

TITLE: Principals' Leadership Practices in the Implementation of Site-Based Management

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OBJECTIVE: Examined the leadership practices of elementary school principals who were implementing site-based management (SBM) in the Bloomington Public Schools (CT) and the conditions which facilitated this practice.

METHODOLOGY: Principals and their SBM teams (eight elementary schools) were studied in a single school district. Principals completed the LPI-Self and members of their SBM (N=55) completed the LPI-Observer. The author developed an Organization Factors Survey (OFS) to gather data about the organizational conditions in the participating elementary schools. The OFS explored seven factors: team building, rewards/incentives, information-sharing, goals and outcomes, formal board support, formal central office support and formal teacher union support.

KEY FINDINGS: Principals' LPI scores, on all five leadership practices, were generally in the moderate to high levels compared to the normative Kouzes and Posner database. The principal's average LPI scores were generally higher than their SBM teams for four leadership behaviors: Inspiring, Enabling, Modeling, and Encouraging. SBM teams reported that the organizational factors identified from the literature as being essential to effective site-based management were put into place unevenly in these elementary schools, with most of them being present either moderately (medium) or minimally (low).

The author concludes: "In the schools where principals had implemented some form of participatory decision making before the school adopted site-based management, principals were perceived by their SBM teams to be more credible" (p. 124; i.e., engaged in the five leadership practices). "There are direct connections between practices that facilitate successful implementation of SBM and Kouzes and Posner's five leadership practices" (p. 129). "If the principals in this research are representative of other elementary school principals in the district, then an immediate training initiative should be designed for them so that they can continue to strengthen their leadership skills" (p. 142).