

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

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- TITLE** A Comparison of the Leadership Practices of Principals of Making Middle Grades Work Schools That Work Schools as Measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory
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WWW.ACADEMICLEADERSHIP.ORG/ARTICLE/A_COMPARISON_OF_THE_LEADERSHIP_PRACTICES_OF_PRINCIPALS_OF_MAKING_MIDDLE_GRADES_WORK_SCHOOLS_AS_MEASURED_BY_THE_LEADERSHIP_PRACTICES_INVENTORY
- OBJECTIVE** This research study sought to determine if the leadership practices of the principals of the higher performing Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW) schools are more transformational than the practices of the moderate and lower performing MMGW schools as measured by the LPI, and to determine if the self-reported leadership practices scores of MMGW principals are different from the expected scores for the leadership practices as measured by the LPI.
- METHODOLOGY** Of the 309 MMGW schools invited to participate in the research study, principals from 49 responded (17% response rate). The principal of each school was emailed an introductory letter outlining the study. The principal was asked to complete a Self version of the LPI and a demographic survey

online using SurveyMonkey.com web site to host the surveys. The principal was also asked to randomly select a teacher and forward the email he/she received. The teacher was asked to complete an Observer version of the LPI and demographic survey also on SurveyMonkey.com. Of the 420 LPI-Observer responses, eighty percent were from teachers; 67 percent of the respondents were from moderate and low implementer schools and the remaining were from high implementer schools.

KEY FINDINGS

ANOVA, using responses from principals, teachers and staff, determined that responses for high and moderate implementer schools were higher than low implementer schools for all practices; with a statistically significant difference between the three groups for Model, Challenge, Enable and Encourage but not for Inspire. There were no statistically significant differences between principals in the three groups on any of the five practices. Principals in this study reported significantly higher scores on all five leadership practices in comparison with Kouzes Posner normative database. The rank order of the frequency of engagement in the five leadership practices was the same between principals and their constituents. However, principals reported engaging in the leadership practices of Model, Enable and Encourage significantly more than that reported by their constituents.

There were no significant differences found for any of the other principal demographic factors (e.g., gender, education, age) with the exception of years of administrative experience. Principals above the mean of having more than nine years of administrative experience, versus those below this nine-year threshold, reported engaging in all five practices significantly more

frequency. There were no significant differences in the five leadership practices between principals based on the location of the school and the size of the school as measured by student enrollment.

The author concludes: "As a result of this research, it was determined that there is a significant difference between the leadership practices of principals of high and moderate implementer schools and low implementer schools. In addition, when comparing the leadership practices of all MMGW principals to the Kouzes and Posner norms, MMGW principals are practicing the five leadership practices significantly better than the norm."