

Title: A Study of the Relationship Between Leadership and School Climate in Rural Secondary Schools

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### ABSTRACT

Leadership styles have been a topic of study for many years. In the school arena, school climate has caused much discussion among educational leaders. In looking at these two topics, a correlation has been found between how educational leaders lead and the impact their leadership style has on the climate in the school. This study focused on three different areas: a) how the teachers perceive the leadership style of the principal; b) the teachers perceive the school climate; c) how the perception of the leadership style and the school climate relate to one another.

Data was gathered in 5 small rural junior/senior Pennsylvania high schools with a student population under 500. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLS) and the Organizational Climate Questionnaire for Secondary Schools (OCDQ-RS) were the two instruments used. The MLQ rates the teachers' perception of the type of leadership style the principal uses. The OCDQ-RS rates the teachers' perception of the climate in the school. A comparison was done between the teachers' perception of the principals' leadership style and the teachers' perception of the school climate.

The findings suggested that a leader does not fall into one defined

leadership category. Leaders often show characteristics of more than one leadership style. Three of the schools surveyed showed some correlation between the teachers' perception of the principal's leadership style and the teachers' perception of school climate. In all of the school there was a strong cohesiveness among the members of the faculty. The small size of the district and faculty may be in direct correlation with the positive feelings the faculty have toward one another. Different conclusions can be drawn from the results that can be related back to the size of the district.