

**THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY AND ITS IMPACT  
ON THE SCHOOLING SYSTEM: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF  
SCHOOLS IN THE SCHOONOORD CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO**

BY  
**PHETOLE FRANK MALATJI**

**Student Number 31233279**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

In the subject

**EDUCATION MANAGEMENT**

At the

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Supervisor: Prof. V.P. Mahlangu

2018

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that:

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE SCHOOLING SYSTEM: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SCHOOLS IN THE SCHOONOORD CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO is my own work, that all resources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference, and that this dissertation was not previously submitted by me for a degree at any other university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malatji P.F.', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

**MALATJI P.F**

18 September 2018

**DATE**

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father Malekutu Alfred, my mother Makobo Malatji and my grandmother Makelle Malatji, who sacrificed a lot to see me through many projects, including this one. I thank them for their endless support during difficult times, when life seemed to be at a standstill. I also dedicate this thesis to my family: my dearest wife Mahlodi Linah (Mothapo) Malatji, for her constant support, and my three daughters Maite (Dineo) Violet, Makobo Maureen and Tebogo Makelle Valencia. ***Ke ya leboga dinoko, le ka moso.***

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I sincerely wish to thank the following people, whose supervision, guidance and contribution have helped me through this study:

- My supervisor, Prof. V.P. Mahlangu, for his expert advice, support, constant motivation and encouragement throughout the duration of this study.
- The Limpopo Department of Education (Sekhukhune District) for allowing me to conduct the research in schools.
- All principals and SGBs of the Schoonord Circuit, who allowed me to conduct the interviews in their schools, including all the principals, educators and parents who participated in the study.
- All the educators of the Tshehlwaneng Senior Secondary School, thank you for your support.

## ABSTRACT

The title of the study is **“The role of the School Governing Body (SGB) and its impact on the schooling system: An exploratory study of schools in the Schoonoord Circuit, Limpopo”**.

The study aimed to determine the impact of the role of the School Governing Bodies in the schooling system with regard to the implementation of education policies, including the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996 as amended). In order to determine the role of the participants mentioned above who represented the SGBs in this project, the researcher interviewed them at their convenient times and environment.

This study used a qualitative approach, since it involved a series of in-depth interviews, document analysis and field notes (see 4.5.4 and 4.5.5). The first interviews were individual interviews with school principals (see Annexure A). This was followed by focus group interviews with executive members of SGBs (see Annexures B, C and D). Learners were interviewed in the form of focus groups (see Annexure E). Observations too played an important role during the meetings with SGBs (see Annexure F). The findings indicate that SGB members who were interviewed had minimal knowledge of how their role affected the schools that they governed. It was also clear from interviews that training conducted by individuals from the Department of Education seemed not to be effective as they failed to make members of the SGBs understand the school policies on the South African Schools Act policy document.

The study revealed that the school policies embodied in SASA documents and the South African Constitution were not understood and as such their effective use was not realised. In other words, the members of the SGB lacked proper knowledge of how to guide their school in order to run smoothly and efficiently. Again, the study revealed that there is a serious need to train members of SGBs at the school level because those interviewed complained about: the time allocated for their training, and the language used in their training by the facilitators. All the above factors have a strong bearing on the fact that the majority of members of SGBs are illiterate (see Section 5.3.2).

Finally, the study revealed that: principals are expected to perform dual roles of representing their schools (as mentors) and simultaneously represent the Department of Education in an ex-officio position (see Section 5.3.1). Therefore, the study proposed that the principal must only represent his school and a neutral person be appointed by the department to represent it in all the SGBs in the circuit. Lastly, the study emphasised the need of the SGB members to work with other qualified individuals in the community who are experts in some areas of learning such as lawyers, accountants, farmers, architects, and business people (see Figure 5.1). All stakeholders are relevant, but they need to be made to function according to their qualifications and expertise and also respect the boundaries of specialisation of the others.

In conclusion, the recommended and proposed model was deliberately designed and structured to offer practical solutions to the problems discussed in the research findings. It is also essential that the training be accompanied by some assessment, in order to determine whether 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.

***Key concepts: school governance, role, School Governing Body, schools; Schoonoord Circuit***

## **ABSTRAKTE**

**Hierdie studie, getitel, *Die rol en impak van die skoolbeheerraad op die skolestelsel: 'n ondersoekende studie van skole in die Schoonoordkring, Limpopo.***

Die doel van die studie was om die rol en/of impak van deelnemende skole se beheerrade op die implementering van onderwyswetgewing en/of beleid was. Aangesien die studie kwalitatief van aard was, het die navorser hoofsaaklik van waarneming en onderhoude (in-diepte individuele sowel as fokusgroeponderhoude) gebruik gemaak om data in te samel.

Navorsingsresultate dui aan dat deelnemende skoolbeheerraadslede se geletterheidsvaardighede en begrip van onderwyswetgewing en beleid gebrekkig is en dat opleiding wat deur amptenare verbonde aan die Departement van Onderwys verskaf is gebrekkig was. Gevolglik was die imlementering van onderwyswetgewing en beleid deur genoemde skoolbeheerrade as 'n reël ondoeltreffend. Die resultate dui verder aan dat daar van skoolhoofde verwag word om sowel hul skole as die Department van Onderwys op skoolbeheerraadsvergaderings te verteenwoordig en dat, ten einde hul skole doeltreffend te bestuur, skoolbeheerraadslede ander gekwalifiseerde/professionele individue in die gemeenskap – regsgeleerdes, boekhouers, boere, argitekte and besigheidsmense – in die skoolbeheerraad se aktiwiteite behoort te betrek.

Op grond van hierdie bevindinge beveel die navorser dus aan dat (a) skoolhoofde slegs hulle skole op skoolbeheerraadsvergaderings behoort te verteenwoordig; (b) 'n neutrale persoon deur die Departement van Onderwys aangestel word om dié se verteenwoordiger te wees; (c) die teoretiese opleidingsmodel wat hy in sy studie voorstel, moontlik kan bdra tot die uitskakeling van heelparty van die probleme/uitdagings wat in die studie uitgelig word; (d) opleiding een of ander vorm van assessering moet insluit ten einde te bepaal of bywonende skoolbeheerraadslede die nodige begrip verwerf het, en (e) opleiding deur skoolbesoeke opgevolg word om te bepaal tot welke mate dit skoolbeheerraadslede tydens opleiding geleer het toepas.

## SETSOPOLWA

Hlogotaba ya phatišišo ke ***“Karolo le khuetšo ya Lekgotlataolo la Sekolo (SGB) lenaneong la dikolo – phatišišo ya tlhotlamadiba ya dikolo sedikothutong sa Schoonoord, Limpopo.”***

Maikemišetšo a phatišišo ye ke go utulla karalo yeo lekgotlataolo la sekolo le nago nayo go lenaneo la sekolo malebana le phethagatšo ya melawana ya thuto, le go akaretšwa le lenaneo la Taolo ya Dikolo (Act 84 of 1996 as amended). Gore go hlaolwe karalo ya batšekarolo ba ka gare ga SGB tabeng ye, mofatišiši o boledišane le bona tikologong le nako yeo e ba swanetšego. Phatišišo e dirišitše mokgwa wa boleng ka ge go akareditšwe dipoledišano tša go tsenelela le phetleko ya dingwalwa tša maleba (cf 4.5.4 le 4.5.5). Poledišano ya pulamadibogo ke ya dihlogo tša dikolo (cf Annexure A). Seo se latetšwe ke dipoledišanothwi le maloko a makgotlaphethiši a makgotlataolo a dikolo (cf Annexures B, C le D). Go boledišanwe le barutwana ka sebopego sa dihlophana (cf Annexure E). Diphihlelelo le tšona di bile bohlokwa dikopanong tša makgotlataolo a dikolo (cf Annexure F). Dikutullo di laeditše gore maloko a SGB a go boledišanwego le ona, a na le tsebo ye nnyane ya ka moo batšekarolo bja ona, bo nago le khuetšo dikolong tšeo ba di laolago. Dipoledišano di laeditše gore tlhahlo yeo balaodi ba Kgoro ya Thuto ba e abetšego maloko a SGB e a fokola ka ge e šitwa go kgontšha maloko a SGB go hlaologanya melawana ya thuto yeo e tšwago go molao wa taolo ya dikolo.

Phatišišo e utulotše gore melawana ya thuto ye e akareditšwego ka go dingwalwa tša Molaotheo wa Afrika Borwa, ga e kwešišwe le gore ga e phethagatšwe ka tshwanelo. Maloko a SGB a hlaelwa ke tsebo ya maleba go ka kgona go hlahla dikolo gore di sepetšwe ka katlego. Phatišišo e utulotše gape gore go tšomega tlhahlo ya maloko a SGB dikolong. Dintlha tše di laeditšwego di gatelela taba ya gore boati bja maloko a makgotlataolo a dikolo ga kgone go bala le go ngwala (cf 5.3.2). Mafelelong, go latetšwe gore dihlogo tša dikolo di raloke karalo ya go emela dikolo tša bona le go emela Kgoro ya Thuto ka bo emo bja semmušo (cf 5.3.1). Phatišišo e šišinya gore hlogo ya sekolo a emele sekolo sa gagwe gomme motho wa go ikema a emele Kgoro ya Thuto makgotlataolong a dikolo sedikothutong. Phatišišo e fetša ka go hlohleletša maloko a SGB go dirišana le ditsebi mafaphene a tša semolao, taolo ya ditšhelete le, balemi le ba bangwe (cf 5.1). Batšekarolo ba bohlokwa ka moka ge go ka hlomphiwa bokgoni bja yo mongwe le yo

mongwe. Go phethwa ka gore mokgwa wa tlhahlo o swanetšwe go sepelelana le tokelo go kgonthišiša kwešišo ya maloko a SGB go tšeo ba rutilwego.

***Dintlhakgolo: Taolo ya dikolo, Karolo. Lekgotlataolo la Sekolo. Dikolo, Sedikothuto sa Schoonoord***

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
ASAPO	Azanian South African People's Organisation
ASGB	Association of School Governing Bodies
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
DOE	Department of Education
ERS	Education Renewal Strategy
LA	Local Authorities
NECC	National Education Crisis Committee
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SACP	South African Communist Party
SASA	South African Schools Act
SDCs	School Development Committees
SETAs	Sectoral Education and Training Authorities
SMT	School Management Team
SGBs	School Governing Bodies
SPCC	Soweto Parent Crisis Committee
SOWETO	South Western Townships
SWOT	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTSA	Parent –Teacher-Student Association
NECC	National Education Crisis Coordinating Committee
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY</b>	
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY.....	2
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	4
1.3.1 Research questions.....	5
1.3.1.1 Main research question .....	5
1.3.2 Sub-questions.....	5
1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.....	6
1.4.1 The main aim of the study .....	6
1.4.2 The objectives of the study.....	6
1.5 THE RESEARCHER'S PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, OBSERVATIONS, ASSUMPTIONS AND PRESUMPTIONS .....	6
1.5.1 Personal experience and observations .....	6
1.5.2 Personal assumptions .....	8
1.5.3 Personal presumptions .....	9
1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	10
1.6.1 Research Design.....	10
1.6.2 Research Methodology .....	10
1.6.2.1 Qualitative research approach .....	10
1.6.2.2 Data collection strategies .....	11
1.6.2.2.1 Participant Observation .....	11
1.6.2.2.2 Interviews.....	12
1.7 DATA ANALYSIS .....	13

1.8	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	16
1.9	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	16
1.10	DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	17
	1.10.1 Delimitations of the study .....	17
	1.10.2 Limitations of the study.....	18
1.11	CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS.....	18
	1.11.1 Role.....	18
	1.11.2 School Governance.....	19
	1.11.3 School Governing Body .....	19
	1.11.4 Schools.....	20
	1.11.4.1 Public schools.....	20
	1.11.4.2 Model C schools.....	20
	1.11.5 Schoonoord Circuit.....	21
1.12	EXPOSITION OF THE CHAPTERS .....	21
1.13	SUMMARY .....	23

## **CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

2.1	INTRODUCTION .....	24
2.2	THEORIES AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN RELATION TO SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLING SYSTEM. ....	24
	2.2.1 Dissatisfaction theory on school governance as a source of the theory of social justice .....	25
	2.2.1.1 Origin and development of the dissatisfaction theory .....	25

2.2.1.2	Contributions of the dissatisfaction theory to the education profession .....	27
2.2.1.3	Contributions of the dissatisfaction theory to the governing structure of the education system in SA.....	27
2.2.2	Action theory on school governance .....	28
2.2.2.1	Origin and development of the Action Theory of school governance.....	29
2.2.2.2	Contributions of the Action Theory to the education profession .....	29
2.2.2.3	Contributions of the Action Theory to the governing structure of the education system in SA.....	30
2.2.3	Community of practice theory .....	30
2.2.3.1	The Domain .....	31
2.2.3.2	The community .....	31
2.2.3.3	The practice.....	32
2.3	CONTRIBUTIONS OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE TO SASA... ..	32
2.3.1	The origin of the South African School's Act (Act 84 of 1996).....	32
2.3.2	The South African School's Act (Act 84 of 1996 as amended).....	33
2.4	SUMMARY... ..	33

### **CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW**

3.1	INTRODUCTION .....	35
3.2	THE SCHOOL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM .....	36
3.2.1	Introduction.....	36

3.2.1	Administration of schools under school boards, school committees, the Soweto parents crisis committee, the national education crisis committee and the school governing body .....	36
3.2.2.1	The school boards.....	36
	(a) The origin and development of school boards.....	37
	(b) Contributions of school boards to the education system.....	38
	(c) Why school boards were replaced.....	39
3.2.2.2	The school committees .....	39
	(a) The origin and development of school committees .....	39
	(b) Contributions of school committees to the education system .....	39
	(c) Why school committees were replaced .....	40
3.2.2.3	The Soweto Parents Crisis Committee (SPCC) .....	40
	(a) The origin and development of SPCC .....	41
	(b) Contributions of the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee to the education system .....	41
	(c) Why the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee was replaced .....	42
3.2.2.4	The National Education Crisis Committee .....	42
	(a) The origin and development of the National Education Crisis Committee .....	43
	(b) Contributions of the National Education Crisis Committee to the education system .....	43
	(c) Why the National Education Crisis Committee was replaced .....	44
3.3	A UNITED SINGLE EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR ALL.....	45
3.4	SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY IN RSA.....	46
3.6.1	Composition of the School Governing Body .....	46

3.6.2	The term of office of the SGB.....	48
3.6.3	Functions of the School Governing Body.....	48
3.5	THE IMPACT OF THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN THE EDUCATION OF LEARNERS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE SGBs .....	51
3.5.1	The core responsibilities of the SGB in the education of learners.....	51
3.6	THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF SGB EXECUTIVE MEMBERS .....	53
3.6.1	The role and responsibilities of the principal of a public school under the SGB.....	53
3.6.2	The role and responsibilities of the chairperson of a public school under the SGB .....	55
3.6.3	The role and responsibilities of the secretary of a public school under the SGB.....	55
3.6.4	The role and responsibilities of the treasurer of the public school under the SGB .....	56
3.7	STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS CONFRONTING SGBs IN THEIR ROLE OF OVERSIGHT REGARDING THE GOVERNANCE OF THE SCHOOL .....	56
3.7.1	The SWOT tool.....	56
3.7.1.1	Strength of SGBs.....	57
3.7.1.2	Weaknesses of SGBS .....	58
3.7.1.3	Challenges that face the SGBs .....	60
3.7.1.4	Opportunities available to SGBs .....	61

3.8	INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA .....	62
3.8.1	School governance in England .....	62
3.8.2	The Zimbabwean system of school governance.....	64
3.8.3	The system of school governance in Canada .....	68
3.9	SUMMARY .....	70

#### **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	72
4.2	RESEARCH APPROACH .....	72
4.3	RESEARCH DESIGN .....	73
4.4	POPULATION AND SAMPLE.....	74
4.4.1	Purposive sampling .....	74
(a)	Accessibility .....	75
(b)	Management.....	75
(c)	Familiarity .....	75
(d)	Cost .....	76
4.5	METHODS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION.....	76
4.5.1	Interviews .....	76
4.5.1.1	Individual in-depth interviews .....	76
4.5.1.2	Focus group interviews.....	76
4.5.2	Observation .....	78
4.5.3	Individual interview as a research method.....	79

4.5.4	Document analysis.....	80
4.5.5	Field notes.....	80
4.6	TRUSTWORTHINESS OF QUALITATIVE DATA .....	81
4.7	ETHICAL ASPECTS OF THE RESEARCH.....	83
(a)	Consent .....	83
(b)	Anonymity.....	83
(c)	Privacy.....	83
(d)	Feedback.....	84
(e)	Approval from University of South Africa (UNISA).....	84
(f)	Approval from District Director .....	84
(g)	Approval from principals of schools .....	84
(h)	Approval from School Governing Body (SGB) members.....	85
(l)	Voluntary participation and protection against harm.....	85
4.8	SUMMARY. ....	85

## **CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

5.1	INTRODUCTION.....	86
5.2	FINDINGS FROM LITERATURE.....	86
5.3	FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY .....	89
5.3.1	Responses from principals of the selected schools .....	89
5.3.2	Responses from SGB secretaries of the selected schools.....	95
5.3.3	Responses from SGB chairpersons of the selected schools.....	98
5.3.4	Responses from SGB treasurers of the selected schools .....	103
5.3.5	Responses from SGB learners of the selected schools.....	106

5.4	SUMMARY.....	110
-----	--------------	-----

## **CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1	INTRODUCTION.....	111
6.2	SUMMARY OF THE STUDY .....	111
6.3	CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM FINDINGS .....	113
6.3.1	The principals and governors' understanding of the school governance roles of SGB members .....	114
6.3.2	The SGBs' training needs and recruitment of ideal SGB members for school governance.....	115
6.3.3	Drawing up a mission statement and policy development, formulation and implementation .....	116
6.3.4	Establishment of a culture of teaching and learning (COLTS).....	117
6.4	INTEGRATED SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY MODEL .....	117
6.5	SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY MODEL..	119
6.5.1	Summary of the model .....	119
6.5.1.1	Principal .....	119
6.5.1.2	Social Partners .....	120
6.5.1.3	School Management Team (SMT) .....	120
6.5.1.4	Non-teaching staff .....	121
6.5.1.5	Teachers .....	122
6.5.1.6	Parents .....	122
6.5.1.7	Circuit .....	123
6.5.1.8	Learners .....	123

6.6	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	124
6.7	SUMMARY.....	124
6.8	CONCLUSION.....	125
	REFERENCES.....	128
	ANNEXURE A: Research interview questions - Principals .....	137
	ANNEXURE B: Research interview questions - SGB secretaries.....	138
	ANNEXURE C: Research interview questions - SGB chairpersons .....	139
	ANNEXURE D: Research interview questions - SGB treasurers.....	140
	ANNEXURE E: Research interview questions - SGB learners (RCL).....	141
	ANNEXURE F: Observation checklist .....	142
	ANNEXURE G: Letter to District Senior Manager to request permission to conduct the study .....	143
	ANNEXURE H: Permission letter from senior manager to conduct the study .....	144
	ANNEXURE I: Letter to Circuit Manager to request permission to conduct the study .....	145
	ANNEXURE J: Letter to principals to request permission to conduct the study ...	146
	ANNEXURE K: Letter to principals to request their participation in the study.....	147
	ANNEXURE L: Letter to SGB members to request their participation in the study .....	148

## List of Tables

Table 3.1: Schools with low enrolment .....	47
Table 3.2: Schools with class components.....	47
Table 3.3: Elements of South African and Zimbabwean school reform the legislation established by SASA and SI .87.....	65

## List of Figures

Figure 1.1: An organogram showing how data will be collected .....	11
Figure 1.2: An organogram showing how data will be analysed .....	13
Figure 1.3: Data analysis in qualitative research .....	15
Figure 1.4: Location of secondary schools in the Schoonoord Circuit (Jane Furse) .....	17
Figure 6.1 Integrated School Governing Body Model .....	118

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The role that education plays in the development and nurturing of the skills that a nation's youth needs in order to potentially be able to maintain a higher standard of living than their parents is an important one. It is this premise that served as a basis for changes to the previous educational dispensation in the Republic of South Africa post-1994. One such change was the introduction of the School Governing Bodies, ushered in by the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), in an attempt to address numerous challenges related to the mechanisms of the Apartheid school governance structures. These structures are described and critically discussed in Chapter 2 of this study.

Section 16 (1) of the South African Schools Act of 1996, as amended, indicates that the governance of schools is vested in their governing body. More specifically, this Act stipulates that the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) have to ensure that all the major stakeholders in education - parents, principals, educators, support staff (non-teaching staff) and learners - be involved in the democratic running of the schools for which they are responsible. In this regard, according to the National Guidelines for the School Governing Body Elections (2012:5), the governing body should ensure that its position concerning the school is one of mutual trust. This means that both parties – the governing body and the school that it governs – should trust one another to such an extent that the decisions taken by the governing body are perceived/accepted as credible and genuinely representative of the educational interests of the communities they serve. Furthermore, the governing body is obliged, through its mandate, to perform its duties effectively and efficiently, to the benefit of the school community's learners.

This new approach to educational governance is succinctly captured in the Preamble to the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996: 1). The preamble states that the

“achievement of democracy in South Africa has consigned to history the past system of education which was based on racial inequality and segregation.” The previous system did not allow the afore-mentioned stakeholders to play any role in the education of their children. In other words, the new educational dispensation was, in the researcher’s view, aimed at integrating previously separated education systems into a single, national system of education that would ultimately do away with discrimination and inequality in education, also in terms of how schools are governed. The dictates of the South African Schools’ Act (Act 84 of 1996) as stated in Section 1 of the same, are to:

- Provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools;
- Amend and repeal specific laws relating to schools, and
- Provide for matters connected therewith.

The focus of this study was on the impact of the role that SGBs in post-Apartheid South Africa play in the creation of an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. The researcher, in concurring with the above points, believes that one of the imperatives of quality education is that past injustices ought to be corrected. By implication, democratic principles must be instilled at schools, hence the broader society must be involved in matters of education. This could be achieved by calling upon the community to collectively strive towards the provision of quality education for all. Therefore, in light of the failures of the past, the country was, according to the researcher, in need of a new educational governance structure which would apply to all schools without discrimination.

## **1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

As a principal, the researcher worked in a disadvantaged school for seven years, working closely with members of the School Governing Body in Tshehlwaneng Senior Secondary School in the Ga-Mogashoa village in the Schoonoord area of the Limpopo Province. The researcher realised that parent governors often experience problems, some of whom did not know or understand what their roles, responsibilities and challenges were. As well as not having the necessary capacity to fulfil their duties;

having an inadequate or no Basic Education background; mismanaging finances, lacking the confidence to deal with the challenges in education and entering into partnerships with other stakeholders; having had limited or no training and preparation for their responsibilities. In addition, being unable to monitor the procedures required to ensure that all the aspects of their schools were functioning as they should.

What the researcher observed was that these shortcomings had a negative impact on the performance of schools, primarily because the governing bodies of many schools in this circuit were not functioning as required by the law. In many instances, governing body members had limited success and struggled to fulfil their responsibilities. Their struggles were compounded by their inadequate level of basic literacy, which had grave implications for their functioning as well as an adverse effect on the performance of the school in general.

Governing bodies are expected to promote the best interests of the school and ensure that learners receive the best education possible (DoE, 1997:6). They are, moreover, expected to play a pivotal role in the creation of conditions that are conducive to the education of a progressively higher quality for all learners and, in the process, to lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities (SASA, 1996:2). However, this task of creating a conducive atmosphere in the school environment has not been an easy one for the SGBs. One of the critical challenges in this regard is the lack of preparation for new governors before they start their work. Mahoney in Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:139) warns that the responsibilities of governing bodies are complex.

Consequently, the SGBs cannot be expected to discharge their role and responsibilities effectively without some training that goes beyond normal processes of directly governing the school matters with the school principal. Meaning that the capacitation of the School Governing Bodies through appropriate interventions and workshops, should not be compromised. Their representation in the schools should be made meaningful by empowering them through the creation of a nurturing and supportive environment so that their functions are thereby promoted and also made

effective. This way an atmosphere for adequate teaching and learning may be brought into the school.

This study aimed at exploring the role and impact of SGBs in schools (see 1.3.1). More specifically, it aimed at the identification of elements of management which have the potential to assist SGBs to become capable of governing their schools. Finally, the study endeavoured to design effective ways of helping the SGBs to purposefully assume their role regarding the creation of a vibrant teaching and learning environment in the schools of the Schoonoord Circuit of the Limpopo Province.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The South African education system has undergone significant changes since the move to a democratic dispensation in 1994. Democracy has brought in challenges in terms of the rights of learners (RSA, Constitution 1996:14 Section 29). Thus, as a democratic society, parents of the learners must be involved in the provision and governance of education of their children. To this end, partnerships with the community people are essential especially with all stakeholders such as the community, churches, teachers, social workers, nurses, doctors, farmers, shopkeepers, accountants and engineers because these people are knowledgeable and very resourceful.

The emphasis on partnerships is in line with the views of a former late Minister of Education Prof Kader Asmal's "Tirisano" programme. This programme promoted a spirit of togetherness in improving the quality of teaching, learning and governance of schools. The task of educating the child cannot be done by schools alone, which is why the South African Schools Act (RSA 1996:16, as amended) gives schools back to local communities to govern through the SGBs. It is against this background that this study intends to contribute to how the School Governing Bodies could be empowered to be in good stead in creating a conducive environment in which effective teaching and learning can take place.

#### **1.3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.3.1.1 Main research question**

The main research question in this study is the following:

- What is the impact of the role of School Governing Bodies in public schools?

More specifically, the main focus of the research problem is on the impact of the role of School Governing Bodies on public schools in the Schoonoord Circuit of Sekhukhune District

### **1.3.1.2 Sub-questions**

In order to find a comprehensive answer to the main research questions, the researcher formulated the following sub-questions:

- What is the role of the members of SGBs in public schools?
- What is the school's strategy to attract parents with unique talents to the SGB?
- How does the school use recruited parents with special talents to improve the teaching/learning situation?
- Which measures are used to gauge the effectiveness of capacity building workshops for SGBs?
- Which measures are in place to ensure adequate financial management by principals, SGB chairpersons and SGB treasurers?

## **1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.4.1 The main aim of the study**

The main aim of the study was to explore the role and impact of SGBs in selected schools in the Schoonoord Circuit.

#### **1.4.2 The objectives of the study**

In an attempt to achieve the aim as mentioned above, the following objectives were identified:

- 1.4.2.1. To determine the impact of the role of members of the SGB in rural public schools.
- 1.4.2.2 To find out how parents with special talents are recruited as members of the School Governing Body;
- 1.4.2.3 To determine whether or not the workshops designed to capacitate members of the School Governing Body are effective, and
- 1.4.2.4 To find out whether there are strategies in place to monitor the principal, chairperson and treasurer of the School Governing Body with regard to the use of school finances.

### **1.5 THE RESEARCHER'S PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, OBSERVATIONS, ASSUMPTIONS AND PRESUMPTIONS**

#### **1.5.1 Personal experience and observations**

The personal experience of the researcher's seven years as a school principal of a rural school (see 1.2) and, by implication, as an *ex-officio* member of the School Governing Body from 2011 to date, is that there is:

- A blatant exclusion of learner representative participation in the affairs of the School Governing Body;

- A lack of knowledge and skills regarding the drawing up and implementation of governance policies at schools, and
- A general inability among School Governing Body members to correctly interpret the South African Schools Act.

During his attendance of SGB meetings at his school, the researcher observed that financial management procedures were flouted and that there was little if any evidence that SGB members could chair such meetings and record the proceedings of the same.

As a principal and the chairperson of the Schoonoord Principals Forum, the researcher also attended a few SGB finance committee meetings at the schools selected for this study. Information on these meetings and his observations at each of these schools follow.

#### School A

At School A, the meeting was held on 15 January 2016. The business of the day was a discussion of the 2016 budget. This school's budget was in line with government requirements, as stated in Section 38(2) of SASA.

#### School B

At School B, the meeting was held on 22 January 2016. At this school, the SGB was not adequately constituted, but the meeting went on even though there was no quorum. Attendees were merely given copies of an already drafted budget, which they were requested to adopt for implementation. At this meeting, there was no mention of a parents' meeting.

#### School C

At School C, the meeting was held on 29 January 2016. It was also a budget meeting, but there was no prepared budget and record-keeping was a challenge (for further details see Chapter 4).

Having noted these discrepancies, the researcher wanted to find out if there were any strategies in place to monitor the principal, chairperson and treasurer with regard to the use of school finances. Informing his intent was his conviction that ignorance in this regard has had a negative impact on the administration of schools in the Circuit of Schoonoord. Observations at these meetings, coupled with the researcher's professional experience of 20 years, motivated the researcher to undertake this study as a means of determining the actual situation.

### **1.5.2 Personal assumptions**

According to Simon (2011), assumptions are the things that are somewhat out of one's control, but if one disappears their study would become irrelevant. In addition, an assumption is something that one assumes to be the case, even without proof (<https://www.vocabulary.com>).

As a principal, the researcher assumed that individuals who offered their services as members of the School Governing Body would be competent to:

- Draw and implement school budgets in accordance with existing educational prescripts;
- Run meetings in a manner which is in keeping with standard procedures; and
- Distinguish between professional and governance matters.

In qualitative research, assumptions take the place of hypotheses. Assumptions are basic principles that are accepted as being true on the basis of logic or reason, without conclusive proof or verification. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:315), assumptions in qualitative research are based on a constructivist philosophy, which assumes that reality is a multi-layered, interactive, shared social experience that is interpreted by individuals.

In this study, the researcher assumed that (a) some of the SGBs in the Schoonoord Circuit lacked knowledge, skills, abilities and expertise in the management of finances; (b) the training given to the SGBs was inadequate, due to limited resources and ill-equipped trainers, which hindered the SGB's ability to effectively manage school

finances, and (c) some SGBs have difficulty executing their roles and responsibilities because of their inadequate knowledge and skills of the governance of schools.

A further assumption informing this study is that some of the secondary schools' SGBs in the Schoonoord Circuit are not yet ready to be given full responsibility for the management of school finances. Informing this assumption is the fact that all 957 public schools in the Limpopo Province, including the selected Schoonoord secondary schools, have been granted a Section 21 status. It was taken for granted that since SGBs were formed more than 20 years ago and were already executing functions at schools, as per the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), it would be easy to add the responsibility for the management of school finances to the SGBs' other responsibilities.

### **1.5.3 Personal presumptions**

Presumptions are conclusions regarding the existence or non-existence of a fact drawn from other evidence, admitted and proven to be true (<https://www.google.com>).

As a school principal in the Schoonoord Circuit, I presumed that persons serving on a School Governing Body would, in terms of its dictates and existing prescripts:

- Possess the requisite functional literacy and numeracy skills;
- Have the requisite moral authority and integrity to resolve challenges without fear, favour and prejudice;
- Not pursue selfish agendas at the expense of good governance; and
- Be willing to volunteer their expertise, time, skills and resources to assist schools to run effectively and efficiently.

Contrary to these presumptions, the researcher discovered that such was not the case. Members of the School Governing Bodies were found not only to lack sound literacy and numeracy skills but also to behave in a manner that was not in keeping with the demands of their office, deciding on issues not in accordance with their merit but terms of opportunities for self-enrichment.

## **1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **1.6.1 Research design**

According to McMillian and Schumacher (2014: 28), research design is “the process for conducting the study”. This study was conducted using a case study design approach. A case study allows for the use of a variety of research methods (Muronga, 2011:42).

A case study design was the most suitable research design for this study because it granted the researcher the ability to make use of any form of data relevant to the study. The primary source of data for this were interviews, and a case study thus became the logical design for this study due to its flexibility regarding the source of data.

Furthermore, a case study focuses on real people in a real situation (Cohen et al., 2011:289) and “strives towards a holistic understanding of how participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of the phenomenon under study” (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:75). This case study sought to establish the influencing factor of a social unit under investigation and explore the relationship between that particular social unit and the factor. It uses people (SGB members) as the social unit.

### **1.6.2 Research methodology**

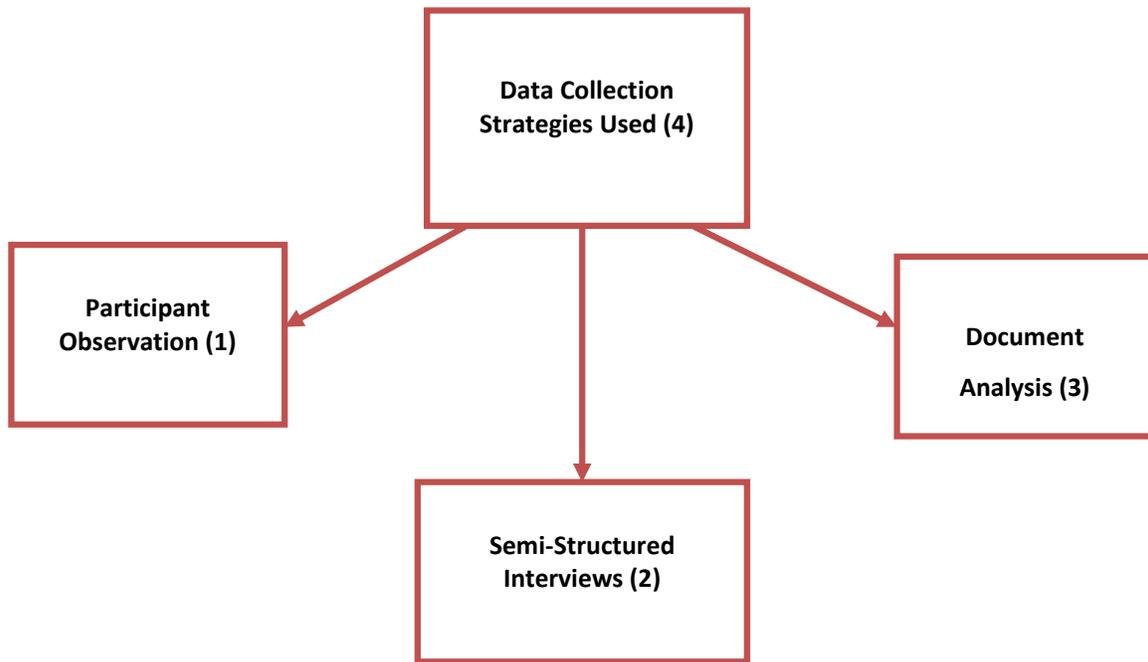
#### **1.6.2.1 Qualitative research approach**

The qualitative research approach is the most appropriate method for this study. Aimed at understanding and describing the problem under investigation, it involved a small number of participants whose spoken words were used in the analysis and interpretation of results.

#### **1.6.2.2 Data collection strategies**

The researcher used data collection strategies such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documents analysis as instruments for gathering the necessary data.

**Figure 1.1: An organogram showing how data were collected**



#### **1.6.2.2.1 Participant observation**

Participant observation is generally regarded as the principal data-gathering strategy in qualitative research. According to Maree (2013), observation is a systematic process of monitoring the behavioural patterns of participants without necessarily questioning and communicating with them. Johnson and Christensen (2014:211) also define observation as the process of watching the behavioural patterns of people in certain situations in order to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest.

In this study, the researcher attended the School Governing Body meetings of five secondary schools that were purposefully selected from the nine secondary schools in the Schoonoord Circuit in order to observe their meeting procedures (see 1.5.1

above). The frequency and consistency of these meetings were also examined and, finally, the researcher evaluated the participation of the individual SGBs of the selected schools.

#### **1.6.2.2 Interviews**

An interview is a conversation between two or more people where questions are asked by the interviewer to elicit answers in the form of facts or statements from the interviewee. Maja (2016) describes interview as the data collection technique of asking participants questions in order to get their honest opinions and views.

According to Alshengeeti (2014:41), an interview is “a conversation whose purpose is to gather a description of the life-world of the interviewee” concerning the interpretation of the meaning of the “described phenomena”. In other words, interviews are a standard part of sourcing information and could be employed in many other situations, including undertaking qualitative research.

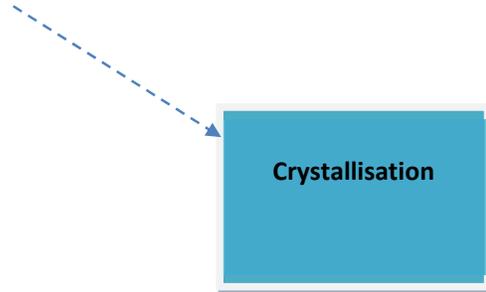
In this study, the researcher used a semi-structured questionnaire schedule to interview participants in focus groups. In addition, he interviewed individuals who were data-rich and were purposively selected. Again, the researcher used the participant observation strategy to collect data. The other method used was a content analysis that went hand in glove with the literature review as a form of data collection.

Principals participated in the individual interviews, and SGB chairpersons, SGB teacher components, SGB treasures and SGB learners (RCL) participated in the focus group interviews. Data collected for this qualitative study were analysed and interpreted using document analyses. These data analysis methods are described in more detail below.

### **1.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

**Figure 1.2: An organogram showing how data were analysed**





### **(a) Content analysis**

Content analysis was utilised to enable the researcher to sift through the recorded data collected from the participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). According to Babbie and Mouton (2010), content analysis embraces all those methods of text analysis that approach texts utilising categories. They further state that content analysis essentially involves the coding of data, a process in which certain segments of the text are associated with crucial labels or codes.

In this study, the documents that were analysed are following: Minute book of SGB meetings, learners' code of conduct policy, financial records, teachers' policy on the code of conduct and SASA (see chapter four Section 4.5.4).

### **(b) Document analysis**

According to Maree (2010:82), document analysis is a data collection technique that includes all types of written communication that may shed light on the phenomenon

under investigation. Punch (2009:185) describes documents as a rich source of data because documentary evidence has been compiled and retained.

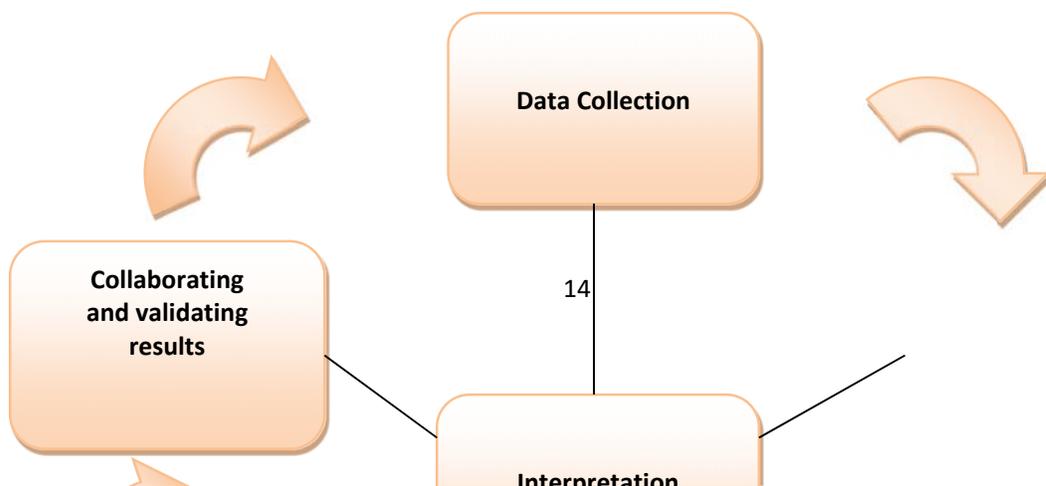
In this study, the researcher reviewed a range of documents, including the Constitution of the SGB, code of conduct of learners, attendance register for meetings, financial records and invitations to meetings of each respective School Governing Body. The perusal of such documents is regarded as an “essential part of the data collection strategy” (Schumacher & McMillian, 2010:384). Data collected through focus group and in-depth individual interviews, as well as observations, were analysed.

### **(c) Crystallisation**

Data collected in this study were analysed utilising crystallisation, which is described by McMillian and Schumacher (2010:366) as a process in which the researcher collapses coding, categories, and pattern seeking into an extended period of intuition-rich immersion within the data. Researchers view crystallisation as telling the same story through data gathered from different data collection instruments or data sources, such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews and document review.

Johnson and Christensen (2014), for example, state that as a qualitative researcher, one has to alternate between data collected through observation, semi-structured interviews and documents and field notes, in order to do data analysis and create meaning from raw data and enhance the trustworthiness of the data.

Johnson and Christensen (2014:531) further summarise qualitative research data in the diagram below:





**Figure 1.3: Data analysis in qualitative research (Johnson & Christensen, 2008:531)**

## **1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The researcher obtained permission from the Sekhukhune District manager to conduct the research, following the prescribed departmental protocol, which stipulates that research should be conducted in line with the ethics, as prescribed by the institution as well as by international norms and standards for conducting research. Written permission for the research was also obtained from the school principals and all other participants in the study, since the consent of the participants ought to be obtained in writing. Interviews were conducted after school hours with principals, learners and

educators, and with parents at times convenient to them, as the researcher did not want to disrupt the smooth running of the schools or participants' personal lives.

In addition, permission was obtained from participants to record the interviews by using voice recorders. In all instances, field notes were taken, and the researcher's impressions were jotted down after every interview. This helped the researcher to remember them during the analysis of data. An application to conduct the research was lodged with the Ethics Committee of the College of Education at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

## **1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study is significant because it could contribute to a better and more comprehensive understanding of the role of the School Governing Bodies at public schools. Such understanding could benefit members of SGBs, empowering them to better perform their different roles, responsibilities, duties, functions and accountabilities.

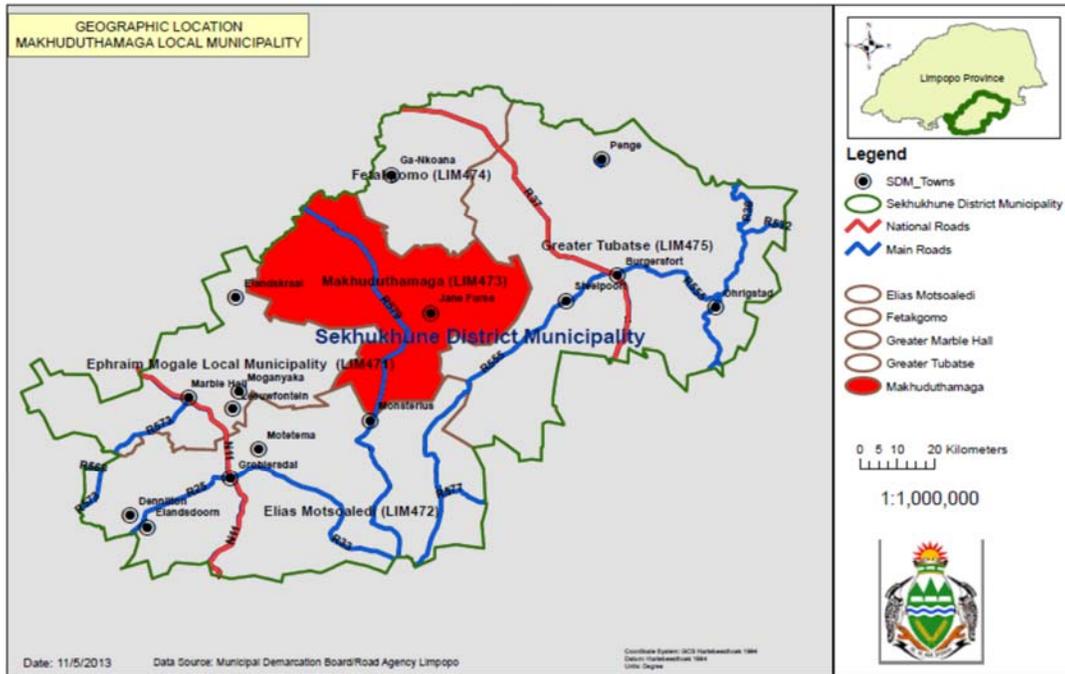
Indications from the literature review are that no previous study had been conducted in this particular area at the time this study commenced. Therefore, this study is unique. In addition to this, the recommendations based on the findings of this study, as well as the model of school governance developed by the researcher, could benefit all stakeholders in the Schoonoord Circuit of the Sekhukhune District and the country as a whole.

## **1.10 DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

### **1.10.1 Delimitations of the study**

According to Baron (2010:5-6), delimitations describe the scope of the study or its established parameters or limits. Delimitations are those characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of a study (Simon, 2011: 2).

This study used a sample selected from the secondary school population of the Schoonoord Circuit in the Sekhukhune District of the Limpopo Province in South Africa. The map below clearly illustrates the location of the Schoonoord Circuit. The Circuit comprises nine secondary schools, five of which were purposively selected for this study. The sampling techniques used in this study are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of the study.



**Figure 1.4: Location of secondary schools in the Schoonoord Circuit (Jane Furse)**

### 1.10.2 Limitations of the study

The outcomes of this study are limited to the selected schools in the Schoonoord Circuit of the Sekhukhune District in the Makhuduthamaga Municipality (Jane Furse) of the Limpopo Province. There are nine (9) secondary schools in the Schoonoord Circuit, all of which are located in the Municipality near the town of Jane Furse (see Figure 1.4), and as such, the results cannot be generalised.

The recommendations are only, therefore, applicable to the five selected schools but may have implications for other public schools not directly affected by this study. The results of the study are, moreover, based on the responses of those participants who were interviewed and cannot, therefore, be generalised either.

## **1.11 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

Definitions of concepts are required in order to highlight those that are relevant to the study. The concepts used in this study are explained in the following sub-sections.

### **1.11.1 Role**

The term role 'role' means "something that a person is tasked to do either in an organisation or institution" (Nonyane, 2016:11). Roles must be performed daily 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 (Mabusela, 2016). The term role was 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.

In this study, the word 'role' refers to the functions, duties and responsibilities that the School Governing Bodies must execute in public schools.

### **1.11.2 School Governance**

School governance involves determining the policies and rules by which a school is organised and controlled. It includes ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively in terms of the law and budget of the school (Davids, 2011:12).

In this study, governance refers to the responsibilities and accountabilities of the School Governing Bodies, together with the underlying principles thereof, which are mainly consistent with the South African Schools Act of 1996 as amended.

### **1.11.3 School Governing Body**

The concept, 'School Governing Body', is used to describe an elected body that is entrusted with the responsibility and authority to formulate and adopt school policies within the national and provincial sphere, thus reflecting the vision and agenda for education encapsulated in the South African Schools Act of 1996.

Governing bodies are representatives of the main stakeholders and, as such:

- (1) Members of the governing body of an ordinary public school should include:
  - a) Elected members
  - b) The principal of the school, in his or her official capacity, and
  - c) Co-opted members (RSA, 1996: S (23) (1) (a-c)).
- (2) Elected members of the governing body should include:
  - (a) Parents of learners at the school
  - (b) Educators at the school
  - (c) Members of the staff who are not educators
  - d) Learners in the eighth grade or higher at the school  
(RSA, 1996: S (23) (2) (a-d)).
- 3) According to the South African Schools Act (1996: 1), a parent is defined as:
  - a) The parent or guardian of a learner;
  - b) The person legally entitled to custody of a learner; or

- c) The person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a parent with reference to paragraphs (a) and (b) that relate to a learner's education at school (RSA, 1996: S (1) (XIV) (a-c)).

For this study, the term, 'SGB', refers to an elected body comprised of parents of learners at the school, educators at the school, members of staff at the school who are not educators, and learners in the eighth grade or higher at the school.

#### **1.11.4 Schools**

According to the South African Schools Act, schools are defined as public or independent schools that enrol learners in one or more grades between Grades 0 and Grade 12.

##### **1.11.4.1 Public schools**

Public schools are pre-tertiary educational institutions that dispense the curriculum requirements in terms of the South African Schools Act of 1996.

In this study, public schools refer to ordinary public schools that cater for the disadvantaged Black members of the rural public schools in the Schoonoord Circuit of the Greater Sekhukhune District in the Limpopo Province.

##### **1.11.4.2 Model C Schools**

Model C schools are government schools that are administered and primarily funded by the parent alumni body (Kruger, 2012:1).

In this study, model C schools are schools that catered for previously advantaged White communities, who were selected purely on racial grounds and accorded a higher per capita expenditure than other racial groups.

Public schools and Model C schools are discussed in more detail later in the study.

### **1.11.5 Schoonoord Circuit**

The circuit is an institution that administers schools. The Circuit Manager is the head of the circuit office (Mafuwane & Pitsoe, 2014:441).

The Schoonoord Circuit falls under the jurisdiction of the Sekhukhune District of the Limpopo Province. It is approximately 162 km east of the city of Polokwane within the Makhuduthamaga Municipality. The majority of the residents of the area are subjects of Chiefs Mogashoa-Manamane, Makgeru and Maloma.

In this study, the Schoonoord Circuit refers to all primary and secondary schools reflected in Figure 1.4 above.

## **1.12 EXPOSITION OF THE CHAPTERS**

This exploratory study has been organised into five distinct chapters with the following contents:

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

This chapter provides the background to the research problem, a description of the problem, and the statement of the problem. It further explains the rationale for the study, as well as its aims, objectives, delimitations, limitations and research methodology.

### **Chapter 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter deals with theories as enunciated by Lutz and Iannaccone (1985) discussing issues of school governance through the Theory of Dissatisfaction. As well as the Action Theory by Argyris and Schon (1974). Furthermore, the theory of

Community of Practice by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) is referred to. Finally, the contribution of the South African School's Act (SASA) is discussed.

### **Chapter 3: LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter explores the functionality of School Governing Bodies, with special reference to their roles and legal responsibilities. A comparative study of the South African education system and the education systems of selected countries form part of this review.

### **Chapter 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the particular research design used in this study. A detailed explanation of the methodology used is included in this chapter.

### **Chapter 5: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

This chapter deals with the collection and analysis of data in this study, also providing an interpretation of the findings of the study.

### **Chapter 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter provides a summary of the research results. On the basis of the findings, conclusions and recommendations are made. In addition, the limitations of the study are highlighted and acknowledged. An integrated School Governing Body model of how SGBs should function is then proposed.

## **1.13 SUMMARY**

This introductory chapter has outlined the problem to be investigated in this study, including the motivation for the study and the aims and objectives of the research. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact that SGBs have on the education

system given the abilities, skills and knowledge that are necessary to manage and govern schools.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

A discussion of theories on school governance is presented in this chapter, in order to articulate the relevance to the study to the field of education. The theories will also show the usefulness of the governing bodies to the administration and management of school affairs. In other words, the theories will indicate how important the role of the SGBs is, in the sense that, their functions have a significant impact on the running of the school activities.

These theories also demonstrate how SGBs can become more helpful by skilfully contributing in a significant way to the development of the growth of schools. A well empowered SGB can become less dependent on principals, unions, who are always eager to pursue their agendas. It does so by discussing the following theories: Dissatisfaction Theory, Action Theory, and Community of Practice, which has strong links with the concepts of administration and management as the main elements of the aspect of governance. All the mentioned theories are fully discussed in Section 2.2 below.

Furthermore, this chapter discusses the contribution of School Governance to the South African Schools Act (SASA) as amended.

#### 2.2 THEORIES AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN RELATION TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLING SYSTEM

The following three theories on school governance are discussed in detail:

- (a) The Dissatisfaction Theory, which gave rise to the Social Justice Theory;
- (b) The Action Theory, which formed the basis for theories on good, participatory, democratic modes of governance, and

(c) The Community Practice Theory, which reflects the communitarian concept of Ubuntu.

### **2.2.1 Dissatisfaction theory on school governance as a source of the theory of social justice**

The Dissatisfaction Theory, which originated in the 1980s, deals with issues of dissatisfaction as discussed in a paper titled: Community dissatisfaction and school governance by Rada and Carlson (1985). It was chosen as one of the frames of reference for this study because it illustrates how dissatisfaction led to many struggles against Apartheid education, known as Bantu Education, in the RSA. Black communities, parents, in particular, were thoroughly dissatisfied with the type of education given to their children because they were denied the right to choose which type of education they wanted for their children. The denial of this right, being perceived as unfair to the children, ultimately led to the demand that social justice should be served through the application of the principle of equal (learning) opportunity.

The “rational aspect of social justice”, according to Mncube (2008:3) “has to do with procedural rights and is concerned with ordering social relations according to formal and informal rules that govern how the members of the society treat each other at both micro and macro levels.” In this study, this interpretation is applied to the procedural aspect of school governance: if SGBs are to strike a balance anchored on excellent and harmonious relationships, they should, by implication, run the affairs of the school based on the theories of social justice. The discussion of the Dissatisfaction Theory, which follows, serves as justification for this claim.

#### **2.2.1.1 Origin and development of the Dissatisfaction Theory**

The Dissatisfaction Theory was first espoused by Lutz and Iannaccone (in Rada & Carlson, 1985:4). Emerging as the result of community dissatisfaction related to issues of mutual interest, it was pro. If community dissatisfaction was based on matters of mutual interest, this theory might have been caused by actions and issues like the ones listed and described below.

In the RSA, existing prescripts and relevant sections of the South African Schools Act (as amended), School Governing Bodies (SGBs) have a constitutional mandate to espouse various policies. Such policies include, among others, a learner admission, religious observance, language, finance and an HIV/AIDS policy. Communities, instead of adhering to these policies often want members of School Governing Bodies to violate them, something which, by implication, is a contravention of the law. Contrary to procedures laid down by the School Governing Bodies in order to govern schools effectively and efficiently, some communities (through organised formations and as influential members within the community) coerce the SGB to deviate from existing learner admission policies even when the closing date for such admissions has passed. Should the SGB adhere to the established policies and procedures, some community structures and individuals mobilise people to invade the school premises in order to forcefully demand learner admission. It follows that actions such as these result in an excessively high levels of demand, thus complicating the work of the School Governing Body insofar as new policies and procedures of school governance are concerned.

The Finance Committee is a critical component of the School Governing Body. If adjudication authorisation and approval processes of claims of service providers at the school were flouted, the community would be dissatisfied, mainly because most of the service providers would come from the local community. The concerned community would then demonstrate its dissatisfaction during meetings scheduled to approve budgets or to elect new members of the SGB and, as a result, the votes would be split. Instances of dissatisfaction often manifest in the premature retirement of dissatisfied members from positions on the School Governing Body. Such actions often arise as a result of the persistent failure of some members to yield influence at meetings. Individuals who are perceived as controversial because they go against popular opinion during parent meetings are most likely to lose their position in the succeeding election.

Due to rapid urbanisation and the migratory labour system, most parents leave their children in rural areas under the guardianship of their grandparents who, because of their age, are likely to retire from the School Governing Body sooner rather than later,

either because of the effects of ageing or because pressure is brought to bear on them, resulting in their resignation or recall.

It is against this theoretical background that communities, especially previously disadvantaged Blacks, mounted pressure on the government to bring about change in the content and governance of education in the country.

### **2.2.1.2 Contributions of the Dissatisfaction Theory to this study and the education profession**

Conditions of service for teachers during the Apartheid years (1948-1990) were appalling. Black teachers had no pension provisioning before 1967, Black female educators had their services terminated each time they fell pregnant, and Black educators had no say – they were not even consulted - on the matter of their salaries. Black teachers' dissatisfaction with this situation, which led in protestations (especially in the late seventies), resulted in some educators being forced into exile while others resigned from the profession in order to pursue other interests.

In addition, because of the high level of dissatisfaction, the teaching profession became strongly unionised. The participation of educator unions, focusing on satisfying the aspirations of teachers, resulted in the organised teaching profession adopting a radical approach to education transformation. In the first instance, education authorities were forced into bargaining councils such as the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) whose members were mostly associated with educator unions. In the second instance, and as a result of the bargaining that took place in these councils, new policies - the Labour Relations Act (NO 66 of 1995 as amended), and the Employment of Educators Act (NO 76 of 1998 as amended), for example – were passed.

### **2.2.1.3 Contributions of the Dissatisfaction Theory to this study and the SA system of education and its governance structures**

Because of serious dissatisfaction with the erstwhile school boards, Black schools were disrupted throughout the late seventies and eighties. There was a build-up for a new governance system, which would replace the one that brought into existence the

infamous school boards. Commissions of inquiry were established to give recommendations for a complete overhaul of the school governance structure.

Because of the overall dissatisfaction, even parents who were initially less concerned about education started to demand representation. This led to a series of consultations which initially produced Parents-Teacher-Associations (PTAs) (for primary schools) and Parents-Teacher-Student-Associations (PTSAs) (for secondary schools) with the dawning of a democratic South Africa, the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996, as amended) was developed. This Act gave communities the right to participate in the governance of their schools. They could develop new policies (admission policy, HIV/AIDS policy, finance policy, religious observance policy, language policy, etc.) which would ensure that the schools were run in a representative manner.

Indications from the foregoing explanation are that the basic tenet on which the Dissatisfaction Theory rests is as follows: When dissatisfaction in a community increases, the desire of communities to participate in and bring about changes in school governance policies and procedures will increase. By implication, these changes result in acceptable governance outcomes.

## **2.2.2 The action theory and its relevance to this study and to school governance**

To begin with, it is worth noting that the Action Theory forms the basis for theories on good, participatory and democratic governance, which is the focus of this study. To validate his claim in this regard, the researcher subsequently first defines Action Theory and then links Action Theory to the afore-mentioned governance theories.

In this study, Action Theory can empower the SGBs. Its fundamental tenets are that the agent (i.e. the person acting) gains a sense of control over a situation through action and that the action s/he takes can be used to infer the reasons for his/her specific action taken. Action Theory is thus a two-dimensional theory: explicit (espoused) and implicit (theories-in-use).

### **2.2.2.1 Origin and development of the Action Theory of school governance**

Action Theory originated during the middle seventies when South African schooling was in turmoil. There was a need for action by certain individuals. Informed by the assumption that human behaviour - parents, learners and teachers in the case of education in the RSA – has inevitable consequences, the theory seeks to predict the behaviour of individuals.

### **2.2.2.2 Contributions of the Action Theory to the education profession**

Action Theory as expressed in deliberate human behaviour in education in the RSA, is reflected in the formation of educator unions, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) in 1991 being one of these. Their formation allowed educators to participate meaningfully and actively in their conditions of service and to influence education policy in various fora. More specifically, Action Theory informed the contributions of teachers, through their unions, in education budgets and even in bodies such as the South African Council of Educators (SACE), which registers and regulates the teaching profession. Together, all of these human actions also led to the formation of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSF).

It was not only among teachers that the principles of Action Theory were reflected. Learners also took an active part in the running of affairs at school through the establishment of the Representative Councils for Learners (RCL). Parents also got involved as members of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and other formations such as the Association of School Governing Bodies (ASGBs).

Based on these actions, taken by humans, and the results of all the actions taken together, the researcher would argue that the Action Theory is pivotal in the creation of an environment which enables teachers, parents, learners and support staff to contribute to the governance of the schools to which they are attached.

### **2.2.2.3 Contributions of Action Theory to the governing structures of the SA system of education**

Action Theory gave impetus to a process which led to school governance in the RSA changing from an undemocratic, non-representative and illegitimate system to one which ushered in a participatory form of democracy. Through organs such as the RCL, the teaching staff, members of the support staff and parents' meetings, individuals are elected to serve on the governing structures of schools. Evidently, such individuals, being representative agents of their constituencies, would thus make inputs in the running of schools in their constituencies that are meaningful to those whom they represent. In this sense, according to the researcher, it can be unequivocally stated that changes to school governance in the RSA were largely driven by the Action Theory.

### **2.2.3 The community of practice theory**

The origins and primary use of the concept of a community of practice come from the learning theory, through the involvement of everyone in the community. The theory was developed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger who in 1991, named their theory *The Community of Practice Theory*. This theory describes the community of practice as a collective endeavour of human beings with a common destiny to exchange knowledge and expertise for the attainment of a common goal.

According to Nonyane (2016:68), the theory reflects the ongoing interaction of groups of people who share a common concern, set of problems, or passion for a topic, towards the deepening of their knowledge and expertise in the area concerned.

Of interest here, according to Tlhapi (in Mathipa, Netshitangani & Matlabe, 2017:114), is the notion that this theory links well with the communitarian concept of Ubuntu. According to Tlhapi (ibid), "the concept, 'communitarianism', is much the same as that of consociation because both mean citizenship that is composed of members of different groups." Mathipa, Higgs and Tlhapi (in Mathipa, Netshitangani & Matlabe, 2017:114) further argue that "communitarianism is, therefore, of paramount importance in the lives of learners in the secondary school phase because they are the future nation and as such they need to know how to coexist in peace with other

race groups as neighbours, or co-workers or colleagues.” It is this comment which is of particular relevance to this study because it involves learners serving as SGB members as research participants.

In order to distinguish the ‘community of practice’ from the broader meaning of the concept, ‘community’, it is necessary to highlight similarities and differences between them. The community of practice comprises of three characteristics that are essential to the understanding of the theory, namely, Domain, the Community and Practice.

Each component is discussed in detail below:

### **2.2.3.1 Domain**

A domain is more than a network of connections between people; instead, individuals operating in the same domain typically share an ability that is defined by the shared domain of interest. Members of a School Governing Body, for example, should have a common goal - the creation of an enabling environment for effective and efficient teaching and learning through effective governance as espoused in the South African Schools’ Act (No 84 of 1996 as amended).

### **2.2.3.2 Community**

As members pursue their interests within their specific domains, they are bound to engage in joint activities and discussions, assisting each other and sharing information. Through these activities, community members build relationships that assist them to learn from each other. In School Governing Bodies (SGBs), the joint activities, which manifest themselves mostly through meetings and workshops, foster relationships among members for three years. In getting to know one another, they develop trust and are thus able to learn from each other.

### **2.2.3.3 Practice**

A community of practice is not merely a community of interest: its members should be practitioners who develop a shared repertoire and way of addressing emerging

problems. School Governing Bodies (SGBs) use tools such as adjudication forms when evaluating potential service providers who, for example, would have to repair a burst water pipe. SGBs would also, through policies and contracts developed over time, be able to regulate the employment conditions of members of the support staff such as cleaners and gardeners.

## **2.3 CONTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE TO SASA**

### **2.3.1. The origin of the South African Schools' Act (Act 84 of 1996)**

In the words of Mathipa in Mathipa, Netshitangani and Matlabe (2017:121), “the country was colonised gradually but mercilessly from 1652, when Jan Van Riebeeck landed at the Cape. With colonisation forcefully taking place, a new policy of educating the various groups emerged and evolved over time.” Thus, since the inception of the Bantu Education Act (No 47 of 1953), school governance in South Africa was structured along racial lines. The idea and purpose are captured in the views of Mathipa (in Mathipa, Netshitangani & Matlabe, 2017:122) who argues that “from the onset, Black education was the least provided for in terms of resources, in comparison to Whites, Indians and Coloureds.” With the coming into being of the new democratic government in 1994, a new education dispensation was put in place in order to correct the wrongs of the past and usher in equality, fairness and social justice.

The new education dispensation brought about a new approach to school governance-informed by explicit theories of decision making and governance because “democracy in education is only possible with the participation and involvement of all” (Mathipa, Higgs & Tlhapi, in Mathipa, Netshitangani & Matlabe, 2017:109). In adopting new theories, the newly elected South African democratic government published a White Paper on the Organisation and Funding of Schools (Republic of South Africa, 1996) aimed at fostering democratic governance. The White Paper ushered in the advent of institutional management, thereby introducing a school governance structure that involved all the stakeholder groups in active and responsible roles in order to encourage tolerance, rational discussion, and collective decision making (Department of Education, 1996:16).

### **2.3.2 The South African Schools' Act (Act 84 of 1996 as amended)**

From the White Paper emanated the South African Schools' Act (Act No.84 of 1996 as amended), which became operative from the beginning of 1999. This Act aimed to advance the democratic transformation of the society (Act 84 of 1996:2). The Act makes provision for democratically elected community-based School Governing Bodies (SGBs).

School governance structures were, however, in most cases a new terrain for the overwhelming majority of South African communities, which had to manage the schools based on the new policy. In other words, there was a need for workshops to empower and capacitate the new members of the newly established SGBs. Without these, the elected school governors would not be able to function effectively because they needed to have a fair understanding of what the principles of democracy entailed. For any structure to function democratically, its participants should have a fair understanding of what democracy is and what it requires in order to be effective and efficient in its role of ensuring that it disposes in an equal and justiciable manner the school policies and resources at the school's disposal.

## **2.4 SUMMARY**

In this chapter, theories and their relevance to school governance in relation to the South African schooling system were presented, in order to show their relevance to the study. Secondly, theories also showed that they have an essential role in the educational governance system since they could provide SGBs with capacity, knowledge and understanding they need to increase their effectiveness.

Finally, the contribution of school governance to the South African School Act (Act 84 of 1996 as amended) was presented.

In the next chapter, the literature review on the impact of the role played by the School Governing Bodies in the running of schools in general and South Africa, in particular, is presented.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is devoted to the review of literature on the impact of the role played by School Governing Bodies in the running of schools in general and South Africa in particular. It does so by first discussing the school governance system. The following countries have been selected for the comparative part of the study: England, Canada and Zimbabwe.

Bantu Education was introduced in 1953 in accordance with the Bantu Education Act (No.47 of 1953). Its introduction was the result of a report by the Eiselen Commission, commissioned by the then Minister of Education, Dr HF Verwoerd, in 1949, to investigate the status of education in the country.

The segregation of the education system on the basis of race and colour was accompanied by adjustments to the per capita expenditure on learners, school governance structures and many other issues involving schools. According to Steyn *et al.*, (2011:22) resistance against Bantu Education by Black education leaders, teachers and learners led to school boycotts and protests which challenged segregated education, rejected Bantu or Apartheid education as unequal and illegitimate, and culminated in the 1976 Soweto riots that spread throughout the country (see also 2.3.3 in this regard).

In order to discuss and show the impact of the role of School Governing Bodies, international experience and its influence on governance in the Republic of South Africa, School administration by School Boards, School committees, the Soweto Parent's Crisis Committee, the National Crisis Committee and the School Governing Body are presented.

### **3.2 THE SCHOOL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM**

#### **3.2.1 Introduction**

In the section, the history of the school governance structures in South Africa are discussed. The schools was administered under the so called:

- (a) School Boards
- (b) School Committees
- (c) The Soweto Parents Crisis Committee
- (d) The National Education Crisis Committee
- (e) The School Governing Body.

The researcher decided to address each school governing structure in terms of its origin, composition, achievements and failures before moving to the introduction of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs).

### **3.2.2 School administration by school boards, school committees, the Soweto parents crisis committee the national crisis committee and the school governing body**

#### **3.2.2.1 School boards**

Before the establishment of school boards, South African education was run by missionaries (churches), provincial education departments and a minimal number of private schools. Schools under provincial education departments taught the same syllabus to learners, regardless of race. Duma, Kapueja and Khanyile (2011:45), report that “the South African school governance in the past was in accordance with race distinctions”. In other words, the school governance structure was divided according to different racial groups within the South African population.

This was done during the era when South Africa was still under British rule and known as the Union of South Africa. The administration of Black education was a provincial responsibility until 1953 when the Bantu Education Act was passed, and the control of African schooling was transferred to the Union Department of Native Affairs.

When the National Party came into power in 1948, it introduced the concept of Apartheid, which involved the development of separate homelands for different racial groups as well as separate amenities for different racial groups. Given the primarily rural environments in which homelands were situated, the kind of education which had been the norm up to that time was considered as too “bookish” an affair, too “academic”, and too far removed from the everyday needs of African people.

#### **(a) The origin and development of school boards**

School boards were constituted through the grouping together of some school committees by their proximity to one another. The authorities appointed a person who served as secretary of the school board, and such school boards had to coordinate the work of the school committees under their jurisdiction and ensure that policies, which were formulated by the education authorities, were implemented at schools through the school committees.

In order to control Black schools, education authorities (mainly White officials) were given absolute power to nominate and appoint members of school committees. In rural areas, some headmen and chiefs were also delegated with limited powers to appoint individuals to serve on school committees. Some school committees were not democratically elected.

The duties and functions of the school committees/boards were restricted as they were not consulted and represented when educational policies, which affected their children, were formulated (Duma *et al.*, 2011:45). They were merely responsible for the implementation of policies handed down to them by education officials and could be removed by the same education officials, with no access to any form of representation.

#### **(b) Contributions of school boards to the education system**

Some church organisations and political parties, such as the African National Congress (ANC), vehemently opposed the work of the school boards. After the introduction of the Bantu Education Act, some teachers resigned to pursue other interests, while others were forced into exile. Those who opposed the Act were merely fired, with no option of any form of representation. In this regard, according to Rakometsi (2008:93), Verwoerd, the then Prime Minister of the country, made a veiled threat to teachers during his speech to the Senate:

*“I wish to express the hope that teachers will not fail in this (that is, in accepting their duties as laid down in the Act) because for teachers who are not faithful in this regard there is no place in the service of the Bantu Education Department”.*

The changes made to the education delivered to Black children, designed to prepare its recipients for servitude, was of inferior quality. School boards merely facilitated the passing on of elementary numeracy and literacy skills to Black children, which is why, during the period of existence of the school boards, most Black children dropped out of school. Those who persevered became clerks, police officers, nurses or teachers. However, professions such as medicine, engineering and others were reserved for Whites.

The contribution of these limited power accorded to school boards contributed to the provision of inferior education, the results of which are even now reflected in the alarming rate of illiteracy among Black adults (especially those who were of school-going age throughout the fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties and nineties).

### **(c) Why school boards were replaced**

School boards were eventually replaced because they had no power or influence of whatever kind in the running of schools; all they did was to implement the decisions of the education authorities. Moreover, according to Duma (2008), they excluded Black parents completely, as reported in the findings of this study (see Chapter 4).

### **3.2.2.2 School committees**

School committees were the very first structures introduced as a form of control over school affairs. What follows is a comprehensive analysis of its role in the critical era of struggle by Black parents to have a say in the education of their children.

#### **(a) The origin and development of school committees**

In terms of the Bantu Education Act, the establishment of School Committees was a precursor to the establishment of school boards, which existed merely to control some School Committees. School Committees, on the other hand, were established to control schools; to ensure that all the schools attended by Black learners implemented the Bantu Education Act (see 3.2.2.1a).

#### **(b) Contributions of School Committees to the education system**

The contribution of School Committees to the education system was very limited in scope. Apart from ensuring that policies, which were predetermined by the Act and education officials, were implemented, their role in shaping the affairs of schools was limited. At most, they ensured that the inferior education (as espoused in the Bantu Education Act) was implemented at schools. The contributions of school committees were, therefore, more or less the same as those of school boards (see 3.2.2.1b).

#### **(c) Why School Committees were replaced**

By the limitations placed on their role through the Act concerned, these committees had no say in the formulation of education policies, were not representative of the communities they served and, hence, lacked credibility and influence. Black communities, which resented these structures, demanded that they be replaced by

representative, credible and liable ones that would carry out the mandate of the communities they serve. This is why, during the late eighties, the National Education Crisis Committee was formed (see 3.2.2.4 below). Formed in response to an outcry by Black constituents for a governance structure which would allow them to participate in the formulation of education policies, this Committee sought to establish structures which would ensure the transformation of school governance in South Africa.

The failure of School Committees is also acknowledged by Seroto (2004:3), and Hyslop (1987:5) who note that:

*“... many groups resisted these school committees. For instance, the African National Congress (ANC) organised a school boycott in 1955 and planned to withdraw children from schools. The Unity movement also opposed the board system and indeed unlike the ANC saw such a boycott as the main strategy against the Bantu Education” (Hyslop, 1987:5).*

### **3.2.2.3 The Soweto parents’ crisis committee (spcc)**

The study will not commit an oversight by not discussing the critical role that was played by Soweto parents who went out of their way to establish an education committee known as the Soweto Parents’ Crisis Committee. It is common knowledge that it was in Soweto where the 1976 students’ uprisings started and that it was these uprisings that led to the establishment of the Soweto Parents’ Crisis Committee.

#### **(a) The origin and development of the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee**

The 1976 education crisis in South Africa was fuelled by Soweto learners’ resentment against Bantu Education. Schools in Soweto were in crisis. Learners saw no value in pursuing inferior education, arguing that it was better to first intensify the struggle for political emancipation. Community structures in Soweto were mobilised to work out a way of saving Black education. In a sense, this is what led to the establishment of the

Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs in Primary Schools) and Parents-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSAs in Secondary Schools).

In 1985, education was again plunged into a crisis: political formations such as the ANC, PAC, AZAPO, and SACP among many others, as well as publications airing the views of the Black masses, were banned. The establishment of the United Democratic Front (UDF) led to the formation of the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee.

### **(b) The contributions of SPCC to the education system**

The Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee made the following contributions in the SA education system:

- (a) Black parents were mobilised to talk about the education of their children;
- (b) Militant youths who had no regard for Apartheid education were persuaded to return to schools; and
- (c) The authorities (including government) realised that it would no longer be possible to ignore the voices of the people in their quest to determine their educational fate.

Nombuso Dlamini in her paper *"Towards an Empowering Education System in South Africa: Youth and struggle for knowledge"* confirms the contributions made by SPCC, saying:

*"In December 1985, at a conference in Soweto, it was agreed that boycotting students, some of whom had not gone to school for over three years, should return to school on the condition that certain demands be met by the central government within three months. The demands including lifting the state of emergency, withdrawing troops from townships, unbanning of COSAS, and the recognition of student representative council".*

Van Der Walt and Helmbold (1995:30) also assert that the then government realised the need for constitutional changes to ensure peace and stability in South Africa. In response to the grievance of Blacks, as indicated in Chapter One, the State passed

the 1979 Education Act (Act 90 of 1979), which came in operation on the 1st January 1990. The Act made provision for new developments in Black education, such as compulsory and free education, subject to the cooperation of parents, and choice of the medium of instruction from Standard Three (Grade 5) onwards.

### **(c) Why the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee was replaced**

Indications from the researcher's review of the literature on evolving school governance structures in the RSA are that the SPCC was not replaced; instead, it formed the basis for the formation of the National Education Crisis Committees (NECCs), which included representatives from 11 regions of the country.

The NECC pioneered a "back to school" slogan which motivated students to stop boycotting schools and to rather work towards the creation of better education by participating in school structures and forming committees that could work towards this end. It was initiatives like these that helped result in the formation of student-teacher committees and student-parent teacher committees inspired by and propagating the slogan, "People's education for people's power".

#### **3.2.2.4 The National Education crisis committee (NECC)**

The struggle for knowledge continued, motivating other regions to join the National Education Crisis Committee (See sections a-d below for more information). While the National Education Crisis Committee had its origins in the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee, it therefore gradually took on a national profile.

##### **(a) The origin and development of the National Education Crisis Committee**

When other regions in South Africa realised the success of the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee, structures were put in place in other parts of the country, such as Cape Town and Durban, to emulate the successes of the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee. It was under the stewardship of bodies such as the UDF that the National Education Crisis Committee was formed. Seeking to ensure the representativity of parents in the

affairs of schools, the NECC followed the Soweto model in the execution of its mandate, which eventually led to the formation of the PTAs and PTSAs alluded to in (c).

According to Booyse (2000:27; 29-31; 35) “In 1989 the so-called coloured people, especially those in the Western Cape, also became involved in the struggle for people’s education, hence the restriction that the government placed on organisations that were connected to people’s education in December 1988”.

### **(b) The contributions of NECC to the education system**

Established in Johannesburg on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 1986, the National Education Crisis Committee made the following contributions to the SA education system:

- It introduced the concept of People’s Education as an alternative education approach to Black education;
- It established an alternative education model which furthered political freedom, including the establishment of subject committees to explore teaching methods for the subjects History, English and Mathematics; and
- It mobilised the whole nation to join them in the struggle for people’s education.

### **(c) Why the National Education Crisis Committee was replaced**

As indicated earlier, the National Education Crisis Committee was not replaced; it naturally evolved into a more powerful body. A speech delivered by State President, FW de Klerk, on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1990 also cleared the confusion that may arise in this regard. Literature confirms that both the NECC and the government reached a consensus that there was a need to review Black education. In 1990 the then Minister of Education launched an investigation into the status of education in order to find solutions for an affordable education dispensation, acceptable to the majority of South

Africans (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2002:17). The proposal of an Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) gave birth to the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) in December 1990.

The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) was one of the projects of the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC), which described itself as “a national body representing teachers, parents and students, mainly from educationally disadvantaged Black communities” (NEPI 1993:1). Resulting from this project were improvements to early childhood education, school education, adult education and training, school governance and finance. The struggle for quality and equality in education did not stop there, in any case. It continued into 1994 when a single, united education system was established.

With regard to improved school governance, which is the focus of this study, the proclamation of the South African Schools’ Act of 1996 (No 84 of 1996) was a key turning point. It was in terms of this Act that SGBs were established and, since they were aimed at the inclusion of all the key stakeholders in education – principals, teachers, parents, and learners – the legacy of unrepresentative school governance structures was at last laid to rest. In this regard, it is important to note that this Act was formulated in an attempt to bring about unity – discouraging racial, cultural, economic, political and gender inequalities – by ensuring the provision of “education of a progressively high quality for all learners” and, in so doing, laying the foundation for “the development of all people’s talents and capabilities” (SASA, 1996(a):11).

### **3.3 A UNITED SINGLE EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR ALL**

The advent of democracy in South Africa saw many radical changes to the country’s political dispensation and State structures. Included in these was the development of its Constitution, which brought democracy to all the citizens of South Africa. Not concentrating on politics only, the Constitutions also included sections on education. It was with reference to these sections that various Education Acts were, and still are passed.

In 1997, outlining the essence of the shift from pre-democratic era to the democratic era, the Department of Education (1997a:2) stated: “Just like the country has a government, the school.... needs a ‘government’ to serve the school and community”. It was primarily to establish School Governing Bodies (SGBs) that the 1996 South African Schools’ Act (Act 84 of 1996) was passed. By including parents in these bodies, the Act, according to Duma (2011:46), attempted to give shape to the principles of access, redress, equity and democratic governance, outlined in the first White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995b).

In 2009, the National Department of Education was split into two departments – the Department of Basic Education and Training, and the Department of Higher Education and Training. The former, i.e. the Department of Basic Education and Training deals with schools (Grade R to 12) and adult literacy programmes. The latter, i.e. the Department of Higher Education and Training is tasked with the responsibility to coordinate the education and training sub-systems of post-school education, including universities, further education and training colleges, sectoral education and training authorities, and Adult Basic Education.

This study, which was aimed at investigating School Governing Bodies, focusing on governance in a specific sector of Basic Education, namely schools. In the preceding section, the origin, development, strength and weaknesses of school governance structures preceding the establishment of SGBs were described. The next section compares school governance in South Africa with those in other parts of the world.

### **3.4 THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY IN THE RSA**

The role and impact of the School Governing Body as an elected entity comes to light when one scrutinises its mandate embodied in the entrusting, responsibility and authority given it to formulate and adopt policies that will provide a vision for the school to function in terms of the South African Schools’ Act of 1996 (see 1.13.2). The establishment of these bodies occurred after the 1994 elections, during the emergence of a democratic era in the RSA.

### 3.4.1 Composition of the School Governing Body

In electing School Governing Bodies, those involved should consider the imbalances of the past, redressing them through the election of School Governing Bodies whose racial and gender mix reflect that of the school community. State involvement in school governance should be limited to the minimum level required for legal accountability. The powers of School Governing Bodies should reflect their capacity to render adequate service and their primary function should be to enhance the quality of education for all learners within the parameters of policy established by the national and provincial departments of education in terms of their legal responsibilities and competence (RSA, 1996a).

According to the South African Schools Act, the membership of school governing bodies should include the school principal, elected and co-opted members. Elected members of the governing body would be those representing parents or guardians of learners at the school, teachers at the school, members of staff who are not teachers, and learners in the eighth grade or higher at secondary schools (see 1.11.3).

The composition of School Governing Bodies could differ from one school to another. However, both the South African Schools' Act (No 84 1996) and the Limpopo Provincial Education Gazette (Number 530 of 2000) suggest that "although the Act does not prescribe the actual size of the SGB and how it should be made up, it is useful to include this section of tables to illustrate how the composition may differ from school to school" (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2 for examples of the Tables mentioned in this citation).

**Table 3.1: Schools with a low enrolment**

<b>Number of Learners</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Educators</b>	<b>Support staff</b>	<b>Learners</b>	<b>Principal</b>	<b>Total</b>
-50	3			1	1	5
-50	4	1	-	1	1	7
-50	5	1	1	1	1	9

Secondary and middle schools with enrolments as low as these would not have to include educators and non-teaching staff on their SGBs. Classified as Section 20 schools according to the Department of Education and South African Schools Act, they are 'no-fee' schools because their learners come from poor communities. Given these exclusions, as indicated in the Limpopo Education Gazette (No 530 /2000) the SGBs of schools like these should preferably have not more than five members (Line 1 in Table 3.1).

**Table 3.2: Schools with all components**

<b>Number of Learners</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Educators</b>	<b>Support staff</b>	<b>Learners</b>	<b>Principal</b>	<b>Total</b>
<80	5	1	1	1	1	9
81-159	7	2	1	2	1	13
160-319	7	2	1	2	1	13
320-719	7	2	1	2	1	13
720+	9	3	1	3	1	17

As the number of learners enrolled at a school increases so would the number of members that ought to serve on its SGB (see Table 3, 2). The number of parents, educators, non-educators and learner members who sit on a governing body also depends on the number of learners enrolled at the school as well as on the school type - whether it is a primary, secondary or comprehensive school. A school with more than 629 learners will have nine parent members, three educator members, one support staff member and three learner members. Schools mentioned in Table 3.2 are regarded as Section 21 schools, secondary schools with all the components; those in Table 3.2 as Section 20 schools, with certain privileges. Schools can be classified only as Section 20 (no-fee) or Section 21 (fee-paying) schools.

Section 21 secondary schools (named after the section of the South African Schools' Act where they are described) are those that qualify to carry out allocated functions, while non-Section 21 schools are those that do not qualify to perform allocated functions. The advantage of Section 21 schools is that they have a greater selection of subjects from which learners can choose, whereas the subjects in Section 20 secondary schools are limited.

The membership of “School Governing Bodies in ordinary public primary schools, ranges from nine to 13 members, while that of public secondary school ranges from 13 to 19 members” (Chaka, 2008:16-17). It is important to note that parents must form the majority of the members in the School Governing Body. The South African Schools’ Act specifically states that the number of parents in any School Governing Body must at least be half plus one of the total combined number of members with voting rights. In this regard, the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) warns that because parents form the majority on an SGB, they have been placed in a powerful position and can influence the school’s budget, language policy and discipline, as well as the appointment and promotion of teaching and administrative staff.

### **3.4.2 The term of office of SGB**

The term of office of all members of the School Governing Body other than learners may not exceed three years. An office bearer who is a learner may not serve more than one year; however, an office-bearer may be re-elected or co-opted after the expiry of his/her term.

### **3.4.3 Functions of the School Governing Body**

The South African Schools’ Act, Section 20, sets out the following functions to be performed by all SGBs:

- Adopt a Constitution;
- Develop the mission statement of the school;
- Adopt a code of conduct for learners of the school;
- Support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions;
- Recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of educators at the school, subject to the Employment of Educators’ Act; and
- Promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education at the school.

As indicated earlier (see 1.2) the conducive environment for school governance which was created by the South African Schools' Act (Act 84 of 1996) was the motivation for my decision to investigate the impact that the inclusion of the principal, educators, learners and members of the support staff had on the education of learners. Additional reasons for my decision are provided next.

#### **a) The parents**

Before the new political dispensation in South Africa in 1994, parents who served in School Committees in previously disadvantaged schools were in many instances old and illiterate ( Duma *et al.*, 2011:46). Their role in school governance was no more than ceremonial as they had no legal powers. They were heavily reliant on the principal, even on issues of governance, and had no direct influence on the running of the school. The principal could, on his/her own, determine the curriculum and policies such as the language of teaching and learning and religious observance, without having to enlist the participation of the School Committee. It is the impact that such exclusion in critical decisions had on the education of the community which motivated me to critique the role of the School Governing Bodies and their impact on the education system.

#### **b) The principal**

Unlike in the past, when the principal took decisions and executed them without having to account to anyone except the Department of Education, the South African Schools Act ensures that they now have to account for their actions to School Governing Bodies. The way principals relate to communities through the School Governing Bodies motivated me to assess the impact which such relationships have on the education of the learners.

#### **c) The Educators**

The inclusion of educators in School Governing Bodies has a significant impact on the education of learners. The success or otherwise of learning activities at school depends on the educators. For school governance to succeed, the stakeholders who

play the pivotal role (i.e. the educators) must be included in decision making. It is the role of educators in decision making in school governance which motivated me to examine their impact in the education of learners.

#### **d) The non-educator staff members**

Non-educator staff members can make or break the education system. If the classrooms and offices are dirty, the school premises are not safe, and files are not appropriately managed, maintenance of some equipment and appliances is not done, the education of learners will be adversely affected. The significance of these role actors motivated me to examine their impact on the learning environment. If the non-educator staff are not included in school governance structures, many essential services at school will be compromised.

#### **e) The learners**

The South African Schools' Act mandates secondary school learners who are members of a Representative Council of Learners (RCL) to participate in school governance as members of the SGB in order to facilitate the liaison and communication between school authorities and learners. This is done in order to meet regularly to consider suggestions, ideas and comments from fellow learners, and to give feedback to learners after every SGB meeting.

The exclusion of learners from decision making could cause conflict, hence my motivation to assess the impact that their inclusion on the SGB has on their education. Mncube and Harber (2013, cited in Mncube & Naidoo, 2014:486) posit that learner members must promote responsibility and leadership, to support the educational programme of the school and to maintain and refine school traditions.

### **3.5 THE IMPACT OF THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN THE EDUCATION OF LEARNERS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE SGBs**

The school can be defined as an institution for the instruction of children or people under college age or as an institution for instruction in a skill or business. The home is

regarded as the primary institution where learners are taught certain norms and values which are in line with those accepted by the communities and school. The introduction of SGB has linked these two institutions, thus promoting more effective teaching and learning and, by implication creating a more conducive educative climate in schools.

Examining the role of the school in the education of learners, and the impact which the control exerted by the School Governing Body has on this role, is critical to the researcher's ability to answer the main research question posed in Chapter 1. It is this aspect, therefore, which is discussed next.

### **3.5.1 The core responsibilities of the SGB in the education of learners**

School Governing Bodies are agents who are to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place. To this purpose, they should see to it that LTSMs (learning, teaching support materials), buildings and all other resources of the school are maintained and taken care of in accordance with the stipulations of Section 16(1) of the South African Schools' Act (No 84 of 1996). It is imperative that any form of school governance should be aimed at promoting the best interests of the learners whom the schools are designed to serve (Mncube & Naidoo, 2014:486). Hence, the need for the SGB to develop a strategy for ensuring that quality education is provided to learners. Fox (2003:2) postulates that a governing body is not a supporter's club. This implies that School Governing Bodies are there to support or be supported by their constituencies to promote the best educational interests and needs of the learners.

Good governance will count as a strength for a given school. If a school lacks financial resources, it will be incapable of delivering on its mandate. One of the core responsibilities of the SGB in the education of learners is, therefore, the proper management of funds. By implication, it is, therefore, the responsibility of the School Governing Body to ensure that the funds of the school are used appropriately to the benefit of the education of learners. Also, in a community which is willing to utilise schools for functions and other projects, the School Governing Body should regard it as a potential source of revenue and use it as an opportunity to raise funds for the school.

The core responsibility of a School Governing Body, however, is to develop school policies, such as the learner admission policy, language policy, the religious observance policy, the HIV/AIDS policy and others (Davids, 2011: 20) and to ensure that they are implemented in order to regulate the school environment. According to Roos (2003:492), school policies set the tone for the standard which has to be achieved by schools. He defines an effective policy as a “statement of values or ethos which generates or underlines a course of action in an institution”. Through an effective and efficient implementation strategy designed by the SGB, the school will be able to create an environment which is conducive to meaningful teaching and learning.

Other core functions of School Governing Bodies, stipulated in Section 21 of the South African Schools’ Act, are, according to Chaka (2008:18), the following:

- To maintain and improve the school’s property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school; including school hostels;
- To pay for services of the school;
- To determine the extra-mural curriculum of the school and the choice of subject options in terms of provincial curriculum policy;
- To purchase textbooks, educational materials and equipment for the school; and
- To perform other functions consistent with the Act and any applicable provincial law.

According to Diamond (2015), however, some members of the School Governing Bodies are functionally illiterate. Hence they lack the requisite skill to perform these functions. This is a significant setback, a weakness which inhibits development at the schools they are supposed to serve. Their greatest weakness is their inability, due to various factors mentioned earlier, to accurately interpret the statutes which govern schools.

The core responsibilities of the School Governing Body have been presented from the above argument as per their role. The school as a system of education has challenges, strengths, opportunities and weaknesses. To support the above-mentioned core

responsibilities, one has to address this by using the theory of SWOT. This theory, according to the researcher, contributes meaningfully to this research because the roles played by the principal, chairperson, secretary and treasurer are clarified.

### **3.6 THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF SGB EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

In many institutions, there are laid down duties and responsibilities that incumbents must fulfil in order for the institution to function effectively and efficiently. The members of the SGB are also expected to fulfil specific functions and duties.

#### **3.6.1 The role and responsibilities of the principal of public schools under an SGB**

School principals are linchpins for the successful functioning of schools. Even though, as Van Wyk (2007:134) points out, principals in South African schools are only ex-officio members of the School Governing Body hence may not chair any of its meetings, they do, as Karisson (2002:332) found, still play a dominant role in meetings and in decision making. He attributes this to the position of power principals hold within the school, their level of education in contrast to that of other SGB members, their direct (first) access to information issued from education authorities, and the reality that they are the ones who have to execute the decisions taken by SGBs. In this capacity, the principal sets the tone for the school, determines the climate for learning, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers and the degree of concern of what the students may or may not become.

The Schools' Act stipulates that the principal, under the authority of the Head of Department, must undertake the professional management of a public school. This means that the principal has delegated powers to organise and control teaching and learning at the school effectively (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009:78). Thus, according to Harvey (2011: 1-3), it is ultimately the principal who is responsible for ensuring the professional and classified staffing or organisational positions, instructional leadership and improvement, curriculum development and materials, the provision of learner services, resource procurement, budgeting and building utilisation and maintenance. Included in the professional management of the school, under the authority of the

provincial Head of Department, is the day to day administration and organisation of the school, staff and financial management. As well as decisions regarding the intramural curriculum - that is, all the activities to assist with teaching and learning during school hours, as well as decisions on textbooks, educational materials and equipment to be bought (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009:79). In addition to this, the principal's responsibilities outside of the school include the forming of associations and the establishment and facilitation of communication lines with community groups and district administrations.

Before the Schools Act, the principal was assumed to be the chief accounting officer of the school, but given the new legislation, this has changed. The principal has a dual role, that of ex-officio member of the School Governing Body and that of being responsible for the management of schools (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009:129). By implication, the principal is obliged to provide the SGB with all the assistance it needs to effectively and efficiently perform its functions in terms of the South African Schools Act while, in addition, liaising with the Department of Education regarding all matters pertaining to the well-being of the school (Maile, 2002:326).

Amendments to Section 16 of the South African Schools' Act stipulate that the functions and responsibilities of principals at public schools are to:

- Represent the Head of Department on the governing body when acting in an official capacity;
- Prepare and submit to the Head of Department an annual report in respect of the academic performance of the school in respect of minimum outcomes, standards and procedures for assessment as determined by the Minister of Education;
- Manage and ensure the effective use of learning support materials and other equipment;
- Keep school records safe;
- Implement policy and legislation;
- Perform functions delegated to him/her by the Head of Department; and

- Attend and participate in all School Governing Body meetings and inform the School Governing Body about policy and legislation.

These amendments directly imply that principals are accountable to the Head of Department for ensuring the effectiveness of their schools through proper and accountable management (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009:81). It is clear, therefore, that the roles of principals are crucial and pivotal in the successful management of the schools.

### **3.6.2 The role and responsibilities of the chairperson of the SGB at a public school**

The chairperson of the School Governing Body is a parent representative in the body. He/she is elected to preside over all meetings of the governing body and to act as its spokesperson. His/her specific roles and responsibilities are to:

- Monitor, control and assist members where needs be;
- Represent the SGB as required;
- Act as 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.

### **3.6.3 The role and responsibilities of the secretary of a public school on the SGB**

The secretary of the School Governing Body is a member of the governing body who could either be a parent or an educator. He/she is elected by the governing body to keep minutes of the body and to handle correspondence of the body. His/her roles and responsibilities are to prepare the agenda for meetings, keep all correspondence of the body and, together with the chairperson represent the body as and when required.

### **3.6.4 The role and responsibilities of the treasurer of a public school on the SGB**

The treasurer of the School Governing Body is a member of the governing body representing the parents. He/she is elected to handle the finances of the governing body. To this purpose s/he has to:

- Control the school budget;
- Keep an accurate record of what is spent and by whom;
- Avail audited finances to relevant stakeholders; and
- Compile a balance monthly financial report.

### **3.7 THE STRENGTH, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS CONFRONTING SGBs IN THEIR ROLE OF OVERSIGHT REGARDING THE GOVERNANCE OF THE SCHOOL**

#### **3.7.1 The SWOT as a tool**

SWOT is a tool which is used to develop future strategies and frameworks for an organisation (school) (Kessler, 2013:814). It can be used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which an organisation (school) faces. Both strengths and weaknesses could be internal or external to the organisation concerned.

In this study, strengths are positive and weaknesses negative factors within the SGB. Opportunities are chances to improve arising from changes and threats are factors which are beyond the control of the School Governing Body. Internal factors are strengths and weaknesses inherent in the organisation while external factors are those outside it; opportunities and threats, in other words.

##### **3.7.1.1 Strengths of the SGBs**

Unlike the school boards and governing councils of Apartheid-era South Africa, current School Governing Bodies (SGBs) are representative of all stakeholders in education. While previous school boards and governing councils were comprised of parents only, to the total exclusion of teachers and learners, present SGBs include not only parents, teachers and learners, but also the support staff (Chaka, 2008:8). Thus indicating the

potential strength and influence of SGBs on education, something previous structures did not have.

Other strengths emerging from the study of literature on school governance are that the composition of current SGBs lends itself to:

- The infusion of positive values into the technical leadership and executive management of the school. The infusion of values such as honesty, loyalty, enthusiasm, willingness, wisdom, insight, commitment, interest in education and dedication into the management and leadership of the school produce inevitable results in improved teaching and learning and, by implication, better academic results.
- The promotion of teamwork and collaboration among the stakeholders, which could introduce a business orientation into the functioning of the school while, at the same time, helping to promote co-ownership of and co-responsibility for the school's challenges.

A School Governing Body (SGB) is a juristic person, and hence it can be sued and has the right to sue (Section 15 of Act 84 of 1996). And as such, it is based on a legally strong foundation. This was not the case with previous school boards and governing councils: they had no such powers; the Apartheid government had all the power. Neither could previous school boards, and governing councils develop any policies (e.g. admission, language): their job was to implement policies centrally developed by the Apartheid government even if they disagreed with these. Policy development is now a fundamental responsibility of SGBs (SASA, 1996).

Before the establishment of a democratic South Africa, school boards and governing councils were not given a financial allocation by the government to run the educational affairs of schools. Current SGBs are given a financial allocation in accordance with the Norms and Standards for School Funding. Also, unlike school boards and governing councils of the past, which were composed on a racial basis, School Governing Bodies (SGBs) reflect the demographics of a particular schooling community without being dictated by race, colour or creed.

These changes to school governance in the RSA not only give SGBs a strength which far outweighs that of school boards or governing councils but, according to Naidoo (2005:18), it gives schools greater autonomy over the delivery and management of resources, democratises local control of decision making and responds to community needs and demands. School boards and governing councils of the past had no such autonomy. SGBs are also permitted to levy school fees and sue parents for non-payment of the same (Chaka, 2008:15).

### **3.7.1.2 Weaknesses of the SGBs**

Ngidi (2004:260) maintains that School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South Africa have an inherent weakness due to the high illiteracy level of the majority of parents, thus leading to their inefficiency in the execution of their tasks. The researcher is inclined to agree with this claim. Having observed that principals and teachers feel offended by the fact that the National Department of Education in South Africa vested all the powers of efficiency on parents, ignoring the fact that principals and teachers are professionals, and that they, therefore tend to undermine parents. They regard them as incapable of using the power vested in them to the benefit of the school. What they overlooked is that some of the parents are educated and occupy positions in their workplaces. Such behaviours cause weaknesses in the functioning of the School Governing Bodies.

At times, governing bodies display weaknesses in their tasks brought about by apathy, non-attendance or poor attendance of meetings and workshops. Rangongo (2011:35) asserts that such apathy will lead to low participation in meetings and thus impact negatively on the effectiveness of the governing body. Van Wyk (2007:135) also maintains that despite having the majority representation of the SGB, many parents serving on SGBs are reticent and rely on the principal and teachers for leadership and guidance in decision making. Xaba (2011) ascribes this to parents' weak understanding of their role, a capacity deficit in the range of skills needed to perform governance functions and irregular attendance of meetings. As the researcher, I agree with the above authors because some members of the SGB feel weak to perform their roles and functions with pride merely because the principal will oppose their opinions

when making decisions. It is for this reason that some parents keep quiet from the beginning up to the end of the meeting because the principals dominate their feelings and opinions.

Inadequate training of members of the SGB is yet another weakness. There is no proper planning for such training sessions, and no follow-ups are made by the Department of Education to assess the effectiveness or otherwise of the training programme (Chaka, 2008:53). It is, therefore, the prerogative of the government of South Africa under the leadership of National or Provincial Department of Education to ensure that all governors receive training regardless of the position they hold. The training session is one of the opportunities that can enable the SGBs to gather information on matters they are uncertain of as an example, the roles and functions of the members of the governing body. Such training will improve their performance with regard to the execution of duties. This is confirmed by Bagarette (2011:230) saying that partnership becomes very successful because the SGB is trained to perform its function which is separated from the professional duties of the principal.

Most parents lack commitment insofar as participation in the governance of learners is concerned. As such, even those parents who are unskilled are elected into positions of responsibility which are not commensurate with their abilities (Rangongo, 2011:35). Xaba (2004:313) maintains that due to inferiority complex which is prevalent among unskilled parent members of the SGB, an acrimonious relationship develops between them and educators. Such a situation will affect teaching and learning negatively as it militates against the purpose for which School Governing Bodies were established. In this study, the strengths and weaknesses of the SGBs as supported by literature were visited. Authors who contributed to this study are highlighted. As the researcher, I will now focus on the challenges faced by the SGBs and opportunities that the SGBs have.

### **3.7.1.3 Challenges that face the SGBs**

School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in previously disadvantaged communities (particularly Blacks) have a challenge of collecting sufficient funds from parents who earn low salaries or are unemployed (Malan, 2010). This poses a challenge to those

who serve in the governing body as they may not be in a position to dispense quality public education to learners at their schools.

Chaka (2008:27) maintains that School Governing Bodies have a complexity of functions. Such functions include the formulation of policies, recommendations for the appointment of teachers and the drawing of the budget. This poses a significant challenge since it assumes that among parents who are members of the SGB, there is a certain level of expertise which will enable them to perform their tasks. Given the complexity of pieces of legislation such as the South African Schools Act (No 84 of 1996), Employment of Educators Act (No 76 of 1998), the Labour Relations Act (No 66 of 1995) and the South African Constitution (No 108 of 1996), it is unfair to expect members of the SGB to execute these tasks with precision.

Over-accentuation of English as a language of communication during workshops poses a challenge to most members of the SGB members whose command of the language is inadequate (Chaka, 2008:28). The fact that pieces of legislation, contracts of employment and policy guidelines are written in English further complicates matters. This proves to be an insurmountable challenge to the many parents who use languages other than English as the language of communication. Van Wyk (2007:135) asserts that another significant challenge of parents in School Governing Bodies is their lack of confidence and uncertainty about their duties. This often leads to dereliction interference in the management duties of the principal.

#### **3.7.1.4 Opportunities of the SGBs**

Unlike school boards and governing councils, School Governing Bodies in the RSA are given the authority to develop policies governing learner admissions, the language of learning and teaching, learner code of conduct and other related policies (South African Schools Act, 1996: Art. 5-9). Having been given this authority, SGBs are, therefore, in a position to develop policies that could improve teaching and learning in their schools. They are also responsible for the drawing up and controlling of budgets (Davids, 2008:25; Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009:98), thus being given the opportunity to prioritise those activities which could improve learner achievement. These

opportunities were not available to school boards and governing councils during the Apartheid era since their powers were limited to the implementation of government decisions.

Another significant role allocated to School Governing Bodies relates to the fact that they are legally given the power and authority to facilitate the shortlisting, interviewing and recommendation of educators (the principal included) to be appointed to their schools. According to Heystek (2010:111), these powers could be used to shed light on the relationship between decision making power, responsibility and accountability of governing bodies for quality education and the possible infringement of teachers' rights. Taylor (2009) concurs with Van Wyk (2004) in her research that teachers from townships as well as principals from former White schools are in favour of the governing body being involved in the selection of the teachers, since it gives them the opportunity to ensure that the appointed teachers are equipped with the requisite skills. During times of school boards and governing councils, staff appointments were made by principals.

### **3.8 INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN THE REPUBLIC SOUTH AFRICA**

School governance varies from one country to the next. It is assumed to be informed by the Constitution as well as education legislation of the country concerned. It follows that the governance of education in these countries would, as is the case in the RSA, have its strengths and weaknesses. The section which follows illustrates these strengths and weaknesses using comparisons. Particular attention is given to three countries – Zimbabwe, England, and Canada. These countries were chosen because:

- South Africa and Zimbabwe are members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and have much in common in terms of their socio-cultural status.
- Having been British colonies in the past, both the South African and Zimbabwean education systems were, and to an extent still, strongly influenced by the British system of education.

- The school governance system in Canada is the only one in which the parent component forms the majority, as is the case in South Africa.

Given these facts, it, therefore, seemed a good idea to compare the governance system of these three countries with that of the RSA. Perhaps, according to the researcher, such a comparison would lend itself to the opportunity to identify examples of 'best practice', which could be imitated in order to strengthen School Governing Bodies in South Africa.

### **3.8.1 School governance in England**

In England, school governance falls under the direct supervision of the central government, Local Authorities (LAs) and the governors of individual schools (Higham *et al.*, 2007:11). Governing bodies are directly accountable to the Secretary of State for Children, composed of between nine (9) and 20 (20) members at a time. Included in such composition are:

- One or more parent representatives - elected by the parents.
- Staff representatives, including teachers and support staff.
- Members of local authorities - governors appointed by these authorities to serve their interests.
- Community governors, appointed by the governing bodies to represent community interests.
- Sponsor governors and associate members, appointed by governing bodies for skills required by the governing body concerned.

In addition to having their own School Governing Bodies, schools are allowed to 'federate' under a single governing body (comprising two to five schools) to have access to the expertise of the members of the other governing bodies in the 'federation' while still retaining their inherent status as individual schools. This concession was promulgated in the English Education Act of 1980, applicable to schools in England

and Wales, in an attempt to lessen the grip of local education authorities on schools by replacing it with a broader system of school governance (Ngidi, 2004:260).

Even within this broader governance structure, governing bodies of individual schools have to perform various roles and execute a wide range of responsibilities. Three of these, which are of particular importance to school governance approaches in the RSA, are:

- a) Strategic decision making, which includes the determination of a school's' vision and aims, sharing decisions about the school's priorities and development plans, and approving the school policies and the school's budget.
- b) Accountability, which includes being responsible to parents, pupils, staff and the broader community for the performance of the school.
- c) Being a "critical friend" to the headmaster by having a say in his/her selection and, afterwards, by constructively challenging and supporting his/her actions, decisions and approaches to school management.

The greatest strength of the English and Welsh system of governance, according to Higham *et al.*, (2007:12) lies in the inclusion of the 'critical friend' component on the SGB because it ensures the headmaster's accountability for the dispensing of quality public education to the nation.

The greatest weakness of the system, according to the researcher, lies in the fact that School Governing Bodies are directly accountable to the Secretary of State for Children since this creates a gap between Local Authorities (LAs) and individual schools.

What South Africa could learn from this system is twofold: (a) to ensure that SGBs operate as the school principal's 'critical friend' as a means of enhancing his/her accountability, and (b) to ensure that the SGBs' accountability does not undermine the say of (local) school communities to some or other State official.

### **3.8.2 The Zimbabwean system of school governance**

In terms of the statutes of Zimbabwe (Government of Zimbabwe 1996:138), the composition of School Governing Bodies in the country, known as School Development Committees (Ngwenya & Pretorius, 2013:138), should reflect a mix of parent and governance selections. More specifically, members should include five persons elected by parents of pupils at the school concerned, the head of the school, the Deputy Head of the school, a teacher at the school (appointed by the Secretary of Education), a representative of the Local Authority (LA), and a counsellor.

School Development Committees in Zimbabwe (SGBs in the RSA), are assigned the following powers/functions:

- (a) To preserve and maintain the facilities of the school using insurance policies;
- (b) To hire and fire teaching and ancillary staff with the approval of the Minister;
- (c) To borrow money, receive grants and donations, whether from parents of pupils at school or other persons;
- (d) To take professional advice on all matters affecting the committee and its institute;
- (e) To carry out developmental projects, alterations and additions, through levies, in the best interest of its teachers in consultation with the head and approval of the Secretary;
- (f) To use the land, buildings and other facilities at the school for educational, sporting, recreational or any other purposes which benefit the school as a whole;
- (g) To help in the organisation and administration of secular and non-academic activities of the school in consultation with the head;
- (h) To submit, on request, audited books of accounts of the committee to the Secretary;
- (i) To charge or impose a levy in respect of each child enrolled at the school;
- (j) To increase levies and charge a capital development levy for a fixed number of terms; and
- (k) To submit a budget to justify an increase in levy or charge of a capital development levy.

Indications from a comparison of legislation on school governance in South Africa and Zimbabwe (see Table 2.1, which follows) are that there are both similarities and differences between them.

**Table 3.3: Comparison of South African and Zimbabwean School Reform legislation**

	<b>South African(SASA,1996)</b>	<b>Zimbabwe (SI 87,1992)</b>
Name of School Management Structures	School Governing Bodies	School Development Committees
Composition and proportions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Principal</li> <li>- School Faculty (number determined by a member of executive council)</li> <li>- Parents (50% +1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Principal</li> <li>- Deputy Head</li> <li>- Local Councillor (1)</li> <li>- Parents (5)</li> </ul>
Method of Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The manner of election or appointment to be made public locally through publication in the Provincial Gazette.</li> <li>- Election held every three years through a procedure determined by Members of the Executive Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Faculty appointments made by the Secretary.</li> <li>- SDCs may apply to the secretary to include 'more or fewer' members.</li> <li>- Parents elected by school</li> <li>- Parents Assembly consisting of no less than 20% of school parents.</li> </ul>
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Setting school Fees</li> <li>- Fundraising</li> <li>- Managing School finance</li> <li>- Maintaining School Facilities</li> <li>- Setting Discipline Policy</li> <li>- Determine Language of instruction</li> <li>- Volunteerism and community outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Setting School Fees</li> <li>- Fundraising</li> <li>- Managing School finance</li> <li>- Maintaining School Facilities (non-governmental schools)</li> <li>- Hiring Personnel' with the approval of the Minister' (since revoked)</li> <li>- Volunteerism and community outreach</li> </ul>

Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SGBs may not refuse admission based on inability to pay or because the parent does not subscribe to the school's mission statement</li> <li>- The refused application may be appealed and the decision may be reversed by Members of the Executive Council. They must recuse themselves in cases of conflict of interest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No recourse to claim unpaid fees at non-government schools.</li> <li>- Proposals to increase fees must be approved at a meeting of the School Parents Assembly (SPA).</li> <li>- If SPA denies fee increase, the responsible authority may appeal.</li> <li>- The secretary may abolish the committee if notified of noncompliance</li> </ul>
------------	---	--

*Sources: Based on Goz (1992) and RSA (1996)*

The above table clearly illustrates that there is a considerable overlap in the composition of governing bodies in both countries, although they differ in a few significant ways. Both include the school head or principal, parents and school faculty.

However, Zimbabwe includes the school's deputy head as a member and allocates one space for a local councillor, signifying the inclusion of local political leadership. Moreover, it prescribes the number of parents to be included (five) while the parent component in South African SGBs should always constitute the majority (50% plus one).

Another difference between the two countries is in the selection of the school management group. The elected number of teachers on South African bodies is neither fixed nor determined by the State. In Zimbabwe, teacher members are not elected; the district's Secretary of Education appoints them.

The strengths of the Zimbabwean system, according to the researcher, is the inclusion of the deputy headmaster in addition to the headmaster as members of the School

Development Committees (SDCs), since this will ensure that the professional development and management of the school remain on course. In the South African system, the role of the principal in school governance is limited to that of an adviser: s/he has no voting rights whatsoever.

The main weaknesses of the Zimbabwean system, according to the researchers, is the omission of two key groups of stakeholders in education, namely learners at secondary schools and non-teaching staff, and that the number of parents serving on the committee is limited to five, thus limiting the say parents have in the education of their children. How parents are elected to the committee (see Table 3.3) is also, according to the researcher, a weakness in the Zimbabwean system. The School's Parent Assembly, which represents approximately 20% of the school's parents, elects the teachers who are to serve on the School Committee. Finally, the appointment of the teacher who is to serve on the committee by the Secretary of Education is an indication that the views of those teaching at the school are not taken into consideration at all.

According to the researcher, South Africa could follow Zimbabwe's example of including both the headmaster and deputy headmaster as voting members on its SGBs since this would contribute to schools remaining on course concerning their professional development and management. Currently, only the principal serves on the SGB, even though s/he has no voting rights.

### **3.8.3 The system of school governance in Canada**

The researcher's literature review helped him to acquire knowledge on the approach taken by the Canadian government, using the Ontario Parent Council (OPC), to investigate the possible establishment of Local School Parent Councils across Ontario in February 1994.

Literature revealed that in April 1995, the Canadian Ministry of Education and Training issued Policy/Programme Memorandum (PPM) No. 122: School Board Policies on Councils, which required school boards to develop policies that would establish school

councils by June 1996. Literature reveals again that this new PPM stipulated minimum requirements for the composition and functioning of School Councils since not all school councils were equally positioned in terms of their experience, advancement, work, and the type of support they received from the board to do so. PPM No.122, therefore, guided these schools in this regard, providing them with direction on how the school councils should be constituted.

In accordance with the Ontario Regulation 612/00, membership of the school council changes from year to year. It is further noted that, as is the case in South Africa, parents, non-teaching employees, principals and learners are allowed to participate in the school council. Also similar to South Africa is the fact that parents constitute the majority of the council members in Canada.

The composition of the Canadian School Councils reflects the diversity of the school community in that it includes a parent majority, the principal or vice-principal, one teacher, one non-teaching employee of the school, one learner, one or more community representative appointed by the elected council, and one person appointed by an association.

The primary function of the School Council in Canada is to participate in the development of the school profile. Additional roles include councils':

- Participating in review panels to decide whether the recruitment of candidates would be internal or external, depending on the availability of internal candidates;
- Serving on a resumed review committee to make recommendations about the candidates who should be interviewed; and
- Delegating a member to serve as a panel member on an interview committee.

Unlike the system of school governance in countries such as England and Australia, the Canadian system of school governance places emphasis on the centralisation of authority, with most of the governing councils in various provinces in Canada amalgamating into more prominent structures with a central authority. The curriculum and evaluation processes are also, according to the government mandate, centrally

controlled. Contrary to practices in countries such as South Africa, England and Australia, the powers of school committees in Canada are restricted to advising the principal (Williams, 2003:10). Also, in order to reduce costs, the Canadian system of school governance advocates the creation of large school boards which could supervise many schools rather than smaller boards for individual schools.

The greatest strength of the Canadian school governance system, according to the researcher, lies in the powers it gives to school principals. Included in her/his duties are the attendance of school council meetings, receiving and responding to recommendations made by the school council, acting as an essential source of information, delegating authority, and ensuring that school councils are in place. By implication, much of the Council's success is, therefore, dependent on the school principal. Another strength of this system is the cost necessary to keeping the councils in place due to the preference for a larger council that can oversee more than one schools rather than smaller councils for each school. The monies thus saved could, therefore, be channelled to other critical functions (Williams, 2003:11).

According to the researcher, the Canadian system does, however, fail its constituents in some ways. In the first instance, members of the larger councils are overworked given the scope of their diverse responsibilities. In the second instance, continuity is minimal: because the membership of councils changes each year, does not give stakeholders the time to perform their roles to the fullest. In the third instance, the composition of the school council (SGB) concerning learner and teacher representation is inadequate: only one teacher from the staff and one learner serve on these councils.

Despite its weaknesses, South Africa could perhaps learn from Canada by amalgamating the governing bodies of smaller schools (such as farm schools) to avoid unnecessary and costly structures that are unsustainable.

### **3.9 SUMMARY**

From the argument presented above, it is clear that school governance in South Africa reflects the historical socio-economic and educational imbalances of the past. SGB

members, especially the parent component, are functionally semi-literate or illiterate and lack the requisite skills which are demanded from them by the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996). Duma *et al.*, (2011:51) also maintain that one of the significant challenges faced by School Governing Bodies is the illiteracy rate of parents, who are supposed to be playing a significant role in school governance activities.

The African National Congress (1994:60) envisaged that democratic school governing structures were needed in order to develop the human resource potential of South Africa when they assumed the reins of government in 1994. Kallaway (2003:11), in support of this system, argues that education, in whatever form, is a fundamental component of democracy. Hence it is imperative that School Governing Bodies should consist of elected parents, staff members of the school and learners from the school concerned.

In addition to the description of SGB composition and ability, the South African system of school governance was also compared to that of other countries in this chapter. Some parallels were drawn, particularly from countries such as England, Zimbabwe and Canada. Some of the inferences drawn from this comparison – increasing representation, and eliminating unnecessary duplication, for example - could be used to improve the current SGB system.

Having given an overview of current knowledge on and examples of school governance structures in the RSA and elsewhere, the chapter which follows is dedicated to a detailed description of the research design and methodology used to investigate the impact of SGBs in the RSA in this study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodological process and the instruments used to collect data on the role that School Governing Bodies play in the creation of an educative climate in selected schools in the Schoonoord Circuit of Sekhukhune District.

In accordance with the topic and purpose of this study, a qualitative approach was regarded as the most suitable approach to data collection and analysis. Reasons for this choice as well as details on the qualitative design of the study are the specific foci of this chapter.

#### **4.2 RESEARCH APPROACH**

A qualitative research approach was considered most suitable for this study because of its exploratory nature. Aimed at providing a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon as it occurs in a natural setting, the main aim of the study was to investigate the role that the School Governing Bodies of secondary schools selected as research sites played in the creation of conducive teaching-learning environments. In doing so, the role played by these School Governing Bodies was compared to the roles played by SBGs in other parts of the world.

Informing the researcher's decision to use a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach was Krathwohl (2009:236) who claims that qualitative procedures are ideal for the exploration of complex phenomena about which there is little knowledge. Through exploration, qualitative methods, therefore, facilitate an understanding of the phenomenon being explored. In this study, the phenomenon is school governing structures, past and present, with specific reference to how their roles locally and internationally have changed over time.

Indications from the literature review on school governing structures in the RSA and elsewhere in the world are that information on these is limited, hence the need for further exploration. Perceptions of and attitudes regarding the role and impact of SGBs about the creation of an educative climate, especially in the deep rural area of the Schoonoord Circuit of Greater Sekhukhune District, cannot be adequately measured using quantitative methods. While people's attitudes towards and perceptions of SGBs could, as is typical of quantitative research, have been determined using questionnaires, the reasons for and the effect of these on the quality of school governance can only be determined in naturalistic settings, through observation and interviews.

### **4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design refers to a plan for selecting the subject, the research sites, data collecting and analysis procedure to address the research questions (Maponya, 2015:121). The design shows which individual will be studied and when, where and under which circumstances. In quantitative research this plan is predetermined and

fixed; it is a blueprint for how research has to take place: the researcher may not deviate from it at any stage and for any reason. In qualitative research, the design is more tentative, evolving during the research process itself. Rather than being a blueprint, it serves as a set of guidelines and directives towards the achievement of one or more goals.

As indicated earlier, this study is an exploratory study of selected schools in the Schoonoord Circuit of the Sekhukhune District in the Limpopo Province. "An exploratory research as the name states intends merely to explore the research questions and does not intend to offer a final and conclusive solution to existing problems"(Berg, 1995:7).

There are nine public secondary schools in this Circuit, five (5) of which were purposively selected as research sites by the researcher. Having decided on the schools to be included, the researcher chose five people from each SGB component since he was interested in a group of cases rather than an individual case, believing that the exploration of multiple cases would enable other researchers to understand better a specific case based on knowledge generated through the study of other cases (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

All five schools chosen as research sites are located in communities of lower socio-economic status. Hence they are respectively classified as Quintile 1, 2 or 3 schools. Since the parents of children at these schools are *assumed to be* less competent than those of learners attending Quintile 4/5 schools, principals often make decisions about their own or teachers' involvement in the governing body without consulting the parents.

#### **4.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

'Population' in this study refers to the "target population", the set of elements on which the researcher focused but is associated with the entire population from which the sample was chosen. For the concept population to be understood by the readers, it should be noted that "a sample is the segment of the population that is selected for investigation". It follows that a sample is, therefore, found in the population. In this study, the population were all the SGBs of public secondary schools in the Schoonoord

Circuit of the Sekhukhune District. The sample is the five (5) SGBs of the purposively selected secondary schools in the Schoonoord Circuit who agreed to participate in the study.

#### **4.4.1 Purposive sampling**

Sample play a crucial part in research. Sampling is a process whereby a researcher selects a portion of a population for a study, within that portion being representative of a more significant portion (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:79). In this study, the purposive technique was employed. The researcher used purposive sampling to select five (5) schools in which the participants were deemed to have sufficient knowledge of the topic under investigation. Twenty-five (25) SGB members participated in the interviews. This means that in purposive sampling, participants are selected based on the knowledge in the field of investigation (De Vos, Strydom & Fouche, 2011:392).

Informing the researcher's purposive sampling were four criteria: accessibility, management, familiarity, and cost, each of which is discussed in some detail in the following sub-sections.

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

The researcher not only served for seven years as the principal of a public secondary school but has also been the chairperson of the SGB at the school his child attends for three years. During this time, he had the opportunity to learn about the challenges facing SGBs from minutes and reports. In addition to this, he has served as chairperson of the Principals' Council for five years. All these positions occupied by the researcher offered him the opportunity to get to know the principals and SGBs of Schoonoord Circuit, thus making it easy for him to get access to all the schools in this circuit.

##### **(b) Management**

To ensure that the sample chosen would be manageable, the researcher selected executive members of the SGB to participate in the study. Included in the sample were principals, chairpersons, secretaries (teachers), treasurers and learners. Principals

were purposively included because they would be able to provide additional information on the role of the selected SGB members.

The researcher conducted a total of five group interviews. Learners were interviewed in the focus group as well as SGB chairpersons, SGB treasures and SGB secretaries. Five individual interviews were conducted with principals and observation for each case. The researcher used documents such as the minute book, budget and budget paper of the five selected public schools to add rigour to the findings.

### **(c) Familiarity**

The researcher has been the principal of one of the secondary schools in the area from 2009 thus he is familiar with the area as well as with the school principals, educators, and all those in the Schoonoord Circuit area, including learners, parents, circuit officials and the community at large. It was this familiarity with the context which enabled the researcher to purposively select schools with similar characteristics in terms of quintiles.

### **(d) Cost**

Finally, the researcher chose to study the five selected schools in the same circuit due to time and cost constraints. Since the researcher was not funded by or obtained any funds from sponsors, he had to minimise these costs, especially travelling expenses to the selected research sites.

## **4.5 METHODS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION**

### **4.5.1 Interviews**

How data were collected is a crucial aspect of the research study as it determines its success or failure. In this study, the interview was used as the dominant technique for data collection at the selected secondary schools in Limpopo's Schoonoord Circuit.

#### **4.5.1.1 *Individual in-depth interviews***

The researcher used semi-structured in-depth individual interviews with principals of the schools under investigation. Principals were the first participants to be interviewed

in the afternoons in their offices from 16h00. The process lasted for six weeks. Each interview took at least 45 minutes.

#### **4.5.1.2 Focus group interviews**

A focus group interview is a type of group interview in which a moderator (working for the researcher) leads a discussion with a small group of individuals (e.g. learners, teachers, teenagers) to examine, in detail, how group members think and feel about a topic (Johnson & Christensen, 2014:209).

The researcher used focus group interviews as one of the methods to collect data from research participants. This is because such interviews allow for the in-depth collection of qualitative data from participants (Darlington & Scott, 2002). The use of focus group interviews enabled the researcher to focus on the meaning that participants attached to the topic under investigation, and not on the meaning that either he brought to the research or the meanings expressed by other researchers in the literature on the topic.

According to Greenbaum (1998:1-2), most people who do qualitative research distinguish between three different types of focus group interviews: full groups, mini-group, and telephone groups.

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

The researcher used mini – group interviews for this study because the size of the schools made provision for five SGB chairpersons, five SGB secretaries (teachers), five treasures (parents) and learners (RCL). This type of focus group interview was suitable for interviewing SGB members namely, the SGB learners, the SGB teachers,

the SGB treasures and the SGB chairpersons because participants tend to feel more comfortable and secure in the company of people who share similar opinions, views and behaviours than in the company of an individual interviewer. The interview programme for all stakeholders lasted for six weeks. Other members were interviewed during the weekend, in accordance with their work schedules. Each interview was scheduled for 45 minutes.

Fourteen questions were prepared before the interview, but follow-ups were done by the researcher when deemed necessary (see Annexures B to E). This focus group interview aimed to exchange words aimed at avoiding monotony and boredom. The researcher's questions focused on the areas defining the SGBs' roles and responsibilities, namely:

- (a) school governance roles and responsibilities;
- (b) aspects of school governance, including the following:
  - relations among SGB members,
  - financial management, including budgeting, accounting and reporting,
  - drawing up and implementation of school policies,
  - communication with and accountability to parents.

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 the five public schools from Schoonoord Circuit, who were interviewed together in order to stimulate discussion. More specifically, focus group interviews were conducted with the four groups of participants - SGB chairpersons, secretaries, treasurers and learners (in eighth grade or higher). They are members of RCL who are part of the SGB as per policy (Act 84 of 1996) and the secretaries (educator component) of SGB.

The interviews with different groups were held separately and the questions were semi-structured. These interviews helped to identify trends, perceptions and opinions that participants had in terms of how the SGBs executed their tasks as well as on their readiness to perform the responsibilities associated with their Section 21 status. The researcher conducted focus group interviews using standardised questions (see Annexures B to E).

#### **4.5.2 Observation**

The researcher employed observation as another method to collect data. The reason behind the use of observation is that information gleaned from observation fills gaps inevitably left by focus group interviews (Creswell, 2013:17).

Observation occurs in a naturalistic setting without using predetermined categories of response. In this situation, observation was used to investigate and clarify the research settings (Thekiso, 2013:82). Another characteristic of observation is that it takes place while things are happening, thus getting the researcher closer to the action, especially since observation often includes participant observation.

Rangongo (2011:69) defines participant observation as a method that requires the researcher to take part in, and report on the daily experience of the members of a group or people involved in a process or event for an extensive period. As the researcher, I chose this method because it allowed me to make field notes that recorded salient features of participants' behaviour. It also gave me a comprehensive perspective on the problem under investigation.

The researcher, as the principal of one of the secondary schools in the Schoonoord Circuit, observed how SGBs held meetings, how policies were drawn up and implemented, how minutes were recorded, what the relationship between SGB members was, and also how financial statements were presented to parents during annual general meetings. Having observed these aspects of school governance by SGBs for about three years, the researcher realised that there was a need for this type of study in the above-mentioned circuit. Indications from his observations were, among others, that the content of the South African Schools Acts (Act 84 of 1996 as amended)

and other guidelines was a problem to all stakeholders (see 1.6.4), an observation which further motivated him to conduct the study.

#### **4.5.3 Individual interview as a research method**

Individual interviews were semi-structured, with open-ended questions. Kumalo (2009:60) describes open-endedness as meaning that the interview was conducted with an open orientation which allowed for direct two-way conversational communication, and that it consisted of a set of questions which served as a starting point, guiding the researcher to ask questions on areas of particular interest, while allowing for considerable flexibility in scope and depth.

Informed by these views, the researcher did not focus only on the questions prepared for the interview settings, but asked questions additional to the ones appearing on the interview schedule. In addition to this, he 'unpacked' questions for participants who needed more clarity when the need to do so arose.

Thekiso (2013:83) emphasises the fact that while an interview is a conversation between two people, it is not casual or non-directive. Its purpose is that the interviewer requires responses from interviewees. Interviews give researchers access to other people's perceptions, including the thoughts and attitudes that lie behind their behaviour (ibid). It was, however, not only for this reason that the researcher chose to use interviews as a data collection instrument in this study. He also used it to collect data which would enable him to answer his main research question.

#### **4.5.4 Document analysis**

For this study, the researcher used official documents such as those which are compiled and maintained on a continuous basis by the organisation such as public schools (Nonyane, 2016:83). Documents include the following: Agenda of meetings and minute book of the school, annual reports for parents, financial records, and paper budget from the Department of Education, discipline records and curriculum materials. The researcher used these primary documents in order to understand the impact played by School Governing Bodies in public schools.

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. The researcher managed to get access to the documents from all five purposively chosen SGBs. The documents were of great importance to this study, as they were written when SGBs were not aware that they might be needed for future research.

#### **4.5.5 Field notes**

In this study, the researcher kept a record of his impressions and experiences of the School Governing Body in the form of notes. He also observed the SGBs using the checklist, but also made notes of what was not on the checklist that needed to be added (see Annexure F). The observer notes are known as field notes and form part of the data collection to ensure triangulation. The field notes assisted the researcher to triangulate the data. The collected data from all documents mentioned above including field notes and responses from the individual interviews (principals) and the focus group conducted with each of the five cases, are analysed in Chapter 5.

#### **4.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF QUALITATIVE DATA**

The quality of qualitative research depends on how much can be attached to the research process and findings. Trustworthiness in qualitative research is challenging in respect to the fact that the interviewer and the interviewees operate within a framework of subjectivity. The most significant threat is bias on the part of the interviewer and the interviewee, and also the content of the questions. These biases relate to the personal attitudes, opinions and expectations of interviewers and interviewee, the interviewers seeking answers to support their preconceived ideas, the misinterpretation and misconceptions about what interviews participants are saying and the misunderstanding of the questions. Aspects such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, status and social class and age all may contribute to bias (Bless *et al.*, 2013:236).

Bless *et al.*, (2013:236-238) propose four criteria that are considered appropriate in qualitative studies that should establish the trustworthiness of the research, namely credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability.

- **Credibility** refers to the fact that the study was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described and that the findings depicted the truth of the reality under study or, in other words, that they make sense.

The study was located within the role of members of the SGB and its impact on the schooling system of the secondary schools and aimed to identify the challenges and to make recommendations about the role of members of the School Governing Body and their impact particularly in the rural public schools of Schoonoord Circuit. In establishing credibility, the parameters were defined in the research questions of this study and the purposeful selection of the participants in the secondary schools of Schoonoord Circuit (see 1.3.1 and 4.4.1).

- **Dependability** refers to the fact the researcher thoroughly described and precisely followed a clear and thoughtful research strategy. In this study, I described each step of the qualitative component namely sampling, how the data were analysed, thoroughly and carefully (see 1.7 and 4.4.1).
- **Transferability** refers to the extent to which the result may apply to other similar situations. No claim is made regarding the generalisation of the result of this study.

In this study, the aim of the interviews conducted with purposefully selected participants was to obtain in-depth information, and not generalizability (see 4.5). However, the findings of the interview could be useful in the similar school context in the Greater Sekhukhune District and secondary schools with similar conditions in the Limpopo Province.

- **Conformability** requires that other researchers may be able to obtain findings by following a similar research process in the same context.

In this study, my detailed description of the research design may supply other researchers with a clear audit trail, should they wish to conduct a similar study in a different context (see 1.6 and 4.3). Furthermore, Botha (2011:171-172) suggests that the collection of authentic data in qualitative research requires an effective interviewer who should be knowledgeable of the subject matter, and who is bright, gentle and empathic, and who listens actively and who makes use of reliable means of recording data.

In this study, I ensured that the interviews were structured correctly. The interview questions were prepared for interviews (see Annexures A-E).

#### **4.7 ETHICAL ASPECTS OF THE RESEARCH**

In this section, ethical considerations are discussed under nine sub-headings.

##### **(a) Consent**

The researcher assured schools and participants in writing - letters of informed consent - that their decision to participate in the study was optional after he had given them accurate, clear and detailed information on the nature and purpose of the study (see Annexures J to K). At that stage, the researcher had already obtained permission from the District Director of Sekhukhune (see Annexure G) to conduct the study in the district. Letters were forwarded to the principals of schools and members of the SGBs of each school in order for them to indicate their acceptance or withdrawal from the study.

##### **(b) Anonymity**

The researcher promised that the names of the selected schools and participants that were going to participate in the study would remain anonymous and confidential. Instead of names, the researcher, therefore, refers to each of the five schools serving as cases using specific codes (A, B, C, D and E), and identifying participants with reference to the code allocated to the school with which they were associated.

**(c) Privacy (Secrecy)**

The researcher assured all the participants that all the information gathered during the research would be strictly used for research purposes only and that he would not, under any circumstances, share the information with anyone. Moreover, participants were guaranteed that all the gathered raw data would be securely stored.

**(d) Feedback**

The researcher reached an agreement with all the participants that he would give them feedback regarding the information gathered during the study, in order to ensure that they could give their input about its accuracy.

**(e) Approval from the University of South Africa (UNISA)**

Before embarking on the study, the researcher had to submit a 2015 Application Form to the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee (CEDU REC) UNISA with a view of obtaining its consent for the study. The University Ethics Committee verified that the proposed research conformed to the full range of moral and research standards, including issues related to professional, legal and social accountability (Bryman, 2004).

**(f) Approval from the District Director**

The researcher also had to obtain permission to conduct the study from the District Director (previously known as District Senior Manager) before initiating the data

collection process (see Annexure H). Permission was granted before the commencement of the study.

#### **(g) Approval from Principals of schools**

The researcher sent letters to the principals of the five selected schools, requesting them to indicate whether or not they were willing to allow the researcher to include their schools in the research project (see Annexure J). The researcher was given written approval to confirm that the five sampled schools would be participating in the study.

#### **(h) Approval from School Governing Body (SGB) members**

The researcher also sent a letter to the SGB members of the five selected schools, requesting them to indicate whether or not they were willing and able to participate in the research project (see Annexure L). The researcher was informed in writing that the four SGBs from the five selected schools were going to participate in the study.

#### **(i) Voluntary participation and protection against harm**

The participants chose to participate in the study. They were not forced to participate; instead, they did so of their own free will. The participants also had the option to terminate their participation at any time with no penalty. The study was thus free from harm, and participants were not exploited in any way.

### **4.8 SUMMARY**

The focus of Chapter Four (4) was on how the study was designed and conducted, highlighting the fact that a qualitative research approach was preferred with regards to data collection in this study.

Data collection methods such as individual and focus group interviews, observations, field notes and document analysis were used, as they were deemed most appropriate to the qualitative approach and the study itself.

The term validity in qualitative research refers to the “appropriateness” of the tool, processes and data. The instruments used to collect data in this study were, therefore, valid in this sense (also refer to the description and analysis of data in Chapter 5).

Reliability, in both quantitative and qualitative research, refers to the repeatability of findings (psc. dss.acdavis.edu). The data collected in this study could be regarded as reliable in the sense that the participants gave accurate information in response to the research questions and the information gathered was well recorded (see Chapter 5 for details on this).

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

While Chapter 4 focused on research design and methodology, Chapter 5 focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data collected during the study. Included are data derived from the researcher’s observations, field notes and document analysis as well as data generated during individual and focus group interviews. Included as research participants were five (5) groups of SGB officials, namely principals, SGB chairpersons, SGB secretaries, SGB treasurers, and SGB learners (RCL members serving in the SGBs). During or after observations and some of the individual interviews, research participants also tendered documents with information relevant to the study.

The names and identities of the schools, teachers, parents, learners and principals involved in the study are not disclosed here because the researcher assured them of confidentiality and anonymity during the signing of consent letters regarding their

participation in the study. For ethical reasons, the schools that served as research sites are, therefore, identified by the codes A, B, C, D and E.

## **5.2 FINDINGS FROM LITERATURE**

In this study the following authors are instructive:

5.2.1 Lutz and Iannaccone (Rada & Carlson, 1995) are instructive in stating that an effective School Governing Body will lead to a high level of demands from community structures, unpopularity among serving governing body members which often leads to their exit from such structures through resignation and defeat at elections.

5.2.2 Argyris and Schon (1974) assert that the Action Theory leads to deliberate human behaviour. It purports to illustrate that a School Governing Body which asserts its authority forcefully could lead to deliberate human behaviour. For example, communities of the Pretoria Central Business District took a deliberate action of revolting against an imposition by the SGB of the Pretoria Girls High School to prevent Black girls from growing long hair whereas White girls were allowed to keep long hair.

5.2.3 On the other hand, Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) through the Community practice theory concur with Argyris and Schon (1974) by instructing that a group of people like those in the School Governing Body, share concerns, have similar set of problems or a passion about a particular topic. Such concerns, a similar set of problems or a passion about a particular topic could arise as School Governing Body members confront ill-discipline among learners and attempt to resolve such problems through sub-structures of the School Governing Body such as the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC). Members serving in the QLTC structure share a domain which is informed by a network of connections, belong to the same community as they engage in joint activities and discussions thus building relationships and acquire the requisite skills which make them expert practitioners in school governance.

5.2.4 Maile (2002), Duma *et al.*, (2011) and Ngidi (2004) instructively insist that School Governing Body members in the Republic of South Africa must be functionally literate and numerate, especially the parent component- in order to develop the necessary policies (finance, language, admission, religious observance), which will ensure sound

governance at schools. If SGBs lack requisite literacy and numeracy skills, then schools will not be governed efficiently and effectively. That is the reason why schools in the Schoonoord Circuit exhaust their budgets allocated to them by the Limpopo Department of Education far ahead of the end of the financial year.

5.2.5 Roos (2002) and David (2011) re-assert the viewpoint of Maile (2002) and Ngidi (2004) by stating that the School Governing Bodies have a core responsibility of developing and implementing school policies. In order to implement school policies effectively, members of the SGB must be able to interpret such school policies correctly. This can only be possible if the members are functionally illiterate and numerate. Schools in Schoonoord circuit are all quintile 1 institutions and are mostly governed by SGBs (parent component) who were exposed to minimal or no formal schooling. As such, they solely rely on the principal and educators to develop and understand school governance.

5.2.6 In an instructive approach towards the improvement of school governance in South Africa, Chaka (2008) and Bagarette (2011) emphasise the importance of training of School Governing Body members in order to assist them to acquire skills which are necessary for sound school governance. The Department of Education should hold follow-up sessions with serving members of the School Governing Body to ascertain that they continue to comply with the prescripts on school governance. In the Schoonoord Circuit, SGB members are only called to induction meetings by the Department of Education. The SGBs are left to struggle with challenges in school governance which often lead to the dysfunctionality of schools.

5.2.7 In a clear reference to the administration of schools by School Governing Bodies and School Committees, Seroto (2004) and Duma (2008) assert that school governance under these structures was restrictive to direct participation by parents, educators and learners. The exclusion of participation by parents, educators and learners was a norm. It started then under the Bantu Education Act (No 47 of 1953) until the establishment of a progressive and representative piece of education legislation (South African Schools Act (No 84 of 1996 as amended)).

5.2.8 Harber (2013), Mncube and Naidoo (2014) maintain that learners in the eighth grade and higher should be allowed to participate actively in the affairs of the School

Governing Body. This is in line with stipulations in the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996 as amended). Due to the involvement through the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) in the post-1996 school governance era, a climate of mutual trust among stakeholders at school was established. This eliminated unnecessary tensions among learners and school management and created a sense of ownership in the affairs of the school among all stakeholders. Relative labour peace was created in schools and schools were governed efficiently and effectively.

### **5.3 FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY**

The previous section of this chapter presented the findings from the literature. This section will then give attention to the aspects listed below:

- Responses from principals of the selected schools;
- Responses from the SGB chairpersons;
- Responses from the SGB secretaries;
- Responses from the SGB treasurers; and
- Responses from the learners (RCL) serving in the SGBs.

#### **5.3.1 Responses from principals of the selected schools**

As indicated earlier, principals were the first research participants to be interviewed. These were individual interviews. All the principals were asked precisely the same questions, namely: (a) Do you as a principal feel that you are performing your governance role and responsibilities successfully? (b) Why do you feel this way?

Principals' responses to the first question - 'Do you as a principal feel that you are performing your governance roles and responsibilities successfully?' - were much the same. All of them stated that they were the chief executives and leaders of their schools. They said, moreover, that they had multi-roles to play under a democratic and decentralised school governance system informed by the vision of improved

academic performance. All of them also emphasised that they were there to provide direction, guidance and support to educators concerning teaching and to educate parents about their roles in school governance.

Responding to the second question – ‘Why do you feel this way? - the interviewed principals admitted that they found the performance of this role and the execution of the responsibilities associated with such performance challenging. Implied in their approach to problem-solving is the principals’ ignorance of their specific role in the SGB as well as of the responsibilities they have to accept in terms of this role.

It could, therefore, be concluded that there is still a long way to be travelled to ensure that SGBs genuinely understand their role. Indications from the interviewed principals’ responses to subsequent questions were that they, themselves, did not have a clear understanding of what their role in the School Governing Body entailed. Hence they tended to refer all the problems to members of the SGBs, and to the parent component in particular.

In responding to the question, “How does the introduction of SGBs impact your work as a principal”? all the participating principals indicated that the introduction of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) after the enactment of the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) heralded in a number of challenges unbeknown to principals in the previous dispensation. In justifying this claim, they posited that, before the introduction of SGBs, the prerogative to make decisions belonged to principals. Having taken the decision, all they had to do was to inform School Committees about their decision. Under the current dispensation, they were not allowed to do this; instead, decisions could only be taken after broad consultations and lobbying had taken place. Indications were that the interviewed principals were of the view that this process was not only time-consuming but also very ‘bureaucratic’.

*Now principals are to serve in the same governing body structure as learners, members of the support staff and educators. This has increased the bureaucratic structure and can – if not properly handled delay a number of processes which should take place (Principal at School E, hereafter referred to as Principal E)*

Typical of bureaucracies in general, principals were obliged to follow and implement a range of rules, regulations and policies related to the management of their schools. Not only did this impact on their daily work schedule but it added a leadership role to their already challenging management role, as indicated in the response of the principal of School B, hereafter referred to as Principal B:

*The introduction of SGBs caused a total turnaround in the work of the principal. If not well handled, some situations become adversarial to the extent of turning the school into a battlefield.*

When asked whether the SGB members in their schools understood, interpreted and implemented policies as expected, the participating principals indicated that some did, other did not. According to the principal of School C, hereafter referred to as Principal C:

*“...only educator components understand and interpret the policies. The parent’s components cannot read and write. The problem is illiteracy among the parents”.*

Principal C’s statement could be interpreted as implying that (a) there is a correlation between a person’s ability to understand policy and his/her literacy skills; (b) only parents who are literate should serve on the SGB and/or (c) that literacy training should be provided to SGB members in need of such. Whether it is the bureaucracy, rules and regulations associated with SGB activities, the conferral of a leadership role on principals or the illiteracy of the parent component that is regarded as a challenge by principals, indications are that there is an urgent need to empower all SGB members, principals included. They ought to be empowered with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to effectively perform their respective roles as SGB members.

Principals’ views on the role that learners played on the SGB contrast quite markedly with the views they expressed on the contribution of parents serving as SGB members. When asked to what extent learner governors participate in decision making, all the principals indicated (a) that learners communicate their views and opinions in the SGB through the Representative Council of Learners (RCL); (b) the representation of

learners was aimed at ensuring that learners were not deprived of their interest and rights, and (c) that learner membership of the SGB was beneficial to the school. These views are particularly well captured in the response of Principal A, who said that:

*“..... at point learner participation improved the functioning of the SGB as it gave everyone a sense of ownership and accountability and at our school, it had help ours to curb some problems that had occurred in the past, such as the incidents of vandalism”.*

All the principals also agreed that learners should be able, through their SGB representatives, to make inputs on curriculum matters. According to them, such involvement increased learners' interest in education and led to improved academic achievement.

The value of learners participating in SGBs is corroborated in some other research studies (Martin, 1999; Williams, 1998; Watkins, 1991 in Mncube 2008:84). The importance of listening to what learners have to say – in other words, to 'hear their voice' – is highlighted by Sithole ( Mncube 2008:85), who contends that, since they had taken part in the liberation struggle in South Africa, learners deserved the right of full participation in all decisions pertaining to their education.

When asked for their views on community participation in school governance and education as a whole, all the principals interviewed indicated that parents and communities have a significant role to play in the affairs of the school and communities. Principals A, B and D indicated that they would like parents and communities to monitor learner behaviour after school, to supervise and ensure that they do their homework, to visit the school in order to teach learners more about the parents' areas of speciality, and to run the library during school hours. The important role of parents in ensuring that their children learn discipline was also emphasised by Principal C, who emphasised the importance of ensuring that their children were punctual with regard to their arrival at school, that they behaved responsibly and took their schoolwork seriously. Moreover, according to this principal, it was important for

parents to support teachers, to make them feel confident that the parents were 'with them' in whatever they do to improve their own and the school's effectiveness.

When asked whether they thought that the governing bodies at their schools contributed to democracy in the broader South Africa society, all five the principals were adamant that they did. The response by Principal E cited below, encapsulate the essence of principals' responses to this question.

*"....before 1994, our dearly parent and learners were not allowed to participate in the election of the democratically elected bodies. All powers were given to principals and the government of the then".*

When asked in which way the SGBs contributed to the establishment of teaching and learning at their schools, principals indicated that effective learning and teaching could only take place in an atmosphere conducive to education. Referring to pre-1997, crises in South African schools, which made it difficult for school principals, teachers and communities to ensure the effectiveness of teaching and learning, principals pointed out that various proactive measures had since been taken by the SGBs to institute a culture of learning and teaching at their respective schools. Included in these were regular visits to schools by SGB members as well as regular SGB meetings with all stakeholders with the specific purpose of the SGBs being kept apprised of problems and challenges.

The responses by principals reflected a consensus among them that the culture of learning and teaching is the very foundation which improved learner performance. To ensure that the SGBs at their schools contributed to the establishment and maintenance of such a climate at their schools, so they claimed, they used to organise people from the community and outside to talk to learners on issues such as violence, drugs and alcohol. As well as on the range of careers which they could potentially follow to build better lives for themselves in future.

In response to the researcher's question on how the SGB assists the principal and his/her educators to improve teaching and learning, the five principals interviewed indicated that their SGBs contributed much to the culture of learning by enforcing discipline among learners. All five principals agreed that, for effective teaching to take place, the school environment had to be peaceful, calm and safe.

Principal B stressed that:

*Since effective teaching and learning can occur under a good school atmosphere they (parents, learner and teachers) have to establish a code of conduct to assist the school to enforce discipline.*

The above statement confirms that SGBs at the respective schools are assisting principals in the formulation of policies on language, religion, and discipline, as well as on other policies which would enable the principals and educators to execute their respective educational responsibilities effectively.

The participating principals all agreed that the image of every school is essential since it relates to public perceptions of the school as disciplined or not. Their views were succinctly captured in Principal D's remark that:

*"..... a good climate or image can promote effective teaching and learning while poor climate does the opposite".*

With regard to the roles that SGBs could play in improving the image of their schools, all five principals mentioned that the SGBs at their schools were assisting in discipline matters through the drawing up of codes of conduct for learners. They agreed, moreover, that it was only if learners respected the code of conduct and worked towards the achievement of what the school stood for that its image would improve. The fact that the SGBs drew up such codes contributed markedly to ensure that this happened, according to the principals concerned. This was not only because it laid

down the ground rules for learner behaviour but also because it enabled all those involved in the maintenance of learner discipline to address disciplinary issues in a fair and unbiased manner.

When asked about the type of training they had received from the Department of Education on school governance, the principals interviewed indicated that the only training they had received was a one-day micro-workshops on how to conduct SGB elections although, as pointed out by Principal C,

*The PEDs must provide training for all the SGB components in order to understand the relevant documents used in the governance of the schools.*

The need for training was emphasised by Principal A, who indicated that:

*SGBs often lack the capacity to be efficient and effective and face confusion and frustration about the real purpose of their work or understanding of their roles and responsibilities. So, I think capacity building in schools is urgently needed, so that SGBs could be provided with necessary support to help them to carry their responsibilities effectively.*

The statements made by these two principals are consistent with Section 19 (a and b) of the South African Schools' Act (NO 84 of 1996), which states that Provincial Departments of Education(PDEs) must not only provide introductory training for newly elected SGBs but should also provide training for effective performance by preparing SGBs to assume additional functions. During my research, I observed not only the frustration that the failure of the Limpopo Department of Education in this regard causes the SGBs but also the challenges this poses to them in their efforts to perform the duties allocated to them in terms of Section 20 of the SASA.

When asked what their role as the principal was regarding the training of SGBs, all the participants interviewed from the five selected schools indicated that principal had to help the department to educate parents about their roles in school governance and had to support the latter in their efforts to perform these. In response to a follow-up question on the role that the Department of Education played regarding SGB training,

the principals indicated that the HOD of each province was supposed to train or workshop all members of the SGBs to ensure that they were well prepared to accept and successfully discharge their delegated powers in school governance.

### **5.3.2 Responses from SGB secretaries of the selected schools**

The researcher held one focus group interview with the teacher component of the SGB of the five selected schools. In each of the five schools three teachers serve on the SGB, but as the researcher, I decided to take only one member of the teachers' components holding the critical position in the SGB who is the secretary. Perhaps because of their knowledge and skills in writing and recording, teachers were chosen to serve as secretaries or assistant secretaries on the SGBs. SGB secretaries constituted the third group to be interviewed and were asked the following questions: In responding to the question on what they understand their role as SGB secretary to be, all the participants indicated that they had to prepare the agenda for meetings, keep all correspondence of the body and, together with the chairperson, represent the body as required.

When asked whether their schools had mission statements, all the SGB secretaries participating in my study indicated that their schools had mission statements. When asked why they thought the SGB should develop a mission statement for the school, they indicated that the mission statement was one of the tools that could be used to market the school.

According to the SGB secretary representing School E, henceforth referred to as Secretary E, the mission statement also:

*"... indicates the goals of a school and can promote identity among the organisation's members-learners, educators and parents".*

When asked whether they, as SGB secretaries, had policies on school governance as provided by Department of Education, responses from the group indicated that some

of the schools did not have all the governance policies provided by the Education Department.

When asked about the extent to which learner governors participate in decision making, the respondents agreed that learners participate through their RCL body which, in turn, communicate their views and opinions to the SGB. They further said the representation of learners is aimed at ensuring that learners are not deprived of their interests and rights (see 5.2). When asked whether they thought learners should be involved in decisions on curriculum issues all the research participants indicated that they should, because, according to them, learner involvement in curriculum issues had increased their interest in education, improved their achievement in school subjects such as Mathematics and the Sciences, and had thus made their schools more marketable.

When asked whether or not they thought their School Governing Body contributed to democracy in the broader South Africa society, all five SGB secretaries restricted themselves to the contribution that their SGBs made to the democratic functioning of their schools, rather than to democracy in broader society. In this regard, Secretary D indicated that the voting procedures of their SGB elections since 1997 are democratic in the sense that they allow for including freedom of expression and the right to participate in decision making.

Responses to a question about how the SGB supports teaching and learning at their schools reflected as consensus among the secretaries that the SGBs contribute to tuition in a variety of ways. These included planning and organising vacation classes for Grade 11 and 12 learners, organising compulsory afternoon studies at the school for learners, purchasing learner support material, and ensuring regular attendance of lessons by learners and educators alike. A follow-up question, related to this question was whether or not the SGB helped to address discipline in their schools and, if so, in which way? Respondents indicated that SGBs did but did not elaborate on how they did so.

In response to a question on their thoughts regarding what the SGB could do to help the school improve its performance, SGB secretaries participating in the focus group interview suggested that SGBs should assist the school principal and staff in their efforts to ensure improved academic results in a variety of ways. For example, ensuring quality teaching and learning at all times. According to the participating SGB secretaries they did, but only partially, due to the illiteracy of some SGB members.

Focusing on the management of school finances, the researchers asked participating SGB secretaries about how the SGBs on which they served contributed to the improvement of the schools' finances. Indications from their responses were that the strategies used by SGBs in this regard included the encouragement of voluntary contributions by parents and the running of projects such as concerts and contests.

When asked whether or not they had received any training on school governance from the Department of Education, participating SGB secretaries indicated that they had received no training whatsoever from the department. In Secretary B's words, three had been no:

*“capacity building programme, there is no assessment evaluation monitoring and performance of their duties, only one induction workshop, once in three years, only few hours” (see 5.2 above).*

Following up on this question, the researcher asked what role the Department of Education was playing regarding SGB training. The response was that the Head of Department of Education in each province was supposed to provide ongoing training to SGBs, but that there was a general concern that the department was not providing adequate training for SGB members.

### **5.3.3 Responses from SGB chairpersons at the selected schools**

The parent components of the SGB (chairpersons) of the five selected schools were included in the focus group interviews. The following questions were asked, and the responses of all respondents are reflected hereunder.

In response to a question on SGB chairpersons' perceptions of their role in a SGB, all five chairpersons interviewed indicated that their role was to chair SGB meetings and general parents' meetings. The chairperson of the SGB at School C hereafter referred to as Chairperson C, summarised their role as being the representative of the SGB if and when required, serving as the accounting officer of the school, and monitoring, controlling and assisting other SGB members when and where this is deemed necessary.

Asked about their school's mission statements (see specific questions in this regard in 4.3.2 or in Annexure C) all the SGB chairpersons indicated that their schools had a mission statement, that it was up to SGBs to formulate it (SASA 1996:20 [c and d] and that it was something like a metaphorical compass for the direction in which the school should move. They also agreed with the SGB secretaries' view that the mission statement could be used as a marketing tool, indicating the goals of a school and promoting the identification of relevant organisations, educators, learners and parents with the school concerned.

While participating SGB Chairpersons seem to know what their functions are in terms of the 1996 South African Schools' Act (Sections 20c & d), indications are that they do not necessarily fulfil all of these as they should. When asked, for example, whether they have the school governance policies provided by the Department of Education, they indicated that the only 'policy' they had was the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), which is written in English. Implied in these comments was participating SGB chairpersons' ignorance of the difference between an Act and a policy since they referred to SASA as an Education Department policy when it is, in fact, a Government Act. Indications that they realise their ignorance of everything the Act requires is, however, reflected in Chairperson A's acknowledgement that they 'knew.'

*"...that book called SASA. The law that controls schools. Knowledge and interpretation of the contents is a major concern."*

Some of the reasons for this 'major concern' are provided by Chairperson D, who explained that:

*The language used in the documents gives us problems, since we are not educated. We are relying on teachers and principals, for information and interpretation of documents that involves SGBs from the department. This actually is limiting our involvement and participation in these governing structures.*

When asked about learner involvement and participation in SGB decision making, the majority of chairpersons indicated that learners participate as representatives of the learner body, communicating the views and opinions of this body to the SGB. Agreeing that learner representation on the SGB ensures that learners are not deprived of their interests and rights, Chairperson C further highlighted various other advantages associated with learner involvement in SGB matters. According to him, their participation improved the functioning of the SGB in the sense that it gave everyone a sense of ownership and accountability; it had helped to curb some problems that occurred in the past, vandalism being a case in point.

With regard to learner involvement in curriculum decisions, most of the chairpersons argued that learners should be involved in curriculum issues since they were supposed to be the direct beneficiaries of the curriculum and therefore had to participate in discussions that might affect these benefits and their education in general. Chairperson A specifically highlighted the fact that not only did learners' interest in education increase as a result of their participation in curriculum discussions but their academic performance had also improved. As a result, thus making the school more marketable.

On the question about the contribution that the SGB makes to democracy in the broader South Africa context, three of the five participants interviewed said that they were convinced that the School Governing Bodies contributed to the democratisation of South Africa. They noted that learners and non-teaching staff are now allowed to participate fully in the SGBs as compared to the era before the introduction of South African schools in which according to the participants' understanding is the explicit aim

of Act 84 of 1996. When asked how the SGB addressed disciplinary problems at their schools, all the chairpersons interviewed indicated that they enforced disciplinary policies and learner codes of conduct at their respective schools. In this regard, three of the chairpersons interviewed cautioned that schools should not just draw up and design the disciplinary rules and learner code of conduct but must also see to it that these are implemented and properly enforced. In this regard, Chairperson E expressed her concern about the failure to do the latter. According to her,

*Having a good disciplinary or code of conduct of learners is one thing, but implementing it is another.*

She indicated that schools have policies which are not well implemented and not working at all. She urged all the SGB's to bear this in mind when they design their school policies.

The critical role of the School Governing Body (SGB) in the establishment and maintenance of sound discipline is highlighted as critical by Joubert and Bray (2007:80). These authors claim that it is for this reason that the South African Schools' Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) mandates SGBs to adopt a code of conduct of learners, as a way of "establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to improving the quality of the learning process" (ibid). In this study the term, 'disciplined environment' is used with reference to an environment that is free of any disruptive behaviour, that is, learner behaviour or actions that may negatively affect their education or that are detrimental to the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere conducive to learning or which interferes with any other school activity (Rossouw, 2007:395).

There have been numerous reports on disruptive behaviour in South African schools, focusing mostly on learners armed with dangerous weapons, learner on learner violence, learner on educator violence, vandalism, theft, and learners in possession of prohibited substances such as drugs and alcohol (News 24.Com. 2015). A learner code of conduct is, therefore, critical to the creation of school environments free from such behaviour.

When asked whether or not the SGBs at their schools offer any guidance to learners, the interviewed SGB chairpersons indicated that they did. They agreed that effective learning could only take place if the school environment were peaceful, calm and safe. They claimed that the SGBs at their schools contributed to the creation and maintenance of such an environment by ensuring learner discipline. To this purpose, according to Chairpersons A and C, the SGBs at their schools have developed a code of conduct to assist the schools in their attempts to maintain a disciplined environment. The SGB chairpersons further agreed that schools alone could not establish or maintain a culture of learning and teaching without the cooperation of the entire community, most especially the parents and guardians of attending learners.

In response to a question on what they thought the SGB could do to help the school improve its performance, the SGB chairpersons concurred that the SGB could help schools in this regard. For example, planning and organising vacation classes for Grade 11 and 12 learners, organising compulsory morning and afternoon study sessions for all learners, purchasing learner support materials, ensuring regular attendance of lessons by learners and educators, engaging temporary or voluntary educators to teach either subjects without educators or difficult subjects such as Maths and the Sciences during Saturday classes.

When asked about SGB members' understanding, interpretation and implementation of policies, chairpersons from the five selected schools indicated that there were indeed challenges with regards to the understanding, interpretation and implementation of policies, most of these, according to them, caused by illiteracy among the members of the SGB.

As regards challenges related to the management and improvement of their schools' finances, participating SGB chairpersons claimed that these were caused by, among other factors, the fact that their schools were situated in deep rural areas and were all Quintile 1 schools. That is, schools where children do not have to pay school fees because most of the parents are unemployed and thus unable to pay school fees. The only monies their schools receive are allocated by the Department of Education, in

accordance with established norms and standards. They all agreed that raising funds for the school was part of the functions allocated to the SGBs. Hence they were obliged to raise money with which to purchase books, educational materials or equipment and to pay miscellaneous services rendered to the school (SASA 1996:21 c and d). Agreeing that a lack of funds impedes the improvement of school performance, participating chairpersons finally agreed that the SGBs should not only raise funds for their schools but also see to it that school funds are not misappropriated.

Finally, in response to the focus group question on school governance training provided by the Department of Education, SGB chairpersons indicated that, while they had received some training on budgeting and conducting SGB meetings, training sessions were short, inadequate and offered on an ad hoc basis.

*Ash!!!!!!! , time for the training was too short. They themselves can't even explain SGBs roles and responsibilities. They ended up rushing over the information in order to finish, but still could not finish.*

These concerns, vociferously voiced by Chairperson C were also identified by Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002:139), who argue that SGBs could not be expected to discharge their fundamental responsibilities effectively without training which goes beyond the normal process of picking up what to do by merely doing the job.

The last question SGB chairpersons were asked to answer was whether or not they, as the chairperson of an SGB, had gained any experience since their election as an SGB member. The responses from all the chairpersons were that they had not. They categorically state, however, that, in the seven months since they started serving on their school's SGBs, they had gained a great deal of experience, especially in the management of finances and leadership in general.

#### **5.3.4 Responses from SGB treasurers of the selected schools**

The researcher held one focus group interview with the parents who acted as the SGB treasurers of the participating schools. The first question they were asked was what

their role as SGB treasurer entailed. In response, all of them indicated that they had to control the school budget, keep an accurate record of what was spent by whom, avail audited finances to relevant stakeholders, and compile a balanced monthly financial report.

Their response to questions about the existence of and rationale for a mission statement at their schools was much the same as those of the SGB secretaries and chairpersons. In short, they were all of the opinions that it was important for a school to have a mission statement because a mission statement (a) indicates the direction that the school is, or should be taking; (b) is a marketing tool, in that it indicates the goals of a school, and (c) it promotes the identification of SGB members - educators, learners and parents – with the school.

SGB treasurers' responses to policy questions also reflected those of other focus group participants. According to them, they had not received any policies on school governance from the Department of Education, (citing the same reasons as those indicated in 5.4), and that they struggled to understand, interpret and implement school policies. Treasurer E's direct and forthright response, cited hereafter, encapsulated all their feelings about and attitudes to this challenge.

*“Honestly speaking, we don't understand and interpret the police because many of us don't know English. Only educator component draw policies. Educators did not even acknowledge our inputs”*

Reflected in this response is an acknowledgement of and frustration with the parent component's inability to understand, interpret and implement policies because of their low education levels and inadequate comprehension of English.

As regards the inclusion and involvement of learners in the SGBs of schools, all the treasurers participating in the focus group interview agreed that the participation channel used by learner governors was the RCL, which enabled them to voice their views and opinions on the SGB. Contrary to other focus group participants, though, the SGB treasures were divided on the value of involving learners in curriculum

discussions. Only two of the five argued that they should be involved; the other three argued that learners lacked the requisite expertise to make informed inputs into curriculum matters. According to them, learners should therefore only be observers during curriculum deliberations.

On the issue of their schools' SGBs contributing to democracy in the broader South Africa society, all the treasurers participating in the focus group discussion believed that they did. Treasurer B expressed this belief as follows:

*“Before 1996 our learners were not allowed to engage in discussions with us, but now learners are allowed to take part in our meetings and are fully members of the School Governing Body. This shows democracy in our country”.*

Treasurers' responses to questions on the way their School Governing Bodies contribute to the improvement of their school's financial situation were the same as those of the SGB chairpersons (see 5.4 above) as were most of their responses to questions on the maintenance of discipline at their schools. There was one exception, however. Whereas none of the other SGB members had indicated the active involvement of SGBs in the maintenance of discipline and the improvement of learner behaviour, one of the SGB treasurers indicated that he remembers his school's SGB 'meeting with the learners when they talked to them “about drug abuse”.

When asked what they thought the SGB could do to help the school improve its academic performance, SGB treasurers, like other SGB members, mentioned planning and organising vacation classes for Grade 11 and 12 learners, compulsory morning and afternoon study sessions for all learners and the purchasing of extra materials that could help learners to pass.

With regard to training on school governance by the Department of Education, the SGB treasurers indicated that they had been trained in budgeting and financial management. According to SGB Treasurer B, though:

*It was tough, the training workshops on budgeting and financial management did not help us at all, because the time was too short and the language (English) used was a problem to us parents who can't read and write”.*

Unlike the SGB Chairpersons, the Treasurers indicated that they had not at the time of the interview gained any experience since being elected to the SGB of their schools, claiming that:

*The time was too short for us because we started to be in office last year (March 2015)*

Overall indications from focus group interviews are that some schools have functional SGB and finance committees while others are still struggling. As a researcher, I realised that some SGBs benefitted from the training that they received and can monitor the cash flow of the school. Treasurer E, for example, explained that:

*We have attended a short training which changed the way I was running finances. We have been told to cross all the cheque issued for payment as a control measure and not to sign any blank cheques in advance. As a treasure, I am able to read and interpret the bank statements. I am presenting monthly financial report and I also present annual statement to parents' meetings.*

Even so, most of the SGBs Treasurers seemed to be confused and frustrated about the roles they have to play in the governing body, primarily because of differences in their interpretation and definition of these (DoE, 2009:4).

### **5.3.5 Responses from SGB learners of the selected schools**

The researcher held one focus group interview with the learner component of the SGB of the five selected schools. In each of the five schools, the researcher decided to interview only two members of the learner representative council (RCL), namely those holding the position of secretary and president. Learners were the last group to be interviewed and, with one or two exceptions, were asked the same questions as those asked of other SGB members. When asked what their role as learners in the SGB was, only one learner provided an answer. According to this learner, their role is

twofold, namely to (a) represent other learners in the SGB and (b) to promote good relations and communication among learners, staff, and the school community as a whole. It could, therefore, be inferred that learners do not understand their roles and functions as RCL members on the SGB.

When asked whether their schools gave them the opportunity to attend SGB meetings, learners answered in the affirmative, adding that, apart from being allowed to represent learners at these meetings, their schools even allowed them to make other contributions that might benefit the school.

Learner responses to questions on governance documents and procedures confirmed the researcher's inference that they lacked the knowledge and understanding needed to serve on the SGB productively. They indicated, for example, that they did not have any of the policies on school governance provided by the Department of Education and neither they nor the rest of the SGB understood the stipulations in these policies. Consequently, they struggled to interpret and implement government policies applicable to the governance and management of schools. The only policy they used at their respective schools was the school's learner code of conduct which, according to them, was drawn up by them, as members of the SBGs.

Even though they neither knew nor understood the policies and that, according to them, some parents did not want to accord them the status of fully-fledged members of the SGB, learner governors indicated that they were allowed to participate in decision making. They also believed that the school should involve them in decisions on curriculum issues. Because they were the direct beneficiaries of the curriculum, they argued, they should, therefore, be given a chance to take part in discussions that might affect the accrual of these benefits. As indicated earlier, this is also the view of Sithole (Mncube 2008:85), who states that learners' participation in the South African liberation struggle makes them deserving of the right to fully participate in all decisions about their education.

When they were asked about their involvement in the appointment of educators and other staff at their schools, however, learners indicated that they were not involved in

the process of interviewing and recommending the appointment of educators and non-teaching staff, but they were allowed to participate in discussions on the selection of staff.

*We do not take part in the interview panels and recommendations, but we are allowed to observe the proceedings.*

When asked about how the SGB addresses disciplinary problems at their schools, all the learners indicated that their SGBs used their school's disciplinary policy or the learner code of conduct for this purpose. According to them, these documents ensured that the SGB managed learner discipline fairly and justly. This practice, as described by learners, is in line with the provision of Section 12(1) of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996b), which provides for the right of everyone to freedom and security of the person, including the right not to be tortured in any way, and not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhumane or degrading way.

One of the learner participants (from school D) indicated, however, that the disciplinary policy at their school did not sufficiently protect learners' rights, hence lending itself to abuse.

*"At our school we don't have a clear policy on how to deal with learners' conduct. It has rules which do not explain what is expected from us learners and what will happen if we don't comply with code of conduct, and it does not even outline procedures to follow when they are disciplining us, which is not fair".*

This, according to Oosthuizen, Rossouw and De Wet (2004:75), should not be the case. According to these authors, once a school has a disciplinary policy as prescribed in the Schools Act, every educator should know the contents of the code of conduct and should utilise it to maintain proper discipline in class and at school.

In responding to the researcher's question on whether or not the School Governing Body contributes to democracy in the broader South Africa society, all the learners agreed that:

*“We are convinced that the School Governing Bodies contribute to democracy in South Africa as compared to the old types of school governance during the era of Apartheid system.”*

When participating learner members of the respective SGBs were asked whether or not their SGBs offered any guidance to them as learners at their schools, and how the SGBs ensured the culture of teaching and learning at their schools, learners responded only to the second part. They indicated that good policies, which are well implemented could contribute to the maintenance of discipline at school. This, in turn, would ensure that the learning and teaching environment will enable all stakeholders to teach freely, thus being conducive to effective learning.

When asked what they thought the SGB could do to help the school improve its performance, these learners suggested that they should outsource teachers with expertise in subjects such as Mathematics and Sciences to teach them after hours and over weekends. They should also organise compulsory morning and afternoon study sessions for all learners and purchase extra materials that could help learners to pass.

The final question asked of learners was whether or not they had received any type of training from the Department of Education on how they should participate in school governance. Their answer was, “No”. The only workshop or training they attended, according to them, was a workshop run by COSAS and lasted for an hour only. According to one of the learners from School C, they were disappointed about the lack of training they had been given.

*Since I was elected in office of RCL in January 2016 to date ... I can count only one workshop which was conducted by our fellow student from universities.*

Indications from their responses were, however, that the opportunity of serving on their schools' SGBs had been of benefit to them. Responding to the researcher's question on whether or not they had, as a learner representative on the SGB, gained any

experience, the participating learner councillors reported that they had become more skilled in communicating through their involvement in the SGB and, as one learner (from school E) said:

*“I learnt how to run RCL meetings. And I learnt how to communicate with the mob. If the learners are angry, I know what to do to turn things right”.*

#### **5.4 SUMMARY**

This chapter described what transpired during the interviews with principals, SGB secretaries, SGB chairpersons, SGB treasures and selected learners from the five selected schools. As indicated in the sections dedicated to participants' responses, with a few exceptions, the questions to which different groups of participants had to respond were the same.

My observation as the researcher indicates a unanimity in the responses to these questions by all parties involved - principals, SGB chairpersons, SGB treasures, SGB secretaries and members of the RCL (learners). Implied in this, according to the researcher, is a general lack of knowledge about the role that they and their School Governing Bodies (SGBs) have to play as well as a relatively poor understanding of the responsibilities associated with the performance of these roles.

Conclusions emerging from these findings, as well as a summary of the study and recommendations on corrective action and further research, are presented in the final chapter following this one.

## **CHAPTER 6**

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

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter, the final one on the study, serves as a summary of the study as a whole. Its focus is, therefore, on essential aspects that emerged from the literature study in respect to the challenges highlighted by participating SGBs about their roles and responsibilities. First, the study is concisely summarised. The summary is followed by a presentation of conclusions derived from research data on the knowledge, understanding and performance of SGB roles and responsibilities by SGB members in selected secondary schools in the Schoonoord Circuit of the Greater Sekhukhune District. The chapter ends with the researcher's recommendations on action and further research that could help to address the shortcomings identified in this study.

#### **6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

Chapter 1 presents the rationale and motivation for the study (see 1.2) and outlines the research plan. The statement of the problem (see 1.3) which includes references to the researcher's personal experience, observation, assumptions and presumptions, research questions (see 1.5) and aims (see 1.4) are then described in some detail. Following this are the research design and methodology, which outline the approach adopted by the researcher (see 1.6), the data collection strategies, research participation, delimitation of the research (see 1.10) and limitations of the study (see 1.10). Together, these details provide a comprehensive overview of the procedures followed throughout this research study in its entirety.

Chapter 2 starts with a presentation of two theories on school governance - the Dissatisfaction Theory and the Action Theory – indicating how they are applied in the governing structures of the RSA system of education (see 2.1.).

Chapter 3 presents the outcomes of the researcher's literature review of school governing structures and the roles they played over time. Indications from this review are that the present era seems to be dominated by a structure referred to as an SGB, locally as well as internationally.

Included in the literature review are an orientation perspective on the school governance system (see 3.2 and 3.2.2) and the administration of schools by school boards, school committees, the Soweto Parent's Crisis Committee, the National Committee and the School Governing Body locally and internationally. The composition of the School Governing Body (SGB), its term of office and functions (see 3.4), the role of the school in the education of learners under the control of the SGB, as well as its core responsibilities in the education of learners are also described. The responsibilities of SGB executive members – the school principals, SGB chairpersons, SGB secretaries and treasurers (see 3.6.1 to 3.6.4) as well as their strength, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities (see 3.7.1.1 to 3.7.1.5) are also highlighted. The nature, function and use of the SWOT theory by SGBs (see 3.7.1) are included in this overview.

International experience and its influence on the SGB in the Republic of South Africa are highlighted explicitly in Chapter 3. The purpose of this comparison was to parallel different experiences in different countries with the functioning of SGBs in South Africa (see 3.8). Included in the comparison are descriptions of school governance in England (see 3.8.1), the Zimbabwean system of school governance (see 3.8.2) and the system of school governance in Canada (see 3.8.3).

Chapter 4 is devoted to a description of the research methodology by which this study was directed. The research design (see 4.2) served as what could be considered the research plan for this study. To this purpose, it included an exposition of the qualitative approach adopted in this study, which determined the methods used for data collection (see 4.5). The description of the data collection process included an exposition of the interview (see 4.5.1) and observation (see 4.5.2) as data collection techniques as well as the steps taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the qualitative research

method used. The chapter concluded with a brief exposition of the ethical aspects of the research study (see 4.7).

In Chapter 5 the data collected are presented and discussed. The introduction (see 5.1) to the chapter is followed by a presentation of the responses of principals (see 5.3.1), SGB secretaries (see 5.3.2), SGB chairpersons (see 5.3.3), SGB treasurers (see 5.3.4) and SGB learners (that is RCL learners) from the schools (5.3.5) selected as research sites. Chapter 5 concludes with a summative interpretation of all these responses (see 5.4).

Chapter 6 is essentially a summary of the entire study, including the researcher's conclusions and recommendations (see 6.1 to 6.7).

### **6.3 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE FINDINGS**

The findings of the study indicate that, while there are examples of good practice in some of the participating schools, all the SGBs were faced with numerous challenges regarding their role. It must also be stated that the findings of this study, as is typical in qualitative research, can in no way be generalised to the entire SGB population, the school population of the Limpopo Province or the population of schools in the Schoonoord Circuit of the Sekhukhune District. Even so, the findings have shed some light on the workings of SGBs and, in line with the challenges highlighted in the literature review, these findings may very well serve as the basis for a consideration of numerous recommendations of good practice.

Following are conclusions drawn from data collected. Emerging from the analysis of data were various recurring themes. The findings of this study are organised in terms of these themes. They are:

- Principals' and governors' understanding of the roles that SGB members should play in the governance of schools;
- SGB training needs and the recruitment of ideal SGB members for school governance;

- Drawing up a mission statement and developing, formulating and implementing policy; and
- Establishment of a culture of teaching and learning (COLTS)

### **6.3.1 Principals' and governors' understanding of the school governance roles of SGB members.**

Indications from the study are that there is no clear understanding of the significant role of school governance, namely to promote the best interest of the school. The study shows that the performance of this role has different connotations for different components of the SGBs.

- \* Principals perceived their responsibility in terms of this role as that of mentoring, teaching other members their roles and functions and mediating between parent- and educator- governors. The following remarks from principals highlight this perception.
- \* Principal from school A: "Yes as the principal I believe that I am performing my governance role successfully. I feel so, I am trying to close a gap that is, other governors believe they belong to another structure, the parent component and teacher component, so they are working against each other, and I have tried to bring peace between the two components" (see Section 6.3.2).
- \* Parents (SGB chairpersons and SGB treasurers) – Remarks like: "We still have a challenge at our schools, most of our governing body members (parents), are not learnt. We need to take them to our level in the understanding of their role (see Section 6.3.3) suggests that parents blame teachers and principals. Some of the reasons they cited for not executing their roles and responsibilities are "being undermined by teachers, not being knowledgeable enough to execute school governance roles and poor training in school governance" (see sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.5).

- \* Teachers (secretaries) - The study reveals that teachers should learn to respect and accommodate parents and all stakeholders to enable a positive relationship and harmonious interaction to reign in school premises.

Based on the above responses, the researcher has to conclude that the performance of SGBs at schools in the Schoonoord Circuit is both positive and negative. How they perform their roles and execute their responsibilities are positive in the sense that they can formulate the vision and mission statements of their schools. They also try to draw up a code conduct for learners and offer guidance to learners at their respective schools (see Section 6.3.4).

Their performance is negative in the sense that they experience seemingly insurmountable challenges with regards to policy formulation, development, and implementation as well as with the management of school resources, in particular, financial management and facilities maintenance. As indicated by a learner from school D: “At our school, we have a policy on how to deal with learner conduct, but we fail to use it when we are expected to discipline the learners” (see Section 6.3.5). This statement by the learner confirms the challenge faced by SGBs at Schoonoord circuit.

### **6.3.2 SGBs training needs and recruitment of ideal SGB members for school governance**

The study revealed that there are SGB training needs at the schools included in this study. All the components of the SGBs interviewed complained about:

- \* Inadequate time allocated to the training.
- \* Language used in training manuals and by facilitators, since the majority of the members are illiterate.
- \* The Department of Education not doing follow-up monitoring after the initial SGB training workshop.

The above points from participants' responses contributed to the researcher's conclusion that SGBs around Schoonoord circuit are concerned about the way in

which the Department of Education conducts its workshops for newly elected members of the SGBs.

## **Recommendations**

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that:

- Schools should provide SGBs with continuous training to empower them with reading skills which, in turn, will enable them to perform their duties better.
- Sustained programmes are provided to the SGB members on an ongoing basis and that these should be accompanied by formative assessment followed by constructive and timely feedback.

### **6.3.3 Drawing up a mission statement and policy development, formulation and implementation**

Under the new decentralised governance system, the SGB of every school is obliged to draw up a mission statement and policies for the schools they serve. These documents should indicate what the goals of the school are, provide learners with motivation and direction, and serve as a marketing tool that attracts prospective learners and educators to the school. However, the findings of the study revealed that although interviewed SGB members (parents) knew that their schools needed these documents, they were incapable of drawing them up because they lacked the requisite insight, knowledge and skills. They pointed out, therefore, that the policies and mission statements could only be drawn up with the help of educators and principals.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the educator component and school principals inform parents about the nature, function and purpose of school policies and mission statement and their relevance to the school. They must also be involved in the drawing up of the mission statements and policies of their respective schools.

#### **6.3.4 Establishment of a culture of teaching and learning (COLTS)**

In this study, it was found out that most of the SGB members interviewed acknowledged that, in realising the importance of a good school climate to academic achievement, the SGBs at schools must establish and maintain the culture of teaching and learning, which they see as the foundation stone for an improved school performance. Given this, the SGBs made it their responsibility to ensure its establishment and maintenance at all times. To achieve discipline, the SGB members interviewed acknowledge that they must provide the school with a code of conduct for learners in order to maintain discipline at their respective schools.

The SGB members interviewed also acknowledged the critical influence that the physical environment of the school could have on academic achievement and accordingly sought to improve this aspect of the school. The SGB components of the five selected schools stated that they contributed in this regard by renovating dilapidated buildings, repairing broken walls, fixing and painting windows and doors, erecting fences and planting trees to protect the environment and make it habitable, attractive, healthy and conducive to learning.

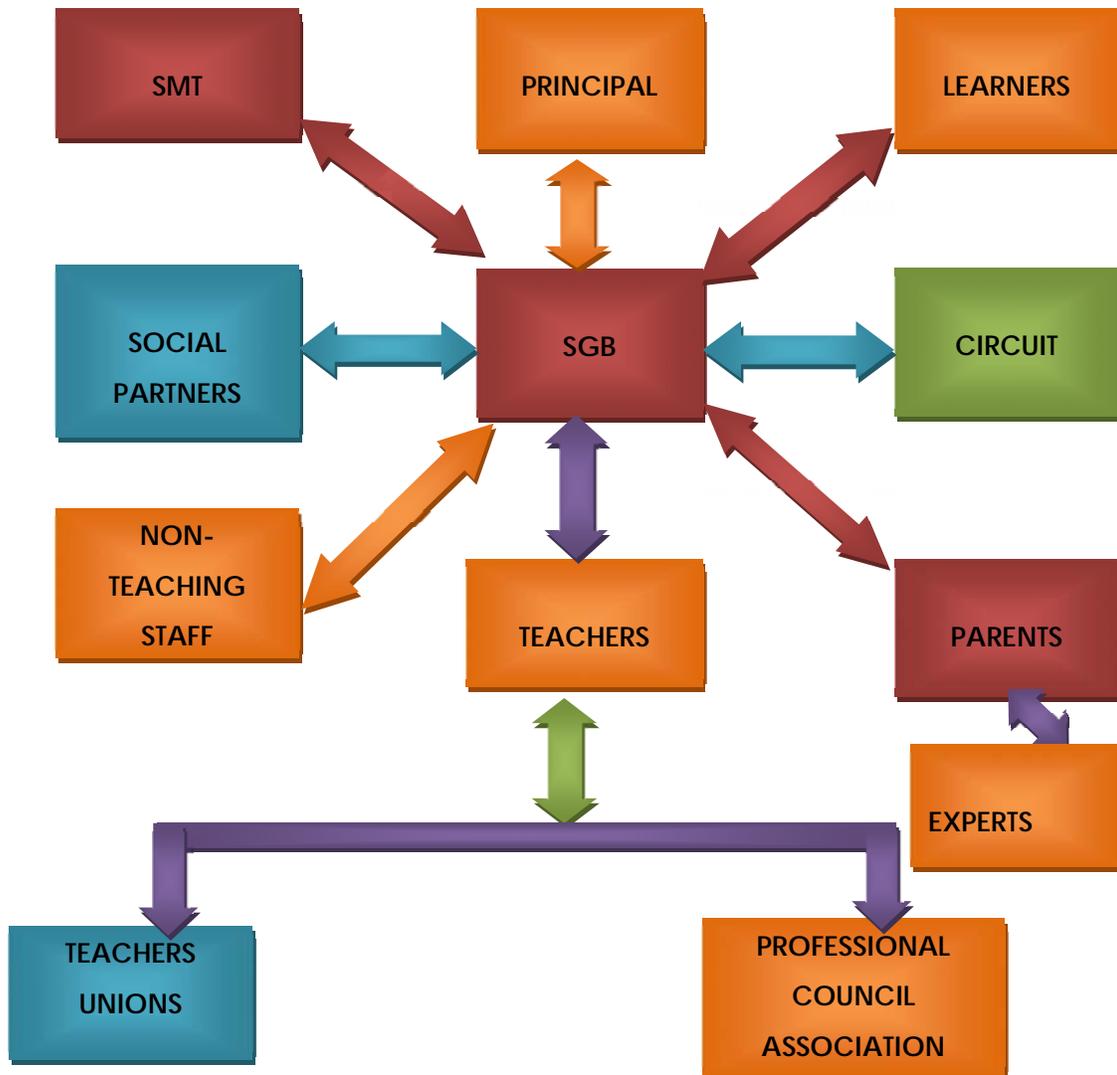
#### **Recommendations**

To realise the culture of teaching and learning the SGB must assist the school to rid itself of drugs, rape, violence, alcohol, bullying and all types of intimidation that may impede teaching and learning. Since the school alone cannot maintain the culture of learning and teaching the cooperation of the community, especially parents, is needed in this matter at all times. Parents may volunteer to provide security at the school for both educators and learners during school times.

#### **6.4 INTEGRATED SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY MODEL**

This study led the researcher to the conclusion that SGB members should be trained to understand the role, duties and functions of an effective and efficient governing body in the creation and enhancement of a culture of teaching and learning. The model presented in Figure 6.1 is an integrated School Governing Body model with a two-way

communication structure, which highlights how stakeholders are expected to interact with one another and each other.



**Figure 6.1: Integrated School Governing Body Model**

The model indicates how our SGBs, together with other stakeholders, could create an educative climate at the studied schools. It also helps the SGB to see where it fits into the education system. The literature review established the importance of positive SGBs. The SGBs at these schools are positive in the sense that they can formulate the vision and mission statements of the school. They can also try to draw the code of

conduct for learners and offer guidance to learners at their respective schools (see Section 6.3.1).

While the School Governing Body is at the centre of this model, its arrows link all the stakeholders in a two-way communication strategy. One could ask whether there is a need for all these stakeholders to be involved in school governance at the Circuit level. The answer is, 'Yes', for governing bodies to perform their roles efficiently and effectively the stakeholders must come together and work as a team.

In order to illustrate a cohesive approach to the impact a well-trained SGB can have on the optimal functioning of a school, the model might assist. Each component of the model is discussed in Section 6.5.

## **6.5 SUMMARY OF THE INTEGRATED SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY MODEL**

The problem statement of this study relates to the determination establishment of the role which SGB could play in ensuring that schools are run efficiently and effectively. To this end, SGBs command respect at schools and, if they are not well informed, their institutions will not function optimally. In other words, SGBs must be coordinated in a manner which will improve learning outcomes.

### **6.5.1 Summary of the model**

In order to understand this model, one should view SGBs in the context of an environment which will be a crucial role player in this process.

#### **6.5.1.1 Principal**

The principal is the accounting officer of a school. In terms of this model, each principal is part of the School Governing Body (SGB) of his/her school. He/she serves as a resource person who ensures that issues of school governance are in keeping with pieces of legislation such as the South African Schools Act (No 84 of 1996 as

amended). The principal also serves as the executive arm of the School Governing Body by ensuring that decisions which are taken during meetings are implemented.

As the primary mandate of the School Governing Body is to create an environment which is conducive to quality teaching and learning, the principal also serves as a liaison person between the governing body and other critical stakeholders in education such as learners, support staff and teachers. Even though stakeholders such as teachers and learners are represented in the SGB, the principal complements their role as he/she is the representative of the Department of Education on the SGB.

#### **6.5.1.2 Social partners**

Education is a societal matter. In pursuit of its mandate, the School Governing Body should lobby social partners such as churches, civic organisations, business people and traditional leaders to maximise its chances of succeeding. Learners, educators, members of the support staff and parents draw their influence from some of these social partners through the initiative of the SGB, thus affording the governing body the moral authority to carry out its mandate with limited challenges.

These social partners could also help to instil discipline at schools as they happen to yield power and influence in the communities. Through their involvement, schools will be run efficiently and effectively. Some social partners, such as the business fraternity, would be in the position to solicit much-needed resources which are in dire need by the school.

#### **6.5.1.3 School Management Team (SMT)**

A cordial relationship between the School Governing Body and the School Management Team (SMT) is essential if schools are to be governed properly. Because of the skills which members of the SMT possess, they are better placed to assist the SGB in a variety of duties and responsibilities.

In order for this to succeed, negative attitudes which alienate the two bodies should be avoided at all costs. Members of the SMT should understand and execute their roles as professionals and allow members of the School Governing Body to espouse policies which happen to be their competency. The governance and professional arms of a school must supplement each other to ensure successful teaching and learning

#### **6.5.1.4 Non-teaching staff (Members of support staff)**

Members of the support staff play a critical role in SGBs by ensuring that the teaching and learning environment is a sound one. They do so by addressing physiological needs – cooking/providing food to learners through the school nutrition programme, and, in the case of cleaners and gardeners, by creating healthy and attractive environments.

Members of the support staff (cleaners and those who work at school, not teachers) also act as parents, representing the SGB who must at all times ensure that the education of a learner become a prerogative in their life that a learner receives quality education. Their support is based on trust and can successfully be carried out only if it is understood and practised by other parties.

According to Heystek (2006:474), “although the emphasis is placed on the SGB by legislation to the relationship of trust with the school, in practice, trust is also expected from other parties.” Thekiso (2013:100), in support of the above statement, adds that “the proper functioning of any country’s education is dependent, to a great extent, on the mutual trust and collaboration that exist among all parties.”

#### **6.5.1.5 Teachers**

Teachers are vital to the learning process. They form the backbone of a school. For successful learning outcomes, the conditions under which they work should, therefore,

be conducive to effective teaching and learning. Adverse conditions – a lack of resources and poor governance policies, for example - could bring about low morale among teachers. Once they are demotivated, they will not make a meaningful contribution to the learning process. Over and above just creating a conducive environment for teaching and learning, the School Governing Body (SGB) could perhaps offer incentives to best-performing teachers in various categories of responsibility. This will undoubtedly encourage teachers to do their best

In constituting sub-committees, SGBs could co-opt some teachers with expertise in specific fields to assist. In this way, teachers will support the work which the SGB does and thus promote good governance at their schools. Teachers could, moreover, through teacher unions, assist SGBs to maintain labour peace at school. This is mostly experienced in policies such as code of conduct for learners, and the religious observance policy. During interviews which are aimed at appointing educators into various posts, a cordial relationship between the SGB and educator unions can ensure that disputes do not riddle the interview process.

#### **6.6.1.6 Parents**

The backbone of any School Governing Body is formed by the parents who serve on it. It is for this reason that schools should launch an advocacy campaign to attract parents with the requisite skills to serve on the SGB. This is particularly important since the parent component forms the majority in any SGB governed by SASA.

These views are confirmed by Van Wyk (2007:132), who argues that, because "parents form the majority on SGBs ... they have been placed in a powerful position and can influence the school budget, language policy, discipline and appointment and promotions of teaching and administrative staff". According to Klein (1994:103), it is therefore important "for parents and learners to be involved in constructing, negotiating and adapting the policy so that everyone wants to adhere to it."

As service to the SGB is voluntary, the school should make a fervent appeal to parents to serve on the SGB. Parents with special skills such as legal knowledge, basic project

management, and financial management should be recruited to avail themselves for election onto the SGB. Equally important are parents with skills which could help the school to avoid exorbitant costs related to the maintenance and repair of school equipment. Without the active involvement of parents, School Governing Bodies will not function optimally.

#### **6.5.1.7 Circuit**

The Circuit Office is the direct authority overseeing the school. Through the intervention of officials from the Circuit Office, members of the School Governing Body are initiated into the realm of school governance. The South African Schools Act No 84 (Section 19[1]) mandates such officials to provide training to the SGB members continuously, to perform their duties. This is critical, as the lifespan of a School Governing Body is three years, after which a new team of the SGB members must be inducted into office.

The Circuit Manager could also serve as someone who resolves disputes in SGBs of schools which fall under his/her area of jurisdiction. If the Circuit Manager can maintain a sustained programme of meaningful engagement with School Governing Bodies, academic performance at schools will improve.

#### **6.5.1.8 Learners**

Excluding learners from issues of school governance can be counter-productive. Learners enjoy being active rather than being relegated to the background. For school governance to succeed, learners must play an active role in decision making. At their age, learners are, moreover, susceptible to negative influences from external forces. As such, it is vital that they should be actively involved in the School Governing Body. By so doing, they will develop a sense of ownership of decisions and programmes at the school. However, issues which involve teachers (such as the appointment of teachers and negative reports about teachers) should not involve learners. They should be excluded when such issues are discussed. It is essential to educate them in advance about such exclusions so as not to cause suspicion.

## **6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

This study, like many other studies conducted, has confirmed that SGBs are performing their roles and responsibilities well, and others are not. However, the study has revealed some challenges faced by SGBs in the execution/performance of their roles. It is, therefore, recommended that further research be conducted on:

- Ways in which parents can be capacitated to assume their rightful roles as governors without patronising them and regarding them as inferior and illiterate.
- How teacher unions could promote School Governing Body performance.
- Social partners and School Governing Bodies' effectiveness.

## **6.7 SUMMARY**

This study was devoted to an exploration of the roles played by SGBs and the impact these have on the schooling system in the Schoonoord Circuit, in the Limpopo Province. In doing so, the researcher focused on the following sub-aims (see Section 1.4.2):

- To determine the role of members of SGB in rural public schools;
- To find out how parents with special talents are attracted into the SGB as members;
- To determine whether or not the workshops designed to capacitate members of the SGB are effective, and
- To find out whether there are strategies in place to monitor the principal, chairperson and treasurer concerning the use of the school finances.

The literature review addressed the first two sub-aims (see Chapter 3). The analysis, presentation and discussions of findings also addressed the second sub-aim (see Chapter 5), and the last chapter provided the conclusions suggested by the findings as well as some recommendations for further research on the subject, thus addressing sub-aim three. In addition, in chapter 4, based on the data collected during the process

of interviews, the conclusions, differences and similarities in other countries outside South Africa were highlighted in order to constructively address what is lacking in our selected schools in Limpopo, especially in the Schoonoord Circuit.

## **6.8. CONCLUSION**

In Chapter 1, the assumption was made that SGBs lack understanding and knowledge of their roles and responsibilities, and the necessary capacity to fulfil their duties due to their poor Basic Education background, and mismanagement of finances. Because of this, coupled with the fact that they had received limited or no training in preparation for their responsibilities, it was assumed that they were unable to monitor the procedures required for all aspects of the functioning of schools. In addition, it was assumed that they lacked the confidence to deal with the challenges in schools and to enter into partnerships with other stakeholders.

The aim of the study, namely to explore the role of the School Governing Body and its impact on the schooling system, especially the schools in the Schoonoord circuit of Limpopo was explicitly stated in Chapter 1. The background to the research problem, a description of the problem, and problem statement, the rationale for the study, as well as its aims, objectives, delimitations, limitations and research methodology were also described in this chapter.

Chapter 2 presented theories as enunciated by Lutz and Iannaccone (1985) discussing issues of school governance through the Theory of Dissatisfaction. Again the Action Theory by Argyris and Schon (1974) was utilised. Furthermore, the theory of Community of Practice by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991). Finally, the contribution of the South African School's Act (SASA) was also presented.

Chapter 3 explored the functionality of SGBs, with particular reference to their roles and legal responsibilities. A comparative analysis was done of the South African education system and the education systems of selected countries - School Governance in England, Zimbabwean, and Canada, for example. What emerged from this comparison was that, in the RSA, a School Governing Body is an elected body that is entrusted with the responsibility and authority to formulate and adopt policies

within the national and provincial sphere that will provide a vision and agenda for education to function in terms of the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996. The number of parents, educators, non-educators and learner members who sit on a governing body depend upon the size of the school enrolment and whether it is a primary, secondary or comprehensive school (a school with more than 629 learners, for example, will have nine parent members, three educator members, one support staff and three learners).

Chapter 4 dealt with the research design and methodology. The approach to the study was qualitative. Thus interviews and observations were the primary instruments by means of which data were collected on the perceptions of SBG members regarding their role and impact on school governance. The area of study was the rural area of Greater Sekhukhune District of Schoonoord Circuit in Limpopo, a circuit comprising nine public secondary schools, five of which were purposively selected to participate in the study. A total of five group interviews and five individual interviews with principals were conducted and, in addition, observations were made on each case.

Chapter 5 focused on research findings and discussions. Included in these were responses by individuals, focus groups, as well as the researcher's observations, documents analysis and field notes. The sample consisted of five (5) groups of SGBs, including principals, SGB chairpersons, SGB secretaries, treasurers, and learners (RCL members serving on the SGBs). Schools in the Schoonoord Circuit are all Quintile One schools and are generally governed by SGBs (parent component) who are exposed to minimal or no formal schooling.

It was found that principals did not have a clear understanding of what their roles and responsibilities are in the SGBs. School secretaries indicated that some of the schools do not have all the policies, with one of the secretaries from the selected schools indicating that not all schools have the governance policies that are supposed to be provided by the Education Department. All five chairpersons interviewed indicated that their roles were to chair the meetings of SGBs and the general meetings of parents. One of the chairpersons indicated that SGBs' roles are to monitor, control and assist members. They think that they, as chairpersons, are the accounting officers of the schools.

Chapter 6 dealt with the summary, conclusions and recommendations. Indications are that SGB members seem not to have a clear understanding of their roles in school governance. The study revealed that parents blame educators and principals. Some of the reasons they cited for not executing their roles and responsibilities include the perception that educators are undermining them for not being knowledgeable enough to execute their duties and for being poorly trained in school governance. It is recommended that schools should provide SGBs with continuous training to empower them with reading skills, which will enable them to perform their duties well.

## REFERENCES

African National Congress. 1994. *The reconstruction and development programme: A policy framework*. Johannesburg: Umanyano Publications.

Amanchukwu, R. N. 2011. The challenges of quality education and good governance in developing economy. *African Journal of Education and Technology*, 1(3): 103-110

Alshengeeti, H. 2014. Interviewing as a Data Collection Method: A Critical Review. *English Linguistics Research*, 3 (1).

- Argyris, C and Schon, D. 1974. *Theory in practice: Increasing effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Babbie, E and Mouton, M. 2010. *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Bagarette, N. 2011. *Power relations in school governing bodies: Implications for effective school governance*. University of Free State: School of Educational Studies.
- Baron, M.A. 2010. *Guidelines for Writing Research Proposal and Dissertations*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Berg, B.L. 1995. *Qualitative research methodology for social sciences*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bless, C, Smith, C.H and Sithole, S.L. 2013. *Fundamentals of Social Research Methods: An African perspective*. Cape Town: Juta & Company.
- Botha, J.C. 2011. *The role of higher education policy in distance education provision in South Africa*. Unpublished D.ed Thesis. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Chaka, T. 2008. *School Governance (CEPD)*. Johannesburg: South Africa.
- Cohen, L, Manion, L and Morrison, K. 2011. *Research Methods in Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Creswell, J.W. 2013. *Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. 4<sup>th</sup> ed*. London: SAGE.
- Diamond, L. 2015. *The role of Parents of School Governing Bodies in School Financial Management*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town
- Davids, J. 2011. *The effectiveness of school governing bodies in Gauteng public schools*. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.

Duma, M. 2008. Involvement of parent governors in the administration of farm school. *Interkulturell and Global*, 3(4):80-98.

Duma, M.A.N; Kapueja, I.S and Khanyile, P.D. 2011. Educators' Experiences on the Role of Parents in the School Governing bodies of Rural Schools. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 1(3):44-52.

Fox, S. 2003. *What do governors do? The education Act: Chapter 25:04. Revised Edition*. Harare: Government Printers. [Online];[http://kirkleesme.gov.uk/Government of Zimbabwe](http://kirkleesme.gov.uk/Government%20of%20Zimbabwe) 1996.

Greenbaum, T.L. 1988. *The Handbook for Focus Group Research*. London: Sage.

Harvey, J. 2011. The school principal as leader: Guiding schools to better teaching and learning. Washington: The Wallace Foundation.

Heystek, J. 2004. School governing bodies: The Principals' Burden or the Light of his life? *South African Journal of Education*, 29: 308-332.

Heystek, J. 2006. School governing bodies in South Africa: Relationships between principals and parent governors, a question of trust? *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 34:472-486.

Heystek, J. 2011. Governing body's responsibility and power for quality education. *Journal of Education*, (48): 99-117.

Heystek, J. 2010. Governing body's responsibility and power for quality education. *Journal of Education*, (48): 99-117.

Higham, B; Hopkins, D., and Ahtaridou, E. 2007. *Improving School Leadership: Country Background Report for England*. London: University of London.

Johnson, B., and Christensen, L. 2014. *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and mixed Approaches*. London: Sage Publications.

Karisson, J. 2002. The role of democratic governing bodies in South African Schools. *Comparative Education*, 38(3): 327-336.

Krathwohl, D.R. 2009. *Methods of educational and social science research*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

Kruger, T. 2012. *Education and Schools in South Africa*. Pretoria: Globe media Ltd.

Mabusela, G.G. 2016. *The role that the School Governing Body (SGBs) play in the implementation of language policy in Brits District*. Unpublished Thesis. Pretoria: UNISA.

Maile, S. 2002. Accountability: an essential aspect of school governance. *South African Journal of Education*, 22(4):326-331.

Maja, T.S.A. 2016. *School Management Team Members Understanding of Their Duties According to the Personnel Administration Measures*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Maponya, S.H. 2015. *The role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learner achievement in South African Primary School*. Pretoria: UNISA.

Maree, K. 2007. *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Marshall, C., and Rossman, G.B. 1999. *Designing Qualitative Research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Martin, J. 1999. Social Justice, Education policy and the role of parents. A question of choice or voice? *The journal of Education and social justice*, 1:48-61.

Mathipa, E.R., Netshitangani, T., and Matlabe, S.M. 2017. *Reflections on Professionalism, Pedagogy and the Theoretical Underpinnings of Teaching Practice Revisited*. New York: Nova Publishers.

McMillian, J and Schumacher, S. 2014. *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry*. Pearson new International Edition, 7th ed. London: Pearson.

McMillian, J.H, and Schumacher, S. 2010. *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry*. (6th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson.

McMillan, J.H., and Schumacher, S. 2001. *Research in Education: a conceptual introduction*. New York: Longman.

McMillan, J.H., and Schumacher, S. 1993. *Research in Education: a conceptual introduction*. Third edition. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Mavuso, M.P.2009. *An exploration of the role of the parent SGB members in the SGB: A case study of two selected rural primary schools in the King Williams's Town District*. Masters Dissertation. Orange Free State: University of Fort Hare.

Mestry, R., and Bisschoff, T. 2009. *Financial school management explained*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Cape Town: Pearson Education.

Mestry, R. 2004. Financial accountability: the principal or the school governing body? *South African Journal of Education*, 24(2): 126-132.

Mncube, V.S., and Harber, C.R. 2013. Learner's democratic involvement in school governing bodies in South Africa: Making the voice of the voiceless. *SA.eDUC*, 10(1): 1 – 24.

Mncube, V., and Naidoo, R. 2014. The contribution of School Governing Bodies in Promoting Democracy in South African Schools: The current Trends. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(3):484-492.

Mncube, V. 2008. Democratisation of education in South Africa: issues of social justice and the voice of learners. *South African Journal of Education*, 28:77-90.

Mncube, V. 2009. The perception of parents and their role in the democratic governance of schools in South Africa: Are they on board? *South African Journal of Education*, 29:83-103.

Mpanza, G. 2015. *Challenges of School Governance: A Case study of a Secondary Schools in Gauteng*. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.

Muronga, M.M. 2011. *The Participati3n of Teachers in the Management and Decisi3n making of three schools in the Kavango Regi3n of Namibia. A case study*. Unpublished Dissertation. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Naidoo, J.P. 2005. *Educational decentralization and school governance in South Africa: From policy to practice*. Paris: UNESCO.

Ngidi, D.P. 2004. Educators' perceptions of the efficiency of school governing bodies. *South African Journal of education*, 24(4): 260-263.

Ngwenya, V.C., and Pretorius, S.G. 2013. The Legal Framework Governing Parental Involvement with Education in Zimbabwe. *J Soc Sci*, 34(2): 135-144.

Nieuwenhuis, J, Perry, J.C, Panula, S, Pretorius, G and Seabi, J. 2012. *Complete your thesis or dissertation successfully: Practical Guidelines*. Cape Town: Juta.

Nonyane, D.L. 2016. *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*. Doctoral Dissertation. Pretoria: UNISA.

Oosthuizen, I.J., Rossouw, J.P., and De Wet, A. 2004. *An introduction to Education Law*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Punch, K.F. 2009. *Introduction to research methods in education*. Cornwall: Sage.

Rada, R.D., and Carlson, R.O. 1985. *Community Dissatisfaction and School Governance*. Chicago: EDRS

Rangongo, P.N. 2011. *The functionality of school governing bodies with regard to the management of finances in public primary schools*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1996. *The Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 2012. *National Guidelines for School Governing Body Election*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1953. *Bantu Education Act (No. 47 of 1953)*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1996. *The Educator's Employment Act (Act 76 of 1996)*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1996. *The Labour Relation Act (Act 66 of 1996)*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1996. *The National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996)*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1996. *The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996)*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Roos, R. 2002. Legal requirements for school rules and disciplinary sanctions. *Koers*, 68(4) 2003:481-498.

Rossouw, J.P. 2007. *The role of the governing body in school discipline*. Pretoria. CELP.

Rugh, A.B., and Bostert, H. 1998. *Involving communities: Participation and delivery of education programs*. Washington, DC: Creative Associates.

Seroto, J. 2004. *The impact of South African legislation (1984-2004) on black education in rural areas: A historical education perspective*. D.Ed. thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Silverman, D. 2011. *Interpreting Qualitative Data. A guide to the principle of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Simon, M. 2011. *Dissertation and Scholarly Research. Recipes for success (2011.ed)*. Seattle, WA: Dissertation Success, LLC.

Simons, H. 2009. *Case study Research in practice*. London: Sage.

Sithole, S.1995. *The participation of Students in Democratic School governance, in Democratic Governance of Public Schooling in South Africa*. Durban: The Education Policy Unit.

Taylor, N. 2009. *What can the School Governing Body do to improve school performance without interfering with management?* JET Education Services Presentation to Governing Body Foundation, 5 May 2009.

Thekiso, M.M. 2013. *The role of School Governing Bodies in creating an educative climate in schools: A case study of schools in South Africa*. Pretoria: UNISA.

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2008. *Governance Indicators: A Users Guide*. New York: UNDP.

USAID (United State Agency for International Development). 2003. *Approaching education from a good governance perspective: USAID resource guide for joint DG/ education programmes*. Washington, DC: USAID Publishers.

Van Wyk, J.N. 1996. *Parent Involvement in Black urban communities in Gauteng*. D.Ed. Thesis. Pretoria: UNISA.

Van Wyk, N., and Lemmer, E. (Eds) 2002. *Transforming Education: The South African experience in Education Emerging Goals in the new millennium*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Van Wyk, N. 2004. School Governing Bodies: the experience of South African educators. *South African Journal of Education*, 24(4):49-54.

Van Wyk, N. 2007. The rights and roles of parents on School Governing Bodies in South Africa. *International Journal about Parents in Education*, 1(0): 132-139.

Vogt, W.P. 2007. *Qualitative Research Methods for Professionals*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R.A., and Snyder, W. 2002. *Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Williams, T.R. 2003. *Educational Governance*. Kingston: Queen's University at Kingston.

World Bank. 1992. *Governance, management, and accountability in Secondary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington, D.C. [Retrieved 7 March 2013] from [www.gdrc.org/u-gov/governance-understand.html](http://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/governance-understand.html).

Xaba, M.I. 2004. Governors or watchdogs? The role of educators in School Governing Bodies. *South African Journal of Education Journal of education*, 24(4): 313-31.

Xaba, M.I. 2011. The possible cause of school governance challenges in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 31:201-211.

Yin, R.K. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage.

## **Annexure A:**

Research interview questions with Principals

1. Do you as a principal feel that you are performing your governance role and responsibilities successfully?
2. Why do you feel this way?
3. How does the introduction of SGBs impact your work as a principal?

4. What is your role as a principal under this school governance system?
5. Do the SGB members in your school understand, interpret and implement their role?
6. To what extent do learners as governors participate in decision making?
7. In your opinion, do you think learners should be involved or not in decisions on curriculum issues?
8. Can you share with me your views on community participation in school governance and education as a whole?
9. Does your School Governing Body contribute to democracy in the wider South Africa society?
10. In which way has the SGB contributed to the establishment of teaching and learning at your school?
11. How does the SGB assist you as the principal and your educators to improve teaching and learning?
12. As the school principal, what do you see as the role of the SGB in assisting your school improve its image?
13. Does the SGB help you in addressing discipline in your school and in which way?
14. What type of training have you received from the Department of Education in school governance?
15. What is your role as the principal regarding the training of SGB?
16. What role is the Department of Education playing regarding SGB training?

## **Annexure B:**

### Research interview questions with SGB Secretaries

1. What do you see as your role being a SGB secretary?
2. Do your school have mission statement?
3. Why do you think the SGB should develop a mission statement for the school?
4. Do you as secretary have policies on school governance as provided by Department of Education?
5. To what extent do learners as governors participate in decision making?
6. In your opinion, do you think learners should be involved or not in decisions on curriculum issues?
7. Does your School Governing Body contribute to democracy in the wider South Africa society?
8. In which way does the SGB support teaching and learning at your school?
9. Does the SGB help you in addressing discipline in your school and in which way?
10. In which way has the SGB contributed to the establishment of teaching and learning at your school?
11. What do you think the SGB can do to help the school to improve its performance?
12. Do the SGB members in your school understand, interpret and implement policies?
13. In which way does the SGB contribute to improve in the school's finance?
14. What type of training have you received from the Department of Education in school governance?
15. What role is the Department of Education playing regarding SGB training?

## **Annexure C:**

### Research interview questions with SGB Chairpersons

1. What is your role in the SGB as a chairperson?
2. Do your school have mission statement?
3. Why do you think the SGB should develop a mission statement for the school?
4. Do you as chairperson have policies on school governance as provided by Department of Education?
5. To what extent do learners as governors participate in decision making?
6. In your opinion, do you think learners should be involved or not in decisions on curriculum issues?
7. Does your School Governing Body contribute to democracy in the wider South Africa society?
8. In which way does the SGB address discipline problems at your school?
9. Does your SGB offer any guidance to learners at your school?
10. How does the SGB ensure the culture of teaching and learning at your school?
11. What do you think the SGB can do to help the school to improve its performance?
12. Do the SGB members in your school understand, interpret and implement their role?
13. In which way does the SGB contribute to improve in the school's finance?
14. Tell me; have you receive any type of training from the Department of Education in school governance?
15. As the chairperson of the SGB, have you gained any experience since you are serving on the SGB of your school?

## **Annexure D:**

### Research interview questions with SGB Treasurers

1. What is your role in the SGB as a treasurer?
2. Do your school have mission statement?
3. Why do you think the SGB should develop a mission statement for the school?
4. Do you as treasurer have policies on school governance as provided by Department of Education?
5. Do the SGB members in your school understand, interpret and implement their role?
6. To what extent do learners as governors participate in decision making?
7. In your opinion, do you think learners should be involved or not in decisions on curriculum issues?
8. Does your School Governing Body contribute to democracy in the wider South Africa society?
9. In which way does the SGB contribute to improve in the school's finance?
10. In which way does the SGB address discipline problems at your school?
11. Does your SGB offer any guidance to learners at your school?
12. How does the SGB ensure the culture of teaching and learning at your school?
13. What do you think the SGB can do to help the school to improve its performance?
14. Tell me; have you receive any type of training from the Department of Education in school governance?
15. As the treasurer of the SGB, have you gained any experience since you are serving on the SGB of your school?

## **Annexure E:**

### Research interview questions with Learners

1. What is your role in the SGB as a learner?
2. Do your school give you an opportunity to attend SGB meetings?
3. Do you as learners have policies on school governance as provided by Department of Education?
4. Do the SGB members in your school understand, interpret and implement policies?
5. Do your school allow you as learner's governors to participate in decision making?
6. In your opinion, do you think the school should involve you or not in decisions on curriculum issues?
7. Does your School Governing Body contribute to democracy in the wider South Africa society?
8. Are you as learners involved in the process of interviewing and recommending the appointment of educators and non-teaching staff at your school?
9. In which way does the SGB address discipline problems at your school?
10. Does your SGB offer any guidance to you as learners at your school?
11. How does the SGB ensure the culture of teaching and learning at your school?
12. What do you think the SGB can do to help the school to improve its performance?
13. Tell me; have you receive any type of training from the Department of Education on how should participate in school governance?
14. As the learner representative in the SGB, have you gained any experience you are serving on the SGB of your school?

## **Annexure F:**

Observation checklist: SGB meetings

What is observed
Venue, water during meetings, catering provided
Arrival time
Agenda
Reading of previous meeting, adoption and matters arising, reading, deliberations or discussions
Seating arrangement of members
Apologies and credentials
Participation of members
Attendance registers
Meeting timeframes

**Annexure G:**

Enq : Malatji P.F (MR)  
Cell : 072 145 1628  
Email: phetole.malatji @mail.com

67 Schalk Street  
51 Bendor Gardens  
BENDOR  
0699

The District Senior Manager  
Greater Sekhukhune District

Sir

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A research PROJECT IN YOUR DISTRICT

1. The above matter refers:-
2. Kindly note that I am an educator in the Limpopo Province Department of Education attached to Tshehlwaneng Senior Secondary School in the Greater Sekhukhune District under Schoonoord Circuit.
3. I am doing a research project with UNISA under the supervision of Prof ER Mathipa and his contact details are as follows: (012) 429 3773. Cell number: 082 202 2118  
Email: [mathier2@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mathier2@unisa.ac.za).
4. Topic of research: "The role of a School Governing Body and its impact on the schooling system: An exploratory study of schools Schoonoord Circuit, Limpopo".
5. Nature of project: D.ED(Educational Management)
6. The aim of this study is to add knowledge in the field of school governance particularly in the Greater Sekhukhune of Limpopo Province.
7. Hoping that this matter will receive a positive response.

Yours Faithfully

.....  
Malatji PF (Researcher)  
phetole.malatji@gmail.com

**Annexure H:**



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

**SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT**

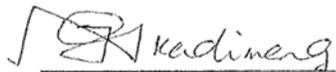
Enq : Mothiba B.O  
Tel : 015 633 2902  
Date : 12/09/2014

To : Malatji P.F (Doctoral Student Education Management)  
University of South Africa (UNISA)

From: District Senior Manager  
Sekhukhune District

**SUBJECT: GRANTED PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH.**

1. The above matter refers.
2. Kindly be informed that your research application to conduct research in Sekhukhune District focusing on the title "The role of a school governing body and its impact on a country's education system: An exploratory study of South Africa education System", is approved.
3. Please note you should conduct your research in line with research ethics as prescribed by your institution and international norms and standards for research.
4. The district wishes you well in your research and awaits your findings with great interest.



NKADIMENG T.G  
DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER

12. 09. 2014

DATE

Private Bag X70, Lebowakgomo, 0737  
Parliamentary Building Tel: 015 633 7154/015 633 2800 Fax: 086 212 7513

**Annexure I:**

Enq : Malatji P.F (MR)  
Cell : 072 145 1628  
Email: phetole.malatji @mail.com

67 Schalk Street  
51 Bendor Gardens  
BENDOR  
0699

The Circuit Manager  
Schoonoord Circuit

Sir

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A research PROJECT IN YOUR CIRCUIT.

- 1.The above matter refers:-
2. Kindly note that I am an educator in the Limpopo Province Department of Education attached to Tshehlwaneng Senior Secondary School in the Sekhukhune Cluster under Schoonoord Circuit.
3. I am doing a research project with UNISA under the supervision of Prof. E Mathipa and his contact details are as follows: (012) 429 3773. Cell number: 082 202 2118 Email: [mathier2@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mathier2@unisa.ac.za).
4. Topic of research: "The role of a School Governing Body and its impact on the schooling system: An exploratory study of schools Schoonoord Circuit, Limpopo".
5. Nature of project: D.ED(Educational Management)
6. The purpose of the study is to examine the role and impact of School Governing Bodies in our schools particularly in the Greater Sekhukhune of Limpopo Province.
7. Hoping that this matter will receive a positive response.

Yours Faithfully

.....  
Malatji P.F (Researcher)

**Annexure J:**

Enq : Malatji P.F (MR)  
Cell : 072 145 1628  
Email: phetole.malatji @mail.com

67 Schalk Street  
51 Bendor Gardens  
BENDOR  
0699

The Principal

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH PROJECT AT YOUR SCHOOL

My name is Malatji Phetole Frank and I am doing research with ER Mathipa, a professor in the College of Education ABET and Youth Development towards a degree Doctoral of Education at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: "The role of a School Governing Body and its impact on the schooling system: An exploratory study of schools Schoonoord Circuit, Limpopo." The purpose of the study is to explore the role and impact of School Governing Bodies in our schools.

This study will consist of a period of a month, in which the principal, SGB chairperson, SGB secretary, learner and treasurer will participate in the study. Parents will also be involved. There will be no benefits such as compensation etc., and through your participation I hope to understand more about this topic. I promise to maintain the following ethical standards: Any information that you provide will be treated confidentially, your privacy and anonymity will be guaranteed and there will be no way that your data will be linked to your name, you will also be given the right to withdraw from the research at any stage without penalties, no harm is expected since the research has nothing to do with the handling of dangerous materials, you will also be informed of the rationale, recording and safe keeping of the audio-taped interviews. The data provided by you will be safeguarded in a file and no-one except me will have access to it. You are more than welcome to ask any questions relating to my study.

Your assistance will be appreciated

.....

Malatji P.F  
phetole.malatji@gmail.com

**Annexure K:**

Enq : Malatji P.F (MR)  
Cell : 072 145 1628  
Email: phetole.malatji @mail.com

67 Schalk Street  
51 Bendor Gardens  
BENDOR  
0699

Dear Principal

**RE: LETTER TO REQUEST PARTICIPATION IN MY STUDY**

My name is Malatji Phetole Frank and I am doing research with ER Mathipa, a professor in the College of Education ABET and Youth Development towards a degree Doctoral of Education at the University of South Africa. I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled: "The role of a School Governing Body and its impact on the schooling system: An exploratory study of schools Schoonoord Circuit, Limpopo". The purpose of the study is to explore the role and impact of School Governing Bodies in our schools.

I would appreciate it if we could arrange a formal schedule meeting for a semi-structured interview with regard to the provided topic: "The role of a School Governing Body and its impact on the schooling system: An exploratory study of schools Schoonoord Circuit, Limpopo". This interview will be tape recorded.

This study will consist of a period of a month, in which the principal, SGB chairperson, SGB secretary, learner and treasurer will participate in the study, there will be no benefits such as compensation etc., and through your participation I hope to understand more about this topic. I promise to maintain the following ethical standards: Any information that you provide will be treated confidentially, your privacy and anonymity will be guaranteed and there will be no way that your data will be linked to your name, you will also be given the right to withdraw from the research at any stage without penalties, no harm is expected since the research has nothing to do with the handling of dangerous materials, you will also be informed of the rationale, recording and safe keeping of the audio-taped interviews. The data provided by you will be safeguarded in a file and no-one except me will have access to it. You are more than welcome to ask any questions relating to my study.

Your assistance will be appreciated  
Malatji P.F  
.....

**Annexure L:**

Enq : Malatji P.F (MR)  
Cell : 072 145 1628  
Email: phetole.malatji @mail.com

67 Schalk Street  
51 Bendor Gardens  
BENDOR  
0699

SGB MEMBERS

RE: LETTER TO REQUEST PARTICIPATION IN MY STUDY

My name is Malatji Phetole Frank and I am doing research with ER Mathipa, a professor in the College of Education ABET and Youth Development towards a degree Doctoral of Education at the University of South Africa. I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled: "The role of a School Governing Body and its impact on the schooling system: An exploratory study of schools Schoonoord Circuit, Limpopo". The purpose of the study is to explore the role and impact of School Governing Bodies in our schools.

I would appreciate your assistance, by interviewing you; I would require permission to schedule a formal interview with you with regard to the provided topic: "The role of a School Governing Body and its impact on the schooling system: An exploratory study of schools Schoonoord Circuit, Limpopo". This interview will be tape recorded.

This study will consist of a period of a month, in which the principal, SGB chairperson, SGB secretary, learner and treasurer will participate in the study, there will be no benefits such as compensation etc., and through your participation I hope to understand more about this topic. I promise to maintain the following ethical standards: Any information that you provide will be treated confidentially, your privacy and anonymity will be guaranteed and there will be no way that your data will be linked to your name, you will also be given the right to withdraw from the research at any stage without penalties, no harm is expected since the research has nothing to do with the handling of dangerous materials, you will also be informed of the rationale, recording and safe keeping of the audio-taped interviews. The data provided by you will be safeguarded in a file and no-one except me will have access to it. You are more than welcome to ask any questions relating to my study.

Your assistance will be appreciated

.....

Malatji P.