

ABSTRACT

Ridlehoover, J. The High School Principalship: An Investigation into the Essential Leadership Characteristics as Determined by High School Principals and the Teachers Whom They Serve (2010)

This study arose from a professional curiosity regarding what high school principals and teachers believed were the most essential leadership qualities of the high school principal. The premise was to quantitatively conclude whether a disconnect existed between what high school principals and teachers believed were the most essential leadership characteristics of the high school principal. The given leadership characteristics were prefaced with the understanding that the most essential leadership characteristics are those that have the greatest impact on student academic achievement and building climate/culture.

The study was of the mixed-method variety, with the vast majority of the data coming from two, ten-question surveys. One survey was provided to all high school principals in the state of Minnesota, and the second was provided to teachers in four Minnesota high schools. The second portion of the research included interviews with four high school principals. The interviews were used to ascertain the principals' thoughts with respect to the quantitative data collected.

The findings showed that high school principals and teachers show a great deal of commonality regarding what they consider to be the most essential leadership characteristics of the high school principal. However, the survey also showed that while high school principals and high school teachers find a great deal of agreement regarding the essential leadership characteristics, they do not necessarily find agreement on how site-based decisions are made or the style of leadership exhibited through their collective experiences with high school principals.

The findings of this research will be further disseminated to high school principals to provide them with insight regarding their *perceived* role in school leadership. This information should be helpful to high school principals in terms of increasing their personal leadership capacity and, therefore, increasing student academic achievement and the climate/culture of their respective schools.