

TITLE: Superintendent Perceptions of the Importance of Research Based Leadership Behaviors Exhibited by Candidates for the Position of Principal

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OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this research study was to investigate the relationship between the leadership behaviors of principals as perceived by superintendents.

METHODOLOGY: The sample comprised 63 percent of all secondary school superintendents in Illinois (N=64). They completed the Leadership Practices Inventory from the viewpoint: "rate the importance of each of these behaviors when evaluating a candidate for the principalship." They also provided demographic and organizational data. The typical respondent was male (84%), from a low-income district (92%) with a high achievement rate 57% with a ACT average score greater than 20).

KEY FINDINGS: Scores on each of the five leadership practices from superintendents about the behaviors they were looking for in principals were significantly higher than those found in the Kouzes Posner normative data base ($p < .001$). There were no significant differences between male and female superintendents on the desired five leadership practices (only four items out of 30 reflected any significant difference). There were no significant differences in desired leadership practices of superintendents of low and high socioeconomic levels of students, or on the percentage of students on free or reduced lunch in each school district (high or low), or by reported ACE scores of students (high or low).

The author suggests that "preparation programs need to not only make the aspiring principals aware of these behaviors, but also need to show them how these behaviors can be put into practice. It is an obligation of the preparation programs to be sure that principals are prepared to successfully deal with the demands and challenges of the role" (p. 85).