

Title: The Administrative Beliefs and Practices of Two Rural Pennsylvania School Superintendents: A Qualitative Analysis

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The purpose of this study was to analyze the administrative beliefs and practices of two rural Pennsylvania school superintendents. One superintendent administered a school district that had Pennsylvania System of State Assessment (PSSA) test scores above the 75 percentile. The comparison district had PSSA scores below the 25 percentile. Ronald Edmonds' theory of effective schools was used to determine what elements of school effectiveness each district exhibited.

Two rural Pennsylvania school districts were identified to participate in this study. Employing questions that focused on Edmonds' constructs of effective schools, interviews were conducted with the school superintendents, building administrators, principals, and members of the school board over an eight month time period.

Using a narrative analysis, data was collected and reviewed to determine the impact both superintendents' administrative beliefs and practices had on the administration of their schools. The researcher found that the superintendent's administrative behaviors in both districts were quite similar. In comparing these behaviors to Edmonds' constructs of effective schools, it was also determined that the efforts of a school superintendent may not be the driving factor in the level of success a district may experience.

From the data collected in this study, it was apparent that the educational goals of the community, coupled with the values present in the community, are significant factors worthy of additional study. The expectations and attitudes of the residents of rural school districts may have a greater impact upon the direction a district moves than the efforts of the superintendent of schools who is leading the district.