

TITLE: Principals' Effective Leadership Practice in High Performing and Inadequately Performing Schools

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OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a difference between principals' effective leadership practice between high and inadequately performing schools.

METHODOLOGY: The population consisted of all K-8 North Carolina principals (N = 1,632), with performance based on high composite growth (gain) scores in the ABCs testing program (Accountability, Basics and Control). Seven high performing school principals and six inadequately performing school principals (who had been with that same school for three years) agreed to participate among those selected for the sample. Principals completed the LPI-Self and asked the teachers within their schools to complete the LPI-Observer. The response rate among observers was 42 percent (N=147) in high and 38 percent (N=107) in inadequately performing schools.

KEY FINDINGS: The LPI scores among principals between the two performance category of schools was not significantly different. Teacher ratings of principal leadership practices were not statistically different between high and inadequately performing schools on Modeling, Inspiring, Challenging, and Enabling. Teachers in inadequately performing schools reported their principals as Encouraging more frequently than did their counterparts in high performing schools. There were no statistically significant differences between the LPI-Self (principal) and LPI-Observer (teacher) scores in high performing schools; although self scores were consistently higher than observer scores. The LPI-Self scores of principals in inadequately performing schools were not significantly different from those of their teachers, except that teachers found their principals engaging more frequently in Inspiring a Shared Vision than reported by the principals.

Overall, the author concludes that there is little difference in principals' leadership practices between school performance levels: principals see themselves in inadequately performing schools as engaging in effective leadership practices just as principals in high performing schools see themselves as positively engaged in effective practices. Inspiring is ranked the least engaged leadership practice by principals regardless of school performance.