

Eby, B. J. (2004). *Effective women principals: Transformational leadership in urban settings*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio.

## Abstract

Urban high school women principals are a very unique and small group of administrators who may bring a different perspective to how schools may be more effective. Throughout the public education system in the United States, women have become a very viable force in providing leadership to urban secondary schools. Many popular and professional writers argue that males and females lead differently and even the way women lead, that is, more nurturing, democratic and empowering, is the way organizations should be led. The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership styles of women high school principals and how these particular traits and characteristics translate into effective models of education. The research sought to answer one question. How do women principals in urban high schools lead schools to success? Through the use of personal narrative and analysis of archival data, women high school principals were given the unique opportunity to tell their stories of their journeys to the role of high school principal as well as the road they travel daily in their present role. The study design was qualitative in nature and involved the analysis of personal interviews, archival documentation and field observation. The three women high school principals interviewed had traveled different paths as they ascended to the role of principal. They had served in many varied roles from program directors, assistant principals, field supervisors, and central office positions. Although each woman told a very different story, these women utilized several common practices. It is hoped that through the study of these very personal stories that a better understanding of the way women lead emerges. If any change toward advancement for women in educational leadership is to take place, the very basis for change, the research, must also change.