

Secondary Education: Principals

TITLE Effective Leadership: Perceptions of Principals and the Teachers They Lead

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between principals self-reported leadership behaviors when compared to their teachers' perceptions.

METHODOLOGY

Participants in this study were 169 teachers (65.25% response rate) and eight principals from elementary and secondary schools located within a small, urban school district in the piedmont area of North Carolina. Principals completed the self-version of the Leadership Practices Inventory, and had teachers in their institution complete the observer-version of the instrument; and all participants provided demographic information. The teachers were predominantly females (85.2%), with about half of the teachers having less than 10 years of teaching experience and between one and four years of experience with the current principal. Principals had an average of 24 years in education and 10 years at the same school.

KEY FINDINGS

The average principal responses were correlated with the number of years they served as principal at their current school and the line of best fit indicated a negative correlation in principal self-reported leadership behaviors based on the number of years they served as principal in their current school, consequently indicating the longer a principal has served as the leader of a school in the researched district, the less confident he or she was their leadership abilities as measured by the LPI survey. However, no statistically significant differences on any of the five practices were found based on the principal's age or gender. Whether their current principal hired the responding teacher had no impact on how principal's leadership behaviors were perceived. The most commonly exhibited leadership behavior of principals according to teachers was Model and Enable; with Encourage the Heart being the least frequent leadership practice.

