
Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding evidence-based information about the characteristics of effective instructional leaders. Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the ten regional educational laboratories (REL) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. It provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations on research based education questions.

The information below represents the most rigorous research available. Researchers consider the type of methodology and give priority to research reports that employ well described and thorough methods. The resources were also selected based on the date of the publication with a preference for research from the last ten years. Additional criteria for inclusion include the source and funder of the resource.

Question: *Is there evidence that shows correlation between effective principals and high graduation rates? What factors differentiate more effective institutional leaders? What evidence exists that effective principals have higher achieving students than less effective principals? I would like information about the role of the instructional coach in secondary schools. Specifically, what factors make them more or less effective as school leaders and coaches?*

Search Process

Key words and search strings used in the search: *principal AND characteristics AND student outcomes.* These terms were sometimes paired with *effects*.

Search databases and websites: ERIC (<http://www.eric.ed.gov/>), EBSCO Host, Academic Search Complete (<http://www.ebscohost.com/academic/academic-search-complete>), Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com/>), JSTOR

Other:

- Mills, L. B., McDowelle, J. O., & Rouse, W. A. (2011). A meta-analysis of research on the mediated effects of principal leadership on student achievement. In E. H. Reames (Ed.), *Southern Regional Council on Educational Administration 2011 Yearbook*. Auburn, AL: Auburn University, College of Education.
- Murphy, J., Goldring, E., Elliot, S. N., & Porter, A. (2006). *Learning centered leadership: A conceptual foundation*. New York: Wallace Foundation.
- Nettles, S. M., & Herrington, C. (2007). Revisiting the importance of the direct effects of school leadership on student achievement: The implications for school improvement policy. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 82(4), 724-736.

-
- Robinson, V. M. J., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(5), 635-674.
 - Waters, T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement*. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.
 - Witziers, B., Bosker, R. J., & Kruger, M. L. (2003). Educational leadership and student achievement: The elusive search for an association. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(3), 398-425.

Referrals

Organizations:

The Wallace Foundation: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org>

Institute of Education Sciences Resources (IES):

Publication search engine available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/>

Other Federally Funded Resources: The Center on Innovation and Improvement (<http://www.centerii.org/>); The Center on Instruction (<http://www.centeroninstruction.org/>); The National High School Center (<http://www.betterhighschools.org/>); Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (<http://www.centerforcsri.org/>); Education Commission of the States (<http://www.ecs.org/>)

Disclaimer:

This Ask A REL response was developed by REL-SE under Contract ED-IES-12-C-0011 from the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.