

ABSTRACT

Benavides, Alda T., An Analysis of Key Leadership Behaviors of the Principal in a High Performing Elementary School Serving Mexican American Children in South Texas. Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership (EdD), May 2001, pp., 15 tables, references, 143 titles.

This study is based on the theoretical framework that defines leadership as an influence process, one that depends on the extent to which people eventually perceive leadership as a quality someone possesses and as a result of that perception, consent to be led (Greenfield, 1998). Leadership is the process of being perceived as a leader (Lord and Maher, 1993). Doing good work at one's school and being seen to do such work is likely to be the most powerful strategy for positively influencing teachers' perceptions of one's leadership. This study expands on the theory that it is what you do (your actions and their perceived efforts) not who you are (age, gender) that matters to teachers (Leithwood, 1995).

The research questions that guided the study are:

- 1) What strategies and techniques do respondent stakeholders perceive this elementary principal use to promote high expectations among all teachers, students and parents?

- 2) What strategies and techniques do respondent stakeholders perceive this elementary school principal use to promote high parental involvement?
- 3) What strategies and techniques do respondent stakeholders perceive this elementary school principal use to build a shared vision among teachers, students and parents?
- 4) What strategies and techniques do respondent stakeholders perceive this elementary school principal use to develop high teacher morale and support?

A qualitative study was conducted at an elementary school using two types of data: a teacher and parent survey and teacher, staff and parent interviews. An analysis was conducted to determine the critical strategies and techniques contributing to a high performing elementary school. Findings of the study indicated that there are different types of strategies used by the principal to influence teachers, parents and students in the areas of high expectations, parental involvement, shared vision and high teacher morale. These strategies included: 1) communication, 2) goal setting, 3) modeling, 4) organization, 5) encouragement, 6) facilitative, 7) agreement building, 8) networking, 9) institution-building, 10) recognition, 11) support, and 12) interpersonal.

This study added to the theory by expanding the knowledge base of what teachers and parents believe are the key behaviors of the principal that contribute to a high performing campus. The conclusion that principals do play a vital role in influencing what happens in the school was strengthened by this study.