Strategies for Using these Resources to Build Relational Trust

1. **Start with why trust matters.** Introduce the concept of relational trust to school faculties, leadership teams, leaders, or a specific group who will be working together over a period of time by using the *Trust in Schools Summary of Research* PowerPoint, since this resource provides the very convincing data around the impact of trust on student achievement.

2. **Next, build staff knowledge about what relational trust is.** Working from a shared definition of relational trust is important. Most people carry their own examined or unexamined definition of “trust”, and it is important to collectively unpack the four components of the definition in Bryk and Schneider’s work. Three resources can help with this step: *Relational Trust in Schools* (EL Education’s overview), *the Trust in Schools* excerpt, and the article from ASCD. The EL overview and the article both refer to some of the why as well as the what.

3. **Get a baseline indicator of relational trust.** The Relational Trust Survey Questions will aid you in gathering data about the current status of relational trust at a school. Before diving into administering the survey(s), determine which ones you will use (Teacher-Principal, Teacher-Teacher, Teacher-Parent), and be sure to communicate to all stakeholders who will analyze the data, when, and how. Anonymity is important, so also consider how data will be collected in a way that ensures both privacy and a high rate of completion.

4. **Analyze the data.** Involve as many stakeholders as possible in data analysis, and use a protocol (such as the ATLAS Looking at Data Protocol) that you’ve modified to meet your specific needs. Be extra thoughtful about facilitation, norms, grouping, and debrief, since in and of itself, this step has the ability to build or erode trust.

5. **Share the data and solicit possible next steps.** Share the data with all who took the survey and perhaps a wider audience (depending on who participated in Step 4.) Sharing the data is another move that engenders trust, since it requires that school leaders both take a risk (demonstrating personal regard for others) and follow through (demonstrating integrity). Just sharing the data is not enough; school leaders need to welcome input about possible next steps based on what stakeholders see. Whether the results indicate that celebration is in order or there is work to be done (or both), the issue of “now what” should be addressed when the data is shared.

6. **Take action.** If the results are celebratory, consider using a success analysis protocol to identify what’s working, so that it can be continued, strengthened, and replicated. If not, determine next steps. Refer to *Seven Norms of Collaborative Work and Five Dysfunctions of a Team* as two starting points for ideas. In addition, refer back to the list of brainstormed ideas that came from analyzing and sharing the data, and consider talking with your regional director about other possible resources and next steps.