



TITLE Faculty Perceptions of Shared Decision Making and the Principal's Leadership Behaviors in Secondary Schools in a Large Urban District

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between teachers' perceptions of the leadership behaviors of secondary school principals and their perceptions of the level of shared decision making practiced in their schools.

METHODOLOGY

The population for the study was a sample selected from all secondary schools in a large urban public school system. The school system encompasses 154 schools, serving 126,000 students of which 60,000 are in secondary schools. The student populace is characterized as 54 percent white. Schools with principals who had served in their schools two or more years were selected for the study and the sample consisted of 646 participants from 26 schools. These respondents represented a 35 percent rate of return from the 1,841 teachers surveyed and 22 percent of the total secondary teachers in the school system. Each participant completed the Leadership Practices Inventory and Shared Educational Decisions Survey-Revised (Ferrara, 1994).

KEY FINDINGS

A total of 34 significant correlations between the leadership behaviors of the principal and the level of shared decision making were identified. The significant correlations ranged between .096 and .191. These weak correlations indicate that the principals' leadership practices only explained between one percent and four percent of the variance in the level of shared decision making. According to the authors: "Therefore, there was very little relationship between the leadership behaviors of the principal and the level of shared decision making in schools" (p. 638). They suggest:

From a more speculative perspective, individual leadership behaviors of school principals may have less influence on the decision making culture than the organizational structure and culture of the schools and school

district. The policies and practices of a community or organization embody the shared values and meanings of its members. Since the study was conducted in a single large district, the norms, values, and policies of the school district may be a prevailing factor in the decision making culture of the schools (p. 640).

The authors indicate, however, that “the results of this study have direct implications for the preparation of future school leaders. Principal preparation institutions must be charged with the task of developing programs that provide experiences which enhance potential leaders’ skill to create learning organizations” (p. 640).