

**TITLE:** The Principal's Leadership Role in Effective Site-Based Managed Elementary Schools

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**OBJECTIVE:** To determine if principal's leadership practices in an effective site-based managed school differ from those in schools rated less effective and whether principals and their staffs accurately perceived these leadership practices.

**METHODOLOGY:** Six hundred and forty-nine schools, in sixty school districts across the U.S., identified as being actively involved in site-based management processes, were randomly selected from 2,645 schools, invited to participate by completing an effectiveness instrument (15 item questionnaire judged for validity by a five-person expert panel). From 119 responding schools, there were 99 usable responses; 34 were categorized as "effectively using the site-based management process" and 34 were identified as not effective. Mann-Whitney U Test for two independent samples confirmed the differences of the two groups. Principals in these schools were asked to complete the LPI-Self and their site committee members completed the LPI-Observer.

**KEY FINDINGS:** Principals in the high performing group reported Inspiring and Encouraging significantly more than did their counterparts in the low performing groups. On Challenging, Enabling, and Modeling the differences approached statistical significance ( $p < .08$ ). Site team members in the schools from the high group viewed their principal's as engaging in the five leadership practices significantly more than did team members from the less effective schools. There were no significant differences between Self (principal) and Observer (site committee members) scores within either effectiveness group.

No differences between the top and bottom groups were found in the following areas: principal's training or previous site-based management experience, length of time the site-based management process had been in place, principal's age or gender, school size, or the management initiating agents. There was more constituent training in the top performing schools.

"The effectiveness of the site-based management process was reliant on the leadership skills of the principals in the high group...the principal whose leadership skills are well developed can facilitate the successful implementation of the site-based management process"(100).