

TITLE Beyond Transformational Leadership: A Mixed Methods Case Study Examining a Deputy Superintendent's Evolution to the Kind of Leadership that Drives System Level Improvement

RESEARCHER Vanessa Y. White
Department of Educational Studies
University of Cincinnati
Unpublished doctoral dissertation: March 2019

OBJECTIVE The purpose of the study was to isolate and examine the distinct transformative leadership practices of a transformational leader in a top-tier central office administrative level as this leader attempts to drive sustainable, system-level improvement.

METHODOLOGY

The study is focused on a large urban pre-K-12 school district. The focal leader (deputy superintendent) oversees improvement strategies for a district with a poverty rate that is one of the highest in the country. The city's population is approximately half Caucasian and half African-American. Almost 75 percent of the district's student population is below poverty rate. The focal leader completed the LPI and eight direct reports completed the LPI-Observer.

KEY FINDINGS

"The data collected from semi-structured interviews, observations, and a leadership measurement survey with open-ended questions on the leadership practices that were consistently depicted in how those leadership practices led to districtwide school improvement. The richness of the qualitative data, both from the focal administrator and the observers was complemented by the quantitative leadership assessment. It is also important to note, through member checking, that the qualitative interviews with focal administrator and LPI summary of the five leadership practices was confirming. On the LPI, the five practices data was summarized for each of the leadership practices. Each of the average responses for the observer was within one or less percentage points of the focal administrator. In fact, four of the practices was within .03 percentage points" (p. 102).