Forging Trustful Connections:
A Case Study on the Role of Trust in Forming Inter-Organizational Relationships for Youth Apprenticeship Programs in Career and Technical Education in Washington State

Presentation to WERA

Washington State University

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introduction

- **Christopher R. Nesmith**
  - Superintendent, Elma School District
  - *Co-Lead, AASA Redefining Ready Cohort on Career, College and Life Readiness*
- *Personal Experience:*
  - *2016: Tour of German TVET System*
  - *Piloted first school AJAC Youth Apprenticeship*
  - *2017: Study at ETH Zurich for Washington Youth Apprenticeship System*
  - *Backend consultant for Computing for All and AJAC*
  - *Launched full youth apprenticeship in Elma within seven months*
- *Elma School District Initiatives:*
  - *H2P Grant*
  - *Limitless Grant (Grays Harbor College, WSU College of Medicine, Clover Park Technical College, AJAC)*
  - *Arizona State University Partnership (Free Bachelor's Degree)*
  - *AJAC Youth Apprenticeship*
  - *Elma Innovation Academy (Bates Technical College, AJAC, Grays Harbor College)*
  - *Member of Launch, Equitable Pathways for All*

Problem

- **High post-secondary dropout rates in the U.S.**
  - Only 40% of Americans earn an associate's or bachelor's degree
  - Lower rates for African-Americans and Hispanics
- **Goals set by the U.S. Department of Education: 55% of Americans to earn a post-secondary credential by 2025**
- **Poor performance in international assessments (PISA rankings)**
  - U.S. students rank 17th in science, 25th in math
  - U.S. post-secondary completion has fallen to 12th internationally
- **Need for Contextual Learning**
  - Emphasis on academic performance over pragmatic knowledge
  - Importance of embedding rigorous academic skills in career pathways
- **Citations:**
  - Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson (2011)
  - Hanushek et al. (2017)
  - Hoffman (2017)

First Problem

Low Post Secondary Enrollments and Completion Rates - Goal of 55% by 2025

Second Problem

Contextual learning improved post-secondary completion - but discrepencies in quality of contextual learning programs.

Career Connect Washington and TVET Models

- Swiss model: Top-down design vs. Washington's bottom-up approach
- Swiss model: Top-down design vs. Washington's bottom-up approach
- Need for new theoretical models to adapt TVET to local control in the U.S
- Insights from Renold, Bolli, and Caves

- Citations:
  - Green & Pensiero (2016)
  - Renold et al. (2016)
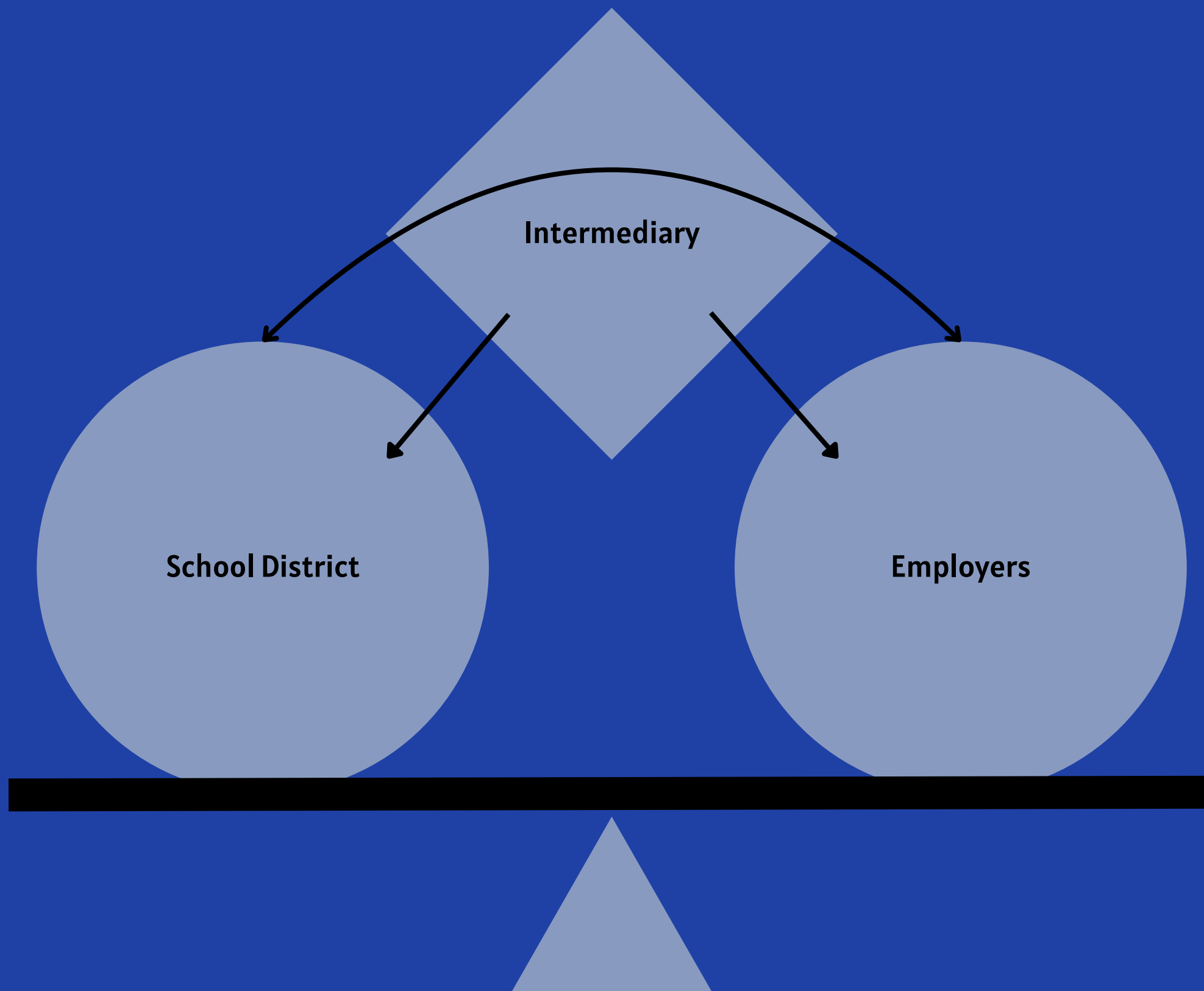 - Hoffman (2017)

TVET Countries

- **Balance of Control in Setting Learning Outcomes**
  - Government Established Intermediaries
  - Top=Down Government Structure
  - Edu
- **Intermediaries**
  - Work Between Schools and Employers has balanced decision-making.
  - Ensures learning outcomes have high expectations.
    - 'Permeable', whereas skills are transferable to advanced education.
- **School Districts**
  - Prioritize graduation rates.
  - Assessment scores.
- **Employers**
  - Low cost human capital.

Citations:
Wolter
Renold et al. (2016)
Green & Pensiero (2016)

Power Dynamics in Schools

Challenges of power dynamics within schools
- Imbalance of decision-making authority
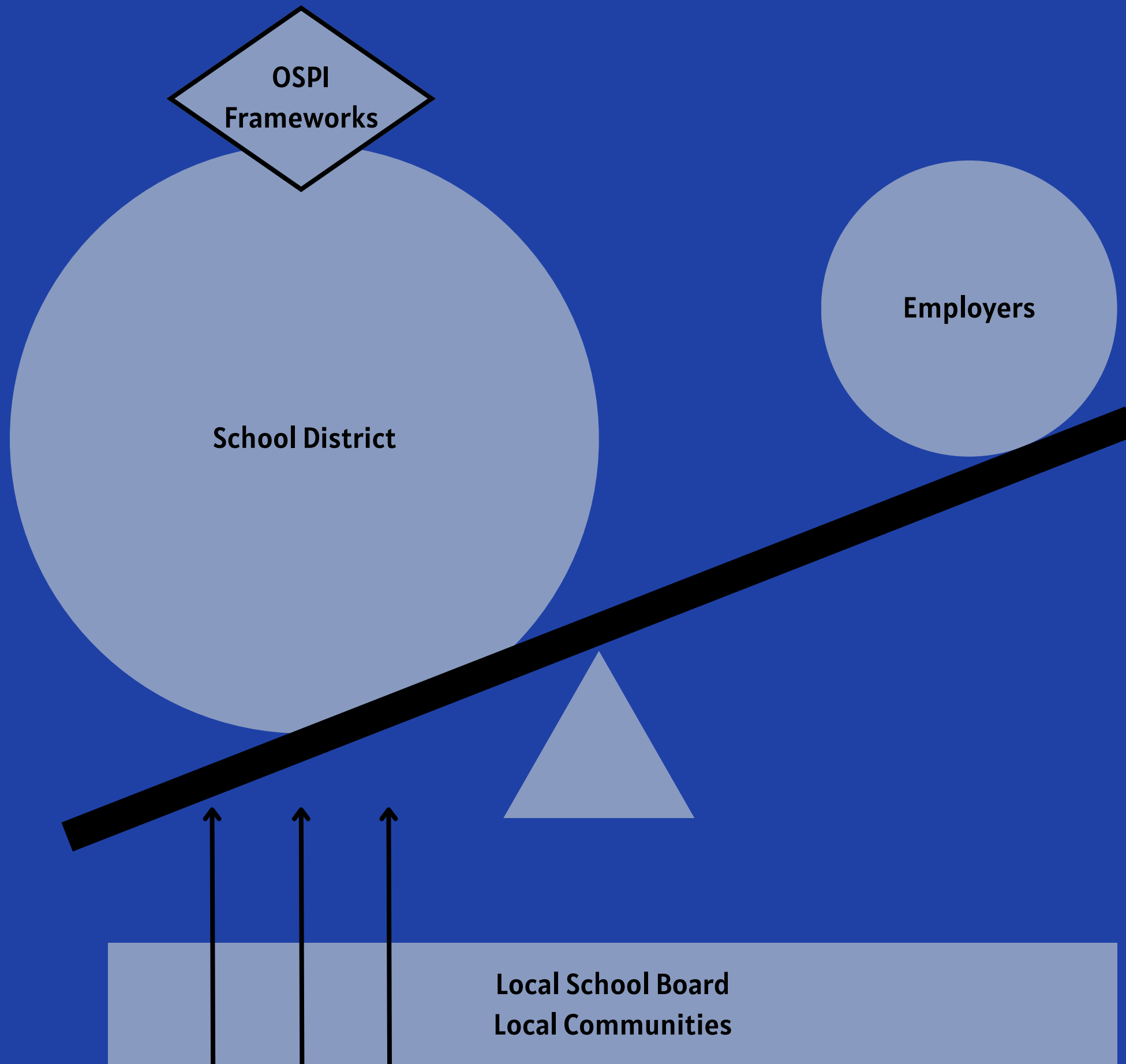- Comparison with Swiss model's balanced power structure

Role of intermediaries in balancing power
- Ensuring mutual accountability between employers and educational systems
- Mitigating self-interests that do not align with student outcomes

Citations:
- Renold et al. (2016)
- Connelly et al. (2018)
- Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson (2011)
  -

US System

- **Balance of Control in Setting Learning Outcomes**
  - Government Established Intermediaries
  - Top=Down Government Structure
  - Edu
- **OSPI**
  - Sets CTE Model Frameworks - Which we can choose to use.
- **School Districts**
  - CTE Responsible for:
    - Setting CTE Frameworks
    - Organizing employer input to various quality
    - Just has to check off the process that was done
  - School Boards / Levies
    - Sports?
    - Test Scores?
    - Graduation Rates?
    - Strikes?
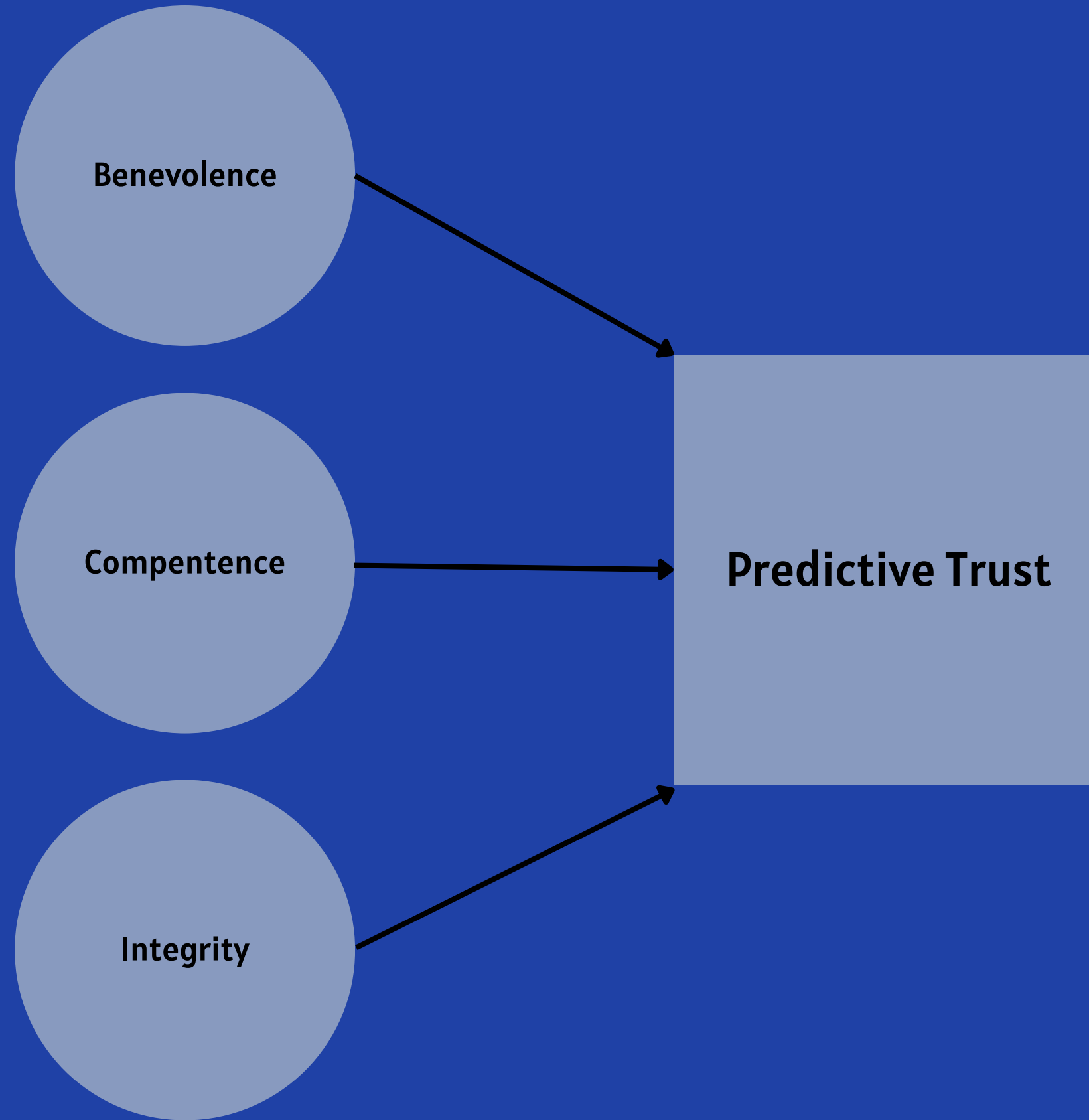- **Employers**
  - Advisory only -

Citations:
Wolter
Renold et al. (2016)
Green & Pensiero (2016)

Theoretical Framework on Trust

- Four dimensions of trust: Benevolence, Competence, Integrity, Predictive
  - Importance of trust in developing youth apprenticeship programs
  - Aligning learning outcomes with employer needs through trust
  - Facilitating successful student transitions into the workforce

- Citations:
  - Mayer et al. (1995)
  - Lane & Bachmann (1996)
  - Luhmann (1979)
  -

Benevolence

Compentence

Integrity

Predictive Trust

Theoretical Framework on Trust

Importance of leveraging experiences of teachers and employers
- Career and technical education teachers connecting learning to future careers
- Need for integrating academic skills in vocational contexts

Developing a shared organizational memory
- Routine meetings and goal-oriented outcomes
- Recording and sharing experiences across teachers

Citations:
- Connelly et al. (2018)
- Caves et al. (2019)
- Renold et al. (2016)

Research Design

Approach: Case Study
- Examines inter-organizational relationships in youth apprenticeship programs

Participants:
- School districts, employers, intermediaries in Washington State

Data Collection:
- Interviews: Semi-structured with key stakeholders
- Document Analysis: Policy documents, program reports
- Observations: Field observations of programs and meetings

Data Analysis:
- Thematic analysis and coding of trust-related behaviors

Ethical Considerations:
- Confidentiality and informed consent

External Factors

Understanding state and federal funding opportunities and mandates
- Impact of outside pressures on learning goals
- New laws and accountability measures
  - Emphasis on Post-Secondary or Career Readiness over Graduation Rates and Test Scores

Citations:
- Zhong et al. (2017)
- Connelly et al. (2018)
- Hoffman (2017)
-

Solutions for Immediate Use

Addressing immediate needs of teachers and employers
- Aligning organizational learning with teaching and workforce needs
- Practical application of new skills

Understand fiscal implications on districts - Local Control and Levies
- Target districts that just had a double levy failure.
- Focus regionally

- Citations:
  - Connelly et al. (2018)
  - Green & Pensiero (2016)
  - Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson (2011)

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Solutions for Immediate Use

Summary of key points

- School districts have reigning authority in decision-making, we must leverage their specific needs
- The potential of collaborative organizational learning to improve academic and post-secondary outcomes
- We need a bottom-up approach to the TVET organizational design through trust.
    - Importance of mutual respect and practical application in teaching

Citations:

- Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson (2011)
- Renold et al. (2016)
- Hoffman (2017)

References

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