

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE **research**

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TITLE The Relationship Between Gender and Leadership Style in the Massachusetts High School Principalship

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OBJECTIVE The purpose was to investigate the relationship between gender and leadership styles of high school principals in Massachusetts.

METHODOLOGY

All current regular public high school principals (N = 239) in Massachusetts as identified by the Massachusetts Department of Education (2007) were invited to participate in the study. Ninety-five individuals (67 males and 28 females) completed the survey (41% response rate). Respondents completed the Individual Contributor version of the Leadership Practices Inventory. The typical respondent had taught for 16.6 years and served as principal, on average, for 6.7 years (with most serving exclusively in their current school).

KEY FINDINGS

On all five leadership practices, while not significantly different, males rated themselves higher than females. Most to least frequent leadership behavior (rank order) for males as well as females was Enabling, Modeling, Encouraging, Inspiring, and Challenging. Number of years taught by respondents was significantly correlated (positive) with Inspiring and Encouraging but not with Modeling, Challenging and Enabling. Neither the number of years as a principal nor number of schools as a principal was significantly correlated with any of the five leadership practices.