

**THE IMPACT OF THE ROLE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES:  
A CASE STUDY UNDERTAKEN IN THE GERT SIBANDE DISTRICT  
OF MPUMALANGA AT BADPLAAS AND MASHISHILA CIRCUIT  
SCHOOLS**

**by**

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**submitted in fulfilment of the requirements**

**for the degree of**

**DOCTOR IN EDUCATION**

**in the**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MANAGEMENT**

**at the**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**SUPERVISOR: PROF ER MATHIPA**

**Year 2016**

**Declaration**

I MS DL Nonyane declares that this thesis the Degree of Doctor of Education (DED) in Management Education, submitted to the University of South Africa, has not been previously submitted by me or anyone for a degree at either this University or any other University. I further declare that this is my work in design and execution, and that all materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

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Date 08/06/16

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to sincerely thank the following people, without whose assistance this thesis would probably not have materialised.

- Professor E.R. Mathipa, for all the hours of patiently plodding through innumerable rough drafts until the end. I appreciate your encouragement and theoretical insights.
- The Circuit Managers who participated in the study.
- Principals of schools who participated in the study.
- SGBs who participated in the study.
- Colleagues at work, who shared their experiences and knowledge during the course of the study.
- Members of the Nonyane family, in particular my brother (Magic) and sister (Lydend), for their unwavering support during this study.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my late daughter (Kelello), late mother (Maida), and late father (Abloes)

**“An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge”. (Proverbs 18:15)**

**DECLARATION BY THE EDITOR**

I the undersigned had taken time to carefully go through the thesis and made corrections and also suggestions that the supervisor and students could opt to effect or not. The corrections made are necessary and I think will enhance the readability of the thesis.

Signed..... Date.....

## **ABSTRACT**

This study explored the role of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in public schools in the Gert Sibande district of the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. It focused on executive members of the SGB of three institutions and their school principals, who play a key role in school governance. The study was conducted using three case studies with the pseudo names as: Lepogo, Nkwe and Tau schools. The executive members of the SGBs comprised the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Treasurer. The aim of the study was to determine the impact of their roles on the implementation of educational policies, including the South African Schools Act of 1996.

The study used qualitative methodology in the form of conducting focus group interviews (see Annexure A), doing document analysis (see section 3.7.3) and making observations (see Annexure B) during the meetings with SGBs. The findings indicated that the SGB members who were interviewed had minimal knowledge of how their roles impacted on the schools that they governed. It was also clear from the interviews that the training they received on an ad hoc basis was insufficient. Furthermore, this training was also conducted by individuals who seemed to be unsure about how to interpret the school policies in SASA policy documents. With regard to sub-committees, such as the recently introduced Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) comprising all stakeholders in education; it was disappointing to find, based on the three schools which participated in the study, that this was ineffective, and no meetings were held after its formation.

The study revealed that the school policies embodied in SASA documents and the Constitution of South Africa were not used effectively, in order to give proper guidance on how SGBs should execute their roles. Moreover, the study revealed that retired officials were given the task of training the trainers, who were then expected to train the members of the SGB, and this was ineffective. Finally, the study revealed that the principals were expected to represent their schools and simultaneously represent the Department of Education in an ex officio position. This was not working, since no person can serve two masters at the same time. Therefore, the study emphasised the need to appoint neutral people to deal with school governance

and report directly to the HoD (see Figure 5.1). All stakeholders are important, but they need to respect boundaries.

In conclusion, the recommendations and the proposed model were deliberately designed and structured to offer practical solutions to the problems discussed in the research findings. It is also important that the training should be accompanied by some kind of assessment, in order to determine whether or not the SGB members have understood what they were taught. Furthermore, there should be follow-ups to ascertain to what extent the SGB members have implemented what they were taught in their schools, which is not happening at present.

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

### ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY ON SOUTH AFRICA

DBE:	Department of Basic Education
SGB:	School Governing Body
SMT:	School Management Team
HoD:	Head of Department (provincial)
PDE:	Provincial Department of Education
AGM:	Annual General Meeting
HR:	Human Resources
IEA:	International Association for Evaluation of Education
LRC:	Learner Representative Council
NAD:	Native Administration Department
NASGB:	National Association of School Governing Bodies
FEDSAS:	Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools
SANASE:	South African National Association for Special Education
NCAW:	National Council for African Women
NECC:	National Education Crisis Committee
PTA:	Parent-Teacher Association
PTSA:	Parent-Teacher-Student Association
QLTC:	Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign
SASA:	South African Schools Act 84 of 1996
SACE:	South African Council of Educators
SPCC:	Soweto Parents Crisis Committee
FET:	Further Education and Training



## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY ON THE UNITED KINGDOM**

LEA: Local Education Authority  
IEA: International Association for Evaluation of Education

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY ON UGANDA**

DEOs: District Education Office  
LC: Local Council  
PTA: Parent Teacher Association  
SMC: School Management Committee  
UPE: Universal Primary Education  
VDC: Village Development Committee  
VEC: Village Education Committee

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY ON LESOTHO**

MoE: Ministry of Education

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **THE BEGINNING OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This research project deals with the very sensitive and topical issue of the role of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in an educational system whose school climate is permeated by a lack of discipline on the part of teachers and learners. The study discusses the Department of Education Policy on the composition and structure of the SGB, as well as how it should function. The following aspects are presented in detail in this chapter: the orientation and background to the study, statement of the problem, assumptions and context of the study, research questions, significance of the study, aim and objectives of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study, motivation for conducting the study, definition of concepts, conceptual framework and outline of chapters in the study.

### **1.2 ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

The School Governing Body (SGB) is a governance structure elected in public, private or independent schools in terms of the South African Schools Act (SASA), specifically sections 23 and 28, in order to govern a school in accordance with the policy of the Department of Education. In terms of section 28(f), the number of SGBs in a school depends on the learner enrolment in that school. According to section 31 of the Schools Act, the election of members of the SGB happens once in every three years, and as such, the elected members have to serve for three years. The enrolment figure may increase or decrease in the period leading up to the end of the three years, which poses a challenge because the elected SGB members have to remain the same until new elections take place. The policy pertaining to the size of a SGB becomes worrisome if the number of enrolled learners increased drastically within the three year period, as the SGB complement will then not be proportionally accurate.

Furthermore, policy dictates that after the SGB members are elected into office for the period of three years, they should hold their first meeting and elect the executive office-bearers within a week. The newly elected SGBs are from the community and have different skills, which might not be known to all of them. As a result, the new SGB is supposed to elect the executive while in possession of limited knowledge of the abilities that each member has.

Mncube and Harber (2013) are of the view that it is also essential to train the members of the SGB, in order to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them. In the researcher's view, if every member is orientated to each other's field of work on arrival, it will help ensure that SGBs execute their tasks effectively. Furthermore, it has been found that "the members of SGB are not functionally literate to meet the requirements of reading and drafting policies, cannot manage and read the legislation" (Heystek, 2011: 458).

Section 31 (3) of the Schools Act allows the executive to be changed every year, but this is impractical because the timeframe is too short. In this regard, the researcher's concern is that before the executive can find its feet, it is either re-elected or its members are removed from their roles. If the executive is available and ready to be re-elected, then its members stand a chance of acquiring skills. However, if they are not available or re-elected, then they leave their positions before acquiring the necessary skills. The researcher therefore questions the impact of the role of the SGBs in public schools under such circumstances, as the former executive members become members of the SGB without acquiring skills, as they are the ones who have been trained.

Section 23 of the Schools Act stipulates that parents elect the parent component of the SGB. It is important, however, that when parents meet to elect SGB members, assistance and clarity should be provided, in order to ensure that there is a high level of parental participation (Ranson, Farrel, Penn & Smith, 2005). The DBE should have a recruitment team to rally in communities, so as to encourage a high level of parental participation during the election process, under the leadership of a neutral appointee. The election process is the origin of a SGB, which will have an impact in a school. Therefore, this process should avoid causing confusion to the parents, such that they end up electing members who are not eligible to be elected in the parent category. These election processes should be conducted freely, without favours, vendettas and secret agendas. The researcher further

highlights that delegating officials to conduct SGB elections is a futile exercise, because they ignore the purpose that they are meant to serve. The circuit managers send principals to conduct SGB elections without prior training on the election process, assuming that principals are already well informed about elections. The researcher is of the view that principals should be trained, in order to enable them to lead the process effectively. In addition, the researcher noted with great concern that principals conduct SGB elections differently in each school.

In accordance with section 8 of the Schools Act, “the SGBs adopt the code of conduct and all over 22 other policies supporting the effective running of the school to ensure that the principal, educators and other staff on the school perform their professional functions in a conducive environment” (Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo, 2008: 173).

Furthermore, SGBs ignore the safety of their stakeholders on school premises. Most SGBs do not implement safety measures within their schools, even though they have adopted a safety policy. Public school buildings that were built during the apartheid era for blacks usually need to be revamped to address safety in schools. Certain areas need to be barricaded, in order to warn learners of the risk of entering them.

The South African Constitution allows pregnant learners to continue with their schooling activities as required. It is arguably correct for SGBs to allow learners to continue schooling, but the challenge is that during examinations, learners experience stress related to examinations, and the available school furniture is not designed for pregnant learners. Such challenges require SGBs to have precautionary measures in place to deal with them. The parents of such learners need to be addressed on these matters, so as to avoid traumatising other learners.

The researcher argues that although the idealism of SGBs is of great importance, it also has unintended consequences. SGBs are complex and have to oversee their own activities, and because SGBs’ roles are unclear, challenges arise. In the researcher’s view, SGBs are not best positioned to oversee themselves under the leadership of the principal. Therefore, the DBE should appoint someone neutral to represent it and oversee the work of the SGBs (see recommendations in chapter five).

### **1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

This study explores the impact of the role of SGBs by using a case study approach, which focuses on a few selected schools in the Gert Sibande district of the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The researcher highlights the fact that “many South African schools are experiencing violence and vandalism, and that it is very disappointing to work under such schools” (Serame, Osthuizen, Wolhuter & Zulu, 2013: 1). Against this background, SGBs need to ensure that a code of conduct is in place as they have to maintain performance and results. Curriculum change has affected amongst other things the role of educators, in some instances it may result in frustration of educators’ expectations to turn over (quitting of the key personnel which led to the introduction of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). For learners it is in place, and is correctly followed and implemented within the school. In addition, SGBs need to ensure that relevant additions are made to the pro-formas from the Department of Basic Education (DBE), in order to curb the ill-discipline of learners.

The SGB is responsible for the management of funds in the school through the adoption of a finance policy. The correct implementation of this policy helps to avoid the mismanagement or misappropriation of school funds, and to ensure that funds are used in a transparent manner, so as to avoid unforeseen consequences in the future, when irregularities are detected by auditors.

The Badplaas and Mashishila circuit experienced numerous disputes related to promotional posts that appeared on the Mpumalanga Department of Education Open Vacancy List of May 2014. The SGB from a neighbouring school declared a dispute related to the shortlisting process, after failing to shortlist their preferred candidate, for a principal’s post. The SGB was unable to attend the interviews and reshuffled its panel. The circuit manager assisted them, indicating that SGBs represent the employer, and could therefore not dispute the process that they led. The timeframe of declaring the dispute indicated that the panel was silent regarding the steps that needed to be followed if they were dissatisfied. In the researcher’s view, the Schools Act is the same in all school governing bodies, but is interpreted differently, which results in the different execution of roles and it creates unnecessary tension. The different interpretations of SASA are actually used to ensure that secret agendas regarding the recommendation of unsuitable candidates for employment, despite the lack of relevant qualifications, are achieved. This interpretation is done by DBE

officials. The researcher argues that employing unsuitable candidates for employment will ensure that South Africa never achieves the desired 100% pass rate in terms of performance.

Section 20(1) (i) and (j) of the Schools Act stipulate that SGBs play a role in the employment of staff. Joubert and Bray (2007: 39) are of the view that SGBs in this context have failed to ensure that schools are run effectively in accordance with the set legislation and educational policies, in order to provide the best possible education to their learners. The researcher believes that SGBs should have delegated panel members to ensure that the process runs smoothly and that three suitable candidates, in order of preference, are recommended for key posts (SASA section 20 (1) (i)).

SGBs should ensure that all learners are admitted to public schools and that the medium of instruction adopted in schools unites all learners (SASA section 5(5)). Most public schools are declared as no-fee schools – however, the SGB determines fees for projects to be run in the school (SASA sections 39-41). SGBs should also apply for sponsorships that will assist them in addressing inclusivity in schools. It is alleged that school governing bodies were established to address the inequalities of the previously divided education system (Deacon, Osman & Buchler, 2010). However, the failure to address the challenges of SGBs could lead to disaster.

Furthermore, the issue of furniture should be addressed, as most schools are without furniture. Principals fail to adhere to teaching time, as the first period suffers in most schools due to searching for chairs, which ultimately contributes to poor school performance. The researcher is of the opinion that poor performance is linked to SGBs, since they are the structure that controls school assets. She strongly believes that starting a day in the wrong way spoils the entire day. It demotivates learners and teachers in the process of learning and teaching. A study conducted in England found that there is a lack of data demonstrating that a good SGB has a direct impact on school performance. However, there is a close relationship between the quality of the contributions of the SGBs and those that are usually performed by the school.

(<http://www.ncogs.org.uk.documents/public/GovenourSchools.pdf>).



It is the researcher's firm belief that SGBs experience challenges, such as the lack of a good understanding of SASA, hence for all the years that she has served as a representative in school governance, section 23 (2) of this Act has not been implemented. The researcher continued to attend training presented by the DBE, and all this training excluded this section. The inclusion of learners in school governance is a blueprint in most schools, and the correct interpretation of SASA could afford SGBs the opportunity to question the absence of learner representatives during their meetings.

In the Gert Sibande district, training is only conducted after elections. In the researcher's view, the earlier occurrence of training would help SGB members to elect competent executive members to occupy the key positions. In addition, skilled people should be co-opted to serve on sub-committees, in order to improve the SGB structure. Training should highlight the importance of deliberations during meetings, so as to ensure that proper decisions are taken.

It is against this background that this study aims to explore the impact of the role of school governing bodies in public schools in the Gert Sibande district of Mpumalanga.

## **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

According to Cresswell (2007: 102), "the statement provides the major objective or road to the study". The problem of this study is to determine whether or not SGBs understand the role that they are expected to play in schools.

### **1.4.1 Research questions**

#### **1.4.1.1 Main research question**

The main research question in this study is the following:

- What is the impact of the role of SGBs in public schools?

Thus, the main research problem focuses on the question of the impact of the role of school governing bodies in public schools in the Gert Sibande district.

### **1.4.1.2 Sub-questions**

The following are the sub-questions in this study:

- What is the role of the members of SGBs in public schools?
- What is the understanding of the members of SGBs with regard to the code of conduct for learners and educators?
- What is the understanding of the members of SGBs with regard to managing school finances?

## **1.5 ASSUMPTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE RESEARCHER**

The researcher is a teacher who has been employed in high schools for 11 years. Since 2004, she has been appointed as a representative of the teaching staff and has gained a lot of experience in how SGBs operate.

Her assumptions are that:

- Teachers are more informed with regard to SGBs; hence they dominate SGBs (this can be tested by asking SGBs if teachers dominate them during meetings).
- Learners are excluded from SGB meetings due to their fighting tactics during discussions (this can be tested by asking SGBs if they have learners attending such meetings).
- There is a poor working relationship between the chairperson and treasurer of the SGB (this can be tested by asking how the working relationship is between the chairperson and the treasurer of the SGB).
- Most members of SGBs do not attend training offered to SGBs (this assumption can be tested by asking SGB members if they attend training).

## **1.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

### **1.6.1 Aim of the study**

The main aim of this study is to explore the role of SGBs in the Gert Sibande district. Therefore the aim is as follows:

- To understand the role of SGBs in public schools, with reference to the Gert Sibande district of the Mpumalanga Province in South Africa.

### **1.6.2 Objectives of the study**

To achieve this broad aim, the following objectives need to be achieved:

- To understand the role of the members of SGBs in public schools.
- To determine the understanding of the members of SGBs regarding the code of conduct for learners.
- To determine the understanding of members of SGBs regarding the code of conduct for teachers.
- To determine whether or not the members of SGBs understand the policy that guides them in terms of how to manage school finances.
- To investigate whether or not teachers are more informed and dominate parents during SGB meetings.
- To investigate the exclusion of learners from SGBs.
- To assess the working relationship between the chairperson and treasurer of SGBs.

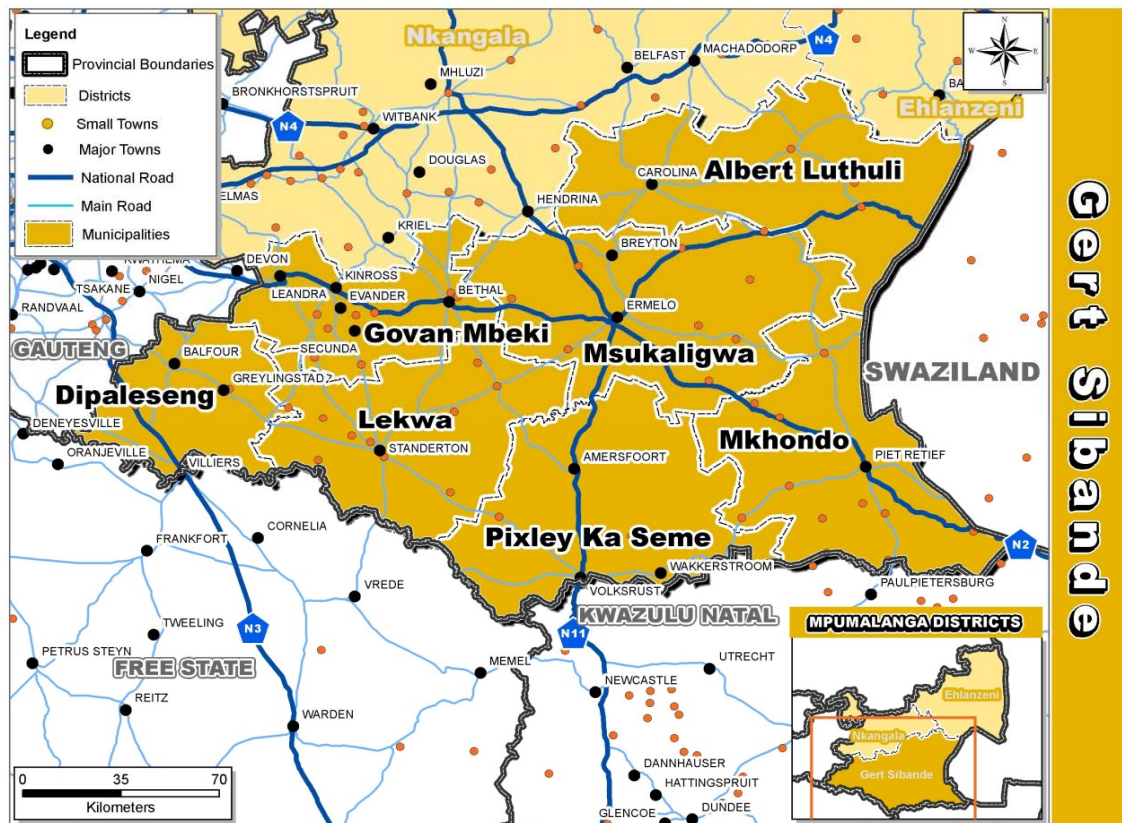
## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is significant because it aims to provide a better understanding of the role of SGBs in public schools. It will benefit members of SGBs by empowering them to understand their different roles, responsibilities, duties, functions and accountabilities. Schools, districts, provinces and the country as a whole will benefit from the recommendations of this study and the model of school governance that will be developed by the researcher.

## 1.8 DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

### 1.8.1 Delimitations of the study

This study takes place in the Gert Sibande District of the Mpumalanga Province in South Africa. The map below clearly illustrates where the Gert Sibande district is. This area has 539 (MDE-Updated Summary of Post Provisioning for 2013 as Per EMIS Data) public schools, of which 3 were purposively selected for this study. This is discussed in more detail in chapter three of the study.



**Figure 1.8.1.1 Map of Gert Sibande District of the Mpumalanga Province in South Africa**

### 1.8.2 Limitations of the study

This study is limited to three public schools within the Badplaas and Mashishila Circuits in the Gert Sibande district of Mpumalanga Province in South Africa, and as such, the results cannot be generalised. The results of the study are based on the responses of those participants who were interviewed and cannot therefore be generalised. The

recommendations are only applicable to the selected schools, but may have implications for other public schools not directly affected by this study.

## **1.9 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

The researcher served for 9 years as a staff representative in the SGB of a public school. During this period, she found that many challenges were experienced by the SGB in terms of school governance under SASA. In this regard, she noted that even though the policy is clear on the roles of SGBs and the functions of the executive of the SGB, in order to ensure the smooth running of the school, there are interferences from non-SGB members which hinder them from executing their duties properly. The researcher also noted that SGBs are unable to take a stand regarding SASA. Her argument is supported by the following quote:

*“A large number of the South African population are not sufficiently functionally literate to meet the requirements of reading and drafting policies. There is, therefore a strong likelihood that many parent governors, even with the assumed training, do not have the necessary literacy level to read legislation, draft policies and manage budgets. Even those few, who have passed grade 12, may not have sufficient literacy levels to read, understand and interpret legislation to perform the functions allocated to them”* (Heystek, 2011: 458).

In addition, the researcher discovered that training in relation to SASA was only conducted for the principal and 3 executive members of SGBs (NASGB invite circular, March 2016). Provincially, the DBE claims to have limited funds to conduct training for all SGB members, but the researcher believes that prioritising funds and extending training to the majority or all SGB members could be of great help, because then most or all SGBs would be well-informed. The DBE should take issues of attrition into account and avoid training only a limited number of SGB members, which is of trivial importance. It should recuse the dual roles of the principal, as stipulated in section 16(3) of SASA. Principals have a lot of responsibilities, hence the window dressing of the training of SGBs. The provincial office of the DBE should ensure that SGBs are properly trained, and that ongoing monitoring is done to avoid serious repercussions in the future.

## **1.10 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

This is a South African study and therefore contains some terms that are more familiar to South Africans than to people from other countries. As a result, there is a need to define, describe and explain their meaning and function, in order to achieve the necessary rapport with readers. The following concepts need clarification to prevent any misunderstandings:

### **1.10.1 Impact**

The term 'impact' refers to the effect or influence that an event or situation has on someone or something (Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2003: 812). The researcher advises the reader to note that in this study, impact is the influence that the role of SGBs has on public schools. She further states that the impact of the role of SGBs can be negative (the outcome is bad) or positive (the outcome is good) in relation to public schools.

### **1.10.2 Role**

The term 'role' means "something that a person is tasked to do either in an organisation or institution" (Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo, 2008: 24). Roles must be performed on a daily basis to ensure the sustainability of the organisation or institution. They are at times regarded as functions, duties or responsibilities that members have with regard to policy matters (Mavuso, 2009: 9). These above terms may be used interchangeably in this study. The reader is therefore advised to understand or use the lens of the researcher, in order to have the same understanding as the researcher.

The word 'role' in this study refers to the functions, duties and responsibilities that SGBs must execute in public schools.

### **1.10.3 School**

A school is an institution where formal teaching and learning takes place, and comprises teachers, learners and support staff, under the leadership of the principal and school management team (SMT). Chapter 3 section 12 (3) of this study states that a school may be an ordinary or public school for all learners, or only for those with special needs, or for normal learners who do not require special attention to engage in the process of teaching and learning. The researcher has only selected three ordinary schools in the Gert Sibande district to participate in this study.

### **1.10.3.1 British and American definitions of a school**

In this study, the researcher found it necessary to tap into definitions of a school from other countries outside South Africa, in order to identify similarities. In her view, this was important because chapter 2 of the study required the use of international literature. In the United Kingdom and the United States, a school is a place or institution where children are educated from the age of 4 or 5 until they are 18. However, the difference is that in the United States, the concept of a school is also used to refer to studying at a school or university (MacMillan, 2002).

### **1.10.3.2 School Governing Body**

In the South African context, 'a governing body is a group of people who are elected to govern a school' (Cornforth & Chambers, 2010: 1; KwaZulu Natal Department of Education and Culture No date: 6). SASA Section 16 (1) defines a school governing body as a statutory body of people elected to govern a school. It is referred to as a 'School Board' or 'School Council' in other countries. Although the names are different, they refer to the same group performing the same roles in the school.

A school governing body has legal status and its members represent the school and its entire community. It is alleged that school governance is primarily about the distribution of authority and voice (Joubert & Bray, 2007). A SGB consists of all stakeholders, such as teachers, principal, support staff, parents of learners who are not employed at the school, and learners in the case of secondary schools.

The researcher discovered that in the South African context under the South African Schools Act, the group that deals with governance at school level is referred to as a school governing Body (Mavuso, 2009), whereas in other countries mentioned in the study, this group is referred to as a 'School Board' or 'School Council'.

## **1.11 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The following paragraphs focus on the conceptual framework according to which this study is discussed and conducted. The concepts are those of the ideas and principles forming the cornerstone of the study. These ideas and principles are the following: planning,

organising, motivating, communicating, controlling, managing, leading, budgeting, coordinating and decision making.

School governing bodies should set up a finance committee and sub-committees in various departments to avoid micromanaging (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009). The subcommittees ensure that all SGB members are strategically placed in leading positions in all committees. The SGBs should be hands-on in executing their functions in school governance, in order for them to have an impact on public schools. They are responsible for establishing and maintaining high ethical standards for themselves and all employees in the Department of Education. Furthermore, they are responsible for ensuring that the law and the letter and spirit are properly followed regarding matters of school governance (McAdams, 2006: 78). School governing bodies are required to plan and design an instrument to deal with the code of conduct for learners, which they should use to resolve conflicts in an impartial manner.

They should also design, organise and apply policies that allow space for equal employment opportunities, in order to ensure good leadership in the school when dealing with matters such as requisitions for approval. SGBs should try to motivate staff and learners by practising the values and principles of equality, fairness, justice and transparency when dealing with appointments for all advertised posts. SGBs should develop programmes to enable them to constantly monitor all activities that are related to governance, and the outcomes of these programmes should be clearly indicated. For example, they should indicate the challenges and dates of meetings on which these challenges were resolved, as well as the resolution reached.

In addition, SGBs should establish standing committees in areas such as finance, facilities and personnel in terms of the South African Schools Act of 1996. Section 38 (1) and (2) compel SGBs to prepare a budget to be presented to an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of parents, after giving them a notice period of thirty days. It is compulsory for the finance committee of the SGB to meet regularly (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009), preferably monthly, and examine the finer points of fund management, budget monitoring and adjustments, contracts and contract management, hiring and compensation, discipline, and transfer and termination of employees. The committee is the focal point of the aforementioned activities, as they all require financial muscle to guarantee implementation. Amongst the mentioned



activities, they also have to establish close working relationships with the administrative staff and principal, in order to ensure the smooth running of activities related to school finances (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009: 76).

However, SGB members' observations or opinions as a whole should be directed to the principal, so as to ensure a working relationship that leads to management relationships. Established working relationships between the principal and the SGB facilitate the dissemination of information in a timely manner. All information should be presented in such a way that it is easy to understand.

In the area of school governance, SGBs are given the opportunity to lead. They need to have a good understanding of SASA and to implement it in their schools. Furthermore, they should be able to understand that good governance is that which has a positive impact on schools. SGB members need to strike a balance between influential voices and the active voters who voted them into office (McAdams, 2006: 82), in order to avoid manipulation. SGBs are required to refer to SASA to explain issues to all stakeholders when resolving matters. Therefore, when it is noticed that they lack skills regarding the implementation of SASA, they are taken for granted by opportunists and those who voted them into office. The researcher argues that such acts are unhealthy for stakeholders and bears no fruits for the DBE.

## **1.12 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

Chapter one serves as an introduction to the study and explains the motivation for conducting the study.

This chapter also includes the background to the study, statement of the problem, assumptions and context of the study, research questions, significance of the study, aim and objectives, delimitations and limitations of the study, motivation for the study, definition of concepts, conceptual framework, and outline of the study.

Chapter two presents a literature review on the role played by school governing bodies. The action theory and agency theory in the field of governance are discussed, in order to

highlight the role expected to be played by SGBs. In addition, the experiences of a few countries are compared, in order to examine their strengths and weaknesses, so that recommendations can be made at the end of the study to address these weaknesses.

Chapter three focuses on the research methodology and design of the study. It discusses the paradigm used and the methods of gathering data for the study.

Chapter four discusses the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data, and presents the findings of the study.

Chapter five presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study, and concludes the study by proposing an integrated model of governance, which will guide SGBs in terms of the role they are expected to play in schools.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY IN GENERAL AND IN SOUTH AFRICA IN PARTICULAR**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a literature review on the impact of the role played by school governing bodies in the running of schools in general and in South Africa in particular. The following countries have been selected for the comparative part of the study: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France, United States, Uganda, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Tanzania, Kenya, Lesotho and Namibia. These countries have been selected from the continents of Europe, North America, Australia and Africa.

In order to discuss and show the impact of the role of school governing bodies, a historical perspective on how schools were governed in the past internationally and in South Africa, the role of each member of the school governing body, and theories on school governance will be presented.

In the Commonwealth of Nations, which includes Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Kenya and Tanzania, the term 'school' refers primarily to pre-university institutions.

#### **2.2 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON HOW SCHOOLS WERE GOVERNED INTERNATIONALLY**

##### **2.2.1 Introduction**

Following the definition provided in 1.10.3 of the previous chapter, the researcher extends her discussion by showing that the word 'school' is derived from the Greek word *schole* meaning leisure, and also that for which leisure is employed. The definition helps to highlight the fact that schools offer formal education to learners. However, the school is not the only place where education takes places, as the home also offers informal education under the guidance of parents.

In regions and countries such as the Middle East, Indian sub-continent, China, Greece and Rome, Europe, Islamic world, India, Japan, Central and South America, France, United Kingdom, Norway, New Zealand, Russia and the Soviet Union, education started as an informal activity at home under the guidance of parents. In Central and South America, all children, regardless of gender, rank and station, attended school.

The researcher chooses to refer to European, American and Asian countries because countries like Denmark, Norway, United States and Japan adopted a public education system similar to that in Western Europe. Included in this adoption were the ideas of decentralisation, local school boards, and teacher autonomy. In most countries, schools were founded upon religious principles aimed at training clergymen.

In 1561, the principle of a school teacher for every parish church and free education for the poor was established. It ensured that most of Western, Central and other parts of Europe provided formal education. Politicians believed that the importance of education lay in its provision of orderly political behaviour.

In the United States and elsewhere, education offered in one-room schools with a single teacher taught both boys and girls. Until the 1920s, these one classroom schools grew to become multiple classroom facilities and provided transport. Much of the focus was on elementary education, and neglected secondary education. It later became apparent that secondary education also needed attention ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_education](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_education)). Today, education in most countries has a highly regulated, centralised system of curriculum and assessment for children ranging from 5 to 16 years old. It is alleged that both elementary and secondary education are now receiving the attention they deserve (Isaacs, 2012: 1).

### **2.2.2 Composition, strengths and weaknesses of school councils**

School councils were established in 1995 to increase parent and community involvement in the education of their children. The elected parents were free to include other parents or students in the body, as indicated by School Councils Regulation 113/2007. This regulation was revised to clarify responsibilities, but was silent regarding the term of office.

A school council is a body which operates in the same way as a school board or committee (Thekiso, 2013:24). Furthermore, it was noted that in the US, UK, Australia and Japan, school governance is the responsibility of school councils. It is just a change in terminology, depending on the country in which the term is best understood. In this regard, a school council is known as a School Management Committee in Ghana and Nepal, the Incorporated Management Committee in Hong Kong, and the school level Board of Trustees and Board of Governors in New Zealand, after the government education department was abolished. In New York, it is known as a school board, and as a school governing body in South Africa.

The composition of school councils is similar in most countries and evolved from the United Kingdom, which had an old tradition of involving parents and community leaders in the management of individual schools (Quan-Baffour, 2006: 25). Internationally, school boards dealt with school policy or authority and resolved local problems.

#### **2.2.2.1 Strengths of school councils**

A school council is a reform which took democratisation to the extent of requiring school councils to elect principals (Bodalina, 2012: 21). School councils are capable of entering into contractual agreements with communities, and are empowered to manage school budgets and hire and fire teachers.

The projects that were undertaken increased the competition between institutions for learners and teachers and the allocation of block grants for flexible use by school principals, resulting in greater cost consciousness and improved efficiency. Evaluations have shown increased stress at the school level, and some of the pedagogical goals of principals have been subsumed by the demands of managerialism (Bodalina, 2012: 21).

#### **2.2.2.2 Weaknesses of school councils**

The school councils comprised a white male of Jewish or Catholic faith who was professionally qualified, and his own children were found to be attending private schools. The member must have lived in the area for a period of at least nine years. In other affluent areas, a high school female graduate whose children attended a public school would be a school board member.

School councils had limited power. They could elect a principal, who did not report to them, and could not in any way make him accountable to them. They were not consulted and represented when educational policies, which affected their children, were formulated. Similarly, the school boards, committees and councils were a blueprint, as they were formed merely for Blacks, whereas they were tools used by Whites to control and suppress Blacks in all possible ways.

## **2.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ORIGINS OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

In this section, the history of the school governance structure in South Africa is discussed, before discussing the international governance structure of a few selected countries. According to Duma, Kapueja and Khanyile (2011:45), “The South African school governance in the past was in accordance to race distinctions”. In other words, the school governance structure was divided according to the different racial groups within the South African population. This also means that the school governing structure was racially distinct and ethnic in nature and function since the establishment of apartheid in 1953. The National Party Government passed the Bantu Education Act No.47 of 1953, as drafted by the Eiselen Commission, in order to enhance the separate education system in line with the different race groups, namely Whites, Coloureds, Indians and Blacks. The “Act” was spearheaded by the ultra-conservative Minister of Native Affairs, Dr H.F. Verwoerd. The “Act” allowed the National Party State to control the education for Blacks, and the apartheid government established a system of school boards and school committees in predominantly rural areas of the country (Tsotetsi, 1999).

The Bantu Education Act allowed the Minister to exercise discretionary powers in determining the subsidisation of Bantu community schools from a pool of taxes paid by the “Bantus” themselves. This confirmed that such a separate education system was designed to be inferior, especially if one takes into consideration the possible limited scope of such a source. Bantu community schools were originally controlled by the Native Administration Department (NAD) (Tsotetsi, 1999). The researcher argues that because this inferior education system was governed by school boards and school committees, it follows that

school boards and school committees were structures with limitations regarding governance, especially in rural areas. Later, school boards and school committees resurfaced as the National Education Crisis Committee.

### **2.3.2 School boards: composition, strengths and weaknesses**

A school board is a body that has power over all school committees (Hyslop, 1987, cited in Thekiso, 2013:21). In urban areas, all members were appointed by the Native Affairs Department (NAD), whereas in rural areas, all members were nominated by Pretoria and the Bantu Authority. It was such that when the homeland system was developed, the proportion represented by homeland authority appointees was allowed to increase. Boards in urban areas often consisted of clergy and ex-teachers, who lacked popular support.

The idea of including parents in statutory bodies of school governance stemmed from the findings of the Levy Commission of 1892, which recommended the establishment of a district board consisting of magistrates, missionaries, colonists and two parents from the community, appointed every two years to manage education at district level (Duma, Kapueja & Khanyile, 2011: 45). The challenge with regard to the boards was that parents from the community were excluded from them.

#### **2.3.2.1 Strengths of school boards**

Although the idea was to ensure that parents were included in the structure of school boards, they were without powers and not in charge of schools (Hyslop, 1987). School boards were discrediting and getting rid of teachers who were political activists. Members of school boards were not accountable to parents; hence the parents of local students considered school boards to be illegitimate. They were therefore resented by teachers and parents (Hyslop, 1987).

School boards play a vital role in the establishment and maintenance of structures that support the district vision, together with the empowerment of the school's professional staff as they implement their school board duties. They also have to invite the community at large to a meeting, in order to update them about the policies and educational programmes of schools.

In addition to the above, the researcher is of the view that the following should be seen as the strengths of the school board:

- It had powers to investigate complaints against a teacher who was reported by members of the community, parents or inspectors, and to institute whatever disciplinary action it deemed necessary, albeit subject to the approval of the Department. In the researcher's view, school boards possessed powers to investigate professionals' true status, and were the eyes of the department. They were actually awarded more powers to investigate and report, which implies that the structure stood in a position of trust in relation to the department.
- Members of school boards were also expected to submit recommendations to the Department with regard to modifications of the syllabi of schools under their control. School boards knew their communities, and were therefore allowed to make recommendations regarding school subjects. The researcher is of the view that school boards had powers to recommend the exclusion of subjects that they deemed unnecessary and unsuitable for learners.
- School boards had the power to levy and collect fund contributions from parents, and together with monies allocated to it by the Department, to control and spend it judiciously. Hyslop (1987) argues that this was a means of squeezing African communities financially, in order to subsidise the kind of cheap mass education that the government was aiming to provide. School boards were responsible for collecting and accounting for monies at schools. Although the education at this time was known to be cheap mass education, the school boards were supported fully with regard to funds. The department alleviated the burden of funding schools, in order for school boards to take charge and lead the process effectively, ensuring that parents funded their children's' education.
- It was believed that these bodies could be freely and directly interfered with by officials of the Bantu Education Department, such as Regional Directors and Circuit Inspectors, all of whom were White males. However, the Assistant/Supervising Inspectors also kept a close watch on their daily activities, in order to ensure that these School Boards executed directives from the Department promptly and without any right to veto them. This view was also propounded by Hyslop, who indicates that school governance was constantly monitored to avoid them deviating from their



directives. The constant support ensured that school boards strove to deliver what was expected of them. These structures ensured that they succeeded in protecting the Bantu Education mandate.

- School boards had to control all the community schools within the area of their jurisdiction. This ensured that all schools in the same area were implementing governance in a similar way.
- They had to erect and maintain school buildings and school equipment. In this regard, school boards needed to ensure that school buildings were in good condition, in order to promote safety, and had to renovate schools rather than waiting for the DoE to take care of such challenges, which took a long time to be implemented.
- School boards were responsible for employing, transferring or dismissing a teacher, subject to the approval of the Department (Tsoetsi, 1999: 19). They were involved in professional matters that involved teachers, which was strength on its own, as they were not professionals.

In comparison, the present SGBs can register their challenges through appropriate channels, but cannot dismiss a teacher. The researcher argues that although SGBs represent the employer during promotional posts, they are limited to recommending suitable candidates for posts to the Department of Education, which then has to make the necessary appointments, and this may not even be according to the order of their preference. SGBs need to be trained and informed of the rights of teachers and the work that they do to ensure that their children receive quality education. SGBs deal with school governance issues, and school management issues are best left for the SMT, with the principal in the driving seat. .

### **2.3.2.2 Weaknesses of school boards**

One of the weaknesses of school boards is that they failed to promote the effective education of a Black learner by robbing the blacks of their money in support of cheap education by the apartheid regime. Hyslop (1987) alleges that school boards were used to get rid of the teachers who happened to be leaders of the struggle. This meant that they were able to ignore the renewal of the contracts of teachers who were activists. The blacks became tired of this oppression and continued to strategies in order to resolve the challenges that they were facing.

In addition, Hyslop (1987, cited by Tsotetsi, 1999) noted the following as weakness of school boards:

- only four to six members represented their bodies in the school board, namely parents elected by Bantu education officials. The elected parents had to, in turn, first be approved by the Minister or Secretary of Bantu Education.

The provisions made it clear that “no serving teacher or wives of educationist Officials qualified to be members of such a parent body”. As a result, teachers were excluded from the structure of school governance, while ensuring that unelected African parents became numerically dominant (Tsotetsi, 1999: 19).

The researcher argues that at this time, married people could not be treated independently, hence the decision that partners of those in education could not serve as governors. The primary aim of school boards was to consider the ideologies of the National Party Government. Only males dominated the membership of school boards, and the rightful parents of learners had nothing to contribute to the education of their children.

### **2.3.3 School committees: composition, strengths and weaknesses**

The composition of school committees was done according to the Bantu Education Act of 1953. The Act was renamed the Black Education Act of 1953, and section 47 of this Act aimed at legalising many aspects of the apartheid system. The Act empowered the parents and guardians of pupils to democratically elect members to their school committees. According to section 4 of this Act, the Bantu Education secretary or an appointee of the National Party Government and the White Commissioner of Bantu Affairs in the area had the power to directly appoint six suitable African parents of their choice as members of a school committee, in order to represent, inter-alia, the religious interests of other groups.

The appointed parents were viewed as guards who had to report to the Minister. This duty was actually imposed on parents, as they had no say in the matter. Parents were limited to electing four additional members to the school committee, subject to the approval of the Minister or Secretary of Bantu Education. School committees were established to serve an ideological role in the apartheid regime (Tsotetsi, 1999). Therefore, the Minister of Native Affairs at the time stated the following: *"There is no place for (the Bantu) in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour ... What is the use of teaching the*

*Bantu child Mathematics when it cannot use it in practice?"* (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bantu-Education>). All appointees to the committee served the purpose of pursuing the goals of the apartheid regime. The power to take decisions regarding black children was in the hands of the oppressors of the time.

All suggestions and recommendations of the school committee lay in the hands of the Minister (Tsotetsi.1999).The principal was given the power to choose parents from the community to represent parents of learners in a particular school on the school committee. The parents' duties were to ensure the proper functioning of the school and that the school headed in the direction that was agreed upon.

The purpose of school committees was political rather than to be educational. This is clearly traced from the Bantu Education Act no.47 of 1953 that referred to members of school committees as freely manipulated by the state. The act allowed the state to appoint two-thirds of the parents with the inclusion of the chairperson and the deputy chairperson (Tsotetsi, 1999). Parents elected on the other one third had to be ratified by the state. This confirms that the ruling part of the time had committees in schools to ensure that their motives regarding the education of a black child are achieved. The structures were limited to expand black schooling as cheaply as possible, and to ensure local level participation of black parents in the schools where their children were registered.

### **2.3.3.1 Strengths of school committees**

The main strength of school committees was to nurture the educational interests of the school and the planned and organised educational activities of the school (Mahlangu, 2007: 18; Tsotetsi, 1999:21-22). Furthermore, the following were identified as strengths:

- They served as mouthpieces for parents regarding physical and material school matters. Parents could initiate projects to improve schools, such as the building of schools.
- They were responsible for the provision and maintenance of the school grounds, buildings, and equipment, and made recommendations to the board. School committees ensured that schools were safe for learners and staff members.

- School committees collected and controlled the funds of the school. They had to ensure that the funds collected were spent under the name of the school. This promoted transparency regarding the usage of school funds.
- They had the power to exclude any pupil from school on grounds of misconduct, lack of cleanliness, unpaid school funds or any other reason. School committees ensured that only learners obeying school rules and not owing the school money remained in school. Learners had to clean their schools, rather than the school hiring community members to do this work.
- School committees had to inquire into any written complaint connected with the school and its teaching staff, but this did not entitle a teacher to lay such charges in return. Learners received maximum protection from school committees, which checked complaints about the school, as well as the way in which they conducted their learning and teaching.
- They could oblige a teacher to attend their meetings for the purpose of giving information or to be questioned, and if such a teacher was an assistant teacher, it was expected that his/her principal would also attend such a meeting. Teachers and assistant teachers with principals were accountable to school committees for inquiry purposes. School committees earned respect from professionals during their term of office.

School committees had control of the schools where their children were registered. Although they were used to pursue the agenda of the apartheid era system of education, alleging to involve black parents in educational matters related to their children, the subsequent passing of the SASA and the establishment of SGBs ensured that democratically elected parents were involved in school governance.

### **2.3.3.2 Weaknesses of school committees**

School committees were not involved with professional activities, but were allowed to report to the director. However, they were not professionals and understanding such matters was therefore a challenge. Their duty was to refer such matters to the department for assistance in handling such issues. The reality, however, was that they were acting like spies who reported what they observed to the director about issues that were unknown to professionals. Decision making regarding sanctions of such issues lay solely in the hands of the director. School committees were used as stooges of Bantu officials. The researcher is

convinced that Bantu officials viewed them as objects that were without a mind of their own. Their duty was to implement what they were ordered to, without seeking clarity about such orders. It was disrespectful and wrong not to be involved in professional matters, but to simply report them to the director. Lack of involvement on the part of parents was a way of ensuring that the power of decision-making lay solely with the Bantu officials. The school principal was an ex officio and secretary of school committees (Mahlangu, 2007). The author argues that having the school principal occupying two positions and electing members to serve on the structure implies that the structure was powerless and non-democratic in nature. The education authorities trusted them to implement activities that they deemed fit to be carried out. This means that they were tools to be used under the false pretence of parent representation.

The researcher is convinced that due to the abovementioned weaknesses, other non-statutory bodies such as parent-teacher-student associations, parent-teacher-associations and parent associations were later established (Mahlangu, 2007). The Conservative Party which was ruling during this time withheld their blessings with regard to school committees. Although school committees were in place according to race, white officials were the ones who had the final say in all matters that affected school governance structures. Later, these committees became dysfunctional and failed to manage schools effectively. School committees were imposed on schools during the apartheid regime, and their aim was to protect the interests of the ruling party and be accountable to them.

School committees were without a code of conduct, hence they were found to be abusing their powers with regard to teacher appointments, and some members openly boasted that they had enough licence to employ and fire teachers overnight. The criteria used to appoint teachers favoured the National Party. In addition, teachers were required to be in the possession of an influx permit under section 10 (1) (d) of Act No.25 of 1945 (Tsetetsi, 1999).

The school committee had the responsibility of convening a general meeting of parents and pupils in March of every year, simply in order to read out the balance sheet of school funds, while the principal of the school would present a general report of the conditions and problems of the school. School committees' roles were limited in comparison to the SGBs. There were members with powers, who did not report directly to the parents of learners.

The researcher argues that the school committee composition had flaws and it is inappropriate to claim that the members were elected. The members were actually imposed on parents. The latter were forced to accept them, since it was believed that they had nothing to contribute to the education of their children. Parents' ideas were suppressed and regarded as unimportant. The fact that the education of learners originated at home under the care of parents was ignored. The importance of the home as the foundation of formal education was also ignored. However, such structures could not be in a position to make an impact in schools without the voice of parents.

The structure of school committees also suffered from male domination, similarly to the school boards. The researcher notes that during the apartheid regime, women were suppressed. It was believed that women could not be regarded as leaders and had no ideas to put forward. In New York, such structures were led by White Jewish males or professionally qualified Catholic males (Tsoetsi, 1999). The researcher argues that during those times, leadership was only entrusted to males.

Even if parents had ideas which would contribute meaningfully to the wellbeing of the school, their ideas and opinions were ignored, disregarding the fact that they had an interest in the education of their children. The abovementioned bodies were established mainly to cater for the education of the Black child, in the interests of the White minority. It is therefore evident that school boards, committees and councils failed to perform their roles effectively, in order to have an impact on schools.

#### **2.3.4 The Soweto Parents Crisis Committee: composition, strengths and weaknesses**

The Bantu Education Act was resented by learners in Soweto to such an extent that they ended up staging central protests within schools and outside schools, led by the Black Consciousness Movement. The learners were against the language policy in education. Parents supported their children and threatened the government that they would take their learners out of school. Teachers who were denied appointment following their political activities in the ANC and PAC also supported learners. These teachers were banned from the country. The protests occurred all over the country, but more engagement was

witnessed in Soweto through the formation of the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee (SPCC).

As the researcher mentioned above, parents supported their children in the protests, and schooling was put on hold. Learners felt that it was of trivial importance to pursue education that was inferior to that of whites. The other challenge was the language policy, which was Afrikaans, thereby again favouring the whites over blacks. Parents' support of their children led to the formation of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs in primary schools) and Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSAs in secondary schools).

#### **2.3.4.1 Strengths of the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee**

The Soweto Parents Crisis Committee had shown its strengths in the following:

- Parents revived the spirit of the National Council for African Women (NCAW) in Soweto, who showed their objection to school boards and school committees by engaging in the education of their children.
- Attempts were made to negotiate with learners, in order to help them view education as important, rather than concentrating on the educational challenges of the past.
- The National Party government realised their governance structures which were imposed on blacks failed to create hegemonic order in the country, since stakeholders were left out. Therefore, the SPCC could pave the way to negotiations.
- The introduction of the Education Act (Act 90 of 1979) on the 1st January 1980, with the provision for new developments in Black education, such as compulsory and free education, subject to the co-operation of parents and choice of the medium of instruction from standard three (Grade V) onwards.

The SPCC was the foundation for the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC).

#### **2.3.4.2 Weaknesses of the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee**

The weakness of the SPCC was shown in its limited life-span, since it was the foundation for NECC. Its role was to pave a way forward to involve parents in the education of their children.

### **2.3.5 The National Education Crisis Committee (NECC): composition, strengths and weaknesses**

In 1986, the National Education Crisis Committee was formed, led by the Soweto Civic Association, and including all Black schools (refer to 2.4.3). An amendment to the Education Act was enacted in 1988, but was supported by the Parliamentarians under the apartheid regime. Farm owners had schools on their farms and were allowed to control these schools without the establishment of school committees. It is such differences which made South Africa shift towards involving parents in school governance in 1994, hence the birth of the South African Schools Act in 1996.

#### **2.3.5.1 Strengths of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC)**

The strength of NECC was that it was an improvement of the political activity that took place during the 1976 uprisings. The aim was to bring parents into the school environment, and this committee made a call for parents to withdraw from statutory parent committees at schools, and to establish parent-teacher-student structures. The establishment of the National Education Crisis Committee gave the opposition an opportunity to embark on a different dimension after the formation of student-teacher committees and student-parent-teacher committees, advocating the so-called “people’s education for people’s power”.

#### **2.3.5.2 Weaknesses of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC)**

The National Education Crisis Committee’s weakness was that it excluded parents from school governance, since farm owners who had schools on their farms were in a position to control these schools without having to establish school committees. People staying on these farms were unable to challenge the farm owner for fear of being evicted. They were therefore forced to accept child labour, rather than education.

### **2.3.6 Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSAs)/ Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs): composition, strengths and weaknesses**

PTSAs comprised parents, teachers and students of secondary schools. PTAs excluded students, based on the view that learners at primary school level were too young to participate in such structures (Mahlangu, 2008: 21). The Consultative Conference on the crisis in education invited parents to withdraw from statutory parent committees in December 1985. The parents were then urged to establish parent-teacher-student



structures. PTSAs became popular and were accepted in oppressed communities, as they focused on school issues rather than resistance to Bantu education.

PTAs in white communities were prominent towards the end of the apartheid regime. It was during the time when schools with low enrolment figures were to be closed, and the PTAs dealt mainly with the disposal of school property.

#### **2.3.6.1 Strengths of PTSAs/PTAs**

Among the strengths of PTSAs and PTAs was the fact that PTSAs were eager to see their children improving at school. They discovered that collective and democratic action was necessary for the rehabilitation of their children. In order to have an impact on their children's schools, they needed to secure a voice (Naidoo, 2005: 28).

In addition to the abovementioned points, Carr (2005) identified other strengths, namely that PTSAs/PTAs aimed to work together with structures that had shown an interest in learners' education. They also focused on the collection of funds to equip schools with the necessary resources for teaching and learning. The researcher argues that it was easy for PTSAs/PTAs to work together with their communities, as the majority of blacks shared the same political ideology. It was therefore not difficult to reach consensus on their activities and function.

#### **2.3.6.2 Weaknesses of PTSAs/PTAs**

The members serving on PTSAs and PTAs lacked clarity regarding the roles that they should play in schools. The members were not professionals; hence they were unable to deal with staff appointments (Naidoo, 2005; Carr, 2005). PTSAs/PTAs tried to give employment opportunities to people with political credentials. The researcher argues that such decisions were problematic, as good political credentials cannot be translated into quality service delivery in the world of work.

The researcher supports the view that students involved in governance were arrogant and adamant about certain issues. They seemed to be in the growing process and did not look into aspects that could lead them to making proper decisions. The researcher argues that it is important for learners to engage in such a process, as it prepares them for becoming the best future leaders.

This section has shown the strengths and weaknesses of these governance structures, which assisted in forging the way to the establishment of SGBs. Both the white and black communities understood that their children could be admitted into a school where they (parents) could also serve as parent governors under the African National Congress government, which came to power in 1994. The researcher maintains that the home is the origin of education for both white and black children; hence it is important that their parents are involved in school governance.

The next section will explore the influence of international experience on the creation of school governing bodies in South Africa.

## **2.4 INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE ON THE CREATION OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In this section, the researcher presents school governing bodies' experiences in different countries, in order to illustrate their similarities and differences, as well as their influence on the creation of effective SGBs in South Africa. Literature on the composition, strengths and weaknesses of the school governance structures in each country is reviewed, as well as the lessons that South Africa can learn from their experiences, in order to ensure that SGBs have a positive impact on public schools.

### **2.4.1 The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: influence on the creation of the School Governing Body in South Africa**

School governance in Great Britain and Northern Ireland was composed of 14 members with voting powers, and 3 non-voting members. The number of members depended largely on the type of school. The 14 members were made up of the parents or guardians of learners in the school, teachers, community leaders within the school district, the school principal or designee (non-voting), and students in high school from RCL (non-voting).

The school governance structures of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had excluded parents in the past, but a change in the nature of school governing

bodies was made through the 1986 Education Act, where governing bodies were re-constituted to include parental, teacher and community representation (Farrell, 2005).

Their functions are to provide strategic direction, act as critical friends, ensure accountability, and participate in decision making in a wide range of areas (Farrell, 2005: 93). The school governing bodies deal with school staffing, new appointments, staff appraisals and grievances. The head teacher is given the power to decide to form part of governance. Consequently, "If the head teacher decides to form part of governance he chairs the board and parents of their different classes are voted into governance to represent interests of all classes" (Sharma, 2008: 8). Members of the governance body are given reasonable time off to carry out their duties. However, payment during their time off depends on their employers, who must decide whether time off is paid or unpaid.

Furthermore, governance has moved to school autonomy, in order to provide new guidelines to schools on how to make decentralised decisions on school issues, and to develop the capacity of school-level personnel to make effective use of their new responsibilities, as well as to strike a balance between districts and schools within the framework of standards and accountability.

#### **2.4.1.1 Strengths of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

The strength of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's school governance was enhanced by the Education Act of 1988, which empowered school governing bodies significantly in terms of the management of schools. The Act gave the school governing body powers regarding the admission and exclusion of pupils, budgetary responsibilities, personnel matters, and the determination of head teacher salary levels (Beckmann & Minnaar, 2005). "Their maximum term of office is four years although governors may be re-elected or re-appointed or change their designation (James, Brammer, and Connolly, Fertig, James & Jones, and 2011: 416). Members of governing bodies are treated equal at all times. They abide by their code of conduct, in order to avoid favouritism, which may in the future create tension between members. The researcher argues that the timeframe is sufficient for the new governing body to implement and sustain the changes brought to the school.

Parent and school relationships are central to the Education Act of 1988, which holds parents responsible for ensuring that their children receive full-time education. The Act states that 'It shall be the duty of the parents of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise' (Education Act, 1988: Section 76).

Other responsibilities of school governing bodies are outlined in *School Governors: A Guide to the Law* (Farrell, 2005: 92), which indicates that governing bodies:

*have a general responsibility for seeing that the school is run effectively, acting within the framework set by legislation and the policies of the Local Education Authority (LEA), so that it provides the best possible education for its pupils. They are not expected to take detailed decisions about the daily matters of the school such as the job of the head. A good head will discuss all the main aspects of school life with the governing body will delegate enough powers to allow the head to perform his or her management duties. The governing body are responsible to parents and the LEA for the way the school is run. The head accounts to the governing body on his management of the school and strike a balance with the governing body.*

The governing body plays a role in evaluating the quality and standard of what the school has achieved. It deals with received reports on implementation and monitoring, both from the principal and other staff members. It reviews the policies, plans, targets and procedures, and agrees on the changes needed to secure further improvements of the school.

The researcher agrees with Farrell's (2005) view that the school governing body's functions, according to the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, are to give direction, monitor, and account to parents.

School governing bodies possess skills and experience; hence they operate like a company's board of directors, in which they provide annual feedback to parents as shareholders, as they control the management of schools and its employees (Plaatjie, 2014). An SGB is accountable, knowledgeable and informative regarding school activities. It is supported by organisations, websites and resources, and ensures that the head teacher sets targets for staff members.

The boards enter into contractual agreements with their communities, manage school budgets, and hire and fire teachers. School governing bodies are still dominated by professionals, politicians and unelected members of the business community (Ng, 2013), which is why they seem to be so well versed in governance.

#### **2.4.1.2 Weaknesses of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

The main weakness of school governance in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is that although the principal of the school is an ex officio member of the school governance structure that he or she is heading, he or she may decline to take the position and decide not to serve in the school governing body, according to section 2 (d) of the Education Act of 1986. The implication is that the position will be vacant and should be left vacant if such a situation arises, as schools are led by a principal. The vacancies of parent governors may be filled by unsuitable candidates, such as parents of former learners. However, such parent governors can be removed any time by a majority vote of the school governing body, and replaced by other parents who are in good standing.

A parent elected to chair the school governing body may serve for more than one year. This implies that the position should be filled by a parent who is skilful and in good standing. Furthermore, the amount of power transferred to governing bodies empowers parents and their business interests, while weakening teachers and local education authorities (LEAs). The focus is on the interests of the consumer, who is the parent, rather than the producer, since it is assumed that parents know best what is good for their children, while educators are more concerned with their own interests (Quan-Baffour, 2006). The researcher argues that although all stakeholders' inputs are different, they complement each other.

The school governance structures in the United Kingdom review exclusions in certain circumstances, reinstate excluded learners, or reduce the term of exclusion. However, they do not increase the number of exclusions. In schools such as foundation schools, voluntary aided schools and academies, governance sets the admission policy and controls the whole process of admissions. Sub-committees of governance tackle specific problems and take decisions without full governance approval.

Research conducted by James, Brammer, Connolly, Fertig, James and Jones (2011) and Ng (2013) reveals that governance is still dominated by professionals, politicians and unelected members of the business community. Furthermore, school governors are sidelined and turned into passive pawns, as their power is eroded by government reforms. In addition, there is little evidence that schools are accountable to parents and have any intention of handing over policymaking power to parents and communities.

#### **2.4.1.3 Lessons to be learnt from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the creation of SGBs in South Africa**

School governance in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland started on a small scale and proceeded to greater involvement in the late 1970s (Maharaj, 2005). The Education Act of 1988 pressured parents to take responsibility and ensure that their children received full-time education (Carr, 2005). In this regard, South Africa could have its own legislation ensuring that parents take responsibility for their children's education. The researcher argues that parents should be held responsible for children not complying with school policies. Children spend a lot of time at home under the supervision of their parents, and the latter should ensure that children execute school activities to curb cases of misconduct. They should deal fairly with misbehaviour and check that sanctions imposed on children are followed as planned.

South Africa could encourage the re-election of executive committee members as office-bearers, in order to ensure that newly elected members can imitate their way of dealing with SGBs matters. The aim would be to ensure active participation and the acquisition of skills that would improve governance. The researcher argues that if the governing body has elected office-bearers who are not well equipped to occupy their positions, then they can be replaced within a period of one year, rather than three years. They should elect members with appropriate capabilities to discharge their responsibilities towards their school (James, Brammer, Connolly, Fertig, James & Jones, 2011). Furthermore, it was found that they always have a list of people waiting to be elected to school governance positions when the term of office for the current governing body elapses, which is not the case in South African school governance. However, the researcher believes that such a strategy could be adopted by the South African school governance structure, in order to take governance to the next level.

With reference to co-option, they should always ensure that local businesses are represented in governance (Maharaj, 2005). The aim is guarantee success during fundraising events, as one of their strengths lies in ensuring that teachers are equipped with the necessary resources to render quality education. Technological resources are changing on a daily basis and the allocated funds for schools, based on the number of learners, are insufficient to ensure improvement. SGBs that have good relationships with sponsors could then easily access resources to benefit their schools. In the United Kingdom, the appointment of an external advisor (EA), who was an independent professional mentor with no axe to grind, and with whom the principal could be completely honest, helped to empower governors and close the gap that existed between them and the principal (Crawford & Earley, 2004).

The appointment of the EA further brought the principal and mentor closer and enhanced mutual respect and understanding. The researcher argues that the mentor to the principal stood in the position of offering support to the custodian of policies. Parents, as encapsulated in the Education Act of 1988, are responsible for ensuring that their children receive full-time education, not teachers (Carr, 2005). It is alleged that school governing bodies in South Africa and England have similarities (Bush & Heystek, 2003; Maharaj, 2005), as governance in both countries includes parents. However, the difference is that co-opted members in England have voting powers, whereas they are powerless in South Africa.

If governors are found wanting in England, there will be pressure for them to resign, rather than to place the school at risk (not trained but certificated), which is not the case in South Africa. The MEC is the only official who qualifies to dissolve an SGB that fails to render services to the school. The term of office may elapse before the relevant official receives notice to dissolve such an SGB. In this regard, the researcher argues that dissolving an SGB has a political influence in terms of the official who is granted powers to dissolve it. The researcher also notes that the term of office in England is four years, whereas it is three years in South Africa. She further states that the term of office in South Africa is entirely suitable and does not need to be increased, considering the challenges faced in school governance.

The researcher argues that SGBs in England have a lot of power, as among their functions, they are able to appoint and dismiss staff members, appoint principals and also determine their salaries. In South Africa, however, SGBs can make recommendations for promotional posts, but the power to employ lies in the hands of the Department of Education. School boards and school committees under the apartheid regime used to appoint staff members, as discussed earlier with regard to the weaknesses of school boards and school committees. Furthermore, the school governance structures of the past used to appoint their political activist colleagues, which proved not to translate into suitable candidates after their appointment. Therefore, giving more powers to SGBs, as in the United Kingdom, is irrelevant under the present circumstances in South Africa, since SGBs do not match the level of skills and capabilities of their counterparts in the UK.

#### **2.4.2 Denmark and the Netherlands: influence on the creation of the School Governing Body in South Africa**

Danish school governance views parents as important stakeholders who in the governance of the school. The Danish Education Act of 1993 placed parents at the centre of the educational process and implied that school leaders should at all times build a partnership with the school community. The latter is supported by the following statement: ‘The task of the basic school is, in cooperation with parents, to offer possibilities for the pupils to acquire knowledge, skills working methods and forms of expression which contribute to the all-round development of the individual pupils’ (Quan-Baffour, 2006: 33). School decision making was strengthened since the 1990s du, when school governors were first introduced.

##### **2.4.2.1 Strengths of Denmark and the Netherlands**

The strength of Danish school governance lies in the composition of the board. The board consists of five to seven representatives from parents whose children are at the school, including two representatives from the school and two from students, who are all democratically elected. All members of school governance have experience that is relevant to assisting the school. Parental representation is in the majority, and the board links the principal and parents of learners in a school (Kristoffersson, 2009). Their responsibility is to develop guidelines for school activities, approve budgets and take decisions on curriculum and staff matters. “A report in 2001 claimed that Danish parents are very committed to their children’s schooling and spend an average three hours in a month at the school deciding on



issues that affect their children schooling” (Kristoffersson, 2009:130; Sharma, 2008:7). Parents dedicate their time to dealing with the educational matters of their children.

Denmark places the responsibility for developing their student capacity for democratic deliberation, critical judgement and rational understanding on the school (Quan-Baffour, 2006). The school also takes responsibility for student participation, and sharing of responsibilities, rights and duties in a society characterised by freedom and democracy. The aim is to ensure that students participate in educational decision making, and that teachers and principals serve as role models for democracy. It implies that teachers are also playing a critical role in creating future leaders.

Quan-Baffour (2006:33) further states that Danish educational approaches seem to be anti-bureaucratic, stressing voluntarism rather than central control, and lateral communication rather than vertical communication. However, in a study conducted by Hooge and Honingh (2014:3), compared to other countries such as the USA, the school boards were found to lack democratic accountability and operate at a relative distance from the political dynamics of government. This implies that governance needs to reconsider the democratic accountability that existed prior to implementing voluntarism, which encouraged parents to visit the school willingly to discuss learners’ schooling.

#### **2.4.2.2 Weaknesses of Denmark and the Netherlands**

The weakness of Danish school governance is that it allows politically irresponsible parents to exercise considerable influence in schools, thereby diminishing the authority of the head teacher (Quan-Baffour, 2006). The researcher is convinced that irresponsible people should be given restricted powers, as they cannot be trusted to be accountable and responsible.

It is argued that “Parents were found to have a little interest in school boards compared to the former school councils” (Kristoffersson, 2009:124). The lack of interest was linked to the involvement of politicians with a lack of clear purpose for the school boards, hence the minimal collaboration. The inclusion of politicians made parents feel excluded from the school board. The boards were proved to lack democratic accountability mechanisms, which led them to operate at a relative distance from the political dynamics of government (Hooge & Honingh, 2013). The politicians were included in the structure to strengthen the

involvement of parents, but this had the opposite effect. The researcher views responsibility and accountability as being inseparable. Therefore, politicians are entrusted with responsibility and should be in a position to account if deemed necessary. The failure to influence parents implies that they are of less importance in school governance at the local level.

#### **2.4.2.3 Lessons to be learnt from Denmark and the Netherlands**

The researcher argues that South African parents could contribute significantly to the education of their children by spending more time on issues affecting their children and dealing with matters such as a code of conduct for learners and others. Parents and SGBs shift the responsibility for the code of conduct to the principal and educators. It should also be noted that political interference needs to be limited, as politicians cannot be trusted to be accountable and responsible with regard to school matters. Politicians have a tendency to use rhetorical speech to achieve their goals. Therefore, it would be disastrous to hope that their inclusion in the issue of the code of conduct for learners would be helpful. In a study conducted in Denmark and Sweden to identify the flaws of involving politicians in school governance, results indicated that they should not be included, in view of the fact that they lack clear purpose in terms of school or educational matters (Kristoffersson, 2009).

#### **2.4.3 Brazil: influence on the creation of the School Governing Body in South Africa**

The school board in Brazil consists of six members of the external community (students and parents) and six members of the internal community (teachers and school employees), chaired by the elected principal. However, the principal cannot decide about the school and its resources without the board's approval. Sharma (2008: 9) claims that "Brazilian studies reported a high correlation between community involvement and student achievement".

##### **2.4.3.1 Strengths of Brazil**

The strengths of the school governing body in Brazil include enhanced community involvement, increased school enrolment, a remarkable fall in grade repetition rates, teacher training according to needs, improved teacher satisfaction, and greater readiness of the community to participate in improving schools, without additional costs. Brazilian parents select the principal and are actively involved in managing schools, because

teachers and principals have greater accountability towards parents and students. However, school finances fall under the jurisdiction of parents.

### **2.4.3.2 Weaknesses of Brazil**

The same system used by school governing bodies in Brazil was also used in Botswana to empower the community to participate in school management. Botswana has community schools that depended on the community for funding, curriculum development, utilisation of school facilities and school improvement. However, community schools did not succeed in Botswana due to poor communication between government and local communities, inadequate financial resources for school construction, an inability to address community needs in the curricula, low educational levels of the community members, and teachers' inability to link instruction with the local culture, which also seems to be the case in Brazil. The school governing body system depends to a large extent on the collaboration and cooperation of all stakeholders, although this does not guarantee success.

### **2.4.3.3 Lessons to be learnt from Brazil**

SGBs in South Africa should learn that in order to enhance collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders, effective communication needs to be maintained at all times.

### **2.4.4 Uganda: influence on the creation of the School Governing Body in South Africa**

Uganda is one of the poorest countries in East Africa, with a history after independence in 1962 which was turbulent, until Museveni took power in 1986 (Suzuki, 2002: 244). The government is committed to decentralisation and democratisation, which materialised as a unique political and administrative structure known as the Local Council (LC) system. The structure comprised five tiers, starting from the village level where villagers participated directly, to LC V at the district level. Only levels III and V are entrusted with decision making power and authority over a wide range of issues, including budgeting and raising funds. Primary schools had Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), which were the driving force of finances before reforms. They were able to consolidate fees from parents and supplement teachers' salaries (Suzuki, 2002).

After several relevant reforms undertaken by the Uganda government, a policy of free primary schooling known as Universal Primary Education (UPE) was introduced in 1997. Parents were exempt from paying school fees and schools depended on capitation grants (UPE grants) from the government. Enrolment in schools increased from 2.9 million in 1996

to 5.7 million in 1997. This drastic increase posed challenges for quality education at school level. The UPE grants were monitored by LCs.

#### **2.4.4.1 Strengths of Uganda**

Every primary school in Uganda is expected to have a school governing body known as a School Management Committee (SMC), which takes overall responsibility for running the school, including the UPE programmes (Suzuki, 2002).

The SMC was further noted in Nepal for community participation in the school, thereby creating the Village Education Committee (VEC), the School Management Committee and Parent Teacher Association (PTA), where each village had its own elected governing body, namely the Village Development Committee (VDC), after the downfall of the Rana oligarchy in 1951. Nepal was then led by King Mahindra in 1971 during the reform of the country's political system. The VDC comprised of a Village Chair, a Co-Chair and 45 Ward members (each VDC comprised nine wards). According to Khanal (2013:5), the "VEC oversees the VDC allocates resources to schools, coordinates the SMC functions and help schools to make operational plans and programmes, and monitors the functioning of the schools".

The SMC is the school-level decision making body, comprising a majority of elected parent representatives serving as the chair, the school head, the Ward chair, one staff member and two co-opted members. The main responsibilities of the SMC include appointing and evaluating the head teacher; hiring new teachers and renewing existing teachers' contracts; entering into an agreement with any government and non-government organisation for the benefit of the school; forming sub-committees and supporting and coordinating them in their business, mainly in the areas of academic standards, social mobilisation for sending children to school, sports and extra-curricular activity, resource mobilization, physical construction and monitoring and evaluation; and establishing by-laws for the educational, financial and personnel management of the school, as well as implementing them after approval by the meeting of parents (Khanal, 2013). The SMC aims to enhance parental contribution to the development and functioning of the school, hence the formation of the PTA (Parent Teacher Association), which consists of all teachers and parents in every public school, and is led by an executive committee comprising the Chair, head teacher, and at least one teacher and a guardian. The size of the committee depends on the size of the school.

The main role of the PTA is to encourage closer links between home and school. The PTA thus encourages parents and teachers to communicate, aiming to unite the two groups and help each party to understand the requirements for enhancing their children's education.

#### **2.4.4.2 Weaknesses of Uganda**

Suzuki (2002) alleges that decentralisation devolved authority over primary education to the District level Education Committee of LC V as the policy maker; with District Education Offices (DEOs), as appointed by the District Council (LC V), as the implementers. At the school level, the school governing body, known as the School Management Committee (SMC), takes overall responsibility for the school. According to the Education Act of 1969, a primary school aided by the government must have an SMC comprising of:

- 4 members appointed by the education committee of the area (refers to the Education Committee of LC V), and one who is appointed as chairman,
- 2 members elected by parents, and
- 3 members appointed by the chief education officer (refers to the Commissioner for Education of the central government).

In addition to these members, the Headmaster joined the SMC as secretary (Suzuki, 2002).

The head teacher and teachers were more accountable to the DEO than to the SMC. The composition was confusing, as members had to account to their constituencies, and parents could not differentiate between the SMC and PTAs in terms of functions. The SMC and PTAs were supported by the National Resistance Movement (Maharaj, 2005). The researcher argues that the use of the structures was mainly political, rather than educational.

#### **2.4.4.3 Lessons to be learnt from Uganda in the creation of the School Governing Body in South Africa**

The lesson to be learnt here is in terms of the line of demarcation between the local structure and the district structure. In the South African context, there was no governance structure at the district and local level. However, a district structure has recently been introduced. However, representation of the local community is not important. The lack of

capable school governance members, however, is of great importance (Mc Crone, Southcott & George, 2011).

#### **2.4.5 Norway: influence on the creation of the School Governing Body in South Africa**

The composition of the Norwegian school governing body hinges on collaboration, which includes parents, pupils, teachers and non-teaching staff. The structure was first known as a collaborative committee and later named a governing body; hence the researcher refers to it as the school governing body. The school governing body consisted of the principal as a representative from the municipal education committee, two parents from the parents' council, two representatives from the executive committee of pupils' councils, and one representative from the non-teaching staff. The governing body was established under the Education Act 61 of 1998.

##### **2.4.5.1 Strengths of Norway**

The school governing body in Norway is different from the other Scandinavian countries, in the sense that direct parent involvement has existed since 1889 in school governance (Quan-Balfour, 2006). The decision of involving parents was sustained for a long time through the inclusion of learners in school governance. Norwegian school governance stresses working jointly with the community, which makes it easy to promote all aspects of education.

##### **2.4.5.2 Weaknesses of Norway**

The main weakness is that although Norway has managed for many years to sustain school governance that seems to be democratic, in the researcher's view, it seems to be very small in terms of size. The researcher foresees the danger of their meetings not sitting, due to the 50% plus one during meetings, and that such a small size might not be in the position to represent the interests of the stakeholders who elected them into school governance positions. Nevertheless, if the members are dedicated, it could be viewed as strength, since the members could be present at all meetings if they follow their programme.

### **2.4.5.3 Lessons to be learnt from Norway in the creation of the School Governing Body in South Africa**

The researcher argues that numbers are not of great importance, since the attendance and dedication of members regarding the support of learners is more important. Parental participation in school governance should also be maintained.

### **2.4.6 Tanzania: influence on the creation of the School Governing Body in South Africa**

Tanzania is one of the first countries in Africa that made provision for learner participation and representation in committees involved in decision making (Quan-Balfour, 2006). Learner provision was made after the change in education in 1962. This change implied changes in the racial separation of students in schools, the European-oriented curriculum, and the small number of schools operating, which afforded an education to only a small minority of the population (<http://www.sdsmorogor.com/common/my%20pages/research%20papers/plato%27s%20concept%20f%20education.html>).

The aim of the provision was to give learners the opportunity to practise democracy, allow them to commit mistakes, and learn to be responsible and accountable in the process. The school council was established under Ontario Regulation 612/00. The council is composed of parents, teachers, non-teaching members, board employees and trustees, 1 community representative, and 1 student in elementary or secondary school.

#### **2.4.6.1 Strengths of Tanzania**

The strength of the Tanzanian school governing body is that national policies on education encourage broad participation; hence all the staff and community members are represented in their school governing body. It allows learners to make mistakes in their learning process. They strongly believe that democracy should be made practical for learners as future leaders. Learners are involved in the decision making process, and there is improved communication in the school, which reduces discipline problems and increases the confidence and decision making skills of learners (Mafora, 2013; Mncube & Harber, 2013).



#### **2.4.6.2 Weaknesses of Tanzania**

The weakness of the Tanzanian school governing body is that headmasters do not really use the councils to promote democratic participation, since most schools are still authoritative and reinforce passive subordination amongst learners. The recent view of school governance by learners is that it is a form of consultative participation, rather than direct participation, which entails involvement. Learners sit in meetings to discuss matters in councils and reach decisions, but the headmaster is the final decision maker. Tanzanians were found to be constantly challenged by the lack of parental participation in school governance (Mahlangu, 2007). The researcher argues that lack of participation may be caused by conducting elections on a yearly basis, as a year is too short a period for parents to adjust to their roles in governance.

#### **2.4.6.3 Lessons to be learnt from Tanzania in the creation of the School Governing Body in South Africa**

The principal as a leader in the school and *ex officio* should be in the forefront, in order to use the opportunity to encourage community participation in all school activities. The lesson to be learnt is that school governance needs to be patient and give learners the chance to make mistakes, so that they can be corrected. The term of office is limited and results in parents not participating.

#### **2.4.7 Kenya: influence on the creation of the School Governing Body in South Africa**

Quan-Balfour (2006: 54) mentions that independence was gained as far back as 1963 in Kenya, with stakeholders playing a key role in financing their primary schools. Secondary schools were scarce, since in order for communities to have them, they needed to fund them themselves, which was later relieved by the Education Commission. The board of management was established under section 55 of the Basic Education Act 14 of 2013. The board management was composed of 6 parents, 1 county education board member, 1 member of the teaching staff, 3 members from school sponsors, 1 member from a special interest group, 1 member from the special needs group, a representative from the student body, and co-opted members, not exceeding 3, with necessary skills.

#### **2.4.7.1 Strengths of Kenya**

The strength of the school governing body in Kenya is that stakeholders were able to collaborate and jointly work together to fund their primary and secondary schools, until they were relieved by the Education Commission. They were determined to ensure that their learners received education, rather than folding their arms and waiting for the education committee to come to their rescue.

#### **2.4.7.2 Weaknesses of Kenya**

The weakness of the school governing body in Kenya is that learners are not taught about the country's resources and the importance of good governance at an early stage. The school governors lack the necessary skills; hence it was recommended that school governors undertake induction courses to prepare them for their tasks (Quan-Balfour, 2006).

#### **2.4.7.3 Lessons to be learnt from Kenya in the creation of the School Governing Body in South Africa**

All new incumbents of positions should be inducted, in order to familiarise them with their new responsibilities and functions. The willingness of parents to volunteer should be supported through induction. School governance should co-opt members to beef up the structure, in order to ensure that they are effective and have a positive impact on schools.

#### **2.4.8 Lesotho: influence on the creation of the School Governing Body in South Africa**

The school governance in Lesotho is authoritative. It was inherited from past colonial and denominational leaders of the country. The governance is led by the Lesotho Education Act No. 10 of 1995 through the Ministry of Education (MoE), which stipulates that SGBs should comprise the following:

- Two representatives of the proprietor, of whom one shall be the chairperson of the structure,
- Three community members elected by parents of pupils admitted to that particular school, one of whom should be the vice-chairperson,
- A chief or his or her representative in the area where the school is situated, and
- The school principal, who becomes the secretary of the school governing body.

#### **2.4.8.1 Strengths of Lesotho**

The decision making powers of the Lesotho school governing body are centralised and they are not ready to compromise in this regard. Although they are in favour of democracy, they restrict learners to presenting matters to the school principal, who will in turn present to the school governing body and report back to the learners. The governance structure uses the principal as a bridge between them and the learners. The researcher argues that governance values respect, in order to instil discipline in learners.

#### **2.4.8.2 Weaknesses of Lesotho**

Lesotho views its school governance structure as being democratic, even though the full participation of all stakeholders is ignored. Learners are not included in the school governing body, unless there are strikes. This implies that the inclusion of learners is limited to resolving strikes or other matters at hand. The learners are supposed to register their concerns through the office of the principal, who will present these concerns to governance. The Lesotho culture limits the freedom and powers of children to mould their behaviour at schools (Matalasi, 2000). Parents believe that allowing a learner to participate in governance might encourage the latter to disrespect them.

#### **2.4.8.3 Lessons to be learnt from Lesotho in the creation of the School Governing Body in South Africa**

South Africa could learn from Lesotho that democracy should be guided to achieve optimal school governance. The restriction of learners in governance indicates that they trust the school principal to attend to the challenges of their children. The learners present their concerns to the school principal, who in turn presents these issues to school governance, and vice versa.

### **2.5 THE PAST EDUCATION SYSTEM**

The system of governance was in the past separated into 19 separate departments of education. South Africa was divided into four provinces only. Finance matters were centralised. Education departments were without district structures to take educational decisions. It follows that there were no decisions to be taken at school level. Abrupt changes happened after the release of Nelson Mandela in 1994 who was elected to be the

president of the country, hence the formation of the unitary system of governance in schools.

### **2.5.1 A unitary system of governance**

In the past, there was racial discrimination in South Africa, to the extent that attempts were made to establish an education system that was specifically for blacks. This system was aimed at providing cheap labour for whites. Whites had a better education, while blacks were subjected to an education that would ensure that they remained inferior to whites. Schools were under the governance of school boards and school committees, which were later followed by the establishment of the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee (SPCC), National Parents Crisis Committee (NPCC), PTSAs and PTAs.

The PTSAs/PTAs were followed by the introduction of the South African Schools Act of 1996, which gave birth to school governing bodies that included parents in the governance of schools. Parents' inclusion in the education system aims at ensuring that learners receive quality education, unlike in the past. Unlike the Bantu Act during the apartheid regime, which had a strong political base, the Schools Act is delinked from politics.

There were fifteen apartheid education ministries in South Africa. Naidoo (2005: 26) states that "the ministries had their own models and were divided as follows:

- Department of National Education responsible for national norms and standards,
- Ten Bantustan departments, and
- Four racially defined departments for Africans".

After the first democratic elections in the country, SASA was established under the first Minister of Education, Professor Sibusiso Bengu, who was succeeded by Professor Kader Asmal. The department was led by one Minister until 2009, when the National Department of Education split and was led by two ministries, namely Basic Education and Higher Education. However, this split does not have any effect on school governing bodies. It is worth mentioning, however, in order to note the current changes in education, although an in-depth discussion of it is of critical importance. This study is located within the Basic Education Ministry, under the current leadership of Angie Motshekga.

## **2.5.2 School Governing Body**

In South Africa, a school governing body is a statutory body that operates under the guidance of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, in order to indicate functions, roles and responsibilities. The composition of an SGB differs from one school to the other, depending on the number of learners enrolled at the school. Chaka (2008:16-17) states “the number of members in the school governing body varies from 7 to 19 members”. All staff members are represented in school governance. Furthermore, it comprises many sub-committees, displaying a distributive form of leadership where various kinds of leaders in various roles share responsibility. The members are from different sections, namely principal, educators, general workers, support staff, nutrition staff, and learners.

The term of office for SGB members is three years, although the executive members have a term of office of 12 months. The SGB may change its executive members if they are found not to be equal to the task. However, it is usually the case that once executive members are elected to office, the SGB expects them to service the structure until elections take place after 3 years. Therefore, the SGB finds itself in a difficult position when it wants to change executive members (refer to 2.5.3. on the role of the chairperson, secretary and treasurer).

The researcher also argues that although SGBs seem to be over-researched, developments in school governance have had and will continue to have important implications for the governance of the education system at local level (Connolly, Farrel & James, 2013). Therefore, the researcher finds it relevant to conduct a study on the impact of the roles of SGBs in the Badplaas and Mashishila areas of the Gert Sibande district, in order to focus on the role of the executive of school governance, whose members fill key positions in the structure.

## **2.5.3 The role of each executive member of the school governing body in a public school**

In order to determine the impact of school governance on schools, the researcher has chosen to elaborate on the role of each member of the school governing body, as she believes that all members are important. The policy allows the positions of chairperson, deputy chairperson, deputy secretary and treasurer to be occupied only by parents whose

children are in the school. The researcher posits that in an effective SGB, the executive positions can only be occupied by parents, with teachers as members.

### **2.5.3.1 The role of the school principal of a public school as a member of the school governing body**

The principal's role is spelt out in section 16 (3) of SASA, which states that "subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law, the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the Head of the Department" (Joubert & Bray, 2007: 125). The principal is an *ex officio*, and is automatically a member of the school governing body, with voting powers, as well as a member of the finance committee. However, the principal may not serve as a chairperson of the SGB (section 29 (2)). He is the only member with this type of status. Considering that all members are elected or co-opted into the school governing body, this automatic entrance to the SGB is often misinterpreted as superiority to the parents. The principal assists in governance and ensures that policies are in place, in accordance with Section 19(2) of the Schools Act. In addition, the principal has to ensure that these policies are written in a language that stakeholders understand. He also checks that policies are applied fairly and equally throughout the school community, without any favouritism.

The principal ensures that the school management team (SMT) plays a role in the development and implementation of policies. He functions in two capacities: to serve as an executive member of the school governing body, and in the SMT for the daily management of the school. The principal is therefore actually an intersection between governance and the SMT, thereby ensuring that governance and management work together amicably to maintain good working conditions at the school. School governance deals with governance matters and management deals with management matters. The researcher argues that the principal play dual roles, namely that of referee and player at the same time. As such, it is doubtful whether there is fairness in the dual roles. The researcher is convinced that the principal should deal exclusively with school management. There are vast changes in education, with many consultations, responsibilities and accountabilities for principals. They experience a lot of pressure in their attempt to do satisfactory work for the DBE. They have to sign forms as an assurance that school finances will be well managed, followed later by accusations regarding the mismanagement of funds. Principals' roles are becoming more complex each day, and leave them confused (Govindasamy, 2009). The researcher thus

doubts what support principals will be able to give to SGBs under such circumstances. Therefore, the DBE should appoint someone to deal with governance issues.

### **2.5.3.2 The role and duties of the chairperson of the school governing body in a public school**

The Chairperson ensures the smooth running of all SGB activities. He signs agreements reached by the SGB and is one of the three signatories of the school banking account. He also chairs the annual general meeting (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2000). The Chairperson must sign any agreement that the SGB enters into and acts as a signatory on behalf of the SGB. In terms of his role and duties, "The chairperson of the school governing body represents the structure in dealing with the Department of Education or outside agencies and ensures that the members of the specific structure do their jobs, follow the rules and deliver the annual report to the annual meeting" (Understanding School Governance Manual, 1997: 54).

Furthermore, the Chairperson calls meetings and determines their agenda after consultation with the secretary and the principal, and presides at meetings of parents, teachers, learners and support staff called by the governing body. In addition, he has to monitor, control and assist members where need be, represent the SGB as required, be the accounting officer of the school, inform the body of any urgent action taken since the previous meeting, and ensure that decisions are reached and recorded.

In the past, the chairperson's position had been occupied by men; hence it has been difficult for women to occupy such positions recently. One view is that women should avoid taking on the Chairperson position, which appears to be predominantly a male prerogative (Diko, 2008; Karlsson, 2002, Restine, 1993). However, the researcher argues that it is imperative that women should be encouraged to occupy such positions today, and that the Department of Education should ensure that the atmosphere in schools empowers all members to participate actively in school governance structures. The Chairperson and principal positions are dominated by males, and it is a pity that when women are found occupying such positions, men continue to take advantage of the situation to manipulate women. Mncube (2008) indicated that school governing bodies were found to exacerbate the inequalities of power relations, gender and socio-economic class. The researcher argues that the school governing body atmosphere should be profitably used to eradicate

indoctrination in the form of male domination in school governing bodies, so as to benefit the entire community. Membership of the SGB should not be linked to socio-economic class, ethnicity, race or gender, but rather to skills, abilities and capabilities that will enhance service delivery, which will bear fruit for the entire community being served.

### **2.5.3.3 The role and duties of the secretary of the school governing body in a public school**

According to Mpumalanga Department of Education (2002: 15) and Understanding School Governance Manual (1997: 55), the secretary of the SGB does the following:

- draws up the agenda for any meeting of the school governing body,
- informs other members of meetings to be held,
- keeps copies of all correspondence,
- acts as one of the signatories to the school account, and
- ensures that minutes are safely stored at the school and are open for inspection by other SGB members, the circuit manager, and any other authorised officers.

The secretary also keeps accurate minutes of all meetings, indicating dates and times of meetings held (Department of Education, 2003). In addition, the secretary prepares the implementation report, which outlines the decisions taken, coupled with the status of these decisions. This helps to keep the SGB abreast of decisions and specifies which decisions have been implemented, and which ones are in the pipeline or have not been implemented, as well as the reasons in this regard.

### **2.5.3.4 The role of the treasurer of a school governing body in a public school**

According to Mpumalanga Department of Education (2002: 15) and Understanding School Governance Manual (1997: 55), the treasurer of the SGB does the following:

- handles all financial receipts,
- give reports that reflect income and expenditure,
- submits monthly and annual financial reports,
- administers the bank account,
- is one of the signatories of the school's bank account,
- controls the school budget, and
- makes audited finances available to relevant stakeholders.



The treasurer establishes whether funds are spent according to the budget of the current year, and highlights urgent activities from the Department of Education that need to be attended to by the SGB. The treasurer also divides the budget from the DoE among the following: stationery, consumables, toiletries, municipal services, day-to-day maintenance, no-fee allocation and telephone account. The researcher notes that the DoE paper budget is impractical to real school situations. Therefore, treasurers draft budgets differently to the DoE paper budget.

#### **2.5.3.5 The role of deputies to the chairperson and secretary of the school governing body in a public school**

The policy states that the deputies of both the chairperson and the secretary become active if the chairperson or secretary is absent. The researcher argues that the deputies of both chairpersonship and secretariat must be allocated responsibilities, since they play an active role in the absence of either the chairperson or secretary.

#### **2.5.3.6 The role and duties of the deputy chairperson of the school governing body in a public school**

The deputy chairperson plays the same role during the chairperson's absentia. However, the deputy chairperson should be given responsibilities to keep him busy while the chairperson is present, so that the position does not become boring and monotonous. The researcher proposes that the chairperson should share the responsibility of chairing the meeting with the deputy chairperson. The chairperson should share items from the agenda and delegate the deputy chairperson to lead the meeting.

#### **2.5.3.7 The role and duties of the deputy secretary of the school governing body in a public school**

The deputy secretary plays the same role during the secretary's absentia. However, the deputy secretary should be given responsibilities to keep him busy while the secretary is present, so that the position does not become boring and monotonous. The researcher proposes that the secretary should share the responsibility of writing the minutes of the meeting with the deputy secretary. The secretary should share items from the agenda and delegate the deputy secretary to write the minutes of the meeting.

### **2.5.3.8 The role and duties of non-executive members of the school governing body in a public school**

The other members of the SGB must attend meetings, prepare for these meetings, and participate fully in them. Members of the SGB must support the decisions taken and carry out any specific task that they have been assigned, give full reports on their activities, and be active in communicating with and working for the SGB (Department of Education, 2003). The researcher notes that at times both the chairperson and the deputy chairperson absent themselves from meetings. In such instances, if this is a recurring situation, then the non-executive members elect a chairperson from its members (Understanding School Governance Manual, 1997).

The non-executive members of the SGB attend and participate in meetings, and become chairpersons of the sub-committees of school governance.

In addition, the non-executive members of the SGB should direct, encourage, inspire and assist the school community to work together willingly and in a motivated way, in order to meet objectives and develop their school. They should be confident and respect everyone in the school by setting a good example, being fair and impartial, keeping promises, making correct and prompt decisions, being approachable and consistent, acknowledging efforts of others, and communicating openly and regularly with other school community members.

According to the Gauteng Education Act (1997:111), “the members of SBGs should build a good relationship amongst them and promote team cohesion.” The researcher supports the notion of good relationships among SGB members, as this will facilitate the achievement of common goals, with their different roles, in order to have a positive impact on public school governance.

## **2.6 SWOT ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES’ RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **2.6.1 SWOT theory**

SWOT is “an analysis used to plan future strategies and framework of an organization (school)” (Kessler, 2013: 814). Studies use SWOT to analyse individual organisations or

compare two organisations. In this study, the researcher will use it to evaluate the school governing body's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It includes the idea of matching the school's internal factors with external factors, which is known as a SWOT analysis.

SWOT always identifies the key internal and external factors that are important in achieving objectives, and groups' key pieces of information into two main categories: "Internal factors- the strengths and weaknesses internal to the organization,

External factors- the opportunities and threats presented by the external environment" (Wang, 2007: 3).

In this study, the strengths are the favourable factors and the weaknesses are the unfavourable factors in SGBs. Further opportunities arise from changes, and threats are those external factors that are beyond our control.

#### **2.6.1.1 Strengths of SGBs**

The key strength is that "SGBs represents all stakeholders in education namely the state, learners, parents, educators, support staff, general workers and the recently introduced nutritional staff through democratic elections" (Bodalina, 2012: 33). The Department of Education noted a weakness in the structure and decided to ensure a complete representation, by introducing a subcommittee to the SGB known as the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC), comprising the majority of external stakeholders in education. However, McCrone, Southcott and George (2011) found representation of the local community not to be important.

The researcher argues that SGBs ensure that parents are represented in school governance. Parents are therefore in the majority in the school governing body, and have voting rights (Ng, 2013; Mafora, 2013; Bray & Joubert, 2007; RSA, 1996). SGBs give parents the opportunity to lead with regard to all issues in school governance. It is only the management of the day-to-day running of the school that is left to the principal. However, SGBs are informed of school activities in their meetings. They decide on the outsourcing of educators to assist their school in achieving better performance. They also manage all

financial transactions and ensure that audited statements are presented to parents, in line with sections 42 and 43 of SASA.

SGBs are in the best position to inform learners of decisions taken by the Representative Council for Learners (RCL), according to section 11 of SASA. They can also use such platforms to bargain for ownership of decisions taken to end strikes. The RCL could take a lead regarding the code of conduct for learners, and given a slot at the meeting to outline the code of conduct, as well as consequences for failing to act accordingly. Their voice here could help to curb cases of misconduct.

### **2.6.1.2 Weaknesses of SGBs**

SGB members are sometimes deployed to serve in the SGB for secret agendas of unions, who have a tendency to monopolise school governance. As a result, South Africa has still experienced the same problems in school governance over the past 12 years of democracy (Rangongo, 2011, Mestry & Hlongwane, 2009). The researcher argues that most members of the school governing body are illiterate, which makes it easier for unions to take advantage of them. They are in the governing body due to the relationship that they have with the community, such as belonging to the same congregation, rather than having the necessary skills and information to assist in the governance of schools. This means that they fail to address core business issues that relate to the support of learning and teaching at school, such as safety issues and disciplinary issues of learners.

SGBs are also used to deploy principals in various schools to continue serving their interests, which hampers the success of the African child. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2016, in the Mashishila circuit, interviews were conducted for Mathematics and Accounting or Physical Sciences posts, which left much to be desired. A candidate under the assumption to be without SACE certificate and a module for Mathematics as required per advert was awarded the post, followed by a dispute. The dispute could not be resolved at school level until the office of the acting district director intervened on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016 without success. This indicates that SGBs lack skills and information regarding their roles in schools. The claim further stated that SGBs were misled into awarding the post to an unsuitable candidate, according to section 20 (1) (i) of SASA. They just recommended the person, with the view that learners should have an educator. Parties raising the matter also had secret agendas regarding the filled post and other unfilled vacancy post.

The researcher argues that an open vacancy list for promotional posts also indicates that such posts are actually created for specific people to come and serve secret agendas.

According to Rangongo (2011: 35), this “further stipulates some weaknesses identified in terms of financial processes as reflected on circular 34 of 2004 of the Gauteng Department of Education, which are also regarded as relevant for the impact of the SGB with regard to financial management”. The researcher agrees that the weaknesses that were noted previously still exist today. She further argues that the training that was conducted in the past has not yet undergone improvements to deal with the weaknesses, hence these remains a problem. Neutral DoE officials need to conduct workshops that could empower SGBs.

SGBs also fail to account to parents and the community at large. They shift their responsibilities of handling finances to the educators in the SGB, as well as the principal and finance clerk. This creates an opening for staff under the leadership of the principal to misuse funds. SGBs fail to serve as a bridge between schools and the community as an agent of power and focus in society. The situation may be compared to the times when governance structures were more accountable to the National Party government than the school and the community. Therefore, SGBs lack skills to implement sections 42 and 43 of SASA.

### **2.6.1.3 Opportunities for SGBs**

The school governing body should also deal with safety in schools, in order to ensure that effective learning takes place in a safe, secure and positive environment. In addition, educational policy expects school governing bodies to play an important role in the establishment and maintenance of sound discipline in schools. However, Mestry and Khumalo (2012: 102) indicated that “most parent in the school governing body that they would rather have the principal and the school management team (SMT) design and enforce the learner code of conduct and they as parents would support the school in their endeavours to maintain effective discipline”. The researcher argues that school governing body ignores the code of conduct due to lack of adequate knowledge and training to implement it effectively.

Unlike in the past, under the apartheid regime, SGBs today are given the opportunity to deal with the admission of learners in public schools, and to develop all 23 policies in schools. They are leading the fundraising process in schools, unlike in the past when school boards had to apply for permission from sponsors to raise funds, and without their approval, they were forced to return the funds to the owner (Tsoetsi, 1999).

In contrast to the past, SGBs close the gap between the school and the community. Parents are given the opportunity to vote for parent representatives to serve their needs in school governance. They should therefore properly exercise section 23 (1) (a) and (2) (a) to (c) of SASA when electing their representatives in SGBs.

SGBs also have the opportunity to make recommendations for appointments during promotional posts. The principal should be fair and empower them by explaining their boundaries and highlighting the line of operation, so that it is not confused with political operation (Khanal, 2013:6). This clarification will curb the tendency of politicians to form part of school governance in order to serve their interests. The most suitable candidates should be recommended to occupy positions, without bribery taking place.

SGBs are from the same community of parents of learners, and therefore have closer contact with their needs. They have an important role to play in finding suitable people with skills that are needed for school projects, as long as there is no nepotism.

As mentioned under 2.6.1.1, the QLTC members could render voluntary services to the school and assist learners in different subjects that lack highly qualified educators, such as Accounting, Mathematics and Physical Sciences. The researcher argues that most highly qualified professionals in these fields are not employed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). However, through the QLTC, accountants and engineers could assist learners, in order to ensure good performance for our schools, especially in those subjects which are perceived to be very difficult.

#### **2.6.1.4 Threats to SGBs**

One of the threats to SGBs is that because they fail to take effective decisions regarding the employment of suitable staff members to teach learners, learners might relocate to better schools, and good teachers will do the same. SGBs should allow teachers to go to better

schools in order to avoid tension. It is better for teachers and learners to relocate than to stay on a sinking ship, as this might hinder their future opportunities.

The chairperson of the SGB should address parents at the beginning and end of the term, in order to set the tone of the school. He should highlight policies such as the code of conduct, as this seems to be very troublesome. Learners should be reminded of their duty to do their school work regularly, so as to pave the way for better achievement. This will assist educators to abide by section 10 of SASA.

Principals are incapable of acting as both ex-officio and member of the SGB. According to section 19 (2) of the Schools Act, they should assist the SGB to perform its functions in terms of SASA. However, the dual role of the principal hampers the functioning of SGBs. Gert Sibande District is found to have employed 73 naturalised Africans as educators in April 2016, with no relevant or duplicate qualifications. This shows that SGBs are used to sign contractual forms incorrectly, in order to pursue their secret agendas. They also sign contractual forms to employ educators when the enrolment figures have dropped and they do not have a post. Unpaid educators usually refer such matters for union intervention, which results in SGBs paying for educators for whom they have not budgeted. The DBE also places SGBs in jeopardy by delaying the approval of contractual forms. The delaying tactics of the DBE is assumed to be verification of documents for potential employees however the verification is fruitless and time wasting as it later shows to be bearing no fruits.

The researcher argues that officials in the DBE should communicate amendments to policies early to all stakeholders, including SGBs. They will then be able to take necessary steps to correct such amendments if deemed necessary, in order to ensure that ignorance and disrespect of policies is permanently eliminated. Another threat to SGBs is that office-bearers elected in accordance with section 29 (1) to (3) of the Schools Act end up playing a leading role in governance, leaving the rest of the SGB in the dark. Principals hold meetings with the executive of the SGB and take decisions, which they later fail to inform the whole SGB about. Executive members are a sub-committee to the SGB and should ensure that notification of decisions taken reaches all SGB members, in order to avoid future challenges.

Section 30 (1) and (2) of the School Act states that school governance should establish committees in SGBs. The executive should form part of such committees, in order to facilitate reporting to the entire SGB. However, committees are found to be dysfunctional during the drawing up of budgets, as they do not do as required.

The term of office for office-bearers is one of the biggest challenges in SGBs. Section 31(3) of the Schools Act states that the term of office is one year. However, this contradicts section 30 (1), which stipulates that the term of office of the entire SGB is three years. Office-bearers thus end up serving for three years rather than one year. This poses challenges if office-bearers are not capable or lack skills to lead in governance. The SGB may find itself facing the same challenge regarding office-bearers serving for three years, thereby rendering governance useless. The office of the head of the department should, under section 25(1) of the Schools Act, appoint people to render services for a period not exceeding three months.

The researcher argues that since 2004, she has worked as a teacher, and during this time, SGBs have never been reported for failing to perform their functions, even if they have done so. Schools are used to facing challenges for the period of three years without assistance. Although SGBs are from the same community as that of learners, they are unable to create a link between the school and home, such that educators at schools welcome parental visits to the school to check on their learner's activities and performance (Chen & Gregory, 2010; Brown & Beckett, 2007; Westhuizen & Mosoge, 2001; Wolfendale & Bastiani, 2000; Fine, 1993). Educators are found to be threatened by continuous parental visits to the school. They feel that school visits either from SGBs or parents are mainly to check on them as they engage in their professional duties.

SGB members are compelled to align themselves with unions and political parties regarding decision making. In the process of complying with unions and political parties, SGBs neglect to implement sections 42 and 43 of SASA, by failing to account to parents. This perpetuates the challenge of parents not participating in the education of their children (Plaatjies, 2014). The failure to account with regard to finances also results in parents' lack of interest in paying for school projects.



Furthermore, the training of SGBs after elections is left up to principals. The researcher argues that principals do not have enough time, due to their tight work schedule, to conduct this training, and this threatens the functionality of the SGBs. The principals are unable to use their custodial role to ensure that the participation of the SGB is maximised by ensuring that there is free expression during meetings, so that all ideas are heard (Mafora, 2013; Agasisti, Catalano & Sibiano, 2012; Mavuso, 2009; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2008; Heystek, 2003; Somech, 2002; Heystek, 2001). They respond to ideas in such a way that members perceive themselves to be useless to the meeting and end up not contributing, for fear of being criticised. Understanding that the principal is more knowledgeable, SGBs further shift the responsibility to principals of rubber-stamping decisions from quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools, including disciplinary issues (Heystek, 2011; Van Wyk, 2004; Xaba, 2004).

The researcher argues that principals will always face challenges regarding SGBs, as they are recommended without being competent, and are therefore unable to assist SGBs, the same SGBs that unfairly recommended principals for their posts. The researcher further states that most principals served in unions and political structures in the past, hence it is easy for them to pursue another agenda in the SGB. Parents want teachers to discipline their children. The researcher argues that parents should play their role of participating in hearing cases of learner misconduct and take the necessary steps to enforce discipline in schools. They should also volunteer to monitor learners who have misbehaved while they are engaging in the disciplinary action imposed on them. It is argued that the “Role of parents remains a serious problem in UK and all over the world” (Plaatjies, 2014: 27). In the researcher’s view, if developed countries such as the UK struggle in terms of the role of parents, with a limited number of illiterate parents, then it can be expected to be worse in South Africa, which has a high number of illiterate parents.

The Department of Education has for years conducted limited training for executive members of SGBs. This selective training, however, does not guarantee genuine participation of SGBs (Tsotetsi, Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2008; Hanson, 2007; Poo, 2006; Heystek, 2004). The DoE conducts training strictly for the principal and the executive of the SGB in a ‘one size fits all’ programme. This training is not effective, however, as it does not assist them to perform their duties. Training is supposed to be conducted for schools within the same cluster, followed by training by the circuit manager of schools experiencing particular challenges. Since 1997, SGBs have created a field of tension between them and

principals, and have disturbed power relations in many schools (Bagarette, 2011) due to selective training. According to section 19(2) of the Schools Act, principals of schools are required to render all necessary assistance to the SGB in performing its functions. However, principals tell half-truths, knowing that they are the only officials at school level who are in the position to assist SGBs. They take advantage of the situation and use SGBs to pursue their own secret agenda. In addition, unsuitable candidates are recommended for appointment under the influence of principals.

“SGBs are from all spheres such that during their term of office it is likely for them to develop micro politics among South African parents in school governance” (Ng, 2013:668). Such developments will hinder the delivery of quality service in relation to school governance. SGBs will be dragged to work, similar to school boards in the past, where appointments were given to candidates with credibility in politics, which did not translate into suitable candidates for the position. SGBs link the appointment and control of candidates after appointment (Deacon, 2011). These appointed candidates account to the principal as the representative of the department, not to SGBs.

In summary, presently effective schools are schools that produce beyond 80% in their Grade 12 results. Schools are pressured to introduce subjects that are deemed simple for learners to pass, in order to obtain a 100% pass rate. The SGBs accept such introduction because they lack skills to interrogate a curriculum that is relevant to community needs (Singh, Mbokodi & Msila, 2004). SGBs lack the capacity to understand that the outcome of such decisions will be unemployed young community members. The DBE requires quality in subject combinations for the future. However, DBE officials neglect to resolve contextual factors presented to them for intervention. They also ignore the failure to reach 80% at provincial level in terms of learner performance, implying that with all strategies in place, they have reached a cul-de-sac point. They need to entertain issues such as the redeployment of educators and discipline of learners in schools.

The redeployment of educators misplaces educators who play a pivotal role in learner performance. The DBE and SGBs lost many cases in courts trying to deal with discipline issues (Smit, 2013); hence both parties now fear applying the SASA with regard to learner discipline. The South African Constitution is used in courts to suppress the roles of SGBs, and even the Head of Department at provincial level. SGBs, similarly to school boards and

school committees in the past, are a political fact. Political and education systems are interdependent and inevitably serve each other (Tsoetsi, 1999:4). The author also mentions that the education system imparts essential knowledge to society or its citizens, and performs other important functions that are central to the continuity of a particular political system. SGBs are elected by parents, but are a creation of the higher unit of our government, and unitary education has a lot of challenges.

Table 2.1 below presents other legislations that work together with SASA in South Africa. It is important for school governance to know and understand the implications of these legislations for their roles. Table 2.2 indicates those countries used by the researcher to compare to SGBs in South Africa, and summarises their similarities and differences.

**Table 2.1 Policy guide, legislation and procedures**

Problems encountered	Legislation	Who takes action to resolve challenges
School safety measures, vandalism to school property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South African Council of Educators (SACE) 84 of 1996 schedule guidelines for a code of conduct for learners</li> <li>• National Education Policy Act (NEPA) 27 of 1996 sub- section 7</li> <li>• Regulations for Safety Measures at Public Schools</li> </ul>	SGB refers the matter to a tribunal committee for adjudication
Discipline, cases of learner misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South African Council of Educators (SASA) 84 of 1996 schedule guidelines for a code of conduct for learners SASA sub-section 8</li> </ul>	SGB refers the matter to a tribunal committee for adjudication

Problems encountered	Legislation	Who takes action to resolve challenges
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School code of conduct</li> <li>• Alternatives to Corporal Punishment SASA 84 of 1996 sub-section 10</li> </ul>	
Discipline of educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South African Council of Educators Code of Conduct (SACE),</li> <li>• Employment of Educators Act (EEA) 76 of 1998 schedule 2</li> </ul>	<p>Principal follows the nature of the case after a final written warning referral is made to the Department of Labour through the line function in the DBE. The Department of Labour formulates a charge sheet for the educators who will be served. Unions will be involved for representation until a verdict is reached.</p>

**Table 2.2 Summary of the effectiveness of school governance in various countries**

Country	Composition/ Structure	Legislation	Functions	Who decides
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Parents/guardians, teachers, community leaders, principal/designee (non-voting)	Education Act 1986 and 1988	Provide strategic direction, accountability and participation in decision making	Head master
Denmark	Parents, learners, principal, teachers	Education Act 1993	Develop guidelines for school activities	Principal
Brazil	Parents, principal, teachers, learners	-	Participate in school management	Principal
Uganda	Parents, members from education committee, members from commissioner for education of the central government, head master	Education Act 1969	Design operational plans, programmes and monitor functionality of schools	Politicians
Norway	Parents, pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff, principal	Education Act 1998	Promote all aspects of education	Principal
Tanzania	Parents, teachers, non-teaching staff, board employees, trustees, community representative, student, principal	Ontario Regulation 612/00	Promote democratic governance in schools	Board
Namibia	Principal, learners, co-opted members	Education Act 2001 No. 16	Promote learner-centered education	Principal
Lesotho		After introduction of Lesotho Education Act.No.10 of 1995/95	Ensure accountability in schools	Principal

## **2.7 THEORIES ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

A discussion of theories on school governance is presented in this section, in order to show their relevance to the study. The theories will also show their usefulness in ensuring that SGBs have a positive impact on teaching and learning in their school environment. These theories also demonstrate how SGBs can become more skilful and contribute significantly to the development and growth of schools, and how they can become less dependent on principals and unions, who are always eager to pursue their own agendas.

### **2.7.1 Theory of action**

The theory of action was developed by Argyris and Schön (1974), who defined it as a theory of deliberate human behaviour, serving to explain or predict behaviour (Argyris & Schön, 1974:6, cited in Naidoo, 2005). The theory is linked to cognitive maps, which constitute frameworks used to guide, interpret and justify actions. The theory of action affects the way in which SGBs interpret the demands made by policies on them in the interplay between policies that attempt to direct local actions and the direction that is constructed by local actors.

In school governance, the theory is linked to the intentions and functions that policy documents or actors define as objectives of school governing bodies. The theory in use is linked to the functions that school governing bodies perform. SGBs are established to extend activities to in support of the effective functioning of schools. However, they have little regard for democratic participation. The researcher argues that SGBs are dominated by principals and their educators, and learners are excluded from SGBs. Although they have legal powers to do so, parents avoid addressing this exclusion, as they only want representation (Plaatjies, 2014:27). They are convinced that direct participation implies that they want to control.

School governance and decentralisation are based on the theory of action. The theory presumes that the institutionalisation of local school autonomy will ensure broad effects on education. New democratic policies such as SASA aim at the creation of a new governance structure that includes the participation of all stakeholders in the decision making process. Actions are promoting a narrow understanding of the policy, which privileges technocratic efficiency over grassroots participation in the decision making process (Daun, 2007).

SASA ensures the election of all stakeholders to the structure. It guarantees that parents are in the majority in the SGB structure. The assumption is that the majority status guarantees power to control schools. However, SASA is serving to reinforce existing power patterns and privilege in schools in the broader society. The researcher argues that parents are in the majority; hence without proper training in the governance structure, the execution of their roles will not have an impact on public schools. Properly trained SGBs should ensure that learners attend meetings. They need to understand that without learners' attendance of meetings, they are incomplete and so are their decisions. SASA is associated with participatory democracy, but it should also address changing, modifying, challenging and redefining policy (Daun, 2007).

SGBs possess limited powers in terms of admissions and exclusions, as well as budgets and finances. Principals take the lead on admissions in the presence of SGBs. They decide to exclude learners and convince SGBs of their good intentions. The SGB should challenge the principal about decisions that are unclear to them, reminding the principal that admissions and exclusions may be referred to the HOD for intervention, who may allow admission after registrations are closed.

There is a thin line between the SMT and SGBs, which causes conflict between them. The solution to this is for the two parties to work together, in order to avoid turning governance structures into theatres of struggle, as was the case in the past. In the researcher's view, SASA allows SGBs to suspend a learner who has misbehaved for 5 days only. SGBs cannot expel a learner from school; as such matters are referred to the Head of Department (HoD). An appeal after the decision of the HoD is referred to the MEC. The researcher agrees with Smit (2013: 353) "that there are misconduct cases that are difficult to match with culprits to punish them". Policies have gaps that allow culprits to get away with their bad behaviour. Therefore, SGBs cannot expel learners from school, even though they have evidence that such learners are putting other learners' lives in danger.

### **2.7.2 Critical theory**

Critical theory is associated with the Frankfurt School in Germany, and refers to the work of members of the Institute for Social Research, which was established in 1923. Critical theory is an educational movement guided by passion and principle, which aims to help people

develop a consciousness of freedom that recognises authoritarian tendencies and connects knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action. This consciousness relates to challenges that people face on a daily basis.

“The theory is about enabling the participants to claim power and develops the know-how to take action against oppression to liberate themselves through participation in their education” (Giroux, 2011, cited in Mbunyuza-De Heer Menlah, 2013: 76). Elected SGBs elect executive members to serve as office-bearers. Their responsibility is to represent the interests of the SGB that elected them to office and the parents. The researcher argues that SGBs should ensure that they implement SASA. Furthermore, they should ensure that sub-committees to the SGBs are operational and that reports are sent to them about programmes. The challenge of RCL not participating in SGBs, even though SASA gives them the right to do so, should also be dealt with.

SGBs participate in activities and empower themselves to curb the domination by educators. They should understand that SASA mandates them to deal with learners’ code of conduct, and avoid shifting the responsibility for this onto principals and educators, which places the latter in a good position to be viewed as people who are more knowledgeable than SGBs, and gives them the opportunity to pursue their secret agendas. They will then treat learners guilty of misconduct differently, in order to protect their secret agendas.

Members of the executive who are not equal to their task and fail to report to the entire SGB must be replaced, rather than spending a year as an inactive office-bearer. All SGB members chair the sub-committees of the structure. They should therefore understand that it is through their involvement that they will be able to realise the limitations of SASA and make suggestions when necessary.

### **2.7.3 Community of practice theory**

The origins and primary use of the concept of a community of practice comes from learning theory, through the involvement of everyone in the community. The theory was developed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger in 1991. Community of practice theory refers to people being engaged in the process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour, where they share a passion for something that they do and learn to do it better as they interact on a regularly basis (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community-of-practice>).



A school governing body is a group which spends time together for a period of three years, observing and performing simple tasks as they learn how to execute their roles together to have an impact on schools. SGBs participate fully and generate meaning through their engagement during their term in office. However, the challenge is that there is no assurance that what they are learning during their term of office is correct and in line with what they are supposed to implement in the course of executing their roles.

A community of practice comprises three characteristics which are essential to the understanding of the theory, namely: the domain, the community and the practice. The domain of school governing body members is an identity defined by a shared domain of interest for all members, who are bound to the domain and share a competency that differentiates them from other people in their community. School governing body members value their collective competence and continue to learn from one another, while people outside the group may value and recognise their expertise.

In order for the members to pursue their interests in their domain, they engage continually in joint activities of school governance. The members build working relationships while interacting with one another. SGBs reach decisions together, although the executive members are observed to be leading the other members who are not office-bearers. The researcher argues that such decisions could be best or worst for schools. Worst decisions happen when some members of SGBs attend a caucus about whom to score during post level one or any promotional post, so that the individual can be recommended for appointment. The researcher views this as the worst decision, because members in disagreement are lobbied to support such decisions.

The SGB executive in particular is used to manipulate the other members of the SGB. Instead of updating the entire SGB regarding the decision they have taken in order to have it ratified, they impose decisions on them with the help of the principal. It is doubtful whether ratification happens or if they are actually just rubber-stamping the decisions taken by the executive and principal on their behalf. The executive should continually update SGBs, in order to ensure that by the end of their term in office, the SGB re-elects or replaces them if deemed necessary. It is questionable that the entire SGB may replace the executive that

used to take decisions, so that they can just rubber-stamp them. This makes it seem as if only the executive knows about decisions and their motivations.

When office-bearers have executed their roles satisfactorily, they may be re-elected or replaced, in order to give other members the opportunity to lead them as the policy requires. SGBs should inform banks of such decisions and also indicate that it should not be penalised for keeping office-bearers as signatories for a period of three years. The replaced executive members should cascade information to the newly elected executive and assist in ratifying decisions that deserve such actions.

The members of the school governing body as a community of practice develop a shared repertoire through their experiences and ways of addressing recurring challenges. This poses a serious challenge, as principals, who are always members of the SGB, provide guidance on recurring challenges. In this instance, principals choose to guide in order to pursue their own interests, which could be seen as being motivated by personal gains. Ultimately, all school governing body members will end up sharing the same understanding in executing their roles calmly with the guidance of the principal. Meetings allow SGB members to realise their main sources of knowledge and share a repertoire in executing their roles in school governance. SGB members are thus vulnerable to the knowledge that they receive during meetings, rather than comparing it with SASA.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the literature review conducted for this study was presented, which included aspects related to school governance in the past, the strengths and weaknesses of various countries' school governance, lessons learnt from international experience for South Africa, a SWOT analysis of school governance in South Africa, the role of the executive members of school governance, and theories on school governance.

In the next chapter, the methodology used in the study will be discussed.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the research methodology used to collect data in the study.

A qualitative research approach will be used to understand how members of the SGB perform their roles in the running of the school, as this approach will allow the researcher to observe participants discussing issues during meetings in their natural setting on the school premises. In addition, in real world settings such as this, the researcher cannot manipulate the phenomenon of interest (Maluleke, 2008). The research design will be briefly discussed below.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology focuses on the research process and the kinds of tools and procedures to be employed in the study (Mouton, 2001).

In this study, the researcher will conduct a qualitative inquiry as opposed to using quantitative methods, because when doing a qualitative study, the aim is to provide a rationale or need for studying a particular issue or problem (Creswell, 2007). The researcher will inform her readers of her observations and experience with regard to the impact of the role of SGBs. "The term qualitative research connotes different meaning to different individuals" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:17). Other researchers understand qualitative research to be an interpretative inquiry, wherein the researcher interprets what she sees, hears and understands which is inseparable from the researcher's own background, history, context and prior understanding (Creswell, 2009).

A qualitative multi-site case study approach was used in this study to answer the research question, because this will enable her to understand social phenomena from the participants' perspective and in their natural setting. The researcher will record what the SGBs are saying and analyse the recorded words to develop themes. Since the researcher is studying the impact of the role of SGBs in schools, she decided to use focus group

interviews with three cases of SGBs and reduce the data to themes and categories through objective evaluation, in order to address the aim and purpose of the study.

“Qualitative is a term that describes an approach to research that stresses quality not quantity” (Miller & Brewer, 2003: 238). Therefore, it provides a detailed narrative description and holistic interpretation that captures the richness and complexity of behaviours, experiences and events related to SGBs in their natural settings. The researcher will also use documents such as minutes of the SGB meetings and parents recorded during her absence as data for the study. It should be understood that minutes are deemed by the researcher to be reliable, as they were not recorded for the study. The researcher believes that they were recorded while SGBs were in their natural setting, without the intrusion of any outsider.

The minutes will reflect the understanding of SGB members on issues that impact their roles, and includes the participation of other SGBs in school matters. As mentioned earlier, the focus group will consist of the five executive members of the SGBs and the school principal, namely the chairperson and deputy chairperson, secretary and deputy secretary, treasurer and principal. The researcher is of the view that there are multiple realities in research and that such realities will be discovered through the focus group session conducted with the executive of the SGBs and their principal. It will also show how they interpret SASA in the school situation to impact their roles as SGBs. The focus group session should also demonstrate how they adhere to policies, as prescribed by the Mpumalanga Department of Education.

“Qualitative research is an inductive and content specific research that focuses on observing and describing a specific phenomenon, behaviour, opinions, and events that exist to generate new research hypothesis and theories” (Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods, 2008: 729). The researcher is using the qualitative approach in order to be able to provide a detailed narrative description and holistic interpretation that captures the richness and complexity of behaviours, experiences, and events related to the school governing body in its natural setting. Qualitative research is best suited to achieving the objectives of the study, because it aims to determine the diversity of a phenomenon of interest within a given population. It is different from a quantitative survey because it seeks to examine the diversity among the units involved in the investigation. Qualitative research is not interested

in counting the number of people with the same characteristics, but rather to identify meaningful variation within the population.

In this study, the researcher aims to be objective and to report only the views of the participants, ignoring her own views. She used document analysis in the form of minutes which were recorded for SGBs' own purpose and not for this research. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the minutes were taken in the SGBs' natural setting, without the interference of an outsider to disturb their natural setting. The minutes will come from the three cases of SGBs, namely Lepogo Primary School, Nkwe Primary School and Tau Secondary School. The data from the three cases will be interpreted objectively, in order to obtain an understanding of the participants' views.

The researcher only has knowledge of the characteristics that assisted her to choose the schools purposively, and much will be discovered as the research progresses. A "case study is an in-depth examination and intensive description of a single individual, group or organisation based on collected information from a variety of sources, such as observation, interviews, documents, participant observation and archival records" (Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods, 2008: 730). In this study, the researcher will use focus group interviews, document analysis and observation to collect data. These methods can under no circumstances be used in quantitative research, hence the use of a qualitative research approach.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

"A research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data" (Bryman, 2004: 27). It entails the way of collecting data that is best suited to answer the research question in qualitative research. It also covers the type of the research topic to be investigated. The topic influences the reporting of data and the analysis of data that will be suitable for this type of study. In this study, the researcher chose to use a comparative design for a qualitative research strategy where multiple cases will be studied. A case is associated with a location such as a community or organisation (Bryman, 2004).

The target population of this study are the SGBs of the schools in the Gert Sibande District of the Mpumalanga province in South Africa. The district has 539 public schools (MDE-Updated Summary of Post Provisioning for 2013 as Per EMIS Data), and the study purposively selected three schools to participate in the study.

The researcher knows the characteristics of the schools in the Gert Sibande District due to the challenges that they encounter during union meetings. Norms and Standards for Funding classify schools according to wealth quintiles, and the schools are then subsidised accordingly. The principles used to govern the determination of the school's poverty or quintile ranking include:

- “The relative poverty of the community around the school, which in turn, should depend on individual of household advantage or disadvantage with regard to income, wealth and level of education; and
- Data from the national Census conducted by Statistics South Africa, or any equivalent data set that could be used as a source” (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009: 46).

The researcher chose the quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools, as they are associated with a lower socio-economic status and less competent parents (Heystek, 2011). Furthermore, it is also mentioned that the parents in quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools require principals to make decisions about their own or teachers' involvement in governing body functions. According to Mestry and Bisschoff (2009: 46) “quintile 1 are the poor schools whereas quintiles 5 are the affluent schools”.

This study is undertaken as a case study of selected schools in the Badplaas and Mashishila Circuit of the Gert Sibande District in the Mpumalanga Province. “A case study research is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question” (Bryman, 2004: 48). The researcher chose three SGBs as cases, since she is interested in a group of cases rather than an individual case, so that other researchers can understand a given case based on the knowledge of other cases (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Furthermore, the three cases were chosen because it is believed that studying them will lead to a better understanding and perhaps theory of a still larger collection of cases (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:). As mentioned in section 3.2, the case study method is used in qualitative research and collects data, as discussed under sub section 3.7.

### **3.4 ETHICAL CLEARANCE AND CONSIDERATIONS**

The researcher ensured that the necessary ethical clearance was applied for and obtained before starting the process of data collection (Kvale, 1996, cited in Henning *et al.*, 2007). In this section, ethical considerations will be discussed under the following headings: consent, anonymity, privacy/secretcy, feedback and permission.

(a) Consent:

Assurance was given to schools and participants in letters of informed consent that their decision to participate in the study is optional after receiving accurate, clear and detailed information. The researcher had already consulted circuit managers of the two circuits, and they indicated their willingness to authorise and support the study. Letters were forwarded to the principals of schools and executive members of the SGB of each school, in order for them to indicate their acceptance or refusal to participate in the study.

Participants were fully informed about the study. The researcher explained exactly when focus group interviews and observations would take place, and also indicated that documents such as the paper budget from the DBE, and a copy of budget and minutes would form part of the study.

(b) Anonymity:

The names of the selected schools and participants in the study were to remain anonymous and confidential. The researcher gave the three cases of SGBs Northern Sotho animal names, thereby ensuring that they could not be traced back to the study. She knows that there are no such names as Lepogo, Nkwe and Tau in the Gert Sibande District of Mpumalanga. Participants were guaranteed of the use of pseudonyms throughout the study to protect their identity.

(c) Privacy/Secretcy:

The researcher guaranteed that all information gathered during the research would be strictly used for research purposes. The researcher will not, under any circumstances, share information with the union when discussing union matters. She strongly believes that

the information she received during the study could not have been received otherwise. In addition, all gathered data will be securely stored.

(d) Feedback:

The researcher reached an agreement with the participants to give them feedback regarding the information gathered during the study, in order to ensure that they would give her their input about the data. They could either agree or disagree with the information gathered, and also suggest whether or not the researcher should revamp the information.

(e) Approval:

(i) University of South Africa (UNISA):

The researcher submitted the 2014 application form to the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee (CEDU REC) at the University of South Africa for their consent. The university Ethics committee verifies whether the research under consideration conforms to moral standards, including issues related to professional, legal and social accountability (Bryman, 2004).

(ii) District:

The researcher had already obtained permission to conduct the study from the Head of the Department (HoD) of the Mpumalanga Department of Education before initialising the data collection process. The researcher personally submitted a letter to the HoD requesting permission to conduct the research. This permission was granted before the commencement of the study. The Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Education Research Unit registered the research in their database.

(iii) Principal:

The researcher was given an indication whether or not the three sampled schools would be participating in the study. In this regard, the letter sent to the schools requested them to either agree or disagree to participate in the study.

(iv) SGB Members:

The researcher was informed that the three SGBs from the three schools were going to participate in the study. In this regard, the letter sent to the SGBs requested them to either agree or disagree to participate in the study.



(f) Voluntary participation and protection against harm

The participants chose to participate in the study. They were not forced to participate, but did so out of their own free will. In addition, the participants in the study were free to withdraw their participation at any time without penalty. Furthermore, the study was free from harm, and participants were not exploited in any way.

### **3.6 GAINING ACCESS TO STUDY SAMPLES**

The researcher requested permission to conduct research from the Head of Department of Education in the Mpumalanga Province. This permission was granted in writing, which allowed the researcher to pursue the study. She requested a list of school names from the Badplaas and Mashishila circuit, in order to enable her to identify potential school samples and participants, based on the characteristics that were forwarded by the circuit managers. The identified schools are situated in rural areas of Badplaas and Mashishila. The circuit managers were personally approached by the researcher to serve as gatekeepers during the research process. However, the principals received letters requesting them to indicate their willingness to participate in the study.

Principals were contacted telephonically, in order to make appointments before visiting their schools. On arrival, the researcher briefly explained the research purpose to the principals, as well as to the other participants in the study. The researcher approached more than the required number of principals from both primary and secondary schools, so as to ensure that the required number of schools to constitute a sample was met. Therefore, it was anticipated that some principals and their SGBs may be unwilling to assent for various reasons (refer to sub-section 3.4 (f)).

### **3.6 POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

“Population is basically the universe of units from which the sample is to be selected” (Bryman, 2004: 87). It is associated with the entire population from which the sample is chosen. In order for the concept of a population to be clearly explained, it should be noted that “a sample is the segment of the population that is selected for investigation” (Bryman, 2004: 87). A sample is therefore found in the population. In this study, the population is all

SGBs in Badplaas and Mashishila schools of the Gert Sibande district, and a sample will be the 3 selected SGBs in the Badplaas and Mashishila schools which agreed to participate in the study.

The demographic composition of the school governing bodies that participated in the study from the three selected public schools in the Gert Sibande district are discussed below.

### **3.6.1 Purposive sampling**

Purposive sampling “is a type of sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher’s judgement about which ones will be the most useful or representative” (Govindasamy, 2009; Babbie, 2008; Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2007). In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling to select schools that fit the criteria of desirable participants with reference to her knowledge of the topic under investigation. SGBs purposively selected for this study were the SGBs from Lepogo, Nkwe and Tau public schools.

The researcher purposefully chose SGBs to participate in the study using the following criteria: accessibility, management, familiarity and cost.

#### **(a) Accessibility:**

The researcher has been the secretary of the school governing body three times, which is equivalent to a period of nine years, at the school where she taught. She served for four years as a member of the Regional Executive Committee (REC) of a teacher formation structure that engages on labour issues at district level. She has had the opportunity to learn about the challenges from minutes and reports, as well as to take part in the deliberation of some of these challenges.

She served for eight years as a branch executive member of a teacher formation, four years as gender convenor and four years as a branch secretary. She also served for eight years as a circuit task team (CTT) member at circuit level. The branch is a structure that engages on labour issues at circuit level. As a member of the CTT, she is responsible for training school governing bodies, specifically for shortlisting and interviews of candidates for promotional posts.

All the positions occupied by the researcher offered her a good opportunity to become known to principals and SGBs in the Badplaas and Mashishila Circuit of the Gert Sibande district. She also understood the importance of including schools that are different from the other schools, so that all types of schools are represented in the study. By strategically choosing SGBs in this way, similarities and differences among the SGBs could be established. The study comprised three SGBs from different schools, in order to formulate a multi-case study, thereby allowing distinguishing characteristics of two or more cases to act as a springboard for theoretical reflections on contrasting findings in the study (Bryman, 2004). The researcher chose to use cases in this study, as they are a direct and effective way of adding to experience and improving understanding (Gomm, 2000).

(b) Management:

The researcher selected the executive of the SGB and the school principal to participate in the study, in order to easily manage the sample, which consisted of the following:

- the principal,
- chairperson and deputy chairperson,
- secretary and deputy secretary, and
- treasurer.

The researcher conducted a total of one focus group interview and observations for each case. She used documents such as the minute book, and budget and paper budget of the selected public schools to add rigour to the findings.

(c) Familiarity:

The researcher purposively selected schools with similar characteristics in terms of quintiles 1, 2 and 3 for the study. "A population is the theoretically specified aggregation of study elements with similar characteristics" (Babbie, 2008: 211). Purposive sampling is also known as judgemental sampling. The samples shared the same age, gender, race, class, lay versus professional, socio-economic status, literacy level, income and demographics. The study was conducted at public schools in the Badplaas and Mashishila circuits of the Gert Sibande district in Mpumalanga. The researcher has been working in the Gert Sibande district since 2005, and is familiar with the area, as well as the school principals and educators in the area, and all those in the Badplaas and Mashishila areas, including learners, education officials, parents and the community at large.

(d) Cost:

The researcher chose to study three cases due to time and cost constraints. She considered her travelling expenses to the sites of the cases, and therefore was solely dependent on the available budget to conduct the study. No funds were obtained from sponsors. However, the distance that the researcher travelled to conduct the research was within her reach and budget.

The researcher is aware that due to resignations, there might be office-bearers who are new, while others are old. With reference to principals, the researcher found it unnecessary to determine whether they were new or old, because there is no new or old principal under the Employment of Educators Act, but only a principal. The principal, who is an ex-officio, represents the Department of Education, must be knowledgeable about school management and policies, and assists the newly appointed members.

The researcher also notes that since 2015 is the year of SGB elections, she trusts that newly appointed office-bearers will be elected due to the skills that they possess so that their roles could positively impact on their school governance structures.

### **3.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

The researcher refers to method of data collection as ways used by the researcher in gathering the data to answer the research question. The data to be gathered should be on information and challenges faced by the Gert Sibande district on the impact of role played by school governing body, parents and teachers at schools through the use of qualitative research approach.

“Qualitative research is advantageous to the study as it will provide rich descriptive data as observed by the researcher during interaction with the participants” (Tsotetsi, 2005: 14). Further qualitative research approach produces findings which are not arrived at by statistical procedures, but focuses on phenomena which the researcher seeks to understand in-depth. It is argued that “in order to ensure providing rich descriptive data, the researcher will employ the three types of data gathering techniques such as focus groups interviews, observations and document analysis to collect data” (Patton, 1990: 10).

### **3.7.1 Focus group interviews**

The researcher used focus group interviews as one of the methods to collect data. Focus group interviews allow for the in-depth collection of qualitative data from participants (Darlington & Scott, 2002). This method enabled the researcher to focus on the meaning that participants attach to the impact of roles of SGBs in public schools, and not the meaning that other researchers bring to the research or authors express in the literature (Creswell, 2009). The focus group interviews were conducted with the three selected public schools' governance bodies, namely Lepogo, Nkwe and Tau public schools. Participants were given the opportunity to share their understanding and views regarding the impact of the roles of the SGBs. They were allowed to talk about questions that were not specifically asked and that would enable the researcher to gather a lot of information about the topic under investigation (Creswell, 2013).

In this study, the researcher conducted focus group interviews based on a set of topics to be discussed in-depth, rather than using standardised questions (Babbie, 2008). The researcher chose to conduct the focus group interviews with the executive members of the school governing body. Therefore, the focus group interviews comprised executive members of the school governing bodies of three public schools, who were interviewed together in order to stimulate discussion.

The focus group interviews were conducted for 1 to 2 hours each, and consisted of 6 participants, namely the principal, chairperson and deputy chairperson, secretary and deputy secretary, and the treasurer of the school governing body, in order to provide a variety of information for the study. Smaller groups such as these have proven to make participants comfortable about sharing their thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and experiences (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech & Zoran, 2009).

In this study, focus group interviews were conducted in order to gain insight into participants' experiences of the impact of the role played by school governing bodies in their natural settings and to explore the interaction between school governing bodies. Focus group interviews were conducted until data reached saturation, which means that further interviews would no longer provide new information concerning impact of role played by school governing bodies. The researcher conducted focus group interviews with the three

selected public schools as cases that are dynamic, although they belong to the same quintile. The schools participating in the study fell within the quintile one category in different rural areas, although two are primary schools and one is a secondary school. The number of learner enrolments in these schools was different and added a dimension of dynamism. The cases' dynamism will frequently bring out aspects of the impact of role played by school governing body, parents and teachers in schools that would not have been anticipated or have emerged in other studies (Babbie, 2008).

Five questions were prepared prior to the interviews, but follow-ups would be done by the researcher when deemed necessary during the interviewing process. The aim of this type of interviews was to ensure the exchange of words aimed at avoiding monotony and boredom. It ensured gains to both the researcher and the participants, and also assisted the researcher to be on par with the participants' understanding of the impact of roles of SGBs. Most importantly, interviewing is an interactive process that allowed the researcher to investigate and probe for information that could not be observed, as they are designed to elicit views and unobservable actions with the aim of establishing some sort of inherent truth about the school governance situation, since there is no single or absolute truth when conducting research. SGBs will build on each other's ideas and comments to provide in-depth information that could not be obtained through individual interviews (Maree, 2014). In this study, participants who displayed quietness were encouraged to share their views during focus group discussions.

The researcher also asked questions regarding promotional posts, in order to establish whether SGBs know their role with regard to the following processes and how to demonstrate fairness: management of finances, budgets and procurement, establishing a code of conduct for learners and tribunals, implementing projects to upgrade their schools, meetings and standards of agendas and special meetings, policies to be developed or implemented, selection of executive members and term of office as members and the executive (see attached appendices).

### **3.7.2 Observation**

The researcher employed observation as another instrument to collect data. The reason behind the use of observation is that the information gleaned from observation fills the gap that is inevitably left by focus group interviews (Govindasamy, 2009; Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith, 2007).

The researcher observed how meetings were conducted under the leadership of the chairperson or deputy chairperson in the absence of the chairperson, as well as how minutes were written and read by the secretary or deputy secretary in the absence of the secretary, how the finances of the school were handled, how financial statements were presented by the treasurer, and how the principal reported to the SGBs. All these observations were made during SGB meetings, as well as in meetings between parents and teachers at the three chosen sites. The researcher observed the situation for about a year while conducting the study, and has also been making observations for the past eight years while not conducting the study. Through her observations, she realised that the SASA 84 of 1996 was not being read and understood properly, which motivated her to conduct the study.

The researcher observed how school governing bodies interacted with one another during meetings and witnessed their level of participation during discussions, so as to provide descriptions of school governance activities. The researcher brought along a checklist to be used to determine the availability of the documents relevant for the study. "Observation is deemed the best method for collecting data on complex skills of school governance" (Creswell, 2013: 17). The researcher observed SGBs engaging in their activities, which are deemed to be complex. The researcher also listened to their conversations during meetings. The meeting serves as a natural setting and is perceived by the researcher to be an undisturbed social world in which to conduct research (Bryman, 2004; Student Voice, 2010). In this study, the researcher opted for an observer participant status.

### **3.7.3 Document analysis**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used official documents such as those which are compiled and maintained on a continuous basis by organisations such as public schools (Govindasamy, 2009; Mashele, 2009). Documents used in this study came from meetings,

such as agendas and minute-books of the school, annual reports for parents, financial records, and paper budgets from the Department of Education, discipline records and curriculum materials. These were primary documents used to understand the impact played by school governing bodies in public schools. The documents used were written or printed, official, public or private, published or unpublished, prepared intentionally to preserve a historical record, or prepared to serve an immediate practical purpose (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1983).

In this study, the researcher studied official documents and evaluated their authenticity, validity and reliability, which were of paramount importance. “The reason is that some authors of these documents tend to have ulterior motives than the motives of that researcher require them for” (Cohen & Manion, 2003: 240). The researcher believes that these documents serve to highlight the impact of the role of the SGBs, as they were written for school governance purposes.

The researcher requested permission to access and peruse the documents, which was subject to availability and the willingness of participating SGBs to share the documents with the researcher. However, due to the fact that most school principals in the study knew the researcher, as mentioned in sub-section 3.9.1, she managed to get access to the documents from the three purposively chosen SGBs. The documents were of great importance to the study, as they were written when SGBs were not aware that they might be needed for future research.

#### **3.7.4 Field notes**

The researcher kept record of her impressions and experiences of the school governing body in the form of notes (Bryman, 2004). The researcher observed the SGBs using the checklist, but also made notes of what was not on the checklist that needed to be added. The observed notes are known as field notes and form part of the data collection to ensure triangulation. The field notes also included gender representation in SGBs, characteristics and what members preferred. The notes assisted the researcher to triangulate the data. Triangulation is of great importance in research, as it adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Therefore, the researcher used multiple instruments for this study, in order to achieve triangulation.



The collected data from the minutes of the SGBs, finance documents, checklist for observation, including field notes and responses from the focus group conducted with each of the three cases, will be analysed in chapter four.

### **3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF DATA**

The objective of any research is to produce valid and reliable results that are deemed trustworthy or credible and can be used by other researchers or readers of the research. Validity is concerned with whether what one is measuring is what one really intends to measure. “Reliability is the consistency and dependability of measures” (Rose & Sullivan, 1996:19).

The relationship between validity and reliability is that a finding may be reliable but not necessarily valid, whereas validity implies reliability.

In this study, the researcher used the concepts of validity and reliability to limit weaknesses in the results of the study. It is essential that research produces results that are trustworthy, valid and reliable (Merriam, 1998). The researcher conducted member checks to verify the correctness of the capturing and meaning of data with the respondents. In this regard, the researcher took the analysis to the participants to ensure that it represented a reasonable account of their experience. This helped to minimise the researcher’s bias and ensure the trustworthiness of the data collected. Additional and unworthy data that was not specifically sought will be appropriately organised and included in the final reports. Once more, bracketing plays a vital role in the trustworthiness of data, by ensuring that researcher’s beliefs do not influence the collection of data and its analysis. The latter serves to avoid biased results, but increases the chances of providing a reliable description of a phenomenon. In this study, the researcher solely recorded data received from the participants.

“Other researchers found that reliability is enhanced when more than one skilled researcher is involved in the analysis of data” (Bryman, 2004: 54). The researcher will recruit other skilled researchers with common interests to coordinate this study (Bryman, 2004: 54). This

coordination will ensure that themes, codes and categories identified are compared, and that differences are discussed by researchers in this study.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

Chapter three focused on how the study was designed and conducted, and highlighted the fact that a qualitative research methodology was preferred with regard to data collection in this study. Data collection methods such as focus group interviews, observations, field notes and document analysis were used in this study, as they were deemed most appropriate for the study. The validity and reliability of the information gathered were well recorded, and will be discussed in chapter four.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter three focused on the research methodology and instruments that were used to collect data for this study. Chapter four focuses on the collection and interpretation of data, and also presents the findings from the focus group interviews, observations and document analysis.

This chapter presents the findings of focus group interviews, document analysis, observations and field notes. The study of the three groups of SGBs included the principal, chairperson and deputy chairperson, secretary and deputy secretary and treasurer.

#### **4.2 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

Three separate focus group interviews were held with the SGBs' executive, including the principal. The participants were interviewed on different days and at different venues, but were given the same topics to discuss in focus group interviews. The venues were unused classrooms or computer centres. The researcher understands the participants' language and therefore did not need an interpreter.

##### **4.2.1 SGBs' perceptions regarding the use of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996**

The research question read as follows: What is your perception of SGBs' roles in public schools regarding the use of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996? In response to the question, the focus groups answered as follows:

Their opinion was that, for the governing body to be effective and efficient in its functioning, the SASA should be read. They indicated that their school varies from quintile 1 and 3 schools. The group stated that there are 10 of them in both the Lepogo and Nkwe (quintile 1) schools, and 15 in the Tau (quintile 3) school. After they were elected into office, they were given 7 days to elect the executive. This was a serious challenge, as they did not

know what skills they possessed. They mentioned that they are actually reminded by the principal that according to SASA, the term of the executive office-bearers is a year, and that they should elect other office-bearers the following year. This is a challenge, as banks change signatories once in every two years. Although they believed that they had elected capable executive members, they felt that it was not possible to change them, as per SASA, because they were not assisted by the banks.

One male SGB member from Lepogo School said the following:

'I remember we once have a challenge with a treasurer who absented herself from meetings for quite some time and neglecting addressing financial matters. According to SASA she was supposed to have resigned from the structure. The secretary executed both her duties as secretary and executed the duties of the treasurer. The SGB could not implement the code of conduct knowing that the bank could not change signatories at that time. The treasurer was always updated about meetings outcomes regarding her conduct. The SGB tried to advice the treasurer to resign however the treasurer was informed of every decision and advised by other members outside the meeting not to resign as the term of office was near. This was a mess. Sometimes elected members of the SGB are sent to serve hidden agendas on posts and funds of the school. They carry mandate from structures and also account to those structures. Such members are recalled if they no longer serve those structures' interests. I may sound naïve but I am actually telling the truth'.

SGBs need to visit schools at least once per term. They have to make additions to draft policies and adopt them, file them in school files and send other files to the circuit. As per SASA, SGBs need to develop policies, or they could have an ad hoc committee draft the policy on their behalf and then send it to them to be revamped and adopted, before being signed by the chairperson and secretary of the SGB, as well as the school principal.

SGBs mentioned a total of 23 policies at the school, samples of which were sent to all schools. SGBs were then given the opportunity to make additions before adopting them.

SGBs also have to do shortlisting and interviews, and recommend the most suitable candidates for appointment. They mentioned that it is important to note there is need for the

school in order to make proper recommendations. They also mentioned that previously they had agreed to recommendations that they felt they did not have any reason to challenge, but that this was all in the past now.

One member from Tau primary school said the following:

‘It’s a pity that we use to have SASA written in English and for us to receive the one written in our language we asked to return back the one that was written in English. Hence not all schools have this SASA. I was of the opinion that the DBE should have given us the one written in our language without taking the one written in English. Now that we have educators from other provinces in our schools they were going to use them and we use the one written in our language. This was going to be very helpful to SGBs. in future we should be asked to have an opinion on such matters cause they are basic.’

SGBs also make recommendations for the appointment of educators to the DBE as the employer. They elect a panel to represent them during shortlisting and interviews. SGBs should be informed about the needs of their school, in order to guard against any domination from the resource person, school principal and the observers of the process as the unions. If SGBs are able to ensure that there are set criteria, then the most suitable candidates will be appointed, so as to avoid appointing unsuitable candidates. As alluded to in chapter 2, SGBs sometimes recommend candidates who have political influence, which does not translate into the most suitable candidate for the job.

Other researchers have indicated that the reason for recommending suitable candidates is that they believe that educators are instrumental in developing the character and ethos of schools and determine the quality of education that prevails at schools, and that the value of teachers must be congruent with the values held by the community in which they work (Maharaj, 2005: 220). The present researcher agrees with this view, and further mentions that it is similar to the context of apartheid, when the contracts of teachers who were political activists were terminated. In addition, she notices that in this instance, SGBs had a negative impact on schools.

#### **4.2.2 SGBs’ understanding of the code of conduct for learners and educators**

The research question read as follows: What is your understanding of the code of conduct for learners and educators at the school?

In response to this question, the focus group answered as follows:

Their opinion was that SACE covers the code of conduct for educators, and that the EEA covers the misconduct and incapacity of educators. Therefore, SGBs do not develop the code of conduct for educators. However, SGBs are responsible for establishing the learners' code of conduct, according to Sec 18(1) of SASA, after all stakeholders, such as learners, educators and parents, have consulted with one another. The code of conduct is then adopted and all learners are given a copy of it so that they will always be reminded of it and avoid breaching it.

One member from Tau primary school said the following:

'Although policies fall under governance scope, as SGBs we shift the responsibility of discipline to the staff and the principal to deal with it. You know it is simple if let someone to discipline your child than if you do it yourself as a parent. Since our school is a secondary school, the principal should ensure that learners have copies of the code of conduct'.

They believed that the language of the code of conduct should be simple, understandable, and should be aimed at establishing a disciplined, purposeful and safe environment dedicated to the promotion and maintenance of quality learning. It should address the lack of commitment and neglect of school uniforms by learners from disadvantaged communities. The principal as the leader who sets the tone for the school at every morning assembly should encourage class managers to discuss the code of conduct with learners on a daily basis. He must also remind learners of it at assemblies or whenever he is given the opportunity to talk to learners.

He should mention the levels of misconduct: level 1- inside the classroom, level 2- breaking school rules, level 3- serious violation of school codes (school authorities considered to be ineffective, inflicting injury on another person, gambling, being severely disruptive of classes, forging documents or signatures with minor consequences, using racist, sexist or other discriminatory behaviour, possessing or distributing pornographic, racist or sexist materials, possessing dangerous weapons, theft, vandalism, cheating during exams) level

4-very serious violation of school codes, and level 5- criminal acts which not only violate school conduct, but also breach the law (transfer to other school, application to the provincial education department for transfer or expulsion). The SGB should sanction the tribunal committee to investigate the matter and submit its findings to the SGB; suspension should not be longer than one week pending the decision from the Head of the Department (HOD); in cases of serious misconduct, an alternative school should be found for the learner by the HOD; and an appeal should be directed to the MEC (learner/parent) (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2002a: 20).

The SGB should support the principal when he suspects a learner of carrying drugs, stolen property, weapons or pornographic material on the school premises and asks to search the learner. Searches should be conducted in a dignified manner, such that learners are searched by staff of the same gender. SGBs were concerned that the school management team mishandles information that they receive from teachers about learners carrying drugs to school, as this could result in the victimisation of staff members.

#### **4.2.3 SGBs' management of school finances**

The research question read as follows: What strategies do you employ at your school to ensure financial management?

In response to this question, the opinion of SGB members was that financial management powers have been devolved to SGBs to be utilised for educational purposes that promote the provision of quality education, according to section 20 of the Schools Act (1996). Lack of financial management skills will leave schools without necessary materials such as stationery, equipment and funds for the day-to-day running of the school. As a result, funds will be exhausted before the end of the year (Sokana, 2006: 4).

In the context of this study, the researcher knows that schools receive the 50% funding allocation for public schools in May and September every year. This implies that the lack of proper financial management could render schools penniless before the start of the upcoming year.

One female member from Nkwe primary school said the following:

'Budget needs to be drawn by September for the upcoming year after receiving requisitions from department and all sub committees of the SGB with the inclusion of routines such as electricity and or telephone (some schools are without telephones and use cell phones), refer to 2013 budget to notice inflation factor and paper budget from the DBE. We once had a challenge of owing a lump sum of money on electricity such that we were misled. A general assistant and a member of the SGB informed the chairperson of the SGB from his church that the secretary and the treasurer had been signing check to buy electricity for their houses hence the school owe such a big amount as R18 000-00. The principal came to our rescue stating that the school electricity is not on prepaid and paid by cheque so there is no way the two signatories could access the money.'

The SGB delegates the finance committee to draw up the budget and present it to them for modification if necessary, and then it goes to parents for approval through general votes in a meeting convened in terms of Section 38(1) of the Schools Act (Naidu et al., 2008:176; Mpumalanga Province, 2002b: 52). The approved budget should be used by the SGB to monitor the income and expenditure of the school through the use of requisition forms, cheques, claim forms and receipts.

Schools need to have quarterly audits (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th term) conducted by the finance committee. Their findings should be submitted to the SGB and recommendations made to avoid perennial challenges in the future.

One member from Lepogo secondary school said the following:

'In our school we agreed with the principal to appoint one administrative staff member to be finance clerk and deal with the finances. All of us we are without skill to draw financial statements including the treasurer. So we needed someone with skill to assist us so that our finance file can be properly arranged for audits otherwise the DBE will not deposit funds into the school account if we fail to meet such a requirement.'

At the end of every year, finances need to be audited before money is allocated to the school for the upcoming year, and forms have to be filled in by the bank and the signatories on the school account. The treasurers should understand the financial statement to be presented to parents.



The researcher noted that two groups of SGBs were not supporting the collection of a project fee to supplement the money allocated by the DBE. The researcher agrees with Maharaj (2005: 215) that parents and communities have to provide extra finances to ensure the smooth running of their schools, although SASA is silent on the matter. The researcher also acknowledges that the DoE takes time to repair schools, and it would therefore be better if schools supplement their income in order to develop and repair infrastructures. SGBs should exercise their powers according to section 36 of SASA and ensure that funds are supplemented.

#### **4.2.4 SGBs' understanding of school safety**

The research question read as follows: What safety measures are in place to ensure the safety of the school community?

The opinion of the respondents was that Section 6(a) of SASA stipulates that the Minister may establish regulations with the aim of ensuring safety in public schools. Safety is about property and human beings at school. The SGB has a mandate to ensure that learners, educators and school property are safe. The school should have plans which indicate the areas within the school, and the staff members who are responsible for monitoring these areas. The school must also have fire extinguishers, and the school gates should be open and closed at stipulated times. All visitors to the school should report to the office of the principal and sign the visitors' register. In addition, every visitor should be informed of the terms and conditions that apply to the school.

One member from Lepogo secondary school said the following:

'We decided to task the finance committee to check on the availability of funds to assist SGBs to buy a safe to keep fundraised funds which get lost in the hands of educators in the clerk's office, computers that got lost inside offices with no one to account for them, hire a day security after a learner was attacked in a class by a by passer-by at our school, the principal was confronted in his office twice by community members on different issues. We then realised that we ignored safety measures in our school and that one day we will face demise due to our ignorance if not negligence. For now the General Assistants assist to ensure that the gates are locked for security reasons. We have also applied for sign to

indicate that unauthorised entrance is prohibited, to ensure that all those who enter the school follow the channels in place for them to register and indicate the reason for their visits’.

The school must have signs specifying everything that is not allowed on the school premises and the ‘no go’ areas if there are any, such as the parking area where learners are not allowed, and the laboratory, computer centre and staff rooms where learners can only enter under the supervision of their educator. Furthermore, the committee known as the school-based support team (SBST) is not allowed to administer any type of medicine to school learners, as parents of sick learners should be phoned about the condition of their children and requested to report to school and take the learners to clinics or hospitals. Doing so without the knowledge of parents or guardians is a risk for schools.

#### **4.2.5 SGBs’ understanding of the school curriculum**

The research question read as follows: What is your understanding of the school curriculum at your school?

The respondents’ opinion was that SGBs and the principal should make provision for learners with special needs. In this regard, staff members should be identified to look after them. Schools have the SBST, which can assist here, since all committees have coordinators who are heads of departments from the school. Other staff members should identify such learners and submit their names to the SBST, as well as the principal and SGBs. SGBs must include a budget if this calls for extra work during or after school. SGBs should report the challenges to parents during meetings, in order to make recommendations with reference to section 25 (1) of SASA.

One member from Nkwe primary school said the following:

‘I do not understand the reason of special needs learners to compete with other learners under general because we do not have resources to cater them. We have trying for years to equip our school with Natural Sciences and Technology equipment’s but in vain. I wonder how we will be able to cater special needs. I am convinced our public schools are not ready for such learners. It might seem we are discriminating them but we really cannot cater for them. I also do not understand the reason of unions stating that an educator is not suitable

for appointment because the principal stated that he is the most suitable candidate for the post. I trust that the principal knows everything when it comes to employment'

This also tallies with the establishment of posts for staff, according to Sections 4 and 5 of SASA and the Labour Relations Act, which give SGBs the power to appoint staff, as long as the costs can be met. In terms of departmental posts, in line with section 20(1) (e), SGBs can recommend the appointment of educators (Education Amendment Act (2006)) and non-educator staff to the Head of Department at the school. The DBE faces challenges, however, in relation to SGBs recommending candidates who are not suitable for posts. The DBE appoints such candidates, instead of either advising that such post should be re-advertised or using its power to appoint the most suitable candidate, despite the recommendations. The researcher is sceptical about the lens that is used by the DBE in addressing issues. It seems that decisions are sometimes taken based on the person who committed such an act, rather than in the interests of the education of the African child.

### **4.3 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

As mentioned in chapter three, sub section 3.10.3, the researcher requested the following documents for the purposes of this study: meeting agendas and minute-book of the school, annual reports to parents (parents' meeting minutes), discipline records and curriculum, budget, paper budget from the Department, and curriculum materials from the three chosen schools.

- **SGB Minutes**

The researcher noted that all three chosen schools were able to provide the requested documents without difficulty. Minutes were available and were hand-written in a minute book or on an examination pad. The minutes of the two primary schools and one secondary school were written in their home language. The SGBs were trained in how to take minutes and write the implementation report, the latter of which indicates the decisions taken by the SGBs. It also indicates whether the decision was implemented or not and the reasons for failure to implement. Differences were only noted when attending their special meetings, since the aim of these meetings was to address specific issues, which vary among the three chosen schools.

The minutes of the meetings held by all three SGBs indicated that principals reported on school activities during meetings. It was noted that this takes up a lot of the time of the meetings if these issues are presented in a way that will ensure that both the SGBs and the principal are left with the same understanding with regard to the reported issues.

These reports indicated the challenges of the school on a daily basis, such as discipline issues, absenteeism of learners, broken school furniture, employment of staff members, termination of temporary contracts, and excursions. With regard to misconduct cases, it was noted that decisions were not completed or the tribunal committees did not sit and complete the processes that were supposed to be followed. The minutes indicated that financial reports are always completed before submission at circuit level. The researcher noted that schools in the Gert Sibande district submit variance almost quarterly to their respective circuits. The submission of variance indicates compliance with the DBE, which does not guarantee the accuracy of transactions regarding school finances. The researcher is of the view that this time should rather be used to conduct quarterly audits in preparation for end of the year audits. Such activities guarantee that there is less work before the submission of the end of year financial files and those financial statements are available. The preparation and presentation of financial statements pose challenges for most SGBs. It is noted with great concern that SGBs are able to spend funds easily, and then encounter challenges when they have to account for this. In the researcher's view, SGBs in schools have been around for a long time, and should by now be developed and literate enough to take charge.

- **Parents' Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of parents' meetings highlighted the difference in terms of the principal's report between primary and secondary schools. Minutes from secondary schools indicated that they faced a challenge with regard to discipline issues. A large number of learners were breaching the code of conduct, and the parents of these learners could not avail themselves when invited to the school. They also faced a challenge in terms of pregnant learners. The policy allows such learners to continue schooling, but the parents of these learners and the school should safe-guard other learners, by ensuring that precautionary measures are taken. They were unwilling to take responsibility, which resulted in the SGB reported the matter to a parents' meeting in order for a decision to be taken that would be binding on all parents. The parents decided that they should either cooperate with the school or remove

pregnant learners from school. In such instances, parents were reported to be uncooperative.

Although disciplinary issues were noted in all schools, they were more serious in secondary schools due to drug usage, breaking of school furniture, bunking of school activities, and copying during examinations.

These above challenges needed the intervention and involvement of parents in the education of their children. It is argued that “parents acknowledged that they should contribute towards the education of their children” (Quan-Balfour, 2006: 96-97). The researcher argues, however, that acknowledgement is no longer relevant parents should act to indicate their involvement. The school should share responsibility with parents, and both parties should synergise their efforts towards achieving the common goal of ensuring that learners receive quality education. School management should embrace parents as the first teachers of their children (Fullan, 2007: 190). Schools should involve parents in the education of their children to avoid a lack of participation, which is a perennial problem throughout the world (Plaatjies, 2014).

The researcher argues that although we are all responsible for the lives of children as they grow up, parents or guardians should take full responsibility regarding their children. This makes space for adult community members to play complementary roles. Parents should champion discipline at home to assist educators, and should avail themselves or send representatives to attend to all challenges at school, including discipline. Failure to discipline learners will result in an ill-disciplined society. Therefore, parents should continue to plant an apple tree, even if they know that the world will fall apart tomorrow.

- **Budget and paper budget**

All schools receive their paper budget from the DoE, indicating their quintile to serve as a guideline during budgetary processes. The researcher noted that the three chosen schools were not in line with their paper budget. The schools were declared no-fee schools and the amount allocated to them could not cover all expenses, as indicated on their budget.

The primary schools tried to use what was allocated to them by the DoE, although it was not enough. They had limited teachers for their grades and classes were merged, with Grade 12 learners being appointed to teach other classes due to redeployment. The SGBs were unable to employ qualified teachers to be paid from their budget. In addition, the schools that were situated next to other schools were facing the challenge of parents paying funds to assist in the running of the school, but when they are unhappy about the funds that are requested by the school, they take their children to neighbouring schools. The implication of this will be the redeployment of teachers and misleading information that the school is not being run properly.

There was a need for parents to pay extra funds to support quality education for their children, and the researcher noted that parents of learners in rural areas were less supportive of their school.

SGBs also failed to resolve a matter regarding the termination of the contracts of temporary educators because these employees were their relatives. They opted for their continuation, even though they were advised to terminate their contracts after twelve months. The DBE policy states that educators who have completed contracts for twelve months qualify to be permanent. This implies that all institutions under the DBE should follow such policy regarding contracts. When schools employ educators and pay them from the school account, it means that other services, such as paying a sport association, should be ignored. Any other association that uses a personal account for its funds should not be entertained in the form of payments whatsoever.

- **Disciplinary records and curriculum**

None of the schools were able to provide disciplinary records. They all dealt with disciplinary issues as and when they happened, and were not sure as to whether or not it was important to have and keep such records. Evidence showed that in different schools the same misconduct was handled differently. SGBs and SMTs were found to be perpetuating misconduct at schools due to favouritism. Learners who were noticed to be problematic were the ones to be recorded, in order to provide evidence when such information might be needed.

It is interesting to note that parents now acknowledge the fact that they have a contribution to make towards their children's education. This is an acknowledgement of the fact that with the rapid changes taking place in South Africa, the work of educating a child cannot be the responsibility of any single person or body. "The 'whole village' must come together to bring up the child" (Quan-Baffour, 2006:96-97). However, with the high level of illiteracy that we have in South Africa in particular, parents lack the necessary parenting skills to teach learners basic behaviours.

Learners should be part of disciplinary actions at schools. They should know the type of misconduct and the sanctions. As it was recognised by principals that learners require training to enable them to represent other learners, involving these learners in leadership in order for them to be informed about the types of misconduct and sanctions will capacitate them and influence their competence (Mncube & Naidoo, 2014).

The SMT in particular should lead the programmes of discipline in schools and refer to SGBs if deemed necessary. The principal should ensure that SGBs are properly briefed, in order for them to reach proper decisions that will have an impact on public schools.

#### **4.4 OBSERVATIONS**

In all the three sampled schools, the researcher observed the following:

- **SGB Members**

SGBs were observed to have improved in terms of attending meetings. Some members were able to arrive early at the venue of the meeting and others came late.

- **Agenda and minutes**

During standing meetings, the agenda was similar in all the SGBs. Minutes were not typed, and the minutes of some schools indicated those members who were present at the meeting. The minutes were kept in 2 quire note books. There were also minutes of the executive members of the SGB which contained decisions that were unknown to the SGB as a whole. Only minutes of the entire SGB were adopted by the SGB.





- **Credentials and apologies**

The SGB members were observed signing the attendance register before the start of the meeting, although their apologies were not in writing or available anywhere, although a quorum was always met.

*“Apologies for absence should be read out at the beginning of the meeting. It is important to send in an apology if you are unable to attend a meeting. Members of the governing body may lose their seat on the governing body if they miss more than specified number of meetings without apology”* (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009: 92).

However, the researcher noted that the chairpersons and their deputies in the three SGBs absented themselves from meetings or arrived late without apologies. The chairpersonship was convinced that they were exempted from apologising, but in actual fact, any member of the SGB who absents himself or herself from the meeting three times has actually released himself or herself from being an SGB member. An official should be invited to conduct bi-elections to fill the vacancy. The code of conduct treats all members equally, but there is no specific code of conduct for chairpersonship.

- **Participation**

The SGBs and their principal participated during the meeting, with the principal being given most of the time to report to the SGBs.

- **Meeting duration**

Two of the SGBs spent about 4 hours on average in meetings, whereas the other one spent about 7 hours 30 minutes. This was one of the longest meetings and members would start sending notes to the chairperson via the secretary, requesting to be excused. The chairperson and the secretary decided to adjourn the meeting so that it could be closed with its full complement. SGBs should time their meetings so that they can be adjourned if the time allocated runs out (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009). The researcher argues that all members of the SGB should be trained in the attendance of and participation in meetings as well. It is disturbing to note that after discussing an item on the agenda, as the meeting proceeded, a member would passively drag the meeting backwards and cause a disturbance. Members therefore lack skills on participation during meetings.

## **4.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused on what transpired during the process of focus group interviews with the principal, chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary, deputy secretary and treasurer at the Lepogo secondary school, Nkwe primary school and Tau primary school. All three groups were asked the same questions, provided their documents for analysis, and were observed at different times and venues.

It is argued that “governance is not an easy task and that all school governing bodies have one thing in common, they do not function” (Plaatjies, 2014). The researcher noted the limitation of providing late and selective training only to the executive of the SGBs. In this regard, early training to the whole SGB is vital, and should be provided by service providers, not school principals. She believes it has been for quite some time that principals have been assisting with the training, which has not been as effective as expected. SGBs were found not to be functionally literate to meet the requirements regarding SASA (Mafora, 2013; Mncube & Harber, 2013).

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study identified and described the impact of the role of SGBs on schools. The findings that follow in this chapter are from the collected data that was presented in chapter four.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS, DOCUMENT ANALYSIS AND OBSERVATIONS**

The summary, conclusions and recommendations below are based on the data collected from the three sampled schools, namely Lepogo, Nkwe and Tau school, through focus group interviews, observations and document analysis.

##### **5.2.1 SGBs' perceptions regarding the use of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996**

The findings of this study based on focus group interviews indicate that the three schools have heard about SASA during their training, which was conducted very late after their election to office. However, the Act was quoted by the principal during meetings where necessary. The respondents also referred to pages from their training manual for information about SASA.

The researcher is convinced that SGBs were made aware of SASA only during the course of this study. The SGBs indicated to the researcher that they had been shown copies of SASA. In the Gert Sibande District, schools were given copies written in English, which were later requested to be returned if the SGB needed the one written in SiSwati. Schools that lost their English version were not given the SiSwati version. This implies that such schools were to rely on the SASA and the Policy Handbook for Educators, which is an English version. This placed educators and the principal at an advantage, as they had their files to refer all matters that needed referrals. In all provinces, there are many older persons who are caring for their grandchildren, as the parents have died of HIV/AIDS (Mestry &

Bisschoff, 2009). Such community members could not be expected to read and interpret the SASA well.

All the three schools agreed that SGBs, RCL, SGB sub-committees, SMT and educators are key structures that need to work together to have an impact on schools. SGBs need to be introduced to SASA before the election of their executive members. The researcher argues that SGBs need to have proper knowledge of the executive roles, in order to enable them to elect suitable office-bearers. Electing office-bearers who are not relevant to the executive structure creates challenges, because the executive is in operation for three years, rather than only one year.

The study found that the members of the executive of the SGBs usually absent themselves from meetings without giving their apologies to the secretaries. Instead, they reported to the school principal or chairperson if they were going to be absent, rather than the secretary. The relationships between the secretaries and the chairperson were found to be characterised by tension. At times, meetings would decide to have a chairperson from the non-executive members, in order to enable the principal to give a report and avoid taking decisions. The researcher states that the executive should lead the entire SGB without fear or favour. SGBs should not be run similarly to traditional houses, and apologies for meetings should be in writing and sent to the relevant office-bearer. SGBs should always abide by their code of conduct, in order to fully exercise their powers. SASA states that parents are required by law to form the majority on SGBs, with the chairperson of the SGB being a parent (Mncube & Mafora, 2013: 13) and presiding over such meetings. Members should attend all meetings and should not be found wanting with regard to presiding over all meetings. The chairperson should avail himself, and if he cannot be present, he should request the deputy chairperson to preside in his absence. Therefore, the researcher is of the view that deputies should be delegated to perform functions, so that when the situation demands their assistance, they are in a better position to do so (see 2.5.3.6 & 2.5.3.7).

The findings indicate that the three sampled schools' governance impacted negatively on public schools. The study found that SASA was actually not known to them. However, the researcher could not check their understanding, as it was clear that it is partially known to them. Furthermore, the elected executive members relied on their political legislation for guidance.

The document analysis revealed that SASA is ignored during meetings of SGBs. SGBs end up neglecting their key functions, such as creating an environment conducive to teaching and learning, developing a mission statement for the school, promoting the best interests of the school, ensuring quality education for learners, ensuring the safety and security of learners, deciding on school uniform policy, disciplinary action, and policy regarding the determination of school project fees (Mncube, 2009).

It was also discovered that the DBE repeatedly sent schools policies without amendments after a period of 5 years. The researcher argues that the DBE was unable to add policies, such as the nutrition policy for schools. The DBE has created confusion, since it made SGBs dependent on it, and it can no longer sustain what they have decided upon. The DBE itself plays a major role in hampering the impact of SGBs in public schools.

Observations made in this study revealed that the chairperson and the secretary sit apart from each other, while the secretary, deputy secretary and treasurer sit together. Other members sit according to the churches or political parties that they belong to. "The researcher concludes that SGB members are unable to encourage tolerance, rational discussion and collective decision making" (Mncube, 2009:1), hence their seating arrangements.

The researcher recommends that the DoE should hire academics to prepare training manuals and present training to the SGBs. The training manuals should be in both hard copy and digital format. Facilitators should give feedback in the form of criticism aimed at correcting all wrongly interpreted legislations. In addition, the training should focus on the newly elected SGB members, and be finished before their term of office comes to an end. The trainees should also be given the opportunity to evaluate the training and recommend changes if necessary. The trainees should be well catered for, as they start in the morning and go on until late afternoon. Service providers who cater for provincial officials should be the ones catering for SGB training. The venues should be comfortable and of acceptable standard and training days should not clash with pay days, in order to avoid lack of attendance. The researcher also recommends that there should be a neutral body that handles the appointment of educators. She argues that in the case of promotional posts, candidates being favoured by SGBs or those in power taking advantage of SGBs do not

translate into suitable candidates after appointment. The principal serving as ex officio is the outcome of such decisions hence he is unable to assist SGBs with early training. SGBs are failing to have a positive impact due to the echelons that continue to be built in schools. In the Badplaas circuit on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 2014, a candidate was invited for an interview on the wrong date. The accounting officers at the time resolved to interview the candidate after recommendations were made. They were shielding themselves from the irresponsible act that they were committing in pursuing their secret agenda. Again, in February 2016 in Mashishila, a candidate who was deemed to be unsuitable was appointed in a post which was disputed at school, circuit and district level without success. The DBE is under the threat of failing to produce good results due to these challenges. It would therefore be better if training is conducted by knowledgeable trainers, in order to eradicate this perennial problem. Neutral officials should be appointed to deal with the processes of shortlisting and interviews. The researcher argues that if the provincial treasury is able to conduct an audit on human resources, it is also possible for appointed neutral officials to deal with shortlisting and interview processes.

### **5.2.2 SGBs' understanding of the code of conduct for learners and educators**

The study found that the code of conduct for learners aims to provide an environment that is conducive for learning and teaching. It also aims to prevent disturbing and disruptive behaviour at schools, and ensures that discipline is maintained. The findings revealed that SGBs receive reports of misconduct by learners from the principal. It is the principal who guides them in selecting people to form a tribunal committee to deal with the misconduct and make necessary recommendations to the SGB. It is clear that without the guidance of the principal, the SGB would not be able to deal with the misconduct hence the SGB prefers that the school principal and educators discipline learners. The data indicated that the shifting of discipline issues to the principal and educators is not effective, because other SGB members take advantage of this, believing that their children should not follow the route followed by other learners whose parents are not SGB members. The SGBs sometimes forget that serving as an executive member means that they are representing the SGBs and parents. The educators are guided by the South African Council of Educators (SACE) with reference to their code of conduct. The executive and the SGBs can report the conduct of educators to the principal, and other community members may report to the DBE or directly to the SACE.

The document analysis and observations concluded that SGBs should be trained in the code of conduct for both educators and learners. They should know the policies that govern educators and learners, so that they can refer to the appropriate policies at appropriate times.

SASA also addresses the conduct of SGBs in terms of managing conflicts among members. Such conflicts are associated with electing middle class parents in the belief that they have class-related norms regarding parental participation (Mncube & Mafora, 2013). In this study, it is apparent that parent representatives need to respect the SGB structure and members serving under it with regard to the code of conduct. They should follow the code of conduct of school governing body members, in order to enhance working relationships between all members and have an impact on schools. SGB members should follow their code of conduct in order to take responsible actions against those who violate their code of conduct.

Policies provide guidance to enable SGBs to make proper decisions that avoid favouritism. The challenge revealed in the findings is that the executive shifts their responsibilities onto the principal. As stated under sub section 2.6.1.3, most parents in the school governing body prefer that the principal and school management team (SMT) design and enforce the learners' code of conduct, and they as parents are willing to support the school in its endeavours to maintain effective discipline, but would rather not be involved (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). The SMT should be consistent in dealing with the code of conduct. All learners should be treated equally at all times. The researcher concludes from her observations that SGBs lack understanding with regard to when to vote to reach a decision, how to define a resolution, and how to adopt a unanimous vote. In addition, meetings should be timed in order to enable members to adjourn if time runs out (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009).

### **5.2.3 SGBs' management of school finances**

The findings indicate that principals are leading the process of financial management, as it is stated that they sign forms from the DBE accepting responsibility for school finances. The long-serving members of the executive of the SGB always remind the principal to alert the school management team (SMT) to the need to submit their departmental budgets. SGBs indicate that their challenge is that the educators are uncooperative when it comes to submitting their budget on time. Educators always complain that SGBs cut their budgets, while SGBs report that educators are not in support of paying the project fee. They misunderstand that projects led by the SGB, such as the cleaning of classrooms, security and school developments, are funded by the SGB. The SGB determines the amount to be paid towards projects which are referred to as the project fee. They also determine penalties for late registrations and fundraising fees every Friday. The decision to charge fees is solely that of the governing body, but it is a matter for the parents to decide (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009). In accordance with this, the researcher's conclusions highlight the fact that schools are subjected to strict monitoring of their budgets. All the three selected schools had plans for monitoring, although they were different, as the schools themselves were not the same. The similarity is that in all three schools, the principal approves transactions against the school account. The researcher proposes that since schools have claim forms to be filled in for all payments, there should be a requisition form that needs to be filled in as well, in order to inform the preparation of the schedule of payment.

The document analysis indicated that schools keep records of project fees and outstanding payments for books. It is difficult to control such records because there are many signatures of parents or guardians on a page. The researcher recommends that forms be designed for parents or guardians to sign, so that the school can get their signatures. The researcher believes that it is easy to peruse such forms to verify if parents have kept their promises.

The observations revealed that SGBs prefer discussing finances than misconduct or safety issues. It is true that in order for structures to run smoothly, finances should be in place, but governance seems to give it more attention than it deserves. The researcher believes that all aspects of governance are important, as stipulated in SASA, and they should be attended to. SGBs should also discuss issues focusing on classroom learning, rather than being obsessed with budgets and human resource (HR) practices (Bush, 2008: 85, cited in



Agasti, Catalano & Sibiano, 2012). According to the researcher's observations, this study concludes that parents (SGB) who support the school in paying project fees should continue to do so, as the support will ensure stability in terms of finances, because the funds from the DBE are insufficient to run the school and support the projects that are under the leadership of the SGB. The researcher also observed that in one school, the principal and deputy principal resigned as employees of the DBE, while the chairperson and treasurer resigned as members of the SGB in Badplaas in 2014. Educators in the SGB suspected that it was due to financial mismanagement that they resigned. The matter was then reported to the circuit manager for intervention. The researcher recommends that internal audits be conducted quarterly, similarly to the submission of variance to the circuit. The programmes of the SGB should include finance committee meetings and SGB meetings on a monthly basis, in order to ensure that all members of the SGB are on the same page with regard to the understanding of SGB issues.

In conclusion, both document analyses indicated that the SGB ensures that the school account is opened in the name of the school and has three signatories from the executive of the SGB, namely the chairperson, secretary and treasurer. SASA stipulates that the executive of the SGB may be changed on a yearly basis, but the executives of the three selected schools lasted for three years. This implies that there was no need to change them, as they were working in accordance with the policy and seemed to be the best chosen members of the whole SGB. The findings indicated that most executive members were serving for their third and fourth times hence they demonstrated sufficient knowledge about governance. The principal is a financial accounting officer, not a signatory to the school account.

#### **5.2.4 SGBs' understanding of school safety**

The findings indicate that all sampled schools lock their school gates in the morning and during break, and then open them after school. Tau school employed both day and night security staff. Lepogo and Nkwe primary schools only employed day security staff. All three schools, despite these differences, used a visitor book to register visitors before they could be assisted. All visitors have to be seen by the principal. SGBs indicated that before safety measures were implemented, they used to encounter the challenge of parents visiting their

children in classes without the principal's approval. Such visits disturbed teaching and learning and reduced contact time with learners.

The SGBs allowed schools to invite police to conduct unexpected searches due to the high incidence of drugs and weapons in schools. Schools have signs that clearly indicate which items are not allowed on the school premises, as mentioned in the safety policy. However, learners ignore the signs and continue to bring drugs and weapons to school. SGBs also placed signs that forbid unlawful entrance onto the school premises. One of the three schools indicated that they had an incident in which one learner stabbed another learner during break outside the school premises. Evidence showed that the learner had been arrested by police for other offences before a tribunal committee could sit to deal with his misconduct. The researcher recommends that learners should be visible at all SGB meetings. However, they should be given training on how to address matters without fighting. Attending the meetings ensures that their views will be heard. It is argued that "when pupils have a voice and accorded value school is a happier place, where pupils are happy and given dignity, they attend more and work more productively. There was far more evidence of pupils taking responsibility for their own learning. The link between legislation (for democracy in schools) and pupil achievement is an indirect but powerful one" (Mncube & Mafora, 2013:15).

According to the findings, the researcher concludes that the scholar transport from the DBE is placing the lives of learners in danger, since the service providers use transport that is not roadworthy to transport learners. Such transport locks the steering wheel on the road, the tyres are in poor condition, and the vehicles do not have discs. SGBs held several meetings with service providers without success. SGBs were unable to report the matter to the upper structures because they were threatened by associates of the service providers. The researcher concludes that scholar transport is actually not benefiting learners as it was supposed to, but only benefits the service provider in terms of payment for its services.

SGBs should supplement funds to ensure that schools have daily security staff. These personnel should control visits to the school, as school resources such as computers and printers are sometimes found to be missing, with no one to account for them.

The researcher agrees to the statement made by Bush and Heystek (2003: 136) that if school governance in England and Australia showed that they require substantial support from the principal in carrying out their responsibilities, then it will also be evident in South African schools. The researcher argues that this poses challenges in the South African context, because principals are misusing support to SGBs by pursuing their own agendas.

Due to HIV/AIDs, most learners are under the guardianship of grandparents. The Department of Education was therefore forced to prepare guideline policies for school governance to make additions to, adopt and implement. SGBs lack functional literacy regarding SASA. After adding a clause that allows schools to invite police to conduct searches due to the prevalence of drugs and weapons, SGBs failed to order schools to allow such conduct, fearing the creation of tension and confusion.

In conclusion, the document analysis and observations in this study indicated that learners are not part of SGB meetings and that schools do not keep records of cases of misconduct.

#### **5.2.5 SGBs' understanding of the school curriculum**

The study reveals that the school curriculum at primary schools is the same, although there is a difference in the language of teaching in certain schools. SGBs revealed that at the time of conducting the study, not all primary schools under Mashishila were using the same language of teaching and learning. The schools opted to use English to ensure that learners adjusted to it. SGBs also highlighted that it is not easy to admit or transfer learners, as the subjects are the same, with the exception of the language of teaching. Msila (2007) is convinced that school governance should strengthen curriculum ideals, as mandated by SASA. SGBs should comprise members who understand curriculum change and its implications. SGBs also revealed that there were challenges with regard to secondary school subjects.

There are schools that have been designated as science and technology schools, and such schools only offer the science stream. These schools also set criteria to select learners who are suitable to be admitted to their schools. SGBs should understand that some learners are rejected due to the set criteria. Such schools also offer Grade 8 and 9, which offer similar subjects to other schools that are not science schools. However, parents do not understand the difference in these schools. There are also schools that offer accounting

paired with mathematical literacy. SGBs point out that these combinations cannot bring us future chartered accountants, or if they do, it is only after a doing a bridging course at university, which is very expensive. There are other subjects at school that are meant to enable learners to pass their Grade 12 and follow the FET colleges. Subject choice depends on the strength of the learner. SGBs support a variety of subjects so that all learners are catered for. However, with reference to the science schools, it is a top-down instruction that they are bound to support.

The MEC in Mpumalanga stressed that accounting should be paired with mathematics in a speech he delivered on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016 in Ermelo. There are subjects introduced to schools, such as Music and Tourism, which were typically not available in our schools, and of which their value is unknown. SGBs relate curriculum to the performance of learners in all grades. They also relate it to absenteeism, lack of teaching materials and experiments, bunking of classes, redeployment of teachers due to post establishment, and supervision of learners for assignments and homework.

The curriculum choices of secondary schools are national for science and technology schools, without involving parents. The researcher argues that it is time for SGBs in South Africa to be composed of members who possess the necessary skills. She believes that matters regarding the curriculum could be handled by school management and SGBs, as it is done in countries such as New Zealand and Australia (Ainley & McKenzie, 2000). SGBs and SMT should realise that most learners face challenges with regard to the science stream and need assistance from experts in the field of science.

The observations revealed that SGBs continue to spend a lot of time discussing school finance issues. SGBs should at least tackle other issues as well, such as curriculum, redeployment of educators, extra-mural activities, safety and maintenance, and code of conduct for learners. SGBs should encourage the principal to ensure that assessment programmes are presented to parents before the beginning of each year. Parents must be given time to ensure that learners are in possession of all stationery needed to sit for their assessments. The SGB must assist the principal to protect teaching time, as required to enable teaching and learning to happen as planned (provincial circular 1 of 2016 on curriculum matters).

### **5.3 THE PROPOSED MODEL FOR SGBs**

The model for SGBs aims at ensuring that their roles have an impact on schools. In this study, the literature review emphasised the importance of the impact of the role of SGBs on codes of conduct for educators and learners, financial management, safety, and the school curriculum. The researcher realised that the district structure in school governance was launched at the end of 2014 in the Gert Sibande district. However, the local gap in governance needs to be filled to ensure parental involvement that complements the role of teachers ([https://www.dropbox.com/s/qsatef/cc200dgi/NSC%202014%20Schools%20Performance %20Report.pdf?di=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/qsatef/cc200dgi/NSC%202014%20Schools%20Performance%20Report.pdf?di=0)). The researcher also understands that the local community representative is of critical importance to school governance. Representativeness in school governance works well when those who form part of the representation have the skills to govern. The most important aspect of school governance is having capable SGB members with the necessary skills (McCrone, Southcott & George, 2011).

#### **5.3.1 The integrated SGB development model based on the literature review and focus group interviews**

The overall perceptions of the impact of SGBs' roles on schools regarding the use of SASA is negative, as governors only read some extracts from SASA in training manuals, which are based on certain topics. In order for the SGB roles to have an impact on their schools, SASA SGB executive members should conduct a thorough study of SASA no 84 of 1996 to enable them to execute their roles and impact positively on schools. The researcher refers to the focus group interviews that she conducted with the three purposive selected SGBs on the positions of the chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary, deputy secretary, treasurer and principal.

This study concludes that the principal should occupy one role, not dual roles. With reference to sub heading 2.5.3.1 on the role of the school principal of a public school as a member of the school governing body, the DBE should appoint neutral persons to represent it. In this regard, the DBE should appoint such persons at the provincial level and allocate them duties to deal with governance issues per district. However, such appointees should report directly to the head of the department at provincial level. The researcher argues that schools always face challenges regarding SGBs throughout their term of office, yet never

get proper assistance from the head of the department. Sub-section 22 (1) to (5) of SASA clearly states that only the head of the department may withdraw a function of the SGB if necessary and after following proper procedures. The researcher also emphasises that section 25 of SASA on the failure by the governing body to perform functions is incorrectly implemented, if at all.

The researcher further argues that when conducting the literature review, she could not come across any literature that stated that there was a situation which required the head of the department to apply sections 22 (1) to (5) and 25 of SASA anywhere in South Africa. The researcher is of the view that for school governance to function properly and have the impact that it deserves, the head of the department should implement what is required of SASA. SGBs that are not actually serving their purpose should therefore be withdrawn, and the DBE should appoint neutral persons to work with SGBs and report directly to the provincial office in order for the head of the department to take the necessary action.

In 2014, SGB members in Mashishila were found to have violated SASA subsection 26 on recusal during discussion and decision making regarding an issue in which they had a personal interest. The violations were noticed in respect of an educator and gardener post. The researcher witnessed, in 2000 in Marble Hall, while attending interviews for an educator post, that relatives of candidates were SGB members who were part of the panel, in an attempt to ensure that their relatives were appointed, regardless of the needs of the school.

In training conducted in the Gert Sibande district in 2012 for SGBs, the status of the principal in the SGB was questioned in the presence of the provincial official. The answer that was given was unclear, indicating that even the official was not well versed. The expectation of the training was that the official should quote the SASA to substantiate his answer, but he was unfortunately not in a position to do this.

Neutral appointees should be visible at all times when representing the DBE. During promotional posts, they should be given the opportunity to peruse recommendations sent for the appointment of candidates on all posts. The reason behind this perusal would be to ensure that candidates recommended for appointment are the most suitable and qualified candidates, and therefore deserve to be appointed. The DBE engages in wasteful and

fruitless expenditure when irrelevant candidates are appointed, who will later fail to translate schools into performing schools. Prospective candidates use their unions to get appointed, but they are not necessarily suitable candidates.

With regard to promotional posts, only candidates with the skill to use the newly introduced gadgets should be appointed, so that in the absence of administrative clerks, information could be sent to the DBE via these gadgets if it is urgently needed. Due to changes in education, the national office of the DBE might need to tap into school files to access information at any time, and this information should therefore be accessible.

Although this study focused on the executive of the SGB, the recommendation is that all members should be trained on all aspects of governance, with the inclusion of SASA, as they may be elected to the executive in future. Furthermore, those who are advanced in their understanding of SASA should always avail themselves to assist those who are lagging behind, in order to close the gap. SGBs should support principals and vice versa. The relationship between the principal and the governing body determines how much effort the principal will put into training of the governing body (Heystek, 2011). Therefore, the researcher highlighted the fact that neutral appointees should deal with SGB issues.

All stakeholders, such as educators and learners, also need support from governors. The researcher states that SASA and school policies should be thoroughly consulted by SGBs, learners and educators, in order to reduce the chances of policy distortion (Maharaj, 2005). The researcher further highlights that the findings of the study revealed that all members of the executive are important, and that they should always be present to take decisions, unlike having only the chairperson, principal and DBE officials present (Maharaj, 2005).

According to Heystek (2011:459), "*The provincial heads of departments (HOD) are responsible for the training of the governing body, so as to assist and empower them with their functionality. The HOD must provide funding for the training and appoint trainers. The provincially provided training is not always the highest quality, with the result that principals need to carry the burden of the training*". The researcher argues that principals should provide a pool of names, in order for educators and principals to train school governors under the supervision of natural appointees, who will be able to clarify misunderstandings whenever they arise.

SGB members elected in the Mashishila and Badplaas circuits of the Gert Sibande district between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> March 2015 should be trained by neutral appointees who are experts, not by resigned principals. Since the latter may have failed to train their SGBs while in office, they are not in the best position to train SGBs after their resignation. Appointing them to be trainees is similar to feeling pity for them and appointing them in order to help them make a living, since they are now pensioners. The training of the SGBs should not be seen as a way of assisting former colleagues to supplement their earnings. In addition, training should not be used to secure votes in a political organisation, such that it becomes a case of “scratch my back and I will scratch yours”. However, training should be conducted to ensure that SGBs play their roles effectively, as mandated by the DBE. SGBs that are trained should serve as a link to parents and members of the community aiming to offer support to education, in order to ensure that it is a societal issue, as envisaged by government (Speech delivered at Announcement of the 2014 NSC Examination Results, 05 January 2015).

The study concludes that further research should be conducted on how SGB executives (chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary, deputy secretary, treasurer) execute their role in order to impact on schools from other districts and provinces. The aim of such research would be to establish how they manage their roles, so that challenges can be identified and solutions reached to ensure that South African school governing bodies improve with regard to the execution of their roles.

The researcher believes that identifying challenges in our country, comparing them and forging a way forward will help to build strong SGBs with a greater impact on schools. The same study could be extended to countries outside South Africa.

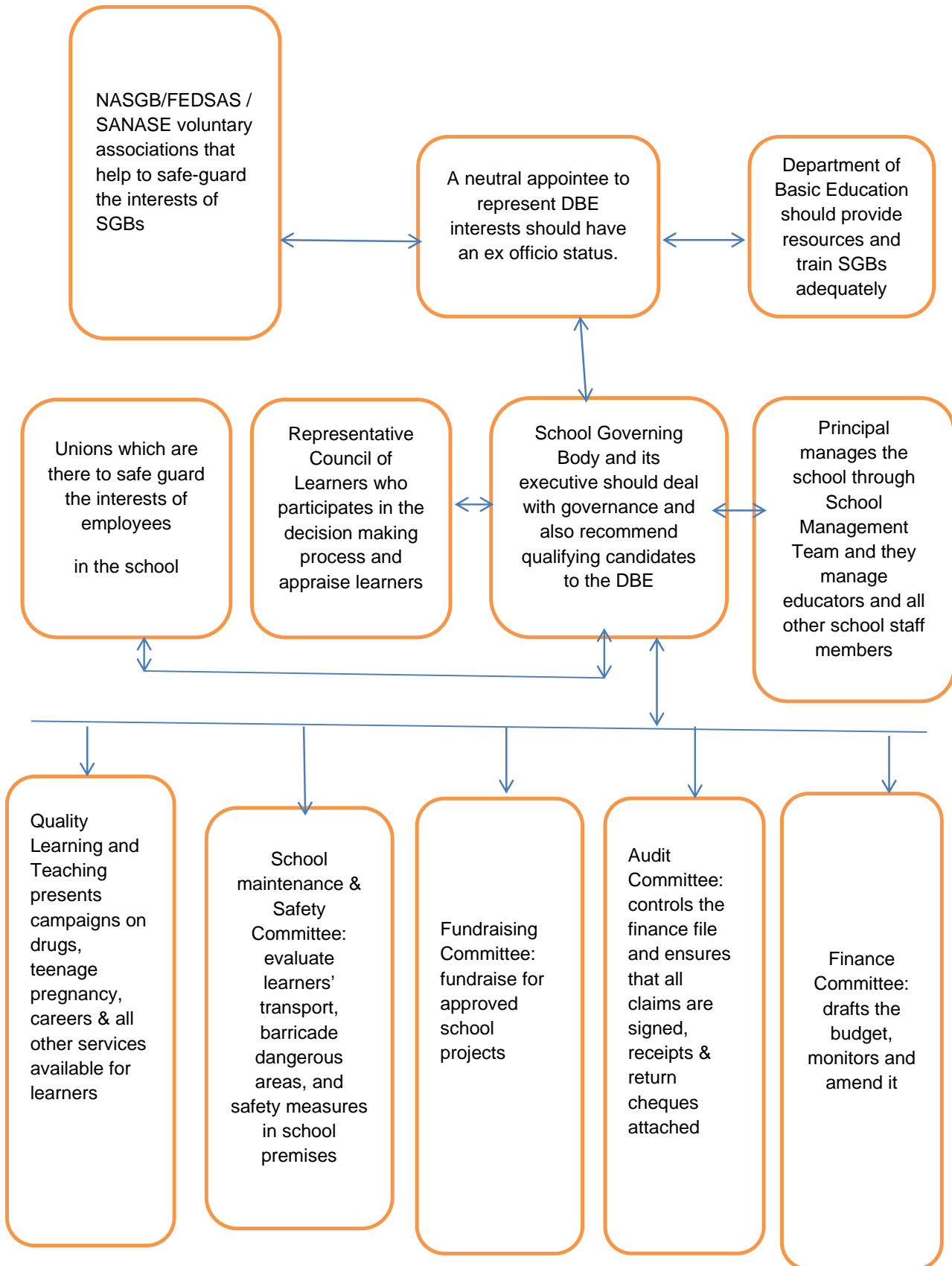
The findings of this study indicate that SGBs are unable to handle financial matters effectively. Therefore, they should have committees such as fundraising, finance and audit committees as sub-committees of the entire SGB to deal with financial matters. They should set time frames to prepare the schedule of payments, as well as the duration for effecting payments to all those who are entitled to reimbursement. Furthermore, they should ensure that the budget is strictly monitored and that all claims are well accounted for, as per the requirement of claims. Requisitions that were not budgeted for should be discussed in SGB



meetings and a motivation should accompany them. The principal should not be found pressuring SGBs to approve such requisitions, and the motivation that is submitted should be enough to persuade SGBs to make a favourable decision. In addition, claims that are not accounted for should not be reimbursed, as this poses a challenge to the finance and audit committee, and to auditors themselves. Schools will end up being issued with qualifying reports, thereby implying that SGBs are unable to handle financial matters.

SGBs also experience challenges in dealing with maintenance and safety issues on and around school premises. They replace broken windows and door locks with ease, but they face challenges with regard to major repairs caused by heavy rains and storms, as the DBE takes years to repair such damages to schools. Under such circumstances, schools should barricade these dangerous school areas. Furthermore, scholar transport matters pose a danger to the learners who are transported, as some vehicles are in a bad condition and do not have discs. However, SGBs are unable to report such matters for fear of being attacked and victimised. The DBE should get information regarding transport matters from SGBs, excluding service providers from such meetings. The researcher further encourages SGBs to work together so that their roles can impact positively on schools, rather than working as individuals.

### 5.3.2 Summary of the integrated participatory SGB model



The model discusses how SGBs should be structured and what additional responsibilities and duties could be delegated to it. In this model, a case is made that the DBE should be represented by a neutral appointee rather than the principal who is already overburdened by the role he or she is playing as the leader of the school. The principal's position renders him or her conflicted as he or she is presently occupying dual positions. In other words, a neutral appointee will act as a representative of the DBE and also play an advisory role to the SGB.

The principal should deal with school management issues supported by school management team (SMT) members. The principal should be recused from representing the DBE. As mentioned under sub heading 5.3.1, the neutral appointees in all districts should report directly to the head of the department to enhance the implementation of SASA policies. In terms of this study, Mpumalanga department of education should have four neutral appointees since it comprises of four districts. The neutral appointee should be appointed from the level of the province and should have authority in a district to advice the SGBs.

In contrast to Joubert & Bray, 2007: 98, the researcher argues that a neutral appointee unlike a committee at district which is dominated by staffs that push for political agendas will act impartially and on his or her own. The neutral appointee could be appointment at post level one. The recommendations of the neutral appointee should be directed to the DBE so it can take immediate action were necessary.

Training manuals should be regularly updated and improved as changes take place in education. SGBs should also send reports or requests to the neutral appointees indicating areas in which they are challenged in the execution of their roles and responsibilities. This may result in the SGB members being empowered and in doing so those with secret agendas may find it difficult to manipulate the SGBs for their own personal gains.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) should have a way of monitoring whether the rules, regulations and a structure provide the SGBs in the form of the 23 policies is working as desired or needs upgrading. Whatever, additional policies the SGBs can make should also be monitored to see whether they are fair and just. The training that DBE gives to the SGBs members should be closely assessed for because more often what is imparted to the

SGBs is never implemented. The efficacy of the training too, should be scrutinised to avoid paying for programmes that are not cost-effective.

SGBs should ensure that there is a policy on the code of conduct for learners, and that it is regularly revised. The code of conduct should be in line with Sections 8, 9 and 20(1) (d) of SASA. A disciplinary committee comprising of at least two members of the SGB should act as an impartial tribunal in hearings to deal with conduct, which are aimed at correcting the misconduct of learners (Learner Discipline and School Management, 2007). Meetings on discipline should be conducted regularly, and minutes of such meetings should be recorded as evidence of the functionality of school governance.

#### **5.3.2.1 Sub-committees of the SGB**

All sub-committees of the SGB are of great importance to school governance, as contemplated in Section 30 (1) of SASA, as well as associations and the DBE. The researcher firmly believes that if they all give and receive information from school governance and vice versa, school governance could be enriched in terms of knowledge. This knowledge could contribute to SGBs role, thereby having a significant impact on public schools (Ajayi, Haastrup & Arogundade, 2009). SGBs could use their strongest weapon of engaging in discussions during meetings. Studies conducted indicate that SGBs face challenges in the maintenance of positive working relationships. These relationships are complicated and at times turn sour, such that leadership is compelled to compromise on its effectiveness due to lack of knowledge (McAdams, 2006). The researcher views the committees displayed in the above model to have the greatest influence on the roles of SGBs and their impact on schools.

There are other stakeholders that the researcher would have excluded, however, as she is convinced that they are not a feature of SGBs, in contrast to the view of the study conducted in the United States of America (Lipman, 2013), even though it is impossible to exclude them. Teacher formations pursue their secret agendas of appointing their friends in posts because of their good political credibility. As stated in chapter two, sub heading 2.3.6.2, good political credibility fails to translate into the best candidate for the job. Teacher formations are actually taking us back to actions that were performed during the apartheid era; hence they are viewed to be of critical importance.

All stakeholders should communicate with each other to ensure that they are all on the same level of understanding with regard to their roles. The researcher is of the view that the executive of the SGB, which is in the driving seat of the entire SGB, could serve as the pivotal area for communicating all decisions and knowledge to the entire SGB, because they are the ones who attend all the training. When all stakeholders share the same understanding, it will be easy to synergise efforts and ensure that set goals are achieved. The committees indicated in the model are those which the literature review has shown to be of paramount importance to answering the research question in this study.

### **5.3.2.2 SGB support to schools**

The SGB should be in the position to assist its schools in appointing additional educators to ensure that all learners are taught during post establishment, which redeploys educators and results in the school running short of educators. The majority of principals mentioned that they face competition in terms of enrolment, hence the decrease in learner enrolment and shortage of educators (Agasti, Catalano & Sibiano, 2012). The DBE allocates posts to schools according to learner enrolment, which means that when the enrolment figure drops, redeployment of educators follows. At such times, the additional workload for educators becomes unbearable and more educators should therefore, be employed and paid from SGB treasuries.

SGBs should recommend only suitable candidates for appointment and avoid nepotism and favouritism. In order to recommend suitable candidates, SGBs should include questions that require presentations by candidates, in order to ensure that they are capable of using the gadgets provided by the DBE. The researcher is of the view that it is now useless to recommend candidates who cannot use technology. SGBs should avoid involvement in deployment strategies, which are unable to translate into a good teaching and learning environment. SGBs sometimes have secret agendas during shortlisting and interviews for promotional posts. They score and recommend candidates who lack skills to upgrade schools after appointment (see sub heading 2.6.1.4). Schools today possess tablets for the capturing of SASAMS of registered learners and marks for the four terms, which are given to them by the DBE.

Therefore, all SGBs should recommend prospective candidates to SMT and post level ones who are capable of using these gadgets. It should be noted that some schools are without

administrative assistants to capture registered learners or marks. Schools with administrative assistants do the capturing of marks, but promoting these learners is the duty of the principal. The neutral appointees in all districts should also verify the logistics of recommendations made and report to the head of the department in this regard.

### **5.3.2.3 The role of the principal in the SGB and the involvement of SGBs in school activities**

The principal should involve the SGB in all school activities, including teaching and learning and extra-curricular activities, with the aim of involving parents in the education of their children. Principals should avoid having relationships with the chairpersons of SGBs, as this was found to discourage parents from challenging decisions, and to hinder democratic participation (Suzuki, 2000). SGBs should apply to pay educators extra if deemed necessary.

The study revealed that principals ignore certain legislations during meetings, in order to avoid tension. However, the discussions in such meetings then end up taking another direction, which they were not supposed to take. The reason behind this is that members of the SGB fail to recuse themselves from discussions that concern them. Members represent themselves for one year contract jobs in nutrition and gardening. They prohibit other members from expressing their views freely and assisting the meeting to take appropriate decisions.

SGBs are compromised, particularly in schools, of two to five educators. Nutrition staff members form part of SGBs (section 23 (2) (c)). The researcher recommends that for effective teaching and learning to take place, such schools should be given at least eight to ten educators. SGBs are unable to hire educators and administrative staff in such schools due to financial constraints. In addition, the fundraising committee fails to reach targets due to geographical challenges. The DBE should reconsider the 'no fee' schools issue, so that parents can contribute a certain amount to support their schools. Parents ignore payments to assist their schools, claiming that these are 'no fee' schools, even if their schools face challenges, such as fences that are needed to ensure the safety of their children. The DBE should support such schools rather than opting to shut them down for the sake of the community. Furthermore, the DBE should ensure that learners travel the approved distance to school.

#### **5.2.3.4 RCL inclusion in SGBs as per SASA**

RCL should form part of the decision making process in secondary schools, as per the SASA mandate, in order to enable them to acquire democratic capacity and leadership skills. Excluding learners from such a crucial role is a violation of SASA. Although they are using force to achieve their goals, this does not justify their exclusion. The researcher argues that RCL should also undergo training, so that they are equipped with the skills that they will implement during the decision making process. They should be ambassadors of the school's code of conduct and empower class representatives to play their roles in their respective classes. The class representatives should engage their class managers in all challenges faced by learners in their respective classes, and also offer support. The researcher supports Davies' (2005) view that learners should be given a chance to lead and be supported.

#### **5.2.3.5 Parents and learner discipline**

Parents should participate in disciplining their children. They should monitor that children are doing their homework, as expected by the school. In another study, the findings indicated that parents have a tendency to leave the principal, school management team and teachers to deal with it (Bechuke & Debeila, 2012). Schools should prepare assessment plans and present them to parents during the AGM, so that they can monitor the plans. Parents should notice the strengths of their children through these assessments and assist them in making choices that are relevant to their future careers. Parental involvement in career choices could also improve learner performance (Turney & Kao, 2009).

Parents should ensure that learners wear their school uniform when attending school, in order to ensure that they follow the code of the conduct. In this regard, parents should support the school by ensuring adherence to the code of conduct for learners. Amongst other things, parents should guard against the usage of drugs by their children and act accordingly if the need arises.

Community involvement is important in order to ensure that school property is kept safe. The introduction of QLTC in schools is another way of ensuring that the community forms part of school governance. The community should volunteer their assistance in securing the school and its property, as well as in ensuring that schools are better places for effective

learning and teaching to take place safely (Smit, 2013). They should encourage learners to respect school property and teach them that the school property is their property. QLTC could also collaborate with the principal and educators, thereby assisting in alleviating the uncertainty of the enormous changes taking place in the education environment, such as transport to school and pregnancy, which are unclear with regard to the legislations in place (Moloi, 2005; Moloi, 2002).

SGBs are behind in terms of inviting volunteers to discuss curriculum issues at schools. The researcher argues that a well composed QLTC could resolve curriculum challenges. QLTC could raise quality standards and have volunteers' expertise to assist in classrooms and the broadening of the curriculum (Earley & Weindling, 2014).

SGBs are by law vested with powers to ensure cooperation between parents, learners and teachers. Msila (2007) is convinced that SGBs are supposed to forge links between the community and the school. Furthermore, they should create space for the community to mould learners and ensure good discipline in schools. Community involvement is dangerous when community members fail to encourage learners to respect the school and its rules and regulations, as this would imply that they support learners' violation of school rules.

The school maintenance and safety committee should keep on its toes regarding the school property and safety of learners; and should refer to Table 2.1 to address such issues. The finance committee should manage the budget and ensure that only natural disaster challenges are attended to as a matter of urgency. Other challenges that are excluded from the budget should be avoided. The audit committee should execute their role without fear or favour, request receipts of purchased items and ensure that claims are properly filled in.

The SMT and educators should under no circumstances use their position to manipulate the SGB and its respective committees. They should avoid manipulating educators to support their non-progressive acts that hamper the functioning of the SGB. "Some governors are deliberately bypassed when school management is involved. 'Parents power' has become 'head teacher power'" (Bush, Coleman & Grover, 1993: 193). They should avoid bringing schools into disrepute because of their secret agendas. The researcher also noted that in comparison to the past, primary and secondary school principals were aloof and dealt with



SGB matters similarly (Collard & Reyholds, 2005). Acts of such a nature should be dealt with accordingly by the DBE.

#### **5.2.3.6 Evaluation of recent SGB models**

The running of schools is constantly changing, and therefore the models in place should always change to be in line with the changing forms of governance. In light of this, the literature review and findings of this study led the researcher to present an integrated model which enables all mentioned stakeholders to work together and communicate with each other, in order to ensure that SGBs have an impact on schools.

The researcher agrees with Anderson, Briggs and Burton (2001) that models of governing bodies should be structured in such a way that it serves at least 4 different purposes, namely, accountable policies, advisory acting to serve the local community, supportive external relationships with agencies, and mediating with the local education system, such that it fits into the broader framework.

#### **5.2.3.7 Unions**

Unions have a role to play during the shortlisting and interview processes, in order to assure fairness and accuracy in applying legalities (Bray & Joubert, 2007: 99). Their roles are limited to observing these processes. However, unions use the process to interfere and manipulate candidates to be shortlisted for interviews, as well as to manipulate the panel to give high scores to their preferred candidates to be recommended for appointment. Principals representing the DBE suppress their views regarding these acts, in order to avoid labelling them as enemies of progress. The researcher argues that they choose not to meddle in such matters, as this is the way in which they were appointed (see sub heading, 2.3.6.2). Unions deviate from maintaining labour peace in the workplace and protecting the interests of the African child.

#### **5.2.3.8 Associations of SGBs**

The researcher noted with great concern that SGB training was conducted in August/September 2015 after March elections, but the NASGB only managed to invite the SGB executive to their first workshop on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016, after a school in Gert Sibande district (Mashishila) encountered a challenge involving an SGB decision which was sent to the provincial office for adjudication. The researcher is convinced that the workshop should

have been conducted in 2015 while it was still relevant and important. In the researcher's view, such workshops should also invite the deputies to the chairperson and the secretary. The limited invitation to the principal, chairperson, secretary, treasurer and one RCL member mainly focused on the launching of the branch structure, not the induction. The induction of the newly elected office-bearers is therefore long overdue. The claim that the invitation addresses induction is a political statement which bears no fruit for the DBE. It is quite disappointing to note that resources and time are used for a futile exercise. The researcher highlights the point that SGBs in particular should always think of themselves as a team of individuals working to provide the best possible education for all learners (Hayes, 2001). She also noted that there are other national structures such as FEDSAS and others for inclusive schools, which need to be known to public schools so that they are able to make an informed decision regarding joining an association. The issue regarding associations seems to be politicised, as African schools are typically only aware of NASGB. The late invitation to the workshop tells one that NASGB is an association with many schools that they themselves are unable to handle. SGB exposure to all associations is a solution to the challenges which have been identified in this study. The researcher concludes that the neutral appointee to represent the DBE is a good answer to the challenges faced, because even associations have their own interests.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided conclusions based on the data collected during the focus group interviews, document analysis and observations (with the principal, chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary, deputy secretary and the treasurer). The conclusions are related to questions posed in the introductory chapter of the study, and the model that was presented is in line with the literature that was reviewed.

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## **ANNEXURE A: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is your perception of the impact of SGBs' roles on schools regarding the use of SASA 84 of 1996?
2. What is your understanding of the code of conduct for learners and educators at school?
3. What strategies do you employ at your school to ensure good financial management?
4. What safety measures are in place to ensure safety for the school community?
5. What is your understanding of the school curriculum?

## **ANNEXURE B: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST**

### OBSERVATION CHECKLIST: SGB meeting

What is observed
Venue, water during the meeting, catering
Arrival time
Agenda
Reading of previous minutes, adoption and matters arising, reading, deliberations or discussions
Seating arrangement of members
Apologies and credentials
Participation of members
Meeting timeframe
Members available until adjournment of meeting

**ANNEXURE C: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

P. O. BOX 538

ELUKWATINI

1192

19 MAY 2015

Attention: Ms M.O.C Mhlabane  
The Head of Department  
Mpumalanga Department of Education  
Building No 5  
Government Boulevard  
Riverside Park  
Nelspruit

Dear Ms M.O.C. Mhlabane

**Request for permission to conduct research entitled: The impact of the role of school governing bodies: a case study undertaken in Badplaas and Mashishila Circuit schools in the Gert Sibande district of Mpumalanga.**

I, Dephney Leumang Nonyane, student number 35908378, am doing research under the supervision of Professor ER Mathipa in the Department of Adult Education for a DEd degree at the University of South Africa.

The Gert Sibande district has been selected because it will assist the researcher to answer the research question of the study. The researcher will ensure that teaching and learning time is protected. The results will be used to meet the requirements for the

The DEd degree, and the researcher will follow University of South Africa's ethics regulations for research purposes.

The study will encompass case studies of three public schools from quintiles 1, 2 and 3. Data collection will entail focus groups, observations and document analysis. The researcher will conduct focus group interviews with the three cases, and will also visit participants during meetings to observe how they interact with each other, as well as

requesting certain documents for analysis purposes, such as minute books. These documents will be used to determine the impact of school governing bodies on schools.

Participation in this study is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study without penalty. The benefits of this study are a better understanding of the impact of the roles of school governing bodies in public schools. The study will also identify a model to be used by school governing bodies to have a greater impact on schools. Potential risks are unknown and feedback will entail giving the transcribed information to participants, in order to ensure accurate recording of information.

Permission to conduct this study was previously granted in 2008 (see attached copies), but due to relocation, the institution is requesting a more recent approval.

Yours sincerely

Name of the Researcher: Dephney Leumang Nonyane

Position of the Researcher: Educator

Personnel Number: 81475560 (Chief Jerry Nkosi Secondary School)

Contact Number: 072 900 8707

Signature of the Researcher: DL Nonyane \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 19 May 2015

## ANNEXURE D: LETTER OF APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



education  
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Building No. 5, Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Mpumalanga Province  
Private Bag X11341, Mbombela, 1200  
Tel: 013 766 5552/5115, Toll Free Line: 0800 203 116

Litiko le Temfundvo: Umnyango we Fundo

Departement van Onderwys

Ndzawulo ya Dyondzo

Ms. Daphney Nonyane  
PO BOX 538  
ELUKWATINI  
1192

### RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MS DAPHNEY NONYANE

Your application to conduct research was received. The title of your study reads: "The impact of the role of SGBs: A case undertaken in Mpumalanga in Gert Sibande Education District (Badplaas & Mashishila circuits)." It therefore gives me pleasure to approve your application subject to you observing the provisions of the departmental draft research policy which is attached. You are also further requested to adhere to your University's research ethics as spelled out in your research ethics document.

In terms of the draft research policy data or any research activity can only be conducted after school hours as per appointment. You are also requested to share your findings with the relevant sections of the department so that we may consider implementing your findings if that will be in the best interest of the department. To this effect, your final approved research report (both soft and hard copy) should be submitted to the department so that your recommendations could be implemented. You may be required to prepare a presentation and present at the department's annual research dialogue.

For more information kindly liaise with the department's research unit @ 013 766 5476 or [a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za](mailto:a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za).

The department wishes you well in this important project and pledges to give you the necessary support you may need.

  
MRS MOC MHLABANE  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

30, 6/5  
DATE





## **ANNEXURE E: LETTER REQUESTING DOCUMENTS FOR RESEARCH**

19 May 2015

Title: The impact of the role of school governing bodies: a case study undertaken in Badplaas and Mashishila Circuit schools in the Gert Sibande district of the Mpumalanga province.

The Principal  
Lepogo Secondary School  
Elukwatini  
1192

Dear Principal

I, Dephney Leumang Nonyane, I am doing research under the supervision of Professor ER Mathipa in the Department of Adult Education towards a D. Ed degree at the University of South Africa. I am inviting you to participate in the above-mentioned study.

---

The aim of the study is to investigate the impact of the role of school governing bodies. Your institution has been selected because it will assist the researcher to answer the research question in this study.

The study will encompass case studies of three public schools from quintiles 1, 2 and 3. Data collection will entail focus groups, observations and document analysis. The researcher will conduct focus group interviews with the three cases, and visit participants during meetings to observe how they interact with each other, as well as requesting documents such as minute books for analysis. These documents will be used to determine the impact of school governing bodies. The benefit of this study is a better understanding of the impact of roles of school governing bodies on public schools. The researcher will also identify a model to be used by school governing bodies in order for them to have a positive impact on schools.

Yours sincerely

---

Dephney Leumang Nonyane (Educator)

## **ANNEXURE F: LETTER REQUESTING SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN A FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW**

**Dear School Governing Body Member**

This letter invites you to consider participating in a study being conducted by myself, Dephney Leumang Nonyane, for my doctoral studies at the University of South Africa. The study is entitled: The impact of the role of school governing bodies: a case study undertaken in the Badplaas and Mashishila Circuit schools in the Gert Sibande district of the Mpumalanga province. Permission to conduct the study has been given by the Gert Sibande District in Mpumalanga and the researcher is awaiting approval from the Ethics Committee of the College of Education at UNISA. The researcher identified your school, as it falls in quintiles 1, 2 and 3, and you have experience related to the topic under investigation.

Additional information about the study will be provided if you indicate your interest to participate in the study. Focus group interviews will be successful if you share your views about the topic of this study.

The study will not award incentives to participants, and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Focus group interviews will be conducted at a time that is most convenient to you.

Kindly allow the researcher to record the focus group interview, in order to ensure that accurate information is collected for analysis. The analysis will be made available to you for amendments and/or additions if necessary. Schools participating in the study will be given animal names such as Lepogo, Nkwe and Tau, in order to ensure anonymity, and information will be kept confidential at all times. The information will be safely stored in the researcher's study room for a period of 5 years in written form. Your participation in the study has no known or anticipated risks.

The researcher welcomes any questions seeking clarity, in order to enable you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate in the study. She may be contacted at 072 900 8707 or by email at [leumang.nonyane767@gmail.com](mailto:leumang.nonyane767@gmail.com).

Thank you in advance for your assistance regarding the study. If you accept this invitation to participate, please sign the request form below.

Yours sincerely

Dephney Leumang Nonyane

## **ANNEXURE G: CONSENT FORM**

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study entitled: The impact of the role of school governing bodies: a case study undertaken in Badplaas and Mashishila Circuit schools in the Gert Sibande district of the Mpumalanga province. I had the opportunity to ask questions related to the study, and received satisfactory answers to questions and all additional details. I give my permission for the researcher to do an audio recording of the interview, in order to ensure accurate recording, which I can also amend. I also accept anonymity in the publication of this research, and acknowledge the fact that I can withdraw from the study without penalty at any time, as long as the researcher is duly informed. With the information provided, I therefore agree to freely participate in the study.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: Dephney Leumang Nonyane

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNEXURE H: FOCUS GROUP ASSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

I \_\_\_\_\_ grant consent to the researcher to use the information shared during focus group interviews for research purposes. I am aware that the discussions will be recorded and grant consent for such recordings, provided my privacy is protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared during the group discussions to any person outside the group, in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: Dephney Leumang Nonyane

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_