



# SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

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Department of Educational Leadership, Western Illinois University

## Editors' Message

It is our pleasure to share with you the first issue of *Spotlight on Research*, a collection of selected dissertation abstracts that highlight the research that has been conducted by the doctoral students in Western Illinois University's Department of Educational Leadership.

The *Spotlight on Research* is the vision of Dr. Jess House, Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership, and it is under his watch that this issue is sent to you. The purpose of this research brief is to share our work with other education scholars and practitioners and to reach out to policy makers, school administrators, and other education stakeholders.

Featured in this issue are four dissertation abstracts written by doctoral students who were members of the first cohort of our program. These studies covered a wide range of issues in education from school finance and professional learning communities, to continuous school improvement practices and barriers to

women entering the superintendency. We appreciate this opportunity to demonstrate our doctoral dissertation research and hope that this issue stimulates your thinking in these important topic areas.

We would like to take a moment to thank Western Illinois University administrators, Dr. Jack Thomas, Provost, and Dr. Nick DiGrino, Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, and all of the individuals who have contributed to the development of this issue. We also look forward to sending our second issue of *Spotlight on Research* this fall. Feel free to share these publications with your colleagues or to contact us or the authors about their research. We would be delighted to hear from you.

Dr. Bridget Sheng, Editor  
Dr. Donna McCaw, Associate Editor  
Dr. Lloyd Kilmer, Associate Editor

# SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

## School Board Accountability: The Role of Continuous Improvement

Author: J. Jay Marino, Superintendent,  
Dunlap Community Unit School District #323

### Abstract

This study measured the extent to which school board presidents utilized continuous improvement practices in their boardsmanship, which has been identified as an effective practice of school boards. The results of this study revealed that school board presidents perceived the extent to which they were implementing continuous improvement practices in their boardsmanship was somewhere between “slightly true of our board and somewhat true of our board” as measured by a mean score of 4.91 (out of a total possible 6.0 on a Likert scale) on a 31-item survey. Pearson Product Moment Correlations, One Way Analysis of Variance, and *t*-tests revealed no statistically significant correlations with the independent variables and the

application of continuous improvement practices in boardsmanship.

### Practical Application

This study can assist school board members and their professional organizations in the identification of effective continuous improvement practices in boardsmanship. Identified in the study are key findings and recommendations that can positively impact the effectiveness of school boards in their pursuit of continuous improvement practices.

### Citation

Marino, J. J. (2008). *School board accountability: The role of continuous improvement*. Doctoral dissertation, Western Illinois University. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations Database (Publication No. AAT 3338881).

## The Relationship Between Instructional Expenditures and Academic Achievement for Illinois Schools 2003-2007

Author: Michael J. Oberhaus, Associate  
Superintendent for Operations and Quality,  
Rock Island School District No. 4

### Abstract

The study examined the relationship between expenditures and student achievement in Illinois school districts for the years 2003 through 2007. A strengthening negative correlation between operating expenditures per pupil and

student achievement was found. For instructional expenditures per pupil, the study indicated a strengthening significant small positive relationship. When disaggregating the instructional expenditure and student achievement correlations, district type and size had little influence on the relationship. For districts that expend less than 65% of their budget on instruction, the analysis showed a strengthening positive small correlation.