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TITLE A Study of the Relationship Between Superintendents' Perceived Leadership Practices and Socioeconomic Status of School Districts in New Jersey

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between superintendents' perceived leadership practices and school district socioeconomic status.

METHODOLOGY

All 209 K-12th grade superintendents in New Jersey were invited to participate and 157 did so by completing the Leadership Practices Inventory (79% response rate). Fifty-eight school districts were classified as being in a low socioeconomic district and 46 met the criteria for being a high socioeconomic district (according to ratings developed by the State's Department of Education). The typical respondent was male (83%), in a district with less than 5000 students (74%), in his/her current position less than five years (54%) and with more than six years of experience as a superintendent (59%).

KEY FINDINGS

There were no statistically significant differences between superintendents from low and high

socioeconomic status districts on the leadership practices of Model, Challenge, and Encourage. Superintendents from high socioeconomic districts reported significantly higher frequency of use for the leadership practices of Inspire and Enable.

No significant differences between superintendents were found on the basis of gender, district size, and years in the current position. This was also true for years as a superintendent with the exception of Enable, with those with more experience reporting greater use of this leadership practice.