



Leading with Trust:

A collection of resources to help
you let go of micromanaging
and build a stronger team.

Christina Fecio Consulting | www.christinafecio.com

“Trust is not built
in big, sweeping
moments.

It’s built in tiny
moments every
day.”

- Brene Brown

Each of the resources in this
guide holds value for educators
who are committed to leading
with trust.

Source information is included
on each page, as needed.

Questions? **Please contact**
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Simon Sinek, “First why, and
then trust”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VdO7LuoBzM>



Stephen Covey, “Trust and
Inspire”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VdO7LuoBzM>



The 13 Behaviors of a High Trust Leader

CHARACTER

Behavior	What to say	Opposite	Counterfeit
Talk Straight	Be honest. Tell the truth. Let others know where you stand.	Lie. Deceive.	"Spinning," positioning, posturing and manipulating.
Demonstrate Respect	Care for others and show it. Treat everyone with respect, especially those who can't do anything for you.	Show disrespect or not care about others.	Faking respect, showing respect for some but not all.
Create Transparency	Tell the truth, be real, genuine, open and authentic.	Hide, cover up, obscure things.	Having hidden agendas, withholding information.
Right Wrongs	Admit when you're wrong, apologize quickly, show humility, don't let pride get in the way of doing the right thing.	Deny, justify, or rationalize wrongful behavior	Cover up, disguise, hide mistakes until forced to admit error.
Show Loyalty	Give credit to others, speak about people as if they're present and represent others who aren't there.	Take credit, betray others	Being gossipy and two-faced, appearing to give credit when they're present but downplaying their contribution and taking credit when they're not around.

COMPETENCE

Deliver Results	Establish a track record of getting the right things done. Make things happen, on-time and within budget. As Yoda says, "Do or do not, there is no try."	Overpromise and under-deliver.	Delivering activities instead of results -doing busywork without accomplishing anything real.
Get Better	Continuously improve. Increase your capabilities. Be a constant learner. Don't consider yourself above feedback.	Rest on your laurels, become irrelevant.	Learning but never producing, force-fitting things into what you're good at.
Confront Reality	Tackle all issues head-on, even the "undiscussables." Address the tough stuff directly. Confront the reality, not the person.	Ignore reality, be in denial.	Focus on side issues while skirting the real issues.
Clarify Expectations	Disclose, reveal and validate expectations. Don't assume they're clear or shared. Renegotiate if needed/possible.	Leave expectations unclear or undefined.	Guessing. Fail to pin down specifics for meaningful accountability.
Practice Accountability	Hold yourself accountable first, others second. Take responsibility. Be clear on how you'll communicate how you're doing and how others are doing. Don't blame.	Not take responsibility.	Point fingers and blame others, fail to enforce consequences when expectations aren't met.

CHARACTER + COMPETENCE

Listen First	Listen before speaking. Understand, diagnose, listen with ears, eyes and heart.	Speak first and listen last or not listen at all.	Listen just to formulate your response, pretend to listen.
Keep Commitments	Say what you'll do, then do it. Make commitments carefully and keep them at all costs. Don't break confidences.	Break commitments, violate promises.	Make vague, elusive promises that can't be pinned down.
Extend Trust	Extend trust abundantly to those who've earned it, conditionally to those who are still earning it.	Withhold trust.	Extend false trust -giving responsibility without authority, then micromanage, "snoopervise" and hover.



The Director's Toolbox

Asking Nonthreatening Questions

Directors can foster greater trust by asking nonthreatening questions at staff meetings that encourage individuals to express their views and opinions on different issues. Here are some suggestions for asking nonthreatening questions at your meetings.

- Begin by asking a question of your entire team rather than singling out an individual and putting that person on the spot.

Example: "What are the possible reasons why the children are having problems with transitions at lunch?"
(Do not say, "Jane, what are the possible reasons the children are having problems with transitions?")

- Don't be afraid of silence. Some directors become anxious if a question does not elicit an immediate response. If this happens to you, relax; your teachers are thinking.

- If a teacher responds, acknowledge the remark and explore the response further if possible. For example,

Teacher: "One of the reasons we are having problems with transitions at lunch is that the new cook brings in the food cart and just leaves it by the door."

Director: "Why is leaving the food cart by the door contributing to the transition problem at lunch?"

Teacher: "Well, before, the cook put the food on the table while we got the kids washed and ready. Now, one of us has to get the food on the table, leaving only one person to supervise handwashing."

- If no one responds in a reasonable amount of time, look for nonverbal signals from a staff member who wants to be involved (e.g., eye contact, a forward lean, an uplifted eyebrow.) Then, call on that person by name.

Example: "Letitia, you look as if you have something to offer here. Can you help us out? In your opinion, what are the possible reasons the children are having transition problems at lunch?"

- If no one responds to a question, consider rewording the question or asking if the question needs clarification.

Example: "Have I explained this clearly?" (rather than, "Do you understand?")

- Ask questions that are not biased.

Example: "What may be causing the problem?" (Do not say, "Is the problem caused by rushing the children?"
The problem may be caused by more than one factor.)

- Avoid too many yes/no questions. These have the effect of limiting discussion.

Example: "Is the transition problem caused by understaffing?" (You will probably get "yes" or "no" answers, but little discussion.)

- Pose questions that do not put your teachers on the defensive.

Example: "Is the lunch routine overwhelming?" (rather than, "Bonnie, why is there a lot of crying in your classroom at lunch time?")

- Even if people are not being attentive, do not ask "by name" questions to get their attention or embarrass them for not paying attention. Such actions can cause resentment and further noninvolvement.

- Be careful not to dish out too much praise or respond to participants with words such as, "That's a good question" or "What a great idea." Other staff members not receiving such praise may interpret their questions or responses as being less valued.

Developing Trust - Take Inventory

From https://www.huffpost.com/entry/can-you-pass-the-leadersh_b_1005216

Leading Yourself

- Does your team know your primary passion behind the work you do?
- Does your team know your ultimate personal professional goal?
- Have you ever shared your personal ethical code with your team?
- Does your team know your sources of inner strength and motivation?
- Do your team members understand your perspective on personal accountability?

Leading the Thinking

- Is your team clear on what your most critical performance metrics are?
- Does your team know your view of the team's vision and mission?
- Is your team aware of how you like to generate new ideas?
- Does your team know your views on how you make decisions?

Leading Your People

- Is your preferred leadership style clearly understood by your team?
- Do your team members feel like you genuinely treat them like individuals?
- Does your team feel like you're well-connected with the reality of their jobs?
- Does your team feel like you're fully committed to their growth and development?

Leading a Balanced Life

- Does your team know your boundaries between work and life?
- Would your team say you do a good job of keeping things in perspective?
- Does your team know what you're passionate about outside of work?

Trust Currency Quiz

1. Ideas are shared freely in this department; contribution, collaboration, innovation, and cooperation thrive.
2. Victim thinking, finger-pointing, and negative storytelling are infrequent.
3. People own their mistakes or errors and quickly correct them without prompting.
4. Best performers stay while others self-select; the performance bar is high and personal accountability is a norm.
5. There are few surprises. People keep each other and me up to date and informed. Regular feedback and dialogue is commonplace.
6. Healthy conflict, grounded with best-of-self behaviors like integrity, ethics, and big-team thinking prevails.
7. People like each other and show care and concern for one another, even volunteering to pitch in when others need assistance, without needing to be asked.
8. Deadlines are regularly met; people can count on each other to keep their commitments or be informed something needs to shift.
9. People volunteer to take on new assignments or be involved in projects, regularly putting in extra effort to achieve personal and organizational goals.
10. People do great work around here because they enjoy what they do, have pride in their work, and are self-engaged.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/trust-the-new-workplace-currency/201609/what-does-trust-look-work>

5-Minute Chats with Staff

Concept and content contributed by Gracie Branch, Associate Executive Director, Professional Learning, National Association of Elementary School Principals

School administrators demonstrate their openness to feedback and set the tone for a caring and supportive environment through repeated, positive interactions with their staff. An informal chat is one simple and effective approach. Chats help school administrators understand the experiences and perspectives of those they support while strengthening communication and trust.

How to use this template: Use this basic structure and prompts as a loose guide when you check in with staff throughout the year. Five minutes will go by quickly, so don't try to ask every question, and be prepared to adapt to focus on what the staff member wants you to know. If possible, meet with all staff including your administrative team, teachers, support staff, security, transportation, custodial, and nutrition staff. Depending on the size of your school, it may be necessary to divide up responsibility among the larger administrative team so that all staff have a one-on-one conversation with someone they see as a school leader with the power to make decisions. After you have met with staff individually, share in an all-staff meeting what you learned (without singling out individual feedback), how you will act on their feedback, and why the experience was valuable to you.

Preparing to chat: The primary purpose of the chat is to hear about your conversation partner's experience and perspective so that you can know them as an individual, be responsive to their needs, learn from them for the benefit of the school, and build relational trust. If you feel an impulse to rationalize or defend against their feedback, resist it. Remember that your purpose is to learn from their perspective, even if you don't entirely agree.

Initiate – If you already have a personalized relationship with the staff member, open the conversation as you would start any informal discussion with that person. If this is a relationship you are working to build, say/text/email something like:

Do you have a few minutes to chat? I'm working on connecting with everyone on staff to get a better sense of what everyone is feeling and thinking about, and how I can be supportive.

Learn about the person – Let them know that knowing about them as a person is your first priority by bringing it up on the front end of your conversation.

- What's new in your life since last time we talked?
- How is your family?
- What has changed for you since last school year?
- Any concerns or ideas on your mind that you would like me to know about?

Learn about their priorities – Transition to asking about their role at your school.

- How is everything going with [your classes, recess, your caseload]? Any bright spots or challenges?
- What are you spending the most time and energy on?
- What would you like to see happen this school year?

Invite more feedback – Show your conversation partner that you value their perspective and are open to making changes based on their input.

- What do you and your colleagues need most right now?
- What do you think we're getting right so far, that we can build on?
- What do you think we should be doing differently?

Close – End on an optimistic, forward-thinking note.

- This was helpful for me. Thanks for being open. You've given me some things to think about. I'm going to take some time to process what you shared, and we'll make some time to talk again in a few days.
- Thanks for taking a moment with me. I've been hearing similar things from others as well, so I'll be sharing about what I've been learning and some possible next steps at our next all-staff meeting.