

***EXPULSION OF LEARNERS FROM SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN THE WESTERN CAPE: TRENDS AND REASONS***

by

AZIZA ALLIE

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SUPERVISOR: DR. I. STRYDOM

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SUMMARY

EXPULSION OF LEARNERS FROM SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE WESTERN CAPE: TRENDS AND REASONS

By : A. Allie
Degree : Master of Education – with specialisation in Guidance and Counselling
Supervisor : Dr. I. Strydom

This dissertation focuses on the expulsion of learners from secondary schools in the Western Cape. Learners with behavioural and emotional problems are disruptive in class. They antagonise teachers and challenge the code of conduct of the school. Expelling learners has far reaching consequences for education and society.

Although official expulsions have remained constant the number of “unofficial expulsions” appear to be increasing. Expulsion rates vary amongst schools, but those situated in middle-class areas request more expulsions than those situated in lower socio-economic areas.

Substance abuse is by far the most dominant reason for expulsion followed by physical confrontation, verbal confrontation, theft, sexual assault and other behavioural problems. Whilst certain factors such as the socio-economic background, intake, catchment area and ethos of the school does influence expulsions, factors within the school i.e. the attitude of the principal towards certain policies and practices may unintentionally contribute to its increase.

Finally, the dissertation provides guidelines and recommendations towards minimising expulsions.

Key terms: expulsion; secondary schools; substance abuse; physical confrontation; theft; verbal confrontation; sexual assault; socio-economic background; academic performance; ethos; corporal punishment; unofficial expulsions.

I declare that EXPULSION OF LEARNERS FROM SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE WESTERN CAPE: TRENDS AND REASONS is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A. Allie
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SIGNATURE

(MRS A. ALLIE)

01/04/2002
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DATE

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In the past 10 years there have been dramatic changes in education in South Africa. The policy of rationalisation resulted in an increase in educator learner ratio, impacting greatly on the enforcement of discipline in school. There have also been radical changes in the funding of schools, retrenchment of educators and terms and conditions of educator employment. The implementation of outcome based education has also resulted in changes in the school curriculum and in teaching methods. All these changes put additional stress on an already strained teacher core giving rise to a number of unintended negative consequences.

In an interview with the Saturday Argus (May, 2000) both the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and the National Union of Educators agreed that physical and verbal abuse of educators by their learners is on the increase in the Western Cape. Venter (Saturday Argus, May 2000), National Deputy President of the National Union of Educators posits that: "Corporal punishment was banned to protect the human rights of pupils, but now some pupils are infringing on the human rights of their teachers." Snayer (Saturday Argus, May 2000), Chairman of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), was of the opinion that: "There was a perception that only children had legal rights, but teachers had rights too."

There has also been a dramatic increase in the number of reported cases of substance abuse, gangsterism, violence and other anti-social behaviour in schools. Niss (Mail and Guardian, August 2000), a clinical psychologist with a special interest in addiction, states that there has been an explosion of drug usage in schools in the past five years: "Kids are going to school stoned, they are using drugs before, during and after school."

Both principals and educators are at loggerheads about how to handle this situation. Educators, on the one hand, request that students found taking drugs be suspended or expelled. Parents, on the other hand, often claim "unfair dismissal" or argue that the punishment does not suit the crime.

As yet, little information exists regarding the number and demographics of learners who are suspended or expelled. Precise reasons for their expulsions are also unavailable. Nonetheless, it is important to explore those reasons, and the factors which influence requests for expulsions.

The section that follows details the circumstances under which the researcher had become aware of the problem.

1.2 ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

1.2.1 Awareness of the problem

Recently, the dilemma faced by the Department of Education, school principals, educators, the community, and parents with regard to suspensions and expulsions of learners has become increasingly apparent. Endless hours have been spent discussing and arguing over the effects of suspensions and expulsions on all parties concerned.

The researcher's opinion on certain expulsions was that schools were merely abdicating responsibilities towards or "washing their hands off" these learners. Thereafter, the school would play no further role in the education of the learner. The issue of a 'mutual agreement' between school principals and parents of transferring a problematic learner to another school appears to be a transfer of a problem from one school to another, which may or may not "cope" with the learner.

A few years ago, whilst substituting at a Western Cape Education Department school for six months and then at another school for six months, it dawned on the researcher how the following factors influenced the rate of requests for expulsions:

- attitude of educator/principal
- the ethos of the school, and
- the intake and catchment area.

There was also an awareness that the reasons for expulsions varied from school to school. These observations led to the conclusion that an educator's tolerance level, as well as the manner of handling learners who transgressed, varied from school to school.

Early in 1999 a school principal recommended expulsions for five of its learners for stealing a cell-phone from one of their educators. However, the Department ruled in favour of the learners. The principal felt that no guidelines or support was given to schools with regard to how these learners should be dealt with once they were re-admitted.

Records of learners suspended from secondary schools are kept at school and are not reported to, or recorded at, the Western Cape Education Department. Requests for expulsions, on the other hand, are submitted to the Head of Education of the relevant Education Department, where every request is recorded.

The researcher's awareness of the manner in which expulsions were handled in different schools after discussion with other educators, lead to the formulation of the following preliminary questions:

- Are there differences in demographics, age, grade and gender of the learners who are expelled?
- What are the most important reasons for requests for expulsions?
- Are principals aware of the extent of expulsions at other schools, i.e. do they have a picture of the problem in the Western Cape Education Department (WCED)?
- How has the legislative policy i.e. the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 and other circulars and guidelines influenced expulsions?
- What are the views of the principals about the support provided by the WCED with regards to expulsions procedures?
- Does the attitude of the principal influence discipline and the disciplinary measures that are implemented and is the principal pressurised by teachers to alter his decisions?
- In the views of school principals, how does the following factors influence the number of requests for expulsions,
 - abolition of corporal punishment
 - influence of the code of conduct, philosophy and ethos of the school
 - socio-economic area, catchment and intake of the school
 - rationalisation of teachers, and

- “achievement/league table”?
- What are the principals’ attitude towards “unofficial transfers” and do they provide parents with alternatives to expulsions?
- Do schools differ with regards to the discipline metered out for the same offences?
- What is the attitude of the principal towards children who are readmitted, after a request for expulsions is declined by the WCED?
- What is the opinion of the principal with regards the ability of educators to deal with behavioural or emotional problems that manifest at school and does the school psychologist have a role to play in the expulsions process?
- What type of programmes or strategies are implemented at these schools to minimise the risk or the incidence of expulsions?

By formulating the above questions, the researcher was able to formulate an overall approach to the inquiry.

1.2.2 Formal statement of the problem

1.2.2.1 Main research problem

This dissertation proposes to identify the rate, demographics and reason for expulsions of learners in the Western Cape Education Department and to explore and interpret the extent that various factors such as the attitude of the principal/educators, the abolition of corporal punishment, the ethos of the school, the socio-economic background, rationalisation and the ‘achievement/league tables’ influence on expulsions in the Western Cape.

1.2.2.2 Subproblems from empirical investigations

The *first* subproblem was aimed at determining whether there were differences amongst schools regarding rate, gender, age and grade of learners.

The *second* subproblem was aimed at determining the most common reasons for the request for expulsions.

The *third* subproblem was aimed at obtaining a perspective on expulsions of learners in the Western Cape and to establish whether the data is readily available to principals, educationists, researchers and the general public.

The *fourth* subproblem explores the perceptions of five school principals in the Western Cape in order to gain insight into the factors that may influence requests for expulsions.

The *fifth* subproblem is to analyse and interpret the information obtained from the interviews conducted with principals, so as to evaluate their views on the attitude of the principal, ethos of the school, corporal punishment, socio-economic background, rationalisation and "achievement/league tables" and how this impacts on expulsions.

The *sixth* subproblem is to determine whether principals perceived educators as being capable of dealing with the behavioural and emotional problems experienced by learners, and whether the educational psychologist has a role to play in the expulsions process.

In the next section, the researcher will reflect on the preliminary research questions which were formulated so as to develop an overall approach to the inquiry, as well as to explain and justify why certain decisions are made in the demarcation of the research.

1.3 DEMARCATION OF THE RESEARCH

Both suspensions and expulsions prohibit learners from attending school. Suspensions can be viewed as a temporary measure, and expulsions as a permanent disciplinary measure.

This research will be conducted and directed specifically at all requests for expulsions submitted to the Western Cape Education Department. It will be based on the period 1 January 1998 i.e. the period immediately after the new South African School Act (Act 84 of 1996) was enacted to 31 December 2000.

The findings cannot be generalised to other provinces, but it is hoped that it will provide valuable information on the:

- rate and occurrence of expulsions in Western Cape schools
- gender, age and grade of learners who are expelled
- the reasons for requests for expulsions in the Western Cape
- the factors that influence expulsions
- provide a framework for analysing data in other areas, and
- providing recommendations/guidelines to minimise expulsions.

The learners selected in this research will be those attending secondary school i.e. Grade 8 to Grade 12. The ages of these learners will range from 12 to 19 years. The learners selected are from public secondary schools, including technical schools, but excludes independent, private, primary schools, and schools for learners with special educational needs. The reason for this exclusion is that learners with special educational needs differ on social, intellectual, and emotional development levels.

Due to time and logistical constraints, only five principals will be interviewed so as to gather information about their views on the factors influencing requests for expulsions.

This research will be based on reasons for expulsions only as suspensions related data are not recorded at the Education Department.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This research focuses on the expulsion of learners as a social issue of immediate concern. It is aimed at contributing towards a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of expulsions. In addition, it may provide further insight into an enduring educational practice. Previous research on expulsions has been conducted, but this particular research problem has not been investigated in the Western Cape. The practice of expulsion is common to many schools, but may not necessarily be found in every school.

This qualitative research is aimed at enhancing an understanding of the phenomenon of expulsion rather than generalizability of the findings.

The next section will describe the method and approach, which the researcher will utilize to review the literature and to investigate the initial research questions.

1.5 RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher will use multiple research strategies in order to increase the validity of the research.

Firstly, the research will embark on a substantive review of all prior empirical work which has been done in the area of expulsion and suspension of learners both internationally and nationally. Literature from international and South African sources will be cited to show the similarities and differences within school systems. Factors that influence expulsions and suspensions in schools will be identified. A methodological review will examine how all prior studies were conducted and which methods were used. A theoretical review will help the researcher to gauge how similar research on expulsions and suspensions was interpreted, what theoretical frameworks were used to inform the study and what implications were drawn (Le Compte & Preissle 1993:154). The literature review will also include a thorough exposition of the policy, rules and regulations as laid out by the South African Schools Act, (Act No.84, 1996), and any amendments thereof.

This qualitative research will be exploratory in nature. De Vos (1998:124) states that an exploratory study explores a research question about which little is known. The researcher employed multi-method strategies encompassing both non-interactive strategies (use of documents) and interactive strategies (the interviews) in this research (Schumacher & McMillan 1993:374).

The researcher will divide this empirical investigation into two phases. The first phase, the non-interactive phase, was aimed at gaining an understanding and obtaining a perspective on the expulsion phenomenon in the Western Cape. The population in this investigation included all requests for expulsions submitted to the Head of Education of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). The data extracted from the individual files contained information such as the name of the school, gender, age, grade of the learners and reason for the request for the expulsion. This type of data will provide the researcher with information on trends and patterns in the expulsion phenomenon.

The researcher will employ a process of category development which is consistent with the principle of grounded theory, to categorise the reasons for request for expulsions i.e. to categorise the actual reason for the transgression or the misconduct charges for which the request for the expulsions is submitted. This means that the categories in this research will be “grounded” in the particular set of data collected in the research (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:564). The data obtained will be utilised to identify and determine the number and distribution of requests for expulsions and to identify the most common reasons for requests for expulsions e.g. substance abuse, aggression, gangsterism, absenteeism or violation of the school’s code of conduct.

During the second phase, the interactive phase, of the research the researcher selected five school principals and conducted semi-structured interviews with them in order to gain insight into the factors that may influence requests for expulsions. This phase of the research entailed “immersion in the every day life of the setting chosen for the study, values and seeks to discover participants perspectives on their worlds, relies on people’s words and observable behaviour as the primary data” (Marshall & Rossman 1995:4).

The semi-structured interviews formed the basis of the actual research. The interview was aimed at exploring the principal’s perspectives on the process of expulsions. The analysis of the interviews with school principals worked at identifying and determining why certain schools are better able to hold on to learners than others. It was also aimed at determining the influence of the attitude of principal/educator, ethos of the school, catchment area, abolition of corporal punishment, policy of rationalisation and the influence of “achievement/league tables” on expulsions. The findings of the research will lead to the formulation of guidelines towards minimising expulsions from schools in the Western Cape.

In the section that follows, the researcher will select and define important concepts which will be used in this dissertation.

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The following concepts will be used frequently in this dissertation and will therefore need to be clarified to avoid any misinterpretations and to ensure that the concepts are used appropriately.

As this dissertation is based on research in schools in the Western Cape, information obtained from the Western Cape Education Department will be utilised. The term *Education Department* refers to a department established by section 7(2) of the Public Service Act 1994, which is responsible for education at national level, or the department responsible for education in a province. The Western Cape Education Department will also be referred to as WCED. The person who is responsible for the education at a national or provincial level is the *Head of Department*. The *MEC or Member of the Executive Council* is the person responsible for education and culture in the province. The *principal*, on the other hand, is an educator who has been appointed as the head or acting head of the school. The governance of every public school is vested in its *governing body*, who stands in a position of trust towards the school and is subject to the South African Schools Act No.84, 1996.

The term "*school*" refers to a public school which enrolls learners in one or more grades from Grade 0 to Grade 12. This dissertation is based on "*secondary schools*" which means a public school or independent school which enrolls learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12. A "*learner*" is any person receiving education or obliged to receive education in terms of the South African Schools Act No.84, 1996. "*Grade*" refers to that part of an educational programme which a learner may complete in one school year.

The term "*disciplinary action*" will be used frequently during this dissertation and refers to the punishment metered out to learners who have transgressed. This punishment can either be in the form of expulsion or suspension, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. "*Expulsion*" is the permanent prohibition by the Head of the WCED of a learner from attending the school concerned if found guilty of serious misconduct. *Suspension*, on the other hand refers to the temporary prohibition by the governing body of a learner from attending school. *Serious misconduct* is a set of behavioural norms which a learner at a school shall be found guilty of if s/he transgresses the school's code of conduct. The "*code of conduct*" is a statement of behavioural norms compiled in terms of the South African Schools Act, Act No.84, 1996, to regulate the conduct of learners attending a public school.

In order for a learner to be expelled certain procedures must be followed. *Due process* refers to these procedures that are underpinned by fairness and just application of laws, rules and regulations which must be applied in decisions which may affect the rights and interests of a person.

An *educator/teacher* as defined by the Educators Employment Act 1994, is any person who is appointed to exclusively perform extracurricular duties, who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and educational psychological services at a school. Finally, a *parent* refers to:

- the parent or guardian of a learner
- the person legally entitled to custody of a learner, and
- the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations towards the learner's education at school.

Interdisciplinary concepts such as those used above, are useful tools. However, they should be used appropriately as defined in education as a discipline. The literature review that follows will permit the researcher to integrate this study with previous studies and to indicate the direction which this research might point towards.

1.7 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation will review literature on both suspensions and expulsions, as it appears that learners who are expelled have a history of suspensions.

The literature review will look at the work of other researchers who have performed similar research and how this compares and at the same time providing greater insight into the dimension and complexity of the problem. The review will, therefore, be aimed at:

- a thorough exposition of the education policies governing expulsions i.e. the South African Schools Act, Act No.84, 1996, and any amendments thereof; to gain insight into the policy, rules and regulations governing expulsions
- identifying factors that have an influence on expulsions and suspensions e.g. the attitude of the principal/educator on expulsions, the ethos of the school, the catchment areas, influence of rationalisation, the abolition of corporal punishment and the influence of the 'achievement/league tables' on expulsions
- determining the occurrence of expulsions in the Western Cape with the aim of identifying schools that are more prone to expelling learners and to uncover trends in gender, age and grade of learners

- discerning international trends with regard to expulsions, to be compared with South African trends, and to extract similarities and differences, and
- identifying programmes or guidelines that could provide schools with alternatives to minimise expulsions.

The literature review will also look for the following:

- studies and analytical works, or theoretical statements which addressed the same population, question, and/or setting as the present study and arrive at the same conclusions, and
- studies, and analytical works, or theoretical statements which addressed the same population, question, and/or setting but arrive at different conclusions (Le Compte & Preissle 1993:154).

In the current research, two theories are commonly used as a foundation in the sociology of education i.e. the consensus theory and conflict theory. The consensus theory approach appears to be more dominant. Chandler (1992:137) states that consensus is usually achieved through socialisation, which functions primarily through the family and the school. Masses of individuals come together to learn how to act in conformity, adhering to common perspectives, values and laws. This acts as a constituting force in schools. Conflict theorists, on the other hand, believe that all aspects of life involve some sort of power struggle. Waller (in Parelius & Parelius 1978:15) states that schools are coercive institutions i.e. that the teacher must coerce the students into obedience and learning.

James (2000:21) goes on to emphasise that South Africa is a society in transition, moving from an authoritarian heritage where the rules of punitive sanction are replaced by the rules of democratic accountability. This implies that this transition would result in schools having to change their method of discipline, the method of punishment and the type of penalty imposed for an offence.

The available literature indicates that expulsions are on the increase and that certain transgressions are more common than others.

British research on expulsions and suspensions also shows that the number of exclusions from schools is increasing. Parsons and Howlett (1996:109) say that exclusions are rising at an alarming rate. The increase from 1991–1992 to 1992–1993 was 32%. In 1993–1994, the total of permanent exclusions had increased almost threefold. The increase from 1993–1994 to 1994–1995 was 11%.

Similar research done by Parffrey (1994:107–119) also found that exclusion rates were increasing steeply. Parffrey (1994:107) found that certain adolescents are rendered vulnerable as a result of inadequacies in the political and social system. Parffrey (1994:107–119) also offered a systemic conceptualization of the problem.

Stirling (1992:128–129) was also alarmed by the number of pupils being excluded from school. Her research differed from that of Parffrey (1994:107) and Parson (1996:182), in that she researched trends in unofficial exclusions. Stirling (1992:128) found that statistics on expulsions were not reliable, that procedures for expulsions were not adhered to, and that a number of children were unofficially excluded from school.

Parsons (1996:182–184) also found that in Britain, many students were excluded mainly for behavioural problems. His study proposes that causes of psychosocial problems stem from family and social problems. The study offers responses to exclusions and presents a few recommendations. Parsons (1996:185) also argues that exclusions is not simply a school issue and that it will only be resolved by means of a co-ordinated, multi-agency approach which is adequately resourced and clearly targeted.

In America, school discipline has been characterized as a major concern of the general public for the last three decades. Educators find themselves spending more time addressing the varying degrees of student behavioural problems, instead of improving academic performance (Garibaldi, Blanchard & Brooks 1996:408).

Under education reform in America, zero-tolerance policies were instituted after several highly publicized incidents of school violence. This was aimed at deterring hate and violence in schools. School districts were forced to expel students who committed any assault, or were caught carrying anything from non-prescription drugs to plastic knives. Over time, the increasingly broad interpretations of zero-tolerance have resulted in a near epidemic of

suspensions and expulsions for seemingly trivial events. It has almost been a decade since the zero-tolerance policies were implemented. However, there are almost no studies that evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies. The American public is left to rely on the media, which reports claims by school districts that the zero-tolerance approach has curtailed gun possession, gang activity and fighting in their schools. An alarming number of students have been suspended under these “draconian” policies for comparatively minor offenses.

A report released in April 2000 by the Washington-based Justice Police Institute found that youth violence has fallen significantly. It found that during the 1998–1999 school year the National School Safety Center reported 26 school-associated violent deaths, a 40% decline from the previous year (<http://www.policy.com/issue.wk>).

Contrary to the above findings, Bumbarger and Greenberg (1999) asserts that “zero-tolerance” policies do not lower rates of violence at schools, but instead lead to increased substance abuse and high drop-out rates by troubled students. They urged the formulation of a more effective policy of expulsions for habitual offenders (<http://www.policy.com/issue.wk>).

Both Britain and America appear to be experiencing an increase in expulsions. However, British researchers tend to focus on the problems and the reasons for the exclusions and the system in which children function. American literature, on the other hand, focuses on zero-tolerance policies and its implementation. It appears that British literature emphasises the causes of behavioural problems and American literature the responses to learners with behavioural problems.

In the next section, the focus will be on the various factors influencing expulsions.

In the 1970's a study done by Longworth-Dames (1977:163) highlighted the effect that attitude has on the suspensions and expulsions of learners. Longworth-Dames (1977) found that some schools reject behaviours that others will tolerate. He linked this to schools' policies of selective entry before comprehensive re-organisation. In an effort to explain the increase in expulsions and suspensions in the seventies, research done by the Pack Committee (1977) suggests that a hardening of educator attitudes rather than an increase in disruptive behaviour as contribution to the increase in expulsions.

The influence of attitude was further researched by Parffrey (1994:117–119). Parffrey (1994) states that exclusion is a matter of attitude: “the attitude of society towards children who misbehave, towards staff and schools who try to cater to these children’s needs, and towards the parents of children who are excluded.”

Parffrey (1994:119) investigates the influence of attitude further, and found that heads (principals) who did not exclude learners, were seen as weak and ineffectual by their staff. Similar research done by Gersch and Nolan (1994:35) highlights the view that, unless a school can be seen to be taking strong action against challenging behaviour through the use of the exclusion process, then other pupils will suffer, and discipline in the school will deteriorate.

The influence of the ethos of the school, different catchment areas and code of conduct was also researched by Parffrey (1994:109). She found that one particular rural comprehensive school excluded proportionately more pupils than its inner-city counterparts. The Secondary Heads Associations (SHA) (1992:2) also claims that much, if not most, of the difference in expulsions rates could be ascribed to the nature of the intake of the school.

Research done by Meier (1992:595) found that the so-called better schools often attracted “better” students and that it was difficult to see what value had been added by the school. Contrary to the above view, McLean (1987:309) found that, with the exception of cases involving vastly different social areas, the prevalence of socio-economic disadvantage in intake cannot be regarded as a reliable predictor of exclusion rates.

The debate as to whether there is a correlation between intake, different catchment areas and expulsions is ongoing. But it is useful in shedding some light on the patterns or trends found in the Western Cape.

Information on the influence of the policy of rationalisation remains scant. Therefore, it was necessary to relate the policy of rationalisation to literature dealing with the size of the school and number of learners in a classroom. The relationship between the size of the school and expulsions was also researched. Imich (1994:7) found that no relationship existed between the size of the school and the rate of exclusion. Similarly, Bullivant (1996:14) and Galloway (1976:46) found that neither the size of the school, nor socio-economic hardship seems to

affect how a school employs suspensions. In contrast, Pittman and Haughwout (1987:337) and Costenbader and Markson (1994:104) contend that school size does have an influence on the drop-out rate. Meier (1992:606) agreed with this, stating that size, as well as scale, is critical.

This dissertation will attempt to determine whether there is a relationship between the Western Cape Education Department's policy of rationalisation and expulsion.

The above literature review focuses mainly on factors that may lead to the expulsions of learners. The second part of the literature review concentrates on the reasons for expulsions, and the guidelines and recommendations towards minimising the expulsions phenomena. A general review revealed some consensus with regard to the reasons for expulsions.

Costenbader and Markson (1998:59–62) surveyed 620 middle and high schools on school suspensions. Their survey supported the results of Parsons (1996:177–186) which revealed that physical aggression, which they attribute to a lack of self-control, was the most common reason for suspensions.

A review of the literature also indicates that the reasons for suspensions and expulsions tend to be similar. Dupper and Bosch (1996:141) examined data on reasons for suspensions from one school district between 1991–1995 to determine why students were suspended. Their findings were similar to other researchers, who claim that the majority of suspensions result from the most preventable offenses i.e. physical confrontation with other students and other behavioural problems such as loitering, dress code violation, truency, insubordination, etc. On the basis of these findings Dupper and Bosch (1996:141), argue against the use of suspensions in these two categories, and recommend a number of strategies designed to dramatically reduce the number of suspensions.

Judging by the available information, expulsions as a result of drug or substance abuse is on the increase. Both Swadi (1992:253) and Swartz and Wirtz (1990:39) correlate drug use with suspensions and expulsions. Later in this dissertation some light will be shed on the extent of the influence of substance abuse on expulsions in the Western Cape.

Researchers have listed several types of programmes or guidelines that could be offered to schools with regard to expulsions. Garner (1994:8) emphasised the need to refine school-based practices, particularly relationships between teachers and those who are exclusion prone. Garner (1994:3–9) also referred to the Elton Report (1989) which states that, “when disciplinary problems arise, head-teachers should involve parents at an early stage rather than as a last resort”. Dupper and Bosch (1996:149) similarly conclude that proactive, preventative and early intervention strategies are the key to reducing suspensions for relatively minor offences, including physical aggression towards other students and other behaviour problems.

Based on the reviewed literature, it appears that researchers in other countries have also become aware of these problems and have embarked on similar research which could serve as a guideline for this research.

This dissertation will attempt to establish whether similar research in the Western Cape will yield similar or different conclusions. The review also examines literature pertaining to education policy-making and application in America, Britain and lastly, in South Africa with regard to expulsions.

The next section will give a broad overview of the intended research programme and its contents.

1.8 RESEARCH PROGRAMME

This study will attempt to determine the number of requests for expulsions and the demographics of the learners that are expelled. It will also examine the important reasons for expulsions. The first chapter aimed to enhance an awareness of expulsions, and identify some recent developments. These were introduced in the first chapter, and be elaborated upon in chapter two and three.

Chapter two will be a specific review of suspensions and expulsions. International and South African sources will be viewed comprehensively to identify factors which influence expulsions, as well as patterns, trends and reasons that influence expulsions.

Chapter three will examine the existing educational policy in America, Britain and South Africa with special reference to suspensions and expulsions. It will focus specifically on the South African Schools Act, (Act No.84 of 1996), the Education Laws Amendment Act 1999 (Act No.48 of 1999) and the General Manual for the Suspension and Expulsion of Learners from Public Schools – circular 0030/99 – Provincial Administration Western Cape Education Department and its application in Western Cape Education schools.

Chapter four will focus on the research design with the aim of discussing critically the process of enquiry followed in the writing of this dissertation. The chapter will address the choice of site, the methodological approach chosen, the process whereby the data, obtained from the Western Cape Education Department, was organised and interpreted, and the motivation behind these choices.

Chapter five will endeavour to analyse and interpret the results of the empirical investigation.

Chapter six focuses on the findings of the empirical investigation and provides recommendations towards guidelines for a programme to minimise the expulsions of learners from secondary schools.

In the next chapter, the researcher will review literature on suspension and expulsion of learners. Both international and national literature, policy documents and articles will be referred to so that the researcher can explain the theory supporting this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2: EXPULSION AND SUSPENSION OF LEARNERS – A

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into five sections. In the first section, two sociological theories in education on which school systems could be based i.e. consensus and conflict theories, will be discussed. Following this, trends and reasons for expulsions and suspensions are investigated on both an international and national level. The third section focuses upon the literature concerning factors contributing to suspensions and expulsions, while the next section will survey the literature that concentrates on programmes and recommendations which could be implemented to alleviate the problems of suspensions and expulsions. Finally, the role of the educational/school psychologist will be examined.

The information chosen for this literature review is related specifically to the aim of this dissertation.

2.2 THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, sociologists focused on the concept of the “perfection of humanity and society” (Parelius & Parelius 1978:1). Sociologists shared a common belief that schools could contribute toward that perfection by “developing human intellect and by inspiring students to devote themselves to reforming society” (Parelius & Parelius 1978:1). Some sociologists were idealistic, arguing that education was the key to alleviation of social ills. Others were pragmatic, and focused on details of schools and classroom organisation.

These two contrasting theories are still widely used by scholars in the sociology of education.

2.2.1 Consensus theory

Historically, the consensus approach has been the more dominant. The school is generally conceived of as a conformist organization. Consensus theory also stresses that the various parts of society, are integrated with each other. “They are just not interdependent — they are

co-ordinated and complementary” (Parelius & Parelius 1978:5). Shared perceptions, sentiments, values, and beliefs is another theme of consensus theory. Consensus is usually achieved through socialization, which functions primarily through the family and the schools. Masses of individuals come together to learn how to act in conformity, within certain perspectives, values and laws (Chandler 1992:137).

Parelius and Parelius (1978:13) also contend that the precept of compulsory schooling indicates a “service to the capitalist class” and serves the following goals:

- mass education could supply workers with cognitive, intellectual and technical skills required by the capitalist economy
- children could be taught punctuality, discipline, deference to authority and acceptance of responsibility for their work, and
- the school could teach loyalty to the state and obedience to the law.

Consensus theorists thus emphasise the harmony and agreement which should exist amongst the role-players in school, and between the school and the community which it serves. This consensus can only be achieved if all role-players identify and work towards a common goal.

2.2.2 Conflict theory

Conflict theorists, on the other hand, believe that no aspect of life is exempt from conflict. In Chandler’s (1992:137) view society and the entities it comprises of belong to two types: the dominants and subordinates. The dominants in a school are the administration and teachers; the subordinates are the students. Waller (in Parelius & Parelius 1978:15) goes further to say that schools are coercive institutions. The teacher is the task-master by attempting to make the students learn the formal curriculum. The teacher must coerce the students into both obedience and learning.

Waller (in Parelius & Parelius 1978:5) also sees the age difference between students and teachers as one source of their perpetual conflict. Children have a culture of their own, they see the world differently from adults, they value different things and prefer different types of activities. Adults, however, have power over children and try to force them to accept adult

values and viewpoints. Students are faced with two choices. They either conform to the system and suffer the restrictions of rights and privileges, or cease to be part of the system.

Berger (1963:68) states that social control are means by which to “bring recalcitrant members back into line”. Chandler (1992:138) agrees, saying that as long as schools have existed, social control (i.e. legal control) have been used to enforce conformity.

The chief difference between consensus and conflict theorists appears to be one of ideology. Conflict theorists believe that institutions are basically coercive. They also emphasise the discord which exists when the ideology of the state differs from the needs of the citizens, and when differences in age, agendas and cultural values differ amongst role-players. But they do not ignore the dissent which exists between the role-players and the manner in which the conflict is resolved.

Consensus theorists, on the other hand, focus on the compliance and adaptation of learners, educators and society at large, and how they function successfully in conformity as an entity.

The next section will discuss the changing role of the South African education system with reference to the conflict and consensus theory.

2.2.3 The changing role of the state, with reference to conflict and consensus theory, in South Africa

Prior to the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996, the state was invested with the power to determine what was good for its citizens. Ruperti (1979:4) writes “that it is the state alone which acts on behalf of the whole community and whose decisions are binding for all members of the community in all fields of activity.” There appeared to be no consultation between the state and the communities it served.

Van Schalkwyk (1988:44) also argues that the state should bear final responsibility for the education of its citizens. But it cannot educate, because it is not structured for this task. However, it has to accept responsibility for education in the interest of the general welfare of

its population. This applies to legislation, administration, execution and administration of justice. The state was thus obliged to initiate and support various non-juridical or untypical undertakings and to ensure that they function effectively.

In 1994 a democracy replaced decades of apartheid. Two years later the South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996 was passed. It stressed the idea of “collaborative partnership”. This meant that the state should not be expected to do as much for schools as before. Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mathata and Squelsch (1997:8), in the simplified version of the South African Schools Act, write that the governance of a school is vested in the governing body of the public school with the principle of “partnership” being of utmost importance. He also sees this collaborative partnership as co-operation of all the stakeholders for the effectiveness of education. This partnership is characterized by:

- mutual trust and respect
- shared decision-making
- shared goals and values
- common vision
- open communication
- promotion of the interest of the partnership rather than those of the individual, and
- a respect for the roles of different partners.

James (2000:21) in his presentation to the Minister of Education, stressed the importance of legitimising the school governing boards as a working institution of civil society. James (2000:21) also stressed that the governing body needed to be supported by the more long-standing institutions of associational life i.e. churches, mosques, temples, sports clubs, civic organisations, non-governmental organisations and local authorities.

James (2000:21) further emphasises that South Africa is a transitional society moving from an authoritarian heritage, where the rules of punitive sanction are replaced by the rules of democratic accountability. In line with consensus theory, James (2000:18) also suggests that certain symbolic rituals should be performed at South African schools. By these he means

that symbols of national identity and South African honour should be celebrated i.e. that the National Anthem be taught and sung at schools.

Thus the SASA and its view on partnership conforms more to the consensus theory of education. The various stakeholders, i.e. the governing body, parents, educators, learners are the ones who “own” the school. They bring with them their own perceptions, sentiments, values and beliefs, that give each school its unique character.

The section that follows will review both national and international literature relating to trends and reasons for expulsions and suspensions.

2.3 REASONS FOR SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS

Research undertaken indicates a fairly consistent pattern of reasons for suspensions and expulsions. According to Blyth and Milner (1993:261), the recorded reasons are, by definition, the official reasons as provided by the head teacher. In reality, the formal reason for exclusion may represent the “final straw”, the culmination of a long deteriorating relationship between the school and the learner. Continuous suspensions are often a prelude to expulsions.

In the 1950's “there seemed to be a marked increase in both the serious and less serious antisocial behaviour on the part of our youth” (Williams 1979:385–387). Two particularly startling problems were documented i.e. violence committed against teachers and the increased use of narcotics by students. Research conducted more than twenty years later indicates a striking resemblance to that of the 1950's, except that the problem worsened. Futrell (1996:7) is of the opinion that today, disagreements among students would be settled through some form of weapon rather than an old-fashioned fist-fight.

Research done by Dupper and Bosch (1996:143) shows that suspensions have been rising steadily. A study completed between 1991 and 1995 found that physical confrontation with students and other behavioural problems, were the cause of the vast majority of suspensions. Costenbader and Markson (1994:105) believe physical aggression is the most common infraction leading to both external and internal suspensions. Later research done by

Costenbader and Markson (1998:69) found that physical aggression and being in the possession of a weapon was the main reason for expulsions.

Baker (1996:4) categorises trends in major disciplinary violations in the 1995 academic year. He became aware of a trend, that hints at major disciplinary violations being an overwhelmingly “team sport”. Certain categories of violations, particularly truancies, drugs, tobacco and alcohol, are almost never undertaken by individuals in isolation. Rather, groups of students or at least a pair of friends enter into the behaviour together.

According to the Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher (1993), violence is more likely to occur in schools where the quality of education is poor. Teachers and students agree that a major factor contributing to increased violence in the schools is the perception that the quality of education is not up to par. The survey found that 33% of the teachers who felt that their school provides only a fair or poor education have been victims of property crime, while 11% of the teachers have been victims of acts of violence (Hoffman 1996:9).

Adolescents excluded from school represent a high risk group in terms of their vulnerability to drug use and involvement in crime (Powis, Griffiths, Gossop, Lloyd & Strang 1998:247). They are of the opinion that drug use among school excludees must be viewed in the context of illicit drug consumption by young people in general. Parker and Meashan (1994:7) found that in school populations, exposure to drugs and drug use has risen. Powis *et al* (1998:246) believes that an increase in drug use amongst normal school populations would suggest that the prevalence of drug use would have also increased among school excludees. Although little empirical evidence exists on the behaviour of permanent excludees, it is likely that their drug-taking behaviour is similar to that of persistent truants. Pritchard, Cotton and Cox (1992:4–5) have shown drug use among truants to be higher than the non-truanting peers. Powis (1998) also believes that adolescents excluded from school represent a high risk group in terms of their vulnerability to drug use and involvement in crime. Both Swadi (1992:253–254) and Swartz and Wirtz (1990:39) correlate drug use with suspensions and expulsions. It also appears that the number of learners being expelled, as a result of substance abuse, will go on to develop serious substance abuse problems or will engage in criminal activities. Cirello, Pruitt, Colwell, Kingery, Hurley and Ballard (1998:329) found that at-risk students who used drugs or alcohol were more prone to use violence as a means of achieving a desired outcome than students who did not use drugs or alcohol. Similar research by Orpinas, Basen-Enquist,

Grunbaum and Parcel (1995:217) and Furlong, Cosas, Corral, Chung and Bates (1997:264) support the view that there is a link between drugs and violence. They found that youths who used drugs took more risks, were involved in more fights, and were more likely to be victimized.

Much concern has been expressed over violence within South African society, especially violence and aggression amongst learners and directed towards educators. Physical and verbal abuse of teachers by pupils are on the increase in the Western Cape, says the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and National Union of Educators. They believe that the scale of the problem is often underestimated because victims are reluctant to talk about bullying (Interview: Saturday Argus, May 27/28 2000). Research done by Imich (1994:8) indicates that 45% of all exclusions are for bullying, fighting or verbally abusing peers. Physical abuse on staff accounts for only 1.2% of all exclusions. The extent of violence and physical abuse in schools is not always reported. Blyth and Milner (1993:262) contend that teaching staff do not always report violent incidents. Teaching staff are under pressure from their schools to conceal attacks in order to uphold the reputation of the school.

In the same article in the Saturday Argus of May 27/28 2000, Pasquallie, spokesman for SADTU in the Western Cape was quoted as saying: "I hope we (in South Africa) will not have a situation like in the United States where teachers have to come to school armed. However, teachers are increasingly being threatened with violence by pupils."

In Kwazulu-Natal, gangsterism is the single biggest threat to the development of a culture of learning and teaching in schools (Friedman 1998:8). He quotes research conducted by Griggs (1997) for the Independent Projects Trust (IPT) and concludes that the biggest problems facing schools in the province is gang-related violence. Schools often have inadequate security, no counselling facilities, a lack of conflict management skills and parental apathy all tying for a close second. Friedman (1998:8) found that Isibonelo Secondary School in Kwa-Mashu, 10 pupils had been killed in gang-related violence in the past two years, yet, weapons continue to be carried with impunity into the school. He concludes that wherever gang-related crime and violence emerged in a school, it followed a chillingly similar pattern to those problems in the broader community.

Dharsey (1998) is quoted by Friedman (1998:9) as stating that “there is not a single school in the Western Cape — apart from white schools — that has not been ravaged by crime and violence of some kind”. He says “there are complex reasons at the root of gangsterism and no recipe for solution”. What is needed instead is an integrated approach.

Judging by the media, it appears suspensions or expulsions in South Africa can be attributed to racial remarks between learners which result in physical confrontation, culminating in disciplinary action. The Cape Argus (August 30, 2000), reported an incident where a white pupil asked a coloured pupil why he had a long nose. The other child retaliated by saying, “stinky white”. A fight then ensued.

In another incident reported by the Cape Argus (August 30, 2000), a pupil had his shoulder dislocated when he was allegedly assaulted and called a “kaffir” by white pupils. A parent of a learner, who witnessed the incident, reported that the principal played down the racism aspect during a parent meeting, by stating that it was an “unfortunate vocabulary mistake”. The mother of the injured pupil did not want to be quoted because she feared for her son’s safety at school.

Several studies have investigated the relationship of race and ethnicity to school suspension practices. Minority group students are found to be over-represented among suspended students (Costenbader & Markson 1998:62). Ordovensky (1988:D-1) suggests that black students were twice as likely as white students to be suspended from school. Moore (1997:10) found that some white teachers avoid confronting the poor behaviour of some African Caribbean pupils, possible explanations for this being a fear of black boys, or the fear of being labelled a racist.

Noguera (1996:11) found that the trouble in disciplining and controlling students was most frequent in urban schools, and especially at schools where the majority of students are black and the majority of teachers are white. However, he does not believe that the problem is primarily racial, although racial differences are a complicating factor. Professor Skiba (<http://www.law.harvard.edu/civilrights>) found that, even if all socio-economic indicators are held constant, African-American children are still suspended and expelled at much higher rates than white students within the same schools. Moreover, there tended to be higher rates of referral of black students for subjective offenses, such as “disrespect”.

The literature reviewed has highlighted the fact that physical confrontation, violence, substance abuse and being in the possession of weapons as important reasons for expulsions. This dissertation will investigate the reasons for expulsion in the Western Cape and also focuses on those reasons that are both common and unique to the province.

The next section will review the literature relating to the factors influencing expulsions and suspensions.

2.4 FACTORS INFLUENCING SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS

British research on expulsion and suspension shows that the number of exclusions from schools is increasing. Stirling (1992:128), Parffrey (1994:107), Parsons (1996:182), and Parsons and Howlett (1996:109) also found that the rate of expulsion is increasing, although their findings differ with regards to the factors influencing expulsions.

The factors that influence expulsions and suspensions are all interrelated and tend to influence one another. They will first be isolated before their interconnectedness is discussed.

2.4.1 Philosophy and ethos of school

The disciplinary procedures of a school are often a statement of the school's values. Earlier theory examined the role of ground motive. Stone (1977:152) states that ground motive can be seen as the spiritual root of community life which determines the expression of thought, feelings, moral standards and community norms. They convey to the community a particular philosophy and ethos of the school. These will be based on the ground motive of the community which will in turn influence the school's code of conduct. The ethos of the school will reflect society's attitude towards life, its disposition and direction.

James (2000:5) states that the first key element to any educational philosophy is the development of the intellectual abilities and critical facilities among all the children and young adults in South African schools. However, he admits that it is no small task as the philosophical basis of apartheid was conformity, obedience to the rules and the suspension of critical thinking. James (2000:17) also writes "our attitude, interest and culture is rooted in our apartheid past...where an authoritarian attitude to learning and social conduct was

expected of learners". Elias (1998:1) supports the above view by saying that disciplinary procedures of a school and classroom are statements of its constitution and its values. He goes further by stating that this system is an expression of humanity.

Stirling (1992:128) as well as Parffrey (1994:108) are of the opinion that the ethos of the school is an important factor in competition between schools, given the growing importance of parental preference for some schools, and the view that parents are influenced in their choice of schools by its reputation and image in the community. Sheets (1996:88) in developing an in-school suspensions programme, feels that it is essential to develop a philosophy that coincides with the school's overall educational philosophy and that such a statement should be a collective process involving staff, administration and other parties. The foundation of the mission statement should explain clearly the importance of the total school discipline policy. The code of conduct will also contain the policy of the school with regard to suspensions and expulsions.

Garner (1993:100) contends that there is a body of research evidence which suggests that, far from being a neutral influence against which students engage in varied types of social and academic interaction, the organisation and ethos of the school itself is a crucial determinant of student behaviour.

Blyth and Milner (1993:260) express a very important point of view. They argue that, despite the British Children's Act of 1989 emphasising the intrinsic worth of the child, that within the new education market, children increasingly appear to be seen in terms of the contribution they can make to the school's image, whether in terms of academic attainment, attendance or behaviour. As a result, children are often seen as a drain on resources, "passengers" and "dragging back the school". They are thus more likely to be excluded.

Similarly, conflicting messages can be perceived in the South African educational system. James (2000:8) states "that an education system does not exist simply to serve a market, important as that may be for economic growth and material prosperity. Its primary purpose must be to enrich the individual." The researcher found that the publication of the National Report on the Performance of Individual Schools (<http://education.pwv.gov.za>) although aimed at "pulling underperforming schools out of the abysmal situation", could also lead to schools getting rid of learners who will not benefit the school, thus increasing expulsions

rates. Stirling (1992:128) found that because of the pressure to give priority to academic results in order to attract pupils and to be seen as successful, schools are unlikely to choose support for behaviourally disturbed pupils as one of their priorities. Without this support, more pupils are likely to be excluded. Hayden (1994:260) agrees with Stirling (1992:128) and Blyth and Milner (1993:260), stating that formula funding and publishing league tables positively discourages schools from taking on and/or retaining children who contribute little to the performance indicators of a school.

Morris's (1996:35) research also points to the fact that despite many mainstream schools losing the finance of excluded pupils, disruptive pupils are asked to leave schools, due to the negative effect upon other pupils, the staff and the image of the school. Garner's (1994:8) response to this is that schools need to be recognised for work that is done with problematic sections of their community, in much the same way as academic learning is celebrated by government sponsored curriculum awards.

Hayden (1997:38) states that it is not easy to achieve a positive ethos in the current financial circumstances, particularly focusing on constructing a national curriculum and the exposure to market forces. Both Stirling (1992:128–130) and Blyth and Milner (1993:263) support the increasing importance of school image and "league tables". They acknowledge the reluctance of head teachers and governing bodies to admit or retain pupils who might have a detrimental impact on the school's image.

Similar views are expressed by the South African Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, who gave reasons for publishing matric ratings for the year 2000. He stated that "whether we like it or not, school results in the National Senior Certificate are seen by parents and politicians (and by newspaper editors) as the most important indicator of school performance" Sunday Times (2001:2).

Publishing matric ratings in South Africa may *not* be a fair indication of the performance of schools. It is unfair to compare schools from advantaged areas or ex-Model C schools to schools in the township or on the Cape Flats. These learners are socio-economically disadvantaged, experience high educator-learner ratios, gangsterism and drugs. The more disadvantaged schools are also unable to employ additional teachers because of financial constraints.

2.4.2 Attitude

In the 1970's, a study by Longworth–Dames (1977:163) highlighted the effect that attitude has on the suspension and expulsion of learners. Longworth–Dames (1977) found that some schools reject certain behaviour that others will tolerate. This was linked to whether schools had selective entry before comprehensive re–organisation. The Pack Committee (1977), in an effort to explain the increase in expulsions and suspensions in the seventies, suggest that a hardening of educator attitude rather than an increase in disruptive behaviour as being part of the explanation. Stirling (1992:129) argues that the children's rights movement may have affected education and teacher/pupil relationships by increasing the risk of exclusion. Teachers may be more apprehensive about physically restraining children who exhibit violent or other problematic behaviour. Exclusion thus seems to be the only option.

Schools are also encouraged to promote a positive image which, deters them from the reporting violence in schools. Blyth and Milner (1993:262) also cite Norman's (1993) concern about the levels of physical and sexual violence directed towards staff. This should be seen in the context of current pressure on schools to promote a positive image, militating against the reporting of violence.

Both Garner (1993:99) and Stirling (1992:128) believe that prior to the British Children's Act, 1989, heads who were previously keen to offer extra support to difficult and underachieving pupils, were now seeing them as a liability. They were looking for ways of transferring them to other schools or units. This presented a sharp shift away from supporting strategies towards punitive measures. Costenbader and Markson (1998:59) write that school administrators were faced with the choice of not accommodating disruptive students in their buildings because of "liability issues regarding possible damage that could be caused to other students or to property".

Dupper and Bosch (1996:148) believe that the definition of 'disruptive behaviour' can vary tremendously from school to school, depending on the tolerance levels of individuals within a particular school as well as the school's discipline policies and practices. For example, a certain statement may be considered verbally abusive and result in suspension in one school setting, and the same statement may go relatively unnoticed in another school

setting. Similarly, a student with a high activity level may be viewed as disruptive by one teacher, but seen as developmentally appropriate and tolerated by another teacher.

Raebeck (1993:27) also recognises the role of attitude and morale as factors influencing expulsions and suspensions. He notes the inverse relationship that exists between the number and severity of disciplinary problems and the level of morale among students and staff. When morale is high disciplinary problems are few, and vice versa. Parffrey (1994:117–119) agrees with Raebeck (1993), stating that exclusion is a matter of attitude: the attitude of society towards children who misbehave, towards staff and schools who try to cater to these children's needs, and towards the parents of children who are excluded. Stirling (1993:15) supports this view, stating that during her research she found that children were frequently told to apply to a "more suitable school". The child appeared to be considered unworthy of being at that school. This often justified excluding or getting rid of certain pupils.

Research done by McLean (1987:304) indicates that a school's formal exclusion rate reflects its exclusion policy rather than its disruption level. The findings of Galloway, Martin and Wilcox (1985:59) were consistent with this: "the cause of exclusion, if not the disruption itself, lies to some extent in the attitude, policies and practices of the school". McLean (1987:304) also found that senior staff acknowledged the need to discriminate between referrals from different teachers. The concern thus was not so much with the actual disruption, as with other factors.

Parffrey (1994:119) found that heads (principals) who did not exclude, were seen as weak and ineffectual by their staff. Castle and Parsons (1997:5) quotes the 1996 Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) Report "that head teachers often feel under pressure to be seen to take a hard line on discipline which results in higher exclusion rates". Research conducted by Carpenter (1998:10) quotes the National Center for Educational Statistics (1998), which discovered that during the 1997–1998 school year, only 50% of secondary teachers reported that the principals enforced school conduct rules and backed them up when necessary. By 1993–1994, the figure dropped to 45.8%.

According to McLean (1987:305), low exclusion schools have a policy of minimizing exclusion as this was incompatible with their philosophy and ethos. Christian principles of respect for the individual and forgiveness made it inappropriate to reject a wayward

pupil. Unifying values i.e. shared values and beliefs among teachers and pupils provide a common set of principles and a strong community identity. Contrary to this, Gersch and Nolan (1994:35) opposes McLean's (1987) view, stating that the disciplinary ethos of the school will deteriorate, unless it can be seen as taking strong action against challenging behaviour through the use of the exclusion process.

Imich (1994:9) on the other hand, found that there was a wide discrepancy in the excluding patterns of different schools i.e. that a minority of schools are excluding a majority of pupils. He states that there is existing evidence of aspects of management that can result in schools effectively coping with pupil behaviour. Imich (1994) cite the Elton Report (1989:13) which notes that the most effective schools are those "that have created a positive atmosphere based on a sense of community and shared values".

Hyman and Perone (1998:12) found that when students perceive the school personnel, especially the principal, as fair and caring, they feel they have a stake in making the school safe. These findings suggest the need to examine how unfair, punitive educators contribute to student alienation, disruption and violence.

The literature shows there is a distinct relationship between attitude and expulsions. Educator attitude, the attitude towards creating a positive image of the school, attitude of society towards learners who violate the code of conduct of the school, and the disciplinary ethos of the school will influence the expulsion rate of a school. The attitude of the principal with regard to discipline, will most definitely influence expulsions at the school.

The next section will try to determine whether schools serving the advantaged areas exclude fewer learners than socially disadvantaged schools.

2.4.3 Intake and catchment areas of schools

Another factor that appears to influence expulsions is the intake and different catchment area of the school.

Research by Galloway (1976:40–47) supports the view that some schools reject behaviour that others will tolerate. He was able to link this to whether schools had had selective entry

before comprehensive re-organisation. Meier (1992:595) states that the so-called better schools often attracted “better” students. Both McManus (1987:262) and McLean (1987:309) found that there was no support for the view that high suspension rates reflect deprived catchment areas. McManus (1987:262) claims that it is assumed that some catchment areas produce more troublesome children than others. McLean (1987:309) found that, except in comparing vastly different social areas, the prevalence of socio-economic disadvantage in intake is not a reliable predictor of exclusion rate. This view is supported by the British Government, which considers the variation between schools to be “too great to be explained by the socio-economic nature of schools catchment area” (Blyth & Milner 1993:262).

Similarly, a literature survey done by Imich (1994:3) found that a small number of schools accounted for the majority of exclusions, indicating that the characteristic of a school may be a more significant predictor of pupil exclusion than the actual behaviour of the pupils. Castle and Parsons (1997:5) say that many schools serving disadvantaged areas exclude few pupils but some, with falling enrolment, experience severe difficulties because they are obliged to accept disruptive pupils excluded from other schools.

By contrast, the Secondary Heads Association (SHA) (1992:2) claim that much, if not most, of this difference in exclusion rate relates to the nature of the intake of the school, as learners from the lower socio-economic areas are already disadvantaged in every respect.

Moore (1997:9) found that rates of exclusion tend to be higher in schools where factors such as a high proportion of pupils taking free school meals or where schools have surplus places due to falling enrolment. Such schools are more likely to be found in deprived urban areas. These areas are characterised by high rates of unemployment and consequently poverty.

Lee *et al* (1990) (in Blyth & Milner 1993:265) argue that a combination of factors such as high unemployment, poverty, poor housing, etc. in economically depressed neighbourhoods further confirms the self-filling prophecy of failure. Blyth and Milner (1993:265) conclude that it should not be surprising to find that schools serving such neighbourhoods experience high levels of non-attendance and exclusions.

The discussion of catchment areas and intake of schools has been combined as they are closely related to socio-economic areas and the marketability of a school.

Disruptive and behaviourally difficult learners may not have special educational needs, but may have pressing social needs. Many schools do not have the resources, expertise or inclination to deal with these learners. In this regard, Parsons (1996:183) states that teachers are faced with larger classes, as well as a limiting and demanding National Curriculum. Teachers are forced to ration resources of time, care and attention that they can give to the most demanding children. As a result of a shortage of resources, schools may have to pay for help with problem children, which may predispose the school to remove the problem, the behaviourally difficult pupils, rather than buy solutions. The school may decide that the loss of funding for the excluded pupil is a small price to pay for the improved reputation of the school.

Hodgkin (1997:136), in response to the Education Act 1993, agreed with Parsons (1996:184), stating that "no one is denying that teachers are operating under increasingly stressful conditions, that seriously disruptive pupils may have to be removed, at least temporarily, from classrooms and schools." Castle and Parsons (1997:5) quote Hayden's research (1994), and found that if a school was suffering financial cuts, staffing problems or was overcrowded, then a child was more likely to be excluded. Castle and Parsons (1997:6) also found that a school which is unable to implement an effective behavioural policy is more likely to reach the point where exclusion occurs. Schools which are less successful in this area are also likely to experience greater disruption. These schools therefore need support with their more difficult pupils. However, because support services are stretched, they are unable to respond rapidly to the problem. Support is often reactive, and insufficient to anticipate and prevent difficulties from arising.

Snayer (Saturday Argus 27/28 May 2000:4), Chairperson of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), said in an interview that "rationalisation in education had had an impact on pupil behaviour because children had less supervision and no extra-mural activities and no release for artistic expression."

When considering disadvantaged areas, family and social stresses spring immediately to mind. A review of the literature suggests that problems are on the increase and that there are

more behaviourally difficult children and young people than in the past. Castle and Parsons (1997:5) quotes Hayden (1997) who surveyed 265 excluded pupils and found that almost all had experienced a variety of stress factors. Among these were:

- family breakdown
- social work involvement
- multiple moves/disruption
- bereavement
- violence/abuse
- accidents
- special education needs, and
- no members of household in paid work.

OFSTED (1996) provides an almost identical list of factors associated with disruption and leading to exclusion. They also included poor basic skills, limited aspiration and opportunities, poor relationships and peer pressure. These factors are likely to lead to conflict with authority.

Research done by Garibaldi, Blanchard and Brooks (1996:410) focuses on the nature of student conflict in schools. They indicate that external factors contributed heavily to the occurrence of students' in-school fighting, often leading to expulsion. Several teachers in this study, claimed that the neighbourhoods in which many of the students lived reinforced violence as a reasonable resolution to conflict. They also maintain that this violent behaviour was supported by parents who encouraged them to strike back at anyone who hits them.

Williams (1998:16) concludes that, in general, school violence is most likely in schools located in high-crime areas, in large schools with large classes, in schools containing a high percentage of male students, and in schools with weak administrators.

2.4.4 Number of learners in a school/classroom

It has been especially difficult to obtain literature on the influence of rationalisation on expulsions. As the policy of rationalisation is closely related to the ratio of educators to

learners, literature on the impact of the number of learners at a school and in a classroom was reviewed.

In a survey on exclusions, Imich (1994:3) found that a small number of schools accounted for the majority of exclusions, indicating that school factors may be a significant predictor of pupil exclusion than the actual behaviour of the pupils. Imich (1994:7) investigated the size of the school, and found no relationship between its size and the rate of exclusion. A school with a larger school population is as likely to exclude pupils as a school with a small pupil population. These findings were similar to those reported by Bullivant (1976:14) and Galloway (1976:47), who state that neither the type nor size of a school, nor socio-economic hardship, seems to affect how a school uses suspensions.

Pittman and Haughwout (1987:337) cite Conant's (1959) research into the size of a school. According to him, "bigger is better": consolidating smaller schools into large units offers students greater academic opportunity and proved to be more economical. Further, Pittman and Haughwout (1987:337) cite Lindsay (1982) who suggests that larger schools are not the most cost effective. Pittman and Haughwout (1987:338) conclude that increases in school size do not produce proportionate increases in academic offerings or in finances; instead it creates reduced individual participation in school activities, decreased attendance, and less expressed satisfaction with the school. These findings contradict Conant's (1959) belief that big schools provide better resources and therefore better experiences for students. Similarly Longworth-Dames (1977:170) found that a comprehensive school (a school that provided education for pupils of all levels and types) as a large organisation, is less responsive to individuals by virtue of its size.

Contrary to the above findings, Husen (1979:167) found that in big schools, relationships tend to be more formal and rigid. Contact between teacher and learners also tends to be less frequent and more impersonal. Enrolments exceeding four hundred to five hundred students make it difficult for teachers to identify the students who belong to the school. When the number rises from one-thousand to one-thousand five hundred, difficulties in even identifying the teacher begin to be felt. Andrews, Taylor, Martin and Slate (1998:209) found that research done by Costenbader and Markson (1994) indicates a strong relationship between suspensions and dropping-out, with the strength of that relationship differing by school size i.e. schools with fewer than 500 students had 16-20% of dropouts with at least

one suspensions; whereas 46–50% of dropouts had been suspended one or more times in school with a student population of 2000 or more. Pittman and Haughwout (1987:337) found that school size does have a potential influence on the drop-out rate. Larger student bodies appear to produce a less positive social environment, less social integration, and less identification with the school.

Meier (1992:606) found that, at the heart of the coalition of essential schools, teachers cannot perform well if they do not know their student well. This means that size and scale are critical. Big schools lead to the depersonalisation of work, and can have an influence on discipline. Contines (1996:269) believes that teachers should continue to increase the extent to which youngsters come into contact with caring adults, a goal that is often more easily achieved in a small school setting. Contines (1996:269) stresses that the trend towards creating smaller, more personalised school settings must increase. As children have fewer caring adults providing them with strong role-models at home, schools must do their part to provide these experiences to impart values whose absence contributes to increased violence. It thus appears that the size of school does play a pivotal role in the suspensions and expulsions of learners.

There is also an increasing awareness of the effect that educational resources and marketability of the school has on suspensions and expulsions. In Britain, the 1988 Education Reform Act and subsequent legislation i.e. the 1993 Education Act, established and further promoted an “education market”; this led to an increase in the number of exclusions (Hayden 1994:257). Hayden (1994:259) further states that competition between schools was deliberately fostered with the explicit aim of improving academic results and efficiency in the system, ignoring the needs of the “less marketable” child. Formula funding and publishing league tables positively discourages schools from accepting or retaining children who contribute little to the performance indicators of a school.

Evidence relating to the influence of the size of the school on expulsions appears to be inconclusive. However, it is possible to hypothesise that the number of learners in a school and consequently the number of learners in a class, will affect the expulsion rate of the school.

The next section will review literature on programmes and guidelines available to curtail expulsions.

2.5 PROGRAMMES OR GUIDELINES TOWARDS MINIMISING SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS

Thus far the literature reviewed covered the factors that influence suspensions and expulsions, as well as the most common reasons for expulsions. The next section will survey the literature on the type of programmes and guidelines that minimise suspension and expulsion rates. It is universal practice that in-school suspensions precedes out-of-school suspensions or expulsions.

This section will firstly examine the various theoretical models on which suspensions are based, which can also be utilised for expulsions. Sheets (1996:87) divided suspension models into four categories: firstly, the punitive model, which is the most commonly used. This model assumes that punishment such as in-school suspensions will eliminate misbehaviour. Strict rule enforcement, a jail-like atmosphere, and punitive activities characterise this plan.

The second model, the discussion format, seeks to change behaviour by solving student problems. Activities are used to improve the student's self-esteem, communication and problem-solving skills. This model assumes that active discussions with the programme staff will help students to develop appropriate ways to deal with school policies and influence appropriate behaviour.

The third model, is the academic model which assumes that the behaviour causing the suspension is a result of student frustration with learning and that if basic academic skills are improved, the student's need to exhibit inappropriate behaviour may go away. Tutoring, goal-setting and structure are an essential part of this format.

The individual model, assumes that the reasons for student misbehaviour vary from student to student. It seeks to change student behaviour by adopting components of the three aforementioned types of programmes, and includes an evaluation component.

Jones (1997:30) notes that most writers champion either “hard” and punitive solutions or “soft” and therapeutic solutions. Carpenter (1998:12) suggests that educators would be wise to take a mixed nature view of human beings. Carpenter (1998:12) quotes the National Centre for Educational Statistics (1998:6), stating that school systems already combine hard and soft approaches.

Elias (1998:1) found that, in reviewing the literature on how to handle adolescents with aggressive, violent and anti-social behaviour, punitive approaches are singularly unsuccessful in creating positive behaviour change as greater focus is placed on the negative consequences. Such approaches are more likely to breed resentment and revenge than contrition and set up cycles of accelerated misbehaviour, punishment and retribution until the offending person is removed from the setting. This is more for social control, than for any likelihood of rehabilitation.

Similarly, Hyman and D’Alessandro (1984:43) found that the extent to which a student behaves in a disrespectful and/or defiant manner is largely dependent on how adults in the school interact with that student. Punitive teachers and administrators “merely cause students to suppress their anger and hostility until the inevitable moment when it erupts against people and property”.

The enactment of “zero-tolerance” policies (advocated by the American Federation of Teacher and other groups) require the automatic removal of students – either through suspension, expulsion or transfer – who perpetrate acts of violence – the use of armed security guards to patrol and monitor student behaviour while school is in session is also advocated. Carpenter (1998:10) quotes the National Centre for Education Statistics (1998), stating that more than 75% of United States school systems have zero-tolerance policies for specific offences. Kader Asmal, Minister of Education, in his document, Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (2000:10), provides educators with a guide to alternatives to corporal punishment. Its aimed at the governing body of schools, principals and educators, and offers alternative disciplinary measures depending on the level of misconduct by learners.

A Cape Town principal has introduced the policy of “zero-tolerance” at his school with successful results. Smith, the principal, said that he had realised zero-tolerance was the only way to whip his school into shape. He believes that if “you get the basics right, everything

else falls into place". The school started out with a 'no littering' policy, now learners are obeying all the rules, even the pettiest ones (Sunday Times 2001:2).

Carpenter (1998:13) criticises the one-size-fits-all zero-tolerance policy and programmes as misguided. He believes punishing all offenders may be necessary in some places, for some offenses, but not others. Mitigating and aggravating circumstances should be considered. Carpenter (1998:13) asks the question: "Why is context not considered?" Most principals know why; "If you treat kids differently for the same offence, you had better be able to justify it — and principals have little time to debate it."

Hyman and Perone (1998:11) found that, as a consequence of misperceptions regarding the real extent of school violence, schools have increasingly adopted law enforcement rather than educational models to support violence reduction. Hyman and Perone (1998:11) also indicate that there is little or no evidence supporting the efficacy of many contemporary youth violence prevention approaches, including the use of metal detectors, increased police presence in schools, searches of lockers and students, student and staff identification cards, amongst others. A possible unintended consequence of overdependence on police intervention might also be the undermining of school authority. That is, students may perceive school authorities as impotent and may feel more free to act in the absence of police.

Noguera (1996:9) also found that many politicians and school officials have attempted to quell the tide of violence by converting schools into prison-like facilities. Despite the tough talk and punitive actions, little reason for optimism exists, given the poor track record of these methods and the persistence of violence in schools. Noguera (1996:10) concludes that two main problems exist with "get tough" measures:

- they do not address the causes of school violence, and
- they do not help us understand why schools have become increasingly vulnerable to its occurrence.

Wagener's (2000:6) research at Brooklyn High School in New York, indicates that some headway was made after years of violence. He cites the installation of metal detectors, a

police presence and the training of teachers and students in conflict resolution skills. New York City also made it mandatory for anyone bringing a weapon to school to be expelled. The results they found, were not spectacular, but the confiscation of guns were down from 129 in 1997 to 90 in 1998. Over the same period, assaults on teachers were down by 24%.

On the other hand, Dupper and Bosch (1996:149) recommend alternatives to a punitive approach i.e. proactive, preventative and early intervention strategies as the key to reducing suspensions for relatively minor offences, including physical aggression towards other students and other behaviour problems. They suggest that schools need to enlarge their repertoire of disciplinary strategies. They also promote the introduction of school-based prevention programmes to help students learn how to resolve conflicts in a non-aggressive manner. Moreover, they recommend that teachers and administrators be equipped with skills in handling all forms of behaviour.

A key recommendation of Garibaldi, Blanchard and Brooks (1996:409), was that New Orleans schools should rely less on suspensions and focus instead on alternative disciplinary methods that more effectively and equitably address student misbehaviour. Accordingly, the New Orleans school district adopted school-based conflict resolution as one of several alternatives to suspension and expulsion. They found that the implementation of conflict resolution practices, the enhancement of teachers' classroom management skills, and the importance of school environmental conditions are important responses to problems associated with school discipline and safety.

Quinn (1991:76) quotes Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko and Fernandez (1989), who state that schools that are effective in educating at-risk youth not only match intervention strategies in response to differences in student needs, but also recognise some basic psychological needs such as the need for attachment. This attachment, also called social bonding, enables the student to identify with the school. It also implies commitment, involvement and believing in the norms, activities and values of the institution. A low attachment level signifies that the student will disregard the feelings of others and will state "I don't care".

Larsen (1994:153) and Tolan, Guerra and Kendall (1995:580) focus on a different approach to children and violence. Larsen (1994:153) approaches the problem primarily through skills-building, prevention and intervention approaches for children and their families.

Subsequently, there was an increased recognition of the importance of the interaction between individuals and their environments for understanding and intervening in problems of violence (Tolan *et al* 1995).

Pianta and Steinberg (1992:77) conclude that children bring their social developmental histories with them to school and that the social environment at school determines what violence is exhibited in that setting. Baker (1998:36) also found that if the school environment is perceived as hostile or threatening, students may respond with a range of violent behaviours. Alternatively, the failure of schools to make contact with at-risk students promotes alienation and distancing which may encourage non-normative behaviour at school. Baker (1998:37) found that school reform efforts which start with the idea that schools are intentional communities, have shown a remarkable improvement in schooling for a variety of at-risk students.

Kittle and Meares (1976:62) discovered that an in-school suspension programme was beneficial to middle-level students because students remain in school and are thus available to the supportive services personnel who could help them with their problems. The recommendations formulated by Knopf (1991:460) on suspension programmes are summarised below:

- Programme goals and objectives should be formulated. When programme goals are not properly formulated; it is easy to forget them and difficult to assess what the programme has accomplished.
- More emphasis should be placed on the counselling aspect. The approach should be more positive, corrective and rehabilitative.
- Parents should be involved in the planning and implementation of the programme and as many support personnel e.g. school psychologists, aides, peer counsellors and assistants should be involved.
- Programmes should have an academic, counselling and a behaviour management component.
- Evaluation of the programme should be periodic.

Parsons (1996:184) supports this, stating that there is little doubt about the causes of exclusion and that many agencies need to be involved in tackling the problem. He recommends that the various sectors such as education, social services, health, the police, parents, and others be involved in the life of the excluded child. Parsons (1996:185) later, admits that multi-agency work is difficult to establish and sustain, but that it has to be part of the way forward. Parsons (1996:185) also stresses that this co-ordinated multi-agency approach requires adequate resources and a clear focus (*see fig.2.1 p.45*).

With regards to the various programmes listed, Short and Noblett (1985:112–116) found that the majority of the programmes they studied were mainly punitive with only a minimal academic component.

In conclusion, it appears that there is a movement away from punitive measures toward more proactive preventative measures. But the type of disciplinary measures used depends on whether the headmasters/principals have the time and the resources at their disposal to treat each case on merit. Zero-tolerance policies are too authoritarian and an easy way out and do not provide guidance to the child. The building of high fences around a school and expelling students, are all easy, but do not solve the problem of violence, drugs, aggression or racial slurs or sexual harrassment.

The next section will focus on the role of the school/educational psychologist in the suspension and expulsion process.

2.6 THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL/EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Schools have become aware of the need for school psychologists to aid the transformation process. Hyman and Perone (1998:12) suggest that in order to help change a climate in which punishment is valued, school psychologists can begin by sensitizing educators about the misperceptions fostered by misleading media reports. Hyman and Perone (1998:12) suggest that, school psychologists, by virtue of their training, are ideal candidates to play a role in this area. However, they must be knowledgeable about the extent of school crime in order to avoid supporting policies that are based on promoting political agendas rather than being grounded in psychological theory and research.

Student violence and substance abuse are complex problems and thus simplistic, punitive solutions have seldom been demonstrated to be effective. School psychologists thus need to critically assess statistics in order to make an informed interpretation which would serve as a bases for a systematic, proactive involvement in policy making (Hyman & Perone 1998: 22).

School psychologists, because of their knowledge of children's psychological development and of the environment and culture of schools, and because of their role as organisational consultants and mental health advocates, should emerge as leaders in the creation of schools as caring communities.

Gersch and Nolan (1994:43) affirm that educational psychologists in Britain are well placed within the local education authorities and schools to assist through offering advice, support and consultancy. There is scope for educational psychologists in working with schools, and the local education authorities to explore ways of involving pupils actively in problem solving and planning.

Stirling (1992:128) described the difficulties facing educational psychologists in Britain. The dilemma was described as "seeking to identify individual children's needs, yet being the servant of authority". Psychologists are torn between wanting to assist each child and bureaucratic constraints such as finances and the implementation of other educational programmes.

Baker (1998:29) acknowledges that violence is rife and commonly accepted in American schools. Baker (1998:37) found that school psychologists have been actively involved in addressing problems of violence in schools. He recommends several ways in which school psychologists might address the community life of their school on behalf of the children. Baker (1998:29), Morrison, Furlong and Morrison (1994:237), and Poland (1994:175) agree that there is a pressing need to help schools deal with crises and for school psychologists to take an active role when school crises teams are organised. Poland (1994:176), however, contends that, administrators like school psychologists lack training, preparation and planning in times of crises. Morrison *et al* (1994:237), however, states that school psychologists have many skills to offer school safety efforts, even though it may require a change of focus of training and professional practice. School psychologists may feel

unprepared to address the behaviours of disruptive and violent students. It has been suggested that university training programmes generally fail to provide school personnel with sufficient training in conflict resolution, violence intervention and prevention (Costenbader & Markson 1998:62).

Furlong, Babinski, Poland, Munaz and Boles (1996:28) researched the factors associated with school psychologists' perception of campus violence. In this study, 123 school psychologists responded to a survey about their perceptions, experiences and readiness to meaningfully address school violence. 78% of the school psychologists reported that they do not worry about their personal safety at school, 73% felt unprepared to deal with school violence and 85% had not received specialised training in this area. The recommended action of this study was to prepare school psychologists to help prevent, reduce and respond to violence. It is also suggested that school psychologists can be effective collaborators in current school violence prevention efforts.

School psychologists should step forward to provide leadership as their training has provided them with a perspective to understand different problems and crises. But Poland (1994) stresses that psychologists should get off the sidelines and take an active role in crisis planning.

Furlong, Morrison and Pavelski (2000:88) believe that the school psychologists' unique contribution lies in their ability to help schools own and modify the conditions that are embedded within schools that may cause distress or harm to students. Furlong *et al* (2000:89) further states that school psychologists have become more involved in reducing risk factors that lead to violence; they have the potential to promote support to move into areas such as early prevention, services for all students and co-ordination of comprehensive pupil-support programmes.

Both Baker (1998:30) and Parsons (1996:185) believe that when dealing with excluded children, a co-ordinated, multi-agency approach is required which is adequately resourced and clearly targeted. Figure 2.1 clearly illustrates the agents and agencies involved with excluded children.

Figure 2.1: Agents and agencies involved with excluded children (in Parsons, 1994:14)



Parsons's (1996:185) multi-agency approach implies that when a child is vulnerable to **expulsion**, all aspects of his or her life should be systematically managed. The child's existing **physical**, psychological, social and intellectual condition should be examined **simultaneously**. This approach, being more systematic and holistic, could prove highly effective.

Baker (1998:30) posits that an adequate response to violence among children must include **the child**, family and community-centered initiatives. He found that school violence could be **curbed** and enhanced if the social context of the school and the complex social interactions that result in the expression of violent behaviour in that setting is considered.

Lowenstein (1990:35) stresses that educational psychologists, parents, teachers and many other professionals should know what should happen to children once they are excluded. They should also be aware of what could be done to prevent such an exclusion and under what circumstances exclusion is necessary. In cases where teachers and heads disagree on a particular decision, the school psychologist can play an important role in helping to plan and implement a decision which is best for all concerned. Morrison, Furlong and Morrison (1994:253) believe that training which school psychologists receive positions them well to understand the issues of risk, resilience, prevention and intervention associated with school safety.

Costenbader and Markson (1998:60) found that although positive, non-punitive approaches to manage disruptive and destructive behaviour should be considered before suspension, this was not always the case. They also found that all the well documented and serious side-effects associated with punishment may accompany the use of suspension, including generalised suppression of behaviour, increases in maladaptive behaviour that were not targeted and withdrawal from/or an avoidance of school staff members. Costenbader and Markson (1998:60) found that many educators and mental health professionals have also expressed concern over the potential disadvantages of external suspensions.

This dissertation will endeavour to investigate the role of the school psychologist in Western Cape schools. The current process of removing troublesome students from educational settings is a reactive solution to a problem that deserves more thoughtful alternatives — something which psychologists can provide.

In conclusion, research has indicated that the philosophy and the ethos of the school does indeed influence expulsions rates, since it is an important determinant of student behaviour. The attitude of the principal, other educators, the governing body and society at large will determine whether or not learners will be expelled and whether punitive or proactive, intervention strategies will be implemented. The most common reasons for expulsions were physical aggression, substance abuse and racial conflict. The literature also highlights how school/educational psychologists could contribute towards the minimisation of expulsions.

The next chapter will review international policy trends with regard to suspensions and expulsions. It will also focus and analyse the South African Schools Act and other regulations that influence the suspension and expulsion phenomenon.

CHAPTER 3: EDUCATIONAL POLICY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines British, American and South African policies with regards to suspensions and expulsions, while taking into consideration the provision, circulars and guidelines provided by the respective Education Departments. Under discussion will be aspects such as provisions made for expulsions, type of expulsions, responsibility for discipline, procedures to be followed, as well as those aspects of exclusion that are unique to the countries mentioned.

3.2 BRITISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

In Britain, the Education Act 1997 ('the Act') was one of the last statutes introduced by the previous Conservative government. The changes introduced by the Act as discussed in this section relates specifically to school exclusions. According to Monk (1997:277), the act makes provisions relating to exclusions, under the following headings: responsibility for discipline, exclusion of pupils from schools, the Local Education Authority (LEA) plans, and children who are permanently excluded from two or more schools. The Act amends the Education Act of 1996, which consolidates the existing education legislation (Monk 1997:277).

3.2.1 Responsibility for discipline

According to Monk (1997:279), Section 2 of the Education Act (1997) establishes a new overall framework for responsibility for discipline. While the powers of the head teacher remain unchanged, their influence is indirectly reduced as a result of the new provisions that places additional duties on governing bodies and enhances the influence of parents and the Secretary of State, who is responsible for education. A circular by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:45) states that the governing body should oversee the head teacher's sound maintenance of discipline at the school in line with their policies. The head teacher has a day-to-day responsibility for discipline, with the backing of the governing body.

Under the new law, governing bodies are required to ensure that policies designed to promote good behaviour and discipline on the part of its pupils are pursued at the school. The need for governing bodies to take a more proactive role in school disciplinary matters is to be encouraged, particularly in the light of the evidence which indicate that “governors are more reluctant than head teachers to exclude pupils” and prone to “exert a moderate influence” (The Office for Standards in Education – OFSTED 1996 [paragraph 19–20]). Monk (1997:278) also states that enhancing the involvement of governors may help reduce the level of exclusions and should avoid future conflicts.

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:45) further states, that the governing body should set the framework of a school discipline policy through a written statement of general principles. This should take into account the needs of all pupils, including any with special educational needs. It should also be reviewed regularly. The statement should cover:

- the ethos of the school, its values and the boundaries of acceptable behaviour
- the school’s moral code
- positive and constructive rules of conduct, and
- the rewards and punishment to be fairly and consistently applied.

The OFSTED 1996 (paragraph 45) report also reveals that schools that have good behaviour policies are more likely to be low-excluding schools. General school behaviour policies are particularly important in the context of exclusions, in that they can stipulate not only the type of behaviour that will result in exclusions, but also the range of alternate measures that should be taken prior to considering exclusions.

Both the OFSTED 1996 (paragraph 45) and the Elton Report (1989:128) recommend that schools “should develop an active partnership with parents as an aid to promote good behaviour” (Monk 1997:279).

In the next section the researcher will review the different types of exclusions unique to the British Education System.

3.2.2 Types of exclusion

Imich (1994:4) cites the 1986 Education Act, which identifies three different types of exclusions:

- *Fixed-term exclusion* – the pupil is given a definite date to return to the same school. Guidelines indicate that the return should be within a short period such as five days.
- *Indefinite exclusion* – the pupil remains out of school pending further investigation. The Local Education Authority's guidelines state that the pupil must be re-admitted to school within a 15 day period or the procedure for a permanent exclusion is invoked.
- *Permanent exclusion* – the pupil is unable to return to the original school, and the Local Education Authority is required to provide alternative provisions.

The researcher sees the need to expand on the length of exclusions.

3.2.2.1 Fixed period exclusion

Sections (SS) 6 and 7 of the Education Act (1997) refers directly to exclusions. The amendment from "15 days in any one term" to "45 days in any one school year" gives schools more flexibility in the use of fixed period exclusions [Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:32)]. Monk (1997:280) asks whether schools now have the power to exclude pupils for up to nine weeks within a single term, as opposed to the three under the old law. He believes that this raises similar problems i.e. that the "longer a child is out of school the less likely they are to return" (Hodgkin 1997:136). The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:32) states that individual exclusions should be for the shortest time necessary, taking into consideration that exclusion of more than a day or two makes it more difficult for pupils to re-integrate into the school.

3.2.2.2 Permanent exclusion

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:33) states that:

- a decision to exclude a child permanently is a serious one. It is a final step, indicating that a wide range of other strategies have been tried and have failed, including the use of a Pastoral Support Programme. It is also an acknowledgement that the school can no longer cope with the child. The Secretary of State does not (own emphasis) expect a head teacher to exclude permanently, a pupil for a “one-off” or first offence.
- a head teacher considering excluding a pupil for a single block of more than 15 school days in a term must plan:
 - to enable the pupil to continue his or her education
 - how to use the time to address the pupil’s problems, and
 - with Local Education Authority, what educational arrangements will best help the pupil to re-integrate into the school at the end of the exclusion.

3.2.3 The use of exclusion

According to Section 68 of the School Standards and Framework Act (1998), as cited in the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:31), a decision to exclude a child for a fixed period or permanently should be taken only:

- in response to serious breaches of a school’s discipline policy
- once a range of alternative strategies have been tried and have failed, and
- if allowing the pupils to remain in schools would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or of others in the school.

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:31) also states that exclusions should not be decided in the heat of the moment unless there is an immediate risk to the safety of others in the school or the pupil concerned.

3.2.4 Drug-related exclusion

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:33) also makes allowances for drug-related exclusions. The law is not specific; it states that exclusions would be the appropriate course, but it is for the school to decide whether or not to exclude permanently for all incidents connected with drug misuse. Permanent exclusions, according to the law, may make students more vulnerable to exposure to drugs.

3.2.5 When exclusion is not appropriate

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:32) provides a clear exposition of when it is inappropriate to exclude a pupil. These reasons include:

- minor incidents such as failure to do homework
- poor academic performance
- lateness or truancy
- pregnancy
- breaching school uniform policy including hairstyle or wearing jewellery, and
- punishing pupils for the behaviour of the parents, e.g. by extending a fixed period exclusion until the parents agree to attend a meeting.

In Britain, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:35) advises schools to consider amongst other things, the age of the pupil and the possible special educational needs of the child. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) 1996 (paragraph 18) report also states that, in addition to these factors, exclusion be a “proportionate punishment” and that although it is not stipulated by statute, it should be considered in the light of the concern about the inappropriate use of exclusion. The British Courts have emphasized the importance of a school being able to develop its own ethos with regard to discipline and acceptable behaviour.

In a recent case, where a pupil was excluded for allegedly being overheard saying “why don’t you just f*** off”, the court specifically addressed the issue of proportionality and held that the decision to exclude in these circumstances was both reasonable and proportionate (Monk 1997:283). The OFSTED 1996 (paragraph 18) report also states that “the implications of permanent exclusions are too profound for it to depend on the difference in school philosophy”. This implies that government policy must provide guidelines which are strictly adhered to.

Monk (1997:287) concludes that there is inherent conflict in the government policy in connection with exclusions. On the one hand, the government encourages diversity in the provision of education i.e. allows school’s individual ethos, while on the other hand, the government circular encourages a restrictive use of exclusion. The provision in the Act fails

to resolve this tension. In fact, it serves to enhance the role of local governors and parents and, at the same time, move closely to regulate the procedures to be followed and give greater weight to the advice to the Secretary of State.

3.2.6 Incidence of exclusion and “informal exclusion”

In Britain there has been a substantial increase in the number of recorded (own emphasis) school exclusions over the 1990's. Moore (1997:9) states that in 1995–1996 there were 11,084 pupils permanently excluded from schools. This out of a total school going population of 8 million. This information was substantiated by Canterbury Christ Church College (1996), which found that the number of pupils permanently excluded from September 1995 to July 1996 reached 13,581.

Both Gillburn (1996:4) and Stirling (1993:16) found that the number of pupils officially recorded as “permanently excluded” represents only a small percentage of the total number of pupils not attending school, and that evidence suggests that some schools tend to operate informal exclusion procedures. Stirling (1993:17) estimates that only 10% of the total number of exclusions is officially recorded and that the figures provided were just the “tip of the iceberg”.

3.2.7 Re-integration

The British education system makes provision for the re-integration of excluded pupils into new schools and sees it as a challenge to both schools and pupils. The Local Education Authority (LEA) also provides extra support as well as extra funding for the school. The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:35) states that excluded pupils should only (own emphasis) be educated outside mainstream schools where there are significant problems that are better addressed in a different environment. Ideally many permanently excluded pupils should rejoin a mainstream or special school within days or weeks.

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:35) also advises that the Secretary of State expects that most primary aged pupils excluded from schools should be re-integrated within one term. However, for pupils approaching the end of compulsory schooling, returning to school may be unrealistic. The Department for Education and

Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:35) also states that schools should not make subjective judgements as to the suitability (own emphasis) of certain children for the school. They cannot refuse admission to pupils because of their past disciplinary record, including any previous exclusions. The only exception is where a pupil has been permanently excluded by two or more schools.

As to the final section in the Act, Section (SS) 11 Part III, which deals with school admissions, Monk (1997:285) postulates that where the Local Education Authority is the admission authority for a school, the governing body can appeal against the decision of the authority to admit to the school “the twice excluded pupil”. Hodgkin (1997:136) argues that some schools would become overburdened with excluded pupils. On the other hand, these pupils will be kept out of the school system and not receive a satisfactory education.

3.2.8 Provisions for excluded pupils

The British Education System makes provision for a wide range of alternatives for excluded pupils. Lovey, Docking and Evans (1994:329) found that there were two main types of provisions for excluded pupils i.e. off-site units and “outreach teams” which support pupils in mainstream schools. Off-site units or “sin-bins” are alternative arrangement made for pupils who reach a stage when no positive or productive learning takes place in an ordinary school. Outreach work, on the other hand, refers to assistance or intervention strategies provided to the student on detection of the problem. Both Lovey *et al* (1994:329), and Gersch and Nolan (1994:36) say that there appears to be a decline in off-site provisions and a shift towards outreach approaches.

Both Garner (1994:3) and Parsons (1996:183) raise the question as to what education, a pupil excluded for a long period, will receive. This, they say, is a matter of concern as evidence suggests that provisions for pupils out of school are extremely unsatisfactory. The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) 1999 (10:33) states that the British Government is committed to ensuring that by 2002 all pupils excluded for more than 15 school days at a time receive full-time and appropriate education whilst excluded.

3.2.9 Procedure for appeals

Section 7 of the Education Act amends the procedure to be followed on appeals against exclusion or re-instatement. Under the existing law, appeal hearings must take place within 15 school days of the appeal being lodged (Monk 1997:280). The appeal committee must ascertain the time, as is reasonably convenient for all persons involved to attend (Monk 1997:281). The Act thus clearly indicates that it is no longer adequate, or lawful, simply to give parents notification of their rights to make representation. A failure to comply with the new requirements will mean parents will be able to challenge the decision through judicial review on the basis of procedural error.

3.2.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, Castle and Parsons (1997:4) believe that behaviourally challenging pupils are a permanent feature of the education culture in the United Kingdom and that the problem of permanent exclusion should be seen as a part of normal provision. Castle and Parsons (1997:4), Moore (1997:9), McLaughlin (1999:13), Parsons and Howlett (1996:109) and Garner (1994:3) all agree that permanent exclusions from schools are continuing to rise. Castle and Parsons (1997:4) contend that the realisation that “bad behaviour” is not a temporary phenomenon is an important “redefinition” and should thus be seen as part of normal provisions and not as an exception. Castle and Parsons (1997:5) conclude that exclusion from schools is an educational and social problem. It also mimics other areas of social policy where, for short-sighted budgetary and more fundamental ideological reasons, an increasingly punitive approach is preferred to prevention and early interventions.

The sections on exclusion in the British Education Act 1997 reflects an attempt at providing comprehensive guidelines at regulating exclusions. Even though the Act covers every aspect of exclusions i.e. individuals responsible for discipline, the appropriate use of exclusions, the alternatives available to exclusions, the procedures to be followed and the reintegration of excluded children, there still appears to be an increase in exclusions in Britain. The Act also has as its basis the judiciary. Despite this, the roleplayers appears to disregard this legislation in favour of individual philosophies. The Act also makes provisions for excluded children, however, it appears that these provisions are non-functional and unsatisfactory.

The next section will discuss the American approach to exclusion of learners.

3.3 THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In America, discipline has been regarded as a major problem for the last three decades. Educators find themselves devoting more time addressing the negative aspects of schooling, i.e. student behavioural problems, instead of improving academic performance (Garibaldi, Blanchard & Brooks 1996:408). Schwartz (1996:1) finds that there is a contradiction between school policies and practices. Many school districts and schools have comprehensive regulations for dealing with violence, but enforcement are uneven or lax. This creates a situation where teachers do not feel supported when they impose discipline, students do not feel protected, and the violence-prone think they will not be punished. Conversely, administrators express dismay when teachers do not enforce policies in their classrooms.

Garibaldi *et al* (1996:409) also state that suspension and expulsion was originally intended to serve a dual purpose:

- to offer a mechanism for teachers to temporarily dismiss violent or grossly misbehaving students from classrooms or school buildings, and
- to allow such students with an opportunity to cool down and reflect on the disruption that they may have caused.

However, these rationales have been forgotten and many students are suspended for non-violent offenses that could easily have been resolved by the teacher.

Phay (1977:1) states that until recently, few procedural requirements were placed on a public school when it decided to suspend or expel a student. Education was considered a privilege, not a right. Today, nobody can withhold education from a student without proper reason and unless proper procedures are followed.

In America the constitutional basis for due process for students can be traced to the fourteenth amendment. This says that “no state shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, or shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of the law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law” (Phay 1977:3). Similarly, Chandler (1992:139) quotes the fifth amendment, which states that a person “may not be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of the law”. In other words, if a student is to be denied life, liberty or

property, a constitutional procedure must be followed. Because of this, public schools are considered a function of “the state”, the life, liberty or property cannot be taken from a person without providing for due process (Rossouw 1989:1).

The American educational system makes provision for the following disciplinary measures, which will be discussed briefly.

3.3.1 Types of disciplinary measures

3.3.1.1 *Long-term suspensions and expulsions*

The distinction between a long-term suspension and expulsion is primarily length of time. A long-term suspension is any suspension which exceeds 10 days but is less than the amount of time between the start of the suspension and the end of the school term. An expulsion is the term most commonly used for a school separation which lasts until the end of the school term. This distinction is educational, not legal and for all practical purposes they must be handled in terms of due-process.

Out-of-school suspension is currently the most widely administered form of school discipline administered in American schools (Dupper & Bosch 1996:141).

In America, expulsion, is the most severe penalty a school can administer as a disciplinary action. Because of the severity of the penalty, formal due process must be afforded prior to the child’s removal. Gordon (1995:20) also states that even though each state has its own expulsion standards, the property and liberty interests at stake have been clearly defined by the courts.

3.3.1.2 *Alternative placements*

Gordon (1995:19) also states that the use of special placements, also referred to as alternative schools, is becoming more popular with districts. The use of an alternative placement is generally made available to students in lieu of the more severe option of long-term suspension and expulsion. This “reassignment” or transfer may be deemed an “administrative move”.

It was found in Everett v Marcase, 1977 that if alternative placements are for disciplinary reasons, a due process hearing is required and provided. The court in Everett (1977) provided: “A suspensions under Goss is a serious event in the life of the suspended child. No less so is the disciplinary transfer to another school” (Gordon 1995:19).

In Goss v Lopez, 419 US 565, 1975, the court held that when a student is suspended, a student’s liberty interest is implicated as well as the student’s education, which is a property interest (Rossouw 1989:1). As a result, the court established that prior to a suspension a child is entitled to due process, which is the minimum requirement. The student must be given oral or written notice, an explanation of the evidence and an opportunity to present his/her side of the story (Gordon 1995:19).

The court, in Goss, did provide that a student whose continued presence posed a danger to other persons or property or an ongoing threat to the disruption to the academic process, could be removed immediately (Gordon 1995:19).

In-school suspensions, i.e. suspensions from class or suspensions from particular activities generally for minor offences, have been considered as not interfering with property or liberty interest (Gordon 1995:19).

3.3.1.3 Corporal punishment

Corporal punishment in America is acceptable in Common Law. However, it has been specifically outlawed in several states and it is against board policy in a number of larger urban school systems. Nearly every state has laws requiring local school boards to have specific policies governing the use of corporal punishment (Gordon 1995:19).

At this stage the researcher considers it important to discuss America’s zero-tolerance policy as it plays a major role in the discipline of learners.

3.3.1.4 Zero-tolerance policies

In recent years, as a result of many incidence of school violence in American schools, legislation at all levels of government was implemented to reduce the availability of guns, particularly the sale of weapons to minors. Some states now hold parents legally responsible

for certain behaviours of their children, such as truancy and delinquency (Schwartz 1996:2).

The term “zero-tolerance” dates back to drug enforcement policies during the Reagan era, but the term quickly caught on amongst educators concerned about youth violence. From the early 1990s, school boards across the country adopted zero-tolerance policies for everything from gang clothing to drugs.

To deal specifically with violence in schools, President Clinton signed the 1994 Gun Free School Act, mandating a one year expulsion for students who bring weapons to schools. This bolstered the “zero-tolerance” for weapon policies of some states and school districts already in existence. The Federal (national) government, and most states, also make funds available for prevention activities through anti-crime and education legislation (Schwartz 1996:2).

Over time, the increasingly broad interpretation of zero-tolerance have resulted in a near epidemic of suspensions and expulsions for seemingly trivial events. Both Carpenter (1998:13), and Skiba and Petersen (1999:373) argue against zero-tolerance policies as erroneous one-size-fits-all remedies. The authors argue that eliminating zero-tolerance policies is “a hard sell because the concept is simple to understand” and “sounds tough”. However, they say that substituting “formulas for decisions made by people who understand the circumstances is dangerous”. Carpenter (1998:13) believes that mitigating and aggravating circumstances should be considered. Skiba and Petersen (1999:373) found that, after four years of implementing zero-tolerance policies, schools are still less safe than schools without such policies. Bumbarger and Greenberg (1999) (<http://www.state.ky>) declared that zero-tolerance policies do not lower rates of violence at schools but instead lead to increased substance abuse and drop-outs by troubled students.

In an era of increasingly public desire for “zero-tolerance” of school violence, courts are giving considerable freedom to school officials in administering student discipline (Zirkel & Gluckman 1997:63). Despite the increased support of the courts and the public for schools dealing with student discipline, and in the absence of any need to provide the kind of due process protection required in criminal courts, administrators are well advised to continue observing the advice provided by Goss v Lopez, 419 US 565, 1975 (*see Alternative*

Placements, p.56). This accords students the kind of treatment that “a fair-minded school principal would impose upon himself” (Zirkel & Gluckman 1997:63).

Carpenter (1998:11) found that currently, more than 75% of United States school systems have zero-tolerance policies for specific offences. The public remains ambivalent, supporting zero-tolerance while viewing schools as a better alternative to prison. Consequently, in a California legal case, the California State Attorney General concluded that a school district policy mandating expulsions in all cases (own emphasis) involving possession of a controlled substance or alcohol, even for students with no prior record, would be inconsistent with state law. He adds that zero-tolerance policies may violate a student’s rights to due process (Carpenter 1998:11).

Chandler (1992:139) concludes that a student in high school has the right to minimal due process in almost all instances. Students should at least be given prior notice of and an opportunity to reply to the charges. In cases involving more serious charges, the Court adheres to the full impact of due process proceedings. Chandler (1992) is also of the opinion that high school students, via personal and legal struggles, are establishing a new aspect of an old role. The role of the student is no longer one of being oppressed or dominated, but of one where the student is willing to stand up for his/her rights. Identifying not only their rights within the school’s law but also within constitutional law.

3.3.2 Form of notice

According to Rossouw (1989:4), no due process can exist without the requirements of notice having been met. The notice requirements has two aspects. *Firstly*, a school rule must warn the student that certain misbehaviour might result in long-term suspension or expulsion. *Secondly*, the student and parents must be given a statement of specific charges and grounds which, if proven, could lead to expulsion.

In an earlier case, the court decided that a telephone call to the parents informing them of their child’s impending expulsion was sufficient notice. However, most state statutes and at least one national court have since required that parents receive written notice. Rossouw (1989:7) states that sending a written notice to the student can be important when the student has reached the age of 18. The Illinois Association of School Boards recommends that “a

copy should be sent to the student who is no longer a minor to avoid a student claim of parental conflict of interest” (Rossouw 1989:7).

Expulsion laws vary from state to state. Ohio is a typical state in the way it addresses school discipline codes. The Ohio code provides in part that “each Board of Education shall (own emphasis) adopt a code regarding suspension, expulsion, or removal specifying the types of misconduct for which a student may be suspended, expelled, or removed from school and that no student shall be removed except in accordance with the code adopted by the board” (Gordon 1995:20).

Thus, the legal documents or legislation that governs a student’s removal from school is the school board code, without which there is no basis for any removal. The board code is governed by the state enabling legislation and cannot exceed these boundaries (Gordon 1995:20). Policies that govern discipline need to be school and community centred. They must reflect sound school management and be built on standards of reasonableness and fairness.

3.3.3 Conclusion

Both America and Britain have experienced major problems in discipline in schools for the last three decades. Both countries consider education a right that could not be withheld without a proper reason and unless due process or constitutional procedure has been followed. The rights of the child is entrenched in both the British Education Act and the American Constitution. Public schools in America are considered a function of the state; thus the life, liberty or property cannot be taken from a person without providing due process. The British Education Act (1997) elevates the status of the parents acting on the governing body of schools, as well as the role of the Secretary of State. Both Britain and America recognise that policies that govern discipline and expulsions are based on either the school board code or the school’s code of conduct, which are derived from the ethos of the school and the values and ideologies of the surrounding community.

In Britain, a permanent exclusion implies that the pupil is unable to return to the original school and that the Local Education Authority is required to provide alternative provisions. Similarly, in America the use of alternative placements is made available to students in place

of long-term suspensions or expulsions. These disciplinary transfers are regarded as serious events in the life of the child, and as such, a due process hearing is required and provided. America has, however, introduced a zero-tolerance policy for certain transgressions such as possession of weapons and drugs in schools. However, much criticism has been directed at the indiscriminate use of zero-tolerance policy, as there is no evidence of its success. The policy is also regarded as inconsistent with state law.

Both American and British education systems recognise and encourage diversity in individual culture, values, ethos and philosophy of the school and the community which it serves. At the same time they discourage the use of expulsions and exclusions. Nonetheless, both systems do acknowledge the right of schools to suspend or expel pupils.

The section that follows will discuss the South African education system with specific reference to expulsions.

3.4 SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

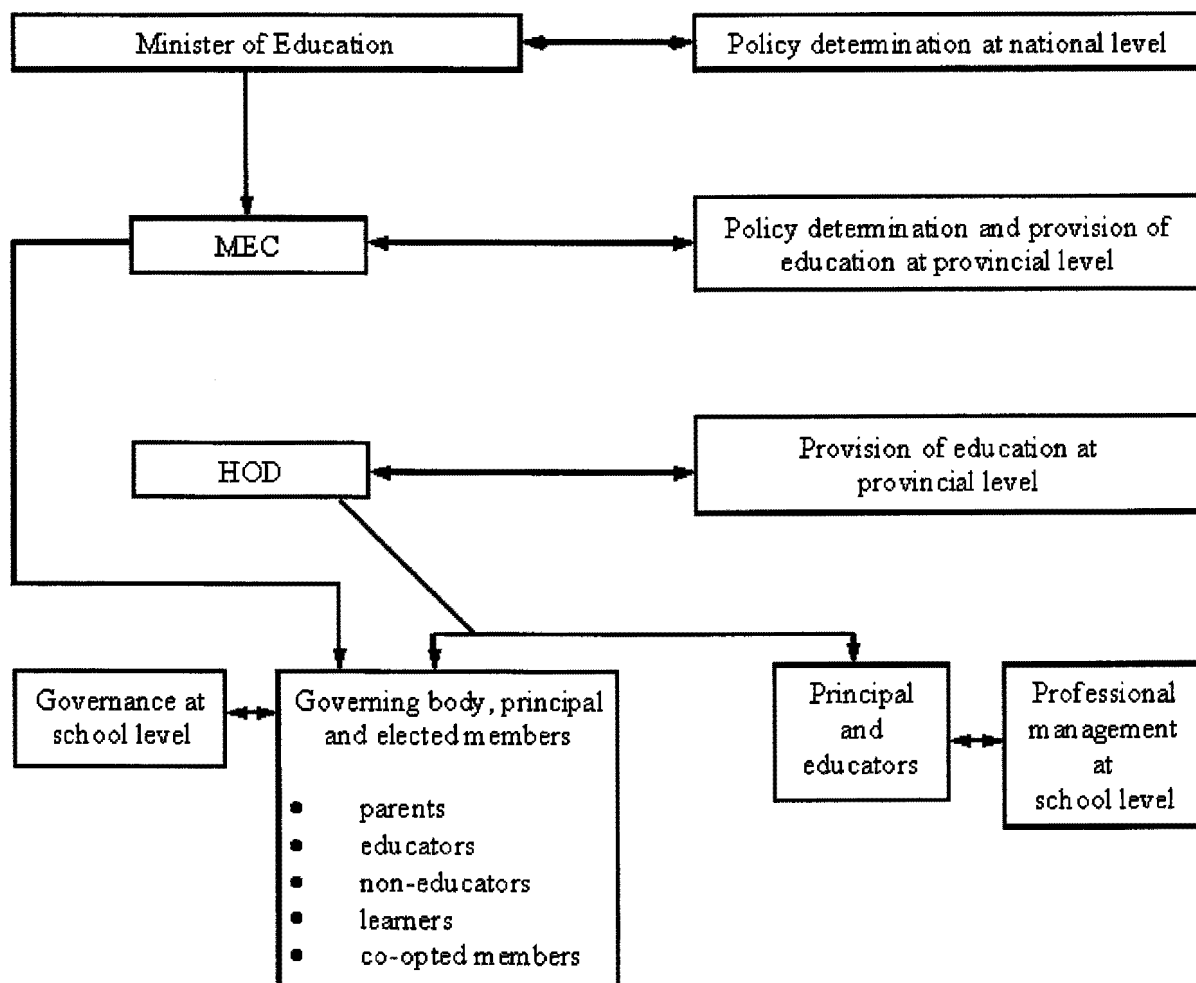
This section will review the South African Constitution, the South African School's Act, Provincial Legislation and other circulars and guidelines relating specifically to expulsions and suspensions.

The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), was one of the last pieces of legislation enacted by the government of South Africa, that provides for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools. The preamble to the Act states that "it will uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the state".

3.4.1 Responsibility for discipline – duties of the stakeholders

In this section, the duties of the various roleplayers/stakeholders as outlined by the South African Schools Act (SASA), with special reference to expulsion and suspension of learners, will be elucidated. Figure 3.1 provides a graphical exposition and an outline of the position and function of the various stakeholders in the education system, according to the South African Schools Act (SASA) Act 84 of 1996.

Figure 3.1: The position and function of the stakeholders in the education system



3.4.1.1 The minister of education (ME)

The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) stipulates that the Minister of Education (ME) in consultation with the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for that province, is responsible for the education of that province. Subsection 6(8) of South African Schools Act (SASA), states that subject to the Constitution and this Act, the Minister may, by notice in the Government Gazette and after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, determine guidelines for the consideration of governing bodies in adopting a code of conduct for learners, and formulate further regulations in terms of the Schools Act.

3.4.1.2 Member of the executive council (MEC)

The MEC within each province, after consultation with the Minister of Education, has to fulfil the following duties, amongst others:

- Provide public schools for the education of learners, out of funds set aside for this purpose by the provincial legislature subsection 12(1).
- Be responsible for education in the province.
- The MEC may determine that the governance of two or more public schools must vest in a single governing body if it is in the best interest of the education of the schools in question, subsection 17(1).
- The MEC must determine, by notice in the Provincial Gazette, which behaviour by a learner at a public school will constitute serious misconduct and the disciplinary measures to be implemented when a learner violates the rules, subsection 9(1).

The MEC must provide for due process safeguarding the interest of the learner and any other party involved in disciplinary proceedings. The MEC may also hear appeals against decisions made by the Head of Departments, subsection 9(4).

3.4.1.3 The head of department (HOD)

The National Minister of Education will consult with the Provincial Minister of Education who will in turn report to the Head of Department (HOD) of that province. The HOD may investigate the circumstances of a learner's absence from school, i.e. a learner who is subject to compulsory attendance. He or she will then take the appropriate measures to remedy the situation. Failing such a remedy, the HOD should issue a written notice to the parent of the learner requiring compliance with the South African Schools Act (SASA) subsection (1), compulsory education (*refer to 3.4.2*).

The most important functions of the HOD are:

- to appoint parents to perform the functions of the governing body if it fails to perform its functions
- take away a function from a governing body, and

- expel a learner from a public school only if found guilty of serious misconduct after a fair hearing.

3.4.1.4 Governing bodies

It is as a result of this partnership between the state and the school that the South African Schools Act (SASA) make provision for the formation of Governing Bodies. Subsection (1, 2 and 3) of South African Schools Act (SASA) states that:

- the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body
- every governing body stands in a position of trust towards the school, and
- subject to this Act and any applicable provincial law, the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the Head of Department.

Subsection 20 of SASA, stipulates that some of the function of all governing bodies are, to:

- promote the best interest of the school and strive to ensure its development
- adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school, and
- to support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions.

It is within this framework that the governing body adheres to the functions outlined by the Minister of Education, the Member of Executive Council and the Head of Department of Education within the province.

3.4.1.5 The principal

The principal is responsible for the professional management of the school. S/he must serve as a member of the governing body in his/her official capacity and must assist the governing body to perform its functions. It is also the principal's responsibility to see to the safety and care of learners during school hours. Consequently, the principal must ensure that a learner who is suspended or expelled, has somewhere to go and that s/he will be safe when leaving the school premises (Western Cape Education Department Circular 0030/99).

The function of each stakeholder is thus clearly delineated and aimed at facilitating and regulating the expulsion process.

The researcher will now review legislation governing school attendance.

3.4.2 School attendance

According to SASA subsection (1) of Act 84 of 1996, every parent must cause every learner for whom he/she is responsible to attend school from the first day of the year, in which the learner reaches the age of seven years, until the last school day of the year in which the learner reaches the age of fifteen years or the ninth grade, whatever occurs first. Thus schooling is compulsory for all learners between the ages of seven and fifteen. Any parent or other persons who, without just cause, prevent a learner from attending school will be “guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months” (Act 84, 1996:6).

The Head of Department may exempt a learner from compulsory school attendance if it is beneficial to the learner. The Head of Department must maintain a register of all learners exempted from compulsory school attendance.

This section of the School’s Act is important to the Principals and School Governing Bodies as it advises them on whether to expel learners and whether they are liable to find alternative placements.

3.4.3 Relationship between discipline and education

Discipline and disciplinary measures are a good example of a combination of legal and educational issues. The legal arrangements relate mainly to the governing body, principal and teacher’s disciplinary powers and the way these disciplinary measures are applied. Education Departments require that proper discipline be maintained in schools. This can be achieved firstly by Departmental guidelines/directives with regard to procedures to be followed in cases of misconduct, and the code of conduct as laid down by the governing body of the school.

Student discipline has become one of the major issues in the management and functioning of the school.

At this stage, it is important to discuss the issue of corporal punishment in schools, and how its prohibition requires the development of constructive alternatives in the disciplinary process.

3.4.4 Corporal punishment

During the apartheid era, South African schools were coercive institutions (*see Chapter 2, pg.19*). After 1994, apartheid was replaced by a democratic constitution guaranteeing the right to dignity, equality, freedom and security for all citizens. As a result South Africa had to follow the path of other democracies by passing legislation to outlaw corporal punishment (*Alternatives to Corporal Punishment 2000:5*).

Corporal punishment is generally defined as the purposeful infliction of pain or confinement as a penalty for an offense (Hyman & Perone 1998:17). It may be broadly defined to include such abuses as unreasonable confinement in a restricted space, inappropriate uses of time-out, excessive exercise and drills, forced ingestion of noxious substances and exposure to painful environments (Hyman & Perone 1998:17).

Sarno (1992:103) states that psychological maltreatment consists of a variety of verbal assaults including sarcasm, ridicule, name calling, and degrading statements that have the potential to anger or alienate students.

3.4.4.1 Legislation banning corporal punishment

As South Africa is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is compelled to pass laws and take social, educational and administrative measures to protect the child. The document on Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (2000:5), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991:4) stipulates that:

- States shall ensure that each child enjoys full rights without discrimination or distinctions of any kind.

- States shall protect children from physical or mental harm and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation.
- States shall protect the child from economic exploitation and work that may interfere with education or be harmful to health and well-being.
- States should protect children from illegal use of drugs and involvement in drug production or trafficking.

Section 12 of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) states that “everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way”.

The National Education Policy Act (1996) states that “no person shall administer corporal punishment or subject a student to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution”.

The South African School’s Act (Act 84 of 1996) states under subsection:

- 10(1): no person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner, and
- 10(2): any person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offense, and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault.

The prohibition of corporal punishment is part of the national programme to transform education and to bring it in line with the spirit of the Constitution and to develop alternative strategies for discipline (*see 3.4.7 for Alternatives to Corporal Punishment*).

The resistance of schools in South Africa to eliminate corporal punishment reflects our ambivalence as a nation regarding punitive punishment versus prevention and rehabilitation as a response to misconduct and substance abuse. In addition, it shows our failure to recognise corporal punishment as a form of violence.

3.4.5 The school’s code of conduct

The discipline procedures of a school and a classroom are statements of its “code of conduct”, its values, norms and its essential beliefs of how learners are meant to interact.

Schools reflect society and society use laws to regulate acceptable behaviour. An effective school environment must have rules and regulations in the form of a code of conduct to set the foundation for acceptable and appropriate learner behaviour. The school's code of conduct is essentially part of the democratisation of education in South Africa.

According to the SASA (Act 84 of 1996), subsection 8(1), a governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for the learners after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school. This consultation with the various stakeholders (i.e. the learners, parents and educators) is aimed at providing a feeling of ownership so that the meaning of the code can be understood. Subsection 8(2) of SASA also states that the code of conduct must be aimed at establishing a disciplined (own emphasis) and purposeful school environment and maintenance of the quality of the learning process.

The governing body must consult the guidelines and regulation on school discipline as determined by the Minister of Education, when formulating a code of conduct for their school [Subsection 8(3)]. Subsection 8(5) also states that the code of conduct must contain provisions of due process (authors' emphasis) safeguarding the interest of the learner and any other party involved in the disciplinary hearing. This is highlighted by a court judgement that alerts principals to the potential clash of interest between their roles as managers (in terms of the internal disciplinary process of the school) and as a member of the governing body. To avoid compromising either of these roles it would be desirable for principals to present this from the perspective of the school, but then excuse themselves from the debate and decision-making process (Circular 0030/99).

Subsection 8(4), states that nothing contained in the SASA exempts a learner from the obligation to comply with the code of conduct of the school attended by such a learner. It is imperative that both parents and learners be informed (own emphasis) about the school's code of conduct. Thus, when a learner is accepted into a school, educators tend to assume that the parents and the learner accepts the code of conduct and that the learner will act accordingly.

3.4.5.1 *Ethos governing the code of conduct*

The code of conduct should be based on an ethos that is compatible with the South African Constitution, relevant legislation, and the vision and mission of the school (Alternatives to Corporal Punishment 2000:20). It should therefore:

- reflect the rights and responsibilities of learners, educators and parents
- provide guidelines for conduct and set standards of moral behaviour
- promote self-discipline and constructive learning
- be based on mutual respect and tolerance
- give learners a clear picture of what they should or should not do
- say which channels of communication they should use, as well as
- provide grievance procedures and due process to follow in the event of misconduct e.g. a disciplinary hearing.

The next section will focus specifically on circulars and guidelines on suspensions and expulsions provided by the Western Cape Education Department.

3.4.6 Suspensions and expulsions

As this research is centred in the Western Cape, its focus is on circulars and guidelines issued by the Western Cape Education Department. In Circular 0030/99 on expulsion and suspension of learners, it is recommended that the procedure, must be strictly complied with, otherwise the expulsion of a learner could be disregarded by the Provincial Minister or by the courts. This could undermine the authority of the governing body and would not be conducive to the maintenance of discipline at school.

The section that follows emphasises the difference between suspension and expulsion.

3.4.6.1 *The difference between suspension and expulsion*

Suspension is the first phase of the procedure – “Suspension is the temporary prohibition, by the governing body, of a learner from attending a school.” (Circular 0030/99). The governing

body is the only body which has the capacity to suspend a learner, and then only after a fair hearing. Suspension comes in two forms:

- As a correctional measure, a learner may be suspended for a period not exceeding five school days 9(1)(a).
- If a governing body recommends expulsion to the Head of the WCED, such suspension must not be regarded as a suspension as a correctional measure in terms of Section 9(1)(a) of SASA. Such suspension pending expulsion may exceed a period exceeding a week.

A learner at a school may be suspended by the governing body of the school if, after a fair hearing, he/she is found guilty of serious misconduct as indicated under 3.4.7 (p:73).

Expulsion is permanent refusal/prohibition by the circuit management of a learner from attending the school concerned, if found guilty of serious misconduct (*see* 3.4.7) after a fair hearing, subsection 9(2) of the South African School Act (Act 84 of 1996).

The Member of the Executive Council must determine by notice of the Provincial Gazette: (a) what behaviour of a learner constitutes serious misconduct; and (b) that disciplinary proceedings be followed in such instances [9(3)].

Subsection 5 of SASA, stipulates that the Head of Department must make alternative arrangements for a learner who is subject to compulsory attendance in terms of Section 3(1). The HOD must find an alternative public school for a learner who has been expelled.

The procedures for suspension and expulsion are thus clearly elucidated in the circulars. Any deviation from this procedure will invalidate the request for suspension or expulsion in a court of law.

3.4.7 What constitutes serious misconduct?

Circular 0030/99 of the Western Cape Education Department states that, subject to the provisions of the Western Cape Provincial School Education Act, 1997 (Act 12 of 1997), a learner at a school shall be guilty of serious misconduct if s/he:

- has been convicted by court of a criminal offence and sentenced to imprisonment without the option of a fine, or
- is under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs during a school activity or while s/he is on the school grounds, or
- is guilty of assault, theft or immoral conduct, or
- has been repeatedly absent without leave from and/or classes, or
- conducts himself or herself, in the opinion of the governing body, in a disgraceful, improper or unbecoming manner.

While the final point may appear to be sound, the learner's misconduct is subject to the governing bodies interpretations of the rules as laid down by the schools code of conduct. Also, it may be influenced by the individual agendas of the principal or the individual members serving on the governing body.

3.4.8 Alternatives to corporal punishment, misconduct and concomitant disciplinary action

As a result of the abolition of corporal punishment in 1994, schools were faced with immense disciplinary problems. In response, the Minister of Education introduced the document entitled Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (2000). It appears that this document was also introduced to provide a certain degree of uniformity in handling different transgressions.

At this stage, it is important to discuss the various levels of misconduct and the subsequent disciplinary actions that will result, as laid out by the Minister of Education's Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (2000:25).

Level 1: Misconduct inside the classroom

E.g. failing to be in class on time; playing truant; failing to finish homework; failing to obey reasonable instructions; being dishonest with minor consequences.

Disciplinary actions – carried out by class educator:

E.g. verbal warning, community service, demerits. Additional work which is constructive, small menial tasks like tidying and detention after school, within the confines of the classroom.

Level 2: Misconduct by breaking school rules

E.g. frequently repeating level 1 misconduct and not responding to disciplinary measures taken by the educator; smoking or carrying tobacco; leaving school without permission; using abusive language; classroom disruption; disrespect to others; engaging in minor vandalism like graffiti; being dishonest with more serious consequences.

Disciplinary actions – to be executed by the Head of Department:

E.g. any disciplinary actions listed under level 1; disciplinary talk with learner; talks with learner's parents or guardian; written warnings; signing contracts with learners; daily reports signed by all educators; performing duties that improve the school environment such as cleaning, gardening or administrative tasks.

Level 3: Serious misconduct or serious violation of school codes

E.g. frequently repeating level 2 misconduct, where action taken by school authorities is considered ineffective; inflicting minor injury on another person; gambling; being severely disruptive of classes; forging documents or signatures with minor consequences; exhibiting racist, sexist or other discriminatory behaviour; possessing or distributing pornographic, racist material; possessing dangerous weapons; theft; vandalism; cheating during exams.

Disciplinary actions – to be executed by the Principal or referred to an outside agency for counselling:

E.g. written warning of the possibility of suspension from the school; referral to a counsellor or social worker; community service, once permission is granted by the provincial education department.

Level 4: Very serious misconduct or very serious violations of school code

E.g. repetition of level 3 misconduct, where disciplinary action has been ineffective; threatening another person with a dangerous weapon; causing intentional limited injury to another person; verbally threatening the safety of another; engaging in sexual abuse such as grabbing; engaging in sexual activity; selling drugs; possessing or using alcohol or drugs or being drunk or under the influence of narcotics; disrupting the entire school e.g. organising boycotts; forging documents or signatures with serious consequences.

Disciplinary actions – Principal or School Governing Body together with Provincial Education Department:

E.g. any disciplinary action listed above; referral of learner to an outside agency for counselling; application to the Provincial Education Department for limited suspension from all school activities.

Level 5: Criminal act which not only violate school codes but which breach the law

E.g. repetition of level 4 acts; intending to inflict major physical injury on another person (assault); intentionally using a dangerous weapon; sexual harassment; sexual abuse and rape; robbery; major theft; breaking and entering locked premises; and murder.

Disciplinary actions – executed by Principal, the School Governing Body together with the Provincial Education Department:

E.g. application to the Provincial Education Department for expulsion or transfer of the learner from the school. Allow for criminal or civil prosecutions which may follow, given that the misconduct is of a criminal nature.

Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (2000:10) does not conform to the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) and the Western Cape Provincial Educational Act, 1997 (Act 12 of 1997). According to the document, level 3 violations carry disciplinary actions such as written warnings with the possibility (own emphasis) of suspension. This is contrary to the Western Cape Provincial Educational Act, 1997 (Act 12 of 1997) which states that learners who are found guilty of serious misconduct, as stated in Section 3.4.7, may be expelled. In order for the document on Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (2000:10) to become legally binding, the South African School's Act has to be reviewed, and amended accordingly.

The next section will discuss the importance of conforming to the expulsion procedures.

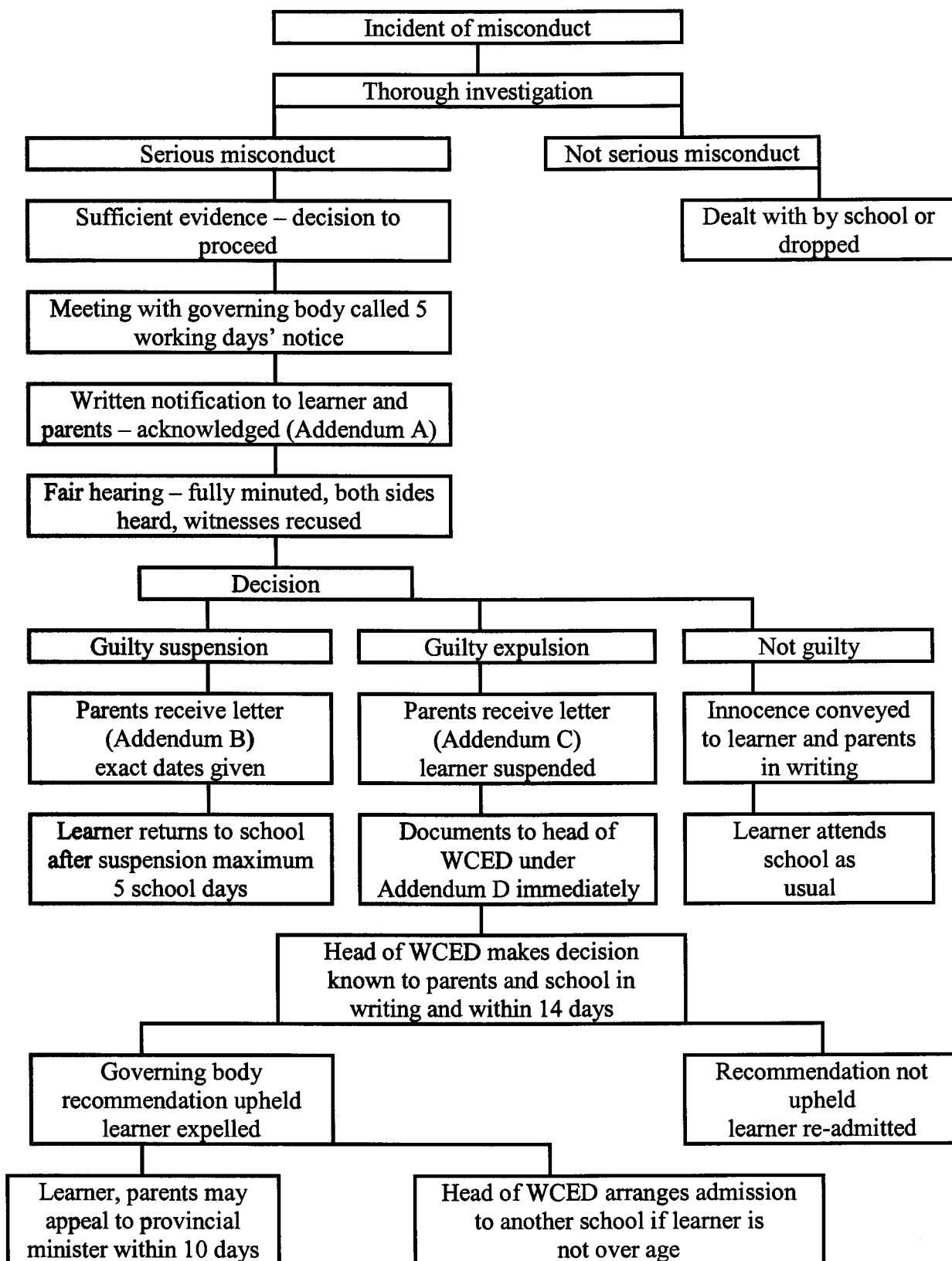
3.4.9 Procedure for expulsions (according to WCED circular 0030/99)

The Western Cape Provincial Administration has set out the official procedural guidelines to be followed if disciplinary measures are to be taken against a learner. The revised manual, circular 0030/99, replaces all other guidelines previously sent. The manual aims at informing governing bodies of:

- the seriousness and far-reaching consequences of expulsions on the future of a learner, and
- it emphasises the importance of handling expulsion cases, strictly according to the correct procedure, and to achieve uniformity when documents are submitted.

Figure 3.2 is a flow diagram which will enable principals and governing bodies to see at a glance the main procedures to be followed:

Figure 3.2: Procedure to be followed for request for expulsions (WCED circular 0030/99)



- a A special meeting of the governing body must be convened urgently to discuss the conduct of a learner whose behaviour constitutes serious misconduct and whose conduct will be prejudicial to the interest of the school if disciplinary measures are not taken.
- b The governing body must inform the learner or his/her parent(s) in writing of the misconduct and the date of the meeting without delay. Notice of 5 working days must be given. This notice is an absolute prerequisite in the procedure and must be hand delivered to the parent(s) by the governing body. If the letter is posted, it must be sent by registered mail (*see Addendum A, p.196*).
- c The governing body is compelled to conduct a thorough inquiry into the circumstances of the alleged misconduct, in order to make the correct decisions.
- d Sufficient evidence, either orally or in writing, must be reflected in the minutes, must be submitted to convince the governing body of the misconduct of the learner. The governing body must adhere to the audi alteram partem rule – i.e. it must hear the other side.
- e Both governing body and the learner charged with serious misconduct or their representatives must be afforded the opportunity to cross-examine the person who made representations.
- f It must be noted that the inquiry is a legal and fair administrative process to establish the facts so that a just decision can be made. The decision must take the rights or legitimate expectations of the persons who are affected into consideration.
- g All witnesses, e.g. a member of the school staff or a member of the governing body involved in the investigation, may only explain matters at the inquiry. That person must leave the meeting after giving evidence because the legal principle, that a person cannot be a witness, a prosecutor and a judge at the same time, applies. Only governing body members must be present for the decision-making process at the end of the hearing.

According to the amendment to the Act (Act 48 of 1999):

- h The principal should phone the circuit manager at the close of the meeting and inform him/her of what transpired and of the reason(s) why the governing body wishes the learner to be suspended.
- i If the circuit manager agrees to the request after considering the best interest of the school and the learner, the principal must inform the learner's parents accordingly. He or she should record the time and date of the circuit manager's decision, as well as the reason(s) for suspensions.
- j It is important that the circuit manager should not be present at the meeting of the governing body where the expulsion of a learner is discussed.

The governing body may, after hearing the representation, and upon conviction of the learner decide to suspend the learner as a correctional measure for a period not exceeding five school days. However, it may also decide to recommend to the Head of the WCED that the learner be expelled. In such instances, the governing body must first consult the HOD before the learner is suspended. This suspension will hold until the HOD's decision is conveyed to the school. Suspension pending expulsion may thus be for a period exceeding one week.

Addendum A, B, C and D (*see p.196–200*) serve as possible examples of letters when parents are informed of notice to suspend or expel a learner (Circular 0030/99).

Principals should note that even when the above procedure is in process, the learner remains an enrolled learner at the school. This is unless the learner or his/her parents requests a voluntary transfer to another school, or the Head of the WCED decides to expel the learner concerned from the school, or the learner concerned dies.

The need for a judicious application of the procedures as laid down by circular 0030/99 cannot be emphasised enough. An oversight in any of the stages could result in the complete expulsion procedure being annulled and contested by the parties concerned. Should a request for an expulsion be upheld by the Head of Education, a learner or his parents may appeal the decision.

3.4.10 Procedure for an appeal

It is possible for a decision made by the Head of the WCED, with regards the expulsion of a learner, to be revoked. A learner or the parent(s) may lodge an appeal against such a decision, within 10 days of the receipt of the written notice, with the Provincial Minister of Education (Circular 0030/99). Such an appeal is normally made if it is felt that due process was not adhered to. The decision of the Provincial Minister of Education is final.

3.4.11 Conclusion

South Africa's education system rapidly and dramatically changed after the 1994 elections. This was significantly noted by policy changes which have occurred over the last seven years. Each of these changes has been an attempt to provide South Africa with a single, unified education system that was more democratic and free of racialism.

It seems that the South African education system has clearly been influenced by the British system and to a lesser degree, by the American education system. South African educationists are clearly emulating the British education system in as far as the governance of the school and expulsion procedures are concerned. The British education system emphasises the role of the governing bodies and enhances the role of the parents and the Secretary of State. Similarly, the South African education system stresses the importance of the governing body, the parents and the Head of Education as role-players. However, in South Africa, the final decision to expel lies with the Provincial Head of Education of each province.

In Britain and South Africa, a permanent exclusion/expulsion means that a pupil may not return to the original school and that either the Local Education Authority or the circuit manager must provide the learner with an alternative school. The difference between the two countries lies in the fact that Britain has to provide for re-integration and alternatives in the form of "sin-bins", "off-site units" or "outreach teams". South Africa does not provide for the re-integration of learners or any form of follow-up procedures for expelled learners.

Subsection (1) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 appears to be particularly contentious, in that the Head of Education is only responsible for learners between the ages of seven and the last school day of the year in which the learner reaches the age of fifteen years or the ninth grade. No alternative provision is made for learners falling outside this age

group. This usually has negative social consequences, as so many youths are then forced onto the streets, becoming alienated from school and society.

In conclusion, it seems that an educator is always in an invidious position with regard to the suspension and expulsion of learners. Such a situation leads to endless soul-searching and leaves one with feelings of indecisiveness and helplessness. It is the legal and administrative procedures of such unpleasant incidence that give rise to additional complications. The diligent execution of the formal procedures are often influenced by the lack of resources and time constraints. But the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), the Education Laws Amendment Act (Act 48 of 1999) and Circular 0030/99 of the WCED all lay stress on the standards and procedures. These are designed to ensure fair treatment of the learner and to avoid the pitfall involved in taking irregular disciplinary steps.

The South African Schools Act (SASA) also looks at empowering governing bodies and stresses the important role that governing bodies play in the suspension and expulsion of learners. Britain, America and South Africa all lay stress on the legal procedures governing expulsions. Issues and difficulties inherent in maintaining discipline and order in schools warrant such painstaking procedures. One must take into consideration that there are no simple formula's such as the American zero-tolerance policy, when it comes to school discipline and that there are specific legal restrictions to the type of disciplinary measures that can be taken.

The next chapter will focus on the research design with the aim of discussing critically the process of enquiry, as well as the choice of site, data collection procedures, analysis of data and the rationale for these decisions.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

4. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the research design with the aim of critically discussing the process of enquiry followed in the writing of this dissertation. Included in the discussion will be the choice of the site of the research, the methodological approaches adapted, instrumentation and the rationale for these choices.

4.1 THE RATIONALE FOR USING THE QUALITATIVE APPROACH

The following empirical investigation is qualitative in nature. Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape the inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln 1994:2). Qualitative researchers seek answers to questions that emphasise how social experience is created and given meaning. To them behaviour is intentional and creative and can be explained, but not predicted. This is in contrast to quantitative studies which emphasise the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes (De Vos 1998:242). A quantitative researcher is detached from the object of his or her study, thus may be considered more objective (De Vos 1998:242).

This investigation is divided into two phases. The first is aimed at identifying the demographics of expulsions and the reasons for the requests for expulsions. The second phase is based on the interpretation and synthesis of the interviews conducted with the five principals who participated in this research. This investigation thus involves the interpretation or construction of the lived experience of the subjects (Burgess 1994 in De Vos 1998:241). This is why a qualitative approach is thus best suited for this investigation.

4.2 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

4.2.1 General aims

The general aim of this research is to determine the demographics and reasons for expulsions by schools and to determine the factors which influence expulsion requests. This is so that guidelines and recommendations can be formulated in order to minimise the phenomenon of expulsions.

4.2.2 Specific aims

It is necessary to uncover the demographics of expulsions in the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), and to reveal the reason/reasons why some schools are “better able to hold on” to their learners than others. The following preliminary questions were formulated:

- Are there differences in demographics, age, grade and gender of the learners who are expelled?
- What are the most important reasons for requests for expulsions?
- Are principals aware of the extent of expulsions at other schools, i.e. do they have a picture of the problem in the Western Cape Education Department (WCED)?
- How has the legislative policy i.e. the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 and other circulars and guidelines influenced expulsions?
- What are the views of the principals on the support provided by the WCED with regards to expulsion procedures?
- Does the attitude of the principal influence discipline and the disciplinary measures that are implemented, and is the principal pressurised by teachers to alter his or her decisions?
- According to school principals, how does the following factors influence the number of requests for expulsions,
 - abolition of corporal punishment
 - influence of the code of conduct, philosophy and ethos of the school
 - socio-economic area, catchment and intake of school
 - rationalisation of teachers, and
 - “achievement/league tables”?
- What is the principal’s attitude towards “unofficial transfers” and do they provide parents with alternatives to expulsions?
- Do schools differ with regards to the discipline metered out for the same offences?
- What is the attitude of the principal towards children who are readmitted after a request for expulsion is declined by the WCED?

- How does the principal feel about the ability of educators to deal with behavioural or emotional problems that manifest at school, and does the school psychologist have a role to play in the expulsion process?
- What type of programmes or strategies are implemented at these schools to minimise the risk or the incidence of expulsions?

The main research questions of this dissertation are aimed at identifying how schools differ regarding demographics, rate and reasons for expulsions; and secondly to explore and interpret the extent that the principal's attitude and views regarding the abolition of corporal punishment, the ethos of the school, the socio-economic background, rationalisation and the "achievement/league tables".

What follows is an exposition of the process and the method of enquiry used to address the research questions.

4.3 PROCESS OF ENQUIRY

As this is the first study of this nature in the Western Cape, the researcher's aim was to provide a perspective on expulsions in the area serviced by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). It was thus aimed at gaining insight into the expulsion phenomenon in the WCED. The first phase was undertaken as a preliminary investigation prior to the second phase of the research.

The first phase of the research was aimed at determining the demographics of learners who were expelled and the reason for their expulsions. This was achieved by employing and extracting information from the official documents from the Western Cape Education Department titled "requests for expulsions". Thus it was possible to draw conclusions on current trends regarding expulsions. The information will also be used to collaborate information obtained from the second phase. The second phase entailed interviewing five principals, who were likely to yield significant insight into the phenomenon being studied. This phase focused on understanding the social phenomenon from the participants' perspectives. It was then possible to critically examine the quality of the data obtained, and to discern the problems encountered (Schumacher & McMillan 1993:15).

The two phases will now be discussed in greater detail.

4.3.1 First phase

This phase of the research is aimed at gaining an understanding and insight into the expulsion phenomena and to draw conclusions from this data. De Vos (1998:124) states that an exploratory study explores a research question about which little is known.

The researcher then embarked on a selection process. Selection requires that the researcher delineates precisely the relevant population or phenomenon for investigation, based on theoretical or conceptual consideration, personal curiosity, empirical characteristics, or some other characteristics (Le Compte & Preissle 1993:57). The population in this empirical investigation included all requests for expulsions made to the WCED.

All requests for expulsions submitted to the Western Cape Education Department, for the period 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2000 have been included. All the learners selected are those attending secondary schools i.e. grade 8 to grade 12. They are from public secondary schools, including technical schools, but not independent, private, primary schools, or schools for learners with special educational needs. The reason for this exclusion is that learners with special educational needs differ intellectually, emotionally and developmentally. The learners are all aged between 12 and 19 years.

The data examined covered a period of three years: 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2000. This was useful to rule out year-to-year fluctuations, and to point out trends.

The requests for expulsions made to the Western Cape Education Department, were documented and filed in separate files for each school. Each school file was extracted and the following information obtained:

- name of the school
- the gender of the learner
- the age of the learner
- the grade of the learner, and
- the reason for the request for expulsion.

The extraction of the data from the files took approximately 10 days. Each request for expulsion was noted under the headings, name of school, sex of learner, age, grade and reason for expulsion. Since the reasons were not simple, it was necessary to divide them into further categories.

4.3.1.1 *Category development*

The researcher needed to study the data carefully in order to identify significant phenomena, and then to determine which phenomenon shared sufficient similarities that could be considered instances of the same concept. The researcher needed to define the category, give it a label, and specify guidelines that both the researcher and others could use to determine whether each segment in the database is, or is not, an instance of the category (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996:564).

The process of category development is consistent with the principles of grounded theory. Gall *et al* (1996:564) states that case study researchers derive their categories directly from the data rather than from theories developed by other researchers. In other words, the categories are “grounded” in the particular set of data collected in the research. Similar research was conducted by Dupper and Bosch in 1996 (140–150) and Baker (1996:1–19). Baker (1996) identified 363 major disciplinary violations, whereas Dupper and Bosch (1996) identified 27 categories. They collapsed these 27 categories into four broad categories for the purpose of data analysis.

This research identified 32 categories as reasons for expulsions. These 32 categories were collapsed into six broad categories for the data analysis. The six categories of offences are the following:

- substance abuse
- physical confrontation
- verbal confrontation
- sexual assault
- theft
- other reasons

A listing of these broad categories and the respective offences are illustrated in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1: Categories of offences violated by learners which resulted in requests for expulsion

1. <i>Substance abuse</i> , includes all substances and substance related offences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - possession of drugs/alcohol - use of drugs or alcohol on school premises or on school outings - sniffing glue - selling/trafficking of substances on school grounds
2. <i>Physical confrontation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assault on educators - assault on learners - gangsterism - stabbing - aggressive behaviour - spitting on others - attempt at setting someone alight
3. <i>Verbal confrontation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - defamation - insolence - insubordination - swearing - lying - racial insults
4. <i>Sexual assault</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - indecent exposure - sexual assault - rape - gang rape - sexual harassment - sexual intercourse on school premises
5. <i>Theft</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stealing of cell phones, lunch boxes, pencil bags, school bags and money.
6. <i>Other reasons</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - chronic absence - bunking - cumulative lateness - truancy - vandalism - housebreaking - possession of dangerous weapons - extortion - possession of pornographic material

There were several reasons for collapsing the data in this manner. Firstly, a simple listing of all the offences did not adequately distinguish offences according to their relative severity. Clearly some offences were more serious than others (e.g. raping someone vs possession of

pornographic material). Secondly, it was important to distinguish actions that were physical in nature (e.g. striking another person) from those that were verbal in nature (e.g. verbal threats). The categories were not mutually exclusive i.e. certain transgressions were both physical and verbal in nature. In these instances the researcher classified the violation into the more serious category i.e. physical confrontation.

4.3.2 Second phase

After the five school principals were selected, semi-structured interviews were conducted with them in order to gain insight into the factors that may influence expulsions. This part of the research was conducted within the qualitative paradigm since it entails “immersion in the every day life of the setting chosen for the study and seeks to discover participant’s perspectives on their worlds, relies on people’s words and observable behaviour as the primary data” (Marshall & Rossman 1995:4).

The interviews were not structured formally as it was necessary to explore the principals’ subjective experience of the whole process of expulsions. De Vos (1998:299) refers to the semi-structured interview as an unstructured interview which is conducted with the use of a research schedule.

4.3.2.1 Interviews

Interviews depended on face-to-face questioning of participants and eliciting data from them. This allowed the interviewer to be more natural and responsive because the question order allowed for flexibility and could still be easily analysed.

According to Cohen and Manion (1994:272–273), the interview may serve the following purpose:

- The principal means of gathering information by providing access to what is “inside the persons head”.
- It makes it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge of information), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs).

Key informant type of interviews were utilised as the principals, or informants, as they were the ideal candidates because of their special knowledge or perceptions. Le Compte and Preissle (1993:167) believe that because key-informants are often reflective individuals, they may contribute insights to process variables not evident to the investigator. They may also sensitise researchers to value dilemmas within the culture and to the implications of their findings. These principals were also regarded as key-informants as they had direct knowledge and access to the educators, learners, school governing bodies, parents and communities which they served.

The five principals were identified based on the first phase of the research i.e. two principals with high requests for expulsions, one principal who submitted a number of requests in 1998 and none subsequently, and two principals which had no requests for expulsions.

Prior to the interviews being conducted, permission was obtained from the Western Cape Education Department. Principals were assured that their identity and any information that they provided would be treated confidentially. After consent was obtained, the principals were interviewed at their own school. Each interview which lasted between 1 hour 30 minutes and 4 hours, were tape-recorded with the consent of the participants. This method of recording interview data has many advantages, i.e.

- it reduces the tendency of interviewers to make an unconscious selection of data following their biases
- it provides a complete verbal record and can be studied much more thoroughly than data in the form of interview notes
- it speeds up the interview process because there is no need for extensive note-taking (Gall *et al* 1996:320), and
- it also facilitated the interview process by allowing both interviewer and interviewee to communicate more freely.

The researcher will now discuss the list of questions and the motivation for asking the questions.

4.3.2.2 List of questions

The list of questions serves as a guideline for the interviewer and contains questions and themes important to the research. The purpose of the list of questions was to ensure that the relevant topics and key issues in the form of open-ended questions were addressed.

The list of questions was scrutinized by an educational psychologist in private practice. After this, two trial runs with principals who were not part of the research were conducted. This was in order to gain feedback on the content of the questions. The researcher will first explain the reason for incorporating a particular question and then pose the question.

The first question posed to the principals was aimed at determining whether principals had any idea of the rate of expulsions in the Western Cape.

- How does your school compare to other schools in the Western Cape as regards requests for expulsions?

The aim of the following three questions was to determine the attitude and opinions of the principals regarding the policy, legislation, circulars and guidelines on expulsions, and to inquire whether the support provided by the WCED was adequate. The questions were:

- What, in your opinion, are the most significant policy changes that have taken place with regard to expulsions?
- What is your view of the procedures/guidelines issued by the WCED regarding expulsions?
- How do you feel about the support, direction and guidelines provided by the WCED?

The next question was aimed at determining how the varying attitudes of the principal towards discipline influences expulsions. Coupled to this was the inquiry into how principals were influenced by the teachers on the staff to alter decisions:

- As the principal of the school, how does your attitude influence the discipline and the disciplinary measures that you implement?
- According to you, are you influenced by the attitude of the teachers on your staff i.e. do they place pressure on you to take any drastic action?

This question was motivated by a need to establish whether the abolition of corporal punishment and the lack of alternatives to corporal punishment had led to an increase in the number of request for expulsions.

- Has the banning of corporal punishment influenced discipline at your school?

The ethos and philosophy of the school undoubtedly plays a major role in expulsions. Similarly, many schools have experienced dramatic changes in their intake, and are accepting children from various socio-economic backgrounds. This is also directly related to the next question pertaining to rationalisation.

- In your view, how does (i) the ethos and philosophy of the school impact on expulsions; and (ii) the socio-economic background and catchment area influence expulsions?

The policy of rationalisation has increased the educator/learner ratio. This has placed additional stress on educators to cope with learners with behavioural problems. The interrelationship between the socio-economic background of the school and rationalisation will be brought to the fore.

- As a result of rationalisation we have observed a sharp increase in the educator-learner ratio. How has this impacted on discipline, and the expulsion rate at your school?

The National Report on the Performance of Individual Schools is published every year to publicise the academic performance of each school. The researcher decided to use the term “league table” to refer to this National Report on Performance, based on the league or

achievement tables commonly used in the British Education System. The decision by the Minister of Education, Kader Asmal to publish the “achievement or league tables” is a contentious issue in education. Could there possibly be a link between the “league tables” and expulsions?

- How has the publication of Kader Asmal’s “league table” influenced expulsions at your school?

The next question was aimed at determining how many principals were utilising “unofficial transfers/expulsions” as an alternative to expulsions. A number of schools have not been requesting expulsions from the WCED. Were principals using other methods of “getting rid” of learners?

- Are parents offered alternatives to expulsion before a request for expulsion is made to the WCED? If yes, what are those alternatives?

The following question was aimed at highlighting the differing ways in which schools react to the contravention of the same or similar offence.

- The principals were asked to consider the following scenarios:
 - A learner is caught using drugs at your school during school hours. How would you respond to this?
 - How would your response differ if you discovered that the learners have sold drugs on the premises?
 - A learner steals a cell phone or any other item. What disciplinary steps would be taken against him or her?

When the Head of Education rejects a number of requests for expulsions, this means that the school has to readmit the learners. How successful were these readmissions, and how were these learners treated after returning to school.

- If the governing body has recommended expulsion to the WCED and it is denied – the learner is readmitted. What are your feelings about readmission? How are these learners treated on readmission?

The next questions were aimed at determining whether teachers had the necessary skills to deal with emotional and behavioural problems, and whether the principals felt that there was a need for an educational psychologist in the expulsion process.

- Do you think that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills to deal with learners with emotional and behavioural problems?
- Would you include a school psychologist or an educational psychologist in the expulsion process?

The final theme was based on type of intervention methods implemented by the five principals in order to determine what would help in minimising disciplinary problems and expulsions.

- Do you rely on punitive measures or would you implement proactive intervention methods?

The audio-recordings of the interviews were then transcribed verbatim for the purpose of analysis (*see Addendum F, p.205*). Their answers will invariably shed some light on why some schools are better able to hold on to their learners than others.

4.3.2.3 Analysis of interviews

In the analysis of the interviews the emic topic and categories in data collection were emphasised because the goal is to represent the situation from the interviewees perspective (Schumacher & McMillan 1993:493). Cross-case analysis which will also be used. This will note all the consistencies and discrepancies in themes and patterns between the viewpoints held by the principals.

Content analysis was utilised to interpret the data from the transcription of the interviews. In analysing the content of the interviews the underlying meaning of the conversation had to be

understood within the context of the principals' frame of reference. Also to be considered were the perceptions, views and attitudes of the principals which are subject to personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics or simply a lack of awareness (Patton 1990: 245).

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to provide a thorough account of the methodology as well as the rationale for the methods adopted. Since the primary source of information was qualitative, the researcher's account of the process is central to determining the credibility and trustworthiness of the research. It was thus imperative that a considerable amount of detail be submitted.

In the chapter that follows the researcher will present the results of the empirical investigation.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

5. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided an overview of the methodology as well as reasons for the methods used. In this chapter, data from the first phase will be presented, and thereafter an analysis of the second phase. The data of the second phase will be presented in the form of quotes from the transcripts.

The interrelationship between the two phases will also be elucidated. The interpretation of the data of this phase should provide a reliable picture of current trends regarding requests for expulsions. This study is based in South Africa, and focuses specifically on secondary schools in the Western Cape.

5.1 RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FIRST PHASE

The Western Cape Education Department services the geographical area of Athlone, Bellville, George, Kuilsriver, Mitchell's Plain, Paarl, West Coast, Worcester and Wynberg. According to a snap-survey conducted by the Statistical Department at the Western Cape Education Department for the year 2001, there are approximately 326 secondary schools in this area. These 326 schools exclude all independent, private and primary schools and schools for learners with special educational needs. All requests for expulsions will therefore be based on requests received from these 326 schools.

The interpretation of current trends on requests for expulsions will be carried under the following sub-headings:

- number of requests and number of actual expulsions
- gender of learners for whom expulsion had been requested
- age of learners for whom expulsion had been requested
- grade of learners for whom expulsion had been requested
- reasons for requests for expulsions

5.1.1 Number of requests and number of actual expulsions

The data indicated that the total number of requests for expulsions for the years 1998, 1999 and 2000 remained relatively constant at 126, 103 and 117 learners, respectively.

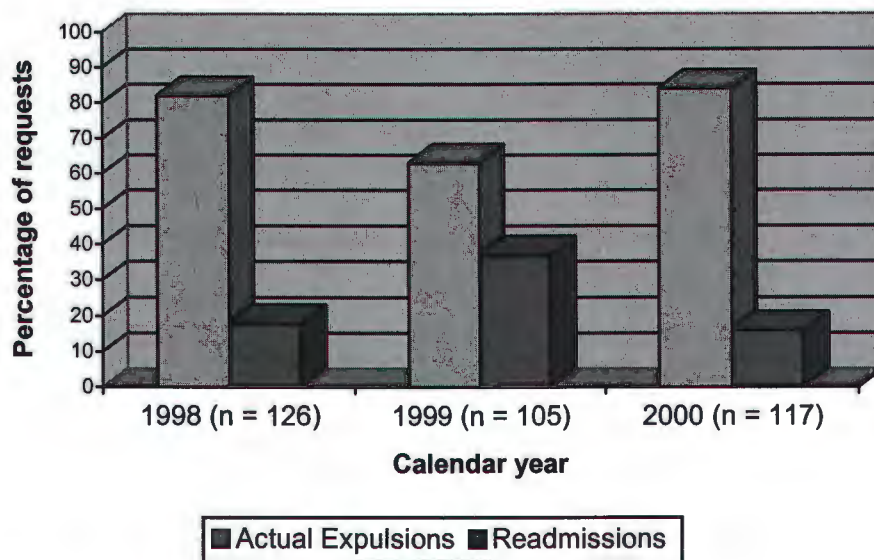
It is important to note that the number of requests for expulsions did not necessarily culminate in actual expulsions as the ultimate decision to expel is at the discretion of the Head of Education of the WCED. Table 5.1 contains the percentages and raw numbers of requests for expulsions, the actual expulsions and the readmissions. Thus the number of actual expulsions for 1998, 1999 and 2000 was 82% of 126 learners, 63% of 103 learners and 84% of 117 learners respectively. Furthermore, the number of learners that were readmitted and accommodated at the same school or at another school for 1998, 1999 and 2000 was 18% of 126 learners, 37% of 103 learners and 16% of 117 learners, respectively.

Table 5.1: Expulsion data for the Western Cape Education Department for the three year period 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2000

Year	Total number of requests for expulsions	Number of actual expulsions		Number of readmissions	
		n	%	n	%
1998	126	103	82	23	18
1999	103	64	63	39	37
2000	117	98	84	19	16

The data presented in table 5.1 has been graphically presented in the form of a histogram (*see figure 5.1*). The blue in the diagram illustrates the percentage of actual expulsions i.e. the successful expulsions and the maroon illustrates the percentage of readmissions.

Figure 5.1: Number of requests and number of actual expulsions



n	= total number of requests for expulsions
blue	= number of actual expulsions
maroon	= number of readmissions

The researcher will examine and analyse the data relating to requests for expulsions with a view to determining trends amongst the various schools. The data reflected some interesting trends amongst schools regarding differences in the rate of requests for expulsions.

Trends

1998:

- In 1998 there were 126 requests for expulsions emanating from 45 schools 23 of the 45 schools were responsible for 79% of requests i.e. 99 requests for expulsions.
- It should be noted that 14 schools accounted for 72 requested in 1998; which translates to 57% of the total requests.
- 22 of the 45 schools requested less than 2 expulsions.

1999:

- In 1999 there were 103 requests for expulsions emanating from 39 schools.

- 14 of the 39 schools were responsible for 70% of the total requests i.e. 72 requests for expulsions.
- The remaining 30% or 31 learners, stemmed from 25 schools, indicating that these schools requested less than 2 requests for expulsions each, per school, on average.

2000:

- In 2000 there were 117 requests for expulsions emanating from 46 schools.
- 13 of the 46 schools were responsible for 65% of the total requests.
- 3 schools accounted for 39 requests; this translates to 33% of the total requests.
- The remaining 33 schools accounted for 41 requests, indicating that these schools requested less than 2 requests for expulsions each, per school, on average.

The distribution of the rate of requests for expulsions for the year 1998, 1999 and 2000 indicates that with relation to expulsions, schools vary considerably. Certain schools could be identified as requesting a noticeably higher number of expulsions than others.

5.1.2 Gender of learners for whom expulsion had been requested

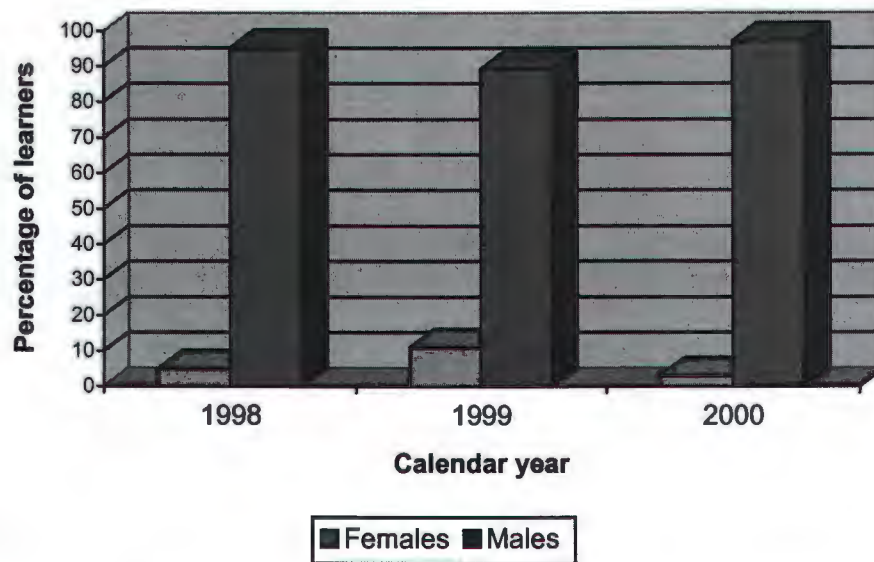
Table 5.2 illustrates the gender distribution of learners participating in this research, for the three years 1998, 1999 and 2000.

Table 5.2: Gender distribution of learners participating in this research for the three years 1998, 1999 and 2000

Year	Total number of learners	Number of males		Number of females	
		n	%	n	%
1998	126	120	95	6	5
1999	105	95	89	10	11
2000	117	114	97	3	3

Figure 5.2 illustrates the same data presented in table 5.2 in the form of a histogram.

Figure 5.2: Gender of learners for whom expulsions were requested



The blue in figure 5.2 illustrates the number of males and the maroon the number of females involved in requests for expulsions for the years 1998, 1999 and 2000, respectively. The distribution reflects that males are over-represented for the years 1998, 1999 and 2000. A significantly smaller percentage of females accounted for the total number of requests for expulsions. The females averaged 5.5% of the requests for expulsion over the three year period.

5.1.3 Age of learners for whom expulsion had been requested

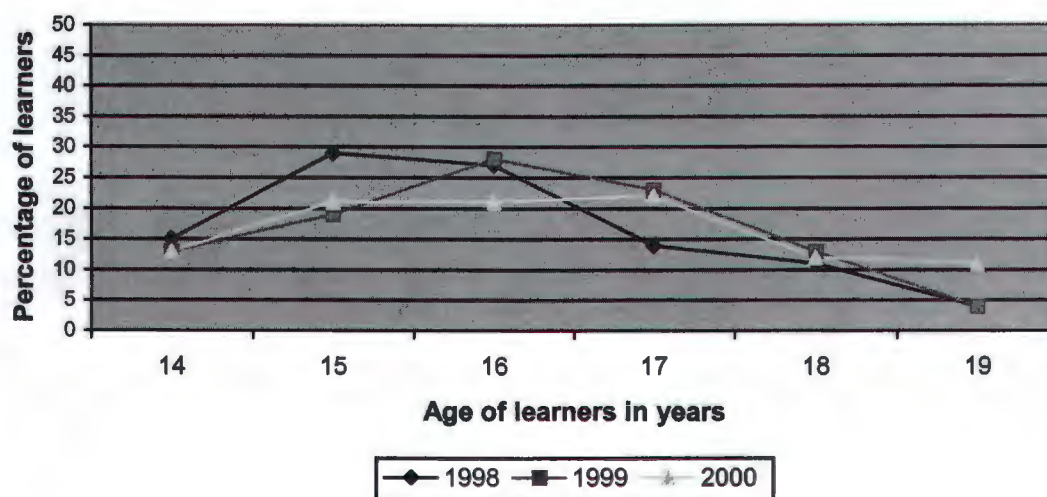
Table 5.3 illustrates the distribution of the ages of learners involved in requests for expulsions for 1998, 1999 and 2000.

Table 5.3: Age distribution of learners participating in this research for the three years 1998, 1999 and 2000

Year	Total number of learners	Age in years and percentage											
		14	%	15	%	16	%	17	%	18	%	19	%
1998	126	19	15	36	29	34	27	18	14	14	11	5	4
1999	105	13	12	22	21	29	28	24	23	13	12	4	4
2000	117	15	13	25	21	25	21	26	22	14	12	12	11

Figure 5.3 illustrates the same data presented in table 5.3, in the form of a line graph.

Figure 5.3: Age of learners for whom expulsions were requested



From the above figure, one can deduce that:

- requests for expulsions peak between the ages of 15 and 16 years.
- in 1998, 56% of the total requests were of learners between the ages of 15 and 16.
- in 1999, 72% of the total requests were of learners between the ages of 15 and 17.
- in 2000, there was a more even spread amongst the age group 15 to 17.
- in 2000, there was an increase of requests for expulsions in the 19 year age group, which translates to a 7% increase compared to the previous two years.

The high percentage of learners between the ages of 15 and 17 reflects a group which is vulnerable to expulsion. According to the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996, schooling is compulsory for all learners until the age of fifteen years or the ninth grade, whatever occurs first (*see p.65*). The implication of this legislation on the age of learners for whom expulsion was requested indicates that, 56%, 67% and 66% of the total number of requests for the years 1998, 1999 and 2000 respectively, were not subject to compulsory attendance and thus the WCED bears no responsibility for them if they were expelled i.e. the circuit manager is not liable to find them alternative placement.

5.1.4 Grade of learners for whom expulsion had been requested

Table 5.4: Grade distribution of learners participating in this research for the three years 1998, 1999 and 2000

Year	Total number of learners	Age in years and percentage									
		8	%	9	%	10	%	11	%	12	%
1998	126	24	19	56	45	25	20	13	10	8	6
1999	105	21	20	32	29	29	28	15	15	8	8
2000	117	32	27	33	28	25	21	16	14	11	10

Figure 5.4 illustrates the same data presented in table 5.4 in the form of a line graph.

Figure 5.4: Grade of learners for whom expulsions were requested

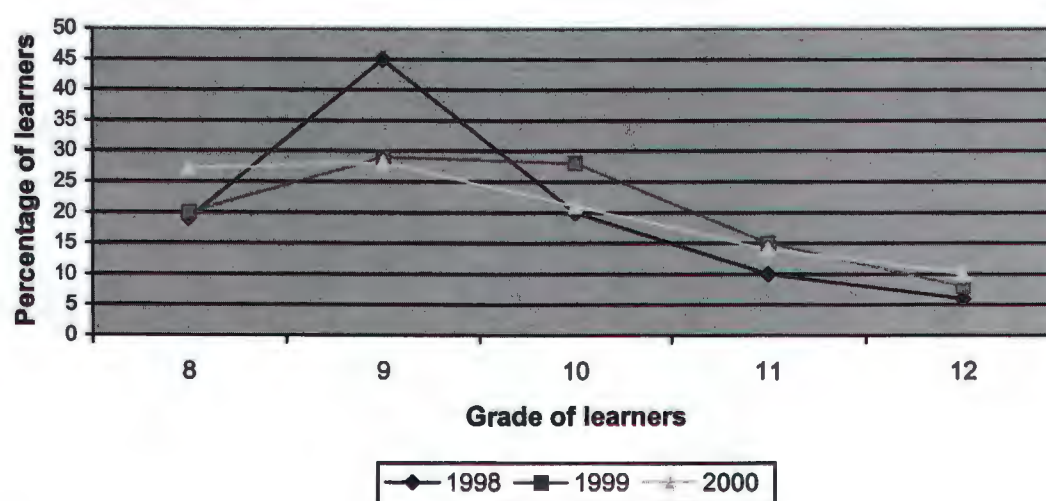


Figure 5.4 indicates that:

- in 1998, 84% of the requests stemmed from grades 8, 9 and 10 and the other 16% of requests was spread between grades 11 and 12.
- in 1998, the grade 9's accounted for 45% of the request.
- in 1999, 77% of the requests stemmed from grades 8, 9 and 10 and the other 23% of requests was spread between grades 11 and 12.
- in 2000, 76% of the requests stemmed from grades 8, 9 and 10 and the other 24% of requests was spread between grades 11 and 12.

- there appears to be a gradual increase in the number of requests for expulsions from the grade 12's.

This distribution indicates that over a period of three years i.e. 1998, 1999 and 2000, the grades 8, 9 and 10, on average, accounted for 79% of the total requests for expulsions. The WCED bears no responsibility for learners who were expelled in grades 10, 11 and 12.

5.1.5 Reasons for expulsions

The data for reasons for expulsions is based on the total number of requests for the three years 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2000. The total number of requests for expulsions are 126, 103 and 117 for the three years respectively.

Reasons for expulsion requests were grouped into the following six categories:

- substance abuse
- physical confrontation
- verbal confrontation
- sexual assault
- theft, and
- other behavioural problems.

The researcher experienced difficulty in categorising certain offences or transgressions into a specific category. In instances where the transgression constituted both substance abuse and verbal confrontation, the offences were listed under the more serious category i.e. substance abuse.

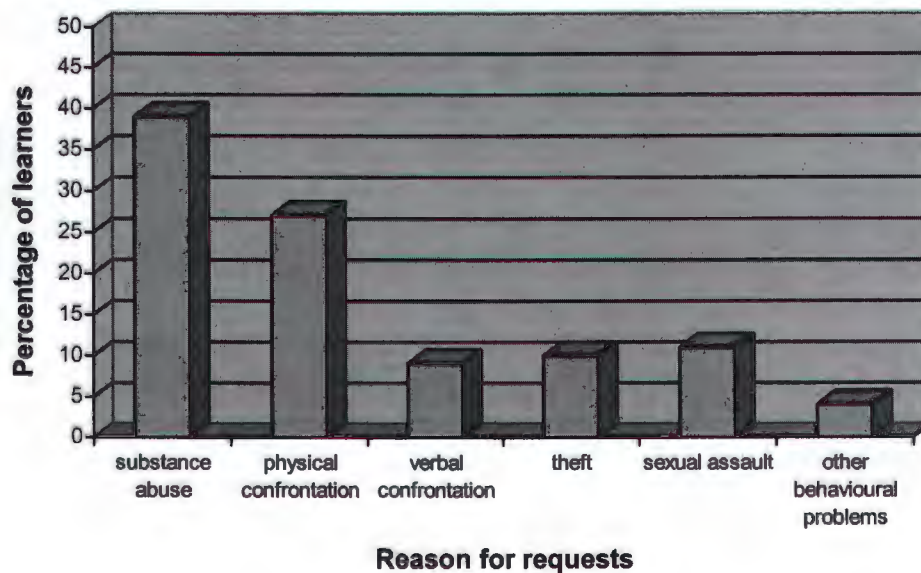
The data on the reasons for expulsion for the three years 1998, 1999 and 2000, is provided in the form of table 5.5. This will then be illustrated in the form of histograms, after which the results will be discussed.

Table 5.5: Reasons for requests for expulsions for the Western Cape Education Department for the three year period 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2000

Reasons for requests	1998	%	1999	%	2000	%
<i>Substance abuse</i>	49	39	50	48	56	48
<i>Physical confrontation</i>	34	27	19	18	20	17
<i>Verbal confrontation</i>	11	9	15	15	10	9
<i>Theft</i>	13	10	15	15	11	9
<i>Sexual assault</i>	14	11	1	1	14	12
<i>Other behavioural problems</i>	5	4	3	3	6	5
Total number of learners	126		103		117	

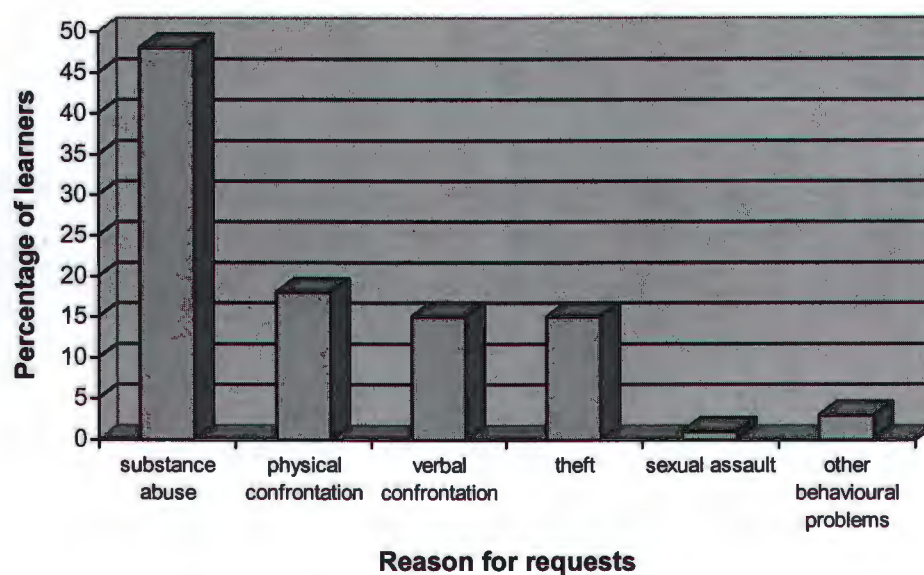
Figures 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 will illustrate the same data as presented in table 5.5, in the form of histograms for the three years 1998, 1999 and 2000, respectively.

Figure 5.5: Reasons for requests for expulsions – 1998



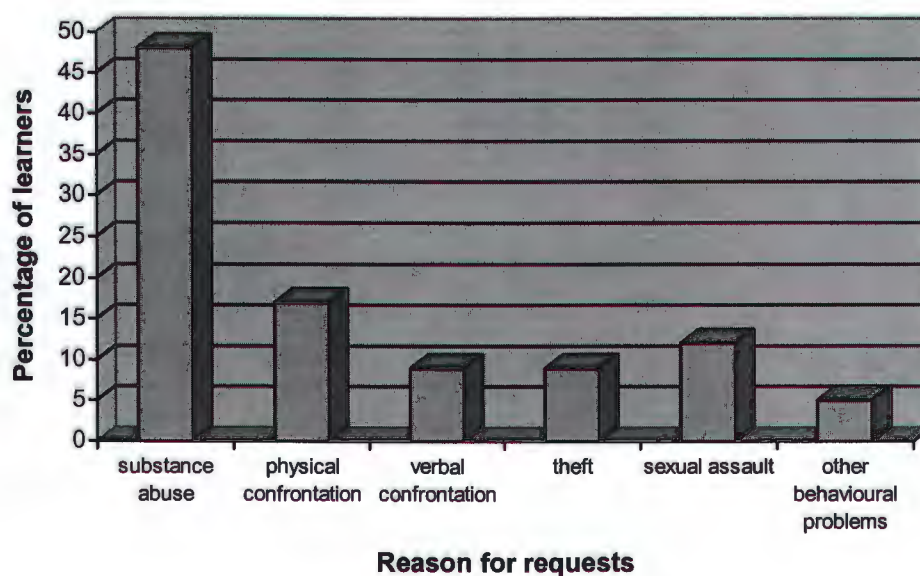
n = 126

Figure 5.6: Reasons for requests for expulsions – 1999



n = 103

Figure 5.7: Reasons for requests for expulsions – 2000



n = 117

Results

- Substance abuse appeared to be the most dominant reason for requests for expulsions for the three years of the study. In 1998, 1999 and 2000, substance abuse accounted for 39%, 48% and 48% respectively.

- Certain schools were more inclined to request expulsions for substance abuse than others.
- Physical confrontation accounted for the second highest reason. In 1998, 1999 and 2000 it was 27%, 18% and 17% respectively.
- Verbal confrontation accounted for 9%, 15% and 9% for the years 1998, 1999 and 2000 respectively.
- Theft also accounted for 10%, 15% and 9% of the requests. The ex-model C schools and the middle-class schools requested more expulsions for theft. The articles stolen were mostly cell-phones, wallets and bicycles.
- Sexual assault accounted for 11% of the requests for 1998, as it included a gang-related rape involving 6 learners. Similarly in 2000 there were requests for expulsions involving three learners for an alleged rape.
- It should also be noted that most of the substance abuse incidents were committed in groups.

In concluding the first phase, it emerged that the number of requests for expulsions has remained relatively constant for the three year period: 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2000. However, certain schools could be identified as requesting more expulsions than other schools. The schools requesting more expulsions than others were identified as the schools servicing the middle-class communities and the ex-model C schools.

The researcher also found that the number of requests for expulsions for boys exceeded that of girls for the three years 1998, 1999 and 2000. The females averaged 5.5% of the total requests for expulsions over the three year period.

The researcher also found that requests for expulsions peaked between the ages of fifteen and sixteen years and also between grades eight and ten. A significantly high number of requests are received in grade 9.

For the three year period; 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2000, substance abuse accounted for an average of 45% of the total requests, followed by physical confrontation which averaged 21% of the total requests. Verbal confrontation, theft, sexual assault and other behavioural problems accounted for the balance of requests for expulsions.

It also noted that most of the substance abuse transgressions were committed in groups. This is indicative of the influence of peer pressure on individuals and the vulnerability of learners between the ages of fifteen and sixteen to expulsion.

The next section will discuss the second phase of the research. The researcher anticipates that the analysis of the second phase will shed light on trends uncovered in phase one of the research.

5.2 ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND PHASE

5.2.1 Background of the five schools participating in this research

At this stage it is important to provide the reader with background information on the five schools whose principals were interviewed. A brief description of each school will be provided so that the interviews can be read in that context. To protect the confidentiality of the principals, the schools and the learners, the five principals will be identified as Principal A, Principal B, Principal C, Principal D and Principal E.

Principal A represents a technical school situated in a middle/working class area. This area was white before the Group Areas Act was repealed. It is an ex-model C school which previously serviced a predominantly working class white community. The racial composition has subsequently changed to approximately 80% coloured, 2% black and 18% white. The roll of the school currently is 950 learners of which 56 are girls. The staff complement is 36 of which 4 are in governing body posts. The annual school fees are R2000. The requests for expulsions at this school are high compared to the other schools in this study.

Principal B represents a middle-class school which is situated in a suburb south of Cape Town. The majority of learners at this school are coloured and come from areas other than its immediate surroundings. Most students are "bussed in" from other residential areas. The roll of the school currently is 891 learners. The staff complement is 34 of which 6 are governing body posts. The annual school fees are R1100. This school had a number of expulsions in 1998. There were no recorded cases of expulsions for the year 1999 and 2000.

Principal C represents an ex-model C school situated in a middle-class area. This school also serviced a predominantly white working class community, but most of the residents have

relocated. The racial composition of the residents has also changed to a middle-class coloured community. The roll of the school currently is 860 learners. The staff complement is 36 of which 5 educators are in governing body posts. The annual school fee is R1500. The expulsion rate at this school is also high compared to other schools.

Principal D represents a school in the Cape Flats area which services a sub-economic and a working class community. Many of the residents of this community are unemployed and the community is plagued by many problems associated with poverty, such as gangsterism and rampant substance abuse. The current roll of the school is approximately 960 learners. The staff complement is 28 and there is 1 governing body post. The annual school fee is R250. No requests for expulsions were received from this school.

Principal E represents a township school. It services a working class black community where unemployment is very high. Many of the learners are from the Eastern Cape although there are learners from surrounding areas. The school services 1600 learners. The staff complement is 48 educators and there are no governing body posts. The annual school fee is R100. Only one request for an expulsion was received from this school in 1998.

The next section deals primarily with the analysis of the principal's opinions and views on the questions posed with regard to expulsions.

5.2.2 Interpretation of views and opinions of principals

The previous section provided a brief outline of the background of the schools. The views and opinions of the principals representing these schools should thus be viewed within the context of the school.

The most significant aspects of the interpretation were the varied opinions and views of the five principals and the extent to which they differed. The researcher wishes to emphasise the complexity and the interrelationships of the unique events at the school and the extent and manner in which the attitudes and views of the principals influences discipline and the decision to expel at a school.

The themes emanating from the interviews were interconnected and it was therefore important to selectively analyse a topic/theme carefully, regardless of where it occurred in the interviews. What helped to simplify the analysis was the fact that the themes were directed by the research questions, thus facilitating synthesis across cases. The views/opinions or attitude of each principal as regards the theme under discussion will be analysed for similarities and differences after which the researcher will interpret and summarise the information.

For a transcript of the interviews conducted see Addendum F (*p.205*). The themes which emerged from the research questions, as stated on page 81, are as follows:

- Principals' awareness of the extent of expulsions at other schools.
- Attitude of principals towards changes in legislative policy regarding expulsions.
- Attitude and opinions of principals' regarding the procedures and guidelines on expulsion.
- Attitude of principals' on the support provided by the WCED in the expulsion process.
- Attitude of principals' towards discipline and expulsion and the impact of how teacher's views influence the principal's decision to proceed with expulsions.
- Principals' views on the influence of the abolition of corporal punishment on expulsions.
- Principals' views regarding the influence of the ethos, philosophy and code of conduct of the school on expulsions.
- Principals' views as regards the influence of socio-economic background, catchment area and intake of the school on expulsions.
- Principals' views regarding the influence of rationalisation on expulsions.
- Attitude of principals' towards providing parents with alternatives to expulsions and principals views towards "unofficial expulsions/transfers".
- Principals' views with regards to the influence of the "achievement/league tables" on expulsions.
- Differing views of principals towards the same or similar transgressions and the role of mitigating circumstances.
- Attitude of principals' as regards to learners who are readmitted by the WCED, after a request for expulsion is declined.

- Opinion of principals' on whether teachers are equipped to deal with learners with behavioural problems, and the principals view on the role of the educational psychologist in the expulsion process.
- Opinion of principals regarding the type of intervention methods used at their schools.

Principals knowledge of the extent of expulsions at other schools

Two principals with high expulsion figures, principals A and C, were informed by the Head of Education that their expulsion figures were higher than other schools. Principal B avoided answering this question, but was directed back to it later in the interview. His view was that *"all that I'm concerned with is the seriousness of what happens here"* and stated that this information only became available *"once it reaches the newspapers"*. Similarly, Principal D stated that *"expulsion cases appeared in newspapers from time to time; there have been contestations in newspapers from time to time"*. Principal E, on the other hand, became aware of expulsions and disciplinary problems at other schools at the principals forum to which he belongs.

Besides the administrative records that were kept at the Head Office of the WCED, no official statistics were published or distributed by the WCED regarding the number of learners that were expelled or reasons for the expulsions. Expulsion cases only become public knowledge when parents contest expulsion issues with the WCED. Many parents approached the print media when they experience problems with the principal or the WCED. It also appears that schools with high rates of requests for expulsions were contacted by the Head of Education of the WCED to discuss the problems that they were experiencing. Principal D expressed a need to know the scale of expulsions in the Western Cape as his school was one of the schools on *"the receiving end"* of expelled learners. Principal B expressed disinterest in expulsion figures at other schools. His concern was the effective functioning of his own school.

From this it can be inferred that principals who are *"in the business of expelling"* would not appreciate the publication of expulsion data as it would point to certain weaknesses within the school or an inability of the school to cope with certain learners. The publication of such expulsion data, if not received by principals in the constructive spirit in which it is published,

will force principals to resort to alternative ways of "getting rid" of learners as confirmed by finding 1 (p.156). Even if the WCED decides to publish the data on expulsion, it should be taken at face value as only certain schools go the "official expulsion route".

Attitude of principals towards changes in legislative policy, with specific reference to expulsions

Three of the principals believed that the South African Schools Act (SASA) was the most significant document which influenced governance in schools. Principal C thought that it was *"a milestone of a document; it has given a lot of focus in the way schools can progress, grow and develop. It went a long way in helping with some legal muscle for the Governing Body and school management to get the tone and discipline of the school on the right path."* However, the principal's opinion was that, superficially, the SASA appears to encourage expulsions and that a school could request as many expulsions as it wanted. But he soon discovered that a request *"...is actually a complex process and the Head of Education is not keen to go the expulsion route"*.

According to principals B and C, the SASA had taken away their power to expel. Principal C said, *"...all we can do is to make a recommendation, that is quite dramatic!"* He felt that prior to the SASA, if a student transgressed you could suspend the child immediately, *"remove them from school, now besides the procedure to be followed to make the recommendation, the WCED has placed another hurdle...it has to be in consultation with the circuit manager!"* This consultation with the circuit manager created many problems, especially when principals wanted the perpetrators off the premises immediately to avoid further friction. The problem did not lie with the actual consultation but in the difficulty of getting hold of circuit managers. This frustration was expressed by Principal C, *"...maybe he doesn't come into office...or he is at a workshop or he doesn't have a cell phone or he is unavailable – this can go on for two or three days...to track down the circuit manager. If the principal proceeds and suspends the child because he cannot find the circuit manager, he has contravened one of the steps of the procedures, making the whole procedure invalid."*

Principals B and C also felt strongly that principals were not allowed to be part of the final decision to expel, even if they were part of the initial investigation. Principal B states that it is obvious that *"...principals know the discipline of the school...it is inevitable that any*

transgression will be brought to the principal and the principal will investigate...and therefore I think...the principal should be present...and should be allowed to vote. The principal is expected to take responsibility of being the leader of the school but at the same time you're denying him input into making a decision about discipline of the school."

Principal C also declared that the SASA had closed a number of options which schools had to avoid expulsions. This paradoxically, resulted in an increase in expulsions. His opinion was that, prior to the SASA, if a child transgressed or was accused of serious misconduct, *"you'd give the child a fresh start, by making arrangements with another school and vice versa"*. The principal would phone some of his colleagues and say, *"I've got this boy who stabbed someone, could you help me out...and it's usually a case of I do this for you, you do that for me. So I'd take some of their dagga smokers or someone who stole something."* Principal C regarded this as an alternative before taking the route of expulsion. However, this type of conversation or any attempt to convince the parents to take a transfer, might indicate a certain bias. Principal A felt that unless the parent asks what is likely to happen, he personally does not like suggesting this as it weakens the school's case. He believes there should be as little discussion with the parents about the *"if's"* and *"but's"* as to where the child should be.

Principal D's views differed considerably from the three discussed above. He believes that, previously when principals wanted to get rid of children, they would do so by making a recommendation. Often the Department would decline *"and give them a load of prescriptions"*. However, since the SASA and the advent of the Governing Body, *"principals hide behind the Governing Body, stating that it is the Civic Voice of the parents, thus getting things done quicker and easier."* He is convinced that *"it's the principals that bullies those parents (serving on the governing body) into abdicating their roles, as the guardians of the interest of the children...They're being bullied because I know, I know if I had the inclination, I would do it as well."*

Principal D also felt that the SASA ought to have worked against expulsion but that other factors, besides the governing body, had worked against it. He believes that the policy of rationalisation had a great effect. This reduced the number of teachers in the system and thus increased the teacher pupil ratio. It also resulted in the disappearance of all non-examinable subjects, *"the guidance counsellor, PT teacher, music, arts and culture is gone...it has been*

stripped of all things...this in itself was alienating...there is a myriad of things that reduced the school's capacity".

There was a significant difference in the focus of principals. Principals A, B and C were more critical about the procedures and the implications of the legislation concerning expulsions than principals D and E. Principals D and E were more critical of the role of the school governing body and the influence of the policy of rationalisation on schools. This criticism is directed more to the relative absence or inertia of governing bodies serving the schools situated in the lower socio-economic areas.

Principals A, B and C felt disempowered by the procedures on expulsion. Their major criticisms were; firstly, that the Governing Body could only make a recommendation for expulsion and that the final decision lies with the Head of Education. This is with specific reference to the duties of the Head of Education, Brian O'Connell (*see p.63 and figure 3.2 p.75*). Principals were also uncertain as to the criteria which the Head of Education used to reach the final decision to expel. Principal C expressed this uncertainty "*...you know...one person he expels...the other he doesn't, it's difficult to know how he is thinking...whether he had a good day...a bad day...*" This implies that Principal C believes that the Head of Education's decision to expel is determined by more subjective factors.

The second criticism was directed at the inaccessibility of the circuit manager, especially in volatile situations. This relates to the amendments to the Act (Act 48 of 1999) that states that the principal should phone the circuit manager at the close of the meeting and inform him/her of what transpired, and of the reason(s) why the governing body wishes the learner to be suspended. Principal D ignores this amendment and disregards this procedure. He suspends the learners instantly and has the suspension ratified by the governing body at a later stage. Both principals D and E were of the view that the culture of the community and the seriousness of the transgression must be considered. Their view was that the principal had to be in control of certain situations.

The third criticism was with specific reference to subsection 8(5) of the SASA (*see p.68*) of circular 0030/99 (*see p.76, point g*) of the Western Cape Education Department. These state that, all witnesses e.g. the principal, members of the school involved in the investigation, may only explain matters at the inquiry, but must leave the meeting after giving evidence.

Principals B and C's main grievance with this stipulation was that they were not allowed to be part of the final decision to expel, despite being part of the initial investigation. The principals' view were that they will always be part of the initial investigation as schools are understaffed and transgression will always be brought to them.

However, it is important that principals do leave the meeting. Not being present at the end of the hearing is based on a legal principle that a person cannot be a witness, a prosecutor and a judge at the same time (*see circular 0030/99 p.76*). Thus by excusing him/herself the principal is not compromising either of his or her roles and would be avoiding a conflict of interest.

Prior to the SASA, schools entered into agreements with parents to transfer learners who transgressed to other schools. However, since the SASA was instituted, principals are in a very precarious position regarding such agreements as parents may accuse the principal of bias and of deciding the fate of learners before the governing body meetings. Such arrangements could also jeopardise the legal process leading to an expulsion. Those principals included in the study appeared to be wary of parents who were knowledgeable of the procedures of expulsion.

Attitude and opinions of principals as regards the procedures and guidelines on expulsions

Principals A, C and E commented that many principals were discouraged to take the expulsion route because the procedures were too long, involved or "*ingewikkeld*". Usually, it required a lot of willpower to complete the administrative work. Initially, Principal A found the procedures difficult to unravel. However, he found that after receiving training it had been much easier to complete. His opinion was that many principals were discouraged by the amount of paperwork. But as they became more accustomed to this, the number of expulsion requests could increase. Principal C stated that it took more than two hours to do the paper work, besides the disciplinary hearing and that "*one slip-up derailed the whole process*". Principal E believed that expulsion cases merit the time for the sake of the discipline and tone of the school.

Contrary to the views expressed above, Principal D felt that, for him, the guidelines, *"merely existed on paper"*. His view was that the procedures only become an issue at middle-class schools, where parents have a tradition of using legal assistance. His opinion was that *"if you follow the procedure, you end up with a legal expulsion by the Head of Education, because you are being pressurised by the governing body and with the attitude of the present MEC of Education, which is, that if a child is a nuisance at school, he forfeits his right to education."*

In his response, the principal made specific reference to the procedures as laid down by the WCED circular 0030/99 (*see p.75*). It seemed that these guidelines were particularly important to schools situated in areas where parents were knowledgeable about the legal implications of expulsion. In other areas the procedures *"merely existed on paper"* and were often disregarded.

It was possible to surmise from the interviews that governing bodies from the middle-class schools were more committed and knowledgeable about the legal implication of following the procedures. Principals from the working class schools complained about the difficulty of getting together the members of the governing body. Parents were either working shifts and were unable to attend meetings, or they did not have the necessary skills to fulfill their functions.

Attitude of principals regarding the support provided by the WCED in the expulsion process

The views of the principals again differed considerably. Principal A was satisfied with the support given to his school and felt that the guidelines and the training for the Governing Body has been ongoing and thorough. Contrary to Principal A, Principal B felt that the WCED could provide more support when declining a request for expulsion. *"I think they (WCED) undermine the discipline of the school by not allowing the expulsions to go through, anyway many schools feel that it is a waste of time, they don't want to go through the expulsion procedure."*

Principal C's view was that *"it was not about the support and the guidelines, but the policy!"* His opinion was that the school needed more power so that it could suspend pending

expulsion, prior to the formal expulsion process. He stressed the point by relating an incident of a boy who lost his temper and could not be restrained during a sports event, *"he lost his temper...he got so angry...he couldn't think straight...he swore at me...the child was beserk. He assaulted two of the opponent players...I needed to tell the child to go home!"* His view was that under, these extraordinary circumstances, the principal should be given the power to send the child home. The action could then be ratified by a full governing body meeting and be checked by the circuit manager later. His view was that principal's hands were tied and that decisions like these needed to be made immediately, before creating a more dangerous situation.

Principal D was emphatic and convinced that the WCED could provide much more support: *"...yes, they can and they should and it is their obligation to do it and it is in the national interest that they do it!"* His standpoint was that, prior to 1994, the Education Department existed to uphold apartheid and that presently many of the higher placed officials were still there who *"...don't have the will nor the capacity to develop the type of networking which schools require. I don't think they can see it!"* He also expressed his displeasure at the fact that governing bodies, which originate from the bureaucracy, did not have the right to use the legal resources within the WCED. *"If you are situated in a working class community you do not have the money to contest issues."* He also states that, *"because we are a Governing Body within the WCED, we should have the legal resources of the WCED and not just O'Connell. We must forget about us and them and just think about our Department, because I am as much WCED as O'Connell and Zille, and even closer to the business."*

Generally principals were satisfied with the support provided by the WCED. However the view was expressed that when a request for expulsion is declined by the Head of Education, the WCED should provide assistance for the readmission as it undermines the discipline of the school. Principal D was responding to the lack of resources which existed at the school especially the legal resources.

Attitude of the principal towards discipline and expulsion and the impact of how the teacher's views influence the principal's decisions to proceed with the process of expulsion

All the principals agreed that their views and attitudes do influence discipline and expulsions. Some principals were more democratic in their approach and others tend to take a more

autocratic stance. Consistency in the application of the code of conduct was also an important factor that came to the fore.

Principal A felt that discipline of the school *"...is one of the worrying aspects of being the principal. When things start going wrong and the discipline is bad I wonder if it's because I'm not strong enough"*. He believes that prior to the existence of a clear code of conduct and a referral system, *"...teachers would want to refer someone straight away for irritating them"*. Now the school has a clear code of conduct which outlines what should happen and the route to follow. He did feel that often *"teachers do expect you to take drastic action from time to time, it's always a difficult thing, because in your heart you have to feel that it is the right thing to do"*. The statements expressed by Principal A revealed the emotive nature of expulsions.

Principal B felt that *"...the principal sets the tone."* There was no doubt that the principal's attitude influences the discipline at school. Principal B said that it is the principal's responsibility to see that the code of conduct is implemented. *"You can easily ignore small things e.g. a student who does not come in his uniform, boys wearing earrings, etc. little things that you ignore and the student will say, well, we can get away with it"*. He feels that you have to be tough on the little things, even if it is draining to the person in the office. Often children will appeal to the deputy principal who might be lenient and more understanding. This tends to break down discipline in a school. His opinion was that it was important that the deputies support the principal's decisions; *"We have to take particular lines, we have to support, we cannot take different decisions"*. Principal B disagrees that all teachers should take responsibility for discipline *"and take every incident to the staffroom, to discuss what we're going to do in this situation."* The principal sets the tone. Principal B felt strongly that the principal cannot just relent to the idea of all teachers having to accept responsibility. *"I have to deal with these issues and I have to deal with it as fairly as possible according to the code of conduct."* He admitted that teachers would from time to time want to discuss discipline. *"There is no doubt that staff members can put pressure on the office to act in a particular way."* He recalls an incident of a grade 11 boy with a vile temper who had a confrontation with the accounting teacher in which he swore at her. I said, *"This boy is out! We can't accept that kind of behaviour at this school...I called in the parents and told them that the child must leave, he must go to another school, I thought the matter was cut and dry."* The teacher, on the other hand, felt that the principal had acted too harshly against the

boy. She felt that the boy should have been given a chance. The principal indicated that if it had been another teacher, he would've argued his point of view. The attitude of the principal towards a particular teacher showed that certain teachers were taken more seriously than others, or that the principal was more receptive to some teachers.

Principal C felt strongly that his attitude does influence discipline. *"I am a person who talks more than acts. The way I want things done, that definitely influences the discipline."* He stated that principals had moved away from the *"kragdadige approach"*, the *"just-climb-in-heavy approach"*...*"we are far more careful...we also try to get onto things quicker and separate those things that must get appropriate punishment"*. Principal C stated that at his school there was a Disciplinary Head linked to a Pastoral Head who would work together if there were problems. They would discuss and determine the most appropriate course of action to be taken for every transgression.

Principal C also admitted that he was influenced by the attitude of the teachers, and that they did place pressure on him. But he added that he did have a mind of his own. *"I realise the staff often would like something drastic to happen...when the Governing Body takes a decision that is going to be unpopular with the staff...then I am not going to defend that decision. I allow the two Governing Body Reps to speak to the staff and explain why a decision was taken and if they are still not happy they can mandate the reps to go back to the Governing Body."* His opinion was that when the Governing Body made a decision, it was normally carefully considered and well thought through.

Principal D also agreed that the attitude of the principal did influence the discipline of the school. However, he did not agree with principal B's views. He felt that, *"discipline in a school is a team effort,"* especially *"if there is a very strong democratic ethic entrenched in that staff...then it's team work"*. He agreed that his attitude did play a major role, and reinforces this view by stating: *"My attitude would be influenced by my collegial relationship with the staff. I don't see myself in a hierarchial relationship, with me at the top, I see myself as one of many. I do see myself as a leader but in specific aspects and areas but I see every other teacher as a leader in areas that they have greater skills and knowledge."* He stated that, *"it is precisely because he sees himself as a teacher first, and then as a head-teacher that he is so attentive to discipline"*.

Principal D remarked that this was a very contentious issue. He was being frank when saying that his approach to discipline *“is not a homogeneous one, it’s a very contested one”*. When he was initially appointed principal his controversial views on discipline were resisted. However, he said, *“I found very strong allies in some very strong personalities, around many of the questions”*. He expressed his gratefulness for that because it would have been extremely difficult for him otherwise. His final remark was that *“teachers do often put lots of pressure on you to get rid of a child but I think they have an understanding now, of how that attitude is not helpful and that approach is not helpful”*.

Principal E agreed that discipline in schools depended on the principals. His view was that *“If I was not as hard as I am, I think I would have serious problems at this school...serious problems! I think it is the fundamental responsibility of the principal to set the tone and discipline of the school...as far as I’m concerned I’m doing that well.”* He feels that he does this in two ways: by being a good role model, *“when I preach punctuality and regular attendance they know where it’s coming from”*, and by not being office bound principal. He makes his presence felt, *“being a complex, big school...I walk around this school six or seven times a day...I think it makes a huge impact.”*

His reaction to the question whether he was influenced by the attitude of the teacher was somewhat shocking. He said that part of the problems of his school was as a result of more than half of the teachers’ poor role-modelling and the poor commitment to the learner. Teachers do not put pressure on him to expel children because he is regarded as a disciplinarian *“they tend to use me a hellavu lot for maintaining discipline...when teachers have discipline problems in their class...they send the whole block to the principals office...I tend to have a problem with that...but at the same time I enjoy it.”* He explained this contradiction by saying that teachers tend to shirk their responsibilities and make it a *“principal thing”*, but on the other hand it gives him an opportunity to communicate to the whole school that *“I’m a no-nonsense guy...I give them a hellavu roughing-up...I treat them badly...I don’t hit them...but some of them will break down in tears, and they take the message back to the classroom and so it perpetuates the idea of ‘don’t try your luck’.”*

All the principals agreed that their views and attitudes on discipline do influence the disciplinary measures that are implemented. What came to the fore was the varying disciplinary approaches of the principals. Principals A, B, C and E believed that the discipline

of the school was a reflection of a principal's ability to maintain control. Principal B's view was that the principal sets both the tone and sees that the code of conduct was implemented. The importance of support from the deputies, as well as having strong allies on the staff, also surfaced as an important factor in maintaining discipline in the school. Principal E stressed the importance of the principal as a role model to the staff.

The view that every transgression, irrespective of its seriousness, must be dealt with as quickly and appropriately as possible was also popular. Principal B's criticism of a democratic management style was that, "*one could not take every incident to the staffroom*". The researcher found that it was precisely because of the views held by principals A, B and C, i.e. that they had to maintain control and good discipline and uphold the reputation of the school, that the rate of expulsions were higher than at schools represented by principals D and E.

Principals A, B, C and D agreed that teachers often applied pressure on them to take drastic action, i.e. to expel a learner. The principals admitted that they were influenced by the opinion of certain teachers on the staff to act in a particular manner. This was illustrated by an incident where a difference of opinion arose between Principal B and a teacher on the staff regarding the discipline of a learner. Principal B admitted that had it been another teacher, he may have stood his ground.

The research indicated that there were major disciplinary problems at schools where teachers believed that discipline was a "*principal's thing*". This is with specific reference to Principal E, who believed that the teachers on the staff were responsible for more than fifty percent of the problem. The researcher detected a rift between the principal and the staff which resulted in the general breakdown of discipline in the school and the teachers shirking their responsibility. Although the management style of principal A, B, C and D differed, the researcher found that if there was consensus amongst staff members on the manner in which disciplinary problems were handled, and all the teachers shared responsibility for the discipline in the school, disciplinary problems would decrease.

Influence of abolition of corporal punishment on expulsions

Four of five principals reported that the abolition of corporal punishment certainly did influence expulsions. Their opinion was that the Department should have provided them with alternatives to corporal punishment when it was abolished. The principals expressed differing perspectives on the abolition of corporal punishment and also whether it was still utilised.

Principals A, B and C agreed that when corporal punishment was used, it did prevent many children from reaching the stage of expulsion. Principal A stated that *"prior to the abolition of corporal punishment they had very few expulsions, now expulsions have definitely increased"*. His view was that corporal punishment created many problems, since the children came from a variety of backgrounds, religions and cultures. He stated that, *"what is acceptable in one family is totally unacceptable in another family and also that the school and the parents are fairly conservative in their expectations but that the children were a totally different breed."* Principal A did admit that although corporal punishment did generate problems, its abolition created even more.

Principal B agreed with Principal A that different religious groups would have different views on corporal punishment, *"we'll find on both sides, arguments for and against corporal punishment"*. His view was that when corporal punishment existed, children were scared to commit transgressions and they behaved themselves for fear of being physically hurt. He stated that he had yet to come across a student that had complained about corporal punishment. He quoted students as saying, *"this is what we were not allowed to do and we didn't do it because of corporal punishment"*. Principal B's view that corporal punishment may have kept students in line, did not mean that they did not have complaints against it. Perhaps the students were merely acknowledging its effectiveness. Since its abolition, students had seemed to become more assertive. They had a tendency to challenge authority and this in turn created many discipline problems. Principal B was, also of the opinion that after the abolition of corporal punishment, many children thought that they could take advantage of its absence. For this reason the school needed to send out a clear message to the parents and the students that it would not tolerate any kind of misbehaviour.

Principal C's views regarding to the abolition of corporal punishment was that *"it affected schools greatly...a complete new approach was needed, not only in the punishment but a whole new disciplining approach was needed"*. Before the abolition of corporal punishment, if the child did something wrong, corporal punishment was the last step before expulsion, *"there was something you could do right at the end, and that is, give him a good hiding, it was enough to wake them up...and now...that is gone"*. The researcher sensed a feeling of *"longing for the old days of corporal punishment"*. After pondering over it for a while, he said, *"I'm happy it's gone because it was used indiscriminately and abusively by teachers...and so I'd rather not have it, than to manage the control of it"*. His attitude was that there were children who benefitted from corporal punishment, *"it was a type of wake-up call before expulsion"*. Currently he felt that *"you'd try the soft approach by talking to them, they sit quietly across the table from me and I tell them what they did wrong...they don't wake up that something terrible has happened until they're actually out on the street wondering why they're not in school today...nobody is mean or miserable to them until the time that they are expelled."*

Whereas the other schools have ceased to practice corporal punishment, principal E who represents the township school said, *"that corporal punishment, according to the learners, parents and teachers, is part and parcel of the African culture"*. The principal had on numerous occasions warned teachers that corporal punishment was banned but they would say, *"in our culture we accept it, even the Bible says, 'spare the rod and spoil the child'"*. He detailed an incident of when he had a discipline problem with of the children, and called in the parents. The parents would say, *"principal, we give you permission to hit our child,"* if we tell them that we can't, they say *"give me the stick! I will do it as the parent!"* His opinion was that the banning of corporal punishment had not truly impacted on his school because it was still practised; *"it's not 100% of the teachers who are in that mode. I would say about 20% of the teachers, who are not in a visible form, because I don't get to see them, but I get to hear from learners from time to time."* He also believes that if he has no corporal punishment at his school, it would influence discipline negatively. The researcher came to the conclusion that Principal E believed that corporal punishment was acceptable in the context of the community which he serves, as long as it was controlled.

Contrary to this view, Principal D's view was that there was rejoicing at his school at the banning of corporal punishment. He ascribed this attitude to the abundance of progressive

ideas and personalities at the school. *"The majority of the teachers agreed with the banning of corporal punishment although there are two or three who bemoan the fact."* He lamented, *"that corporal punishment was abolished in 1996 but that the Department did not provide alternatives until October 2000. They did not empower teachers to use alternative approaches and so you even had certain schools voting the return of corporal punishment."*

Section 12 of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) states that *"everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way".* Similarly, the National Educational Policy Act (1996) states that *"no person shall administer corporal punishment or subject a student to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution"* (see p.67).

The prohibition of corporal punishment was part of the national programme to transform education and to bring it in line with the spirit of the Constitution and to develop alternative strategies for discipline. Thus the South African School's Act (Act 84 of 1996) states under subsection 10(1) no person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner, and subsection 10(2) states that any person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence, and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault (see p.67).

No alternatives to corporal punishment were provided to schools until October 2000, when it came in the form of the Minister of Education's, Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (2000). This document was not well publicised, and, at the time of the research, only two of the five principals had received copies of the document. The view of Principal C was that the document came too late, *"the solutions are quite simplistic and not practical for large numbers of pupils"*.

All the principals agreed that the abolition of corporal punishment had influenced disciplinary practices and expulsions in schools. Principals A, B, C and E believed that the abolition of corporal punishment led to an increase in expulsions. The reason cited was that previously corporal punishment, instead of expulsion, was used as a last resort. If this did not help the child, an agreement would be entered into with another school and the child would be transferred.

It was not possible to confirm an increase in expulsions since the abolition of corporal punishment in 1996, as it did not fall within the ambit of this study.

Even though principals felt disempowered at the abolition of corporal punishment, it seemed that they also felt relieved that it was abolished. The view of Principal C was that, “...*I’d rather not have it, than to manage the control of it*”. This was with specific reference to teachers who practised corporal punishment indiscriminately and disregarded the legal consequences which followed subsection 10(1) and 10(2) of the SASA.

Principal E was the only principal who admitted that corporal punishment was still practised by certain teachers on his staff. Although he did not condone the action of these teachers his views were, firstly that he did not see them do it, secondly, it was acceptable in the context and culture of the community which this school served.

What the principals did have in common was that they all expressed the need for a new disciplinary approach.

Principals’ views on the influence of the ethos, philosophy and code of conduct of the school on expulsions

All the principals acknowledged the link between the ethos and philosophy of the school, the code of conduct and expulsions. What was very significant, however, was the degree to which the ethos, philosophy and code of conduct of the school was dependent on the community which it represents.

Principal B stated emphatically, “*that there is no doubt that the ethos of the school has a direct link with expulsion. We expel!*” He felt strongly that if the child did not adhere to this code of conduct, then the school would not hesitate to put the child out. He stated that the ethos and the philosophy of the school was to inculcate in the student, “*that if he wants to be at the school, he must be prepared to work*”. His perception was that people sent their children to the school because of its reputation and tradition of good discipline and because the community understands the need for discipline. Principal B reiterated the philosophy of the school, “*the philosophy is this, we understand the problem out there, we know what it does to you (the learner), we know that if we expel it will become the problem of another*

school, but we pride ourselves of the fact that if we had to take action against two or three students the other 800 we have protected, and that is where we draw on our inspiration. It does not make us remorseful. We do not hesitate to put the child out, legally or any other way."

Principal D agreed that the ethos and the philosophy of the school did impact on the discipline of the school. It is because of this particular ethos that they have no expulsions. At his school they would rather encourage and convince the child to stay. His perception was that this philosophy and policy has not been effectively entrenched into the South African constitution, and should place greater emphasis on the rights of children to an education. Principal D acceded that it would be senseless to explicitly state that *"we shall have no expulsions, it will be stupid for a school to do that! The very people that you would want to help would tend to act against you."* Principal D vehemently opposed the views of principal B, stating that when a school expels a child *"you relegate the responsibility to another school"* and thus he suggested that schools needed to look at their capacity to deal with problems that existed, instead of deferring it to another school. However, he described this phenomenon of getting rid of students from a different perspective, *"schools are graded, they grade themselves, generally according to economic class. A child expelled or put out of school L or school P is not likely to be accepted by an ex-model C school, and a child pushed out of a working class school is not likely to be accepted by L or P."* He pointed to the fact that he receives most of the students expelled from schools such as L and P because there is no other place for them to go.

Principal C, on the other hand, stated that the ethos and philosophy of his school made it difficult to expel pupils. He expounded on their ethos, *"our policy is that we don't get rid of our problems...we solve it. It is not our policy to expel...the staff is keen on getting rid of them...push them out...no, we'll work with them for as long as we can...we are in the business of educating...we give them a chance. Expulsion is an absolute last resort."* The researcher noted that even though Principal C felt that *"expulsion is an absolute last resort"*, the number of requests for expulsions were considerably higher at this school than requests from other schools.

Principal E explained that cultural norms and standards at his school are still very much the basis of the ethos and philosophy of the school, and thus there are virtually no expulsions at

the school. His opinion was that the cultural norms and standards were still respected and that subservience to authority was still the order of the day. *"...The teacher is the boss, the principal is the God...they don't tell me that...but I have a sense of it...when it comes to discipline they seem to look at me with respect. I can get the worst 'skollie' and still and still talk aggressively or even give him a shot with my hand...but there is no kind of retaliation."* The principal felt that because of the type of learner (most of them originate from the Eastern Cape), *"they are still on the good path in terms of good discipline and good moral behaviour."*

Principal E appears to have adapted the code of conduct at his school to suit the African culture. *"The way Africans handle problems is more of a consensus arrangement with the whole tribe...the whole group of people...the whole family is brought into a 'bosberaad'. So, I understand the culture and I understand where the parents are coming from...not they're imposing on us...we respect that."* The principal was emphatic about *"solving it as a family and looking at it in its context and culture"*.

The researcher finds that this type of problem-solving in the African cultural context explains why there are no formal requests for expulsions from a school where serious disciplinary problems exist. The principal stated, *"we have huge problems but we don't think many warrant expulsions"*.

Although all the principals acknowledged that the ethos, the philosophy and the code of conduct does influence the phenomenon of expulsion, the manner in which these factors influenced expulsions differed. The ground motive of each school could be detected in the thoughts, feelings and the moral principles expressed by each principal. It can be seen as the spiritual root of community life which determines the expression of thoughts, feelings, moral standards and community norms. This is reflected through a school in its particular philosophy and ethos. (Stone (1974) in Van Schalkwyk 1988:240).

Principal B's view that *"there is no doubt that the ethos of the school has a direct link with expulsions. We expel!"* reflects the society and the community which this school serves. The ethos of this school is based on academic excellence and a tradition of good discipline. Thus expelling a few learners to protect other students would be the norm. In stark contrast to Principal B are the views of Principal D. He agrees that the ethos and philosophy of the

school does indeed influence expulsions. But he does not believe in getting rid of students, but rather to nurture them or provide them with opportunities to improve. The community and the school which Principal D serves is characterised by a high percentage of at-risk youth.

Principals A and C were two of the schools with the highest expulsion rates. But principal C maintained that the ethos and philosophy of the school made it difficult to expel learners. He was adamant that expulsions were only used as a last resort. In an attempt to reconcile the difference in the rate of expulsions and the ethos and philosophy, the researcher concluded that schools differed in their tolerance levels. The phrase used by Principal C, *"we'll work with them as long as we can..."* is a relative concept which differs from school to school. The ability of schools to hold on to learners also depends on the capacity of the school to deal with the problems. Principals A and C seemed to prefer erring on the side of caution. They would rather request the expulsion of a learner who is found guilty of serious misconduct than take the risk of being accused of not protecting other learners.

All the schools have adapted their code of conduct to the context and culture of the community which they serve. It may appear that Principal E had adapted the code of conduct more than others. But this could perhaps be explained by the vast difference in the culture of the community which he serves.

Principals' views regarding the influence of socio-economic, catchment area and intake on expulsions

Principals A and C were certain that, despite the changes in the intake and catchment area this did not influence expulsions at their schools. However, principals A, B and C did have selective enrolment policies. This may serve to shield their schools from actually having to adapt to their changed catchment area.

Principal A stated that his school was white and that *"regrettably as time has gone on the white families have actually pulled out and we have become more of a brown school and what we have left are the children of families of lower socio-economic groups"*. He did not find a correlation between socio-economic background and expulsion. His opinion was that *"some of the characters that we have expelled are very difficult characters, irrespective of*

race". Both principals A and C were of the opinion that the number of expulsions represented the racial composition of the school population.

Principal C identified with Principal A in that his school also served a working class white community. He explained that after 1990, when admission was opened to everyone, his enrolment figures were down because no-one wanted to come to a dual-medium school. *"...The rich, white schools were full...so they took a few black people...few brown people...so this school wasn't full...not even close...so in a short space of time...two to three years the student population underwent a dramatic change...the teacher population a little longer."* His opinion was also that expulsions had nothing to do with intake or socio-economic area. Even though the expulsion rate was high and the school is predominantly coloured, the principal emphasised that colour *"did nothing but improve the academic results. We now have parents who are businessmen, professional people, we have never been able to draw on the skills of architects"*. The school's selection policy is also very subtle, and attempts to draw learners from "better" families and socio-economic backgrounds. This can be seen by their enrolment criteria. *"We open enrolments early...we expect the parents to hand in their forms...we're quite fussy...we want two photographs...R150.00...we want an electric account...their birth certificate, they have to come up with those things...parents who are slack to do that...well, sometimes we contact the primary school and if we find there has been exceptionally bad behaviour, theft or fighting...we will not take the child."*

Unlike principals A and C, Principal B's enrolment policy is based on academic excellence. This topic, when broached, was met with a degree of antagonism. *"We will be criticised for our enrolment policy. Where we say; we will take the best students based on extra-curricular activities, sporting activities and of course academic results and siblings."* He stressed that the school came with a history of academic excellence and a reputation of discipline. He emphasised that if you get the best application you would certainly not say, *"...well, I think what we need to do is to take 10% of parents who are quite well off and 10% who are not so well off and 10% who come from Lavender Hill and 10% who come from Steenberg. I don't think we can do that."* To stress the difficulties that they are faced with when accepting children from other areas, he recalled two specific learners. *"We had a student from Lavender Hill, Jock, who came from a very poor, deprived background...he came with gangster attributes...we were worried that his behaviour would influence students, and it did influence the students, there's no doubt about it! Eventually because of his behaviour we put him*

out...subsequently we learnt that he had been murdered in a gang fight." To stress the influence of socio-economic background, the principal related another incident of a child from Lavender Hill, *"she was not a nice person to deal with...initially, very coarse, very rude...the teachers did not like her...I was upset because she was elected on the SRC...but I had to deal with the situation...there were still some teachers who disliked because of her past records, and when it came to the selection of prefects, they never selected her...I had to step in because I thought they were doing her a disservice."* The principal's view was he would take on these students but there should also be a change in mindset of the teachers. They needed to know where the students came from and at the same time the child should be warned that *"we are prepared to give you a chance, but you must know that if you don't take these chances, then the threat of expulsion becomes a reality"*.

Principal D, whose school is based in a working class community, emphasised that expulsion was not an option at his school. If it were an option, discrimination would be prevalent. He was emphatic that *"racism was endemic and entrenched"*, and challenged anybody to disagree with that as he had many experiences that would demonstrate its existence. The principal believed that, despite the school's noble beginnings, i.e. when the school opened in 1976 it was the only one which opened its doors to all children irrespective of race, colour or creed. However, there is still endemic and entrenched racism amongst the staff, governing body members, parents and the children. His concluding remark was that, *"yes, there is racism and racism will play a role in expulsions despite the denials"*.

Principal E found that the children who came from the Eastern Cape, *"are a better core of pupils, many of them are still on the good path in terms of good discipline...they have not yet been caught in the tentacles of evil, drugs and gangsterism"*.

There appeared to be no evidence to support the view that high requests for expulsions reflected the socio-economic area or the intake of the school. The two ex-model C schools admitted that the intake of their schools had changed from being predominantly white to predominantly coloured. However, both principals A and C were of the opinion that the ratio of expulsions reflected the racial make-up of the school population. The researcher was unable to confirm these statements in the data.

Principals A, B and C employed a policy of selective entry. However, it seemed that despite this, their expulsion rates were higher than other schools that did not have a policy of selection. Principal B's policy of selection is based on excellence and directly linked to the school's history of academic excellence and a reputation of discipline.

But problems associated with accepting learners from different socio-economic areas were expressed by Principal B. If teachers are not equipped or empowered to deal sensitively with learners from different cultures and socio-economic groups, expulsions will increase. This discrepancy was illustrated by an incident at school A, where a learner was expelled for stealing a train ticket; whereas at school E the stealing of a train ticket was regarded as a petty transgression. Disciplinary measures for that specific transgression seemed to depend on the school which the learner attended, as well as the principal's understanding of the context of the transgression. Principal E's view was that *"...if we know that the child doesn't have a train ticket and he's living on his own...we are not pardoning the criminal behaviour...we are just wary of the mitigating circumstances..."* Similarly Principal D supported the view by saying *"...we understand the deprivation..."*

Based on Principal D and E's opinions, it appeared that schools that accept learners from lower socio-economic areas or different cultures will find it difficult to understand the child's behaviour and attitude. They will thus be more inclined to expel such learners.

Principals' views regarding the influence of rationalisation on expulsions

There was consensus amongst the principals on the impact that rationalisation had on expulsions. Some principals were more vociferous than others, depending on whether their school was able to employ additional teachers. Usually, this depended on how much resources the school had at its disposal.

Schools A, B and C are middle-class schools, which felt the impact of rationalisation to a lesser degree. Principal A believes that the process of rationalisation and redeployment had a greater effect on expulsion than socio-economic factors. When the teacher-student ratio was large, frustration levels rise amongst students. This is directed not only towards the teacher, but sometimes at other students. The problems which arise ends up as a governing body matter or an expulsion matter. Often children feel neglected by teachers and this creates

disciplinary problems. Principal A definitely believed that there was a correlation between the number of learners at the school and expulsions. *"Previously we had 600 students and quite a large staff and I think we knew the child even if the child was difficult...we were able to give the child, time. These days it's almost the case of we could've done that without really giving the child the chance, no personal interaction, and I can see this getting back to the way it was by getting more staff."*

Principal B had to lose 20 of his 48 teachers in 1996. By 1999 he was down to 27 teachers. *"There is no doubt in those years the disciplinary problems grew because of the large classes and the only reason why we were able to appoint five additional teachers, was because our parents were able to pay for the services of five teachers".* He was also convinced that in 1996 when the teachers started leaving, the class sizes were getting bigger, *"the teachers couldn't really pay attention to the problem, they could not sort out the problems as they arose"*. By 1996 and 1997 the principal had removed more than 15 students from different grades presumably to sort out the problems!

Similarly, principal C did not feel the impact of rationalisation because the governing body paid for five teachers. The governing body post *"cushioned the blow"* and without the five teachers, he would certainly have had more problems and more expulsions. *"Expulsions usually arises out of situations where pupils have been unsupervised, without control...then things happen"*.

Although Principal D does not regard expulsion as an option, his opinion is, *"...when you have many children, one teacher, a syllabus that has to be completed...a principal that is not very helpful...and children misbehave and there's no support mechanism, what can you do? You tell the child to get the hell out! The child becomes a nuisance to the entire school. The principal does not know how to deal with the child...he expels the child."*

Principal D feels that there is a correlation between the number of learners at the school and expulsion rates. In his estimation, the physical size of classrooms is meant to accommodate 20–25 children, not 40. *"I think it is a factor, a very real factor, I have seen 40 children in a class in the UK, but the classroom size, physically, is huge. So it does make it easier for the teacher to cope, the children are less frustrated not to climb over each other, to get*

somewhere.” He concludes by saying, “...that if it is behaviour that gets you expelled then certainly there is a correlation”.

Principal E found rationalisation to be an extremely huge problem. *“Staff rationalization and the staff establishment that has been given to us makes it really, really problematic to manage the school as a whole and to manage individual classrooms. Our class enrolment figures ranges from 37–51 and many of our classrooms are built to accommodate 40 learners maximum, we have instances where our desks are virtually right next to the chalkboard.”* His frustration was evident in his descriptions of the huge classes, the very, very high workloads of teachers, and the very high stress levels of teachers who are struggling to maintain discipline. *“There’s more kinds of misbehaviour...so these issues are seriously impacting on discipline and I have my hands full, dealing with classroom discipline, almost on a daily basis...all because of rationalisation.”* His solutions to these problems are *“we obviously need more teachers...we obviously need smaller classes to impact on quality education”*.

There seemed to be a contradiction in the major disciplinary problems the school experiences and the number of expulsions. However, Principal E tries to explain the low expulsions and serious behavioural problems by saying, *“I am a very strict disciplinarian with teachers and learners alike and they know who I am in terms of discipline...so I haven’t seen that type of correlation, the type of learner that we have...from the Eastern Cape.”*

The policy of rationalisation had a greater impact on the working class schools i.e. schools D and E than on the middle-class schools i.e. schools A, B and C. When considering the data (Chapter 5, p.104–105) on the number of additional teachers appointed by schools, it would be reasonable to say that rationalisation did impact on working class schools. It seemed to have resulted in a large number of learners being expelled from these schools. However, the expulsion rates did not reflect this change. Schools situated in the working class areas expelled less learners than the other schools, even though they were understaffed, teacher/pupil ratios were higher and the schools were generally under-resourced.

Both Principals D and E experienced major disciplinary problems. Being understaffed compounded the problem. However, this did not reflect in the expulsion data. Rationalisation has an effect, but not directly. It’s hard to establish a simple cause-effect relationship. This indicates that other factors besides rationalisation influences expulsions. Alternatively, school

D functioned as a type of “*holding institution*” attempting to rehabilitate and nurture these at-risk learners until they leave school voluntarily. Principal E endeavoured to resolve the discrepancy between the major disciplinary problems and the low expulsions experienced at this school, by focusing on his disciplinary style.

Principals also described other problems that existed concurrently with rationalisation. Factors such as an increase in the number of students in a classroom. Classes are too small to hold the increasing number of learners. Overcrowding of classrooms is undoubtedly a major factor in the breakdown of discipline. The policy of rationalisation produced many negative consequences for education. Schools that were understaffed experienced a breakdown of morale amongst teachers. This resulted in a high absentee rate amongst teachers resulting in a further breakdown of discipline. The policy of rationalisation also saw the departure of all non-examinable subjects such as the guidance teacher, physical education teacher, music, etc. This reduced schools’ capacity to function holistically to assist learners with behavioural and emotional problems.

Attitude of principals towards providing parents with alternatives to expulsions and principals’ views towards “unofficial expulsions/transfers”

The response to this question was evasive. Some of the principals stated that they were not certain as to how many students are asked to leave; others said that they had stopped using it as an alternative. Another principal claimed that he only started using it because of the pressure being placed on him by the Department to perform academically.

Principal A was also unsure. He believed that, in some cases there are children whose discipline is questionable for a long period. Eventually, he says, he will be forced to confront the governing body and then “*the parents will decide which route to take, no option is given to them, I make it clear that if they come to the governing body hearing it could be punishment, suspension or expulsion*”. The principal said that often the “*child has had enough of school...and actually it is the right thing to do*”.

Principal B was upfront about the numbers of students who were unofficially transferred. His belief was that “*a situation reaches a peak, quite a number of students misbehaving and we need to do something about it, but it also sends out a message, so we need to look at it*

(misbehaving students) at regular intervals". He has "unofficially expelled" 27 times over a 3 year period.

Principal B was firm and adamant that he does not offer any alternatives to either "an unofficial expulsion" or a "legal expulsion". He says *"my attitude has always been the extreme attitude, the youngster must go!"* But does not agree with substance abuse contracts with learners as they were not regarded as legal documents. He was asked whether he had agreements with other schools regarding *"his transfers"*, to which he replied: *"I don't believe in that. You accept my bad eggs and we'll accept your bad eggs"*. If a principal who is on the receiving end of the transfer contacts the school, he says, *"...we asked him to leave because he had drugs in his possession, but I think he's learnt his lesson, and maybe he's prepared to knuckle down and fit in your school."*

Principal C concurred with principal B regarding *"getting rid of learners"*, but he differed with his counterpart on the agreements between schools. He had, however, stopped the "unofficial transfers" two years ago. This, he explained, was the reason for the high "official expulsions". Some disappointment was detected in his voice, when he said *"I would like to go back to the old days and phone another principal and say...listen can you help out here...it was a 'relationship' we've taken dagga smokers from school P and vandals from school G and they have done the same."* Principal C's view was that children should rather be given an opportunity to start afresh at another school than go through the process of expulsion and the stigma attached to it. He stated that he now has approximately 4 to 5 expulsions – the same number that he would have transferred.

Principal D opposes the standpoint of principals B and C because he is at the receiving end of the "unofficial transfers". He accepts errant children from other schools, but prevents and discourages the practice at his school. He related an incident where one of the gay learners at the school wanted to leave. *"I didn't want him to leave, because I know justice is not being done to gay children, because schools have not researched their own roles in how to deal with gay learners. In school they are also regarded as alien to their culture. Like most of the troubled children, we try to hold them as close as possible. Many times I had to stand the wrath of the staff because they have their own views of gay people, and with some of us, our views are prescribed by religion."* The boy, for some or other reason, insisted that he wanted to leave, which left the principal hurt and disappointed. What bothered the principal was that

he knew that the school the boy wanted to attend *"would take one look at him and never accept him and secondly, it was one of the schools that kicked out children because they don't have school fees. I knew that he didn't stand a cat's chance in hell at that school, I told him so, we tried to dissuade him, eventually I signed the transfer form."* The boy went to the school and was immediately told that *"the school is full"*. He then came back, but the principal refused him entry to the school because he had left by choice. He feels that the school has the capacity to deal with problematic cases because they have links with both social services and places of safety, which other schools do not have.

Contrary to principals B and C, Principal E stated that he had never done any "unofficial transfers" until the end of last year. He habitually threatened students that he would get a transfer for them but it never actually happened. *"It's a deliberate strategy that I use to instill fear into them and believe me, they feel so intimidated and threatened that they will appeal, for me, not do it. It's an idle threat!"* However, the principal admitted that at the end of 2000, he blacklisted approximately 26 children from further admission to the school. *"We know it's illegal...so unofficially we transferred, not to a specific school, we excluded them, and it works...of the 26 or 27, 85% of them failed...now when they fail in the African school set-up...they almost never come back...most of them go to another school...mostly embarrassment."* He commented that not one of the parents had reported the school to the Department *"and we are thankful for that...maybe there's a good and an evil in that"*. The good being that the community will respect the rules of the school and bad because principals may get away with things which are not constitutionally fair.

It was somewhat unusual that principal E would start "unofficial transfers", which are illegal, when other school principals had stopped the practise or claim to have stopped it. This is an indication that principal E is being pressurised by the Western Cape Education Department to improve the school's academic results.

The evidence indicates that of the five principals interviewed, principals A, B, C and E had at some time expelled learners "unofficially". It appears that this is a common practise amongst schools, even though legislation exists which discourages its use. Parents who are unfamiliar with the law governing expulsion are often provided with the alternative of an "unofficial transfer" to another school. Often parents are too embarrassed by their child's transgression

to challenge the principal and the school governing body decision to expel the learner.

Anecdotal reports point to the existence of mutual agreements between school principals to accept each other's learners who transgress. Principal B said that he did not subscribe to the practice, *"I don't believe in that. You accept my bad eggs and we'll accept your bad eggs."* This implies that Principal B would never accept learners which transgress at other schools. If all principals had this attitude, what would happen to learners who transgressed?

The evidence suggests that principals who were previously sympathetic to problematic learners and academically weak learners, were now eager to get rid of them. This change of attitude will lead to an increase in social problems such as gangsterism, substance abuse and general alienation of the at-risk youth of society.

Principals' views on to the influence of "achievement or league tables" on expulsion

The previous question looked at the attitude of principals regarding "unofficial expulsions". Could it be that "unofficial transfers" and the league tables were linked? Most principals found this question interesting, and their reaction differed from one of indifference to infuriation.

Principal E, who only requested one official expulsion in three years, unofficially transferred approximately 26 learners at the end of 2000. It was necessary to find what motivated this change. His opinion was that he had a very big issue with the "league tables". He said the tables were *"judgemental, it is not an objective table based on sound principles of quality and excellence...if you look at the table the highly functioning schools are the better resourced schools, so how can they (the Department) say that those schools are better than my school?"* He lamented that if he enrolled his children at Pinelands High and then brought those children to his school, *"...then you'll see the impact! You're dealing with a different kind of product and you're using a standard norm for every one of them, and not looking at the ethos, the atmosphere and context, the poverty, the enrolment, the socio-economic background, the distance the children have to travel....so many other factors that impact on the results of the school."* He stated emphatically, *"I am not dysfunctional within the context*

in which I am, my school is more functional than many other schools. So I have a huge problem with those tables!" His anger at "those tables" explained what had happened at the end of 2000. Because of the pressure being placed on him to improve his academic results, he had to set very high standards at the school. *"We had to do it! So I'm playing their game...we set a very high level of papers...I didn't promote a single student last year. Only about 25% of the students passed...previously I would have sympathy and empathy for the children...I would look at the Maths results, 45 failed out of 51...sometimes I'd say hold it, there must be a problem, and sometimes I'd increase the mark...I didn't do that last year...last year they failed."* The principal's dilemma is apparent when he states, *"I tell you I didn't sleep...I kept on asking myself if I've done the right thing...I kept on asking, did they fail because the teacher did not deliver?"* The principal's opinion is that, *"in his heart he knew that the teachers did not deliver because of their commitment, it's a problem in all township schools"*.

Principal D also felt very intensely about this issue. His opinion on the "league tables" is that *"...it is fundamentally flawed...it is fundamentally wrong...and it churns up many unintended consequences. One unintended consequence, and I don't think this an intended consequence of Kader Asmal...is that the crime levels are rocketing! and that it (crime) will continue to rocket for as long as such a comparison is made."* The second unintended consequence is *"a reduced continence in township schools or generally black schools, even the middle-class schools, it has already but it will accelerate a movement of children out of schools in those areas to schools that they perceive or have been defined by Kader Asmal's definition of excellence."*

The league tables are creating a diminished confidence in public schools and a movement from the black, township schools to middle-class school, and from middle-class school to ex-model C schools: *"unfortunately this is based on Kader's understanding of what is an excellent school"*. Asmal (the Minister of Education) says, *"an excellent school is a school that delivers excellent academic results. Unfortunately, the cluck of individuals around him, all the provincial ministers of education agree with him...I say it is absolute rubbish! Quality schooling has to do with the development of students in a balanced way in every facet of their existence of its development, that development must be guided."*

Principal D feels very strongly about the “league tables” as he is one of the principals who is receiving children, *“but the majority of the children that we receive between grade 8 and 12 are children who have been unofficially expelled from other high schools”*. His belief is that most principals have *“bought into”* the understanding of the National Minister or they are *“being bullied into accepting that sort of thinking, either by being coerced...through the “carrot system”*. *Some schools have been awarded R250 000, R15 000 plus if they have a recent history or consistency in good grades.”* He feels strongly that no school can claim that they have managed a 100% matric pass rate consistently, without being selective in grade 8. He also feels that there is a relationship between those children who have been unofficially expelled and behavioural problems, *“it’s a combination of behavioural problems and a lack of academic ability and those two go together and therefore it is easy for them to expel informally”*. He found it deplorable that teachers who *“expel informally”* could call themselves educationists. *“They are frauds...simply because we have enormous difficulties, at this school, simply because we try to pick up where other schools have dropped the ball...we sit with an enormous number of children with a lot of problems. We risk an implosion. Our discipline will collapse! I cannot indefinitely take on children.”* He illustrated the severity of the problem: *“If I should parade our problem children and I identify those that have come from other schools...because of drug addiction...they will end up with the majority. It cannot carry on like this...with all the errant and problem children that we receive.”*

Principal D further described two reasons why principals have yielded to the “league tables”; firstly because *“principals are desirous, i.e. they get some reward to have a high level percentage pass rate or they get hit over the head”*. His impression is that every principal wants to know that his or her school is a good school, or in fact, the best school. In striving towards this, they sacrifice so many other things and introduce measures that *“weed out”* children. He explained the *“litany of tricks”* that principals use to get rid of students. *“Initially it started only in grade 12, then they went to grade 11...before May, before the final names (of learners) must go in (to the WCED), those children must be gone! They would get the staff together, and they are resolute and would identify those children that must be gone.”* Schools also fail children in grade 11 and they will inform the child that *“...you don’t have what it takes to maintain the standards of this school in grade 12, you might be able to pass to grade 12, at another school. They threaten the child, that unless they take a transfer, the child will stay in grade 11”*.

Principal D also expressed his views on township schools who have become the “*darlings*” of the press. He says the belief that they have “*beaten the odds is rubbish!*” He is convinced that the only reason that those schools could improve their results was because they had managed to introduce into their schools “*the tricks and bad habits of the old established, bourgeois schools...they have learnt the trick of selection and deselection*”. He concluded by saying that what he was saying might sound radical and outrageous, “*but we sit with that kind of treachery...they are so counter-productive.*” These manipulations also happen on a national level, to get the high average percentage pass rate. This is not done in the interest of the child: “*I think it’s plain ignorance*”.

Principal C was intrigued by the question, but denied that the “league tables” affected expulsions at his school. However, he did admit that it influenced the school in other ways. “*...It leads to a fair amount of blood on the staff...and some heated discussions on what the heck we’re trying to do here...but those were academic and curriculum related discussions and had nothing to do with the discipline*”. Nonetheless, the two issues are not that easily separated. If the publication of the “league tables” had nothing to do with discipline, did it have something to do with academic excellence? Similarly, Principal A also did not agree with the “league tables”. He said that they have “*come to terms with the fact that they are published...we have a policy that if a child has a chance of going from Grade 11 to 12, we don’t fail them*”. He confessed that a student who was readmitted by the WCED, was registered as an independent candidate. However, they (the schools) were informed by the WCED that if a child is in a school then it is a school entry. He acknowledged that, “*there were some people who would get around that one*”.

Principal B was the only principal who approved of the “league tables”. His view was that normally “*if you look at the results of schools...it indicates that something has happened at the school, and that there is discipline at the school, that I think is to a large extent true*”. He believed this of schools that are doing well and those that are not. With regards to schools that are doing well, “*for all kinds of reasons, whether it is supported by the previous regime or whether they just had the political guts to go ahead and to be good, these schools will take the necessary actions against students who misbehave.*” On the other hand, he believes that schools that are not doing so well, “*might feel that because there is pressure on them to accept students, to keep up their numbers, and therefore to safeguard their teachers, there could be a tendency of, whilst we have them, we are not going to waste our time to expel the*

students...we'll try to sort out their problems, if we can't sort out their problems eventually they'll leave". He also said that the whole issue was related to the question of numbers. *"Principals don't want to lose students because their numbers will drop, so if their numbers drop, they just accept students, where do you start?"* He claimed that he had yet to find a school that is not proud of getting a 100% pass rate or of performing well. Referring to independent candidates, he felt there were circumstances where exceptions needed to be made. The principal related an incident last year when two girls fell pregnant in grade 11. Those two students will be entered as private candidates because *"we feel, we have a group of grade 12's who are working as a cohesive group, trying to get 100% pass rate, and now you have two students who through certain reasons, have brought it upon themselves...I always believe in the consequences of your actions. Must everybody bow down to them because there's such a thing as forgiveness, and then at the end of the year, they fail and the other students must bear the consequence of that."* It seemed clear that to Principal B, achieving the 100% pass rate is of primary importance to the school and the community it serves. The school appears willing to take the necessary measures to deal appropriately with learners who jeopardise its chances of achieving a 100% pass.

The National Report on the Performance of Individual Schools as published in South Africa is similar to the British "league/achievement tables". This report is aimed at publishing the matric results of all schools in each province, in order of achievement. Although the publication of the performance of individual schools is aimed at "pulling underperforming schools out of an abysmal situation", the focus has instead fallen more on praising and acknowledging schools for excellent academic achievements.

There is much evidence to prove that schools are being pressurised to perform academically. Principal E who represents a township school, has been labeled a "dysfunctional principal" on the basis of the academic results produced at the school. In response to the WCED's demands, Principal E admits that he has now raised the academic standards and requirements at his school. This had resulted in a shocking number of failures in grade 11. He also "unofficially expelled" 26 of the learners whom he knew would not pass grade 12. All this evidence indicates that Principal E who was previously sympathetic to the plight of learners, was now getting rid of them to boost academic results.

Although the two ex-model C schools denied that the achievement tables had influenced expulsions at their schools, they admitted that the publication of the league tables had been a contentious and an emotive issue amongst staff members. Schools rated as excellent will attract students of high academic ability. Parents will select schools for their children based on these “achievement tables”. “Under-achieving” schools will thus be more neglected than schools that are defined as “excellent” in terms of the “achievement tables”. Principal D’s views on the unintended consequences of the “achievement tables” i.e. an increase in crime rate and a reduced continence in township schools, appears to have become reality already.

There is nothing inherently wrong with the publication of the National Report on the Performance of Individual Schools. But it is problematic to compare schools which are completely unequal. Principals representing the disadvantaged schools felt more affronted by the publication of these tables as this left them wide open to scrutiny and criticism. Principal E’s pronouncements tend to support a link between league tables and expulsions.

Different violations and the differing disciplinary measures attached to these transgressions

The views of the five principals differed significantly regarding the same offences. Some principals involved the governing body more than others, and others were more tolerant of certain violations.

Principals A and C represented two ex-model C schools with high expulsion rates. Most of their requests for expulsions were as a result of drug abuse, theft and physical confrontation.

Principal A says that previously, when a child was caught with drugs during school hours, he would call in the police. Now, he convenes a governing body meeting to request expulsions. If the request is not upheld, then the child and the family is referred for counselling. If the child is caught selling on the school premises, “*an even stronger message would go out to the governing body*”. Similarly, Principal B said that he, “*previously practised zero-tolerance, you’re out!*” However, since he was approached to enter into a Substance Abuse Programme for students at his school, he has been reviewing his position, “*maybe to soften a little bit*”.

However, his response towards children peddling drugs, is still expulsion as *"they were not only endangering their own lives but also the lives of others, so they are a threat...it's like somebody coming in with something dangerous...they can go!"* Both felt that mitigating circumstances should be considered to 'soften' the disciplinary measures.

Principal B takes a much stronger stance on the use and sale of drugs. He referred to two children who were caught smoking dagga, *"I gave them a long lecture...I told them, if you are using dagga on the premises, then you are out of the school...I have no sympathy for you!"* The parents of these boys were provided with the following choices, *"either you take a transfer to another school and we leave it at that...or I go to the police station and I give them the details"*. The principal knew that he was placing them under tremendous pressure, and also that they would probably accept the transfer. *"That has been our policy, if you're caught with drugs, stealing of a cell-phone or anything are all treated the same way. If the parents don't take the option, then the school goes through the whole process."* For any other transgression, *"he would consider the track record of a student but a child who sells dagga is a serious transgressor, you have to act!"*

Principal D, who does not encourage expulsions, has a very clear policy on drugs, peddling and gangsterism. This differs considerably from the standpoints of principals A, B and C. His policy is that any person who is caught using drugs or peddling is, *"...you are immediately isolated! We have to draw the lines somewhere...which is diametrically opposed...we are not bleeding hearts...we isolate, no contact. We have a responsibility to the rest of the school and the parents...the parents must take them to a rehabilitation centre...who will give me reports and based on these reports, they are phased in."* (Isolation means that the children are not allowed to come to school and were immediately suspended by the principal.) This illegal suspension would later be ratified by the governing body. He related an incident of a girl that was caught selling drugs, *"she was caught with 7 zols and 7 mandrax tablets, for herself? No. She is connected to a gang in Mitchells Plain, that's where she comes from, that information gets handed to the police."*

The value of the items stolen at schools D and E differed markedly from that which was stolen at schools A, B and C. Stealing of cell-phones was non-existent at schools D and E, as these are schools from working class communities. However, Principal D stated that there was a lot of stealing from the teachers, *"they leave their handbags in the class...the female*

teachers...they feel terrible about this, they feel that it's an assault on their person and they cry a lot...but they get over it. Yes, we do trust our children, but we do understand the deprivation..."

Principal E agreed with Principal D; *"Many, many cases of stealing, but I think we need to set the scenario in the context of where they are coming from and the poverty they find themselves in".* Most thefts are petty, involving lunch, pencils, pens, calculators and train tickets, *"the train ticket is a huge issue...if you have a train ticket lying in your pencil bag, someone will take it".*

Principal E's views on drugs, especially dagga, differed entirely from those of the other principals. Dagga use amongst some of the students was seen to be acceptable; *"we have many, many learners who smoke dagga. Mandrax is totally unknown...maybe it's the economics...but dagga is very freely available...they grow them in the Eastern Cape and probably bring it to Cape Town."* He did not find the smoking of dagga to be a huge issue; *"It's not so intoxicating and we would not expel students for it. Dagga we are a little more lenient...we have a lot of Rastafarians in our school...they say it's part of their culture...recently the court instructed the Education Department to accept children with dreadlocks...we can't expel them...one sits on the fence as to what action to take."* Principal E's tolerance also came across when he recalled an incident in which students were intoxicated by alcohol at a matric farewell, *"you have students who are excited about finishing matric...their behaviour was not disruptive, they were in their own world...their own joyful experience...they were not interfering, abusive or disruptive".*

He also stressed the importance of considering the mitigating circumstances. *"We look at the merits of the case, if we know that the child doesn't have a train ticket and he's living on his own...we compromise...we just make good the loss...we are not pardoning the criminal behaviour...we are just very wary of the mitigating circumstances...some of our children are extremely destitute."* The principal states that he does not even investigate lunches which disappear, his reason is that *"the need of the person stealing is much greater than the one who had it in the first place"*. However, the principal does not leave it there, *"we replace the lunch from school funds"*.

An analysis of the principals' views on and response to the same transgressions suggested that these violations were context-bound and relative to the culture in which they are committed. The attitudes of principals A, B and C towards substance abuse has influenced the rate of requests for expulsions. These principals practised a zero-tolerance approach to substance abuse. Principal D 'isolated' learners, who used drugs, from other learners until they showed signs of rehabilitation, while principal E excused the smoking of dagga as part of rastafarian culture. The approach towards drug use varied within the five schools, from zero-tolerance to acceptance depending on the cultural context, ethos and socio-economic background of the school, as well as the principal's attitude towards drug use.

Principals A, B, C and D agreed that drug peddling constituted serious misconduct. The police were always called in to investigate the incident. Such incidence always result in an application for a request for an expulsion.

As regards theft, the researcher found that the value of the articles stolen varied depending on the socio-economic background of the learners e.g. cell-phones and bicycles are items stolen in middle-class schools whereas lunches and train tickets were common in the working class school.

Principals in working class areas were more tolerant and displayed more compassion towards learners who were found guilty of theft. Thus a learner who stole a train ticket at a working class school would be suspended, but if another learner stole a train ticket at a middle-class school, he or she would be expelled. The relative and symbolic value of a train ticket needs to be emphasised. The train ticket may be the only means of transport for a learner to get from point A to point B. It may also have cost the parents of the learner a substantial percentage of his/her earnings to purchase a train ticket.

Consequently, a principal who regards the train ticket as an item of 'no value' must therefore look at the importance which the learner attaches to the item before deciding on the appropriate punishment.

Attitude of principals on learners who are readmitted by the WCED after a request for an expulsion is declined

This question was received with some amusement. At the same time, the principals' response shed much light on the attitude of the school towards these children whose requests for expulsion have been denied by the WCED. It also indicated why there had been an increase in informal expulsions.

Principal A said that both the Head of Education and circuit manager had assured him that they take into consideration the ethos of the school. The WCED does try to support the school when they reject a request for an expulsion. Principal A's view was that he does experience feelings of *"disappointment and being let down"* when a request is rejected. He believes that when a child does return, that *"the staff should not do anything that will be construed by the child or the parent as picking on the child"*. The principal does admit that the success rate of readmissions has been very disappointing *"25%–30% of those who have come back have eventually left for one reason or another"*.

Similarly, Principal C agreed that should a child be readmitted, he would be *"very unhappy if they (the staff) bear a grudge against a child or if they are mean or minimal to the child...let the child pay his dues...we didn't get the decision we wanted...but we are not going to be vindictive about it"*. When a child is readmitted it does make the staff *"very mad, really cross, but I don't feel that at all...it serves my purpose...I want the responsibility to be with the WCED and not with the school, so if Mr. O'Connell wants to take on that responsibility on himself...then he must do it...he must live with the decisions that he's made...so it doesn't bother me."* The success rate of students who are readmitted is good. *"If I can hold on to them till Grade 10...I've got them...they're not the same pupils that we wanted to expel. There are no hard feelings...there's nothing personal."* However, he does express disappointment at parents who withdraw the child after he or she is readmitted. His view is that they *"try to prove a point"*.

Principal B's attitude is more uncompromising and perhaps, a little vindictive. *"Their names wouldn't be mentioned in an assembly, but the students would know who they are...we make no bones about it...we put pressure on them."* The principal tells the readmitted student, *"we don't consider you to be a student of...we are forced to accept you...if you are not going*

behave at this school, then we are going to take the necessary action". The message must go out, "that we are watching you!" He felt that this attitude may be perceived as "high-handed" in that they (the school) are not accepting the decision of the Department. But the principal felt it was needed to send out a clear message to students and to the Department that schools will not simply accept its decisions. The success rate of readmitted students is not good. Of the 15 students that were readmitted, 2 returned but never completed grade 12. On the basis of this, he feels that "perhaps it is an indication that we are quite right in not accepting those students back".

Principal D claimed that he was not in the habit of expelling students, but if there are children who *"insist they want a transfer to other schools, and we have insisted that they stay, we have not opened the doors to them again"*. Often he found that if a child was unofficially transferred from another school and could not be accommodated because of the subject package, *"I would assist the parent to locate the child back to the school, in many cases the parents don't want to, because they know the child will be victimized, if the child returns"*. He related a specific case of a parent whom he had assisted. After much insistence by the parent, the school relented, but they wanted the child to sign, *"certain conditions"*. The parent did not want his child to sign the document, *"I wanted to know what was reasonable to expect from the child."* I said, *"you think, what is reasonable to expect of the behaviour of the principal and staff and say that it's a quid-pro-quo situation – you also have some conditions...there should be no victimization of my children."*

Principal E made disturbing revelations about readmissions. He believed that, at his school, there was sometimes a *"power-play between the teacher and learners. Victimisation is quite rife...not in a direct way, they won't confront a child in the classroom but I notice that the teachers manipulate the marks, the test marks and CE (continuous evaluation) marks and they ensure that the child does not go beyond the standard!"* He is adamant that it happens *"I've seen that, I've seen that! They side-line the child. I can't prove it because the CE marks are subject to evaluation."* He believes that this is done underhandedly and indirectly. He is also convinced that deviant children are *"terribly victimised...they are failed, chased out of the class...the teacher wants to be the boss and the child must be subservient, otherwise they are punished"*.

Generally, principals and teachers experienced a great sense of disappointment and disillusionment with the Head of Education if he did not uphold the school governing body's decision to expel the learner. Principals felt that the Head of Education was threatening the discipline of the school when such a request for expulsion was turned down.

The research shows that the success rate amongst learners who were readmitted was very low. Principals A and C asserted that no victimisation of learners is tolerated at their schools. They were extremely wary of being accused of victimisation and not abiding by the WCED's decisions. Principal B, on the other hand, made it quite clear that learners who were readmitted were not welcome as they threatened the discipline of the school. Learners who were readmitted were continually chastised and admonished for their transgressions.

It appears that as expulsion is not an option for Principal E, teachers have instead resorted to victimisation of learners. The researcher finds that the practise of victimisation is totally uneducational and will lead to learners feeling totally demotivated and alienated from school.

Opinion of principals on whether teachers are equipped to deal with learners with behavioural problems and their view on the role of the educational psychologist in the expulsion process

Principal A conceded that teachers were not trained to deal with behavioural problems and admitted that *"unfortunately it turns out that more and more of our work is managing children with some problem or the other"*. He did say that teachers were very concerned about the problems that they encounter on a daily basis. His view was *"that teachers needed constant input on how to deal with problems"*. Under the previous dispensation the school had the services of a full-time school psychologist. Currently, the WCED do not appoint psychologists or counsellors at schools.

Principal B's opinion was that teachers did not have the time to help students, *"...they try to get through their work...there is more pressure put on them to teach larger classes...and to still get involved with a student with a problem, you'll think twice"*. He added that neither do they have the capacity to deal with problems. *"We need the help of outsiders, not somebody*

for 3 weeks, someone who can monitor, who is permanent, who can tell us how a child is progressing...I think schools are scared that if they allow a student to stay the problem will worsen and nobody will monitor the performance of those students. If we had the necessary skills we would certainly have felt more confident that it can be handled." His view on school psychologists was that *"They (the psychologists from the school clinic) were also overworked and they wanted to see learners in groups"*.

Principal C agreed that teachers were not capable of dealing with behavioural problems and problems of substance abuse. His school has a social worker who comes in twice a week. He would like her to be present 5 days a week but due to financial constraints, they were unable to afford this. He also complained about the school psychologist at the school clinics, *"I have never benefitted from them...I don't hold them accountable...I realise they don't have the facilities. The only time that I had intervention was when the Head of Education requested that the children, whom he had readmitted, had to receive counselling"*.

Principal D also acknowledged that teachers were not capable of dealing with students with behavioural and emotional problems, unless they had gone through a process of developing that capacity. He draws an analogy between the abolition of corporal punishment and the removal of guidance counsellors from schools. *"The Department stopped corporal punishment but they did not provide alternatives....similarly they removed the guidance counsellors but they did not provide alternatives"*. He expressed his anger at the people who are responsible for education, stating that *"a lot of people who are responsible for the delivery of education, don't know what the hell they are doing, they don't know...much of what they do is in fact anti-education"*. His views on psychologists and expulsions was that *"the two are mutually exclusive, if we had a counsellor, she would never agree with expulsions"*. He thus believes that once a psychologist becomes part of the process, then expulsion would not be that much of an option.

Principal E also agreed that teachers were definitely not capable of dealing with problems which they face, not because they did not have the necessary skills but because *"they have gone through worse and come with their own personal baggage"*. He felt that they often lack empathy, *"I battle with that, it really appeals to the very core of myself...empathy for learners...it's almost nil! There's no willingness to lessen the struggle for others because they've been through worse"*. He expressed his disgust at the manner in which some of the

teachers treat the children. *"It's appalling."* The guidance counsellor who also teaches other subjects is, *"...a pathetic example of a guidance counsellor...pathetic...shocking...no empathy...appalling...no skills of psychology"*.

Principal E expressed his disappointment at not having the services of a school-based psychological service. He was also disillusioned by the services of the school clinic which he said also worked under pressure and had more serious problems to deal with. He said that the social services sent a social worker for 1 week a year. *"We need someone full-time."*

The principals were unanimous in their response to this question. They all felt that since the abolition of the guidance teacher posts, other teachers were not equipped with the necessary skills to deal with the emotional and behavioural problems experienced at school. Principals also linked this to the retrenchment and rationalisation policies of the Education Department. As a result of rationalisation more stress has been placed on existing teachers to complete the syllabus. This means they have less time to deal with the social and psychological problems which are experienced by learners. All the principals stated that there was a need for an educational psychologist or a guidance teacher at their schools. Their views were that the school clinics were understaffed and not helpful when needed. The assistance offered by the school clinics were regarded as quite inadequate.

Opinion of principals on the type of intervention methods used at school

The principals' methods varied from being punitive to proactive. Most of them said that they would prefer to be more proactive but due to staff/time constraints, they were unable to implement more creative methods of discipline. The disciplinary methods that were used differed from school to school.

Principal A stated that there was no time to implement proactive methods because of the teacher/pupil ratio. However, he does see the school moving towards more proactive measures by enlisting the help of outside agencies. Currently, he finds that walking around the school and *"making his presence felt"* has made a difference to discipline. His view is that the implementation of the policy of zero-tolerance helped to a certain extent *"the fact that you've stopped something small, you've stopped something big"*. This helped in reducing

the high rate of expulsion at his school, he said *"we have done a lot of soul-searching, because I don't think anyone likes it"*.

Principal C's disciplinary measures also leaned more towards punishment. A very dramatic intervention method that he is currently using is putting pressure on parents. *"Parents are getting very irritated with us, we get them in week after week and then they have to sit in the office and listen to what their child has been up to"*. The principal hopes that eventually the parents *"will get so cross with the child, they will either take action at home or they will take the child to another school...the parents will decide"*. He also utilises the "time-out" method with children who cannot function in class. The child has to accompany the grade head to all his classes, after which work is sent to the child. This gives the child *"an opportunity to catch up and sort themselves out...to get their behaviour on track"*. He does not believe in normal detention and "writing out"; rather, children are given duties such as digging the foundation for an extension to the school, or cleaning toilets. He has found these measures to be successful as the number of students transgressing has decreased; *"We needed more pupils to dig the foundation, and now we have a few"*. His opinion on the Minister of Education's alternatives to corporal punishment was that it, *"came too late and that his solutions are quite simplistic and it is not practical for large numbers of pupils"*.

Principal B's approach appears to be more punitive than proactive because he has a *"no-nonsense approach"* to discipline. His view is that children get detention for minor misdemeanors but *"where something has happened of a serious nature, the youngster must go!"* His view is that proactive strategies take place in all the classes, *"the guidance classroom, the English classroom, etc...where the facts are laid down...so I'm not sympathetic towards people who know the effects of drugs and are not prepared to heed the warning. So if they don't see a boy the next day, they'll know what happened...it's just not threatening, it's carrying out."* Principal B's focus on promoting excellence can also be seen in the manner in which it is reinforced when he addresses them in the morning, *"good morning students of excellence and quality"*. All students are also informed of the code of conduct at the beginning of each year.

Principal D's view on discipline is more proactive than punitive. He states that discipline has *"more to do with correct and honourable behaviour than with punishment. It is also about introducing corrective measures"*. He mentioned a number of programmes currently in place

at the school, such as the environment education project where 10 schools were asked to send 10 of their worst students *"your druggies, gangsters, dagga smokers and so on"*. He related some of the problems encountered. *"Some of the schools declined because they could not supply the 3 teachers to accompany the 10 students...this school subsidised even in terms of person power...our staff is passionate and sincere in what they are doing."*

Principal E stated that he combined both punitive and proactive disciplinary measures. *"We do many things in an illegal way, if a child has done something very serious, we send the child home, to fetch the parents. We put pressure on them...however, this often does not work because the parents are in the Eastern Cape...getting uncles and aunts is not as forceful and effective."* Corporal punishment is still widely practised but *"we seem to have that under control"*. Principal E expressed his frustration at many of the problems that he is faced with. On afternoon detention he said, *"the Department has to go a much longer way to appease the desire of the teacher's core. Teachers don't want to detain children because they feel they detain themselves...they say, my time stops at 3 o'clock...I am not punishing myself. There's no commitment."*

He also expressed the difficulty of convening governing body meetings as *"most of the members work 7–8 shifts"* and thus he resorts to dealing with disciplinary problems within the context and culture of the school. *"I get everybody together...that kind of cultural mindset impacts on problem-solving and many, many kinds of problems have been solved in that way"*. He agrees with Principal A that *"walking around the school and making his presence felt"* has helped with discipline. His vision for the school is to have peer-mediation programmes as part of the school system and part of overall problem-solving of the school.

The intervention methods used by a school are closely related to the ethos, philosophy and code of conduct as laid down by the governing body of the school. Prior to the South African Schools Act, schools in South Africa were regarded as coercive institutions and thus punitive methods of discipline such as corporal punishment, excessive exercise and drills, inappropriate use of time-out etc. were generally practiced (*see Chapter 3, p.66*).

After 1994, South Africa had to follow the path of other democracies by passing legislation to outlaw corporal punishment and other punitive measures. Principals generally found it

difficult to move away from this. It appears that the transformation from a punitive to a proactive intervention approach has been a slow process and not one which was received with much enthusiasm. However, concurrent with the abolition of corporal punishment came the implementation of the policy of rationalisation. This resulted in an increase in teacher/student ratios, a low morale and lack of motivation amongst staff. All these factors had a severely negative impact on discipline in the school.

Although all schools had introduced some form of conflict resolution, peer mediation and other problem solving programmes, punitive measures were still favoured by the principals as it was easier to manage and implement.

None of the five schools had implemented a drug education policy in their school. This is despite the substantially high request for expulsions for substance abuse.

5.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher has provided all the results of the data collected as well as an analysis and a synthesis of the interviews conducted.

The underlying assumption for the differences in; incidence of expulsion, gender, grade and age will be elaborated upon in the next chapter. The main reasons for expulsions i.e. substance use and physical confrontation will also be discussed. Chapter 6 will also provide insight into how the views of principals impact on expulsions.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation notes the complicated and emotional nature of expelling learners from schools. It also explores the interrelationship between a multiplicity of factors such as legislation governing expulsions, attitude of principals with regards to corporal punishment and discipline in general, the philosophy and ethos of the school, the socio-economic background and intake of the school, rationalisation and attitude of principals towards readmission.

The findings of this research is based firstly on all the requests for expulsions made to the Head of Education of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), and secondly on the views and attitude of five principals on the various factors which influence expulsions. Few studies in the Western Cape have questioned principals about their perceptions and attitude towards school policies/practices and factors which influence expulsions. This dissertation provided a platform for principals to voice their opinions on those aspects of expulsion which affected their school and community.

Chapter one provided the reader with a broad overview of the background, the preliminary research questions, the significance of the research, the research method and a preliminary literature review. In chapter two the researcher reviewed a number of factors central to this empirical research. Underlying all these factors is the question of how it influences requests for expulsions. Chapter three examined the existing educational policy in America, Britain and South Africa with special reference to suspension and expulsion. Chapter four focussed on the qualitative research methodology utilised in this dissertation and focussed on the delimitation and selection of the participants as well as the process employed in the interpretation, analysis and synthesis of the data. In chapter five the researcher analysed, synthesised and interpreted the results of the empirical research. This final chapter, chapter six, will discuss the results in relation to existing studies and provide recommendations and guidelines towards minimising the expulsion of learners from secondary schools.

In surveying the implications of the results in chapter five the researcher will support or refute each finding with findings from previous studies as related in chapter two and

three. The interrelationship between the first phase i.e. the demographics and reasons for expulsions; and the second phase i.e. the views of five principals regarding the factors which influence expulsions will also be elucidated.

In the next section the researcher will proceed with a summary of the theory in order to examine the basis of this empirical investigation.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE THEORY

For the purpose of clarity, it is necessary to briefly review the legislative policy which governs expulsions. This legislation is based mainly on the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996, on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) and on Section 12 of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996).

According to the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996, schooling is **compulsory** (own emphasis) for all learners between the ages of seven and fifteen. Any parent or other persons without just cause, who prevents a learner from attending school, will be guilty of an offence and liable, on conviction, to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months (*see Chapter 3, p.65*).

However, learners often act in ways that do not conform to the code of conduct of the school. If they are found guilty of serious misconduct by the Governing Body, a request for expulsion is made to the Head of Education who will make the **final decision** to expel. Circular 0030/99 of the Western Cape Education Department lists those transgressions that fall in the category of “serious misconduct”. It is the fifth stipulation (*see p.71: 3.4.7*), i.e. a learner at a school shall be guilty of serious misconduct if s/he conducts him/herself, in the opinion of the governing body (own emphasis) in a disgraceful, improper or unbecoming manner, that permits the governing body of each school to request expulsion for reasons they deem serious. This phrase is open to interpretation by school governing bodies and principals who want to ‘get rid of a learner’. This was illustrated by the fact that certain schools requested more expulsions than others for offences that would otherwise be tolerated by some schools. This stipulation lends itself to a large degree of subjectivity amongst the school governing body members, the principal and the community which it serves.

The abolition of corporal punishment (*see p.66: 3.4.4.1*) in 1996 created many discipline problems in schools. It also resulted in an increase in expulsions. McLean (1987:301) found that exclusions had increased after corporal punishment was abolished in 1982.

Regarding the frequency, gender, age and grade of learners, British researchers have found that, the rate of expulsions were generally on the increase (Blyth & Milner 1993:256 and Stirling 1992:128). The fact that boys far outnumbered girls was confirmed by Hogden (1994:259), Castle and Parsons (1997:4), and Blyth and Milner (1993:259). Exclusions peaked between the ages of 15 and 16 and grade 10 (Parsons & Howlett 1996:110 and Castle & Parsons 1997:4). Unofficial exclusions, exclusions that are not notifiable to the local education authority, go unrecorded. Blyth and Milner (1993:256) and Stirling (1992:128) found that the number of “unofficial exclusions” could only be speculated upon. Monck (1997:8) expressed the importance of publishing expulsion data and making it available to other schools for scrutiny.

The British Education Department (DfEE, 1993:14) also revealed that some schools exclude more learners than other schools in similar circumstances.

Regarding the reasons for exclusions, Dupper and Bosch (1996:143) and Costenbader and Markson (1994:68) found that physical confrontation and aggression with other students were the reason for the vast majority of external and internal suspension. Many students involved in violence in schools are enmeshed in a lifestyle involving various forms of social deviance such as substance abuse and weapons possession (Rivara, Shepard, Farrington, Richmond & Connor 1995:612). Similarly, Cirillo, Pruitt, Colwell, Kingery, Hurly and Ballard (1998:329) also found that at-risk students who used drugs/alcohol were more apt to use violence as a means of achieving a desired outcome than were students who did not use drugs/alcohol.

The research also points to the fact that many of the disciplinary violations were carried out in groups. Baker (1996:4) became aware of an overwhelming trend i.e. that major disciplinary violations are overwhelmingly a “team sport”. He found truancy, drugs, tobacco and alcohol are almost never undertaken in isolation.

The impact of the teachers' view on the principal's decision to expel was emphasised. Heads (principals) who did not exclude were seen as weak or ineffectual by their staff (Parffrey 1994:119). The OFSTED (1996) also found that head teachers often felt under pressure to be seen as taking a hard line on discipline which resulted in higher exclusion.

A review of the literature on intake and catchment areas indicates that high expulsion rates did not necessarily reflect deprived catchment areas except when comparing vastly different social areas (McManus 1989:261; Parsons 1996:183 and Blyth & Milner 1993:263).

The policy of rationalisation was closely related to the number of learners in a class and the size of the school. Castle and Parsons (1997:5) found that many schools serving disadvantaged areas excluded fewer pupils and that some schools with falling roles experienced severe difficulties because they were obliged to accept disruptive pupils from other schools. Contrary to this, Hayden (1994:259) found that schools suffering financial cuts, staffing problems or overcrowding, were more likely to exclude pupils.

The influence of the "achievement/league tables" on expulsion and the underlying motivation i.e. an educational market economy was clear in the literature. Blyth and Milner (1993:260), Stirling (1992b:128) and Parffrey (1994:119) all found that under-achieving pupils were seen as a liability. Schools were looking for ways of transferring them to other schools or units.

The readmission of learners after a request for expulsion has been refused, was researched by Costenbader and Markson (1994:106). They conceded that the philosophy and ethos of the school regarding the use of suspension ought to determine how readmitted students are regarded on return to school.

In the next section the researcher will discuss the recommendations from the theory.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THEORY

In the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) all schools receive a computer printout of the number of suspensions and expulsions from surrounding schools. Schools are then

encouraged to constructively discuss why certain schools feel the need or has the need to suspend so many more pupils than other broadly similar schools. Monck (1997:8) also recommends that school governing bodies should decide each case on its merits as they are not in a court of law.

As regards to whether punitive or therapeutic solutions should be implemented, Jones (1997:30) notes that most writers advocate either “hard” and punitive solutions or “soft” and therapeutic solutions. Adolescents who are punished for aggressive, violent or anti-social behaviour are unsuccessful in creating positive behaviour changes as greater emphasis is placed on the negative consequences (Elias 1998:1). He found that a punitive approach was more likely to breed revenge than contrition. Similarly, Hyman and D’Alessandro (1984:43) found that punitive teachers and administrators merely causes students to suppress their anger and hostility until the inevitable moment when it erupts against people and property.

Criticism for the punitive “get tough” measures come from Noguera (1996:10) who states that it does not address the causes of school violence nor does it help in the understanding of the schools vulnerability to its occurrence.

Another punitive method used in America is the policy of zero-tolerance. The enactment of “zero-tolerance” requires the automatic removal of students – either through suspension, expulsion or transfer – who perpetrate acts of violence. Carpenter (1998:10) quotes the National Centre for Education Studies (1986), which states that more than 75% of American schools have a policy of zero-tolerance for specific offences.

Contrary to these punitive methods, Dupper and Bosch (1996:149) recommends alternatives i.e. proactive, preventative and early intervention strategies as a key to reducing suspensions and expulsions. They also promoted the introduction of a number of school-based prevention programmes to help students learn how to resolve conflicts in a non-aggressive manner. Moreover, Dupper and Bosch (1996:149) recommends that teachers and administrators be equipped with skills in handling all forms of behaviour. Similarly, a key recommendation of Garibaldi, Blanchard and Brooks (1996:409) was that schools should implement alternative disciplinary methods that more affectively and equitably address student misbehaviour. They found that the implementation of conflict resolution practices, the enhancement of teacher

classroom management skills, and the importance of school environmental conditions are important responses to problems associated with school discipline and safety.

Pianta and Steinberg (1992:77) conclude that children bring their social developmental histories with them to school and that the social environment at school determines what violence is exhibited in that setting. Baker (1994:36) found that if the school environment is perceived as hostile or threatening, students may respond with a range of violent behaviours.

Parsons (1996:184) recommends that the various sectors such as education, social services, health, police, parents and others must become involved in the life of the excluded child. Parsons (1996:184) admits that this multi-agency work is difficult to establish and sustain but that it has to be part of the way forward. As far as the involvement of parents in the expulsion process is concerned, Gordon (1995:21) concluded that school administrators could no longer allow parents to 'opt out' or 'bully' their way out of their role in discipline and responsibility. He recommends that parents must be contacted and involved in discipline immediately and must not be allowed to remove themselves by threatening a law suit or become disruptive influences themselves.

Furlong, Babinski, Poland, Munoz and Boles (1996:28) suggests that school psychologists should be effective collaborators in current school violence prevention efforts. Furlong, Morrison and Pavelski (2000:89) are of the opinion that school psychologist have the potential to help the profession to garner support to move into areas such as early prevention, services for all students and co-ordination of comprehensive pupil-support programmes. Lowenstein (1990:35) stresses that educational psychologists, parents, teachers and many other professionals should know what should happen to children once they are excluded. They should be made aware of what could be done to prevent such an exclusion and under what circumstances exclusions are necessary. Lowenstein (1990:35) noted that in cases where teachers and head's (principal's) disagree on a particular decision, the school psychologist could play an important role in helping to plan and implement a decision which is best for all concerned.

In the next section the researcher will discuss the findings of each preliminary research question, relate it to the theory and provide recommendations towards minimising disciplinary problems and expulsions in schools.

6.4 FINDINGS FROM EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

6.4.1 FINDING 1: Demographics

6.4.1.1 *Number of requests for expulsions and unofficial expulsions*

Figure 5.1 (p.95), shows requests for expulsions have remained relatively constant for the years 1998, 1999 and 2000 at 126, 103 and 117 learners respectively. Of the total number of requests for expulsions 82%, 63% and 84% culminated in successful expulsions for the years 1998, 1999 and 2000 respectively. The rest of the learners i.e. 18%, 37% and 16% were readmitted to or accommodated at the same school or at another school.

But it has been speculated that actual expulsions in the Western Cape may be higher than the official statistics reveals. Two of the five schools appear to operate “unofficial expulsions” (see Chapter 5, p.132–133). Principal B had “unofficially” expelled 27 learners over a period of 3 years. Principal E “unofficially excluded” 26 children from further admission to the school at the end of the year 2000, not on the basis of behavioural problems but because of weak academic results. Principal A was uncertain as to how many leave, “*the parents will decide which route to take...*” Principal C said that the school stopped offering this alternative about 2 years ago, and that this, they explained, was the reason for the “high official expulsions” at their school. Evidence of “unofficial expulsions” was further substantiated by Principal D who stated that his school “receives” most of the learners that are “unofficially expelled or transferred” from other schools. Based on the information from the Western Cape Education Department and from the interviews conducted with principals, the researcher found that there were no records of the number of learners “unofficially excluded”. The data on official requests for expulsions obtained from the Western Cape Education Department accounts for only a small percentage of the actual expulsion which occurs in schools as principals are circumventing the official route. Such under-reporting could in fact be considerable.

Contrary to these findings, the following researchers Stirling (1992:128), Parffrey (1994:107), Parson (1996:182), and Parsons and Howlett (1996:109) all found that the rate of

expulsions were increasing even though their findings differed with regards the factors influencing expulsions or the reasons for expulsions.

British researchers Blyth and Milner (1993:256) found that the actual number of children excluded from British schools is subject to considerable speculation. Similarly, Stirling (1992:128) recognised that current information about exclusion were inadequate. Stirling (1992) found that many exclusions that are “unofficial” are not notifiable to the local education authority and therefore go unrecorded.

Both Stirling (1993:17) and Powis *et al* (1998:246) found that actual exclusions may be higher than official statistics would indicate. Stirling (1993:17) estimates that only 10% of the total number of exclusions are officially recorded.

6.4.1.2 Age and grade of learners

Figures 5.3 and 5.4 (*see p.98–99*) show that requests for expulsions peak between the ages of 15 and 16 years and peak in grades 9 and 10. Over 50% of the learners that were ‘successfully’ expelled were older than 15 years. This is cause for grave concern as the Western Cape Education Department bears no responsibility for these learners. Similarly, Parsons and Howlett (1996:110) also found that it was likely that over 5000, 15 and 16 year olds are permanently excluded and that many of them do not return (to school). Research done by Castle and Parsons (1997:4) also found that exclusions peaked in grade 10.

However, it seems that the liability of the WCED towards learners who are successfully expelled is limited. Successful expulsions implies that these learners are permanently refused/prohibited by the circuit manager from attending the school concerned, if found guilty of serious misconduct after a fair hearing (subsection 9(2) of the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996). However, subsection 5 of the SASA states that the Head of Education must make alternative arrangements for a learner who is subject to compulsory attendance, i.e. between the ages of seven and fifteen, in terms of section 3(1). The Head of Education must find an alternative public school for such a learner, who has been expelled. With reference to section 3(1), one can infer that the Department of Education bears no responsibility for a child 16 years and over. This was confirmed by Principal D who quoted the circuit manager as saying: “...the Education Department is not going to lift a finger to get

you (the learner) a place anywhere..." The boy was older than 16 years. The principal was further quoted as saying, *"they (the Department) usually don't have the time to do it, and are not disposed to do it. They will only stick to the Act."* Principal C believes that the Education Department shirks its responsibility when a request for an expulsion is made, *"there are problems...they don't want to take the decision...the onus is now on the school to get the student into another school. Why is the onus now on the school to find another place for that youngster? I think that's unfair."*

6.4.1.3 Demographics of schools involved in expulsions

This research was based on 326 secondary schools in the Western Cape. This excludes all independent, private, primary and schools for learners with special educational needs. The information was extracted from a snap-survey conducted by the Statistical Department at the Western Cape Education Department for the year 2001. In 1998, of the 45 schools which requested expulsions, 23 schools were responsible for 79% of the total 126 requests. In 1999 of the 39 schools which requested expulsions, 14 schools were responsible for 70% of the total of 105 requests and in the year 2000, 46 schools requested expulsions, of which 13 schools were responsible for 65% of the total 117 requests. This indicated that schools varied considerably in the number of requests for expulsions (*see Chapter 5, p.94–95*).

Although there were noticeable differences in the number of requests for expulsions amongst schools, there were certain schools that had a greater tendency to request expulsions than others in similar situations. Circular 3 of the British Department of Education (DfEE, 1993:14) similarly stated that *"it is a matter of concern that some schools have exclusions more than other schools in similar circumstances"*. Schools situated in middle-class areas accounted for a greater percentage of requests for expulsions than schools situated in the lower socio-economic areas. This finding was corroborated by one of the principals, who was quoted as saying, *"that procedures (for expulsions) becomes an issue especially if you are looking at a middle-class family where the parents have a tradition or a custom of making use of legal assistance...then it becomes an issue"*. Parents whose children attend schools situated in lower socio-economic areas tend to be less familiar with the legal implications of expulsions either because of disinterest or ignorance. Expulsion procedures are often unco-ordinated and ineffective, and thus principals and governing bodies often disregard the formalities and "unofficially" expel learners. This could be one of the reasons

for the low rate of formal requests for expulsions from schools situated in the lower socio-economic groups.

Are the 'drop-out' rates and the number of 'unofficial expulsions and transfers' higher in the lower socio-economic areas? Anecdotal evidence tends to support this assertion.

6.4.1.4 Gender of learners

A significantly small percentage of female learners accounted for the total number of requests for expulsions (*see Chapter 5, p.96–97*). Female learners averaged less than 5.5% of the total for the three years 1998, 1999 and 2000. All other research conformed with the results of the present study. Hayden (1994:259) quotes the National Education Reporting System (NERS) which found that boys greatly outnumber girls. Similarly, Castle and Parsons (1997:4) noted that most exclusions are from secondary schools, most are boys (4:1 at secondary schools). Approximately four to five times as many boys as girls are excluded from schools (Blyth & Milner 1993:259). They also stated that male socialisation processes emphasised aggressiveness and assertiveness as male characteristics and reinforced gender stereotypes.

6.5 FINDING 2: Reasons for expulsions

The recorded or official reason for a request for an expulsion was often the 'last straw' of a succession of misdemeanors or transgressions. This occurs even though the Head of Education had stated that when a request for an expulsion is made, only the actual transgression and not previous transgressions could be taken into account. Anecdotal evidence tends to support the assertion that previous transgression are considered. This assists in explaining the apparent triviality of some of the incidences such as, "poor discipline record" and "bullying" (*see Addendum E, p.201*).

Figures 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 (*see Chapter 5, p.101–102*) illustrate the percentage of learners and the reasons for the request for expulsions for the year 1998, 1999 and 2000.

In the next section, the reasons for expulsions will be discussed.

6.5.1 Substance abuse

Substance abuse was by far the most dominant reason for expulsion for three consecutive years. In 1998, 1999 and 2000 substance abuse and substance abuse related incidences accounted for 39%, 49% and 48% of the total requests for expulsions (*see Chapter 5, p.101–102*).

Similar research by Swadi (1992:253–254) and Swartz and Wirtz (1990:39) correlated drug use to suspensions and expulsions. They found that the number of learners expelled as a result of substance abuse will go on to develop serious substance misuse problems or will engage in criminal activities. Powis (1998:246) believes that an increase in drug use amongst the normal school population suggests that the prevalence of drug use has increased amongst those excluded from school.

The Western Cape Education Department definitely appears to regard drug-related transgressions as a reason for expulsion. According to Bridges (2000) the number of learners that are using drugs in schools are increasing. Thus it can be reasonably expected that the number of learners that will be expelled in the future will also increase. These expelled learners become easy targets for drug dealers to ply their trade. Powis (1998:247) found that adolescents excluded from school represented a high risk group in terms of the vulnerability to drug use and involvement in crime. He also says that as the size of this group increases, it may well be that many more will go on to develop serious substance abuse problems or engage in long-term criminal careers.

Certain schools in the Western Cape are more inclined to request expulsions of learners for substance abuse than others. The principals' attitudes towards drug use did seem to influence requests for expulsions. Principal A, Principal B and Principal C were totally intolerant towards drug-related issues i.e. they implemented a zero-tolerance policy towards drugs thus increasing requests for expulsions or "unofficial exclusions". Principal D 'isolated' or suspended learners unofficially from school until they showed signs of improvements; learners are thus given an opportunity to rehabilitate. Principal E acknowledged that dagga smoking was part of the Rastafarian culture. He could therefore not expel learners on this basis. Principals requesting expulsion for learners who are addicted need to consider their

attitude towards addiction. The researcher is by no means condoning drug use but alternatives such as individual and family counselling should be considered.

6.5.2 Physical confrontation

After substance abuse, physical confrontation was found to be the second highest reason for expulsion in the Western Cape. Most of these transgressions were learner to learner confrontations and physical assaults. Most of the incidence of physical aggression involved grade 8 and 9 learners. Incidence of physical aggression are more common amongst boys. Violence is a dominant feature of South African society and it is not surprising that it reflects in the behaviour of learners in schools. Aggressive behaviour is often maintained and reinforced by peer and societal approval. Aggression is also often a sign of an underlying problem which would need psycho-therapy and counselling. It must also be recognised that conflict amongst students is inevitable and thus programmes must be implemented to alleviate this problem.

Similarly, Dupper and Bosch (1996:143) and Costenbader and Markson (1994:68) agreed that physical confrontation and aggression with other students were the cause of the vast majority of external and internal suspensions.

According to Rivara, Shepherd, Farrington, Richmond and Connor (1995:612), many students involved in violence in schools are enmeshed in a lifestyle involving various forms of social deviance such as substance abuse and weapons possession; this signifies their involvement in a broad cycle of violence. The link between substance abuse and physical aggression and violence was also researched by Cirillo, Pruitt, Colwell, Kingery, Hurly and Ballard (1998:329). They found that at-risk students who used drug/alcohol were more apt to use violence as a means of achieving a desired outcome than were students who did not use drugs/alcohol. Cirillo *et al* (1998:329) also found that when students gain knowledge about ways to avoid fighting, they tend not to engage in violent behaviour. They suggested that since drugs and violence were intertwined that violence avoidance skills and drug education should be offered simultaneously. This certainly does not imply that all aggressive episodes are drug related. Any form of aggression should be monitored and handled appropriately.

6.5.3 Verbal confrontation

Verbal confrontation accounted for 9%, 9% and 15% of the total requests for expulsions for the years 1998, 1999 and 2000 respectively. This category of transgression included insolence, swearing, disrespect, lying, insubordination and racial insults. Confrontation can occur between students, or students and teachers. At certain schools requests for expulsion on this basis were greater than others.

Hyman and D'Alesandro (1984:43) found that the extent to which students behave in a disrespectful and defiant manner is largely dependent on how adults in the schools interact with students. Strict teachers and administrators *"merely cause students to suppress their anger and hostility until the inevitable moment when it erupts against people and property"*. Dupper and Bosch (1996:146) also found that a student's misbehaviour is often exacerbated by factors within the context of the school or because the student lacks the social skills necessary for survival in school.

Although there is an indication in the media that racially abusive remarks are common in Western Cape schools, and that they often culminate in disciplinary action, the researcher was unable to confirm this from the data available.

6.5.4 Theft

Theft accounted for 10%, 15% and 9% of the total requests for expulsions for the year 1998, 1999 and 2000 respectively. Theft was definitely more common in some schools than others; and secondly items that were stolen were peculiar (specific) to a school, and their value also differed according to the socio-economic area of the school. Ironically, at school A, a learner was expelled because of *"premeditated theft of item stolen of no value (own emphasis) to him i.e. a train ticket"*. At another school, Principal E said that *"we need to set the scenario in the context of where they are coming from and the poverty they find themselves in. We have instances of petty theft...the train ticket! The train ticket is a huge issue...if you have a train ticket lying in your pencil case, somebody will take it...it's very petty...nothing major...we take the suspension route, not the expulsion route."* Principal D also felt that when learners steal from each other or from teachers, it is necessary to *"understand the deprivation"*. The principals representing the lower socio-economic areas appeared to be more tolerant of, and expressed more compassion towards learners who stole.

6.5.5 Sexual assault

In the years 1998 and 2000, sexual assault accounted for 11% and 12% of the total requests for expulsions. In 1998 and 2000 there were incidence of gang rape, one involving 6 boys, and the other 3 boys. This increased the percentage for sexual assault for the years 1998 and 2000. The increase of gang rapes is of particular concern. It reflects a culture of violence and disrespect towards women. The other incidences were of indecent exposure, sexual intercourse on the school premises and sexual harassment. It must be noted that many rapes and attempted rapes are not reported, still less other forms of sexual coercion. This is often related to the stigma attached to sex related offences.

6.5.6 Other behavioural problems

Transgressions that fall within this category remained below the 5% mark for the three years. Most of the misdemeanours were for truancy/bunking, possession of dangerous weapons, vandalism and possession of pornography. Often a combination of reasons i.e. truancy and pornography culminate in a request for expulsion in this category. These learners are often regarded as persistent troublemakers. A transgression in this category is regarded as the 'last straw'.

Incidentally, the researcher found a significant trend in the manner in which transgressions were carried out. The majority of violations were undertaken in groups or with a friend. The data indicated clearly that most substance abuse, gangsterism, theft and sexual abuse incidences were committed in groups. Baker (1996:4) became similarly aware of an overwhelming trend i.e. that major disciplinary violations are overwhelmingly a "*team sport*". He found that lone individuals almost never involve themselves in truancy, drugs, tobacco and alcohol. This provides an indication of the influence of peer pressure on individuals. Individuals do things when together that they would not do if they were alone. This is most frightening when one looks at the immoral and violent act of gang rape. It appears that individuals lose their sense of personal responsibility when they are in a group.

6.6 FINDING 3: Principals' awareness of expulsions at other schools

As has been stated before, the Western Cape Education Department does not publish statistics on expulsions. Schools were only notified or contacted by the Head of Education if their

requests were excessive. Other principals obtained information on expulsions either via the newspaper or principal forum meetings.

However, the recording and publishing of such data, on both a provincial and national level is imperative. Such statistics will enable other researchers and education authorities to detect trends and problematic areas which could lead to either changes in policy or to the development of programmes directed at the problematic areas.

Monck (1997:8) says that in Britain, each school governing body receives a computer print-out of the number of suspensions and expulsions from their school and in the Division of the Authority in which their school lies. This occurs each term and enables governors to check their own school's performance and compare it to other broadly similar schools. Should trends be detected, schools can get assistance from the local Education Authority. The Western Cape Education Department, schools and society can only benefit from such openness and transparency.

6.7 FINDING 4: Principals' views on the factors influencing expulsions

6.7.1 FINDING 4.1: Attitude of principals towards legislative policy

The researcher found the following to be the most contentious issues amongst principals:

- Superficially the policy on expulsion appeared to encourage expulsion but principals found the procedures complicated and time consuming. Principals were also uncertain what criteria the Head of Education used when making the final decision to expel.
- The amendments to the Act 48 of 1999 (*see p.77*), state that the principal should phone the circuit manager at the close of the meeting and inform him/her of what transpired and of the reason/s why the governing body wishes the learner to be suspended. Principals did not have a problem with consulting the circuit manager, but they did encounter problems in contacting the circuit manager.
- Principals B and C also felt strongly that they were not allowed to be part of the final decision to expel, if they were part of the initial investigation. However, the researcher found that this was a legal issue based on a legal principle, that a person

could not be a witness, a prosecutor and a judge at the same time (*see p.68 & 76*). This legal principle is aimed at protecting the Western Cape Education Department and all its representatives against liability.

- Principals A and D were of the opinion that the SASA had closed many options which schools formerly had to avoid expulsions i.e. unofficial agreements or transfer between schools of learners who transgressed. Principals appeared wary of “*threatening*” the legal process, or of being accused of bias. This explained why certain schools had higher expulsion rates than others.
- Principal D believed that rationalisation also decreased the capacity of schools to assist problematic learners.
- Principal D stated that with the SASA, came the advent of governing bodies. However, he felt that principals were hiding behind the governing body. He also believed that principals ‘bullied’ parents into abdicating their role as the guardians of the children. Principal C attested to this statement, “*...when the governing body takes a decision that is unpopular with the staff...then I (the principal) am not going to defend that decision...I allow the governing body reps to speak to the staff...they can mandate the reps to go back to the governing body.*” This attitude indicates that many of the principals’ responsibility is taken over by the governing body.

6.7.2 FINDING 4.2: Attitude and opinion of principals on the procedures and guidelines on expulsions

Most principals found the procedures were too long, drawnout and “*ingewikkeld*”. Schools situated in middle-class areas were more inclined to utilise the formal expulsion procedure than schools situated in the lower socio-economic areas since parents from middle-class areas “*have a tradition of using legal assistance*”. This could also be one of the reasons why certain schools had more requests for expulsions than other schools. For parents whose children attended schools situated in lower socio-economic areas, the option to avail themselves of the legal route was not considered, and merely existed on paper.

6.7.3 FINDING 4.3: Views of principals on the support offered by the WCED in the expulsion process

The views of principals on the support offered by the WCED varied considerably. Some principals were satisfied with the support, but others felt that the WCED undermined the discipline of the school, especially when a request for an expulsion was declined. Principal C stated that he did not want more support, but more power, in particular, power to expel in volatile situations.

Principal D stated that the WCED *“could and should provide more support”*; but his view was that *“they (WCED) did not have the will nor the capacity to develop the type of networking which schools required.”* The principal believed that schools should have the same legal resources available to them as the WCED, as he sees the schools as being representative of the WCED and not separate entities.

6.8 FINDING 5: Influence of the principals’ attitude towards discipline and how teachers’ views impact on the principals decision to expel

The principals’ attitude towards discipline definitely does influence discipline in schools, as well as the decision to expel. Principal D had a strongly democratic ethic; he agreed that all the teachers were to some degree responsible for the discipline in schools. The majority of the principals disagreed with this view, stating that, *“the principal sets the tone...”*; *“the way I (the principal) want things done, that definitely influences the discipline”*. Principal E stressed this point by saying that *“if I (the principal) was not as hard as I am, I think I would have serious problems at this school...I think it is the fundamental responsibility of the principal to set the tone and discipline of the school.”* Principal C was moving away from the *“kragdadige approach”*, the *“just-climb-in heavy approach...we (the school are more careful”*.

Four out of the five *“principals were of the view that teachers did place pressure on them to take drastic action, however their view was that when a decision is made on discipline...the principal has to feel it is the right thing to do.”* A teacher’s opinion regarding the impact of

their views on expulsion would have been valuable, however, it did not fall within the scope of this research.

Parffrey (1994:119) found that heads (principals) who did not exclude, were seen as weak and ineffectual by their staff. Castle and Parsons (1997:5) quoted the Office for Standards in Education Report (OFSTED:1996) *“that head teachers often feel under pressure to be seen to take a hard line on discipline which results in higher exclusion rates”*.

Most principals also expressed the importance of having support from the Deputies. Principal B stated *“we (principals and deputies) have to take particular lines”*. Principal D expressed his gratefulness at having *“strong allies in some very strong personalities, around many of the questions”*.

Contrary to the four principals, Principal E was of the opinion that the teachers at his school were responsible for more than 50% of the school's discipline problems. But the teachers believed that the responsibility for discipline was a *“principal's thing”*.

The researcher finds that the attitude of the principal and the staff does influence the manner in which a learner will be disciplined.

6.9 FINDING 6: Principals' views on the influence of the abolition of corporal punishment on expulsions

All the principals agreed that the abolition of corporal punishment had influenced disciplinary practices and expulsions in schools. Four of the five principals views' were that, after corporal punishment had been abolished, expulsions increased. The rationale for this was that corporal punishment was used as a last resort, *“there was something you could do right at the end...give him a good hiding, it was enough to wake them (the children) up!”*

The researcher detected a sense of disempowerment in principals. They lamented the fact that corporal punishment had been banned in 1996, and that alternatives were only provided by the Education Department in October 2000. The document on alternatives to corporal punishment (*see p.71: 3.4.8*) was aimed at helping teachers “manage without the cane”. However, the document was met with criticism as many of the disciplinary measures required

teachers to act as supervisors. Principal C remarked that the Document on Corporal Punishment was *"both simplistic and came too late"*.

The principals were generally relieved that corporal punishment was abolished since it created many administrative problems if it was used indiscriminately.

However, corporal punishment was still practised in township schools. Principal E says that *"it is part and parcel of the African culture"*. He gave the impression that corporal punishment was acceptable in the context of the community which it serves. This is as long as the practice was controlled.

McLean (1987:301) discovered that exclusions had increased substantially during the years after corporal punishment was abolished in 1982 in Stratchlyde, Britain. McLean (1987) said that teachers argued that the children's rights movement, as it affects education and teacher/pupil relationships, may itself have increased the risk of exclusion. As teachers may be more apprehensive about physically restraining children who are violent or present behavioural problems, so exclusion may come to be seen as the only option available to them.

It can thus be concluded that the abolition of corporal punishment has influenced expulsions. Principals have needed to establish alternative disciplinary measures that would fit in with the context, culture and ethos of the school. However, this often means that the last resort of expulsion becomes the first option available.

6.10 FINDING 7: Principals' views on the influence of the ethos, philosophy and code of conduct of the school on expulsions

There was also a definite link between expulsions and the ethos, philosophy and code of conduct of the school, and the community which it serves.

This statement is substantiated by Principal B who said, *"there is no doubt that the ethos of the school has a direct link with expulsions. We expel!"* This principal also highlighted the attitude of the school, *"we understand the problem out there...we know that if we expel it will become the problem of another school...it does not make us remorseful"*.

Although Principal D's views were similar to those of Principal B, their ethos and philosophy differed dramatically. Principal B expressed a zero-tolerance policy whereas Principal D *"encouraged and convinced the child to stay"*. Principal D vehemently opposed the practise of expulsions, stating when schools expel, *"you relegate the responsibility to another school"*.

The researcher did detect a contradiction between the ethos and philosophy of another school and its expulsion practices. Even though Principal C stated that it was not his policy to expel, his school submitted amongst the highest number of requests for expulsions. In attempting to reconcile this apparent contradiction, the researcher found that the schools differed regarding their tolerance levels. The phrase that *"we (the school) will work with them as long as we can"* is a relative concept. Schools differed as well in their capacity to deal with problems. Teachers did not possess the expertise to deal with behavioural problems. Also, the school with high requests for expulsions was not prepared to take chances with learners who posed a threat to the school. Principal C would rather request an expulsion of a learner who is found guilty of serious misconduct and make the Head of the WCED aware of the transgression and allow him or her to make the decision on whether to expel or not. Thus, the school prefers to transfer responsibility for the learner to the Head of Education. The school thereby avoids liability should a learner again be found guilty of serious misconduct.

Finally, Principal E, from a township school, appeared to adapt his code of conduct to fit in with the African culture. This explained why there were no formal requests from this school, even though the principal admitted to having *"huge problems"*. He was quoted as saying, *"the way Africans handle problems is more of a consensus arrangement with the whole tribe...a bosberaad"*, *"solving it as a family and looking at it in its context and culture"*. It appears that township schools, because of the difference in culture, feel alienated from the Western Cape Education Department. This could be another reason why they do not approach the WCED for help.

6.11 FINDING 8: Principals' views on the influence of socio-economic factors, catchment areas and intake on expulsions

Although the two ex-Model C schools principals, Principal A and C, acknowledged their high requests for expulsions, they did not ascribe this difference to a change in intake or the

differing socio-economic background of learners. The principals attributed the increase in requests to the SASA, which closed all alternatives to expulsions. This included corporal punishment, unofficial transfers from one school to another and mutual agreements between parents and the school. Schools were thus forced to abide by the legal procedures as laid down by the Act. Both principals felt that the number of requests for expulsions was representative of the composition and ratio of the school population, thus denying any form of discrimination.

Although three out of the five schools, those represented by Principal A, B and C, had enrolment policies and were selective in their intake, their expulsion rates were higher than non-selective schools. The interrelationships between schools' enrolment policies and their low tolerance level, towards behavioural problems, is an interesting paradox. The researcher also found that some schools' enrolment policies were more subtly implemented than others.

Principal B, whose enrolment policy is based on academic excellence, found it difficult to accept learners from lower socio-economic areas because of inherent prejudices, which exist amongst teachers at the school. It appears that both the principal and the educators at this school, as in many other schools, still practice subtle discrimination. This practice is in conflict with their supposedly democratic ethos. The principal acknowledges the school's inability to handle the problems associated with learners from those areas.

Principal E, representing the township school, found that learners from the Eastern Cape were "*a better core of pupils...*" than pupils from the surrounding areas. Principal D also pointed out that if expulsion was an option at his school, discrimination would definitely be prevalent. His view was that racism was endemic and entrenched, "*racism will play a role in expulsion despite the denials*".

The differences between schools regarding intake, socio-economic background and racial composition was indeed varied. Thus, it was difficult to gauge the extent to which they impacted on expulsions.

Schools situated in the lower socio-economic areas had very few or no requests for expulsions compared to the schools in the middle-class areas. McManus (1989:261) supports

the findings of this research i.e. that high expulsion rates does not reflect deprived catchment areas. Similarly, McLean (1987:303), Parson (1996:183) and Blyth and Milner (1993:263) found that, except when comparing vastly different social areas, the prevalence of socio-economic disadvantage in intake is not a reliable predictor of exclusion rates, nor could the variation in expulsion rates be explained by the socio-economic characteristics of the area.

6.12 FINDING 9: Principals' views on the influence of rationalisation on expulsions

There was consensus amongst the principals regarding the negative impact that rationalisation had on expulsions. Schools situated in the lower socio-economic areas experienced the impact of rationalisation more than those schools which were situated in the middle-class areas. These schools were able "*to soften the blow*" by employing educators in governing body posts.

Although the effects of rationalisation were felt more by schools situated in the working class areas, the expulsion rates did not reflect this. Schools situated in working class areas expelled less learners than the schools situated in the middle-class areas, despite being under-staffed, experiencing higher teacher/pupil ratios and being generally under-resourced.

Similarly, Castle and Parsons (1997:5) found that many schools serving disadvantaged areas excluded fewer pupils and that some schools with falling enrolment experienced severe difficulties because they are obliged to accept disruptive pupils excluded from other schools. Contrary to these findings, Hayden (1994:259) said that if a school was suffering financial cuts, staffing problems or was overcrowded, a child was more likely to be excluded.

6.13 FINDING 10: Principals' views on the influence of the "achievement/league table" on expulsions

The "league/achievement table" were closely related to whether a school regarded itself as an "*effective school*" i.e. the school which produces good academic results.

Of the five principals that were interviewed, Principal B was the only one who categorically stated that he approved of the “achievement/league tables”. His view was that the results of a school indicate that, *“something has happened...and that there is discipline at the school...”* The researcher found that for Principal B, achieving the 100% pass rate was of greatest importance. Any learner who jeopardises the school’s chances of achieving a full pass rate is usually registered as an independent candidate.

Although Principal A and C, who represent the ex–Model C schools, denied that the “league tables” had influenced expulsions at their schools, it was evident that they had created a certain degree of discord and uneasiness amongst the principal and staff. Principal C stated that *“...it lead to a fair amount of blood on the staff...and some heated discussions on what the heck we’re trying to do here...”* Principal A’s statement that *“...we have to come to terms with the fact that they (the league tables) are published”* meant that it was a contentious issue amongst the staff.

The researcher found that Principals D and E, who represent schools in working class communities, reacted more intensely than the other three principals to the “achievement/league table”. Principal D’s criticism was based on intrinsic values of the league table and the unintended consequences of the implementation of a system of comparing schools on the basis of academic achievement. He stated that the “league tables”, *“is fundamentally flawed...it is fundamentally wrong...and it churns up many unintended consequences”*. His view was that the crime rate will escalate; and that there would be a *“reduced continuence in township schools...to schools that they (parents) perceive or have been defined by Kader Asmal’s definition of excellence.”*

The researcher found that the principal from the township school, Principal E, in his quest to increase the academic performance and to avoid being stigmatised as a ‘dysfunctional school’, unofficially excluded twenty–six learners at the end of the year 2000. He felt that principals who *“got rid”* of learners have *“bought into”* the plan of the National Minister or *“they (principals) are being bullied into that sort of thinking, or by being coerced...through the ‘carrot system’...”* He believed that principals were either ambitious and desirous of recognition *“...or they get hit over the head”*.

In the Western Cape the “achievement/league table” compares and places schools in direct competition with each other, irrespective of the socio-economic areas, budgets and resources of the school. This is inherently unfair.

Addendum G (*see p.206*), confirms that only black and coloured schools had pass rates between 0% and 79.99% for the year 2000.

The South African education system sends out worryingly conflicting messages. James (2000:8) states *“that an education system does not exist simply to serve a market...It’s primary purpose must be to enrich the individual.”* However, Kader Asmal’s National Report on the Performance of Individual Schools, although aimed at “pulling underperforming schools out of the abysmal situation”, has led to principals “getting rid” of learners who will not benefit the school, thus increasing expulsion rates.

The “achievement tables” has had the effect of placing schools on the market. Parents with the financial means can choose the ‘best’ schools for their children. This emphasises parental choice, meaning that parents who are empowered to make decisions would gravitate towards schools which emphasise academic excellence. It also reflects the disempowerment of those parents who cannot afford to send their children to better schools.

In a study resembling the present research, Stirling (1992b:128) found heads (principals) who had previously been willing to offer support to difficult and under-achieving pupils were now seeing them as a liability. They are looking at ways of transferring them to other schools or units. This conformed to the results of the present study, where Principal B “got rid” of 15 pupils over a period of three years and Principal D ‘unofficially transferred’ 26 learners at the end of 2000 *“...to improve his academic results...”*

Similarly, Blyth and Milner (1993:260) found that the notion of transferability of a “marketable” commodity (the pupil) was now made explicit, as a head teacher announced *“we came fifth in the league table so not many of our pupils are on free transfer”*. Research conducted by Parffrey (1994:119) stated that the ethos of the educational market economy created *“human saleable goods”*. She added that *“perhaps the salvation army or church schools or industry should salvage what society has rendered unwanted”*.

6.14 FINDING 11: Principals' attitude towards learners who are readmitted by the WCED, after a request for expulsion is declined

Principals and teachers experience a great sense of disappointment and disillusionment with the Head of Education if he does not support the school governing bodies request to expel a learner. However, what was significant was how the principals differed in their treatment of learners who were readmitted.

The researcher found that the manner in which learners were treated on readmission was closely related to the ethos and philosophy of the school and the attitude of the principal towards discipline.

Principals A and C were adamant that when learners were readmitted, there would be no victimisation of them. Principal B, on the other hand, made it quite clear that when learners are readmitted, they were admonished and cautioned. If they did not abide by the code of the school, then the necessary action would be taken.

Although Principal E did not formally expel learners, he revealed that if teachers and learners did not agree on a matter, victimisation of learners would follow. The principal attributed this to a power-play between teachers and learners. The researcher found that the extent of the victimisation as expressed by the principal, to be totally uneducational. Costenbader and Markson (1994:106) concede that the philosophy and ethos of the school regarding the use of suspension ought to determine how readmitted students are regarded on return to the school.

The researcher found that the success rate of retaining readmitted learners at two of the five schools were low. A readmission is regarded by principals as a "failed attempt" at getting rid of a student. Learners readmitted, are often made to feel uncomfortable and leave the school on their own accord. Often, parents remove the child from the school immediately after the WCED approves a readmission. This is basically to prove a point i.e. that they have challenged the school and won.

6.15 FINDING 12: Principals' opinions on whether teachers are equipped to deal with learners with behavioural problems

The principals were unanimous in their view that teachers were not equipped with the necessary skills to deal with learners with behavioural and emotional problems. The five principals expressed the need to have the services of a school guidance counsellor or a school psychologist on a more regular basis as schools could not cope with the problems being encountered on a daily basis.

The most common complaints that principals had with regards subject teachers substituting as guidance counsellors were that:

- teachers were not trained to deal with behavioural and emotional problems.
- teachers did not have the time nor the inclination to deal with learners who needed assistance and support.
- teachers did not have the experience of dealing with learners with drug problems.
- teachers came with their own personal baggage and were unable to empathise with learners.

The principals also said that the services rendered by the school clinics were inadequate. They were understaffed and therefore unable to provide the necessary assistance.

6.16 FINDING 13: Intervention methods used by the five principals to minimise disciplinary problems and expulsions

The methods utilised by principals varied from being punitive to proactive. Four out of the five principals admitted that they would prefer to be proactive but due to staff and time constraints, they were unable to implement proactive intervention methods.

Principals A and E believed that it was important to be visible at all times i.e. they found that walking around the school and making their presence felt made a big difference to the discipline in the school.

Principals A and B adopted a policy of zero-tolerance towards serious transgressions. Principals C and E applied pressure tactics on the parents of learners who regularly transgressed. The pressure tactics involve requesting parents to attend meetings week after week, hoping it would drive parents to take corrective action. Principal C discovered that subjecting learners to manual labour such as digging a foundation (for an extension to a building) and cleaning toilets resulted in a decrease in the number of transgressions. Principal C was also contemplating the implementation of a drug policy at the school.

Principal E admitted that although he did not condone corporal punishment, it was still a form of punishment meted out by teachers. He believed that corporal punishment must be viewed within the context and culture of the school and community which it serves. He also voiced his frustration at the lack of commitment by teachers towards disciplining learners.

There was also a difference in the type of programmes, which schools implemented. Principal D who was more proactive in his approach, utilising a number of outside agencies to present conflict resolution programmes and peer-mediation programmes. He also co-ordinated an environmental education project amongst schools in the area, aimed at empowering learners with life skills. Principal D and E, it appeared, matched their disciplinary methods to the type of learners and the community which they served. Although Principals A, B and C did implement conflict resolution and peer-mediation programmes, they were more punitive in their approach, favouring more afternoon detentions and suspensions. Considering the high rate of requests for expulsions as a result of substance abuse in schools, none of the five schools participating in this research had a formal drug education policy. It is imperative that every school should have a protocol and a drug policy for substance abuse offenders.

The research found that discipline in schools and the disciplinary methods implemented were influenced by the educator/learner ratio, the principals' views on discipline, the community which the schools serve and the commitment of the teachers towards maintaining discipline.

6.17 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The aim of this research was firstly, to determine the demographics and reasons for requests for expulsions; and secondly, to determine the factors which influence these requests for expulsions.

A survey of the literature revealed that a number of factors such as the ethos and philosophy of the school, socio-economic background/catchment area, abolition of corporal punishment, policy of rationalisation and the publication of the “league table” influence expulsions.

Expulsions in the Western Cape have remained relatively constant for the three year period 1998, 1999 and 2000.

Although expulsion rates varied amongst schools, certain schools had a greater tendency to request expulsion than others. Schools situated in middle-class areas had a greater tendency to request expulsions than schools situated in lower socio-economic areas. The reasons given by the principals were that parents in the middle-class areas were more au-fait with the law governing expulsions than parents from working class communities who were not empowered and did not have the resources to challenge decisions made by the school.

The researcher also discovered that learners in the age groups 15 to 16 years and between grades 9 and 10 were more vulnerable to expulsions than other groups.

Reasons for requests for expulsions such as substance abuse and substance abuse-related incidents accounted for the highest reasons for requests for expulsions with physical confrontation, verbal confrontation, theft, sexual assault and other behavioural problems accounting for the balance of the transgression. The researcher also found that most of the transgressions were committed in groups.

A multi-variate of factors influenced the results of the first phase i.e. the varying expulsion rates at schools and the reasons for expulsions. The researcher found that a learner's chances of being expelled are influenced as much, if not more, by the school which the learner attends than by individual factors such as socio-economic background, intake and catchment areas,

abolition of corporal punishment, rationalisation or the influence of the publication of the “achievement/ league tables”.

Factors within the school such as ethos, philosophy and code of conduct of the school, the principal’s view towards discipline, and the value that principals and staff attach to the “achievement table”, impacts on whether a learner will be considered for expulsions.

“Unofficial transfers or expulsions” are used as an alternative to requesting expulsions via the Western Cape Education Department. The researcher found that this is a common practice in Western Cape schools. No official records exist as it is not notifiable to the Western Cape Education Department.

The researcher takes cognisance of the fact that learners with behavioural and emotional problems are disruptive in class; they antagonise teachers, they challenge the code of conduct and ethos of the school, affecting both parents and the community. Thus expulsion cannot be regarded solely as an educational issue. The researcher finds that there is a systemic abdication of responsibility for the learner who challenges the system either by his or her behaviour, or because s/he does not perform academically.

If the Western Cape Education Department does not attempt to assist schools to meet the increasing number of learners experiencing behavioural and emotional problems and problems related to substance abuse, expulsion figures will continue to increase. If these learners are not given an opportunity to change or given a better start to adulthood, they are unlikely to take their rightful place in society.

This research focussed on only five school principals. Some are working under considerably more pressure than others. The social cost to society of drug addiction, gangsterism, theft and general alienation from school, if not realistically addressed, will be phenomenal.

Although it is not within the scope of this study to design a programme to minimise expulsions, the section that follows will provide guidelines/recommendations towards minimising the expulsion phenomena.

6.18 RECOMMENDATIONS/GUIDELINES

The challenge of preparing learners for the twenty-first century is an enormous responsibility for our schools. The Education Department and individual schools can maximise the success of their efforts by considering the following recommendations.

- Children are our responsibility; thus teachers, parents, communities and the Education Department must take collaborative responsibility for their behaviour. There must be a common will to find a solution and the resources to provide a solution. It is of utmost importance that the social and cultural context and the background of learners be taken into consideration when contemplating a request for expulsion.
- All Government Departments must work together in the interest of the child as suggested by Parsons (1994:14) (*see p.45*). Collaboration between Health, Social, Correctional and Educational services must be encouraged. Representatives of each service must form part of a multidisciplinary team, which will work in the interest of the learner.
- A method of monitoring the number of “unofficial transfers or expulsions” must be implemented to discourage principals from excluding learners or transferring ‘the problem’ to other schools instead of working with them.
- Since this research found that some schools were more inclined to expel than others, it would be helpful for schools to monitor the pattern of disciplinary action and expulsions in the school and to question whether certain groups i.e. age, grade, gender or racial groups are over-represented. If so, staff might want to examine the reasons for their occurrence. Insight can be gained by communicating with school psychologists/counsellors, parents, community groups and the learners themselves.
- This research identified that certain groups i.e. the 15 to 16 year old learners and learners in grade 9 to 10 were most vulnerable to being expelled. Proactive preventive strategies must target this group of learners. At the same time a concerted effort must be made to find out what their grievances are.

- Since substance abuse and physical confrontation are the most common reasons for requests for expulsions, it is recommended that all substance abuse prevention programmes must be designed to include violence prevention and vice versa.
- The Education Department needs to ensure that schools have access to qualified guidance counsellors or school psychologists. These professionals should be in a position to advise, train, inspect and monitor what happens to problematic learners in school. School/educational psychologists are well placed in the school clinics to assist with advice, support and consultancy, and to implement early prevention programmes.
- The school/educational psychologist could advise and provide the appropriate type and level of intervention i.e. individual, family or group therapy. The psychologist can identify the type of programmes required at a particular school e.g. conflict resolution programmes, classroom management practices, substance abuse programmes etc., depending on the needs of the school. Baker (1998:40–41) concluded in her research that school psychologists, because of their knowledge of children's psychological development and of the environment and culture of schools, and because of their roles as organizational consultants and mental health advocates for children, should emerge as leaders in the creation of schools as caring communities.
- The circuit managers of the Western Cape Education Department should be more accessible to principals in times of emergencies. The WCED should provide principals with alternatives if a threatening situation arises at a school and the circuit manager is not available.
- Official statistics on expulsions should be published and made available by the WCED in order for policy makers, researchers and psychologists to pinpoint areas of concern. Substance abuse is a major problem in the Western Cape. Policy makers must therefore seriously consider implementing a substance abuse policy in every school.

Other studies could look at the opinion of learners who are expelled. The views of learners are critical in the expulsion process since it is the learner's future which is being jeopardised.

The next section will discuss the limitations and problems encountered during this empirical investigation.

6.20 LIMITATIONS AND PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING THIS STUDY

The first phase of the research was limited to requests for expulsions at secondary schools in the Western Cape only and only five principals were interviewed during the second phase of the research. The finding of this research can therefore not be generalised to other schools or provinces.

The researcher encountered three methodological problems in collecting data for the first phase. Firstly, the number of days set aside for collecting the data was extended by two days as the files needed for the research were either being used in another department or were with the Head of Education. Secondly, requests for expulsion which contained inadequate information were not included in the study. This accounted for approximately three percent of requests for expulsions. Thirdly, the researcher also encountered problems in the classification of transgressions into categories i.e. when applying the grounded theory. Some transgressions were not exclusive to a particular category. This implied that the researcher had to exercise discretion in selecting the most appropriate category in categorising a transgression.

The researcher estimated that the interviews would be completed within two hours. However, the duration of one interview was three hours, and another, four hours. The four hour interview was completed in two two-hour sessions. The researcher refrained from interrupting the flow of the interviews as the information shared by these principals was valuable and relevant to this research.

- The Western Cape Education Department should also consider the implications and the repercussions of the publication of the “achievement/league tables”. Principals who were previously sympathetic to problematic and academically weak learners are attempting to “get rid” of them to boost their ratings. “Unofficial expulsions” could have a serious negative impact on society.
- Schools situated in the lower socio-economic areas which operate under severe adverse conditions and who rather than expel them, attempt to work with these learners, need to be recognised by the Western Cape Education Department for work done, in much the same way as academic learning is celebrated and recognised (Garner 1994:8).
- It is essential that all educators be equipped with skills in handling all forms of behavioural problems.

6.19 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Because this can be considered an exploratory study, only five school principals across the socio-economic spectrum were selected. Their views also differed considerably. Future research could select a more homogenous group of principals representing a specific socio-economic group or geographical area, such as all rural schools or all urban schools, or all schools within a certain socio-economic group to identify factors which could influence expulsions in these areas.

This research identified a number of factors which could influence the rate of expulsions from schools. Further research could scrutinise and examine the impact of individual factors such as the abolition of corporal punishment, the influence of rationalisation and the publication of “achievement/league tables” on expulsions.

This study also confirmed that certain groups of learners were more inclined to be expelled than others e.g. males more than females, grade 9 and 10’s more than the other grades and 15 year old’s more than the other age groups. Further research could explore the reasons for this phenomenon.

6.21 CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the difficulties experienced in disciplining learners and the subsequent request for an expulsion is an emotive and highly contentious issue amongst educationists and the community at large.

Whilst certain factors such as the socio-economic background, intake and catchment area and the ethos and philosophy of the school does influence requests for expulsions to a certain degree, schools and educationists may unintentionally contribute to an increase in the number of learners being expelled from schools. Schools must therefore be encouraged to scrutinise the motivation behind certain policies and practices which they advocate.

The researcher would like to emphasise the unique nature of each request for expulsion. There are no “one size fits all” solutions. Each request involves a learner with his/her individual personality and characteristics, a school with its unique cultural background and ethos, and a community with its unique impact on the individual. Transgressions do not occur in a vacuum but are manifestations of the social, political and cultural contexts in which the school finds itself.

Each of the factors discussed in this empirical research represents a challenge to educators and to others involved in education. What is of primary importance is the assistance or the attention that is given to learners who are at risk of being expelled. This assistance or support will not only benefit the learner, but also society at large.

Perhaps it is time for schools to acknowledge the pivotal role which they play in society and to make a formal commitment to educate all learners up to a certain stage, irrespective of the problems that this would pose.

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NOTICE INFORMING PARENTS OF MISCONDUCT

ADDENDUM A

.....
.....
.....
.....
(Name and address of school)
Date:

Name and address of parent(s))

.....
.....
.....
.....

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

In accordance with regulation 3(1) (a) of the regulations promulgated in terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), I wish to inform you that your son/daughter* (name), a grade learner at the above-mentioned school, may be guilty of serious misconduct, as he/she*

.....
.....
.....
.....

(Furnish full details with date(s) of the serious misconduct)

You are welcome to submit written or oral representations explaining, denying or defending why your child should not be suspended or expelled. Such representations must reach me within days of the date of this letter to be taken into consideration when the case will be considered by the governing body on (date) at (time) at (venue).

You and/or your son/daughter* and/or your representative (who may be a legal representative) are also invited to be present on the specified date, time and place and, if present, you will be afforded the opportunity to state your side of the case to the governing body.

Yours faithfully

SECRETARY: GOVERNING BODY

(*Delete where not applicable.)

NOTICE OF AN INTENTION TO SUSPEND

ADDENDUM B

.....
.....
.....
.....

(Name and address of school)
Date:

(Name and address of parent(s):)

.....
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.....
.....

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

I wish to inform you that the governing body of the above-mentioned school, after hearing representations on (date), has found your son/daughter guilty of serious misconduct and, in accordance with regulation 3(1) (c) of the regulations promulgated in terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), has decided to suspend your son/daughter* as a correctional measure for a period of school days, as a correctional measure.

As a result of this decision your son/daughter* may no longer attend the school nor enter the grounds of the institution from the date of this letter. If your son/daughter* does enter the grounds, he/she* will be guilty of an offence and will be subject to prosecution. He/she* may resume school attendance on (date).

(Only where applicable) Your son/daughter* is also prohibited from residing in the hostel attached to the school and must therefore vacate the hostel no later than (date). Please make immediate arrangements for the accommodation for your son/daughter* after the aforementioned date.

Yours faithfully

SECRETARY: GOVERNING BODY

(*Delete where not applicable, as the case may be)

NOTICE OF A DECISION FOR ACTUAL SUSPENSION

ADDENDUM C

.....
.....
.....
.....
(Name and address of school)
Date:

(Name and address of parent(s):)
.....
.....
.....
.....

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

In accordance with regulation 3(3) of the regulations promulgated in terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), I hereby notify you that the governing body of the above-mentioned school has investigated the circumstances of the misconduct of your son/daughter* (name).

The decision of the governing body is that your son/daughter* is suspended from attending the school pending a decision by the Head of the WCED whether your son/daughter* should be expelled, as he/she*
.....
.....
.....
.....

(Details of serious misconduct)

As a result of this decision your son/daughter* may no longer attend the school or enter the grounds of the institution from the date of this letter. If your son/daughter* does enter the grounds, he/she* will be guilty of an offence and will be subject to prosecution.

(Only where applicable) Your son/daughter* is also prohibited from residing in the hostel attached to the school and must therefore vacate the hostel no later than (date). Please make immediate arrangements for the accommodation for your son/daughter* after the aforementioned date.

Yours faithfully

SECRETARY: GOVERNING BODY

(*Delete where not applicable, as the case may be.)

NOTICE OF A RECOMMENDATION FOR EXPULSION

ADDENDUM D

RECOMMENDATION FOR EXPULSION OF LEARNER

This form is to be completed for each learner whom a school intends to expel and must accompany the documents submitted to the Head of the WCED.

NAME OF SCHOOL:			
TEL. NUMBER:		FAX NUMBER:	
NAME OF LEARNER:			
DATE OF BIRTH:		GRADE:	
NAME OF CIRCUIT MANAGER:			

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING AND WRITE "YES OR NO" WHERE APPROPRIATE.

1. Can this learner's misconduct be classified as serious misconduct, as stipulated in the regulations? ☐

2. Summarise the serious misconduct of the learner. Give relevant dates.

3. Who reported the serious misconduct to the Governing Body? Learner

Principal

Staff member

Parents

Member of Governing Body

Other

4. Were learner and parents notified in writing of the charge of misconduct?

	DATE:
--	-------

5. Did parents acknowledge receipt of notification?

YES NO

Date of governing body hearing:

--

6. The following were present at the hearing:

Learner

Parent

page 199

7. Was/were learner/parent(s)/representative given an opportunity to make verbal or written representations?

☐

8. Was reporter or witness of the serious misconduct part of the decision-making panel at governing body hearing?

☐

9. Written decision/recommendation of Governing Body attached:

☐

10. Where is learner at present?

11. Will learner be allowed to write examinations?

☐

12. Has learner previously been found guilty of similar misconduct?

☐

If so, what remedial steps were taken?

13. Documentation per registered mail/by hand/fax to Head of the WCED:

Date on which documentation was despatched to Head of the WCED

Content: i. Full report on circumstances

ii. Comprehensive minutes of meeting at which decision was taken

iii. Written representations of learner/parent(s)/representative

iv. Copy of letter to parent(s) inviting him/her/them to meeting

v. Copy of letter to parent(s) informing him/her/them of decision of Governing Body

vi. Copy of acknowledgement of decision

Please tick

14. Additional comments (if any)

.....
SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL/CHAIRPERSON

.....
DATE

.....
NAME (BLOCK LETTERS)

ADDENDUM E (A COPY OF A SCHOOL'S DISCIPLINE RECORD)

DATE	NAME	PROBLEM	PUNISHMENT		
4-12-97	R H	Assault / indecent assault upon a Gr 8 learner, H	Expelled		
"	E M		Expelled		
"	L H		Expelled		
"	M G		'Acquitted'		
"	T P		'Acquitted'		
22-5-98	M B	Fighting		3 days suspension	Detentions x ?
28-5-98	S D	Theft			2 DTs
"	G T			5 days suspension	
"	G W			5 days suspension	
16-7-98	T P	Bunking school, bad disciplinary record	Expelled		
30-7-98	G S	Assault / indecent exposure and assault upon a Gr 8 learner, W	Expelled		
"	D W		Expelled		
30-7-98	M dW	Butterfly knife at school			4 Sat DTs, warning
"	A R	Ninja sticks weapon at school			3 Sat DTs. Warning
"	S S	BB gun at school (could not prove he had in possession)	'Acquitted'		
"	H P	Theft of BB gun belonging to S		5 days suspension	
"	D R			5 days suspension	
"	L W			5 days suspension	
"	E U				3 Sat DTs warning
"	D B	Had S BB gun in their possession on school premises			3 Sat DTs warning
19-8-98	H E	3 instances of assault / fighting	Expelled		
"	J P	Copper sulphate on chips and offered to other pupils		2 days suspension	2 Sat DTs, warning
"	G M			3 days suspension	3 Sat DTs, warning
"	C S	Theft of leg for WW project (also using other pupils' marks as his own		3 days suspension	3 Sat DTs, warning
24 Nov	M C	Theft of electronic parts from Electrical Workshop to use in their own school project		2 days suspension	3 DTs (8:30 – 14:00) after schools broke up
24 Nov	G L				
11-11-98	A D	Theft – premeditated, stole from fellow-pupils, some items stolen of no value to him (e.g. train ticket S Suburbs)	Expelled		
28-1-99	M S	Fight / assault on D (gr 8) on way to station		3 days suspension	2 Sat DTs, warning
28-1-99	E G				2 Sat DTs, warning
22-2-99	C E	Assault, bullying of Gr 8 pupil (J)	Expelled		
25-2-99	V G	Fighting in Basic Workshop		1 day suspension	1 Sat DT, warning
"	H F			3 days suspension	2 Sat DTs warning

6-3-99	B B	11	Stole hammer from Workshop and was selling it to workman		3 days suspension	2 Sat DTs warning
14-4-99	W C	11	Intoxicated on school premises	Expelled		
	W K	11	Intoxicated on school premises		5 days suspension	2 Sat DTs, warning
	D D	11	Consumed alcohol on way to school, hit a prefect		5 days suspension	2 Sat-DTs, warning
7-5-99	R R	8	Theft (clutch pencil)		3 days suspension	3 Sat DTs
	B M	8	Theft (watch)		5 days suspension	1 Sat DT
	M M	10	Theft (clutch pencil)		2 days suspension	2 Sat DTs
5-5-99	D v R	8	Assault / bullying	Expulsion but overthrown by WCED		
12-5-99	A V	8	Theft (windbreaker)		3 days suspension	2 Sat DTs
27-5-99	FB	11	Spraying of Mace into cloakroom (learners in the cloakroom)		2 days suspension	2 Sat DTs
3-6-99	A B	10	Bullying / assault on way home – Gr 8 learner		4 days suspension	3 Sat DTs
3-6-99	M S	10	Theft of school tie (found & not handed in)		3 day suspension	3 Sat DTs
3-6-99	M E	10	Spraying of Mace into dirtbin in corridor		1 day suspension	1 Sat DT
3-6-99	A D	10	Theft of CD from fellow-learner		3 days suspension	3 Sat DTs
11-6-99	B H	11	School discipline record unacceptable (3 meetings with parents unsuccessful), possession of dagga	Expulsion		
22-6-99	M B (ref 22-5-98)	10	Accessory to a theft		2 days suspension	2 Sat DTs
22-6-99	G F	10	Assault (pricked pupil with scalpel blade)		5 days suspension	4 Sat DTs
21-8-99	M C	10	Disciplinary Record, plus self-defense spray		2 days suspension	2 Sat DTs/Probation
21-8-99	J d V	10	Assault		2 days suspension	2 Sat DTs
	K E	10	Assault		3 days suspension	3 Sat DTs
	C A	10	Assault		3 days suspension	3 Sat DTs
21-8-99	G B	10	Discipline record to date, plus swearing re teacher		5 days suspension	5 Sat DTs/Probation
21-8-99	F D	10	Assault (on S)		3 days suspension	5 Sat DTs
1-9-99	S W	10	Assault / bullying pupil on train		2 days suspension	2 Sat DTs
	A B	10	Assault / bullying pupil on train		2 days suspension	2 Sat DTs
	C v R	10	Possession of dagga	Expulsion		
3-9-99	T B	8	Discipline record to date	Expulsion		
1-9-99	T R	9	Poor discipline record / libellous written document re teachers	Expulsion, but overthrown by WCED		
3-10-99	M S	10	Handed in another pupil's steam-car pretending it was his own – marks used for yearmark		3 days suspension	3 Sat DTs
-11-99	D W	10	Setting off and throwing a firecracker out of the window of a railway carriage		3 days suspension	2 Sat DTs
-11-99	D v R v O	10	Setting off a firecracker inside a railway carriage. Verbally abusive to and swore at member of public.	Expulsion		

0-11-99	C McP	10	Had live ammunition at school			3 Sat DTs
0-11-99	ZW	11	Set off firecracker in subway at W station		1 day suspension*	3 Sat DTs
1-11-99	J F	11	Providing firecrackers to another pupil on way to school		1 day suspension*	3 Sat DTs
1-11-99	G D	9	Theft of a calculator from a teacher		1 day suspension*	4 Sat DTs
1-11-99	B K	9	Sexual harassment of fellow learners, poor discipline record	Expulsion		
9-11-99	B F	9	Theft of Y dustpan lid to use in his metalwork project		1 day suspension*	3 Sat DTs
9-11-99	Z D	9	Theft of a set-square from the 'smoked' schoolbag of S P			2 Sat DTs
-2-00	C leR	8	Discipline Record – disregard for school's authority	Expulsion		
-2-00	D vR (ref 5-5-99)	9	(2 nd Hearing) Theft	Expulsion		
-2-00	S P	12	Bullying and extortion	Expulsion (but overthrown by WCED		
-2-00	RE	12	Bullying and extortion		5 days suspension	
-2-00	E A	9	Theft		5 days suspension	
4-2-00	T A	11	Discipline record – blatant rudeness, disrespect	Expulsion		
4-2-00	S M	9	Bullying, Discipline Record	Expulsion		
5-2-00	T J	11	Bullying		1 day suspension	2 Sat DTs
5-2-00	FB (see 27-5-99)	11	Bullying, Discipline Record		Letter to parents – put 'under contract'	
5-2-00	M F	10	Live ammunition at school			2 Sat DTs
7-2-00	A S	10	Theft of train ticket		2 days suspension	3 Sat DTs
7-2-00	G C	10	Theft of train ticket		2 days suspension	3 Sat DTs
7-2-00	BM (see 7-5-99)	9	(2 nd Hearing) Vandalism of fellow-learner's bag / theft (clip)		1 day suspension	4 Sat DTs
9-2-00	R S	9	Theft of fellow-learner's wallet			
12-3-00	J G	10	Vandalism of fellow-learner's bicycle		1 day suspension	4 Sat DTs
9-2-00	G B (see 21-8-99)	10	(2 nd hearing) Bunking sch with Gr 8 girl, purchasing alcohol, Disc. Record	Withdrawn from school by parents before Hearing		
9-2-00	V A	8	Bunking school with Gr 11 learner		1 day suspension	2 Sat DTs
5-5-00	A L	11	Assault upon fellow learner, poor discipline record	Expulsion		
5-5-00	C A	8	Discipline Record including assault, dishonesty, etc.	Expulsion		
3-5-00	S P (see 7-2-00)	12	(2 nd Hearing) Unacceptable and offensive writing out in detention	Expulsion		
10-5-00	M C	10	Extremely poor discipline record		4 Days suspension (only 4 left prior to exams)	
-6-00	M E (9-6-99)	9	Assault upon fellow-learner		3 days suspension	2 Saturday DTs
-8-00	J dV	11	(2 nd Hearing) Theft of bicycle	Withdrawn from school by parents before Hearing		
18-7-00	GC	11	Possession of dagga	Expulsion recommended – readmitted to school after interview with Head of Education		

20-7-00	R S	10	Harassment of fellow-learner, obscene remarks		1 day suspension	2 Sat DTs
20-7-00	T M	10	On-going sexual harassment of fellow learner, obscene remarks		3 days suspension	2 Sat DTs
20-7-00	C P	10	On-going sexual harassment of fellow learner, obscene remarks		5 days suspension	
22-7-00	N J	10	On-going sexual harassment of fellow learners, indecent exposure		5 days suspension	
22-7-00	C McP (see 10-11-99)	11	On-going sexual harassment of fellow learner as well as some of the girls. Obscene remarks	Expulsion recommended- readmitted after interview with Head of Education		
22-7-00	G C	9	On-going harassment of fellow-learner, indecent exposure, obscene remarks		5 days suspension	
22-7-00	J R	10	1) Knowingly in company of learner in possession of dagga 2) In possession of butterfly knife at school 3) Harassment of fellow learner		3 days suspension (for dagga)	4 Sat DT (knife)
0-8-00	C B	12	Disrespect, cheekiness to Grade Head. Long Discipline Reg.		5 days suspension	
0-8-00	N D	10	Obscene writing out during detention		2 days suspension	2 Sat DT
0-8-00	P dV	9	Put laxatives on sandwiches of 2 other learners			1 Sat DT
1-8-00	MM	10	Assault on G. C		3 days suspension	
1-8-00	A S	10	Assault on G. C.		1 day suspension	
1-8-00	H vN	10	Assault on G. C.		4 days suspension	
1-8-00	S J	10	Assault on G. C.		5 days suspension	
1-8-00	K M	10 8	Sexual harassment and insulting of L S , indecent exposure, obscene remarks, racism		5 days suspension	
4-9-00	D G	9	Obscene remark re teacher written on desk Very poor discipline record		5 days suspension Contract	
4-9-00	J L	9	Pornography, Very poor discipline record		5 days suspension Contract	
-10-00	S S	8	Sticking a compass point into neck of fellow learner, very bad discipline record		5 days suspension Contract	
-11-00	D C	8	Assault upon fellow learner		3 days suspension	2 days detention
-11-00	N H	10	Theft (compass & clutch pencil)		2 days suspension	3 days detention
4-2-01	G A	9	Sexual harassment and bullying of fellow learners		5 days suspension	
5-2-01	J M	11 10	Theft (compass and protractor)			
5-2-01	H F	10	Theft (clip off schoolbag)			
-3-01	J G (see 22-3-00)	10 (p)	Possession of alcohol on school grounds	Expelled		
-3-01	GC (see 22-7-00)	10 (p)	Discipline record, Forgery, Defiance of school authority	Withdrawn from the school on the day before Hearing		
9-3-01	D C	11	Theft	Withdrawn from school by the mother 26-3-01		
9-3-01	G K	11 (p)	Defiance of school authority	Withdrawn from the school by the parents		

ADDENDUM F (TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWS)

If requested can be made available by researcher

ADDENDUM G (SCHOOLS IN THE WCED ACHIEVING LESS THAN 80% PASS RATE)

W Cape schools results page

WESTERN CAPE

ATHLONE

0% to 19.99%

Ikamvalethu Finishing and Zola

20% to 39.99%

Bonteheuwel, Kulani, Langa and Masibambisane

40% to 59.99%

Bridgetown

ISilimela

Lagunya Finishing

Manenberg

Modderdam

Mountview

Phoenix

Thembelihle

Usasazo

Windermere

60% to 79.99%

Alexander Sinton and Arcadia

<http://www.suntimes.co.za/2000/01/16/news/news47.htm>