| **TITLE** | Principal Leadership and Resilience in a Climate of Secondary School Reform |
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| **OBJECTIVE** | The purpose of this study was to explore leadership practices, resilience and implementation of change leadership among secondary school principals in Alaska. |

## METHODOLOGY

The target sample was a pool of 98 secondary public school principals in Alaska, and 48 (49% response rate) participated by completing the Leadership Practices Inventory, the Resilience Scale (Wagnild & Young, 1987), and a qualitative open-ended questionnaire consisting of five questions regarding change leadership. The typical respondent was male (65%), between the ages of 34-49 (50%), Caucasian (88%), and led junior/senior high schools (23%), junior high/middle schools (29%) or high school principals (48%). Their average service at their current site was just under four years; although they averaged 6.6 years of experience as principals in Alaska. Eleven participated in semi-structured interviews.

## KEY FINDINGS

Enabling Others to Act and Modeling the Way were the leadership behaviors most frequently engaged in, followed by Encouraging the Heart, Inspiring a Shared Vision, and Challenging the Process. An overall, or composite, measure of the five leadership practices was significantly related to the overall measure of resilience. The researcher came to the conclusion that principals that exhibit high levels of resilience are better able to employ the best practices in leadership. Taking that conclusion further, and supported by the results of the qualitative data, "intentional and collaborative leadership practices were critical to the implementation of successful school reform. According to Kouzes and Posner (2007a), Modeling the Way and Enabling Others to Act include elements of intentional and collaborative leadership" (p. 90).

No significant relationships were found between any of the five leadership practices and demographics: Gender, age, race, type of school, type of district, years in current position, number of years in as a principal in Alaska, or number of years overall as a principal.

Two over-arching dimensions became apparent -- intentional leadership and collaborative leadership -- as the defining dimensions of the qualitative data. The importance of the principal leading change within the school emerged as the primary theme within the dimension of intentional leadership. Qualitative participants expressed their strong belief that collaborative leadership was another element necessary for principals to successfully implement school

reform.  A primary theme within collaborative leadership was that of building trust and creating relationships; and a second theme that emerged as an element of collaborative leadership was that of securing shared vision through stakeholder involvement.

"The researcher has concluded that the secondary principal participants in this study perceive themselves as able to effectively employ some of the best practices in leadership due to relatively high levels of resilience.  This conclusion from the quantitative data is supported by the results of the qualitative data analysis that suggested that both intentional and collaborative leadership practices were critical to the implementation of successful school reform.  According to Kouzes and Posner (2007a), Modeling the Way and Enabling Others to Act include elements of intentional and collaborative leadership" (p. 90).

The author concludes:
>Two dimensions of leaders of successful school reform that emerged from the qualitative data were intentional leadership and collaborative leadership.  These results complemented the findings from the quantitative surveys in which Modeling the Way and Enabling Other to Act (Kouzes & Posner, 1987, 2007a) were the clusters of leadership practices most frequently employed by participants of this study. Modeling the Way and Enabling Others to Act both address collaboration (Kouzes & Posner, 1987, 2007a). Modeling the Way also requires explicit leadership action while Enabling Others to Act includes capacity building within the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 1987, 2007a) (p. 94).