

# **The Trust-Communication Connection in the Implementation of Race-to-the-Top Policy Innovations**

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# The Espoused Policy Theory of Action

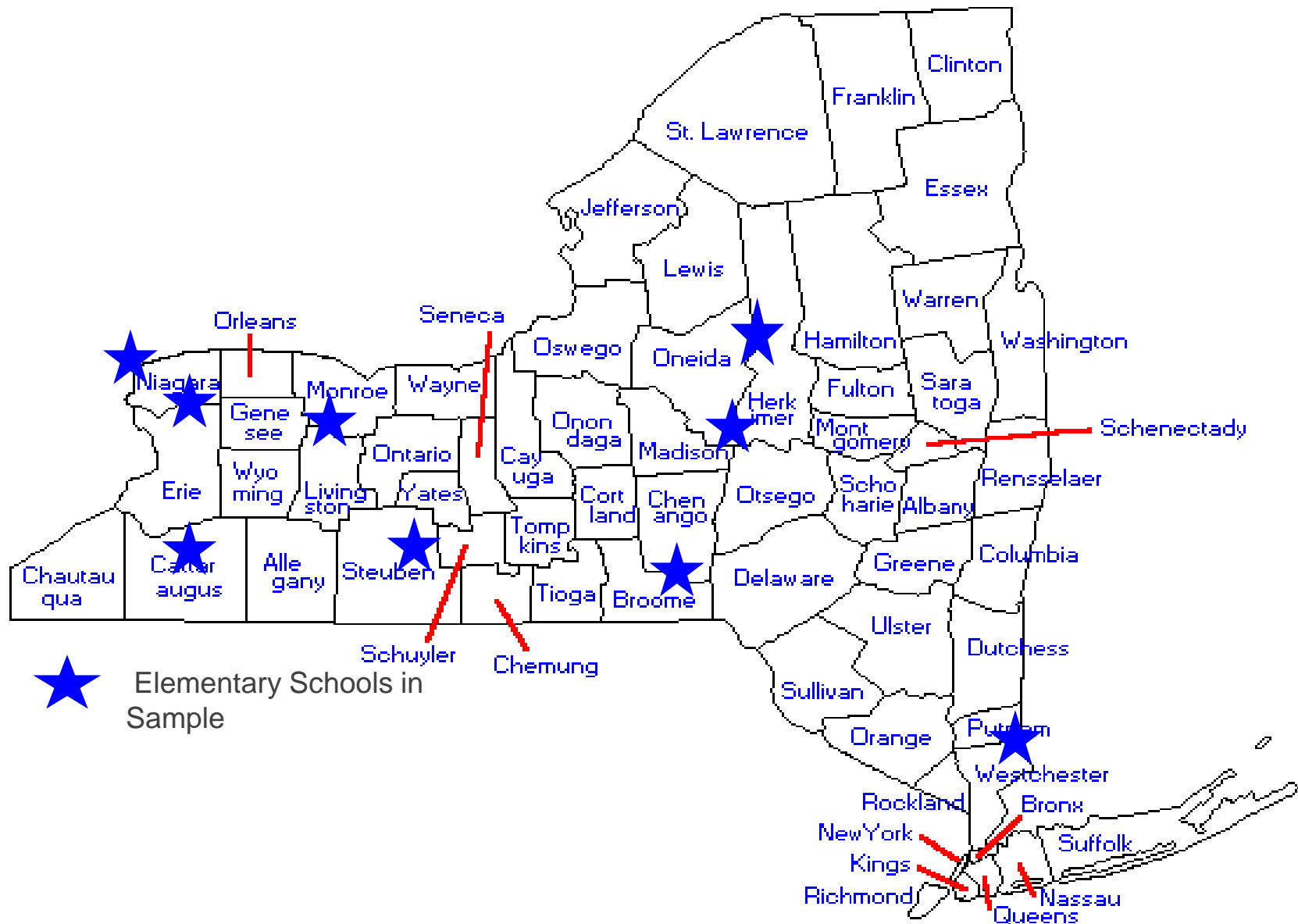
**Three  
Innovations:  
CCSS, APPR, &  
DDI**

**Implementation  
Moves from  
District Offices  
to Schools &  
Results in  
Performance  
Adaptations**

**Students Gain  
Equitable Access  
to Teachers,  
Learning  
Resources &  
Gain Important  
Knowledge**

**More College-  
and Career-  
ready Students  
Graduate from  
High School with  
Demonstrated  
Competencies**

# Background of Study



# The Schools

Odds-Beating	% Economically Disadvantaged Students	% White Students
Eagle Bluff	>43%	>89%
Spring Creek	18-43%	>89%
Starling Springs	18-43%	<73%
Yellow Valley	>43%	<73%
Bay City	>43%	<73%
Goliad	>43%	<73%
Typically Performing		
Wolf Creek	18-43%	>89%
Sun Hollow	18-43%	73-89%
Paige City	>43%	73-89%

## **Relational Trust**

(Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; McAllister, 1995; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Day & Gu, 2014)

## **Leadership and Organizational Communication**

(Rogers, 2003; Gilley, Gilley, McMillan, 2009; Knapp et.al, 2014; Durand, et al 2016)

## **Framing This Study**

## **Reciprocal Trust**

(Akkerman & Bakker, 2012; Fullan 2006; Lawson et al, 2016)

## **Trust-Communication Connection**

(McAllister, 1995; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis 2015; Bryk & Schneider, 2002)

# Research Questions

**What can we learn about the association between trust and communications during policy innovation implementation?**

A. How do district leaders communicate with principals and teachers as policy innovation implementation proceeds?

B. What is the relationship between these implementation-related communications and trust?

C. How does this trust-communication connection influence leadership for innovation implementation?

# Methods

- Multiple Case Study Design
  - Two-day site visits
  - Larger study included interviews, focus groups, classroom observations, surveys, interpretive memos, documentary evidence, case studies and member checking
- 69 Semi-structured interviews, 45 focus groups with superintendents, district leaders, principals, and teachers
- Analysis using NVivo 10, coding by a priori categories, identification of patterns

(Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; QSR International, 2012; Strauss & Corbin, 2008; Yin, 2014)

# Relational Trust and Communication

Trust and communication within the school building

- Bi-directional communication throughout the school buildings
- Open and diverse methods of communication
- Use of teams to gather and spread information
- Trust in professional expertise

“Some people have a little bit of experience and some people have a lot of experience. All of them are highly motivated to do well in the classroom and push themselves”- Eagle Bluff

Principal

“She’s very supportive of teachers and she trusts us”- Eagle Bluff  
Teacher



# Reciprocal Trust and Communication

Mutual trust and communication between

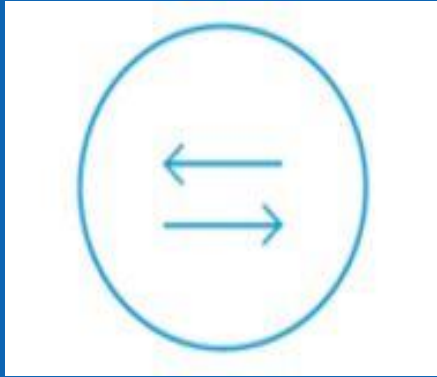
- District leaders and School Leaders
  - Frequent and Regular Meetings
  - Data Use
  - Shared Expectations and goals.
- District Leaders and Teachers
  - Teacher Expertise
  - Professional Judgment
  - Collaborative work with district leaders

*“What’s informing me the most are the conversations I’m having with individual teachers...When you are a learning leader, you are humble and you are learning with everyone else. I don’t see myself as part of an org chart where I’m at the top. I’m in the center of a web of connections and collaborations. I’m a facilitator of conversations” -Starling Springs Superintendent*

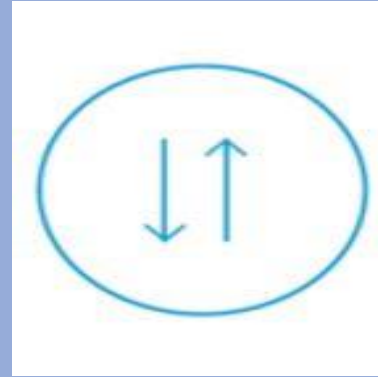
# Recommendations

- Communication is a never ending priority.
- Communication fosters and builds trusting relationships
- Remember the emotional side of change
- Support teachers in their work by providing resources; providing and communicating a clear vision
- Anticipate change and communicate expectations, goals, and shared mindset frequently
- Explicitly express trust

# Conclusion and Discussion



Relational  
Trust



Reciprocal  
Trust



# Thank You!

**This presentation and abstract can be  
downloaded at:**

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