BUILDING TRUST IN A PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL: FORMAL AND INFORMAL PRACTICES OF PRINCIPALS

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract

Today’s contemporary challenges of educating students place responsibility on school principals that may be unmatched by any other generation. Principals in their early years of the portfolio face an even greater task as they become comfortable with the portfolio and the school community which they lead. Drawing from the leadership literature that emphasized the importance of trust for effective school leadership and improvement, this qualitative study examines the formal and informal leadership practices of seven principals/ headmasters with less than eight years of experience in private high schools in Ontario. The study focuses on the practices that these leaders identify as being crucial to building trust. Their responses reveal that trust building includes personal and professional honesty, transparency and clear communication and a sharing of decision-making powers which all help to minimize the micropolitics that arise in a school, engenders better relationships with faculty members, increases capacity of faculty members more effectively, and ultimately provides support for the principal and decreases personal stress. This study contributes to the Canadian literature on school leadership and the literature on private school leadership and concludes with recommendations for both research and practice.
Acknowledgements

The completion of any journey often sparks an opportunity for reflection and the completion of this doctoral research paper is no different. Looking back on the last six years and beyond, an undeniable truth is that my success is very much a product of the support that I have received. First and foremost, I am thankful to God for providing me with the fortitude, ability and passion to follow through on this endeavour and for placing very special people in my life.

I am very grateful to the administrators who participated in this study. Your candid comments and professionalism were truly appreciated. The passion for education which you exhibited is inspiring and it speaks volumes about your own school communities.

To my parents and siblings, thank you for setting the bar high and teaching me the importance of family, love, and commitment. Each of you in your own way has provided support and encouragement when it was truly needed most.

Laura, Nicolette, Brianna, and Kirsten, the final product of this journey is as much yours as it is mine. Thank you for being patient and supporting me during my writing periods. Laura, your sacrifices along the way have only helped me fall more deeply in love with you. You truly are my best friend. Nicolette, Brianna, and Kirsten, I do not think a father can be any more proud than I am of you three. Thank you for all of the joy you bring to my life.

To my thesis committee, Nina Bascia and Blair Mascall, thank you for your time, support, encouragement and guidance. Your wisdom, insights and questions pushed me in new directions and challenged my thinking, all of which helped me arrive at the end successfully. I was lucky to be surrounded by scholars like you during my writing.

Finally, I offer my sincerest appreciation to my thesis supervisor, Joe Flessa. You continually provided encouragement and support, especially in times when I doubted myself, and
helped this dream become a reality. Working with you has been an honour and I am very fortunate that our paths crossed and you agreed to be my supervisor. You are a true role model as a researcher and educator. Thank you for your friendship throughout this process.
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Chapter One: Introduction

“trust is the keystone of successful interpersonal relations, leadership, teamwork, and effective organizations.” (Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy, 2011, p. 3)

1.1 Introduction

The study of leadership in all facets of society has been of ongoing interest to researchers for more than a century. Paradigms ranging from top-down leadership to wholly democratic ones have influenced all levels of business and government over the decades and education is no different. As such, leadership in school has been an important area of study for educational researchers. Perhaps now, more than ever, research in this area is needed because of the challenges our schools, students, families, teachers, and administrators face. More specifically, principals in today’s educational system face the toughest task in trying to develop effective schools and guide effective teachers. As their job portfolio seems to increase on an ongoing basis and principals seem to have less and less time to interact with the classroom experience, they are often left feeling that school leadership is not what they expected. Tredway, Brill, and Hernandez (2007) ask the question, “Given the responsibilities, time demands, and challenges attached to administration, how can new urban leaders construct their conceptions of practice so that they can sustain themselves in their roles and effect school change” (p. 213). The answer to this question is elusive and it is not just mechanistic solutions that are needed. Some of the responses to the question posed lie in the peripheral realities of any institution and not just in the day-to-day tangible tasks. Some examples of these peripheral realities are relationships, charisma, vision, and trust. Although charisma does not seem to exhibit itself from the responses in this research, trust, relationships and vision play a significant role and, seemingly, in this order of importance.

One of the greatest challenges for any principal who is entering a new school environment is to establish trust with his/her faculty members. Tschannen-Moran (2004) argued
that “principals and teachers who trust each other can better work together in the service of solving the challenging problems of schooling. These leaders create a bond that helps inspire teachers to move to higher levels of effort and achievement” (p. 12). As a corollary to this she also argued that “without trust, schools are likely to flounder in their attempts to provide constructive educational environments and meet the lofty goals that our society has set for them because energy needed to solve the complex problem of educating a diverse group of students is diverted into self-protection” (p. 13). The necessity of trust within our schools is of paramount importance. Most of the literature in this area is American based and from the teacher’s perspective. In this light it is imperative to provide research opportunities to further investigate the building of trust from the principal’s perspective and to add further Canadian, and Ontarian specific, content to the literature base.

The aforementioned insights play a key role in setting the stage for the remainder of this chapter. The following pages contain the research context, the purpose of the study, my personal reflections, and an outline of the thesis proposal.

1.2 Research Context

Similar to many other leadership structures, educational leadership is tending toward a flatter hierarchical pattern rather than a pyramidal one. Whether one identifies this as distributed leadership or shared leadership matters little, as the reflection on leadership paradigms is crucial. Though a normative stance would only extol the virtues and promises of distributed leadership, prudence in addressing the critics of this leadership style is necessary. Spillane and Diamond, who are advocates of distributed leadership and see it as being synonymous with shared, collaborative, and democratic leadership (2007b, p.1), recognize that it is descriptive rather than prescriptive. They posit that in studying the phenomenon of leadership, “a distributive
perspective on leadership offers no simple panacea; it puts the onus on users to diagnose and
design school practice well in order to enable improvement” (2007c, p.148). Spillane and
Diamond assert that distributive leadership is a conceptual lens and that its theory-building will
continue to refine the analytical tools to study and develop leadership. They also suggest that its
perspective does offer design principles that can guide research and that as empirical knowledge
develops, school leaders will be provided with information influencing leadership and managing,
and their relation to instruction (p. 148).

The understanding that distributive and shared leadership is in its infancy is reiterated by
numerous researchers. In Distributive Leadership According to the Evidence (Leithwood,
Mascall and Strauss, Eds., 2009), this idea is raised over and over again by Gronn (2009),
Macbeath (2009), Firestone and Martinez (2009), Spillane et al. (2009), Anderson et al. (2009),
Grubb and Flessa (2009), Mayrowetz et al. (2009), Timperley, Leithwood et al. (2009), and
Harris (2009). Each of these researchers describe this leadership paradigm as worthy of study
and relevant as it is suggested that “distributed leadership ... also enhances opportunities for the
organization to benefit from the capacities of more of its members, permits members to
capitalize on the range of their individual strength, and develop among organizational members a
fuller appreciation of interdependence and how one’s behaviour affects the organization as a
whole” (p. 2). In fact, this entire cast of researchers seems to want to advocate for this leadership
style, but brings forth its shortcomings to help strengthen its future and direct its study. By
recognizing that direct empirical relationships to student improvement are difficult to find,
leadership tasks that are shared are different from site to site, intentions may be halted by
relationships, understanding whether or not distributed leadership truly stands on its own as a
form of leadership, and distinguishing between achievement of school and district goals via the
distributive leadership paradigm, these researchers identify areas that are in need of clarification and research. Further to this, Robinson (2008) is just as emphatic about her analysis of the paradigm. Citing Timperley (2005), she argues that “there is little point in more teachers exercising more influence over one another if the content of their leadership does not deliver benefits for students (p. 249). If education is about students, then school improvement is the key to everything. Robinson is not indicating that distributed leadership is insignificant, but rather that it must prove itself through empirical research that it is beneficial to student learning.

Acknowledging this insight as particularly relevant, Leithwood, Mascall and Strauss (2009) encourage and push for further research in this area because “distributed cognition gives rise to the expectation that the existing capacities if individual members of the organization, along with the sources of influence to be found in the organization’s technology and other artefacts, are radically underutilized in contexts firmly exercised by formal leaders at the organization’s apex” (p. 5).

As important as student achievement is, another equally important area that must be touched upon is that of micropolitics. To investigate any area of leadership and avoid dealing with relationships and trust is a significant shortcoming. Flessa (2009) asks the question “Why does a literature that focuses on individuals’ work within school sites and that investigates the different ways schools are managed and their implications fail to feature a micropolitical analysis” (p. 332)? It is imperative that when studying the relationships between individuals and groups of people the nature of these interactions is analyzed. As Ball (1987) suggests, “to deny the relevance of micro-politics is in effect to condemn organizational research to be forever ineffectual and out of step with the immediate realities of life in organizations” (p. xi). Siskin and Little (1995) further argue that within the high school setting, micropolitics takes on an even
greater role as subject departments influence what transpires in this environment: “the department is the singular entity that most predictably unites teachers with one another, and most deeply divide faculty groups from another” (p. 7). Ball’s and Siskin and Little’s insights here are particularly important to the school environment because of its uniqueness in organizational structure. Principals are expected to be leaders in the school but maintain middle management status with Board personnel above them while teachers maintain control over part of the organization and their actions within the classroom. With this in mind Ball, with support from Cyert and March (1963), Collins (1975), Boyd-Barrett (1976), Hannan (1980), further articulated that schools “in common with virtually all other social organizations, [are] arenas of struggle, to be riven with actual or potential conflict between members; to be poorly coordinated; to be ideologically diverse” (p. 19). To navigate through these challenges, relationship building is imperative within schools and at their core, to ensure school success, is trust. MacBeath’s (2009) research supports this insight when he articulated that “without mutual trust among teachers, the latitude for a more opportunistic or cultural form of distributed leadership [is] undermined” (p. 55). To ignore the human dynamics in any relationship, especially one which involves power is concerning. Siskin (1995), using Waller’s (1932, 1967) insights, provides an appropriate insight in this regard, “what is most important in understanding the concrete realities of schools is the tangled web of social relationships among those who inhabit them, a web of influences and interactions” (p. 23). Clearly this, as well as the aforementioned concerns with distributive or shared leadership, brings into focus the gaps in the research that are in need of being addressed.

Acknowledging that distributed leadership is a lens (Leithwood et al., 2009) through which to observe leadership in a school, it is also an acted leadership style that is synonymous with shared leadership and, at its extreme, as democratic leadership. By addressing it from this
perspective and through a normative stance, insights can be gained about how trust is developed by new principals who are engaged in creating schools where decision-making is shared. There has been much theoretical discussion on the validity of shared leadership, but seemingly not enough practical research identifying how one creates the necessary element of relational trust to ensure its success. Tschannen-Moran (2004) identifies that “studies that reveal how trust is fostered when a new principal or superintendent enters a school setting would be useful” (p. 212). This gap in the research seems especially true with regards to principals and their engendering of this leadership style and the understanding of shared leadership at a practical level. Furthermore, Bryk and Schneider (2002) performed an in-depth study of the Chicago School Reform Act, via case study research including statistical data, interviews, and observations, which led them to posit that “if relational trust operates as a resource for school improvement, we expect that in school communities where relational trust develops over time, achievement trends also should improve. (p. 107). Bryk and Schneider identify four key areas that define relational trust: competence, respect, personal concern, and integrity (pp. 23-25).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Addressing the realities of today’s educational system requires an ever-increasing need for adept administrators as the challenges and demands of the principalship are numerous and ever increasing. For those who are willing and desire to take on leadership roles in our schools, navigating through these challenges is paramount, especially if he/she is not going to get bogged down in the day-to-day logistics. To ensure that administrators have time to step back and see the bigger picture, plan and vision out paths for success, attention must be paid as to how principals can balance their time and provide self-support. This provides the impetus for the study, which is a desire to discover 1. what new principals to a high school setting believe they
do in order to build trust with their faculty members. More specifically, this research investigates the formal and informal actions taken by principals, 2. how he/ she deals with micropolitics and personal characteristics that engender the building of trust with faculty members as well as 3. indicators used to gauge success and assess its importance.

Much of the research and investigation done to date has involved elementary schools. This investigation will provide insights about the phenomenon of a principal building trust with faculty members within a private high school. It would be naïve to think that the experiences of an elementary school principal are exactly the same or perhaps even similar to that of the high school one. This is not to suggest that one is easier or more difficult than the other. It simply identifies that the elementary and the secondary principal, though similar in title, dwell, operate, and lead in very different environments. Siskin (1994) indicates that while the literature on schools repeatedly finds attributes of cohesive communities, such as goal consensus, collaborative norms, and shared expectations to be essential components in ‘effective’ schools (Purkey & Smith, 1983), at least at the elementary level, those who look to apply those findings to high schools have found those same attributes markedly absent. Instead high schools are characterized by images of anarchy (Firestone & Herriott, 1982), of ‘shopping malls’ with ‘something for everyone’ (Powell et al., 1985), of ‘fractionated’ curriculum and staff (Sizer, 1984). (p. 90)

As such, the high school environment is ripe for investigation with respect to building trust as it provides a different landscape (micropolitically, organizationally, pedagogically, managerially, instructionally, financially, and developmentally) than an elementary school and analysis of this phenomenon is quite useful. Furthermore, much of the research done reflects the perspective of the teacher and the lens of the principal will provide an interesting viewpoint.
In summary, the purpose of this research study is to investigate principals in their early years (between years two and eight) and how and why they build trust with their faculty members. By doing so, this investigation aims to add the principal’s voice and perspective to the importance of trust building within private high schools that will add to the existing research. By identifying specific ways in which private high school principals build trust, insights may be gleaned for other new principals on how to help mitigate the numerous tasks and challenges they face as well as provide. Furthermore, boards, the Ministry of Education, and principal training programs may also identify key areas of focus to develop and support future leaders in education.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Research studies have shown that the transition from teacher to administrator can be a very challenging one. Once committed to, the new principal finds him/herself with the adjustment to new roles and responsibilities that may seem overwhelming. One of the greatest of these challenges is to gain the confidence of the teachers who they lead within the school and there seems to exist a gap in the literature in this respect. Much research has been done regarding the teachers’ perspective on trust and very little from the principal’s perspective. Also absent from the literature is the early principal’s voice on how he/she aims to build relationships and trust with his/her faculty members. The voice of the early principals may be quite instrumental in identifying ways to build trust, and the formal and informal practices new principals use to gauge when it is established. There has been much theoretical discussion on the trust-building at the elementary level and practically from the teachers’ perspective, but seemingly not enough practical research identifying how one creates the necessary element of trust at the high school level. From this perspective, the underlying research question and sub problems for this study are:
What do the perspectives of seven new private high school principals reveal about how a principal develops trust in a private high school?

Sub-problems:

- From the perspective of the principal, how do formal and informal trust-building actions address micropolitics in a private high school?
- From the perspective of the principal, how does the building of trust impact relationships with faculty members?
- From the perspective of the principal, does trust help build the leadership capacity of faculty members?
- From the perspective of the principal, how does a trusting environment reveal itself and does it decrease the workload of new private high school principals?

1.5 Definitions of Key Concepts

*Trust* is a key component to this research project and the understanding of this term is influenced by the work of Tschannen-Moran (2004), Bryk and Schneider (2002) and Mishra (1996). It is Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) definition, however, that provides the lens through which this research is undertaken. Specifically, Bryk and Schneider’s assertion that there are three types of trust: organic, contractual and relational and that the latter is based on a three-tiered dynamic in which trust is understood to be intrapersonal, interpersonal and having consequences at the organizational level (p. 22). As well, Bryk and Schneider (2002) identify respect, competence, personal regard for others and integrity (pp. 23-25) as essential components to building trust. Furthermore, this definition is also influenced by my own understanding of this concept in that the building of trust is not a linear process. Trust in the high school environment is a living concept each and every day and it comes up against a myriad of events that can either
hinder or promote the building of trust, and in this research these events are termed as micropolitics.

*Micropolitics* is another key concept to this research study and the use of this term is highly reliant on the works of Blase and Blase (1997), Siskin (1994), and Ball (1987). Micropolitics play a significant role in the development of trust in a high school and, though it can be seen as neutral in some of the research literature, my view is more in line with Blase and Blase (1997) who identify it as a power struggle through which different individuals or groups try to achieve their goals and either influence or protect their own situations (p. 138). As such micropolitics, more often than not, can be seen as an impediment to building trust and is a dynamic that principals must become adept at handling in school environments if they hope to be successful in building trust and sharing decision-making abilities.

*Shared Leadership* is also a key concept within this research study that is used and its understanding is influenced by the work of Spillane and Diamond (2007), Pearce and Conger (2003) and Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (2000). The idea of leadership being an interactive influence with the ideal of attaining both group and organizational goals and that said influence is vertical and lateral (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 1), resonates with my experiences at the high school level. However, Spillane and Diamond’s assertion that opposing goals are present and confrontation is a needed aspect of leadership, helps to round out my own personal lens through which I observe this leadership paradigm unfolding.

### 1.6 Background of the Researcher

After completing my undergraduate degree (English Major/Geography Minor) and receiving my Bachelor’s of Education through the Concurrent Program at York University (Junior/Intermediate Panel), I began my teaching career in a large district board in southern
Ontario in 1994 at the high school level. Honing my skills as a professional in the classroom and as one actively involved in the co-curricular arena, I continually found my passion for education ever increasing. I subsequently continued to pursue the regular avenues of professional development for teachers by taking Additional Qualification courses. These courses provided me with opportunities to pursue English Specialist and Religious Specialist designations.

After three successful years of teaching, I was given the opportunity to move from the public Catholic education system to the private school system. This move was a daunting one at the time because both family and professional roots were being established in the area of the school board. Fortunately, the professional move did not entail a family one and it was all fortuitous move because just after leaving significant labour unrest took over in the public education system.

After arriving and during the first couple of years at this large private school, I completed my English Specialist and realized that the cliché of being a life-long learner as a teacher was a real part of my vision for me and the profession. As a result, in 1999 I applied and was accepted into the Master’s of Arts in Teaching English program in the Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning Department at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) of the University of Toronto. My hopes of becoming a better English teacher certainly came to fruition as I was better able to reflect on my pedagogy. Furthermore, the thought of a future leadership positions became a part of my thinking and the Master’s designation was important for these opportunities.

In concert with the pursuing of my Master’s, I also began taking my Principal Qualification Papers. In January of 2001 the private school of which I am a part, posted a new vice principal position. Though I was young, I believed I had the needed qualities to be effective in this
position and the new principal to the school had the wisdom and experience to provide direction and mentorship for a young administrator. Following the rounds of interviews, I was chosen as the successful candidate and began my administrative career in education in September of 2001. The first five years of my administrative career provided an opportunity to oversee the portfolio of discipline within the school and then in September of 2006 I switched to the portfolio of teacher and curriculum development. After working with students, parents and teachers and building effective lines of communication and clear expectations through committees and strong relationships, my new portfolio brought the challenge of working with and overseeing teacher development and new curriculum initiatives. Once again, relationship building played an important role in the successes and dealing with the challenges. To draw relevance between my portfolio and actions, I returned to the classroom to teach a Grade 12 English course which proved prudent in setting the stage for success in my opinion. This particular portfolio provided opportunities for immense growth, both personally and professionally.

Prior to accepting the portfolio of teacher and curriculum development, I had applied to do another master’s program through OISE, this time in the field of Administrative Leadership. Following the successful completion of my first two courses which began in September of 2006, a discussion with one of my professor’s helped me discover that if I was looking to pursue doctoral work in educational administrative leadership, I did not need to have a master’s in the specific area. With my previously attained M.A. (T.), I could apply to the doctoral program, however, the caveat was that I needed to have a thesis. As the aforementioned Master’s involved only course work, I spent the spring and summer of 2007 completing a Qualifying Research Paper revolving around the challenges that ESL students face in taking the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test. My QRP was accepted at the end of the summer in 2007 and I was
officially a part of Ph. D. in the Educational Administration program and a student in the Theory and Policy Studies Department. The courses I had taken as part of the M.Ed. were also moved toward my doctoral program.

My experiences as a doctoral candidate have provided both theoretical and practical insights into the world of leadership in education. The insights have not only resonated around leadership paradigms, but also creating opportunities to see the different lenses through which my professors and fellow doctoral students see the educational landscape. This has provided me personally with an enormous amount of insights and strength as I continue along my leadership journey in education.

My journey at my private high school took another turn in January of 2010 when I took on the title of Principal. After eight and half years in different roles as a vice principal, the opportunity presented itself to take on the lead role of academics in the school. Though I am not sure if anyone can say they are ever “ready” to take on such a position, I felt comfortable in my skills as a leader as a product of my practical experience at the school and more importantly through the theoretical and practical experiences afforded me through my studies at OISE as part of the master’s and doctoral programs.

Though my journey through the doctoral program has taken me into my seventh year, this is not a sign that I have been a procrastinator or slow off the mark. The realities of my professional responsibilities and how these have increased with different portfolios should not be seen as hindrances to either. In fact, I think it is the greatest complement to what I have learned through my education and practical experience in the private high school. By being a part-time student, I have been able to mesh the two together and I see the fact that I have been able to do the two together as being fundamental to my success as an educator and administrator. In many
ways, this complimentary relationship came to another poignant moment when I became the President and Principal in September of 2012.

1.7 Significance of Study

The role of the principal is ever changing and in the last decade or so the responsibilities on the principals and educators in general have increased significantly. Specifically with the principalship and the high school uniqueness of it (Siskin 1994) there is a need to identify how he/ she can come to terms with the numerous responsibilities, rise above the issues and dilemmas which take up so much of his/ her time, and help to lead effective schools. Through a qualitative study method and interpretive approach to the data, the intention of this study is to give voice to the practical experiences of private high school principals as they attempt to build trust with their faculty members. As well, this research is intended to provide policy makers, board level administrators, other school level administrators and principal training providers with information to help future school leaders prepare practically, theoretically, professionally and personally for the task ahead.

The new knowledge generated by this research is unique on a couple of fronts. First and foremost, this research study will contribute to our understanding of how principals see themselves, how they build trust and the impediments they overcome in building this trust. More specifically, it will provide principals and those new to schools with an insight as to what indicators to look for in order to gauge when trust is developing and when it is established. This lens is important because it has not been one that has been explored to any great extent. More times than not, trust is studied through the lens of the teacher and so this study provides a unique perspective. Equally as important, this research study will also provide insight into the Canadian, specifically the Ontarian, context at the private high school level. The elementary
school system and how it sees trust has been investigated to some length, but the uniqueness of this research study is that it provides insight into the high school landscape, an area lacking great study.

From the perspective of a newly anointed principal, the knowledge gained from this research may serve to better prepare the individual about the challenges that lie ahead, but with some insights on how to deal with them through the building of trust. Through the support of higher level administrators, preparation programs, and colleague mentorship, new principals may be better situated to find success rather than flounder and be over-whelmed by the day-to-day stresses and challenges of the principalship.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This research study investigates the experiences of relatively new principals to the position and how they build trust in their private high schools. More specifically, these principals have completed at least one year in the position as a new portfolio or those new to a school with no more than eight years of experience. Due to the small sample size and distinctiveness of the private school experience, the ability to generalize the findings is limited to those cases where principals experience similar situations.

Though the individuals involved who shared their experiences and personal insights present to very specific educational environments, the data collected and the resulting findings lend themselves well to filling some of the gaps that exist in the current research. The principal’s voice and perspective as well as the high school lens helps new principals to understand the challenges that are present and the tangible ways in which principals can proactively prepare to mitigate these challenges by building trust.
1.9 Plan of Thesis

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. In Chapter One, an introduction is provided that informs the reader about the problem the thesis will explore and discusses the significance of the study, background of the researcher, and identifies the main questions that drive the study.

Chapter Two contains the literature review for the thesis and it examines the existing literature conducted in this area. Attention is paid to leadership in general, the principalship, the secondary principalship, and trust. By reviewing each of these, a context is created to support the research study presented in this dissertation.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the participants and the schools of which they are a part. Furthermore a review of the research methodology used in this study is provided including a review of the sample, insights into data collection, how the data was analysed, and both internal and external validity. Last, but not least, a review of the ethical considerations that were necessary for this study is brought to the foreground.

Chapter Four provides the rich accounts of the participants and their insights about building trust within a private school. The principals’ responses are thematically grouped into the four over-arching themes that indentify trust building as helping in minimizing the micropolitics that arise in a school, building better relationships with faculty members, building capacity with faculty more effectively and ultimately providing support for him/ herself and decreasing stress. Within these four areas there are a number of recurring ideas that support the over-arching themes and these include autonomy, honesty, and sharing to help engender the positive effects of micropolitics, support, hearing, and visibility for building better relationships with faculty, self-reflection, trusting others, and offering experiential expertise to help build faculty capacity,
and vision, accountability, team-building and school culture to help create self-support and decrease stress. These insights emerge from the interview responses and insights provided by the private high school principals who have completed one year in the position or no more than eight years in the position but starting at a new school.

Chapter Five provides the discussion component of the dissertation and revisits the literature and the research question with respect to the findings. Connections between the research, findings and existing literature help to place this research in proper perspective. As well, the discussion leads to implications of the findings and suggestions for future study.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

“without trust, schools are likely to flounder in their attempts to provide constructive educational environments and meet the lofty goals that our society has set for them because energy needed to solve the complex problem of educating a diverse group of students is diverted into self-protection ... trustworthy leadership is the heart of productive schools.” (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p. 13)

2.1 Introduction

The following literature review will provide the background to the question that is being asked by giving insight into the existing research informing topics pertaining to understanding of leadership, identifying the importance of the principal position, defining and illustrating the importance of trust and identifying the micropolitical impediments to trust building that are present in a high school. In selecting the literature for review, emphasis was placed on those that provided insights into concepts important to the conceptual framework. As well, selections were based on an ability to provide poignant insights into rather large topic areas, while still offering breadth of understanding of concepts. It is intended that this literature review will help set the stage for investigating the phenomenon of how principals gauge the development of trust within their school communities and, equally as important, how they go about building trust with faculty members in the first place. The literature selected in the

2.2 Overview of Leadership

The notion of leadership has evolved over time and has drawn many researchers to study its inner workings as well as those individuals who have been identified as leaders. My understanding of leadership as a social influence process is influenced significantly by Spillane and Diamond (2007a) who suggest that

from a distributive perspective ... [it] involves two aspects: the leader plus aspect and the practice aspect ... the leader plus aspect recognizes that leading and managing schools can involve multiple individuals ... [it] involves more than the work of individuals in formal
leadership positions such as principals, assistants principals, and specialists; it can also involve individuals who are not formally designated leaders ... Defining leadership and management as practice allows for the possibility that people without any formal leadership designations might take part in that work (Heifetz, 1994). While people’s actions are important in studying practice, interactions are paramount in efforts to understand the practice from a distributed perspective ... a distributed perspective frames practice as a product of the interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situations” (p.7).

For almost a century or more, researchers have provided insights about the needed leadership structure, skills, and personal characteristics needed to make it work. Originally, Frederick Taylor’s model and its characteristics of shifting responsibility for the organization of work from the worker to the manager, using scientific methods, selection, training, and monitoring, established itself as a guide for the optimum mode of performance (Morgan, 2006, p. 23). The assembly line model started the trend where “office factory people perform fragmented work and highly specialized duties in accordance with an elaborate system of work design and performance and evaluation” (p. 24). The early success of this model influenced its implementation over time into other areas such as the fast food industry and into other organizational structures such as education. Furthermore, it has influenced the study of organizational theory within these fields. Specifically within the educational system, Taylor’s influence can be observed through the hierarchy of positional structures and its subsequent imbalance of decision making power. This model, however, has come under increased scrutiny in the past half century. This is because researchers are now challenging the hierarchical structures that exist in educational systems as being the most productive means for student and
school improvement. Though top-down decision making and instruments created to achieve tasks, goals, aims and objectives continue to govern, there is ample research to support the decentralization of control in school systems. Leithwood, Jantzi and Strauss (2000) identify that “like other types of organizations, school systems are working toward flatter structures that are intended to distribute the responsibility for thinking about organizational effectiveness broadly among its members, and to release problem–solving capacities seriously constrained by hierarchy” (p. 187). This research advocates for a sharing or distributing of leadership in the educational environs, and, in turn, the fundamental necessity of trust between those individuals involved.

Pearce and Conger (2003) define shared leadership as a “dynamic interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both … [and it] often involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times upward or downward hierarchical influence” (p. 1). Though Spillane and Diamond (2007b) see this as slightly different from distributive leadership as they argue for recognition of oppositional goals and need for confrontation (p. 11), the difference does not make them distinct from each other. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (2000) argue that “site-based management, self managing schools, teacher leadership, and team problem solving: all these initiatives illustrate the considerable value currently attached to widely distributing leadership throughout the organization. Evidence from quite different sources provide compelling support for this valuation, but this in no way diminishes the importance of the leadership provided by those in formal administrative roles” (p. 53). Whether it is shared leadership or distributed leadership, either definition is different from the aforementioned traditional leadership style as they move away from a solely downward influence structure where
leaders or managers identify what their subordinates do. Harris, using the insights of Leithwood (2006), comments that there are two key features of distributed leadership: “leadership needs to be distributed to those who have, or can develop, the knowledge or expertise required to carry out the leadership tasks expected of them ... [and] ... the initiatives of those to whom leadership is distributed need to be coordinated, preferably in some planned way” (p. 16).

This evolution of leadership theory did not happen quickly. Decades of theoretical influences have helped to arrive at the present calling for shared leadership. Human relations and systems perspectives, role differentiation in groups, co-leadership, social exchange theory, management by objectives and participative goal setting, as well as emergent leadership were important theoretical influences leading up to the 1970s (Spillane and Diamond, 2007b, pp. 7-9). In the following three decades, expectation states theory, participative decision making, vertical dyad linkage/ leader-member exchange, substitutes for leadership, self leadership, self managing teams, followership, empowerment, shared cognition, and connective leadership are all theories that in some way contributed to the birth of shared leadership (pp. 10-13). Ultimately what has emerged from all of these theories is an understanding that organizations are a living system in need of new leadership, one where the different levels of the organization are interconnected and interdependent. Fletcher and Kaufer (2003) conceptualize leadership as a more “relational process, shared or distributed phenomenon occurring at different levels and dependent on social interactions and networks of influence” (p. 21). Cox, Pearce and Perry (2003) further identify that there are really two sources of leadership within an organization. Though it is an overly simplified scenario, they recognize the appointed or emergent individual as one leader, and the rest of the team as the other. Identified at the forefront is the interactive relationship that exists when working within an organization.
As well as recognizing the interactive nature of organizations, there is also a reality that “organizations today feature more emphasis on efficiency and productivity, continued innovation, decreased stability, more difficulty achieving and maintaining profitability, changed employment relations and altered internal structures” (Seers, Keller, & Wilkerson, 2003, p. 78). Echoing Simon’s (1990) bounded rationality, there is an understanding that leaders of organizations do not always possess the information needed to make a decision, or, with the speed at which some decisions need to be made, the leader is unable to do it in an efficient manner. Taking both the intrinsic and extrinsic realities that a leader of an organization faces today, one realizes that the idea of sharing leadership is personally beneficial, and organizationally prudent. Research (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Silins & Mulford, 2002) provides Harris with the support to argue that “distributing a larger portion of leadership activity has a positive influence on teacher effectiveness and student engagement. In fact, Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (2000) specifically state that “from the consideration of clearly independent images of future schools has emerged a more comprehensive image: the school as high reliability community. This image responds well to four requirements or criteria that have been asserted to be critical in design of future schools. Such schools should be inclusive, efficient and effective, and adaptable” (p. 223). For a principal who is focused on school improvement and shared leadership, the building of trust with faculty members seems to be an ideal starting point to begin this investigation.

2.3 Overview of Shared Leadership

The fact that sharing leadership is personally beneficial and organizationally prudent allows for an evolution away from top-down management to a more grass-roots and community oriented decision-making process. Though this leadership paradigm transition has not been easy
and continues to take shape, it is essential in order to “create fundamental transformation in the learning cultures of schools and of the teaching profession itself” (Fullan, 2002, p.17). In today’s classrooms the dynamics at play with regards to culture, race, styles of learning, inclusion of differently-abled students, and single-parent families to name a few, increase the multitude of demands already placed on teachers and school administrators. Berg et al. (2006) describe today’s challenges in education and the needed changes to move to a more community-oriented focus:

- growing demands on teachers, principals, and district officials to be accountable for the success of all children are critical factors driving this change. To help all students succeed … principals are convinced that schools and communities must pay attention to the multiple dimensions of young people’s lives. (p. 1)

This recommendation to involve community members and subsequently develop partnerships means educators need to call upon the expertise of others in the community to help create the best opportunities for educational and personal success for their students. Ryan (2006) posits that leadership, where decision making is shared amongst its stakeholders, is the needed leadership paradigm to address these realities in education because it “emphasizes the process and product of leadership, in that all members of the community should be involved in influence processes and that leadership processes should promote inclusive practices generally” (p. 56). In this new millennium, the building of community and sharing of leadership is essential if educators are to truly deal with contemporary issues effectively. King and O’Sullivan (2002) citing the work of Neuman and Simmons (2000) aptly indicate that shared leadership “cultivates collective ownership of both successes and problems, as well as responsibility for results” (p. 293). Especially in this era of accountability, standards-based testing and results orientation,
distributed leadership offers an opportunity to find greater success because sharing the power and decision making provides the best opportunity for a community to draw together all of its resources and knowledge to develop the ideal programs for its students.

2.3.1 Building Community and Leadership Capacity

From a practical perspective, Lovely (2005) comments on the power of the school community coming together as she points out that “when shared responsibility flows through the arteries of a school, the wisdom of working as a whole supersedes any desire for individual triumph” (p 16). This idea of the total being greater than the sum of its parts is not a new insight. However, it is refreshing to see it used in an educational context. Blase and Blase’s (1999) research supports this insight as they suggest that “major psychodynamic changes occur as a result of developing a collaborative or shared governance leadership style including changes in motivation, role conflict, and use of power (moving from having power over others to sharing power with others)” (pp. 82-83). They do, however, make a distinction between contrived and authentic shared leadership. Shared leadership cannot be forced and regulated by administrators, but rather it should evolve from leaders who “work hard to build up the capacities of teachers and others, so that direct leadership will no longer be needed. This is achieved through team building, leadership development, shared decision making, and striving to establish the value of collegiality” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 123). This idea of building capacity within the schools is supported by the research of Lovely (2005), Chirichello (2001), and Huffman and Hipp (2000). Building capacity of the individuals within a school cannot but help create a stronger program for students. Interestingly enough, this style of leadership, whose foundations are built on capacity building, collaboration, and sharing is more feminine in its origin or softer in its approach, as Brunner (1997) points out, than more traditional forms. This leadership style may,
however, be more comfortable for everyone and “now there is potential for it being perceived as non-confrontational, as an approach that encourages and supports the participation of others” (p. 34).

### 2.3.2 Rationale for Distributing Leadership in Schools

More specifically at the school level, sharing leadership and decision making throughout the building seems prudent. This is often connected to the idea of professional learning communities where individuals learn together and try to construct knowledge and meaning through collaboration (Lambert, 2002, pp. 37-40). Furthermore, Lambert (2002) identifies that “everyone has the right, responsibility, and ability to be a leader, how leadership is defined influences how people will participate, educators yearn to be more fully who they are – purposeful, professional human beings, and leadership is an essential aspect of an educator’s professional life” (pp. 38-39). King and O’Sullivan (2002) from a financial and business perspective articulate the need for shared leadership because within schools “the administrators, teachers and other professional staff who constitute a technical core of the system constitute a natural decision making and management team” (p. 293). Identifying the school’s faculty, staff and community as being closest to the issues and most informed about them, King and O’Sullivan are suggesting that these stakeholders are also the best ones to make decisions for the school rather than from a school board or from one individual, usually the principal, in the school.

Wallace (2001), using the works of Blase and Anderson (1995), Bottery (1992), Sergiovanni (1996), Southworth (1995) and Starratt (1995) as support, comments from a more philosophical perspective that shared leadership is morally just (p. 154). In a democratic society it seems necessary and appropriate that all voices should be heard and that individuals should
have a say in the decision-making process. Wallace, however, goes beyond the moral justification of shared leadership in the school setting. He identifies four other significant reasons to implement this leadership paradigm. He believes that staff are entitled to gain this experience [shared leadership] to further their professional development and career aspirations, … [and they] have a responsibility to express in their working relationships the kind of cooperative behaviour they wish their students to emulate” (p. 154). In essence, Wallace is pointing out that there is an intrinsic personal component to working in a school and that individuals care greatly for the community in which they practice their craft and become aligned within relationships. Furthermore, he is suggesting that by sharing leadership opportunities, it is professionally rewarding to be accountable to the greater causes of the school community and to discover one’s own abilities and desires to take on an administrative role within a school. When this empowerment extends to other stakeholders, shared leadership is not only beneficial to principals and teachers, but parents and students as well. The research by Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2010) leads them to posit that “when principals and teachers share leadership, teachers’ working relationships with one another are stronger and student achievement is higher” (p. 282).

2.3.3 Principals and Shared Leadership

Within the school context there is much to be gained for principals who are willing to share power and leadership. Citing Lambert (1998), Hipp and Huffman (2003) point out that “school leadership needs to be a broad concept that is separated from person, role, and a discreet set of individual behaviors. It needs to be embedded in the school as a whole. Such a broadening of the concept of leadership suggests shared responsibility for a shared purpose of community” (p. 10).
Specifically within a school, shared leadership can be found where there is faculty empowerment, shared mission, values, and common goals, open communications, clearly stated roles, collaboration, shared decision making, shared expectations and common purpose (Brown, 1995). These characteristics are needed within schools because there is simply just too many challenges present for everyone.

It is crucial to understand that teachers take on numerous roles such as educator, parent, counsellor, confidant, and peace keeper to name but a few, principals too are overloaded in their responsibilities. Trail (2000) posits that the principal takes on the role of psychologist, teacher, facilities manager, philosopher, police officer, diplomat, social worker, mentor, P.R. director, and coach (pp. 2-3). As a result, the job can be overwhelming and Togneri and Anderson (2003) suggest that “principals who share leadership responsibilities with others will be less subject to burnout than principals who attempt the challenges and complexities of leadership alone” (as cited in AEL, 2005. p. 6). Trail (2000) suggests principals can find comfort in shared leadership and uses the following analogy to describe the positives of it: “collaboration is much like the strength of fabric woven from many different threads. Individually those threads are easily broken, but as an integrated whole, the cloth is strong and not likely to unravel from the loss of one thread” (p. 4). In order to create this type of community and bring some perspective to the principal’s role within the school, he/she must be willing to let go of the power vacuum that is present. Research by King and O’Sullivan (2002), Chirichello (2001), and Hipp and Huffman (2000), support the insight of Johnson (1996) in her book Leading to Change:

today’s school leaders must understand both the limits and the potential of their positions, carefully balancing their use of positional authority with their reliance on others,
gradually building both a capacity and widespread support for shared leadership and collaborative change. (p. 11)

Further to this point, a principal need not worry about losing influence if he/she opts for a shared leadership paradigm. In fact, Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2012) posit that principals “do not lose influence as others gain it. Influence does not come in fixed quantities. Influential leaders wishing to retain their influence may share leadership confidently” (p. 282).

### 2.3.4 Impact on Teachers

Principals are not the only ones to gain from this new shared leadership paradigm, but the transition from top-down leadership and decision making to a shared leadership style for teachers is not easy. In fact, to expect overnight results would be insulting to professionals. The transition from traditional leadership styles to one of shared leadership will be a process and not an event. Fuller (2000) refers back to Burns (1978) to support this idea and emphasizes the reciprocity between leaders and followers. Leadership involves attention to the needs of followers not only in the effort to mobilize them in some direction … [and that] … conflict is necessary to transformation, but harmonious adjustment is necessary to sustaining operations. Leadership must mediate between these. To lead means to accept, even welcome conflict, and to find ways to shape and contain conflict to useful ends. (p. 202)

In trying to change a linear hierarchical structure to a more horizontal one will not be easy. Not everyone is going to view issues from the same perspective. As a result, conflict, healthy conflict, will be a necessary component of shared leadership. Furthermore, the harnessing of this constructive dialogue to promote shared decision making will be the challenge of the identified leader. This challenge will be a tough one, but it is, by no means insurmountable. Using the
works of Pearce and Sims (2000), Hooker and Csikszentmihalyi (2003) point out that “as shared leadership takes hold, group psyche, group behaviour, and group effectiveness will change, and as they change they in turn affect shared leadership” (p. 219). As time and effort is invested in this new leadership style, it will begin to reinforce itself naturally. As stakeholders within the school observe, practice and find success in shared leadership, the synergy created from these experiences will further nurture the environment and skills necessary for shared leadership to sustain itself. This synergy that can be created will only be accomplished if the sharing of leadership, power, and decision making is authentic. From a teacher’s perspective, shared leadership cannot simply be a delegation of tasks, such as timetabling and supervision schedules that add on to their already enormous load of work. In many situations where shared leadership has seemingly failed, Lindahl (2008) points out that this is because “administrators have so readily fallen into the trap of involving teachers in shared administrative roles rather than in shared leadership, they have promulgated retrospectively predictable models of failure” (p. 300). Instead, the authentic sharing of leadership in meaningful ways such as curriculum development, school vision, and identifying school and community issues and offering solutions provide school stakeholders with a real sense of leadership opportunity. Lindahl (2008) further points out that “teachers are deeply immersed in the school’s culture, which is a prerequisite to being able to assess that culture … [and] they can challenge aspects of the school’s culture that they consider to be less productive or healthy” (p. 304). Once again, this ideal world where teachers suddenly take on leadership roles will take time. It will also involve teachers redefining their roles. Chirichello (2001) suggests that successful shared leadership within a school will “only occur if teachers recognize that their roles, responsibilities, and relationships must also change. They must begin to move away from individualism and isolationism. They must believe in
creating a culture in which accountability becomes a value. Teachers must be accountable for students, for themselves, and for each other” (p. 6). Clearly the transformation from top-down leadership does not only entail a shift in understanding on behalf of the principal, but also on that of the teacher.

If teachers are willing to be a part of this paradigm shift, opportunities are numerous as to how it will help both their own practice and the success of their students. In schools where shared leadership has been implemented successfully, a real sense of collegiality has emerged. Hord and Rutherford (1998) indicate that “teachers visit each other’s classrooms to learn from each other and to provide useful feedback. Such open and trusting practice contributes to individual and community improvement. In an environment of this kind, teachers can share and are comfortable in debate, disagreement, and discussion” (p.8). Furthermore, McClure (1988) observes the impact on the school as a whole and suggests that “these faculties now see themselves as powerful forces that can affect the quality of their schools. They describe themselves as more action oriented than they were at the beginning of their work together. They are able to learn from their mistakes and have become advocates of what they believe in” (p. 62). The ultimate result of this type of professional community is that change and new program are more readily embraced (Swick et al., 1999, p.7). On both an individual basis and a collective one, teachers benefit when a collegial atmosphere is established of which shared leadership is the foundation.

Equally as important for the individual teacher is job satisfaction. Over the past couple of decades teacher retention has been dropping at an alarming rate. Hence, it is not surprising that research indicates that job satisfaction improves when shared leadership is present. Woods and Weasmer (2002) identify shared leadership as one of four critical elements necessary for
improved teacher retention. It can be argued that the other three elements, collegial investment, support meetings and mentoring, are part of the shared leadership package. This is because shared leadership is based on collegial interaction and supporting each other in the nurturing of our professional growth both as teachers and individuals.

When “buy-in” to the shared leadership model is reflected in both professional and personal commitment, effective schools result and teacher satisfaction is realized. In these effective schools, researchers indicate that “faculty members are beginning to see their roles differently. They are becoming more collegial: better able to share ideas, to solve problems together, and to contribute to the knowledge base. They are more passionate about the values they hold for their schools” (McClure, 1988, p. 62). When this is the case, it is not surprising that a positive educational environment is present and students will have a greater opportunity for success. Teachers in effective schools “share data in meaningful and straightforward ways so each teacher, student, family, and administrator can add to the vision … [and] they are not complacent but are in and out of one another’s classrooms and offices to share work and best practices and offering suggestions for improvement” (Sammon, 2005, p. 52). Further normative discussion (Lindahl, 2008; Hipp & Hoffman, 2003; 2000; Swick et al. 1999) also espouses that shared leadership and its resulting building of collegiality or professional learning communities ultimately have positive results for students and parents.

**2.3.5 Impact on Students, Parents and School Community**

Research (Turner & Waterhouse, 2003; Ryan, 2006; and Slater, 2008) indicates that leadership that willingly includes and encourages its different members to voice their opinions ultimately enables schools to be more effective because improvement is “not dependent on one
person but is a shared responsibility amongst staff, students, and parents” (Slater, 2008, p. 56). This is supported by Barth (2003) who suggests that creativity is unleashed within people when they are given leadership opportunities to pursue issues related to their personal passions and concerns. In such situations, individuals are capable of profound learning. (as cited in Slater, 2008, p.59).

Further research in this area by Anfara (1995), Brown (2006), Lau (2004), and Lewis (2001) clearly indicates that involving stakeholders, especially parents and students, in the process of establishing behaviour expectations leads to a more positive school environment and a more responsible school community. It is true that “when middle level and high schools implement partnership programs, more students benefit than just those whose families become involved … [and] parents’ wishes for more useful information and teachers’ hopes for more successful students require effective partnerships” (Epstein, 2008, p. 10). Ryan (2006), using research by Gronn (2002), Pounder et al. (1995) and Spillane et al. (2001), also posits that “schools improve not necessarily as a result of individual people doing remarkable things in isolation, but as a consequence of a variety of people working together in many different ways and roles, using the multitudes of resources that are available to them” (p. 78). It takes the collective efforts from everyone in the educational system to improve student achievement. It is too simplistic to think that on one’s own any one person or group can develop success. With present research and school community issues, all members of the educational system must work together. An interesting example of this is identified by Caldwell and Spinks (1998) in the United States where the Learning First Alliance met to discuss research about improving student achievement and design specific projects. Most importantly, “the alliance [brought] together every major teacher union and principal’s organization as well as associations representing the
interests of states, school district and parents” (p. 104) to improve student achievement. The educational world is beginning to realize that top-down leadership may be needed at very specific times, but as the general paradigm, it is unsuccessful. As a result, educational conferences and progressive groups are ensuring that the future of education taps into the thoughts, ideas, and creative energy of all stakeholders.

Providing parents with an opportunity to be involved in their child’s education is important. Researchers (Carter, 2003; Scheie & Robillos, 2003; Fullan, 2001; Jesse, 1997) identify that it is common knowledge that parents have a major impact on their children’s educational endeavors when they are involved in the educational process. Enabling parents to have a say in school decisions, not only brings them to the school proper and gives them a visible presence, but it also is important because “children receive powerful messages from family-school relationships. When families view their parents as interested in what happens at school and see them in regular and respectful contact with school staff, they are more likely to bond with their teachers and learn from them” (Comer, 1988, as cited in Berg et al., 2006, p. 16). Providing parents an opportunity to influence their child’s education is important because it helps to set up positive expectations because “family attitudes toward education and careers are reflected in youth attitudes toward work and career choice” (Berg et al., 2006, p. 17). They need to be included in the decision making process and not just those from the dominant culture because parents “are crucial stakeholders possessing knowledge and expertise about their children that are not available to anyone else” (Slater, 2008, p. 58).

With respect to the students themselves, insight can be gleaned from Starratt (1996) and his use of the principle of subsidiarity, which he defines as providing the opportunity for decisions to be made as close to the work level as possible, and more specifically where
“operational decisions about the work are not made at the superintendent’s level or even at the principal’s level. They are made where teaching and learning take place” (p. 121). In this light, students can take an active voice in their own learning rather than be passive recipients of information. Students and teachers working together cannot but help to bring about positive and effective learning environments, stronger relationships and circumvent the tendency to become overspecialized. Dimmock and O’Donoghue (1997), citing the work of Covey (1989), draw a parallel to his insights on synergy where a focus on shared leadership creates a “state where the energy unleashed and results obtained by the whole come to more than the sum of its parts … [and] usually result in creative and previously unscripted methods of working and higher goal achievements” (p. 153). Going to the extent of involving students can be very profitable as Fielding (2005) suggests that by building relationships with students and involving them allows for “a series of impassioned, though-provoking exchanges between students and staff about the nature and possible justification of compulsion, the necessity of recognizing differences in need and capacity, the importance of thinking about and helping others and the relationship between school and the wider society, particularly with regard to preparation for adult life” (p 129).

Though this may seem very idealistic, the results of a positive school environment where colleagues are working together as professionals and working in collaboration with other school community members results in a better education.

Ultimately involving the students in the decision making processes of the school gives them an opportunity to influence their own education and take on a leadership roles within the school. Slater (2008) indicates that students are important stakeholders in the school and leadership that willingly includes and encourages its different members to voice their opinions enables the school to be more effective because improvement is “not dependent on one person
but is a shared responsibility amongst staff, students, and parents” (p. 56). The recognition of students being important in the decision-making process seems only natural if they are not only stakeholders, but perhaps the most important ones. Unfortunately, students are often not included in the decision-making process, but it is becoming clearer that “students to be successful need to be provided with relevant, engaging and worthwhile experiences … Students have ideas about how schools should be … [and] not only must they be part of the solution, but also, in many cases, they may even have better ideas for solutions” (Hammonds, 2002). It is these solutions, discovered through the sharing of power and decision making between students, parents, teachers and administrators that promise so much hope for educational institutions in the future. Please see Appendix 1 for a summary of the literature that supports shared leadership and Appendix 2 for the literature that challenges this paradigm.

2.4 Overview of the Principalship

Research in education often makes much out of the leadership within elementary and secondary schools. Though it often focuses on teachers or board level personnel, the principal proper is clearly a primary position of leadership and his/ her importance within a school is paramount. Fink (2010) recognizes this insight: “Leithwood and his colleagues suggest that leadership has very significant effects on the quality of school organization and on pupil learning. As far as we are aware, there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership. One explanation for this is that leadership serves as a catalyst for unleashing the potential capacities that already exist in the organization” (p. 3). This is further supported by Silins and Mulford (2002) who report that “leadership characteristics of a school are important factors in promoting systems and structures that enable it to operate as a learning organization. In recent years, it has
become a well-accepted principle that school leadership makes a difference to student achievement” (as cited in Fink, 2010, pp. 3-4). It is also a unique leadership position in that one must have been a teacher first in order to “move up” and there are required courses such as The Principal Qualification Papers, and levels of education recommended, such as a Masters of Arts or Education. The fact that one must have taught creates “peculiar circumstances that mark the authority system in these schools [resulting] in beliefs and practices that emphasize the establishment personal relationships with teachers, of earning their confidence over time, and exerting influence through consultation and the provision of needed support” (Lortie, 2009, p. 175). Furthermore, there are politics involved in the leadership succession that takes place in schools. As Fink (2010) points out, “leadership succession is inherently political. Many groups and individuals have an interest in who becomes principal or head or an assistant; some of those groups and individuals have more power than others, and often their interests and relative degrees of power conflict” (p. 118). To begin to address this issue and the highly political arena in which leadership plays out, the Ministry of Education in Ontario has established a new, significant direction with respect to the Ontario Leadership Strategy. This strategy is “a comprehensive plan of action designed to support student achievement and well-being by attracting and developing skilled and passionate school and system leaders. It incorporates a collaborative approach through which schools, school boards, education partners and the ministry work in partnership to make a difference. The commitment to develop a comprehensive leadership strategy is outlined in Reach Every Student: Energizing Ontario Education (2008)” (http://cal2.edu.gov.on.ca/june2009/OnLeadershipStrategy.pdf). The basic principles of the strategy focuses on partnership, essentially building on the good practices and networks already in place, individual and organizational development which promote professional learning for
school leadership and school boards, alignment that engages all partners in learning from one another, sharing effective practices and common language, and aligning ministry initiatives, and finally communication to engage in dialogue and communicate a clear message that supports effective practices (http://cal2.edu.gov.on.ca/june2009/OnLeadershipStrategy.pdf). As mentioned above and perhaps most importantly, it is a system-wide, collaborative process that involves a broad spectrum of partners including:

- School boards who provide direction and support for leadership
- Associations representing principals, supervisory officers and directors of education who partner in implementation and resource development, provide member support and collaborate with boards to create conditions for success
- The Institute for Education Leadership, which models a tri-level approach, commissions/dissemnates research on leadership, develops resources and promotes/advises on sector engagement and alignment
- Teacher federations who provide advice about recruiting and attracting teachers to the role of the principal and support shared leadership opportunities
- Academic experts who provide theories of action, stimulate thinking and heighten the level of discourse on leadership
- The Ministry of Education, which provides direction and support for the Ontario Leadership Strategy, maintains internal connections across the ministry and with other ministries and sectors focusing on learning about leadership
- OCT which organized the revised Principal’s Qualification Program Guideline into the five domains outlined in the Ontario Leadership Framework to support candidates in their development and application of leadership competencies.
This new direction established in 2008 recognizes the importance of the principalship and the need to develop leaders who are ready for succession. The Ministry of Education in Ontario defines the principal as the individual responsible for “the organization and management of individual schools, including any budget assigned to the school by the school board. They are also responsible for the quality of instruction at their school and for student discipline” (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca). More specifically the Ministry identifies the following responsibilities for the principal of a school:

- determining the organization of the school and ensuring ongoing maintenance of the school buildings;
- administering the school's budget;
- student admission and placement;
- maintaining student records;
- ensuring report cards are sent to parents;
- developing a school safe arrival program with the help of the school council, parents, and the community (elementary schools);
- ensuring student supervision and school discipline;
- assigning teachers to classes and assisting and supervising them;
- making recommendations to the school board on the appointment, promotion, demotion and dismissal of teachers; and selecting textbooks and other learning materials from the approved Ministry of Education list, with the help of teachers.

(http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)
To define the principal’s role in the school in this manner is to focus only on the mechanical and managerial aspects of the role. In practice the principal’s role extends far beyond this simplistic itemization of responsibilities. In fact, some might argue that this list, though it includes several significant responsibilities, does not do the principalship justification. Lortie (2009) indicates that principals occupy the classic ‘middle-management’ position referred to in organizational writing ... yet they do so with a twist; they do not operate, as many middle managers do, alongside those of higher rank in the same physical setting but as heads of discrete, dispersed, and bounded units, schools with names and distinct identities” (p. 45). The fact that principals are “in charge” of the faculty, staff, students, and parents in their school and responsible to the Board over-seeing its operation creates the perspective of a normal middle management position. Lortie’s recognition, however, that the principal works within a distinct community that is separated from higher management, places a whole new dynamic upon the principalship. No longer is the principal only responsible for the logistical and mechanistic needs of the school, but he/ she is also responsible for the tangibles and intangibles that come along with facilitating the development of a healthy school community. Lortie defines these as “complexities” and, through survey and interview research, he identifies the building of relationships with staff, parents, students, and volunteers (p. 16), the emotional turbulence of changing demographics, job security and school closings (p. 17), understanding the needs of different social compositions such as socio-economics and racial integration (p. 18), recognizing district grade structures and the alignment between elementary and secondary schools (p. 19) and dealing with student performance and the expectations of meeting or exceeding average scores (p. 19) as part of the principalship which might not be the norm for positions usually identified as middle management. Lortie (2009) further posits that principals work in a very public setting, are
accountable to any number of people including the tax payers, and one of their greatest challenges is to decide how to get the best out of ‘subordinates’, which often is identified as treating everyone fairly (p. 46). Specifically to this challenge Lortie comments, “the relationship ... [between the principal and teacher,] ... both collectively and individually, is simultaneously the most important and the most difficult for the principal to establish and sustain. That combination of importance and intricacy gives it great salience” (p. 73). Using both data gained by survey and structured interviews, Lortie discovered that for 57% of his suburban principals, the greatest complexity was overseeing the work of teachers via supervision and evaluation, and exercising influence (p. 74) and that “one might wonder how principals deal with these crucial subordinates who have assured occupancy of their positions (tenure) and are financially compensated not on the basis of merit ascribed to them by their managers, but in terms of seniority of service and the number of college credits they have accumulated” (p. 74). The principal’s role within a school is clearly more than just an individual who looks after the logistical and mechanistic needs of a school. In fact, the role calls for far more than a numbercruncher or organizer as the position of principal truly calls for a leader who is dynamic in relationship building, has the ability to be a visionary, and one who is a pedagogical expert. Obviously it is a tall order for any individual to excel at all of these areas, but nonetheless, it is the contemporary challenges for the contemporary principal and his/ her ability to be a leader rests on moving beyond the managerial perspective.

To add further complexity to the mix, the high school environment offers other challenges in regards to micropolitics. Blase and Blase (1997) define micropolitics as the use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goals in organizations. In large part, political actions result from perceived differences between
individuals and groups, coupled with the motivation to use power to influence and/or protect. Although such actions are consciously motivated, any action, consciously or unconsciously motivated, may have political ‘significance’ in a given situation. Both cooperative and conflictive actions and processes are of the realm of micropolitics. Moreover, macro – and micropolitical factors frequently interact. (p. 138)

To investigate any area of leadership and avoid dealing with relationships and trust is a significant shortcoming. Flessa (2009) asks the question “Why does a literature that focuses on individuals’ work within school sites and that investigates the different ways schools are managed and their implications fail to feature a micropolitical analysis?” (p. 332), and it is imperative that when studying the relationships between individuals and groups of people the nature of these interactions is analyzed. The insight here is particularly important to the school environment because of its uniqueness in organizational structure. Principals are expected to be leaders in the school but maintain middle management status with Board personnel above them while teachers maintain control over part of the organization and their actions within the classroom. Furthermore, Ball (1987), with support from Cyert and March, 1963; Collins, 1975; Boyd-Barrett, 1976; Hannan, 1980, articulates that schools “in common with virtually all other social organizations, [are] arenas of struggle, to be riven with actual or potential conflict between members; to be poorly coordinated; to be ideologically diverse” (p. 19). To navigate through these challenges, relationship building is imperative within schools and at their core, to ensure school success, is trust. MacBeath’s (2009) research supports this insight when he articulates that “without mutual trust among teachers, the latitude for a more opportunistic or cultural form of distributed leadership [is] undermined” (p. 55). To ignore the human dynamics in any relationship, especially one which involves power is concerning. Siskin, using Waller’s (1932,
insights, provides an appropriate insight in this regard, “what is most important in understanding the concrete realities of schools is the tangled web of social relationships among those who inhabit them, a web of influences and interactions” (p. 23). Clearly this brings into focus the gaps in the research that are in need of being addressed, especially with respect to a principal’s ability to build trust.

With this in mind, the high school setting provides the usual micropolitics plus another layer of leadership that is added to the traditional hierarchy in the form of department heads or curriculum chairs. Siskin and Little (1995) argue that within the high school setting, micropolitics takes on an even greater role as subject departments influence what transpires in this environment: “the department is the singular entity that most predictably unites teachers with one another, and most deeply divide faculty groups from another” (p. 7). The departments themselves “form the primary organizational unit in the high school, defining in crucial ways who teachers are, what they do, where and with whom they work, and how that work is perceived by others” (Siskin & Little, 1995, p. 1). The department headship position is defined by Kerry (2005) as “the promoted teacher in a secondary school responsible for the work of a discrete subject area” (p. 65). These individuals are often seen as subject specialists and they are responsible for a subject area within the school and the faculty members who teach in that subject area. These departments take on varying roles with respect to influence as “some departments more than others command the human and material resources, and display the collective inclination and leadership, to shape internal policies regarding curriculum priorities, teacher assignment, resource allocation and the like” (Siskin & Little, 1995, p. 10). These department heads add another layer of trust building for principals. Lucy (1986) suggests, “principals and central office staff should play only supportive roles in curriculum revision.
Department heads are ideal curriculum leaders because of their position, their subject area expertise, and their daily classroom experience. Despite being the logical choice to lead curriculum revision, department heads may be spending too little time on this task” (p. 86). The possibility of friction between principals and these individuals can be seen in Lucy’s insight and hence the phenomenon of building trust within the high school setting takes on a different dynamic. The importance of building trust with department heads is highlighted in Kerry’s (2005) research in which he used a survey approach. He posits that “the HoD [head of department] is the archetypal ‘piggy in the middle’ of school leadership, reporting upwards to deputy heads and head, and seeking to lead the departmental staff—as well as the increasing number of teaching assistants and support staff who form the learning team. Amid all the hype about leadership in education, it is particularly easy to lose sight of the fact that every leader has to have followers” (p. 72). As such, it becomes important that the trust is built with all levels in a high school and the canny principal must realize that department heads are a stakeholder group unto themselves.

On top of departmental micropolitics, the reality exists that micropolitics permeates much of school life and at all levels. Ball (1987) indicates that “real decision making is not as simple as recording the public discussions which take place at such moments. Decision making is a micropolitical process which embraces a whole set of formal and informal arenas of interaction, confrontation, and negotiation (p. 237). He further comments that micropolitics does not finish at the end of the agenda, it does not stop at the committee room door; it is an ongoing dynamic process. It is multifaceted, indexical and obscure. It intervenes when least expected, it underpins the fleeting encounter, the innocent-
sounding memo, the offhand comment. It is about relationships not structures, knowledge rather than information, talk rather than paper. (p. 245)

Principals cannot afford to remain ignorant to the political game that transpires each and every day in the school environment. Whether it is faculty, staff, students, or parents, the principal must keep his/ her finger on the pulse of the micropolitical life in the school and learn to navigate through it. Metz (1990) provides support for this when she comments that

what makes high schools such different places, and specifically such different contexts for teachers, was that the actors around them and inside them imbued their similar structures with different meanings. Important variable meanings included parents’, staff members’, or students’ values and their assumptions about the nature of knowledge, about the place of high school in a life trajectory, about the roles of teachers and students; and about the inherent nature of adults and adolescents, men and women, blacks, and whites. (p. 43)

When trying to lead a school, the challenges are multifaceted and only grow in size as the institution does. Clearly, the principal’s role within a school becomes more challenging as all of the complexities are unravelled.

Fullan’s (2002) *The Change Leader* argues that the “the role of the principal as instructional leader has taken us only so far in the quest for continual school improvement. We now must raise our sights and focus on principals as leaders in a culture” (p. 20). Furthermore Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) suggest, via past observations and theory, that “teachers and principals [must] fight for fundamentally positive changes that will benefit themselves and their schools ... teachers and principals must act as moral change agents and presents some of the core starting points and most powerful levers for change.” Regardless of the leadership style a
principal employs, he/she is an important cog in the wheel of a successful school. In fact, research suggests that three identifiable areas of influence for a principal to enhance school success and teaching are teacher support and development (McKenzie, 2005; Richards, 2003; Youngs & King, 2002; Blase & Blase, 2001), understanding school context and visioning (Moos, Kresjler, & Kofod, 2008; Stine, 1998; Rollow & Yanguas, 1996; Harchar, 1993), and communicating to build relationships (Burbach & Duke, 2007; Borba, 2006; Clark & Clark, 2002; Schumacher & Sommers, 2001; Reiss & Hoy, 1998; Cash, 1997; Blase & Blase, 1994; Bryk & Schneider, 1996; Hoy & Kupersmith, 1984).

Communicating and building relationships, is a challenge for individuals at any level within an institution and is important to its vitality. Perhaps this is even more difficult at the superordinate level and it requires a unique skill-set and interpersonal qualities. Noonan, Walker and Kutsyuruba (2008) suggest that “the school principal's role as moral agent and how, in this role, s/he judges and makes decisions and fosters community trust, not only in themselves and the "institution of education," but between and among students, parents, community members, staff members, schools, central administration, provincial authorities, interagency personnel, and the general public” (p. 3) speaks to the vitality of the school. To suggest that developing these trusting relationships and clear lines of communication to enable a transition from top-down leadership to a paradigm of sharing power are easy, would be naïve. Research by Slater (2008), Court (2004) Hipp and Huffman (2003), and King and O’Sullivan (2002), all suggest that if a school is to move in this direction, it cannot be done in one fell swoop, but rather through communication and opportunities to build trust. If this is not done, teachers and other school staff members may be skeptical of what is going on and fearful that more responsibility is being put on their plates. Slater (2008), from her case study research, posits that “effective
communication is instrumental in establishing collaborative relationships and is a key aspect of building leadership capacity in a school” (p. 55). For Slater, truly listening, empathy, openness, as well as effective verbal and non-verbal skills are needed to develop real relationships with people and to begin to build up the leadership ability within these same people (p. 56). The insight that these collegial relationships are the foundation to a shared leadership paradigm is supported, via another case study, by Hipp and Huffman (2003). They suggest that these relationships are characterized by caring, trust and respect, recognition and celebration, risk taking, and a unified effort to embed change (p. 7). With these types of relationships in place, individuals are more able to take risks and are empowered to become leaders within the building if given the chance.

Court’s (2004) case study research that looked at a very unique sharing of leadership also emphasized communication and trust. This unique version revolved around a co-principalship that was shared among three individuals. Though much of her research and information dealt with the discourse involving legal and board challenges to sharing a principalship, a similar thrust to the success of it was communication and trust. Court identifies that the three individuals “built their co-principalship model on collectively agreed aims and accountabilities that included ethical considerations and individual moral commitments to the practice of personal integrity, honesty, shared responsibility in the provision of education as a social good” (p. 185). To collectively agree upon parameters of a position not only takes solid communication skills, but it also gives proof to the fact that these individuals had to trust each other if the co-principalship was going to work. Furthermore, they also agreed that communication and building trust with the rest of the stakeholders was imperative to the school’s success. Court lends the success of this co-principalship to the fact that “its flat management
structure was built on the prioritizing of open, honest communication and the sharing of information and decision making both within the leadership and between them and their support staff, board and parents in the school” (p. 191). Interestingly enough, a sharing of the principalship ultimately led to a sharing of power with all of the stakeholders. Shared leadership is not a picture set in a moment, but rather it is an ongoing evolution that becomes a way of life. It is through this way of life that schools can find success and that stakeholders can become an active part of the school community with the opportunity to influence it positively. It is also a way to help principals face the challenge of leading a school and providing teachers with ample opportunity to develop professionally. With this in mind, Chirichello’s (2001) comments provide emphasis for this style of leadership:

It is time to take down the rungs of the career ladder and abandon the industrial paradigm that emerged in the early Twentieth Century. If we want to attract teachers to the principalship, we must re-imagine leadership and create new choices – choices that value collective leadership – and that value will allow new voices to emerge. (p. 9)

In order for this paradigm to truly take hold, a real sense of trust must exist between the stakeholders in the school community.

2.4.1 The Challenges of the New Principal

The experiences of a new principal when he or she receives the first placement, by its very nature, are unique and quite different from an individual who has been in the position before. Though a new school is challenging for every principal, the first year principal in his or her first school is fraught with its own challenges. Weindling (1990), using surveys and case studies in England, posits that “the new headteachers seemed to have an ideal image of what they wanted their schools to resemble. As they settled in, they found that they differed from their
ideals, and they soon became quickly involved in the management of planned change. Initially, this change tended to focus on communication, consultation, and efforts to improve the public image of the school” (p. 42). Coming to grips with the reality of the job is something that all new principals to the position must come to. Much akin to the new teacher who begins with the ideals of changing the world and tempers this as he or she gains experience, so too does the new principal come to this realization. Macmillan (1993) helps to put this in perspective when he comments, “as individuals gain experience, current reality becomes more important; people have an increasingly clearer concept of the barriers faced in moving towards their vision ... the creative tension between vision and reality eases as individuals gain a clearer sense of what is achievable given the time and resources in a given context” (p. 18). Equally important to my research is Weindling’s (1990) insight that “the new headteachers stressed their willingness to try to involve their staff members in consultation, to lead from the front, and to use an open door approach to make themselves available. They tried to be around the school as much as they could and practiced management by walking around during lunch periods and at the beginning and end of the day” (p. 42). This willingness to involve teachers in dialogue is the opening that is needed for shared leadership and building trust. Research by Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton and Ikemoto (2012) supports this insight when they suggest that it is not how a principal spends his/ her time that affects outcomes, but rather “Principals who reported higher teacher capacity and higher levels of collaboration and cohesiveness were ... more likely to experience achievement gains during their first year” (p. 48). The fact that new principals or headteachers lean to this leadership perspective is important and provides some support for this research as it is connected to trust.
Though a new position and its demands are difficult for anyone to acclimatize to, being part of a succession plan, however modest in its intentions, creates further challenges for a new principal of a secondary school. Not only does the brand new principal in title need to learn the new demands of the job, he or she must also come to an understanding of his or her new school. Daresh and Male (2000) provide an interesting example from observation: “all noted that they were treated to a short ‘honeymoon’ period where some people held back on information until they had a clearer idea of the incoming headteacher’s or principal’s value system. It was not long before they discovered vital information that was previously not open to them, or that they became aware of issues that remained hidden from them as they were not perceived by other players in the system as being in charge while acting on behalf of the principal or headteacher” (p. 95). Macmillan’s (1994) research supports this as he suggests that:

a new principal has to learn not only about the role, but also about the new school’s culture and the meaning of that role within that context. At least three barriers prevent the principal from easily learning about a school’s culture. First information is controlled by both the teaching and the support staff. The new principal soon realizes that the new role restricts direct, unbiased access to knowledge of the culture resident in its members (Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985), and that the nature and accuracy of information can be determined only through observation and trial-and-error. Second, while the principal is a key factor in determining how teachers interact, the power and authority of the principal’s role restricts and alters access to and knowledge of those interactions. Third, creating personal ties with specific staff members has micropolitical implications for the new principal and is discouraged by superiors for reasons associated with the evaluative nature of the role. (p. 8)
It is obvious that the learning curve for the new principal in title and as school leader comes with a steep learning curve. Navigating the new environment is a crucial but needed challenge for the new principal. It is only through this “initiation stage” that new principals can gain credence with their faculty and staff. One of the challenges as Macmillan points out is that “newly appointed principals face a difficult dilemma: while learning to be principals and to cope with the complexity of their new role, they often must do so without the luxury of time to reflect on what they are learning” (p. 1). The barrage of challenges that face a new principal in his or her early months provides a rich opportunity to explore how the principal works through these challenges and builds trust and provides opportunities for shared decision-making. As the research of Macmillan, Meyer, and Northfield (2004) indicates, “much of what happens in schools depends on trust. From day to day, teachers hope that principals will support their instructional efforts in ways that extend beyond what is legally mandated, but trust the principal will support their work within the confines of legislation, regulation and contracts” (p. 275). How this trust is built through the scope of newly titled principals in their new schools provides rich grounds for study.

2.4.2 The Principalship and Secondary Schools

It would be naïve to think that the experiences of an elementary school principal are exactly the same or perhaps even similar to that of the high school one, or that the experiences of one high school principal is the same as another high school principal’s. This is not to suggest that one is easier or more difficult than the other. It simply identifies that the elementary and the secondary principal, though similar in title, dwell, operate, and lead in very different environments. Siskin (1994) indicates that “while the literature on schools repeatedly finds attributes of cohesive communities, such as goal consensus, collaborative norms, and shared
expectations to be essential components in ‘effective’ schools (Purkey & Smith, 1983), at least at the elementary level, those who look to apply those findings to high schools have found those same attributes markedly absent. Instead high schools are characterized by images of anarchy (Firestone & Herriott, 1982), of ‘shopping malls’ with ‘something for everyone’ (Powell et al., 1985), of ‘fractionated’ curriculum and staff (Sizer, 1984)” (p. 90). As my focus is on high schools, it is important to identify some key norms that influence this level of schooling and make it distinct from other levels.

As mentioned earlier, department level micropolitics play an important role in the life of the high school. This, however, is just part of the influence departments have. How and where the idea of departments within the high school came to exist is summarized nicely by Siskin (1994):

the history of department emerges as a largely unintended and ancillary by-product of other efforts in three related areas:

1) increasing size and bureaucratization of schools led to organizational differentiation and the institutionalization of the ‘word’ department

2) as changes in the organization of knowledge from a model of unified whole to branching fields made their way through the educational system, disciplinary modifiers were attached to these divisions.

3) most recently, changes in the numbers and career patterns of teachers, filling up what had become an already acceptable label with groups of specialized and professionalized teachers. (p. 22)

The history of high school departments, in essence, evolved quietly and was a somewhat natural outcome of preparing new citizens for university or trade. In the debate between what should be
taught as the core areas of high school, placing value on certain areas such as Math, English and Social Sciences emerged and subject specialization for teachers became the norm. Where teachers often taught between the two panels early on, as the high school evolved, teachers were expected to have university degrees: “the early use of the word department thus covered a variety of kinds of internal divisions: some were logically and rationally connected to functional differentiations; some were efficient responses to problems of increasing size; and in some cases they were simply words, dividing little of substance, but making the department label a familiar and expected one” (Siskin, 1994, p. 28). This focus on subject specialization at the university level naturally transcended and continues today in the faculty of educations when preparing teacher candidates.

The impact this has on the high school environment moves beyond relationships and communication. High school teachers have a vested interest not only in their profession, but more specifically in their subject area as they may know more about that subject area than does the principal. This gives high school teachers, and department heads more specifically, a more grounded voice in responding to initiatives and policy. As Siskin (1994) suggests, “a new set of conditions has arisen: the organizational divisions are entrenched, the academic subjects are well-established and firmly divided, and the realms which they create populated by significant numbers of certified and educated specialists – specialists whose career orientation gives them a substantial stake in school operations” (p. 38).

The secondary school department does not only influence a school through micropolitics and subject specialization responses to changed. These very departments help define who teachers are and how they see themselves and their profession. This is supported by Siskin (1994) who identifies that “four critical aspects of the department emerge: 1) it represents a
strong boundary in dividing the school; 2) it provides a primary site for social interaction, and for professional identity and community; 3) it has, as an administrative unit, considerable discretion over the micro-political decisions affecting what and how teachers teach; and 4) as a knowledge category it influences the decisions and shapes the actions of those who inhabit its realm” (p. 5).

In a very real sense, subject departments are akin to little worlds operating within in a school and though all contain teachers, teachers of one subject see issues far differently than another teacher of a different subject. In fact, “for high school faculty, their professional identity and sense of what Van Maannen and Braley (1989) call ‘occupational community’ lie not in teaching, but in the teaching of their subject. Teachers frequently explain who they are, what they do, or how they do it by anchoring their identities, actions, and understandings in the subject matter itself” (Siskin, 1994, p. 153). For teachers and principals to work together in a high school and to develop trusting relationships that lead to school improvement and student success, principals must have a clear understanding of how to interact with departments, department heads, and subject specialist teachers. To recognize this is to understand that “subject departments fill a variety of needs for teachers and schools; they are deeply embedded in the social, political, and intellectual structures of high schools as institutions and teaching as an occupation. These realms of knowledge are the territory in which secondary school teaching now takes place” (Siskin, 1994, p. 189). Working with and through departments to build a strong school community is a necessity for any new principal. Understanding the subject department dynamics is the only way in which principals can build a trust that will lead to a shared leadership paradigm to develop initiatives within their schools. Please see Appendix 3 for a summary of the selected literature on the principalship.
2.5 Overview of Trust

One of the greatest challenges for any principal who is entering a new school environment is to establish trust between him/herself and the stakeholders and between the stakeholders themselves. Tschannen-Morin (2004) argues that “principals and teachers who trust each other can better work together in the service of solving the challenging problems of schooling. These leaders create a bond that helps inspire teachers to move to higher levels of effort and achievement” (p. 12). As a corollary to this she also argues that “without trust, schools are likely to flounder in their attempts to provide constructive educational environments and meet the lofty goals that our society has set for them because energy needed to solve the complex problem of educating a diverse group of students is diverted into self-protection” (p. 13). Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2012) provide further support to this idea from their research that trust within our schools and, more specifically the principals, is of paramount importance: “Our analysis provides the most extensive empirical test to date of whether instructional leadership, shared leadership, and trust in the principal, when considered together, have the potential to increase student learning. The answer is an unqualified yes ...” (p. 51).

Trust is often defined in three distinct ways. Organic trust is “predicated on the more or less unquestioning beliefs of individuals in the moral authority of a particular social institution and characterizes closed, small-scale communities” (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p. 16). This type of trust is most often seen in fundamental religious schools, but it cannot take into account the larger perspective of education. Contractual trust as defined by Bryk and Schneider (2002) suggests that “the basis for social exchange is primarily material and instrumental” (p. 17). This does not work in schools either because the aims within a school are multiple and interrelated
and there is not one single goal. Furthermore, the inner workings of a school are far more complex and the development of trust needs to happen over a substantial period of time. For Bryk and Schneider (2002) “relational trust differs from organic and contractual trust in that it is founded both on beliefs and observed behaviour” (p. 22). It is based on a three level theory that is articulated as follows:

1) Rooted in a complex cognitive activity of discerning the intentions of others
2) The discernments occur within a set of role relations (interpersonal level) that are formed both by the institutional structure of schooling and by the particularities of an individual school community with its own culture, history and local understandings
3) Trust relations culminate in important consequences at the organizational level – effective decision making, enhanced social support, expanded moral authority, social control of adults’ work. (p. 23)

Tschannen-Morin (2004) and supporting research (Mishra, 1996; Tschannen & Hoy, 1998, 2000) support this insight as she succinctly states that “trust is one’s willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, honest, open, reliable, and competent” (p. 17). For Bryk and Schneider, the establishment of relational trust is imperative if school communities are to face the challenges of providing the best education for the students in our schools. Their in-depth study of the Chicago School Reform Act, via case study research including statistical data, interviews, and observations, leads them to posit that “if relational trust operates as a resource for school improvement, we expect that in school communities where relational trust develops over time, achievement trends also should improve. (p. 107). Bryk and Schneider (2002) identify four key areas that define relational trust: competence, respect,
personal concern, and integrity (pp. 23-25). This is supported by earlier work done in the social science field by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995), Mishra (1996) and also Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999). Bryk and Schneider draw the most support from Mishra as their definition of trust coincides exactly in the use of two of the defining words, competence and personal concern, whereas respect and integrity for Bryk and Schneider resemble closely Mishra’s openness and reliability respectively.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) identify competence as “the execution of an individual’s formal role responsibilities” (p. 23) and recognize it as one of the integral characteristics of relational trust. This is based on the fact that when one is incompetent trust breaks down because individuals cannot trust another to perform their responsibilities and implement identified changes. On the flip side, competency indicates an ability to follow through not only on personal responsibilities, but also on tasks assigned by others. This generates a positive and proactive atmosphere. Research and theory (Clark & Clark, 2002; Youngs & King, 2002; Harcher, 1996; Hearne, 1991) provide support for the importance of competency within schools at all levels. Harcher’s (1996) research, using loosely structured, open-ended interviews, identified “key elements for successful instructional leadership: establishing vision, developing trust, fostering collaboration and demanding respect for all in the community” (p. 28). In essence, these are necessary for developing a successful school. Clark and Clark (2002) further this insight by indicating that the necessary characteristics of a successful school are principal commitment, trust, focus on teaching and learning, teacher involvement, parent and community involvement, professional development, and time opportunities (p. 52). Each of these characteristics identified by Clark and Clark represent competency by the individuals within a school from the principal to the teachers and finally to the parents. Youngs and King (2002), using their qualitative study of
urban elementary schools, further posit that effective schools focus on developing competency by enhancing teachers' knowledge, skills, and disposition; building professional communities; and ensuring program coherence” (p. 645). When competency of individuals is either present or a focus of development, the aforementioned research posits that trust is built and effective schools are a result.

Bryk and Schneider’s second characteristic of relational trust is respect which “involves recognition of the important role each person play in a child’s education and the mutual dependencies that exist among various parties involved in a child’s education and the mutual dependencies that exist among various parties involved in this activity” (p. 23). This idea of truly listening to others in an educational environment and its result being more effective teaching is supported by the insights of Hickman, Moore and Torek (2008), Brewster and Railsback (2003), Rollow and Yanguas (1996) and Terry (1995-96). Hickman, Moore, and Torek (2008), through observation indicate that “when teachers become voluntary leaders and have the authority to make important decisions, sustainable success is within reach ... [and]... that the most important thing that any principal can do to encourage the spirit of empowerment throughout the school is to practice servant leadership” (p. 30). By listening to and accepting teachers input, change and progress can meet with successful implementation. Further to this, observations and interviews by Rollow and Yanguas (1996) indicate that “positive social relations enable enhanced democratic participation. This, in turn, fosters the development of even stronger social capital. Over time these resources, combined with a search for new knowledge and dedication to strategically using that knowledge, promote systemic educational change” (p. 76). By truly listening to the ideas and insights of others, whether they parents,
students, or teachers, a real sense of trust is built, which ultimately results in a healthier school community that is more focused and dedicated to student success.

Personal regard for others, which Bryk and Schneider (2002) identify as the third necessary characteristic in developing relational trust recognizes that “interpersonal trust deepens as individuals perceive that others care about them and are willing to extend to themselves beyond what their role might formally require in any given situation” (p. 25). When a community of individuals feel that their relationships go beyond that of worker and job related issues then greater strength is built in the community. Feeling and understanding that colleagues and community members have a deeper sense of caring for the individual brings a stronger sense of commitment and effort. Peters (2004) and Gordon (2003) both support this insight. Peters (2004) through his own experience as a school administrator and observing in-service programs suggests that “the highest-achieving classrooms are ones where the students trust, respect and care about their teacher because that teacher trusts, respects, cares about and expects great things from them. This is also true for the highest-achieving schools. The staff trusts, respects and cares about the principal and each other because the principal and other staff members trust, respect and care about them, and they are all working toward the same thing, a shared mission that ultimately targets student success. Putting employees first has more to do with how they are treated every day than it does with special events and what they are paid” (p. 50). A true sense of caring creates an environment where people are willing to go beyond expectations. This sensitivity and real caring for those who are a part of a school community build trust which ultimately bodes well for the school community. Gordon (2003), based on her observations within a Montessori environment, furthers this insight when focusing on sensitivity, but she does so by zeroing in on what and how things are articulated. She suggests and “urges administrators
to show sensitivity by speaking in encouraging terms and knowing what not to say” (p. 137).
Sensitivity, not only to people’s plight in life, but also their feelings and insecurities is important in developing the relational trust necessary for the betterment of any community.

Last, but not least, Bryk and Schneider (2002) posit that integrity is necessary for the development of relational trust. They suggest that integrity is reflected through the “consistency between what [people] say and do ... a moral-ethical perspective [to] guide one’s work” (p. 25).

The need for principals to “walk their talk” is imperative if trust is to be built and established. Hypocrisy is corrosive to relationship building and establishing trust. McKenzie (2005) and Cash (1997) both support the need for integrity. McKenzie (2005), using theory, suggests that four components of collaborative leadership that can help school leaders accomplish what works best for their schools:

1) Helping faculty members grow in their knowledge and experience through collaborative community meetings and team meetings;

2) Putting a system in place to support the professional growth of all teachers according to their needs;

3) Having a strategic plan developed by the entire school community that declares the school’s mission and creates an action plan to achieve that mission; and

4) Providing opportunities for teachers and administrators to collaborate to deal with classroom challenges. (p. 42)

A school leader cannot espouse to desire improved pedagogy and school improvement without putting in the necessary infrastructure to facilitate these desires. When actions support rhetoric then people involved in the community recognize that the principal of a school means what he or she says and that the necessary steps will be taken to support everyone in the process. Cash
(1997), from personal reflections in the field, summarizes that “good leaders celebrate creativity and capitalize on others’ creativity while building schools on foundations of trust, commitment, and fun. Successful leaders are optimistic, generate trust, reward innovation, create a safety net for risk-taking behaviour, delegate authority, and lead balanced lives” (p. 23). Not only does the principal need to walk the talk, but he/she needs to exhibit personal qualities that engender trust. Enthusiasm, a love of learning, and a willingness to support risk-takers help build relational trust because people recognize positivity and are willing to think outside of the box if they are not going to be ridiculed, but rather challenged and supported.

When each of these characteristics that Bryk and Schneider (2002) espouse is present, then the foundation is built to support relational trust which lubricates much of a school’s day-to-day functioning and is a critical resource as local leaders embark on ambitious improvement plans” (p. 5). This supports the reality that “a growing body of case studies and narrative accounts about school change direct our attention to the social dynamics of schooling, and especially to the engaging but also somewhat elusive idea of social trust as foundational for meaningful school improvement” (Bryk and Schneider, 2002, p. 8). When this relational trust is established the impact on the school community is extraordinary. It provides an opportunity for individuals within the community to share their opinion, thoughts, and concerns. This ultimately creates a school where all stakeholders are attempting to do what is in the best interest of the students. Tschannen-Moran (2004), using support from Pounder, 1998, and Short and Greer, 1997, provides further support for this as she posits that real collaboration is when “principals and teachers make decisions jointly. This model highlights teachers’ competence and acknowledges that they have valuable insights to bring to decisions. Higher quality decisions are the goal of this more genuine form of shared decision making that gives teachers actual influence
over the outcomes of decisions that affect them” (p. 79). As such, the establishment of relational trust is essential to implementing shared leadership. Please see Appendix 4 for a summary of selected literature on building trust.
Chapter 3: Methodology

“most leadership styles require a greater or lesser degree of mutual alignment between leader and led and, as the process of joint action proceeds, mutual adjustment, compromise and negotiation all play a part in the career of the social relationship.” (Ball, 1987, p. 84)

The stage that was set in Chapter One, indicated that this study would investigate the experiences and insights of new principals to the position with at least one year of experience or principals with no more than eight years of experience at the initial stages of their principalship in a new school to the individual. This chapter lays out the approach and design of the study and why it is appropriate to approach the issue from this context. To begin, the theoretical framework is established to provide perspective on the research problem or question and how it is best approached from a critical perspective for this researcher. A conceptual framework is then presented to the reader to visually see how the researcher cognitively visualizes the interrelationship of the concepts and ideas laid out in the conceptual framework. Following this, a summary of the participants and the schools of which they are apart is provided and then the research method is described and perspective is provided as to why this method is appropriate for this study. Finally, the study is then reviewed with respect to sample, data collection, analysis, validity of the research, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The review of the literature provides insight into the importance of the principal position, what is needed to establish relational trust and finally how this trust is essential to overcoming the impediments to its development that are present in a high school. In order to understand the social relationship between these concepts, however, one must reflect more deeply on the reality that is constructed beneath these issues. Most importantly, one needs to understand the social underpinnings of the relationships that exist within a school culture. The existence of power,
how it is balanced, who holds it and who is possibly oppressed in its enactment is an important realm that must be examined with a critical approach.

When examining the dynamics of power within relationships, it seems appropriate that critical theory would prove salient here as it “examines sources of social domination and repression, but with the caveat that since we ultimately make our own worlds, we can ultimately change them ... [and it is] ... committed to values; its critique is largely oriented toward how created social structures impede the attainment of such values as democracy and freedom” (Foster, 1986, p. 72). The imbalance of power between peoples, creates a reality not only where the disadvantaged are unable to reflect and analyse their world, but also one in which they are unable to actively participate in reform. In summary, Ryan (1998) posits that the disadvantaged need to gain the knowledge of how they are disadvantaged so that in turn they can be empowered and empower themselves to actively participate and change their unjust social arrangements.

Critical theorists contend that in order for educational institutions to move forward and extinguish the power imbalance that exists in the present hierarchy, educational leaders must look to engender a sharing of decision-making power and leadership. In essence, today’s school leaders must, as Anderson (1990) suggests, be “cognizant of the ways that control is exercised over practitioners through the forms of unobtrusive control ... [and in so doing] ... free practitioners to take a more active and conscious role in the social construction of organizational and social reality” (p. 55). In so doing, the realm of power, whether it is political or practical, becomes a shared venture between all those who are involved in education and promotes democracy and a true sense of freedom and accomplishment for all involved in our educational communities. In order to do this, a real sense of trust must exist between community members.
3.2 Conceptual Framework

The construction of the conceptual framework envisions how all of the concepts interrelate to each other, and it presents these connections as a linear flow - one concept leading to another. Within this flow, concepts may be consciously acted upon and lead to concrete outcomes, while others may encounter impediments to desired outcomes at which time a feedback loop is created so as to overcome these impediments. From “the big picture perspective” and taking a normative view with regards to building trust as necessary for healthy school environments, it ultimately leads to better teaching and learning opportunities for students. As mentioned above, the interest is in the perspective of the principal and it is envisioned that the process is as follows:

- The principal is the instigator of trust building.

- There are a number of ways that this may be done, but they can be grouped under two headings: formal and informal actions. It is my understanding and experience that principals institute tangible and concrete strategies to develop trust such as open-forum meetings, committee work, and sharing power, to name but a few. Similarly, principals also behave and interact with their colleagues and faculty in specific ways, such as truly listening, being compassionate, providing motivation, to name but a few, in order to build trust.

- If building trust simply meant implementing the aforementioned formal and informal strategies, principals would have a far easier job. Creating confusion to an implementation process are the micropolitics present in a high school that happen in parallel with the informal and informal actions of the principal.
1) The complex nature of relationships within a school environment is a reality that must be acknowledged, understood, and addressed. Within the high school setting there are multiple layers that exist from relationships with faculty members, between faculty members, relationships with department heads, and loyalties that teachers have to their subject department.

2) Organizationally, high school subject departments are akin to little worlds operating within a school and though all contain teachers, teachers of one subject see issues far differently than another teacher of a different subject.

3) Pedagogically, “for high school faculty, their professional identity and sense of what Van Maannen and Braley (1989) call ‘occupational community’ lie not in teaching, but in the teaching of their subject. Teachers frequently explain who they are, what they do, or how they do it by anchoring their identities, actions, and understandings in the subject matter itself” (as cited in Siskin, 1994, p. 153).

4) Managerially, the high school is far larger than the elementary school and, hence, there are far more teachers that come under the supervision of high school principals.

5) Instructionally, high school teachers have a vested interest not only in their profession, but more specifically in their subject area as they may know more about that subject area than does the principal. This gives high school teachers, and department heads more specifically, a more grounded
voice in responding to initiatives and policy. As Siskin (1994) suggests, “a new set of conditions has arisen: the organizational divisions are entrenched, the academic subjects are well-established and firmly divided, and the realms which they create populated by significant numbers of certified and educated specialists – specialists whose career orientation gives them a substantial stake in school operations” (p. 38).

6) Financially, high schools have a larger financial budget than their elementary counterparts. Its allocation creates challenges for relationship building. Departments take on varying roles with respect to influence as “some departments more than others command the human and material resources, and display the collective inclination and leadership, to shape internal policies regarding curriculum priorities, teacher assignment, resource allocation and the like” (Siskin and Little, 1995, p. 10).

7) Developmentally, the high school environment deals with educating older students and what comes along side of this are, perhaps, more challenging issues. The supporting of teachers in instances of student misbehaviour can also impact the trust between principal and faculty.

- In order to overcome these micropolitical impediments to building trust that are present in a school, principals, it is suggested, must establish four critical areas that are identified by Bryk and Schneider (2002) in their definition of relational trust: competence, respect, personal concern, and integrity (pp. 23-25).

Through the research and analysis of this project, it was interesting to note whether or not these same characteristics needed to build trust within elementary schools emerged in the private high
school setting. Furthermore, it was also interesting to see if these were indeed markers for a principal to indicate the sense of trust that he/she believes is present in his/her high school. These results may prove valuable to principals in other school systems as they strive to build trust in their high schools. To see a visual representation of the concepts, please see “Diagram 1: Conceptual Framework”.

As part of this research project, the research question and supporting subquestions that have been developed provide the foundation to the “Interview Guide” (Appendix 5) and its corresponding “Appendix 6 - Research Questions and Methodological Tools” through which the concepts of the conceptual framework will be investigated. With respect to the interview guide, there are two sets of interview questions. The first set was used in September and the second was used in January. The questions provide an opportunity to explore the skills and abilities of a principal that he/she thinks are needed to garner the respect of their professional colleagues and to help identify themselves as a leader in practice, rather than just in title alone. In combination with this line of questioning, research suggests that there are interpersonal skills that a principal and/or leader need to possess for successful leadership. These questions have also been created to provide insight into the formal and informal practices that principals use on daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis to build trust. In the building of this trust it would be naive to think that the dynamics and complexities of real life, human relationships, and the school environment do not exist which hinder or challenge the establishment of trust. As a result, other questions in the guide are intended to help identify what a principal uses to overcome these impediments or how he/she identifies that trust has been built with the school community stakeholders. As a collective, the interview guide questions will help to address the research question and are critical to the methodology set-up for this qualitative study.
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Principal

Actions

- **Formal**
  - Communication logistics
  - Conflict resolution
  - Professional learning communities
  - Sharing power
  - Stakeholder involvement

- **Informal**
  - Truly listening
  - Empathy
  - Openness
  - Motivation/Encouragement

Micropolitics

- Relationships
- Organizational issues
- Pedagogy and departments
- Managerial challenges
- Instruction of subject
- Financial allocations
- Development of students

Essential Components of Relational Trust

- Competence
- Respect
- Personal concern
- Integrity

TRUST

???

WITH TEACHERS
(Shared Leadership)
3.3 The Interview Subjects

The principals/headmasters selected for this study were from seven private schools located in Southern Ontario and each principal had no more than eight years of experience. From the chart immediately below, it can be seen that these schools range in size from a large co-educational private school to a small all-girls school. Interestingly enough, the breakdown of female to male principals/headmasters was almost equal as there were three female principals/headmasters interviewed and four male principals/headmasters (abbreviated to principal(s) from here onwards). Following the chart that provides a broad overview of the schools and the principals is a brief summary of each principal, their background, and the schools of which they are in charge.

Table 1

The Principals and Their Respective School’s Particulars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>School T Grades 7-12</th>
<th>School U Grades 5-12</th>
<th>School V Grades 5-12</th>
<th>School W Grades 3-12</th>
<th>School X Grades 5-12</th>
<th>School Y Grades 1-12</th>
<th>School Z Grades JK-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal’s Experience</td>
<td>Principal A 2 years</td>
<td>Principal B 2 years</td>
<td>Principal C 4 years</td>
<td>Principal D 6 years</td>
<td>Principal E 2 years</td>
<td>Principal F 2 years</td>
<td>Principal G 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Population in Upper School (9-12)</td>
<td>500 Co-ed</td>
<td>320 Co-ed</td>
<td>90 Girls</td>
<td>270 Boys</td>
<td>440 Boys</td>
<td>200 Girls</td>
<td>550 Co-ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Experience</td>
<td>Total = 103</td>
<td>Total = 40</td>
<td>Total = 19</td>
<td>Total = 69</td>
<td>Total = 66</td>
<td>Total = 67</td>
<td>Total = 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5 years – 35</td>
<td>&lt;5 years – 4</td>
<td>&lt;5 years – 11</td>
<td>&lt;5 years – 18</td>
<td>&lt;5 years –14</td>
<td>&lt;10 years – 24</td>
<td>&lt;11 years – 37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-15 years –52</td>
<td>5-15 years-28</td>
<td>5-15 years-4</td>
<td>5-15 years-38</td>
<td>5-20 years-37</td>
<td>10-19 years – 27</td>
<td>&gt;11 years – 37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15+ years - 16</td>
<td>15+ years - 8</td>
<td>15+ years - 13</td>
<td>20+ years - 15</td>
<td>20+ years - 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attrition Rates</td>
<td>5/ year</td>
<td>&lt; 5/ year</td>
<td>&lt;2/ year</td>
<td>&lt;5/ year</td>
<td>&lt;5/ year</td>
<td>&lt;5/ year</td>
<td>7/ year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.1 Principal A – School T

This private school is a large co-educational boarding school and promises a state of the art educational experience with its focus on technology. Furthermore, a focus on global education and global service help to define the unique characteristics of this school and its desire to build a community. The student body is made up of both local and international students, some of whom require ESL support. As part of the school’s culture, a strong co-curricular program is offered to round out the students’ experiences. The academic program is quite varied and the school offers both the Ministry diploma and other advanced studies such as AP courses. The leadership needed for such an institution is one that requires a broad vision and the ability to lead close to one hundred faculty members with an understanding that faculty turnover is quite low each year. The female principal of this school is in her second year and possesses the credentials of an honours undergraduate program, an education degree, a Master’s Degree and several professional development courses focusing on student leadership. She has also held several administrative positions within School T and, thus, the faculty know who she is and recognize her efforts within the school community.

3.3.2 Principal B – School U

This coeducational private school finds itself directly in the middle of the schools that were a part of this research study in regards to student population. With approximately three hundred and twenty students in grades 9 – 12, School U offers a strong academic program with opportunities to enrich learning through AP opportunities. The student experience is rounded out through a focus on community service within the school’s local area and some co-curricular experiences. The leader of this school, Principal B, has been a part of the school community as a teacher, guidance counselor, and administrator. As such he has a strong understanding of the
culture of the school and its community and the faculty of approximately forty individuals are quite familiar with his abilities and character. His credentials are similar to other administrators in that he has an honour’s undergraduate degree, an education degree, a Master’s Degree, and he has completed his Principal Qualification Papers.

### 3.3.3 Principal C – School V

This all-girls school was the smallest of all the private schools studied as part of this research project. With approximately ninety girls as part of its upper school program, School V aims to educate its students to be academically strong and women of character who will contribute to society in a positive manner. This is done through a strong academic program that is enhanced via AP course opportunities, a belief in a strong co-curricular program, and service opportunities both locally and abroad. As this school continues to grow, Principal C’s skills will need to nurture this school along even though it is only her first year there. Originally working with one of the public boards as both a teacher and administrator, Principal C was seconded to the Ministry of Education for a couple of years and as such brings experiences from all levels of education. Though she is not an alumnus or a former faculty member of School V, her credentials do speak for themselves as do her previous four years as a principal. She has an honour’s undergraduate degree, a Master’s Degree, and education degree, Principal Qualification Papers, and Supervisory Officer Papers and relies on these to help guide her decisions as she acclimates herself to the school community.

### 3.3.4 Principal D – School W

School W prides itself as having a student population where each student is supported and known by name. As one of two all-boys schools researched in this study, the school is known for its academic program, which includes AP courses and high matriculation rate to university.
The student experience at School W is rounded out with outdoor education and co-curricular opportunities. The two hundred and seventy male students in the Senior School also have the opportunity to participate in volunteer initiatives and a vibrant intramural program. Overseeing this school community is a principal with the most years of experience in this study – six. This is his second school and his academic background includes an honour’s undergraduate degree, an education degree, a Master’s Degree, Principal Qualification Papers (Part 1), and leadership courses offered through the United States. Furthermore, Principal D also brings business experience outside of the educational arena. What makes Principal D’s leadership unique to this school is that he sat on the Board of Directors at one time and he is also an alumnus of the school and this gives him an intimate understanding of the community.

3.3.5 Principal E – School X

The largest single-sex school in this study, School X provides an all-male environment that focuses on providing a rich experience for its students through academics and a strong co-curricular program. Its academic program is enriched through the offering of AP courses. As a boarding and day school, the tight-knit community of four hundred and forty students in the Senior School provides a safe and energetic environment for the young men to grow and prepare themselves for the next part of their journey. As the leader for two years in this school, Principal E brings with him a public and private school experience. Teaching in the public system and transferring this knowledge as he moved up the ranks in terms of administrative jobs at School X, provides credibility to Principal E and helps to ensure that he is well-respected in his own community. To support his practical experiences, Principal E has an honour’s undergraduate degree, an education degree, a Master’s degree, and his Principal Qualification Papers which further support his leadership skills.
3.3.6 Principal F – School Y

As one of two all-girls educational institutions in this study, School Y provides a well-respected academic program to its approximately two hundred students in grades 9-12. Offering both the Ministry Diploma and a strong AP program, the girls are well prepared when they leave School Y to pursue post-secondary educational opportunities. Life at School Y is rounded out with several opportunities for service and leadership as well as other co-curricular experiences in athletics and the Arts. The second year leader of this all-girls school brings with her a well-rounded background with respect to teaching in the public and private system as well as administrative roles both at School Y and elsewhere. As an alumnus of the school, the comfort level is high for both the individual and the community. To support her practical experience, Principal F has an undergraduate degree, education degree, a Master’s degree and her Principal Qualification Papers. As she continues to seek out opportunities for her own learning, Principal F provides strong role modeling for the students and teachers alike.

3.3.7 Principal G – School Z

This co-educational school was the largest of the schools researched in this study. Its academic program is very strong and offers its students the opportunity to attain the Ministry of Education Diploma as well as participate in the International Baccalaureate Program. School Z does not have a boarding option and the cultural feel of the school is enhanced through a co-curricular program that provides opportunities in leadership, sports, clubs and activities. In only his fourth year overseeing this school, the school is revitalized and forging ahead in new directions. Principal G brings with him many years of experience outside of the educational arena as well as practical experiences at the University level. His educational background includes an honours undergraduate degree, a Master’s degree, and a Doctoral degree.
3.4 **Research Approach and Design**

In this research study, a qualitative method was employed to gain insights about how principals new to private high schools and with limited experience in the position build trust with their faculty members. In order to address the question, *What do the perspectives of seven new private high school principals reveal about how a principal develops trust in a private high school?*, two interviews with each of the seven private high school principals were used to allow the voice of the new principal to inform this research.

This study employed semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions guided by the conceptual framework which was developed from a review of the literature on the position of principal, the importance of trust and the impediments to building it. Please see “Interview Guide” as well as “Appendix 3 – Research Questions and Methodological Tools” for further information on this. The interviewing was necessary because I “cannot observe behaviour, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It is also necessary to interview [because I am] interested in past events that are impossible to replicate” (Merriam, 1998, p. 72). Seven private school principals from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) were interviewed about the formal and informal practices used to build relational trust, the impediments they face to the building of this trust, and how and when they gauge that trust has been established to achieve their goal. In support of the logic to use seven private school principals, qualitative case study research (Daresh & Male, 2000; Macmillan, Meyer & Northfield, 2004; Siskin, 1995; Siskin & Little, 1995; Macmillan, 1993, 1994; Weindling, 1990) tends to use three or four schools in their investigation. Though I did not use a case study approach, the number of principals being interviewed was doubled to provide enough data, much like the aforementioned case studies. This helped identify similarities and differences with regards to the insights of the principals and
their building of trust. Furthermore, the collective data obtained from all seven private school
principals provided insights in regards to some generalizations in the leadership area.

The seven private school principals from the GTA were identified using personal contact
information from the Conference of Independent Schools. These seven principals were
ultimately the ones who responded to the request for participants, but having said that, the
volunteers represent a fair cross-section of new principals. Essentially they differ in age and
gender and there is a wide variety of experience leading to their appointments to the
principalship. These differences, however, did not seem to have a significant impact on their
answers as their previous experiences seemed to provide a similar perspective to the practice of
the principal and leadership. In this regard, the answers of these principals, whether they were in
year two or six, are consistent enough to be grouped together. Though gender may be a focal
point in later research, I was more interested in the insights of principals who are in at least their
second year of the position. Focusing on this group provides information and insights that are
current, reflective, and insightful from an experienced individual who can reflect on some of the
initial tangible or intangible practices that he/ she used to develop trust.

Some would argue that a case study or studies approach to this question would provide
the best research tool because it “is an intensive holistic description and analysis of a single
entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriam, 1998, p. 34). As such this research design would
provide an intensive review of the process of trust building within a school community.
However, this research study focused on the principals themselves and how they understand the
phenomenon of building trust and hence structured interviews involving a number of principals
seemed appropriate because “if the phenomenon [one] is interested in studying is not
intrinsically bounded, it is not a case” (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). The focus on only the principals’
responses to building trust in this study provides a lens through which little research has been garnered. There is ample research on stakeholder empowerment and building trust from the stakeholder perspective, but little in regards to how the principal observes or understands the intricacies of the phenomenon when trying to build trust. As such, this qualitative survey was given “to a small group of people (called the sample) in order to identify trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or characteristics of a large group of people (called the population)” (Creswell, 2005, p. 52).

The interview questions were designed to help identify the ways principals think about their positions and the conscious actions they take to build trust among the stakeholders in their school community. Each interview provided an opportunity to “report quotes from the interview data or from observations of individuals. These quotes captured feelings, emotions, and ways people talk] about their experiences” (Creswell, 2005, p. 250). With the data collected, I was able to construct an analysis that is full of the human experience of principals and is fair to the challenges they face in their position and building trust with faculty members. The information revealed from the interviews allowed for common threads and themes to emerge and be identified. Ultimately an opportunity presented itself to analyse the emerging themes and connect them to the existing literature using the conceptual framework developed for this qualitative research.

3.5 Sample

There were seven principals chosen to participate in this research study. The principals chosen had at least one year of experience in the principal position so that they could reflect upon their experiences, both positive and negative, and their experiences helped inform their responses to my questions. Though this number reflected the initial volunteer group, I was more
than willing to seek out other candidates through a second appeal to C.I.S. principals should the need have arisen. The initial group of seven, however, provided me with that “critical number” and the insights and information did become redundant and supportive of each other. In essence, a saturation point was arrived at and a further request for more participants was not needed. The choice of seven principals also provided informed perspectives that were rich in data and filled with information and themes that provided important insights into the phenomenon of private high school principals building trust with the faculty members in their schools.

In order to manage the scope of this research, I focused on one school system, private high schools, rather than adding other variables such as trying to compare catholic, public, and private high schools as well as account for socio-economic factors. This research also focused on principals in general and their building of trust. It did not set out to specifically focus on male or female principals, and in fact the research did not identify any major differences. This would be an area for further investigation that would stem from this research project. Last but not least, I also focused on the building of trust with faculty members, rather than all of the stakeholders in a private high school setting. These other areas, too, may provide opportunities for further research.

3.6 Data Collection

Twenty-nine principals who are a part of the Conference of Independent Schools were invited, via email, to participate in this research study regarding the building of trust within their high schools. The email, consisting of a brief note and the Information Letter (Appendix 8), was initially sent out through the C.I.S. head office to ensure that there was no pressure to participate and the interested individuals were then free to follow up with me personally. Once the interested parties identified themselves, the participants were made aware of the two interviews
that would be part of this research study and the potential risks and benefits associated with it. Furthermore, they were presented with the Informed Consent Form (Appendix 9) prior to beginning the interview process.

During the two digitally recorded interviews the principals were asked questions pertaining to the building of trust with faculty members. The first interview asked questions focusing on defining trust, general actions taken to build trust, micropolitical challenges experienced and interactions with department heads (Please see Appendix 5A). The second interview used questions focusing on building trust using different strategies over the course of the year, recent examples of building trust, the ebb and flow of the school year and the effects of building trust and indicators of success and the importance of trust (Please see Appendix 5B). Though these questions were developed to address each of the sub-problems specifically, there was an understanding that answers and discussion would naturally evolve and potentially touch on other areas of questioning.

The interviews began with some informal discussion to create a relaxed environment. This discussion revolved around the successes of the school year and general inquiries into other general areas. Following this, the more focused questions from the interview guides were initiated and each of the interviews lasted approximately one hour. Though the questions had been devised to address specific sub-problems, it was not surprising that the answers to these questions also delved into other areas that were of interest to this research. At different times, there was a need to probe more deeply into the responses and as a result there were questions asked by me that were not part of the schedule of questions. These questions did not put any of the principals in an awkward position, but rather asked them to either clarify or ponder more deeply their earlier response. Once the interviews were completed the principals were thanked
and informed that a transcribed copy of their interview would be sent to them for verification of their answers.

3.7 Data Analysis

Once the data was transcribed, confirmed for authenticity by the interviewees and read several times with notations made in the margins, the data was reviewed using The Constant Comparative Method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is summarized by Merriam (1998) who articulates that:

Grounded theory consists of categories, properties, and hypotheses that are conceptual links between and among the categories and properties … The researcher begins with a particular incident from an interview … and compares it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set. These comparisons lead to tentative categories that are then compared to each other and to other instances. Comparisons are constantly made within and between levels of conceptualization until a theory can be formulated. (p. 159)

To manage the data collected, I coded it to help organize the information by themes that emerged and then further organized it to create insight, hunches and speculations (p. 165). By constantly comparing the interview data within each interview and between all of them, the categories and subcategories emerged. I recognize that these themes, categories, and subcategories must build from independent pieces of information that can be compared to larger categories and ultimately to conceptual elements. The last part was to develop a theory from these connections, and this necessitated a development of properties, “concepts that describe a category” (p. 190), and hypotheses, “links between categories and properties” (p. 190). Through the connections established, a theory did develop about building trust in schools and how principals gauge when it is established.
The citations selected from my interviews to support the identified themes and insights were based on poignancy. As Merriam (1998) suggests, “that since there are no set guidelines on how to achieve the right balance between the particular and the general, between description and analysis, the qualitative investigator usually learns how to balance through trial and error” (p. 236). When answering questions, the principals often responded in very similar ways about circumstances and as the researcher it was my job to pick the best one that would summarize the insight and provide clarity for the reader. As the interview statements had all been organized under different themes via data files, there were many quotes to choose from for each insight or theme. With the sheer amount of information at my fingertips, it was important to use best judgment to reduce the number of citations that could have been used, and identify those that were most poignant and provided sufficient description.

3.8 Trustworthiness

The validity of this research study predominantly rested with the researcher. To minimize the impact of the researcher on the project and to ensure that the insights and experiences of the participants were accurately recorded, the following techniques were used:

1. Interview questions were reviewed by three administrators and practice interviews on two of these individuals took place. None of these administrators were participants in the actual research study.

2. The interview took place at a site that the principals were comfortable in and at their choosing. Furthermore, each participant was comfortable knowing that they might remove themselves from the research at any time.

3. Relationships with most participants existed before this research study. These relationships were professional in nature and provided a natural comfort level to set
the stage for the interviews. Care was taken to ensure that the relationship did not impinge on answers and discussions.

4. Participants were provided with the opportunity to review the interview transcripts to ensure that information was accurately transcribed.

By ensuring accuracy of transcription and ensuring an appropriate comfort level for the participants, the rich data that emerged from the fourteen interviews was deemed authentic. The collection of data, with the above in mind, created opportunities to draw relevance from and between the participants so as to develop overarching similarities and themes.

Though this study is based on the practical experiences of seven principals/ headmasters in the private school system in southern Ontario, the findings and implications of the research will go beyond these individuals and may be generalized to other principals. Each of the principals interviewed provides insights into the building of trust form his/ her perspective which might represent other principals of high schools. Therefore, it is imperative that a “rich description” consisting of information and explanations gleaned from the research is present so that readers can compare their own experiences to them. This is the primary strategy used to identify the extent to which the information, in a qualitative sense, can be generalized (Merriam, 2002). In its entirety, this research study is intended to add to the research base on the importance of trust within high schools and the tangible and intangible ways that principals build trust with their faculty members. To do this, principals in the earlier years of their practice provide insights into how they go about building in the Ontario context, which might provide insights and support for other newly appointed high school administrators.
3.9 Ethical Considerations

Prior to interviewing the principals and collecting data, approval for this study was granted by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Toronto through the expedited process. The confidentiality of the participants was protected via the use of pseudonyms as was the schools with which they are associated. Each of the research participants had access to the data specific to the individual’s participation and none of raw data was made available to the specific schools, the other administrators or the Board of Directors. The data collected, which included audio recordings and transcripts, was secured in a locked facility. Furthermore, the electronic files were password protected and saved on an encrypted USB stick. Access to any printed information or hardware containing any research information was all stored in a secure facility. Only the researcher and supervisor of the study had access to the primary data. All data collected will be shredded or erased within five years completion of the research. Each of the participants was also informed that they could have access to a final copy of the research paper.

At the beginning of the study, the participants were informed that they were not obligated to be a part of the project and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. If withdrawal took place, the participants were assured that their information would be deleted and that any insights would not be used in the research. The participants in this study did not face any apparent risks through involvement in this research study.

Specifically with regards to the participants, these individuals had the opportunity to reflect on their careers and identify areas where they found great success and ones where they determined a need for further growth. It is my belief that the participants gained much by reviewing their year(s) as a principal/ headmaster and possibly found a renewed commitment to the ideals that are important to them.
With regards to the school communities of which these individuals are a part, it is anticipated that the impact will be a positive one. A renewed or continued focus on building relationships and trust can be very important for schools, and, as a result, this research may foster further school and professional development. It may also create opportunities for building relationships with other stakeholders in the school, especially parents. As well, the understanding of how principals develop trust, via formal and informal practices, will provide insights to the greater educational community. New and old principals alike who are looking to better relationships and trust within their schools may be given insight on how to do this through this research. This initial research with principals of private high schools and their building of trust may also provide a stepping stone to further research in the public and public Catholic school boards, identifying if any differences between lower and higher socio-economic schools and the building of trust exist, gaining insights on male and female principals and the differences in their understanding of building trust. This initial research may continue to open up a very fertile ground for educational research worthy of investigation.
Chapter Four: Findings

“Trust is at the foundation of all of the relationships that you’re going to find in the school and its absolutely crucial because it can be destroyed in an instant ... Without trust nothing is possible and ... you have to be consistent, transparent, and you have to develop personal relations so that you can speak candidly and off the record to know that confidence won’t be destroyed or abused. Trust is at the very heart of what we do; trust is the key to a successful society, whether it is a small organization or large. Trust is hugely important as a civic virtue, how we get on with each other as citizens.” (Principal G)

Chapter Four provides a summary of the experiences of seven principals who are either one year into their role as a new principal or are at a new school to them with no more than eight total years of experience. The overview is the product of ferreting out information as found in the two interviews done with each principal. A general introduction to how the principals view trust is provided followed by an in-depth analysis of the four major themes: 1. minimizing the micropolitics that arise in a school, 2. building better relationships with faculty members, 3. building capacity with faculty more effectively and 4. ultimately providing self-support and decreasing stress, that emerged in answer to why trust is important in private high school from the principal’s perspective.

4.1 Introduction

With the challenges that lie before of each of these principals, each expressed that building trust with their faculty members is of the utmost importance. Principal F, when asked to describe what trust means to her, provides a nice summary when she suggests that it is paramount in anything you do. I think when you’re a leader you’re dealing with change … I think we deal with people, students, faculty, parents, staff all the time and that can be exhausting in itself, but building trust so that decisions you make are understood and appreciated is so important because I don’t think you can be successful if people don’t trust you. I think trust in the institution is really important as well.

From a broader perspective, Principal G adds the following to the insights on what trust means:
it’s obviously at the foundation of all the relationships that you’re going to find in the school and it’s absolutely crucial because it can be destroyed in an instant … Without that trust nothing is possible and that’s got to be true in all institutions. Certainly in schools you have to be consistent, transparent, and you have to develop personal relations so that you can speak candidly on and off the record and know that confidence won’t be destroyed or abused. Trust is at the very heart of what we do and trust is the key to a successful society, whether it is a small organization or large. Trust is hugely important as a civic virtue, how we get on with each other as citizens.

Each of these insights from a couple of the leaders in this study points to the need for relationships that are built upon trust with the other adults involved in educating the young people that are present in their schools. As well, these passages suggest a competency involving interpersonal skills and communication. Speaking for all of the leaders interviewed, these excerpts provide a fair overview of the general commentary and that is without trust very little can be accomplished within our schools to improve the education of our young people. To organize the findings from these interviews, it seems more appropriate to do so using a schema different than that provided by Bryk and Schneider. Though their research was very helpful in the creation of my interview questions and immeasurable support for looking at this area of study, the organization of this data is presented in a manner that suggests that building trust is not the aspired for end result, but rather a means to an end. The principals’ responses indicate that in building trust with faculty members, principals are able to minimize the micropolitics that arise in a school, build better relationships with faculty members, build capacity with faculty more effectively and ultimately provide support for him/herself and decrease stress. Within these four areas there are a number of important ideas that must be focused upon
for leaders to build trust with their faculty members. These include autonomy, honesty, and sharing to help engender the positive effects of micropolitics, support, hearing, and visibility for building better relationships with faculty, self-reflection, trusting others, and offering experiential expertise to help build faculty capacity, and vision, accountability, team-building and school culture to help create self-support and decrease stress. Though there are outlier comments for almost all areas, the leaders consistently mentioned these areas of focus, not as an avenue for better standardized test scores, but all in the hopes of building a better team to service the school community.

Table 2

Summary of Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Themes through which Trust is Built</th>
<th>General Areas/Opportunities to Build Trust within these Areas</th>
<th>Specific Actions Supporting Areas/Opportunities to Build Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Engendering Positive Micropolitics      | 1. Autonomy  
2. Honesty  
3. Sharing                                                   | 1. classroom autonomy, supporting curriculum chairs/department heads, interaction with other administrators  
2. honest dialogue, justifying decisions, providing constructive feedback  
3. decision-making and collaboration, inclusion in process |
|                                         |                                                               |                                                               |
| Building Better Relationships with Faculty | 1. support  
2. True listening  
3. Visibility                                              | 1. moral support, providing a structured environment, reducing teachers’ anxiety, and supporting mistakes  
2. open door policy, willingness to persevere, listen to all perspective  
3. morale boosting, presence at poignant moments, leadership at critical times |
<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Building Faculty Capacity              | 1. Reflection  
2. Trusting Others  
3. Sharing Expertise | 1. professional, personal, building trust  
2. involvement in hiring process, build school capacity  
3. experience and confidence, competency, implementing pedagogical change |
| Self-support and Decrease of Stress    | 1. Vision  
2. Accountability  
3. Team Building Exercises  
4. School Culture | 1. clear mission, working on relationships, program and facility development  
2. actively role model decisions, demonstrating perseverance and commitment to the school community, demonstrating personal accountability and holding others accountable as well  
3. response to crisis, formal and informal socials, establishing of personal connections  
4. student-focused, tangible enjoyment of faculty, true sense of community |

### 4.2 Engendering Positive Micropolitics

Micropolitics are prevalent in almost all known work environments quite simply because power is at play (Blasé & Blasé 1997, p.138). Though there is often a negative connotation attached to the word, it need not be such. More often than not, however, micropolitics result from certain unrest or power imbalances that exist within the workplace. This is true for all educational institutions starting at the elementary school and proceeding through the high school and into the colleges and universities. For the sake of this research it need only be mentioned
that micropolitics exist in both elementary and secondary schools. However, they take on a different profile within the high schools because of the presence of subject areas being housed within a department structure. Though an image of “anarchy” and the term “fractionated” have been used to characterize secondary schools (Siskin 1994, p. 38), this may paint an overly grave picture from what was experienced in this research. That said, Siskin’s insight that “a new set of conditions has arisen: the organizational divisions are entrenched, the academic subjects are well-established and firmly divided, and the realms which they create populated by significant numbers of certified and educated specialists – specialists whose career orientation gives them a substantial stake in school operations” (p. 38), is extremely relevant. As such, the principals in this study were quite aware of the necessity to work at both the teacher level and department head level to build trust. They did this through allowing teachers and departments to work to an appropriate level of autonomy, always being honest in their dealings with faculty members, and sharing information and decision-making opportunities whenever appropriate.

4.2.1 Autonomy

One of the themes that emanated out of the data collected from all of the principals was how providing a sense of autonomy to other groups in the building went a long way to building trust. Whether it was with other administrators in the building, department heads or curriculum chairs, or classroom teachers, the principals in the schools studied recognized that providing an opportunity for these groups to take on their responsibilities with a sense of focus and professionalism rather than being micro-managed was extremely important to building trust.

In regards to building trust with classroom teachers, all of the principals collectively articulated that providing a sense of autonomy in the classroom is paramount to building trust because it helps put a focus on the number one priority of education and that is teaching the
students. This insight suggests that when teachers and administrators believe that classroom effectiveness is critical to education and administrators allow that to happen, a sense of trust is built between the teacher and the principal because the teacher feels supported. Principal B sums up his belief in the importance of an uninterrupted classroom:

I think they also appreciate the fact that I take a step back and I recognize the fact that they are on the front lines … I think the most important person in the school when it comes to looking at a faculty is the teacher, it’s not the administrator. I think the teachers are critical to any school, because they are on the front line; they are pulling the agenda forward in terms of what you’re doing for the school.

Recognizing the importance of the classroom teacher and providing him/her with the ability to perform their responsibilities in the classroom as a professional is extremely important for the principals if a trusting relationship is to move forward. However, one of the greatest challenges to this sense of autonomy and the trust that follows comes from external factors that are usually out of the control of the administration, and the principal specifically. Ontario’s Ministry of Education is responsible for overseeing, developing and ensuring implementation of new pedagogical initiatives deemed appropriate for the students and teachers of the province. The reaction of teachers to these new approaches is usually one of resistance and self doubt due to the fact that what they have been doing is now no longer deemed strong enough. Though this may be an over exaggeration on the teacher’s part, this is the reality that the principals indicate they deal with. In many ways a principal’s challenge is to find the precarious balance between a teacher’s passion for the subject area and the way he or she wants to teach and the reality of meeting Ministry, or university expectations. This, too, is important to managing micropolitics. Principal A provides an insight into the latter when she comments,
Well certainly if you are making changes or medium changes, teaching is one of those things that people go into because they are incredibly passionate about their area. At high schools you tend to find more people with more specialized degrees, you’ve got people with more Masters degrees in English or Math, with very firm beliefs in terms of how a particular discipline should be taught. I think at a university preparatory school there is always that friction between teaching the way that we all would like to teach and preparing them for what they are actually going to be experiencing in university.

Trying to balance the personal perspective of teaching and the autonomy that is reflected through this with external realities can create conflict, but it is the principal who can provide the reassuring hand to reinforce the autonomy, minimize the negatives of micropolitics and meet expectations that really builds the trust. Principal B provides a brief insight into the predicament that is created when he suggests that essentially a lot of people know they are doing good things in their class and we tell them they are doing good things. When the Ministry comes across with some new approach or some new direction for some reason, for example assessment and evaluation, there is a reality that there will be some people who put us in a position to say, ‘Well I’m doing a good job. Why are you asking me to do something different?’ I think this is where we have most of our trouble.

This challenge can only be met with authentic and relative professional development but ultimately with the belief in the professionalism of the teacher. These situations also demand a certain competency from the principals in that he/ she must find the balance between implementing new policy pedagogical directions and their good points, while maintaining a belief in the good teaching techniques and policies that are presently in their school.
Moving outside of the classroom, Principal E provides a larger picture of what autonomy means in an educational setting through his willingness to allow his teachers the ability to operate in a responsible and professional manner:

People manage their own schedule which is not very contentious; I wouldn’t call it contentious because it’s been around for a number of years. I’m driving out today at 12:15 and behind me is one of our math teachers. I don’t even give it a second thought because they know that they have to be in the classroom, they have to be there in their designated extra time, but these people are living and working in a residential community, so it’s not about signing in or signing out when you’re not on campus.

People really respect that and I say often that ‘I trust you.’ The word I use is trust. This respect for the individual and his/ her professionalism provides the building blocks of mutual respect and trust. Providing a sense of autonomy is essential in the principals’ eyes to building trust with the classroom teacher. Whether it is their classroom, their larger professional life, or even in the face of adversity with new educational initiatives, the recognition that teachers need to maintain a sense of autonomy goes a long way to building trust between the principal and the classroom teacher and limiting negative micropolitics. This sense of autonomy is also needed by those teachers who take on further responsibility, via department head opportunities or curriculum chairs.

Taking on roles of responsibility within a school can be a challenge, and the principals interviewed in this research study recognize that supporting their curriculum chairs and department heads, via a true sense of autonomy, was paramount to building trust at this level. Three areas that seemed to emerge where this autonomy could be given and trust built was when dealing with parents, hiring, and in budget or resource management. Dealing with parents when
a teacher is challenged about curriculum is an area that the principals do not want to deal with, not because they could not be bothered, but because it is seen as the purview of the department head and curriculum chair. Principal E summarizes this general feeling amongst the principals succinctly when he suggests,

If there are parent complaints about teachers, we do funnel them back to the department head to deal with them because we obviously have confidence in their ability and their skills. This is not to off load it, but to give them the ability to be involved in what’s going in with the teachers, the students, and in their departments.

No leader is expected to be perfect and even when resolving issues, perfection cannot be expected of department heads and curriculum chairs. These expectations of department heads and curriculum chairs are the same as those the principal has for his other administrators in the sense that he would rather coach them than make decisions for them. In so doing, the principals believe that these individuals are empowered and gain a better sense of themselves and their leadership skills. This leads to a higher sense of self-worth and a relationship with the principal that is built on trust rather than on backroom micropolitics that engender a negative feeling within the school. Knowing that one can make a mistake without significant ramifications builds stronger bonds within the school and provides good role modeling when they deal with their own department members.

When dealing with faculty members that fall under their subject area umbrella, the principals interviewed also recognized that providing department heads and curriculum chairs the opportunity to take the lead in hiring for their department is an excellent way to build trust with those individuals. Principal A articulates this point when she discusses the hiring process at her school:
HR views [the applicants] and then the department head is the first one to see them teach in the classroom so we are conscious of who we put in that department role. For me especially, if they pass them on to the next step of the interview, which is meeting with me, I value their decision. I really put a lot of faith and trust in that fact that what they’ve seen as a classroom teacher is at the level that we want. I guess there’s that in terms of developing trust too.

Valuing the opinions of those who are put in charge does provide a sense of autonomy for the department head or curriculum chair because they are able to begin forming a vision of how they want to see their department operate and who should be a part of its delivery. Interestingly enough, when an administrator is also teaching a section or two within the department, this too needs to be done with much forethought and a constant acknowledgement that an administrator’s voice at a department meeting, even though he/ she is there as a teacher, carries much more weight than the individual might realize. In these situations, Principal D cautions that the micro managing piece… is one of the most significant ways to either build or deflate trust, you know over managing the details or when a decision is really important not allowing the department head to take the lead and to make that decision.

One must be truly careful when involving him/ herself in a conversation when the individual wears two hats. If a balance can be struck and the department head is respected for the role and responsibilities he/ she has taken on, then it can be a significant builder of trust within the school. This is true of the principal and the specific head as well as other heads as they watch on and observe the autonomy that is being given. This too displays a competency of the principal in that he/ she can take on the role of both leader and team player when the appropriate situation arises.
This sense of autonomy and the building of trust between principal and department head are also developed by the principal through the enabling of the department head to be responsible for budget and department resources. Principal B is the exception to this as he believes that “staff members are distrustful in terms of how money is being used no matter what happens ... I’ve [therefore] managed the budgets directly with the teachers meaning they are not going to the department head they are actually coming to me.” He does however suggest that the impact of the removal of this responsibility is limited. Though this may seem to be counter-productive to building trust, its impact may be minimized by the transparency of the model.

Five of the seven principals are better served by Principal E’s comments which suggest that when and where possible, even when things need to be stretched when they are already tight, a department head should be supported when trying to further develop their department:

People have great ideas and the way to squash creativity and drive and passion is to say no, so even though sometimes it’s outlandish and financially not feasible … in that group it’s about leadership and it’s about trying to give people autonomy to run their department without micromanaging.

By believing in the vision and passion of the curriculum chairs or department heads, a greater message is sent that the principal will support initiatives of departments that are meant to improve the school and/ or the lives of the students. This development of autonomy for department leaders and teachers is important for the principal to build trust with these individuals because it provides the backdrop for positive relationships, but more importantly because it can have a positive impact in the classroom and in the staffroom. These two groups also observe interaction between the administrators in the building and the principal and these too are important litmus tests for building trust with the faculty.
Comments from four of the seven principals studied clearly reflect that the interactions with other administrators in the building play an important role in the general building of trust with community members. Principal G indicates that he was very conscious of the boundaries between his portfolio and other administrators:

Sometimes you have to be very careful too if you’re in a position of power that you’re not overwhelming somebody. You’re the boss, … you’ve got to be careful, you just can’t overdo it. Because I’m not so much on the front line and because I’m removed I have this particular layer of administrators, I’d be very careful about saying anything to a teacher. I’m not well enough informed and it would be a bit much coming on like the big guy.

The principals seem to suggest that providing the opportunity for the appropriate administrator to deal with certain issues creates an atmosphere where faculty members are part of a discussion with many leaders in the building rather than only with the lead administrator. Whether it is a curriculum, student or professional issue, there was a common understanding that faculty members need to interact with appropriate administrators and build that sense of trust at different levels rather than with just the principal. In turn they suggest that this helps build relationships at many levels and develops trust at these levels as well. Principal G also adds that there are issues that every new administrator inherits or encounters on the job and his role is “to back up and not micro manage the [individual]”. This empowerment is something that is appreciated by the other administrators, but more importantly, it is observed by the faculty and provides at the very least the appearance that this is happening at all levels of the school and builds trust by its very nature.
4.2.2 Effective Communication/ Transparency/ Honesty

Along with a new principal’s belief in minimizing micropolitics via the commitment to developing autonomy for the teaching professionals, the principals believed that an open door policy and truly listening and hearing are important to building trust. Furthermore, it is not surprising that those interviewed for this research study also emphasized the need for effective communication and transparency. This latter focus for new principals is important because they feel that it ultimately respects the professionalism of their faculty members much like autonomy. Transparency and effective communication promotes a sense of honest dialogue within the school community on all issues as well as providing insight into decisions made, but it also calls for the principal to be honest and constructively critical of individuals at times when it is needed.

The sense of honest dialogue is important within a school community because these new principals, with one specific exception, suggest that from a broad perspective it builds trust because faculty members feel that they are in the know with regards to their community and that a sense of collective ownership of the community emerges which minimizes the negative backroom chatter. Providing the opportunity to inform community members about school issues and take feedback is important, especially when all stakeholders are included. Important to this study is the fact that when teachers feel that they are “in the loop”, principals feel that trust is built. Furthermore, this type of interaction is not a once a year opportunity, but rather an ongoing dialogue which entails the receiving of information and an opportunity to respond to it. Principal G’s reflection from a more specific perspective, that of budget and finances, has tones that are akin to those just mentioned:

One of the formal actions I took early on was to have a completely open sharing of the budget at the budget presentation that went to the board, went to the staff as well
...completely the same slides, nothing hidden, including that amount put aside by the way for the pay increases for the following year, just completely no surprises. What I wanted to do by that action was to get them out of the position of infantilization and non-responsibility and remind them that we are a fate sharing vessel here and that we are all in this together.

Once again, the willingness of these principals to share information with faculty members and provide details of initiatives on the horizon is believed by them to create an atmosphere of transparency and openness. The one exception to this was Principal F whose situation was quite unique:

I inherited a board structure where we had a faculty member sitting at the board table and a faculty member on all three board committees which is a great concept, but I found myself last year at our finance committee meeting relaying information about decisions on organizational structure that I would be changing that my admin team did not even know. I had a staff member who was hearing this before anyone else, and that did not sit very well with me. At the board table being able to have truly open conversations, we have an in camera session with the board, I leave but there was not that capacity to have those discussions with faculty sitting there.

Though this removal of a faculty member from Board status created some challenges, it was somewhat understood by the faculty members because of the sensitivity of the information and common understanding of appropriate knowledge in a specific situation. However, even when dealing with sensitive issues such as budget and financing, being transparent with the faculty is important to help them understand the lay of the land within the school community. This provides a perspective for their own comfort level as to where the school is and what this might
mean for their employment. The end result is a trust that is built on the hope that teachers will
never be blind-sided with either information or financial challenges of the school and that there
is always the opportunity for dialogue. This dialogue is equally important when it comes to
dealing with student discipline issues or those involving parents. As Principal A reflects, a lack
of transparency or a chance for discussion can create negative faculty conversations and actually
disrupt the trust building that new principals find important:

   I certainly think that an impediment [to building trust] that you can control is one where
you don’t have a lack of consultation or lack of discussion around a decision, especially if
it’s an issue between a teacher and a parent.

One of the key insights of the principals is the realization that there will not always be an
agreement between the themselves and the faculty member, but providing that there is an
explanation and transparency throughout the process, all parties can believe that the intention of
the outcome is to support all in involved. As it is suggested, responses or decisions that are
unexpected are those that erode trust that has been built.

   The broad perspective of being transparent and providing communication is also believed
to be important by the principals when it comes to dealing with department heads. Department
heads have taken on a position of leadership and with that come higher expectations on both
sides. Principals expect certain things from them and, on the flipside, department heads expect
to have more input around information and a heightened awareness of what is going on from the
principal’s perspective. Principal B believes that, just as with the faculty at large, transparency
of expectations is vital:

   By meeting with [department heads] regularly, going over some of the things that are
expected of them and then informally asking them to take on some duties and
responsibilities that would be beyond what you would ask a classroom teacher whether it be supervision, whether it be assisting with certain things, whether it be drafting policy on certain items that’s what I think there should be.

Though there is the reality of remuneration for taking on added responsibilities, the building of trust with the department head is a priority for new principals because these individuals are in many ways conduits to their department members from a curriculum standpoint. Providing a clear set of expectations for them and being transparent in supporting their ideas and initiatives within their departments is paramount to building trust with these elevated faculty members.

The department heads also are key players in the implementation of initiatives within the school and hence these principals see their role as extremely important. Transparency and clear communication are important between the principals and the department heads and Principal F articulates this best:

The Head of Guidance was retiring and so there was an opportunity there, but she also was particularly proud of the department and owned it. There hadn’t been a lot of accountability and she was exceptionally anxious and I spent a lot of time, ups and downs with her, and there were times when we came to some really tough impasses where I think she thought I was pushing things forward … There were monumental moments where I was like oh this is going to blow up, so one of the things that we talked about was what the name of the new department would be … She was fine up until the name and that’s when she lost it with the name. We were going to avoid it and send communication to parents and I finally said to her sorry, I pulled the Principal’s card here, and I think the trust went down and I think she understood over time, I think it was also her letting go of it too.
Principal F’s comments echo the thoughts of the other principals in that there are some initiatives that need to be implemented and being honest with department heads specifically is important to building trust because everything is transparent. As department heads go back to their department, they know what the priorities are and what other issues are less significant. The principals suggest that being a good communicator and transparent does not always ensure that everyone will agree with the principal, but it does maintain a mutual respect and a sense of trust that a department head can agree to disagree with the principal. A principal must understand all of the issues that are at play when there are challenges and show patience, understanding, but also a clear direction, which all show a sense of competency in handling the portfolio. This provides the opportunity for feedback and input, but it also means that if something must change for the betterment of the school community, then the end product can be a shared evolution to something better.

Within this needed focus of transparency and communication all seven of the principals suggest that they must also provide reasons and justification for their decisions. On top of just letting people know what the needs of the school are and where it may be heading, providing a rationale for the decisions they are making builds trust. Providing a rationale is not seen by the principals as catering to the faculty’s wants and desires. Instead it is seen as a respect for their professionalism and an understanding that when the faculty hears and understands the reasons for such a direction, cynicism and negative talk will be minimized and they will be more on board and be positive actors in the implementation of it. Principal B reflects on his own practice: people need to feel that they can invest time in you or they can invest sharing certain things with you. More importantly they should feel a level of support that will come from your office even though sometimes there are decisions that are made where they
question if there was any reason behind it. … They are conscientious; they know how things work, they appreciate some of the bigger issues surrounding decisions, and so I think it’s important that I give the reason.

The education of today’s professional teachers is quite extensive and the principals recognize that to ignore this fact and treat faculty members like peons who simply follow directions is disrespectful and counter-productive to building trust. By including them in the explanation of the initiative and respecting their professionalism, the principals, as articulated by Principal B, feel that putting an explanation behind their ideas reinforces their importance and builds a relationship that is built on respect which with work and effort transcends into trust. An interaction where the leader explains him/herself would have been far more confrontational fifty or sixty years ago when most decisions were top-down and bosses were not questioned. Today, these principals see this type of interaction as only having positive benefits and building trust. In fact, these principals seem to appreciate the opportunity to explain themselves and be challenged by the queries. Principal C provides further support for this perspective of principals when she reflects on dealing with serious discipline issues:

I don’t like to send information like that on email, so that’s why it’s a face-to-face, a few minute meeting before school starts, or at the end of the day or at lunch. I think that it’s just keeping them informed and being transparent with the process at each step of the way and just not saying okay well here it is.

Once again, the principals suggest that it is not always about finding consensus, but rather talking people through the process and helping them come to an understanding of the decision. Though it may not bring agreement, it once again respects the professionalism of the faculty and
goes a long way to building trust. In a concrete way revolving around curriculum and budgeting, Principal A adds a final insight to this point when reflecting about capital expenditures:

> it comes back to the funding and pieces there, for example why did we build the library before we built the gym that we desperately need? There are really good explanations but I think those things come back to the communication around the why’s and the reasoning there and again just like the financial piece and even sometimes even the pedagogical piece. People champion for their own passion within the school … Those types of things if they are not explained brings up those kinds of questions.

Providing explanations and updates are important for all in the school to live with a little less anxiety and it provides another example of competency not only in the data being delivered, but in the explanation to the faculty. Much like a family, a school community is invested in what is happening in and around it and principals feel that when teachers are in the loop, the whole community is far less stressed. The principals feel that by keeping everyone in the loop, the community is tighter, faculty members are more invested in the school and trust is built.

However, one of the caveats to providing an opportunity to question decisions and ask for the rationale, is that the principals need to communicate at times with constructive criticism, and as they are honest about their decisions, they must also be honest with their faculty members. Interestingly enough, when done properly, faculty are not put off by this, but rather it can be means to continue to build trust, perhaps in a more intimate way.

*Providing constructive feedback* can often be challenging for anyone in a leadership position. However, four of the principals in this study feel that it is an opportunity to build trust in a professional manner. Much like there is an understanding that faculty members will ask for reasons behind decisions, the principals feel that part of this exchange is to provide direct
feedback to a group or individual in private when needed. Principal E, when planning for a new hire and amongst the expectations of an individual, needed to be honest and dash some hopes:

Everything that I do as a head of school with regard to the admin team of the school is about trying to be as transparent as I can be … I had a conversation with a senior person and that senior person wants to be the go-to person. I said I need to spread it across to others. That was difficult, but I thought I was going to need one or two right hand people but I think I might go to three or possibly four.

Obviously these discussions that are intended to increase transparency and improve communications are not always received well. This is because these conversations may inform individuals that what they see in themselves is not what others see, or that the person’s hopes for attaining a position are not to be. Though these are tough conversations, five of the seven principals believe that the honesty in the midst of this adversity for the individual is a trust building exercise. Disappointing people is not the news that any person in leadership wants to deliver. In situations like these, the principals feel that honesty and transparency is of the utmost importance to building trust. Even though there is some disappointment up front to a faculty member, the principals feel that the understanding that may take some time to come to, is far better than misleading an individual or setting them up for failure. Sometimes principals have these personal discussions with faculty members in order to clarify their thinking and provide justification to the individual who is not getting a position. To further support these insights, Principal F provided a scenario that demonstrates a rationale to a decision as well as an honest letting down of one of her faculty members:

I need to be honest with you that something has come up and I need to let you know, just to get your perspective. I said. “I’m in a really difficult situation because I have
someone who’s interviewed our first round of candidates, including you, who is an internal person who is really wondering whether she shouldn’t have put her hat in the ring and really it’s a complex situation and I just need to let you know. She listened and she was okay, seemingly okay, and she went away and I thought okay. I said this person hasn’t actually applied yet, but is now saying that maybe they’d like to. Two days later she asked if she could come and see me and she was really angry. She said I have had time to think about this and I am actually furious. It’s not right, it’s not the right process and the way I sort of worked on it is I listened and I said I completely understand which is why I spoke to you. I don’t have any excuses but I also said you have to look at this ... I have to make the best possible decisions for the institution and if I look at this I actually think that having this person apply, if I don’t let it happen, I don’t think I’m making a responsible decision in terms of the school.

All of the principals acknowledged that they are capable of making mistakes and, as one principal does in the above, owning up to the mistakes and providing a rationality to what needs to be done in the best interest of the school is the best way to handle these situations. By explaining the whole situation and not expecting total agreement, the principal felt that the honesty would best serve all of the individuals involved. This type of interaction and handling of the situation is an echo of the sentiments of all principals interviewed for this study. The premise by which they all operate is one that is based on transparency and honest communication so as to continually build trust even in times of disappointment.

4.2.3 Sharing Information and Decision-making

When a new principal is conscious of building trust and minimizing micropolitics within their school community, they suggest that it becomes an active idea within a school community
rather than just a token word that is thrown around. One of the most poignant ways that these principals build trust is through their practice of sharing decision-making or at the very least ensuring that some collaboration and opportunity for feedback takes place. Six of the seven principals reflected in a theoretical way about the positives of including faculty in the decision-making process. In many ways their comments reflect contemporary expectations of leaders:

Being transparent or open in terms of the decision making that goes on and having people involved in a collaborative process around all of the different aspects of the school whether it’s input on the Spring Café for example, or concerns that parents have [is important]. It’s kind of being open and transparent and actually having staff be collaborative through the process and building the trust through the continuous input.

(Principal C)

This ability to bring others in to share in the decision making process is an on-going process. It is not the type of initiative that happens once a year or builds trust specific to one event. Six of the principals articulate that collaboration and sharing becomes a school process and part of the fabric of the professionalism in the school. Principal B shares the flip-side to this insight:

Any type of change that comes forward will affect people’s trust and it’s ironic because you’re told over and over again when you take a principal’s course or a master’s course that you are change agents and you’re always trying to do things to benefit people right across the board but it’s interesting the moment you try to change something, even if it’s an idea to support the development and the growth of a teacher they are always looking at you sideways saying what’s next, what’s coming next.

This commentary provides an insight into the tenuousness of the trust building that takes place within the school between the principal and faculty members, especially around pedagogy
because it is so sensitive to the teacher’s sense of self. If the collaboration is done well and truly is part of the process rather than just a façade, teachers can also come to understand that there are times when decisions cannot be shared. This is not a matter of exclusion, but may be a timing issue or something dealing with a specific individual rather than the school at large. Principal F reflects on the overall picture of collaborating:

I think its collegiality, its collaboration where possible. Sometimes there are decisions where you can’t always collaborate on, but it’s building a culture of I think I would almost say ownership not so much but everybody is a part of that organization. To me that’s huge and I have found that’s been enormously helpful and it’s also the way I work. I really feel strongly about it. I don’t sit in this chair and say I’m the boss. I tend to try not to say ‘I’ a lot because I think that in itself can really change things up, change the dynamics a lot.

Understanding the power of language and authentically involving faculty in the decision-making process is important. One of the important insights of Principal F pertinent to this area is the focus on language. If it truly is to be a collaborative community, then the language becomes focused on “we” or “our” statements versus “I” or “my” comments. This is part of the on-going investment of this leadership style and it can pay huge dividends when it comes time for implementation because the community at large is on-board with it because they have had input.

When a school community collectively looks to implement a new initiative and members are supportive because they have been part of the process, all of the principals believe this is a result of the trust built. Principal G reflected on establishing his school’s vision and the buy-in that resulted:
When we had the visioning exercise, I made sure that a third of the spots on that committee [were for faculty] and the futures committee of forty was reserved for faculty and I get them to pick who they want … I went through this whole future business; we came up with five priorities. I do believe, I took my time, I took two years consulted and then eventually everyone was screaming give us the vision. That’s where you want them to be and then you come up with five pillars …

When the faculty is involved in the process, the end result is a decision that the collective can take ownership of and truly support. When the faculty is excluded, then there can be a tendency to nod and when the meeting is over, go about the business of teaching without buying in to the larger community efforts and only look after the individual classroom. Principal C reflects on her own challenge of developing a homework policy that provides a similar insight:

It’s a very new environment for me and certainly I don’t know everything and I look to them for direction. I kind of take all of the pieces of how it was done and then I formulate that and throw it out there as a draft like an assessment and evaluation policy. The homework policy is a huge issue here and I think part of it is that the girls are overachievers. They tend to do more homework, like copying things and making things perfect so we need to do a whole piece on that. We have to start re-looking at our policy and so it’s good to have a draft and to have people critique it … because then you’re going to get a quality product that people value.

The “quality product that people value” is an important phrase because the principals feel that if it is a top-down mandate that is not vetted through a process, then it becomes somebody else’s idea for which individuals feel they need not take any internal investment. However, if an individual teacher has invested time and energy into the decision-making process, then he/ she is
more willing to take ownership of the initiative. This is a builder of trust in the principals’ eyes because it builds community.

A school community’s greatest concern is for its students and if this is at the heart of decisions and initiatives then each faculty member can trust in the decisions and the process that he/she is involved because everyone is on the same page. Principal D reflects on this insight quite poignantly when talking about school development:

There are a couple of extra pieces that I’ve added on to since I came here. I’ve been very much let’s have focus groups - what do you see in our school?, what do you want from our school?, and it’s been a real opportunity for me to try to develop … You tell people this is our strategic plan you are going to get a lot less than if you ask people what should be on our strategic plan and you are going to earn that trust. I think again you earn trust by showing that you are actually listening to the answers and you’re changing your opinion.

This involvement of others is essential to establishing a sense of trust in the principals’ eyes and it is enhanced through this process when dealing with department heads as well. Principal C’s comments on how department heads are included in budget decisions are part of her usual decision-making process that includes others. In this case, however, it is a more significant decision and her leaders take on a role by meeting with their department members and collaborate and then the department head works with the administration to work on their budget to implement the department’s goals:

In budget I guess it might be more like a department head … I think that that’s where the collaborative process is, where it’s shared between the various different teachers. For example in Science we’re looking at updating and you know trying to create a resource
for all of the classes, for the Physics, the Chemistry and so really what’s happening is everybody is having a go at the resource booklet to see what they need and then if it’s not in one book, then they’re going out and they are looking at different resources. That’s a collaborative process, although the Head of Middle School, who also has the science portfolio would be managing that so it’s a process of consultation with them. Everybody has a part of it because some have been here from the beginning and some are teaching it for the very first time and … so we’re all in it together.

In this scenario, where this sharing happens, trust is built at multiple levels. Ultimately it is a process that establishes trust between the faculty and its principal because the role modeling and culture starts with the leader. Working together when hiring a new teacher who will be the best for the school is a challenge and extremely important. This task is an easy and necessary one to share with department heads if the principal is to build trust with these individuals. Once again, there is discussion about the final decision and it may come down to selecting candidate number two versus number one, but these reasons are openly discussed and everyone involved in the process is part of the decision. This is true even if there is a debate between two candidates as the process is important with regards to building trust as Principal D suggests:

I see consensus building as being a huge skill and I think knowing when consensus is not going to be reached is equally as important. I think our job is probably to try to be wise; to know the things we cannot change and those we can. I think consensus build as far as you can, but also be ready to be the lonely guy making a decision. I think again to your area of research in terms of trust building that’s a huge one.

There is a reality that a final decision needs to happen at some point and all educators recognize that fact. From the principals’ perspective, if the faculty feels involved in the process and there
is an authentic opportunity for feedback, the trust is based on a final decision that takes all ideas into account and it is based on what is best for the school community. When there are positive feelings about final decisions, the principals believe that micropolitics are minimized and a positivity prevails in the school community. In this sense, the trust built through mitigating the negative impact of micropolitics, leads to a friendlier and more personable school, the principals believe. This positive environment, in their minds, is also more attractive to private school parents and their children.

4.3 Building Better Relationships with Faculty Members

Positive relationships within a high school environment seem to be an active goal that the principals strive to achieve through the building trust. This is not surprising in that contemporary understandings of schools reflect the need for positive relationships as is suggested by Fuller (2000) when he refers back to Burns (1978) and his idea that emphasizes the reciprocity between leaders and followers. Leadership involves attention to the needs of followers not only in the effort to mobilize them in some direction … [and that] … conflict is necessary to transformation, but harmonious adjustment is necessary to sustaining operations. Leadership must mediate between these. To lead means to accept, even welcome conflict, and to find ways to shape and contain conflict to useful ends. (p. 202)

In any professional or work environment it seems logical that confrontation may occur when implementing new initiatives or seeking improvement. This does not mean that confrontation must carry with it negative connotations. In fact, to move forward, disagreement and exchanging of ideas is essential. That said, however, individuals within the same work environment must learn to deal with differing perspectives and then move on in the most positive of ways and this
especially true within school environments. Principals, new and old, recognize this fact and the need for all to come together and work to a common vision. Ryan (2006) supports this and using research by Gronn (2002), Pounder et al. (1995) and Spillane et al. (2001), posits that “schools improve not necessarily as a result of individual people doing remarkable things in isolation, but as a consequence of a variety of people working together in many different ways and roles, using the multitudes of resources that are available to them” (p. 78). It takes the collective efforts from everyone in the educational system to improve student achievement. When this is the reality within a high school environment only wonderful things can happen for the students involved and it clear why the principals in this research seek to build positive relationships with their faculty members. From the interview data collected, the principals suggest that by focusing on supporting faculty members, truly listening and hearing them, and finally being visible for them in the school community positive relationships can be built with faculty members so as to build trust.

4.3.1 Faculty Support

The trust developed through a focus on building positive relationships with faculty members is enhanced in the eyes of all seven of the principals in this study by ensuring that teachers within their schools feel supported. This support is identified in a variety of ways, but most specifically through providing moral support, providing a structured environment with regards to the students, reducing teachers’ anxiety, and supporting teachers who have made mistakes and when dealing with parents. One of the key roles that most of these principals see themselves fulfilling this notion of supporter is being a champion of the teachers and providing moral support. Though this may seem to be too idealistic, the principals feel that it goes a long way to building positive relationships and trust. Principal B puts it in perspective:
Making sure that I take some time to ask how they are doing and ensuring that they know that I appreciate what they are doing [is important]. I think sometimes when you’re running a school with so much going on we forget to thank people who work here and I try as much as I can to do that at every occasion, every opportunity because they also want reassurance that you’re satisfied with the work that they are putting in.

Sharing appreciation for people and the job that they do is important. Like any other profession or career, receiving complimentary feedback from a boss is welcomed and so too with teachers. Schools tend to be extremely busy places and often times this busyness can consume those in the community. The principals feel that to take moments to step back and share their appreciation with faculty members is a key to developing relationships and trust. This is because there will be times for tough discussion because of something that has gone awry, but a teacher who has heard the good things from a principal will be far more accepting of constructive criticism when they know the good things are being observed as well. This illustrates leadership competency in that the principal is able to identify strengths and weaknesses of individuals and can effectively dialogue with individuals to address the positives and areas in need of improvement. The extreme to this notion comes from Principal G who needed to set a tone of change and reflected, “there’s one guy that I singled out and yelled at him first, I’m taller and I’m also the boss, we haven’t had a squeak out of him since then because he’s used to doing the yelling but I yelled first.” Though this was not a standard way of interaction, the realization that life within a school is not always ideal is important. It lays credence to the fact that principals have a tough challenge in finding that fine line between working for change and keeping everyone pulling in the same direction. The tough interactions need to be balanced with the deft touches of appreciation. It is important to note that these thank you comments are not just tokens handed
out twice in the school year. The principals are clear that this interaction is ongoing and deliberate. It cannot be seen as a façade but needs to come from the heart and a place of true caring. Principal D asserts that during some of the more challenging times of the year this moral support can go a very long way to smoothing out the rough waters. An example of his moral support came in the form of creativity and his assertion that it can do a lot to provide the moral support needed for faculty even if it is not a direct word:

If you can show up with a novel idea, we had poetry month here in April and everybody has poetry month in April, it’s national poetry month and April was a tough … I started posting poems into one of our conferences ... colleagues started to post poems and then the boys started to post poems ... You sense something needs to be done and try something new, so if you can pull off a few little tweaks and surprises like that in the right times, you’re showing everybody that I know and I’m earning the trust and credibility by addressing it somehow.

Sometimes the moral support that a principal provides for his/her faculty members comes from the strangest of places. It may not be overt comments but rather a subtle understanding of where teachers are at and providing the needed support. This is even more important when teachers are dealing with loss as Principal F indicates, “I think the impediments that we don’t think about are the surprises and the unexpected things like basic day to day life issues that come up with your faculty. So this year we’ve had several faculty deal with the death of parents. They’re at that age now where they are dealing with ailing parents, or ill parents and that’s emotional and it’s a struggle and it’s hard to manage.” Though no words can ever heal the sense of loss through death, the principals feel that being there and providing an ear for the individual and a support structure at the school can go a long way to being a moral support, building relationships, and
ultimately building trust. This caring attitude and a willingness to support one’s colleagues also need to be provided by the principal in terms of the school environment.

*Providing a structured environment* for the orderly operation of an efficient school is seen by five of the seven principals as another key area to support faculty members. Once again, support like this is felt to build relationships and trust between the principal and his/her faculty members because it is another illustration that the principal supports the teacher’s efforts in the classroom and that the priority is the classroom. These principals feel that an effectively run school discipline-wise demonstrates competency and helps build trust with teachers. Principal B posits:

I will earn the trust of teachers, the trust of students, the trust of parents if we’re able to operate and give everybody an opportunity to do what they need to do. For example, for teachers, ensuring that the code of discipline is enforced and allowing them to do their jobs so that they are not bogged down with worrying about things like discipline or classroom management. [This is] because the consequences are enforced and if there are any issues with a student in class teachers have to feel confident that the administration is going to support them.

The principals feel that when a teacher is able to focus on the important part of education and that is teaching the students without worrying about being interrupted or dealing with troublesome students, then trust is built with faculty because support is there for them. This does not mean that teachers do not have to deal with student issues and it does not mean that teachers send any problem that they have to an administrator. What it does indicate is that there is an understanding in the building that education is the primary focus and that the expectation is that everyone in the community is on board with this. In fairness to the whole community, this set of
expectations is also important for faculty members to buy into and there is a sense of professional discipline that needs to be maintained. Principal C, in reflecting on a specific disciplinary issue, reveals that for the collective, the importance of ensuring that teachers who are struggling feel support is critical. However, should necessary changes not come to fruition action needs to be taken:

In regards to the staff in particular, disciplinary issues, I can say this particular year has been very challenging. As you know with one individual, and I think the process that we went through was effective in terms of providing support. I can say that the teacher was aware that we bent over backwards, and you were part of that solution, where you had somebody watch you, and critique you and give you feedback, give you resources, give you supplies, have you go out and visit some other place, get more advice and more feedback, so there were about two or three different things that went on throughout.

Though it is never an enjoyable process to go through, teachers who are not doing things right need to be brought in-line with expectations. Interestingly enough, fellow teachers, providing that support and time have been given for the changes to be made, respect a principal who does what is in the best interest of the school and the students. In transparent processes like this and one that reflects a belief in a well-disciplined school, the principals believe that trust is actually built with other faculty members. Being on the same page about what is important within in a school community, specifically when dealing with discipline, is seen by the principals to be a builder of trust with faculty members. There are also other factors that play a role with regards to building trust through a principal’s support of his/ her faculty members

Throughout the school year the principals believe that there are is an ebb and flow that all school communities feel. There are times when the teachers are fresh and full of energy and
times when the faculty at large is stressed and feeling the pressures of the world. Principals A to G all felt that their ability to ease stressful times for teachers was a builder of trust because of the ability to empathize with the teachers and provide professional development where needed. This empathy for teachers who are in the classroom comes from a realization that teaching is a very difficult job when trying to meet their own expectations as well as those of their students, parents and even their principals. Initially, setting up an environment that is conducive to supporting professional development is essential to reducing anxiety. Principal D provides a philosophical understanding of this need:

I think as school leaders our job is to create the conditions for the adults in our school to replicate what we want them to create for the children. This means you have high expectations, which means you offer lots and lots of support, which means you differentiate what support is required by what the condition of the learner is. Learning is a very risky business for everybody and I think we see that with kids and I think we have to recognize that with the adults in our school too.

From a philosophical perspective, a school needs to create a trusting and safe environment for its students to learn. As Principal D suggests, this nurturing environment is equally important for the teachers to learn. By paying attention to this necessary environment, it helps ease the stress and anxiety when it comes to new initiatives that are created. In so doing these principals feel that trust is built and stronger professional relationships are established because of this support. This sense of professional support and development is echoed by Principal F who is quite in-tune with the anxiety teachers feel around new initiatives. As well as providing words of comfort, Principal F speaks for all them when she reflects:
I’m really mindful of how we can support them not so much with the content as much as with the change factor. For example, I have a couple, one department leader and one leader of IT, who I have seen really struggle when people come at [them]. There’s an internal panic and they react in a way that I actually internally am uncomfortable with, and so I actually sent them to a great program through Harvard on mindfulness and being an effective leader.

Addressing anxiety creating issues with leaders of the faculty also creates a boost in trust levels the principals believe. Rather than feeling like one mistake or an area of need will be the end of opportunities, teachers feel a sense of support recognize the chance to attend to their area of growth. This is important to building a community that is caring and one that fosters development and education.

Providing a safe and caring environment as well as words of wisdom to help teachers’ professional development and sanity, helps build a relationship between the principal and the teachers. In so doing, principals feel they are mentors and through this they build trust by sharing their experiences and expertise. This mentorship also plays a role in how teachers survive through the tough times of year. On top of the mentorship, the principals acknowledge that their understanding of the difficult times of year goes a long way to helping ease the difficulty and reducing the anxiety inherent in these time periods:

There are times of the year that are really brutal [such as early] November 22\textsuperscript{nd} where you feel that someone will come in and say “this is it, I’m leaving, we’re all quitting because it’s a nightmare”. You have to also be prepared to ebb and flow with everybody and wherever possible you have to let them know that it’s a rough time. Sometimes you have to say I’m really sorry but it is, so November is one, February is one and May is a
different kind, it’s just this insanity, it’s just so busy that if someone comes in with a new idea you just want to say please don’t come near me until July … I think a lot of it is just frame of mind. (Principal F)

By providing a calming hand and helping others realize that it is stressful for everyone helps ensure that nobody feels like they are on an island. Helping individual teachers understand the ebb and flow of the school year and ensuring that they realize everyone is challenged, brings a sense of calm and collectivism to the issue. The principals identify the fundamental need to understand the tenor of the school year as imperative to providing the support that teachers need to feel less anxious and stressed. It does not mean that the stress will disappear, but a principal’s calming influence can go a long way in relieving the tension at a certain point. This confidence during these time periods can also be trust-building because faculty recognizes that the leader will help get them through. This is even true when dealing with department heads who are often part of decisions that can be difficult. Principals see themselves once again helping to deflect some of the pressure and, by doing so, ease the anxiety levels. Principal A reflected on an experience where a teacher’s contract was not renewed at year’s end and the department head was caught in the middle:

the amount of anxiety that that caused in that person’s particular department was really evident and in that case the department head had actually come to speak to me and said “I don’t know, I feel that I’m being ostracized a bit and somehow they think this is my fault and my doing”. The first step that I took was to have a good long discussion with that department head ... [This was] because the way the circumstances were she had just been promoted to this position and there had already been a couple of changes that she was trying to implement that were all good but that were causing a bit of some anxiety … I
talked to that individual and told her that I would let her department head know, but that was really so that the rest of the department of course didn’t think that it was her doing. By explaining the situation to the department head and keeping her informed, the initial steps decreased the anxiety. However, in this situation Principal A took full responsibility for the decision and provides and insight into the principal’s role. Where possible and appropriate, taking pressure off of department heads with respect to personnel moves can help the individual in their own leadership role. In this situation, refocusing the spotlight on a different person allowed the department head to continue to work on her initiatives that were already causing some anxiety. By taking the other pressure off, the principal showed competency in handling the politics of the school environment and was able to build a team mentality and ensure that the teacher felt that the principal was trustworthy because he/she would provide this needed support.

A teacher’s career is never one without a mistake or an unnerving teacher/parent interaction and most of the principals observe that this is another area where they can reduce teacher anxiety and ultimately build relationships and trust. Principal B, however, indicates that, depending on the issue, this can cause a major setback in trust building: “It’s almost like the father-son, father-daughter relationship … where you trust that they do one thing and then they don’t, you never trust them again, that’s what it is.” This extreme view of the trust in relationships between principal and faculty members is not shared across the board and in fairness recognizes significant indiscretions. At the most common level, principals realize that teacher’s professionalism is at risk each and every day as their actions are under the microscope. This is the reality of teaching and no apologies can be made for it. However, like every other human being, teachers have their good days and they have their bad ones as well. During some of the bad days, teachers can make poor choices, much like parents, and challenging issues are
created. It is during these times that the principals interviewed recognize that their support for the teachers is crucial. This is not to say that the teacher is always in the right and never wrong. However, a teacher needs to feel that errors are atoneable and they are never sacrificial lambs for parent frustrations. Principal A’s personal reflections speak volumes:

I think that’s probably the biggest anxiety that a lot of teachers have, and that’s not to say that 50 percent of the time parents are right in terms of their concern. I think it’s the way in which you’re dealing with that … but it’s always telling the parents your first step should be the teacher.

Giving teachers the knowledge that they will be supported as well as providing them with an opportunity to deal with issues one on one with parents and/ or students first, goes a long way to building trust the principals believe. Rather than escalating all issues immediately to the principal’s office, following a protocol where teachers are able to handle most of their issues independently decreases anxiety. That is not to say that the conversation will not be challenging, but knowing that it is placed at an appropriate level eases a teacher’s concern. Principal F clarifies this nicely:

the most important side is the day to day classroom, teaching. Again you have to trust your teachers, you have to find a way to support them if there’s an issue and if there is an issue then obviously as an administrator you have to follow it up and you see it through but, at least at the surface, you have to support the teacher first and I think that goes a long way.

At least initially, a principal has to give the benefit of the doubt to his her teacher when an issue arises. Like a team or a family, the principals see themselves sticking with their faculty, at least initially, and they believe this builds trust and relationships. This provides scenarios where
teachers can approach their principal when they have made mistakes and ask for advice because
the trust and level of support is there. Furthermore, when issues arise that are clearly not the
school’s fault, then teacher and principal can work together to help parents in a responsible way.
Principal F shares her perspective in the following:

I will support my faculty, but I need to get all the information. My open door can be to
the faculty, but it also has to be to parents at least to do fact finding and our parents are
our clients. It’s not to suggest that I’m going to go with whatever the parent … I think
our parents need a lot of education about what in fact we’re doing to help kids as opposed
to handing them a silver platter and actually do say, “No here’s why.” Those are difficult
conversations, but if we don’t keep our door open to them then we’re not going to help
ourselves.

Sometimes parents cannot get their heads around what goes on in a school and from a very
subjective viewpoint, they cannot imagine their son or daughter creating a fuss or not working
hard. As a result, when teachers and principals have trust in each other, they can attempt to build
an honest bridge with parents and openly discuss the challenges the child is having. This only
comes to fruition, from the principals’ perspective, if teachers feel they will be supported when
issues arise.

4.3.2 Hearing and Listening

Further to supporting faculty members via moral support, providing a structured
environment with regards to the students, reducing teachers’ anxiety, and supporting teachers
who have made mistakes when dealing with parents in order to building trust, principals who are
able to hear at times and truly listen at others feel that they build trust quite well with their
faculty members. In fact from the data collected from all of the participants, this is one of the
most significant skills that a principal believes he/she needs to build trust with his/her faculty. These seven principals recognize that there is a difference between hearing people and truly listening to them. Distinguishing between the two and knowing when to do so is an important skill that these principals need to have. Though none of these principals ever confessed to being rude, they were quite open about the need to allow some things to roll off their backs as well as have the ability to recognize which individuals were promoting their own agendas and whose perspectives needed to be taken with a grain of salt. First and foremost, however, the *ability to create a truly open door feeling* in the principal’s office was the essential first step in building trust with faculty members. Principal B believes that the faculty needs to know and be reminded that they are welcome to come in for a discussion about all issues and concerns:

> I think one of the things I do on a regular basis is I try to meet with staff as a group but more important individually in formal and informal sessions. I also open up the lines of communication and dialogue. I always preface by letting them know that I’m not afraid to have a difficult conversation … I tell them I hope by the end of the conversation you will understand, you may not necessarily agree with it, but you may understand my thinking on it so this is what it is.

The invitation is not meant to insinuate that everyone will agree with everything and that the school environment will be utopian, but rather the invitation to discuss creates an environment where people can professionally agree and/or disagree about issues with a feeling of security.

The definition of “open door” is something far more than the office door being open. In fact, it has nothing to do with the principal’s door being open and far more to do with the idea that the principal needs to be present and available for discussion at all times and for all people. Principal F reinforces this when she comments that “I’ve said to my staff, I have an open door,
my door is always open figuratively as I know it’s closed a lot this term in particular, it is a closed door term. I meet with every staff member, but I don’t think one is more important than the other. I think in both cases they are opportunities for listening.” Though this idea and reality can consume a lot of time, it is one of the most important agenda items that a new principal must have if he/ she is going to build the trust with faculty members. Being available for others can be a drain on time resources, but it is a must for these principals to carve out their relationships with their faculty and show competency as a good listener. Success in building the open door policy ultimately is seen for these principals when school colleagues share with them more than just their professional lives. This does not mean that all teachers will do so, but it is a signal that people are willing to converse with the principal and that the open door policy is taking shape. Principal D eloquently describes this success in the following:

It’s when they begin to trust you with matters that are of more importance than what page of that book they’re on or what process. It’s when they bring their lives into that trust to you and we are central figures for whatever reasons. I think people are drawn to talk to us about things. When you’re called from the hospital because a baby is born or you’re called from the hospital because a parent has just died, that’s the same thing; that’s a deep level of trust.

For new principals, creating the opportunities for discussion is extremely important. Whether this is articulated under the cliché of “open door policy”, having conversations with faculty members about any and all issues builds trust and an environment where faculty members are willing to share their opinions. As the new principal begins to develop this trust and the relationships that evolve, he/ she will also have to come to an understanding of when to listen and when to truly hear.
With an open door policy, it is no surprise that a principal might be inundated with private conversations that are intended to push some individual agendas or attempts by the outspoken ones to have their opinions and perspectives valued over others. Furthermore, during these conversations, principals must become adept at wading through information that is vented from frustration and that which is a real issue within the school’s community. The principals in this research address these concerns from a variety of perspectives. Principal B feels that as a new principal it is important for him to remember that:

a teacher by nature, especially a very good teacher will have an activist side to them and that comes out in what they do and I think part of that activism is always challenging the structure and the institution and also questioning and always being a little how should I put it, weary and leery of anything that’s coming from the admin office. I think that’s always again a teacher, the nature of the beast. It’s good in a way because it adds a lot to the classroom experience but on the other hand you do have someone that will question whether or not decisions are made in their best interest.

Recognizing the culture of teachers and their distinct understanding of their profession is important because teachers very much believe in what they do and will often challenge new initiatives. This is not because they fear change, but because the latest and greatest is not always the best for classrooms. As Principal B suggests above, the positive of this is that a principal witnesses the passion in the classroom with the understanding that initiatives will face professional challenges. To be fair though, there are also individual teachers, just like those in our daily lives, who will never be happy and will always find fault with something. This is true in school environments and Principal G’s understanding of the teacher dynamic pushes him to find a happy medium. He believes that part of building trust
is getting used to my respecting their conservatism on one hand, but their getting used to my operating style. If it’s going to be a learning institution, I have to try stuff … you are always introducing new material and you are always getting people to stretch toward something and that’s true about running a school.

Recognizing the need to work with faculty members rather than at them, goes a long way to building the trust the principals suggest is needed. By supporting each other, being open to new ideas and at the same time recognizing the challenges of change, helps establish a community that is willing to talk and hear each other and ultimately work from a perspective of trust.

Once again, there is a never a utopia, but the participants all agreed that a principal’s committed attitude of working to get there with his/ her faculty members is needed. In order to do this, however, principals must be willing to persevere when the naysayers put up the road blocks and support but not give in to frustrations when appropriate. Principal E’s insights into this dilemma stems from a discussion with a faculty member who coaches basketball:

speaking with a third year teacher who happens to be a basketball coach who says well I can’t compete, and I said well you’re not supposed to compete, they’re a bigger school. You do your best and you try to get to a championship and you try to be genuine. You try to hear him out and feel for him.

For Principal E, the answers are not always found in responding to a frustration or a wish for better players. In this situation the best option for Principal E was to listen, support, and help the coach realize that there is a bigger reason to playing the sport and the season than always winning, and that much is discovered in the process rather than just the product. In a different way this same response is often needed often with department heads who are vying for budget money. At times the explanation for more budget money comes at the expense of another
department. Principal A’s experiences here provide a valuable insight: “When you’ve got departments who are competing for funding or time, the social science teachers think the gym teachers don’t do anything, the gym teachers think the arts people get all the money and again I think a lot of that comes back to communication around how decisions are made and again that’s not going to make everybody happy by any means, but at least the justification for why certain decisions are made is out there.” A new principal must realize that at times some faculty members will make judgements about others that are unfounded. This is not done to be maliciously, but rather in an attempt to improve their proposal to get better budget numbers. Weeding through this type of information and coming up with a response that is honest and fair is important in the principals’ eyes to earn trust with the faculty.

Last but not least, hearing all of the voices on staff is an important insight to remember for all new principals. If one is not careful, he/ she will only hear the most vocal, those with the largest issues to raise, or those pursuing their own agendas. When reflecting on their first year(s) as principal, those in this research study recognized that the ability to listen to all voices and put those that are loudest or first at their door in proper perspective was of the utmost importance. Principal D articulates this dilemma quite well and recognizes the trust built with the entire faculty when the loudest or first become just another valid opinion rather than the one that should rule:

It is a huge builder of credibility and a huge opportunity to build trust, particularly if you are able to have the wisdom to get past the loudest or first. It has been quoted back to me, something that I said once apparently at a meeting, which was pay attention to the kids in the back row pay attention, similarly to your teachers, pay attention to the quiet ones, pay attention to the ones that aren’t first in line for everything and consult with
them too because that will spread as well and that you’ve taken the time to have that conversation.

The message here from Principal D is important because he is not saying that the first and loudest are irrelevant or should be ignored, but rather part of the process is to seek out the quieter faculty members and ask for their insights and opinions. In many ways this shows an appreciation for all faculty members and their opinions and helps all others realize that the principal can be trusted to listen to all perspectives and is attempting to forge relationships with all in the school’s teaching community. Being aware of this temptation for new principals is something to be wary of because it can be one of the most immediate ways to lose any credibility and trust that has been built. Ensuring that all perspectives, to the best of one’s ability, are sought is key to building a trusting relationship with faculty members from the principal’s perspective.

From another perspective with regards to having selective hearing, stressful times of the year can be a time when the open door policy is used to its maximum. Principal F comments, there are times where I have learned even in short order and even in my job before this, there are times when its best to ride it out for a little bit, not necessarily to avoid it, but to pick your times … November, end of November into December is a really dangerous time to get into anything too intense and right now the week before March break is a real intense time. People are exhausted, they want to get finished, they’ll give you your feedback if you want it but it’s pretty brutal.

Each of the principals in some way talks about the ebb and flow of the school year, and these too are times when new principals feel they need to have their antennae finely tuned. Recognizing when faculty members are anxious, stressed, tired, or all of the above, is a time that the
principals suggest there is a need to hear everything with a grain of salt. To take everything personally or actually respond to every frustration would be an error. As Principal F says above, a new principal needs to be able to identify these times of year and patiently hear people out and try and soothe some of their challenges. This is not to be done condescendingly or patronizingly, but rather with a real sense of patience and understanding. Handling these ebb and flow crisis over the year provides an important trust building opportunity. Of significant assistance during this time period, the principals believe they also need to also listen to one, two, three, or even four faculty members who provide honest insight and objective commentary about the state of the school community. The principals in this research commented on the need for individuals, who may or may not be their friends, to provide feedback. These relationships are not based upon favoritism, but rather on a willingness to provide real and honest insights to each other. Principal E helps to put this concept into perspective:

I have some people that I have implicit trust in, longtime friends that are out there. I had a coffee yesterday, I schedule coffees with four people regularly, and this guy is supremely connected. Nobody knows that he’s my detective so to speak, and they would never know. The deal that we have is that he never mentions names, but he will tell me if there is anything that there’s a concern about. So I think that helps, and you need that, if you think that everything is rosy then you’re not a realist. There’s always things can be improved upon.

If these relationships are based on power or favouritism, then they will not work. In fact they can be the greatest cause of destruction of trust in a school community because these individuals will be seen to have the principal’s ear. These relationships do not need to be publicly acknowledged, but the principals interviewed identified the need to be able to trust these people
implicitly to be honest and to give them real feedback. In so doing these relationships and the information garnered can actually help build relationships with all of the faculty members because it becomes another way in which the principal is truly listening and hearing his/her school’s faculty members.

4.3.3 Visibility

In conjunction with principals who focus on their ability to hear at times and truly listen at others to build positive relationships, six of the seven principals articulated that a healthy school community with positive relationships between the principal and the faculty members is enhanced by a leader who is actively visible within the school. Each of the principals felt that it was important to be visible within the school and that this translated into an aspect of trust with faculty members. The principals expressed that one way of being visible within the school helped build trust and the morale in the community was raised. Part of the responsibility of a principal is to be the face of the school and to build external relationships, which is a needed area of competence. When these relationships blossom and there is a positive feeling about the school from the outside, these good feelings influence the feeling within the building. When there is a strong morale in the school community, relationships are stronger and, as a result, principals feel that trust is stronger as well. This morale boosting by principals is also influenced by actions that he/she takes within the school building as well. Principal A consciously spends time connecting with faculty and students, via co-curriculars, to ensure that she has a read on the vibe of the school. It is learning opportunities like this that can help a principal be proactive in dealing with issues or to address concerns through one on one discussions and build trust:

making sure that I’ve got a good pulse on what’s going on in the school so that when the boys’ soccer team makes it to the finals, you’re there if you can and if you’re not there
you’re sending a message of good luck to the coach or congratulations or things like that.

So when I stand up and say that we care about the contribution that you make in the
different realms of the school, we care about what’s going on, that there’s actually some
backing to that presence.

When the principals immerse themselves in the school community and can share in the trials and
tribulations of the school’s programs, the principals feel that this builds trust because the faculty
members not only feel recognized for their efforts, but that the principal cares enough to know
what they are doing. Principal G supports this when he comments that

I certainly think wandering about and popping in is important because you want to be
familiar with [what is going on], you want to be as much a part of the furniture as you
can. I have a lot of visitors and I inevitably take them on a tour and we inevitably go into
a class and I never tell anyone that I’m coming because I don’t even know I’m coming,
it’s all truly arbitrary. I don’t rat anybody out or anything. I don’t stay long and I want to
make it a normal thing. It’s interesting as it’s like the 3 minute manager, you do get a
pretty good vibe on who’s running this class.

Rather than be the “person in the office”, the principals feel that getting out and being a part of
the action of the school helps them to be seen as one of the team and working in the so-called
trenches which is significant for positive morale. If the principal is in the office too much, then
he/she becomes a mythical over-seer and this reputation is not conducive to building trust.

Sometimes to build this morale it is just the soft touches and meaningful exchanges that go a
long way. When time is taken to acknowledge the efforts of teachers, either collectively or
individually, teachers feel appreciated and respected for the work that they do, the principal is
observed to be aware of what is happening and active in the building, and the morale of the
school is positively affected. The principals feel that by-product of all of this morale boosting is the trust built with faculty members.

Morale boosting is not the only way that a principal can enhance his/ her visibility in the school. The principals also feel that providing visible support by being present at important times positively influences the trust level with teachers. One example of this type of presence is when visiting classrooms on a more formal basis. These visits are never easy for a teacher, but depending on how they are approached, the visibility in the classroom can be quite powerful. Principal D sets up his visits from a positive stance and articulates this quite well to his teachers:

With the faculty, I think you do things, like spot who you’re going to sit next to having lunch. Go through and check out, if you look at a list of people, [identify] who I’m going to spend [some] time with this week. Who could I not envision in my mind what it looks like when they are teaching? I have not seen everyone on my faculty teach but I’m getting there. The ones that I have, I’ve also not done a drop in. I think it’s important before you do that, to share with all of them somehow either in a weekly memo or something that you’re dropping in to learn, you’re not dropping in to evaluate, you’re not dropping in to judge.

Taking the edge off of these formal visits by trying to ease the stress is important. The visibility of the principal visiting classrooms is important because he/ she needs to know that things are going well and can articulate prime examples with parents when discussing the great things the school is doing. Having the principal in to observe a class is stressful, but when the post discussion is professional and supportive, a lot of the stress and pressure is relieved these principals believe. Teachers begin to see it as an opportunity to talk about pedagogy and personal development rather than check marks in boxes and reaching a “satisfactory” level. This
type of support through visibility can also register through attending department meetings and may provide the department head with what he/ she may need. Principal B identifies how this might be helpful: “Having regular [department head] meetings with them on their own, and also when they are having their own meetings heading out there to support them, and also being able to answer any questions they may have.” Though it does not have to happen all of the time, sometimes when tough initiatives are going to be implemented, the department heads can use a helping hand in explaining the whys and hows. The principals were clear that this would never be something done to undermine a department head’s leadership with his/ her department, but it might be done with perhaps a new department head or at another’s request. Once again, the visibility of the principal at department and teacher level meetings validates their importance. This once again helps to ensure the reputation of the principal is one of an individual who is part of the fabric of the school and who has a good feel for what is happening.

Last but not least, the principals also felt that they are able to build trust with faculty members when they show visible leadership at crucial times within the school community. The ability for a principal to take charge and be the spokesperson at critical moments exemplifies competency and is important because “Everybody’s watching you … depending on what is happening, [if] you show that you genuinely care and are concerned about what’s going on, then that will take you a long way” (Principal E). When a situation arises, whether it is a crisis or not and a public response is needed, a visible presence by the principal to demonstrate concern, compassion, or insight is needed to ease the concerns of the school community. Internally, the faculty needs to feel that a situation is being handled appropriately and with professionalism and, when this is observed, calm is restored and the principals feel that trust is built. When a principal is able to be visibly calm during the toughest moments, it provides teachers with that calming
influence and the ability to respond appropriately because everything is given the appearance of being under control. The principal’s personal space may be chaotic, but the outward appearance of calm is important. Principal D reflects on his experience of having a staff member die during the school year and how this put him in the spotlight of pressure:

The crisis that I went through at my school was the loss suddenly of everyone’s favourite teacher. I don’t want to use a trite phrase but that’s show time for us as heads. You’re lonely or you’re not lonely, but you’re on your own and you’re in the spotlight. I think that’s when our instincts kick in. Maybe when these schools have gone through some sort of process and have ended up with us, as much as we may feel often fraudulent in taking on the headmaster’s role, it turns out we may be good at those things. I think that’s show time and I think you’re going to get all the trust in the world if you handle those well.

This insight reflects the collective feeling that in handling delicate situations professionally and adroitly, trust is built with faculty members. Balancing compassion and nurturing with the need to keep everything as normal as possible, helps identify the precarious line that a principal must balance when dealing with critical situations. Though the aforementioned scenarios identify crisis type responses, there are also opportunities for visible leadership by the principal on a more routine basis. Principal C reflects on the general when she comments that “I always like to connect and I try to get out in the classrooms and I try, but people stop you in the halls and they will ask you something but they won’t come down to you office. It’s kind of being approachable, being open, being transparent and willing to listen.” This visible presence in the hallways for both teachers and students is important because it reflects a leadership style that is present to all members of the school. The principals believe that when administrators are in the
hallway it sends a message to everyone that the leadership is taking an active role in ensuring that the comportment of the student body is appropriate and that it is not left to just the students. The principal helps to set the tone for the whole school and it is important that he/ she stands up and does this for the sake of the school community. A principal, who hides away in his/ her office, does not take on what these principals feel is a critical role: the face and voice of the school and the outward leadership that is needed to run it. When he/she does this effectively it, the school and ultimately builds trust with all stakeholders, but most importantly in this research with the faculty members. With this in mind and as echoed in many of the principals’ comments, there is suggestion that trust is important but the building of it helps establish a school environment that is connected and immersed in a communal vision of what a school success looks like.

4.4 Building Capacity of Faculty Members

When the responses were aggregated, the principals seemed to be trying to build a faculty that acted on its strengths and improved its areas of weakness. As such, building the capacity of its faculty members through empowerment with a foundation of trust became a critical area for these principals. This desire should not come as a surprise because in today’s contemporary professional world input from different levels within the organization is desired and has positive repercussions. Blase and Blase’s (1999) research supports this insight as they suggest that “major psychodynamic changes occur as a result of developing a collaborative or shared governance leadership style including changes in motivation, role conflict, and use of power (moving from having power over others to sharing power with others)” (pp. 82-83). More specific to the educational environment and from a practical perspective, Lovely (2005) comments on the power of the school community coming together as she points out that “when
shared responsibility flows through the arteries of a school, the wisdom of working as a whole supersedes any desire for individual triumph” (p 16). In order to build this capacity, the principals recognize the need to let go of titles that solely reflect a power dynamic. This not only builds a better sense of community, but it helps build a more integrated community built on trust. Though titles may not go by the wayside because of their need for external interaction, internal cohesion is paramount to these principals. In support of this, using Lambert (1998), Hipp and Hoffman (2003) point out that “school leadership needs to be a broad concept that is separated from person, role, and a discreet set of individual behaviors. It needs to be embedded in the school as a whole. Such a broadening of the concept of leadership suggests shared responsibility for a shared purpose of community” (p. 10). In this light these principals work toward building the leadership capacity of their faculty to build a stronger sense of community and ultimately to gain a better insight into the challenges that may be facing a school. This is important because as Lindahl (2008) points out that “teachers are deeply immersed in the school’s culture, which is a prerequisite to being able to assess that culture … [and] they can challenge aspects of the school’s culture that they consider to be less productive or healthy” (p. 304). These principals’ desire to make the best decisions for their schools is reliant upon the ability to have the best information influencing their choices. The insight that emerges from their comments is that when a school can make an informed decision then the whole community benefits, especially the student. This type of decision-making process builds trust because more people are engaged and empowered. As Lambert (2002) suggests, “everyone has the right, responsibility, and ability to be a leader, how leadership is defined influences how people will participate, educators yearn to be more fully who they are – purposeful, professional human beings, and leadership is an essential aspect of an educator’s professional life” (pp. 38-39). In promoting this building of
capacity faculty members, the principals believe they do this through self-reflection, trusting others, and offering experiential expertise.

**4.4.1 Self-reflection**

When trying to support teachers in the myriad of ways that present themselves in a school environment, five of the seven principals commented that there is the balance of the soft and direct approach. This balance takes a deft touch, but it also requires a self-understanding about one’s own strengths and weaknesses and the perspective from which they lead. As such, the principals identify self-reflection as an important asset to building trust with teachers. Obviously self-reflection is not something that is directly connected to teachers, but rather it provides the principals with the opportunity to step back and reflect on their own experiences and enhance what they are doing in the best interest of the school community. This self-reflection revolves around three areas: professional, personal, and that of building trust. When the principals reflect professionally, what this entails is their ability to ensure that the implementation of a new initiative is done well and to address those areas that may need addressing or individuals that may need to be approached because of confusion or a lack of understanding. The principals did not care where the fault lies, but rather addressing the concern is the focal point and hence this is a very practical approach to building capacity within the school. Principal B indicated how he uses one experience to learn from another and how reflecting is an on-going process to help personal growth:

"another thing that I’ve learned from one experience, it helps me to go on to another experience and ask the question was I transparent enough, was I clear enough? Was I concise in terms of the message I was relaying? Was there something there that I said that left the door open for misinterpretation or at the same time concern as to whether or..."
not I was being forthright with them. That’s always something that goes on in my mind. Anytime that you walk away from an experience and you say you know what, I think there were one or two people there that did not believe what I put across, I will try to follow up with them or better yet let it go and if they want to raise it with me I give them that opportunity but it also becomes a learning experience for the next time.

This is an important attribute for principals to have because it engenders the building of capacity and relationships and ultimately trust. No one is expected to be perfect, but when principals clearly try to get better in their delivery and approach and this is done consciously and observably, this does not go unnoticed. Following up with teachers after a new initiative is launched and where communication may not have been clear is equally important. This shows teachers that the principal is aware of their concerns and feels that they are important enough to follow up with on an individual basis. This follow-up by a principal is also needed, they believe, when an error must be acknowledged. The error can be in something that literally is incorrect or when the principal is not true to him/herself and the school community. As human beings, principals sometimes let the situation get the better of them or they react to an individual in less than ideal terms. When being self-reflective, principals build trust in these situations because they are able to acknowledge mistakes and errors. They become more human in their position and more vulnerable in their relationships with others by being able to address individual mistakes or ones made before the collective. Principal D reflects on a significant mistake when hiring an individual to lead curriculum changes that ultimately reinforced his integrity and built trust because he was able to own up to the error and address it:

I put her as the Assistant Head of School and so what happened was everyone expected her to be me. I had been the Director of Students and Assistant Head of School, so
people were sending the behavioral problems to her, sending the stuff that I would have
done and I really set her up for failure, I really did, and it took me a year of increasingly
noticing her not being able to do her job very well. People’s response was that she’s not
doing her job very well and why did we hire this person. I let that go for too long before
I understood. I never cite the academic books but in good degree you get the right people
in the bus and put them in the right seat. I put her in the wrong seat, I got the right person
but I put her in the wrong seat. As they say, you wear the reputation of everybody you
hire. [As] the school leader you’re sending a message if it’s somebody who’s not doing
their job very well, then you’re not doing your job very well and that also, to be really
honest, was difficult for me to not want to distance myself; it’s not me, it’s not me. It
was me and I needed to take responsibility for it being me. I made that hire; I put that
person in the wrong seat.

The principals believe that taking professional responsibility through self-reflection builds trust
because it engenders honesty in relationships with faculty that is respected. This self-reflection
goes beyond the professional boundaries of the principal and asks him/ her to personally reflect
on their own understanding of teaching and bring to their approach an understanding of what
teachers are going through. By being vulnerable and committed to the faculty with regards to
admitting fault, the principals believe they build capacity of the faculty members by engaging in
the building of honest relationships and in building a community that works toward doing its best
but never expecting perfection.

*Personal reflection* is important for principals to do when trying to get a better feel and
understanding for the teacher’s perspective. The more teachers feel that the principal is in-tune
with how they are feeling is better for the whole school community. Equally important, the
principals believe, is their ability to reflect on the skills they bring to the job and exhibit these skills to the best of their abilities. By sharing their greatest strengths, teachers observe a confident individual who is guiding them in a positive light and has the trust of the Board of Directors, and may be worthy of their trust as well. Principal E’s comments put this in to perspective:

One thing that I know that I’m good at is continuing to build relationships. I continue to be motivated with that because that’s the sole reason that I got the job. As I said last time, that’s the reason and I will never forget that. I can be hard lined with people when I need to be but I will always, always support. It’s people, people first and emotional leadership, whatever you call it, that’s what I firmly believe.

This self-awareness of strength is important for principals to be aware of because it gives a clear direction for the principal and helps with the faculty’s understanding of his/ her personality. Knowing the strengths of oneself, however, must also be balanced with areas for growth or areas where he/ she may be less impactful than those that have preceded the present principal. This too builds capacity with faculty members because they can help address and support the weaknesses of a principal. Principal G recognizes that his leadership is different than his predecessor’s, but the reality for him is that he can only be himself and work on areas that are needed:

My predecessor was like the Wal-Mart greeter at school, omnipresent, but he didn’t have a family and this was his whole life. I have a family, I have a life, I have a wife, kids and so I could not possibly emulate him. Measured against his omnipresence, I’m being a little more strategic ... I’m out there pretty much every day for about twenty minutes. You’ve got to be there for the pick, so I’m being a little more strategic about it.
Helping faculty members let go of past positives and negatives in other people, enables the principal to establish him/herself and forge relationships based on his/her real personality rather than some expectation or façade. In building these authentic relationships on clear individual characteristics the potential for trust is far greater. This personal understanding, via self reflection, also helps the principals put themselves in the teachers’ positions. Being able to understand a teacher’s life provides the principal with the opportunity to further support where needed and vice versa. The teacher’s plight is not an easy one and principals need to be aware of this by remembering their own days as a teacher: “Every one of our independent schools is exceptionally busy. Teachers are not just teachers in the classrooms, they are coaches, they are homeroom teachers, they’re mentors, and they’re club runners” (Principal F). By reflecting on their past experiences as a teacher, principals can understand and provide better support for their teachers. Through the very nature of this support, whether it is emotional, collegial, or practical, trust can be built. One needs to be careful not to patronize because this can destroy that trust as quickly as it builds it. Supporting teachers through self-reflection can occur quite naturally when a principal remembers what it is like to be in the classroom. The trust that is built through this is significant and helps to establish a positive school climate.

Interestingly enough, self reflection on a personal and professional level also pushes these principals to seriously reflect on trust itself. The seven principals clearly articulated that they feel trust is important to build with their faculty and paying proper attention to it and actively reflecting on a regular basis of how they are attempting to do it is important. Principal B adds credence to this when he articulates that “It is something you work at. It’s an ongoing thing because when something happens it will damage the trust a lot quicker in comparison to how long it takes to build it up. It’s almost like the father-son, father-daughter relationship … where
you trust that they do one thing and then they don’t, you never trust them again, that’s what it is.” Understanding the fragility of trust helps the principal to reflect and act in purposeful ways so as not to destroy it. As said before, this does not mean that everyone agrees with everything and a utopia is created. What it does mean is that honest interaction takes place at all levels and respect and trust are a natural outcome of this interaction. Clearly acting in ways to build trust is one of the things that these principals focused on early in their tenures. Principal A suggests that her reflection on trust early helped her think proactively about building trust with faculty members:

Being on the very early part of my career and in this position, it is the thing that I found most challenging. It is not making the switch, you know peer to leader switch probably wasn’t as complicated as I thought and I think in some ways this was probably because it came a lot faster and in some ways I think it made it a little bit easier for me. It’s trying to get in the mind set of why wouldn’t they just automatically trust me? They know me, I’m the same person that I always was. I think trying to get trust beyond the title so that I have a sense that people are engaged because they genuinely want to be as opposed to my boss told me to.

Reflecting on building trust and on being proactive about it is important to the new principal. As these principals suggest, being reflective of self and one’s actions is an important tool to finding common ground with teachers, supporting them, and building trusting relationships with them.

4.4.2 Trusting Others

In order to truly build a team, the trust must go both ways. It is a process for these principals to build trust with their faculties, but this trust must be reciprocated. Six of the seven principals felt that it was equally important for them to clearly show that they trusted others in
the building to make prudent decisions. From a general perspective Principal E provides a perspective that summarizes the feelings of the principals, “Trust is about believing that somebody is going to do the right thing and do what’s in the best interest of the school.” If the school environment that a principal is attempting to create is one built on trust, then he/she over time must rely on the work that has been done and allow others to take on some of the decision-making ability and let them continue to build the culture of trust by making good decisions on behalf of the school. Principal D provides a limited exception to this insight. Though he recognizes the need to empower teachers he believes that “people want a hand on the wheel and they want to know that there is a hand on the wheel steering the ship and sometimes that is collaborative in building ... I will give the illusion that it’s a democracy but you want to give the illusion that there’s democracy. There is for sure an important difference between consensus building and decision time.” Though the decision-making and responsibility ultimately lands at the feet of the principal, the other principals did not indicate any reservations around this empowerment and building of trust. Principal G provides an insight into what is at the heart of this trust and what needs to be at the heart of each decision, “I do think there is probably truth to all of the people who run schools - that there is a genuine idealism which has to be recognized and celebrated and it is that the ultimate trump card is doing what’s best for the kids. Maybe it can be over invoked, but that’s the ultimate test of whether you’re moving in the good direction …” When a school’s focus is solely the best interest of the students, then all decisions are intended to make the school community stronger in all ways. A couple of these ways where principals felt it was important to trust others and their decisions involved hiring and building school culture which helped build capacity of the faculty members.
Empowering faculty members when it comes to the hiring process was seen for five of these principals as a genuine opportunity to build trust with them. Teachers, when given an opportunity to shape the school environment through hiring, truly take on the best interest of the school. This relinquishing of power is consciously done by the principal and it takes significant effort because ultimately they are responsible for the final decision. However, Principal B showed some skepticism to this process due to his worry that one has “to be careful in terms of who is part of that process because I as a leader have to trust that they are going to be looking for decisions that are in the best interest of the school and not necessarily who they are going to get along as sometimes that may happen in the process and that is really not the nature of the process.” Though there may be some individuals who have a personal agenda in any situation, the other principals took a different perspective. They felt that though a principal may have a broad picture of what is needed in the school, other teachers and department heads are able to identify exactly what is needed within the specific department and may be better able to pick up other nuances in an interview that a principal may not. Principal C supports this when she comments that,

sometimes you want a fresh new person, like a different pair of eyes, because we’re in the recruitment and the hiring. I like to have different people on the team that bring in different perspectives, so that you’re not always looking at it from an experienced perspective. An experienced department head may be looking for specific things, but a younger teacher maybe looking for aspects that are engagement with the school and being able to relate to people, so you want to have a range of different perspectives particularly in the hiring process.
It is obvious here that department heads as leaders in the building need to be a part of this process, but equally important is the opportunity for younger faculty members to have input here as well. The department head’s input is needed because he/ she will be working and potentially mentoring the new hire within the subject area. As part of their leadership development, department heads need to be involved in this and the trust the principals shows in respecting their selection or input goes a long way to building trust with these faculty members. Furthermore, the opportunity for younger staff to be trusted by the principal for their input speaks volumes for the school community and the value of all of its members. Sometimes it is easy to disregard younger teachers because they do not have the experience to make these decisions. Though the lack of experience part may be true, their perspective may contain more idealism which adds to the interview process and the information needed to make a quality decision in hiring. This involvement via the principal’s process does build trust with all members of faculty because once again all interests are taken into account and people valued. The emphasis that the principal places on the recommendations that the faculty involved in the process put forward is crucial.

Principal A helps to put this in proper perspective:

It’s pretty rare that I would not take their advice as I always take the time to sit down and debrief with department heads and to talk about the 2 or 3 candidates or issues or how to deal with issues in their departments. I generally allow them to lead and manage their department.

When the principals in this study sought to empower department heads and other faculty members in the school, they felt that it was imperative that it not just be a token involvement, but a true investment in those people’s time, judiciousness, and efforts. When the opinions of
teachers are truly valued and provide the backdrop for the decision or at the very least significantly influence the decision, trust is built with the faculty at large.

The other opportunity from a broad perspective where principals can demonstrate their trust in faculty members is seen when opportunities to build school capacity is left in their hands. Once again this is a challenge for the principals to do, but the benefits are enormous and it furthers the desire of all of the principals to build trust with faculty members. One of the challenges when leading a school is identifying meaningful professional development opportunities and, when done right, can demonstrate competency by the principal. Often times it is not the content that is difficult to target, but rather an individual presenter or presenters who can connect with the faculty to make it meaningful. The principals in this study posited that using school faculty to lead professional development seminars provided an opportunity to demonstrate best practice, ensure a connection with present staff, and openly profess trust in the teachers. Principal E comments on this initiative:

We’ve moved to a model where most of our, I’ll talk about the professional development side, it’s mainly in house. We really want our teacher’s and our staff members frankly to shine and people love that, but you have to trust because you’re effectively saying there are no students here and we have everybody in one room and it’s got to be effective. You have to trust people and we do and people put a lot of time and effort into it.

When a day of professional development is left in the hands of a few faculty members, the pressure on those individuals is significant, but the trust for these individuals is significant by the principal. This trust is observed by the rest of the faculty as well and the school community is the winner in the eyes of the principals because colleagues sharing best practice with each other is key to contemporary professional learning communities and it develops trust throughout the
school and at all levels and between levels. Principal F shares in this commitment to building
capacity from within and using the strength of current faculty members, new and old, to continue
the school’s growth and its changing culture:

I think with people who have had experience outside of where I am now, I find it easier
in order to be able to have them consider different situations and how things may or may
not have happened. It’s more complex, it’s well, we are working on a changing culture in
terms of leadership being very different, how to frame that with current people who have
been here for a long time.

With a change of leadership styles and one that is far more open, rather than bringing in
presenters who can speak to leadership change and different styles, working this through with
present faculty and leaders in the school at a practical level is filled with rewards. As the
teachers continue to see the processes that are in place and the principal’s belief in the power of
the professionalism within the school, the belief is contagious and so is the building of trust
between each other. The example above of how this builds capacity in Principal F’s school helps
one understand that it is not a simple process to build this type of school community, but in the
end it is more about the collective and perhaps even more efficient than traditional leadership
styles. The principals feel that when one is trying to build trust, one cannot pick and choose
where and when this happens. The commitment to building trust must be on-going and all-
encompassing. There are always pieces of information that are confidential or situations that
need to be handled by the school principal, but wherever possible, teachers need to be trusted by
the principal if the community is truly to become one that is trustworthy and the by-product is
capacity building of the faculty itself. For the principals, one way to build the trust with the
faculty from their eyes is to actively demonstrate its presence in their relationships with the teachers in the school.

4.4.3 Experience/ Confidence/ Competence

Another important component of building faculty capacity the principals suggest is their ability to share their own expertise to provide perspective and insight and build capacity of the faculty members. All of the principals believe that their experiences and the confidence that their actions instilled in others was paramount to building trust. Faculty members need to feel that they and the school at large are in capable hands when school challenges present themselves, pedagogical shifts need to be implemented, and the individual’s background is suitable for a leader of a school. It seems logical to expect that a principal’s confidence is impacted by his/ her feelings of preparedness for the position. Though many say there is nothing like on-the-job training, coming to the position with a wealth of practical and theoretical experience helps a new principal have some confidence which laterally affects the faculty’s trust in his/ her competence. Principal F’s journey to her principalship, though unique in some its struggles, ultimately provides a normal template for an emergent principal:

I went to university and got a degree. I worked at a couple of schools ... and [then] ... I went to teacher’s college and then was in the public school board ... In the early nineties things were closing down [and] I had a guaranteed job at a private school and I was there for 3 years. I went and taught special education for 3 years at another school, and then in the regular class for one ... At the end of that time I ... got a job at another school and set up their Academic Support Programme ... I was there for two years and [then I took a job] as Admissions Director ... After five years I ... went to another school as Assistant Head that oversaw academics, co curricular, residential life, health centre, student life,
and high level discipline. After my third year when the position of principal of School Y came up I thought about throwing my hat in the ring and now I’m in my second year at School Y.

Though this principal’s journey covers a lot of different schools, these practical experiences create an initial sense of trust with faculty members and competency. Principal F’s credentials of an undergraduate degree, Bachelor of Education, Master’s Degree, and Principal Qualification Papers also add to this ability to assume a principalship and at least have some credibility behind her. This journey of Principal F’s to the principalship is unique, but it is generally reflective of the others’ though as many schools may not be involved in the journey. Two of the principals also had experiences outside of the educational arena. Although Principal D still went through an educational journey similar to Principal F’s, Principal G brought other respected qualities to the table that are hard to ignore. Each has developed that credibility and initial sense of trust.

Whether the preparation is education specific or more externally influenced, each individual’s journey to their present position can be best summarized in the words of Principal C,

This is a new position for me … it just evolved and it was one of those little plans that I wasn’t expecting that you just kind of fall into. I can see how I was prepared at different levels to do different things, so this seems like a natural to kind of build, a unique learning experience in the private [school] world.

Though each of these principals comes to their present positions with theoretical and practical experiences which create an initial trust, they believe that with their faculty, their understanding of trust and how they respond to daily or school challenges demonstrates their competency and is important to the building of trust. One of the greatest challenges to any private school year tends to take place around the month of March. At this time enrolment is
established for the following year and as a result so is the staffing. How principals handle this anxious time is important for faculty trust as Principal B posits that “it’s nice to have a good relationship with people you work with and I think that’s always important, but I think when it comes right down to it, people are going to want to see how you react in certain situations and that’s where you earn their trust.” This recognition takes on a significant role when it comes to the anxious time in March:

There may be crunch times, obviously March in our world is a bit funny because that’s when we finally figure out how many kids are coming back and how many new ones are going to accept our offer. That’s the point where teachers have to tell us if they are coming and staying and we have to tell them if they are coming or staying and that’s obviously a tense time for people so we’ve got to get over March. (Principal G)

Though budget plays an important and heightened role at this particular time of year, showing competency by having the experience to navigate the stresses and maintain a sense of calm is important for a school and its faculty to believe in and trust the principal. The reality each year is that a teacher may be let go, so the trust is not built on the expectation that everyone is keeping their job. It is based on the understanding that tough decisions need to be made by the principal and he/she needs to make these decisions in a dignified and professional manner. Not every faculty member will be in agreement and as Principal C suggests,

It gets to the point where you try all of the different steps that you could possibly do and then you just have to let go. You’re not going to solve that battle and you just move on to the next thing and you try to figure out what’s the best resolution at that point …You’re going to be faced with people who are constantly going to be in your office for one thing or another and if you can’t handle that …
These tough decisions often cause great consternation for principals and though some individuals are hurt, the reality is that in the principals’ eyes it can be a great trust builder with faculty when done with a deft touch. Tough decisions that are made during the school year can be challenging, but when they are encountered and responded to with dignity and serious deliberation, trust can actually be built.

Interestingly enough, another challenge in the school year is the hiring of faculty members to new positions. Though not necessarily a negative challenge, it still can create opportunities to either build trust or lose it for principals. These decisions when promoting people to higher positions from within can often become a political football because applicants can, at times, rest on seniority, relationships, or even simply credentials. Principal D relies on his past experiences to hire the best candidate and though he does not dismiss credentials, he focuses on:

which person do I want to work with more and that’s just a huge question and to me always gives me the right answer. Well it’s a cultural thing, no it’s not, who do I want to work with more. I want to work with nice people who have a nice sense of humour, and guess what, so do kids. Parents want to work with those types of people, those people bend over backwards for kids.

Internal hiring can play a huge role in the building of trust with faculty members through the eyes of the principal and, though the decisions can sometimes be difficult, the faculty is watching. Deep down inside want to see the best candidate hired regardless of the micropolitics at play. From the principals’ perspective, building trust each and every day and reflecting a sense of confidence and a desire to build trust when dealing with school challenges is important. This is because building that trust is
I think it’s the most difficult to cultivate, although it’s the one that’s the prized possession, kind of like the pearl in the mist. It’s the hardest one to develop because it doesn’t come easy because everybody has their own personality, their own agenda, their own pieces. They come to a relationship with a history that you don’t know. Sometimes you uncover that and sometimes you don’t. Some people are very guarded, and you never get to know why they are resistant. (Principal C)

Each principal echoed Principal C’s thoughts and all are aware that building trust is also challenged when dealing with pedagogical shifts or initiatives as presented to them by the Ministry of Education.

*Pedagogical shifts for teachers*, whether they come from external sources or internal ones, can create anxiety for teachers and five of the principals realize that their competence and how they deal with these shifts can mitigate the unease that teachers feel. When teachers feel uneasy about themselves or their teaching style has come under review based on pedagogical shifts or initiatives, trust in the administration and specifically the principal can become frayed. The principals in this study clearly understand this fact and realize that any type of change that comes forward will affect people’s trust and it’s ironic because you’re told over and over again when you take a principal’s course or a master’s course that you are change agents. You’re always trying to do things to benefit people right across the board but it’s interesting the moment you try to change something, even if it’s an idea to support the development and the growth of a teacher, they are always looking at you sideways saying what’s next, what’s coming next. (Principal B)

The reasons for this anxiety and stress are many, but similar answers from the principals interviewed suggest that ensuring the implementation plan of the new initiative is well laid out is
important. Most important from the principals’ perspective is that they must believe in the initiative as being worthwhile and valuable and believe that they are improving the teaching capacity of the faculty. Faculty can read individuals quite well and they will read a phony effort quite easily. As Principal G posits, “If you build the trust and the credibility, you’d better make sure you’re firmly behind whatever the pedagogical initiative is because you’re going to cash in your credibility and you’d better be willing to stand behind it.” Asking teachers to teach or assess in different ways creates anxiety and a principal must clearly do a few things to alleviate a crisis, believe in the initiative and cash in on some of the trust that has been built. Though some teachers may nod their head and pretend to implement the new initiative and then close their door and do what they want, these principals believe that a faculty who trusts him/her buy into the initiative and work together on implementation. When a sense of trust exists and faculty feel supported, great things can happen in a school and new ideas can be implemented without too much consternation. This is not to say that there will not be any challenges. In fact a principal may have some teachers that are too eager and hence finding that balance is important. The reality when dealing with challenges is that a principal must rely on his/her experiences and realize that

you’ve got to keep your eye on everything because there are other things that seemingly are going along okay, and it’s not that they’re not, but it helps you anticipate things, keeping an eye on things and just meeting regularly with people as much as possible. I think it’s so time consuming. I think in the long run it really helped. Otherwise people get out and ahead of things and then sometimes you have to pull them back and that is harder to do. (Principal F)
When the principals reflect on the whole idea of building capacity, they proposed that by doing this and building trust, a greater perspective by all was gained and that this helped build a school that encouraged more input for discussions and a greater sense of accountability.

4.5 Self-support and Decreasing Personal Stress

Building trust with faculty members also pays great dividends for all of the principals as they ultimately find that they are able to do their jobs far more efficiently. Underlying all of their attempts to build trust with faculty members and the over-arching peripheral goals, finding balance in their own lives seems to be a goal of these principals. The job of principal or headmaster is not an easy one and these individuals know they take on far more responsibility than that of just a school personnel manager. Trail (2000) posits that the principal takes on the role of psychologist, teacher, facilities manager, philosopher, police officer, diplomat, social worker, mentor, P.R. director, and coach (pp. 2-3). As such, it cannot be denied that the stresses on a principal or headmaster are enormous. Though some would argue that this is what the individual signs up for or that the individual is paid well to take on these stresses, the principals are quite wary of being overloaded. Taking an interpretive stance that is consistent with the literature, the principals actively seek out opportunities to build trust and build relationships to build support and offset some of the stressors. This support revolves around an invested faculty who are actively pursuing the best interests of the school and its students. Trail (2000) further suggests that principals can find comfort in building a trusting community and sharing leadership and uses the following analogy to describe the positives of it: “collaboration is much like the strength of fabric woven from many different threads. Individually those threads are easily broken, but as an integrated whole, the cloth is strong and not likely to unravel from the loss of one thread” (p. 4). The benefits to these principals in building a trusting community where some
of the leadership role can be shared and others trusted to make decisions ultimately alleviates some of the stressors inherent in a school’s principalship or headship. Further to this point, Togneri and Anderson (2003) suggest that “principals who share leadership responsibilities with others will be less subject to burnout than principals who attempt the challenges and complexities of leadership alone” (as cited in AEL, 2005. p. 6). In this sense the building of trust is of paramount importance to build a healthy school community and leadership structure. Research by King and O’Sullivan (2002), Chirichello (2001), and Hipp and Huffman (2000), support the insight of Johnson (1996) in her book *Leading to Change*:

> today’s school leaders must understand both the limits and the potential of their positions, carefully balancing their use of positional authority with their reliance on others, gradually building both a capacity and widespread support for shared leadership and collaborative change. (p. 11)

In order to build this paradigm and trust, the interviewed principals/headmasters believed that by establishing a vision, providing proper role modeling for the teachers, specifically identifying team building opportunities and engendering a positive school culture, they were able to help create a system of self-support and decrease stress.

### 4.5.1 Vision

What lays the foundation to the principal’s ability to make these tough decisions and build trust is to have a vision for the school that is known, supported and recognized by the school community. All of the principals clearly felt that having a defined vision for their school community helped them gain credibility with their teachers and built trust through a common articulated mission. Though it may be expected and somewhat simple, the principals all believed that it was important for the school community to understand that the students come
first and that their learning is the priority. At times in a school, these principals suggest that priorities can become skewed, perhaps with too much focus on co-curriculars or faculty needs, and this can interrupt the development of trust. It is important to clearly articulate the essential focus of the school which provides everyone with a clear vision and this builds trust. Principal E supports this insight when he reflected on a conference he was at and how it echoes the essential focus on students within our schools:

I was at NAIS conference in Seattle last week and Bill Gates was the key note speaker, big time speakers and there was about six of them, and the best speaker was just a teacher from Virginia. The sixty year old teacher, he’s been a teacher all of his life, and he spoke to 4,000 people and his message was “how do you touch the lives of others and the impact that we have.” He cited example after example, after example and so the general message taken from that and looking at our school is - maybe you don’t agree exactly that we’re so technology driven or maybe you don’t agree with something that we’re doing, but regardless of what and how we’re doing it, we’re doing the same thing. That is, we’re trying to educate kids so that in 10 years they come back or 30 years, or next week they come back and say you know what, you taught me something.

Though it does seem simple, ensuring that all faculty and staff members are on the same page with respect to students being the number one priority needs to be clear. When everyone is on the same page and aiming in a common direction, a goal is established and a team mentality emerges. In the principals’ eyes this team approach is a builder of trust with faculty members. Within this team approach is also the mentality of improving in order to be the best team and to provide the best education for the students. New initiatives that are worthwhile, and not the newest fad, need a champion and enthusiast. When the principal envisions a new direction that
is vetted through a proper process and support is in place, he/she must inspire the faculty to learn and implement the new direction. Principal C supports this when she comments that

> We started at the beginning with trying to develop a strategic plan or having various people from the board and for us to be able to come up with a strategic plan for the school moving forward. Technology was one and leadership another, so we did identify some areas that we were going to focus and we put target dates and timelines and we’re fast approaching quite a number of them. It’s an evolution that’s kind of embedded and we’re constantly coming back to it as a group and then that drives everything else. You can’t drop that because as you’re building the development of where you want to go, you’ve got to now bring everybody on board. That’s where you’re trying to do this, but you’re also trying to make sure that everybody’s on the bus with you, so that’s a challenge.

Even though a process is followed and people support what is happening, there needs to be a voice of enthusiasm to keep the ball rolling and the principals see this as one of their mandates as a competent leader. Supporting the faculty and being the constant motivator is a trust builder in their eyes. Part of the challenge as a new principal in a school is to involve the faculty and ask them to be part of the visioning. In so doing, they feel a part of the direction and they also observe the new principal’s authenticity around core beliefs. In this sense the principals believe they build trust with faculty when they espouse their core beliefs as an educator and become vulnerable such as the case with Principal D:

> Show me a school where the teachers are learning and I’ll show you a school where the children are learning. I jumped in with both feet to the idea of school as a place for
learning not just for the children and I have always been very public with my colleagues that I have a lot to learn about this job.

When a vision, at least from a theoretical standpoint, has students at its core, wonderful things can happen within a school. When this is coupled with a desire to include faculty members in the visioning process and a principal’s willingness to show vulnerability, the principals in this study identified these as essential elements to building trust with their faculties. The by-product of this trust building is also a team mentality that helps reduce the stress load of the principals because he/she can rely on others.

Part of having a vision that builds trust also includes working at and building relationships with teachers these principals believe. It is great to have a vision and co-produce it with the faculty, but an on-going commitment to building relationships as part of the principal’s personal vision is a must. Part of this building of relationships is providing an opportunity for people to take on different roles within the school building, some of which may be leadership positions. Principal A reflects on the importance of these opportunities for both younger and more experienced teachers alike:

We certainly have lots of opportunities here for people to take on additional responsibilities in the school. For example we have a department head, but we also have a curriculum chair so they split the management and the curriculum side. We find that after 3 to 5 years of being here, a lot of the really strong curriculum chairs have that five years of experience where they don’t have to manage people but they are really focused on the curriculum ... I would say if I had to split it into who puts their hands up for those opportunities it would probably be an 80/20 split between teachers who have less than 10 years experience and then teachers with 15 plus.
The principals felt that teachers needed to at least feel that they have opportunities to advance should they choose. These different experiences may provide new challenges and reinvigorate those who have found themselves stagnating. It does not guarantee that everyone will get a chance, but the presence of those opportunities builds trust because the positions are open to all candidates. Part of building these relationships is establishing him/herself as a caring and compassionate individual who also will stand up for what he/she believes in when the situation calls for it. The principals felt that establishing an authentic reputation of being understanding and also holding those accountable was important to building trust. Principal E helps to put this into perspective from his reflections:

My primary objective was, I need to have teeth and be tough because I don’t want to be one of those wishy-washy guys that doesn’t do anything. If people perceive you to be that way, you’re dead, so that’s number one. I want to be tough enough, but I also want to be able to be the guy that people walk out of the door and they have their integrity in check.

Having the ability to hold a person accountable, while maintaining the individual’s integrity and still have a compassionate side, is an important reputation of competency for these principals to have. To be a principal who cannot do all of these makes the building of trust far more difficult. As part of a personal vision, principals need to balance these different character traits and work on areas of weakness with regards to these. These are essential when the culture of a school needs to change and that is part of the personal vision that needs to take place. A principal’s commitment to make long lasting and authentic changes is not done easily or overnight. These principals believe that it takes a concerted effort in respect to building relationships with teachers through honesty and support as well as having the internal fortitude to be compassionate and
forthright when appropriate. When these are part of a principal’s vision and he/she is committed long-term to seeing cultural change happen and can persevere to see it come to fruition, then teachers can believe in the vision and buy into a community that will demonstrate stability and this too can be a huge reducer of stress for principals. This is what teachers can trust in and it is what principals need to do to build trust with the teachers.

Last but not least, six of the seven principals commented that having a vision to help the school grow in physical characteristics or program offering can also be a way that the principal can build trust with faculty members. This is because teachers see growth in the school and that translates into a progressive vision which creates interest and enthusiasm. When this is joined with all of the other trust building efforts, trust is further enhanced. Principal G reflects on the growth of programs he feels that are needed in his school:

Looking at greater access which was in the DNA of the place as we used to have bursaries but we lost them - getting them back. Taking advantage of the obvious – a 35 acre site. We’ve got our own piece of wilderness, we have deer, a river is right there, which we used to do something about twenty years ago. Citizenship, what does that really mean for the 21st century? What are citizen skills in the context of the international world, international mindedness? … and then we have a whole thing on neuroscience, neuroeducation.

By having the vision to improve programming, principals believe that it invigorates teachers and creates a cutting edge educational atmosphere. This builds excitement amongst all members of the school community and builds wonderful public relations. When there is a positive vibe in the school and people feel challenged in a healthy way, trust is built in the eyes of the principal. This is because teachers are being supported in their professional growth and are part of a
healthy and vibrant school community. As indicated, providing the support and having patience to ensure a proper implementation is necessary for a healthy vision intent on building the school. Principal C reflects:

I wish we could be, in so many ways, further ahead but, at the same time, I recognize that we’re here and it’s having the patience, the perseverance to stick with it, and the passion to be able to work through those challenges. Right now we’re at a point where we can’t develop because you don’t have the funds and the enrolment and all those limitations. You wish you could be forward but you just have to work diligently and tackle the recruitment, the retention, all of those pieces that will allow development. I have no doubt that we are going to cross that threshold but it’s just getting to that point.

As part of a private school or public school for that matter, student numbers are significant in terms of dollars to spend on initiatives. From this reflection, part of having a vision for building school programs or the school itself is recognizing when to push hard and when to be patient. Prudence in choosing between the two demonstrates competency and also builds trust in the principal’s eyes because it is observed that their vision will not be at the expense of teachers or the students. Any vision must have a plan and when the vision is going to impact the classroom, via building teachers’ pedagogical knowledge, timing is important. There may not be an ideal time to begin, but rather than look at it as an instant fix, support, education and time become allies in a vision for growth. When a plan is observed by the faculty, then this builds trust in the principal because nothing is again seen in the light of a vision is being implemented at the cost of something else. Instead, it is received as something that will enhance the school and be supported in always. At the heart of all of these levels of vision is a key element that the principals each indicated needed to be present. It is best summed up by Principal E:
The more that I thought about [trust], I don’t want to say solely the most important, but it is one of the most important aspects of everything that we do. Trust equals culture, culture equals success, success equals motivation, and they are all tied together.

At the core of each vision, the principals articulated that the building of trust was necessary to ensuring a healthy and successful school. Without the trust of their faculty, each principal felt that their schools would be boring, unstable, and stale places of education which can be a cause of great consternation and worry. Whether it is public or private school, enlightening education of students stems from a motivated and supported teaching staff that ultimately must trust its principal if they are going to be progressive and buy in to ensuring that the school is the best it can be. In essence, a school culture is created through trust that teachers and students buy in to and support. This is the real vision of each principal – a school that establishes its own culture through the team work of its community members and is an enjoyable place for all to be. One of the areas for this to begin being established is in the principal’s attempts to build trust with his/her faculty members by providing proper role modeling in all aspects of school life.

4.5.2 Role Modeling

As well as having a vision for the school, all seven of the principals feel that it is crucial that they actively role model decisions and actions that are in the best interest of the school and students. Principals cannot afford to ever be seen as selfish or vindictive. In fact, these principals observed that it was most important to almost go beyond expectations in role modeling what he/she wants to see in the school. One of the ways that these principals see themselves building trust with faculty is by being active in the school with the students. Once again, this builds the community feeling and makes the principal a role model for teachers to observe.
Principal B sees his interaction with the students demonstrating his/her humanity and the reality that he/ she is just one part of the school community:

We had a hockey game of teachers versus students, a ball hockey game, and the kids just couldn’t believe that I participated not to mention I knocked their goalie over while a shot was taken on them. Doing these kinds of things that’s informal, so they see you in a different light, is important for people who work here, students that go here and parents to see that there’s a whole other side to the principal and the principal’s office. That requires you to be, I think, humble and you can’t be afraid to laugh at yourself as well and to put yourself into those situations.

Though the faculty is not mentioned here specifically, the whole community sees the principal in a different light. This is also important because if principals expect teachers to have relationships with students, then role modeling these types of interactions is important. In a sense, the principal is demonstrating competency by walking the talk and being an example to others of what to do. This is important to faculty members because they see expectations of the principal as ones that he/she is willing to live by and this, the principals believe, increases trust. This can also be done in the academic setting at a presentation where attendance may not be mandated, but to benefit the community it is hoped that teachers attend. Though a principal always has paper work to catch up on or other matters of concern, being in attendance at these presentations is a sign of support and commitment to the school and its betterment. Principal G reflects on one such situation at his school:

Sometimes it’s a moral presence [at meetings]. We had a meeting of the faculty not well attended here in the senior school for something called Project X, to be alert to teen suicide and mental health issues particularly in the upper years as they move into
university … I thought was an important message. It was productive and important and symbolic for me to be there and show up. I’m investing my time and I appreciate your investing your time.

Providing the role modeling for faculty members when it means investing time for the students of the school again sets a tone. The principal is actively putting into practice his/ her expectations that the school community is about helping students not only academically, but in leading healthy lives as well. Setting expectations for others is important and living up to it through one’s own actions is critical. When these expectations are ones that are for students for their benefit, the principals believe that they need to adhere to these expectations themselves and role model for their colleagues as well. When principals “walk the talk” they garner respect from the whole school community and especially from faculty members when it deals with student life. When this role modeling is taken to heart by the faculty, this too is a great stress reliever for the principals. Ultimately, an active principal in the lives of the students reminds everyone that at his/ her very heart, the principal is an educator and this, too, can be a trust builder.

A second way that these principals assert that they can be role models and build trust with the faculty is by demonstrating perseverance and commitment to the school community. When it comes time to ensure that an initiative is implemented or that something must be done for the school community to become better either pedagogically or program-wise, a principal must be committed to this endeavour. When identifying these new initiatives, the principals feel that they need to clearly communicate each time what it is and why it needs to be done. There is never an expectation that all faculty members are on board, but a whole-hearted commitment must be
observed from the principal and his/her belief in it. This is supported by Principal D who posits that:

I think there is nothing that earns you more trust than making a good decision and you’re never going to make a universally good decision, but the good teachers in the school know. They know who the good people are. You owe it to them sometimes to make a change, even if it’s a bigger change, and you owe it to the boys for sure even if it rattles some cages or shakes things up or it costs you some trust of some group.

With perseverance and passion, the principals believe they can build trust with faculty members by staying true to his/her beliefs, especially when they are for the betterment of the students and the community at large. Even though there may be some fences to mend, when the majority of faculty supports and recognizes the good behind a decision, those that are not in agreement will come around, perhaps with the one-on-one conversations mentioned earlier. Principal C, in a far more poignant reflection about her own decision to step into the private education sector, role models her belief in her school and her commitment to it on a daily basis:

because some people actually have that feeling [that the school may close], they are not putting their heart and soul into it, because they really think that this might just collapse but that’s just with anything. My coming here, the risk that I took, leaving what I had, the security … I remember the lawyer telling me why are you doing this?, because from a financial [perspective] this didn’t make sense, but then there’s that other, vocation and that other calling that you know you just okay well I did all that. Sometimes you have to leave the security of what you have to go venture into the unknown … if it wasn’t meant to be and it didn’t work, then I’m sure something else would come through.
This type of commitment by a principal to a school community, when other things might have been far easier and safer, displays an immense amount of courage to the faculty and school community. For the faculty it demonstrates an unwavering belief in what the school stands for and the work that the school as whole is doing for its students. This type of commitment to a school community builds trust with a faculty because it reflects a personal investment in what they are doing and how successful the students are. Furthermore, it is a reflection of the effort that the principal is willing to invest to make the school a success because he/she is literally investing their future in the school. Though not all of the principals’ investments are this profound, even the commitment to extend their own learning to help the school is important and a visible sign of dedication to the community. Principal F reflects on the challenges of being out of the school building, but by explaining the necessity and working to improve the school, the faculty comes to see it as a positive and trust can be built with them:

for my own development I took this course last week for four days, one day was our mid-term break, but I was out of the school for three days taking a course for me. It was for the school, but I feel that does that breach some trust … I have to be honest and I’m quite honest with the staff saying that I wish I was in the school but I am also very careful to express why I’m taking this course and what are the reasons beyond my own development, that my development really means development for the school.

This anecdote does not mean that teachers need to give permission for a principal to do some professional development in order to build trust. What it does indicate is that when a principal is honest with his/her faculty, trust is built on that level and it is further enhanced when the subject matter of the conference is shared and this too can alleviate the principals’ stress level because
again here the belief is that there is a greater sense of buy in. As a result, faculty can see the
commitment the principal is making to the school via role modeling.

A final way in which these principals felt that they could build trust with faculty
members with regards to role modeling is *demonstrating both personal accountability and
holding others accountable as well*. One of the toughest challenges for a principal is to hold
their faculty members accountable to proper expectations. It is not always about a specific
teacher and sometimes can be a school procedure to ensure that everything is running smoothly.
A specific example of this is around exam time when principals often require departments to
submit exams well in advance of the test date. A sense of accountability here is identified by
Principal B as he ensures that exams are well written, even if it causes some consternation:

> I have to be sure as to whether or not I trust everybody to be doing what they need to be
doing to get ready for exams, so I will review exams. In some ways I’m saying to people,
I may not trust what you’re doing to get ready for exams, but meanwhile that’s why I will
review all the exams myself. In the same breath there are people who are very
conscientious and … they do appreciate that I do that. I think when it becomes a problem
for them is if I don’t do it and then they begin to lose faith in this office in terms of what
we are trying to do.

Some faculty members have an aversion to people checking up on their work and this can be a
cause of some frustration when the principal asks to review their exams. Having said this, there
are those who recognize the professional need to do this and appreciate the professional
accountability that this demonstrates. When initiatives and new assessment tools are being
implemented, there may be a tendency in a school to move slowly through this process.

However, if time and energy has been spent and the rationale sound, holding faculty accountable
can be expected and is appreciated by those who are working hard to implement the new ideas.

In this light, the principals felt they earned trust by following up on the new directions and the willingness to ensure that all faculty members were making the necessary adjustments. The next step in this role modeling of walking the talk is to hold individuals accountable. This initially does not mean a reprimand, but the ability to have the honest conversation about expectations. Principal C reflected on this:

I think what’s important is having those courageous conversations with people and not letting it go, ignoring it. I think people respect that, even though sometimes it’s hard to do. I really believe that that’s important and I try to address everything. I try to nip things in the bud as soon as possible because I just think that if things go on too long, I think they fester and they just grow into snowballs you can’t control. They just come downhill and they knock you over, so I think that that’s really important.

The principals felt it was important to demonstrate what is important to stand up for and ensure is being implemented versus what can over looked. If there is nothing that the faculty is held accountable for then nothing, at least in appearance, is important. When teachers are given a very clear message and then those that ignore it are held accountable, teachers recognize that the principal is not only going to role model expectations, but he/ she is going to walk the talk in terms of holding others accountable and this builds trust. If there are standards that are expected, then accountability is needed and trust is built when this is in place. This set of standards is equally important to enforce with students to provide an educational environment that is conducive to learning. In this sense, just as it is important to ensure that faculty is held accountable, principals must “walk the talk” with students:
You know the mission is always at the forefront of what we do, as it should be … this school is about the complete man and the well-rounded citizen and as much as we tried with this young man, he just was not buying into the Mission. It was not a good fit and therefore people were able to trust us on the decision that we made, including parents who talk and have friends with the boys … some kids are mission appropriate and some aren’t and it doesn’t mean that they are bad, it just means it’s not a good fit for them, so it’s certainly at the forefront of everything we do. (Principal E)

When principals “walk the talk” and live up to what they espouse as being important to the school community, they feel trust is built with faculty because all stakeholders know what the expectations are and the lines that cannot be crossed.

Equally as important as holding others in check and ensuring accountability, the principal feel they build trust when they themselves are accountable to their own actions via support of the school at large. If principals are going to have buy-in and trust from their faculty members, they must follow through on what they feel is important for the school community. Principal E helps to clarify this perspective:

I think that ultimately the most important aspect of the whole trust notion for me is that people think that I, as a leader, am a normal guy and I make mistakes like everybody else.

I had an academic assembly this morning to address an incident where there was a theft in our school and I asked the boy to leave. I did my little congratulations on the success of the school term and then I took the microphone and I walked out into the middle of students and I just said I want to just remind you of our six core pillars of our strategic plan and the words that mean most to us. One is accountability and you need to know that if you take something that’s not yours, you're gone, that’s the way it is. I said that
doesn’t apply just to students, as that’s for everyone here. We hold everyone accountable here, including me. I try to do that as much as I can.

The rules of the school are to ensure a school community where learning and education take place in an over-arching atmosphere of trust. Though this may seem harsh, everyone is under the same expectations and holding the line for the principal with regards to these principles demonstrates a walking-the-talk mentality that is trusted to be acted upon. When there are clear lines drawn in the sand and they are ones that cannot be stepped over, trust is developed on all sides because there is a response to inappropriate actions. In the toughest of situations for a principal, the writing up of a teacher, Principal C argues that walking the talk and living up to the expectations that she as the leader has put in place is essential:

At the end of the day you have to put the cards on the table and say okay this is what we’ve done, this is still where we’re at and if you look at going forward this is what it looks like. Then [the individual] has to make a decision - do you want to deal with this situation where you may not have any credits or any courses that you’re going to be teaching and we’re just going diminish them one at a time with the condition of not returning, or do you want to be proactive and go out there and see what’s out there and maybe see about getting a fresh start? You set specific timelines and you work towards those and then you review them so that at every step that individual was having information about where they were at, where they stood and so I think that they were appreciative of that.

“Walking the talk” with respect to holding the teachers accountable is also a sense of personal accountability because it ultimately is the responsibility of the principal to ensure proper instruction is taking place in the classroom. Though it is difficult, when a process is followed
with lots of support and professional development, and progress is still not made by the individual teacher, other faculty members can respect the decision to let a teacher go and it can be a trust builder. The other teachers see that decisions are made in the best interest of the school and the students. Every teacher understands that being the leader is a tough job and the principals believe that when they are needed to step forward and make the proverbial tough decisions, they will be morally supported if proper support is given and processes are followed. In this sense, the principals feel that trust is built because they are willing to make the tough decisions and role model good decision-making abilities for the faculty and school community at large. Principal D helps put this into a practical light:

I think and again this is something I learned latterly was when you make hard management decisions, but they are good management decisions, you earn a ton of trust from the people that you should earn trust from, from your best teachers. When someone’s not doing it and you remove them from the situation, you’ve done very well on the trust earning thing. I think again empathetically to wow now I suddenly don’t trust this person because they’ve let someone go, but no in fact you do trust that person because they are telling you they value good people in this organization.

A faculty has a sense of pride about its collective efforts and if someone is falling short and letting them down then decisions need to be made to ensure the reputation of the collective and the school is upheld. Once again, this is so as long as support has been given and process followed and this too, the principals believe, alleviates stress levels because there is a sense of understanding by faculty of the decision. In this light the principals build trust with faculty, in their eyes, because they are seen as serving the needs of the student, being able to make the
tough decisions by role modeling what is important and in a round-a-bout way helping support the faculty’s reputation.

4.5.3 Team-building Exercises

Principals A to G in this research feel that role modeling is important, and in order to enhance the trust developed through this, time must be spent on team-building exercises. Unfortunately these team building opportunities are not always ones that are planned or full of excitement for a school community. In fact, some of the events that can be rather large builders of trust between the principal and the faculty are a crisis. Principal B reflected on a very challenging school community crisis where a student died:

Well I think any time a student passes away in a school community and when that happens in any school community, that’s when you really see the teachers, the student body come together and that’s when you see a real appreciation of what the school is about in its mission and so forth. There’s no question that the passing of a student is one of the worst things that can happen to any principal. What I find interesting is how the school pulls together and almost in some ways redefines itself. I’ve seen when this type of situation has happened both young men and women define who they are and show a side to us that we didn’t even think was there and gives us a whole new outlook on some of the kids that maybe we thought were not serious. It’s a life changing moment for them as well. It may sound bad, but sometimes a crisis does work really well for a school community.

Though none of the principals ever expressed hope that a crisis would present itself, they all did recognize that the power of the situation and the support of the community when it draws together can be a builder of trust for the principals and his/ her faculty. Though a death may be
the most significant of a crisis that a school may face, other types of smaller crises can arise that tests the mettle of a principal, demonstrates his/her competency and builds trust. Often times these mini-crises can happen at a staff meeting, but the way in which the challenging questions or challenges in general are handled speaks volumes for how a principal can build trust by continuing to be composed and honest:

[constructive meetings are] huge and I find that so much can be built up trust-wise if a meeting has an agenda, a follow through, and not a hidden agenda. The opportunity for discussion and feedback, even though sometimes that makes me more anxious than anything else because when we open it up for questions I think please don’t ask any questions because I don’t know the answers. I do think there’s much to be said for that and I think for our staff what I’m learning a lot about is it has to be meaningful for them because if it’s not then they tune out … (Principal F)

There are times throughout the year when the pressures get the best of everyone and principals can be challenged by their faculty. In many ways this may just be an opportunity to vent, but by listening and responding honestly, the principals feel that they demonstrate a calm sense of leadership and it too builds trust. Similar to dealing with a major crisis, the ability to deal with minor ones calmly and professionally builds trust with teachers. This demonstration of composure is also important when dealing with Ministry of Education inspections or other accreditation processes. Principal A reflects on her experiences with this situation:

Last year we went to our CAIS accreditation. I really wanted to make sure that it was going to be a very fast process. We didn’t start as early as we perhaps should have in putting together our internal evaluation report, but I wanted to make sure that everyone had the opportunity to sit on each of these committees … We want to use this as an
opportunity to identify weakness that faculty and students see and so we did that. I asked that there were not assistant heads on any of those committees purposely because I didn’t want people to feel that they could not speak freely. By asking for the feedback, I think we got some and obviously I don’t know who said what in each report.

Even in times of inspection which adds pressure or stress and what might be considered something similar to a crisis in a private school, following regular processes and keeping faculty informed and part of the process helps to alleviate some of the pressures. By alleviating the pressure of others, the principals sense their own pressures being reduced. Through this calming influence, the principals are also demonstrating the ability to build trust.

A more positive opportunity to build trust through team building experiences takes place when principals formally and informally plan social interaction opportunities with the faculty at large or a few at a time. Principal B shared some reservations about this type of interaction when he commented that he has his own “views that there has to be a clear separation of management and employee, you have to, because you may be called upon a few weeks or a few months later to make a tough decision relating to staff. Sometimes I think if you involve yourself informally too much with people, you could ruin your ability to be objective in making the right decision for the school.” Though there is truth to this perspective, Principal G formally sits down for a monthly lunch that is put on by the school. These lunches are tokens of appreciation and they also provide opportunities to build team in the general sense by talking, discussing, and sharing insights:

Every month I meet with the staff at lunch … I tell them where we’re going, I report on the Board meeting … I’ve told them about the five year plan in place because I want to
share with them the five year plan because I don’t want them to say you didn’t tell me, you’re hiding or you’re being sneaky. I want to be transparent as there’s nothing to hide.

By sharing ideas and providing opportunities for feedback, dialogue is created that is necessary for healthy relationships and a healthy community. This helps to build trust because teachers believe they are not on the outside looking in on decisions, but are part of an on-going process and part of the answer. Principal D reflects on his own school in this light from less formal opportunities such as being present at school events after school or taking the bus with a team:

There are a lot of little tricks such as if you go to a sporting event you take the bus and you sit next to the coach. We’ve done a lot of outdoor education and I’ve gone up to everyone and there’s a period after dinner where the boys have free time and the staff tend to sit at the table and have a pot of coffee or something. You can find the time, like I hope the teachers find the time with each boy, you can find the time in really less formal ways, than can you come to sit in my office. I have one teacher who I know, he was little iffy about coming to see me and I couldn’t quite put my hand on it. I still don’t know what it was but I caught him one day when he had his coat on and I said do you mind if I walk with you, I’ll treat you to a coffee. It was the walk as he wanted to get off campus before he could talk to me.

These opportunities provide a chance to get to know and understand people on a more personal basis. Understanding the lives of others, or however much they choose to share, makes everyone a little more human and gives the school a sense of community. Opportunities to interact on a different level than that which is offered each day at school are important and it is believed that these “fuller” relationships help diminish stress. Underneath the professional attire, principals have lives that make them who they are. It is not necessary that everyone knows each others’
deepest secrets, but the principals/headmasters believe that having relationships beyond school talk builds community caring and ultimately trust because to a degree more intimate relationships are developed.

One further opportunity that these principals shared in trying to build trust through team building exercises is the *establishing of personal connections and discussion* through social events offered to faculty members and staff on behalf of the school. On a small scale Principal D suggests that the small discussions with groups or individuals can bring the reward of trust:

I knew coming in here too that it was really important for me to gain the trust of my assistant, who is a gentle and kind soul and therefore has the ear of all of the staff and I needed her on my side … I think if you do what you say you’re going to do and you remind people every chance you can that you’re open to learning and you don’t pretend to have all the answers and you do want to hear from them it’s a slow process.

An ability to develop relationships with individuals in the school community, whether they are faculty or not, speaks volumes about the caring nature of a principal. In establishing personal connections with people on faculty and staff, a sense of community is built as well as trust because people observe that each person is worthy of the principal’s attention. This does not mean that the principal knows everyone’s business, but that he/she can better understand the individual and better appreciate his/her perspective. Investing time in the individuals that are a part of the school community builds a sense of closeness, support, and trust. Even the grander scale demonstrations have their value as Principal E described his insights on the value of a social outing:

I truly believe the culture of this place is incredible and there are things that can rock a culture sometimes. Fortunately we have been able to avoid that, but doing things like
today where I’ve signed off on a $5,000.00 expense to take people to Yuk Yuks on the Wednesday before Christmas on a bus to have dinner. Little things like that are fun and also allow people to bond.

It is not the dollar value of the experience that builds the trust but the focus on bonding. It is the commitment to say thank you for the hard work and the visible signs of appreciation that continue to build relationships with teachers and the trust that comes along with these. In the long run these healthy relationship based on respect are believed to ease the principals/Headmasters’ stress. This is because these planned formal and informal social events, the professional opportunities for social interaction and those trying times of crises all are seen by the principals to be trust building exercises with their faculty and go a long way in engendering good will or ensuring that the school community is caring and supportive.

4.5.4 Creating School Culture

All of the principals’ focus on building trust through team building, in their mind, is critical to creating a school environment that is progressive and healthy. Interestingly enough, the motivation for six of the seven principals is not high test scores, but rather the building of a school culture. Principal E when articulating about the importance of standardized test scores comments that “No, [test scores] are things that are just part of the process and I understand why, but they are not a significant part.” In his mind provincial test scores are important, but they are not the main reason that trust is built with faculty members nor is it necessarily an outcome of it. Principal F supports this insight and the separation of building trust with ensuring higher test scores:

I don’t think I would link those (high level of trust and improved test scores) directly at this point. I think that those, rightly or wrongly, would be isolated in terms of the kids as
there’s so many other factors, the anxiousness about writing that stuff. No, not in terms of scores, but when I think of student success, like many of our schools, I am going beyond the marks so much as the engagement and the learning and the true success and growth.

The principals of these private schools clearly articulate that educational success is not about a high score or a mark, but rather the development and growth of students into productive citizens who are ready to contribute. This focus on the whole student is not a product of the mentality that “private schools only deal with smart kids.” Principal A has two poignant insights in regards to this. The first revolves around her school community and the types of students that she deals with in regards to standardized testing:

We actually don’t do the EQAO testing, except for the Literacy test and then the SAT test. With a much larger population of students, not just ESL as we have a larger group of Chinese students who in general come with weaker English skills than their Korean counterparts who understand the culture of education because of what is over there … I would guess that 90 percent of our teachers wouldn’t even know where to go look to see our school’s Literacy test results. We’ve never gone back to an English teacher of a grade 10 student and said how is it that this person is passing your test and they did poorly on the test (OSSLT). With SAT scores again they are very individual and we don’t do mass reporting. The counselor who works with US applicant sees them and I see them. We have AP, and the same thing for AP - we have a very open policy in terms of taking AP. We have pre AP and we build it in terms of a vertical team into the natural progression as they move through in terms of getting some of those skills … The same thing with teachers, we certainly debrief the results and look at patterns of weakness so
that we can go back, but we’ve never been like wow our English department is bombing in prepping these kids for AP.

Clearly test scores are not the defining piece of information for a strong school and a successful one in her eyes. By no means does any principal dismiss the public relations part of test scores, but there is a mentality that test scores are not the driving force by which a successful school is determined. In fact, when asked about the necessity of having trust in a school she responded, I think you could certainly operate one without it and you could probably operate a very successful one depending on how you brand success or what your measurement of success is. You could have kids with very high test scores and getting into all the best schools without necessarily having a great culture of trust in the school, but I think if you want to be doing things differently or as different as you can … I don’t think that you can operate a successful school without a culture of trust. (Principal A)

Clearly a successful school can be defined in many different ways, but for almost all of the principals of these schools high test scores were not the litmus test. An engaged and happy educational community that focused on the development of the whole student seems to be the focus. Principal D, without any sort of cynicism, supports this as well, we do cover the Ministry expectations and they sometimes impede us from I think best practice in education. On the other hand, we may rely on that a little too much and there are ways around that. If all we do is the Ministry expectations, there’s a school down the street for free. That again is an area where you’re asking people to up their game and we’re asking them to do more than they are expected to at the school down the street that’s free. We’re doing that because they’re learners and they want to get better and we need to create the situation where they are going to be motivated to go to the mat for
their kids and to do the extra thing and to coach the extra team and to exceed the Ministry expectations.

For private schools to stand out and draw students to them, they must be seen as something different. From what these principals articulate, that difference seems to rest in the focus on the whole student rather than just on test scores. This is not to say that public school principals are not trying to focus on the whole child as well, but these principals perceive that test scores are driving much of public education at this time.

The belief of these principals’ that creating school culture is the reason for building trust and is a key ingredient to a successful school, emphasizes the need to explore what school culture means for these principals. One of the overarching aspects of a successful school culture is the fact that it is clearly defined as a student-focused community. Part of this focus is the ensuring, on the principal’s part, that a proper structure is in place to ensure a proper learning environment. Principal F suggests,

I think deportment when I think of the kids, and I think clarity of expectations is really what’s key - trying to move away from the discipline to knowledge ... Where kids are involved, we need to make sure that there’s a clear outline of expectations and that we follow up in the consequences of that. I believe that ultimately does build trust if it’s clear.

Having a proper structure, routine, and expectations in place sets a standard by which a successful school can operate and it becomes a very part of the school’s fabric. A successful school culture for these principal was not about setting students up to get caught doing something they should not and then hold them accountable as an example to other students. These principals found that providing a clear set of expectations and identifying appropriate
consequences up front was good for the school community and its culture because everything is transparent. Another part to this student-centered learning environment that is important is addressed by Principal C:

I think creating the motivation and the engagement to be able to continue to learn and be curious really has to do with the people around you, the people in your learning environment. If you believe that they trust you and they want the best for you and it’s that whole “the teacher can unlock the potential of the student”, they can’t unlock that potential if you’re not feeding that fire and that energy. So it’s kind of part of a sequence of things that kind of have to happen.

Having a motivated school culture is important. This motivation is not just for the students, but also must be a part of the teachers as well. The catalyst for this energy often times can be the principals and it revolves around setting expectations of work ethic and dedication. If all members of a school community are committed to learning, then part of the school’s culture becomes clear. Each member of the community is invested in being the best learner they can be and the best person they can be and this helps define what the culture of the school is. This motivation to be a community of learners provides opportunities for interaction on a different level. In a school culture where learning is at the core, adults, too, learn alongside of the students. By having a trusting environment, teachers need to supervise, but not hover over each student. In this way, teachers learn about the power of role modeling and students are given an opportunity to show responsibility and growth as demonstrate learning from the bigger picture. These positive relationships are a wonderful testament to a school and can be a huge positive in a principal/ headmaster’s life as they suggest with regards to job-satisfaction.
A second major facet of a school culture based on trust and which all of these principals desire to build is demonstrated through a tangible enjoyment that the faculty has in teaching at the school. There is no utopia in education or at a specific school, but when the majority of the teachers are part of a school culture which engenders a pride in what they are doing and a passion for the school at which they teach, the true benefactors are the students themselves. Building this culture is actively pursued by these principals by the actions that they take and the trust they build. Principal C reflects on a way that she tried to build school culture by ensuring that the teachers feel appreciated:

We went out and actually bought, little valentines, we had them made up, on our own, and we had little cups made up with {our school logo on it}, which of course we don’t have a budget for so it was just our little treat for the staff. We went out to each of the classrooms with a basket and we hand delivered them. It’s those little things and you’re constantly doing them and you want to do it because I think that the staff does so much in terms of extra work … you try to do what you can do to make them feel valued.

A principal’s focus on ensuring that people feel valued and appreciated goes a long way to building a trust and a school culture that is appreciative of people’s efforts. In an environment where the faculty feels cared for and secure, the principals feel that a culture of trust is built and a school is created that is conducive to providing the same feeling for all of its members, especially the students. Interestingly enough, when this type of school culture is non-existent, trust is not present, and teachers may not be enjoying the school as much. Principal A explains what this might look like:

I think you would have a lot of your faculty focuses on protecting their own material, working as an individual in the school, having a school full of individuals. A school
devoid of trust would lack, if you were to talk with the students or the faculty, there wouldn’t be a common sense in terms of purpose of the school, where we are going and of what we believe in. In addition to the individual focus, I think the overall culture of the school would be far less innovative than a school with a strong sense of trust, trust in community and vision. It’s pretty hard to move ideas forward, and have people feel confident enough to bring them forward so I think there would be a sense of stagnancy in a school like that.

This sentiment was shared by the other principals and it depicts a school environment where students are lucky if they get a conscientious teacher, but across the board, everyone is less effective and the ones that lose out the most are the students. Schools where the faculty feels appreciated and is excited about coming each day helps foster a culture that is caring and progressive and where this passion and nurturing is transferred to the students. Principal D summarizes this best:

These are such human enterprises that we are engaged in and you’re only going to get the best out of people when they are willing the bring the whole of themselves, when they are willing to be vulnerable, which means not just their times of sadness, but their interests, their passion. I’ve got a teacher here who’s so passionate about cooking and she has her cooking club. It’s not like an after school club because it is really important and the kids are learning a lot of really important stuff. To have that at an all boys’ school … it has nothing to do with her professionally as it has to do with her allowing her personality and her interests to come in here. That’s when we’re going to profoundly get the boys engaged in stuff, but you only get that when you are open to people to bring their humanity in, and they need a place to park it sometimes.
When teachers feel supported and part of a culture that is safe and caring, they share more of themselves and the students once again are the benefactors. When the school community is interacting at this level, it is not surprising that the principals/ headmasters feel positive about themselves and the work they are doing.

The last aspect of school culture that is built through a focus on trust is a true sense of community. The sense of community in essence is seen beyond the classroom and it is reflected in the faculty’s willingness to be involved beyond the curriculum. Principal E articulates his perspective of culture and its connection to community:

Culture is just the feeling when you walk in the place like having lunch with the staff and faculty and having every person in the school involved in [the charity drive]. You see people here on a Sunday afternoon like yesterday when I saw a number of teachers with their vans pulled up here to our depot on their own you know you’re in a pretty special place. We’re about to do our carol service at a church in Toronto watching our entire community come together, 2000 people, next Friday night is pretty special. All of the faculty will be there and tons of alumni and parents.

Building the trust with faculty members is done in the hopes of building a school culture where the school community takes on a life of its own. It is demonstrated best when the community comes together outside of a regular school day and it has a family feeling. Though all institutions may have a culture, these principals actively build trust to mold a culture that is healthy and vibrant. In many ways each of the schools, though common in being private, espouse their own culture and use this to attract both teachers and students. In this way, parents, students, and faculty members know what they are committing to when they accept a placement or a job opportunity. The culture however is not stagnant and the building of the community
feeling takes competency, work and on-going effort. Principal C identifies her effort to build this community feeling:

It was strategic in terms of why we had it there and it gave people a kind of sense of being away from the school. It was really more about creating a sense of community and how we developed that [reflection] and the commissioning, calling everybody up and giving them a part of the commissioning activity where everybody was called to be a part of it. All of the people coming from various different aspects, some came from private schools, a small group was returning, but a majority of staff came from everywhere, including directly from the faculty. You have seasoned teachers, you have very young teachers and everything in between. It was kind of like starting the year with a vision of what we wanted to accomplish and creating a sense of community and getting everybody to be part of it or feel that they were part of it.

Staff meetings for reflections provide an excellent opportunity to review where the school has been and where it is heading. It also provides an opportunity for each faculty member to understand his/ her role in enhancing the life of the school as a member of the community. It also provides an opportunity to review the school’s Mission Statement which is at the heart of each school’s culture. Principal F comments on the importance of each teacher’s understanding of the core values of the school:

I think that if you have a culture that is known and understood to be the goals of the school, the values, the importance, I think that is the framework around which everything else is set in terms of tone. If our values are consideration and mutual respect and trust, making sure that every decision we make reflects that absolutely contributes to building trust … That goes along not just with your faculty but with your students too.
When there is a common understanding of the culture of the school and what is important, then trust is built because everyone is making decisions and coming to an understanding about issues and initiatives from the same perspective. As much as teaching is about what goes in the classroom, a school’s culture helps transcend teaching beyond the lectures, group work or assessments. It builds connections between and across the different constituents of the school including teachers, students, parents, alumni, and administration. Principal D helps to put this in perspective:

it is also the openness to a relationship that is beyond what they’re learning, beyond the curriculum. I want my teachers to be open to a relationship with the boys that challenges them and that keeps them safe and makes them feel important. I should have that exact same relationship and my admin team should have that relationship. Teachers are not going to connect with every boy, but every boy should have at least one teacher that they have a profound connection. I think similarly with your admin team, if you look at it, you should complement each other so that you’re different types of people. In fact, that happens with the faculty and with the staff in the school - who’s going to have the conversation with so and so about x,y,z? The same with the boys - who’s going to talk to this kid about x, who’s going to give this kid a kick in the pants if he needs it, why don’t I do that because I have a relationship? I think, those relationships are the culture in the school.

Developing a school culture that focuses on student development, ensures teachers are enjoying being at the school, and creating a community feel is important for the principals in this study. This ultimately makes the environment more positive and stress free for all involved, especially the principals. From each of their perspectives, the principals/ headmasters believe that the
building of trusting relationships with school stakeholders is important, but the one where the trust is crucial is that which is established with their faculty members. By actively building trust via all of the ways mentioned in this research, these principals hope to engender the positive effects of micropolitics, build better relationships with faculty, increase the leadership capacity of the faculty, and create a system of self-support to help decrease stress. Creating trusting relationships with faculty members that focuses on student growth and establishing a trusting school environment that is nurturing and safe for all of its members is a significant desire of these principals. The trust built by these principals is seen then to be of critical importance, not just for the trust itself, but its impact on teacher productivity and influence of student learning.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications

“trust is rooted in the microdynamics of day-to-day social interactions among teachers, principals, and parents and the discernments that various participants make about these interactions ... [and] the myriad social exchanges that make up daily life in a school community fuse into distinct social patterns that generate (or fail to generate) organization-wide resources ... When relational trust is strong, reform initiatives are more likely to be deeply engaged by school participants and to diffuse broadly across the organization.” (Bryk and Schneider, 2002, p. 122)

The discussion in this chapter is organized around the major themes that emerged from the interviews and follows in parallel the preceding chapter. This structure provides an opportunity for the themes and the supporting insights to be linked to the literature. These links provide the impetus to arrive at implications of this research and subsequent suggestions for future research and program development and support that might prove worthy to develop the next leaders in education.

What do the perspectives of seven new private high school high school principals reveal about how a principal develops trust in a private high school?

Sub-problems:

- From the perspective of the principal, how do formal and informal trust-building actions address micropolitics in a private high school?
- From the perspective of the principal, how does the building of trust impact relationships with faculty members?
- From the perspective of the principal, does trust help build the leadership capacity of faculty members?
- From the perspective of the principal, how does a trusting environment reveal itself and does it decrease the workload of new private high school principals?
5.1 Analysis of Micropolitics

Upon an analysis of the seven interviews completed in this research study, a number of commonalities emerged in the attention to the micropolitics existing in a private high school by the principals. In a general sense, the fact that all of the principals were aligned in their recognition of micropolitics leads further credence to Blasé and Blasé (1997) research which suggests that “to deny the relevance of micro-politics is in effect to condemn organizational research to be forever ineffectual and out of step with the immediate realities of life in organizations” (p. xi). Furthermore, the principals seem to be quite aware that in order to address the challenges that one might face from micropolitics, there needs to be recognition of the idiosyncrasies presented at the high school level due to subject departments (Siskin 1994) and the challenges they present in bringing about change. In being attuned to these realities, the principals gave evidence to the fact that micropolitics, in a general sense, also played an important role in the overall mood in the building. Trying to ensure that the general tenor of the building remains positive, means that the principals recognize that micropolitics are ever-present. As such, the principals recognized that it was impossible to take micropolitics out of the equation so they worked proactively to keep the negative to a minimum and mitigate the cynical side of micropolitics, that of gossip, lest it take hold of a school and fulfill Ball’s (1987) insight that “by its concentration on the untoward and illicit, gossip serves as a form of moral arbitration which penetrates beyond the surface features of apparent conformity ... intimate relationships between staff members, doubtful promotions and changes to established routines all, in different ways, threaten the social and moral order of the organization; they are the stuff of gossip” (p. 217). By being attuned to the reality of micropolitics, the principals worked diligently to counteract the
negative fallout that can exist because of it, and instead worked within its framework to build trust.

5.1.1 Autonomy

One of the very direct ways that the principals felt that they could manage or mitigate the negative impact of micropolitics was through the building of autonomy for the teachers and the departments. This was by no means a laissez-faire approach to the principalship, but rather a clear attempt to build trust by treating the teachers as professionals and to support them in their efforts to do their best. By paying particular attention to the classroom and the details of interruptions and resources, the principals identified a clear support of the teachers’ professionalism and a belief in the classroom as the central focus of education. Lortie (2009), Tschannen-Moran (2004), and Bryk and Schneider (2002) all support this insight as being a meaningful way in which to build trust with faculty members. When the value of the classroom is emphasized by both teacher and principal alike, school-wide improvements are better able to come to fruition.

School-wide improvements typically have two impetuses. The first is that of an initiative which comes from within the schools walls. The principals in this research suggest that these types of initiatives are usually ones that can be generated through interaction within the building and is supported by the research of Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011). Usually these types of initiatives can be trust-builders as they often evolve out of group dynamics and not are always top-down. When faculty members feel a part of their own professional development, a truer sense of autonomy grows and the principals identify these opportunities as ones that genuinely build trust. Tschannen-Moran (2004) articulates this poignantly when she suggests that “bureaucratic organizations rely on a hierarchy of authority for coordination and control,
whereas professional organizations rely on trust in the expertise of the professionals to exercise discretion in responding to the needs of clients” (p. 36). Though we rarely identify our students as clients, the analogy is effective in that relying on the expertise of the professionals, in this case the teachers, to help direct responses to the needs of the students is a way to respect their professionalism and build trust.

To say that all initiatives come from within would be misleading. The most challenging initiatives for faculty members tend to be those that are external and in this research these initiatives often stem from the Ministry of Education and created challenges for these principals. As Ball (1987) suggests, “the structure of schools allows for and reproduces dissensus and goal diversity. The relative autonomy of subunits within the organization – departments, houses, year groups, special units, the sixth form – produces what Bidwell calls ‘structure looseness’; that is ‘a lack of coordination between the activities and the goals of actors in separate functional units and the existence of multiple and overlapping areas of interest and jurisdiction, and complex decision-making processes’” (p. 11). As the principals suggest in this research study, teachers are often told by the principal that they are doing a good job and often receive positive reinforcement. In this light they must work within the ‘structured looseness’ and navigate to the tension that arises from these challenges. Unfortunately, teachers are then in a personal space where they cannot connect the effective job they are doing presently with a need to change that comes from external sources. The principals found the external direction given to teachers to change pedagogy was incongruent with the feedback they were getting in the school. As a result, the principals found that integrating new Ministry directives into the school’s daily life took an adept hand. The ability to do this without diminishing the faculty’s feelings of autonomy is important. Though Lortie (2009) acknowledges this reality in regards to standardized testing
south of our border, it rings true when dealing with pedagogy as well. When this is done with
sensitivity and a deft hand, the principals found that it can be a builder of trust, though not as
strong as an initiative developed from within the school.

Whether it is an internal or external initiative, the principals of these seven private high
schools identified a need to work with the department heads. As Siskin (1994) suggests, “the
realms of academic departments create boundary lines which constrain high school
communications, and social worlds which can sustain subject-colleagues within their small
groups, but they are also micro-political arenas where critical ‘material endowments’ of funding,
time, and space are ‘defended’ and distributed” (p. 113). In general, the principals responded to
this dilemma by providing opportunities for the department head to look at ways of
implementing new ideas and pedagogy within their own departments and placed responsibility
on them to see them through to fruition. By doing so they are respecting the autonomy of the
department head and, as supported in studies done by Shulman (1987), Grossman (1990), Wilson
and Wineberg (1988), and Wineberg and Wilson (1991), Siskin (1994) indicates that “it becomes
apparent that disciplines shape not only choices of content but also quite different understandings
of what teaching and learning are all about” (p. 11). Understanding that these differences exist,
also helps give the principal a reputation of being in touch, both as a fellow educator and as a
leader. Both of these identities, that of an in-touch educator and leader, build trust in the
principal and is identified by these seven as important to them and how they would like to be
perceived. In many ways, the high school faculty can become like one large family (Siskin
1994) and for the principal to be seen as an important member of this is beneficial to the whole
school environment, builds trust, and ultimately leads to open and honest relationships.
5.1.2 Honesty

From the research and insights of these seven principals, it is quite evident that the principals have a clear perspective that being honest with faculty members is a way to mitigate the effects of micropolitics. Ball (1987) posits that schools are seen “in common with virtually all other social organizations, to be arenas of struggle, to be riven with actual or potential conflict between members; to be poorly coordinated; to be ideologically diverse” (p. 19). The principals in this research understand the struggles that are inherent in the school environment. For these principals, however, it is another opportunity to build trust. This is because the principals believe that these struggles provide an opportunity for honest dialogue through which both parties can work together to resolve issues or set in motion new plans for the school community. Providing opportunities throughout the school year to keep faculty members abreast of school information and issues is recognized by the principals to be of paramount importance to building trust. Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) support this as they suggest that when an organization is complex, the probable best means to achieve cooperation and predictability is for leaders to use social controls and trust building. That is, when the task context is complex, effective leaders will emphasize socialization to a common mission and goals, preferring soft means such as persuasion to shape culture, and for the most part, avoid forms of control based on unnecessary behavioural constraint. Leaders will build trust by acting in ways that reveal them as trustworthy to others in the organization. That is, they will act in ways consistent with the criteria for judging trustworthiness: benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competence (p. 111).

The principals clearly subscribed to this insight as they felt that everyone should be on the same page and aware of the issues. Unless something was confidential, the sharing of information was
not an issue for any of the principals. Whether the issues revolved around finances, resources, or strategic plans, each of the principals felt that a willingness and deliberate sharing was beneficial to building trust with all faculty members. Though this may be seen as catering to the curiosity of the human psyche, the principals believed that by being and honest and sharing information created a vulnerability of sorts that made them more approachable. This too is a builder of trust and is supported by Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) as they suggest that “vulnerability, risk, and interdependence are necessary conditions for trust; thus variations in these aspects over the course of a relationship may alter the level and form that trust takes” (p. 18).

This focus of being honest and keeping faculty members in the know information-wise is also important to the department heads. By paying particular attention to the department structure, the principals are in fact recognizing that “as social worlds departments both provide a potential site for strong and meaningful membership within a collegial community, and out of that community generate a cultural mechanism which can reinforce, mediate, or transform school culture” (Siskin 1994, p. 92). The principals felt that by working not only in a general fashion with the faculty as a collective, but also more specifically with the department heads, more can be attained in the school community. By being willing to share information first with department heads or even share different information with them, it recognized their role as leaders in the building and developed trust. These types of interactions provide everyone with an opportunity to dialogue at many different levels and ask the pertinent questions and share insights.

When the principals shared information and responded to questions or different perspectives, they did not feel put on the spot. In fact, the sharing of reasons and the providing of justifications for direction was a way in which they felt they built trust. Though this may
seem counter-intuitive as a “boss” explains his/ her reasoning, it echoes Forsyth, Adams and Hoy’s (2011) insight that “in addition to principal-teacher relations, school leaders build a foundation for constructive social interactions among teachers through their use of structural and normative mechanisms as a means of promoting cooperation and shared inquiry around instructional issues” (p. 58). Any opportunity to interact and discuss the goings-on and challenges within a school environment with faculty was seen as an opportunity to be honest and build trust. Lortie (2009) supports the idea that the principal, in sharing information honestly is attempting to help all understand issues and the need to move in a new direction. This is due in large part to the principals’ understanding that it is easier to move forward with the faculty in-the-know and on-board than trying to do things alone and that ultimately it speaks to better involvement and commitment. This perspective also leads credence to the fact that the principals were trying to build a sense of team and goodwill so that when the challenging times arrived, everyone was able to handle the situation more effectively and that no one was blind-sided. In their minds this was a very significant aspect to building trust and, it too, is supported by Lortie (2009).

When there is a commitment to honesty and actions that support this commitment, the principals felt that when it came time to provide professional feedback to teachers, it was far easier. As a result, the constructive feedback was seen as another opportunity to build trust because it could be done through an honest and open discussion. Because of the fact that an honest relationship is already established, at least in a general way, the principals found it far easier to relay information to teachers about their performance or areas that might need improvement. Rather than see it as an evaluation, the general sense from the principals is that it was about supervision and only in the extreme situations about evaluation. In this light the
principals were interested in dialogue rather than a list of do’s and don’ts. Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) support the distinction between supervision and evaluation and as it is supportive of the teacher-centered approach, it is found to build trust with the teachers. The principals felt that the ongoing dialogue rather than one or two meetings focusing on positives and negatives, built trusting relationships. This is not to say that the tough decisions were not made by these principals. Interestingly enough, the tough decisions about letting teachers go based on an ultimate evaluation could be seen to build trust as well. This is because the principals felt that in building trusting relationships throughout the school and establishing a sense of fairness, faculty members could understand, to the best possible degree, that the principal was acting in the school’s best interest when making a decision not to renew a teacher. Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) support the fact that when teachers are part of a clearly outlined performance and dialogue review, then trust is built because it does not seem like a review based on the unknown. Consistency from the teacher’s perspective can then be expected across the board and when somebody is not meeting “standards”, it is more objective than personal. Furthermore, this type of dialogue and feedback is what truly leads to improvements and further building of trust between these principals and their faculty members. It is not surprising that in Lortie’s 2009 research “92% of the respondents rejected the chance to support close and detailed supervision of their teachers in favour of looser arrangements for supervision; they preferred latitude that permitted teachers to exercise a degree of personal discretion in their teaching” (p. 85). By respecting the teacher’s professionalism and trying to work with the individual, a collegial approach is established and the focus is on betterment rather than errors. By respecting the professionalism of the faculty member and being honest in conversation, trust is built and improvement is the end goal rather than what might be seen as a power play affecting an
individual’s job. As mentioned above, this did mean that the principals made tough personnel decisions, but it also means that these challenging opportunities were seen as trust-building when individuals were held accountable to a clear set of expectations. Any time the principal could be seen as acting honestly and in the best interest of the school, he/she was able to build trust.

5.1.3 Sharing

Alongside of opportunities to be honest with faculty members to build trust, the principals believed that sharing decision-making also helped to mitigate the negative impact that micropolitics might have. Ball (1987) suggests that “the introduction of, or proposal to introduce, changes in structure or working practices must be viewed in terms of its relationship to the immediate interests and concerns of those members likely to be affected, directly or indirectly. Innovations are rarely neutral” (p. 32). The principals in this research often spent time realizing and planning how a change or new initiative would affect others and how best to help faculty members come to terms with the new ideas. When and where possible, faculty was included in the initial development of the idea or at the very least provided input into the implementation of it. This is a significant builder of trust because it recognizes that the faculty have a vested interest in the school’s improvement and hence an opportunity for them to share their insights is critical. In doing this, the principals, whether it was through hiring or resource allocation, showed respect for the professionalism of the teachers and department heads. As Bryk and Schneider (2002) point out, “good schools are intrinsically social enterprises that depend heavily on cooperative endeavours among the varied participants who comprise the school community” (p. 144). Pertinent to this research is the insight that when these principals articulate a desire to create great schools and involve faculty members in the strategic plan to do so, they build trust and a common mission with the faculty members. This team mentality can be
an important means through which to sustain the engendering of trust and mitigates the micropolitics that emerge around decision-making times when people are not involved.

The challenge in today’s educational environment, especially in these private schools, is to try to meet the expectations of the parents. In many ways this is very similar to the public and public catholic education systems, but within these private high schools the principals felt extra pressure to meet contemporary demands. In order to meet these needs, the principals felt that by sharing decision-making where possible, helped to generate an enthusiasm for the decision and greater buy-in which helped develop trust. This is reflected in Tschannen-Moran’s (2004) comments that “without trust, schools are likely to flounder in their attempts to provide constructive educational environments and meet the lofty goals that our society has set for them because energy needed to solve the complex problem of educating a diverse group of students is diverted into self-protection ... trustworthy leadership is the heart of productive schools” (p. 13). Though the trust was appreciated by the principals, the end goal was to create a better environment or conditions in which to educate the students. This is echoed further by Blasé and Blasé (1997) who suggest that “a facilitative micropolitical orientation can be referred to as a ‘power through’ (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991) or ‘power-with’ (Kreisberg, 1992) approach to leadership: such an approach is designed to empower others (rather than control them) through a process characterized by varying degrees of reciprocity, co-agency, negotiation, sharing and mutuality to achieve educational goals” (p. 140). By empowering others and providing the ownership of certain decisions reduced the ability of the faculty members to place blame when things do not work out. Celebrating and resolving issues together is also a powerful way to build trust.
The principals recognized that the sharing of decision-making did not come without challenges. Each of the principals recognized that in providing opportunities for feedback meant that conflict might emerge through the realization of existing different perspectives and the feeling by some that their input had been ignored. These conflicts also provided opportunities to build trust because any powerful relationship must be able to withstand disagreement. In being able to agree to disagree and still be committed to future sharing is the power that the principals saw in these dynamics. As Ball (1987) suggests “the changing pattern of control is not the product of abstract organizational systems; rather, it emerges from the confrontations and interaction between individuals and groups in the organization” (p. 10). In this sense, confrontation is seen as healthy and necessary to the building of trusting relationships. Nothing is ever easy all of the time and conflict can be a test to the trust, but also an affirmation of it as well. Even though sharing decision-making was seen by all of the principals as inefficient time-wise, the engendering of trust and building of team was more important. Lortie’s (2009) research indicates that “[principals] showed a preference (78%) for sharing decisions with faculties and foregoing whatever efficiency gains might be thought to result from moving ahead without them ... conferring with teachers ... increases commitment to action on decisions” (p. 87). The principals in this research were committed to sharing information and decision-making to the best of their ability and truly felt that it built trust. This component of trust-building, in line with being honest and providing professional autonomy, were clearly identified ways through which these principals attempted to mitigate the effects of micropolitics.

Equally as important as mitigating the potential negatives of micropolitics, these principals consistently identified the need to build better relationships with faculty members as a means through which to build trust. The bettering of these relationships, as indicated by research
conducted, revolved around the provision of support for the faculty members, truly hearing about issues, and visibility of the principals within the school. The principals articulated that a focus on these areas was beneficial to building trust.

5.2 Analysis of Building Better Relationships with Faculty

All seven of the principals interviewed for this research project articulated, at least to some degree, that building relationships with faculty members is important to building trust with them. The relationship is not necessarily one with deep emotional connection as a friendship, but rather a professional relationship that is built on mutual respect and acknowledgement of a shared investment in education. Lortie (2009) suggests that “the relationship ... [between the principal and teacher,] ... both collectively and individually, is simultaneously the most important and the most difficult for the principal to establish and sustain. That combination of importance and intricacy gives it great salience” (p. 73). The importance of the principal’s relationships with faculty members as a whole and as individuals cannot be under-estimated as Lortie suggests. Much of the work done in schools to improve student learning rests on those in the community relating and coming to terms with each other on how best to do that. Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) further support this insight as they suggest that when looking at a school it can be classified as a complex organization and

when an organization is complex, the probable best means to achieve cooperation and predictability is for leaders to use social controls and trust building. That is, when the task context is complex, effective leaders will emphasize socialization to a common mission and goals, preferring soft means such as persuasion to shape culture, and for the most part, avoid forms of control based on unnecessary behavioural constraint. Leaders will build trust by acting in ways that reveal them as trustworthy to others in the
organization. That is, they will act in ways consistent with the criteria for judging trustworthiness: benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competence (p. 11).

Schools are indeed complex institutions and the relationships within them prove to be equally so. As such, the principals of this research revealed that building relationships with faculty members rested, from their perspective with their ability to provide support, a structured environment, and an ability to reduce anxiety levels of faculty members.

5.2.1 Support for Faculty Members

Providing support for faculty members seems like a fairly obvious way for the principals to build trust. Interestingly enough, there seems to be very specific ways in which the principals saw themselves providing this support. Consistently, one of the ways mentioned by the principals to build this trust was their ability to demonstrate moral support for the faculty. For the principals this means being a champion of the teachers in the good work they do. Understanding that teachers need recognition and encouragement like any other members of a team seems reasonable, but it must also come from the heart and be authentic. Bryk and Schneider (2002), when discussing an individual’s personal regard for another, suggest that “interpersonal trust deepens as individuals perceive that others care about them and are willing to extend to themselves beyond what their role might formally require in any given situation” (p. 25). By being aware of a teacher’s involvement in the school, whether it be what he/ she is doing in his/ her classroom or the individual’s involvement in the co-curricular environs, the principal’s ability to recognize the good work the teacher is doing and verbally articulate it to the individual is important. Tschannen-Moran (2004) suggests that, “school leaders can promote trust by demonstrating benevolence: showing consideration and sensitivity for employees’ needs and interests, acting in a way that protects employees’ rights and refraining from exploiting
others for personal gain” (p. 20). This sense of moral support and the ability to lean on the principal in times of need is important to building the trust with faculty members. In a sense it deepens the professional relationship to at least a surface-oriented personal relationship. This is not to suggest there is a large emotional investment, but there is at least some level of personal investment that the moral support helps to develop and this is indicative of trust. By recognizing the emotional needs and support that faculty members might need, Bryk and Schneider (2002) posit that “principals establish both respect and personal regard when they acknowledge the vulnerabilities of others, actively listen to their concerns, and eschew arbitrary actions” (p. 137). In essence, when a principal is able to understand and acknowledge the human being beneath the professional, the principal is able to establish relationships and build trust with faculty members.

Alongside of morally supporting the teachers, the principals also suggest that ensuring the teachers are supported through the school’s structural environment and policies is important. Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) put this insight into perspective: “institutional integrity, initiating structure, consideration, principal influence, resource support, academic emphasis, and morale form a collective set of variables that determine the health of interactions in schools” (p. 9). Similar to other professionals, teachers feel a need to be part of something that is organized and has parameters because of the serious work that they do. As a result they appreciate and find comfort in structure and policies that lay out expectations and responsibilities. Whether it is a behavioural code of conduct, clear expectations of responsibility, or expected lines of communication, the provision of a structured environment helps teachers feel a sense of security and, when provided, can be a huge boost to trust. This perception of the principals in this research study is supported by Hoy and Miskel (2008) who argue “that effective school leaders rely less on formal and more on informal authority to build loyalty and establish consensus. The
use of power by principals, both in how they interact directly with teachers and how they use structures to shape interactions among school members, has direct and indirect consequences on collective trust” (as cited in Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy 2011, p. 57). By establishing internal school structures that effectively support a teacher’s need and help them feel secure, the principal is able to build a sense of trust with them. Even when these structures may not be the highlight of a high school principal’s day, they are extremely important. The policies that deal with student discipline and/or teacher discipline are often challenges that disrupt a principal’s day and are not enjoyable (Lortie, 2009, p.132), but how they are dealt with is important to building trust because they reflect both the personal and professional support that a teacher will receive from a principal and this impacts trust immensely. This is supported by the work of Hoy and Sweetland (2001) who articulate that “better schools are possible, and one key ingredient to more effective schools is a school structure that enables participants to do their jobs more creatively, cooperatively, and professionally. Designing better schools seems inextricably bound to creating enabling school structures” (p. 319). Effective policies and structures help to build trust between the principal and the teachers and they begin to reduce the anxiety of teachers, which is another trust builder.

Teaching is not an easy job and with it comes high levels of stress and anxiety as the teacher is attempting to meet the overall expectations of the course, stay on top of assessment and evaluation, respond to new initiatives set forth by the Ministry of Education, build relationships with students and their parents, interact with colleagues and develop an understanding of the school culture of which the individual is a part. The principals in this research suggest that mitigating this stress and anxiety is a key way in which they build relationships with their faculty members. Tschannen-Moran (2004) suggest that “one way that
principals demonstrate their competence is in their willingness to buffer teachers and handle difficult situations, whether dealing with difficult students or distressed parents, or discretely handling problems among the faculty and staff” (p. 32). When things are not going well for a teacher with a student or a parent, help from the principal can go a long way to building trust. This is not to suggest that a principal does not allow his/ her teachers to interact with distraught parents, but rather that the principal is there for support when needed and the teachers know this. Even in times of error, obviously not ones dealing with professional misconduct, a teacher who knows that he/ she can count on the principal’s support is an enormous builder of trust between the principal and the teacher. Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) insight that “any actions taken by a principal that reduce teachers’ sense of vulnerability can be highly salient” (p. 129) supports the notion of trust-building between the principal and teacher when support for the individual is a known factor. As mentioned above, the subconscious knowledge of being supported is important for teachers as they face the day-to-day challenges of a high school. When this type of support is felt within a school it does engender very positive feelings and it builds trust between the principal and faculty members. This does not mean that the principal solves all of the issues of his/ her teachers, but rather creates an environment where teachers feel empowered to solve problems on their own and focus on the most important part of their job, which is the education of the young men and women in their classrooms (Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy 2011, p.8). This support goes a long way to reducing stress and anxiety and ultimately builds trust between the principal and his/ her faculty members because they all feel supported.

Providing supporting for faculty members, via encouragement, school specific structures and policies or lessening their stress and anxiety is only one way a principal can help to build trust with faculty members. This research suggests that another opportunity for the principals to
build trust with faculty members rests in their ability to truly listen to their teachers rather than just hear them.

**5.2.2 Truly Listening**

Rather than just hearing the talk of faculty members, one further way that the principals believe they build relationships based on trust is by truly listening to the feedback and concerns of the teachers. Having an open door policy for faculty members provides an opportunity for the principals to demonstrate that they are willing to listen and take feedback. This is crucial to the development of trust because teachers need to feel that they have a voice in their high school community and that it will not be dismissed outright. Rosseau et al. (1998) suggest that trust is seen as a condition in which people or groups find themselves vulnerable to others under conditions of risk and interdependence. In such situations trust requires that one party has confidence that another party will act in positive fashion and in its best interests. Vulnerability, risk, and interdependence are necessary conditions for trust; thus variations in these aspects over the course of a relationship may alter the level and form that trust takes. (as cited in Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy 2011, p. 18)

In this light teachers need to feel that the principal will work in his/her best interest, but in order to do this the principal must provide the opportunity for the teachers to share their insights, thoughts, and concerns. By providing the open door policy, the principals believe that they create the forum for this exchange to take place and then to respond in the best interest of the school community exemplifies the commitment they have to truly listening. Lortie (2009) further suggests that when the principal does this “the emphasis is on openness, sharing, equality, and clear communication, [and] the assertion of authority per se is played down” (p. 84). In removing authority as the first characteristic of an interaction, the focus between the principal
and teacher can be on improvement in all ways and this can be a builder of trust. Bryk and Schneider posit that “principals establish both respect and personal regard when they acknowledge the vulnerabilities of others, actively listen to their concerns, and eschew arbitrary actions” (p. 137). In paying close attention to what teachers are saying around them and to them, the principals believe that in responding effectively to pertinent issues or dilemmas, trust is built with their faculty members.

To deny the fact that individuals try not to forward their own agendas would be naïve, and teachers are no different. A further way that principals believe they build trust with their faculty members is by being able to distinguish between those situations where people are just venting and pushing their own viewpoint versus real issues in the school. Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011), using the work of Tarter et al. (1989b), suggest that “collective trust is shaped as much by informal work processes as by formal structures ... informal processes are shaped by the actual behaviour and social interactions of school members that collectively help to define the personality of the school” (p. 59). For principals to build trust in this way, they need to have an understanding of their school culture and the players within it. Lortie (2009) suggests that “effective practice requires a synchrony between parties, both in terms of general understandings about each other’s expectations and obligations and in terms of the interpretations made about the specific behaviour occurring” (p. 125). For principals to be effective and build trust, they must be able to filter through the frustrations and cacophony and identify real issues. This ability represents to the teachers that the principal understands the school environment and the players involved. Being able to disregard personal agendas does not mean ignoring the individual. What it does mean is listening intently and helping everyone come to the best resolution. Bryk and Schneider (2002) add further insight to this when they suggest that “regardless of how much
formal power attaches to any given role in a school community, all participants remain
dependent on others to achieve desired outcomes and feel efficacious about their efforts” (p. 125). Understanding the different conversations that happen within a school environment enables the principal to separate issue from personal agenda or an individual venting out of frustration. To allow some conversations to pass in one ear and out the other without being disrespectful builds trust with faculty members. This is because the principal is supposed to always keep the big picture in mind and rise above any pettiness that might show itself over the school year. Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) suggest that “constitutive definition of collective trust is a 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. 48). Rising above personalities and personal agendas to the point of displaying the aforementioned qualities, builds a new sense of trust between the principal and the faculty members because the faculty sees the principal as being able to lead without being distracted or fooled. It does not mean that the principal can ever be dismissive of another colleague, but rather that he/ she must have the ability to hear all voices present in the school.

The principals believe that being open to listening to all voices within the faculty is an important way to build trust. This is because nobody deserves special consideration and everyone’s voice should be considered equal, at least with respect to being able to share insights or thoughts. Lortie (2009) suggests that “the relationship ... [between the principal and teacher,] ... both collectively and individually, is simultaneously the most important and the most difficult for the principal to establish and sustain. That combination of importance and intricacy gives it great salience” (p. 73). The challenge for the principal is to establish positive relationships with as many faculty members and department heads as possible. To do this, the principal needs to
ensure that all people feel welcome to come to his/her office or to stop them in the hallway to have conversations. Even though some ideas will need to be tempered or even shut down, the general feeling amongst faculty members is that the principal should be open to all voices. Bryk and Schneider (2002) identify that “the social relationships at work in school communities comprise a fundamental feature of their operations” (p. 5). In saying this, trusting relationships between the principal and the faculty members is of paramount importance because it does affect the ability to operate the school, both in the day-to-day routines and in times of introduction to school reform. This brings the conversation full circle with respect to the relevance of trust between the faculty and the principal. Principals need to spend time cultivating trusting relationships with teachers and department heads by supporting them in all areas. Tschannen-Moran (2004) posits that “openness is a process by which people make themselves vulnerable to others by sharing information, influence, and control (Zand, 1997)” (p. 25). In allowing others to be part of the ongoing process of developing insights about the needs of the school provides the principal with a more objective view and builds trust with faculty members by empowering them in the process of moving the school forward. This, however, only comes to fruition if the principal is seen as tangibly taking feedback from faculty members and is a visible constituent in the building.

5.2.3 Visibility

The principal’s visibility within the school is another opportunity for him/her to show support for faculty members. This is not surprising in the sense that the principal must be a role model and provide direction for the faculty. Tschannen-Moran (2004) identifies the fact that “school leaders can promote trust by demonstrating benevolence: showing consideration and sensitivity for employees’ needs and interests, acting in a way that protects employees’ rights
and refraining from exploiting others for personal gain” (p. 20). When the principal sets the stage for expectations in a building around professionalism and role models trust in relationships, this begins to permeate throughout the building and affect all members of the community. By role modeling the desired behaviour, the principal displays a consistency in approach and this builds trust. Perhaps this consistency is best seen by the way the principal takes on the role as leader to the external constituents in the school. Tschannen-Moran indicates that “principals play an important role in creating the context for trust to develop between parents and the school and between teachers and parents” (p. 136). Effectively establishing positive relationships with constituents beyond the faculty, is a visible sign to the faculty that the principal is the face of the school and will be active in this role and not one to hide out in the office. This builds trust because the principal’s relationships with other constituents helps to buffer faculty relationships with parents where needed and role models expectations for others. This is not the only way that the principals can build trust with regards to visibility.

Having a physical presence within the school building is an important way for principals to build trust with their faculty members. The principals that are never at the school for one reason or another or those that remain in their office for most of the day, have more difficulty establishing trusting relationships because they are not seen to be fully vested in the school community. Tschannen-Moran posits that “effective school leaders not only know how to ‘talk the talk’ of trust, they also know how to ‘walk the walk.’ If being a role model is ever necessary, it’s when it comes to cultivating a culture of trust ... skilful principals often earn the trust of their faculty by leading quietly” (p. 177-78). If a principal is never seen in the building, then he/she is limited in the role modeling that can be done. By being out and about in the school environment each and every day, the principal is able to be observed acting the way he/she
expects others to act and building trust because the principal is seen as authentic and real. Bryk and Schneider (2002) look at this insight from an ethical perspective and articulate that “consistency between what [people] say and do ... [is] a moral-ethical perspective [to] guide one’s work” (p. 25). In this light a principal’s ability to “walk the talk” is an insight into his/ her integrity as it demonstrates a willingness to live by the words that he/ she espouses. This is summarized succinctly by Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2004) who believe that “for principals, being in the presence of teachers and creating opportunities for interaction around the central work of the school are essential for teacher perceptions of principal trustworthiness to emerge as normative” (p. 167).

Perhaps the greatest visible sign that a principal can give to his/ her faculty members is how he/ she responds to crisis situations within a school. By demonstrating ability in times of greatest need indicates a competency that puts all others at ease and enables trust to be built because “leaders will build trust by acting in ways that reveal them as trustworthy to others in the organization” (Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy 2004, p. 111). Whether it is dealing with a death in the school community or with an unfortunate issue involving teacher discipline, the way that a principal steps up and deals with the situation is critical to building trust. A principal must be able to lead in times of difficulty and to take pressure off of others who are having difficulty responding in these situations. Tschannen-Moran indicates that “it takes a willingness to deal with difficult situations and difficult people in a straightforward and firm manner ... you need to blend pressing for goal achievement with demonstrating concern for teachers and staff” (p. 84). In responding with a firm and compassionate hand during trials and tribulations, the principal builds trust with faculty members because he/ she has demonstrated a high level of competency that is required for the job. These trust building opportunities that are provided for staff directly
through the principals visible engagement in the school community, coupled with other attempts to provide support and truly listen, are key ingredients to building better relationships with faculty members. In the building of these relationships there is also the potential by-product of building the capacity of the faculty at large and individual members as well.

5.3 Analysing Building Faculty Capacity

An over-arching theme that emanated from the research and the interviews of the seven principals was the building of trust to enhance the capacity of faculty members. This was attained by the principals through their own self reflection, ability to trust others, and offering their own expert feedback to teachers. By involving themselves in these three actions, the principals felt that they provided further opportunities to build trust with their faculties. In general terms Forsyth, Adams and Hoy (2011) indicate that “teacher beliefs concerning structures and processes used to coordinate teaching and learning matter for collective trust, but so too do beliefs in the instructional capacity of the faculty as reflected in collective efficacy” (p. 60). By working together to take advantage of all of the leadership capacity in the building, principals build a unique environment where all members have the opportunity to be involved in a collective effort to improve their high school and the instruction that happens inside of it. In order to do this, the principal must have a clear understanding of who he/ she is and how his/ her personal philosophy informs the individual’s idea of the principalship.

5.3.1 Self-reflection

Providing opportunities to reflect professionally on what one is doing as principal is paramount to building trust with faculty members. If a principal is seen to be doing things haphazardly, faculty quickly loses faith and trust in the individual. It is important for the principals to show professional leadership and direction and clearly understand what informs
their own decisions. One of the toughest parts of a principal’s portfolio is the overseeing of the teachers who are a part of the faculty. Forsyth, Adams and Hoy (2011) suggest that “the distinction between supervision and evaluation is captured by Acheson and Gall (2003): ‘supervision is interactive rather than directive, democratic rather than authoritarian, teacher-centred rather than supervisor-centred’ (p. 15)” (p. 144). By professionally reflecting on how one sees the role of the principal, different perspectives can be discovered on how to fulfill one’s role. By looking at teacher development and evaluation from a supervisory angle and ensuring that it is about dialogue is important. This builds trust with faculty members because it is not just about check marks and dos and don’ts, but rather it becomes improvement from both perspectives. Through dialogue a principal can come to discover areas that he/ she might address to improve their support of faculty. Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (2000) support this by positing that “informal control does not restrict behaviour using rules and other organizational structures. Rather, where there is informal control, individuals and groups choose to act in ways that are cooperative and consistent with the organizational mission as a result of genuinely ‘shared beliefs, norms, and values’” (p. 115). Reflecting on how they interact with faculty members, principals can consciously move away from authoritarian stances and create opportunities without worrying about losing control. This has a positive impact on faculty members because “the successful principal knows that for change to work means that all – students, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents – must have a sense of participation in and ownership of the process and the product. Only then will commitment be gained and without commitment, sustaining change will be difficult if not impossible” (Day 2009, p. 121). This commitment by the principal to professionally reflect on how he/ she sees the principalship can
profoundly build capacity of faculty members by involving them in discussion and ultimately build trust.

Professional reflection is not the only means by which a principal can review and build faculty capacity. Personal reflection is important because principals need to understand the personal biases and perspectives that they bring to the job. Daresh and Male (2000) posit that in addition, whatever the blend between theory and practice, there must be a strong commitment to the need for those stepping into school site leadership roles to spend time reflecting on personal values, ethical stances, and other similar matters which may help them appreciate the single most critical issue facing all who step into a new role. The interviews of headteachers and principals described here echo findings of other research (Daresh, 1986; Daresh & Playko, 1994; Parkay & Hall, 1992) which notes that people often do not appreciate the way in which taking on a management post will be a life-transforming experience. One’s personal control of time and priorities is altered drastically. Reaction by peers is changed largely because one soon learns that ‘peers’ are suddenly no longer present when one takes a place on the ‘hot seat’ (p. 98).

When an individual has an understanding of the biases and stances that he/ she brings to the job, the individual is better able to deal with challenges presented and in listening to other perspectives. Macmillan (1994) suggests that a new principal has to learn not only about the role, but also about the new school’s culture and the meaning of that role within that context. At least three barriers prevent the principal from easily learning about a school’s culture. First information is controlled by both the teaching and the support staff. The new principal soon realizes that the new role restricts direct, unbiased access to knowledge of the culture resident in its members
(Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985), and that the nature and accuracy of information can be determined only through observation and trial-and-error. Second, while the principal is a key factor in determining how teachers interact, the power and authority of the principal’s role restricts and alters access to and knowledge of those interactions. Third, creating personal ties with specific staff members has micropolitical implications for the new principal and is discouraged by superiors for reasons associated with the evaluative nature of the role. (p. 8)

Arriving on scene and reflecting both on the personal perspective one brings to the school and the theory that one has learned about through education provides an opportunity for the principals to respond effectively to their schools and become more aware of the subjective biases that they have. By being more objective both with others and their own limitations, principals can call on the insights of others and build a high school community where faculty capacity is built and trust is a desired by-product.

When reflecting upon the direction that a principal would like to move with the faculty, if that direction includes building trust, then the principal must consciously reflect on ways to do this and implement strategies to do so. The principals in this research clearly committed themselves to building trust by engaging in a conscious decision to do so. Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (2000) suggest that “it is time the unique challenges of secondary school leadership were addressed more seriously. Transformational forms of leadership emphasizing the empowerment of their colleagues, encourages secondary administrators to focus their energies on the capacities and motives of those in a position to offer ‘direct’ (Hunt 1991) leadership within their organization, as distinct from front-line staff” (p. 26). If principals desire to build trust to engage others in sharing decisions and build faculty capacity by doing so, they
must look at the abilities of all involved. Not all faculty members will be able to offer the same feedback or objectivity, but by being committed to the process capacity can be built with each person. Seashore Louis, Mayrowetz, Smiley, and Murphy (2009) reflect that “trust will affect the way in which people make sense of any effort to change leadership patterns, and will also have direct effect on any enactment of leadership” (p. 161). The importance of trust is important in any school level, but especially so at the high school level. It is seen to be a major component of ensuring that educational reform can happen or that new initiatives can be implemented. At the high school level, departments play a significant role in the implementation of initiatives. As seen through the principals involved in this research, working with department heads and building trust with them is important because their capacity as leaders needs to be a focus.

Siskin (1994) supports this insight suggesting that “subject departments fill a variety of needs for teachers and schools; they are deeply embedded in the social, political, and intellectual structures of high schools as institutions and teaching as an occupation. These realms of knowledge are the territory in which secondary school teaching now takes place” (p. 189). When principals actively set out to build trust, they must be reflective at a number of levels. Professional and personal reflection are starting points, but day-to-day reflection on the intricacies of the high school play an important role in building trust. This ultimately plays a huge role in the building of capacity with faculty members and this supports the principals in this research in their quest to build capacity with their teachers.

Clear demonstrations of trusting others are important to building the capacity of faculty members. If a principal simply espouses a desire to trust others but never follows through, teachers will soon see through the façade and isolate themselves in their classrooms and
departments. However, the principals in this research actively sought out opportunities to demonstrate their trust in others by having them actively involved in the hiring of future teachers.

5.3.2 Trusting Others

Within any school and especially in a high school environment, the principals in this research consistently reported that in order to build a culture of empowerment and trust, and thus to build the capacity of faculty members, a true sense of decision-making leads to this. The decision-making, however, cannot be those that matter little, but rather they must be of significant value so that the teachers know that they matter. The principals consistently identified hiring new teachers as a means to authentically share decision-making power and in turn build capacity and trust. Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2004) clearly indicate that in order “to create a trusting and functional school, principals must dedicate adequate time to recruiting and screening effective teachers. In this matter, principals should never compromise – there are few actions that will so directly determine their success or failure” (p. 170). If the decision-making arena involving teacher hiring is so important, then to share this responsibility with present faculty members suggests a true willingness to build capacity. By involving teachers in the hiring of other teachers, those involved learn valuable skills through the process and also take on a genuine sense of responsibility for the future of the school. Tschannen-Moran (2004) suggests that “when administrators share influence and control, they demonstrate significant trust and respect for their teachers (Hoy & Tarter, 2003; Leonard, 1999; Short & Greer, 1997)” (p. 27). In connecting these ideas, the salience of hiring new teachers to the future of the school is not lost on professionals and it provides a key opportunity to build capacity and trust.

One group of individuals unique to the high school is the department heads. Taking on leadership roles within their subject areas, these professionals also need opportunities to further
build their capacity. Being part of the hiring process for new members to their own department may seem like such a simple step, but it is a huge builder of trust. Siskin (1994), when reflecting on the high school department posits that “a new set of conditions has arisen: the organizational divisions are entrenched, the academic subjects are well-established and firmly divided, and the realms which they create populated by significant numbers of certified and educated specialists – specialists whose career orientation gives them a substantial stake in school operations” (p. 38). Recognizing the powerful role that a department head plays in the high school environment is important for the principals interviewed in this research. This is because it taps into leadership potential already recognized in their position, and also continues to build capacity and trust.

One other area that emerges from the research is that of building school culture. When the principal is but one individual who is striving to make the school better by implementing productive initiatives, wonderful things can happen. In order for this to happen, the principals felt that the teachers needed to be a part of this culture building and build capacity. Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) reveal that “authentic relations characterize open principal behaviour with teachers. The principal creates a work environment that is supportive and helpful, encourages teacher initiative to solve problems, and frees teachers from administrative busywork so that they can focus on the teaching-learning task” (p. 8). When the principals place great emphasis on the work done in the classrooms, then teachers are supported in their quest to provide the best education possible. Bryk and Schneider (2002) articulate that “the myriad social exchanges that make up daily life in a school community fuse into distinct social patterns that generate (or fail to generate) organization-wide resources” (p. 122). When faculty members feel that they have a vested interest in the shaping of the community, they feel a sense of respect which these principals believe translates into trust for them. As Grubb and Flessa (2010)
indicate “the impossibility of traditional one-person principalships in the present policy context, and the need to address so many diverse issues, necessitate looking at joint or collaborative structures” (as cited in Fink 2010). Though their insight leans toward a more equal administrative team such as seen with co-principalships, the idea of the sharing power or decision-making can also inform the need to provide faculty members with some of this power as well. If what Bryk and Schneider (2002) says is true, that “trust is rooted in the microdynamics of day-to-day social interactions among teachers, principals and parents and the discernments that various participants make about these interactions” (p. 122), then the involvement of teachers building school culture alongside of the principal is imperative to trust, and it also has the effect of building the capacity of teachers. In order for all of this to work, the principals in this research see a need to share their expertise with faculty members to mentor the teachers in the building of their capacity and when done properly, this too leads to trust for the principal.

5.3.3 Sharing Expertise

For the principals interviewed in this research study, another key aspect of realizing faculty capacity was their own willingness to share their expertise. How this was done and the light in which faculty saw them after doing this helped exhibit their professional expertise and built trust. One way that these principals felt they were able to demonstrate their expertise was dealing with school life. In many ways the principals did this by showing calm and composure and wise decision-making ability during the challenges of the regular school year. For these principals helping the faculty deal with day-to-day anxieties was critical to empowering them to develop strategies to deal with their anxieties and this in turn developed appreciation and trust. Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (2000) support this insight: “providing individualized support,
creating intellectual stimulation, and modelling practices and values important to the school are important practices that contribute directly or indirectly to the development of teachers’ dispositions, motivations, bodies of knowledge and skills that are required to create a set of shared directions for a school and pursue them successfully” (p. 71). A principal’s impact upon the faculty that he/she leads is quite profound and needs to be recognized. The ability to role model or teach others about how to handle the challenges of the profession is very important to the relationship between the principal and faculty. When the principal is recognized as a wise individual this increases credibility and builds trust. More importantly, when faculty members learn strategies that work to mature in their profession and can credit them to the principal this builds the trust in the principal. Mascall, Leithwood, Strauss and Sacks (2009) emphasize the importance of this when they reveal that “the degree to which leadership is successful in improving the learning of students would appear to reflect, in part, the amount of influence leadership has on teachers’ motivations and related beliefs and feelings” (p. 81). By establishing professional credibility, the principal is able to set the stage to have a far greater impact on the school. This is because teachers see the principal as a mentor and master teacher and, because the faculty respects the insights of the principal, trust is built for future initiatives and potential pedagogical improvements can be sought.

These pedagogical shifts can create great consternation among teachers and often creates situations where teachers feel that what they have been doing is not good enough. As a result, the principals feel that their ability to build trust is critical to supporting teachers during times of new initiatives or pedagogical change. Spillane (2004) supports this by indicating that “the problem with viewing policies as change mechanisms is that genuine change does not emerge from formal regulation; it grows out of the actions and interactions of individuals who interpret
and make sense of policies within the context of their local environments” (as cited in Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy, 2011 p. 137). In this light it can be argued that policies will always be passed down by the Ministry of Education, but the implementation can be done with a deft touch. In fact, most times policies of this nature are actively ignored because they challenge the status quo. The principals believe that their adeptness at finding the positives in any initiative is important, but more importantly their ability to include teachers in the initial discussions about the benefits of the new pedagogy theoretically and the eventual implementation strategy. By actively involving the faculty, the principal is able to reduce their anxiety and involve them in the decision-making process. This actually transitions a potentially trust destroying activity into a trust building opportunity. Bryk and Schneider (2002) posit that “teacher trust ‘is highly predictive of school productivity trends [i.e., improving math and reading performance]. Schools reporting positive trust levels in 1994 were three times more likely to be categorized eventually as improving in reading and mathematics than those with very weak trust reports’” (as cited in Forsyth, Adams and Hoy 2011, p. 72). The impact that trust has on a school environment is critical to making improvements in academic scores. As a result it is important that principals involve faculty members in decision-making which helps empower them and, in so doing, aids in the development of trust. Ultimately, the principals’ ability to help position new initiatives for faculty helps them create trust from faculty members.

To say that change within a high school environment is easy and that by involving teachers all will go smoothly, is a little naïve. In the process there will be those who stand in the way of the initiative and they need to be addressed. Bryk and Schneider (2002) suggest that “Principals must be prepared to engage conflict in order to advance reform ... also need social support and trust from a solid core of the faculty if reform is to have a chance of succeeding” (p.


73). Ironically, holding people accountable and confronting problems does not destroy trust. In fact, it may do the exact opposite and build trust. When principals involve faculty members in the process and then hold a few on the periphery accountable, they actually build trust with the core faculty who are actively involved in the processes of the school. The important part of this insight is that the principals will need to have reached that critical mass that trusts them in the school. Furthermore, this culture of trust within a high school is a challenge to attain but as Tschannen-Moran (2004) suggests, “principals play an important role in creating the context for trust to develop between parents and the school and between teachers and parents” (p. 136). The school culture that is created by the principal is important and ultimately speaks about his/ her suitability for the school community. When the principal is able to create connections between the teachers and parents by the processes that are in place, the faculty gains that much more respect for him/ her, buy-in is greater, and hence trust is built with faculty members because of the principal’s expertise in leading a private high school community.

5.4 Analysis of Self-Support and Reduction of Stress

One of the underlying ideas that resonated throughout the interviews of these principals was the inferred fact that they were trying to build trust as a means of coming to terms with the amount of responsibility that is part of their portfolio. The principal’s role within a school is clearly more than just an individual who looks after the logistical and mechanistic needs of a school. In fact, the role calls for far more than a number cruncher or organizer as the position of principal truly calls for a leader who is dynamic in relationship building, has the ability to be a visionary, and one who is a pedagogical expert. Obviously it is a tall order for any individual to excel at all of these areas, but nonetheless, it is the contemporary challenges for the contemporary principal and his/ her ability to be a leader rests on moving beyond the managerial
perspective. By building trust with faculty members and empowering them in making decisions, there is a subconscious understanding that this will reduce some of the principal’s stress as he/she can rely on others to help lead. The importance of trust in developing a high school environment in this regard is summarized effectively by Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011):

> trust is seen as a condition in which people or groups find themselves vulnerable to others under conditions of risk and interdependence. In such situations trust requires that one party has confidence that another party will act in positive fashion and in its best interests. Vulnerability, risk, and interdependence are necessary conditions for trust; thus variations in these aspects over the course of a relationship may alter the level and form that trust takes. (p. 18)

The reality that a trusting environment is built on positive interactions between the principal and the faculty members is not a surprise, but the long ranging effects in helping the principal limit stress and providing self-support should not be ignored. The principals in this research were seen to create opportunities for self-support or stress limiters could be seen through their vision, role-modeling, team-building and construction of a school culture.

### 5.4.1 Vision

In building a vision for the private high schools that these principals are involved in, one of the underlying effects is the ability for teachers to take on more responsibility because they can take better ownership of the vision. Many principals articulated this as being on the same page and this is echoed by Nanus (1992) who suggests that “there is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future, widely shared” (as cited in Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach 2000, p. 58). A vision is important for a private high school, but these principals clearly
articulated that having a shared vision with faculty members increased buy-in by the faculty and actually brought the vision to life more quickly. This is important for principals because by increasing buy-in stress is reduced in the sense that the principal will only have limited resistance from faculty members who do not want to participate or object to the vision. When the majority of the faculty feel they have active ownership of the direction of the school, wonderful things happen. Day (2009) suggests “the successful principal knows that for change to work means that all – students, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents – must have a sense of participation in and ownership of the process and the product. Only then will commitment be gained; and without commitment, sustaining change will be difficult if not impossible” (as cited in Harris (Ed.) 2009, p. 121). The sharing of building a vision for a private high school is important to building trust with faculty members as they feel empowered and yet it provides an opportunity for the principal to be relieved of a faculty who are not supportive a principal-only led vision.

Aside from trying to ensure that everyone is on the same page, the principals also build trust by working on improving and continuing to build relationships. By establishing honest, professional and potentially personal relationships, the principals establish a sense of trustworthiness that helps to create a more unified school environment. A private high school environment needs to understand their principal and be able to rely on him/ her and know what to expect. Forsyth, Adams and Hoy (2011) support this insight indicating that “faculty trust is a collective form of trust in which the faculty has an expectancy that can be relied on and that the trusted party will act in the best interests of the faculty” (p. 4). When the principal is truly well known by his/ her faculty trust is built because the faculty knows what to expect at all times. This provides a sense of comfort for all in the school environment and in turn the consistent expectations translate into trust for the principal. This too epitomizes what Bryk and Schneider
Focusing on relationships is important for principals because when they authentically make themselves vulnerable to their faculties and truly care about them whole-heartedly, trust is built and is then translated into a more supportive school community which is both supportive of the principal and a reducer of stress.

The effort to make sure everyone is on the same page and further build relationships are important areas to build trust with faculty, which in turn provide the principal with support and stress relief. These efforts are furthered when the principals are either establishing new program directions for the school or are embarking on capital development. When the principal is embarking on these types of initiatives, trust is imperative. Tschannen-Moran (2004) posits that “without trust, schools are likely to flounder in their attempts to provide constructive educational environments and meet the lofty goals that our society has set for them because energy needed to solve the complex problem of educating a diverse group of students is diverted into self-protection ... trustworthy leadership is the heart of productive schools” (p. 13). When it comes to effectively responding to the expectations of the greater community, trust for the principal from the faculty is imperative. When the principal is able to involve the faculty in plans to implement new initiatives then trust is built, and once again a better sense of buy-in is developed.

Hargreaves (1995) states “honest, democratic and ethical procedures for decision making and conflict resolution are, in this sense, an essential component of the secondary schools of the future, especially where management and governance move more to the individual school, and teachers’ work becomes more patently and pervasively politicized” (as cited in Siskin and
Warren Eds. 1995, p.168). The contemporary high school is an environment rich with professionals and their ideas and insights are valuable. By providing opportunities to share these, principals build trust and better educational communities and this is important for all pedagogical and capital initiatives. When the faculty feels involved and responsible for decisions, the commitment to the initiatives is far greater and provides opportunities for principals to spend time on other things rather than just monitoring teachers for compliance. Though Flessa and Grubb (2009) suggest that an alternative approach to leadership might be a co-principalship and indicate that it would provide an opportunity for closer attention to instructional practices which principals complain they often cannot get around to (as cited in Fink, 2010, p. 41); more attention to support services, neglected in a great many schools (National Research Council, 2004, Ch. 6); and greater availability to students, teachers, and parents (as cited in Leithwood, Mascall, Strauss, 2009, p. 159), this can be related to faculty taking on leadership as well. With an empowered and trusting faculty, the principal is able to rely on faculty members to self-regulate implementation to a certain extent because of their commitment to the community and its directions. As a result, some areas of the principal’s portfolio take on a positive life of their own and hence he/ she has created a system of self-support and reduced some stressful situations due to the many aspects of the portfolio.

5.4.2 Role-modeling

As the principals’ portfolios were quite large, their desire to come to grips with all of it necessitated their own commitment to role modeling expectations that ultimately had a two-fold purpose: build trust by “walking the talk” and providing self-support in the sense that the faculty observed expectations of their leaders by watching them. For the principals in this research the
ways that they best role modeled for their faculty was through being active with the students, demonstrating perseverance and personal accountability.

It is not surprising that through role modeling by being active with the students the principals found that they built trust with faculty members. This is because when the leader of a school places emphasis on being active with students, teachers are reminded of the most important people in the school and that is the students. This reminder also creates a situation where the principal is recognized as being in the front lines with the students and not locked away in the office. The importance of the principal acting in accordance with what he/ she expects the teachers to do cannot be underestimated. This builds trust with faculty members because the principal is actively living out the expectations that he/ she has of faculty members and how they interact with students and how often. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (2000) suggest that “providing individualized support, creating intellectual stimulation, and modeling practices and values important to the school are important practices that contribute directly or indirectly to the development of teachers’ dispositions, motivations, bodies of knowledge and skills that are required to create a set of shared directions for a school and pursue them successfully” (p. 71). In this light it is not surprising that trust can be built, and when teachers are more active in a positive way with students the whole school community is more positive and this pays off with respect to lessening stress levels for the principal.

Role modeling by the principal is also observed when he/ she is seen to persevere in times of difficulty. Whether this is with the implementation of an initiative, dealing with a tough student, parent, or teacher, or through times of crisis, a principal who remembers the dignity of each and every person gains respect and trust from the faculty because they are seen rising above all of the trials and tribulations and still being professional. Tschannen-Moran (2004) reveal that
“school leaders can promote trust by demonstrating benevolence: showing consideration and sensitivity for employees’ needs and interests, acting in a way that protects employees’ rights and refraining from exploiting others for personal gain” (p. 20). Once again, a principal who role models stability even in the face of challenges build trust because he/ she is seen as someone that others can rely on and, therefore, it builds trust. When a person role models a sense of stability and it is adopted by others, then when the others take this on and respond favorably in tough circumstances, it too reduces the stress of the collective and specifically the principal.

The principals in this research continually commented on the need to be held accountable by themselves for their actions and living up to the expectations that they espouse to others. By being accountable to self and ultimately others, a principal faces his/ her faculty with a real sense of vulnerability. This authentic vulnerability creates a relationship with faculty members that is open, honest, and trustworthy. The sense of vulnerability enables others to risk the same and creates opportunities to build trust. Bryk and Schneider (2002) using Fukuyama’s insights comment that “high levels of social trust among individuals and institutions create more efficient production arrangements than in situations where it is necessary to rely on direct monitoring and extensive legal mechanisms to regulate economic transactions” (p. 13). When the principal holds him/ herself accountable to self and others then the long-term gain is a deep sense of trust with the faculty. To put him/ herself in that type of spotlight, the principal truly engages him/ herself with the school community and creates opportunities to really affect change and work with teachers. Forsyth, Adams and Hoy (2011) identify that “for principals, being in the presence of teachers and creating opportunities for interaction around the central work of the school are essential for teacher perceptions of principal trustworthiness to emerge as normative” (p. 167). When principals let themselves be vulnerable, interactions become far more profound.
and the opportunities to better the school are taken far more seriously. The by-product of this outside of better pedagogy is a sense of support for the principal that reduces stress and provides support.

5.4.3 Team-building

When the principals further reflected, team building became another action that surfaced from their words and that could be identified as another way to develop trust and ultimately reduce stress and provide self-support. Though team building often carries with it a positive connotation, the opportunities for this at a high school level are not always upbeat. The principals in this research identified times of crisis as opportunities for team building, but at no time embraced the opportunity, rather founding it as a silver lining. Tschannen-Moran (2004) suggests that “authentic trust emerges when people have grown to have a deep and abiding trust in one another ... there is empathy with the other’s desires and intentions, and mutual understanding such that each can effectively act on another’s behalf” (p. 55). When handled adeptly, crisis can build a team mentality because it does create an opportunity to demonstrate empathy both to the external and internal school communities. It provides an opportunity to deepen trust because a crisis situates people at their most vulnerable states and how the principal deals with them is critical. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (2000) indicate that “Teacher leaders are open and honest with their colleagues and students, and have well honed interpersonal and communication skills. In addition, they possess the technical and organizational required for programme improvement and use them in concert with a broad knowledge base about educational policy, subject matter, the local community and the school’s students” (p. 128). When the principal is seen in this light and fosters a sense of empathy, relationships deepen and trust is built. Though crisis is never hoped for, a challenging situation
for a school environment provides an opportunity for faculty and administration to come together and jointly put measures in place which builds team, trust, and ultimately provides the principal with support because it is no longer solely his/ her response but one based on the school community’s planning.

Further team building opportunities that surfaced from this research are the very planned ones that these principals felt were important. Whether it was lunches, socials after school either on or off campus, or faculty dinners, the principals felt that getting together on a social level helped to build the team mentality and trust. Forsyth, Adams and Hoy (2011) reflect from their research that “in addition to principal-teacher relations, school leaders build a foundation for constructive social interactions among teachers through their use of structural and normative mechanisms as a means of promoting cooperation and shared inquiry around instructional issues” (p. 58). Part of any high school environment is a socializing of the administration and faculty on non-academic issues. When principals structure opportunities for social engagement, preferably covering costs for these events, there is a demonstration of caring about the faculty and a showing of appreciation. When teachers feel appreciated, more solid connections are made and relations are built and this then builds opportunities for things to happen in the broader high school environment. Forsyth, Adams and Hoy (2011) support this: “group cohesion is needed before expectations and responsibilities can be collectively defined and accepted. The external context of schools can present challenges to developing cohesive relationships, but as long as internal conditions support cooperative and interdependent transactions among school members, collective trust can exist” (p. 56). Providing times to socialize away from or at the very least in conjunction with school issues, builds a sense of team and provides initial steps that can lead to a team sense that helps drive change in other areas.
Specifically at the high school level, these socials can play an important role in addressing the realities of department isolation. Siskin (1994) suggests that “for high school faculty, their professional identity and sense of what Van Maannen and Braley (1989) call ‘occupational community’ lie not in teaching, but in the teaching of their subject. Teachers frequently explain who they are, what they do, or how they do it by anchoring their identities, actions, and understandings in the subject matter itself” (p. 153). Staff socials hosted by the principal are not going to change the fact of departments in the high school or the natural draw that these have for teachers. Principals who bring their faculty together simply remind each teacher that they are a part of a bigger team as well as their own department team and, in so doing, provide the opportunity for other relationships to emerge. When there is a focus on relationship building in the bigger context, faculty members are enabled to observe and hear other perspectives and needs. The planned structure of socials helps principals set the stage for wider team initiatives. In establishing relationships as priorities, the principal is emphasizing the willingness to respond to individual needs and to do so through a team mentality. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (2000) support this: “providing individualized support, creating intellectual stimulation, and modelling practices and values important to the school are important practices that contribute directly or indirectly to the development of teachers’ dispositions, motivations, bodies of knowledge and skills that are required to create a set of shared directions for a school and pursue them successfully” (p. 71). Principals who provide opportunities to socialize as a collective, demonstrate their authentic commitment to building relationships, role model the importance of them and ultimately build a team mentality which provides direct support for initiatives in the school.
As well as effectively dealing with crisis and providing opportunities for socializing, the principals also discussed the need to extend personal connections. Flessa (2005) contests that “as middle managers, school principals are the hierarchical heads of their sites, yet they are subordinate to and dependent on a central district office for the budgets and supports they need to make schools run more effectively. Part of the challenge of the job is found in the contradictory mandates principals face: Cuban (1988) suggested that principals cope daily and simultaneously with the instructional, political, and managerial imperatives of school administration” (as cited in Hughes Ed., 2005, p. 266), and with this identity, principals need specific action to overcome this identity. By purposefully making personal connections, the principals are able to build relationships that are based on trust because faculty members observe these actions. By articulating the importance of relationships and then actively following through, at the very least the principal gains trust by “walking the talk”. Lortie (2009) using his research posits that “the central strategy [of the principal] can be described as building broad coalitions among parents and teachers and central officials of working to create reservoirs of goodwill to buttress them for whatever confrontations might arise” (p. 171). In building these broad coalitions of trust, the principals are able to move into areas of change that may not be so comfortable for the school community and do so with support in place and less stress on the horizon. Tschannen-Moran (2004) even suggests that the build-up of trust through the relationship buffers those inevitable times when things do not go well: “even the most trustworthy of school leaders will have to deal with times of betrayal and conflict in the school environment ... they hold out the hope for reconciliation and the repair of trust” (p. 183).
5.4.4 School Culture

In creating an environment that is built on relationships and a jointly shared vision for the school, the private high school principals believe that a school culture emerges that encompasses the whole community. By building the relationships within the school to identify a common understanding, the principals believe that it is both a result and engenderer of trust which ultimately helps support them in their endeavour to lead the school. The principals are active in promoting this school culture via focusing pedagogy around the whole child, ensuring to the best of their ability teacher enjoyment, and by participating in school life themselves.

Rather than just focusing on the academic life of each student, the private high school principals identified a need to ensure that a private school education encompassed a well-rounded experience that included academics, co-curriculars, and socialization. By establishing a shared focus, teachers can buy in to the direction and clearly know what is expected of them and this creates a sense of trust because there are no hidden surprises around expectations. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (2000) suggest that “from the consideration of clearly independent images of future schools has emerged a more comprehensive image: the school as high reliability community. This image responds well to four requirements or criteria that have been asserted to be critical in design of future schools. Such schools should be inclusive, efficient and effective, and adaptable” (p. 223). By including teachers in the establishment of the school’s culture, an initial buy-in is generally assured and trust is built because the teachers feel part of the decision-making process. Once again, this buy-in alleviates the stressful worry of teachers not doing things and allows the principal to focus more intently on other needs. In effect this fulfills Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach’s (2000) insight that “like other types of organizations, schools systems are working toward flatter structures that are intended to
distribute the responsibility for thinking about organizational effectiveness broadly among its members, and to release problem-solving capacities seriously constrained by hierarchy” (p. 187). The more faculty members are in-tune with this type of direction, the more effectively a principal can lead a school as trust exists and the school does not get mired into obstacles that negate process.

Though a private high school principal cannot guarantee enjoyment for his/ her faculty as equally responsible for this is the teacher’s own attitude, a principal should be doing as much as possible in regards to what they are responsible to ensure job satisfaction. The principal’s willingness to create an environment that is open and honest is one where “authentic relations characterize open principal behaviour with teachers. The principal creates a work environment that is supportive and helpful, encourages teacher initiative to solve problems, and frees teachers from administrative busywork so that they can focus on the teaching-learning task” (Forsyth, Adams and Hoy 2011, p. 8). When teachers are part of a high school environment that does this, the only thing standing in the way of true enjoyment is the individual strengths and weaknesses of the teacher. In creating this environment, the principal sets the teachers up for success and gains trust in doing so. The good-will associated with this transcends for the principal into support and stress relief in dealing with the responsibilities of their portfolio. This too is supported by Silins and Mulford (2002) and Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) who suggest that “distributing a larger portion of leadership activity to teachers has a positive influence on teacher effectiveness and student engagement” (as cited in Harris Ed. 2009, p. 14). Without being cynical or condescending, it seems true that a happy faculty makes for a happy school environment and a supported and stress reduced principal.
Last but least, a principal’s ability to be active in the building not just with regards to curriculum but in the school culture is an important commitment for the teachers to see. Once again, rather than just articulating expectations, being a living role model is important because it truly does bring to life the vision and ethos of the leadership of the school. This insight is supported by Forsyth, Adams and Hoy (2011) who posit that “faculty trust in principal is consistent with positive cultural features of a school and structures perceived as enabling ... when teachers trust the principal, they are more likely to embrace decisions made by the principal and less likely to subject the day-to-day choices of the school’s leaders to suspicious scrutiny. Perhaps contrary to intuition, trust appears to expand the principal’s control over school outcomes” (p. 117). In this sense, when the principal not only helps shape the school culture but actively lives it, trust is built with the faculty members and they are not subjected to second guessing at each stage of the process. The positive environment across the board creates a high school environment that is positive and supportive, and this only impacts the students in the most positive of ways.

Whether it is the principal’s active attention to managing micropolitics, improving relationships with faculty members, building the leadership capacity of teachers in the building or attempting to provide self-support and stress relief, the overall goal of building trust to address each of these school challenges warrants this research and future investigation into this area of research. Furthermore, research already done in this area speaks to its importance and a continued focus can illuminate insights on the principalship and strategies for developing future principals. As such, the following suggestions and implications are meant to summarize the thoughts generated from my research with the hopes of having a positive impact on principal training, expectations at the board level, school level expectations and strategies for building
stronger communities, and finally expectations of the principalship for those seeking to pursue administration.

5.5 Implications

Upon consideration of the findings in this research study, a number of areas have emerged that could benefit from future research exploration. These policy, practice and directions for future research emanate from the answers to my research question and the corresponding sub-problems that are answered below. Upon reflection, and recognizing that the research was done with private school principals, I suggest that some of the findings could be used from this research to address the mainstream public and public Catholic high schools. Furthermore, there is no reason to suggest that some of the findings could not be applied to elementary schools as well.

What do the perspectives of seven new private high school principals reveal about how a principal develops trust in a private high school?

This research study asserts that new private high school principals actively try to build trust with faculty members in a variety of ways. Specifically, these private high school principals actively engage in activities to build trust to help mitigate the micropolitics present in schools, build relationships, build capacity of faculty members, and ultimately to reduce their own stress levels. Perhaps what is the most poignant insight from this research is the fact that for these principals, the building of trust was intended to build a school culture conducive to healthy students rather than an identified need to improve student test scores. Though this may be an outcome of a school culture built on trust, it does not seem to be the driving force behind the desire to build the trust.
5.5.1 Summary of Sub-problem #1

From the perspective of the principal, how do formal and informal trust-building actions address micropolitics in a private high school?

For the principals interviewed in this research study, the building of trust does indeed provide a means by which to mitigate the impact that micropolitics can have on a school’s culture. Left unchecked, micropolitics can create a negative underlying tension within a school building. By articulating an “open door policy” and acting upon it, a true willingness to listen to and not just hear other people’s thoughts and opinions, and by being transparent and honest, both in affirmation and corrective ways, the principals found that they were able to establish a positive school environment and keep the negative undertones that can be caused by micropolitics to a minimum.

Implications to practice and policy:

1) As Board policy, all administrators should be expected to respond to opportunities where sharing decisions and involving faculty members in setting direction present themselves. This should also happen at the Board level with school administrators when setting direction for the entire school community and thus provide the necessary role modeling to implement this style of leadership.

2) Within the operations of the school specific, principals should practice leadership skills that look to demonstrate honesty and shared decision-making while working towards a leadership model where his/ her voice is not the only one that provides direction for the school.

3) As both policy and practice, teachers in the faculties of education must be taught that their professional insights need to be shared and are a required and a necessary part of
their profession when working within a school. As part of practice, these same teachers need to understand leadership dynamics and respond to taking on leadership opportunities when they arise.

5.5.2 Summary of Sub-problem #2

From the perspective of the principal, how does the building of trust impact relationships with faculty members?

Creating and/or improving relationships with faculty members was deemed to be critical for principals who are intent on building trust. With the willingness to focus on relationships with faculty members via avenues where personal and professional support might be provided, truly listening to faculty members and by being active and visible in the building, principals found that they were able to build trust. By extending opportunities to build this kind of school environment, there was a mutual openness to converse and either agree or disagree, usually without long-lasting negative effects, demonstrate caring for one another, and provide opportunities for explanation and improve buy-in to school directions.

Implications to practice and policy:

1) Board policy should be implemented to ensure that administrators become better equipped to understand and act upon emotional intelligence and provide professional development in this light. An ability to understand and respond to the emotional cues and be proactive in understanding potential reactions will go a long way in building relationships for principals.

2) In practice, principals must be excellent communicators and be expected to develop and demonstrate competency in the softer skills associated with leadership. Aside from the realities of managing school expectations and teacher reviews, principals must be able to
interact with faculty members on an individualistic level and not just that as a business manager.

3) Teachers should be expected to hone and practice the soft skills of the profession and leadership as well when interacting with student, parents, colleagues and administrators. Per policy, this should be part of a leadership course within the faculty of education.

5.5.3 Summary of Sub-problem #3

*From the perspective of the principal, does trust help build the leadership capacity of faculty members?*

Leadership capacity of faculty members within a high school is becoming more and more important as the complexities and expectations of educating students increases. By role-modeling a leadership style that is self-reflective, a willingness to trust others and transparently share expertise, the principals felt that the teachers were able to learn and develop a capacity to take on leadership roles in the school that might not always be remunerated. This building of capacity seemed to be part of an effort to create a school environment that is professionally forward thinking and improves pedagogy.

Implications for practice and policy:

1) In an effort to increase opportunities for professional development, Boards should make it policy that costs, either partially or wholly, will be covered for teachers. In working with teachers, this might be connected not only to QECO in the province of Ontario as it is right now, but also to salary grid increases due to seniority. A professionally enriched teacher population who are active within their schools bodes well for effective schools.

2) As practice within schools, principals need to identify professional development as a key component of their leadership. In consultation with teachers, principals need to provide
effective professional development for their specific school communities. Through policy, appropriate funds within each school must be set aside for this.

3) Teachers must become part of the professional development model within the school of which they are a part. Teachers need to be a part of identifying the professional development needs of their school community, its planning, and the implementation of the service to better address their own needs. In so doing, professional development becomes more and more a part of the purview of teachers rather than administration.

5.5.4 Summary of sub-problem #4

*From the perspective of the principal, how does a trusting environment reveal itself and does it decrease the workload of new private high school principals?*

With the increasing number of responsibilities for administrators within a school, and especially that of the principal, the principals interviewed felt that by building trust they were better able to handle the myriad of challenges and roles they are asked to take on. Through efforts to establish a community developed school vision, role-model professionalism, focus on team-building exercises, and build a positive school culture, the principals found that faculty members were better able to take on leadership roles within the school. In so doing, the principal was able to find support and stress relief as others took ownership of different responsibilities. Though the principal is still ultimately responsible, relying on other professionals is increasingly required to avoid burn-out.

Implications for policy and practice:

1) Board policy must be reviewed to ensure that the contemporary reality of school populations and expectations are taken into consideration when identifying the
responsibilities of the principalship. This may require a need to look at other models of leadership, which might include co-principalships.

2) School policy should empower teachers to be active in their school communities in addressing areas of need that are critical to student and school success. Each school should have a teacher committee or infrastructure that enables them to actively participate in the operation and in the decision-making process of the school.

3) In practice, teachers must respond to the professional call to be part of the decision-making of the school. In this way, teachers will be able to take on more ownership of the directions of the school and in effect help build a more positive school culture.

5.5.5 Implications for Theory

This research study provides some important perspectives that might be considered when doing further investigation into the area of trust, micropolitics and leadership:

1) Upon reflection of the conceptual framework designed for this study based on Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) definition of relational trust, the four key elements (respect, competence, personal regard for others and integrity (pp. 23-25)) prove relevant. These components, however, are not isolated and neither is the development of trust. In fact, trust building is not a linear process, but rather one that is far more organic and iterative than first imagined. It is a living dynamic that interacts with micropolitics on a daily basis and this relationship provides an ebb and flow to its development. Further inquiry into trust building from this perspective would be beneficial to our understanding of this important element of leadership.

2) The evidence in this research suggests that shared leadership and trust must go hand-in-hand if this leadership style is to find success. Trust is important, to some degree, to all
styles of leadership, but none more so than shared. The shared leadership paradigm is one that requires continued research to understand the degree to which trust is essential to its development and how it connects to the essential characteristics of shared leadership.

3) Micropolitics in education is not a new concept to the researcher. This study saw micropolitics from a negative perspective in that it created impediments that hindered the development of trust. Looking at micropolitics from a more positive theoretical basis would provide an opportunity to investigate situations through which trust might be enhance.

5.5.6 Potential Areas for Further Research

Reflecting upon the answers to the main research question and the subsequent sub-problems provided an opportunity to identify both policy and practice implications. Alongside of these, there are also a number of potential avenues for further research which are outlined below.

1) Further insights are needed about effective support that might be provided at the Board level for principals who are trying to build trust within their schools. This gap might be addressed by conducting research that seeks to identify the support principals need from above to build trust within their schools. Furthermore, board level investigations that might reveal how administrators at this level identify with the need for trust and their perception of the need to build it with their own principals, would prove beneficial.

2) Research might also be effective in studying the need for a mentorship program for principals and what might be most effective in training up-and-coming educators so that they can take on the role of the principal with confidence. The gap in this area might be addressed by interviewing successful board level administrators who were successful at
the school level to find out what insights they might provide to further develop new principals.

3) Regardless of the leadership paradigm one comes from, further insights are needed in regards to identifying best methods or initiatives that build trust within high schools. This type of research would help give insight and perspective to new principals on effective ways to build trust within their new schools. Presently, very little time is spent on this when future principals pursue their Principal Qualification Papers in Ontario. Furthermore, research in this area might help to identify best training practice for new principals by comparing those done around the world. Further research might very well provide insight into the appropriate length of time needed for the program and what a mentorship program might look like.

4) Research would also prove valuable at the vice principal or assistant head level. Providing a voice to these administrators might provide insights as to how they see their style of leadership developing and what key areas are focused upon. Subsequent to this, information revolving around trust might come to light as to how important it is for these upcoming leaders to build it with their faculties. Such research might also provide support for longer terms for principals within one school and succession planning coming from within as well.

5) Future consideration and research should be done in order to address the significance of a mentor principal program and selection of mentors. By taking feedback from both the mentor and mentee, an ideal system might be established and information valuable to the literature in this area could be developed. As well, best practice might be an outcome from this research to further help new principals and the mentorship program. This
mentorship research might also be extended to the vice principal or assistant head positions. The information derived from the study could provide insights into effective succession planning and possible needed prerequisite issues upon which to focus for seamless succession.

6) As middle managers, the portfolio of the principal is extensive. Research into the principalship might provide information for the literature in this area to identify crucial areas to focus on and secondary items that might be left to when time permits. This research might also help administrators at the board level reconsider the principalship in its entirety and develop opportunities to share the position on a more formal basis. This might very well provide the parameters of a mentorship system where veteran leaders mentor new principals.

7) Research would also be important to further explore the concept of co-principalships. With the number of responsibilities as part of the principal’s portfolio, time to spend on building trust is limited and options involving creative leadership scenarios might prove beneficial for high schools and elementary schools alike.

8) Further research is needed to support the importance of trust found in this research study. Though it is my perception that this focus is not specific to private schools, valuable insights and further support can be gained if this study is done in the publically funded schools within the province of Ontario.

9) Research involving new teachers and teacher candidates might be pursued to provide data about the teacher’s perspective and how they see their profession unfolding. This information would be beneficial to all levels of education to see if trust is desired by all. This information can also be used by faculties of education to prepare their candidates to
take on leadership roles as they join new schools. Obviously these would not be large roles but to identify this reality for new teachers would be powerful.

10) Research about the effectiveness of combining new teachers and new principals in training would be interesting. This data would indicate whether a significant amount of mutually beneficial learning experiences can happen for both the principals and teacher candidates in training.

Though the generalizability of the findings in this research study is limited because of the somewhat small number of principals/ headmasters interviewed and, to some extent, the uniqueness of the private high school, this study is fruitful in its ability to identify the necessary hard and soft actions needed to build trust with faculty members. Much of the research in this area around trust-building is American based and this research adds a Canadian, and more specifically an Ontarian, perspective to the literature. The findings compliment other qualitative research done in this area involving the importance of trust between the principal and his/ her faculty. Though the building of trust is a first step for these principals, the personal gains and potential by-product opportunities to improve teaching and learning suggests that the studying of trust is critical to building effect school system.
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Macmillan R. (1994, May). *New principals’ experiences with leadership: Crossing the cultural boundary.* (ED375531)


Richards, Jan. (2003). Principal behaviors that encourage teachers to stay in the profession: Perceptions of k-8 teachers in their second to fifth year of teaching. National University. (ED477523)


http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1741143207084060


Appendix A: Research Overview of Shared Leadership (Supporting)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Type (Supporting)</th>
<th>Implication What?</th>
<th>Gap So What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AEL (2005); Lovely (2005); Sammon (2005); Woods and Weasmer (2004); Hipp and Huffman (2003); Chirichello (2002); Walace (2001); Trail (2000); Swick et al. (1999); Butler (1995); McClure (1988);</td>
<td>Normative/ Descriptive - Supporting</td>
<td>Sharing leadership and decision making is needed for better school communities and student learning</td>
<td>Data to support insights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slater (2008); Blasé and Blasé (1999); Court (2004); Hipp and Huffman (2000); Lindahl (2008); Huffman and Hipp (2000); Hord (1998)</td>
<td>Case Studies (specific) - Supporting</td>
<td>Importance of communication skills; Psychodynamic changes occur: motivation, role conflict, and use of power</td>
<td>Consistency of shared responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court (2004); Hipp and Huffman (2000); Lindahl (2008); Huffman and Hipp (2000); Hord (1998)</td>
<td>Case Study (specific) - Supporting</td>
<td>Co-principalship</td>
<td>Micropolitics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King and O’Sullivan (2002); Brunner (1997)</td>
<td>Case Studies (peripheral) - Supporting</td>
<td>Localized decision making = materials in classrooms Women superintendents and sharing power</td>
<td>Student achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case Studies (peripheral) - Supporting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Same as above</td>
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## Appendix B: Research Overview of Shared Leadership (Challenging)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Method Type (Challenging)</th>
<th>Gap</th>
<th>Implication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anderson et al. (2009); Firestone and Martinez (2009); Flessa (2009); Gronn (2009); Grubb and Flessa (2009); Harris (2009); Leithwood et al. (2009); Macbeath (2009); Mayrowetz et al. (2009); Spillane et al. (2009); Timperley (2009); Robinson (2008)</td>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>Micropolitics</td>
<td>The research that exists with regards to distributive leadership is inconclusive and empirical evidence suggests limited effectiveness. Though this is not conclusive, areas mentioned in the preceding column need to be researched to provide more detailed insight into this paradigm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review Article</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multi -method Study</td>
<td>Student achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case Study and Framework Design</td>
<td>Consistency of shared responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Longitudinal Study</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Longitudinal Study Case Study</td>
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</table>
## Appendix C: Research Overview of the Principalship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Method Type</th>
<th>Implication - What?</th>
<th>Gap – So What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lorti (2009); Stine (1998); Bryk and Schneider (1994); Siskin (1994)</td>
<td>Case Study Qualitative Qualitative - interviews</td>
<td>Helps researchers understand the dynamics of management within schools</td>
<td>Provides insight into how schools function and perhaps the need for sharing decision-making powers to help principals avoid burnout – school improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngs &amp; King (2002); Rollow &amp; Yanguas (1996); Harchar (1993)</td>
<td>Normative/ Descriptive</td>
<td>Importance of school principal or leadership with regards to accountability and climate</td>
<td>Provides insights into the dynamics of the principalship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Education (2010); Moos et al. (2008); Fullan (8FLC 2005, 2002, 2001); Burbach and Duke (2007); Mackenzie (2005); Clark and Clark (2002); Blasé and Blasé (2001, 1994); Schumacher and Sommers (2001); Brown et al. (1998); Reiss and Hoy (1998); National Association of Elementary School Principals (1997); Fullan and Hargreaves (1996); Lucy (1986)</td>
<td>Survey Quantitative Case Study Normative/ Descriptive</td>
<td>Politics, Department Heads, Teacher empowerment and trust in the principalally</td>
<td>Improved trust creates opportunities for collaboration and cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball (1987)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haskin (1995); Bredeson (1989)</td>
<td>Structured Interviews</td>
<td>Teacher empowerment</td>
<td>Involving stakeholders in the decision-making process changes the behavior of principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richards (2003)</td>
<td>Structured Interviews</td>
<td>Teacher attrition</td>
<td>Building of trusting relationships and a sense of empowerment help teachers through the initial hurdles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supovitz et al. (2010)</td>
<td>Multilevel structural equation modeling</td>
<td>Administrative influence on instructional practice</td>
<td>Importance of principal leadership on school improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash (1997); Lintas (1994)</td>
<td>Normative/Descriptive Case Study</td>
<td>Characteristics of good principal leadership</td>
<td>Provides insight into the benefits of sharing decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macmillan, Meyer &amp; Northfield (2004); Daresh &amp; Male (2000); Macmillan (1993, 1994); Weindling (1990)</td>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>New Principals and experiences, challenges of succession</td>
<td>New principals encounter unique experiences in transitioning to the position along with the usual challenges of a new school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix D: Research Overview of Building Trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Method Type</th>
<th>Implication -What?</th>
<th>Gap – So What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bryk and Schneider (1996, 2002); Bulach &amp; Peterson (1999); Harcher (1996); Mishra (1996); Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1995); Mayer et al. (1995)</td>
<td>Quantitative Survey Data</td>
<td>Importance of trust in schools</td>
<td>Building of trust is important to school and instructional improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngs and King (2002)</td>
<td>Qualitative Research</td>
<td>Building organizational capacity</td>
<td>Higher levels of capacity are built through trust, structures for teacher learning and by bringing in external expertise or allowing teachers to participate in reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hickman et al (2008); Hearne (1991)</td>
<td>Normative/Descriptive</td>
<td>Principals and Teacher empowerment</td>
<td>Building teacher empowerment can be done through servant leadership and results in sustainable success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewster &amp; Railsback (2003); Clark and Clark (2002); Rollow and Yanguas (1996)</td>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>Trust-building as an important component of schools</td>
<td>Lack of trust hinders school improvement and relationship building promotes collaboration, shared leadership and shared decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKenzie (2005); Peters (2004); Gordon (2003); Cash (1997); Terry (1995/96);</td>
<td>Normative/Descriptive</td>
<td>Building caring and trusting environments</td>
<td>Trusting and caring classrooms provide environments where students thrive and in turn schools improve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E(I): Interview Guide

Interview #1:

1) From your perspective as a leader, what does trust mean?
2) What does a school devoid of trust look like?
3) Please identify some specific examples of formal actions that you, as a principal, use to engender trust with faculty members.
4) Are there informal things that you do to engender trust with faculty members? How does your faculty see these in action?
5) What micropolitics do you see in your high school that interfere with your ability to build trust? (organizationally, pedagogically, managerially, instructionally, financially, and developmentally)
6) Identify an experience or two where you were successful in overcoming these obstacles. One where you were not successful. What did you do next?
7) What specific actions do you take with regards to interacting with departments and building trust?
8) How do you develop relationships with department heads?
9) What key indicators do you use to identify whether trust has developed between yourself and school community stakeholders?
10) Does trust between the principal and faculty matter for a high school?
Appendix E(II): Interview Guide

Interview #2:

1) Do you, as principal, use different strategies at different times of the school year to build trust with faculty members?

2) Please describe a couple of experiences since our last meeting where you built trust.

3) Please describe a couple of experiences since our last meeting where you were unsuccessful in developing trust? What went wrong? What would you do differently next time?

4) Are there any impediments to building trust that are more pronounced at the beginning, middle, or end of the school year?

5) What do you think the faculty needs to see to in their principal to become trusting? Are there differences between the start of the school year, middle, or end?

6) What does a school with trust between the principal and the faculty look like?

7) What does trust between a principal and the faculty mean to a school environment?
Appendix F: Research Questions and Methodological Tools  
(I1= Interview 1, I2= Interview 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</th>
<th>METHOD OF INVESTIGATING</th>
<th>WHAT WILL BE ASKED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From the perspective of the principal, how do formal and informal trust-building</td>
<td>Interviews with principals</td>
<td>From your perspective as a leader, what does trust mean? (I1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actions address micropolitics in a private high school?</td>
<td></td>
<td>What micropolitics do you see in your high school that interfere with your ability to build trust? (organizationally, pedagogically, managerially, instructionally, financially, and developmentally) (I1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identify an experience or two where you were successful in overcoming these obstacles. One where you were not successful. What did you do next? (I1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Please describe a couple of experiences since our last meeting where you built trust. (I2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Are there any impediments to building trust that are more pronounced at the beginning, middle, or end of the school year? (I2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| From the perspective of the principal, how does the building of trust impact relationships with faculty members? | Interviews with principals | What does a school devoid of trust look like? (I1)  
How do you develop relationships with department heads? (I1)  
Do you, as principal, use different strategies at different times of the school year to build trust with faculty members? (I2)  
Please describe a couple of experiences since our last meeting where you were unsuccessful in developing trust? What went wrong? What would you do differently next time? (I2) |
| From the perspective of the principal, does trust help build the leadership capacity of faculty members? | Interviews with principals | What specific actions do you take with regards to interacting with departments and building trust? (I1)  
Does trust between the principal and faculty matter for a high school? (I1)  
What do you think the faculty needs to see to in their principal to become trusting? Are there differences between the start of the school year, middle, or end? (I2)  
What does a school with trust between the principal and the faculty look like? (I2) |
| From the perspective of the principal, how does a trusting environment reveal itself and does it decrease the workload of new private high school principals? | Interviews with principals | Please identify some specific examples of formal actions that you, as a principal, use to engender trust with faculty members. (I1)

Are there informal things that you do to engender trust with faculty members? How does your faculty see these in action? (I1)

What key indicators do you use to identify whether trust has developed between yourself and school community stakeholders? (I1)

What does trust between a principal and the faculty mean to a school environment? (I2) |
Hello Ms. Campbell,

My name is Terry Sheridan and I am the Principal at St. Michael's College School in Toronto. To begin, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment to the position of Director of CIS. I am sure that you will continue to guide CIS with a steady hand as George did, as well as bring your own initiatives and ideas. Good luck in this new position.

The reason for my email is basically to ask a favour from your office. I am currently pursuing my PhD. at OISE, focusing on how principals/ headmasters build trust in private high schools and my thesis proposal has been accepted. I am now entering the research phase of my journey and, as part of the ethical consideration for ensuring that potential candidates are not pressured into participating, there is a need to have a neutral site from which to send an email of invitation to potential participants. It is my hope that you will agree to be this third party neutral site. There will be little, if any, time or work needed on your end other than distributing an email. The email(s) would be drafted by me and obviously agreed to by you, but in no way would I be asking you to personally endorse the project or do any work. As stated, a neutral site is needed from which to send out an invitation to potential principals/ headmasters who would like to participate and remove any pressure if I was to make direct contact. Once people respond and agree to participate, your involvement would be over.

I would gladly meet with you to discuss this further and would appreciate a response at your earliest convenience. I thank you for taking the time to consider this request.

Regards,

Terry

Terence M. Sheridan
Principal
St. Michael's College School
Appendix H: Email Letter of Introduction and Invitation

FROM: Ms. Jan Campbell, Director of Conference of Independent Schools

TO: Principals/Headmasters of Conference of Independent High Schools

September 2011

Dear Principals/Headmasters,

This letter has been sent out on behalf of Terry Sheridan, Principal of St. Michael’s College School. Please see attached.

OISE
ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Dear Principals/Headmasters,

I hope that this letter finds you all well and safely through the first part of the school year. My name is Terry Sheridan and I am the principal of St. Michael’s College School as well as PhD. Candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). At this time I am beginning the thesis portion of my program and I am searching for six (6) to twelve (12) interested participants for my study who have completed between one (1) and eight (8) years in the principal/headmaster position. The topic for my research is “Building Trust in a Private High School: Formal and Informal Practices of Principals”. Participation is completely voluntary and for those of you who believe that this is important in private high schools, I hope that you will consider being a participant in this research study. The nature of the research will involve one or two interviews of approximately sixty (60) minutes in length and will ask you to reflect on the ways in which you build trust as a high school principal/headmaster. All of the information that is collected will be kept in the strictest of confidences as your name and the name of the school will not be used in any publication, and the information will be destroyed after five (5) years. The questions will revolve around formal and informal actions that are taken as principals/headmasters during the school year and will touch on specific areas including:

- What actions are taken by a principal to build trust with faculty members in a private high school?
- How does a principal of a private high school overcome the impediments to building trust that are present in a private high school?
- How do the characteristics of competence, respect, personal concern, and integrity engender trust with faculty members?
- How does a principal know when trust is established in a private high school?
- Why does trust matter in a private high school?

It is my hope that you will be interested in this research study. I believe that it will provide an opportunity to personally reflect on your tenure as principals/headmasters and provide an opportunity to celebrate your successes. Furthermore, it may help identify areas that might use further focus in your own professional
development. If you would like more information about being a participant in this study, I would ask that you contact me through my email address: terry.sheridan@utoronto.ca. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Terence M. Sheridan
Appendix I: Information/Consent Letter for Participants

From Researcher: Terence M. Sheridan  
Email: terry.sheridan@utoronto.ca  
Date: September 2011

Dear Potential Interview Participant,

Thank you for considering being a participant in, or contributing to, my research project. I am currently beginning the research portion of my doctoral thesis at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. My supervisor is Joseph Flessa (PhD.) and he can be contacted at joseph.flessa@utoronto.ca. I am doing this research as part of the requirement for a PhD. in Education through the Theory and Policy Studies Department. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information that you will need to understand what I am doing, and to decide whether or not you choose to participate. Participation is completely voluntary, and should you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without consequence. Furthermore, if you do decide to participate, you do not have to answer any question with which you are not comfortable.

Because of administrative and ethical issues related to research done in universities, this letter is a form letter; I have filled in comments, ticked appropriate boxes, and included sections specific to this study. At the end of the letter, you will decide as to whether or not you wish to participate. If you do wish to participate, please contact me with your information at my email address listed above. When I meet you in person, I will ask you to provide me with one signed copy and you should keep another for your reference.

The name of this research project is “Building Trust in a Private High School: Formal and Informal Practices of Principals.”

The nature and purpose of the research is to better understand the process that private high school principals/headmasters go through to develop trust with their faculty members. More specifically, by interviewing 6-12 principals/headmasters, I would like to study the formal and informal practices that principals, with experience of one (1) to eight (8) years in the position, partake in, and how he/she establishes when this trust is in place. Furthermore, I would like to learn about the essential components that each participant feels is needed to establish trust in the school building. The collected data will be analyzed to see if there are common themes that emerge from each of the principals. The data collected will be used to satisfy the academic requirements of my PhD. program and may be published in other standard academic venues.

Your part in the research, if you agree, is to be interviewed once or twice for approximately 60 minutes each time. During this time you will be asked to answer questions revolving around the building of trust in your schools. We will be doing a cross between an open interview and an interview from a guide (Enclosed please find questions, which I will definitely ask). I will need your consent to tape record and transcribe the interview. You may decline to have the interview recorded. Only I will have access to the data. At no time during the research will you be judged or evaluated, or will your responses be judged. As well, at no time will you be at risk to harm.

Potential limitations in my ability to guarantee anonymity are:

1) The data being collected is not sensitive. The risks involved are no more than what might transpire in everyday interactions.

Potential benefits you might derive from participating are:

1) A personal recognition that your belief in trust building has come to fruition in your school.
2) An opportunity to reflect and find areas of strength and perhaps areas that you would like to further develop.

Areas I hope to touch on are:

- What actions are taken by a principal to build trust with faculty members in a private high school?
- How does a principal of a private high school work with influences that are present in a private high school that affect the building of trust?
- How do the characteristics of competence, respect, personal concern, and integrity engender trust with faculty members?
- How does a principal know when trust is established in a private high school?
- Why does trust matter in a private high school?

Examples of questions that I have in mind but may or may not ask depending on priorities that emerge and how dialogue evolves are:

1) From your perspective as a leader, what does trust mean?
2) What does a school devoid of trust look like?

3) What obstacles/impediments do you see in your high school that interfere with your ability to build trust?
   (micropolitically, organizationally, pedagogically, managerially, instructionally, financially, and developmentally)

Once the audiotapes of the interview(s) have been transcribed, the original audio tapes will be destroyed.

In order to maintain the confidentiality of each participant, each participant will be given a case number and all documents will be numbered accordingly in the participant’s file along with any notes taken and the audio tape from the interview. Should the participant name specific institutions or persons in the interview, these will be given a factitious title or name in the final transcription of the data and not mentioned by name or title in the dissertation or in any publication. As well, all personal information and files will be encrypted. Identifying codes that could connect you or your organization with the changed names will also be kept under lock and key in the place designated above. The timing for the destruction of the transcriptions and/or the raw data is 5 (five) years. The results will only be used to fulfill the requirements of my academic program or may be used in other standard academic venues.

As interviewee, you will receive a copy of the transcript of your interview, via email, approximately two weeks after the interview. Any section, which you request to have deleted from the transcript of your interview, will be deleted. I will allow for two weeks from the sending of the transcript to hear back from you. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and you may request that the entire transcript of your interview be destroyed. I will be sharing major aspects of my preliminary analysis with you and you have the opportunity to provide feedback. How I will be doing this is through discussions with you as the need arises.

The study has been approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Toronto. If you have any questions related to your rights as a participant in this study, or if you have any complaints or concerns about how you have been treated as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Ethics, ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273.

If desired, a copy of the final paper will be sent to each participant.

Sincerely,

Terence M. Sheridan
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I agree to participate in this research study
email: _________________________________
   _____ (please check if permission granted)

I agree to have the interview taped and transcribed by the researcher
I would like a summary of the results of the study
   _____ (please check if permission granted)
   _____ (please check if desired)

_________________________  ___________________________  ___________________________
Name (Printed)  Signature  Date

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS LETTER FOR YOUR RECORDS