

PRACTICES THAT CONSTITUTE
SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT LEADERSHIP:
PERCEPTIONS FROM ESTABLISHED RURAL SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine which leadership practices are the most crucial in helping school superintendents be successful as school leaders. This is a qualitative study in which six rural Missouri superintendents were interviewed to determine the answers to the following research questions: (a) What leadership practices are perceived by established school superintendents to be crucial to successful school leadership? and (b) What do established superintendents perceive are the leadership practices that warrant the most attention from the school superintendent?

A review of the literature identified nine commonly used research practices: vision, communication, visibility, inspiring followers, shared leadership and collaboration, professional growth, ethical behavior, political awareness, and building relationships. The qualitative interviews focused on the impressions, the perceptions, and the experiences of the superintendents as answers were sought concerning which leadership practices were considered the most crucial. Once the interviews were completed and the data were analyzed, the findings provided evidence to support recommendations for superintendents concerning communication, having an ethical focus, being effective managers, and utilizing combinations of leadership practices.