

TITLE School District Support Structures: A Mixed Methods Study of the Leadership Development of Pre-Service School Librarians

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the school district support structures available for the Project LEAD students on their leadership development.

METHODOLOGY

The Project LEAD program at Florida State University was developed as a leadership curriculum for school librarians, and the population of this study consisted of 30 teacher-leaders that participated in the program. They had an average of 13 years of teaching experience and a bachelor's degree. Respondents completed the Leadership Practices Inventory, provided demographic information, and answered several closed and open-ended questions. The school librarianship director assigned a mentor to each participant.

KEY FINDINGS

The majority of the responses collected detailing the transformational leadership skills they learned in the program centered on Challenge the Process and Inspire a Shared Vision; while Enable and Encourage were least frequently mentioned. While there was no significant relationship between the participants' perceptions of mentor support and the leadership practices, there was a relationship with the amount of time the participants spent with their mentors. Participants that spent more time with their mentors scored higher on Model, Enable, and Encourage. No significant relationships were found between any of the leadership practices and respondents' perceptions of the support offered by their school districts or school climates.

The author notes:

Despite their school climates, the results of this study were contrary to research suggesting that negative school cultures can discourage leadership development (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). The participants' satisfaction with support from the school district and support within the schools did not have a significant relationship with the LPI. As the researcher analyzed the data from the surveys and focus group, it became evident that there was another layer of support that the students relied upon heavily that was not included in the survey. It was the cohort format of the program. The entire cohort of students matriculated through the online program together. Yet each student could also rely upon the cohorts that existed within their counties (p. 67)... It can be inferred that factors likely to impede the leadership development of pre-service school librarians can be counteracted with support

structures such as cohorts, mentors, and the assistance of school librarianship directors (p. 68).