

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE **research**

THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE ON BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

TITLE The Perception of School Superintendent Leadership Behavior in Missouri Public Schools Accredited with Distinction in Performance

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of the study is to determine leadership behaviors and characteristics of school superintendents in Missouri public school districts Accredited with Distinction in Performance.

METHODOLOGY

The sample population consists of 255 Missouri school districts accredited with distinction in performance in the 2007-2008 school year. Superintendents completed the Leadership Practices Inventory and provided demographic information. One hundred and eleven responded (43.5% response rate) and the typical superintendent was male (77%), aged 50 or older (56%), with at least a master's degree of education (56%). The number of years in their current job and years as a superintendent in total were about equally divided between 1-3 years, 4-5 years, 6-10 years and over 10 years.

KEY FINDINGS

The average score of Missouri superintendents from school districts accredited with distinction in performance were higher on all five leadership practices, and 26 out of 30 individual behaviors, in comparison with the Kouzes Posner normative database. This finding was consistent across genders and generally consistent with increasing years of education. Age, years of service, school district size, and percentages of free and reduced lunch were not correlated with LPI scores. This study, the author concludes: "Provided overwhelming evidence that school superintendents' perception of leadership behavior awareness far exceeds the national norm group in all five categories of the Leadership Practices Inventory" (p. 96).