

TITLE Secondary School Improvement Efforts of a Midwestern Dropout Factory: A Case Study

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to address the paucity in the literature in regards to the school improvement efforts a secondary school principal was making in conjunction with the leadership practices to rid the school profile of the label Dropout Factory.

METHODOLOGY

This study used purposeful sampling of a single secondary school principal. The principal was selected based on two specific criteria: The leader had been a principal of a Dropout Factory before the label was designated to the secondary school, and the secondary school had been making steady improvement efforts to help lift the label Dropout Factory from their school profile. The school enrolled over 1,000 students, with nearly all African-American (98%). In addition to artifacts, field notes, and interviews, the Leadership Practices Inventory was administered to the principal.

KEY FINDINGS

The principal's percentile on the LPI ranged from the 80th to 95th percentile for all five leadership practices. These average scores are considerably higher than those found in the Kouzes Posner normative database.

The author concludes:

Analysis of the data addressed how the principal's behaviors influence the school improvement efforts of the school and led to the emergence of two major themes: (a) Leadership and (b) Vision. The LPI results showed the principal's means for the leadership practices 'Challenging the Process' and 'Encouraging the Heart' were the highest, indicating that these practices might have a link to continuous student achievement in this secondary school (p. 80).