

# THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

# research

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THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE ON BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

<b>TITLE</b>	An Exploratory Descriptive Mixed-Method Study Examining Leadership Characteristics and Practices as Identified by Middle School Teachers
<b>RESEARCHER</b>	Richard L. Bishop II School of Education Stephen F. Austin State University Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation: August 2009
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	The purpose of this study was to identify middle school teachers' perceptions of characteristics and leadership practices of middle school principals.
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	Middle school teachers who were currently employed in two East Texas school districts were purposely selected because their middle or junior high school campus had been rated as "Recognized" for at least two out of the past three years, and whose ethnic makeup was less than 55 percent Caucasian served as the sample population (total population = 400) for the study. The sample size for this study was 43 middle school teachers (response rate = 91%); six teachers from each campus also participated in a focus group. Teachers completed the Kouzes Posner Checklist of Admired Leaders (CAL) survey and the Leadership Practices Inventory. The typical

teacher was female (86%), held a bachelors degree (79%), was between 31-50 years of age (58%), and had 5-14 years of teaching experience (44%).

## KEY FINDINGS

Teachers reported that Enabling was the most frequently engaged in leadership practice of their principals, closely followed by Modeling and Encouraging, and then Challenge and Inspire. The five most important leadership characteristics they identified in principals were supportive, honest, dependable, caring and competent.

The author concludes that “the practice of enabling others to act received the highest mean score, but teachers identified that all five practices: (1) challenging the process, (2) inspiring a shared vision, (3) enabling others to act, (4) modeling the way, and (5) encouraging the heart, were important for a middle school principal” (p. 89).