

**TITLE:** A Study of the Relationship Between the Preferred Leadership Styles of School District Superintendents and the Capability of School Districts to Become Professional Learning Organizations

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**OBJECTIVE:** To investigate the executive leadership role of school district superintendents and the capability of their respective school districts in becoming professional learning organizations.

**METHODOLOGY:** Public school districts in four upstate New York counties were invited to participate, with 69% replying (N=22). The school district superintendent completed the Leadership Practices Inventory and a randomized sample (N = 525) of district building principals, department coordinators, supervisors, teacher from elementary, middle/junior high school, and high school from each school district returned the School Professional Staff as Learning Community (SPSLC; Hord, 1999). Five superintendents, with the highest scores, were interviewed.

**KEY FINDINGS:** LPI scores were somewhat higher from this sample than the normative data base. There was a significant relationship between Challenging and SPSLC Dimension 1b (shared decision making) and between years the superintendent had worked in the school district and Inspiring and SPSLC Dimension 1a (staff involvement in decision making). There were no significant relationships between the five practices and the SPSLC Dimension 2 (staff discussion, improving practice or quality learning). On SPSLC Dimension 3 (sharing information, student issues, program delivery, implementing plans, and assesses the impact of actions) there were generally no significant relationships with leadership, except for Inspiring and implementing plans and both Enabling and Encouraging were negatively associated with assesses impact of actions. On the SPSLC Dimension 4 (peer evaluation and collaborative discussion and dialogue), only Inspiring and Modeling were correlated with peer evaluation. There were no significant relationships with SPSLC Dimension 5 (time for interaction, facilities for interaction, processes for staff communication, trust and openness, and collaborative relationships).

When the separate LPI dimensions were factored into a regression model with the dimensions of the SPSLC, the direction of the relationship was negative, while when the same model applied the combined LPI dimensions with the

combined SPSLC dimensions, the relationship was positive, leading the researcher to speculate that it “could very well be assumed the leadership effect of the LPI must be considered in total when pre-figuring a predictive equation on the SPSLC. The combined total of the LPI dimensions, which would model the combined leadership skills and potential of the superintendent, may be a predictive variable in ascertaining the organizational practices of the professional learning organization for this sample” (p. 156).