

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE **research**

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TITLE Elementary Principals' and Paraprofessionals' Perceptions of Principal Leadership Practices and the Impact on Meeting NCLB Paraprofessional Requirements

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to investigate the leadership practices of selected elementary school principals in Southeastern North Carolina and provide a profile of the type of support provided by school principals to meet NCLB requirements.

METHODOLOGY

The sample population consisted of 33 elementary school principals (response rate = 34%) and 248 elementary paraprofessionals from nine southeastern North Carolina school districts. Participants completed either the self or observer version of the Leadership Practices Inventory, and paraprofessionals also provided demographic information.

KEY FINDINGS

Comparison of LPI scores from principals and their paraprofessionals revealed no significant differences on the leadership practices of Modeling, Inspiring and Encouraging. On Challenging and Enabling the leadership scores of principals were significantly higher than those of their constituents. The most frequently engaged in leadership practices by principals were Model and Enable, followed by Encourage, and then Challenge and Inspire. The pattern was somewhat similar from the perspective of paraprofessionals, although Challenge was ranked fifth in frequency. An unexpected finding was that paraprofessionals under the age of 30 scored principals lower on each of the leadership practices than did their counterparts over the age of 30.

The study found no significant difference in how elementary principals and paraprofessionals perceived the support provided by school principals to meet NCLB paraprofessional requirements.