

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE **research**

THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE ON BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

TITLE	Parent and Teacher Perceptions of Characteristics of the Effective Elementary School Principal
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OBJECTIVE	The purpose of the study was define the characteristics of an effective school principal from the perspective of parents and teachers.

METHODOLOGY

The parent participants (N = 29) and teacher participants (N = 40) were chosen from three separate primary schools within one school district located in the suburbs of a mid-sized metropolitan area in South Central Pennsylvania. Participants completed the LPI-Observer in regards to their school's principal and responded to several open-ended questions connected with the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership.

KEY FINDINGS

There were only three LPI items (leadership behaviors) on which parent and teacher responses significantly varied. Parents rated Challenging the Process and Modeling the Way slightly higher than teachers; no differences were found for Inspiring, Enabling and Encouraging. Both parents and teachers recognized Modeling as the most important leadership theme, followed by Enabling Others to Act, Encouraging the Heart, Challenging, and Inspiring a Shared Vision.

Analysis of open-ended responses suggested differences in emphasis between parents and teachers. "The parents seemed to emphasize the responsibility of the principal to be the primary role model within the organization who ensured that people adhered to the standards of the organization and grew in their job skills. In contrast, teachers seemed to have placed less importance on the principal as the primary role model and placed a greater importance on the principal recognizing and utilizing his or her teachers' strengths and opinions in the decision-making process" (p. 80).