

TITLE: A Correlation of Self-Assessed Leadership Skills and Interpersonal Communication Competencies of Public School Superintendents in Illinois

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OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between specific leadership skills and interpersonal communication competencies for school superintendents.

METHODOLOGY: A probability sample (N=333) was drawn from the target population of practicing school superintendents who were members of the Illinois Association of School Administrators (N=842) and 112 participated. They completed the Leadership Practices Inventory and the 30-item Conversational Skills Rating Scale (CSRS) (Spitzberg, 1993). The respondents' average age was 55 years and typically male (84%). Forty-one percent were in elementary districts, 43 percent in unit districts and the remaining in high-school districts. Most had been superintendents for five years and in their current district three years. Nearly half were in rural districts, and most of the others in suburban districts (44%) or urban (7%).

KEY FINDINGS: Females reported significantly higher responses on 14 of the 30 LPI statements than their male counterparts. Twenty-eight of the LPI items did not vary on gender by virtue of type of school district. Twenty-eight LPI items did not vary on the basis of school district location. The LPI items were generally not significantly correlated with the variables of superintendent age, length of time as a superintendent, length of time in current position or district size.

“This study supported the relationship between leadership skills and interpersonal communication competencies generally and for educational leaders specifically” (p. 123).