

TITLE: Faculty Perceptions of Shared Decision Making and the Principal's Leadership Behaviors in Duval County Secondary Schools

RESEARCHER: Donald W. Leech
College of Education and Human Services
The University of North Florida
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OBJECTIVE: This study examined the relationship between leadership behaviors of secondary school principals and the level of shared decision making in schools as perceived by teachers.

METHODOLOGY: The sample consisted of 12 middle and 14 high schools in the Duval County Public School system (Florida), whose principal had at least two years of tenure. Teachers at each school completed the LPI-Observer and the Shared Education Decisions Survey-Revised (Ferrara, 1994). Of the 1,841 teachers, approximately 35 percent responded (N=646). The typical teacher had 16 years of teaching experience. About two-thirds of the respondents were female, and the majority were Caucasian (76%). Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the LPI-Observer ranged from .84 to .91. Factor analysis revealed high multicollinearity.

KEY FINDINGS: Statistically significant, but weak, relationships were discovered between the principals' leadership behaviors and the level of shared decision making in all seven areas: Planning, policy development, curriculum/instruction, student achievement, pupil personnel services, staff development, budget management. Enabling was reported as the most frequently used leadership practice, while Encouraging was viewed as least often practiced by the principals.

NOTE: Also presented at the Annual 2000 Joint Meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Educational Research, the National Academy of Educational Research (November, 2000): "The Leadership Practices of Secondary School Principals in a Large Urban School District." The author reports: "The results of this study portrays a somewhat promising view of the current status of school leadership. Over half of the responding teachers perceived principals as demonstrating Kouzes and Posner's (1995) effective leadership practices 'fairly often' to 'almost always.'