

TITLE Novice Principals' Perceptions of Effective Leadership Practices and Their Principal Preparation Programs

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to examine novice principals' perceptions of effective leadership practices and the elements of their principal preparation program that prepared them for the role of school leader.

METHODOLOGY

The sample consisted of 47 principals from one school district in the mid-Atlantic section of the United States (with less than three years in their current position, who had participated in a principal preparation program; 47% response rate). Respondents completed the Leadership Practices Inventory; semi-structured interviews were conducted with seventeen respondents primarily in regards to the effectiveness of the principal preparation program. The typical respondent was an African-American (85%), 37-45 years old (54%), female (77%), with a master's degree (94%), heading an elementary school (54%). In this study internal reliability coefficients were .90 Model, .95 Inspire, .92 Challenge, .92 Enable, and .95 Encourage.

KEY FINDINGS

The most frequently engaged in leadership practice was Encourage, followed by Enable and Model, and then Inspire and Challenge. No statistically significant differences were found between elementary, middle and high school principals on the leadership practices of Model, Inspire, and Challenge. On both Enable and Encourage elementary school principals reported engaging more frequently in this leadership practice than did their high school counterparts.

Respondents in the focused groups tended to stress the importance of Enabling, Modeling and Encouraging. As the author explains: "In this study, quantitative data informed the researcher that the three most important leadership practices were as follows: (a) enabling others to act through collaboration and collegiality; (b) sharing rewards and celebrating accomplishments; and (c) modeling the way through the demonstration of standards, accountability, and the achievement of goals" (p. 105).