RELATIONAL TRUST AND PARENTAL ROLE CONSTRUCTION

IN URBAN SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This mixed methods study examines the relationship between relational trust, role construction, and parent/guardian engagement in K-8 Philadelphia public schools. While research has established valid and reliable measures of trust in schools, they are based primarily on the teacher perspective. Therefore, this study is an effort to build on prior research and make parent and guardian perspectives more central to the conversation about trust in schools.

To determine the concepts of relational trust, role construction and parent/guardian engagement are interconnected with each other and also impacted by the social and historical context of school communities, qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to answer the following research questions: (1) Over the past four years, what are the levels of trust among parents, teachers, and students in Philadelphia schools? How do these levels vary based on student demographics, climate, and academic achievement levels? (2) What are the effects of student demographics, academic achievement, and climate on levels of trust? Are levels of trust predictive of school-level characteristics and climate? (3) How do parents and guardians understand their role and the role of their child's teachers in the school community and how does this shape their perspectives and insights into relational trust in their schools?

Research questions one and two were explored in the quantitative portion of the study, which involved regression and structural equation modeling (SEM) of school level data, including data from the School District of Philadelphia annual District-Wide Surveys. To answer research question three, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten parents of Philadelphia public school students in grade K-8.

Findings from the quantitative analyses supported the hypothesis that higher levels of relational trust, as measured by surveys, have a direct effect on school climate and indirect

effects on school characteristics. Schools with higher levels of trust are predictive of schools with higher rates of attendance and lower rates of suspensions. Higher levels of trust were predictive of high proficiency rates on standardized tests and lower concentrations of students of color and students living in or close to poverty. Additionally, climate served as a significant intervening variable between trust and school characteristics; higher trust predicted more positive climate which predicted schools with higher rates of student proficiency in math and English Language Arts (ELA) and serving lower rates of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students and students living in or close to poverty.

Through the application of a coding scheme aligned to Bryk and Schneider's (2002) four criteria of relational trust, analyses of interview transcriptions from ten Philadelphia public school parents brought to light the variation in how parents perceive their roles and teachers' roles. Moreover, the nuances that characterized the differences in parents' perspectives related to how much they trust their child's teachers. In other words, the degree of competence, personal regard for others, integrity, and respect that parents perceive in their child's teachers depended on the expectations they hold for teachers and teachers' abilities to meet these expectations. Additionally, the findings suggested that parents' understanding of the role of a teacher is influenced by their lived experiences as well as their appreciation for the experiences of the teacher and other parents. Therefore, the extent to which relational trust existed between parents and teachers was influenced by the social and cultural norms of parents, the quantity and quality of communication and interactions, and the degree to which agreements are upheld.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Trust the Process." Fans of professional basketball, and in particular fans of Philadelphia's NBA team, the 76ers, know this as the unofficial motto of the team, adopted after a particularly demoralizing season in 2014 (Rollins, 2018). When criticism from fans across the city arose around strategies team managers and coaches implemented to rebuild after a losing season, the team responded with "Trust the Process." But what did they mean? And why did they need the fans' trust?

They meant two things. First, managers needed fans to believe they had a plan. Second, fans needed to know that this plan would eventually lead to what both parties desperately wanted: a championship-contending basketball team. The Sixers' staff knew fans would be skeptical of changes, but they also recognized that they could not fully do their jobs -- they could not effectively navigate this rebuilding process -- without some preemptive trust from all stakeholders. In an age where every move made by professional sports teams is subject to media coverage and public criticism, the Sixers were acknowledging that "the process" would be transparent and critical to the outcome. Asking for the trust of a city with a notoriously passionate and well-informed fan base is no small request. Yet, the city embraced the phrase -- wore it on t-shirts, chanted it at games.

A short time before the Sixers bombed the 2013-2014 season and found themselves in need of a renaissance, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) was also in dire straits. For myriad reasons, SDP faced a particularly acute funding deficit in the 2012-2013 school year. Some even questioned whether Philly schools could be open for day one in September 2013 (Bidwell, 2013). It was in the midst of this crisis that I began working at SDP in the Office of

Research and Evaluation (ORE). As I was starting as a district employee, hundreds of teachers and staff were receiving the infamous "pink slips" in the mail, schools' programs were being cut, and their library doors were locked for lack of a librarian (some of the first to receive those pink slips). This "process" certainly did not evoke trust; rather, it created an environment of lasting suspicion even when schools did finally open with the bare minimum allowed by law. In 2015, a new governor was elected to the state of Pennsylvania. This new governor, along with Philadelphia's mayor,[1] committed to beginning a new process to counteract the mistrust that had devastated Philadelphia public schools, including reinstating the funding for schools that was cut under the prior Governor.

Another critical step in this most recent process was taken when Philadelphia schools were returned to local control (Graham, 2018). Since 2001, schools in Philadelphia were run by the School Reform Commission (SRC), a governing body of five officials, three of which were appointed by the Governor (Graham, 2018). Since the majority of the SRC members were state appointed, Philadelphia schools were considered to be under state control. The protests from Philadelphians that took place when the SRC was created in 2001 continued over the 15 years of its existence, as Philadelphians continued to voice their disdain for a process from which they felt excluded (Mezzacappa, 2017). The SRC meetings held on Thursday evenings were notorious for attracting crowds of Philadelphians wanting to contribute their opinion about a particular issue. I attended many of these meetings and can attest that the environment was not one of trust. Clearly, this was not a process that was trusted. Indeed, the justification for the creation of the SRC was a looming budget crisis (Graham, 2018), and yet, over a decade later in 2012, Philadelphia schools were still facing the ramifications of disinvestment. The conclusion of

[1] Before leaving office in 2016, Mayor Nutter's administration increased funding for Philadelphia schools.

many was that the challenges our schools faced had only been exacerbated by the state takeover.[2] In short, the SRC only further eroded trust between citizens and the school district.

The trust that is required of a sports fan of a losing team is not the same as the trust that students and their families put in schools every day. However, there are similarities. There is a common understanding of the desired outcome, which benefits individuals as well as the larger community, and there is a need to rely on certain individuals to achieve this outcome because they hold a position of power, presumably based on their expertise. In other words, we can all agree that we want a winning basketball team and we want schools that prepare our students to be successful, but we must rely on team owners and school boards to meet these goals. At a more micro level, the work of building and maintaining trust is in the hands of coaches and teachers, the experts who work every day to help our basketball players make their layups and teach our students how to do long division. It is because of the work of our teachers and coaches that the process happens.

As Maxwell (2005) describes, the purpose of reflecting on personal experiences and assumptions prior to engaging in research is primarily for the benefit of the researcher so that he or she may recognize how he or she shapes and influences the goals and interpretations of the study. Essentially, the goal of my research was to find additional evidence to support my hypothesis that trust is the keystone to building the strong relationships between teachers and families that promote student success. Literature, conversations, and observations have all led me to believe that trust is a key part of a successful school and that developing and sustaining trusting relationships is shaped by the context and environment of each district and school

[2] After being elected as the governor of Pennsylvania in 2011, Tom Corbett budget cut $1 billion dollars from the state's education budget. Additionally, he terminated the use of a funding formula, which took into account student populations when allocating funds to each district (Perry & Weingarten, 2014).

community. At the highest level is the district, which serves the city of Philadelphia. In my experience as a Philadelphian, a key component of the city's personality--our desire to be critical and hold institutions that bear the city's name to high standards--can be gleaned from the Sixers example and, more relevantly, the relationships between our citizens and our school board.

Within the district exist hundreds of schools that strive to form relationships with community members. One of the first large research projects I worked on as part of my job in the Office of Research and Evaluation was an examination of the Renaissance Initiative,[3] which sought to "turnaround" the lowest performing schools in Philadelphia. Over the course of visiting the 30 schools that were designated in need of turnaround, I interviewed principals, teachers, and students. One theme across the schools from the teacher perspective was how challenging it was to encourage parent engagement. For example, one teacher explained her experience:

> We've done, we do back to school carnivals, we have assemblies, we just had a black history month assembly, we have report card conferences where we raffle things off, like one time we did a television, we just had a dinner, literacy night, so we're trying. It's not the greatest turnout. We did a breakfast where the moms and dads come in. We're constantly trying, we just haven't found the right thing yet (Stratos, Reitano, Wolford & Miller, 2014, p. 83).

This theme, teachers feeling challenged in their efforts to increase parent engagement, has emerged in project after project.

Juxtaposing this parent engagement issue is the image of an auditorium packed with angry community members, holding signs expressing their frustration at an SRC meeting. So why is it that teachers find it challenging to get parents to come to parent-teacher conferences but security guards and barricades are necessary to help contain crowds at SRC meetings? I believe

[3] The Renaissance Initiative began in the 2010-2011 school year as a way to rapidly turnaround the lowest performing schools in SDP. Schools either became a Promise Academy and remained a SDP school, or became a Renaissance Charter and run by a charter operator (Stratos, Reitano, Wolford & Miller, 2014).

that a key component to explaining this is a lack of trust. More specifically, this lack of trust stems in part from an incongruence in expectations around what it means to fill the role of teacher, parent, or engaged community member. If everyone is not on the same page about what the process is and who is expected to contribute and how, trust can be threatened. To test this hypothesis, I applied the theoretical frameworks of relational trust and role construction to analyze survey and focus group data from Philadelphia parents and guardians. Additionally, I used critical theory to highlight and problematize how the power dynamics that characterize our schools – and in particular how expectations around teacher and parent roles – represent a specific perspective that has come to be accepted as the status quo. My study questioned these assumptions, and investigated what relational trust looks like in Philadelphia schools.

After introducing the research problem, providing some context, and highlighting the relevance for this study, this section reviews the goals, specific research questions, significance, and limitations of the study. The next chapter reviews relevant literature on the theoretical and methodological approaches to defining and measuring trust in schools. It also explores the theoretical frameworks that shape this study's approach, including theories on role construction and Critical Race Theory. Chapter 3 is an explanation of the study's methods, and Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 present the results. In Chapter 6, the results are interpreted and discussed in relation to the literature.

Existing Research on Trust in Organizations and in Schools

Research from various vantage points, including economic, organizational, and sociological, has found that the presence of trust in institutions enables cooperative and productive relationships (Cummings & Bromiley, 1996; Goddard, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Messick & Kramer, 2001; Mishra, 1996; Louis, 2007; Stolle, 2001; Forsyth, Adams &

Hoy, 2011; Romero, 2015; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). A review of literature examining trust through a sociological lens reveals that there is a subset that deals particularly with questions of organizational trust, or, how trust between individuals and groups influences behavior within the context of a specific organization.

The work of Bryk and Schneider (2002) and their relational trust framework is seminal in explaining the phenomena within the specific context of education. The concept of relational trust came from the work of Bryk and colleagues with the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research (CCSR), who examined Chicago survey data to expand on their understanding of the relationship between school organization and improvement. Specifically, they applied Rasch-scale analysis to survey data to create measures that captured various aspects of "essential supports."[4] The CCSR researchers then used factor analysis to combine these measures into factors that ultimately served as indicators for five organizational subsystems, referred to as the Five Essential Supports for school improvement (Sebring, Allensworth, Bryk, Easton, & Luppescu, 2006). These measures of the Essential Supports were tested within the context of a longitudinal study of school improvement in several hundred elementary schools in Chicago that took advantage of the district's natural experiment in school decentralization prompted by the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988. In their work in Chicago, Bryk et al. (2010) considered whether the Essential Supports were present in schools, how they interacted with one another and school context, and the relationship between the strengths and weaknesses of the Essential Supports and improvement and stagnation in learning gains. Based on their analyses, the

[4] When the framework was first introduced, the 5Essentials were: Professional Capacity, Student-Centered Learning Climate, Parent-School-Community Ties, Instructional Guidance, and Leadership. As of 2018, the Five Essentials are: Supportive Environment, Involved Families, Collaborative Teachers, Effective Leaders, and Ambitious Instruction (UChicago, 2018).

researchers found strong positive relationships between high levels of the Five Essentials and other measures of school improvement, such as student test scores (Bryk et. al., 2010).

This research also resulted in the development of their concept of relational trust. Bryk and colleagues found that survey items about levels of relational trust among teachers, between teachers and principals, teachers and students, and school professionals and parents can be used to create a school-level measure of relational trust, which complements the Five Essentials. After engaging in a longitudinal mixed-methods study examining the relationship between relational trust and school improvement, Bryk and Schneider (2002) concluded, "Elementary school communities characterized by high relational trust were much more likely to demonstrate marked improvements in academic productivity across the early to mid-1990s in Chicago," and ultimately claimed relational trust as a social resource for school improvement (p. 123). Subsequent research employing the relational trust theoretical framework has only further bolstered the validity of Bryk and Schneider's findings on the connection between trusting relationships in a school and positive student outcomes (Forsyth, Barnes, & Adams, 2006).

Existing Research on Role Construction and Parent Engagement

According to Bryk and Schneider (2002), relational trust is comprised of four measurable criteria that share similarities with those found across the larger body of literature on trust in organizations: respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity. Each criterion is a trait that is possessed and observed in individuals that make up a school community (teachers, principals, students, and parents/guardians). The degree to which there is consensus among teachers on what the embodiment of these criteria looks like for each role, and if individuals embody these criteria in accordance with their role, is an "organizational property." Bryk and Schneider refer to this multi-level dynamic as the interplay between the intrapersonal, the

interpersonal, and the organizational, which requires that beliefs and observed behaviors of self and others be considered in tandem. As Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy (2011) point out in their review of the literature on trust in schools, this focus on role construction and "role-relationships" is what distinguishes the concept of relational trust from other conceptualizations found in the literature. Bryk and Schneider use the term "role sets" when referring to the behavioral expectations that define interactions and perceptions between principals, teachers, students, and parents within a school setting:

> Each party in these role sets maintains an understanding of their personal obligations and holds some expectations about the obligations of the other… 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 behavior occurring (p. 125).

Indeed, in describing the four criteria that comprise relational trust, it is apparent that role formation and construction is central to relational trust.

Deficiencies in Exiting Literature

The research deficits that this study will address are related to three primary issues, the first is that the current understanding of relational trust relies heavily on teacher perceptions. The relational trust framework, and much of the literature on measuring trust in schools, focuses on measuring levels of trust from the teacher perspective (Adams & Forsyth, 2013; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard, Salloum & Berebitsky, 2009; Goddard, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Forsyth, Barnes & Adams, 2006). The foundation of the relational trust concept is based on measures that situate teachers' understanding of each role-set as the point of reference, which means that, for example, the teacher-parent trust construct is based on how teachers understand the role of parents and how parents' behavior adheres to this understanding. As Bryk and Schneider (2002) explain, the judgments made by individuals (or in this case teachers) of

whether or not actions reinforce relational trust are "grounded in each individual's historical perspective on the institution, personal and cultural beliefs rooted in his or her family and community of origin, and prior workplace socialization experiences" (p.21-22). This relates to research that shows a disconnect between how school-based staff (teachers included) view parents' roles and how parents understand their place in a school community, a disconnect that is often found to be rooted in differences in historical and cultural beliefs and experiences with school as an institution (Constantino, 2007; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Epstein, 1995; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2007; Horvat, 2011; Hubbard & Hands, 2011; Lavadenz & Armas, 2011). Therefore, a single role-set may have different meanings and interpretations based on whether it is from the perspective of the teacher or from the parent. Broadening the study of relational trust to include the perspectives of parents in addition to teachers is important given the degree to which relational trust is predicated on a common understanding of the various roles that define members of a school community. Expanding measures of relational trust to include the perspectives of parents and guardians allows for the triangulation of how roles are understood, which is critical for increasing the validity and reliability of measures of relational trust across school communities.

The second is that literature on parent engagement – i.e., the process by which parents and schools build relationships – shows that an unequal distribution of power perpetuates a disconnect between the status-quo that defines parental engagement expectations and how parents understand their roles within a school community. Across the literature, a dominant theoretical perspective applied to answering the phenomenon of parental involvement and engagement is role construction. Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1997) argue that there are three constructs that are essential to explaining parents' behavior when it comes to engaging with their

child's education, the first of which is role construction. The authors highlight how parental beliefs about child-development and child rearing, and the degree to which parents believe they should be involved in their child's education, can be linked to the amount and nature of parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). In other words, if a parent believes it is the role of a teacher to direct and manage the education process, then it would threaten his or her role as a parent to engage in the behaviors associated with a teacher.

The survey instruments used in Chicago to measure relational trust are grounded in an assumption that there is a common understanding across parties of the "expectations and obligations" of each role. However, since teacher surveys are the primary source for data collection for their research, the inclusion of parent data would serve to further strengthen the theoretical framework though the collection of data that allows for the consideration of parent and guardian perspectives. By privileging the perceptions of teachers over parents and families, the current relational trust construct could result in the perpetuation of the unequal distribution of power that Bryk and Schneider (2002) identify as being a source for a lack of trust.

Indeed, critical theorists argue that the power dynamics that are characteristic of schools in large urban districts serving students of color and living in poverty are the result of inequitable and oppressive social and political systems that favor a status-quo informed by, and designed to perpetuate, white middle class ideals (Dixson & Rousseau Anderson, 2017; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2017; Yasso, 2005). Bryk and Schneider (2002) acknowledge this unequal distribution of power in their discussion of Chicago public schools, which they refer to as "the significant power imbalance between poor parents and school professionals in most urban contexts" (p.130). This means that in schools serving students and families of color and low SES, teachers are likely

operating according to concepts of culture and capital that situate white-middle class norms as the standard of comparison.

Thirdly, without a valid and reliable measure of relational trust in school communities, achieving the necessary organizational conditions for school improvement is impeded. Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has been administering the surveys developed by Bryk et al. for decades. The data collected are used as a way to measure and better understand school improvement, as well as for accountability purposes (UChicago, 2018). Each year, schools' survey data is displayed publicly on the CPS website, including information on the teacher-parent trust construct.[5] When SDP wanted to revamp its district-wide survey program, it looked to Chicago as a leader in this work. Currently, SDP uses and encourages the use of survey data to understand the strengths and challenges of schools. However, in order to most effectively take advantage of relational trust as a social resource for school improvement, researchers and practitioners need to understand exactly how role-sets are understood, particularly from the perspectives of parents/guardians. In other words, does the role of "teacher" mean the same to teachers and parents? Or do the expectations that are foundational to the criteria of relational trust vary? Is there a relationship between the social and historical context of a school's community and the ways that roles are defined? By including parental voice in the development of relational trust in schools, the assumptions and expectations that define the role of those in the position of power can be questioned, reinforced, or reconsidered.

Historical Context: School Desegregation Efforts in Philadelphia

The need for a crucial study in Philadelphia is grounded in its history and in particular, the history of the relationship between public education leaders and Philadelphians of color. A

[5] See https://cps.5-essentials.org/2017/

series of historical events that we can look to in order to understand why there may be distrust between many parents and guardians and Philadelphia schools begins with the Second Great Migration and comes to a head in the 1970s with the School Boards approach to desegregation. In particular, research and primary sources show that the Philadelphia School Board was unwilling to address the social, political, and economic forces that enabled and perpetuated a system of inequality and, when they were finally forced by the state to create a Desegregation Plan and timetable in 1976, they created one that placed the burden on students and their families, using the rhetoric of "school choice" to avoid controversy. The following paragraphs recount the major events and interpretations of these events, which provides one narrative that explains why the existence of trust between families of color and the School District of Philadelphia cannot be assumed.

The influx of African Americans from the south during the Great Migration, the decline of the very industries whose jobs attracted the migration, and the subsequent white flight and racist housing policies and practices, left cities like Philadelphia with large populations of under employed African Americans who had little opportunity for social mobility (Rury, 2005; Commission on School Integration, 1963). Specifically, between 1940 and 1970, the African American population in Philadelphia rose by about 400,000 (Spencer, 2012). Importantly, there was not only a rise in the number of African Americans living in Philadelphia, but as Phillips (2005) notes in her article on school desegregation in Philadelphia, with the growth of the black population came "the rapid expansion of the black ghetto;" in fact, "between 1930 and 1970, the index of black isolation in Philadelphia rose from 27.3 percent to 75.6 percent." Given that students attended schools based on where they lived, it is not surprising that reports and studies published in the 1960s and 1970s reveal the segregated state of Philadelphia schools. For

example, a 1962 report to the United States Commission on Civil Rights about public schools in Philadelphia states:

> [N]early 30 percent of Philadelphia's 214 public elementary schools have Negro populations of 1 percent of less, and another 25 percent have Negro populations of 97 percent or more. Further, it is, by and large, true that white teachers teach in 'the white schools' and Negro teachers teach in the 'Negro schools' … and with this segregation have come the inequalities found in most segregated education systems (Blaustein, 1962).

A 1974 study of a black neighborhood in Philadelphia provides additional insight into the physical and "behavioral environments" where some of the most segregated schools were located (Ley, 1974). Using the 1970 census and newspaper reports from 1971 and 1972, the study argues that there are still "two distinct populations in Philadelphia, black and white, separate and unequal." According to 1971 data used by Ley in his study, over 90% of students attending the following high schools were non-white: University City, West Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin, William Penn, Bok, Simon Gratz, Overbrook, and Edison. But what about the demographic makeup of the schools fifty years later? Publicly available data from the 2019-20 school year shows that the percentages of non-white students at each of these schools remains over 90%, with the exception of University City, Bok, and William Penn, which have since been closed (School District of Philadelphia, 2021). In addition to these schools, many other Philadelphia public schools located in the neighborhoods with the highest rates of unemployment and poverty continue to have homogeneous racial and socioeconomic populations, with the vast majority of students being economically disadvantaged and Black/African American (Philadelphia School Partnership, 2021).

One might wonder how Philadelphia schools managed to stay segregated in 1971, and yet even in 2020, given that the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling was issued in 1954. In her essay, Phillips (2005) addresses the factors that enabled Philadelphia's schools to remain

segregated for so long. She argues that the dominant social and political conditions in Philadelphia from 1955 to 1967 prevented the success of school desegregation, focusing on the combination of an unwilling School Board, an anti-bussing movement led by white Philadelphians, and federal limitations. Similarly, in his book, *The Education of Black Philadelphia,* Franklin (1979) acknowledges that much of the blame for the segregated conditions of Philadelphia schools lies with the District's leadership and the Shedd administration in particular, which was in place from 1967 to 1971. However, Franklin also finds fault with the Black community, and is critical of their apparent apathy over public education.

In an article examining Philadelphia school politics, Birger (1996) focuses on the white middle-class opposition to school reform from 1965-1967, which allowed the perpetuation of a segregated school system. In his account of this historical moment, Birger uses police commissioner and mayor Frank Rizzo as the personification of the larger social and political climate whose interest was in maintaining the status quo, which Superintendent Shedd and School Board President Dilworth attempted to challenge. This article opens with a description of a student protest turned violent, which the author uses to represent the educational environment that characterized Philadelphia in 1967: "The events of November 17, 1967, crystallized a white, working-class opposition to school reform that Shedd and Dilworth proved unable to overcome" (p.164). Ultimately, Shedd and Dilworth's experience in Philadelphia is an example of how the poor conditions of urban schools are perpetuated by a power dynamic that is maintained through a system of institutionalized racism that is extremely difficult to overcome, even when those in position of power attempt to do so.

Morrison (2004) traces the legal lineage of desegregation in Philadelphia schools as an example of what he deems the "difficulty, or even futility, of desegregating large urban public-

school systems" (p.5). Litigation began in 1972 in response to the Pennsylvania Human Rights Commission (PHRC) order that the School District of Philadelphia desegregate. Rather than legitimately attempt to address the issue of segregation, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) challenged the PHRC's mandate for a variety of reasons, including the fact that segregation was not the result of *de jure* segregation and the financial burden that desegregation efforts would impose (Morrison, 2004). While SDP did submit several desegregation plans to PHRC, they were rejected as unsatisfactory or impossible; for example, in two plans, a central premise was creating a "metropolitan district" by expanding the School District of Philadelphia's boarders to include some of the outlying suburbs (School District of Philadelphia, 1976), which the Court did not have the power to compel. Ultimately, a voluntary desegregation plan was approved by the Court in 1976 on the grounds that *de facto* segregation was not the root cause of Philadelphia's segregated schools (Morrison, 2004). Needless to say, the voluntary plan, which was based on the creation of magnet schools and the provision for students to voluntary transfer out of schools that had a certain proportion of students of one race/ethnicity (School District of Philadelphia, 1976), did not have results that satisfied PHRC. Over the next 25 years, litigation continued between SDP and PHRC due to SDP's inability to comply with the Courts prior mandates for SDP to desegregate until 2001, when the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania finally closed the case by ruling that SDP "made a significant and continued effort" to mitigate the racial isolation of students in public schools.

The history of Philadelphia's attitudes towards, and efforts to, desegregate schools is important context for this study in that in it is the foundation on which the current experiences of students, teachers, and families are built. As reviewed in the literature, for decades, the actions of those that had the power to address the racist policies and challenge the status-quo that

perpetuated segregated schools in Philadelphia show a lack of commitment to ensuring that all students in Philadelphia have access to an equitable education. This is the legacy that frames the current situation in Philadelphia and it is one that does anything but serve as a foundation for trust. Moreover, research supports the benefit of taking a wholistic view of the social context in research of urban education (Green & Gooden, 2014). Taking a wholistic view would mean that the fact that schools continue to be fairly segregated in Philadelphia,[6] regardless of the cause, has implications for the degree to which conditions are in place for trust to be formed in school.

Contemporary Relevance: A Renewed Focus on Parent Engagement

Understanding the historical context and how it may frame the way that Philadelphians perceive public schools is especially relevant when thinking about how communities and families engage with urban schools. Research has shown that the levels and impact of parent involvement are affected by school context, which includes normative values and expectations, as well as the concentration of poverty and instability (Horvat et. al., 2003; McNeal; 2014). Therefore, it is important to understand the historical underpinnings of the current educational environment, especially in the context of efforts to increase parent and family engagement.

Indeed, a renewed commitment to the belief that family and parent engagement can support academic outcomes is evident in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the reauthorization of the original 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which included requirements for how schools utilize Title I funds to engage families (ESSA, 2015). In Philadelphia, a commitment to engaging families in schools was seen in SDPs investment in the Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE). Specifically, in 2016, the passing of a

[6] Based on 2019-20 enrollment data, 165 of the 224 (74%) SDP schools meet the criteria outlined by the PHRC 1979 formula defining a segregated school (School District of Philadelphia, 2021; Morrison, 2004).

policy requiring every school to have a School Advisory Committee (SAC)[7] and the commitment of $40 million by the Mayor's Office of Education to open 25 Community Schools over five years (Mezzacappa, 2016).

Another recent event relevant to strengthening the relationships between families and schools was SDP's return to local control. In July 2018, the School Reform Commission (SRC), the state-controlled board that governed Philadelphia public schools for 17 years, voted to abolish itself in favor of a locally appointed school board (Graham, 2018). This historical moment represented a high-level shift in one of the primary structures that dictates how students, parents, educators, and school leaders interact with their schools. Given this shift and its potential to remove a barrier to the formation of trusting relationships between schools and families, there was a need for a study that questioned existing assumptions about parent engagement and investigated the aspects of trust in schools in Philadelphia.

Study Purpose and Rationale

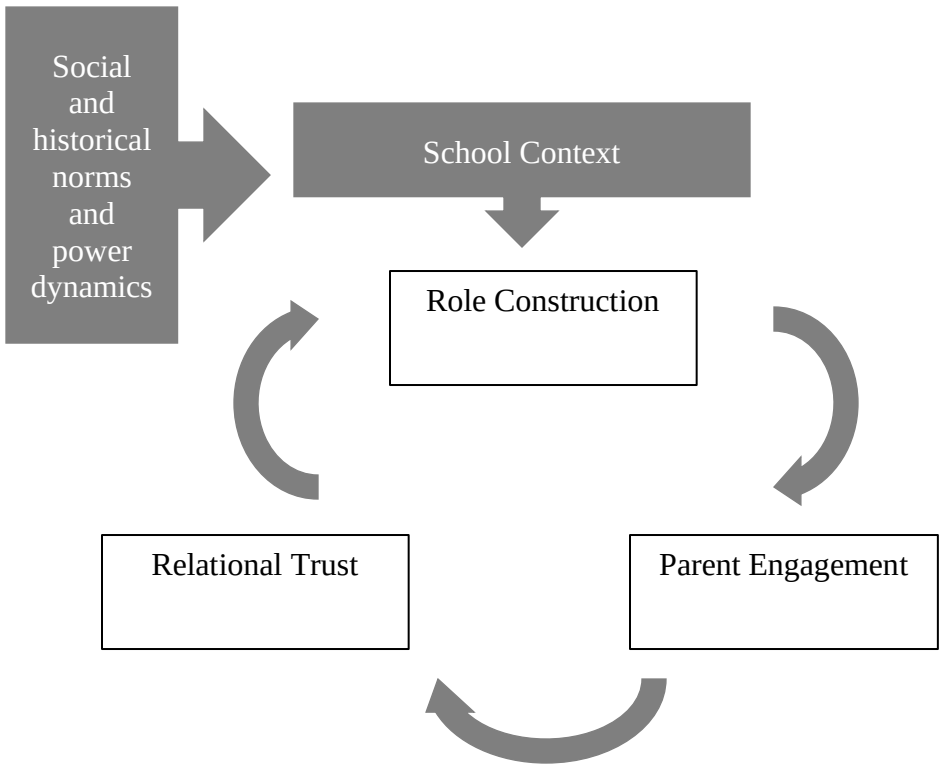
The overarching aim of this study is to employ a pragmatic paradigm and critical perspective to unite the literature on parent/guardian engagement and trust to further shed light on how trust is understood and measured. More specifically, the goals of this research study include the following. First, this study will explore the literature on trust in schools, and accentuate the strengths of the relational trust framework in particular, as well as review the literature on parent engagement. The juxtaposition of the two will underscore the evidence

[7] In June 2016, the School Reform Commission passed policy 920, which made it mandatory for all SDP schools to have a School Advisory Council (SAC). SACs are peer elected teams, comprised of parents/guardians, the school principal, teachers or other school-based staff, and community members. SACs are required to meet at least once a month and are based on the theory that "when parents/family members are engaged in their student's school, academic achievement improves."

produced by each that shows that strong parent-school relationships and high-levels of parent/guardian engagement and are a positive asset to a school community. Additionally, I will use role construction theory to connect aspects of relational trust and parent engagement research, and utilize aspects of critical theory as an entry point to problematizing this phenomenon. Figure 1 demonstrates the hypothesized relationship between role construction, parent engagement, and relational trust, all of which operate within a specific school context that is shaped by social and historical norms and power dynamics. Indeed, it is because of the unequal power dynamics at the foundation of how role construction, parent engagement, and relational trust interact that this study will apply a critical lens in the qualitative research methods.

Figure 1.1

Diagram of the relationship between role construction, parent engagement, and relational trust



As Figure 1.1 depicts, parental understanding of their roles in schools exist within a specific school context. Parents' beliefs around how, when, and why they are expected to engage with their child's education dictates their parent engagement behaviors – how, when, and why they interact with their child's school. Relational trust is developed through these interactions, and in turn, the level of trust can reinforce or redirect how a parent understands his or her role.

I used the theoretical framework of dramaturgy, developed by Erving Goffman in the 1950 as a way to understand social interactions through a lens of theatrical performance, as a theoretical grounding for the particular phenomenon of parental role construction in the context of schooling, and in particular, parent engagement. Goffman (1959) uses the term "performance" to refer to "the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers" (p. 22) and "performance team" to refer to "any set of individuals who co-operate in staging a single routine" (p 79). Goffman uses the language of the theater to explain how social norms and expectations impact individual behavior, or performances, in the context of a group or performance team. The application of theory that dissects role construction to explore parent engagement is relevant to relational trust in that it is through parent engagement that teachers and parents form relationships, which shape and are shaped by how they understand their role in relation to each other. Goffman's theory is useful in accentuating the social aspect of role construction and thus can help explore how parent and teacher interactions build relational trust. Roles exist in relation to other roles, and for Goffman, this is clear through his emphasis on performances and, of particular relevance to the relational trust framework, in the concept of role-sets. Linking terminology from the relational trust and dramaturgy theoretical perspectives, synchrony of expectations, or a common understanding of roles within role-sets, allow the members of the school to act together as a "performance team."

Research examining parent engagement, or the relationships and interactions that parents and families have with teachers and school leaders, provides key insight into the roles, and role-set, of teachers and parents. Furthermore, much of the literature that challenges the dominant discourse around parent engagement problematizes the power dynamics that impact how the roles in the parent-teacher role-set are defined. Thus, it is expedient to apply this critique of role construction in research on parent engagement to that of relational trust.

Secondly, this study drew on the Chicago *5Essentials* surveys that are central to relational trust. The *5Essentials* survey framework highlights the potential of Philadelphia's District-Wide surveys (DWS) to serve as a measure of relational trust in Philadelphia schools. In this way, School District of Philadelphia school-level survey data and administrative records on student demographics and achievement were employed to identify schools for further qualitative data collection with parents/guardians. This qualitative data responded to the issues identified by the application of critical theory and role construction theory to the current relational trust framework. Finally, a goal of the study was to triangulate school-level characteristics, survey, and interview data to identify any inconsistencies that may exist between the way that relational trust is understood and expressed by parent/guardians and the way it is measured in Philadelphia schools.

Research Questions

This is a mixed methods study that utilized a pragmatic epistemological approach. As such, there were two parts of the study, the second building off the first. In part one, a postpositivist approach was assumed and quantitative analyses employed to examine survey data. In the second part of the study, a critical lens was adopted and qualitative methods were used to

problematize ideologies that perpetuate inequities in school communities. The following three research questions served to drive the study:

Research Question 1: Over the past four years, what are the levels of trust among parents, teachers, and students in Philadelphia schools? How do these levels vary based on school characteristics, climate, and academic achievement levels?

Research Question 2: What are the effects of student demographics, academic achievement, and climate on levels of trust? Are levels of trust predictive of school-level characteristics and climate?

Research Question 3: How do parents understand their role and the role of their child's teachers in the school community and how does this shape their perspectives and insights into relational trust in their schools?

Quantitative methods were used to answer research questions one and two and qualitative methods to answer question three.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As this is a study of trust in schools, this chapter begins with a review of the relevant literature that describes past research about trust in school, which is organized into the following themes: literature on trust in organizations, literature on trust in schools, an exploration of the relational trust framework, and a review of the measures, samples, and variables that have been employed in relevant research on trust in schools. Next, this chapter focuses on the literature around parent and guardian engagement and role construction theory. This application of role construction theory as a lens to understanding parent engagement highlights the importance of many of the central tenets of relational trust, namely that a mutual understanding of role responsibilities is the foundation upon which relational trust is built.

Trust in Organizations

The concept of trust as it relates to organizations has been examined through a variety of lenses, resulting in economic, political, sociological, anthropological, and psychological theories that explain the phenomenon. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) trace the beginning of the empirical study of trust to the 1950s, when it was conceptualized as a behavior, particularly in the context of organizations. Later theories defined trust in organizations as an attitude or belief about others (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). For example, Cummings and Bromiley (1996) define trust as: "An individual's belief of a common belief among a group of individuals that another individual or group" will fulfill their commitments, be honest, and not take advantage of others (p. 303). In her research, Mishra (1996) looks specifically at "*beliefs* regarding the openness of another's communication" (p. 273). The terms "expectation" or "expectancy" are common occurrences in definitions of trust, both as something possessed by an individual and by

a group or community (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000, p. 533). An expectation is a belief about the way that another, or a group, will behave.

Risk is another concept that is consistent across definitions of trust and is critical to understanding trust in social systems (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995; Goddard, et. al., 2009). Messick and Kramer (2001) highlight the centrality of risk: "Trusting is exploitable and potentially costly. In all cases, if the target of your trust is not trustworthy, you will suffer. If, on the other hand, the target is trustworthy, both parties are better off" (p. 92). Beliefs and expectations are "risky" when there is a chance they are wrong, thus resulting in harm or loss. In their model of trust, Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) argue, "Trust is not taking risk *per se*, but rather it is a *willingness* to take risk" (p. 712). They go on to explain that trust is likely to exist between individuals when three factors are perceived to be present: ability, benevolence, and integrity. An aspect of the Mayer et. al. (1995) model that is shared in the relational trust framing and important to the educational context is the significance of time in the development of trust. The more often individuals interact, the greater the opportunities for experiences that can reinforce perceptions of trustworthiness. Through continued interactions over time, individuals gain the information needed to discern the trustworthiness of others.

On the one hand, time allows for the development of relationships and is therefore conducive to the development of trust. However, Goddard (2009) explains how long periods of time can also be associated with high risk and thus requires high levels of trust. In the context of education, outcomes often take long periods of time to be realized, which means the realization that expectations have been met are prolonged:

> Time lags are a key factor in education, because it may take months or even years to learn about the benefits particular children receive from schooling. Thus, trusting others involved the choice to put at risk what one cares about to accomplish those things one cannot realize alone (p. 294).

In this example, the parent or guardian must trust that what their child experiences in school will increase the likelihood that the child will learn to read or graduate high school, or at minimum, not decrease their potential.

Additional elements that are prevalent in the literature on trust include openness, competence, benevolence, honesty, integrity, and reliability (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Louis, 2007; Mishra, 1996; Romero, 2015). Each of these is related directly or indirectly to the concept of "relational trust" developed by Bryk and Schneider (2002) as a specific theoretical framework for understanding trust in a school setting.

Trust in Schools

Studies of organizational trust in the specific context of schools began in the 1980s, when Hoy and his colleagues at Rutgers University developed and employed tools specifically designed to measure faculty trust in principals, colleagues, and the school organization as a whole (Forsyth et. al., 2011). The definition of trust that drove this work assumes that the holders of trust are a group:

> Trust is a generalized expectancy held by the work group that the word, promise, and written or oral statement of another individual, group, or organization can be relied upon (Hoy & Kupersmith, 1985, p.2).

In particular, the group in question in this early study was faculty, and the referent groups, or those that faculty may or may not trust, included the principal, other faculty, and the school organization.

From this early work out of Rutgers University came the concept of collective trust (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011), another conceptualization of trust within a school, which was developed and refined around the same time that Bryk et. al. (2002) were conducting their studies in Chicago. In their book, "Collective Trust: Why Schools Can't Improve Without It,"

the authors organize the studies of trust in schools into four categories based on the lead research institution: the Rutgers studies, the Ohio State studies, the University of Chicago studies, and the Oklahoma State and University of Oklahoma studies. These groupings are also somewhat chronological, with the later research based in Oklahoma building on the early Rutgers work. The authors also highlight the similarities in the conclusions of the research that was concurrently being done by the Ohio State faculty and the University of Chicago faculty, both of which led to theoretical models that explained the relationship between levels of trust in schools and students' academic achievement. Most of the text is focused on their more recent work on the refinement of collective trust, which Forsyth et. al. (2011) tout as being the most advanced of the four, due to its inclusion of measures of student and parent trust, rather than solely examining trust from the teacher perspective.

Relational Trust

The researchers that led the University of Chicago studies developed their theory of relational trust based on data gathered as part of a large research project, the goal of which was investigating school improvement. The extensiveness of the research backing their framework is unprecedented, as the researchers spent almost a decade collecting qualitative and quantitative data across more than 400 schools in Chicago (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Bryk and Schneider (2002) argue that other theories of trust in organizations, which they summarize as being either organic or contractual, are not applicable to the unique setting of a school. Building on Coleman's social capital theory, Bryk and Schneider (2002) developed a theoretical framework to fill this gap, which "roots a consequential organizational property of a school community (defined as relational trust) in the nature of interpersonal social exchanges among members who comprise that community" (p. 14). Coleman (1988), a sociologist also based at the University of

Chicago, argues that social capital is a way to explain how social structures influence human actions and interactions while maintaining the assumption that individuals are purposeful and rational actors.

Coleman (1988) describes social capital as being comprised of "several entities" that enable actors to work within a social structure in order to achieve something that, in its absence, would not be possible. Social capital is both critical to Coleman's theory and relevant to relational trust. He writes that social capital "exists in the *relations* among persons" (p. S100). Like relational trust, the existence of social capital is contingent on multiple individuals interacting within a larger social structure or organization. What distinguishes relational trust from collective trust is the emphasis on role relationships or role-sets: teacher-principal, teacher-student, and teacher-teacher. As Bryk and Schneider (2002) explain in "Trust in Schools," through social exchanges within the context of a school, "each party in these role sets maintains an understanding of their personal obligations and holds some expectations about the obligations of the other. These understandings form the basis for judging the actual behavior transacted within each role set" (p. 125). Hence, relational trust is "an individual's emotional state," while collective trust is "a group norm" (Adams & Forsyth, 2013).

The influence of Coleman's social capital theory is evident in the way that the value of relational trust is based on its transactional nature and that the expectations that frame these transactions are influenced by the larger social structures in which the individuals are operating. Furthermore, the micro is translated to the macro. The trust in a specific teacher can expand into trust in "teachers" and trust in schools. For example, Coleman (1988) writes:

> ...social capital depends on two elements: trustworthiness of the social environment, which mean that obligations will be repaid, and the actual extent of obligations held. Social structures differ in both these dimensions, and actors within the same structure differ in the second (p. S102).

In other words, a school can be deemed trustworthy as can a teacher. The degree to which the school, or social environment, is understood as trustworthy is dependent on the actions of the individuals, or teachers, who are part of the school community. In contrast to collective trust, relational trust is the "sum of individuals beliefs, not necessarily a property of the school culture" (Adams & Forsyth, 2013, p.3), which means that like social capital, relational trust is rooted in the social exchanges among individuals who comprise a specific community.

This aspect of relational trust, it's rootedness in the individual within a community, makes it such an expedient tool for understanding the multi-dimensionality of trust in schools. Bryk and Schneider (2002) refer to this as "a three-level theory:" the intrapersonal, the interpersonal, and the organizational. They write: "Relational trust, so conceived, is appropriately viewed as an organizational property in that its constitutive elements are socially defined in the reciprocal exchanges among participants in the school community" (p. 22). In other words, it operates in the same way as other school-level measures that see individual members of the schools as a part of a whole. When we hear about the achievement of a school, what we mean is how well the individual students, as a collective, are achieving. Similarly, when we talk of a trusting school, we are thinking about the levels of trust that characterize individual interactions within the entire school community.

Relational Trust Criteria for Discernment

Bryk and Schneider (2002) break down relational trust into four measurable "criteria for discernment" (criteria): respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity. These four criteria share similarities with elements of other models presented in the literature on trust and are described by Bryk and Schneider as being traits that are possessed and observed in individuals that comprise a school community (teachers, principals, students, and

parents/guardians). Below, each of the criteria is explained specifically as it relates to both relational trust and the larger body of literature on social trust.

Competence

Competence is one of the four relational trust criterion that is explicitly found across the literature on trust in society. Competence is found when an individual has the skills necessary to perform tasks that are understood to be part of their role (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Competence it also often referred to as "ability." For example, Meyer, Davis and Schoorman's (1995) model of trust includes ability, which they define as "that group of skills, competencies, and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within some specific domain" (p. 717). Their qualification of "a specific domain" is important, as it acknowledges that trust is domain specific, a concept that is central to relational trust.

In the relational trust model, the term domain is replaced with "role," and competence is defined as "the execution of an individual's formal role responsibilities" within the context of a school community (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p.23). Competence is important because, as Goddard et. al. (2009) point out, good intentions do not equal met expectations if certain skills are lacking (p. 296). For example, a teacher may expect that it is the role of a parent to ensure that students complete their homework correctly. If a parent does not have the skills or time that are required to assist with the homework, his or her intentions will not suffice in supporting the completion of the assignment and acting in accordance with the teacher's expectations. This example also highlights why the existence of competence is predicated on a clear understanding of a role. The ability of a parent to support his or her student in completing assignments is only relevant if this is a responsibility associated with the parental role.

Romero (2015) highlights how competency can, but may not necessarily, be understood based on social constructs that serve as an indicator of a skill or expertise. For teachers and many other professionals, possessing a certification or a degree can serve as an indication of competency. However, Romero argues that competence can also be based on personal interactions and experiences. For example, a student's idea of a competent teacher is not usually based on the student's awareness of the teacher's possession of certifications or degrees. Rather, a student considers a competent teacher to be someone who is engaging and supportive.

Personal Regard for Others

This criterion is related to other key concepts present in the literature on trust: risk, vulnerability and benevolence. Across the literature, risk and vulnerability are used interchangeably to indicate that the potential for harm exists, and, for many researchers, the presence of risk or vulnerability is a necessary prerequisite for the presence of trust (Mayer, Davis & Shoorman, 1995). Bryk and Schneider (2002) define personal regard for others using the terms vulnerability and benevolence: "Any actions taken by a member of a role set to reduce others' sense of vulnerability affects their interpersonal trust. Such actions typically are interpreted as an expression of benevolent intentions and understood as singling personal regard for others" (p. 25). According to the relational trust framework, personal regard for others encompasses vulnerability and benevolence in the context of "a given role set" characterized by "mutual expectations and obligations" (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

The concept of vulnerability was central to Baier's (1986) foundational work as well, which hones in on the function of trusting relationships within society. Baier explains the difference between relying on someone and trusting them, the difference being "reliance on their good will toward one" (p. 234), not merely confidence in their ability to complete a task;

believing that someone has the *ability* to do something does not necessarily account for whether or not he or she *will* complete that task or action. While Baier's explanation of trust is general, it applies to how parents/guardians think of schools and their role in the lives of children:

> ...we must allow many other people to get into positions where they can, if they choose, injure what we care about, since those are the same positions that they must be in order to help us take care of what we care about (p. 236).

In the context of schools, teachers and students spend hours together each day. It is during this time that teachers are tasked with the education of the students, something that parents/guardians do not have the expertise and/or time to do themselves. However, regardless of how skilled or competent a teacher may be in math or reading, if parents do not think the teacher cares for the student, trust will not exist: in the language of relational trust, because students are in a vulnerable position, entrusting a teacher requires more than just confidence in his or her competence as an instructor.

As noted, the concept of vulnerability is often accompanied by that of benevolence, which is another term used to capture the expectation of "good will" or personal regard. Goddard (2009) highlights that this aspect of trust is accentuated in school due to the unique way that schools operate as institutions in our society. Goddard argues that benevolence is "central to the mitigation of risk in the absence of contracts or other formal regulatory structures that can guarantee a given performance" (p. 296). This ties directly to Bryk and Schneider's argument that other theories of trust in organizations, which they summarize as being either organic or contractual, are not applicable to the unique setting of a school. Organic trust is present in social systems where "individuals give their trust unconditionally; they believe in the rightness of the system, the moral character of its leadership, and all others who commit to the community" (p. 16). In this environment, there are little to no feelings of vulnerability. On the other hand, contractual trust exists in the presence of a contract, where the roles and actions of the involved

parties are clearly stipulated and non-adherence is often tied to legal consequences. There are no moral or ethical motivations in play. Hence, relational trust lives in a space where risk and vulnerability exist and contracts do not.

Integrity

Integrity is another example of a criterion that is deeply rooted in the larger body of research on trust relations. According to Bryk and Schneider (2002), integrity is "the level of agreement in each role relationship in terms of the understandings held about these personal obligations and expectations of others" (p. 26). In other words, a person possesses integrity when there is consistency between what she says and what she does (Mishra, 1996). This is also sometimes referred to as "reliability," or the degree that we are confident in our ability to predict another's behavior (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). In relational trust, the expectations about how another will behave are developed within the context of a role-set. Integrity is not only measured by the alignment between how an individual behaves to fulfill commitments (Cummings & Bromiley, 1996), but also by the alignment between how individuals behave to fulfill the expectations based on their role within the school.

Integrity's contribution to the relational trust framework reflects the influence of Coleman's social capital theory, and, in particular, the way Coleman understands the relationship between social norms and social interactions (Goddard, 2003). In "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," Coleman (1988) uses the term "credit-slips" to define the sense of obligation that exists between parties based on a common understanding of reciprocation. In certain communities, the norms around reliance on others impact the number of credit-slips that exist, which heightens the need for integrity and the development of trust. When social norms promote

cooperation, individuals must abide by the rules necessary for the exchanging of favors in order to meet the expectation of these norms.

Indeed, Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) define the relationship between integrity and trust "as the trustor's perception that the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable" (p. 719). Here, integrity is twofold; it is based on the adherence to a set of principles, but also contingent on the "acceptability" of the principles themselves. The value judgment that comes into play here is common across conceptualizations of social trust. Common terms that have been used to explain this aspect of trust include morals, ethics, values, and character. Bryk and Schneider (2002) also recognize that the reasons for consistent behavior cannot be ignored – however, for them, the "moral-ethical perspective" is one based on the specific context of a school community: "Integrity also demands that a moral-ethical perspective guides one's work. Although conflicts frequently arise among competing individual interests within a school community, a commitment to the education and welfare of children must remain the primary concern" (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p.26). Essentially, integrity is found in individuals who make and keep a promise to others, a promise that aligns to their role and is predicated on an understanding of a common goal.

Respect

Bryk and Schneider explain respect as not only a shared understanding of the unique and interconnected roles within a school community, but also as the communication of this understanding through social interactions in which the ideas of all parties are valued. Bryk and Schneider (2002) call these exchanges "genuine conversations," and argue that they should occur between and among parents/guardians, teachers, and school administrators (p. 23). Respect is evident in interactions where parties are both speaking and listening in a way that shows they

value the contribution of all. Communication is a consistent theme across the literature, as it is the primary way in which relationship building is operationalized. This communicative aspect of their description of respect shares many of the same qualities as the concept of "openness," which is found in much of the literature around trust. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) define openness as "the extent to which relevant information is not withheld" (p. 558). This definition also has a communicative element as well, and is aligned to one central aspect of respect, the sharing of information. Of the four relational trust criteria, respect is the most unique and, by virtue of its emphasis on communication, the most directly tied to the centrality of a common understanding of a given role set.

Mishra (1996) uses the term "undistorted communication" to complement her discussion of openness in relation to trust: "The extent to which the trusted person engages in undistorted communication then reinforces the trust (in terms of openness) placed in him or her" (p. 273). Mishra (1996) also recognizes that the role of openness in trusting relationships depends on the power dynamics within the organization; the motivations to be open or not are different depending on whether the communication is bottom-up, top-down, or lateral. In the context of relational trust, this means that openness between two teachers is distinct from openness between a principal and a teacher or between a teacher and a parent. Because the power dynamics that characterize a teacher-parent relationship are not clearly defined by traditional workplace structures, they are more dependent on the types of social interactions where "undistorted communication" takes place. In other words, the degree to which respect between parents and teachers is built through interactions is heightened in school settings due to the particular context of a school and its surrounding neighborhood and city.

Early Measures of Trust

The use of surveys to measure trust is not unique to education research but is certainly the most prevalent across studies on trust in schools. As Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) note, the development of trust as an organizational property, which served as the groundwork for the education specific theories of trust, built off work that framed trust as a quality found in individuals. Therefore, surveys that ask individuals to self-report on their unique perceptions are epistemologically and ontologically appropriate for studies of trust in schools. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) trace the history of surveys of trust back to one of the earliest, developed by Julian Rotter in the late 1960s. Rotter's definition of trust was grounded in its communicative quality and the extent to which individuals believed that others would follow through on a verbal or written commitment. Thus, his scale created scores based on respondents' feelings of reliability about other types of individuals. The Organizational Trust Inventory (OTI) is another example of a scale that, while not specifically developed for an education setting, assumes that individual perception and experience must be captured in order to understand trust in organizations (Cummings & Bromiley, 1996).

Furthermore, by virtue of the OTI being based on a definition of trust that considers it to be a continuous construct, it assumes a post-positivist ontological and epistemological framing that is consistent throughout the development of later scales to measure trust. In other words, the use of a survey is predicated on a belief that data and research can be used to explain social phenomena. Cummings and Bromiley (1996) developed and validated the OTI as a tool that would help "reduce transactions costs in and between organizations" (p. 303). It is based on three conceptual dimensions of trust. These three dimensions, how people feel, think, and intend to act, are measured through 121 items.

Instruments designed to specifically measure organizational trust in schools were also developed; one of the earliest, developed by Hoy and Kupersmith (1985), is comprised of 21 items that use a six-point Likert scale. The survey contains three scales, each based on faculty trust of a distinct referent: the principal, other faculty, and the school organization (Forsyth et. al., 2011). Because the scales are designed to measure the cumulative levels of faculty trust within a school, the scores of all the teachers are averaged at a school level. These scales were used in several early studies out of Rutgers University to test and better understand the relationship between levels of trust and school effectiveness. For example, in one study of the relationship between trust, authenticity, and school organizational climate, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) use the scales developed by Hoy and Kupersmith to measure faculty trust in their colleagues and in the principal, as well as additional instruments designed to capture organizational climate.

Later studies use items from the Omnibus Trust Scale (Omnibus T) (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999), which was developed using the earlier 1985 survey as a starting point. The development of this survey came out of the work around collective trust, which, as discussed previously, shares many of the theoretical characteristics with relational trust. (Forsyth et. al., 2011). The survey is 26 questions, each aligned to one of six facets of collective trust: honesty, benevolence, competence, openness, risk of vulnerability, and reliability. Additionally, the survey measures three referents, faulty trust in principals, faculty trust in colleagues, and faculty trust in clients (parents and students). In their study of the effects of trust on levels of student achievement in elementary schools, Goddard, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) use a 15-item subset of the Omnibus T scale to survey teachers. Adams and Forsyth also (2013) used a subset

of the Omnibus T Scale in their study of the effects of collective faculty trust on math and reading achievement in elementary schools.

Measuring Relational Trust

Relational trust is measured using data gathered from the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) annual student and teacher surveys, the *5Essentials Survey*. On these surveys, there are questions that are aligned to four different relational trust measures: student-teacher, teacher-teacher, teacher-principal, and teacher-parent. Three measures, teacher-teacher, teacher-principal, and teacher-parent come from the teacher survey, while the student-teacher measure is comprised of questions on the student survey. Each of these measures is aligned to one of the Five Essentials.[8] For example, the teacher-teacher trust measure is one of five measures that make up the Essential "Collaborative Teachers;" the teacher-principal measure is one of the four that fall under "Effective Leaders."

Methodologically, the foundations of relational trust are unique in that they were developed out of data gathered in a longitudinal mixed methods study, the focus of which was not specifically trust. An outcome of this is that the surveys used in their research have since been institutionalized in Chicago Public Schools' system of school accountability. For decades, survey data has been gathered across schools in Chicago, some of which is collapsed into the trust scores described above. In this way, the surveys as a measure of relational trust have a long history of being an accessible and actionable way to operationalize trust in schools.

Another unique aspect of the relational trust framework is how it can be measured through "organizational conditions" found within a school. Through their longitudinal work, the

[8] The *5Essential* Supports include School Leadership, Parent-community Ties, Professional Capacity, Student-centered Learning Climate, and Instructional Guidance.

University of Chicago researchers found a second way, in addition to the relational trust survey constructs, to measure relational trust in a school: the degree to which a school exhibits the "organization conditions" whose existence is predicated on high levels of relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). The presence of these organizational conditions, Orientation to Innovation, Outreach to Parents, Professional Community, and Commitment to the School Community, then serve as the conduit by which a trusting school community translates into improved student outcomes. This means that if there is a tool or tools that can be used to measure the degree to which a school "promotes innovation," for example, the potential for determining the presence of relational trust also exists. Furthermore, because the researchers found a strong positive relationship between increases in these organizational conditions and increases in relational trust, the organizational conditions can serve as a proxy whereby schools can examine levels of relational trust.

Trust Study Samples

Many of the survey instruments used to measure trust in schools are designed for teachers, meaning that teachers' perspectives serve as the foundation for frameworks of trust. This is the case for the Chicago surveys, where 19 of the 23 questions are on the teacher survey, with the remaining four on the student. As noted, the 1985 tool developed by Hoy and Kupersmith is designed for faculty and measures faculty trust. Similarly, the Omnibus T scale includes three subscales that examine teachers' trust in the principal, colleagues, and clients. Literature problematizes the focus on a singular perspective when measuring trust, both generally and specifically in the context of measuring trust in schools. Baier's (1985) critique on concepts of social trust was that they failed to account for the unequal distribution of power that often characterizes relationships within organizations. She argues that the level of power an

individual has in relation to other matters when defining and understanding trust, which should be taken into account when selecting samples for studies of trust (Baier, 1985). Indeed, in his study, Kramer (1996) found that there were variations in the criteria used by employees when making trust judgments based on their level within the organization. Kramer argues that one of these differences is rooted in the way that authorities and their subordinates define relational trust: "to the extent relational trust concerns are salient to those on top, I argue they are more likely to be construed in instrumental or consequentialist terms" (p. 227). In effect, this means that those with greater power due to their relatively lower levels of vulnerability, have less of a need to develop relationships based on high levels of respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) discuss the role of power dynamics in the study of trust in organizations, citing several studies that show that actors within the same organization may feel differently about information gained through social interactions depending on their level of authority. Similarly, in their review of decades of research examining the relationship between teacher trust and student achievement, Forsyth et. al. (2011) highlight how a reliance of teachers as the principal referent was problematic:

> In fact, it seems likely that the reason the earlier research could not link collective trust with student achievement, controlling for SES, was that the wrong referent of the collective trust was studied...In brief, trust relations with parents and students are the critical referents when it comes to explaining student achievement (p. 87).

This finding contributed to the development of additional scales designed for students and parents: the Parent Trust in School Scale, the Parent Trust in Principal Scale, the Student Trust in Faculty Scale, and Student Trust in Principal Scale. These scales were developed, tested, and confirmed by researchers based at Oklahoma State and the University of Oklahoma (Forsyth et. al., 2011).

In her recent study, Romero (2015) also acknowledges and addresses the gap by selecting students as her sample. She uses student surveys to examine the effects of student trust in teachers on student outcomes. Using competence as an example for how teachers and students have different understandings of the key concepts that comprise trust, she explains how students' perceptions of the degree to which their teachers are competent are not likely to be based on their degrees or credentials.

Variables Used in Studies of Trust

Much of the research that focuses on trust in schools is geared toward exploring the relationship between levels of trust and student outcomes, particularly student academic achievement. As such, there exists evidence that suggests that high levels of trust among members of the school community are associated with higher levels of student achievement, most often operationalized by standardized test scores (Adams & Forsyth, 2013; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Goddard, Romero, 2015; Salloum & Berebitsky, 2009; Goddard, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). In the 1990s, studies conducted in New Jersey public schools produced findings that supported the hypothesis that high levels of trust were significantly and positively related to school effectiveness (Hoy, Tarter, & Wiskoskie, 1992; Tarter, Sabo, & Hoy, 1995). However, as Forsyth et. al. (2011) recognize, there were many flaws that limited the reliability and validity of these Rutgers studies; one major limitation was that critical control variables, such as SES, were not included in some of the studies.

Goddard, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) address this limitation by applying HLM to examine the relationship between teacher perceptions of trust and student math and reading achievement, controlling for student characteristics such as SES and race/ethnicity. They found that even when controlling for student characteristics, "trust was a significant positive predictor

of the differences between schools in student achievement" (p. 12). Goddard, Salloum, and Berebitsky (2009) use surveys as their tool for measuring trust in schools in order to examine the degree to which "organizational features such as school socio-economic status (SES), racial composition, and size were predictive of the level of trust in schools" (p. 293) and if teacher trust was predictive of student achievement. Using path analyses, the authors concluded that, after controlling for school context, there was a positive relationship between trust and academic achievement (Goddard et. al., 2009). Romero (2015) looks at the relationship between student levels of trust, behavior, and academic outcomes in high school students. Romero uses a combination of student data to operationalize academic achievement, including graduation status, GPA, and the highest level of math course. Her measures of behavior also include several data points, such as number of suspensions, and instances of cutting class.

To varying degrees, research on trust in schools includes an examination of the effects of school-characteristics and context. These characteristics generally include a measure of SES, race/ethnicity, gender, and prior student achievement. In some cases, studies that include student demographic data (either at an individual or school-level) are often rooted in the assumptions that "people have a tendency to extend trust more readily to people they perceive as similar to themselves" (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000, p. 560). In schools where difference is a large part of how teachers, students, and parents perceive one another, building relational trust may be more challenging. For example, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) used additional survey instruments, the organizational climate description questionnaire and the organizational health inventory, to capture and control for organizational measures of the schools in their study. This study found that the perceived difference in SES between teachers and their students has a

stronger relationship to teachers' trust in parents compared to perceived differences in race (Tschannen-Moran, 1998).

More frequently, the rationale for including SES, race/ethnicity, gender, and/or academic data is to control for factors that have been shown to be consistently predictive of an array of student outcomes. In her study, Romero (2015) focuses on the effects of school size and SES on levels of trust in schools. Goddard (2003) includes both student and school level variables in his study of social trust in schools, which includes measures of SES and prior achievement. In a 2009 study, Goddard et. al. examined the degree to which "links between academic achievement, socioeconomic status, and racial composition are mediated by the levels of trust teachers report in students and parents" (p. 292). This study found that student achievement and school characteristics (SES, racial composition, and school size) were indirectly related through their relationship with levels of trust. Overall, many studies of the relationship between trust and student achievement conclude that, since SES and race/ethnicity have repeatedly been shown to account for variation in student outcomes, they should be included when modeling the effects of trust.

The Intersection of Trust, Parent Engagement, and Role Construction

There is ample literature that highlights both the benefits of parent engagement and the challenges that schools face in engaging parents (Auerbach, 2007; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; McNeal, 2014). Parent involvement and engagement is understood to be a social experience by which parents of students interact with members of the school community. As such, parent engagement is the process by which relationships between parents and teachers, among other school-based staff, are formed. Thus, the study of parent engagement is also the study of the formation and development

of teacher-parent relationships in schools. The importance of interactions in the development of trust is central across the literature, with an emphasis on the frequency and duration with which actors are engaging with one another (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). The more often individuals have social exchanges and the longer these regular interactions endure, the greater the opportunity to build relational trust. In their discussion of trust in the workplace, Lewicki and Bunker (1996) assert that trust is developed over time as continued interactions between parties accumulate into patterns that reinforce expectations for, and predictability of, behavior. Role construction is a way to better understand the assumptions and expectations that shape these interactions to begin with. Hence, the relationship between relational trust, role construction, and parent engagement is interconnected in such a way that each influences the other (see Figure 1). Role construction of parents and teachers is impacted by, and impacts, parent engagement, which in turn allows for the development of relational trust.

Parent Engagement

Across the literature on parent engagement, there are certain assumptions, both in the language used and the concepts implied, that should be acknowledged. First, for the purposes of this research study, "guardian," and "parent" will be used interchangeably to mean parents, guardians, and/or any adult who shares in the responsibility of raising the child, which is consistent with the literature. However, defining "engagement" or "involvement" is more complex, as the terms are intentionally used in opposition to define one another (Ferlazzo, 2011). In line with the prevailing understanding of the concept, Chrispeels and Rivero (2001) define parent involvement as "expectations of schools for the way parents can and should be involved in their child's education" (p. 121). However, in recent literature there is an acknowledgement that the traditional understanding of parent involvement is a narrow one, which is characterized

as something that either happens within the school, or at home (Green et, al., 2007; Johnson et, al., 2011; Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2011; Stitt & Brooks, 2014). To discuss this tension, Ferlazzo (2011) distinguishes engagement from involvement, emphasizing the collaborative and relational aspect of engagement. Ferlazzo describes the difference through the language of "doing to" versus "doing with," the former indicative of involvement and the latter of engagement. He emphasizes the importance of listening as a key component of engagement, as listening to parents and families enables strong relationships grounded in understanding and communication (Ferlazzo, 2011).

Parental Role Construction and Parent Engagement

There is a large body of research that shows a positive relationship between levels of parent engagement and student achievement (Constantino, 2007; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Epstein, 1995; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2007; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Horvat, 2011; Hubbard & Hands, 2011; Lavadenz & Armas, 2011; Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012). However, defining "engagement" or "involvement" is complex and literature has challenged the assumptions that are often made in the dominant discourse surrounding parent engagement. Chrispeels and Rivero (2001) define parent involvement as "expectations of schools for the way parents can and should be involved in their child's education" (p. 121). In their meta-analysis of research on how parent involvement promotes student achievement, Hill and Tyson (2009) define parental involvement as "parents' interactions with schools and with their children to promote academic success" (p. 741). Key components of these definitions include the importance of mutual expectations, schools being considered the point of reference, and situating academic success as the desired outcome. Given this reliance on expected behaviors, it is fitting that across the literature, a dominant theoretical perspective applied to answering the phenomenon of parental involvement

is role construction. For example, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) argue that there are three constructs that are essential to explaining parents' behavior when it comes to engaging with their child's education, the first of which is role construction. The authors highlight how parental beliefs about child-development and child rearing, and the degree to which parents believe they should be involved in their child's education, can be linked to the amount and nature of parental involvement. For example, if a parent believes it is the role of a teacher to direct and manage the education process, it would threaten his or her role as a parent to engage in the behaviors associated with a teacher.

Goffman's (1959) theoretical framework of dramaturgy is useful for understanding the ways that social interactions contribute to role construction, which can thus be applied to the question of how interactions among and between teachers, parents, and school leaders impact their understanding of their roles and their roles in relation to each other. In this way, the dramaturgy framework enables us to better understand the relationships in which relational trust are grounded. Goffman's framework is built on the fundamental concepts of "performances," "teams," and "impression management." For a group of individuals to be considered a "team," two criteria must be met, what Goffman calls "reciprocal dependence" and "reciprocal familiarity." While Goffman does not use the term "trust," these concepts bare the same central characteristics of trust in that the identity of each team member is based on that of the others, suggesting vulnerability.

Elements of Goffman's concept of "teams" speak to how individual actions are dictated by the social norms that define the larger group that they associate with and the setting in which interactions occur, particularly when the actions take place in front of an "audience," or individuals that are not members of the same team. When a member of a team acts outside of the

parameters of what is expected of him or her, the entire team is undermined. Using a particularly useful example set in the educational setting, Goffman (1959) explains:

> For example, in a recent study of the teaching profession, it was found that teachers felt that if they are to sustain an impression of professional competence and institutional authority, they must make sure that when angry parents come to school with complaints, the principal will support the position of his staff, at least until the parents have left (p. 90).

In this example, the team is comprised of the school staff and the audience is the parents; while trust is a necessary component within a team, maintaining the distinction between a team and the audience requires a conscious manipulation of facts so as to ensure the sharing of information does not contradict anything the team as already established: "the audience must not acquire destructive information about the situation that is being defined for them (p.141)." Therefore, Goffman's scenario is one where openness and integrity are not shared across parents and teachers and principals. Using Goffman's framework, teachers and parents must all be on the same team.

The degree to which parents see themselves, their students, and the teacher as part of a "performance team" impacts how parents understand their role and thus the decisions they make regarding engaging in their child's education. In an example where the parent does not frequently come into the school building, this may be because their social norms do not promote parental presence in a school building. Additionally, if parents were to recognize that they are unsure of the school's expectations of them, they would avoid interacting with school staff in order to avoid embarrassment, or to avoid acting in a way that goes against their parent team. Essentially, if a parent does not believe engaging with the school is part of their role, or is unsure of how to act to fill the role as defined by the school, engaging with schools is risky and involves the potential for embarrassment.

Indeed, a useful facet from Goffman's theory about the way that roles based on team membership explain social interactions is how he explains the desire for individuals to avoid embarrassment. Goffman argues that often, within institutions like a school, "two teams establish an official working consensus as a guarantee for safe social interaction" (Goffman,1959, p.190). For example, parents attend parent teacher conferences at the designated time, listen politely to what the teacher has to report, and thank the teacher. However, these working consensuses are often those that have been established and perpetuated by a single group or team that all adhere to the same social norms. If a parent recognizes that he or she is unaware of the expectations of the parent team, they will avoid interactions in which this may come to light. For example, a parent that is a member of a family that has just arrived in the United States from El Salvador may avoid a face-to-face interaction with school staff so as to avoid "Unmet gestures, inopportune intrusions, and faux pas [which] are sources of embarrassment and dissonance" and "are typically unintended by the person who is responsible for making them" (Goffman, 1959, p. 210). Thus, a school-based definition of parent engagement favors parents who already have trusting relationships with schools, share the social norms that sustain this dominant conception of parent engagement, and understand how to conform to the role that is expected of a parent "team member."

Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, and Sandler (2007) conducted an empirical study based on Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1997) theoretical framework of parent motivation to test how parental role construction may or may not be related to the nature of parent engagement. In this study, "parental role activity beliefs" were operationalized in a series of survey items such as "I believe it is my responsibility to volunteer at the school" (p. 536). Applying the traditional home and school-based involvement definitions, the researchers also asked parents to self-report

on their levels of involvement. Using hierarchical regression analysis, the authors found that role activity beliefs had a significant ($p<.05$) positive relationship to school involvement but not home involvement. This finding is key in that it emphasizes the importance of understanding "construct definition" when it comes to theorizing about parent involvement (Green et. al., 2007). Indeed, Chrispeels and Rivero (2001) came to similar conclusions in their study, and highlight that:

> Teachers' perceptions that Latino families do not care about their children's education often derive from misunderstandings of actions by these families. These differing perceptions of a parent's role and place in school and in his or her children's educational lives can vary across both culture and socioeconomic backgrounds. (p. 120)

The misunderstanding between parents and teachers stem from a lack of expectation clarity around the roles of parents and teachers as supporters of their child's expectations, which is likely to occur when the social norms that define expectations are not consistent across parties.

Lareau (2002) also found that parents within different social classes had distinct parenting styles. Lareau identifies two distinct "cultural logics of childrearing" that are class based, which suggests an intersection between social status and role constriction. In other words, the assumption that all parents define parent engagement in the same way must be challenged when analyzing how parental beliefs about engagement affects their role construction, especially when considering parents from marginalized populations (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Christianakis, 2011; Lareau, 2002; Lavadenz & Armas, 2011).

Drummond and Stipek (2004) also examined how parents' values and beliefs contributed to how they understood their role in their children's education. Additionally, the researchers hypothesized that the beliefs that parents held would not only correlate to their levels of involvement, but that factors such as subject matter, child's achievement, child's age, and levels of teacher communication would impact the role that parents adopted (Drummond & Stipek,

2004). Essentially, the researchers set out to identify how parental role construction is influenced by factors that are not necessarily reliant on race and class with the intention of informing policies designed to increase parent engagement. Their findings suggested a negative relationship between student age and parents' beliefs about levels of involvement as well as a stronger relationship between parents' beliefs and actions around supporting their children with reading as compared to math (Drummond & Stipek, 2004). However, the entire study falls within the dominant paradigm of parent involvement, which was operationalized as "help with reading," "help with math," "help with homework and projects," "know what the child is learning," and "help child with other things." Moreover, the study concludes that based on its findings, schools should place more focus on parents of older students and math related activities, reinforcing the idea that the problem can be solved by increasing the degree to which parents change their current behaviors to engage in particular ways.

Critiques of Parent Engagement Discourse

A critical lens has been applied by many across the literature on the relationships between parents and schools. For example, Christianakis (2011) writes, "by making White middle-class the standard of comparison, and by not including ethnic diversity in the structure of schooling, some educators perpetuate a tacit structural classism and racism" (p. 159). Crozier (2010) also criticizes "the 'one size fits all' approach to parental involvement" (p. 330). He writes: "the blanket assumption that all parents are the same, with the same needs, and that their children can be treated in the same way is disturbing for all parents and particularly those who are already disadvantaged" (p. 330). Crozier goes on to argue that this type of treatment of parents by schools is a form of "structural discrimination." By failing to recognize the value behind a wide range of parents' behaviors and forms of capital, members of the school community reinforce the

dominant white, middle-class social identity, what it means to be an engaged parent, and how parent engagement benefits the child. Perez (2009) recognizes that "educators tend to perceive the cultural capital of those who control the economic, social, and political resources as the 'natural and proper sort;' thus they favor students (and families) who possess the cultural forms of the dominant groups" (p. 139). Goddard et. al. (2001) point out how this is manifested in the research around relational trust, noting that the increasing emphasis on including parents and guardians in school decision-making accentuates the need to understand relational trust from the parent perspective.

Stitt and Brooks' (2014) study challenges the approach taken by Drummond and Stipek (2004), as they criticize both the definition of parent involvement and the intended outcome. They claim that much of the literature on parent engagement is limited in its "overemphasis on school-based involvement, reliance upon a middle-class white definition of what counts as parental support, and failure to recognize legitimate educational goals beyond the raising of test scores" (p. 75). However, they do support the theoretical framework that links role construction with behavior. In order to inform how to best expand the social identity of "parent," Stitt and Brooks (2014) interviewed single working mothers about what they did outside of the school building in order to engage in their child's education and why they made these decisions. This speaks to the findings of Green et. al. (2007), which showed a need to better understand how non-school-based engagement contributes to parental role construction. Stitt and Brooks found an alignment between these mothers' beliefs about education and how they constructed their role when it came to supporting their children. The mothers in their study saw education as something that occurs in many settings besides a school building or even at home, and therefore did not

subscribe to the school-based or home-based definitions of "engagement" that school-based staff associated with the parent role.

For example, Stitt and Brooks (2014) quote one mother as saying: "I think that the school has a narrow view of education, and I have assumed the role to provide the extras" (p. 87). The article goes on to give examples of "the extras," which include gardening, playing games, and doing arts and crafts. Here, the mothers understand their engagement in their child's education as taking place outside of school, as supplementing what is taking place in the classroom. Stitt and Brooks use this to reframe the issue of parent engagement: it is not that parents need to change their behaviors to better align with the traditional role of "engaged parent," rather the role itself must be broadened beyond that of the white, middle-class, two-parent household. Using Goffman's terms, Stitt and Brooks are arguing that when teachers and parents are interacting as separate teams, there is the potential for a misalignment between the social norms behind the expectations that dictate what, and in particular, where parent engagement occurs.

Goffman (1959) recognizes that the setting of an interaction is meaningful when examining social situations. Goffman describes an interaction as "a dialogue between two teams" one the performers and one the audience (p. 92). One of the essential distinctions between the performers and the audience is the setting in which the interaction takes place; whichever team is in control of the setting is the performers. Goffman explains: "it is often felt that control of the setting is an advantage during interaction. In a narrow sense, this control allows a team to introduce strategic devices for determining the information the audience is able to acquire" (p. 93). The application of this lens to the context of parent engagement results in a scenario in which teachers are the performers and parents the audience – teachers have more control over the interaction and are better able to manipulate the "scene" to keep their role intact. In schools

where there is a lack of trust (perhaps particularly a lack of honesty, or perceptions of honesty) in the parent-teacher role-set, asking parents to come to the school to engage deepens the feelings of risk and vulnerability.

The importance of context is also found in literature on parent engagement that takes a sociological approach by applying Bronfenbrenner's Theory of Ecological Development. Bronfenbrenner's theory posits that the development of an individual must be understood in the context of several layers of systems that are often conceptualized as a series of concentric circles (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This is particularly relevant when thinking about the effects of context on the behaviors of members of the school community, as the microsystem, which includes school, neighborhood, family, and immediate environment, has the most direct impact on the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

For example, McNeal (2014) applied Bronfenbrenner's theory to investigate the impact of ecological context on parent engagement. McNeal (2014) hypothesized that the levels and impact of parent involvement are affected by school context, which includes normative values and expectations, as well as the concentration of poverty and instability. Using a series of hierarchical linear regression models, McNeal (2014) tested the relationship between individual and school level variables and student achievement based on test scores. The former was operationalized as a set of behaviors that constitute parent involvement (the degree to which individual parents were engaged), while the latter referenced ways in which school culture and environment promoted parent engagement. McNeal (2014) concluded that, "various elements of the school environment contribute to increased achievement and educational expectations above and beyond the individual's socioeconomic status and parent involvement" (p. 161). This supports the theory that the larger systems that characterize our environment, such as school and

neighborhood, moderate the impact of more immediate relationships, such as family. Therefore, the ways in which the student is impacted by the interactions of their parents and families with the school is contingent upon the outer layers of social structures that may be different for each school community.

Conclusion

Overall, the literature reviewed shows there is a consensus that role construction is important when it comes to better understanding why and how families engage with their children's education, and that the dominant discourse around parent engagement assumes a particular understanding of a parental role. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), Drummond and Stipek (2004) and Green et. al. (2007) represent how the theoretical lens of dramaturgy and role construction can be used to argue that a parent who does not properly fill the role of "parent" based on the expectations of the school and society is not consciously breaking the social norms. Rather, they are abiding by norms that define an alternate conception of the role of a parent. Other literature challenges the existence of a singular parental role construct at all, advocating the use of role construction theory as a means to help change the attitudes and beliefs of society, not parents (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Christianakis, 2011; Lareau, 2002; Lavadenz & Armas, 2011; Stitt & Brooks, 2014). In either case, an acknowledgement that there are multiple definitions for the parent role is problematic for the relational trust framework, which is predicated on interactions between individuals within the specific context of their role-set. In other words, if there can be multiple parent roles, does that mean that there are multiple realizations of the parent-teacher role set? And if so, how can we ensure that we are accounting for these differences when measuring relational trust?

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter describes the methodology for this mixed methods study. First, there is discussion of the appropriateness of a mixed methods approach. Next, the student population, participants, procedures, and analysis methods are reviewed for both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study. The research questions that drove the study were:

Research Question 1: Over the past four years, what are the levels of trust among parents, teachers, and students in Philadelphia schools? How do these levels vary based on school demographics, climate, and academic achievement levels?

Research Question 2: What are the effects of student demographics, academic achievement, and climate on levels of trust? Are levels of trust predictive of school-level characteristics and climate?

Research Question 3: How do parents and guardians understand their role and the role of their child's teachers in the school community and how does this shape their perspectives and insights into relational trust in their schools?

Quantitative methods were used to answer research questions one and two, while qualitative methods were used to answer research question three.

Rationale for Mixed Methods Approach

This is a mixed methods study that utilized a pragmatic epistemological approach. There were two parts to this study: first, an examination of empirical evidence around the relationship between school characteristics and levels of trust; and second, a collection of perspectives from parents of students in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). In part one, a postpositivist approach was assumed and quantitative analyses employed to examine survey data. In doing so,

the study builds on research that assumes a postpositivist lens, as Bryk and colleagues operationalized the concept of relational trust in a way that can be measured quantitatively and consistently across schools and across time (Creswell, 2013). However, Bryk et. al. (2010) acknowledge the ways that traditional school-based relationships are characterized by an unequal power dynamic, which is a tenet central to critical theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2017). This relates to the second part of the study, which adopted a critical lens, using interview data to bring to light and problematize ideologies that perpetuate inequities in school communities (Cohen et. al., 2007). By using critical theory, which prioritizes the subjective voices of individual lived experiences, this study expands on the work of Bryk and Schneider (2002), which primarily focused on an empirical measure of relationships within the school buildings. Indeed, Morgan (2014) argues that because the epistemological assumptions of mixed-methods research considers human experience and social context to be the driving force behind research methods, it is ideal for research dealing with issues of equity.

Quantitative Component

Part one of this study employed a normative paradigm and *ex post facto* research design; in other words, statistical analyses were run using quantitative data gathered by the School District of Philadelphia from 2015 to 2019 (Cohen et. al., 2008). A hypothesis -- about the relationship between school characteristics on the observed variation in measures of relational trust from a longitudinal data set of survey data collected in the past -- was tested using statistical tests that included controls for variables of interest. The methods in part one of this study were based on the assumption that relational trust, as defined by Bryk and Schneider (2002), can be operationalized and measured empirically by surveys. In other words, it assumed that there was a direct correspondence between the concept of relational trust and how it is defined in the survey

data, and, that this correspondence held true across contexts (Weber, 2004). This is often referred to as a normative paradigm, which Cohen et. al. (2008) describe as being based on "two major orienting ideas (Douglas, 1973): first, that human behavior is essentially rule-governed, and second, that it should be investigated by the methods of natural science" (p. 21). This paradigm is reflected in the four criteria for discerning relational trust (respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity) that Bryk and Schneider (2002) identify as granular dimensions in the operationalization of their theory and specifically by their argument that "a serious deficiency on any one criterion can be sufficient to undermine the discernment of trust for the overall relationship" (p. 23). This argument assumes that statistical tests on the survey items that comprise the relational trust constructs and sub-constructs can ensure the data is both valid (a true measure of reality) and reliable (can be replicated and generalized across schools and districts). The postpositivist lens also assumes that because the researcher can separate his or herself from what is being measured, the quantitative data can accurately capture differences across the school communities that can help to explain some of the variation in levels of relational trust (Weber, 2004).

Qualitative Component

The assumptions that drove the qualitative portion of this study, part two, were representative of a critical paradigm. In contrast to part one, this section of the study was concerned with the individual and sought to bring to light how hegemonic and dominant ideological frameworks that drive education policy and reform share responsibility for the inequities that exist in schools (Cohen et. al., 2008; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2017). Building off the literature reviewed previously around parent engagement and role construction, the qualitative portion of the study tested the hypothesis that the perceptions of parents and

guardians would reveal a disconnect between how parents and guardians define their role and how it is defined by teachers and schools. Examples of literature that supports this hypothesis include the work of Christianakis (2011) and Crozier (2010), which argues that the expectations schools hold for parent and guardian are grounded in a white and middle-class social context. Other examples include studies conducted by Stitt and Brooks (2014) and Green et. al. (2007), which apply a critical lens to challenge the assumptions that drive the dominant discourse around parent engagement.

As with interpretivist framing, the epistemological assumptions of this methodology included the belief that knowledge is relative and that context and experience influence an individual's reality (Cohen et. al., 2008). This lens is evident in research question three, which is focused on investigating the ways in which "trust," as a social construct both theoretically and operationally, can mean different things to different people, and, that a particular meaning held by those who dictate the status quo then dictates a paradigm at the expense of other meaning. Including line of inquiry in the study sets it apart from the prior research, including that of Bryk and Schneider, which has either taken a quantitative or a qualitative approach.

While it may seem contradictory to include an interpretivist element in a study that is largely empirical, there are examples of the critical aspect of critical theory in the relational trust schema that serves as the foundation for part one of the study. Merriam (2009) asserts, "in critical inquiry the goal is to critique and challenge, to transform and empower" (p.34). Similarly, Cohen et. al. (2008) highlight how the defining factor of critical education research is to "uncover" how unequal distributions of power in society perpetuate inequities in schools. This is evident in Bryk and Schneider's (2002) explanation of social interactions in schools where they acknowledge that "an asymmetric power dynamic characterizes urban school communities"

and that "discrepancies and vulnerabilities," which are the result of the unequal distribution of power, "exist even in situations where the power distribution is relatively equal" (p. 27). Thus, within Bryk and Schneider's framework lies an acknowledgement that the success of school reform can be enhanced or limited depending on power dynamics.

A critical approach, and specifically the use of a counternarrative, is useful in exploring power dynamics through the lens of role construction because of its ability to be used as both an analytic tool and also as a way to highlight perspectives that "counter the dominant narratives," which posit that relatively low student achievement is a result of "supposed pathologies held by students and communities of color" (Dixson & Rousseau Anderson, 2017, p. 35). Indeed, critical theory is also an appropriate approach for the second part of this study due to its focus on context (Merriam, 2009). As with the work of Bryk et. al., this study considered schools as the primary object of inquiry, and is grounded in the assumption that understanding trust in schools must consider the specific context of each school community. In particular, the concept of relational trust acknowledges the importance of understanding how power relationships between parties are conditions of a particular social environment.

The rationale behind part two of the study may appear paradoxical to part one of the study, as each of the approaches belong to a different paradigm or "worldview" (Creswell, 2013). However, a third research paradigm, pragmatism, allows for the coexistence of seemingly contradictory assumptions about the nature of knowledge and truth; in other words, the heuristics of pragmatism support the use of mixed-methods (Creswell & Clark 2011; Morgan 2014) because "the focus is on the consequences of research and on the research questions rather than on the methods" (Kaushik & Walsh 2019, p. 2). Indeed, as Morgan (2014) argues, the

philosophical underpinnings of pragmatism are a good match for research that seeks to highlight systems of suppression.

By employing both normative/postpositivist and interpretive/critical approaches, the limitations of each methodology were addressed. Cohen et. al. (2008) note one of the primary criticisms of the singularly normative approach, which is that the increased complexities of quantitative research methods manipulate the everyday experiences of individuals to a point of abstraction that is no longer representative of reality. Part two of this study addressed this by employing qualitative methods designed to capture the perceptions of individuals. In this way, the use of mixed methods reflects a pragmatist paradigm in which multiple types of epistemological approaches can exist simultaneously.

Population, Sample, and Participants

To provide some context for the study, this section begins with a brief overview of the Philadelphia educational landscape. Then, details of the quantitative and qualitative study population and samples are provided. While there was overlap in the samples from the quantitative and qualitative parts of the student, the two samples were not exactly the same.

A Landscape of School District of Philadelphia Schools[9]

Public schools in Philadelphia can be categorized in a variety of ways depending on the criteria of interest. For example, one way to group schools is by the grade levels they serve. In Philadelphia, schools that serve students in grades K-2, K-3, K-4, K-5, or K-6 are considered "elementary schools." The largest group of schools are "elementary-middle schools," which serve students in grades K-8. The second largest group of schools based on grade-level is high

[9] Charter schools are not included.

schools, which enroll students in grades 9-12. There are also middle schools, which serve students in grades 5-8, 6-8, and in some cases, 7-8. Finally, some schools have grade bands that overlap these categories and are considered middle-high schools.

Schools in Philadelphia can also be categorized based on the way that students enroll. Every student has a neighborhood or "catchment" school that is determined by their home address. All public elementary and K-8 schools are neighborhood schools, and do not require students to go through an application process to attend.[10] However, there are some middle, middle-high, and high schools that have enrollment criteria. For these "special-admission" schools, students from across the city can apply to attend through the school selection process. Reports examining the enrollment trends in Philadelphia public schools have found that there are higher concentrations of students of color in lower performing elementary and K-8 schools (Philadelphia School Partnerships, 2021) and that the special-admission schools have disproportionately high percentages of White and Asian students (Schmitt, 2017).

Study Population

The population of schools of interest for this study was defined as schools that serve Kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8), do not serve students in grades nine through twelve grades, and serve students in at least one tested grade (third through eighth grade). In the 2018-2019 school year, there were 162 schools that met these criteria. This study focused on K-8 school communities for three reasons. The first reason is theoretical, and based on the fact that the research done in Chicago was conducted in elementary schools, as Bryk and Schneider understood that high schools are organizationally different that elementary schools, in part

[10] There are cases where students can attend an elementary or K-8 District school that is not their neighborhood school. These include cases covered by the McKinney Vento Act or in instances where families preferred to send their child another neighborhood school that had extra seats.

because of the developmental differences between older and younger students. Additionally, another organizational difference between elementary and high schools is based on how school choice policy impacts school enrollment. As with the schools that served as the primary sites for the original Chicago research, Philadelphia elementary school populations are primarily based on where students live rather than subject to the school choice policies that are more prevalent in high schools. Since the majority of the schools in Philadelphia are K-8 schools, these schools were included in the sample in addition to the "elementary schools," as excluding K-8 schools because they are also serving students in middle grades would prevent the study findings from being reflective of the organizational conditions that are inherent to the majority of Philadelphia schools.

The second two reasons were practical, and driven by the availability of data. Compared to K-8 schools, high schools have lower survey response rates, particularly for parents/guardians. For example, in 2018-2019, the response rate for parent/guardians of students in K-8 and elementary schools was 28% compared to high schools, which was 12%. Additionally, academic achievement for students in grades 3-8 can be consistently operationalized by using Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) scores. These standardized tests are taken by students in grades 3-8 in math and reading every spring. At the high-school level, there is not a similarly reliable and consistent measure of academic achievement.

Quantitative Sample

The survey data used in this study was collected by the School District of Philadelphia from 2015-16 to 2018-19. Data from the parent/guardian, student, and teacher District-Wide Surveys (DWS) were utilized. Only survey data from District schools and not charter schools were used. There is ample empirical research that backs the validity of surveys that do not apply

sampling methods (Baker et. al., 2010; Baker et. al., 2013), and since all teachers, students in grades 3-12, and parents/guardians are asked to complete the survey and there is no opt-in or selection process, no sampling is applied.

In the quantitative analyses, the school was considered as the unit of analysis for survey data, as the surveys are designed primarily to be a measure of the school community as a whole. Moreover, in their study of the relationship between measures of trust and school climate, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) highlight that "the unit of analysis for climate studies should be the school because the variables reflect organizational properties" (p. 344). As such, school-level responses rates were considered to determine if the survey data associated with that school was reliably representative of the school overall. Typically, response rates are used to set criteria for determining if survey data is generalizable for a specific population.

There is variation across the literature in what is considered an acceptable response rate for paper, online, and telephone surveys, ranging from 10% to 80% (AAPOR, 2016). For the surveys used in this study, the response rates ranged across years and respondents. Teacher and student response rates were consistently over 50%, with the student response rate being as high as 71% in 2018-19. Parent/guardian response rates were lower, ranging from 12% to 23% (See Table 3.1). These surveys are primarily conducted online, and as the use of online surveys has become more prominent, researchers have found that online surveys typically yield lower response rates compared to paper surveys (Manfreda et. al., 2008; Nulty, 2008). Keeter (2000) notes that there has been a consistent and significant decline in response rates to telephone surveys, which is apparent in the trends in response rates of large national NSF funded surveys that have been administered for decades. In light of this trend, Groves and Peytcheva (2008) conducted a meta-analysis that found that while nonresponses are a threat to the generalizability

of surveys data, the degree to which the nonresponse rate contributes to nonresponse bias is not necessarily predictive. This means that the extent of non-respondents is perhaps less important than the use of probability sampling, or no sampling, in ensuring valid survey data. Nulty (2008) also highlights that sample size cannot be ignored with considering response rates, as the larger the overall sample, the smaller the acceptable response rate. Considering student response rates in higher education, Nulty identifies 25% as meeting "stringent contentions" (3% sampling error, 95% confidence level) for a response rate of a sample of 2,000. District-wide, student, and teacher response rates were high enough to meet this, and other more conservative minimums. While parent/guardian rates were lower, and posed a greater concern, the number of parent/guardian respondents has been increasing, and was around 20,000 in the past three years (Table 3.1). Additionally, an analysis of 2017-18 parent/guardian survey respondents found that the demographic characteristics of respondents were within seven percentage points of the demographic characteristics of students overall across the District, meaning the sample of parents/guardians represented in the survey data is fairly representative of the District overall (Reitano & Tanz, 2019).

Table 3.1

DWS District Response Rate and Number by Respondent Group

	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019	
Respondent Group	Rate	Number of Respondents	Rate	Number of Respondents	Rate	Number of Respondents	Rate	Number of Respondents
Student[a]	64%	51,951	62%	50,265	63%	59,468	71%	66,468
Parent & Guardian[b]	12%	15,923	15%	19,710	16%	21,005	23%*	23,647*
Teacher[c]	55%	4,330	59%	4,605	64%	5,010	67%	5,213

Note: Charter school data is not included. [a]Student response rates are based on student enrollment records as of May 31. [b]Prior to the 2018-19 school year, parent/guardian rates were based on student enrollment. Beginning in the 2018-19, the number of unique households was used to determine the parent/guardian response rate. [c]Teacher response rates are based on District teachers with an "active status" on record as of May 31.

The full sample began with all District schools over the past four years. To arrive at the analytic sample, cases were eliminated based on the following criteria: the school must serve students in grades K-8, and the school-level response rates to the student, teacher, and parent/guardian surveys each year over the four years (2015-16 to 2018-19) must reach the minimum threshold. The response rate threshold for all three surveys was 20%, meaning schools must have at least a 20% response rate for all three surveys (students, teacher, and parent/guardian) to be included for any given year. Of the cases that met the first criteria regarding grade levels served (N=216), there were 98 unique schools across all four years that met the response rate threshold criteria.[11] Of the 98 schools, 63% (N=62) had more than one year of data (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

Number of Schools in the Sample by Number of Years of Data

Number of years of data	Number of Schools
1	36
2	22
3	24
4	16
Total	98

As this study involved a multilevel analysis, sample size was important, as a minimum sample was needed to ensure a precise estimate of regression coefficients, their standard errors, and the variance components and their standard errors (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2001; O'Dwyer & Parker, 2014). In multilevel analyses, the minimum sample size refers to the highest level of data in the nesting hierarchy, which, in this study, was at the school level. A sample of 98 exceeded

[11] As the School District continues to administer the DWS, it will be important for them to work towards increasing response rates, particularly for parents and guardians, to ensure that the survey data is reflective of the parent and guardian population and not biased towards those that may face fewer barriers to participation.

the minimum of 20-25 groups that O'Dwyer and Parker (2014) note as the standard across research.

Qualitative Sample

While no sampling is used for the District-Wide Surveys (DWS), purposeful sampling was used to identify interview participants, and in particular, a combination of convenience and purposive sampling was employed (Merriam, 2009). While ideally the goals of maximum variation sampling would drive the recruitment efforts, participation in the study were voluntary, and limited by time, location, and availability, and thus also based on convenience. To get a sense of the variation of parent/guardian perspectives across schools, data from the Parent/Guardian DWS and PSSA proficiency data were used to group schools into four categories: high-trust and high-achievement; high-trust and low-achievement; low-trust and low-achievement, and low-trust and high-achievement. A data set was created that included the K-8 District schools from the quantitative sample, the percentage of students that scored Proficient or Advanced on the PSSA, and the Parent Trust score, a measure based on responses to the Parent/Guardian DWS. Schools were considered "high" in each of the respective categories if they were among the top quartile of schools and "low" if they were among the bottom quartile, see Table 3.3. Recruitment efforts focused on recruiting two to five parents/guardians from schools that fell into one of these four categories.[12]

[12] The initial plan for the qualitative portion of the study was to conduct focus groups with groups of parents from schools in each of the four categories. However, just as recruitment efforts began, schools and cities were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To avoid in-person contact with groups of people, I pivoted my methods from focus groups to phone interviews.

Table 3.3

Sampling Criteria for Interviews

		Relational Trust	
		High	Low
Achievement	High	Group 1 (N=12)	Group 2 (N=5)
	Low	Group 3 (N=4)	Group 4 (N=14)

Recruitment activities included contacting representatives from the Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) at the School District of Philadelphia, reaching out to parent advocacy groups in the city, and posting information about the study on social media. Snowball sampling was also used by asking participants to share the information about the study with other parents/guardians.

Ten phone interviews with parents were conducted and ranged from 15 to 45 minutes in length. Participants were from nine unique schools (two parents had students attending the same school) and had students in Kindergarten, first, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. As shown in Table 3.4, half of the interviews were from parents of students attending high achievement high trust schools. One potential reason for this is that after connecting with one parent, I was successfully able to use snowball sampling to connect with others within that that initial parent's network.

Table 3.4

Interview Participants

School Type	Number of Interviews	Grades of Students
Group 1 High Achievement and High Trust	5	K, 1, 4, 5, 6
Group 2 High Achievement and Low Trust	0	NA
Group 3 Low Achievement and High Trust	2	3 and 4
Group 4 Low Achievement and Low Trust	3	3 and 5

It is important to note that recruitment efforts took place from February 2020 through October 2021, which was the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. This put severe limitations on opportunities for outreach due to the fact that in-person events where parents/guardians could be informed about the study through flyers and announcements could not occur due to social distancing mandates. Additionally, since schools closed in March 2020 and continued to be 100% virtual throughout 2020, schools could not be taken advantage of as a location for recruitment, such as distributing flyers during arrival and dismissal.

Variable Construction in Quantitative Component

In this section, the variables utilized to answer the first two research questions will be explained and the rational for their inclusion delineated. As this is a study of trust, the variables employed as measures of trust are particularly critical. After providing some background about the survey tools, the specific constructs used as measures of trust are reviewed. Then, the additional school-level variables utilized in the correlation, regression, and structural equation models will be explained.

Background about the Survey Instruments

In the spring of 2014, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) launched a new District-Wide Survey (DWS) program for students, teachers, principals, and parents and guardians. Staff from SDP's Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) collaborated with the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education (UPenn GSE) to create Shared Solutions, a researcher-practitioner partnership whose first task was to develop and launch the District-wide surveys. The Shared Solutions team developed the surveys using the research of Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, and Luppescu (2010) on the five essential supports for school improvement. Survey questions are aligned to constructs that measure each of these five essentials: Supportive Environment, Ambitious Instruction, Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, and Involved Families (UChicago, 2018). In line with the framework out of Chicago, the SDP district-wide surveys incorporate the five essential supports, with adaptations as appropriate to the particular context of Philadelphia (School District of Philadelphia, 2018).

Since the 2014-2015 school year, the surveys have been administered to all Philadelphia district and charter schools each spring. The surveys are administered online for principals, teachers, and students in grades 3 through 12, and for parents and guardians. Both online and limited paper copies available by request. District students access the survey by logging into their student portal; similarly, District teachers and principals access it via their employee portal. Parents/guardians can access through their "Parent Portal" account[13] or through a link to a website, where they must enter their student's seven-digit SDP student ID. When District teachers, principals, students, and parents/guardians access the surveys though their SDP portals, their unique ID numbers and the unique ID number of the school in which they are enrolled (or

[13] Any parent or guardian can sign up for a Parent Portal account, where they can access information about their students and their students' school.

employed by) are passed through into the survey data, so that each survey response is aligned to a specific respondent and their associated school at the time in which the survey was completed. When using the website, parents/guardians must enter the SDP student ID for the student they are answering the survey on behalf of, which is checked against all valid student IDs to ensure their enrollment status before the survey can be accessed. This means that survey data files include a unique identifier that can be linked to other student-level data, as well as a school-level identifier that identifies the school to which the survey is attributed (School District of Philadelphia, 2018).

Survey Constructs

Since this study does not utilize principal survey data, the following will only include information relevant to the student, teacher, and parent/guardian surveys. The survey items across the three instruments align with one of the five essential supports, or constructs, that are based in those identified by Bryk et al. (2010) as being key factors for school improvement. However, each construct is not represented on each survey (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5

Constructs and Survey Instrument Alignment

	Climate	Instruction	Leadership	Professional Capacity	Parent/Guardian Community Ties
Student	X	X			
Parent/Guardian	X	X	X[a]		X
Teacher	X	X	X	X	X

[a]Questions that measure this construct were added to the surveys for the first time in 2018-19.

Additionally, the constructs are comprised of sub-constructs, and several of the sub-constructs are theoretically aligned with the organizational conditions identified by Bryk et. al. (2010). For example, on the DWS Teacher Survey there is an "Innovation" sub-construct within the

Instruction construct and a “Student-centered Learning Climate” sub-construct within the Climate construct. See Table 3.6 for some sample questions from the Student, Teacher, and Parent/Guardian DWS.

Table 3.6

Example Questions from the Student, Teacher, and Parent/Guardian DWS, by Construct

Construct	Student	Parent/Guardian	Teacher
Climate	-I feel welcome in my school. -I feel safe in my classes.	-Adults at my child's school treat my child with respect. -My child is bullied at school.	-Teacher moral is high at my school. -Teachers at my school have high expectations for students.
Instruction	-In my classes we learn a lot. -My teachers make sure I understand my lessons before teaching something new.	-Teachers at my child's school encourage my child to work hard. -Teachers at my child’s school give helpful comments on homework, classwork, and tests	-My students influence decisions regarding learning activities. -My students work hard in my classes.
Leadership		-The principal or school leader has high standards for student learning. -The principal or school leader works to create a sense of community in the school.	-My principal or school leader is committed to shared-decision making. -My principal or school leader works to create a sense of community in this school.
Professional Capacity			-I am encouraged to try new teaching approaches in my practice. -Teacher input is taken into consideration when planning professional development.
Parent/Guardian-Community Ties		-I know how to contact my child’s teacher(s).	-I contact parents when students re struggling academically.

Construct	Student	Parent/Guardian	Teacher
		-My child's school gives me information about what my child is expected to learn.	-I contact parents about students' achievements and successes.

Survey Reliability

After the first survey administration in 2014-2015, the internal consistency of the existing constructs and sub-constructs on the DWS were validated through calculation of Cronbach's alphas for each of the five constructs (School District of Philadelphia, 2018; Cronbach, 1951). Additionally, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to further test construct validity (School District of Philadelphia, 2018; Child, 1990). As described in the School District of Philadelphia's (2018) District-Wide Survey Technical Report, because changes were made to the surveys in the 2016-17 school year and again in 2017-18, EFA was re-run and the Cronbach's were recalculated to confirm that the constructs and sub-constructs were still valid, confirming the validity of the constructs and sub-constructs in both years. As seen in Table 3.7, the reliability alphas calculated using the results from the 2017-18 surveys ranged from 0.80 to 0.95. See Appendix A for reliabilities for all the constructs and sub-constructs from the 2017-18 District-Wide Surveys.

Table 3.7

Cronbach's Alpha for District-Wide Survey Constructs (Topics), 2017-2018

Constructs	Student Survey	Parent/Guardian Survey	Teacher Survey
Climate	0.85	0.80	0.95
Instruction	0.91	0.93	0.81
Leadership	--	--	0.92
Professional Capacity	--	--	0.92
Parent/Guardian-Community Ties	--	0.93	0.91

Each year, construct-level and sub-construct- level scores are calculated for each school that met the survey response threshold. These scores are calculated using respondent-level construct averages that are weighted by sub-construct and then averaged at the school-level. In other words, the average of all responses for a given sub-construct are calculated at the respondent level, and then averaged to create respondent-level and school-level construct scores. All relevant items were reverse coded so that the highest value represented the most positive response and then all items are converted to a three-point scale. As a result, each school has a score that corresponds to each respondent-construct combination (e.g. Student Climate, Teacher Professional Capacity, Parent/Guardian Instruction) (School District of Philadelphia, 2018).

Analyses of DWS results showed that the surveys are correlated with student standardized test scores (Reitano, Park & Wills, 2018). In particular, Reitano et. al. (2018) found that for schools that serve students in grades 3-8, there are strong positive correlations between school-level average scaled scores for math and English Language Arts (ELA) standardized test scores and Climate and Instruction constructs as measured by the student, parent/guardian, and teacher surveys. These findings not only strengthen the validity of Bryk et al.'s (2010) theoretical framework in general, but also as it applies specifically to the Philadelphia context as measured by SDP's surveys.

Survey Development and Framework

The data used as the basis for the *5Essentials* concept of relational trust came from teacher and student surveys administered in Chicago, which included questions that aligned to three different relational trust measures from the teacher survey: teacher-teacher, teacher-principal, and teacher-parent, and one from the student survey: student-teacher trust. On the Philadelphia District-Wide survey (DWS), there are no measures, or constructs, that are

specifically designed to measure levels of trust. Research and literature, expanded upon below, on measures of trust were used to identify what constructs and sub-constructs from the DWS would be the best proxies for this study, which used not only a measure of teacher trust, but also student trust and parent/guardian trust.

The extensive research around the *5Essentials* Survey provided rationale to help determine the best proxies from the DWS. Bryk and colleagues found a second way to measure relational trust in a school: the degree to which a school exhibits the "organizational conditions" whose existence is predicated on high levels of relational trust (Bryk et. al, 2003). The presence of these organizational conditions, Orientation to Innovation, Outreach to Parents, Professional Community, and Commitment to the School Community, then serve as the conduit by which a trusting school community translates into improved student outcomes. Each of these organizational conditions correspond to a series of items on the *5Essentials* teacher survey. The series of items fall into the categories of "supplemental," "essential," and "measure." Of the *5Essential* item groups, there are three with corresponding sub-constructs and constructs on the teacher DWS. The matches include: Professional Capacity and Parent/Guardian Community Ties, and were contenders for inclusion in this study as a measure of teacher trust (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8

Crosswalk Between Organizational Conditions, the Chicago 5Essentials Teacher Survey, and Philadelphia's District-Wide Teacher Survey

	Organizational Conditions			
	Orientation to Innovation	Outreach to Parents	Professional Community	Commitment to School Community
Philadelphia				
Title	Innovation	NA	Peer Collaboration, Respect	Peer Collaboration
Type of Construct	Sub-construct	Construct	Sub-constructs	Sub-construct
Overarching Construct	Professional Capacity	Parent/Guardian Community Ties	Professional Capacity, Climate	Professional Capacity
Respondent Group	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher
Chicago				
Title	Innovation	Involved Families	Collaborative Practices, Collective Responsibility	School Commitment
Type of Measure	Supplemental	Essential	Measures	Measure
Overarching Essential	NA	NA	Collaborative Teachers	Collaborative Teachers
Respondent Group	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher	Teacher

While the teacher survey crosswalk was used to help identify which DWS items should be included in this study, it was not possible to take the same approach for identifying student and parent/guardian survey items, as only teacher items are aligned to the Organizational Conditions. Rather, I looked to items that comprise the student-teacher trust measure on the *5Essentials* student survey as a guide for the best corresponding items on the student DWS. On the DWS, the items on the student survey that are most closely aligned with the *5Essential* student-teacher trust measure fall into the Climate construct and specifically the sub-construct of Belonging. A key component to this study is the inclusion of parent/guardian survey items,

which is not included in the *5Essential* framework. Thus, I looked to the theoretical framework to identify which items on the Parent/Guardian DWS are most suited as a measure for trust. The items that fall under the Parent/Guardian Community Ties construct ask questions about respect and competence, which are two of the four Criteria of Relational Trust outlined by Bryk and Schneider (2002). The Parent/Guardian Community Ties construct is comprised of the sub-constructs: Communication Quality, Communication Frequency, Parent Involvement, School Relationship, and Parent/Guardian School Networks.

For this study, one sub-construct from each of the student, parent/guardian, and teacher DWS was selected as the trust measure. For teachers, the Innovation sub-construct was used; for parents/guardians, the School Relationship sub-construct was used, and for students, the Belonging sub-construct. See Table 3.9 for example questions from each of the sub-constructs. Selecting one sub-construct from each survey meant there was roughly an equal number of items from each respondent group represented in the models. The ultimate selection of which sub-construct to use was based on the consistency of the reliability and validity of the sub-constructs over time, as well as their alignment to the Organizational Conditions and Criteria of Relational Trust. Each of the three sub-constructs used in the analyses have consistently been on the DWS for the four years considered in the models, and, as seen in Table 3.9, have internal consistencies validated through calculation of Cronbach's alphas (Cronbach, 1951).

Table 3.9

Example Questions and Cronbach's Alphas for Used for Trust Measures in Analyses from the Student, Teacher, and Parent/Guardian DWS, by Construct and Sub-Construct

Construct	Sub-Construct	Respondent Group	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Example Questions
Climate	Belonging	Student	5	0.81	-When I am in school, I feel like I belong -I have good friends at my school.
Professional Capacity	Innovation	Teacher	5	0.88	-I am encouraged to innovate to improve my teaching. -I am willing to question other's views on issues of teaching and learning.
Parent/Guardian Community Ties	School Relationship	Parent/Guardian	6	0.90	-I know how to contact my child's teacher(s). -I am treated with respect in my child's school.

To create sub-construct scores, responses were converted to numeric values on a 0 to 3 scale, with 0 being the most negative response option and 3 being the most positive. Then, for each respondent, the values for each item in the sub-construct were averaged, meaning that the sub-construct scores were also on a 0-3 scale. The school level sub-construct score was an average of the sub-construct score for all respondents at that school.

Additional School-Level Variables Included in the Study

To best answer the research questions, in addition to survey data, variables that capture school characteristics, climate, and levels of student achievement needed to be included in the equation. As shown in Table 3.10, three variables are used to measure school climate, four to measure school characteristics, and two to measure student achievement. The paragraphs below justify why school characteristics, climate, and achievement matter and explain why the variables listed in Table 3.10 were chosen as measures of school characteristics, climate, and achievement.

Table 3.10

Variables in the Analysis (N=98)

School Level Variables	Measure	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
% of Black/African American	School Characteristics	4%	96%	50.83%	0.33
% of Hispanic /Latinx		0%	83%	21.75%	0.25
% of Students with IEPs		5%	33%	14.56%	0.06
% of EL Students		0%	55%	10.13%	0.11
SES/ CEP Rate		24%	100%	94.00%	0.15
% Proficient Math PSSA	Academic Achievement	2%	78%	20.40%	0.16
% Proficient ELA PSSA		8%	87%	34.50%	0.18
% With 95% Attendance	School Climate	23%	81%	45.63%	0.14
% With 0 Suspensions		66%	100%	93.92%	0.06
Teacher Retention Rate		36%	100%	81.72%	0.12
Parent Trust*	Trust	1.94	2.75	2.33	0.14
Student Trust*		1.72	2.57	2.11	0.18
Teacher Trust*		1.50	2.64	2.20	0.19

*Scores are based on a 0-3 point scale.

School Climate Measures

Across education research, school climate is a term used to capture how members of the school community feel about the school and the degree to which it is an environment that is conducive to student learning and happiness (MacNeil et. al., 2009). One of the five essential supports for school improvement identified by Bryk et al. (2010) includes Student-Centered Learning Climate, a construct that is a combination of teacher and student perceptions about school safety and order, as well as academic support and press. Additional studies have come to a similar conclusion, that school climate effects students' levels of academic achievement (Klugman, 2017; Moller et. al, 2013; McMahon et al. 2009). To account for the effects of school climate on levels of Trust and student achievement, the following three measures were included in the analyses: student attendance, student suspensions, and teacher retention.

Attendance

Studies have shown a relationship between student attendance, school climate, and academic achievement (Maxwell, 2016; Daily, et. al., 2020). For example, Maxwell (2016) found that, when controlling for student race/ethnicity and SES status, student attendance and climate mediated building conditions and academic outcomes in New York City public schools. Van Eck et. al. (2017) found that students with negative perceptions about their school climate were more likely to be chronically absent than students that felt more positively about their school climate. In another recent study, Daily et. al. (2020) found that a positive school climate reduces poor student attendance and that students with more absences tend to perform less well academically; a positive school climate and school satisfaction may promote good grades.

The decision to use attendance as a variable in this study rests in the research noted above and the specific attendance metric used is the percent of students attending 95% or more of

school. Currently, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) uses the percent of students attending 95% or more of enrolled days, rather than a school-level average daily attendance (ADA), as their main data point for school-level attendance. Using ADA at a school-level can mask the presence of a group of students with very poor attendance if there is also a large population of students with high attendance rates. But summing the total number of days absent for all students and dividing by the total number of possible days that can be attended across all students, the ADA of individual students is lost. Looking at the percent of students attending 95% or more of school days provides a better picture of the degree to which each student is attending school regularly. The 95% attendance metric is calculated at the end of each school year based on the attendance rates of students enrolled in each school for at least 10 days, and only takes into account students' attendance while enrolled at a given school (School District of Philadelphia, 2020).

Suspensions

There is also research that shows a strong relationship between positive school climate and low instances of suspensions (Collins, 2010), as well as studies that document the negative impact that suspensions have on student academic achievement (Rausch & Skiba, 2005; Perry & Morris, 2014; Noltemeyer et. al., 2015; Lacoe & Steinberg, 2019). As with the attendance metric, the suspension related metric used in this study aligns to SDP's practice of looking at the percent of students at each school that have zero suspensions. As with the attendance metric, this school level metric includes students' suspension data if they have been enrolled at the school for at least 10 days, and only includes any suspensions that may have occurred while enrolled at that school (School District of Philadelphia, 2020).

Teacher Retention

Schools with positive climate are not only better places for students to learn, but also better places for teachers to work (Ingersoll, 2001; Kraft et. al., 2016).). When teachers feel they are part of a positive school community, they are less likely to leave to teach at another school, or leave teaching altogether. However, research is mixed when it comes to showing that low year-over-year teacher retention can have a negative effect on student achievement (Ronfeldt et.al., 2013; Henry & Redding, 2020). The specific metric used in this study is the percentage of teachers retained in a school from October 1 to October 1 the following year.

School Characteristics Measures

As with school climate, the researchers behind the *5Essentials* framework found that development of the essential supports varied by school context such that the supports tended to be stronger in communities with lower rates of crime and poverty (Bryk et. al., 2010). This is consistent with other work showing that living in communities that have been marginalized and systematically underserved can hinder student success (Ainsworth, 2002; Ellen & Turner, 1997; Sharkey, Schwartz, Ellen, & Lacoe, 2014). To capture the effects of racist policies and disenfranchisement on schools that are located in neighborhoods with high levels of poverty and Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and non-native English speakers, measure of the following were included in the models: socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, English Learner status, and Special Education status.

CEP Rate/ Socio-economic status

Ample literature has documented that in American cities like Philadelphia, racist policies and power structures that perpetuate a status quo that favors white people have contributed to the existence of neighborhoods characterized by high concentrations of poverty and people of color

(Wilson, 2008; Litcher et. al., 2012; Okech et. al., 2012; Teti et. al, 2012; Sharkey, 2013). Moreover, research has shown that the high levels of poverty and oppression that characterize the lives of those that live in these communities have an effect on student's academic success in school (Ainsworth, 2002; Sirin, 2005; Duncan & Murnane, 2014), and on levels of parental involvement (Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Green et. al.,2007; Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009); Horvat et. al, 2003). To capture these effects, studies employ various measures of socio-economic disadvantage (SES), and when it comes to studies involving schools, the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch is often used as a measure of SES (Horvat et. al., 2003; Woolley & Grogan-Kaylor, 2006; Steinberg & Lacoe, Maxwell, 2016; Stitt & Brooks, 2014).

This study utilized the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) rate, which represents the percentage of students who are eligible for free meals multiplied by a USDA-defined factor of 1.6, and capped at 100%. Students who are eligible for free meals and not subject to verification include, but are not limited to, students directly certified through participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Food Distribution Program for Indian Reservations (FDPIR). Because the number of students eligible for free or reduced lunch is an imperfect measure and can often lead to the underestimation of students with low SES (Harwell & LeBeau, 2010), the USDA applies a multiplier of 1.6 to arrive at a more accurate percentage of students living in or close to poverty. This means that the higher the CEP rate, the higher the percentage of students coming from low SES backgrounds.

Student Race/Ethnicity[14]

In this study, the percentage of students that identify as Black/African American or Hispanic/Latinx are included in the models and the percent of White and Asian student are excluded as the reference categories. This is because students that identify as Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx have been shown to have diverse experiences and academic outcomes compared to their White and Asian peers (U.S. Dept. of Ed, 2014; Berkowitz et al., 2016; Bohrnstedt, 2015).[15] These variables are included because research on parent engagement has found that race/ethnicity affects parents' levels of involvement (Christianakis, 2011; Horvat et. al., 2003; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Zhang et. al., 2011).

Percent of students with English Learner (EL) status

Students whose dominant language is not English are screened using the WIDA assessment to determine if they meet the criteria to be an English Learner. In subsequent years, EL students are assessed annually using the Assessing Communication and Comprehension in English State to State exam (ACCESS) to determine their ongoing status as an EL. The percentage of EL students was included as a variable because research has showed a relationship between the number of ELs served in by a school and the degree to which the school is serving students with low SES; in other words, schools with higher percentages of EL students also tend

[14] It is important to note that including teacher race/ethnicity as a school-level variable would have been a relevant and valuable addition, as research has shown that historically, Black/African American teachers have strengthened the relationships between schools and students and families of color, particularly when the schools are in communities have been oppressed by racist policies (Ladson-Billings & Anderson, 2021). However, school level teacher demographic data was not publicly available at the time of this study.

[15] For example, in *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, Wilkerson (2020) describes the research that has shown that a "hierarchy of rank" exists in the ways that non-White racial and ethnic groups are subject to the negative impact of racism and unconscious bias. Specifically, while all non-White people are negatively stereotyped, research shows that negative biases towards Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx people are more pervasive compared to those towards Asian people.

to serve higher percentages of students living in or close to poverty (Ransdell, 2012). Additionally, research has shown that parents/guardians whose primary language is not English have different experiences interacting with schools compared to native English speakers (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Lawson & Lawson, 2012; Drummond & Stipek, 2004).

Percent of students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

While there is myriad literature on parent engagement, few studies take into account the effects that student's disability status may have on levels of parent engagement. In one of those studies, Zhang et. al. (2011) used Structural Equation Modeling and data from the Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study data set to investigate the impact of parent involvement on the academic achievement of students with disabilities. The researchers found that parent engagement positively predicted student learning, but only when engagement was defined as home engagement and not when defined as participation in school activities. These findings suggest that the way that parent engagement is measured matters in terms of its effects on student achievement, at least when it comes to students with disabilities.

In Philadelphia, students diagnosed with the following disabilities are eligible for an IEP: an intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, a hearing impairment, deafness, a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment including blindness, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities. Students can also receive an IEP if determined appropriate by an evaluation team. Students with IEPs are flagged, and this flag was the variable used in this study.

Academic Achievement Measures

Using standardized test scores as a measure for student academic achievement is a widely accepted practice across education research (Tyson & Hill, 2009; Berkowitz et. al., 2017; Maxwell, 2016; Lacoe & Steinberg, 2018). In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania State Standardized Assessment (PSSA) exams are taken by students in grades 3-8 each spring. All students take a math and ELA assessment, and students in grade 4 and 8 also take a science exam. Students receive a scaled score on each test, which determines where they fall in one of four proficiency levels, Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. Each year, the cut scores for each level are published by the PA Department of Education (PA Dept. of Education, 2021). In this study, the percentage of students in each grade that fall into the top two categories (Proficient and Advanced) and bottom two categories (Basic and Below Basic) from 2015-16 to 2018-19 are combined and used as the school-level achievement measure in both the quantitative portion of the study, and also to determine sampling criteria in the qualitative portion of the study. The percentage of students in the Basic and Below Basic categories is used in the structural equation models because of the directionality of its relationship with the other latent variables with which it is combined. By ensuring that each of the latent variables of a single latent construct are positively correlated, the relationship of the latent construct with other latent constructs is easier to discern.

Data Collection: Quantitative

To acquire the data needed for the quantitative portion of the study, a data request was submitted to SDP's Office of Research and Evaluation for the data that was not already publicly available. Data that was publicly available was downloaded from the Open Data website. School-level survey and administrative data was combined into a master data file in SPSS. The

data file was longitudinal and included data from the 2015-2016 through the 2018-2019 school years. Schools that did not have survey data due to low response rates (less that 20%) were excluded from the file, leaving 98 schools. For each survey, the sub-constructs identified as being most in-line with relational trust were combined and re-named as the "trust" construct for the respected respondent group (i.e., teacher trust, student trust, parent/guardian trust). Additionally, respondent scores were combined to create an "omnibus" measure of trust for each school, or an average of the Student, Teacher, and Parent/guardian Trust scores. In this way, schools had an overall trust score, as well as a Student Trust, Teacher Trust, and Parent/guardian Trust score.

Initially, each row of the school-level data set represented a school, with multiple columns for each year of data so that the data set was organized horizontally. Then, for each variable, the four years of data were averaged to create one combined variable. The use of four-year averages accounts for any anomalies in the data that may have existed in a certain year, and allows the findings to be more generalizable. See Appendix B for a list of variables and their descriptions.

Data Collection: Qualitative

Originally, the qualitative data collection plan was to conduct focus groups with groups of parents. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews took place over the phone. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participant and lasted from 15 to 45 minutes. After reading the consent language and asking for consent to record the interview, the researcher followed a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix C). The protocol was designed around two key themes found in the relevant literature on parent engagement, role construction, and trust: communication and expectations. Example questions aligned to the

theme of communication included: “When your child’s school communicates with you, what is it typically about?” and “Do you communicate with your child’s school? What is it typically about?” Sample role construction questions included: “When you think about the job of a teacher in general, what are some of the main things you think of?” and “When you think about the job of a parent, what are some of the main things you think of?”

Language was added to the protocol to recognize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and that Philadelphia public schools have been 100% virtual since March 13, 2020. Respondents were welcome to discuss their experiences during this virtual period, but were also asked to reflect back to before school transitioned to online instruction. All participants consented to being recorded, and all recordings were transcribed by the researcher for analysis.

Analytic Procedures: Quantitative

The first phase in the analysis was to examine descriptive data to better understand the ranges and averages of the variables used in the analyses. Correlations looked at the relationships between the variables, including the relationship between school-level trust scores and other school-level variables, such as the percentage of English Language (EL) learner students or the percentage of students attending 95% or more of instructional days. Specifically, correlations between each of the trust scores (student, teacher and parent/guardian), as well as correlations between each of the trust scores and the school-level characteristics.

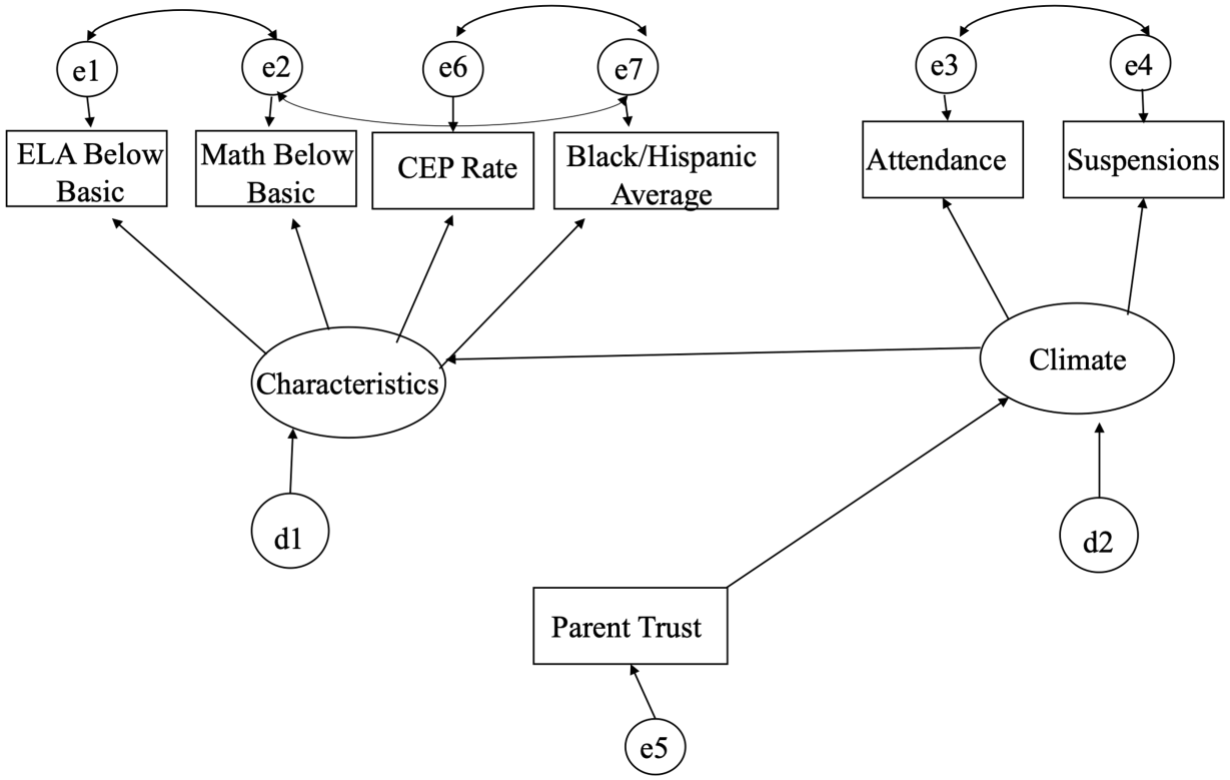
Next, ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions were run to examine the strength of the relationship between school-level achievement and school-level measures of relational trust, holding all other school-level characteristics constant. Three equations were run using school-level student, teacher, and parent/guardian trust scores as the outcome variable. The independent variables included in the model were percentage of Black/African American students, percentage

of Hispanic/Latinx students, CEP rate (a proxy for student SES), percentage of EL students, percentage of students with IEPs, percentage of students Proficient or Advanced on the math and ELA PSSAs, percentage of students attending 95% or more of school, the one year teacher retention rate, and the percentage of students with zero suspensions. In addition to these, independent variables included the two Trust scores that were not set as the dependent variable (i.e., Parent Trust and Teacher Trust in the equation that used Student Trust as the dependent variable). In this way, the results from each equation could speak to the unique effects of each variable, controlling for other the effects of the other variables.

Finally, a structural equation model was specified to examine direct and indirect effects of trust on school characteristics and climate. In the hypothesized model (Figure 3.1), circles represent latent variables and rectangles represent observed variables. Straight lines between variables represent hypothesized direct effects and bi-directional arcs represent correlational effects. The hypothesized model examined the direct and indirect effects of Parent Trust on School Climate, a latent variable with two indicators, and School Characteristics, a latent variable with four indicators.

Figure 3.1

Hypothesized Model



The School Characteristics indicators included the percentage of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students, CEP rate (a proxy for socioeconomic status), the percent of students scoring Basic or Below Basic in math and the percent of students scoring Basic or Below Basic in ELA (see table 3.10). The decision to use these as the indicators for the School Characteristics is based in the literature that has shown that the schools that serve students who live in neighborhoods characterized by concentrated poverty and racial marginalization are also the schools where most students do not achieve high scores on standardized tests (U.S. Dept. of Ed, 2014; Berkowitz et. al., 2016; Bohrnstedt, 2015). More importantly, the makeup of the School Characteristics variable takes into account the research that argues that the context, or the political, social, economic, and historical forces at play in the creation and perpetuation of such

neighborhood schools, is at the root of the low achievement (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Ainsworth, 2002; Sirin, 2005; Duncan & Murnane, 2014). In other words, the inequities that result in schools that mostly or completely serve students of color living in poverty are the same inequities that prevent them from having higher scores on standardized tests. This relationship was supported by the correlational analyses, which showed a strong negative relationship between the race/ethnicity and socio-economic status of students in a school and the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced on the PSSAs. In the hypothesized model, the inverse of the percent of students scoring Proficient or Advanced (the percent of students scoring Below Basic or Basic) was used so that all the School Characteristics indicators were positively correlated with each other.

While initial models included teacher retention as an indicator, the School Climate indicators included in the final models were the percentage of students attending 95% or more of school days, and the percent of students with zero suspensions. As discussed above, these are indicators that are widely used as measures of school climate, and are also relevant to the specific Philadelphia context as they are two of the accountability metrics used by the District (School District of Philadelphia, 2018). The indicators were found to be strongly and positively correlated with each other.

Analytic Procedures: Qualitative

After receiving consent, all interviews were recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions were then coded using NVivo following an analysis process that was inductive and comparative (Merriam, 2009). To support the development of the codes and categories, Bryk and Schneider's discussions of their four criteria of trust, and other relevant literature on trust, was consulted to align terms and themes. First, interview transcriptions were attributed to one of the four school

types (high achievement high trust, high achievement low trust, low achievement low trust, and low achievement low trust). Next, open coding was used in an initial review of the transcriptions in order to identify units of data that address the research questions that drive the study. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) definition of "units" were be employed, meaning they met two criteria: the first is that it had the potential to contribute to the discovery of something new, and the second is that it was pared down as much as possible without losing its meaning (Merriam, 2009). As long as these criteria were met, the units could vary in length and detail, ranging from a couple words to several sentences. During this first stage of analysis, notations were made to the transcription documents to identify these units. Then, these notations were reviewed to identify initial codes and sub-codes that were tied to each of the research questions and relevant theoretical frameworks (Merriam, 2009). For example, three initial parent codes that emerged were: "Communication," "Role Construction," and "Trust" and within the "Role Construction" parent code, there were the sub-codes of "Parent Role," "Teacher Role" and "Overlapping Roles." The terms "Transactional" and "Transformational" from Communication Theory were utilized as sub-codes to capture themes that emerged within the Communication sub-code (Manojlovich et. al., 2015). "Transactional" was applied to units, or segments of the transcription, where parents spoke about how schools communicate information, while "Transformational" was used to code experiences where communication between parents and teachers resulted in the deepening of their relationship. Examples of transactional communication include email blasts, robo-calls, or Facebook posts conveying general information about a school event or class assignment. Transformational communication were primarily one-to-one conversations between a teacher and the parent about their specific student.

A review of the themes that emerged after this second round of coding brought to light many of the concepts that are central to the relational trust framework. Therefore, in a third of round coding this framework was utilized to assign a second set of codes to units; four codes that correspond to each of the four criteria of relational trust: competence, personal regard for others, integrity, and respect (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). These codes were compared with the second round of coding in order to identify categories, which were then used to further group, combine, and refine the codes. During this process, a codebook was used to track and organize the data. As the categories were developed, a more deductive approach was used to test and confirm the validity of the categories (Merriam, 2009). Units were double or triple coded when necessary and patterns among the overlap of the codes were used to identify themes. Finally, the criteria outlined by Merriam (2009) was used to determine if the themes are responsive to the research questions; sensitive to the data, exhaustive, mutually exclusive, and conceptually congruent (p. 186).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS:

QUANTITATIVE

This chapter, the first of two analyses chapters, presents the results from the quantitative portion of the study, which answers research questions one and two:

Research Question 1: Over the past four years, what are the levels of trust among parents, teachers, and students in Philadelphia schools? How do these levels vary based on student demographics, climate, and academic achievement levels?

Research Question 2: What are the effects of student demographics, academic achievement, and climate on levels of trust? Are levels of trust predictive of school-level characteristics and climate?

Research question 3 will be addressed in the second analyses chapter. In the sections below, descriptive statistics are reviewed, followed by a summary of the correlation, regression, and structural equation model findings. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the findings in relation to the first two research questions.

Descriptive Analysis of School Level Data

Descriptive statistics showed that the schools in the sample serve a diverse set of students. As depicted on Table 4.1, the percent of Black/African American students ranged from 4% to 96% and the range for Hispanic/Latinx students was 0% to 83%. At one school, 3% of students were in special education (had an IEP), compared to another school, where a third of students (33%) were in special education.

There was also a wide range in the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced on the PSSA, from 2% to 78% in math and 8% to 87% in ELA (Table 4.1). Similarly, the

variation in the three climate related variables – attendance, suspensions, and teacher retention – was large. For example, Table 4.1 shows that schools could have as few as 23% of students attending 95% or more of school and as many as 81%. There was a 34-percentage point difference between the schools where 100% of students received zero suspensions (i.e., no students were suspended) and the school that has the lowest rate of students with zero suspensions. While the average teacher retention rate was about 83%, at least one school had an average retention rate of 36%, compared to the maximum of 100%. Table 4.1 also shows the minimum and maximum scores for the three Trust scores. There was a 1.14-point difference in the minimum and maximum scores for school-level Teacher Trust, which was the largest range of the three Trust scores. On average, the Parent Trust score was the highest at 2.33, compared to an average Student Trust score of 2.11 and an average Teacher Trust score of 2.20 (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics for Sample Schools (N=98)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Black/African American	4%	96%	50.83%	0.33
Hispanic /Latinx	0%	83%	21.75%	0.25
Students with IEPs	5%	33%	14.56%	0.06
EL Students	0%	55%	10.13%	0.11
CEP Rate	24%	100%	94.00%	0.15
Proficient Math PSSA	2%	78%	20.40%	0.16
Proficient ELA PSSA	8%	87%	34.50%	0.18
95% Attendance	23%	81%	45.63%	0.14
0 Suspensions	66%	100%	93.92%	0.06
Teacher Retention	36%	100%	81.72%	0.12
Parent Trust*	1.94	2.75	2.33	0.14
Student Trust*	1.72	2.57	2.11	0.18
Teacher Trust*	1.50	2.64	2.20	0.19

*Scores are based on a 0-3 point scale.

Correlations Between Measures of Trust and School Characteristics

The school characteristics of interest include the demographics of students enrolled in the school, measures of school climate, and student academic achievement. The correlation results reinforced trends between student achievement and student demographics that have been well documented in the literature, both in literature about students across the country (Bohrnstedt et. al., 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999; Sirin, 2005; U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2014), and in research that specifically focuses on students in the School District of Philadelphia (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2019; Philadelphia School Partnership, 2021). Specifically, findings from the correlational analyses are in line with research that shows that schools with high percentages of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students and high concentrations of students with low socioeconomic status have low rates of proficiency based on standardized test scores. This is shown in Table 4.2, which displays that the percentage of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students are negatively correlated with the percentage of students proficient or advanced in math (r=-.505, $p<.01$ and r=-.290, $p<.05$, respectively) and ELA (r=-.429, $p<.01$ and r=-.282, $p<.01$, respectively). Additionally, CEP rates, the school-level proxy for socioeconomic status (SES), were highly negatively correlated with ELA (r=-.720, $p<.01$) and math (r=-.722, $p<.01$) standardized test scores, which means the schools with high rates of students with low SES also had low rates of students that were proficient in either math or ELA.

The relationship between climate and academic achievement measures were also consistent with research, which has shown climate and achievement to be highly correlated (Berkowitz et. al, 2016; Bryk et. al., 2010; Collins & Parsons, 2010). For example, as seen in Table 4.2, attendance was highly positively correlated with ELA (r=.854, $p<.01$) and math

(r=.801, p<.01) standardized test scores. Of particular relevance to answering research question 2 is the relationship between the Trust measures and the other variables. All three measures of Trust were positively and significantly correlated with both math and ELA proficiency rates as well as all three climate measures (attendance, suspensions, and teacher retention). The strongest relationship was the positive correlation between Student Trust and ELA and math test scores, (r=.623, p<.01; and r=.664, p<.01, respectively). Student Trust had a negative relationship with the percentage of Black/African American students (r=-.536, p<.01), but not the percentage of Hispanic/Latinx students. This held true when looking at the Parent Trust measure as well, as there was a significant, yet small, negative relationship between the percentage of Black/African American students and Parent Trust (r=-.230, p<.05). Parent Trust had the strongest relationship with the percentage of students receiving zero suspensions (r=.449, p<.01), meaning the more students at a school that were suspended, the lower the Parent Trust measure. Student and Parent Trust were also significantly positively correlated (r=.397, p<.01). As Table 4.2 shows that there were few significant relationships between the other variables and Teacher Trust. Nonetheless, the Teacher Trust score was moderately and significantly correlated with student attendance (r=.369, p<.01) and Student Trust (r=.430, p<.01). In fact, across the three Trust measures, the strongest positive relationship was between Teacher Trust and Student Trust. The weakest relationship, yet still statistically significant, was between Parent Trust and Teacher Trust (r=.284, p<.01).

Table 4.2

Correlations between School Demographics, School Climate, Academic Achievement, and Trust (N=98)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. % Black/ African American Students	1	-.634**	0.185	-.674**	.298**	-.505**	-.429**	-.440**	-.479**	-.347**	-.230*	-.536**	-0.165
2. % Hispanic/ Latinx Students		1	-0.094	.640**	.232*	-.219*	-.282**	-0.173	0.178	-0.071	0.046	0.079	0.025
3. % Students with IEPs			1	-.323**	0.191	-0.146	-0.172	-0.185	-.219*	-0.076	0.091	-.208*	-0.039
4. % English Learners (ELs)				1	0.132	0.1	0.024	.209*	.325**	0.193	0.009	.232*	0.102
5. CEP Rate					1	-.722**	-.720**	-.627**	-.270**	-.250*	-.204*	-.424**	-.221*
6. % Proficient on math PSSA						1	.945**	.801**	.445**	.497**	.307**	.664**	.298**
7. % Proficient on ELA PSSA							1	.854**	.483**	.527**	.339**	.623**	.279**
8. % 95% Attendance								1	.556**	.467**	.330**	.537**	.369**
9. % 0 Suspensions									1	.336**	.449**	.397**	.221*
10. Retention Rate										1	.227*	.513**	.320**
11. Parent Trust											1	.397**	.284**
12. Student Trust												1	.430**
13. Teacher Trust													1

The Effects of School Characteristics and Climate on Measures of Trust

Three regressions equations were run to test the relationships between school level characteristics, school climate, and each of the Trust measures, one equation with Parent Trust as the dependent variable, one with Student Trust as the dependent variable, and one with Teacher Trust as the dependent variable. The specific independent variables included as measures of school characteristics, climate, and achievement were consistent for all three equations, and included the following: percentage of Black/African American students, percentage of Hispanic/Latinx students, CEP rate (a proxy for student SES), percentage of EL students, percentage of students with IEPs, percentage of students proficient or advanced on the math PSSA, percentage of students proficient or advanced on the ELA PSSA, percentage of students attending 95% or more of school, the one year teacher retention rate, and the percentage of students with 0 suspensions. In addition to these, independent variables included the two Trust scores that were not set as the dependent variable (i.e., Parent Trust and Teacher Trust in the equation that used Student Trust as the dependent variable). In this way, the results from each equation could speak to the unique effects of each variable, controlling for the effects of the other variables.

Before running the regressions, statistical tests for linearity, homoscedasticity, and normality were conducted to ensure that no assumptions were violated. The first equation, with Student Trust as the dependent variable, had the best fit (R^2= 0.616 F=11.36 p<.000) of all three equations. Parent and Teacher Trust were both significant predictors of Student Trust (β=0.181, p<.05 and β=0.206, p<.05, respectively); as Parent and Teacher Trust increases, so does Student Trust. Interestingly, while the percentage of students proficient in math was a significant and positive predictor of Student Trust (β=0.524, p<.05), ELA proficiency was not significant (β=-

0.011, *p*=n.s). Another significant predictor of Student Trust was the percentage of students with IEPs (β=-0.161, *p*<.05); a lower percentage of students with IEPs predicted higher levels of Student Trust.

Table 4.3

Regression Equation Results with Student Trust as Dependent Variable

Effect	B	S.E.	β	*p*
Intercept	1.05	0.316		0.001
Black/African American	-0.142	0.104	-0.256	0.176
Hispanic/Latinx	0.034	0.118	0.046	0.772
IEP	-0.496	0.243	-0.161	0.044
EL	-0.164	0.213	-0.099	0.444
CEP	0.118	0.137	0.097	0.389
95% Attendance	-0.136	0.204	-0.105	0.507
0 Suspensions	-0.182	0.268	-0.064	0.499
Teacher Retention	0.266	0.137	0.168	0.055
Teacher Trust	0.202	0.077	0.206	0.01
Parent Trust	0.237	0.106	0.181	0.027
Math Proficiency	0.595	0.28	0.524	0.036
ELA Proficiency	-0.011	0.286	-0.011	0.969

The equation that set Parent Trust as the dependent variable was also statistically significant (R^2= 0.348 F=3.779 *p*<.000). Higher Student Trust was a significant predictor of higher Parent Trust (β=0.308, *p*<.05), but there was not a significant relationship between Teacher Trust and Parent Trust (β=0.104, *p*=n.s.). In contrast to the relationship between the percentage of students with IEPs and Student Trust, the percentage of students with IEPs was a positive and significant predictor of Parent Trust (β=0.209, *p*<.05). Finally, the percentage of students with zero suspensions was also a significant predictor of Parent Trust (β=0.39, *p*<.01).

Table 4.4.

Regression Equation Results with Parent Trust as Dependent Variable

Effect	B	S.E.	β	*p*
Intercept	0.779	0.324		0.019
Black/African American	0.033	0.105	0.077	0.756
Hispanic/Latinx	0.076	0.118	0.133	0.521
IEP	0.494	0.242	0.209	0.045
EL	-0.176	0.212	-0.139	0.409
CEP	0.01	0.137	0.01	0.945
95% Attendance	-0.001	0.204	-0.001	0.997
% 0 Suspensions	0.854	0.252	0.39	0.001
Teacher Retention	-0.066	0.139	-0.055	0.635
Student Trust	0.236	0.105	0.308	0.027
Teacher Trust	0.078	0.079	0.104	0.326
Math Proficiency	-0.215	0.285	-0.248	0.452
ELA Proficiency	0.245	0.284	0.31	0.391

The third equation, with Teacher Trust as the dependent variable, was also statistically significant (R^2= 0.321 F=3.344 p<.001). Student Trust was a significant predictor (β=0.364, p<.05), but Parent Trust was not (β=0.109, p=n.s.). The two other variables that were significant predictors of Teacher Trust were the percentage of Black/African American students (β=0.515, p<.05) and the percentage of students attending 95% or more of school (β=0.532, p<.05).

Table 4.5

Regression Equation Results with Teacher Trust as Dependent Variable

Effect	B	S.E.	β	*p*
Intercept	0.606	0.451		0.182
Black/African American	0.292	0.139	0.515	0.039
Hispanic/Latinx	0.285	0.157	0.376	0.073
IEP	0.098	0.337	0.031	0.773
EL	-0.03	0.289	-0.018	0.918
CEP	-0.095	0.186	-0.077	0.611
95% Attendance	0.702	0.266	0.532	0.01
0 Suspensions	-0.114	0.364	-0.039	0.756
Teacher Retention	0.316	0.186	0.195	0.094
Parent Trust	0.145	0.147	0.109	0.326
Student Trust	0.371	0.141	0.364	0.01
Math Proficiency	0.452	0.386	0.39	0.244
ELA Proficiency	-0.645	0.381	-0.614	0.094

Summary of Findings from the Three Regression Equations

Across the three equations, at least one of the two measures of Trust included was a significant predictor of the measure of Trust set as the dependent variable. When controlling for student demographics, academic achievement, and climate, Teacher Trust and Parent Trust are both statistically significant predictors of Student Trust (β=0.181, p<.05 and β=0.206, p<.05, respectively). However, when controlling for the same school characteristic variables, Student Trust and not Teacher Trust was a significant predictor of Parent Trust. Similarly, Student Trust and not Parent Trust was a significant predictor of Teacher Trust. When it came to the effects of academic achievement on levels of Student, Teacher, or Parent Trust, only math proved to be a significant predictor of Student Trust when controlling for other school-level characteristics and Teacher and Parent Levels of Trust. Interestingly, the percentage of students with an IEP had opposite effects on Student Trust and Parent Trust, and no significant effect on Teacher Trust.

Results from the Structural Equation Model (SEM)

The regression analyses described above allow for a better understanding of the effects of each of the measures of school climate and characteristics on levels of trust for students, parents/guardians, and teachers. While including regression models allow us to control for other variables to isolate the effect of others, they cannot provide insight into the degree to which certain variables mediate the effects of others. However, SEM enables the examination of the effects of multiple factors on a dependent variable while also allowing the inclusion of directly observable and latent variables in a single model. An additional advantage of SEM is that it estimates and removes the error, isolating the common variance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Hypothesized model

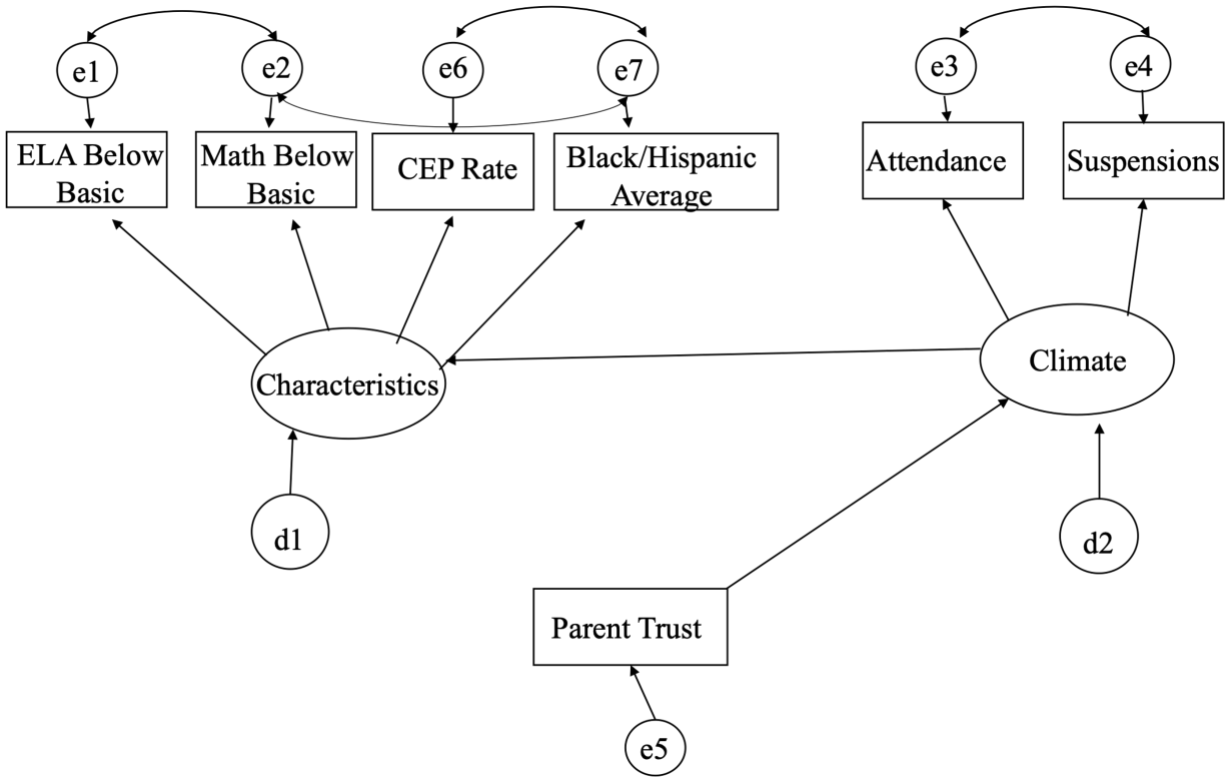
The hypothesized model examined the predictor of Parent Trust on school characteristics and the mediating effects of school climate on school characteristics. To determine which variables to include in the model, I assessed which were central to the hypothesis and which could be omitted based on the results from the correlation and regression analyses. As discussed in previous Chapters, research has shown complex and intertwined relationships between the conditions that cause segregated schools in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty (schools with high percentages of students of color and students qualifying for free lunch) and those that cause students attending those schools to have lower academic achievement (standardized test scores) (Bryk et. al., 2010; Ainsworth, 2002; Ellen & Turner, 1997; Sharkey, Schwartz, Ellen, & Lacoe, 2014), less consistent attendance (Maxwell, 2016; Daily, 2020), and higher rates of suspensions (Lacoe & Steinberg, 2018; Rausch & Skiba, 2005). Given that the particular effects of these variables on the conditions that make Philadelphia schools conducive to trusting relationships, it was necessary that the following six variables be included in the SEM: percent of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students enrolled, CEP rate, percentage of students Below Basic on the math and ELA PSSA, percentage of students attending 95% or more of school, and percentage of students with zero suspensions. Given the strong positive correlation between the percentage of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students, these variables were combined into one variable. Since the percentage of EL students was not a significant predictor in any of the regression models, and teacher retention was not a significant predictor of Student or Parent Trust in the regression models, both variables were excluded from the analyses. Due to the opposing effects of the percentage of students with IEPs on Parent and Student Trust in those two regression models, the percentage of students with IEPs was also

excluded. Finally, since one of the primary goals of this study is to build on the literature around parent trust in particular, the SEM model included a measure of Parent Trust only, and not Student or Teacher Trust.

SPSS AMOS Gradpack 26 was used to test the hypothesized model. In the model (Figure 4.1), circles represented latent variables and rectangles represented observed variables. Straight lines between variables represented hypothesized direct effects and bi-directional arcs represented correlational effects. The hypothesized model examined the predictor of Parent Trust in schools on School Characteristics, a latent variable with four indicators and School Climate, a latent variable with two indicators. The model considered both the direct and indirect effects of Trust on School Characteristics.

Figure 4.1

Hypothesized Model for SEM

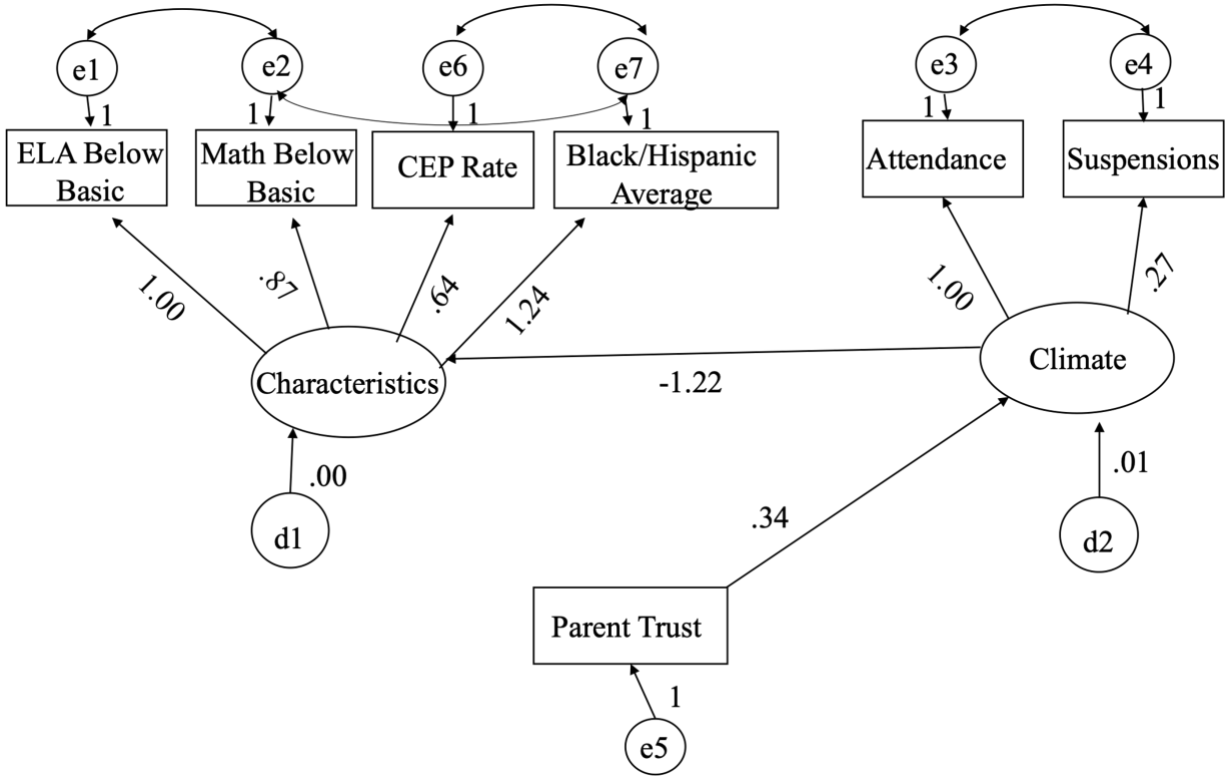


Model Estimation

The estimation model used was maximum likelihood because the data were normally distributed (Kline, 2005) and because it "provides simultaneous and statistically efficient estimation of all direct and indirect effects among the latent variables" (Raudenbush & Sampson, 1999, p. 124). Results show that the first model (see Figure 4.2) was not a good fit $\chi^2(9, N=98) = 18.745$, $p<.027$, CFI= .983, GFI=.949, RMESA=.106, as the RMESA value was over .06, which are indications that the relationships outlined in the model do not represent the relationships as they are represented in the data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Figure 4.2

Model Prior to Modification

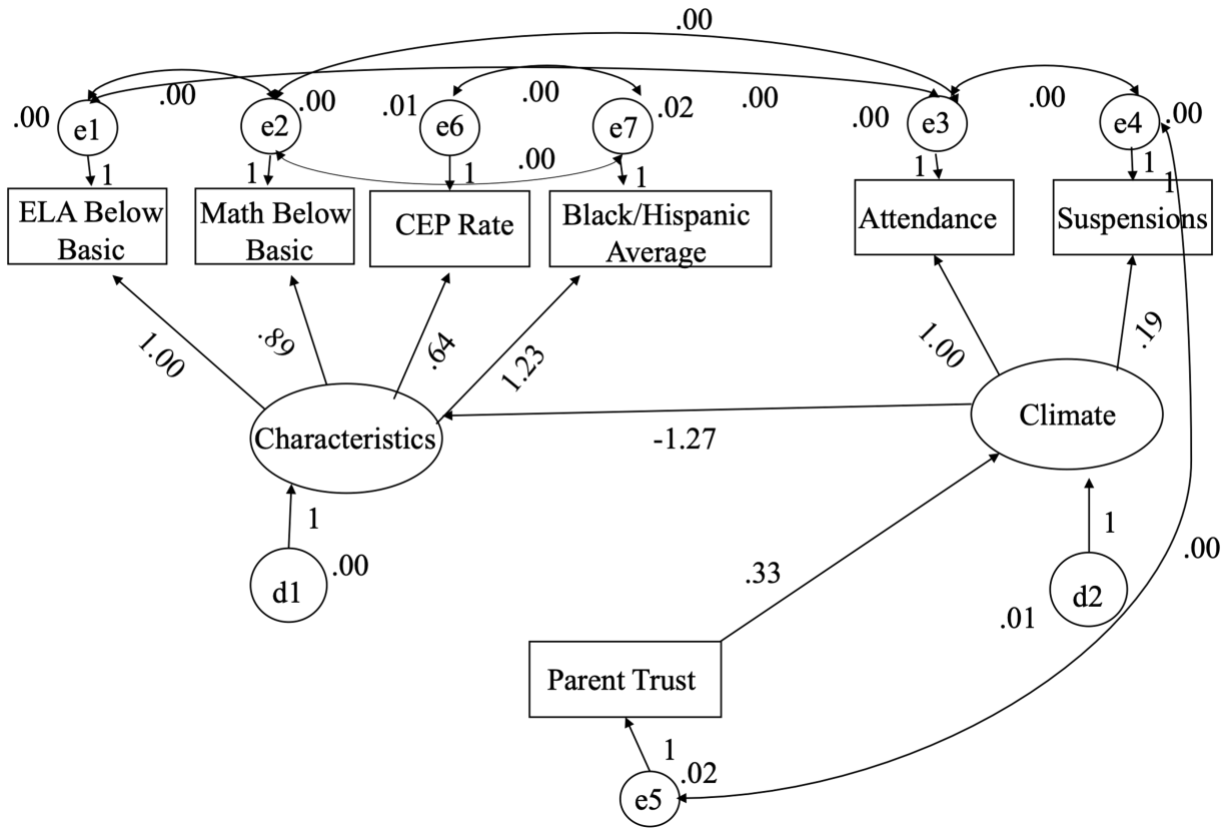


Post hoc model modifications were performed based on the modification indices provided. Three residual covariances (between e1 and e3, e2 and e3, and e4 and e5) were added

to the original model, see Figure 4.3. The estimation model used for the second model was also maximum likelihood. Results show that the second model was a better fit $\chi^2(6, N=98) = 5.594$, $p=.470$, CFI=1.00 GFI=.984, RMESA=.000, with an RMESA less than .06, and a CFI greater than .95 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Figure 4.3

Model After Modifications



As seen in Figure 4.3 and Table 4.6 all the parameter estimates were significant. The results show that for each 1unit increase in CEP rate, there is a .64 increase in the School Characteristics variable and for each 1 unit increase in the percentage of students that were Black/African American or Hispanic/Latinx, there was a 1.23 unit increase in the School Characteristics variable. Increases in the percentage of students Below Basic in math and ELA are also

significant predictors of increases in School Characteristics; for each 1 unit increase in math proficiency rates, there was a .89 increase in School Characteristics. Similarly, as the percentage of students attending 95% or more of school and the percentage of students with 0 suspensions increase, so does School Climate.

Table 4.6

Standardized and Unstandardized Coefficients from SEM

Observed Variable	Latent Construct	β	B	C.R	SE
ELA Below Basic/Basic	School Characteristics	.98	1.00		
Math Below Basic/Basic	School Characteristics	.97	.89***	22.445	.040
Black/Af Am Hisp/Latinx	School Characteristics	.83	1.23***	8.593	.143
CEP Rate	School Characteristics	.74	.64***	7.592	.084
95% Attendance	School Climate	.92	1.00		
0 Suspensions	School Climate	.40	.19***	3.948	.049

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Note: Table 4.6 contains the same statistics as Figure 4.3

Direct Effects

As seen in Table 4.7, increased Climate was predicted by higher levels of Parent Trust (unstandardized coefficient = .33, p<.01). There was a statistically significant negative relationship between levels of School Climate and School Characteristics, (unstandardized coefficient = -1.271, p=.01), meaning Lower Climate was predictive of schools with higher concentrations of students of color, students with low SES, and students scoring Below Basic or Basic on the math and ELA PSSAs. This was consistent with the findings from the correlational and regression analyses.

Table 4.7

Standardized and Unstandardized Direct and Indirect Effects from SEM

	β		B		S.E.	
Model	Trust	Climate	Trust	Climate	Trust	Climate
Direct						
Climate	.35		.33**		.096	
Characteristics		-.95		-1.27**		.213
Indirect						
Climate						
Characteristics			-.42**			
Total						
Climate	.35		.33**			
Characteristics		-.95	-.42**	-1.27**		

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Note: Table 4.7 contains the same statistics as Figure 4.3

Indirect Effects

Trust had a significant indirect effect on School Characteristics (unstandardized indirect effect coefficient = -.42, p = .01), meaning that mediating effects of School Climate between levels of Parent Trust in schools and levels of student proficiency on standardized tests was significant (see Table 4.7).

Discussion of Results in Relation to Research Questions

The first research question was: Over the past four years, what are the levels of trust among parents, teachers, and students in Philadelphia schools? How do these levels vary based on student demographics, climate, and academic achievement levels?

Descriptive data showed that the schools in the sample were representative of schools with a wide range of characteristics, including the demographics of students served, measures of school climate, and levels of student achievement. Correlational data reinforced prior research that has found there to be a negative relationship between the percentage of students of color and students with low SES enrolled in a school and the percentage of students in that school testing

proficient or advanced on standardized tests. Additionally, positive school climate, such has high attendance and low suspensions, were both positively correlated with standardized test scores. When it came to levels of trust, all three measures – Student, Parent, and Teacher Trust – were significantly correlated with proficiency rates in both math and ELA as well as with the three measures of school climate. These findings suggest that schools that have more positive climate and higher percentages of students testing proficient or advanced in math and ELA also have higher rates of trust. Moreover, the moderate yet significant correlational between the three measures of trust show that while they are aligned, they are measuring different things. In other words, as a variable, Student Trust captures something that is not captured by Parent or Teacher Trust.

The second research question was: What are the effects of student demographics, academic achievement, and climate on levels of trust? Are levels of trust predictive of school-level characteristics and climate?

Regression analysis showed that when controlling for student demographics, student achievement and climate, Teacher and Parent levels of Trust were still significant predictors of Student trust. When it came to Parent Trust, Student Trust and suspensions remained significant predictors above and beyond the effects of academic achievement and student demographics. SEM analyses supported the hypothesis that higher levels of parent relational trust have a direct effect on school climate, and indirect effects on school characteristics, including academic achievement and concentrations of students of color and those living in poverty. In other words, schools with lower levels of Trust are predictive of schools that serve high numbers of students that have been impacted negatively by racist policies and systems. Moreover, schools with higher levels of trust are predictive of schools with higher rates of attendance and lower rates of

suspensions. Additionally, Climate served as a mediating variable between Trust and School Characteristics, and was shown have a significant indirect effect; higher trust predicted more positive Climate which predicted schools with lower rates of students scoring below basic in math and ELA and serving lower rates of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students and students living in or close to poverty. In other words, increasing Parent Trust increases Climate, which then increases levels of academic achievement. Given these findings that suggest that improving trust in schools can lead to improved climate, academic achievement, and diversity, it was critical to understand the perceptions of families when it comes to their decision to put trust in their child's school.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS:

QUALITATIVE

This chapter focuses on the findings from the qualitative portion of the study, which examines a purposive sample of ten parents of School District of Philadelphia students. The analysis answers research question three: What are perspectives of parents/guardians about relational trust in their schools? What are parents/guardians' understanding of their respective roles in a school community? What are parents/guardians understanding of teacher's roles in a school community?

After an overview of the participants, this chapter presents the themes identified though the coding process. While terms from communication theory were borrowed during the second stage in the coding process, as they proved relevant as codes and themes were identified, developed, and refined, the sub-codes of transactional and transformative communication were ultimately folded into the four parent and eight sub-codes that comprise the final codebook (see Appendix D). After the second round of coding, it was apparent that the themes that were emerging were beginning to align to each of Bryk and Schneider's (2002) criteria of relational trust: competence, integrity, personal regard for others, and respect. Thus, in a third round of coding, these criteria were applied as codes and the attentional theoretical framework consulted for this study, role construction, was used to assign sub-codes. This means that each of the four parent codes had two sub-codes, one about parent's role and the other about teacher's roles. As a result, the major themes discussed in this section represent how parents' perspectives can help us to better understand how relational trust converges with role construction.

The main findings that emerged suggest that while each parent has a unique understanding of the role of a teacher, there are some common expectations that the parents interviewed shared when it comes to how teachers support students. One belief that was consistently expressed was that it is the role of a teacher to ensure their child is safe and healthy while in school. Another consistent theme was that communication between parents and teachers is the primary means for the development of the expectations and understandings on which a trusting relationship can be built.

Multiple parents, particularly those from high-achievement, high-trust schools, also spoke about teachers as being responsible for teaching their children academics, such as reading and math. Interestingly, when discussing the degree to which teachers have ensured their child is learning appropriately, parents expressed compassion for teachers by recognizing how difficult their jobs are, and explained that since they have the ability to step in and support their children, trust was able to be maintained. In other words, parents from high-trust, high-achievement schools consider the role of a teacher in the specific context of the school and their social and cultural capital. An additional theme that emerged, particularly from parents from the low-achievement schools, was that a key aspect of a teacher's role is to treat students with respect by being in tune to their mood and understanding that what they are experiencing outside of school affects their behavior inside of school.

Descriptive Analysis of Participants and School Characteristics

In Chapter 4, literature on the associations between school characteristics, school climate, academic achievement, and relational trust were reviewed. Namely, research that has shown empirically that schools with high percentages of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students and high concentrations of students with low socioeconomic status have low rates of

proficiency based on standardized test scores (Bohrnstedt et. al, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999; Sirin, 2005; U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2014; U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2019; Philadelphia School Partnership, 2021) and that positive school climate and high levels of trust are associated with higher student achievement (Berkowitz et. al, 2016; Bryk et. al., 2010; Collins & Parsons, 2010). Given that these findings were confirmand by the results from the quantitative analysis described in Chapter 4, is it important to consider them in the qualitative sample as well. It is also important to consider the characteristics of the schools that are reflected in the qualitative sample, as qualitative research on parent and guardian relationships with schools has shown that the social and cultural backgrounds of parents effect how they engage with their child's education (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Christianakis, 2011; Lareau, 2002; Lavadenz & Armas, 2011; Stitt & Brooks, 2014; Crozier, 2010). For example, Stitt and Brooks (2014) interviewed single working mothers about their views on parent engagement and found that the mothers in their study saw education as something that occurs in many settings besides a school building or even at home, and therefore did not subscribe to the school-based or home-based definitions of "engagement" that dominate the discourse around parent engagement. This aligns to the literature that applies a critical lens to understanding parent-school relationships and challenges what Christianakis (2011) calls the "White middle-class standard" of what a parent role should look like.

Overall, ten parents were interviewed for this study. Purposeful sampling was used as a way to include parents from schools from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds as well as from schools that varied in their levels of trust and achievement. Data from the Parent/Guardian DWS and PSSA proficiency data were used to group schools into four categories: high-trust and high-achievement; high-trust and low-achievement; low-trust and low-achievement, and low-

trust and high-achievement. Schools were considered “high” in each of the respective categories if they were among the top quartile of schools and “low” if they were among the bottom quartile, As seen in Table 5.1, half of the parent participants had children in high-achievement, high-trust schools (Group 1). Three interview participants had children at low-achievement, high-trust schools, and the final 20% were parents of students in low-achievement, low-trust schools (see Table 5.1). It is also important to note that none of the parents interviewed were from high-achievement, low-trust schools. This means that the findings presented in this paper should be interpreted with caution, as the conclusions many be biased as a result of not including the perspectives of parents/guardians from high-achievement, low-trust schools.

Table 5.1

Interview Participants

School Type	Number of Interviews	Grades of Students
Group 1 High Achievement and High Trust	5	K, 1, 4, 5, 6
Group 2 High Achievement and Low Trust	0	NA
Group 3 Low Achievement and High Trust	2	3 and 4
Group 4 Low Achievement and Low Trust	3	3 and 5

While the schools in high-achievement, high-trust group (Group 1) had an average of 22% of Black/African American students, the schools in Groups 3 and 4 had higher percentages, 49% and 87%, respectively. The schools in Groups 3 and 4 also had average CEP rates of 100%, which was higher than the average CEP rate of schools in Group 1 (59%). The schools in Group 3, on average, had the highest percentage of English Learner (EL) students (15%) and the highest average percentage of students in special education (20%). Group 1 schools, characterized by their high proficiency rates on the PSSAs, had an average of 54% and 67% of students scoring

Proficient or Advanced on the math and ELA PSSAs, respectively. Comparatively, schools in Group 3 and Group 4 had an average math proficiency rate of 9% and 13%, respectively, and ELA proficiency rates of 25% and 27%. The two groups of schools with high Parent Trust had average Parent Trust scores of 2.5 (out of 3) from the District-Wide Survey. Group 4, the low-trust group, had an average Parent Trust score of 2.0. See Table 5.2.

The demographics of the parents that were interviewed were representative of the student demographics of the schools their children attended. All five parents from the high-trust, high-achievement schools were white and middle or upper-middle class. All three of the parents from the low-achievement, low-trust schools were African American. The two parents from the low-achievement, high-trust schools were Hispanic/Latinx.

Table 5.2.

Characteristics of Schools by Type, 2018-19

	Group 1 Average (N=4)	Group 2 Average (N=0)	Group 3 Average (N=2)	Group 4 Average (N=3)
Black/African American	22%	NA	49%	87%
Hispanic /Latinx	9%	NA	42%	5%
Students with IEPs	15%	NA	20%	17%
EL Students	2%	NA	15%	3%
CEP Rate	59%	NA	100%	100%
Proficient Math PSSA	54%	NA	9%	13%
Proficient ELA PSSA	67%	NA	25%	27%
95% Attendance	66%	NA	47%	41%
0 Suspensions	98%	NA	97%	90%
Parent Trust	2.5	NA	2.5	2.0
Student Trust	2.4	NA	1.9	1.8
Teacher Trust	2.2	NA	2.1	1.9

Parent Perspectives of Relational Trust

The four main themes that were examined from the qualitative analysis are discussed in relation to the interview excerpts that were the most representative of each of the four themes, which are aligned to Bryk & Schneider's criteria of relational trust: competence, personal regard for others, integrity, and respect. Competence is defined as "the execution of an individual's formal role responsibilities" within the context of a school community (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p.23). Competence is important because good intentions do not equal met expectations if certain skills are lacking (Goddard, et. al., 2009). For example, a parent may expect that it is the role of a teacher to teach students how to manage their time. If a teacher does not have the skills or time that are required to teach time management skills, his or her good intentions will not be adequate in making sure parent's expectations are met. This example also highlights why the existence of competence is predicated on a clear understanding of a role. The ability of a teacher to support students in developing time management skills is only relevant if this is a responsibility associated with the teacher role.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) define personal regard for others using two terms that are common across literature on trust: vulnerability and benevolence. Specifically, personal regard for others is expressed through "actions that reduce others' sense of vulnerability" and are thus "an expression of benevolent intentions" (p. 25). In the relational trust framework, personal regard for others encompasses vulnerability and benevolence in the context of "a given role set" characterized by mutual expectations and obligations. This means that an action of a person toward another many convey benevolence, while that same action toward another person may not.

According to Bryk and Schneider (2002), integrity is "the level of agreement in each role relationship in terms of the understandings held about these personal obligations and expectations of others" (p. 26). In other words, a person possesses integrity when there is consistency between what she says and what she does (Mishra, 1996). This is also sometimes referred to as "reliability," or the degree that we are confident in our ability to predict another's behavior (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). In relational trust, the expectations about how another will behave are developed within the context of a role-set. Integrity is not only measured by the alignment between how an individual behaves to fulfill commitments (Cummings & Bromiley, 1996), but also by the alignment between how individuals behave to fulfill the expectations based on their role within the school.

Bryk and Schneider (2002) explain respect as not only a shared understanding of the unique and interconnected roles within a school community, but also as the communication of this understanding through social interactions in which the ideas of all parties are valued. They call these exchanges "genuine conversations," and argue that they should occur between and among parents/guardians, teachers, and school administrators. Respect exists when dialogue between members of a role set is characterized by a genuine openness to understanding the other person's opinion and taking their perspective into account when making future decisions. Communication is a consistent theme across the literature on trust, as it is the primary way in which relationship building is operationalized. This communicative aspect of their description of respect shares many of the same qualities as the concept of "openness," which is found in much of the literature around trust.

Competence

Data coded with the criteria of competence were often found among parents' responses to questions about their thoughts on the role of a teacher. Considered in tandem, the themes that emerged suggest that for the parents of students in high achieving schools, teachers are considered to be the experts when it comes to academics. Additionally, these parents acknowledged that teachers in Philadelphia schools have demanding and difficult jobs, which led some to express that they do not have high expectations for teachers when it comes to non-academic responsibilities. Nonetheless, these same parents will intervene if they feel their children's teachers show incompetence when it comes to meeting academic expectations. In other words, a competent teacher is one who ensures students are learning academic subjects, such as math and reading; and, on the flip side, incompetent teachers are those who do not.

For example, Shelly, parent of a student in a high achievement school (Group 1) identified supporting students academically as within the purview of the teacher:

> …as a parent, I like to have most of the academic pressure, like, the academics should be left to the teachers. I definitely teach my kids things as they come up, like life skills and stuff, but in terms of pure academics, like math, reading, that's left to the experts.

This parent considered teachers to be the experts in academics, a statement that implied a high level of trust in teacher's competency. On the other hand, she sees the role of a parent is to educate children "as things come up," and to stick to topics "like life skills."

This sentiment was shared by Shana, a parent of a child at a high-trust, high-achievement school. She included the following in her response the question about defining the role of a teacher:

> I cannot teach [my child] how to read. Like, I can teach statistics but I cannot teach a first grader how to do multiplication. So those are the things that, in our

> family, that we have contracted out to the school. And that is what we rely on the teachers for.

Like Shelly, Shana sees teaching math and reading to young children as a particular skill set that is beyond what they possess and particular to their child's teacher. Shana emphasizes this by comparing teaching statistics, something she can do, to teaching multiplication, something she cannot do.

In another example, Cordelia, a parent from a high-achievement school spoke not only about how her expectations for a teacher are confined primarily to academics, but also noted that she arrived at these expectations for teachers knowing how challenging the job is:

> Also, like, as a parent in this district, I think I'm mindful of what my expectations are of teachers, I mean, my son goes to a middle class, higher performing school, but I know that a lot of expectations are put on teachers, they don't get paid as much as nearby districts. So, I think I try and temper my expectations a little bit. Just keep them more to education. Like, I wouldn't complain about anything not related to academics or general safety.

Cordelia highlighted the differences between schools in this district and those in a nearby district an expression of how context shapes parents' expectations for teachers. She explained that given the strain on teachers in this district, her expectations are limited to "academics" and "general safety," and that she would not "complain" about issues outside the scope of these two areas. Like Shelly, the parent quoted previously, Cordelia saw supporting her child academically as the primary role of the teacher. Additionally, this excerpt shed light on another theme about how the parents interviewed understand their role: it is the parent's responsibility to speak up, or "complain," if the teacher proves to be incompetent, or, fails to meet the parent's academic-related expectations.

Similarly, when asked to reflect on what they see to be the role of a teacher and if they think their child's teacher fills this role, Shana, another parent of a student in a high-performing,

high-trust school spoke about a time she had to intervene because the teacher was not sufficiently challenging the student, providing a specific example of how a teacher can be perceived as incompetent:

> At first, she had assigned a certain [reading] level to her and then the library chooses books according to that level. And then she read all the books in that level in like a few days, um, she herself said the teacher said I can change the reading level, and she's like yeah, I already read all of those, can you change mine. So, and I don't understand the resistance. And I mentioned this to her, I gave her an example of one of the books she was reading, she actually looked it up, and she was like, oh, this is whatever level, and then she just bumped her up one level.

Here, Shana noted that even after her daughter let the teacher know she finished all the books assigned to her, which is a sign that they were too easy, she still had to reach out to the teacher in order to get her daughter more challenging work. In this example, the parent sees assigning challenging work as an aspect of the teacher's role and therefore, the teacher was exhibiting a lack of competence by not giving her student sufficiently challenging work. Once this lack of competence came to this parent's attention – when her daughter told her the teacher did not change her reading level –the parent communicated her concern to the teacher, an expression of her belief that it is the role of a parent to intervene when teachers are failing to meet the expectation of ensuring students are challenged academically.

After expressing dissatisfaction that her child's teacher was assigning work that was too easy for her child, Shana noted:

> I also realize that it is difficult to have individual attention and an individual plan for 20, 24, whatever the number is, kids, and maybe they just have to play to the average and um, have [the] outliers on either side take care of themselves or involve more parental support for those, I don't know.

This comment illustrates one of the other competency-related themes – specifically those from parents of students in high achievement, high trust schools: when parents spoke about the role of

a teacher and the degree to which they do or do not fulfill their role responsibilities, parents expressed that they understand why teachers may fall short of their expectations given the intense demands of the profession. In another example of a parent expressing this orientation toward teacher roles, a parent named Leah noted:

> I think their job description is very lengthy and the expectation in urban schools is a lot more than in the suburbs for what the role of the teacher is and what the expectations are.

Like Cordelia, Leah drew on a comparison between teachers in an urban district like Philadelphia and teachers in suburban districts, highlighting the importance of context in how parents develop their expectations for teachers. In yet another interview, Julia, a parent from a high-achievement school also expressed that she recognized that teachers are "overtaxed," and therefore, she alters her expectations about the degree to which teachers are able to meet the specific academic needs of every child:

> I think in a perfect world it would be nice for teachers to understand individual children and work toward their needs and like, if they don't understand how to do math this way, is there an alternative? But you know …they are so overtaxed.

Julia went on to convey that like other parents interviewed, she saw teaching academic subjects, specifically math, to be the teacher's responsibility and, when the teacher's lack of competence required her (the parent) to step in, she struggled to fill a role that was outside of her comfort zone:

> …often times there's an issue with math and they have some newfangled way of learning math that is not the way that we learned math and my kid looks at me like I have 42 heads when I'm trying to explain it a different way because they've never heard if it any other way than this one program that the school has done.

A few minutes later Julia also echoed what other parents expressed in terms of her understanding why teachers sometimes fell short of their formal role responsibilities, which left it to the parents to fill in and provide academic support to their children:

> It's almost like the parent needs to learn the method the way the kid is learning so then they can teach it that way and then they can try and figure out how to do that. And luckily we are in a privileged group and we have communication and education and all of that … I think between my husband and I, we have different skills so we're able to figure out like, right-brain left-brain things that we can support our children in, you know. The teachers have a very limited ability to change mid-stream.

Julia's use of the word "ability" aligns to the language that is common in the literature around trust and in particular to concepts tied to competence.[16] Indeed, this comment resonated with the previous quotes in which parents expressed they have come to terms with the fact that teachers cannot meet all the specific academic needs of every student, even though they are expected to do so. In other words, they do not have the ability or competence to fill all of their role responsibilities. Moreover, Julia expressed a similar sentiment to Shana about it being the role of the parent to step in and support their child's learning when the teacher falls short. As Shana put it, when a child is an "outlier," it's up to the parents to take on some of the responsibilities that should, in an ideal world, be designated to the teacher.

While parents of students in low-achievement schools also discussed the many demands that are associated with the role of a teacher, many of the responsibilities they focused on did not pertain to academics per-se, which suggested that parents' views of teachers' roles are multifaceted. For example, when asked to describe the role of a teacher, Carlos, the parent of a student at a high-trust, low-achievement school noted the ways that a teacher's role overlaps with that of other adults in a child's life:

> A teacher wears many hats. A teacher is one, the teacher, the mom, the dad, the nurse, the therapist, the teacher does a lot.

[16] For example, Meyer, Davis and Schoorman's (1995) model of trust includes a variable called "ability," which they define as "that group of skills, competencies, and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within some specific domain" (p. 717).

For Carlos, a teacher actually has many roles, as they "wear many hats." The references to "a nurse" and "a therapist" accentuated the non-academic support that teachers are expected to provide to students. Additionally, Carlos equated the role of a teacher with that of a parent, suggesting that he believes there is a great deal of overlap between the two roles. Likewise, when asked to speak about the role of a teacher, another parent from a low-achievement, high-trust school (Leah) included specific examples of how a teacher supports students in ways that are not academic:

> I mean like, realistically, teachers do everything. They teach your kid manners if you're not teaching them manners, they tap in and make sure they understand manners. They show your child love and care. They make sure that your child has their lunch or lunch money, they make sure, I mean, they teach your child how to read, they either enhance or supplement what your child is learning at home.

While Leah did include "teaching your child how to read" in her list of teachers' responsibilities, she also included "teaching them manners" and showing them "love and care." Through the lens of competence, this layered understanding of a teacher's role has implications for relational trust because the more things teachers are expected to do, the more things they need to be competent in.

Another parent spoke about the various role responsibilities teachers are expected to meet. During her interview, Zinnia, a parent from a low-achievement, low-trust school brought up how she realizes her expectations of teachers are different from other parents; while some parents see teachers as "babysitters," she sees the primary role of teachers to be getting academic information out to students:

> Like whatever subject they are teaching, getting that [information] out to the kids. A lot of parents think different, they have to babysit and 'if something's going wrong, don't call me cause that's what I send the kid to school for' but yeah, just, you [the parent] have to handle that stuff. I just expect them to get the information out, teach it to them and then we have to, what's the word I'm looking for, we have to… support, we have to help out as parents.

Zinnia's observation that different parents have different expectations for teachers corroborates the varying and complex perceptions shared by the other parents interviewed. While parents of students in high-achievement schools tended to confine the formal role responsibilities of teachers to academics, they also expressed that these expectations are framed within an understanding that the role of a teacher in a Philadelphia public school is unrealistic. In multiple instances, parents conveyed that they temper their expectations given their understanding of all that teachers are asked to do, and that part of their coming to terms with the inevitability that teachers will fall short of meeting the academic and social-emotional needs of all students is adjusting the role they see for themselves as parents. As Shana put it:

> I think the reason why I would trust the teacher is because I know that they are doing the best that they can within the limitations and constraints that they have. I guess, I see the effort.

In a context where teachers are essentially set up to appear incompetent, parents that are able to, see it as their role to step in to support their child. They recognize the "effort," and in some ways, this enables trust to be maintained. This connects to the second criteria of trust – personal regard for others – in that teachers displaying personal regard can offset the negative impressions that teachers give parents when they fail to measure up to the impossible demands of their role. More specifically, teachers showing personal regard for their students can be understood by parents as an expression of competence in that by supporting students socially and emotionally, teachers are filling a formal role responsibility.

Personal Regard for Others

Indeed, many of the responses that parents gave to the question about why they trust their child's teachers were tied to personal regard for others, or actions that teachers take to reduce students', and even parents', sense of vulnerability (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). One way that

parents tapped into personal regard for others was by noting that they trust teachers to make sure their child, as one parent put it, has "their basic needs met." For example, in regards to teachers mitigating the health and safety risks that kids face, Carlos, a parent from a low-achievement, high-trust school said:

> …If my child isn't feeling well, I have to put my trust in their teacher to identify that my child isn't feeling well. So, if my child has a fever, you send my child to the nurse….. So, I think that's something that's very important when it comes to trust, being able to give my child to someone for eight hours a day and not really have to think too much about it. I can go on and do what I have to do, and not focus on 'is my kid ok? Does he need this, that, or the other?'

Here, Carlos touched on a basic yet unavoidable vulnerability that students face, threats to their physical wellness and safety. This parent expects the teacher to take the proper actions to address his child's essential needs, which allows him to focus on other things during the day when his child is in school.[17]

While there could be an argument that teachers are contractually, or legally bound, to ensure the physical safety of students, which would reduce the need for trust,[18] parents also recognized and recounted the ways that teachers have gone "above and beyond" their formal role responsibilities as part of their explanation for why they trust their child's teacher. For example, one parent from a high-trust school stated:

> I've seen teachers take a uniform home and you know, wash it, like do laundry for parents that don't have the money to get the laundry done so that the child has clean clothes to wear.

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[17] This aligns to Baier's (1986) explanation of why the presence of vulnerability is central to understanding the circumstances that warrant trust, when there is a risk for injury, there is a need for trust.
[18]Goddard (2009) argues that personal regard for others that benevolence is "central to the mitigation of risk in the absence of contracts or other formal regulatory structures that can guarantee a given performance" (p. 296). In other words, when contracts or form regulatory structures are present, the need for trust is diminished.

This type of action is beyond the teacher's formal role responsibilities but showed that she, the teacher, will nonetheless act in a way that ensures the students have what they need to be successful in school.

Daniella, a parent from a high-trust, low-achievement school, explained how teachers can show their personal regard for their students in more routine ways. When asked to speak more about her understanding of a teacher's role, she described how teachers should, before beginning to engage with students academically, check in on how they are feeling.

> …because my thing is, the way you should know how a student feels is by entering the classroom. If you see that they are having a bad day, me personally, I would pull them to the side and see if there is anything that they can help them with, and if they can, then try and step it up, because you just want to try and do anything possible to help the child, not to - how do I put it - avoid it.

Moreover, Daniella puts herself in the teachers' shoes, saying that if she were the teacher, and she sensed that a student may be "having a bad day," she would "do anything possible to help the child." This is an example of a how a parent uses what they know about being a parent to help construct their ideas about the role of a teacher.

Another theme that emerged from parents of students from both groups of low-achievement schools was the extent to which teachers' support of parents contributes to parents' trust of teachers, or, for some parents, the ways that a lack of support for parents can be a barrier to building relationships between parents and teachers. In other words, when parents' sense of vulnerability is recognized and teachers and schools act to reduce it, trust is increased. In circumstances where parents do not feel understood or supported, opportunities to build trust are lost. For example, when asked about ways that schools can promote trust, Victoria, a parent from a low-trust, low-achievement school, explained:

> I think that the school should provide more assistance for parents to deal with the teachers. Because you have different family backgrounds, you have different

> education levels, so everybody is not receptive to you saying 'hey, your child keeps doing this.' You may have one parent that will say 'Ok, well I'll address it' and then you'll have another parent saying 'well what were you doing, my son ain't do nothing and you always calling me and telling me about this and that' and on and on, you know?

Here, Victoria highlighted how the relational trust and role construction frameworks come together by explaining how different parents have different reactions to the same type of communication from a teacher, and how that reaction is based on the lived experience of the parent, which contributes to the role they construct for themselves and for teachers. She continues by suggesting ways that parental trust can be increased:

> …maybe more incentives, you know what I'm saying? Like, sorry you have to give incentives or sorry you've got to give someone a gift card, but sometimes you just got to do it. Just if you want to get a better relationship with the school or the parent or whatever, you don't understand what these parents and these families are going through and what they are seeing.

Through the lens of relational trust and role construction, Victoria is advocating that parents' historical and social contexts, namely family background, education levels, and what parents "are going through and what they are seeing," should dictate the ways that schools show personal regard to parents, by offering incentives or some kind of financial support (gift cards) to parents in order convey that they recognize what they are going through.

A parent from a low-achievement, low-trust school shared similar insights when asked to expand on her observation that some parents do not have strong relationships with teachers:

> It's really that parents need to get more training, those that don't have any education or background or you know, and they are just resorting to what they know. It's like generational, it's pushed down from family to family to aunt to grandmom. That's just the reality of it.

By referring to the education and background not only of the parent, but also of extended members of their families, this parent directly addressed the role of generational and systematic oppression and marginalization in how parents construct their role. Similarly, when reflecting on

why some parents may not be involved in their child's school, another parent, Daniella, surmised:

> I guess it could be either lack of, not having both parents there, lack of you know, adult supervision. Maybe too much single parents working a lot of hours and not being able to attend. Maybe they want to attend but they're not able to due to their hours and wherever they work.

Just as with the two prior examples, Daniella recognized that the circumstances that dictate some parents' lives mean they are up against financial and health risks like under or unemployment and high levels of stress.[19] Carlos, a parent from a high-trust school, described the type of support that he received from his child's school, and how in turn, this enabled him to support his child:

> As a parent we're getting that support that we need from the teachers at this school, so it kind of makes it a little easier. It kind of takes some of that stress off, having that support, so if there's something that my child doesn't understand, and I don't understand, I can communicate with the teacher and the teacher can explain it to me so I can explain it to my child.

Carlos directly acknowledged how teachers can reduce parents' levels of stress by supporting the parent to best support his child. In this example, the support described by the parent comes in the form of communication, a concept that is critical to developing and maintaining trust.

Integrity

Parents' comments about communication were often coded as integrity. Communication is central to integrity in that it is the means by which expectations are set. This is a critical first step, as integrity is the degree to which the expectations that are set between two parties are followed through on and done so equally across all parents; in other words, that some parents do not receive preferential treatment. This element of communication in the development of

[19] Research has showed that high levels of stress are directly tied to negative health outcomes (Sapolsky, 1998).

expectations came into play often when coding interview transcriptions, as it determined whether competence or integrity was the appropriate code for the excerpt. When parents noted or implied that their expectations were based in communication that had occurred, the comment was coded as an example of integrity. In other words, when parents talked about teachers following through with what they said they would do, rather than meeting more general societal expectations, it was considered to be an example of integrity rather than competence. Cordelia, a parent from a high-trust, high-achievement school, gave an example of how this plays out for her with her child's teacher:

> The way I find out about what he's doing, is I look through - he comes home with a folder - and I look through the folder to figure out what he's supposed to be doing. And there was an email at the beginning of school from the teacher saying, every week they will go home with a folder, every week there's going to be spelling words, so like, I know what to look for.

This is an example of a teacher showing integrity in that the teacher told the parent that they would put information in a folder, and there is consistently information shared via the folder. When asked to explain why she trusts her child's teachers, another parent, Daniella, from a high-trust, low-achievement school honed in on how well they communicate with her, emphasizing how they are doing what they are "supposed to be doing."

> I have to say, the communication, it's awesome… they have the remind app, and his teacher, if he has something to say, you know, he'll give praise and say this is my number and you can contact me, you know. If anything comes up, you can contact me. I mean, as far as communication, its good. I cannot say that they're not doing what they are supposed to be doing.

Here, Daniella notes that the teacher set up a system and expectations for communication: an app that facilitates sharing information "if anything comes up." By following through with this system and expectation, the teacher allows the parent to feel confident in the teacher's integrity.

While Cordelia and Daniella provided examples of how communication between parents and teachers can promote trust though integrity, other parents gave accounts of experiences where there was a lack of communication, and pointed to those as examples as things that diminished trust between them and their child's teachers. Shelly, a parent from a high-achievement, high-trust school explained:

> I only really had an issue with one of them [teachers] who gave my son a D and kind of like, never reached out before hand to be like, "hey, this is what he's not getting done." And that was really like the only time. But that was a particularly difficult teacher and I wasn't the only one that had an issue with her and I found that to be an anomaly in the teacher pool that I've had so far.

Here, the lack of integrity is not necessarily that the teacher failed to make sure the student got a good grade, but that the teacher did not communicate that the student was struggling early on so that the parent would be able to step in and assist. Additionally, Shelly points out that this is an "anomaly," indicating that her expectations had been met otherwise by other teachers from the same school. While those teachers followed through on their commitment to let the parent know when there was an issue with her child, this teacher did not.

Shana, another parent from a high-achievement school who also noted that her child's teacher is supposed to share information via a folder, explained how parent networks can fill in gaps that may occur when teachers do not follow through on communication as promised, such as failing to let parents know about school events such as a "dress down day" (a day when students do not have to wear school uniforms and can choose their clothes).

> There's a first graders, last year's kindergartners, Facebook group. And there, there's a lot of discussions, and sometimes there's information, like one of the kids learns something from the teacher, which is not emailed to us, let's say something like tomorrow there will be a dress down day, whatever, or something like that. I never hear anything, there's not a flyer or any information put in her folder, and then, we hear someone says something on the Facebook group and people keep asking and then they inquire. Maybe somebody emails the teacher, and then, they'll say, "yeah, there's apparently a dress down day."

While a dress down day may seem trivial in comparison to things like a child's health, safety, or even their academic growth, the teacher's failure to inform parents about it though any of the agreed upon mediums (email or flyers in the folder), threatens the teacher's integrity.

While it may seem that the examples used to highlight the competency theme are similar to those related to the integrity theme, the central difference is that integrity is tied to whether the role responsibilities that parents hold for a teacher are based on something the teacher said they would do. In the following example of the importance of this nuance – the occurrence of an agreement between teacher and parent – a parent describes how she came to terms with the lack of communication she received from teachers as her child got older. In this example, the parent recognized that her expectations were not based on an agreement she had with her child's teacher, but rather, they were based on her child's past teachers' behaviors:

> I think it took some adjustment for me as a parent, that the teacher is not, she's not going to be telling us, like every day, this is what your child should be doing, this is what we did in class today. And maybe I was expecting that a little bit, but I realize that she has a lot of students to teach and he's 9 now, so he really should be able to tell me what he is working on and I really shouldn't necessarily expect the teacher to be summarizing like every day what they worked on and what happened in class. So that's been evolving expectations for me as a parent.

This parent reflects that since the amount of communication she was expecting from her child's teachers was not based on an understanding she and the teacher had mutually come to, she does not find the teacher at fault. Rather, she realized that she should change her expectations now that her child is older and can do some of the communicating.

Respect

Communication also plays a critical role in the final of the four criteria of relational trust, respect. According to Bryk and Schneider (2002), communication is at the foundation of a respectful relationship; when two parties are open to sharing information and do so honestly, and

they show they value the opinions of others, respect can develop. Bryk and Schneider refer to this type of dialogue as “genuine conversations.” This theme emerged in the interviews in regards to the relationship between teachers and parents, but also concerning parents’ understanding of their child’s relationship with their teacher. In other words, genuine conversations between teachers and parents are a means to show mutual respect and also provide an opportunity for parents to understand the degree to which the teacher has had genuine conversations with their child.

In relation to establishing that parents’ input is valued, one parent spoke directly about how she knows that her child’s teachers value her involvement. When asked about the different ways that the school communicates with her and the types of things that are communicated, Daniella said:

> When it comes to email, that's basically more of ‘thank you for participating in the activities that they were doing with the students’ ’thank you for always putting your input in ‘and giving us, you know, praise for what we are doing. You know, stuff like that.

This positive reinforcement acknowledges and shows gratitude for this parent’s participation and perspective, a sign of a respectful relationship.

Communication came up again and again in comments about respect. In another example, when asked about ways that the role of parent and teacher overlap, one parent (Shelly) spoke about “the back and forth” she has with her child’s teacher and how both the teacher and the parent keep the other informed:

> I think that we have to keep each other informed of what's going on. You know, like any big change at home, at least I feel like needs to be brought to the teacher’s attention so they can understand where the kid is coming from and vice versa…. My daughter’s had periods where she was like, acting out, and - I didn’t mention this, but she had periods where she was acting out and her teacher and I communicated and we came up with a plan, to like, get her back on track and

> figure out why she was acting out, what was going on. And we did. You know, we kind of nipped it in the bud with a lot of back and forth.

In this example, Shelly not only described a situation in which an honest an open exchange of information between the parent and the teacher yields positive benefits for the student, but also illustrates how teachers can show respect for students by learning more about why the child may be acting out. The teacher's willingness to "understand where the kid is coming from" is a sign of respect for the child. This willingness leads to a transparent conversation between the teacher and parent about what is happening at home, a hallmark of a "genuine conversation." Shelly went on to reframe her specific experience in more general terms:

> that's like the ideal situation, I feel like. Like somethings going on in school, they let me know. I let them know what's going on at home. We trade, I would trade tips with the teacher, like 'hey, just so you know, I did this and this and it seems to really work' and then the teacher would do the same thing with me.

The "trading of tips' between parents and teachers allow each to have insight into relevant experiences that the child may have at home or at school, which enables a deeper understanding into the child's motivations and needs.

Daniella, a parent of a student in a low-achievement, high-trust school expressed how she too, internalized teachers' attempts to support students socioemotionally as a sign of respect, particularly when in involves teachers utilizing communication as a tool for gaining information from students about their thoughts and opinions. In the example quote below, the parent recounted how the school reacted after a man in West Philadelphia was shot by the police.

> …the fact that the teachers took their time out and counselors, I think it was guidance counselors and some other kind of team that the school had, to even talk to the kids, let the kids voice their opinions, and see what ways they were able to talk about it… But like I was saying, its different, like where I was raised, we don't deal with as much violence as there is here, but the fact that the teachers even took their time and effort to even discuss and let the children voice their opinions and how they feel, and how they can come up with I guess a plan, to you know, like I said, think more positive.

Daniella explained that since her experiences when she was younger were different from those of her children's, she would not have necessarily expected teachers to have conversations with students about the violence they experience in their communities. In other words, her teachers never did this type of thing because there was not the need for it. Even though she did not necessarily expect for teachers to prioritize addressing the traumatic incident with students, it contributed to her trust in the school.

A similar sentiment was shared by another parent (Victoria), but from the opposite orientation. This parent of a student at a low-trust, low-achievement school, when asked to expand on things teachers have done to diminish trust, explained how teachers have showed a lack of respect for students:

> Their tone, like their tone of voice. Like if they are always yelling and loud, like, you know, I would be like 'ehhh.' And I'm not saying that it's their fault, but maybe they were the aggressor in the situation. Like some teachers just don't know how to let it go. Like, you don't know what this child is dealing with and you're going to come over and say 'I need you to do this and I need you to do that' regardless of if you are frustrated with this kid.

In this excerpt, Victoria expressed that when teachers get frustrated in response to a student having trouble following directions and cannot "let it go," this signifies they do not understand what the "child is dealing with" nor did they take the time to do so. Unlike the scenario described previously by Shelly, where the parent and the teacher were able to fill each other in about factors that may cause a child to disobey or act out, the teacher showed anger and frustration toward the child. Instead of attempting to communicate with the child or the child's parents as a way to show the teacher valued their perspective, the teacher dismissed the child and reacted negatively.

When asked to reflect on where her ideas about teachers' roles came from, Julia, a parent from a high-trust, high-achievement school provided another example of how teachers show respect. In response, she compared her personal experience in school to her child's experience as a way to explain how her child's teachers build trust by treating their students as "whole people:"

> Well, I feel like when I was in school it was more like, 'sit down, shut up, do your work.' And you know, and behave. Where now, I feel like at my kid's school they have kind of like a grasp on you know, kids are actually people who have thoughts and feelings, you know, they are all different. And kind of, they get treated as whole people, instead of just, you know, like…little child robots.

For Julia, the teacher's concern for students' unique feelings demonstrated the teacher values students' "thoughts and feelings." While this example is the opposite of the one preceding it, both parents expressed similar sentiments: teachers enhance trust when they show compassion and understanding for their students.

The parents also touched on respect by highlighting a key component of parent-teacher communication: teachers making specific references about students that show they've taking the time to get to know the student and had "genuine conversations" with them. When teachers talk to parents specifically about their child, they are conveying to parents they have taken the time to engage with their child individually, which is a sign of respect. A parent from a high-achieving, high-trust school (Cordelia) relayed a personal example:

> Whenever I've had parent teacher conferences its really clear to me that the teacher, like, can give specific examples of what my child did or work they did or things about their personality that I can tell, like, oh, you've actually taken the time to get to know him a little bit, despite having 30 kids per class. So that makes me trust the teacher.

Another parent (Leah), though speaking more generally, shared a similar perspective:

> When a parent can see that the teacher is invested in their child, that's where the trust begins. I'm talking about like when the teacher reaches out and shares a specific example that makes the parent go like 'yes, that is exactly what my child does,' or 'that is definitely something that they would say.' And I think feeling as

> a parent that your teacher is getting to know your child and their little quirks and their personality and the things they like and the things they don't like, that is the foundation of trust.

These last two remarks emphasize how critical communication is to establishing trust; if teachers and parents do not engage in meaningful conversations, teachers do not have the opportunity to express to parents that they value their child as an individual and are "invested" in them.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed parents' experiences and perceptions of relational trust in Philadelphia public school students in grades K-6. The parents were of students that attended nine different schools across the city. The schools were grouped based on achievement levels (as measured by standardized test scores) and levels of trust (as measured by surveys). Half of the interviews were with parents from high-achievement, high-trust schools, 20% were with parents from low-achievement, high trust schools, and 30% were from parents from low-achievement, low-trust schools. On average, there were higher concentrations of students of color (Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx) and students with low socioeconomic status in the low-achievement schools compared to the high-achievement schools. High-trust schools had lower percentages of Black/African American students and lower CEP rates, on average, than low-trust schools.

Using Bryk and Schneider's (2002) framework of relational trust, the interviews were transcribed and coded to identify common and divergent themes. One theme that was apparent particularly from parents in high-achievement, high-trust schools, which have higher rates of White, middle-class students, was the tempering of expectations for teachers based on the urban context. In a couple instances, parents such as Shana, Cordelia, and Julia recounted times when their child's teacher did not fill their role such that their child was not challenged or did not

understand their assignments. However, rather than citing this lack of competence as something that diminished trust in the teacher, these parents explained that given the extensiveness of a teacher's role responsibilities in the specific Philadelphia public school context, they understood why the teacher fell short of meeting his or her expectations in this instance. Importantly, these parents explained that because of their ability to supplement the work of a teacher, they were able to step in and ultimately ensure that their child was challenged appropriately or understood the homework. These parents gave specific examples of their privilege, such as having a specific skill set, being part of the middle-class, or having a spouse that shares the responsibilities of supporting their child.

Another theme, which was more prominent from parents from the low-achievement schools, namely Daniella and Victoria, was that parents trust teachers who consider student behavior in light of what they know about the child as an individual. This not only conveys a personal regard for others, but also suggests that the teacher has taken the time to have open conversations with the student and, in some cases, with their parents. Overall, while the main findings were that some themes were more apparent in the interviews with parents based on the type of school the child attended, there were also commonalities across all parents. One of these overarching conclusions is centered on the critical role of communication, which facilitates the creation of trust as defined by each of Bryk and Schneider's criteria: competence, integrity, personal regard for others, and respect. Role construction theory helps to explain why communication plays such a foundational role in building trust, as it brings to light how lived experiences, social and historical context, and repeated interpersonal interactions contribute to how parents understand their role and the role of a teacher. In this way, this study builds on the

previous research by showing that role construction theory can be a useful lens for understanding the relationships between parents and teachers.

CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore the relationship between student demographics, academic achievement, school climate, and relational trust in Philadelphia public schools. This chapter reviews findings for each research question individually, as well as discusses the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study in relation to each other. Through this triangulation of data, the benefits of a pragmatic theoretical framework are highlighted. Additionally, both the qualitative and quantitative findings are situated in conversation with the frameworks of relational trust and role construction, which were used in the development of the research questions and the study design. This type of dialogue that bridges methodological approaches is possible under the epistemological assumptions of mixed-methods research, which considers human experience and social context to be the driving force behind research methods (Morgan, 2014). This chapter closes by reflecting on the implications the findings have for additional research and practice, as well as acknowledgements of the study's limitations.

Research Questions

The research questions that drove the study included:

Research Question 1: Over the past four years, what are the levels of trust among parents, teachers, and students in Philadelphia schools? How do these levels vary based on student demographics, climate, and academic achievement levels?

Research Question 2: What are the effects of student demographics, academic achievement, and climate on levels of trust? Are levels of trust predictive of school-level characteristics and climate?

Research Question 3: How do parents and guardians understand their role and the role of their child's teachers in the school community and how does this shape their perspectives and insights into relational trust in their schools?

Quantitative methods were used to answer research questions one and two, while qualitative methods were used to answer research question three.

Summary of Quantitative Methods and Findings

To answer research questions one and two, descriptive, correlational and regression analyses were run, in addition to the used of structural equation modeling (SEM). Descriptive and correlational analyses revealed significant relationships between student demographics, levels of achievement, school climate, and levels of Teacher, Student, and Parent Trust. Variables included as measures of student demographics included the percentage of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx students, the percentage of students in special education, and the percentage of English Learner students. Student achievement was measured by the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced on the math and ELA PSSAs. The variables included as measures of school climate were the percentage of students attending 95% or more of school, the percentage of students with zero suspensions, and the year-over-year teacher retention rate. Trust was measured by data gathered through the School District of Philadelphia's District-Wide Survey (DWS). One sub-construct from the Student, Teacher, and Parent/Guardians surveys was utilized as the measure of trust for each group.

Student Trust and Parent Trust were negatively correlated with the percentage of Black-African American students enrolled in a school, but Teacher Trust was not. All three measure of trust were significantly negatively correlated with CEP rate, a measure for the percentage of students with low SES that are enrolled in the school. All three measures of trust were positively

correlated with math and ELA proficiency rates, with the coefficient between Student Trust and math and ELA being particularly high. In terms of the relationship between the measures of trust and measures of school climate, all three Trust measures were significantly positively related to the percentage of students attending 95% or school, the percentage of students with zero suspensions, and the teacher retention rate.

These trends are in line with the findings from Bryk et. al. (2010), who used survey and school-level data from Chicago public schools to show there was a strong relationship between school climate, levels of relational trust, and student achievement. However, correlations can only tell us so much about the relationship between these variables. To get a better sense of the degree to which school characteristics are predictive of levels of Trust (the subject of Research Question 2), regression analyses were used.

Knowing that all three measures of Trust are correlated with each other but not equally with all of the other variables, three separate equations were used to answer research question two, each equation setting one measure of Trust as the dependent variable. While all three equations were statistically significant, the one with Student Trust as the dependent variable had the best fit (R^2= 0.616 F=11.36 p<.000), meaning that this model was the best representation of what the data represent. Additionally, Parent and Teacher Trust were both significant predictors of Student Trust (β=0.181, p<.05 and β=0.206, p<.05, respectively). While neither math or ELA proficiency is a significant predictor of Teacher or Parent Trust when controlling for student demographics, and school climate, only the percent of students proficient on the math PSSA was significant predictor of Student Trust (β=0.524, p<.05). Similarly, looking across the equations, the significance of the effects of the percentage of student with IEPs (students in special education with Individualized Education Plans) varies on levels of Trust. While it is a significant

negative predictor of Student Trust (β=-0.161, $p<.05$), it is a significant positive predictor for Parent Trust (β=0.209, $p<.05$), and is not significant at all in the equation that sets Teacher Trust as the dependent variable. This finding will be discussed in greater detail in the sections below.

The SEM analysis showed that levels of Parent Trust Parent Trust had direct effects on School Climate; increased climate was predicted by higher levels of trust (unstandardized coefficient = .33, $p<.01$). Additionally, levels of Parent Trust had an indirect effect on School Characteristics when mediated by School Climate (unstandardized indirect effect coefficient = -.42, $p = .01$). Lower Climate was predictive of schools with higher concentrations of students of color, students with low SES, and students scoring Below Basic or Basic on the math and ELA PSSAs (unstandardized coefficient = -1.27, $p<.01$).

Summary of Qualitative Methods and Findings

To answer research question three, ten parents and guardians were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol. In order to get a variety of perspectives, recruitment efforts targeted parents and guardians of students in schools based on their levels of trust and academic achievement. Ultimately, five of the parents interviewed had students in high-achievement, high-trust schools, two had students in low-achievement, low-trust schools, and three in low-achievement, low-trust schools. Based on 2018-19 data, about 30% of students enrolled at the high-achievement schools were Black/African American or Hispanic/Latinx, compared to 95% and 92% of students enrolled in the two groups of low-achievement schools. There were also lower CEP rates for the high-achievement schools compared to the low achievement schools, 59% compared to 100%. This means that there are higher concentrations of students of color and students with low socioeconomic status in the low-achievement schools compared to the high-achievement schools.

Each of the ten interviews was recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were analyzed though several rounds of coding to identify common and divergent themes. During this process, a codebook was used to track and organize the data. Patterns were identified across double or triple coded units, and as the categories were developed, a more deductive approach was used to test and confirm the validity of the categories. The criteria outlined by Merriam (2009) was used to determine if the themes are responsive to the research questions; sensitive to the data, exhaustive, mutually exclusive, and conceptually congruent (p. 186). The final themes that emerged from the interviews were framed around the four criteria of relational trust identified by Bryk and Schneider (2002): competence, integrity, personal regard for others, and respect. Additionally, the themes incorporated elements from role construction theory, as a way to further the understanding of relational trust between parents and teachers.

The main findings that emerged suggest that while each parent has a unique understanding of the role of a teacher, there are some common expectations that the parents interviewed shared when it comes to how teachers support students. One belief that was consistently expressed was that it is the role of a teacher to ensure their child is safe and healthy while in school. Another consistent theme was that communication between parents and teachers is the primary means for the development of the expectations and understandings on which a trusting relationship can be built. Regardless of the type of school their child attended, parents valued when teachers communicate with them specifically about their child and use language that shows that the teacher has taken the time to learn about their child as an individual.

Multiple parents, particularly those from high-achievement, high-trust schools, also spoke about teachers as being responsible for ensuring that their children are challenged and supported academically. Interestingly, when discussing the degree to which teachers are meeting the

learning needs of their specific child, parents expressed compassion for teachers by recognizing how difficult their jobs are. Parents also went on to explain that in situations when their child was having academic issues that the teacher did not address, their having the ability to step in and support their children allowed for trust to be maintained; because parents were sympathetic to teachers being overwhelmed, they expressed understanding in the instances when teachers did not uphold their formal role responsibilities. In other words, parents from high-trust, high-achievement schools consider the role of a teacher in the specific context of the school and their own social and cultural capital. An additional theme that emerged, particularly from parents from the low-achievement schools, was that a key aspect of a teacher's role is to treat students with respect by being in tune to their mood and understanding that what they are experiencing outside of school affects their behavior inside of school.

Connecting the Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

In this section, the outcomes from the quantitative analyses are considered in relation to the themes that emerged from the qualitative findings. While the methodology used in the qualitative portion of the study are not such that the findings can be generalized, they do reflect the perspectives of ten parents that have similar characteristics to those captured in the survey data that is utilized in the quantitative part of the study. Additionally, the experiences the interview participants shared are based on interactions with school communities that are represented in the quantitative sample. Despite an inability to claim that the themes that emerged in the interviews hold true generally, the themes are a valuable representation of a sample of parents from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. This section considers three findings from the quantitative analysis in light of the themes that emerged in the parent interviews around the criteria of trust: personal regard for others, competence, integrity, and respect.

The Relationship between Student Special Education Status and Relational Trust

One of the findings to emerge from the correlational and regression analyses was the relationship between the percentage of students receiving special education, as measured by the percentage of enrolled students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and the levels of Student, Parent, and Teacher Trust. Correlation results showed a small but statistically significant negative correlation between the percentage of students with IEPs and Student Trust (r=-.208, $p<.05$), the percentage of English Learner (EL) students (r=-.323, $p<.01$), and the percentage of students with zero suspensions (r=-.219, $p<.05$). The percentage of students with an IEP was not significantly correlated with Parent or Teacher Trust, nor was it significantly correlated with the percentage of Black/African American students, Hispanic/Latinx students, and CEP rate (used as a proxy for student socioeconomic status, or SES). The lack of a correlation between the percentage of students with IEPs and student race/ethnicity and CEP rates is worth noting, as research has shown that students' race/ethnicity can impact their being identified as in need of special education (Oswald et al., 1999; Zhang et al., 2014; Sullivan & Ball, 2013; Morgan et. al., 2015). However, there is not a consensus in the research on the effects of student race/ethnicity on special education status; some research has found students of color and from low SES backgrounds are overrepresented in the special education population (Oswald et al., 1999; Zhang et al., 2014; Sullivan & Ball, 2013), while others argue that race/ethnicity can have the opposite effect, resulting in the underrepresentation of students of color in special education (Morgan et. al., 2015). Nonetheless, the reasons for the disproportionality discussed in the literature, regardless of the direction, are similar, and include biases held by school staff, as well as social and cultural disconnects between students and staff (Oswald et al., 1999; Zhang et al., 2014; Sullivan & Ball, 2013). This research, which highlights how the relationships between

schools and the students and families they serve have an effect on their evaluation of a student for special education, offers a potential explanation for the negative correlations between the percentage of students with IEPs and Student Trust: poor relationships between staff and students may contribute to the overidentification of students for special education.

Indeed, the regression equations allowed for the effects of the percentage of students with IEPs on levels of trust to be assessed controlling for the percentage of students of color and students with low SES. In the equation that set Student Trust as the dependent variable, the percentage of students with IEPs remained a significant negative predictor of Student Trust, even when controlling for race/ethnicity and SES (β=-0.161, p<.05). Moreover, in the equation that set Parent Trust as the dependent variable, the percentage of students with IEPs was a significant positive predictor of Parent Trust (β=0.209, p<.05). This means that higher percentages of students with IEPs had a negative effect on levels of Student Trust but a positive effect on levels of Parent Trust, controlling for student race/ethnicity, SES, academic achievement, attendance, and suspension rates. While further speculation into the negative impact on Student Trust is beyond the scope of this study, findings from the qualitative portion of the study can offer some insight into the positive relationship between Parent Trust and the percentage of students with IEPs.

While parents were not asked directly during the interviews if their child was in special education or had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), two parents mentioned they had a child that was in special education. Both of these parents spoke favorably about their relationships with their child's teachers, and highlighted how much of the communication they experience with their child's teachers is connected to the special education services their child receives. For example, parents spoke of their child's teachers updating them about whether or not their child

was making progress toward their goals and mentioned how these goals were outlined in the "paperwork" that specified the child's IEP. When students have an IEP, the roles and expectations of parents, teachers, and other school staff are documented and reviewed regularly. This relates to the research around parent engagement outlined in earlier chapters, particularly that which applied the theoretical perspective of role construction when examining the phenomenon of parental involvement is role construction. For example, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1997) argue that there are three constructs that are essential to explaining parents' behavior when it comes to engaging with their child's education, the first of which is role construction. The authors highlight how parental beliefs about child-development and child rearing, and the degree to which parents believe they should be involved in their child's education can be linked to the amount and nature of parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). If there are discussions between parents and school staff about how to meet the goals outlined in the IEP, it is likely that the role responsibilities of a teachers and parents are clearly articulated, which create the conditions that maximize parent and family engagement.

This hypothesis that the way that parents construct their role is a key factor in whether and how they are engaged in their child's education is also supported by the work of Green et al., (2007), who conducted an empirical study based on Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's (1997) theoretical framework of parent motivation. In this study the authors found that role activity beliefs had a significant positive relationship to school involvement. This finding is key in that it emphasizes the importance of a clear and common understanding about role responsibilities when it comes to theorizing about parent involvement. When student have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), teacher and parent roles are established and documented through specific protocols forms, and schools are held accountable by law to ensuring that students' needs are

met.[20] As discussed, the type of trust that exists in the presences of laws, which Bryk and Schneider (2002) call contractual trust, is distinct from organic trust, which occurs required in the absence of formal agreements. While the trust that may emerge due to the presence of an IEP is not the same as relational trust because of the legal aspect, the ongoing and consistent communication that takes place between parents of students with IEP and their teachers could still have positive effects on the parent-teacher relationship.

The Relationship Between Student and Parent Trust

Another finding from the correlation analysis was that each of the three measures of trust were significantly and positively correlated, which was also evident in the findings from the SEM analysis that supported that the three measures of Trust (Student, Parent, and Teacher) could be used as indicators for the latent variable of Trust. Across the three Trust measures, the strongest positive relationship was between Teacher Trust and Student Trust ($r=.430$, $p<.01$). The weakest relationship, yet still statistically significant, was between Parent Trust and Teacher Trust ($r=.284$, $p<.01$). Student and Parent Trust were also significantly positively correlated ($r=.397$, $p<.01$). In the regression equations, Parent and Teacher Trust were both significant predictors of Student Trust ($\beta=0.181$, $p<.05$ and $\beta=0.206$, $p<.05$, respectively). While higher Student Trust was a significant predictor of higher Parent Trust ($\beta=0.308$, $p<.05$), there was not a significant relationship between Teacher Trust and Parent Trust when controlling for Student Trust. This could suggest that levels of teacher trust do not affect parent trust levels above and beyond the effects of student levels of trust. In other words, one of the most significant predictors

[20] The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that requires that all students with disabilities have a free and appropriate education (U.S. Dept. of Ed, 2021).

of the levels of parent trust in a school is the levels of student trust because if students trust their teachers, parents do, too.

This interpretation of the quantitative findings was supported in the feedback gathered in the qualitative portion of the study. For example, parents spoke about learning what happens in school not only from communication with the teacher, but also from their child recounting what happened at school. One parent noted that as her child gets older, she has shifted her expectations such that she relies more on her child and less on the teacher to share relevant information. In this way, a parents' understanding of whether or not a teacher is filling his or her role responsibilities is funneled through the perspective of their child, which offers an explanation as to why there is such a strong relationship between student and parent trust.

In particular, this connection between student and parent trust relates to how the concept of integrity is discussed both in the relational trust framework and also in the literature around trust more generally (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). This is due to the connection between integrity and the existence of a common set of norms or principals that dictate behavior. In addition to integrity, terms that have been used to explain this aspect of trust include morals, ethics, values, and character. Indeed, Bryk and Schneider (2002) write that integrity "demands that a moral-ethical perspective guides one's work" (p.26). While relational trust is predicated on the specific relationship between two role sets, the relationship between parent and child is such that parents are able to know if teachers are upholding their role responsibilities with their child, which in turn impacts the degree to which they view the teacher's character. Essentially, because parents see teachers showing personal regard and respect toward their child as a sign of competence and integrity, it is unlikely for relational trust to exist between a teacher and a parent and not between the teacher and the child.

The Effects of School Climate on Levels of Trust

In the quantitative part if this study, school climate was measured by attendance and suspensions. The regression analysis found that the percentage of students with zero suspensions was a significant predictor of Parent Trust (β=0.39, p<.01), even when controlling for student demographics, student and teacher trust, and student achievement. However, this was not the case for the percent of students attending 95% or more of school, the second of the two indicators of the School Climate latent variable included in the SEM. The percentage of students with zero suspensions was found to be a significant predictor of School Climate, which was a meaningful moderator of the effects of Parent Trust on School Characteristics (unstandardized indirect effect coefficient = -1.27, p = .01). In other words, the mediating effects of School Climate significantly on School Characteristics are significant.

That school climate and trust are both important factors when predicting student academic achievement is in line with the extensive findings from a group of researchers at the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR), who developed a framework that captured how multiple factors interact to create a school that is organized for success. Bryk et al. (2010) and his colleagues at CCSR identified Five Essential Supports (school leadership, parent/guardian-community ties, professional capacity, school climate, and instruction) that positively contributed to improving student learning independently as well as through relationships with the other essential supports (Sebring et al., 2006). Specifically, “schools having strong indicator reports [high scores on the essential supports] were up to ten times more likely to improve students’ reading and mathematics learning than were contexts where three or more of these indicators were weak” (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 198). On the other hand, schools that were strong in all of the essential supports saw the greatest improvements in achievement

whereas schools that had a low score on one or more indicator had a less than ten percent probability of improving (Bryk et al., 2010).

Themes from that emerged from the qualitative analysis offer some potential explanations into the ways that school climate mediate the levels of trust in schools and in particular, the ways that suspension and attendance rates interact with parents' feelings around teacher's competence, personal regard for others, integrity, and respect. The most obvious connection between trust and school climate arises when considering the importance that parents placed on feeling that their child was safe at school. During the interviews, a common theme that emerged was that parents trust teachers because they know that the teacher is looking out for their child's physical and emotional wellbeing. This trust, or belief in the competence and personal regard for others displayed by the teacher, enables them to drop their child off at school every day and not constantly worry. The flip side of this would be that if a parent did not have this trust in their child's teacher to keep their child safe, they may keep their child home, which would negatively impact attendance. Of course, there are other reasons that students may be absent unrelated to trust, such as illness or a lack of transportation, which is why there was only a partial indirect effect.[21]

Findings from the qualitative portion of the study can also provide insight into the relationship between trust and suspensions. Parents emphasized the importance of teachers communicating with them about their child, especially when there was a behavioral issue. For example, one parent recounted time when her daughter's teacher reached out to her to let her know her child had been pushing classmates. While this type of behavior could have resulted in

[21] Research has found numerous factors to impact student attendance, such as student health issues, socioeconomic conditions such as homelessness and transience, and high rates of neighborhood crime (Hamlin, 2020).

the teacher suspending the student, the teacher reached out to the parent in an effort to initiate dialogue about what might be the source of the behavior. The parent was open and honest, and shared with the teacher about circumstances at home that may be at the root of the child acting out. Other parents also brought up how teachers should be patient and caring with students, especially when they may be in "a bad mood" or refusing to obey instructions.[22] Parents explained that rather yell or grow frustrated with the child, a trust-worthy teacher would assume the student needs support, and engage with the child and offer support. Considering this feedback, suspensions could be interpreted by parents as lack of competence, personal regard for others, and respect. The need for a child to be suspended could be seen as sign of a lack of competence on the part of the teacher to handle issues before they escalated to the point where a suspension was necessary. Moreover, suspending a student could be a sign that the teacher did not act to minimize the child's vulnerability, or that the teacher does not have personal regard for the student. Finally, suspending a student may indicate that teachers did not take the time to show the student or parent respect by engaging in open and honest conversations about the child's behavior.

Implications for Theory and Research

This study benefited from a strong foundation of research around trust in schools and particularly the relational trust framework from Bryk and Schneider (2002). Additionally, this study drew upon the literature on role construction theory and parent engagement to explore how relational trust could be considered specifically between parents and teachers. Given the specific context, Philadelphia, this study emphasized research that has challenged the existence of a

[22] The use of suspensions for nonviolent misbehaviors, such as insubordination or "willful defiance" has been documented in the literature (Skiba, 2000; Lacoe & Steinberg, 2018).

single, dominant parent engagement discourse (Lawson & Lawson, 2012; Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009; Lareau, 2002). This research is critical of a framing that defines parent engagement as things that parents can do to support their child's education, places value on the degree to which this positively impacts student achievement, and is grounded in assumptions based in a White middle-class status quo (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Christianakis, 201; Crozier, 2010). This critical lens is appropriate for exploring relational trust between parents and teachers because it highlights how individuals within a role set carry beliefs and attitudes that are grounded in their social and cultural context. Essentially, exploring relational trust via role construct and critical theory lifts up the specificity of the role set while also emphasizing the importance of context and individual lived experiences.

Indeed, the findings from this study supported the co-existence of a more general understanding of relational trust between teachers and parents as well as reinforced the importance of interpersonal relationships that accommodate the unique perspectives of parents and teachers as individuals. This was possible though the application of a mixed-methods approach, which allows for the benefits of quantitative and qualitative approved to exist simultaneously. It is possible to conclude, based on an empirical understanding of the data, that strengthening relational trust between teachers and parents can contribute to school communities that are conducive to student learning and also to conclude, based on the qualitative findings, that a trusting relationship between a teacher and a parent may vary based on the context of the school and the individuals lived experiences.

Further quantitative and qualitative studies would be useful in expanding on the findings from this study, and in particular, the three topics discussed in this chapter: the effects of special education status on parent/guardian relational trust, the connection between student and

parent/guardian relational trust, and the relationship between school climate and parent relational trust. In regards to the first topic, a qualitive study with a sample that features parents/guardians of students in special education could be designed to explore the relationship between students' special education status and parents/guardians' levels of relational trust with teachers. Such a study could include interviews that ask parents and guardians about their experiences interacting and communicating with members of their child's school community, and explore the degree to which these interactions are the result of the child receiving special education services.

A qualitative study that incorporates the perspectives of both parents and their students could be designed to collect the data necessary to deepen the understanding of the connection between parent trust and student trust. Another qualitative study, similar to the one conducted here but with an interview protocol that included specific questions around attendance and suspensions, could add to the literature by enabling clearer patterns to emerge around the relationship between parent relational trust and school climate. A quantitative study design utilizing survey data could also shed additional light on the relationship between school climate and parent relational trust. Such a study could incorporate the Climate construct and sub-construct scores from the District-Wide Surveys as well as the measure of Parent Trust included in this study in statistical analyses that explore the effects of levels of School Climate on levels of Parent Trust.

Implications for Practice

In regards to the practical implications, the findings from this study could be useful for schools and districts that are striving to improve their relationships with families. For example, given that relational trust is grounded in specific relationships, re-framing the conversation from parent engagement to parent relationships would enable the focus to shift from generalize

expectations about what patents should be doing to interpersonal and nuanced communication between teachers and families. Additionally, building on the findings from this study that showed that positive parent-school relationships are grounded in a common understanding of expectations that are reinforced though personalized communication (which is also supported in other research), schools and districts could explore the practices that are currently reserved for special education students to determine which might be scalable for all students as a way to increase communication between families and students.

Finally, schools, districts, and teacher preparation programs should treat the skills that teachers must possess to be able to increase relational trust with the same weight as the content knowledge they have about a subject or their understanding of how to align the curriculum to the academic standards students are expected to learn. This study supports the finding from Bryk et. al. (2010), which suggests that the presence of relational trust in schools can have positive effects on school climate and academic achievement. Therefore, schools should consider increasing measures of relational trust among their community members with the same amount of urgency they consider reducing suspensions or increasing student test scores.

Limitations

There are limitations to this study that are rooted in the qualities of *ex post facto* research, as well as the methods used to gather data, namely surveys and interviews. Cohen et al. (2008) highlight how *ex post facto* research, the use of data that has been previously gathered, is not useful for making casual claims about the relationship between variables because of the lack of experimental design and existence of a control group. Additionally, the quantitative portion of this study was limited by the survey response rate for parents/guardians. The elimination of schools from the potential study sample due to their low parent/guardian response rates could

result in bias in the findings. Additionally, while criteria were used to ensure that schools included in the analyses met a threshold of a 20% response rate, the parent/guardian survey rates of the schools that were included in the study remained well below those of the teacher and student surveys. This means that the parent/guardian survey data included in the analyses are less reliable than the data from the student and teacher surveys.

A major challenge to the qualitative portion of this study was the added difficulty of recruiting and conducting interviews during a global pandemic. Just as recruitment efforts began in the winter of 2019-20, schools and public spaces in Philadelphia (and across the world) were closed and students were transitioned to online learning. This resulted in logistical, methodological, and ethical issues. The primary logistical issue was getting information out about the study to potential participants and scheduling interviews over the phone. One of the primary recruitment methods, handing out flyers at parent/guardian events and in public spaces, was no longer an option. Ethically, it was a challenge for the researcher to ask parents/guardians for their time knowing the stress and turmoil that many families were undergoing as more and more people faced health, financial, and employment issues. Combined, this affected the number of interview participants included in the study. As such, the qualitative portion of the study would have benefitted from additional interviews, particularly interviews with parents/guardians that represented schools with high levels of achievement and low levels of trust. Since none of the parents interviewed were from high-achievement, low-trust schools, the findings presented in this paper may be biased. Another limitation to the qualitative portion of the study is the chance that the feedback shared during the interviews is limited by participants feeling uncomfortable or distrustful of the researcher (Cohen et. al., 2008). While the institutional knowledge that I possess as a School District of Philadelphia employee is an asset in some cases, my role as an

employee may have impacted the degree to which interview participants believe in my impartiality and assurances of confidentiality.

Conclusion

This study sought to examine levels of parental relational trust in Philadelphia public elementary and elementary-middle schools. A mixed methods study design was employed so that the strengths of quantitative and qualitative approaches could be utilized to understand how school characteristics impact levels of trust empirically and also through the voices of actual parents of Philadelphia public school students. Each epistemological lens added a unique value to the way that relational trust is implicated when thinking about creating and maintaining school communities that are positive and nurturing places for students to learn. Quantitative analyses confirmed prior research, and suggested that improving relational trust in schools can lead to improved climate, academic achievement, and diversity. Qualitative analyses provided insight into parent relational trust in particular, and reinforced why communication plays such a foundational role in building trust: it brings to light how lived experiences, social and historical context, and repeated interpersonal interactions contribute to how parents understand their role and the role of a teacher. In this way, this study built on the previous research by emphasizing the positive effects of relational trust in schools, as well as showing that the role construction framework can be a useful lens for understanding the relationships between parents and teachers.

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APPENDIX A

RELIABILITIES FOR DISTRICT-WIDE SURVEY CONSTRUCTS AND SUB-CONSTRUCTS

Table A.1

Survey Constructs and Sub-constructs, Parent/Guardian Survey, 2017-2018 SY

Construct	Sub-construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Climate	Bullying	8	0.90
	Safety/Building Condition	3	0.81
	Overall	11	0.80
Instruction	Evaluation of Teaching & Learning	6	0.93
	Evaluation of Extracurricular	3	0.87
	Overall	9	0.93
Parent/Guardian Community Ties	Communication Quality	10	0.93
	Parent/Guardian-School Relationship	6	0.86
	Parent/Guardian Involvement	4	0.74
	Parent/Guardian-School Networks	5	0.89
	Overall	25	0.93

Table A.2

Survey Constructs and Sub-constructs, Student Survey, 2017-2018 SY

Construct	Sub-construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Climate	Bullying	8	0.78
	Safety/Building Condition	6	0.81
	Belonging	5	0.83
	Overall	19	0.85
Instruction	Evaluation of Teaching & Learning	15	0.91
	Overall	15	0.91

Table A.3

Survey Constructs and Sub-constructs by Teacher Survey, 2017-2018 SY

Construct	Sub-construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Climate	Student-Centered Learning Climate	13	0.85
	Respect	9	0.73
	Challenges: Classroom Level	7	0.80
	Challenges: School Level	18	0.91
	Challenges: External	5	0.82
	Attendance	4	0.82
	School Discipline	10	0.90
	Overall	66	0.95
Instruction	Student Engagement	17	0.81
	Overall	17	0.81
Parent/Guardian Community Ties	Communication/Outreach	8	0.91
School Leadership	Expectations and Feedback	6	0.94
	Inclusive Leadership	5	0.94
	Classroom-level Decision Making	11	0.88
	Overall	21	0.92
Professional Capacity	Innovation	5	0.89
	Quality of PD	7	0.87
	Quality of PD: Learning	6	0.88
	Quality of PD: Consistency	5	0.68
	Peer Collaboration	7	0.93
	Overall	30	0.92

APPENDIX B

VARIABLES IN DATA SET

Table B.1

Description of Variables used in Data Set

Variable Name	Type of Variable	Description of Variable	Source	Publicly Available
School Name	String	Name of school	SDP Master School List	Y
School Code	Numeric	Four digit school identifier	SDP Master School List	Y
Enrollment 1516	Numeric - Continuous	Number of students enrolled based on October 1 snapshot	SDP School Information	Y
Enrollment 1617	Numeric - Continuous	Number of students enrolled based on October 1 snapshot	SDP School Information	Y
Enrollment 1718	Numeric - Continuous	Number of students enrolled based on October 1 snapshot	SDP School Information	Y
Enrollment 1819	Numeric - Continuous	Number of students enrolled based on October 1 snapshot	SDP School Information	Y
Percent Black/AfAm 1516	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with Black/African American race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent Black/AfAm 1617	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with Black/African American race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent Black/AfAm 1718	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with Black/African American race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent Black/AfAm 1819	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with Black/African American race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent Hisp/Lat 1516	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with Hispanic/Latino race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent Hisp/Lat 1617	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with Hispanic/Latino race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent Hisp/Lat 1718	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with Hispanic/Latino race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent Hisp/Lat 1819	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with Hispanic/Latino race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent Asian 1516	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with Asian race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent Asian 1617	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with Asian race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent Asian 1718	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with Asian race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y

Percent Asian 1819	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with Asian race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent White 1415	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with white race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent White 1516	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with white race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent White 1617	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with white race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent White 1718	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with white race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
Percent White 1819	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students with white race/ethnicity	SDP School Information	Y
CEP Rate 1516	Numeric - Continuous	Measure of economic disadvantage	SDP School Information	Y
CEP Rate 1617	Numeric - Continuous	Measure of economic disadvantage	SDP School Information	Y
CEP Rate 1718	Numeric - Continuous	Measure of economic disadvantage	SDP School Information	Y
CEP Rate 1819	Numeric - Continuous	Measure of economic disadvantage	SDP School Information	Y
Percent EL 1516	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students that are English language learners	SDP School Information	Y
Percent ELL 1617	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students that are English language learners	SDP School Information	Y
Percent EL 1718	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students that are English language learners	SDP School Information	Y
Percent EL 1819	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students that are English language learners	SDP School Information	Y
Percent IEP 1516	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students that have individualized education plans	SDP School Information	Y
Percent IEP 1617	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students that have individualized education plans	SDP School Information	Y
Percent IEP 1718	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students that have individualized education plans	SDP School Information	Y
Percent IEP 1819	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of enrolled students that have individualized education plans	SDP School Information	Y
Per 95% Attend 1516 Student	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of students attending at least 95% of enrolled days	SDP School Performance	Y
Per 95% Attend 1617 Student	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of students attending at least 95% of enrolled days	SDP School Performance	Y
Per 95% Attend 1718 Student	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of students attending at least 95% of enrolled days	SDP School Performance	Y
Per 95% Attend 1819 Student	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of students attending at least 95% of enrolled days	SDP School Performance	Y

PSSA ELA Performance Levels 1516	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of students scoring in each performance level on PSSA-ELA	SDP PSSA Attribution File	Y
PSSA ELA Performance Levels 1617	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of students scoring in each performance level on PSSA-ELA	SDP PSSA Attribution File	Y
PSSA ELA Performance Levels 1718	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of students scoring in each performance level on PSSA-ELA	SDP PSSA Attribution File	Y
PSSA ELA Performance Levels 1819	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of students scoring in each performance level on PSSA-ELA	SDP PSSA Attribution File	Y
PSSA Math Performance Levels 1516	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of students scoring in each performance level on PSSA-math	SDP PSSA Attribution File	Y
PSSA Math Performance Levels 1617	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of students scoring in each performance level on PSSA-math	SDP PSSA Attribution File	Y
PSSA Math Performance Levels 1718	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of students scoring in each performance level on PSSA-math	SDP PSSA Attribution File	Y
PSSA Math Performance Levels 1819	Numeric - Continuous	Percent of students scoring in each performance level on PSSA-math	SDP PSSA Attribution File	Y
Per 0 Suspensions 1516	Numeric - Continuous	Percent enrolled students with 0 OSS days	SPR Files	Y
Per 0 Suspensions 1617	Numeric - Continuous	Percent enrolled students with 0 OSS days	SPR Files	Y
Per 0 Suspensions 1718	Numeric - Continuous	Percent enrolled students with 0 OSS days	SPR Files	Y
Per 0 Suspensions 1819	Numeric - Continuous	Percent enrolled students with 0 OSS days	SPR Files	Y
Retention Rate 1516 Teacher	Numeric - Continuous	The percent of teachers teaching at the school that also taught at the school the prior year	SPR Files	Y
Retention Rate 1617 Teacher	Numeric - Continuous	The percent of teachers teaching at the school that also taught at the school the prior year	SPR Files	Y
Retention Rate 1718 Teacher	Numeric - Continuous	The percent of teachers teaching at the school that also taught at the school the prior year	SPR Files	Y
Retention Rate 1819 Teacher	Numeric - Continuous	The percent of teachers teaching at the school that also taught at the school the prior year	SPR Files	Y
Parent Trust Score 1516	Numeric - Scale	Calculated from DWS School Level Files	Requested from SDP	N
Parent Trust Score 1617	Numeric - Scale	Calculated from DWS School Level Files	Requested from SDP	N
Parent Trust Score 1718	Numeric - Scale	Calculated from DWS School Level Files	Requested from SDP	N

Parent Trust Score 1819	Numeric - Scale	Calculated from DWS School Level Files	Requested from SDP	N
Teacher Trust Score 1516	Numeric - Scale	Calculated from DWS School Level Files	Requested from SDP	N
Teacher Trust Score 1617	Numeric - Scale	Calculated from DWS School Level Files	Requested from SDP	N
Teacher Trust Score 1718	Numeric - Scale	Calculated from DWS School Level Files	Requested from SDP	N
Teacher Trust Score 1819	Numeric - Scale	Calculated from DWS School Level Files	Requested from SDP	N
Student Trust Score 1516	Numeric - Scale	Calculated from DWS School Level Files	Requested from SDP	N
Student Trust Score 1617	Numeric - Scale	Calculated from DWS School Level Files	Requested from SDP	N
Student Trust Score 1718	Numeric - Scale	Calculated from DWS School Level Files	Requested from SDP	N
Student Trust Score 1819	Numeric - Scale	Calculated from DWS School Level Files	Requested from SDP	N

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hello, my name is Adrienne and I am a Ph.D. student in Urban Education at Temple University. I am studying trust between teachers and families in Philadelphia schools. I am also a School District of Philadelphia employee, and I work in central office. However, this study is completely separate from my work as an employee.

Consent:

You are being asked to participate in this focus group/interview because you are a parent or guardian of a School District of Philadelphia student. The questions I would like to ask you are about the communication you have with your child's school and your opinions on teacher and parent roles. As I mentioned, I am providing $25 gift cards as a thank you for your time!

Participation is voluntary and you do not have to answer any question you do not want to answer. You can end the interview at any time.

What you said is completely confidential. When I write up my paper, I will not include any personally identifiable information, such as your name, your students name, or the name of your student's school.

It is helpful to me to record the interview so I can go back and re listen and type up notes later. Is that ok with you? Only I will have access to the focus group recordings and transcripts and they will be deleted as soon as I am finished with my study, which should be sometime in the spring or summer of 2021.

Do you have questions before we start?

You have my email and phone number, and you can reach out with any questions about the study using those if you have additional questions in the future.

Is it ok if I record the interview now?

1. Can you tell me the schools your child attends and what grade(s) they are in?
    a. When you think about the rest of the questions, if you have more than one student, you can think about how the question applies to one student in particular, or all your students.

2. In what ways does your child's school communicate with you?
    a. In-person, mail, flyers, calls, folders?
    b. When and how frequently?
    c. Who is it that you usually hear from?

3. When your child's school communicates with you, what is it typically about?

   a. Is it mostly about your child in particular or more of a general message to all parents?
   b. Do they ever invite or ask you to participate in school events? Suggest or ask you to do things at home?
   c. Do you believe what they are communicating is important and true?
   d. Can you think of a time when the you wished that you were hearing more from the school about an issue or less about something? For example, a time you felt out of the loop about something or a time you thought the communication was too much?

4. Do you communicate with your child's school?
   a. When and how?
   b. What is it usually about?
   c. Who do you usually communicate with?

5. When you think of the job of a teacher in general, what are some of main things you think of?
   a. Are these things that your teachers did in the past?
   b. How do these match with what your students' teachers do?

6. When you think about the job of a parent, what are some of the main things you think of?
   a. Are these things that your parents did for you?
   b. In what ways should a parent be involved in a student's education?

7. In what ways do you see the job of a teacher and a parent overlapping? In what ways are they different?

8. Do you think that you student's teachers have the best interest of your child in mind
   a. Why or why not?

9. Would you say that you trust your child's teachers? Why or why not?

10. Is there anything else that you would you like to share about your relationship with your child's school?

APPENDIX D

CODEBOOK

Code Book

Parent Code	Sub-code Code	Definition
Competence		
	Teacher role	The degree to which teachers meet parents' expectations about key aspects of a teacher's role.
	Parent role	The degree to which parents meet their own expectations about their role in their child's life, specifically when it comes to their child's education.
Integrity		
	Teacher role	The extent to which teachers follow through on mutually agreed upon expectations with parents.
	Parent role	The extent to which parents follow through on mutually agreed upon expectations with teachers.
Personal Regard for Others		
	Teacher role	Actions that teachers take to reduce students' and parents' vulnerability.
	Parent Role	Actions that parents take to reduce students' and teachers' vulnerability.
Respect		
	Teacher Role	When teachers engage in open and honest communication with parents and students.
	Parent Role	When parents engage in open and honest communication with teachers.