their particular role rather than from a common mission or set of values. The culture’s philosophical underpinning is that, if everyone performs his responsibilities capably, the result will be a quality product. Parallels are can be seen between this culture and an authoritarian structure in their bureaucratic authority and source of power as well as in the presence of a single set of formal goals.

The implication of this association is that a school’s culture shapes its properties, thereby defining the school’s structure and predicted level of effectiveness. Those that are
rooted in values appear to be more stable as, though times change and reform efforts come and go, relationships of trust and caring that are grounded in values keep those in the schools focused on what really matters; people. For those whose culture is focused on products, changing times can be disruptive when current reform efforts are replaced by the new, as much of the school’s work is geared to achieving the former. Not having a values base to guide them, the school must restructure its workings to be aligned with the new requirements while concurrently experiencing decreased effectiveness as they work to adjust.

Related to the leadership inherent in a school’s culture, the superintendent’s role as the gatekeeper of communication was mentioned throughout the interviews. Those in both schools discussed the significance of the superintendent in channeling information between the teachers and board members as well as controlling what information is passed, stating that the relationship between the groups is highly dependent on this process. Sergiovanni (2005), talks of a similar process that he labels indirect leadership. In such a method, leadership that relies on good instructional delivery realizes positive results. Sergiovanni refers to leadership as the initiating variable, instruction as the mediating variable, and results as the results variable, depicting the relationship as a one-way flow from leadership through delivery to results.

This approach serves as a springboard from which a model of optimum teacher-school board member communication may be created. In this model, the superintendent exhibits indirect leadership through enabling an open flow of communication between school board members and teachers. Board members, assuming the role of initiating
variables, create policy while teachers, or results variables, translate policy into the daily practices that influence school effectiveness. Meanwhile, the superintendent acts as the mediating variable that controls the flow of information. Except for information that is confidential and cannot be shared, the ideal model depicts a wide open gate that provides for an unrestricted flow of information in both directions (see Figure 36).

Variations of the model can occur as well. In the case of a weak superintendent who succumbs to pressure exerted from one of the groups, the gate may be only partially open with information flowing in a single direction (see Figures 37 and 38). Such may also be the case with a bureaucratic superintendent who controls what is transferred.

![Diagram 36](image)

Figure 36. Indirect leadership with unrestricted flow of information in both directions.

![Diagram 37](image)

Figure 37. Indirect leadership with partial flow of information from school board members to teachers.
between groups, or who may not pass any information at all, resulting in a gate that is closed (see Figure 39). In the case of the open gate, the superintendent’s indirect leadership sets the stage for the distributed leadership and relationship building that is characteristic of Weberian and professional structures. In the remaining examples, the superintendent’s bureaucratic authority reduces or inhibits the groups’ communication, an essential component in the building of trust relationships.

In light of respondents’ comments expressing uncertainty as to whether a relationship between teachers and board members exists due to their lack of direct

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**Figure 38.** Indirect leadership with partial flow of information from teachers to school board members.

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**Figure 39.** Indirect leadership with no information flow.
communication or contact, indirect leadership could explain a school still being considered effective. It should also be noted that, because of the amount of information teachers receive each day, they may not be aware of that which originates with members of the school board. Such a model has many implications with regard to school effectiveness, suggesting that the superintendent is a critical factor in the development of teacher-school board member trust relationships. Before adopting the model, though, more research involving its use would need to occur.

The establishment of a professional relationship between teachers and board members, even if it is one of introductions only, appears to be a prerequisite for the development of trust relationships. Although the existence of a relationship is important, as is shown in research (IASB, 2001), that the relationship is professional seems just as significant. Several teachers expressed concern that non-educators with no training are making decisions that impact many students over the years. Although boards that are successful as a whole frequently self-monitor their own performance, individual members who advance interests supported by popular opinion often see their initiatives enacted by less vocal colleagues. Training for board members, as supported by the EPLC (2004), could provide the knowledge necessary to bring more professionalism to the relationship, helping both teachers and board members see an issue through the eyes of the other.

As this is the first known study to explore teacher-school board member trust relationships and the influence they are perceived to have on school effectiveness, more research must be conducted to begin building a body of knowledge on the topic. In addition to studies of rural and suburban elementary schools, research should also include
middle and high schools as well as those in urban areas. Not only are qualitative studies needed to fully understand the nature of such relationships and how they affect the educational process, the development of teacher-school board member trust scales and quantitative explorations would add yet another dimension to this evolving topic.

Two other avenues emerging from this study also merit further exploration. First are the ramifications of teacher-school board member trust relationships in light of the political climate surrounding educational issues. How, when under such intense pressure to perform, will schools not making adequate yearly progress forego the use of more “scientific” methods of reform in favor of building a culture of trust? The second avenue involves investigating the indirect leadership model evolving from this study. Such explorations should be conducted in elementary schools as well as expanded to the middle and high school levels of various demographic and socioeconomic strata so as to gain a broader understanding of the model’s operation. As there are currently no scales to quantifiably measure indirect leadership, the development of such an instrument is one topic for future study, while qualitative investigations probing the nature of the model would yield a depth of understanding not possible through more quantitative endeavors.

Conclusion

When introducing this study it was written that, since the 1957 launch of Sputnik, mandated legislation has been the response to the call for reform. The results of this study suggest an alternate route; one built on the shared values and relationships of trust necessary for positive, lasting change. As time moves on, it is hoped that policymakers
and others who care about our youth heed the counsel of Carlina Rinaldi (2003):

Often in our work, and in our lives, we tend to look for confirmation of what we think and what we believe. We identify our selves with our ideas and our theories. To change our minds, to reconsider our basic theories and beliefs so as to see their limitations, is often perceived as a personal defeat. Often the ensuing crisis is experienced as a loss rather than the beginning of something new. The fact is that we are too firmly attached to our theories and to our ideas and thus we often close the door to new ways of seeing and understanding. (p. x)
References


Appendix A

Letter to Superintendent Regarding Opinion Inventory
April 29, 2005

Dear Superintendent,

Standards, Adequate Yearly Progress, and No Child Left Behind are growing concerns for many school districts. Today's school board members are challenged with mandated educational reforms such as increasing school effectiveness and accountability for student progress. As a respected superintendent and someone greatly affected by these changes, I am requesting your assistance with my doctoral dissertation at Duquesne University. Please note that I have been designated a Research Fellow by the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators and, as such, this study carries their seal of approval.

The purpose of my study is to explore school board members' and teachers' perceptions of school effectiveness and how the same might be influenced by teacher-school board member trust relationships. Toward this end, I am asking for your support in facilitating the administration of a brief opinion inventory (10-15 minutes) to your school board members.

Should you agree, I have enclosed the inventories, consent forms (to inform board members about the nature of the study; they do not need to be signed or returned), and stamped, pre-addressed envelopes through which the inventories may be returned to me. Please be assured that board members' responses are strictly confidential; only statistical summaries will be reported and at no time will individuals, schools, or school districts be identified. Receipt of completed inventories will be considered informed consent to participate in the survey. Should you prefer, I would also be happy to meet with the school board and personally administer the inventory. A phone call will follow this letter to determine your preference and also so that I may answer any questions you may have.

I so appreciate your support and help in the administration of this inventory. If you have any questions or concerns about this research and/or the completion of the inventory, please contact me at 814-476-0409 or my advisor, Dr. Helen Sobehart, Director of the Duquesne University Leadership Institute at 412-396-4524. Any additional concerns regarding this research can be directed to Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board at 412-396-6326.

Thank you so much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Pamela A. Lenz, Principal
Springfield Elementary School
Northwestern School District

Enclosures
Appendix B

Letter to Principal Regarding Opinion Inventory
April 29, 2005

Dear Principal,

Standards, Adequate Yearly Progress, and No Child Left Behind are growing concerns for many school districts. Today's principals and teachers are challenged with mandated educational reforms such as increasing school effectiveness and accountability for student progress. As a respected principal and someone greatly affected by these changes, I am requesting your assistance with my doctoral dissertation at Duquesne University. Please note that I have been designated a Research Fellow by the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators and, as such, this study carries their seal of approval.

The purpose of my study is to explore teachers' and school board members' perceptions of school effectiveness and how the same might be influenced by teacher-school board member trust relationships. Toward this end, I am asking for your support in administering a brief opinion inventory (10-15 minutes) to your certified teachers during a faculty meeting held prior to the end of this school year.

Should you agree, I have enclosed the inventories, consent forms (to inform teachers about the nature of the study; they do not need to be signed or returned), brief directions for administration, a form on which you can indicate the percentage of certified teachers completing the inventory, and a pre-addressed envelope through which they may be returned to the Intermediate Unit on your regularly scheduled pick-up/delivery day. Please be assured that teachers' responses are strictly confidential; only statistical summaries will be reported and at no time will individuals, schools, or school districts be identified. Receipt of completed inventories will be considered informed consent to participate in the survey. Should you prefer, I would also be happy to meet with the teachers to personally administer the inventory. A phone call will follow this letter to determine your preference and also so that I may answer any questions you may have.

I so appreciate your help in administering this inventory to your teachers. If you have any questions or concerns about this research and/or the completion of the inventory, please contact me at 814-476-0409 or my advisor, Dr. Helen Sobehart, Director of the Duquesne University Leadership Institute at 412-396-4524. Any additional concerns regarding this research can be directed to Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board at 412-396-6326.

Thank you so much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Pamela A. Lenz, Principal
Springfield Elementary School
Northwestern School District

Enclosures
Appendix C

Informed Consent Form-Opinion Inventory
TITLE: Teacher-School Board Member Trust Relationships and their Perceived Influence on School Effectiveness

INVESTIGATOR: Pamela A. Lenz
4281 Dunn Valley Rd.
McKean, PA 16426
Home Phone: (814) 476-0409
Work Phone: (814) 756-9400, Extension 3310

ADVISOR: Dr. Helen Sobehart, Dissertation Chair,
Director of Duquesne University Leadership Institute
(412) 396-4524

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in education at Duquesne University.

PURPOSE: Teachers and school board members in rural and suburban Erie County school districts, having elementary schools that house grade 5, are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate their perceptions of school effectiveness, how school effectiveness may be improved, and teacher-school board member trust relationships. You are being asked to complete an opinion inventory which will take approximately 10-15 minutes. Following completion of the inventory, districts will be contacted on the basis of their 5th grade PSSA scores at which time teachers and school board members may be asked to participate in follow-up interviews. These are the only requests that will be made of you.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are no risks due to your participation in this study beyond those that you would normally experience in daily life.
The benefits of this study include contributing to the understanding of how teacher-school board member trust relationships may influence school effectiveness.

**COMPENSATION:**

There is no compensation for participation in this study. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you. After completing the inventory, it will be placed in an envelope with all other completed inventories from your school and returned to the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5 where it will be picked up by the investigator.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Your name will never appear on any inventory or research instrument. No identity will be made in the data analysis. All written materials will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home. Your response(s) will only appear in statistical data summaries. All inventories will be destroyed at the completion of the research.

**RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:**

You are under no obligation to participate in this study, and do not have to complete and submit an inventory. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS:**

A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT:**

I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project. Receipt of your completed inventory will be considered informed consent to participate in the study.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Dr. Helen Sobehart, Dissertation Chair and Director of the Duquesne University Leadership Institute (412-396-4524), Pamela A. Lenz, Investigator (814-476-0409), or Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board (412-396-6326).
Appendix D

Opinion Inventory
~ OPINION INVENTORY ~

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND 
TEACHER-SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER RELATIONSHIPS

PART I: Please indicate your current status: School Board Member ❋acher ❋

PART II: SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

Directions:
The following are statements about school effectiveness. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement along a scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Effectiveness is helping students:</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>meet Adequate Yearly Progress goals in reading, math, and writing as established by the state of Pennsylvania.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>attain academic achievement that goes beyond what the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment currently measures (e.g., intellectual curiosity and creativity).</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>acquire job skills and preparation for the work force.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand and value the growing diversity of American society.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>develop citizenship (e.g., volunteerism, voting, community service, abiding by laws).</td>
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<tr>
<td>realize sound physical development and optimal health.</td>
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<tr>
<td>develop an appreciation of the arts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>develop character and values (e.g., integrity, responsibility, courtesy, patriotism, and work ethic).</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART III: IMPROVING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

**Directions:**
The following are statements about education related practices. Please indicate the extent to which you agree that each could improve school effectiveness along a scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishing rules, directives, and procedures at the school board/superintendent level that teachers must uniformly follow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing positive trust relationships between school board members and teachers</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegating most decision-making to the professional staff (e.g., teachers and principals) at the school building level</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening lines of communication between school board members/superintendents and teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopting board policies to address immediate needs and issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating an environment in which teachers have a high degree of autonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basing board policy on requests and information provided by interest groups including teachers, the business community, parent organizations, and other external constituencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establishing a centralized management structure for all school buildings in the district</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involving school board members in the day-to-day management of schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating a district culture that actively fosters teachers' esteem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adopting board policies that reflect research-based information and known best practices</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PART IV: TEACHER-SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER RELATIONSHIPS

Directions:
The following are statements about teacher-school board member relationships. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement along a scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School board members support staff professional development.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board members respect teachers.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board members work in partnership with teachers toward a common set of aims.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rules and procedures established by school board members are uniform and apply to all teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>School board members do not encourage teacher autonomy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>School board members work to empower teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>School board members engage in top-down decision-making.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There are few collaborative efforts between school board members and teachers.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules and procedures established by school board members are uniform and apply to all teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>School board members support the teaching staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is little communication between school board members and teachers.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board members trust teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>School board members support staff professional development.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board members respect teachers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THANK YOU!
Appendix E

Letter to Superintendent Regarding Interview
May 13, 2005

Dear Superintendent,

Thank you for agreeing to help me with my doctoral dissertation, the purpose of which is to explore teachers' and school board members' perceptions of school effectiveness and how the same might be influenced by teacher-school board member trust relationships. By sharing the accompanying letter explaining the study's purpose and the nature of the interviews in which board members would participate, and also by returning the enclosed form (containing the names, contact information, gender, and years of experience of those willing to take part) in the envelope provided, I will randomly select two board members who will be asked to participate in up to three rounds of interviews. (Board members may also contact me directly at 814-476-0409.) It is estimated that interviews will take from 30 minutes to no more than one hour, depending on the length of participant responses. Please note that I have been designated a Research Fellow by the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators and, as such, this study carries their seal of approval.

Please be assured that this research is voluntary in nature, that participants have the right to withdraw at any time, and that board members' responses are strictly confidential. No schools, districts, or individuals will be identified at any time; all identities of school board members, your school system, and anyone they talk about will be deleted or disguised, with other responses contributing to the collective analysis of all cases. Interviews will not be shared with anyone and will be secured in a locked file cabinet in my home. An informed consent form will be given to those board members selected to participate that must be signed, dated, and returned to me prior to any interviews taking place. There will be no cost or compensation for anyone agreeing to participate.

Your help in completing and returning the enclosed form to me by May 27, 2005 is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your recommendations. If you have any questions or concerns about this research and/or the interviews, please contact me at 814-476-0409 or my advisor, Dr. Helen Sobehart, Director of the Duquesne University Leadership Institute at 412-396-4524. Any additional concerns regarding this research can be directed to Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board at 412-396-6326.

Thank you so much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Pamela A. Lenz, Principal
Springfield Elementary School
Northwestern School District

Enclosures
Appendix F

Letter to Principal Regarding Interview
May 13, 2005

Dear Principal,

Thank you for agreeing to help me with my doctoral dissertation, the purpose of which is to explore teachers' and school board members' perceptions of school effectiveness and how the same might be influenced by teacher-school board member trust relationships. From your recommendation of six teachers, as well as the information provided about their professional experiences on the enclosed matrix, I will select two teachers who will be asked to participate in up to three rounds of interviews. It is estimated that interviews will take from 30 minutes to no more than one hour, depending on the length of participant responses. Please note that I have been designated a Research Fellow by the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators and, as such, this study carries their seal of approval.

Please be assured that this research is voluntary in nature, that participants have the right to withdraw at any time, and that teachers' responses are strictly confidential. No schools, districts, or individuals will be identified; any quotations, references to statements, and analyses will be attributed to a coded name (alias), with other responses contributing to the collective analysis of all cases with absolutely no identification being made. Interviews will not be shared with anyone and will be secured in a locked file cabinet in my home. An informed consent form will be given to those teachers selected to participate that must be signed, dated, and returned to me prior to any interviews taking place. There will be no cost or compensation for anyone agreeing to participate.

Your help in completing and returning the enclosed matrix to me by May 27, 2005 is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your recommendations. If you have any questions or concerns about this research and/or the interviews or matrix, please contact me at 814-476-0409 or my advisor, Dr. Helen Sobehart, Director of the Duquesne University Leadership Institute at 412-396-4524. Any additional concerns regarding this research can be directed to Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board at 412-396-6326.

Thank you so much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Pamela A. Lenz, Principal
Springfield Elementary School
Northwestern School District

Enclosures
Appendix G

Letter to School Board Member Regarding Interview
May 13, 2005

Dear School Board Member,

Standards, Adequate Yearly Progress, and No Child Left Behind are growing concerns for many school districts. Today's school board members are challenged with mandated educational reforms such as increasing school effectiveness and accountability for student progress. As a school board member and someone greatly affected by these changes, I am requesting your assistance with my doctoral dissertation at Duquesne University. Please note that I have been designated a Research Fellow by the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators and, as such, this study carries their seal of approval.

The purpose of my study is to explore school board members' and teachers' perceptions of school effectiveness and how the same might be influenced by teacher-school board member trust relationships. Toward this end, I am asking for your support by volunteering to participate in up to three rounds of interviews. It is estimated that interviews will take from 30 minutes to no more than one hour, depending on the length of participant responses. All interviews will be scheduled for a mutually agreed upon time and location. Your district has been selected based upon 2003-2004 PSSA results for grade 5.

Please be assured that this research is voluntary, that participants have the right to withdraw at any time, and that board members' responses are strictly confidential. No schools, districts, or individuals will be identified at any time; all identities of school board members, school systems, and anyone they talk about will be deleted or disguised, with other responses contributing to the collective analysis of all cases. Interviews will not be shared with anyone and will be secured in a locked file cabinet in my home. An informed consent form will be given to board members selected to participate that must be signed, dated, and returned to me prior to any interviews taking place. There will be no cost or compensation for anyone agreeing to participate.

If you are willing to volunteer, please notify your superintendent by May 24, 2005 and provide contact information. Should you prefer, you may contact me directly at 814-476-0409. Two board members will then be randomly selected from those who volunteer, and sent a confirming letter and informed consent document that must be signed, dated, and returned to me.

Thank you so much for your assistance. If you have any questions or concerns about this research and/or the interviews, please contact me at 814-476-0409 or my advisor, Dr. Helen Sobehart, Director of the Duquesne University Leadership Institute at 412-396-4524. Any additional concerns regarding this research can be directed to Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board at 412-396-6326.

Sincerely,

Pamela A. Lenz, Principal
Springfield Elementary School
Northwestern School District
Appendix H

School Board Member Interview Candidate Matrix
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER
INTERVIEW CANDIDATES

Completed for the ____________________________ School District

Directions: On the following form, please print the names of any school board members who would be willing to participate in interviews regarding their perceptions of teacher-school board member trust relationships and how such relations may influence school effectiveness. Please complete all columns for each board member. Two samples are provided at the beginning of the list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board Member's Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample Betty Wilson</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>814-555-1212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Jamie Randall</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>814-555-1234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix I

Teacher Interview Candidate Matrix
TEACHER INTERVIEW CANDIDATE RECOMMENDATION MATRIX

Compiled by ________________________________ (Building Principal)

Directions: On the following matrix, please recommend six teachers who would be willing to participate in interviews regarding their perceptions of teacher-school board member trust relationships and how such relations may influence school effectiveness. Please print responses and complete all columns for each teacher. Two samples are provided at the beginning of the list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s Name</th>
<th>Grade Level Taught</th>
<th>Subjects Taught</th>
<th>Years Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Past or Present Member of School, District, or State Level Committee Regarding Educational Issues?</th>
<th>Contact Information (Phone Number Preferred; Home Address May Also Be Included)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample Betty Wilson</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Language Arts; Social Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>814-555-1212 100 Smith St. Erie, PA 16509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Jim Randall</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>814-555-1234 1400 PSSA Way Erie, PA 16509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix J

Informed Consent Form-Interview
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE: Teacher-School Board Member Trust Relationships and their Perceived Influence on School Effectiveness

INVESTIGATOR: Pamela A. Lenz
4281 Dunn Valley Rd.
McKean, PA 16426
Home Phone: (814) 476-0409
Work Phone: (814) 756-9400, Extension 3310

ADVISOR: Dr. Helen Sobehart, Dissertation Chair, Director of Duquesne University Leadership Institute
(412) 396-4524

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in education at Duquesne University.

PURPOSE: Teachers and school board members in rural and suburban Erie County school districts having elementary schools that house grade 5 are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate their perceptions of school effectiveness, how school effectiveness may be improved, and teacher-school board member trust relationships. You are being asked to participate in a follow-up study based upon the 5th grade PSSA scores of your school (for teacher participants) or that this school is located in your district (for school board member participants). You will be asked to allow me to interview you, with these interviews being audio taped and transcribed. These are the only requests that will be made of you.
RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are no risks due to your participation in this study beyond those that you would normally experience in daily life.

The benefits of this study include contributing to the understanding of how teacher-school board member trust relationships may influence school effectiveness.

COMPENSATION: There is no compensation for participation in this study. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your name will never appear on any interview or research instrument. No identity will be made in the data analysis. All written materials will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home. When audio tapes are transcribed, all identities of you, your school system, and anyone you talk about will be deleted or disguised. All audio tapes will be destroyed immediately following their transcription, with all transcribed materials being kept for five years following the completion of this research study.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT: I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.
I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Dr. Helen Sobehart, Dissertation Chair and Director of the Duquesne University Leadership Institute (412-396-4524), Pamela A. Lenz, Investigator (814-476-0409), or Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board (412-396-6326).

_________________________________________  __________________________
Participant's Signature                      Date

_________________________________________  __________________________
Researcher's Signature                       Date
Appendix K

Interview-School Board Members
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEWEE (Alias) ______________________________ DATE ____________

1. What is it that makes a school effective? Why are these items necessary for school effectiveness? Which do you feel is most important? Why? Are there characteristics of school effectiveness mentioned by others (individuals, organizations, articles) with which you disagree? Why? (Interviewees may respond both in generalities and from personal experience.)

2. How successful do you think schools have been in realizing the previously mentioned characteristics? Why do you feel this way? What is helping us accomplish these goals? How is it helping? What is keeping us from realizing these ends? How is it hindering? (Interviewees may respond both in generalities and from personal experience.)

3. What do you feel is the role of school board members in 21st century education? What do you feel is your most important responsibility? Why? Should board members act: (1) individually or as a group; (2) according to their own beliefs or those of their constituents? Are there any actions or roles that you feel are not the responsibility of school board members? Why do you feel this way?

4. In general, what type of relationship do you feel exists between teachers and school board members? Why do you think this is so? Do you feel this relationship is adequate or that it should be changed in any way? What type of relationship do you try to foster between the two groups? What do you feel is the most essential component in teacher-school board member relationships? Why? Do you feel that trust is an important component in this relationship? Why? What do you feel is the level of trust that currently exists between teachers and school board members? Do you think this level is adequate or that it should be changed in any way? (Interviewees may respond both in generalities and from personal experience.)

5. Do you feel relationships between teachers and school board members influence school effectiveness? Why? Do you think that the level of trust between teachers and school board members influences school effectiveness? If so, how? If not, why? What characterizes a trusting relationship between teachers and school board members?
Appendix L

Interview-Teachers
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEWEE (Alias) _____________________________  DATE _____________

6. What is it that makes a school effective? Why are these items necessary for school effectiveness? Which do you feel is most important? Why? Are there characteristics of school effectiveness mentioned by others (individuals, organizations, articles) with which you disagree? Why? (Interviewees may respond both in generalities and from personal experience.)

7. How successful do think schools have been in realizing the previously mentioned characteristics? Why do you feel this way? What is helping us accomplish these goals? How is it helping? What is keeping us from realizing these ends? How is it hindering? (Interviewees may respond both in generalities and from personal experience.)

8. What do you feel is the role of school board members in 21st century education? What do you feel is their most important responsibility? Why? Should school board members act: (1) individually or as a group; (2) according to their own beliefs or those of their constituents? Are there any actions or roles that you feel are not the responsibility of school board members? Why do you feel this way?

9. In general, what type of relationship do you feel exists between teachers and school board members? Why do you think this is so? Do you feel this relationship is adequate or that it should be changed in any way? What type of relationship do you try to foster between the two groups? What do you feel is the most essential component in teacher-school board member relationships? Why? Do you feel that trust is an important component in this relationship? Why? What do you feel is the level of trust that currently exists between teachers and school board members? Do you think this level is adequate or that it should be changed in any way? (Interviewees may respond both in generalities and from personal experience.)

10. Do you feel relationships between teachers and school board members influence school effectiveness? Why? Do you think that the level of trust between teachers and school board members influences school effectiveness? If so, how? If not, why? What characterizes a trusting relationship between teachers and school board members?