

Public Abstract

First Name:Elizabeth

Middle Name:Hayet

Last Name:Woods

Adviser's First Name:Barbara

Adviser's Last Name:Martin

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

Graduation Term:SS 2012

Department:Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Degree:EdD

Title:A CASE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS REGARDING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROCESSES AND STRUCTURES IMPLEMENTED IN A HIGH POVERTY, HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOL

Boyd-Zaharias and Pate-Bain (2008) postulated that low achievement and high dropout rates among poor students continue to "plague" (p. 40) public schools in the United States; and elaborated further by stating, "our nation will profit by or pay for whatever they become" (p. 40). Chenoweth (2009a, 2009b) and Haycock (2001) shared that the country continues to move forward with reform efforts though the achievement gap between poor students and their non-poor peers does not tend to close, rather it widens. Therefore, the achievement gap between poor students and their peers, a problem of practice, is the focus of this study.

The researcher chose a narrative case study in a high performing, high poverty school in Missouri. The perceptions of stakeholders regarding the leadership processes and structures implemented by the principal were examined through the lens of transformational leadership. The following two overarching themes emerged: (1) Educating the Whole Child, with the subthemes of: (a) providing basic needs, (b) academic interventions based on achievement data, (c) an emphasis on reading, (d) extended academic time, and (e) relationships; and (2) High Expectations of Stakeholders, with the subthemes of: (a) consistent student expectations, (b) increased staff accountability, and (c) community involvement. The researcher found that by focusing on the themes and subthemes, rather than adopting numerous expensive programs, the school was able to increase and sustain academic achievement of the students of poverty as well as their peers when assessment data from the Missouri Achievement Program (MAP) were analyzed. Staff, parents, administration, and students were aware of their academic success as data were examined and discussed regularly through collaboration with the principal. School personnel across the United States could replicate the leadership processes and structures identified through this case study.