

**THE CAPACITY OF SCHOOL GOVERNING  
BODIES IN RURAL SCHOOLS IN THE  
MORETELE DISTRICT OF THE NKANGALA  
REGION**

**by**

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## Declaration

I declare that *THE CAPACITY OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN RURAL SCHOOLS OF THE MORETELE DISTRICT OF THE NKANGALA REGION* is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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**Student No 641-235-1**

.....

**Date**

This dissertation is dedicated to:

My wife, Rachel and daughters, Dorothy, Tenyiko and Nkhensani for their understanding and sacrifices in giving me space to pursue my studies

My mother, Christina and late father, Jack for giving me the solid foundation for my education

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## SUMMARY

The introduction of school governing bodies provided the communities with an opportunity to play a significant role in the organisation and governance of the schools. This involvement of significant stakeholders is purported to oversee that schools offer education of high quality to the learners. However, school governance is a legal responsibility, which requires skills, knowledge and expertise to ensure that SGB members will be able to fulfil the concomitant legal duties.

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of SGBs' capacity on school governance in three rural schools in the Moretele District. The findings revealed that SGBs' knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and the type of training they receive have a marked effect on their functionality. There is also a need to recruit SGB members with a particular level of education, knowledge, understanding and expertise to minimize the chances of failure.

Governance

School governance

School Governing Bodies

Governance responsibilities

Functions of SGB members

Election criteria for SGB members

SGB capacity

Additional functions of SGB members

Co-operative governance

Schools Act

Education policy

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction to the Study

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The new constitution of South Africa ushered in a new educational dispensation part of which is a new system of education governance and, in particular public school governance (Beckman and Visser 1999:152). This led to the establishment of the school governing bodies (SGBs) to take charge of the governance of schools. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (s16 (1)) indicates that the governance of a public school is vested in its governing body. Furthermore, the governing body stands in a position of trust (*fidei commisum*) towards the school: this simply means that a relationship of trust should exist between the school and its governing body. The governing body always acts on behalf of the school (and in the name of the school) with the best interest of the school at heart (Davies 1999:60). As the functionary of the school, the school governing body is obliged to perform its duties effectively and efficiently for the benefit of the school community.

The focal point of the new system of education governance is evidently captured in the preamble of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, which states that:

*the country requires a new national system for schools, which will redress past injustices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for development of all our people's talents and capabilities, protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages, uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators, and promote their acceptance of responsibilities for organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the state... (RSA 1996:2).*

It is evident that the school governing bodies are pivotal to the new, democratic models of organisation, governance and funding of schools (The Teacher, June 1998:4). However, it is uncertain whether the governing bodies have the necessary capacity to handle their increased responsibilities. Creese (1995:1) cautions that these increased responsibilities mean that the way in which the governors carry out their duties can now have a significant impact upon the management of the schools.

If school governing bodies are expected to play a pivotal role in creating conditions that are conducive for education of progressively high quality for all learners, they will be expected to possess certain skills, knowledge and expertise which are necessary in discharging their responsibilities. However, in most schools, particularly in the rural areas, there seems to be a dearth of these skills, knowledge and expertise among SGB members as suggested by the prevalence of many dysfunctional schools. Thus governing bodies should be assisted to develop their capacity, which will enable them to purposefully assume their roles and responsibilities in the governance of education.

## **1.2 MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH**

As a member of the school management team, the researcher has worked closely with members of the school governing body in the Moretele District of the Nkangala region for several years. During his interaction with members of the school governing body, the researcher realized that parent governors often experience problems such as a lack of understanding and knowledge of their roles, responsibilities and liabilities, lack of capacity to fulfil their duties, inadequate or no basic educational background, mismanagement of finances, lack of confidence to deal with the challenges in education and to enter into partnerships with other stakeholders, limited or no training and preparation for their legal responsibilities, lacking ability to institute monitoring procedures for all the aspects of the functioning of the school and grandparents who are not the biological parents of learners serving in the school governing bodies.

These observations have a negative impact on the performance of the school, because in many schools within this district governing bodies are not functioning as the law requires them to. In many instances governing body members must struggle to learn their roles and responsibilities with limited success, which is compounded by their inadequate basic literacy level. This has both grave implications on their functioning and adverse effect on the performance of the school in general. Moreover, governing bodies are expected to promote the best interest of the school and to ensure that learners receive the best education possible (DoE 1997:6). But under these circumstances this objective will be realized with limited success.

Governing bodies are expected to play a pivotal role in creating conditions that are conducive for education of progressively high quality for all our learners and in the process establish a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities (RSA 1996:2), but this has not been easy. One of the challenges is the lack or limited preparation for new governors before they start with their work. Mahoney (in Van Wyk & Lemmer 2002:139) warns that the responsibilities for governing bodies are so complex that they cannot be expected to discharge them effectively without some training going beyond the normal process of "picking

the job by doing it". Therefore, the issue of capacity in governing bodies should not be compromised for the sake of representation if schools are to provide a nourishing and supportive place for learning and teaching.

This research is aimed at establishing a system of selecting potentially capable school governors and to explore possible ways of capacitating them to be able to purposefully assume their legal responsibilities towards creating vibrant teaching and learning institutions within Moretele District of the Nkangala region.

### **1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM AND PROBLEM FORMULATION**

The issue of the school governing bodies' lack of capacity has developed into a serious challenge to most schools within Moretele District of the Nkangala region. This has sparked questions on the ability and authority of the school governing bodies to assume their legal responsibilities and to successfully implement the education policies in creating the desired teaching and learning environment. Furthermore, most governing bodies in Moretele District of the Nkangala region are grappling with lack of knowledge and skills in education governance, which impact on the general functioning of the schools. Although the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (s20 (1) (a-m) ) clearly lists all the compulsory functions of the school governing bodies, most governors often appear uncertain about their roles and responsibilities. It is on this basis that this research seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the manifestations of SGBs lack of capacity in the organisation and management of schools in Moretele District of the Nkangala region?
- What challenges are faced by school managers of schools whose SGBs lack capacity in school governance in Moretele District of the Nkangala region?
- Which developmental strategies can be employed to capacitate the SGBs in Moretele District of the Nkangala region?
- What effect does the current SGB election criteria have on the functionality of SGBs within Moretele District of the Nkangala region?
- How is education policy implementation affected by SGBs' lack of capacity?

In answering the above questions, this research seeks to review, inter alia, the election criteria for governing body members and to explore possible ways of capacitating elected school governors on their legal responsibilities. This would ensure that governing body members assume their duties with confidence and authority.

The challenges of lack of capacity facing SGBs in rural schools within the Moretele District of the Nkangala region (and other regions in South Africa) led to the aims of this study as outlined below:

#### **1.4 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

The aims of this research are to:

- Highlight the plight of the governing bodies' lack of capacity in school governance in the Moretele District of the Nkangala region.
- Highlight the effect of this lack of capacity on the governance of education in schools.
- Suggest possible ways of capacitating governing body members.
- Suggest alternative ways of electing governing body members who have potential to cope with their increased responsibilities.
- Suggest ways of redressing the negative implications of the school-governing bodies' lack of capacity in schools and to improve on the positive ones.
- Highlight the plight of governing bodies in formulating and implementing education policies

#### **1.5 APPROACH AND METHODS**

This research is qualitative by nature and interpretative by design, within the ethnographic tradition of research. It also needs to be noted that this research will not in essence be concerned with generalisation to a wider population, but with describing and attempting to explain the phenomenon of school governing bodies' lack of capacity and its impact on the successful implementation of education policies.

#### **1.6 THE QUALITATIVE APPROACH**

The researcher has chosen to use a qualitative research approach for data collection and analysis. Straus and Corbin (1990:17), define qualitative research as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about persons' lives, stories, behaviour, but also about organisational functioning, social movements, or international relationships.

As a research approach the qualitative approach is generally classified as primarily an interactive field research or primarily non-interactive document research (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:371). For this investigation the researcher will collect data by both interacting with selected persons in their natural setting (field research) and by means of non-interfering

data collection strategies (document research) to discover the natural flow of events and processes relevant to the research topic, and the way in which it impact on the effective functioning of schools.

Qualitative research is naturalistic inquiry, which takes place in real-world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest. The phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally in that it has no predetermined course established by and for the researcher. Most qualitative research describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. Qualitative researchers collect data by interacting with selected persons and by obtaining relevant documents. Furthermore, observations take place in real-world settings and people are interviewed with open-ended questions in places and under conditions that are comfortable for and familiar to them (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:372, and Patton 2002:39).

Furthermore, qualitative inquiry means going into the field – into the real world of programs, organisations, neighbourhood, street corners – and getting close enough to the people and circumstances to capture what is happening. This enhances description and understanding of both externally observable behaviour and internal states such as worldviews, opinions, values, attitudes and symbolic constructs (Patton 2002:48). This is a further justification of the choice of qualitative approach for this study as the researcher intends to visit selected schools to conduct observations and to interview selected participants in order to gather as much relevant information as possible.

Straus and Corbin (1990:19) further assert that qualitative approach can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known. This is what the researcher intends to do in uncovering and understanding the phenomenon of a lack of capacity of school governing bodies in the Moretele District of the Nkangala region and the effect this has on their implementation of education policies, and to also look into the ways of improving SGB capacity.

## **1.7 METHODS**

The qualitative research approach has various data collection strategies such as interviews, observation, diaries, photographs, official documents and newspaper articles (Bogdan & Bicklen 1982:73). For this study the unstructured focus group and individual interviews with data-rich individuals, participant observation and literature study will be used for data collection.

### **1.7.1 Interviews**

Interviews are open response questions to obtain data from participants about how they conceive of and give meaning to their world and how they explain events in their lives (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:423).

The open-ended responses permit one to understand the world as seen by the respondents. The purpose of gathering responses to open-ended questions is to enable the researcher to understand and capture the points of views of other people without prior selection of questionnaire categories (Patton 2002:21). This will enable the researcher to elicit more knowledge, perceptions and understandings from the participants on the implementation of education policies and the subsequent functioning of the schools.

Qualitative interviews may take several forms: the informal conversational interviews, the interview guide approach and the standardized open-ended interview (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:426). For this study the interview guide approach will be employed as data collection technique, during which the researcher will select aspects of the topic for discussion in advance and also decide on the sequence and wording of the questions for the interview. The rationale for the choice of the interview guide approach is that it provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate the research topic (Patton 1990:283). The flexibility of the interview guide approach helps to bring out the affective and value-laden aspects of respondents' responses and to determine the personal significance of their attitude. Not only does it permit the subjects' definition of the interviewing situation to receive full and detailed expression, it should also elicit the personal and social context of beliefs and feelings. This type of interview achieves its purpose to the extent that the subjects' responses are spontaneous rather than forced, are highly specific and concrete rather than diffuse and general, and are self-revealing and personal rather than superficial (Kidder 1981:187).

#### ***1.7.1.1 Focus group interviews***

A focus group interview is described as an organised informal group discussion among selected individuals about a specific topic relevant to the situation at hand. The goal of focus group interviews is to create a candid, normal conversation that addresses a selected topic in depth (Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub 1996:4).

Focus group interviews have three basic uses in current social science research. First, they are used as a self-contained method in studies in which they serve as the principal source of data. Second, they are used as a supplementary source of data in studies that rely on some other primary methods such as a survey. Third, they are used in multi-method studies that combine two or more means of gathering data in which case no one primary method determines the use of the others (Morgan 1997:2). For this study unstructured focus group interviews will be used in multi-method form to add to data gathered through participant observation and literature study.

The hallmark of focus groups is their explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insight that could be less accessible without the interaction found in a group (Morgan 1997:2). When focus groups are administered properly, they are extremely dynamic. Interactions among and between group members stimulate discussions in which one group member reacts to comments made by another. This group dynamism has been described as a synergistic group effect. The resulting synergy allows one participant to draw from another or to brainstorm collectively with other members of the group. A far larger number of ideas, issues, topics and even solutions to a problem can be generated through group discussion than through individual conversation (Berg 1998:101).

One of the major advantages of focus group interviews is their “loosening effect.” In a relaxed group setting where participants sense that their opinions and experience are valued, participants are more likely to express their opinions and perceptions openly. Thus, the focus group format of interviews facilitates more candid and reflective responses by participants (Vaughn et al. 1996:19). This justifies the relevance of focus group interviews for this study, as it will be used to gather information from a group of school governing body members and teachers in selected schools.

### ***1.7.1.2 Individual interviews***

According to De Vos (2001:299) in-depth interview with individuals is defined as one or more face-to-face interactions between an interviewer and interviewee, where the purpose is to understand the interviewee’s life experiences or situation as expressed in his/her own words.

Thus, in-depth interviews will be conducted with principals of selected schools and selected circuit managers as key-informants who have special knowledge to share on the functioning and capacity of school governing bodies. The principals are chosen because they have access to observations on the aspects of the research topic which maybe unavailable to the researcher. Beside, their special insight into SGBs’ level of knowledge and understanding of their legal responsibilities and their functioning will be crucial in shedding light into SGBs’ level of capacity and how this affects their functionality.

Furthermore, De Vos (2001:300) asserts that the advantage of in-depth interviews is that reality can be reconstructed from the world of the interviewee, which enables the researcher to obtain an “insider view” of the social phenomenon as well as to explore other avenue of research emerging from the interview. Thus the rich data which will be collected from the principals and circuit managers through this method is important in understanding how SGBs’ capacity affects the governance and management of the schools.

### **1.7.2 Observations**

As a technique for gathering information, the observation method relies on the researcher seeing and hearing things and recording these observations, rather than relying on subjects’ responses to questions or statements (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:256). This data collection technique will be used when visiting schools and attending SGB training workshops.

Patton (2002:48) noted that fieldwork is the central activity of qualitative inquiry. “Going into the field” means having direct and personal contact with people under study in their own environment – getting close to the people and situations being studied to personally understand the realities and minutiae of daily life. This make visiting the selected schools most appropriate for data collection. Again, Patton (2002:262) argue that firsthand experience with a setting and the people in the setting allows an enquirer to be open, discovery orientated, and inductive because, by being on site the observer has less need to rely on prior conceptualisation of the setting, whether those prior conceptualisations are from written documents or verbal reports. Furthermore, the enquirer has the opportunity to see things that may routinely escape awareness among the people in the setting. This will afford the researcher valuable chance to gather much information about the research topic.

Naturalistic observation has three major advantages: (a) an ability to collect data on a larger range of behaviour; (b) a greater variety of interactions with the study participants; and (c) a more open discussion of research topic (Morgan 1997:8). With these advantages of observation as a data collection technique, the researcher will be able to collect more relevant information to answer the research questions. Moreover, naturalistic observation offers the researcher a chance to learn things that people would be unwilling to talk about in an interview (Patton 2002:263).

## **1.8 LITERATURE STUDY**

A thorough study and analysis of literature found in professional journals, reports, scholarly books and monographs, government documents, dissertations, periodicals, newspaper articles, school policies and SGB training manual will provide a broad and good understanding of the capacity (or lack thereof) of school governing body as a factor in the implementation of education policies to ensure the effective functioning of schools.

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:112) argue that if literature study is carefully conducted and well presented it will add to a better understanding of the selected problem and help place the results of a study in historical perspective. Without literature study it would be difficult to build a body of acceptable knowledge on an education topic.

The study of literature will help the researcher to gain a deeper and broader insight into the significance of a well-informed and capacitated governing body in the successful performance of the school and the impact which the lack of information and capacity by governing bodies might have on the governance and management of the schools. It will also shed some light on the possible ways of empowering the school governing bodies on their roles and responsibilities on school governance.

Furthermore, knowledge from literature will be used in setting the significance of the problem, developing the research design, relating the results of the study to previous knowledge and suggesting further research (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:113).

At the end the researcher will triangulate the information gained from observation, interviews and literature study in order to get a better solution to the research problem and to formulate recommendations on how to deal with the impact of lack of information and capacity of governing bodies on the governance and management of schools. This will assist in improving the quality of teaching and learning, particularly within rural schools.

## **1.9 DELIMITATION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY**

This research will focus on the activities or lack thereof, of governing bodies of three black secondary schools within Moretele District of Nkangala Region in the Mpumalanga Province. The three secondary schools will be purposefully chosen as information rich cases. Patton (2002:116) asserts that the logic and power of purposeful sampling is derived from the emphasis on in-depth understanding of a phenomenon of interest. This leads to selecting information-rich cases for

study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one learns a great deal about issues of central importance to, and will illuminate the questions under study.

The intention of the study is not to generalise the findings to all school governing bodies, but to establish salient features that are necessary to enhance the functionality of school governing bodies. It will also shed light on empowering SGB members, as this problem may be prevalent even in other regions within South Africa.

## **1.10 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

### **1.10.1 School Governance**

School governance as regards the governing body's function, means determining the policy and rules by which the school is to be organised and controlled. It includes ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively in terms of the law and the budget of the school (Potgieter, Visser, van der Bank, Mothata and Squelech 1997:11).

### **1.10.2 School Governing Body**

The term "School Governing Body" is used uniformly to describe an elected body that is entrusted with the responsibility and authority to formulate and adopt school policies within the national, provincial and district vision for education, and functioning in terms of the provisions of the Schools Act (DoE 1995:53).

Governing bodies are representative of the main stakeholders, as such:

- (1) Membership of the governing body of an ordinary public school comprises: -
  - (a) *Elected members,*
  - (b) *the principal of the school, in his or her official capacity*
  - (c) *Co-opted members (RSA 1996: 5 (23) (1) (A-C).*
  
- (2) Elected members of the governing body comprises of a member or members of each of the following: -
  - (a) *parents of learners at the school*
  - (b) *educators at the school*
  - (c) *members of staff at the school who are not educators,*
  - (d) *learners in the eighth grade or higher at the school (RSA 1996: s (23) (2) (a-d)).*

According to the South African Schools Act a parent is defined as:

- (a) the parent or guardian of a learner,*
- (b) the person legally entitled to custody of a learner, or*
- (c) the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a person referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) towards the learner's education at school (RSA 1996: s (1) (xiv) (a-c)).*

The functions of the school governing bodies are prescribed in sections 20 and 21 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.

### **1.10.3 Education policy**

Education policy refers to the implicit or explicit specification of courses of purposive action being followed or to be followed in dealing with a recognised problem or matter of concern, and directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired set of goals. It also can be thought of as a position or stance developed in response to a problem or issue of conflict, and directed towards a particular objective (Harman 1984:13).

Educational policies come in the form of legislations, regulations, rules, directives and circulars issued by the Department of Education and those formulated by school itself, such as, according to Potgieter et al. (1997:20):

- (a) the Constitution of the Republic of Africa Act 108 of 1996, which deals amongst others:
  - the best interest of the child – which is of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child. This means that the governing body must at all times uphold the best interest of the learner in whatever they do or decide;*
  - fundamental human rights – which provides protection for every person's fundamental human rights. Therefore, the governing body in dealing with learners, parents, educators and all others involved in school education must always respect these rights.**
- (b) The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996
  - which makes it possible to national policy and other related policies education.**
- (c) The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 –affects the rights and duties of employees including educators and non-educator of staff at schools. The Act regulates unions and the right to strike, bargaining procedures in the work place and participation of employees in decision-making and deals with other related matters.*

- (d) *The Educators' Employment Act 138 of 1994 – which deals with subjects such as; the appointment and promotion of and their terms and conditions employment, the transfer and secondment educators, the availability of educators, discharge and resignation educators, misconduct and procedures.*
- (e) *The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 which deals with amongst others with the establishment of the school governing bodies, their roles and responsibilities, the control and management of schools, and the management of school funding.*
- (f) *Provincial Education Acts and Regulations – where each province has its own Education Acts Regulations that will regulate education in under its jurisdiction.*

#### **1.10.4 Capacity**

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of current English explains capacity as the “mental power” or “legal competence” to perform a given task. This explanation translates into the talent, skills and ability to effectively and efficiently perform one’s duties (Allen: 1991).

#### **1.11 DEMARCATION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY**

##### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

This chapter gives the background to the problem, description of the problem and problem formulation. It also explains the rationale for the research and also describes its aims, limitations and research methodology.

##### **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY**

This chapter explores the functionality of the school governing bodies, with special reference to their capacity in assuming their legal responsibilities. It will also explore the manifestations of the SGBs’ lack of capacity in school governance, which will inform their capacity- building needs. Again it will examine the current election criterion of parent governors and its impact on the functionality of the school governing bodies. In essence, this chapter will constitute a review of the literature on the challenges of SGBs’ lack of capacity in school governance and management.

### **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

This chapter will provide a description of the particular research design for this study. A detailed explanation of the methodology to be used will be given.

### **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

This chapter will provide the results and interpretation of the empirical research.

### **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARIES, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter will provide a summary of the research results. On the basis of analysed and interpreted data, conclusions and recommendations will be made. In this chapter, limitations of the study will be pointed out and acknowledged.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Study**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The South African Schools Acts 84 of 1996 ushered in a new approach to school governance in South African schools. Most significant was the democratic governance of schools through the involvement of stakeholders (Xaba 2004:313). This was a welcomed move by the government to have the communities not only getting involved in the education of their children, but to have a marked influence in the organisation and governance of schools.

Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:126) assert that the main thrust of the South African Schools Act is that the state has inadequate financial and organisational capacity to do everything for schools, all stakeholders, parents, educators, learners and local community members should be actively involved in the organisation, governance and funding of schools. The idea stems from the strong belief that schools are run well when governed by local people, since these people are well placed when it comes to identifying the problems and needs of their schools - provided that they are well prepared to accept the responsibilities of their governance.

The preparation of these stakeholders to assume their governance responsibilities remains a challenge to both the Department of Education as the controlling body and the schools as the sites for governance practices. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:129) warn that in order to perform their duties and carry out their responsibilities in an effective and efficient way, school governing bodies should have the necessary capacity to do so.

School governance is a legal responsibility, which requires particular skills, knowledge and expertise to ensure that members will be able to fulfil the concomitant legal duties and accountability. Besides, the functionality of the schools depends on the level of knowledge, skills and expertise of the school governing body. In this regard Xaba (2004:316) asserts that school governing bodies are by their nature critical structures for the delivery of effective teaching and learning in schools. The various component members therefore need to perform their functions and act their roles in a way that promotes the best interest of the child in the school.

As Mestry (2004:128) report that prior to the South African Schools Act's promulgation every principal was considered an accounting officer and was accountable to the Head of Department. Heads of educational institutions sat with massive sets of directives about how to do everything

from writing a receipt to opening a bank account. The problem that now arises is that the moment the school has elected a school governing body (SGB), certain responsibilities are devolved upon the SGB as a body despite the fact that the authorities have not formulated a set of clear directives for SGBs on this matter. This research seeks to determine the impact of this lack of directives, knowledge and skills on the governance, organisation and management of schools.

The investigation in this regard becomes even more critical if one considers the fact that school governance is regarded as an act of determining policy and rules by which a school is to be organised and controlled to ensure that such rules and policies are carried out effectively in terms of the legislation. This implies that the SGB, in promoting the best interest of the school and, particularly that of its learners, is responsible to develop a strategy for ensuring the provision of quality education to the learners and its proper implementation. The general purpose of the governing body is to perform its functions effectively and efficiently in terms of the South African Schools Act of 1996, on behalf of the school and for the benefit of the community. A governing body is therefore placed in a position of trust by the government to effect proper learning (Nkosana 2003:9, and Xaba 2004:314).

On the basis of the above it is of the utmost importance that governing body members should have the necessary skills and knowledge in order to perform their roles and responsibilities according to the community's expectations and desire. However, the phenomenon of lack of capacity on the side of SGB members, particularly in rural schools, is posing serious challenges on the governance and management of schools. The following discussion seeks to investigate this phenomenon, its manifestations and impact on the functionality of schools.

## **2.2 SALIENT ASPECTS PERTAINING TO SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES**

Pursuant from the principles of transformation and restructuring of the education system emerged the need for a new structure of school organisation. This system is aimed at creating conducive conditions for developing a coherent, integrated, flexible national education system, advancing equitable use of public resources, improving the education quality across the educational system, and establishing democratic governance catering for school based decision-making within the borders of provincial guidelines. The new structure was brought about through a well-managed process of negotiated change, based on the understanding that each public school should embody a partnership between provincial education and the local community (RSA 1996:10). School Governing Bodies are statutory bodies, which are established to take charge of the governance of public schools.

Looyen (2000:49) postulates that education reform should be aligned to bring parents back into the ambit of educational governance, because participatory parental involvement is designed to unlock traditionally centralised, bureaucratic structures that insulated policy and decision-makers who often were unable to share the aspirations of school communities. Parents throughout the world seek to be liberated and call for greater involvement in school governance to ensure, amongst other things, that schools provide a service that is relevant to community needs.

In becoming members of the SGB, community members are given a chance to influence the school activities according to their needs and aspirations. Bullivant (1988:12) reports that being a governor is a voluntary task undertaken to serve a school and the community, an opportunity to help young people to benefit fully from their education, so that in the future they too may wish to make their contribution to the community.

According to Looyen (2000:19) the process embarked on by the Department of Education to consciously mobilise society to participate in educational reform is critical in ensuring that our schools come to mirror the needs, desires, aspirations, hopes and expectations of the community. In realising these, communities mobilised, interacted and clustered skills to enhance and contribute to the well-being of the school with a view to elicit desired outcomes. The process embarked upon by the Department of education will enhance democracy and accountability among all stakeholders in schools, which will create the necessary conditions for quality education in schools. Thus there was a need to establish a body, which would be acceptable to all the stakeholders and would be able to serve their needs and aspirations.

### **2.2.1 The establishment of School Governing Bodies**

The huge disparities among South African schools required a new structure of school organisation and system of governance, which would be workable as well as transformative (RSA 1996:10). This new system of governance is underpinned by the principles and values of democracy, and makes allowance for participatory decision-making.

According to Looyen (2000:67) school principals had in the past controlled South African schools with little or no teacher-parent participation. The principal's leadership style and frame of reference were the main drivers of the school's ethos, culture and impetus. Teachers, parents and students contributed very little to policy and decision-making, as their roles was for the most supportive in nature. As could be expected this system was met with strong opposition and criticism from the school community and the general public.

Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:124) report that in most cases, the black communities rejected the governance structures that the government instituted as they offered them little say in the running of their schools. By 1976 parents in urban areas had started to establish their own representative committees, precisely because they felt that the school committees and boards were not representing them adequately.

The alienation of the communities from the education system under the apartheid regime created dissatisfaction and tension between the schools and the communities. However, this has changed since the promulgation of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, which made the introduction of SGBs in all schools mandatory. While parents in this country have, for many years, been voluntarily involved in school-based activities, their role as entrenched in the South African Schools Act, has since become more pronounced. Not only are they accountable to those who entrusted them with the task of school governance, but they also need to master skills in dealing with issues such as control, finance, personnel, school policy, curriculum, discipline, religious rights and natural justice (Van Wyk and Lemmer 2002:141). The South African Schools Act gives all the stakeholders a chance and equal opportunity to participate in the affairs of the school, and also new rights and responsibilities regarding the quality of education offered by the school. As a result the Schools Act assisted in driving the democratisation and transformation of education governance.

Marishane (1999:33) argues that since the state has no financial and organisational muscle to do everything for schools, all stakeholders, namely parents, educators, learners and local community members should be actively involved in the organisation, governance and funding of schools. The idea stems from the strong belief that schools run well when governed by the local people since these people are well placed when it comes to identifying the problems and needs of their schools – provided they are prepared to accept the responsibilities for their governance tasks. The envisaged partnership between the community and the state in running of the school is critical in determining the level of resources of the school and subsequently the quality of education to be offered to the learners.

Dlamini (1993:5) also notes that the source of potential advantage of community participation for the school is that the school may benefit from a wide range of expert knowledge, which may exist in the community in areas such as law, accountability and civics. However, in rural areas the availability of these skills remains to be seen. The participation of community members with expert knowledge is the only guaranteed way to infuse new social energy into the institutions and structures of the education and training system, dispel the chronic alienation of large sectors of society from the education process, and reduce the power of government administration to intervene where it should not (Van Wyk and Lemmer 2002:125).

According to Bruce-Reeds (in Marishane 1999:54), school governance has three dimensions:

- Sovereign governance – which entails full public accountability for the work of the school as a whole to all interested parties, rendered in various forms, including the representation of the annual report to parents.
- Judicial governance – which entails accountability for meeting all the legal requirements to which the school is subject, including the law relating to finance, employment, the curriculum and health safety.
- Performance governance – which entails accountability for carrying out the activities of the school through which the vision for the school and providing a service to pupils are put into practice.

These dimensions of governance entail specific and legal obligations, which require particular knowledge, skills and expertise to be fulfilled. However, it remains to be seen if the governing bodies as charged with these obligations will succeed in fulfilling them.

The other rationale for the establishment of school governing bodies is to assist in driving the government's decentralisation process. According to Brown (in Marishane 1999:16) decentralisation means that the decision-making authority devolves from the central office to the school. The reason behind such a move is to widen the scope of accountability to the public by giving both responsibilities to those in close contact with the school. In this way the aspirations and needs of the community will be served, provided those elected to dispatch these responsibilities receive the necessary training.

Although the establishment of governing bodies is a welcomed move by the government, there is a fundamental challenge of school governors, particularly in the rural areas, being able to dispatch their legal responsibilities.

### **2.2.2 Membership of School Governing Bodies**

The school governing body mirrors the stakeholder community of the school, whose representation is underpinned by the principles of equality. Marishane (1999:48) postulates that in reflecting the democratic principles of equality and collaborative governance, the governing body of an ordinary public school is composed of such democratically elected members as the following:

- The principal of the school
- Educators at the school
- Members of staff at the school who are not educators
- Learners attending the eighth grade and higher
- Co-opted members of the community served by the school
- The co-opted owner or representative of the owner of the property on which the school is situated

The co-opted members are drawn into the school governing body because of the expert knowledge and skills which are needed to assist the governing body with its functions. However, this provision is under-utilised, particularly within schools in the rural areas. One possible reason for this is that people with expert knowledge and skills do not want to associate or be seen associating with members of the school governing body who are seen as “amateurs”.

Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:125) argue that while the transformation of education in the South African context involves changing education for the better, democratisation of education encompasses the idea of partnership in which stakeholders – such as parents, learners, educators and members drawn from the school community – not only play an active role in school activities and functions, but also jointly constitute a body that represents stakeholders and take decisions on behalf of the school.

Members of the school governing body should obligate the school to serve the best interest of the learners. Thus Moate (1996:30) advises that the structure of governing bodies should be such that it creates an environment designed to ensure that all learners have an opportunity to achieve their potential. It is on this basis that the election process of school governing bodies should have a way of emphasising the need for particular skills from candidates that are elected to serve in the SGB. Again Moate (1996:29) argues that the composition and characteristics of a governing body determine its nature and scope of influence, and also affect its effectiveness and efficiency. Thus the competence of the school governing body depends entirely on its composition.

A substantial combined pool of skills and knowledge is critical in the effective functioning of the SGBs. Therefore, members of the school governing body should not only be people who care enough about schooling and what goes on in their own school to want to be involved and make a difference, they should also possess the necessary capacity to fulfil their obligations (DoE 1997:9). Thus the recruitment and election processes should be informed and guided by the governance needs of the school.

Section 23 (9) of the South African Schools Act (RSA 1996:18) stipulates that the number of parent members must be one more than the combined total of the other members of a governing body who have voting rights. To some extent this creates a problem in the governance of the school, particularly in the rural areas where most of the parent community are either illiterate or semi-literate. This means that more than half of the governing body members will either be illiterate or semi-literate, which will create a problem for the reading, understanding and implementation of policies. The inability to implement education policies, which seek to deal with the inherent inequalities in education, will create serious problems in the organisation, management and governance of the schools leading to the phenomenon of dysfunctional schools. This problem can be resolved by the nature of the election criteria that is employed during the election of school governing body members.

### **2.2.3 Election criteria for School Governing Bodies**

The election of SGB members is predominantly based on the nomination and seconding of candidates who should stand for elections. There is no specific prescribed recruitment process that is employed to “woo” people with the necessary skills for the governance responsibilities. The election process for the school governing body has the following steps (DoE 2003:11):

- compilation of voters roll
- nomination of candidates
- elections, and
- after election processes

The procedure for the nomination and election of parents, learners, educators and non-educator members of staff into the school governing body is the same. All nominators, seconders and candidates for the school governing body should be people who are listed on the school register as learners’ parents, educators or non-educator staff members at the school. All the eligible persons who wish to be school governors have to be nominated and seconded.

The electoral officer has to decide on a date, time and venue for a meeting where the different sectors of the school community, which will constitute the SGB, will nominate their candidates. The rules for nomination of parents are as follows (Doe 2003:12):

- A parent may only be nominated (or seconded) by another parent of an officially enrolled learner at the school.
- The nominating parent must not be employed at the school, or an electoral officer for the school.

- The nominated parent must be of sound mind.

The following is the procedure for the nomination of a parent to serve in the school governing body (DoE 2003:12):

- A parent can be nominated by the proposer handing a completed nomination form, which is available from the principal's office to the electoral officer no earlier than eight days before and not less than 24 hours before the scheduled nomination meeting.
- Alternatively they can also be nominated at the nomination meeting.
- The nomination of each parent nominated at the meeting needs to be seconded by another parent after which the nomination form has to be completed and handed to the electoral officer within the prescribed time during the meeting.
- Every nominated candidate will have the opportunity to state:
  - their name
  - names and grade of their children in the school
  - occupation and experience or skills, and
  - vision for the school
- When nomination has closed no further nominations are allowed.

At the end of the nomination process the ultimate procedure to come up with the actual parental school governing body members is as follows:

- If the total number of valid nomination is less than the required number of parent governors, the electoral officers will dissolve the nomination meeting and organise another nomination meeting within 14 days. If at the second meeting there are still insufficient nominations, those who have been nominated will be considered as being elected provided they meet the required number.
- If all the nominations accepted by the electoral officer at a nomination meeting of parents are equal to the number of parent members required for the governing body, the electoral officer must declare that all the nominated candidates are dully elected.
- If the number of nominations accepted by the Electoral officer at a nomination meeting of parents is greater than the number of parent members required for the governing body, then the Electoral officer must organise an election process.
- The election is by way of a secret ballot, which requires voters to make a cross next to the names of the nominated candidates, who they wish to elect (DoE 2003:11-3).

Although the SGB election procedure is underpinned by democratic principles, the nomination and seconding processes are nevertheless often limiting to the skill composition of SGBs. The

parent community, particularly in the rural areas, is often inclined to nominate those parents who are easily accessible while ignoring the skills need for effective school governance. Thus their choice of SGB members is often based on the person's availability rather on particular knowledge and skills.

The system that is employed to elect members of school governing body does not emphasise or stipulate the need for particular skills, knowledge or literacy level. As a result parents elected into the school governing bodies, particularly in the rural areas, do not necessarily have the minimum basic literacy level to understand the jargon and practices of the world of education. Thus many would rely heavily on personal values and intuition when electing parents.

Section 23(9) of the Schools Act (RSA 1996:18) states that the number of parent members must be one more than the combined total of other members of a governing body who have voting rights. This creates a problem in the governance of schools in rural areas where most members of the parent community are either illiterate or semiliterate (Moate 1996:102). In such a case, it means more than half of the governing body members will be either illiterate or semi-literate. As a result chances are that parents serving on the SGB would experience problems with reading, understanding and implementing policies and legal directives from the Department of Education. This would obviously impact negatively on the functioning of the SGB.

Mabusa and Themane (2002:114) note that although in general SGBs are duly constituted in accordance with policy stipulations, grandparents often represent parents in SGBs in the rural areas since they are more readily available for service due to the fact that most parents work far away from their homes. However, representation by grandparents is problematic because their views may not necessarily be identical to those of the parents. Besides grandparents may have little or no knowledge about the new trends in the education system. As a result serious problems regarding the implementation of education policies, which seek to deal with the inherent inequalities in education and the organisation, management and governance of schools leading to a phenomenon of dysfunctional schools, could emerge.

Creese (1995:2) indicates that in some parts of the teaching profession, there is a tendency to resent the involvement of governing bodies in matters of school policy, as they are perceived as "amateurs". Besides, according to him, some teachers see the role of governing bodies as largely peripheral to the real work of the school because of their often-limited knowledge and skills. Thus it is critical that the criteria used to elect, particularly the parent governors, should be reviewed to allow for the election of members who will have some working knowledge and understanding of education policies and practices, and speak with authority on education matters. This will earn them the respect and co-operation of members of the school community.

#### **2.2.4 The roles and responsibilities of School Governing Bodies**

The school governing body has vested powers to ensure effective and efficient governance of the school. As such the job of the governing body is to promote the best interest of the school to ensure that the learners at the school receive the best education possible. SGBs should also help the school principal to organise and manage the school activities in an effective and efficient way (DoE 1997:7).

According to Potgieter et al. (1997:31), the powers, functions and duties of governing bodies are grouped according to a list of managerial duties that have to be carried out by all governing bodies, and a list of tasks that may be given to certain governing bodies that have the ability or means to fulfil these tasks which are called allocated functions of SGBs. These allocated functions of SGBs are discussed in section 20 of the Schools Act (RSA 1996:12), which stipulates that subject to this act, the governing body of a public school must:

- (a) promote the best interest of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school
- (b) adopt a constitution
- (c) develop the mission statement of the school
- (d) adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school
- (e) support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions
- (f) determine times of the school day consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school
- (g) administer and control the school's property and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels, if applicable
- (h) encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school
- (i) recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of educators at the school, subject to the Employment of Educators Act 1998 (Act No 76 of 1998) and the Labour Relations Act 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995)
- (j) recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of non-educator staff at the school, subject to the Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation No. 103 of 1994) and the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995)
- (k) at the request of the Head of Department, allow the reasonable use, under fair conditions determined by the Head of Department, of the facilities of the school for educational programmes not conducted by the school
- (l) discharge all other functions imposed upon the governing body by or under this Act and

- (m) discharge other functions consistent with this Act as determined by the minister by notice in the Government Gazette, or by the Member of the Executive Council by notice in the Provincial Gazette.

Although the above functions are imperative in the effective governance of the school, the functions discussed below and which are related to the above functions seem to have critical implications on the capacity of the SGBs towards school governance:

### **1. Determining the school curriculum**

Curriculum is the range of learning opportunities, which the school provides for its learners, that is, everything that is taught and learnt. The curriculum includes the formal lessons in classroom, laboratory and gymnasium or on the sport field. It encompasses homework and examination choices, good manners and school uniform, and equal opportunities for all pupils. It also includes those activities arranged by the school, which take place outside the normal school hours such as matches against teams from other schools and school trips and visits. The so-called “hidden curriculum” refers specifically to the set of attitudes and values which pupils acquire, often sub-consciously through being members of the school. This “hidden curriculum” depends heavily upon the ethos of the school and human relations, racial equality and awareness, health and career education, and political and religious education offered in the school (Creese 1995:48 and Bullivant 1988:64).

The curriculum forms the core business of the school. Thus its selection and management determine the level of functionality of the school. Moate (1996:41) considers the instructional programme to constitute the heart of the school and states that the SGB should therefore objectively monitor the outcomes of instructional programmes by means of the periodical evaluation of the curriculum. It should take action if the outcomes do not meet the established needs, because it has an on-going responsibility to ensure that standards and quality are continually maintained. It should, according to the mentioned author, develop an accountability system that reflects priorities and agreed upon measurable benchmarks in as far as the curriculum is concerned.

The nature of the responsibilities pertaining to curriculum issues demands that the SGBs should have specific and particular knowledge, skills and understanding of the need of the community, legislation and policies governing the structuring of curriculum and the educators’ training capabilities in managing the envisaged curriculum.

Although the governors do not choose textbooks or set the examinations, they should certainly keep an eye on the way in which the curriculum is put over to the pupils and the results that

are produced. For example, in secondary schools they should monitor and have answers to the following questions:

- How the homework time-table is planned?
  - How many hours of homework a week are children of different ages expected to complete?
  - Is homework marked?
  - To what extent is the curriculum affected by the availability of teachers who are able to teach it?
  - Is the curriculum affected at all by the presence of large numbers of children from ethnic minority background?
  - How is the curriculum affected by local employment?
  - To what extent do the requirements of higher education affect the curriculum?
- (Bullivant 1988:65).

SGB members need to be well informed and capacitated to tackle the challenges involved in planning, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the curriculum. In this regard a British author Sallis, (1995:61) asserts that the basics of human reproduction are now for all age groups part of the national curriculum in science, and other aspects of sex education – emotional, social, moral and health – are the legal responsibility of governors. In secondary schools governors are required to ensure that this additional sex education is provided, approve the content and inform parents about it, and it must by law include information about HIV and AIDS, of course this also applies to South African schools. Teaching must be within a framework of morality and family values. Therefore, the knowledge, skills and information pool of the SGB members are critical in the successful choice, organisation, management and implementation of the curriculum to satisfy the needs and expectations of the community served by the school. However, if the SGB lacks the capacity to handle this critical responsibility the school is more likely to under perform or even become dysfunctional.

## **2. Maintaining discipline**

The level of discipline maintained within the school underpins the functionality and performance of the school. As a result sections 8 (1) and 20 (1) (d) of the Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996:7&12) require SGBs to adopt a code of conduct for learners after consultation with learners, parents and teachers of the school. The primary aim of the code of conduct is to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process. A code of conduct based on human rights principles contains rules, regulations, sanctions and disciplinary procedures (Squelch 2001:141).

However, the SGB has to maintain a good balance between maintaining discipline in the school and observing and protecting the constitutional rights of individual learners, to avoid having their decisions and actions regarding discipline declared unconstitutional. According to this researcher whatever decision and investigation made by the school governing body should be in line with the values, spirit and objectives of the Bill of Rights.

Squelch (2001:142) argues that for the school governing body to develop a school code of conduct and meaningful policies on disciplinary matters they need to possess the knowledge and skills on how to write policy as well as a fairly extensive knowledge of the law. This according to this researcher is a serious challenge for the vast majority of SGBs, particularly in the rural areas, as they do not seem to have either the capacity to develop policy or the resources to engage necessary expertise. Hence, many schools would not have proper policies and procedures in place, which could create serious disciplinary problems for the school. In spite of the SGBs' lack of the necessary capacity to develop disciplinary policies, they still have to play a role in ensuring that a culture of teaching and learning prevails in their schools. This can be achieved by among others, fulfilling their tasks relating to discipline of learners and educators. Whether they will succeed remains to be seen.

Squelch (2001:141) warns that the failure or omission by the SGB to adopt a code of conduct may in law render the public school, through its governing body, delictual liable for any damage or loss that may arise from such a failure or omission. This emphasises the importance of the school governing bodies' capacity in discharging their responsibilities.

Although each governing body may have its own ideas about what type of behaviour is to be accepted in their schools, according to Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:134) the following aspects should be included:

- School Rules – these are standards of behaviour that set out what may and may not be done. Rules must be fair, reasonable and realistic.
- Sanctions – learners should know what is expected of them, but also what actions will be taken if they disobey school rules.
- Disciplinary Proceedings – some disciplinary cases need to be investigated and specific procedures followed before any action can be taken against a learner who is charged with an offence. These procedures or steps should also be included in the code of conduct.

These aspects and their correct implementation will determine the legal validity of the school code of conduct, which will then form a subordinate legislation for the school governance and administration.

Again, Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:130) argue that the governing body exercises its powers in areas affecting the discipline, grievances, disputes and dismissal of educators. Therefore according to them, the school governors need to be familiar with legislation and government notices affecting learners, personnel and labour relations. Thus it is reasonable for school governors to have specific knowledge and understanding of the laws and legislation governing education to avoid making wrong decisions which might expose them to litigation.

### **3. Determining school policies**

School policies set the tone for the standards which have to be achieved by schools. As such Carver (in Walters and Richardson 1997:29) defines an effective policy as “a statement of values or ethos which generates or underlies a course of action in an institution.” This means, according to him, that the governing body should state clearly what it wants concerning matters such as school dress, behaviour and discipline in the school, curriculum matters, staff development, educational visits and excursions, meeting special educational needs or any matter which the governing body considers important.

To address the above calls would require a clear understanding of the school situation and the legislation which governs the education system, because the spirit and purpose of all the policies should express the vision and objectives of the school and be in line with education legislation. Thus the school governing bodies are responsible for determining school policies and procedures necessary for the smooth and effective running of the school. SGBs should also ensure that such policies are clear, consistent and reasonable for implementation and compliance by the school community (Squelch 2001:140 and Van Wyk and Lemmer 2002:130).

However, Walters and Richardson (1997:28) two British scholars, argue that there are so many policies, which the school must make by law that it is common –place in most schools to “make sure we have them” usually “in case someone from the Department of Education asks to see them,” they should be readily available. Some of these policies are very important in directing the school’s ethos but they are often, according to these authors, been drawn up with minimal or no input from the SGBs. Thus it seems that many SGBs have busied themselves approving policies usually drawn up by the head teacher about such matters as health and safety, special educational needs, admission, sex education, pupil discipline, charging and remissions of fees, lettings and the use of the premises without making any contributions revealing the weakness of the ability of the SGBs, in all probability, particularly in the rural areas, to diligently deal with policies on various school matters.

The SGB’s responsibility is not limited to the establishment of various policies, but they should also monitor and evaluate their implementation. Walters and Richardson (1997:30) assert that it is the main purpose of the governing body to make and review policy statements, and to check on how well these policies are working.

Moate (1996:37) reports that when it comes to school governance’s policy obligations SGBs should not only set broad policy, but they should build a chain of accountability and responsibility within the school community. However, Walters and Richardson (1997:53), referring to English schools, argue that at present it seems as if many school governing bodies are unclear about what they should monitor and how to go about evaluating the success of the policy statements. This researcher is of the opinion that this assumption also applies to South African SGBs. It is crucial for the governing bodies to have a clear understanding of the school situation which will inform the type of policies to be formulated and the monitoring tools to be put in place. This will assist in focusing their efforts and energy on ensuring that there is effective and efficient implementation of all policy statements. However, with the limited knowledge and understanding, which most SGB’s seem to have, it will be difficult to realise this crucial responsibility.

#### **4. Financial management**

The financial environment of the school has a direct impact on the functionality of the school. As a result the SGB has an important role to play in overseeing the financial management of the school fees and any other money which may be paid into the school’s account. This role includes planning, reviewing, controlling and approving the school budget in accordance with the school’s needs. The SGB must also ensure that the budget complies with the Department’s guidelines and regulations (Van Wyk and Lemmer 2002:135), and of course the prescriptions provided in the following sections of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996:24-7) states:

36. A *governing body of a public school* must take all reasonable measures within its means to supplement the resources supplied by the State in order to improve the quality of education provided by the *school* to all *learners* at the *school*.

37. (1) The *governing body of a public school* must establish a *school* fund and administer it in accordance with directions issued by the *Head of Department*.

(2) Subject to subsection (3), all money received by a *public school* including *school* fees and voluntary contributions must be paid into the *school* fund.

(3) The *governing body of a public school* must open and maintain a banking account.

(4) Money and other goods donated or bequeathed to or received in trust by a *public school* must be applied in accordance with the conditions of such donations, bequest or trust.

(5) All assets acquired by a *public school* on or after the commencement of this Act are the property of the *school*.

(6) The *school* fund, all proceeds thereof and any other assets of the *public school* must be used only for-

(a) educational purposes, at or in connection with such *school*;

(b) educational purposes, at or in connection with another *public school*, by agreement with such other public school and with the consent of the *Head of Department*;

(c) the performance of the functions of the *governing body*, or

(d) another educational purpose agreed between the *governing body* and *Head of Department*.

38. (1) A *governing body of a public school* must prepare a budget each year, according to guidelines determined by the *Member of the Executive Council*, which shows the estimate income and expenditure of the *school* for the following financial year.

(2) Before a budget referred to in subsection (1) is approved by the *governing body*, it must be presented to a general meeting of *parents* convened on at least 30 days' notice, for consideration and approval by a majority of *parents* present and voting.

39. (1) Subject to *this Act*, *school* fees may be determined and charged at a *public school* only if a resolution to do so has been adopted by a majority of *parents* attending the meeting referred to in section 38(2).

(2) A resolution contemplated in subsection (1) must provide for-

(a) the amount of fees to be charged; and

(b) equitable criteria and procedures for the total, partial or conditional exemption of *parents* who are unable to pay *school fees*.

(3) The *governing body* must implement a resolution adopted at the meeting contemplated in section (1).

(4) The *Minister*, after consultation with the *Council of Education Ministers* and Minister of Finance, makes regulation regarding the equitable criteria and procedures referred to in subsection (2)(b).

40. (1) A parent is liable to pay the school fees determined in terms of section 39 unless or to the extent that he or she has been exempted from payment in terms of this Act.

(2) A parent may appeal to the Head of Department against a decision of a governing body regarding the exemption of such parent from payment of school fees.

(3) In deciding an appeal referred to in subsection (2), the Head of Department must follow due process which safeguards the interest of the parent and the governing body.

41. The *governing body of a public school* may by process of law enforce the payment of *school fees* by parents who are liable to pay in terms of section 40.

42. The *governing body of a public school* must-

(a) keep records of funds received and spent by the public *school* and of its assets, liabilities and financial transactions; and

(b) as soon as practicable, but not later than three months after the end of each financial year, draw up annual financial statements in accordance with the guidelines determined by the *Member of the Executive Council*.

43. (1) The *governing body of a public school* must appoint a person registered as an accountant and auditor in terms of the Public Accountants and Auditors Act, 1991 (Act No.80 of 1991), to audit the records and financial statements referred to in section 42.

(2) If the audit referred to in subsection (1) is not reasonably practicable, the *governing body of a public school* must appoint a person to examine and report on the records and financial statements referred to in section 42, who-

(a) is qualified to perform the duties of an accounting officer in terms of section 60 of the Close Corporations Act, 1984 (Act No. 69 of 1984); or

(b) is approved by the *Member of the Executive Council* for this purpose.

(3) No person who has a financial interest in the affairs of the *public school* may be appointed under this section.

(4) If the *Member of the Executive Council* deems it necessary, he or she may request the Auditor-General to undertake an audit of the records and financial statements of a *public school*.

(5) A *governing body* must submit to the *Head of Department*, within six months after the end of each financial year, a copy of the annual financial statements, audited or examined in terms of this section.

(6) At the request of an interested person, the *governing body* must make the records referred to in section 42, and the audited or examined financial statements referred to in this section, available for inspection.

Moate (1996:45) cautions that a systematic control of school funds is important as all the instructional practices are carried out within the school's financial framework. Besides, according to this researcher the school's vision is successfully driven by its financial strength.

The failure or omission by the SGB to set up stringent financial management and control systems would inevitably result in serious misappropriation and/or mismanagement of school funds, which in turn would have a negative impact on the general functioning of the school.

Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:135) report that since financial matters are so complex that many governors find them difficult to understand, governing bodies generally organise subcommittees – with co-opted committee members having a sound knowledge of finance and budgeting to be actively involved in financial matters. However, in rural areas and deprived communities this always proves to be difficult to achieve, because those with expert knowledge do not want to be seen associating with people who are “seen to be amateurish” in their approach. As a result parent governors rely heavily on the principal to take the lead in fulfilling their financial responsibilities.

In most instances, many principals use this opportunity to usurp power from the SGB and to start directing school governance according to their volition and to their satisfaction. Thus reports abound of principals who have been dismissed for the misappropriation of school funds, a situation which could not have prevailed if the SGB had had the necessary knowledge and ability to manage and control school funds.

Five hundred and seventeen schools in KwaZulu – Natal did not submit their audited financial statement for the previous year (2005). As a result, their allocations from the Department of Education could not be transferred. Thus learners are punished because of the negligence or incompetence of their principals and other SGB members (City Press July 23, 2006).

This undesirable situation demonstrates a lack of understanding of the financial management responsibilities which impact negatively on the functioning of the schools. An SGB with a sound knowledge of financial management would have a financial program which identifies the time for budgeting, presenting the budget for approval, presenting the audited financial statement to

parents as well as prescriptions on reviewing the budget and /or financial position of the school at specified times.

A sound knowledge of financial management is imperative in administering the complex budget of the school. Intuitive knowledge of financial management of most rural parent governors is insufficient for handling the complex financial responsibilities which have legal implications and consequences.

## **2.3 FUNCTIONALITY OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES**

The SGB is a crucial stakeholder in the education system and therefore has a fundamental impact on the quality of education received by the learners. Their functionality or lack thereof has a marked influence on the effectiveness of the school. Moate (1996:15) asserts that SGBs play an important role in the survival of the school. They are the centre of schooling in general as they determine the vision, tone and ethos of the school. For the school to achieve excellence, the participation of the governing body is very important. Thus there is a need to make special emphasis, during the recruitment and election of school governors, of particular skills, knowledge and expertise, which will be needed in their governance function. This should be followed by proper and adequate training in their roles and responsibilities so that the chances of failure are reduced.

The SGB has a prime obligation to shape and influence what is offered to children in schools and to ensure that each child is able to achieve their full potential in the education system. Thus the nature and quality of governance will determine the success of community empowerment from the school activities (Walters and Richardson 1997:18).

### **2.3.1 SGBs as part of co-operative governance**

In South Africa, education is organised at national, provincial and local level. These spheres of government are distinctive, but also interdependent and interrelated. These bodies make laws, regulations and rules on education, and continue to work together according to principles set out in the constitution. The school governing body has, through the process of decentralisation, become part of this system of governance with vested powers (Potgieter et al. 1997:18).

Co-operative governance is the bedrock of education governance and should provide the ways and means of achieving democratic, participative, transparent and accountable school governance (Davies 1999:9). Thus the school governing body should know and understand its position, functions and powers in order to make critical contributions within the education system.

Potgieter et al.. (1997:19) argue that the following constitutional principles for co-operative government are applicable to school governance and members of the school governing body:

- The activities of the school governing body should preserve the peace, harmony and stability of the school.
- They should secure the well-being of all stakeholders in education.
- They should provide effective, transparent and accountable governance for the school.
- They should co-operate with one another in mutual trust by –
  - ~ encouraging friendly relations.
  - ~ helping and supporting one another
  - ~ informing one another of, and consulting one another on matters of common interest
  - ~ co-ordinating their actions.
  - ~ keeping to agreed procedures: and
  - ~ avoiding legal actions against one another.

It is therefore, fundamental that members of the school governing body should understand their collective and individual roles within their sphere of co-operative governance. Under the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, the governing bodies in each public school assume joint responsibility with the provincial education authorities for the provision and control of education (Nkrosana 2003:26).

According to Looyen (2000:32) co-operative governance can only be fruitful when there is a closer understanding of the roles, responsibilities and functions of governors. These concepts have to be clearly defined and understood. It is for this reason, according to him, that the training of governors forms a cornerstone in affirming and empowering governors to execute their functions with the view to increase school effectiveness and efficiency based on the principles of democracy.

The possession of various social and personal skills does not guarantee SGB members success in school governance. In this regard Looyen (2000:33) warns that co-operative governance, being a fairly new way of doing school business, requires a paradigm shift necessitating training. If governors are to take their new roles, duties and responsibilities seriously, they need to acknowledge that irrespective of their skills, they need training to integrate their skills with the requirement and systematic operations of the schools. The entire SGB, comprising of parents, teachers and learners, need to have a knowledgeable understanding of co-operative governance and the parameters of their powers to enable them to determine the ethos, and also direct and control the activities of the school. Walters and Richardson (1997:25) warn that when directing the school towards meeting community needs, the governing body, as the corporate body of trustees, is in a position of leadership. According to them, however, leadership in governing bodies is

lacking since the governing body is not capable of helping the school staff to do their job, or keeping up with everything that is happening in the school, or studying through detailed reports, statistics or regulations. According to them there is no leadership in simply approving what someone else has decided. As leaders, governors need to be in at the beginning, making decisions about the schools direction and ethos and expressing community values in these, then assuring themselves and the real owners about the school's performance.

Heystek (2004:38) is of the opinion that the limited training of the main role-players in the management of schools, coupled with their uncertainty regarding their functions and duties, sometimes makes it difficult for principals and parent governors to work together harmoniously. Although many principals have long years of experience, the participative and democratic management approach is also new for most of them, with the result that not even their experience can prepare them for this changed situation. This poses a serious challenge on the functioning of the SGB because principals are supposed to guide and even train the governing body members on their roles and responsibilities.

In response to this challenge, Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:140) advise that school principals need intensive training regarding a more participative style of management that would embrace the values of co-operative governance. Likewise, principals need to develop a more participatory style of management that would allow staff and parents to play a meaningful role in decision-making. In most cases the government is not providing such training. The principal is a central figure in both the effective and efficient functioning of the school and the school governing body, thus principals should be the most knowledgeable persons regarding all the aspects of school governance and governing body functions.

Furthermore, Coombe and Godden (1996:74) postulate that the methods that can be developed to lead to greater collaboration among governors and other stakeholders may involve:

- Developing guidelines to ensure both better candidates as officers of parents associations, and clearer accountability of head teachers to the associations with regard to the utilisation of financial contributions.
- Promoting mechanisms for developing collaboration in tasks such as writing community profiles, surveying community needs, setting goals and priorities, mobilising and managing resources, selecting and monitoring teachers, setting time-tables and calendars, developing curriculae, assisting in teaching and tutoring, helping to guarantee pupil enrolment and continuation, and monitoring school performance and the achievement of goals.

The creation of the SGBs' awareness of their roles and mandate in co-operative governance is critical in helping them to discharge their responsibilities within their sphere of governance, and

also in understanding how and when to allow other stakeholders to be involved in the school without causing confusion.

### **2.3.2 SGBs' lack of capacity and challenges resulting from it**

The introduction of school governing bodies in schools is meant to improve the quality of education offered by the individual schools. They came into the schools with a legal mandate to oversee quality performance of the schools, ensure good governance and create a safe, secure and conducive environment within the schools for effective teaching and learning to occur (See section 2.3).

However, the level of skills, knowledge and understanding they bring along is sometimes posing serious challenges in the way they are supposed to discharge their responsibilities. As a result Coombe and Godden (1996:24) warn that while in principle there is a commitment in South Africa to involve "the community" in decision-making about local schools, the constraints in making the principle a reality may include: -

- perception of lack of power among school staff, and among parents and others in the community;
- confusion over the varying roles of governing bodies in different categories of schools;
- rurality and illiteracy of a large proportion of the population and unrealistic educational requirement for membership of school bodies;
- the perception of the heavy burden of responsibility for educational matters among a populace already overworked and underpaid.

These constraints may lead to jostling for power and fighting over territory between the school governors and the school managers, which might cause a serious draw-back in the performance and development of the school. Thus Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:140) maintain that although the establishment of democratically elected governing bodies has changed the political structure of schools and the nature of decision-making, principals are in practice often reluctant to relinquish or even share their power and authority. This, according to them, is also compounded by the school governing bodies who often "delegate authority back to the principal", thus preserving the status quo. This seems to be what is happening in many schools, particularly where the difference between management (the task of the principal) and governance (the task of the school governing body) has not been adequately debated.

Educators feel that the school governing body members lack confidence in what they are doing and are also not sure about their duties. Some educator SGB members reported that other school

governors often feel “inferior” in their presence because they think they are being undermined. This clearly implies that educators are also not sure of the role of the school governing body, and in particular educators in the SGB, as they perceive the SGB in the sense of “them” and “us” (Xaba 2004:313).

This perception of “them” and “us” hinders the good working relationship, which is supposed to prevail among the school governors, where SGB educator members, because of their knowledge and expertise, should help the parent members in understanding and carrying out their responsibilities.

Thody (1994:82) asserts that governors need knowledge-based skills to cope with the change in culture and to improve the quality of their decision-making. However, according to him, lack of expertise means that several school governors cannot participate fully in the decision-making process. This reduce them to the role of spectators while other people are carrying out what they are supposed to be doing, with the result that they are forced to rubber stamp and adopt other people’s decisions and activities. As a result most governing bodies are being manipulated by the school principals, educators and influential members of the community into doing things within the school in accordance with their wishes.

Marishane (1999:91) indicates that the governing body exercise its power in areas affecting discipline, grievances, appraisal, promotion, recruitment, selection, and the appointment and dismissal of educators. In the process of exercising these powers, consideration has to be given to the legal requirements pertaining to the handling of personnel issues by the governing body. This necessitates that the governing body should be familiar with legislation and government notices affecting personnel and labour relations. However, the school governors sometimes espouse limited knowledge when dealing with matters related to the management of staff and learners at a school. This makes it easier for other people to successfully challenge their decision, and even leave them vulnerable for manipulation into propagating other people’s motives to the detriment of the school.

Marishane (1999:88) also reports that the SGBs are regarded as guardians of efficiency and effectiveness in that they have to exercise surveillance and oversee all the activities of the school. These include establishing whether the objectives and goals set for the school are being pursued, whether policy is being implemented and whether the resources allocated to the school are effectively and efficiently utilised. In monitoring these activities, the SGB needs to be in possession of information on such matters as finance, performance and discipline in order for it to exercise proper control and be able to report to its respective constituencies.

Heystek (2004:310) argues that in a school where parent SGB members have limited skills, knowledge or experience and even lower levels of literacy, they may find it difficult or impossible to assume responsibility for drafting and managing the budget. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:137) concur that the burden of establishing, exempting and retrieving fees is particularly difficult for governing bodies without the requisite expertise and skills. As a result reports abound of the mismanagement of funds in schools leading to serious crises that hamper the effective functioning of the schools.

The level of skills, knowledge and understanding of the SGBs has a marked influence on both the authority of the school governors and the effective functioning of the school. Thus the recruitment and election process of members of the school governing body should be guided by this vital need.

As mentioned below the capacity of SGBs or lack thereof, has a marked effect on the functioning and effectiveness of the schools. Moreover, the school governing body determines the tone and ethos of the school. As Moate (1996:41) points out that effective governance is imperative to improve schooling and teaching. However, the election criteria of governing body members and the subsequent training, which they receive, leave most governing body members inadequately prepared for their legal responsibilities.

Mabusa and Themane (2002:112) are of the opinion that although SGBs are required to be involved in making important decisions that have an impact on the quality of education, this has not been easy. One of the challenges has been the lack of preparation for new governors before they start with their work, which finds expression in the following problems: governors tending to be unfamiliar with meeting procedures, failing to understand the specialist language used, lacking knowledge needed to make a contribution, lacking knowledge of appropriate legislation, feeling inhibited by the presence of colleagues who seem to possess more knowledge, and perceiving their role as simply “rubber stamping” what others have already decided upon. These manifestations would obviously have a negative impact on the policy making and implementation processes, control and monitoring of all the aspects of the functioning of the school.

Beckman and Visser (1999:158) assert that the following manifestations of lack of capacity among governing body member may impact on the quality of the performance of governing bodies and on their capacity-building needs:

- Different home languages and varying degrees of proficiency in the use of the language used by schools. These impacts negatively on the understanding, formulation and implementation of school policies.

- Various degrees of literacy ranging from illiterate to barely functionally literate. This adversely affects the understanding of the jargon, practices and legislation constituting and guiding the education system.
- Various levels of experience regarding participation in statutory SGBs ranging from no experience at all to some experience in non-statutory school council associations such as the pre-1994 PTSA (Parent-Teacher- Student association). Levels of experience will inform and influence the decision-making process regarding school activities and decision-making.

The SGB's actions and decisions on crucial school issues like curriculum, financial management, discipline and property management are mostly characterised by uncertainty and lack of confidence. These, then weaken their authority and power on school governance.

Sometimes school governors know what they want to say regarding crucial school issues, but because they are unable to say it, they end up feeling totally negated (Walters and Richardson 1997:13). As a result they withdraw their contributions and participation from school governance, which prompts them to even refrain from attending SGB meetings. This is a serious challenge in most rural schools where very few school governing body members remain active for their term of office.

Thody (1994:28) reports that parent governors fear arguing with professionals for fear of repercussions which might affect their children. Parent governors therefore renounce their legal responsibilities to control, monitor and direct the proper implementation of school policies despite the fact that it is the job of the SGBs to promote the best interest of the school and to ensure that the learners at school receive the best education possible without fear or favours (DoE 1997:7). SGB members have to set, improve and develop the rules, direction and policies by which the school must operate (Potgieter et al. 1997:11). Thus, governing body members will be acting within their legal powers when advocating for the best interest of both the school and the learners.

Mestry (2004:127-8) reports that some principals use the information obtained from delegated tasks to usurp power and authority from the SGB by using information to pursue their own objectives at the expense of the school. The principal finds him/herself in a position of wielding power when the members of the SGB are either illiterate or have little knowledge regarding school finance. It does therefore not come as a surprise that some principals end up taking advantage of the lack of capacity of SGB members to act fraudulently. Reports abound of principals who have been dismissed from schools because of misappropriation of school funds and misuse of school property. Nevertheless, principals are supposed to account to the SGB for the financial and property matters, which are not specifically entrusted to them by statute (Mestry 2004:128).

The discussed manifestations reveal the gaps and shortfalls with regard to knowledge, skills, understanding and ability of SGBs that retard the execution of their statutory functions. These manifestations of SGBs' lack of capacity should, if validated by research, be used to determine the training needs and capacity-building programs for the school governing bodies.

### **2.3.3 The implications of the current election criteria on the functionality of SGBs**

An SGB is a statutory body of people who are elected to govern a school. These people are placed in a position of trust and they are obliged to promote the best interest of the school and to ensure that the learners at the school receive the best education possible. They are entrusted to help the principal to organise and manage the school's activities in an effective and efficient way (Potgieter et al. 1997:23; DoE 1997:7).

Section 23(9) of the South African Schools Act (RSA 1996:18) stipulates that the number of parent members must comprise one more than the combined total of other members of a governing body who have voting rights. This is done to ensure sufficient representation of the needs and aspirations of the community being served by the school, and to get more parents being involved in the activities of the school.

However, this numerical representation of parent members is a serious challenge within certain communities. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:137) discovered that the problem, which besets parents in the previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa, is the high level of illiteracy. An estimated 37% of the population of the country are functionally illiterate. This would obviously impact on the role parents are to play in decision-making activities if parent who are illiterate (or semi-literate) are to serve on SGBs. It would also affect the relationship between the school, its educators and community.

With the current election criterion which has no emphasis on particular skills, knowledge, ability and expertise, many of the governing body members could be functionally illiterate. The competency and literacy level of parent members of the SGB has a marked influence on the functionality of both the SGB and the school in general.

In his research conducted in the Vaal Triangle, Xaba (2004:315) found that educator governors were in most instances not interested in the work of the SGB and even resented what they saw as interference by the SGB as they perceive the SGB as consisting of parents only. Furthermore, a significant number of educator governors (48%) were sceptical about the involvement of the SGB

in decision-making processes on matters affecting the school and were also reluctant to work closely with the parent governors.

If educators who are supposed to bring professional knowledge and understanding into the SGB are either uncertain of their role or resent the involvement of such a body in school activities, it would leave the functionally illiterate parent members battling with little success to carry-out their legal responsibilities. Goleman (1996:160) argues that whenever people come together to collaborate, whether it be in an executive planning meeting or as a team working towards a shared product, there should be a very real sense of the existence of a group intelligence, the sum total of the talents and skills of all involved. How well they accomplish their task will be determined by the level of the group intelligence. The single most important element in group intelligence, according to the mentioned author, is the ability to harmonise all the individual talents and skills of all involved, since this will make the group productive and successful. But with the parent governors being functionally illiterate and the educator-governors resenting their involvement in the SGB, the SGB would perform poorly as a group and militate against promoting the best interest of the school.

Moate (1996:93) complains that principals do not receive adequate management training although they are expected to give advice to the school governing bodies. They are to facilitate, support and assist the SGB in the execution of its statutory function even though principals are often too busy to attend to the training of SGB members concerning their role and responsibilities. For the SGB to be fully functional it must, according to Moate, consist of members who possess at least a fairly adequate working knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and also possess certain necessary skills and abilities for their legal functions.

The recruitment process for school governors should focus on addressing the critical issues of the quality of representation within the SGB. The envisaged quality of representation should be characterised by certain level of ability, skills, expertise, knowledge and understanding of the legal responsibilities that have to be discharged. These will in turn positively influence the effective and efficient organisation and management of the school.

Coombe and Godden (1996:27) advise that the capacity of the SGB to do their statutory duties depends on the quality of the individuals who are elected into school governance, taking into account not just their skills, but of their attitudes and perceptions, their ability to interact, their mindset and commitment to social activism, and their creativity, imagination and capacity for taking the initiative. This would at least give an assurance of the functionality of the SGB. Currently there is no mechanism for either the dismissal of governors by parents who are dissatisfied or the monitoring by the Department of Education of the functionality of the SGB.

## **2.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SGB TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT**

The recruitment and election processes of SGB members as set out in the Provincial Gazette of Mpumalanga Department of Education (DoE 2003:11-3) do not stipulate or emphasise particular skills and/or knowledge level. As a result there is no assurance for the election of suitably skilled and knowledgeable people into the SGBs. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the rural areas where most governing body members seem unfamiliar with, and uncertain about their statutory roles and responsibilities. Thus Coombe and Godden (1996:21) warn that international experience has demonstrated that effective SGBs do not happen by chance - instead they must be nurtured and sustained, and specific actions must be taken to make them work as they were intended.

The knowledge and skill base of school governors and its relevancy to school governance cannot be left to chance if schools are expected to offer the best education possible to the learners. Thus Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:139) assert that the responsibility for SGBs are so important and complex that they cannot be expected to discharge them effectively without some training going beyond the normal process of picking up the job by doing it.

The intuitive knowledge and experience of most members of the school governing bodies, particularly in the rural areas, is proving to be inadequate for the complex statutory responsibilities of the school governing body. Thus people with specific knowledge and skills should be elected into the SGBs and the relevant training to the elected members should complement this. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:138) argue that training is the cornerstone of affirming governors in the execution of their roles and responsibilities. This, according to them, is particularly relevant when governing bodies are composed of a cross section of people with different ideologies, expectations and levels of schooling. Since such training will harmonise the various skills, expertise and knowledge of the individual governors.

In general, governors need to be fully, legally empowered, and to be given access to information they require, so that they can assess what is going on. They need to know they are in charge within a recognised framework of SGB participation. Special strategies to empower the marginalised and disempowered may need to aim at training and reorienting rural villagers in the aspects of legal school governance (Coombe and Godden 1996:25).

Mestry (2004:129) indicates that section 19 of the South African Schools Act stipulates that the Head of the Department of Education should provide introductory training for newly elected SGBs to enable them to perform their functions. They should also, according to section 19 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 be provided with continuous training to promote the effective performance of their functions or to enable them to assume additional functions.

Xaba (2004:316) asserts that capacity building has to be done in a way that addresses SGB members' real gaps in functional knowledge and expertise as well as needs of governance of schools in a rapidly changing educational milieu. This will ensure that SGB members are kept abreast not only of the new developments in education, but also of the new challenges that are there.

SGB members need ready access to knowledgeable and reliable resources. This is often in the hands of school principals and the Department of Education who need to ensure that relevant information is collected and disseminated, so that people are kept up to date with developments and issues, and are in a better position to make informed decisions. In practice this does not always happen. Research by Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:139) found that the distribution rate of policy documents to teaching staff and members of governing bodies is 19%, whereas the distribution rate to schools is 47%. Overall, only one in five documents reached its intended target. In addition, most policy documents and directives from the Department of Education are very difficult to understand and SGB members are seldom given assistance in the interpretation of these official documents.

With this eminent stalling of important education and governance documents in the principals' office, it becomes difficult to rely solely on the principals to train SGB members on their roles and responsibilities. Thus a dependable alternative has to be looked into. Moreover, there is already a concern as mentioned by Heystek (2004:311) that the Department of Education does not make provision for training other than the limited initial training soon after the election of the SGB. Coombe and Godden (1996:22) point out that it clearly takes time to build the professional capacity of a governing body so that members are able to sustain or challenge practice, and influence policy-matters. This is particularly so where local governance is contemplated in areas which previously were marginalised and underprivileged.

The training of SGB members is crucial in ensuring that they have the necessary capacity, full knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities and that they will be able to set their own goals, targets, timeframes and allocate functions to each other. This will assist in informing their programme for the year. Well trained SGBs will be able to monitor their progress and the participation of individual members in school governance. Beside, they will be able to check, quantify and prioritise the needs of the school to ensure that there is quality teaching and learning in the school. They will also be able to demand and interrogate the report from the principal on the actual progress of the teaching and learning activities. In this way the quality and standards necessary to realize the vision and mission of the school will not only be maintained, but they will also be improved. The problem with the dysfunctionality of most rural schools is that this necessary capacity of the SGB is minimal or lacking. To improve the functionality of the rural

schools the department of education has to seriously address the problem of lack of capacity for SGBs.

It is not only training which is important in the functioning of the SGB, but constant monitoring and control is also crucial to ensure that the intended functions are fulfilled. Marishane (1999:64) advises that in order to ensure that SGBs perform their duties as expected they need to be appraised or inspected from time to time. This is critical because of the vast amount of accountability, which the SGB carries on behalf of the school, community and the government through the Department of Education.

Marishane (1999:64) states that there are four main areas on which the SGBs can be appraised and inspected:

- the quality of education provided to the learners,
- the quality of standards achieved by the school,
- the efficient management of the school's financial arrangement, and
- the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils.

This will give an assurance to the department that the SGB is able to account for the powers and authority that have been delegated to them. Furthermore, the department will have sufficient grounds to deal with incapable governors.

It is expected of the SGB to advocate for the best interest of the child at school. Thus Holt and Murphy (in Looyen 2000:35) maintain that appropriate training of governors is crucial to contemporary education, as children should not be exposed to a "second class" schooling system just because individuals responsible for administering and managing their schools are inadequately prepared to perform their duties.

It is important for the department to invest time and resources in the capacity-building activities of the SGBs to ensure that they are well prepared to accept and successfully discharge the delegated powers in the governance of schools. This will make SGB members to be valuable role players in the education system.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

The participation of most SGBs in school activities in rural areas is negated by their lack of capacity and level of knowledge. After been elected they cannot see themselves playing an active and meaningful role in the decision-making process because they are overwhelmed by their school situations. The fact that they have to interact and function in collaboration with the head of the

institution who is regarded as the most “superior and professional” in the school while they are functionally illiterate becomes an inhibitory factor in their participation.

The initial training which governors receive from the department after been elected is not assisting the plight of the SGBs. Besides; it is not only the SGBs who are affected by this limited training; the schools are also hampered in their organisation, management and governance activities. This will have an adverse effect on the education and life of the learners because the people who are supposed to speak for their best interest have a limited authority resulting from lack of knowledge and skills.

Therefore, the election criteria has to be reviewed in order to address the skills need of the governing bodies, which would then ensure the effective functioning of the schools. This research seeks to find ways of improving the recruitment and election requirements for sufficiently functional SGBs and to suggest a capacity-building programme and needs for SGBs in order to improve both the functioning of the SGB and the quality of education offered by the schools.

Moreover, research in rural areas, particularly in the area of this research project, seems to have been neglected, and this research will determine whether this also applies to Moretele District as well.

# **Chapter 3**

## **Research Design and Methods**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a description of the research design for this study. It also gives a detailed explanation of the research approach and the data collection methods employed.

As mentioned (see section 1.3) this study is aimed at answering the following questions:

- What are the manifestations of SGBs' lack of capacity in the organization and management of schools in Moretele District of the Nkangala Region?
- What challenges are faced by managers of schools whose SGBs lack capacity in school governance within Moretele District of the Nkangala Region?
- Which developmental strategies can be employed to capacitate the SGBs in Moretele District of the Nkangala Region?
- What effect does the current SGB election criteria have on the functioning of the SGBs within Moretele District of the Nkangala Region?
- How is education policy implementation affected by SGBs' lack of capacity?

The study focuses on the school principals and school governing bodies of three schools within Nokaneng Circuit in Moretele District and three circuit managers of the three circuits within Moretele District to investigate how they are experiencing the manifestations and effects of SGBs' lack of capacity in their schools. Interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed. The researcher also visited these schools, attended SGB meetings to observe how meetings were conducted, what is discussed in meetings, how people behave in meetings, and he also attended workshops conducted by the circuit to observe how they were conducted, what topics were discussed, the nature and level of SGB members' participation, the type of questions which were asked and the quality of the workshop itself. The researcher took field notes that formed part of the findings.

The three schools were chosen because they would provide rich data on the functionality of the SGBs.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Flick, Von Kardorff and Steinke (2004:146) the research design is a plan for collecting and analyzing evidence that will make it possible for the investigator to answer the questions he or she has posed. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:31) further stipulate that a research design refers to the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer questions the researcher might have.

The researcher has selected the qualitative research approach to collect data. The rationale for using qualitative approach will be discussed in the following section.

### **3.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH**

The term qualitative research is broadly defined as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss and Corbin 1990:17).

Bogdan and Biklen (2003:3) point out that data collected through qualitative research is termed soft, that is, rich in description of people, places and conversations, and not easily handled by statistical procedures. Research questions are not framed by operationalizing variables; rather, they are formulated to investigate topics in all their complexity in context.

Flick et al. (2004:3) argue that qualitative research claims to describe life-worlds “from the inside out” from the point of view of the people who participate in the research project. By so doing it seeks to contribute to a better understanding of social realities and draws attention to processes, meaning, patterns and structural features.

Furthermore, Bogdan and Biklen (1992:2) assert that people conducting qualitative research are concerned with understanding *behaviour*, *attitudes* and *action* from the subjects' own frame of reference. Researchers collect their data through sustained contact with people in settings where subjects normally spend their time. This justifies the aptness of a qualitative approach for this research because the researcher visited schools for the purpose of first hand data collection.

Qualitative research always involves some kind of direct encounter with “the world”, whether it takes the form of ongoing daily life or interaction with a select group. This, too, explains the choice of qualitative approach for this study as the researcher conducted participant observation and interviews with select persons within their natural settings (their schools). Again qualitative researchers are also routinely concerned not only with objectively measurable “facts” or “events”,

but also with the ways that people construct, interpret and give meaning to these experiences (that is the effect and manifestations of SGBs lack of capacity in schools) (May 2002:199). The richness of the data collected through qualitative approach permits a fuller understanding of what is being studied than could be described from the experimental research methods (Best and Kahn 1993:186).

### **3.3.1 Characteristics of qualitative research**

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003:4) the following are the essential features of qualitative research:

1. **Naturalistic** – Qualitative research has actual settings as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument of data collection. Qualitative researchers feel that action can best be understood when it is observed in the setting in which it occurs. Thus context is critical in deepening and broadening the meaning of words, attitudes, behaviour and actions of people being studied. Hence for this study the researcher visited schools for data collection, which would enhance the understanding and analysis of educational issues as they unfold in a natural and un-interrupted way. The qualitative researchers believe that divorcing the act, words or gesture from its context is to lose sight of its significance. Thus the SGBs' lack of capacity can only be expressed within the school context, which is their field of operation.
2. **Descriptive Data** – Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected take the form of words or pictures rather than numbers. The written results of the research contain quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentations. The data include interview transcripts, field notes, photographs, videotapes, personal documents, memos, and other official records. The researcher took field notes during his observations and recorded all the interviews for transcribing and analysis at a later stage, and he also analyzed the training manual for SGBs.
3. **Concerns with process** – Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products. They are mainly concerned with how people negotiate meaning; apply certain terms and the natural history of the activities or events under study. In this regard, the researcher was concerned with how the school community perceives and interprets the SGBs' lack of capacity and its impact on the functionality of the schools.

4. **Inductive** – Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively. They do not search out data or evidence to prove or disprove hypotheses they hold before entering the study; rather, the abstractions are built as the particulars that have been gathered are grouped together. The researcher used the data that has been collected to clarify and to answer questions for the research project.
  
5. **Meaning** – “Meaning” is of essential concern to the qualitative approach. Researchers who use this approach are interested in how different people make sense of their lives. In other words, qualitative researchers are concerned with what is called the participants’ perspective. Similarly the researcher was interested in how different members of the school community conceptualize the impact of SGBs lack of capacity within their schools.

The various characteristics of the qualitative research approach underpin the necessity of the current research leading to a better understanding of the impact of SGBs lack of capacity in school governance and its subsequent effect on the functionality of the school in general.

The three kinds of data collection strategies employed in this research are: (1) in depth open-ended interviews; (2) direct observation; and (3) written documents. The data from interviews consist of direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge. The data from observations consist of detailed descriptions of people’s activities, actions, and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience. Document analysis in qualitative inquiry yields excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from organizational clinical or program records, memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries, and open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys (Best and Kahn 1993:184).

Data collected through these strategies provide wealth and depth of detailed information through direct quotations, description of interactions and observed behaviour.

The interactive nature of qualitative research makes it relevant for this study because the researcher wished to spend some time in the actual relevant educational settings (the schools) observing situations and events, conducting interviews and collecting documents for analysis. The aim of the researcher is not primarily to generalize the findings to all other similar schools in Nkangala Region of Mpumalanga province - instead the researcher seeks to explain and understand the experiences and perspectives of the research participants regarding the impact and manifestations of SGBs lack of capacity in their natural settings, which are the schools. However, the findings of this research may be used to explain similar incidents from other schools

within Nkangala Region and to inform the decision on the training needs of SGBs within rural areas.

### **3.4 ETHICS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:397) advise that qualitative researchers need to be sensitive to ethical principles because of the nature of their research topics, face to face interaction, data collection, an emergent design, and reciprocity with participants. Criteria for a research design involve not only selection of information rich informants and efficient research strategies, but also adherence to research ethics.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003:43) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000:138) the two issues that dominate the traditional official guidelines of ethics in research with human subject are informed consent and the protection of subjects from harm. Therefore, the following have to be born in mind:

1. Subjects enter research projects voluntarily; understanding the nature of the study and the danger and obligations that are involved. Their agreement must be based on full and open information. The Articles of the Nuremberg Tribunal and the Declaration of Helsinki both state that subjects must be told the duration, methods, possible risks, and the purpose or aim of the experiment.
2. Subjects are not exposed to risks that are greater than the gains they might derive.

Furthermore, Bogdan and Biklen (2003:44) suggest the following useful guidelines for qualitative researchers in their attempt to support ethical approaches to fieldworks:

1. Research sites where informants may feel coerced to participate in the research should be avoided. For instance, principals should avoid studying teachers and/or SGBs in their schools as part of their dissertation unless they can guarantee that the teachers' or SGBs' co-operation is authentic. Since this is almost impossible to do, it is best to avoid the appearance of coercion. The researcher conducted his investigation at other schools within Moretele District and not his school to avoid the appearance of coercion.
2. The informants' privacy should be honoured. The privacy of the respondents should under no circumstances be violated. If one is studying a topic that informants might not want to engage with the researcher, one should find a way to recruit subjects who accept the opportunity and also choose to participate in his/her study. The researcher

sought permission to conduct his research from the three schools and the affected departmental officials before embarking on the research project.

3. There is a difference between the time which the informants are prepared to commit to the research during participant observation in public places (where people are spending the time they would normally spend there), and during interviews. Thus in the letter requesting for permission to conduct the research project the researcher stated both the modes of data collection and the time it will take for each data collection session. This helped the participants in giving their informed consent, particularly for interviews as the participants' time is claimed. A special concession is needed for interviews.
4. Unless otherwise agreed to, the subjects' identities should be protected so that the information collected does not embarrass or in other way harm them. The informants' identity and/or schools were not revealed during reporting. The principle of anonymity was strictly adhered to.
5. Subjects should be treated with respect and their co-operation sought for the research. The researcher informed the subjects of his research interest in order to secure their permission to proceed with the investigation.
6. In negotiating permission to do a study, researchers should make it clear to those with whom they negotiate what the terms of the agreement are, and they should abide by that contract. If the researchers agree to do something in return for permission granted, they should follow through and do it. It is unethical to violate the terms of the agreement, besides it will result in informants losing trust and confidence in the researcher.
7. Researchers should tell the truth when writing up and reporting their findings. The most important trademark of researchers is their devotion to report what the data reveal. Fabricating or distorting data is the ultimate sin of a scientist. The researcher did everything possible to present an authentic report. In this regard Denzin and Lincoln (2000:138) point out that ensuring that data are accurate is a cardinal principle in social science, because fabrication, and contrivances are both non-scientific and unethical.

### **3.5 VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND GENERALIZABILITY**

Reliability and validity are central issues in all measurements because both have to be taken into consideration to ensure authentic information. Reliability and validity are salient because constructs are often ambiguous, diffuse, and not directly observable. However, all social researchers want their measures to be reliable and valid. Both ideas help to establish the truthfulness, credibility, or believability of findings (Neuman 2006:188).

#### **3.5.1 Validity**

Validity refers to the degree to which the explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world (McMillan and Schumacher 1993:391). Validity in qualitative research is largely determined by the extent to which the data represent the actual subjective experience of the participants. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:391) concur that validity of qualitative designs is the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meanings between the participants and researcher. The validity of information is primarily determined by the participants' willingness to freely communicate their experiences to the researcher in an atmosphere of trust and comprehension.

This study sought to explore the impact of SGBs' lack of capacity on the governance and functionality of schools. As a result the governing bodies, three principals of secondary schools, and three circuit managers within Moretele District were interviewed and gave what the researcher considers to be sincere first hand information of the manifestations and impact of SGBs' lack of capacity on the governance and functionality of schools.

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:391) assert that the following strategies increase validity in qualitative research:

1. **Lengthy data collection period** – the lengthy data collection period provides the opportunity for continual data analysis, comparison, and corroboration thus refining ideas to ensure the match between research-based categories and participant reality.
2. **Using language that all participants understand** – interview questions have to be phrased simply and clearly.
3. **Credible field research** – participant observation and in-depth interviews are conducted in natural settings that reflect reality of life experience more accurately than do contrived or laboratory settings.

4. **Disciplined subjectivity** – the researcher’s self-monitoring, known as disciplined and subjectivity (sic), submits all phases of the research process to continuous and rigorous questioning and re-evaluation.

The researcher recorded all the interviews, wrote field notes and took notes during the interviews to facilitate analysis at a later stage of the research.

### **3.5.2 Reliability**

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions (Silverman 2000:175). In other words it refers to whether the research will produce the same result if conducted by a different researcher or even the same researcher using different participants. It is also the consistency of the researchers’ interactive style, data recording, data analysis and interpretation of participants’ meaning from data (McMillan and Schumacher 1993:385).

For this study the question of reliability of the findings was addressed by using triangulation as a guiding methodological principle (see section 3.6) during data gathering. A range of techniques is thus used in this study to corroborate findings.

### **3.5.3 Generalisability**

Generalisability is the extent to which the findings of one study can be used as knowledge about other populations and situations – that is, to predict the outcomes or operations of activities in a general population (McMillan and Schumacher 1993:16-7).

The researcher does not focus on generalizing the findings of this study to the wider population but seeks to highlight the lack of capacity of the SGBs under scrutiny and its impact on the governance and functionality of the schools. This could however, be used as the basis for deciding on the training needs and methods for SGB capacitating in rural areas where conditions are the same.

The next section deals with methods that will be used for data gathering for this study.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

The researcher has chosen data collection methods appropriate to the qualitative research approach in this study. According to Atkinson et al. (2003:15) qualitative research is a highly variegated domain. The methods that could be employed for qualitative data collection include participant observation, interviews, the collection and analysis of life histories, biographies and autobiographies and the recording and analysis of spoken discourse.

For this study the researcher used interviews, observations and analysis of documents to collect data. These data collection methods allow for direct engagement in the participants' social world, which is appropriate in focusing the researcher's attention on the interactions between thought patterns and action to show how people are embedded in larger social and cultural contexts and how, in turn, they actively participate in shaping the world they inhabit (May 2002:203).

The use of the three data collection methods allow for triangulation in data collection. Flick (1998:230) concurs that triangulation refers to the combination of different methods, study groups, local and temporal settings, and different theoretical perspectives in dealing with a phenomena. Furthermore, Esterberg (2002:176) argues that if the researcher has access to interview data, observational data, and historical documents, his/her analysis is likely to be much sounder than if he/she relies on only one source of evidence.

#### **3.6.1 Interviews**

According to Janesick (in Esterberg 2002:83) an interview is a meeting of two persons to exchange information and ideas through questions and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning about a particular topic. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:645) concur that the most common form of interviewing involves individual one-on-one face-to-face verbal interchange, but interviewing can also take the form of face-to-face group interchange, mailed or self-administered questionnaires, and telephone surveys. It can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with principals of the selected schools and the circuit managers in which these schools are situated. According to Esterberg (2002:87) semi-structured interviews (sometimes called in-depth interviews) are much less rigid than structured interviews during data collection process. In semi-structured interviews the goal is to explore a topic more openly and to allow interviewees to express their opinion and ideas in their own words openly. Semi-structured interviews thus allow for much exchange between interviewer

and interviewee. These interviews enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth expositions of the impact of the SGBs lack of capacity on the governance and functionality of schools, which, of course also influence the way the school is being managed.

May (2002:205) warns that a successful interview study depends on the prior construction of a theoretically informed and user-friendly interview schedule (or questionnaire), because the researcher needs to know what kind of information to gather. Equally important, those who have offered to give their time and share the intimate details of their lives also have the right to expect clear, understandable and supportive guidance through a process that can be confusing and unsettling. One of the first phases of an interview study, therefore, involves the development and pre-testing of a theoretically informed and effective interview schedule. The researcher developed interview schedules, which he used on both the individual and group interviews to facilitate and focus the data gathering exercise (see Appendix E and F). In constructing the interview schedules the researcher kept in mind the views of May (2002:206) who argues that people experience their lives not as a set of factors or variables, but rather as the unfolding of events, perceptions and feelings over time. Chronologically ordered questions thus provided a structure for recounting a coherent narrative and for remembering potentially important, but easily overlooked events and experiences.

The participants' perceptions and experience of the SGBs' capacity is imperative in understanding the training needs of the SGBs, the challenges faced by principals of such schools and the impact this has on the functionality of the schools.

Lastly, Bogdan and Biklen (1992:96) point out that in qualitative research interviews may be used in two ways: they may be the dominant strategy for data collection, or they may be employed in conjunction with participant observation, document analysis, or other techniques. In all of these situations the interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insight on how subject interpret some piece of the world they live in.

In this study, one-on-one interviews were used in conjunction with focus group interviews, participant observation and document analysis. The combination of these types of interviews ensured a rich data collection exercise, which assisted greatly during analysis and report writing.

### ***3.6.1.1 Individual interviews***

According to De Vos (2000:297) the literature on the techniques of face-to-face interviewing treats the interview as a pipeline for extracting and transmitting information from the interviewee to the interviewer. In this way face-to-face interview helps to understand the closed world of individuals, families, organizations, institutions and communities. The researcher used the one-on-one interviews with three school principals and three circuit managers to gain knowledge and understanding of the factors affecting SGB functionality within Moretele District. The interviewees were chosen because of their continuous observational information and knowledge of the SGBs' level of capacity in carrying out their legal responsibilities in schools.

Furthermore, De Vos (2000:299) points out that in-depth interviewing with individuals could be defined as one or more face-to-face interactions between an interviewer and an interviewee, where the purpose is to understand the interviewee's life experience or situation as expressed in his/her own words. Thus the school principals and circuit managers are in a better position to explain the impact of SGBs' lack of capacity on the functionality of the schools and the performance of the learners.

May (2002:206) argues that a well constructed in-depth interview goes well beyond the more structured survey to explore a range of theoretically important dimensions, including pre-existing beliefs and outlooks, events and situations that trigger or prevent action, the social context in which choices are made, the social and psychological consequences of contextually embedded choices, and the long-term interpretations that people develop as their lives proceed. The varying positions of the principals and circuit managers have the advantage of providing different perspectives on the functionality of the SGBs. The responses of the principals and the circuit managers will assist in gaining more insight on the capacity and skills need of the SGBs.

Holstein and Gubruin (in De Vos 2000:298) point out that the interviewer as well as interviewee are actively involved in a meaning-making process and are thus constructors of knowledge and not conveyers and receivers of it. The information gained from the one-on-one interviews will be critical in answering and making recommendations on improving functionality of SGBs within Moretele District.

### ***3.6.1.2 Focus group interviews***

Focus groups are small structured groups with selected participants, normally led by a moderator. They are set up in order to explore specific topics, and individuals' views and experiences, through group interaction (Litoselliti 2003:1). The researcher conducted focus group

interviews with SGB members of the three selected schools in order to get their views and experiences on the level of SGB capacity, the challenges and manifestations of these levels of SGB capacity, and how such levels of capacity affect the management and governance of schools.

A focus group typically consists of a small number of participants, usually less than 10. Often, the focus group is relatively homogenous with regard to age, ethnicity, gender, or some other characteristic important to the study (Esterberg 2002:110). This justifies the choice of focus group interviews with SGB members for this study as they share common experience and views on the functioning of the SGB. They were able to express an informed opinion on the research topic. Morgan (1997:8) advises that the group composition should ensure that the participants in each group both have something to say about the topic and feel comfortable saying it to each other.

According to Greenbaum (1998:1-2) most people who do qualitative research classify focus group into three different types: full groups, mini-groups, and telephone groups:

- Full group – consists of a discussion of approximately 90 to 120 minutes, led by a moderator, involving 8 to 10 persons who are recruited for the session based on their common demographics, attitudes etc.
- Mini-group – is essentially the same as a full group, except that it generally contains 4 to 6 persons.
- Telephone group – individuals participate in a telephone conference, wherein they are led by a trained moderator for 30 minutes to 2 hours. They are recruited according to the same parameters as full and mini-groups.

The researcher used mini-group interviews for this study because the size of the schools make provision for six parents, two educators, one non-educator and two learners, as component members of the SGB. The learners were not involved in this study because their participation is limited to certain activities because of their age. Besides, their term of office is only one year which limits their knowledge and experience of SGB activities. It should also be mentioned that it is not always possible to secure the full complement of the other SGB components because of social commitments. Therefore, the researcher had to use mini-group to gather information from SGB members.

Greenbaum (1998:3) is of the opinion that the researcher can gain more in-depth information from a smaller group and that it is not feasible to recruit more than 6 persons for a particular group. The small size of the qualified participants' universe, the cost of obtaining subjects, or the general unwillingness of some target groups to be involved in focus group research are factors that often limit the feasibility of larger groups.

According to Litoselliti (2003:4), the number of groups used will depend on a variety of factors – primarily on the topic and the range of responses to the topic required, but also on the breadth of the target population and on the location of the groups. Many projects use a larger number, while the minimum of groups set is usually three. It is too risky to build a research project around a single focus group, as this would make only limited claims about that particular group of people, and could hinder both comparative and in-depth exploration of the topic.

For this study the researcher used three groups of SGBs for data gathering because focus group interviews were used in conjunction with other data gathering strategies. The researcher had planned to visit only three selected schools for data collection.

According to Litoselliti (2003:18) focus group interviews, as data gathering technique, are useful for:

- ❖ Obtaining a number of different perspectives on the same topic, in participants' own words.
- ❖ Gaining information on participants' views, attitudes, beliefs, responses, motivation and perceptions on a topic, why people think or feel the way they do.
- ❖ Examining participants' shared understanding of everyday life.
- ❖ Brainstorming and generating ideas, with participants discussing different angles of a problem, and possibly helping to identify solutions.
- ❖ Gaining insight into the ways in which others influence individuals in a group situation.

The advantages presented by the use of focus group interviews assisted in exploring the participants' own words and views, the manifestations of the SGBs lack of capacity and how this affects the governance and functionality of schools. Furthermore, Litoselliti (2003:16) concurs that focus group research is useful for revealing through interaction the beliefs, attitudes, experiences and feelings of participants, in ways which would not be feasible using other methods such as individual interviews, observation or questionnaires.

Participants respond to and build on the views expressed by others in the group – a synergistic approach that produces a range of opinions, ideas and experiences, and thus generates insightful information. It is these elements of a collective activity or social-orientation event, together with the centrality of interaction, that make focus group methodology potentially invaluable for many social research projects (Litoselliti 2003:2).

The interactive nature of focus group interview assisted the researcher to explore the research topic, thus generating explicit information on the implications of the SGBs' lack of capacity. Litoselliti (2003:19) concurs that the direct, open-response interaction among participants and

between the moderator and the participants allows for a variety of responses, clarifications, probing, connections among points made, nuances and deeper levels of meaning.

The focus group interview sessions were recorded to facilitate analysis and subsequent interpretation of data.

### **3.6.2 Observation**

Observation is the act of noting a phenomenon, often with instruments, and recording it for scientific or other purposes (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:378). This method relies on the researcher's seeing and hearing things, and recording these observations, rather than relying on subjects' self-reports responses to questions or statements (McMillan and Schumacher 1993:256). Thus the researcher observed and recorded the interactions, ways of doing things and mannerisms of the SGBs of the selected schools. This shed light on the SGBs' capacity and understanding of their legal roles and responsibilities.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994:378) assert that as observation consists of gathering impressions of the surrounding world through all relevant human faculties, it necessitates direct contact with the subject(s) of observation. For this study the researcher visited the three schools as the natural contexts of SGB activities to witness the connections, correlations and causes of their activities as they unfolded.

According to Esterberg (2002:61) researchers become the instruments of data collection in observational research. As such their previous experiences in similar incidents will shape their manner of thought and their interpretation of what they see and hear. Similarly, the researcher in this study will continue to draw from his experience of having worked with the SGBs as both a member of the school management team and school principal, to corroborate and confirm the observational data.

Atkinson et al. (2003:100) argue that observation of events in context is yielding a more complete record and understanding of events than reliance on interviewing about those events alone. In other words, participant observation makes it possible to check descriptions against fact and noting discrepancies as well as becoming aware of systematic distortions made by the person under study. This justifies the choice of observation for data collection for this study as it assisted in increasing the validity of the information obtained through individual and focus group interviews. Besides, the triangulation of the information as obtained through these methods provided answers to the questions for this study and to deepen the insight on the functionality of SGBs (see section 3.6).

### **3.7 DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS**

In addition to interviews and observations, selected documents were analysed because they provide an internal perspective of the organization and clarify the collective educational meaning that may be underlying current practices and issues (McMillan and Schumacher 1993:43). The researcher analysed the SGB training manual to confirm if it covers all the aspects that characterize and define the key responsibilities of the SGBs, which shed valuable insight of the standard of capacity building given to SGB members and their subsequent level of functionality within schools. Besides, this document provided both historical and contextual dimensions to the researcher's observations and interviews.

According to Best and Kahn (1993:191-2), the following purposes are served through documents analysis:

1. to describe prevailing practices or conditions – that is how SGBs carry-out their governance responsibilities;
2. to discover the relative importance of, or interest in, certain topics or problems – that is clarifying the actual capacity of SGBs in doing their prescribed duties;
3. to discover the level of difficulty of presentation in textbooks or in other publications – to discover the SGBs' level of knowledge and understanding in educational policies that governs their functioning;
4. to evaluate bias, prejudice, or propaganda in textbook presentation – to evaluate SGBs' level of policy implementation;
5. to analyze types of errors in students' work –to analyze the impact of SGBs' capacity on the governance of the schools.

Document analysis further clarified the salient aspects of SGBs' functioning – the way they influence curriculum, handle finance, maintain discipline and safety of learners and drive the vision of the school – and the impact these would have on the general performance of the school.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994:428), data management is the operations needed for a systematic, coherent process of data collection, storage, and retrieval. These operations are aimed at ensuring (a) high-quality, accessible data; (b) documentation of just what analysis has been carried out, and (c) retention of data and associated analysis after the study is complete.

Again Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 430) argue that how data are stored and retrieved constitutes the heart of data management; without a clear working scheme, data can easily be “miscoded,

mislabelled, mislinked and mislaid.” This will cause serious problems during data analysis and interpretation resulting in a loss of valuable time and even compromising the quality of the subsequent report.

In the light of the above Bloor, Frankland, Thomas and Robson (2001:65) advise that the researcher requires a method of bringing together all extracts of text which have been allocated the same index, to be able to retrieve them for comparison with other extracts given the same index. This can be done manually, using photocopies and an organized filing system, or a card index method. Using the former method the researcher physically places copies of each extract of indexed data into a folder along with all other extracts containing that index. With the card index method, the analyst marks indexes on a complete copy of data and then notes location of data (such as interview number, page number, paragraph number) on a set of cards.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992:175) concur that during data management researchers physically sort the research material into piles, folders, or computer files to be able to read and retrieve data as they figure out what there is to learn and what they will write. These techniques of mechanically working with data are invaluable because they give direction to the post fieldwork efforts, thus making manageable a potentially confusing time. Such a clear working scheme is critical for quality and in-depth data analysis leading to informed findings and insightful report and recommendations.

One has to bear in mind that data analysis is also the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials that the researcher accumulates to increase his/her own understanding of them to enable him/her to present what he/she has discovered to others. Analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, selecting, categorizing, comparing and synthesizing them, searching for patterns, interpreting them to provide explanation of the single phenomenon of interest, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding on what to report to others (Bogdan and Biklen 1992:153; and McMillan and Schumacher 1993:480).

This process seem daunting, but it is inevitable as it forms the *raison d'être* for the research process. The researcher of the present study also found the data analysis process quite challenging because there was a vast amount of data collected through interviews and observations. Again the fact that most of data analysis was done at the end of data collection compounded the challenges for data analysis. Some of these challenges were experienced in the following areas:

- Sorting and filing research materials;
- identifying themes and categories amongst the massive data; and

- reducing data into manageable units and categories

In broad terms data management for this study entailed the following:

- The master file (file no1) that consisted of the raw data from transcribed interviews and field notes.
- Selected documents from the three selected schools that are important for the purpose of the research were stored in a separate file (file no 2)
- Indices of extracts of data that are pertinent to particular themes or topics are filed together (file no 3)
- Audiotapes were filed separately.

To eventually present a topical, comprehensive and scientific product the researcher followed the following nine steps in data analysis as described by De Vos (2001:343-4):

1. Each transcribed interview was read carefully, re-read and compared with the hand written responses that were used as a backup in case the tape failed.
2. One interview transcript is chosen, read carefully while writing thoughts that come up in the margin.
3. Interviews were read carefully in order to make sense of what they are trying to convey. Main thoughts were highlighted and written down.
4. Similar topics were clustered together in all the interviews.
5. Data was compared to establish themes, trends and patterns.
6. Emerging themes, patterns and trends were identified and written down
7. Emerging themes and patterns were cross-referenced with the research questions to ensure that the research does not lose focus.
8. The themes were categorized into topics. Related topics were then put in one category.
9. Data material belonging to each category was assembled in one place; coloured papers with codes were used to divide different categories.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

In this section the research design and the rationale for using the qualitative approach was discussed. Ethical issues were dealt with and the methods to be used in collecting data for this study have been outlined and explained in detail. The subsequent chapter will deal with the findings and interpretations of the empirical research.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings and Interpretation of Empirical Research**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

As mentioned in chapter 1 (see section 1.4) the aims of this research are to:

- ❖ highlight the plight of the governing bodies' lack of capacity in school governance in Moretele District of the Nkangala Region;
- ❖ highlight the effect of this lack of capacity on the governance of education in schools;
- ❖ suggest possible ways of capacitating governing body members;
- ❖ suggest alternative ways of electing governing body members who have potential to cope with their increased responsibilities;
- ❖ suggest ways of redressing the negative implications of the school governing bodies' lack of capacity in schools and to improve on the positive ones;
- ❖ highlight the plight of governing bodies in formulating and implementing education policies.

In this chapter these aims find expression mainly in the analysis of the interviews which were conducted by means of relevant questions geared towards achieving the above-mentioned aims.

#### **4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, qualitative research methodology was used to collect data for this study since the aim is to highlight the plight of SGBs who lack capacity in carrying out their duties and the challenges faced by school managers of such schools (see section 2.3.2). The primary instrument used to collect data was the focus group interview. This instrument was selected because the researcher wanted to obtain the participants' views on their perceptions of the level of SGBs' capacity, the challenges and manifestations of the level of SGB capacity, and the manner in which such a level of capacity affects the management and governance of schools. The researcher also analysed one SGB training manual consisting of six main topics. However, most of the data derived from the observation of the training workshops and analysis of documents is presented as part of the field notes (see section 4.6).

The results of this study are presented in the context of its limitations as pointed out in section 1.6. The intention of the study is to establish salient necessities for improving the SGBs' capacity in school governance. Although the aim of this study is not to generalize the findings, schools in similar situations as the rural secondary schools under study could benefit and the findings could also provide an impetus for further research on the subject.

Nine interviews were conducted, two in each of the three selected schools and three with the circuit managers of the circuit where the three schools were selected. Out of the nine interviews, six were individual interviews conducted with the principals of the three schools and three circuit managers, and three were focus group interviews conducted with the SGBs of the three schools. Pre-formulated questions were asked (see Appendices B1 & B2) and the participants were allowed to expatiate. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The researcher attended two SGB workshops conducted by officials from the Department of Education. The SGB training manual was analyzed to check their applicability to the literacy level of SGB members, particularly the parent component.

### **4.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Each of the nine interviews conducted lasted approximately 90 to 120 minutes and they were audio recorded. The audio tapes were transcribed and checked against the taped discussions and written responses. Transcriptions were analysed as guided by Tesch's eight steps approach by De Vos (2000:343) (see section 3.2.4).

An SGB training manual for Mpumalanga Department of Education was analysed mainly to identify salient aspects that are necessary for capacitating SGB members to ensure effective school governance.

### **4.4 PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED**

The researcher experienced problems with the transcription of interviews because there were tapes which had some background noise and some had to be translated from an African language (Setswana) into English. These were audio tapes used during the interviews with the SGBs of School A and C, and the principal of School C. The tapes had to be played several times in order to fully transcribe them. Furthermore, one circuit manager sounded defensive to the Department of Education which limited his views on the dysfunctionality of SGBs and the challenges encountered during the training workshops. However, his limited views and

perceptions were supplemented by the detailed and insightful responses from the other two circuit managers. The interview schedules are attached as appendices (see Appendices B 1-9).

#### **4.5 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

The findings of this study are organized under the following headings: the SGBs' knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities in schools, the challenges of SGB training, the challenges faced by school managers in schools where SGBs lack capacity in school governance, the SGBs' lack of capacity on policy implementation, the SGBs' training needs and recruitment of ideal SGB members for school governance.

##### **4.5.1 The SGBs' knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities in schools**

The powers, functions and duties of governing bodies are grouped according to a list of managerial duties that have to be carried out by all governing bodies (section 20 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996), and a list of tasks that may be given to governing bodies that have the ability or means to fulfil the tasks (section 21 of South African Schools Act 84 of 1996) (Potgieter et al. 1997:31). These functions have to be carried out diligently to ensure proper school governance.

##### **4.5.1.1 Limited knowledge of SGB functions**

As a body with vested powers, the SGB has certain functions in ensuring effective and efficient governance of the school (see section 2.2.4). Knowledge and understanding of these responsibilities are critical in the successful functioning of the SGBs. Of the 12 functions of all governing bodies stated in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 section 20 (1) (a-l) and the 5 allocated functions of the governing bodies as stated in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 section 21(1) (a-dA) (see section 2.2.4.), the SGBs could mention only 5, the principals 7 and the circuit managers 8 (also see appendices C1, C2 and C3). This does not only suggest that SGB members have a limited knowledge of their functions in school governance, but that the immediate departmental officials who are supposed to assist them most probably possess superficial knowledge of the functions of the governing bodies. In terms of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996, section 19(2)), the principals and other officers of the Department of Education should be fully capacitated to render all the necessary assistance to the governing bodies in performing their functions.

This limited knowledge and/or understanding of the functions of the governing bodies will not only hamper the functionality of SGBs, but will also render the training and guidance of SGB members by their immediate officials impossible.

The principal of School B (see Appendix B) pointed out that

*... most of the SGBs don't know their legal responsibilities ... but I think that when we talk about the SGB we should be conscious of the fact that the principal is an ex-officio member of the SGB and his/her role is to advise the SGB members ... so SGBs depend on the principal to learn and do their legal responsibilities.*

Principals are not only juristically expected to assist the governing body in performing their functions, but they are also looked upon by the SGB, as knowledgeable persons, to offer them guidance and advice. However, some principals seem to require extensive training in order to fulfil their advisory role within the SGBs.

Again the principal of School B (see Appendix B) argued that

*... schools are different ... we have schools that are in the rural areas and those that are in the urban areas. Maybe schools which are in the urban areas have SGBs that have the necessary knowledge of their roles and responsibilities, but SGBs of schools in the rural areas really don't have the necessary knowledge of their duties, thus they find it difficult to support the school in its functions ...*

The SGBs' knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities is a fundamental pre-requisite for their effectiveness in school governance. The immediate departmental officers should also be knowledgeable, not only of the functions of the SGBs, but also their legal obligation to assist the SGBs in performing their functions.

#### **4.5.1.2 SGBs' lack of knowledge of their legal duties in school governance**

In terms of section 16 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body. Therefore, the governing body should perform its functions effectively and efficiently for the benefit of the school community (RSA 1996, s16). However, this legal requirement is still to be realized in most of the schools in the rural areas (see section 2.3.2). There seem to be a general complaint on the ineffectiveness of most SGBs of schools in the rural areas due to limited knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities (see Appendices C2 and C3).

The principal of School C (see Appendix B) complained that

*... because the level of understanding of their roles and responsibilities is so low ...  
it has a very negative effect on their functioning within the schools ...*

The ineffective SGBs compromise the best interest of the schools, which they are supposed to promote and protect and even fail to ensure the provision of quality education for all learners at the school (cf RSA 1996, s20 (2) (a)). This result in the wide spread phenomenon of dysfunctional schools in most areas across the country.

Circuit manager A (see Appendix B) pointed out that

*... there are schools which have very much disjointed or dysfunctional SGBs ...  
which is frustrating for the school.*

The SGB is supposed to play a supreme role in setting the tone of the school through developing the vision and mission for the school and also ensuring that the school remains on course towards accomplishing its aspirations. However, this still remains a challenge for most SGBs in the rural areas.

Circuit manager C (see Appendix B) commented that

*... if you compare the previously advantaged schools ... that is the former model  
C schools' SGBs and our own ordinary public school SGBs [SGBs of schools in the  
rural area] ... you will see the Difference [in capacity and performance of their  
governance functions] ... . [I]f our SGBs can operate at the same level as SGBs of  
former model C schools ... I think we shall have moved a milestone in as far as  
capacitating the SGB is concerned.*

The capacity of SGBs, in the rural schools investigated, requires serious attention and improvement in order to offer education of high quality for their learners. It is also imperative for the SGBs to be inspected or appraised from time to time to ensure that they perform their duties as expected. This will give an assurance to the Department of Education that SGBs are able to account for the responsibilities and authority that have been delegated to them. Furthermore, the Department of Education will have sufficient grounds to deal with incapable governors (see section 2.4). Thus section 25 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, make provision for the Head of Department to dissolve the existing SGB and commission for the election of a new SGB if there are reasonable grounds that the governing body has either ceased to perform all of its

allocated functions or has failed to perform one or more of such functions. Although this decision has never been taken by the Head of Department, it is high time that it should be considered, particularly after continuous capacity building exercise has failed, to minimize the prevalence of dysfunctional SGBs and/or schools.

#### ***4.5.1.3 SGBs' level of education and their understanding of their roles and responsibilities***

According to Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:137) the main problem which besets parents in the previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa is the high level of illiteracy. An estimated 37% of the population of the country is functionally illiterate (see section 2.3.4). This would obviously impact negatively on the Department of Education's capacity building programs for the SGBs.

Although the Department of Education is expected to provide training to governing bodies to promote the effective performance of their functions, this task seem to be less successful with most SGBs of schools in the rural areas. There is a general concern that the majority of the SGB parent component have never been to school, which frustrates any effort to train them and the subsequent demand to implement the information received during the training sessions (see Appendices C2 and C3).

The principal of School B (see Appendix B) was concerned about the SGBs' lack of understanding of their responsibilities:

*... when we elect them [SGBs] we don't look at the level of their education ... the requirement is just having a child at a particular school irrespective of the educational level of the parent... .*

The fact that there are educated parent members in the SGB is a matter of chance because there is no purposive, predetermined criterion in place to have skilled and educated persons elected into SGBs. Even the recruitment process does not have any intentional guideline to draw people with the necessary expertise to this vital structure for school governance (see section 2.2.3). It is also problematic for highly educated persons who are elected into the SGB to work with the less educated SGB members because these groups will be operating at different levels of knowledge and understanding. This might also cause unnecessary conflicts and misunderstandings among SGB members. The less educated or uneducated SGB members might either feel intimidated or dominated by the well-educated member(s) and on the other hand the (highly) educated member(s) might feel out of place and unchallenged by the lack of basic

knowledge and understanding displayed by the less educated SGB members. Thus even the educated persons who are elected into SGB may not be retained for the entire term of office, which will perpetuate the challenge of SGBs comprising mainly of people with little or no knowledge of their functions. This lack of knowledge of their functions will hamper their effectiveness in school governance.

In the rural areas teachers seem to dominate the SGBs despite parents, in accordance with the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996, s23(9)), having the majority voice (see section 2.2.3). Parents seem to defer to the teachers because of teachers' class positions. Parents in the rural areas seem to feel that they have little chance to participate in SGBs and in many instances are either silenced or withdraw altogether from SGB activities. In this regard Circuit manager A (see Appendix B) argued that,

*if you take an SGB member who went to school up to standard 3 to a training workshop, you will always know that even if you can train this person, he/she is going to be overwhelmed by the training materials and the information that is being disseminated during the training sessions ... . [S]o the practical implementation is going to be difficult, but if you take a person who has gone up to Grade 12, you are saying that that person is able to read, is able to write, is able to argue constructively, and is able to advise ... . [M]ost schools that have functional or effective SGBs ... a greater percentage of the parent component has passed Std 10 or Grade 12 ... so these people are likely to be very much effective ... thus the SGB will be very much functional ... .*

There is, therefore, a need for predetermined intentional criteria for the recruitment and election of SGB members with a certain required level of education, skills and knowledge. The SGB members cannot be expected to be fully functional if the system and procedures for electing them do not make predetermined provision for their effectiveness in school governance. Besides, a better education level for the SGBs will facilitate their successful training and subsequent successful implementation of the information that has been gained during the workshops.

Circuit manager B (see Appendix B) asserted that

*... if the SGBs' level of literacy is below par, obviously they will never understand the policies ... and therefore implementation becomes very much staggered ... .*

A certain level of education, particularly for the parent governors, is imperative for the training sessions on SGB functions to be successful, and for them to succeed in performing their functions.

Circuit manager A (see Appendix B) argued that

*... for most of the SGB members if you talk matters legal or anything that has to do with legislation then you are denying them information ... . [T]hat is why I was trying to emphasize that if these people are educated ... to a greater extent, they will be able to grapple with any legal matter regarding school governance ... but most of them, even if they have been trained, they are still doing things that are against the constitution of the country ... they are still grappling with an understanding of what the constitution is ... what legislation is ... what is meant by the word amendment, clause, act etc. ... .*

The SGBs' level of education, which in this study proved to be inefficient, has a marked influence on the effective performance of their duties and understanding of their *logo standi* when taking any action or making any decision within the school.

#### **4.5.1.4 The significance of SGB training**

The training of SGB members is intended to promote and boost the effective performance of their functions and to enable them to take up more functions (Potgieter et al. 1997:30). Although the Head of Department is supposed to provide continuing training to governing bodies, there is general concern that the department is not providing adequate training for the SGB members (see Appendices C2 and C3). The inadequate training provided to the SGBs, which became evident in this study of 3 schools, leaves them ill-equipped to tackle the challenges of their functions.

In this regard the principal of School C (see Appendix B) remarked:

*[A]s far as I remember we had very few workshops regarding SGBs' roles and responsibilities ... . I think the Department of Education is not doing enough, because that is their sole responsibility ... . [T]he school management, educators and principal cannot educate SGB members on how to go about regarding their responsibilities ... but now the Department of Education is not doing enough ... .*

The few workshops that are conducted for the SGBs regarding their roles and responsibilities (see section 4.7.2.1), do not do justice towards helping them to develop appropriate knowledge and understanding of their legal functions. This is compounded by the low literacy level of most SGB members, particularly in the rural areas (see section 2.3.4). The Department of Education is also sluggish in carrying out its legal mandate of providing continuous training to the SGB members.

The principals of schools also seem not to understand their role regarding SGB training; they also look upon the Department of Education to carry out this responsibility.

Circuit manager B (see Appendix B) argued that

*... there should be consistency in training the SGB members so that at the end they can become functional and [understand] their roles and responsibilities as SGBs ... .*

The amount of SGB training offered should be proportional to the literacy level of the recipients in order to ensure maximum success and effectiveness in school governance. Besides, all the persons who are legally responsible for SGB training should have a good understanding of their roles and also have a full capacity to fulfil these tasks.

When the SGB members were asked about the role played by the principal and/or circuit manager regarding their training, they were hesitant to answer, which could imply that the role of these officials in SGB training is not clearly discernible or that it is very limited (see Appendix C1). Such implication militates against SGB functionality because most of the SGB members assume office with little or no knowledge of their legal responsibilities. As a result they solely depend on the principal in carrying out their duties. Thus the SGB members will only do what the principal wants them to do and not come up with their own initiatives.

Although an SGB member of School A reported that, “the circuit office organized an induction workshop for us,” it seems to be inadequate because the researcher was part of the circuit governance team that conducted the three hours induction workshops for the newly elected SGB members at School A. During the workshops only the basics of SGB functions were dealt with and no follow up was made thereafter. Thus the preparedness of the SGB members in carrying out their legal duties remains questionable.

With regard to SGB training, an SGB member from School A (see Appendix B) reported that

*... the workshop on financial management helped us in managing the school finance for which we will be presenting a report on Saturday (10 March 2007) ... .*

Although the SGB member reported that the workshop benefited them, observations made by this researcher revealed that only a few individual members, who are educated, benefited because they could consolidate the information they received during the workshops on their own. Other members expressed uncertainty through their body language. The general success of the workshop cannot be measured through the knowledge and understanding of few individual

SGB members. Instead, the majority of the SGB members should be able to demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities after the workshop. If the majority of the SGB members have good knowledge and understanding of their work, they would be able to express some influence, authority and power in school governance, particularly in decision-making processes.

#### **4.5.2 The challenges of SGB training**

It is essential that the election of school governors be followed by proper and adequate training in their roles and responsibilities to reduce the chances of failure, because the SGB indeed has a prime obligation to shape and influence what is offered to children in schools and to ensure that each child is able to achieve their full potential in the education system (see section 2.3).

However, this research shows that in most instances the SGB training workshops are riddled with many challenges which compromise their quality and effectiveness. Some of these challenges are discussed below.

##### ***4.5.2.1 The time allocated for SGB training workshops***

It really takes time to build the professional capacity of governing bodies to enable members to sustain or challenge educational practice and to influence policy matters (see section 2.4). However, this maxim seems not to be enjoying priority when training workshops are conducted. The departmental officials who are charged with the training of SGBs seem to be concerned with completing their quota of work rather than the quality of the outcome.

An SGB member of School A (see Appendix B) complained that

*... the time [for the training workshop] was too short for the information they intended to workshop us on ... thus they ended up rushing over the information in order to finish, but still they could not finish ... . [T]here was too much information given within a short space of time ... .*

Rushing the workshop for the sake of finishing compromised the quality of the information that was transmitted, which militated against the objectives of the workshop. The result would obviously be the negation of the implementation process and the SGB functionality because the SGB members leave the workshop with a limited knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities.

Another SGB member from School A (see Appendix B) concurred that

*[T]hey [departmental officials who were conducting SGB workshops] need to make time again to workshop SGBs ... because they were rushing everything in order to finish without taking into consideration whether the SGB members understood what they were presenting or not ... .*

A crash course with elderly semi-literate or illiterate SGB members, like the crash courses that this researcher attended, militates against the successful implementation of the intentions of the workshops. SGB members will most probably miss most of the valuable information which is meant to empower them in their governance functions. Besides, the semi-literate or illiterate SGB members are not able to study the workshop material and other relevant legal documents on their own in order to supplement and/or consolidate the information they received during the workshop presentations. The other problem is that the little knowledge they gained during the workshop will gradually fade with time, since these SGB members will not be able to refresh their memories through studying the workshop materials. As a result the workshop booklets are of little value to them.

The principal of School B (see Appendix B) raised the concern that

*... only a half day workshop was organized for them [SGBs] ... and it did not make any difference ... eh ... I don't think it is enough ... . [S]o you just elect people into [the] SGB and there is no adequate training provided for them ... you expect them to work miracles ... .*

This concern by the principal of School B is also supported by Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:139) who assert that the responsibilities of SGBs are so important and complex that they cannot be expected to be discharged effectively without some training going beyond the normal process of picking up the job by doing it (see section 2.4). To a certain extent the SGBs are failing in their governance functions because of the inadequate training which they received. Circuit manager A (see Appendix B) argued that

*... the Department of Education is forced to come up with a program that will start in the morning and end in the afternoon ... and in that case it is not going to be a quality workshop because it is going to be so fully packed ... . [W]ork that has to be done in three days is going to be done in few hours ... so you can just see what is going to be happening ... . [C]ertain people or a few people ... 10 people out of 40 people are going to understand ... and you cannot say you have been successful ... because the very mistakes which we were trying to eliminate*

*through these workshops ... when they go back to their schools they are still going to continue with them ... .*

Training is the cornerstone of affirming governors in the execution of their roles and responsibilities (see section 2.4). Therefore, SGB members should be provided with consistent adequate training to empower them to confidently and authoritatively discharge their complex responsibilities within the school.

#### **4.5.2.2 The language of SGB training workshops**

The school governing bodies have to be fully empowered and be given ready access to information they require so that they can function competitively within their sphere of education governance. They need to confidently know that they are in charge within a recognized framework of SGB participation (see section 2.4). However, SGB members seem to continue to experience barriers towards accessing critical information for discharging their fundamental responsibilities.

Circuit manager A (see Appendix B) asserted the following:

*... I cannot say they are able to cope [with the workshop presentations]... but some are able to cope ... . In the training sessions the manuals are written in English which is a different medium of communication for most of the SGB members ... but even if they can be written in the language that is understood by most of the people ... there is still a problem of a lack of the culture of reading and illiteracy ... (also see section 2.4).*

Language and illiteracy remain the major barriers for most of the SGB members to access the much needed information to ensure their effectiveness in school governance, particularly in the rural areas. These barriers should be addressed by the recruitment and election processes which should embrace clear guidelines towards attracting skilful and knowledgeable people into governing bodies. It was proposed by an SGB member from school B (see Appendix B) that

*... during elections they [parents] should try to elect people who will be able to read the training manuals on their own with understanding ... . [T]he manuals should also be written in the African languages ... .*

Furthermore, the principal of School B (see Appendix B) complained that

*... some of the manuals are written in English ... and the facilitators present some of the items/topics in English ... only to find that the SGBs, particularly the parent component, cannot understand, write or read the language [English]... . [S]o those are the challenges encountered by SGBs ... .*

The language used in the training manuals seems to be far beyond the basic literacy level of most of the parent governors. As a result it is virtually impossible for most of them to refer and/or study these manuals to supplement the few hours crash workshop offered by the Department of Education (see section 2.4). Thus most SGB members rely heavily on the verbal information they receive during these workshops in executing their governance responsibilities. The verbal information of the facilitators in itself is not so helpful because being pressurized by time limitations, facilitators become selective in their presentation of information. Facilitators cover a lot of work within a short space of time, resulting in information overload and subsequent loss of some valuable information. Judging from the manner in which these workshops are conducted and the literacy level and age of most of the SGB members, it becomes doubtful if they are successful. This is also compounded by the fact that there is normally no follow-up to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the information and skills which were supposed to have been acquired during the workshops.

It is essential that information regarding school governance should be made readily accessible to SGB members to improve their knowledge and skills in governance functions.

#### ***4.5.2.3 The competency level of facilitators***

The establishment of the school governing body was based on the premise that the government cannot do everything for schools. Therefore, the school governing body has, through the process of decentralization, become part of the co-operative governance system with vested powers (see section 2.3.1). The training of the SGBs, as a legal requirement, should thus receive top priority from the Department of Education. However, the choice of facilitators for the SGB workshops leaves much to be desired (see appendices C2 and C3). The Department of Education should ensure that the SGB training workshops are informative and empowering to promote effective school governance.

The principal of School C (see Appendix B) expressed his disappointment regarding SGB training as follows:

*Since they [SGBs] were elected in 2005 to date [March 2007] ... I can count three workshops which were conducted by a very incompetent person ... . [A]fter*

*attending such workshops it appears as if the SGB members have never attended any workshop ... and I can say in that regard the Department has failed ... by appointing a person who did not understand his work, to conduct the workshops. The person was supposed to take centre stage during the workshop ... but he was sitting there not able to answer questions on crucial issues ... even if they [the Department] conducted three workshops that amounted to nothing ...*

The facilitators for SGB workshops are supposed to be authorities in school governance in order to eliminate the frustrations and uncertainties experienced by the SGB members in their governance functions. Moreover, there is an outcry that appropriate training of SGBs is crucial to contemporary education, as children cannot be exposed to a “second class” schooling system because individuals responsible for administering and managing their schools are inadequately prepared to perform their duties (see section 2.4). If the SGB training process and programs, particularly in the rural areas, are not improved, learners in rural schools will in all probability continue to be exposed to the plight of dysfunctional schools.

Concerning the competency of facilitators Circuit manager B also complained as follows:

*... I am not satisfied with the competency level of the workshop presenters ... because there were several complains which were brought to my office ... . [B]ecause the circuit governance committee that consists of principals was also attending such workshops ...they realized that the interpretation of certain pieces of legislation were not according to how they know them ... so it is a problem ... . [I]t would mean that such facilitators would need more training so that when they impart information to the SGBs they should fully understand what they are talking about ... .*

There seems to be incapacity of the Department of Education to successfully undertake its legal responsibility to train SGBs to promote and boost the effective performance of their functions and to develop their capacity to take on additional functions. Although the Department of Education seem to have programs to capacitate the SGB members, it seem to lack relevant people to implement them, which might perpetuate the problem of the SGB’s lack of knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Circuit manager B (see Appendix B) remarked that

*... if the facilitation skills of the workshop presenters is not up to scratch ... it becomes a big challenge ... and therefore it creates some gaps in terms of the SGB's understanding of their legal functions ... .*

On the other hand circuit manager A (see Appendix B) reported that

*... training is done by well equipped ... versatile people ... well informed people ... . [I]t is just that when they are training these people [SGBs] ... they turn to forget the level of education of the recipients ... . [T]hey disseminate information as if these people [SGBs] are specialists ... . [T]hey leave these people behind ... and as a result only a few people will be able to understand what was been disseminated during these workshops ... .*

Although there are different and contradictory perceptions on the competency level of the workshop presenters, it is common that their impact on the SGB members' knowledge and understanding of their governance functions is limited. Thus specific and purposeful actions need to be taken to nurture and sustain the effective functioning of the SGBs by all the relevant officials.

#### **4.5.2.4 The quality of SGB training workshops**

The Department of Education has a legal obligation to invest time and resources in the capacity-building programs of the SGBs to ensure that they are well prepared to accept and successfully discharge the delegated powers in school governance. As to whether the SGBs will develop into valuable role players in the education system depends on the quality of the training they receive. However, there are reports of complaints from the SGB members, principals and circuit managers, of the area under study, about, amongst others, the incongruity between the standard and quality of the workshops and the level of literacy and understanding of the recipients (see Appendices C1, C2 and C3). This will compromise the intended objectives of the capacity-building programs of the SGBs and their subsequent functionality in school governance.

The principal of School B (see Appendix B) argued that

*the training was too high for the SGB members ... . [I]t was too high for them ... they did not understand ... . [T]he level of comprehension of our SGB members is very low ... although some ... not all of them ... very few could understand, but the majority did not understand ... . [W]hat is important is to go down to the*

*level of the parent SGB members ... and be relevant during the training workshops ... .*

The SGB training workshops seem to have missed the target, because the majority of the people who are supposed to be benefiting from such workshops seem to grapple with the presentations. As a result the SGB members become passive recipient of information with no guarantee of understanding. They do not even ask questions that would enhance their understanding and handling of their responsibilities.

Circuit manager A (see Appendix B) said that

*... it is a pity that the Department of Education organizes workshops [sic] ... but you find that these are not workshops ... . [I]n a workshop we expect two way communication ... but I can tell you most of the SGB members just go there and listen ... . [Y]ou can see that they are frustrated but they are not able to voice out their frustration ... .*

The inability of the workshops to dispel the frustrations of the SGB members results in inadequate knowledge and functions leading to the poor performance of the school in general (see section 2.3.2). Besides, the Department of Education does not seem to be having a definite mechanism in place to render additional support to the SGBs after these initial workshops. In most cases the SGB members continue to struggle on their own, with minimal success, in school governance.

The principal of School B (see Appendix B) argued that

*... maybe once in a year they [the departmental officials] come train the SGBs, for example, on finance ... and from there, there is no follow-up ... there is no feedback ... there is no evaluation to check whether the SGBs are following and/or implementing the information which they received during the workshops ... . I think that is not enough ... because the SGB members who attended this financial management workshop are still having the same problem of managing the finance of the school ... . [B]esides the standard of the presentation was too high for the parents and they did not understand the information which was presented to them ... and these parents were supposed to come back and implement ... but nobody came from the Department to check as to whether the parents have improved or not ... .*

It is not only training which is important in ensuring that SGBs are effective in school governance. Constant monitoring and control are also crucial in guaranteeing that the intended functions are efficiently being fulfilled. In order to ensure that SGBs perform their duties as expected, they need to be appraised or inspected from time to time (see section 2.4). This is crucial to identify mistakes and shortfalls in SGBs' knowledge and understanding and prevent the potential negative impact on the governance function at an early stage. This information can also be used not only to devise appropriate corrective measure on the inadequate performance of the SGBs, but can also be used to prepare a more appropriate training program for the future.

These training workshops and follow-up monitoring mechanisms should depict the department's accountability on the SGBs capacity-building responsibility, which is intended to promote and boost the effective performance of the governance functions.

#### **4.5.3 The challenges faced by school managers in schools where SGBs lack capacity in school governance**

The school thrives very well if both the professional functions of the school management and governance functions and objectives of SGBs complement each other. If one is over accentuated an imbalance in the running of the school is created. This might result in unnecessary conflicts and tensions. As a result the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 purports that the governing body should help and support the principal, educators and other staff members at the school to perform their professional functions. On the other hand principals are also required to give all the necessary assistance to the governing bodies in performing their functions (Potgieter et al. 1997:13). However, there are certain challenges which hamper the realization of this mutual support and assistance by both the SGBs and the school managers as suggested in the following discussion.

##### **4.5.3.1 The strain of ineffective school governance on principals**

The major purpose of school governance, as a function of the SGB, is to set the tone and ethos that will drive the vision and mission of the school. Therefore, the SGB has a significant function of assisting the school principal to organize and manage the school activities in an effective and efficient way (see section 2.2.4). However, SGBs in the rural areas seem to be hampered by their lack of capacity and knowledge to assist the principals in their management of the schools (see Appendices C2 and C3). Most principals in the rural areas seem to grapple with both the management and governance functions with limited support from the SGBs.

Circuit manager A (see Appendix B) argued that

*... the principals cannot run the school alone ... he has to have people who assist him in managing the school ... in terms of advice and decision-making ... . [S]o the principal on his own is going to crumble ... . [H]e needs empowered and visionary SGB members to help him run the school ... . [I]f the SGB members are not empowered and visionaries, then the school is going to be run by the principal ... which is going to be burdensome ... . [S]o some of the projects are not going to be accomplished ... . [T]hings are not going to be well conducted at school ... and at the end he is going to be blamed for running the school alone ... .*

The management of the school has become a daunting task to principals whose SGBs lack the necessary capacity to dispatch their functions. The principal might have good ideas and intentions to develop and improve the school and its performance, but if he/she does not receive the necessary support from the SGB, then all the good intentions will never be realized. The running of the schools, in some instances, virtually hinges on the principals' volition.

The principal of School B (see Appendix B) complained that

*... the crucial challenge that faces the principal is to take over the SGB functions ... . [T]he principal does [the] management and governance tasks of the school ... . [T]he principal is supposed to advise the SGB and they should work on their own ... but the SGB is not in a position of being advised, because of their lack of capacity ... . [T]he principal has to do all the work ... in other words the principal with this type of SGB has to work double shift ... . [H]e has to do all the task of the SGB ... something that is very difficult for him ... . [T]he poor principal is overworked ... . [H]is work is going to be affected negatively ... the performance of the school in general will be affected adversely ... .*

The SGBs' lack of capacity in their governance functions compromises the best interest of the school. As a result the learners will be exposed to a "second class" schooling which is against the spirit and intension of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 of redressing the past inequalities and providing education of progressively high quality for all the learners.

The principal of School B (see Appendix B) argued that

*... schools are failing to perform up to the expectations ... not because the poor principal is failing to manage the school ... but ... because the support that he/she should receive from the SGB is not forthcoming ... .*

The SGB has a supreme function of promoting the best performance of the school, which will ensure that learners receive the best education possible. However, many SGBs in the rural areas are failing to take a leading role in this regard, which creates problems for the school principal.

The principal of School C (see Appendix B) asserted that

*... they [SGBs] normally want to do what the management tells them to do ... . [T]hey don't come up with their own initiative nor do they criticize the management's decisions ... . [T]hey are not as yet understanding their roles ... . [A]s SGB and/or executive members ... they should be the ones, who call meetings, as it is directed by the SGB constitution ... . [I]nstead the principal ends up calling SGB meetings ... comes up with the agenda ... chairs the meetings ... Comes up with proposals ... comes up with all that has to be done and they always rubber stamp what you say ... that is not good ... .*

As it was suggested in section 2.3.1, the governing body, as a co-operate body of trustees, is in a position of leadership. They should keep up with everything that is happening in the school and also take major decisions about the general performance of the school. The governing body will be failing in its leadership responsibility if it simply rubberstamps what other people has decided. As leaders, the governing body needs to take the initiative and make decisions about the direction of the school and its ethos. They should assure themselves and other stakeholders of the school about the real performance of the school. In so doing, they will be promoting the best interest of the school as trustee members.

#### **4.5.3.2 The level of motivation of SGB members in fulfilling their functions**

As it was indicated in section 2.2, being an SGB member is supposed to be a voluntary task undertaken to serve a school and the community, an opportunity to help young people to benefit fully from their education. Members of a governing body are supposed to be people who care enough about schooling, and what goes on in their own school, to want to be involved and make a difference. However, most SGB members seem unaware that being involved in school governance requires hard work and sacrifices of precious time (DoE 1997:9).

To most of the SGB members, particularly in the rural areas, being involved in SGB activities becomes a tedious and rewardless task. As a result their commitment and participation wane with time to a point where they begin to drop by the way side. In this regard Circuit manager A (see Appendix B) indicated that

*... at any given time if a person feels bored with the activities of the SGB ... he/she resigns without even informing the other SGB members of his/her decision... .*

The tendency of some SGB members to “resign willy-nilly” militates against the best interest of the school, which they are supposed to promote and to protect. Besides, it betrays the parent community’s trust in the person and it compromises the collectivity that is supposed to characterize the operation of the SGB.

The principal of School C (see Appendix B) indicated that

*... in our school in particular ... out of 10 members, I have four members who are always attending SGB activities ... they are there for interviews ... they are there if we have difficult problems to deal with ... .*

The SGB secretary of School A (see Appendix B) also complained that

*... two of the parent SGB members are no longer attending SGB meetings even if they are sent invitation letters ... and they are always at home as they are not working ... .*

Furthermore, the principal of School B (see Appendix B) was also concerned that

*... there are those [SGB members] whom you no longer know whether they are still SGB members or not ... . [Y]ou send them invitation letters ... they just don’t turn up ... .*

The irregular and/or non-attendance of SGB meetings by some governing body members suggests that the discussions taken during such meetings are not representative of the views and opinions of the official SGB, as they seldom form a quorum. The fact that the school principals continue to work with “skeletal” SGBs suggests that the departmental guidelines are not observed. These guidelines stipulate that a school governor can be stopped from serving or can be removed from office for

- missing more than three meetings in a row, without giving a reasonable explanation;
- not fulfilling the rules requested to stand as a member;
- acting in a way that is “prejudicial” to the best interest of the school (DoE 1997:13).

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 directs that if the number of parents at any stage is not more than the combined total of other members with voting rights, the governing body must temporarily co-opt parents with voting rights (RSA 1996, s 23(10)). However, these directives seem to be more applicable in communities where the education of the children is valued and there is a commitment from parents to voluntarily protect and promote the best interest of the school. In most rural areas parents focus on other challenges because of the high rate of unemployment and poverty. Most parents want to engage themselves in activities that will at least earn them some livelihood.

Circuit manager A (see Appendix B) argued that

*... the fact that they are not being paid sort of demoralizes them ... . I don't know if they can be given certain remuneration ... maybe [then] the attitude and level of motivation would change ... and the level of motivation would also be high ... .*

Circuit manager B (see Appendix B) concurred that

*... some of these people (SGB members) really believe that they cannot perform SGB functions for free ... they expect to be remunerated in a way ... .*

The idea that the SGB members should be remunerated seems to create a serious challenge for the principal to secure a full complement of parent members in the SGB. On the other hand the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 states that “no member of the governing body may be remunerated in any way for performing his/her duties” (RSA 1996, s27 (2)). However, the education of the learners should not be left to chance; there should be a way of sustaining full parental involvement in SGB activities. If possible the legislation should be reviewed to accommodate a possible reward in the form of a sitting allowance.

#### **4.5.3.3 The demand for the principal to train the SGB members**

The principal as the immediate departmental official is best placed to observe and measure the quality of SGB's performance of its legal functions. Through his/her interactions and meeting with the SGB, he/she can identify their training needs. Although the principal is legally expected to render all the necessary assistance to the governing body in performing their functions, the following are some of the challenges which hamper the principal from fulfilling this function

- restraining workload – both managerial and teaching responsibilities;
- limited expertise – both knowledge and skills
- limited time – always busy (see Appendices C1, C2 and C3).

The principal is indeed looked upon by the SGB members to play a leading role in governance activities. Circuit manager B (see Appendix B) suggested that

*... the principal as an ex-officio member has to train the SGB members ... educate them ... and help them to interpret the policies so that it becomes easy to implement them ... .*

In agreement, Circuit manager A (see Appendix B) said that

*During their [SGBs'] meetings the principal should create a slot in which he/she should educate these people [SGBs members] on what roles and responsibilities they are to play in the school ... .*

The calls by the circuit managers, for the principal to support SGB members in understanding their role in school governance, are pertinent in view of the fact that most SGB members, particularly in the rural areas, assume office with little or no knowledge of their legal responsibilities (see section 2.3.2 and also see Appendix B). As a result they solely rely on the principal, not only for guidance and support, but also for training with regard to their legal functions. However, most principals' readiness to assume the training role of the SGB members still remains to be seen. Furthermore, the circuit manager's reference of the SGB members as "these people" (see above quote), has the connotation of distancing oneself from the plight of the SGB members' lack of knowledge and a revelation of lack of confidence in the role played by the SGB members in school governance. Nevertheless, the circuit manager should co-own the training responsibility, monitoring and mentoring of the SGB members in their legal functions.

The principal of School A (see Appendix B) argued that

*... the principals are always having a lot of work to do ... but if they get a chance they can assist in training the SGBs ... •*

The inability of the principals to assist in training the SGB members is compounded by the fact that they are already overloaded with their managerial responsibilities, and in most instances they are presented with SGBs that lack capacity to do their duties, resulting in them taking over the governance responsibilities as well. Thus, instead of training the SGBs, the principal just give orders of what should be done (see section 4.5.3.2 also see Appendix B).

Principals' limited role in SGB training was also eminent in the SGB members' hesitance in answering the question on the role of the principal in their training exercise (see Appendix C1). The principals' training role is limited by the fact that they already have a lot of work to do as subject teachers, administrators and managers of schools. However, there are some principals who are robed into the circuit governance teams whose responsibility is to conduct SGB induction programs in their respective circuit on behalf of the Department of Education.

Although the principals are expected to assist in capacity building of the SGBs, their involvement is limited by their workload and limited skills as trainers (see section 2.4). Thus the Department of Education remains mainly accountable for capacitating the SGB members.

#### **4.5.4 The SGBs' lack of capacity on policy implementation**

As a juristic person, the school should perform all its functions through its governing body, which has legally binding decision-making powers concerning the school (Potgieter et al. 1997:12). Thus it is expected of the SGBs to make decisions that are informed by relevant pieces of legislation and which are in line with the Constitution of South Africa Act 108 of 1996. Consequently, the SGB members are expected to have a sound knowledge and understanding of the relevant educational policies and legislation to perform their duties effectively. However, most interviewed SGB members seem to struggle with the basic understanding of the education policies, which impact negatively on their performance of the legal functions. In certain instances the SGBs' decisions and actions are in violation of the code of good practice (see Appendices C1, C2 and C3).

The contribution of most SGB members in performing their legal functions is limited by their lack of understanding of and inability to interpret the educational policies. In this regard Circuit manager A (see Appendix B) pointed out that

*... once you talk the language of the PFMA [Public Fund Management Act] the SGB members are completely lost ... anything that relates to control of monetary issues is a problem to them ... . [I]t is very ease to rob them ... something that I have realized is that some principals have this irresponsible practice of saying to the SGB members [to] just sign this cheque [sic] ... which is blank [sic] ... and it will never be questioned by this person ...*

The PFMA is a legal measure to ensure proper financial accountability and control for public institutions like the school. If the SGB members are “lost” with regard to the interpretation of the PFMA, the maintenance of proper control and management of school funds indeed becomes a problem. As a result there are numerous reports of misappropriation of school funds; particularly by some school principals (see section 2.2.4). The PFMA provides legal guidelines on the control and management of public funds to prevent fruitless and wasteful expenditure. Yet, the SGB members continue to demonstrate a lack of understanding of the due processes that have to be followed during disciplinary hearings. Circuit manager B (see Appendix B) alluded to the fact that

*... when they [SGB members] encounter a problem ... a disciplinary problem ... maybe during a hearing process or disciplinary tribunals ... some of the SGB members really don't know and understand what their role should be ... [regarding] the interpretation of the pieces of legislation .... [T]he disciplinary measures ... the code of conduct and good practice ... it's a problem ... .*

The limited understanding of the legal documents such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997, Employment of Educators' Act 76 of 1998, Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 etc. makes it impossible for the SGB members to take disciplinary actions against errant teachers or to recommend the dismissal of a particular teacher. As a result, there are schools which continue to struggle with underperformance and indiscipline of teachers which result in a general poor performance of learners. SGBs of such schools are failing to protect and promote the best interest of both the school and the learners. Furthermore, Circuit manger A (see Appendix B) indicated that

*... we are still having SGB members who feel that they can expel a learner at any given time ... . [T]here was an incident at one school where the parent governor got a learner smoking dagga within the school campus ... [and the SGB member] immediately said the learner is expelled from school ... [T]his in itself say they are still lacking knowledge of the legal due process that has to be followed before a learner can be expelled from school ... .*

It has to be borne in mind that the maintenance of discipline in the school has serious legal connotations and implications which require a shrewd person to avoid unnecessary litigations. The SGBs' lack of capacity to implement education policies would necessarily impact negatively on many aspects of the functioning of the school. For instance, if an SGB does not understand the curricular needs of the school, it cannot recommend a particular teacher for appointment into a post in the school. If they then do make a recommendation, it would neither have a proper basis nor would it meet the legal standard. Such ill-informed recommendations would give rise to a phenomenon of wrongly placed teachers, leading to underperformance.

Although the education system is based on various policies to ensure quality service delivery, the successful implementation of these policies depend, to a greater extent, on the capacity of the SGBs as the functionaries of the state.

#### **4.5.5 The SGBs' training needs**

The responsibilities for SGBs are so important and complex that they cannot be expected to discharge them effectively without training going beyond the normal process of picking up the job by doing it. Besides, training is the cornerstone of affirming governors in the execution of their roles and responsibilities (see section 2.4). Furthermore, this research revealed that most SGB members and their immediate departmental officers have a superficial knowledge and understanding of the legal governance functions of the SGBs in schools (see section 4.5.1.1), which compounds the problem of the dysfunctionality of most SGBs, particularly in the rural areas.

Although the main purpose of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 and other related education legislation is to increase the democratic control and quality performance of schools, this will not be achieved unless serious interventions are made in capacitating SGBs. Therefore, serious training, which should include the following basic fundamental aspects of school governance, should be done:

- Financial management and fundraising;
- policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- maintaining discipline, safety and security in the school;
- increasing awareness of different laws pertaining to school governance;
- forming partnerships with the school management;
- determining school curriculum;
- conducting and managing SGB meetings (see Appendices C1, C2 and C3).

Increased capacity in the above aspects of governance will boost the confidence and authority of the SGB members in their functions. As a result they will speak with vigour to the school

community to robustly discharge their delegated functions in school governance. This will minimize the prevalence of underperforming schools, particularly in the rural areas, as the best interest of the school and its learners would be zealously promoted by capacitated SGB members.

#### **4.5.6 Recruiting ideal SGB members for school governance**

Unlike other civil services, which have specific academic and/or vocational qualifications requirements, the governance function has none. Instead it depends on a collection of specific skills incumbent upon other civil duties. Therefore, a balance of these collective skills is required in constituting the SGB in a school in order to ensure and promote effective performance of governance functions.

Since the constitution of SGBs in schools does not have the advantage of advertisement, short listing and interview processes, it has to rely on the quality of the recruitment and subsequent election processes. The skills pool and composition of the parent community is therefore a limiting factor in constituting a potentially effective SGB.

In recruiting potentially ideal SGB members, careful consideration should be given to, amongst others, the educational level, knowledge and understanding of educational issues, fundamental knowledge of financial management and reporting, understanding and acceptance of the legal implications of being an SGB member and any other essential skill that might promote the effective performance of governance functions (see Appendices C2 and C3).

The principals of schools are better placed to know the ideal skills composition of the prospective SGB members. In support of this assertion, the principal of School B (see Appendix B) suggested that

*... among the requirements to qualify as an SGB member ... a parent should have a particular level of education ... . This will help SGB members in governing the school ... and also in guiding the learners ... . [T]he SGB members should be confident of themselves ... and also have knowledge of educational issues ... . To just say the requirement [to qualify as an SGB member] is just to have a child in the school, is not enough ... .*

The SGB members are supposed to perform critical functions, which determine the quality of the general performance of schools. As people with vested powers to promote and protect the best

interest of the school, they should espouse certain essential fundamental skills and knowledge. Nevertheless, the principal of School A (see Appendix B) complained that

*... most schools have SGB members with lower levels of education ... . Obviously such SGB members are not going to be so functional ... . [Y]ou will also see that the development of the school will not be the same as that of the school having SGB members who are good [educated and skilful] ... capable SGB members ... . If the level of education of SGB members is poor ... obviously even their performance of governance functions is going to be poor ... but if the level of education of SGB members is higher ... obviously their school development will be good and learners will perform better ... .*

The government, through the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, aims to create and manage a new national school system which will ensure that the quality of education of all learners is improved. For example, there should be better facilities, well trained teachers, better methods of teaching and better school conditions (Potgieter et al. 1997:6). However, it did not consciously ensure that the people who will be elected to discharge this vital responsibility have the necessary skills to match the challenges involved in school governance. It was not enough of the government, through the Department of Education, to have procedures ready only to make people available for the governance task. If ensuring high quality education is a prime priority for the government, then meticulous care should be given to the quality of the skills, knowledge and understanding of the people who are to be charged with the crucial responsibility of promoting and protecting the best interest of the school.

The number of underperforming schools, particularly in the rural areas (see section 4.5.1.2.), suggests that the best interest of the schools and its learners are not taken good care of. In such cases it seems that SGBs are unable to read and analyze the situations in their schools correctly and to put proper mechanisms in place that will really protect and promote the best interest of the schools and its learners.

The principal of School B (see Appendix B) asserted that

*... we need the SGB that will constantly come to school and motivate the learners and educators to work very hard ... . [W]hen learners pass, they (SGBs) should come and congratulate them ... and at the beginning of the year when learners did not pass very well ... they should be able to come in and ask "Where did things go wrong?" ... "How can we help to correct the situation?" ... . [W]e want this type of SGB members ... .*

SGB candidates should be people who understand the dynamics of the school, curriculum planning and implementation, financial management and resource provisioning, and restore and maintain discipline and order in the school — people who will really and consciously have the welfare of the school and learners at heart. Above all they should have the skills and knowledge to drive the vision of the school.

The principal of School C (see Appendix B) recommended that

*... when they elect SGB members ... they should stipulate that the prospective parent member should have a particular level of education ... . [T]he parent should have knowledgeable understanding of the legal roles and responsibilities, and the implications of being an SGB member ... . [M]aybe we will have SGBs that really know their duties and will help the school to develop ... .*

It is imperative for the Department of Education to factor in the election requirements for SGB members, particularly for the parent component, a certain level of skills and/or education profiling in terms of the portfolios which underpin SGB functioning. This would in all probability improve success in school governance in particular and good performance of the school in general.

#### **4.6 GENERAL FIELD NOTES**

This section deals with the researcher's observation of SGB involvement and functionality and training workshops. Many aspects, as shall be seen correspond with the analysis of interviews which makes the research more reliable as a result of triangulation (see section 3.2.2).

##### **4.6.1 Observation of SGB involvement and functionality in school governance**

From the researcher's observations, working together and interaction in meetings with the SGBs of the schools under study, it emerged that the principals still remain in control of SGB activities. This was also confirmed during the interviews where one principal (see Appendix B) complained that " as the principal you chair meetings ... you end up calling meetings ... come up with the agenda ... come up with proposals ... you come up with all what has to be done ... and they always rubber stamp what you say."

Therefore, what is being seen happening in most schools is predominantly the principal's ideas and decisions. Even if SGB members are not showing any active participation in governance activities, their presence seem not to be missed as they have little or no contribution towards

school governance. In most instances most schools operate with or without the involvement of SGB members. This lack of active participation of SGB members deprives the schools the benefit of effective and purposeful school governance.

It is not surprising that there is a poor culture of teaching and learning in schools where SGB members have minimal or no contribution towards school governance, with a possibility of little or no hope of improvement in the foreseeable future. The SGB members that seem to be a necessity to retain are the signatories of the school cheques. However, if the principal had an alternative means of signing the cheques, even these SGB members would not be involved in governance activities. The financial records and statements are, most of the time, presented by the principal.

During the researcher's interaction, during meetings, with the school principals, it emerged that the functionality of most SGBs is hampered by the work commitment of some of the parent members. There is a serious concern from the principals regarding the participation of the parent members in SGB activities, because those who are working often apologise stating that they are not released from their work to attend SGB activities, and those who have been recently employed just "disappear" without any report. Some parent members send word that they are not going to jeopardize their work opportunities by attending to SGB activities. This gave rise to the notion that SGB members should be paid for their participation in SGB activities. Nevertheless, the negative attitude by some of the working parent members suggests that they do not understand the value and purpose of their positions in school governance. This attitude compromises the primary objective of the SGB, namely, representing the community's interest and aspirations within the schools and endeavouring for the best interest of the learners' education. Consequently the principal is left on his/her own to make major decisions on both the governance and management of the school.

There is a dire need for SGB members, particularly in the rural areas, to know and understand their position and role in school governance, and to be encouraged to be actively involved in SGB activities for the school to offer education of progressively high quality to all the learners.

#### **4.6.2 Observation of SGB training workshops**

The researcher observed that the organisation and presentation of the training workshops were characterized by several shortfalls which compromised their quality and success. The facilitators continued to make reference to several pieces of legislation, such as the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 and the Constitution of Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 without establishing from the SGB members if they have any knowledge of these acts, or even providing them with copies of same. Thus such references had no meaning to the SGB members.

Communication and/or presentations were a serious challenge as some of the presenters were less conversant with the indigenous language of the majority of the SGB members. To aggravate matters, they could not use English as most of the SGB members could not understand it. Furthermore, the translations of most of the sections of the South African Schools Act, which were quoted and translated into the African language used for the presentation, was not always accurate. This distorted the information resulting in wrong interpretations. The facilitators sometimes used confusing terminology in explaining some of the governance concepts.

It also emerged from the discussions of the SGB members that there was no clear understanding and/or distinction between the governance functions of SGBs and the managerial and administrative functions of the principal. This sometimes caused unnecessary confrontations and conflicts.

The parent component seldom attends training workshops because of lack of information as invitations are received by the schools and are honoured by the teacher component. If they, however, do attend, they are in most instances passive recipients of information. Where SGB members do ask questions, questions do not result in improving their understanding and handling of their responsibilities. Instead these questions reveal their differences and lack of co-operation with the school principals. The tone of their questions also suggests an intention to “police” the principal rather than to cooperate with him/her.

The facilitators of training workshops discussed too many aspects of governance in one session, resulting in information overload and subsequent forgetting of most of the crucial aspects by SGB members. Furthermore, time was not well managed, resulting in the sessions being too long and the SGB members becoming impatient with the presenters.

Some of the facilitators were not authorities in school governance. As a result, several SGB members complained about the quality of the workshop, leading to decreased attendance in

subsequent workshops. Some of the SGB members threw away the workshop material at the venue out of frustration and disappointment.

There is a need to carefully screen prospective facilitators to ensure that workshops really become fruitful to the SGB members so that the latter's confidence can be won and attendance improved. Furthermore, departmental officials should visit schools to monitor the functionality of SGBs because in most instances SGB members are neither taking their rightful positions, nor fulfilling their responsibilities.

#### **4.7 ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTS**

The training manual for school governance for the Mpumalanga Department of Education was analysed to discern its relevance and suitability for capacity-building of SGBs in this province. It was discovered that the training manual is addressing pertinent governance issues such as (1) democratic school governance, (2) policy development, (3) conducting effective meetings, (4) financial management, (5) managing diversity and (6) interviewing skills (MDoE 2006). However, the training manual did not include other crucial governance aspects such as discipline, safety and security, and curriculum development. Of the four SGB functions which seem to have critical implications (see section 2.2.4) only two namely financial management and policy development are covered. The other two, namely, discipline and curriculum development, are not catered for. As a result, the manual does not make provision for a holistic capacity development of the SGBs.

The language and style of presentation of the training manual is too complex for the ordinary parent governors, particularly with their limited level of education. Thus the information in the manual remains somewhat inaccessible to most of the SGB parent component. The fact that the training manual is only written in English, further compounds the inaccessibility of the information to the semi-literate SGB members.

The training manual is divided into different sessions according to the respective topics. A detailed analysis of each topic is given below:

##### **Topic 1: Democratic School Governance**

This part of the manual seeks to familiarize SGB members with the content of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, particularly the stipulated functions of SGBs, establishment of various committees, functions of the executive committee members, and the strategic responsibilities of the SGBs.

This part of the manual seems to contain sufficient information for orientation and induction of the SGB members, to allow them to get started with their roles and responsibilities. It, however, falls short of mentioning and emphasizing the significance of partnerships and cooperative governance aspects which are crucial in terms of delegated powers and the decentralization of responsibilities. The manual, however, does emphasize the fact that members of the SGB should understand that they are serving in a legal entity which does not come into existence as a result of some favours from an individual and that they have a huge responsibility entrusted upon them by the parents of learners in the school under their governance (MDoE 2006:29).

## **Topic 2: Policy Development**

This part of the training manual seeks to capacitate SGB members on policy development by emphasizing the policy development techniques and processes, and the acts which should provide the necessary guidelines in developing various policies. This part of the training manual provides essential information and procedures regarding policy formulation, and all the necessary policies that should be established to ensure consistent and effective school governance. The manual emphasizes that the SGB has the responsibility to ensure that National Policies established by the National Minister of Education are adhered to. These (MDoE 2006:12) include the following:

- The language in education;
- The admission policy for ordinary public schools; and the
- National norms and standards for school funding.

It further states that SGBs should develop school policies as directed by the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, which are in line with the Constitution and the Schools Act. Again all school policies established by the governing body should also be consistent with the national and provincial policies. Some of the policies that the SGB should establish according to the manual (MDoE 2006:12-3) are the following:

- Finance policy
- Religious policy
- Fundraising policy
- Learner code of conduct
- Admission policy
- HIV/AIDS policy
- Language policy and
- SGB Constitution.

Although guidelines for policy formulation are provided, the actual process would still require SGB members to engage in serious reading and research on the various aspects pertaining to each policy, other examples of policies and the relevant legislation. Besides, the SGB members still need to receive education in policy formulation and implementation. This highlights the need to emphasize a particular literacy level for SGB members during the election process and to workshop SGB members on various acts and legislation that are applicable in education.

### **Topic 3: Conducting effective meetings**

This part of the manual seeks to accentuate the importance of SGB meetings in making decisions, which have both legal and financial implications for the school (MDoE 2006:2). The different types of meetings and their specific purpose are highlighted. Meeting procedures and management are also outlined.

A clear understanding of this part of the manual will assist in establishing effective and successful SGB meetings and accountable and developmental school governance. The manual provides a solid basis for conducting effective meetings in order to develop and improve learners' education. Besides, SGB members should also be able to defend and explain their decisions to both the parents and the Department of Education.

### **Topic 4: Financial Management**

This part of the manual seeks to empower SGB members as far as financial management skills are concerned. Although it details most of the aspects pertaining to financial management like exercising financial discipline by curbing unnecessary expenditure, involving as many people as possible from the community to plan the school budget, communicating the school budget to stakeholders, and evaluating the budget regularly in order to make adjustment when needed (MDoE 2006:4), it is not specific on the actual function of the SGB members in this regard. Although, reference is made to crucial acts and procedures on financial management, namely, the Public Fund Management Act 1 of 1999, Norms and Standards for School Funding of 1998 and the Education Law Amendment Act of 2001, the workshops do not ascertain whether SGB members have any knowledge of these acts.

The manual in which the information is presented is appropriate for people with an advanced level of education and not lay persons as is the case with many SGB members, particularly, those in the rural areas. Thus it would require a highly competent and skilful facilitator to make the

information easily accessible to the majority of the SGB members, particularly if the current challenge of low literacy level of the parent component is kept in mind.

Financial management is a delicate aspect of school governance, which require special attention to ensure that SGB members have adequate knowledge and understanding of what is expected of them to ensure that the school not only benefit its learners from its financial resources, but that there is proper and accountable handling of funds.

### **Topic 5: Managing diversity in schools**

With regard to diversity management the manual states that “schools have to acknowledge the existence of a diversified society, appreciate the opportunity to exist in a diverse environment, and create an all-inclusive condition which is conducive for all. This entails planning, organizing, directing and providing support to the school so that it can derive value from the differences and similarities of its human base”(MDoE 2006:7).

The limited guidelines provided in this regard will compromise the quality of the capacity building exercise.

### **Topic 6: Interviewing skills**

This part of the manual seeks to empower SGB members with recruitment and staffing techniques. It outlines the possible steps to be followed in filling a vacant post in the schools. However, it is not explicitly clear on the actual role of the SGB members during the short listing and interview processes. Moreover, the SGB is supposed to play a pivotal role in the staffing process of the school. The inadequate capacity of the SGB members in the staffing process culminates in their failure to address the school’s human resource need. In some instances the staffing process is marred by ill-informed recommendations and undue manipulations by some unscrupulous departmental officials leading to favouritism and nepotism, which deprive the school of the services of the better candidate and also compromise the best interest of the school.

## **4.8 SALIENT ASPECTS CONCERNING SGBs’ CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

The findings revealed the following aspects as essential for effective SGB capacity development:

- ❖ Improvement of knowledge and understanding of SGBs’ legal roles and responsibilities (see section 4.7.1.1);

- ❖ continuous appraisal of SGB members to ensure that they perform their functions as expected (see section 4.7.1.2);
- ❖ improvement of the literacy/education level of SGB members as a key factor in the success of the capacity-building exercise and subsequent effective performance of governance tasks (see section 4.7.1.3);
- ❖ improvement of the recruitment and election processes to have built in mechanisms to attract educated and/or skilful persons into the SGB (see section 4.7.1.3);
- ❖ making concerted efforts to train the SGB members on their roles and responsibilities (see section 4.7.1.4);
- ❖ ensuring that all the stakeholders involved in SGB training have a good understanding of their roles and also have the full capacity to fulfill their tasks (see section 4.7.1.4);
- ❖ allocation of sufficient time for SGB training workshops (see section 4.7.2.1);
- ❖ ensuring that critical information to improve the knowledge and skills of SGB members on school governance is made readily accessible (see section 4.7.2.2);
- ❖ appointment of persons who are authorities in school governance to conduct SGB training workshops (see section 4.7.2.4);
- ❖ ensuring that the quality and standard of training workshops given to SGB members should be a “proper fit” to improve the skills, knowledge and understanding of SGB members on school governance, (see section 4.7.2.4);
- ❖ provision for continued additional support to the SGB members after the initial workshops (see section 4.7.2.4);
- ❖ ensuring that the SGB continue to work as a collective unit (see section 4.7.3.2);
- ❖ training of school principals to assume their role of developing the SGB members in their schools (see section 4.7.3.3);
- ❖ utilizing the Circuit Governance Team in capacity-building programs for the SGBs (see section 4.7.3.3);
- ❖ workshopping SGB members on major pieces of legislation which govern education (see section 4.7.4) and;
- ❖ giving meticulous care to the quality of skills, knowledge and understanding of the people who are to be charged with governance functions (see section 4.7.6).

These essential aspects for effective SGB capacity development will be further expatiated on in the next chapter.

#### **4.9 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the findings of the research were presented and discussed. The SGBs’ main challenge of lack of understanding of their roles and responsibilities was discussed as being

characterised by a limited knowledge of their functions, a lack of knowledge on school governance, the SGBs' level of literacy which hampers their understanding of their roles and responsibilities as well as the adequacy of the training programs.

The main challenges of SGB training were discussed as emanating from the limited time allocated for SGB training workshops, which compromise the envisaged output, the language barrier which renders information inaccessible and the training sessions to be less successful, the facilitators who seem to be less competent in their duties compromised the quality and success of the training program.

The main challenges faced by school managers of schools where SGBs lack capacity in school governance were discussed as the failure by the SGBs to set the tone and ethos that will drive the school vision and mission, the perception often held by some SGB members that school governance seem to be a tedious and rewardless task leading to the waning of the SGB members' commitment in participating in governance activities, and the principals' workload which makes it impossible for them to render quality assistance to the SGB members in terms of training.

In the light of the above, meticulous care should be given to the quality of skill, knowledge and understanding of governance issues when appointing potential facilitators for SGB training workshops. Furthermore, the training programs should address the specific training needs of SGB members, and the recruitment and election processes should be structured in such a way that they will attract potentially ideal SGB members.

The following salient aspects on SGB capacity development for effective school governance were identified:

- improvement of the knowledge and understanding of the legal governance functions, which will enhance effective and efficient performance of SGB tasks;
- continued support and appraisal of SGB members, which will ensure persistent development of the required skills and expertise in school governance; and
- the provision of quality training programs, which will improve capacity and the level of functionality of SGB members in school governance.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Summaries, Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The challenges of school governing bodies' lack of capacity raised questions on their ability and authority to assume their legal responsibilities and to successfully implement the education policies in creating the desired teaching and learning environment. Furthermore, most governing bodies in Moretele District of the Nkangala Region are grappling with lack of knowledge and skills in education governance, which impact on the general functioning of the school. This gave rise to the following questions which have to be answered by this research:

- What are the manifestations of SGBs' lack of capacity in the organisation and management of the schools in Moretele District of the Nkangala Region?
- What challenges are faced by school managers of schools where SGBs lack capacity in school governance in Moretele District of the Nkangala Region?
- Which developmental strategies can be employed to capacitate the SGBs in Moretele District of the Nkangala Region?
- What effect does the current SGB election criteria have on the functionality of SGBs within Moretele District of the Nkangala Region?
- How is education policy implementation affected by SGBs' lack of capacity? (See section 1.3).

These questions on SGBs' ability, authority, knowledge, understanding and skills, emanating from the challenges of lack of capacity, to carry out their legal functions led to the aims of the research which also forms the basis for this study (see sections 1.4 and 4.1).

In answering these questions and achieving the aims of this study, the second to the fourth chapters focused on: literature study - which explored the functionality of the school governing bodies, paying particular attention on their capacity in assuming their legal functions; research design – which provided a description of the research design and the explanation of the research approach and data collection methods employed; and analysis, interpretation and discussion of results – which provided the findings and interpretations of the empirical research on the capacity of SGB members in discharging their legal duties respectively.

The current chapter seeks to present the conclusions to the entire study. In addition, the chapter will also present the recommendations for improving SGB capacity in school governance.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

Salient facts pertaining to chapter 2 to 4 are provided below.

### **5.2.1 CHAPTER TWO: THE CHALLENGES OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES' LACK OF CAPACITY IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

The legislation on the establishment of school governing bodies professes a collective involvement of all stakeholders in the education of their children. Nonetheless, particular skills, knowledge and expertise are required in fulfilling the concomitant legal responsibilities, and promoting and protecting the best interest of the school.

Membership and election procedures for SGB members were discussed. The legal governance roles and responsibilities were also highlighted. Furthermore, some of the SGB functions that seem to have critical implications on the capacity of the school governing bodies towards school governance were expatiated in order to draw emphasis on the significant influence of the SGB on the effectiveness of the school. These functions were (1) determining the school curriculum; (2) maintaining discipline, (3) determining school policies, and (4) financial management (see section 2.2.4).

As part of co-operative governance, SGB members have vested powers in education governance. However, SGB members still need training to improve and integrate their skills with the requirements and systematic operations of both the schools and the Department of Education in general (see section 2.3.1).

The level of skills, knowledge and understanding of some of the SGB members in school governance, sometimes poses a challenge in the way they are supposed to discharge their legal responsibilities. This has an adverse effect on their confidence and also weakens their authority and power on school governance (see section 4.5.1).

The current SGB election criteria, which seem to emphasize numerical representation more than particular skills, knowledge, ability and expertise is a serious challenge in communities where most people are functionally illiterate, like in most rural areas.

Proper training and monitoring are fundamental issues in the effective functioning of SGB members because they are guardians and custodians of the best interest of the school and its learners. Furthermore, training is the cornerstone of affirming governors in the execution of their roles and responsibilities, and to harmonise the various skills, expertise and knowledge of the individual governing body members (see section 2.4).

### **5.2.2 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

The qualitative approach was used because it seeks to describe life-worlds from the point of view of the people who participate in the research project and its descriptive and exploratory nature makes it more suitable for this study (see sections 3.3 and 3.3.1). The interactive nature of qualitative research made it more relevant for this study. The SGBs and principals of three secondary schools, together with three circuit managers of the circuit where these schools are found, were chosen to participate in this study. Data collection methods used included interviews; observations of SGB training workshops and analysis of the training manual (see section 3.6). Ethics in qualitative research were outlined (see section 3.4), and limitations of the study were identified (see section 3.5).

### **5.2.3 CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

The data revealed that SGB members and their immediate departmental officials have limited knowledge of the SGB roles and responsibilities, with the result that school governance is adversely affected (see sections 4.5.1.1 and 4.5.1.2). The level of literacy of SGB members has a marked effect on the level of success of their capacity building programs and there seems to be no intentional guidelines to recruit educated and/or skilful persons into SGBs (see section 4.5.1.3).

The data also revealed that there are several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the successful implementation of SGB training programs. These are

- The time allocated for SGB training workshops (see section 4.5.2.1).
- The language of SGB training workshops (see section 4.5.2.2).
- The competency level of the facilitators (see section 4.5.2.3).
- The quality of SGB training manuals (see section 4.5.2.4).

Furthermore, the successful management of the school has to be complemented by active involvement of capable and visionary SGB members (see section 4.5.3). The implementation of educational policies within the school requires expertise and knowledge from the SGB members.

### **5.3 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY**

Findings of the study revealed that circuit managers, principals as well as SGB members themselves are concerned about the effect of SGB members' lack of capacity on the governance and management of the schools within Moretele District of the Nkangala Region. The data also revealed that there is a need to provide purposeful guidelines on the recruitment and election of knowledgeable and skilful SGB members and that this should be supplemented by a vigorous training to harmonise the various skills, expertise and knowledge of the individual SGB members for effective governance of the school (see section 4.5.5).

Furthermore, the analysis and interpretation of data provided answers to the following major questions posed in this study:

- ❖ The manifestation of SGBs' lack of capacity in the organisation and management of schools are highlighted as lack of preparation of new school governing body members before they assume their duties, which is expressed in the following problems
  - the SGBs' limited knowledge of their functions (see section 4.5.1.1);
  - the adverse effect of the SGBs' lack of knowledge of their legal functions in school governance (see section 4.5.1.2); and
  - the impact of SGBs' level of education on their understanding of their roles and responsibilities (see section 4.5.1.3).
- ❖ The challenges faced by school managers where SGBs lack capacity in school governance were expressed as
  - the strain of ineffective school governance on principals (see section 4.5.3.1);
  - the low level of motivation of SGB members in fulfilling their functions (see section 4.5.3.2); and
  - the extra demand on the principal to train the SGB members (see section 4.5.3.3).
- ❖ The developmental strategies which should be employed to capacitate the SGBs are detailed in recommendations for ensuring effective SGBs (see section 5.5)
- ❖ The current SGB election criteria which emphasise numerical representation rather than particular skills, knowledge and expertise hamper the functionality of the SGB members in school governance. Thus in recruiting and electing SGB members careful consideration should be given to amongst others:
  - the educational level of candidates,
  - knowledge and understanding of educational issues,
  - fundamental knowledge of financial management and reporting and

- understanding and acceptance of the legal implications of being an SGB member (see section 4.5.6).
- ❖ The effect of SGBs' capacity on the implementation of education policies were discussed as
  - the need and importance to have sound knowledge and understanding of the relevant education policies and legislation to improve the performance of SGB functions,
  - the correct interpretation and implementation of the guidelines provided by the Public Fund Management Act 1 of 2000 on the control and management of the public fund to prevent fruitless and wasteful expenditure of school fund, and
  - the basic understanding of legal documents such as Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Employment of Educators Act, Labour Relations Act, The South African Schools Act and the Constitution of RSA to enable SGB members to maintain discipline and sense of purpose in the schools (see section 4.5.4).

### **5.3.1 The SGBs' lack of understanding of their roles and responsibilities**

The SGBs' lack of understanding of their roles and responsibilities became evident from the following

- Most SGB members and their immediate departmental officials seem to have superficial knowledge of the functions of governing bodies (see section 4.5.1.1).
- The SGBs' lack of knowledge and understanding of their legal roles and responsibilities seem to perpetuate the wide spread phenomenon of dysfunctional schools (see section 4.5.1.2).
- Some SGB members have never been to school, which frustrates efforts to train them and the subsequent demand to implement the information received during the training sessions (see section 4.5.1.3).

School governance is a statutory function which has to be performed by well informed and versatile people. The school community will be able to tackle and overcome most of their challenges if they are led by well capacitated SGB members. This will bring about a general good performance of the school and better academic progress of the learners as the SGBS would maintain purposeful monitoring of the outcomes of the instructional programmes, thus ensuring that standards and quality of learning and teaching are continually maintained. The SGB will also be in a better position to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment,

dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process. This will be made possible by the establishment of a chain of accountability and responsibility within the school community through the formulation and successful implementation of appropriate and well informed policies (see section 4.5.3).

Furthermore, the SGBs' systematic control of the school funds will create the necessary impetus for the successful execution of the instructional practices and the achievement of the school vision (see section 4.5.4).

### **5.3.2 The challenges of SGB training**

The challenges experienced during SGB training are the following:

- Inadequate time been allocated for SGB training (see section 4.5.2.1).
- The language used in training manuals is not understood by the majority of the SGB members. This result in information being inaccessible to them (see section 4.5.2.2).
- Some of the facilitators of the SGB workshops seem to lack the necessary expertise and knowledge in their function (see section 4.5.2.3).
- The Department of Education does not seem to have a particular follow-up monitoring mechanism after the initial SGB training workshop (see section 4.5.2.4).

Responsible SGB members with full capacity, knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibility will be able to set their own goals, targets, time frames and to allocate each other particular functions and/or responsibilities. This will assist in informing their programme for the year. Thus, they will be able to monitor their progress and the participation of individual members in school governance activities. Besides, they will be able to check, quantify and prioritise the needs of the school to ensure that there is quality teaching and learning in the school. They will also be able to demand and interrogate the report from the principal on the actual progress of the teaching and learning activities. In this way the quality and standards necessary to realize the vision and mission of the school will not only be maintained, but they will also be improved.

### **5.3.3 Challenges faced by school managers where SGBs lack capacity in school governance**

The challenges faced by school managers where SGB members lack capacity are manifested as follows:

- Principals grapple with both the management and governance functions with limited success (see section 4.5.3.1).
- SGB members seem to simply endorse what other people have decided with no input of their own (see section 4.5.3.1).
- Principals are faced with irregular and/or non-attendance of meetings by some SGB members resulting in meetings not forming a quorum for proper and legal decision - making on school activities (see section 4.5.3.3).
- Most principals seem not to be ready to assume their training role of SGB members (see section 4.5.3.3).
- The circuit managers seem to distance themselves from the plight of SGB members' lack of knowledge of their roles and responsibilities (see section 4.5.3.3).

The principal as the immediate departmental official is best placed to see and measure the quality of SGB's performance of their legal functions, and to identify their training needs. Thus, together with the circuit managers they should co-own the training responsibility, the monitoring and the mentoring of the SGB members. This will assist them in tackling the challenges that they are faced with as a result of SGB members' lack of knowledge of their legal functions.

### **5.3.4 The prerequisite of recruiting SGB members**

The skills pool of the parent community is a key factor in constituting potentially effective school governing bodies. Thus, in recruiting SGB members, careful consideration should be given to:

- particular education and skill level,
- knowledge and understanding of educational issues,
- fundamental knowledge of financial management and reporting,
- understanding and acceptance of the legal implications of been an SGB member and
- any other essential skill that might promote effective performance of governance functions (see section 4.5.6).

#### **5.4 LIMITATIONS**

The aim of the study was not to generalize; hence the research was limited to 3 rural secondary schools. However, the study could serve as an impetus for further research. The aim was to highlight the challenges of SGBs' lack of capacity in school governance.

#### **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

School Governing Bodies need to have the necessary capacity in order to perform their duties and carry out their responsibilities in an effective and efficient way. The following recommendations should assist in ensuring effective SGBs:

- Increase training efforts to build the capacity of the SGB members on governance aspects including financial management, discipline, school safety, awareness of the different laws that pertain to school governance including labour laws.
- Introduce clustering of schools and their SGBs in order to share and develop their capacity.
- Make Adult Basic Education available and accessible to SGB members who are illiterate or semi-literate to improve their education level.
- Establish and capacitate Circuit Governance Teams consisting of principals to assist in training and monitoring SGB members.
- Make provision to granted paid leave to working SGB members for the purpose of attending to SGB activities, as a way of encouraging parent members to continue to participate in SGB activities.
- Include a certain educational level as one of the criteria for becoming an SGB member.
- Reward SGB members in a form of sitting allowance, in addition to the subsistence allowance, in order to retain the services of the parent members in SGB activities.
- Provide continued appraisal, monitoring and mentoring programmes for SGB members to ensure accountability for the delegated powers and authority.

***In the absence of light,  
darkness prevails.  
But beyond darkness,  
there is light.***

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**PRINCIPAL'S INTERVIEWS AT SCHOOL A**

Researcher: What is the role and responsibility of SGBs?

Principal: To maintain school property ... to manage school fees, develop policies, determine the time of the school, keeping records, to govern the school and look after the school grounds and buildings.

Researcher: How effective are SGBs in schools?

Principal: It all depends on the type of people who are been elected into SGB ... because if parent members are not educated, they cannot read and write it creates problems for the school

Researcher: What is the SGBs' level of knowledge and understanding of their legal roles and responsibilities?

Principal: As I have explained ... if they can read their constitution and the South African Schools Act with understanding ... because the SGB and the school are legal bodies ... they can sue a person and they can also be sued. But if the SGB does not understand the legal aspects of their responsibilities it is just like a person who did not attend school ... like if there is an agreement to charge school fund and the parent does not pay ... the SGB should take that parent to court. Its only parents who understand their legal position who can do it, but if they don't understand their legal position and powers they will not know what to do when a parent does not pay school fund.

Researcher: How are SGBs educated about their roles and responsibilities?

Principal: When the SGBs are elected we workshop them on their roles and responsibilities ... we give them these booklets (pointing at the SGB guides on the shelf) which explain what the SGB is ... their position in the school ... the composition and functions of SGBs. The circuit office also organise some workshops for them.

Researcher: What effect does the SGBs' level of knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities have on their functioning?

Principal: The effect is there ... if what they are doing is clearly visible ... but it can only be visible if they understand what they suppose to be doing, like for example, they are supposed to control the finances of the school ... if the person has no idea of financial management and can neither read nor write ... and is expected to give a financial report how is he/she going to do it.

Researcher: What level of capacity does the SGB have in carrying out their responsibilities?

Principal: At least the SGB that I have understand what they have to do ... they know what is expected of them. If I compare them with the ones I had in the past there is a vast difference ... at least these ones have some understanding of what they have to do ... they can run a parents' meeting on their own without me having to be present.

Researcher: How much training has the SGB received since they were elected into office?

Principal: I am not quiet sure ... but there was this training which was conducted by the circuit governance team ... it can be two times ... and last year ... I am not quiet sure it can be three times.

Researcher: Are these training workshops having any effect on the functioning of the SGBs?

Principal: They are not effective ... they are not effective ... If you train a person he/she should at least be educated ... but with the parent component it is a big challenge because most of them did not go to school beyond Grade 4. When we talk about training we refer to training on financial management, discipline, code of conduct and educational policies and people with this level of education will battle to understand the training information. The success of the training workshop depends on the type of persons you are supposed to train ... and will these people be able to implement the information they have being workshoped on?

Researcher: What are the challenges that are encountered by the SGBs regarding their training?

Principal: The first one is that the parents are mostly illiterate and the workshop information is too complicated for them ... the other one is that most workshops are conducted on Saturday when these people have many social commitments.

Researcher: How best can these challenges be addressed?

Principal: It is just that we are trying to follow up democratic practices ... if it was possible we would elect capable people. As it is now we elect a person because he/she has a child in the school ... not on the basis of his/her level of education and ability. Sometimes they would elect a person because he/she is argumentative ... because he/she will be able to police and/or discipline the principal. If it were possible we should elect people who can read and write ... people who will be able to help the school. They elect a person because he/she has a child in the school, but the very person is of little help to the school.

Researcher: There is this directive that the parent component should be one than the combined total of the other SGB components. How will this affect the functionality of the SGBs?

Principal: If the parent component consists of educated persons it is not a problem, but if they are illiterate it is a big problem because it will be difficult for them to carry out their responsibilities ... at the end they will no longer come to SGB meetings. If they do come they will just accept things from the principal without any question ... they shy away from objecting to the principal's decisions. If the SGB is educated, they will be having the necessary capacity to handle SGB issues on their own without having to rely on the principal. But if the parent community just elects grandparents that are illiterate they will only rubber stamp the principal's decisions.

Researcher: How is the SGBs' lack of capacity manifested in schools?

Principal: If the principal does not come up with suggestion and ideas to improve and develop the school; there is nothing that will be forthcoming from the SGB ... they expect the principal to do everything.

Researcher: What challenges are faced by principals of schools where SGBs lack the necessary capacity to carry out their duties?

Principal: The school and the principal will always have problems and confrontations with the community, because the people who are chosen to represent the community and its interest are sitting back and not taking the rightful position in school governance or they just at any given time withdraw their membership of the SGB. They no longer take decisions on behalf of and in the interest of the community ... everything seems to come from the principal ... and if they are asked about issues pertaining to the school or decisions that have been taken they always say "We don't know" ... it is the principal who said that should happen. They cannot speak for or defend the decisions that have been taken in an SGB meeting.

Researcher: What should be an ideal SGB?

Principal: Is an SGB that know and understand its roles and responsibilities ... it is and SGB that can formulate and implement the school policies ... it is an SGB that can formulate the learners' code of conduct and also monitor its implementation. In many instances SGBs formulate the code of conduct which is only been kept in the office and its never being implemented. It is an SGB that can drop in just to check on the functioning of the school, they should not sit back and wait for the principal to call them.

Researcher: What is the level of motivation of the SGB members in carrying out their duties?

Principal: If somebody is not motivated he/she will not attend SGB meetings ... especially the parent component. The principal is also an important factor in motivating the SGBs. If his/her leadership style does not satisfy his followers, then he/she will end up been without followers. If the principal dominates the SGB, the parent begin to loose interest in the activities of the SGB ... because they feel intimidated and out of place as most of them are not educated ... and they normally don't indicate their dissatisfaction, instead they will complain to other community members, saying there is nothing that we are doing except listening to the principal and doing what he/she wants us to do. The principal is an important motivating factor to the SGB because of his/her leadership and guidance role to the SGB. The SGB should develop ownership of the school and also have the desire to develop it.

Researcher: What is the training need of the SGBs?

Principal: They need to be trained on their legal functions ... on governance ... and on financial management. They also need to be trained on conducting effective meetings ... they don't know the duties of the chairperson ... they should also be trained on conducting interviews ... they should be able to staff the school through the process of short listing and interviews.

Researcher: What role is the Department of Education playing regarding SGB training?

Principal: In most instances parents don't go for the training workshops on Saturdays because they claim that they are not getting paid by the department.

Researcher: What is your role as principal regarding the training of SGBs?

Principal: The principals are having a lot of work to do, but if they get a chance they can assist in training SGBs ... moreover this will help in the successful running of the school.

Researcher: What is the success rate and/or shortfalls of the training received by SGBs?

Principal: The success of the SGB training depends on the people you are training ... and their literacy level ... if you train illiterate people on complex legal responsibilities you are likely not to succeed. But if you train educated people ... people who understand ... you will be successful.

Researcher: What is your perception/opinion regarding the level of training offered to SGB members?

Principal: The training offered is very much inadequate ... because most of the SGB members are still unable to carry out their duties despite the little training that they have received ... the training need to be repeated ... and even the trainers need to be people who are knowledgeable about governance issues and also be able to handle SGB members.

**PRINCIPAL'S INTERVIEW AT SCHOOL B**

Researcher: What is the role and responsibility of SGB?

Principal : The most important role is governance ... and ... that governance need to be further broken down ... what is governance? One can say governance is coming up with the policies ... drawing of policies and running the finances of the school, and taking care of all the physical resources of the school. The most important one is governance.

Researcher: How effective are SGBs in schools?

Principal : Some SGBs are effective and some schools' SGBs are not effective, but there is a reason for that. Ineffective SGBs are there because of lack of training ... because sometimes SGBs are elected but they are not given adequate training ... but been provided with adequate training, knowing what is expected of them eh ... eh ... usually they become very much effective and involved in the running of the school. So generally, one can say when SGBs are trained they become so effective, but untrained ... usually you will have some problems.

Researcher: Talking about training, will training only suffice bearing in mind the type of SGBs in the rural school?

Principal : Yes, training will suffice but it depends on the level you are talking about ... the department sometimes organizes training that is so high ... so complicated for our SGBs. But I think it is also incumbent upon us as principals to organize training that will be to the level of comprehension of our SGBs ... there is nothing that can help us without training them ... without informing them about their roles and responsibilities. In fact we should show them the way ... the limit. What is their work and what is not their work. Some SGBs confuse governance with management. You will realize that when SGBs are untrained, they will even do the work that was supposed to be done by management .... And forget about governance. But if you train them they will be able to know what is expected of them, and how to best help the school.

Researcher: What is the SGBs' level of knowledge and understanding of its legal roles and responsibilities?

Principal : Most of the SGBs don't know their legal responsibilities, but I think when we talk about the SGBs we must also be critical because the principal is also an ex-officio member of the SGB and his/her role in the SGB is to advise ... so SGBs that are aware of the legal implications of their actions will depend on their adviser who is the principal because his/her role is just being there to advise SGB members on their roles and responsibilities. Advised properly SGB members will be aware of their legal responsibilities.

Researcher: We are talking about the knowledge and understanding of the legal roles and responsibilities and you said they have some legal implications. Thus they need somebody with a certain level of education and knowledge to understand them. Can we say our SGBs have what is needed of them to understand their legal roles and responsibilities?

Principal : Some of the SGB members no ... let me just categorically say no ... because when we elect them we don't look at the level of their education. The requirement is just having a child at the particular school irrespective of the educational level of that parent. The parent will qualify to become an SGB member on that basis. But sometimes you would find that a highly educated person has been elected to become a member of SGB. But the majority of SGB members are those that cannot their roles and responsibilities ... they have never been to school ... cannot read and write. That is why I say in some instances we cannot just say they have the necessary understanding of their legal roles and responsibilities.

Researcher: Is sufficient criteria to say a parent should only have a child in a particular school to qualify to become a member of the SGB or do we have to add something?

Principal : I don't think it is sufficient. We have to add ... adding maybe a level of education ... specifically for those who are going to work in SGB ... it is really going to help in governing the school ... in running the school ... helping the school in guiding the learners. It means the SGB members should be confident of themselves and also have knowledge of educational issues. There I agree to just say the requirement to become an SGB member is just to have a child is not enough. It needs to be extended, maybe to say they should also have a certain level of education.

Researcher: What effect does the SGBs' level of knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities have on their functioning?

Principal : That is a most relevant question, because you find that an SGB has a lower level of education ... obviously that SGB member is not going to be so functional. You will also see that the development of the school will not be the same as that of the school that is having SGB members who are good ... capable SGB members. The level of education of SGB members has a great effect on their functionality. If the level of education of SGB members is poor [low], obviously even their function is going to be poor. But if the level of education of SGB members is higher, obviously their efforts to develop the school will be good and learners will perform better. They will be able to assist the school in its functions. One of the legal functions of the SGB members is to assist the school in performing its functions.

Researcher: What level of capacity does the SGB have in carrying out their responsibilities?

Principal : That is why we are going to emphasize on training to capacitate the SGBs ... the SGBs don't have capacity to carry out the functions that they are supposed to do. However, schools are different ... we have schools that are in the urban areas and schools that are in the rural areas. Maybe schools that are in the urban areas have SGBs that have the necessary capacity to carry out their responsibilities. But SGBs of schools that are in the rural areas, really don't have the necessary capacity to carry out their responsibilities. That in itself simply means that the SGBs need to be capacitated. Maybe

undergo skills training course on how to develop the schools. SGB members should be capacitated, however, the Department of Education is just taking things as simple as that ... we elect a parent today ... and that parent is expected to be effective in supporting the school. That is something that is impossible because of lack of the necessary capacity to carry out the duties.

Researcher: What is the education level of the SGBs generally?

Principal : Generally it is very low. You find that most of them can't read and write ... most of them have attended school up to Grade 3 ... Grade 4 ... very few of them have gone to school up to Grade 12. But generally their level of education is very low.

Researcher: How much training has the SGBs received since their election into office?

Principal : Only a half day workshop was organized for the SGB members and it did not make any difference. I don't think it is enough ... you just elect people and there is no adequate training that is provided for them. You expect them to work miracles? If the SGB should determine the uniform, the curriculum of the school, maintain the physical resources of the school, manage the finances of the school, and determine the school policy, all these things will need somebody with good understanding and knowledge of educational issues. But if you have persons with a lower level of education, obviously that is going to negatively affect their functions.

Researcher: Are these training having any effect on the functioning of the SGBs?

Principal : No! No ... not at all.

Researcher: What challenges are encountered by the SGBs regarding their training?

Principal : Some of the manuals are written in English and the presenters present some of the items in English, only to find that the SGBs do not understand, cannot read or write the language. So those are the challenges they are encountering. Again SGB members are not been paid and this discourages them from coming to meetings ... they are not motivated to work for the school. I think these are the major challenges ... the language barrier and the motivation part of it.

Researcher: How best can these challenges be addressed?

Principal : The challenges can be addressed by first putting incentives for the SGBs ... once you put incentives ... like if you become an SGB member you are going to be paid ... I don't know how these incentives can be structured, but as long as there are incentives you will attract better people to become SGB members. That is the best way ... put some incentives in the SGB responsibilities, then you will get the necessary benefits.

Researcher: If you talk of paying the SGB members, do you mean they should have a monthly salary ... how should this be done?

Principal : I think the best way is to register them like the employees of the Department of Education ... registering them on temporary basis and pay them from the coffers of the school. They should not submit claims, because a person who has submitted a claim is not paid he/she will be demotivated or they should be paid a seating allowance. If a parent knows that there is money for transport and food, at least there will be something to motivate him/her to come to the meetings. These incentives should not take time to reach the parents. I think that will be the best way to motivate them to take part in SGB activities. If on the day of the meeting they get their incentives, I tell you all of them will come.

Researcher: How is SGBs' lack of capacity manifested in the schools?

Principal : In different ways ... there are so many ways, you find the school with no policies, if you find the school with policies where the SGB is not working very well, those policies are not the product of the SGB but of the teachers. As I said you cannot suspend the work of the SGB. If the SGB is not working the school has to see to it that the policies are been developed. Again you are going to see educators not even taking the SGB members into consideration in governance activities. You will see an SGB member once in a year. You will also find that even the teachers don't know who the SGB members are, because they don't attend SGB meetings. You find that they don't information about the duties of the SGBs like curriculum development, policy development, deciding on the uniform of the school etc. The SGB without capacity will not be able to draw policies, it means the school must draw these policies; they won't be able to run the finances of the school, which means the school should manage its own finances. In some schools

you find that the chairperson and some SGB members are no longer coming to the SGB meetings. All these things will affect the general performance of the learners at the end of the year. When learners pass, it is the combination of efforts – the effort of educators, parents and the Department of Education. But when learners perform poorly we should not just point fingers at the educators, even the SGB members should be held accountable. The SGBs' lack of capacity is also manifested through lack of discipline in schools. If you get to a school and you see seven uniforms from learners – you see seven learners dressed differently; you will understand that there is no proper governance in that school. Really the school management should get assistance from the SGBs for the schools to run properly.

Researcher: Whilst you are talking about discipline, there is this emerging phenomenon of the increasing rate of teenage pregnancy and the issue of children killing one another at school. Thus SGBs should have a legal way of dealing with pregnant girls, boys who are bully, carrying dangerous weapons, take drugs etc. At the end of the day it says a learner has to be expelled from school, which is tempering with the learner's right to education. But if you cannot balance the two, the learner's right to education and discipline then there will be a problem at school. But if you don't have a legal background to the whole thing it is going to be difficult.

Principal : It is very difficult and it needs our SGBs to be capacitated, be given relevant knowledge then all these things that we are complaining about will be dealt with and the schools will be better.

Researcher: If you talk about training you should also consider the person's level of education because you cannot train somebody who doesn't understand.

Principal : Yes, that is why when we talked about the fact that the criterion that a parent should only have a child at the school to qualify to become a member of the SGB in that particular school, I said we must also consider the level of education of the potential candidates. We must also add the level of education as a criterion for becoming an SGB member. Although a parent has a child at school, this parent should be this type of parent. The parent with this minimum educational level, more so if been an SGB member is incentified it will help to attract more skilled and educated people to do the SGB tasks better.

Researcher: What challenges are faced by principals whose SGBs lack the necessary capacity to carry out their duties?

Principal : The most crucial challenge that faces the principal is to take over the SGB, you do management and governance functions at the same time. You are supposed to advise the SGB members and they should work on their own. But who are you going to advise, because the SGB members don't know what they are supposed to do. In other words the principals with this type of SGBs have to work double shift, they have to do all the tasks of the SGB and also make all the decisions of management, something which will be very difficult for them to do. The poor principal is overworked ... your work is going to be negatively affected. The performance of the school in general will be affected; you will even age faster because of a lot of work that you have to do. But if you have people whom you can delegate, people who can do the job then yours will just be to advise the SGB. Remember the SGB is just there to do governance work which entails drawing up the policies and so on and these policies need to be implemented by the school management. So your life will be so easy because you will be implementing what they have come up with. But now you have to draw up policies and implement them, monitor and evaluate your own policies, it is very difficult and that is why many educators say they are comfortable where they are, they don't want to become principals. This happens because educators are afraid of SGBs who don't do their work. When you assume the principalship post you have to start with policies.

Researcher: What should be an ideal SGB?

Principal : An ideal SGB is an SGB that is capable of doing its job, the SGB that understand its roles and responsibilities, that has the potential to be trained, the SGB that will run the governance of the school as it is expected. Firstly it should be an SGB that will be able to draw up policies, it should be very easy for them to draw up policies, SGB that will have members who will be able to become the chairperson of committees, when we say a finance committee should be led by and SGB member, the sport committee, the cultural committee, all these committees should have an SGB member as the chairperson. We want SGBs that can delegate people to become chairpersons and those people should be able to report back to the SGB. The executive of the SGB should be able to assist other members; they should be able to educate other members on tasks of the SGB. The SGB that will be able to go

out and raise funds for the school that is the ideal SGB that we want. The SGB that when the school is experiencing problems will come in and help the school to come out of the problem. The SGB that will constantly come to school and motivate the learners to work very hard and when the learners pass they will come and congratulate them and at the beginning of the year when learners did not pass very well they should be able to come in and ask, "Where did things go wrong?" We want this type of SGB; we want the SGB that will be part of the school who will visit the school even though we did not invite them, just to find out what is happening. That is an ideal SGB that we want, we want the SGB that is not financially orientated, and we want an SGB that will say I am working for the school and I cannot stop because I am Not earning a salary. An ideal SGB is an SGB whose members will know that when there is an SGB meeting they should attend and they should contribute positively during the deliberations, that is an ideal SGB we want. If we can have such SGBs then the education of learners in both rural and urban schools will be the same. The level of education will be the same and that will be good for the school.

Researcher: What is the level of motivation of SGB members in carrying out their duties?

Principal: The level of motivation is very low ... they are not motivated ... there is nothing that motivates them ... in fact they are voluntarily participating in the structure called SGB. They are volunteering, and somebody who volunteers will come at his/her own will. So that is why I am saying their level of motivation is very low. There is nothing that will increase their level of motivation without giving them something ... incentives or whatever ... certificates of attendance. The Department of Education is trying to give them certificates, but these certificates are not helping at all because they are given after three years while you are no longer a member. While these people were still members of the SGB there were no incentives at all. Then when you go out they give you a certificate to say thank you for participating in the SGB from 2003 to 2006 and that does not serve as motivation at all.

Researcher: What is the training need of the SGBs?

Principal : The first thing is financial management, running of meetings ... most of our SGB members don't know how to run meetings. You just elect somebody and say he/she is the chairperson, but SGB meetings are chaired by somebody else in the presence of the elected chairperson ... so running of meetings is also very important. The other thing is to train them on their role and responsibilities, their legal functions. At least SGBs will change if they know their roles ... if they know how to run finances of the school; they know how to run meetings. The other thing that is important is the fund-raising part ... how to raise funds for the school. But you can't raise funds if you don't have a mission ... you can't raise funds if you don't know your legal responsibilities. But if they know their legal responsibilities they will be able to raise funds for the school ... and they will even encourage other parents to volunteer to help the school in order to save funds, because fund raising is also about saving funds. If parents volunteer to come to school and work they will be saving the school from having to pay somebody for doing the same job and that will be raising funds for the school in some way. SGBs don't know and understand these things, but if they are been trained in this regard their level of motivation will improve.

Researcher: What role is the Department of Education playing regarding SGB training?

Principal : The Department of Education is playing a very minimal and insignificant role, but they are trying although they are not effective in their efforts. They are not effective because they don't consult the stakeholders. If you want to help people you should consult with them ... you should ask them as to how best you can help them. But the Department of Education just goes for an NGO to come and train the SGBs and they don't even take time to listen to the presentations of this NGO. Maybe once a year they come and train you on financial management ... and from there, there is no follow-up ... there is no feedback ... there is no evaluation to check whether the SGBs are following and/or implementing the information which they received during the workshop. As a result you train a person and you don't do follow-ups ... I think that is not enough. They once organized a workshop on financial management for school governing bodies ... people went there to attend the workshop, but they are still having the same problem of managing the finances of the school because the standard of the presentation was too high ... too high for the parents and they did not understand. These parents are

supposed to implement the information from the training workshop. But nobody came from the Department of Education to check as to whether the SGB have improved or not ... that is why I am saying they are trying but very insignificantly. Maybe it is because they don't consult with the stakeholders the principals in particular. The Department of Education only informs the principals that they have organized a workshop and SGBs should attend.

Researcher: What should be done to make these workshops to be effective?

Principal : I think to make the workshops to be effective is very easy ... you call the people and ask them where and how they would want you to help them. Like in the Directorate of Administration clerks they approach them and ask them where they would need help in terms of development. Then they indicate to them the aspects that they would want development and the reasons thereof. If they can use this approach they will be able to realize the level of education of SGB members and even the training need. Sometimes they train and develop people on something that are not really important to them ... something that is not relevant to their school. Because most of the Acts that are made are urban orientated rather than rural orientated ... they talk more of urban schools than rural schools. Most of the policies and legislation that they are talking about, for example if they say one of the functions of the SGBs is to establish and run the financial account of the school, but you elect somebody who cannot read and write to come and manage the finances of the school ... a person who cannot see whether the financial records of the schools are correct or not ... it is not a relevant function for such a person to do ... I really don't know, it is really a serious challenge. It seems as if the Department of Education is not really willing to go an extra mile in training the SGBs. If they were really prepared to go an extra mile they should be having a Directorate that is to deal with SGB matters like any other directorate. Such a directorate should start from the national Department of Education looking into relevant matters of the SGBs. I think this will improve the attention given by the Department of Education to the SGBs and this will improve the functioning and involvement of SGBs in schools. As long as SGBs are still falling under other directorates, the SGBs will continue to perform poorly in schools and skilled people will continue to shy away from SGB activities.

Researcher: What is your role as principal regarding the training of SGBs?

Principal : As principals we are organizing things for SGBs, particularly at the beginning we train them on how to draw up policies ... capacitate them on how to handle meetings ... even encourage and motivate those that are quiet ... those that are looking down upon themselves ... those with low self esteem ... show them that they are important ... uneducated as they are ... but the school really depends on them. When they come to meetings or workshops we buy them food and drinks. That is how far the poor principal can go regarding their training. But your efforts are limited because you don't have high powers as that of the Department of Education. The principal should also make SGB members aware of the South African Schools Act ... they should understand what is contained in SASA ... explain it to their level of knowledge so that they can understand because they were democratically elected. The principals have no choice but to continue with the type of SGB members that are elected for them.

Researcher: What is the success rate and/or short falls of the training received by SGBs?

Principal : The success rate is so poor because there is no change. But the shortfalls as I said the time was very short ... information was not adequately presented to the people ... and not every person who was supposed to attend was there ... the number of people attending the meeting was too high for the venue that was organized. The manual that was used was not written in friendly language [language that was understood by most of the SGB members attending the workshop] ... there were so many shortfalls ... the SGBs that attended the workshop came with totally different idea ... not aware of what is happening in the Department of Education ... and making them realize what is happening in the Department was very difficult ... as a result they did not reach their objectives.

Researcher: What is your perception/opinion regarding the level of/type of training offered to SGB members?

Principal : The training was too high for them [SGBs] ... it was too high for them ... they did not understand ... the level of comprehension of our SGB members is very low ... although some not all of them understood the presentations. Very few could understand the information that was presented, but the majority did not understand. What is important is to go down to the level of

the parent SGB members ... and be relevant ... the training workshop should be as per training need of the SGBs ... not somebody from the Departmental offices deciding that I want to workshop the SGBs on this topic ... it must be the people who indicate what they want to be developed on ... because the schools are failing to perform up to expectation and it is not because the poor principal is failing to manage the school, it is because the support that he/she should be receiving from the SGB is not forthcoming.

**PRINCIPAL'S INTERVIEW AT SCHOOL C**

Researcher: What is the role and responsibility of SGBs?

Principal: The role of the SGB is about governance ... checking as to whether the governance of the school is in order. They are responsible for the physical resources of the school, checking the buildings, the windows among other things ... fixing them. They are also taking care of the finances of the school. They have to make sure that the school is up and running. They are to raise funds for the school and try and make the school to move. They also help in maintaining discipline in the school.

Researcher: How effective are SGBs in schools?

Principal: They are not as effective as per requirements ... most of them are in the SGB because they are not working. Most of them are not educated enough to can handle policies of the Department of Education. But then in our school in particular, out of 10 SGB members I have four that are always attending ... they are there for interviews ... they are there if we have difficult problems to deal with ... any time you call them they are always available. Some of them because of their interest in the school they are always available to supervise whatever project we have here at school. They always consult with me, but there are those whom you no longer know whether they are still members or not ... you send them invitation letters to SGB meetings they just don't turn up. Generally they need to be educated on their responsibilities ... once they agree to be SGB members they must be taken on board but I think it will improve with time.

Researcher: What is the SGBs' level of knowledge and understanding of their legal roles and responsibilities?

Principal: I don't think they understand their legal roles and responsibilities ... I don't think most of them really understand what they are supposed to do. Most of them turn to gain knowledge and understanding during their term of office. They normally want to do what the management wants them to do. They neither come up with their own initiatives nor do they criticize the management's decisions. They do not as yet understand their duties ... as SGB members they should be the ones who call meetings, as it is directed by

the SGB constitution. As the principal you chair meetings ... you end up calling meetings, come up with the agenda, come up with proposals ... that is not good.

Researcher: How are SGBs educated about their roles and responsibilities?

Principal: Mostly we rely on inputs from the Department of Education regarding SGB training ... as far as I remember we had very few workshops regarding SGBs' roles and responsibilities. I think the Department of Education is not doing enough because I think that is their sole responsibility. The management, educators and principal cannot educate SGB members on how to go about regarding their responsibilities, but now the department is not doing enough to train SGBs.

Researcher: What effect does the SGB's level of knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities have on their functioning?

Principal: Because the level of understanding of their responsibilities and duties is so low, it has a very negative effect on their functioning ... because they will always do what the management is saying they should do without questioning them. This low knowledge and understanding of what to do and what not to do really burdens the management of the school because you have to come up with all what has to be done and they always rubber stamp what you say.

Researcher: What level of capacity does the SGB have in carrying out their responsibilities?

Principal: I think they do because most of them have the interest of the school at heart maybe because their children are capable that is why they have the interest of the school at heart ... but like I said before they need to be capacitated thoroughly by the Department of Education or by other structures ... maybe the legal wing of the department can takeover and educate them on their legal duties.

Researcher: What is the education level of the SGBs?

Principal: Out of the ten SGB members that I have ... I have been checking on their level of education most of them did not reach metric ... I am talking about the parent component ... I think I only have two who can read with understanding. It came out during the interviews ... we gave them a slot to ask questions ... we took pains to teach them how to ask questions, how to score a candidate, at the end we had only two who really understood how things should be done. But maybe in future I don't know how it should be done but when they elect SGB members they should say the parent must have this minimum level of education ... the parent must have knowledge and understanding of the legal roles and responsibilities, and the implications of being an SGB member ... maybe we will have SGBs that really know their duties.

Researcher: What impact does SGB'S education level have on their functioning?

Principal: It does have an impact ... as a democratic institution we take that parents understand the real need of schools ... but then you find that when we are at assembly trying to give instructions ... talk to the learners ... you will find that most of our parents really don't understand what you are saying to the learners ... and that in itself is very much disturbing ... that is why I am saying their level of education really does not assist.

Researcher: What can be done to improve their confidence and authority to do their duties?

Principal: If the confidence level of an SGB member is low he/she will not be able to communicate with the educators and learners.

Researcher: How much training has the SGB received since their election into office?

Principal: Since the were elected in 2005 to date (March 2007) I cant count three workshops which were apparently conducted by a very incompetent person ... such that after attending such workshops I can say it appears as if the SGB members have never attended any workshop ... and I can say in that regard the department has failed by appointing a person who did not understand his/her work to conduct the workshops. The person was supposed to take the centre stage during the workshop but he/she was sitting there not able to answer questions on crucial issues ... even if they conducted three

workshops that amount to nothing.

Researcher: Are these training workshops having any effect on the functioning of the SGBs?

Principal: No they don't ... maybe if the department can make sure that the people they appoint to workshop the SGBs really know what they are supposed to do ... the workshops were just a waste of our time and the department's money.

Researcher: What challenges are encountered by the SGBs regarding their training?

Principal: I think it is concerning the person who was conducting the workshops ... he was himself not confident about what he was doing ... parents sometimes need some form of financial compensation because most of them are at home unemployed ... and if you take them to a workshop they are expecting something ... in the past where schools were still charging school fees it was better ... we could give them some money ... but now that the department has introduced no-fee schools it is difficult ... some of the parents won't even go because they know they are not going to get anything.

Researcher: How best can these challenges be addressed?

Principal: The challenges can be addressed by putting some incentives for the SGBs. I don't know how these incentives can be structured ... as long as there are incentives you will even be able to attract better people to become SGB members, which will be good for the school governance.

Researcher: How is the SGBs' lack of capacity manifested in the schools?

Principal: There are so many different ways ... for instance you find a school without policies ... you will find that educators do not take the SGB members into serious consideration in school matters ... SGB members are seldom seen at school and teachers don't know who the SGB members are ... in general the school is not well governed.

Researcher: What challenges are faced by principals of schools where SGBs lack the necessary capacity to carry out their duties?

Principal: The most crucial challenge that faces the principal is to take over the SGB ... as the principal you have to do both the management and governance tasks at the same time ... in other words the principal with this type of SGB has to work double shift. The poor principal is been overworked and his/her work will be adversely affected. The principal has to draw up policies ... implement the policies he has drawn and even come and monitor and evaluate these policies and their implementation.

Researcher: What should be an ideal SGB?

Principal: Is the SGB that understands its roles in the school ... the SGB that has the ability to be trained ... the SGB which will be able to run the governance of the school as it is been expected of them ... it should be an SGB which will be able to draw up the school policies ... it should be an SGB which will have members who can become the chairpersons of the various committees that should there in the school.

Researcher: What is the level of motivation of SGB members in carrying out their duties?

Principal: They are not motivated to do their work ... the fact that they should volunteer their service in a way has a negative effect on there morale. There is nothing that will increase their level of motivation without giving them some form of incentive. The department should consider giving them some incentives.

Researcher: What is the training need of the SGBs?

Principal: They should be trained on managing the finances of the school ... conducting effective SGB meetings ... the other thing is that they should be trained on their legal roles and responsibilities. They should also be trained in drawing up the learners' code of conduct and how to maintain good discipline in the school.

Researcher: What role is the Department of Education playing regarding SGB training?

Principal: The Department is trying but they are not effective ... maybe once in a year they come and train the SGBs on finance ... and there is no follow up ... there is no feedback ... there is no evaluation to check whether the SGBs are following and/or implementing the information which they have been workshopped on. The other thing the standard of the workshop presentation is too high for the parents to comprehend, which creates problems for the implementation.

Researcher: What is your role as the principal regarding the training of SGBs?

Principal: The principal normally organize the initial training of SGB members according to their need ... the principal should also make SGBs aware of the South African Schools Act ... explain it to their level of understanding because it is very important for them to have a good working knowledge of this piece of legislation.

Researcher: What is the success rate and/or shortfalls of the training received by SGBs?

Principal: It did not succeed because there is no change in the way the SGBs are doing their work ... the shortfall is that the time was very short for training workshop ... information was not adequately presented to the people. The manual that was used was not written in a friendly language thus making it difficult for the SGB members to understand the presentations.

Researcher: What is your perception/opinion regarding the level of training offered to SGB members?

Principal: The training was far above the level of comprehension of the parents ... very few could understand but the majority of the members did not understand ... the training workshop should be as to the training and comprehension of the majority of the SGB members. The schools should indicate what they would want their SGBs to be workshopped on and this will make the workshops to be effective.

**INTERVIEW WITH CIRCUIT MANAGER A**

Researcher: What are the roles and responsibilities of SGB?

Circuit Manager: I am not going to table all of them...responsibilities of SGBs are there to see to it that there is a code of conduct especially for the learners... because if they do not have a code of conduct especially for learners... like in a way there will be a chaotic situation in the school... so the code of conduct determines the behaviour of learners within the school... the school without an SGB we can say is like a person who is without legs... or a mouth... because it is the responsibility of the SGBs to see to it that there are educators within the institution... in schools where there is shortage of educators they go to the SGBs to make a special fund available to hire teachers in SGB posts... to an extent they (SGBs) are to see to it that educators are there ... another responsibility of functional SGB... we are talking about functional SGBs because there are schools which have very much disjointed or dysfunctional SGBs... a functional SGB will see to it that money is made available so that whatever need of the school... they make sure that they are been accomplish through the money that is made available by the SGBs... in times the schools need to buy equipments to be used by both teachers and learners... and it is the responsibility of the SGB to see to it that such equipments are made available... and also... the SGB, despite the fact that they have minimal education, they also go to an extent of advising the school manager... and at the same time, if it is a functional SGB, they will even try to harmonic the environment at school... if there is a clash they will be able to play a supreme role... but are not saying in matters professional they do not have to... it is not, their responsibility... as long as they can see to it that there is schooling... the SGB to a greater extent determine the language that can be utilized within the school environment... it is not the responsibility of educators nor is it the responsibility of the principal despite the fact that the principal is an ex-officio member of the SGB... language determination becomes the responsibility of the SGB... and also the uniform... they play a supreme role in that... most of the white schools will go for expensive uniform so that the underprivileged communities cannot access the uniform hence

they will not be able to register at the school... thus it is an exclusive illegal law...

Researcher: How effective are SGBs in schools?

Circuit Manager: SGBs are very much functional in certain schools... and at the same time I can say they are very much ineffective and very much dysfunctional... it all depends on their level of education... if you take an SGB that went up to standard 3... you will always know that even if you can train this person... he is going to be overwhelmed by the training material and the information that is been disseminated... so the practicality part is going to be very much difficult... but if you take a person who has gone up to Grade 12... you are saying that the person is able to read... is able to write... is able to argue...and is able to advice... most schools have functional or effective SGB... the greater percentage of the parent component has passed Std 10 or Grade 12 so those people are very, very much effective and that SGB is very much functional.

Researcher: What is the SGBs level of knowledge and understanding of its legal roles and responsibilities?

Circuit Manager: Most of the SGBs if you talk matters legal or anything that has to do with the legality then you are denying them information... that is why I was trying to emphasize that if these people are educated... any legal matter to... to a greater percentage... they would be able to grapple with it... but most of them even today, despite the fact that they have been trained they are doing things that are against the constitution of the country... because the constitution of the country is the supreme law of the country...so they are still grappling with an understanding of what the constitution is... what legislation is... what do you understand by the word amendment... clause, act or anything that has to do with legislation... so they are still grappling... and I am still trying to say only those who are a little bit enlightened... have gone to school up to a certain level... they are going to understand the legal parameters... we are still having educators and SGB members who feel they can expel a learner at any given time... that in itself is saying they do not have a broader understanding of the legality of the SGB... to show that they do not understand the legality aspect at anytime if a person feels

bored within the activity of the SGB... can resign at any time without even informing through a letter or verbally (the other member)... and at times to show that they do not have an understanding they do not adhere to the year program for SGB meetings... all these things have to do with the legal aspect.

Researcher: How re SGBs educated about their roles and responsibilities?

Circuit Manager: Normally we identify training needs to empower or to educate our SGB components... at circuit level we don't have a component that can train or assist or empower the SGB... normally we liase with our regional office, that the HR (Human Resource division)... after giving them the training needs or requirements they organize the workshop so that they empower the SGBs.

Researcher: What effect does the SGBs level of knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities have on their functioning?

Circuit Manager: I am still going to take you back ... if you say the level of understanding ... SGB members who are minimally educated still act like they are in the past where we had School Committees ... most of them who have below average education are still behaving like they are in the school committees ... but those SGBs who are a little bit blessed with their education have been able to transform because there is more understanding of their duties. Such SGBs are more effective because you can see that the school is moving in the direction it is expected to be.

Researcher: What level of capacity does the SGBs have in carrying out their responsibilities?

Circuit Manager: Like I am saying ... let me not give you a gloomy picture of the SGBs because in most of the schools where I am ... I am having roughly a smaller percentage ... it can be 25% of the SGBs that are still having little education, but the greater percentage ... like 75% is able to understand what they are actually supposed to be doing. They are not passive ... they know their roles ... they are so inquisitive to an extend that they bother the school managers.

Researcher: What is the education level of the SGBs?

Circuit Manager: For this year I did not measure that, but last year a greater percentage of them had gone beyond Std 10, that is Grade 12 ... some had one year or two years Diplomas, but I cannot say they have degrees. What is good is that they are taking down minutes ... and when you read those minutes you will realize that this person must have gone beyond Std 10.

Researcher: What impact does their education level have on their functioning?

Circuit Manager: The impact of their level of education is that they are doing things in a professional and efficient way ... if we are saying they are able to do things in a professional and efficient way, is just like when you request one of them to record or take minutes in a meeting proceeding, a person is able to record the number of people or the attendees ... is able to summarize what transpired or even before a person been requested the person is able to send information to other SGB members who are very far ... notifying them that we are still going to have a meeting. If you can check the annual program that date is still standing ... there is no postponement. Such a person informs the people well in advance ... not in the morning or today when a meeting is supposed to take place tomorrow. The school also benefits from their level of education because they show professionalism in their conduct. You will also understand that in the past in their meetings these people used to make a lot of noise trying to make a pot ... but in their case there are no interruptions ... one is given a chance to put his/her views on the table ... this way their level of education has sharpened them to an extent that they are able to accommodate the differences that ought to be there.

Researcher: How much training has the SGBs received since their election into office?

Circuit Manager: The new SGBs were elected in August 2006 ... thus far they have received only one training workshop ... what is good is that we have circuit governance team ... all the circuits have a tam to train the newly elected SGB members ... we no longer depend on the workshop that are conducted by the Regional Office ... up to so far let me not tell lies

it is only one session wherein the SGBs received training. But there is one training that is still coming, although I don't know exactly when ... that will be the second workshop ... but up to so far it is only one training session that has been conducted.

**Researcher:** Are these training having any effect on the functioning of the SGBs?

**Circuit Manager:** I think they are having positive effect because around Marapyane circuit ... there was a highly disjointed SGB ... in Lefiswane they did not understand their roles ... they asked a lot of questions which shows that these people did not have proper information ... but after that particular training which focused on admission, payment of school fees ... which also touched their responsibilities, functions and roles ... also related to money matters ... and on their going back to school gradually people were shaped. That school I am told there is a lot of harmony, although there is one who still does not understand ... he does not tow the line ... he thinks as the chairperson of SGB the principal has to be under his control. He is this type of person who will always confront the educators to say why are you late ... he does not understand that professional matters fall under the principal's control and management. He is not prepared to work within the kraal ... he just want to be free ... he is the type of person when is around the school and the teachers are not in class he will go to the principal to say the class is without a teacher ... the teacher is not there and learners are making a lot of noise ... and he becomes very furious. He is the type of person who still need to be schooled on the roles and responsibilities of the SGBs.

**Researcher:** What challenges are encountered by the SGBs' regarding their training?

**Circuit Manager:** It is a pity because we organize workshops ... you find that these are not workshops ... in a workshop we expect two way communications ... but I can tell you most of the SGB members just go there and listen, you can see that they are frustrated but they are not prepared to voice out their frustration ... and some of the questions that can open up their minds ... it becomes a one way communication ... only two or three people really get involved in the discussions ... and people get bored if only two or three people pose questions for the whole day as if they are the only people who don't understand.

Researcher: Are the SGBs able to cope up with the language that is used in the manual and sometimes for presentations?

Circuit Manger: I cannot say they are able to cope ... but some are able to cope ... in the training sessions the manuals are in English ... they are read and translated into the language that is understood by most people ... but of late there is an approach that they are going to write the training manuals in the other official languages for the people to understand ... but even if they can write the information in the languages that are understood by most of the people ... there is still a problem of a lack of the culture of reading and illiteracy.

Researcher: How best can these challenges be addressed?

Circuit Manager: I believe the core is commitment ... if the person is committed we will not has this type of problems ... and if a person can change his/her attitude these challenges won't be there ... change your attitude then we will be able to succeed ... the other thing is that people have got this wrong idea that they need to be paid ... the mere fact that they are not been paid sort of demoralizes them ... I don't know if they can be given a certain remuneration maybe the attitude and level of commitment might change ... but I doubt

Researcher: How is the SGBs' lack of capacity manifested in the schools?

Circuit Manager: What really boggles or challenges the SGB s the most is the finance factor ... once you talk the language of PFMA they are completely lost ... anything that relates to control of monetary issues is a problem to them ... it is very easy to rob them ... because anything that I have realized is that some principals have this lousy habit/ practice of saying to the SGB members just sign this ... letting them sign blank cheques and it will never be questioned by this person. It will only be questioned when there is a crisis ... saying I was never ware that I was putting my whole trust on the principal but see where I am today. Most of these people (SGBs) when it comes to money matters they seem to be very strict, but they are not strict because they fall to a great extend on monetary traps. They become enlightened after they have been in that very danger. So they have one of the greatest challenge, especially on the monetary issues ... and when you try to organize a workshop

that has to do with monetary issues they will always want to send the educator component because they are able to grapple with issues related to money matters. The parents ... the very people we would wish to empower, they will never feature ... they will always be behind ... even if you invite them they will never come ... they will always be having commitments at home.

Researcher: There is this increased phenomenon of teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and bullying, are SGBs able to handle such disciplinary issues?

Circuit Manager: No. Like I said any matter related to legal issues is not well grappled by the SGBs ... not unless the educator component deals with it ... around one of the schools in my circuit an SGB parent member once found a learner who was taking dagga and the SGB member immediately said to the learner you are fired ... this in itself say they are still lacking information as to what has to be done ... especially on disciplinary measures, because some are still saying but Sir you people are very much unfair, why don't you bring back corporal punishment ... but when you try to explain that corporal punishment has long been criminalized ... they just don't understand ... which says the legality part is still a challenge to these people.

Researcher: What challenges are faced by principals of schools where SGBs lack the necessary capacity to carry out their duties?

Circuit Manager: The principal is just frustrated ... the principal is not the SGB and the SGB is not the principal ... the principal cannot run the school alone ... he has to have people who assist in information dissemination ... in terms of advising and all these ... so the principal on his own is going to crumble ... he needs empowered SGBs ... he needs visionaries in the form of SGBs ... if they are not empowered and visionaries, then the school is only going to be run by the principal, which is going to be burdensome ... so some of the projects are not going to be accomplished ... things are not going to be well at school and at the end of the day he is going to be blamed for running the school alone to the exclusion of the SGB.

Researcher: What should be an ideal SGB?

**Circuit Manger:** An ideal SGB is an SGB that is empowered ... empowered in the sense that they would understand exactly what their functions are ... their responsibilities ... their roles, it is an SGB that will be there not only for the principal, but for the community ... it will be an SGB that will be there to service the needs of the school ... it is an SGB that will understand when to expel a learner ... they should also know that that is not their responsibility ... somebody has to, not them ... theirs is just to recommend ... it is an SGB that will be able to give financial report to the parents ... it is an SGB that will be able to convene parents' meetings with a well planned program that will be related to the parent community ... that is an ideal SGB

**Researcher:** What is the level of motivation of SGB members in carrying out their duties?

**Circuit Manager:** Like I was saying if we will be able to reward them, that moral would be upped ... but for now most of the SGB members' moral is very, very low ... one turns to believe that if we would be paying this people that level of motivation would be high.

**Researcher:** What are the training needs of the SGBs?

**Circuit Manager:** Most of the SGBs if they would be trained on aspects that has to do with finance ... they would be on the right track ... again if we can organize workshops that has to do with unpacking the word functionality ... responsibility and also roles ... because these people do not understand these things ... we should also unpack the fact that if we say your responsibility is this to such a level that even a person who did not go to school would understand and emerge from that workshop having been empowered ... more so that most of them are not appearing for the first time in the SGB component.

**Researcher:** What role is the Department of Education playing regarding SGB training?

**Circuit Manager:** After detecting the cracks or the weaknesses among the SGBs the Department ... will always outsource, if we do not have relevant people to do the job ... will always outsource people to come and assist with the empowerment programs and processes for the SGBs ... the Department will always organize venues ... the Department will

always organize provisions, because if you take people from 8 O'clock to 3 O'clock you have to provide them with refreshments ... the Department has to come out clear with training manuals ... the Department also has to create an environment that will be good for this people to be work shopped.

Researcher: Thus far is the training that is been offered sufficient?

Circuit Manager: I cannot say the training is sufficient because training depends on the availability of funds ... if we are saying the current governance team is going to conduct training twice in a month ... we are going to call people from 8 O'clock in the morning up to 2 O'clock in the afternoon. Who is going to bear the costs? It is going to be the schools and most of the schools are having a problem of finance. The Department also works on a budget. The service provider also has to be paid ... and the person who has to provide food has to be paid also. So money is needed ... and we are running short of money at schools ... at circuits ... and at regional level ... that is why you will realize that in a year we have only conducted training workshops twice.

Researcher: What is the role of the circuit manger regarding SGB training?

Circuit Manager: A visionary principal will say to the circuit manager, that he is not satisfied with certain aspects of SGB functioning and ask the circuit manager to organize a training workshop ... in most cases as circuit managers we rely on inputs from the school principals in the form of request ... we organize workshops after having consulted with the principals ... because we cannot just organize workshops when we don't know the short comings of the respective SGBs ... otherwise we

are going to organize a financial workshop only to find that these people excel in that regard. So we want our workshops to be very much pertinent or relevant to the people we want to empower.

Researcher: What are the success rate and /or shortfalls of the training received by the SGBs?

Circuit Manager: If we organize workshops for three days, I can assure you that on the third day only few people will attend ... so this is what is frustrating us as the Department ... now we are forced to come up with a program that will start up in the morning and end up in the afternoon ... and in that case it is not going to be a quality workshop because it is going to be so fully packed ... work that has to be done in three days is going to be done in few hours ... so you can just see what is going to be happening ... certain people or few people ... 10 people out of 40 are going to understand ... and you cannot say you have been successful because the very mistakes which we were trying to eliminate through these workshops ... when they go back to their schools they are still going to continue doing them.

Researcher: What is your perception/opinion regarding the level/type of training offered to SGB members?

Circuit manager: Training is been done by well equipped ... versatile people ... well informed people ... it is just that when they are training these people turns to forget the level of education of the recipient ... they disseminate information as if these people are specialist ... they turn to leave these people behind ... and as a result, as I was saying, only a few people will be able to understand what was been disseminated during the workshop sessions

**INTERVIEWS WITH CIRCUIT MANAGER B**

Researcher: What is the role and responsibility of SGBs?

Circuit Manager: Basically the SGB to start with they assist with the governance of the school ... making sure that the school is smooth running ... the school is operating according to the school policy and SGB constitution ... they also assist in making sure that the school is a safe environment for teaching and learning through the policies that they have ... protecting the buildings ... and protecting all stakeholders within the school through the SGB constitution ... they also make sure that there is that co-operation between and amongst all stakeholders within the school.

Researcher: How effective are SGBs in schools?

Circuit Manager: Definitely it all depends ... I would say most of the SGBs, especially those that have undergone training they are so effective, but they still need more training to become more effective ... it also depend on the management of the school to what extend do they engage them ... to what extend do they guide them in terms of the interpretation of the policies and legislation ... but I would say they are effective to an extend.

Researcher: What is the SGB's level of knowledge and understanding of its legal roles and responsibilities?

Circuit Manager: It also hinges on the literacy level of the SGBs ... some of the SGBs have passed their matric, in a way they are able to understand the policies ... though some members are below Grade 7 and so on ... so those who are advanced in literacy level will assist others and also the principal has to do that as an ex-officio member ... he got to train these people ... educate them ... and help them to interpret the policies so that they become easily implementable.

Researcher: How are the SGBs educated about their roles and responsibilities?

Circuit Manager: During their meetings the principal has to create a slot in which he should educate these people on what roles and responsibilities they are to play ... and also as a Department we organize workshops and training sessions for these SGBs so that they become capacitated in terms of their roles and responsibilities.

Researcher: What effect does the SGBs' level of knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities have on their functioning?

Circuit Manager: I would say that level of literacy ... if it is below par obviously they will never understand the policies ... and therefore implementation becomes very much staggered, which then means it comes to that question of training ... consistency in training them so that at the end they can become functional and understanding their roles and responsibilities as SGBs.

Researcher: Like you say the literacy level determines their understanding of policies, can we say there is a need for a certain level of education for a person to become an SGB member?

Circuit Manager: Basically for SGB members to understand and interpret the policies a certain educational level is necessary ... otherwise if a person is blank or not that much educated the understanding of the policies become very much difficult because it needs also a certain degree of intelligence and so on.

Researcher: What level of capacity does the SGB have in carrying out their roles and responsibilities?

Circuit Manager: Yes, to an extent they have that capacity... especially after undergoing training... the reality becomes unlocked to them the start to know. What roles and responsibilities are they to execute and therefore we strongly believe that with time... before the end of the three year period they will have become more capacitated... because they will be undergoing further training they will know what really have to do...

Researcher: What is the education level of the SGBs?

Circuit Manager: Aah! They differ... like I said some have gone through their matric... some grade 7... Grade A just like that... they differ respectively.

Researcher: What impact does their education level have on their functioning?

Circuit Manager: If a person can naturally understand... especially during workshops and everything... obviously with time the person will start to understand... therefore the level of education that they have... those that are more educated will understand more quickly... and those that are lacking they will, with time develop to the level that they will also assist.

Researcher: How much training has the SGBs received since their election into the office?

Circuit Manager: Though it is not so much adequate but a lot has been done... the circuit governance committee has trained them... and we had some volunteers... towards the end of last year training them... I think with that information I would say they are now advanced... to a certain level

Researcher: Are these training having any effect on the functioning of the SGBs?

Circuit Manager: Yes: a lot once they begin to understand what is expected of them they become motivated... and then becoming more effective...

Researcher: What challenges are encountered by SGBs regarding their training?

Circuit Manager: The first one is the facilitator... if his facilitation skill is not up to scratch... it is a big challenge... and therefore it creates some gaps in terms of understanding... eh... the other challenge is that literature is written in English which is a different medium of communication for most of the SGBs ... really it is a big challenge... it is a challenge to the department to make sure that the policies are written in the language which most SGBs understand in that area... and as long as most of the SGBs understand it will be easier to implement the policies.

Researcher: How best can these challenges be addressed?

Circuit Manager: Like I have said... in terms of the language the department has to write the policies in the language which these people would understand better... the facilitators must be thoroughly workshopped so that they can thoroughly workshop the SGBs with that better understanding... be able to go down to the level of the SGBs...

Researcher: If I am to ask, are you satisfied with level of capacity of the presenters or facilitators?

Circuit Manager: No! I am not because there were several complains [that came to my office]... because the governance committee that consists of principals were also attending such workshops and therefore they could realize that the interpretation and understanding of certain pieces of legislation were not according to how they know them... so it is a problem... it would mean that such facilitators would need more training and clarification so that when they impart to the SGB they must fully understand what they are talking about...

Researcher: How is the SGBs lack of capacity manifested in the schools?

Circuit Manager: Some schools are not so much functional ... you will realize that when they encounter a problem ... a behavioural problem ... maybe during hearing process ... some of the SGBs really do not know and understand what their role should be ... interpretation of the literature ... the disciplinary measure ... the code of conduct ... in certain institutions they are not so much functional but as I have said with time they will develop

Researcher: Regarding their role of determining the school curriculum are they showing any capacity to do that?

Circuit Manager: They really show that interest ... but it depend on the management of the institution, because curriculum is something that is more professional ... which is more understood by the educators ... and for the parents ... the SGB in particular to develop that interest and understanding it depends on whether the SMT does explain ... even the educators engaging them ... involving these parents ... explaining to

them what curriculum is all about ... if the SMT is able to do that ... the SGB will be able to know what is happening in the school professionally.

**Researcher:** There is this problem of the educators and even some principals not knowing their roles in the SGB, who regard the SGB as the parent component and the teacher component not been part of SGB, is it not creating problems in the school?

**Circuit Manager:** In certain quotas it does, but to a greater extend people have started to understand that when we are talking about SGB we are talking about a unit ... we are talking about a team ... that demarcation is no longer so much manifested ... so they take it as a unit.

**Researcher:** What challenges are faced by principal of schools where SGBs lack the necessary capacity to carry out their duties?

**Circuit Manager:** Obviously school governance will be affected ... if the SGBs don't know and understand their roles and responsibilities they will never know how to support the principal in running the school ... but if the opposite happens then the principal gains strength and energy to go forward because he is sure of the support from the SGB in terms of finances ... in terms of moral support then that level of cooperation increases.

**Researcher:** What should be the ideal SGB?

**Circuit Manager:** An ideal SGB, should be an SGB which has a bit of education that will help them to understand and interpret the policies ... and also the SGB which is willing to cooperate ... willing to support the management of the institution and also support and cooperate do not necessarily mean agreeing to everything ... where things go wrong they should come in to say this is wrong ... and I think the correct path to take is this one ... the SGB should really act as an advisory body to the management of the institution ... and also to represent the community well in that

school ... because they need to invite parents into parents' meetings to explain certain developments taking place within the school ... that is the kind of SGB which we will say is an ideal one.

Researcher: We are speaking of SGB as advocating for the best interest of the school, is the criterion that a parent should have a learner in the school, to qualify to become an SGB member sufficient?

Circuit Manager: We are in a democratic society and you are coming in as a parent to represent the interest of your child ... and if elected by the community you then represent the interest of the community ... the community's children are there, you should look after them ... keeping safe ... but in safe ... but in terms of certain specific skills which we require as a Department the SGB has got that latitude to co-opt certain people with specific skills so that the SGB becomes more functional ... because you will realize that in certain instances they do not have certain requisite skill and capacity ... therefore they have got the right to co-opt some people to assist them, but such people do not have voting rights.

Researcher: Talking of co-opting people, there is this outcry that SGBs are regarded as amateurish, and people with skill don't want to be seen associating with such amateurish people. How do we go about addressing this problem?

Circuit Manager: It depends on the personality of a person and also the approach which the SGB would use to recruit such a person ... if the personality of that person is not ok leave him/her alone ... lets say you need a psychologist to become part of the SGB ... two psychologists will be different in terms of their personalities ... if this one is a difficult person you go for the next one ... I think they will differ in one way or the other ... therefore, such people depending on their personalities are willing to assist ... some of them are retired principals with those expertise ... they are willing to assist.

Researcher: What is the level of motivation of SGB members in carrying out their duties?

Circuit Manager: The motivation is there ... but what counts more is the attitude of the principal ... as an ex-officio member ... if the principal is accessible ... is having a smile on his face ... then the SGB feels free to engage with that kind of a principal ... then they become motivated if their ideas are taken on board and considered that is part of motivation ... SGBs having delegated powers they know what they are supposed to do in a school ... they become motivated ... it depends on the kind of principal ... but I would say today we have young people ... self-motivation among SGB members also counts a lot ... if they really have that will power to assist the school from the day they are elected into office ... that self-motivation will generate them into doing their duties properly ... if a person is in a way been forced into that structure will not really perform ... will not attend meetings and at the end the whole motivation goes off ... but sometimes, depending on the type of the school manager ... those people who might have been brought into the SGB structure against their will ... the principal can turn things around and make them feel at home and become more motivated to do that ... that is why I say it hinges on the principal's attitude predominantly.

Researcher: There is this problem of the SGB members dropping by the way side, how best can we ensure their sustained involvement in SGB activities?

Circuit Manager: I really don't know ... but some of the people really believe that they cannot perform SGB activities for nothing ... they expect to be remunerated in a way ... but like I have said the principal is a very critical person in motivating these people that they are doing this for their children and to be elected by the community into SGB means they have trust and confidence in you ... and during that period you will be representing them in the school ... I think if the principal can clarify that they will become motivated ... but how the principal treat this people in terms of having programs and itinerary for meetings ... not calling them randomly like he feels ... having itinerary for meetings to say on such a date we will be having a meeting ... they will prepare ... they will suspend everything for that day and come to the meetings ... but if things are done haphazardly it demotivates them and they will keep on dropping on the way.

Researcher: There is still a problem of SGB members who are employed somewhere, who say that they cannot leave their employment to attend to SGB activities for which they are not been paid, how can this problem be addressed?

Circuit Manager: Like I have talked about an itinerary ... if we have people working far from home ... I think they should be given such a program of meetings so that they can also give that to the employers and democratically such employers will have to give them such permission to attend those meetings because it is a social responsibility ... if you belong to an SGB structure you are executing such responsibility ... whoever employer who refuse that person the permission that person has the right to take legal steps against such employer.

Researcher: What is the training need of the SGBs?

Circuit Manager: They need further training in terms of motivation so that they know that their role is crucial ... I think also in financial management skills. To have an ideal SGB we have to look at predominantly, though they are democratically elected, the level of education in a way will assist because in the olden days we used to have parents who have never gone to school becoming members of the school committees or SGBs and their level of understanding is very low, thus it allowed the principal to do as they pleased. But if people are able to read and write they will also be able to read for themselves the policies of the department ... so the principal cannot do as he pleases.

Researcher: What role is the department of education playing regarding SGB training?

Circuit Manager: They organize through the HRD (Human Resource Development) the workshops for the SGBs ... even organize the service providers ... people to facilitate ... also at circuit level we are doing that through the circuit governance committee.

Researcher: What is the role of the circuit manager regarding the training of SGBs?

Circuit Manager: The circuit manager visits schools to check on SGB documents, meetings and to the extend the SGB is involved in the school ... that is only quality assurance what the circuit manager is doing ... and where there are loopholes he should close them up. He should organize

workshops so that the very circuit governance team should come and workshop them. Maybe just to call them and have a motivation session for these people ... recognizing the critical role that they are doing in the school.

Researcher: What is the success rate of the training received by SGBs?

Circuit Manager: It is remarkable ... people are beginning to understand their roles and responsibilities ... if they don't understand they will overstep, behaving like school managers whereas they are not.

Researcher: What are the shortfalls of the training received by SGBs?

Circuit Manager: Some of the parents don't regularly attend such workshops ... like for instance some of them are employed far away and training takes place predominantly during the week ... and over the weekend members don't attend because of their social commitments, therefore it is a problem.

Researcher: Is the Department in any way making follow-ups on these SGBs' training?

Circuit Manager: We have a questionnaire that we use to measure the success of the workshops ... and also the circuit governance team help us to assess the workshops just to have a feel of the success of the workshop ... and where there are gaps subsequent workshops will be organized to close these gaps.

What is your perception regarding the level of training offered to SGB members?

Circuit Manager: The training is adequate as it clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the SGBs ... on the other hand the problem could be the facilitators, as I have indicated before, but the menu given to the SGBs is the menu one can expect to make them more functional and effective in a school.

**INTERVIEWS WITH CIRCUIT MANAGER C**

Researcher: What is the role and responsibility of SGB?

Circuit Manager: The SGB is a governing wing of the institution, they deal with governance... just to site examples they deal with buildings... they do purchasing... they develop the school... the purchase learner-teacher material...

Researcher: How effective are SGBs in schools?

Circuit Manager: SGBs differ from one institution to the other in terms of functionality... but majority of SGBs are non-functional. Wholly non-functional... as a result of some members of the SGB getting employment immediately after election somewhere... and other SGB members been fully engaged in their normal work which does not give them time to participate in the activities of the SGB... but the logic and constitution of the SGB in the school is very positive.

Researcher: What is the SGBs level of knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities?

Circuit Manager: Truly speaking one cannot say they are 100% capacitated on their legal engagement or know how... but I think it is a process that is a continuous to empower the SGBs... if you compare the previously advantaged schools, that is, former Model C schools' SGBs and our own ordinary public school SGBs can you will see the difference... if our SGBs can operate at the level of former Model C schools SGB I think we shall have moved a milestone... in as far as capacitating the SGBs is concerned.

Researcher: How are SGBs educated about their roles and responsibilities?

Circuit Manager: There are continuous workshops which the department organizes and prepares to continuously capacitate the SGBs... but the other challenge that we have is to try and translate the manuals that are used during

training workshops into the language that is used friendly to most of the SGBs taking into consideration their literacy level... that is the other challenge that we have... we might have the manuals but you find that it is in English.

Researcher: What effect does the SGBs level of knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities have on their functioning?

Circuit Manager: Obviously if you are not 100% fully capacitated you will be afraid to implement the policies or fail to know how to implement the policies or implement incorrectly or wrongly and that will have devastating effects... but as soon as they are fully capacitated they will start functioning fully and even know how far they should participate and function.

Researcher: What is the education level of The SGBs?

Circuit Manager: It differs...you cannot say they are fully illiterate or literate...but it differs from one school o the other... you should remember that the SGBs started functioning in 1996 after the South African School Act was adopted by the ministry of education to be complemented in schools... you will realize that it is a process... we are still moving towards having a fully capacitated SGB... but the level of literacy is another challenge, which might utilize ABET centers to try and capacitate them.

Researcher: What impact does their education level have on their functioning?

Circuit Manager: It will have a negative impact if we don't translate the manuals into their language... but I think we are moving there... I think you know that the minister of education announced that inclusive education should be the thee thing, where by you should take learners with the so called learning barriers... I think even with the SGBs immediately you translate the manuals into their language you will have fully functional SGBs... that's where we are moving... we have started but we still have to move on and on... and the other thing you know you have got your SGBs running for three years, after that most of them will not stand for election because you know it is a sort of a "letsoma"

programme...voluntary service towards the community... and many people do not understand this, the buying in is not at a convincing level...

Researcher: How much training has the SGB received since their election into office?

Circuit Manager: The training is good we only need to do monitoring and evaluation...or assess and evaluation... or intervention program as far as their capacitation is concerned... but the trainings are there ... the Department through the regional and district offices is running the workshops for capacitating them... in former, Moretele if you talk of Mmametlhake, Nokaneng, Marapyane, Libangeni and Moutse-West fortunately they were advantaged by the QLP (Quality Learning Programme) whereby they also conducted workshops to capacitate SGBs on their roles and responsibilities... so I think that sub-region is more advantaged...

Researcher: Are these trainings having any effect on the functioning of the SGBs?

Circuit Manager: Yes... positive ones... because I think concerns and questions raised by SGBs are basically addressed in such a workshops... but as I have indicated the manuals was one critical challenge that we were faced with...

Researcher: What challenges are encountered by the SGBs regarding their trainings?

Circuit Manager: One during the early inception of the SGBs, they did not understand their roles visa vice the role of the school management... the role of the SMT the role of the SGB... they would cross roads... and think they would jump into the roles of the school management basically... and SMT's would feel offended and think the SGB wants to take their responsibilities and replace them... there were really the teething problems, but I think now people understand their roles.

Researcher: Talking of SGBs is the criteria that one should have a child in a school to qualify to be an SGB member, sufficient?

Circuit Manager: Well, in terms of policy the school is allowed to co-opt any community member who might not necessarily be having a child in the school, into the SGB... but looking at what value he or she is going to bring into

the school... so it not only by virtue of having a child in the school in order to become an SGB member... so that in itself is an added advantage into having a fully functional SGB in the school.

Researcher: There is this problem that SGBs are perceived as been “amateurish” in their approach and dealing with educational issues, and skilled people don’t want to be seen associated with such “amateurish” people, how do we deal with this problem?

Circuit Manager: I subscribe to the notion that each one teach one ... you know all retired educators... and retired people who have been working in the public service or any other knowledgeable person... most of them will have time to participate in SGB activities... I think that is the reason why you are saying they don’t want to be seen associating with such “amateurish” people... but if that is turned around and people with knowledge starts participating fully, then we are going to have progress [in SGB activities].

Researcher: How best can these challenges be addressed?

Circuit Manager: I think I have indicated... let the knowledgeable people start participating fully... doing community development job... plough back into the community... many people want to participate in activities that are paying but most of us we are doing most things without any payment... if we can have many people doing that, I think we will benefit...

Researcher: How is the SGBs lack of capacity manifested in schools?

Circuit Manager: Where you have unresolved cases... where you have department loosing cases because it was not well handled from the school level... where you have media all over the show... where people are questioned in issues they are not clear on and wanting to respond... instead of them indicating that this is not our terrain... if one is not fully capacitated and fail to recognize that... will start engaging in such activities and will bring the department into disrepute... but I think we have tried to reduce the number of such cases... and when you see the numbers going down you acknowledge that we are succeeding in capacitating our people...

Researcher: What are the challenges faced by principals whose SGBs lack the necessary capacity to carry-out their duties?

Circuit Manager: It all depends on the type of Manager you are talking about... because that is the manager who is an ex officio member who should be educating and capacitating the SGBs because of his knowledge and background... as a manager also...if the principal is not knowledgeable that will manifested in the SGBs and instead of having a functional SGB he will be having an SGB that is arguing on issues that are parallel to the truth and policies of the department... a knowledgeable principal... his knowledge will manifest itself in the functionality of the SGB...

Researcher: What should be an ideal SGB?

Circuit Manager: An ideal SGB, is an SGB that is knowledgeable... an SGB that is willing to learn... and SGB who is having a school manager who is a Chief Executive Officer of the institution, who is knowledgeable... if the principal is not knowledgeable how do you expect SGBs to be knowledgeable... but if a principal is not knowledgeable and we have SGB that is knowledgeable then we have a crisis also... so the two should be on the same wavelength then we will have functionality...

Researcher: What is the level of motivation of SGB members in carrying out their duties?

Circuit Manager: Is a question of been patriotic... and knowing that what they are doing is a community project and they are ploughing back... and it should also be motivated by the fact that their learners or children are benefiting from a solid functional units institutions which will be able to deliver... produce knowledgeable products as in learners that is what should motivate the SGBs... the other thing is that they are building nations, and this nation depends on smaller units which at the end converge into a broader picture of the society that is what should motivate the SGB... the other thing is what we are trying to do is to acknowledgeable the participation of such people during their tenure... in the three years ... we normally would turn up with acknowledgement certificate or awards of some sort towards them so that we pat them on the back and say job well done...

Researcher: But we still have this problem of elected members dropping by the way side, and at the end of their tenure you only have two... three members remaining to carry out the duties?

Circuit Manager: It is a very common thing that we normally experience... initially when they started people would cry saying but we don't get paid... or when people got into the SGBs maybe expecting some favours... I am not talking of an acceptable thing when a person gets an employment far away from home... I am talking about a person who is at home... who would not move and drop by the way side, it's because they expected some favours when posts are advertised...expecting to be employed... getting into the SGB with an ulterior motive... and that's when you will have people dropping by the way side.

Researcher: What is the training need of SGBs?

Circuit Manager: Basically to enhance the basic knowledge that they have through continuous capacity building ... (1) their roles and responsibilities... (2) how they should interact with the school management... (3) you know the SGB is a legal entity, so that they understand the implications of them been SGB member...

Researcher: What role is the department of education playing regarding SGB training?

Circuit Manager: Except for the training and workshops that are there... I said there are monitoring and evaluation programs that are there to review the impact of the training programs that have had on the SGBs... and also to review the powers that are given to the SGBs... because if you give the SGBs more powers that they can handle ... they will have bitten more than they can chew... that is been reviewed... the powers with regard the appointment of educators and staff...these are the things that might be reviewed because some people might abuse their powers as SGBs members to go on with nepotism or to appoint only the local people...

these are some of the things that have to be reviewed so that we don't give the SGBs more than they can handle...

**Researcher:** What is the role of the circuit manager regarding SGB training?

**Circuit Manager:** The role of the circuit manager if you look at the broader view of what the circuit manager should do is to do monitoring and support... that has to be done in governance and management of schools...when we talk governance we talk SGB... fortunately the regional office has a governance section under HRD... so those are the people who assist the circuit manager in running the training workshops for the SGBs... at circuit level, cluster level and regional level...

**Researcher:** What is the success rate of the training received by SGBs?

**Circuit Manager:** That can only be measured by successful schools and functional SGBs which we have... all the challenges that I have mentioned does not take away the fact that we have fully complemented SGBs and functional

**Researcher:** What are the shortfalls of the training received by SGBs?

**Circuit Manager:** The legal part and the financial part have not been fully addressed... the financial part is complicated and technical... even the educators and some principals when you talk financial management it becomes a problem...it is not something that can be done once off... that you can run and say I am done... you need to crash courses and follow-ups then we can achieve what we intended achieving...

**Researcher:** What is your perception regarding the type of training offered to SGB members?

**Circuit Manager:** The type of training offered to SGBs, according to me its OK... but it is difficult to measure the level of understanding of the SGBs... because, like I have said, the language versa vice the prepared material... if we can have the material prepared in the language of the people, then we can push and achieve progress...

**Researcher: Regarding the presenters, do they have necessary capacity to present to the SGBs?**

**Circuit Manager: When I talk of the District and Regional official in the HRD governance section, those people are well capacitated to conduct training workshops to SGBs**

**INTERVIEWS WITH SGBs OF SCHOOL A**

Researcher: What are your roles and responsibilities in school governance?

SGB Member A: To assist the principal in the management of the school.

SGB Member B: To look after the school buildings.

SGB Member C: To take care of the school assets.

SGB Member D: To manage the finances of the school.

SGB Member E: To formulate and implement school policies.

SGB Member B: To maintain discipline in the school.

Researcher: How did you come to know of your roles and responsibilities?

Member B: We were workshopped by officials from the Department of Education.

Researcher: How successful are you in carrying out these responsibilities?

Member C: We have achieved some success in doing our SGB job.

Researcher: What evidence do you have or can point out as a measure of your success?

Member D: Because learners are wearing their school uniform.

Member E: Learners are observing the school times.

Member B: We succeeded in conducting interviews for the deputy principal and Admin clerk.

Member C: The school finance is well managed.

Researcher: How much capacity do you have for carrying out your responsibilities?

Member B: We have the necessary capacity because we have repaired the school buildings including ceiling.

Researcher: How much training did you receive since you were elected into office?

Member E: We have attended two workshops.

Researcher: Who conducted the workshop?

Member B: Mr Futhane who was send by the Department of Education.

Researcher: On what issues did he conduct the workshop?

Member D: The workshop was on how to conduct effective meetings.

Member B: We were also workshopped on how to manage school finances.

Researcher: Are these training workshops helping you in your functioning?

Member B: Yes, because we can now conduct successful meetings. I was hesitant when I was elected chairperson of SGB, but now I know how to conduct meetings and I do my job with confidence.

Member C: We can now successfully manage school funds, keep proper financial records.

Member A: Our financial records are good, and it is important for the running of the school, and on Saturday we have parents' meeting where we are going to present an audited financial statement.

Researcher: What challenges did you encounter during the training sessions?

Member B: The time was too short for the information they intended to workshop us on. Thus they ended up rushing over the information in order to finish and they still could not finish. There was too much information given within short space of time.

Researcher: How best can these challenges be addressed?

Member C: They need to make time again to workshop the SGBs because they were rushing everything in order to finish without taking into consideration whether the SGBs understood what they were presenting or not. Beside, they could not even finish what they were presenting.

Researcher: What is the level of your motivation in carrying out your duties?

Member C: We are enthusiastic in our functions because we want to see our school developing.

Researcher: What is your training need?

Member D: We need retraining on financial management, policy formulation and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the school performance, maintaining discipline.

Researcher: What role is the Department of Education playing regarding your training?

Member A: The Department of Education has sent people to workshop us on two occasions.

Researcher: What role does the principal/circuit manager playing regarding your training?

Member B: The circuit office organized an induction workshop for us.

Researcher: What is the success rate and/or shortfalls of the training you received?

Member C: They were very much helpful because they assisted us in conducting successful interviews and in running our meetings.

Researcher: What is your perception/opinion regarding the level/type of training you received?

Member E: They need to repeat the training and give it sufficient time in order to finish what they are presenting and to increase the SGBs' level of knowledge and understanding of their duties.

**INTERVIEWS WITH SGB MEMBERS OF SCHOOL B**

Researcher: What are roles and responsibilities?

Member A: To determine the school time, to determine the school uniform, manage and control the finances of the school; maintain discipline in the school, to ensure the best interest of the school, maintain the school buildings and grounds and plan for the development of the school.

Researcher: How did you come to know of your roles and responsibilities in school governance?

Member D: The Department organized some workshops for us where they taught us our roles and responsibilities.

Researcher: How successful are you in carrying out these responsibilities?

Member B: We are successful because we managed to help the school to produce better results. We work very well with learners, teachers and the principal in order to produce better results. The other thing that we do is to assist the principal with the things which will help the learners to perform better, for example we advise that learners should come in the morning for study, they should also have extra study periods ... the school itself should be orderly ... learners should put on school uniform. They should also listen to their teachers in class, if a particular learner misbehaves the principal calls us in to talk to the learner indicating to him/her that teachers are not against him/her nor the school is in any way against him/her ... it is just that he/she conduct is unacceptable ... in other words we assist the school in solving the problems.

Researcher: You have just touched on one important aspect of discipline. Discipline is maintained through certain rules and regulations. What are these rules and regulations that assist in maintaining good discipline in the school?

Member C: If a learner arrives late for school on several occasions we call the parent to enquire from them what the problem might be ... is it maybe because of the learner him/herself or the parent at home who delays him/her or who does

not ensure that the child leaves home in time for school ... then we are able to resolve this problem ... because there is no learner who is supposed to be late for school.

Researcher: What do we call this regulation?

Member B: It is called by-law ... we have the constitution of the country that governs everybody ... but where we realize that the constitution is abused to allow for indiscipline, we formulate by-laws ... like for example, if a learner misbehaves we call the parent because we know that these learners are afraid of their parents and when we call the parent the particular learner will begin to behave him/herself because he/she does not want to be exposed to the parent ... so we are able to maintain discipline because we involve their parents.

Member D: We also use period registers to control period attendance ... each period we mark learners who are absent and we then use these registers to discipline them ... because they have to account for their absence during these periods ... we ensure that learners attend all their periods.

Researcher: How much capacity do you have in carrying out your responsibilities?

Member A: Our SGB comprise of educated people there is one working at the regional office, others our teachers.

Member C: We have the capacity ... and even our principal is transparent in all the information available to us ... we can talk to him on various school issues ... that is why even those who lack the necessary capacity can talk to him ... however most of us have the necessary capacity

Member D: As proof of our capacity we have teacher component and these teachers are doing their job in class ... and we have the parent component that work and relate well with other community members ... the teacher component offer us advice on various issues. We also have the option to co-opt members from the community with certain expertise to help us ... we can also attend training workshops to improve our capacity.

Researcher: How much training did you receive since you were elected?

Member A: The circuit office organized an induction workshop for us immediately after our election; we also received training on our roles and responsibilities.

Researcher: Are these training of any help in your functioning?

Member C: They are of help, like for example, when you are newly elected you don't have any knowledge of what is expected of you ... because we are only having information of the then school committees ... they helped us to know our responsibilities and even our boundaries; as SGB members I cannot tell a teacher what to do because he/she know the program of action in teaching.

Member B: They also helped us to know the duties of the chairperson that he/she should convene and chair meetings ... the treasurer is dealing with finances ... these workshops are an eye opener ... they remind us of our duties.

Researcher: What challenges did you encounter during the training workshops?

Member C: The government has promised us money, and now that they have introduced the no-fee schools, but the money is not forthcoming ... and this creates problems for the school because there are many things which we can no longer do as a school.

Researcher: Are the manuals which are used during the training workshop to the level of SGB members' understanding?

Member A: Fortunate enough all our SGB members can read and understand.

Member D: The presenters also try by all means to explain the manuals in the local language.

Member B: The organizers of the workshop should also try and write the manuals in the language that is best understood by everybody.

Researcher: Did any official come to monitor or evaluate your performance after the workshop?

Member C: Fortunately we have one of the presenters who have been co-opted into our SGB, and if we were doing anything wrong he might have told us. However, he is not necessarily monitoring us ... but the Departmental officials have never come to check on our performance.

Researcher: How best can these challenges be addressed?

Member A: The presenters should present the information in our languages, because some of them only read the information in English and they are unable to explain it in Setswana.

Member D: During the elections they should try and elect people who are educated so that they can be able to read the manuals on their own with understanding. The manuals should also be written in the African languages.

Researcher: What is the level of your motivation in carrying out your duties?

Member B: The SGB members have children in the school and they work for their children.

Member A: SGB members who drop by the way-side are lacking motivation, but as a parent I will not be pleased to see a learner from this school in the street during school hours ... I will come and notify the principal about it, because it brings the name of the school into disrepute ... and we will also speak to the parent to try and instill good morals in their children at home.

Member C: SGB members who drop on the way are those that are not actively involved in SGB activities ... you find that the principal does not involve them ... does not take their contributions into considerations, then they end up saying what is the use of attending the meetings because there is nothing which is taken from us ... meetings become one person show.

Researcher: What are your training needs?

Member D: They should workshop us on the skill of addressing and motivating learners ... we should be able to speak to the learners with authority and confidence.

Member B: They should workshop us on financial management, particularly raising funds for the school ... they should also workshop us on discipline and handling of learners so that we can maintain order in the school.

Researcher: What role is the department playing regarding your training?

Member C: It has since trained us at the beginning of the year for almost two hours ... since then they have never made any follow-ups.

Researcher: What role is the principal/circuit manager playing regarding your training?

Member A: The principal assist in the initial induction of SGB members.

Researcher: What is the success rate and/or shortfalls of the training you have received?

Member D: The Department only conducted crash course for two hours once and went away and they are waiting for after three years to come and elect another SGB.

**INTERVIEWS WITH SGB MEMBERS OF SCHOOL C**

Researcher: What are your roles and responsibilities?

Member A: It is to take care of the school building, to take care of the school children ... to resolve problems that might be there, to manage the finances of the school.

Researcher: When you talk of taking care of the learners, what actually do you mean by that?

Member B: When we undertake trips with them we ensure that they don't misbehave and do wrong things ... and when maybe one learner gets injured we make sure that he/she is taken proper care of ... and that no learner gets lost during the trip ... and to ensure that learners respect their educators.

Member C: We also ensure that there is proper discipline of both learners and educators ... and to ensure that there is proper use of the school resources.

Researcher: You have just touched on one important aspect of discipline. In essence when you talk of ensuring that there is proper discipline in the school what is your specific role in this regard?

Member A: To ensure that the learners have good respect to their teachers in class, to attend school regularly ... this respect will lead to good discipline.

Member B: We take care of the school buildings and the projects that are here ... we make sure that the builders are doing a good job for the school.

Researcher: How did you come to know of your roles and responsibilities in school governance?

Member D: They called us for a training to tell us about our roles and responsibilities in the school.

Researcher: You talk about workshop, how many times did you attend such workshops?

Member C: They workshopped us first here at school, then they called us to the circuit office for workshop.

Researcher: How successful are you in carrying out your responsibilities?

Member A: We are succeeding although we sometimes encounter problems.

Member C: We have also assisted in conducting interviews for general worker.

Researcher: How much training did you receive since you were elected?

Member D: We attended two workshops on conducting effective meetings and managing the finances of the school.

Researcher: Are these training workshops of any help to you?

Member B: Yes, because we can now conduct successful meetings and we can successfully manage school funds, keep proper financial records.

Researcher: What challenges did you encounter during the training workshops?

Member D: The time was too short for the information they intended to workshop us on, thus they ended up rushing over the information in order to finish. There was too much information given within short space of time.

Researcher: How best can these challenges be addressed?

Member A: They need to make time again to workshop the SGBs because they were rushing everything in order to finish taking into consideration whether the SGB understood what they were presenting or not.

Researcher: What is the level of your motivation in carrying out your duties?

Member C: We are happy with our functions because we want to see our school developing.

Researcher: What is your training need?

Member D: We need training on financial management, policy formulation and implementation and maintaining discipline in the school.

Researcher: What role is the Department playing regarding your training?

Member B: The department sent people to workshop us on two occasions.

Researcher: What role is the principal/circuit manager playing regarding your training?

Member C: The circuit office organized an induction workshop for us.

Researcher: What is the success rate and/or shortfall of the training you received?

Member A: They were very much helpful because they assisted as in conducting successful interviews and in running our meetings.

Researcher: What is your perception/opinion regarding the level/type of training you received?

Member D: They need to repeat the training and give it sufficient time in order to finish what they are presenting and to increase the SGBs' level of knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities in school governance.

## **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **PRINCIPALS AND CIRCUIT MANAGERS**

1. What is the role and responsibility of the SGB?
2. How effective are SGBs in schools?
3. What is the SGB's level of knowledge and understanding of its legal roles and responsibilities?
4. How are SGBs educated about their roles and responsibilities?
5. What effect does the SGB's level of knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities have on their functioning?
6. What level of capacity does the SGB have in carrying-out their responsibilities?
7. What is the education level of the SGBs?
8. What impact does their education level have on their functioning?
9. How much training has the SGBs received since their election into office?
10. Are these trainings having any effect on the functioning of the SGBs?
11. What challenges are encountered by the SGBs' regarding their training?
12. How best can these challenges be addressed?
13. How is the SGB's lack of capacity manifested in the schools?
14. What challenges are faced by principals whose SGBs lack the necessary capacity to carry-out their duties?
15. What should be an ideal SGB?
16. What is the level of motivation of SGB members in carrying-out their duties?
17. What is the training need of SGBs?
18. What role is the department of education playing regarding SGB training?
19. What is your role as principal/circuit manager regarding the training of SGBs?
20. What is the success rate and/or short falls of the training received by SGBs?
21. What is your perception/opinion regarding the level/type of training offered to SGB members?

## **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **{GB MEMBERS}**

1. What are your roles and responsibilities in school governance?
2. How did you come to know of your roles and responsibilities in school governance?
3. How successful are you in carrying out these responsibilities?
4. How much capacity do you have in carrying –out your responsibilities?
5. How much training did you receive since you were elected?
6. Are these training of any help in your functioning?
7. What challenges did you encounter during the training sessions?
8. How best can these challenges be addressed?
9. What is the level of your motivation in carrying-out your duties?
10. What are your training needs?
11. What role is the department playing regarding your training?
12. What role is the principal/circuit manger playing regarding your training?
13. What is the success rate and/or shortfalls of the training you received?
14. What is your perception/opinion regarding the level/type of training you received?

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5 MARCH 2007

THE PRINCIPAL  
MABOTHE HIGH SCHOOL

DEAR SIR

**APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH  
PROJECT AT YOUR SCHOOL**

1. The above subject bears reference.
2. As a MEd. Student I am supposed to collect data for my research project from various schools. As a result I have purposefully selected your school as a rich source of information for my research project.
3. To accomplish this objective, I hereby apply for permission to conduct my research project at your school on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2007. The target group for this research is the SGB and the school principal.
4. Furthermore, permission has also been granted by the Regional Office to conduct the said research project, and an application has been submitted to your circuit office for the same reason.
5. It will be greatly appreciated if this application can be positively considered.

Yours faithfully

Maluleka J.S.

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PRETORIA  
0182  
5 MARCH 2007

THE PRINCIPAL  
KHAMANE HIGH SCHOOL

DEAR SIR

**APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH  
PROJECT AT YOUR SCHOOL**

6. The above subject bears reference.

7. As a MEd. Student I am supposed to collect data for my research project from various schools. As a result I have purposefully selected your school as a rich source of information for my research project.

8. To accomplish this objective, I hereby apply for permission to conduct my research project at your school on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2007. The target group for this research is the SGB and the school principal.

9. Furthermore, permission has also been granted by the Regional Office to conduct the said research project, and an application has been submitted to your circuit office for the same reason.

10. It will be greatly appreciated if this application can be positively considered.

Yours faithfully

Maluleka J.S.

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PRETORIA  
0182  
5 MARCH 2007

THE PRINCIPAL  
DIKOTELLO MIDDLE SCHOOL

DEAR SIR

**APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH  
PROJECT AT YOUR SCHOOL**

11. The above subject bears reference.
12. As a MEd. Student I am supposed to collect data for my research project from various schools. As a result I have purposefully selected your school as a rich source of information for my research project.
13. To accomplish this objective, I hereby apply for permission to conduct my research project at your school on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2007. The target group for this research is the SGB and the school principal.
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15. It will be greatly appreciated if this application can be positively considered.

Yours faithfully

Maluleka J.S.

**ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

**PRINCIPALS' INTERVIEWS**

<b>TOPICS</b>	<b>THEMES</b>	<b>CATEGORIES/SUBCATEGORIES</b>
<b>1. The impact of SGBs' understanding of their roles and responsibilities</b>	1. <i>Knowledge of their roles and responsibilities.</i>	1.1 To maintain school property 1.2 To manage the finances of the school. 1.3 To develop the school policies. 1.4 To determine the times for the school. 1.5 To take of school grounds and buildings. 1.6 To raise funds for the school. 1.7 To maintain discipline in the school.
	2. <i>The impact of SGBs' lack of knowledge of their legal duties on school governance.</i>	2.1. SGBs' lack of knowledge of their legal responsibilities. 2.2. SGBs in rural schools lack the necessary capacity to do their duties. 2.3. SGB members cannot support the principal. 2.4. SGBs' lack of knowledge has a negative effect on their functioning. 2.5. SGB members fail to understand simple instructions given to learners by the principal.
	3. <i>The impact of SGBs' literacy level on their understanding of their roles and responsibilities.</i>	3.1. Parents are elected because they have children in the school irrespective of their level of education. 3.2. Majority of parent SGB component have never been to school. 3.3. Many of the parent SGB component cannot read and write. 3.4. Very few parent governors can read and write. 3.5. Out of 10 parents only two can read and write. 3.6. Parent governors who can read and write are successful in their legal functions.
	4. <i>The significance of SGB training.</i>	4.1. The principal has a significant role to play in training SGB. 4.2. SGB functionality depends on the principals' advice. 4.3. Very few workshops were conducted to capacitate SGB members. 4.4. The Department of Education is not doing enough to capacitate SGB members. 4.5. It is a challenge for the school management to workshop the SGB members.

<p><b>2. The challenges of SGB training.</b></p>	<p><b>2.1. <i>Time allocated for SGB training.</i></b></p>	<p>5.1. Training was conducted for a short time which did not make any difference.  5.2. SGB training is inadequate.  5.3. The success rate of the training workshops was low.  5.4. Information was not adequately presented to the SGBs.  5.5. No follow-ups are made on the short training sessions which were conducted.  5.6. Only crash course was conducted for SGBs.</p>
	<p><b>2.2 <i>The language for the training workshops.</i></b></p>	<p>6.1. Most of the training manuals are written in English.  6.2. Some of the topics were presented in English</p>
	<p><b><i>The competency of the facilitators.</i></b></p>	<p>Workshops were conducted by incompetent people.  Workshops were not making any difference on the capacity of SGBs.  Facilitators were unable to answer questions on crucial issues.  The Department should appoint knowledgeable people to conduct SGB workshops.</p>
	<p><b>2.4 <i>The quality of the training workshops</i></b></p>	<p>8.1. Information of the training workshop was too complicated and complex for the SGB members.  8.2. The standard of presentation was too high for the parents.  8.3. The workshop did not make any difference in the functionality of SGBs.  8.4. The workshop had no follow-up in terms of evaluation and/or monitoring.  8.5. There was no need analysis prior to the workshop.  8.6. SGBs' comprehension level was not taken into account during workshops.</p>

<p><b>3. Challenges faced by school managers where SGB lack capacity in school governance.</b></p>	<p><b>3.1. <i>Challenges on school governance.</i></b></p>	<p>9.1. SGBs are less effective in their duties.  9.2. The principal has the burden of doing governance functions.  9.3. SGB members are less visible at school.  9.4. SGB members don't attend meetings.  9.5. SGB members are unable to carry out their duties.  9.6. The principal has to take over the SGB responsibilities.  9.7. The principals are overworked.  9.8. The principal does not get the support from the SGB members.  9.9. The schools are underperforming due to lack of support from the SGBs.  9.10. The SGB cannot criticize the school management.  9.11. SGB cannot take the initiative in school development.  9.12. SGB only rubberstamps the principal's decisions.</p>
	<p><b>3.2. <i>The level of motivation of SGB members in fulfilling their functions.</i></b></p>	<p>10.1. The voluntary nature of SGB functions discourages active participation by members.  10.2. SGB members expect some payment/reward when doing their duties.  10.3. Very few SGB members remain playing an active part in their activities.  10.4. Some SGB members fall by the way side during their term of office.  10.5. Some SGB members fail to honour invitations to meetings.</p>
	<p><b>3.3. <i>The demand for the principal to training SGB members.</i></b></p>	<p>11.1. Principals only do the initial induction of SGB members.  11.2. The principal continue to work with the type of SGB that is presented to them without improving their capacity.  11.3. The principals don't have time to train SGBs because of their tight work schedule.  11.4. Principals can suggest to the Department the training need of the SGB members.</p>
<p><b>4. The impact of SGBs' lack of capacity on policy implementation.</b></p>		<p>12.1. Most SGBs' lower education level hampers their understanding of education policies.  12.2. Most SGBs cannot perform most of their policy functions because of lack of understanding and knowledge.</p>

<p><b>5. The SGBs' training needs.</b></p>		<p>13.1. SGB members should be trained on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- financial management</li> <li>- conducting effective meetings</li> <li>- performing their legal functions</li> <li>- raising funds for the school</li> <li>- conducting interviews to staff the school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Recruiting ideal SGB members for school governance.</b></p>		<p>14.1. A particular minimum education level should be required from SGB candidates.</p> <p>14.2. SGB candidates should have knowledge of educational issues.</p> <p>14.3. SGB members with low level of education are a hindrance to the development of the school.</p> <p>14.4. Less educated SGB members contribute minimally to school governance.</p> <p>14.5. SGB members should be able to motivate learners to work very hard.</p> <p>14.6. SGB members should be able to assist in conducting situation analysis of the school.</p> <p>14.7. Parents should have knowledgeable understanding of the legal roles and responsibilities of SGBs.</p> <p>14.8. Parents should understand the implications of been an SGB member.</p>

**ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

**CIRCUIT MANAGERS' INTERVIEWS**

<b>TOPICS</b>	<b>THEMES</b>	<b>CATEGORIES/SUBCATEGORIES</b>
<b>1. The impact of SGBs' lack of understanding of their roles and responsibilities.</b>	<i>1.1 Knowledge of their roles and responsibilities.</i>	1.1 To develop a code of conduct for learners. 1.2 To recommend for the appointment of staff members. 1.3 To determine the school policies. 1.4 To determine SGB constitution. 1.5 To take care of the school building. 1.6 To ensure the safety of everybody in the school. 1.7 To develop the school. 1.8 To purchase teaching-learning materials.
	<i>1.2. The impact of SGBs' lack of knowledge of their legal duties on school governance.</i>	2.1.1.3 There are schools with dysfunctional SGBs. 2.2..1.4 SGB members cannot advice the principal accordingly. 2.3.1.5 SGBs cannot maintain discipline within the schools. 2.4.1.6 SGBs are ineffective in schools. 2.3.1.7 SGB members cannot implement what they were workshoped on.
	<i>1.3. The impact of SGBs' literacy level on their understanding of their roles and responsibilities.</i>	3.1 SGB members with low education have difficulty understanding the training manuals. 3.2 Less educated SGB members find it difficult to implement what they were workshoped on. 3.3 In schools with functional SGBs, the greater percentage of their parent component has passed Grade 12. 3.4 Parent governors who are educated can engage in constructive debate and criticism with the school management. 3.5 Educated SGB members are able to understand departmental policies. 3.6 A certain education level is needed for SGB members to be able to interpret the policies.
	<i>1.4. The significance of SGB training.</i>	4.1 Since they were elected in 2006, SGB members have received only one training workshop. 4.2 Circuits have elected circuit governance teams to assist in capacitating SGB members. 4.3 SGB members need consistent training in order to be functional. 4.4 SGB training is a continuous process to fully capacitate SGB members.

<p><b>2. The challenges of SGB training.</b></p>	<p><i>1.5 Time allocated for SGB training.</i></p>	<p>5.1. Too much training information is presented within short space of time. 5.2. Only a few SGB members emerge from the workshop with some understanding of the workshop material. 5.3. The same mistakes are done even after the workshop</p>
	<p><i>1.6 The language for the training workshop.</i></p>	<p>6.1. The training manuals are written in English. 6.2. The culture of lack of reading is apparent in most SGB members. 6.3. The training manuals should be translated into other official languages. 6.4. The training manuals should be user friendly.</p>
	<p><i>1.7 The competency of facilitators.</i></p>	<p>7.1. There were complains about the facilitators' lack of expertise in their role. 7.2. Facilitators need proper training themselves. 7.3. Workshop material was wrongly interpreted. 7.4. Facilitators were not mindful of their audience's education level. 7.5. The facilitation skill of the presenters were below par.</p>
	<p><i>1.8 The quality of the training workshop.</i></p>	<p>8.1. Workshops were not participative. 8.2. Workshops failed to dispel the frustrations faced by SGB members in their governance functions.</p>
<p><b>3 Challenges faced by school managers where SGB lack capacity in school governance.</b></p>	<p><i>1.9 Challenges on school governance.</i></p>	<p>9.1. The SGB can't support the school management as expected. 9.2. The school is not well developed in terms of the teaching-learning environment. 9.3. SGBs cannot provide visionary support to the school management. 9.4. SGB members provide limited participation in SGB school activities.</p>
	<p><i>1.10 The level of motivation of SGB members in fulfilling their functions.</i></p>	<p>10.1. The level of commitment of SGB members is low. 10.2. SGB members wish for payment as motivation to continue with their functions. 10.3. Some SGB members resign without any information to other SGB members of their intention. 10.4. Some SGB members are quick to loose interest and commitment in SGB activities. 10.5. SGB members seem to lack motivation to do their duties. 10.6. SGB members feel they cannot offer their services for free.</p>

	<b>1.11 The demand for the principal to train the SGB members.</b>	<p>11.1. The principal should make time available to train SGB members.</p> <p>11.2. As an ex-officio the principal should educate SGB members on policy interpretation and implementation.</p>
<b>4 The impact of SGBs' lack of capacity on policy implementation.</b>		<p>12.1. Some SGB members think they have absolute power in school governance.</p> <p>12.2. Most SGB members don't understand the due processes that have to be followed in governing the school.</p> <p>12.3. Most SGBs have no knowledge of the Public Fund Management Act 1 of 2000, which should assist them in managing the finances of the school.</p> <p>12.4. Some SGB members are led to commit gross financial irregularities due to ignorance.</p> <p>12.5. Most of the SGB parent component is hesitant in attending financial management workshops because they lack the basic knowledge to cope with it.</p> <p>12.6. SGB members lack knowledge and understanding of the procedures to be followed when dealing with disciplinary, behavioural and/or misconduct problems in the school.</p> <p>12.7. Most SGB members don't understand what their role should be during disciplinary tribunals.</p>
<b>5 The SGBs' training needs.</b>		<p>13.1. SGB members need to be trained on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- financial management;</li> <li>- understanding their roles and responsibilities;</li> <li>- forming partnerships with other important stakeholders;</li> <li>- their legal role in the school.</li> </ul>
<b>6 Recruiting ideal SGB members for school governance.</b>		<p>14.1. SGB candidates should be committed to being there for the school and its learners.</p> <p>14.2. They should be prepared to serve the needs of the school.</p> <p>14.3. The SGB should understand their <i>logo standi</i> when taking any decision on and for the school.</p> <p>14.4. The SGB should have functional knowledge of financial management and reporting.</p> <p>14.5. The SGB members should be able to play a critical advisory role to the school management.</p>

**ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

**SGBs' INTERVIEWS**

TOPICS	THEMES	CATEGORIES/SUBCATEGORIES
<p><b>1. The SGBs' understanding of their roles and responsibilities in school governance.</b></p>	<p><b>1. <i>SGBs' knowledge of their roles and responsibilities in the school</i></b></p>	<p>1.1 To assist the principal in the management of the school.                      1.2 To take care of the school buildings.                      1.3 To take care of the assets of the school.                      1.4 To manage the finances of the school.                      1.5 To formulate and implement the school policies.                      1.6 To maintain discipline in the school.                      1.7 To determine the school time.                      1.8 To determine the school uniform.                      1.9 To develop and improve the school in general.</p>
<p><b>2 The challenges of SGB training</b></p>	<p><b>1.2 <i>Time allocation for SGB training workshop.</i></b></p>	<p>2.1. Time allocated for the workshop was not proportional to the amount of information that was disseminated to the SGB members.                      2.2. The workshops were rushed with less emphasis on understanding of the workshop content.                      2.3. Too much information was given within short space of time.                      2.4. The workshops have to be repeated to enhance SGB understanding.                      2.5. Time allocated for SGB training should be reviewed.</p>
	<p><b>1.3 <i>The language for training workshops.</i></b></p>	<p>3.1. The training manuals were written in English and should be translated into the other official languages.                      3.2. The presenters should conduct the workshop in the dominant local language.                      3.3. The presenters are unable to explain what they read in English in the local language.                      3.4. The training manuals should also be written in other official languages.</p>

	<b>1.4 The competency of the facilitators.</b>	4.1. Some of the people send by the Department of Education to conduct workshops are themselves not knowledgeable about information they are suppose to present to the SGBs.
	<b>1.5 The quality of the training workshops.</b>	5.1. There is no follow – ups after the workshops. 5.2. The implementation of the workshop information still remains a challenge to most SGB members.
<b>3 Challenges faced by school manager where SGBs lack capacity in school governance.</b>	<b>1.6 The level of motivation of SGB members in fulfilling their functions.</b>	6.1. Some parent SGB members resign from SGB activities without sending a word to the other members. 6.2. Some members are not honouring SGB meetings. 6.3. SGB members want the Department of Education to pay them for their services in school governance. 6.4. Parents complain that when they return from SGB activities their children expecting something from them.
	<b>1.7 The demand for the principal to train the SGB members.</b>	7.1. The principal should assist in the initial induction of SGB members. 7.2. The principal should explain some of the policies and legislation from the Department of Education to the SGB members.
<b>4. The impact of SGBs' lack of capacity on policy implementation.</b>		8.1. SGB members are unable to take up their legal positions in implementing policy procedures in dealing with school issues. 8.2. Most SGBs are easily manipulated by the principal because of lack of knowledge on other important issues.
<b>5. The SGBs' training needs.</b>		9.1. SGB members need to be trained on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- financial management;</li> <li>- policy formulation;</li> <li>- policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation;</li> <li>- Maintaining discipline in the school;</li> <li>- Skills of addressing and motivating learners.</li> </ul>