COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTIONAL NORMS AND PRINCIPLES FOR DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AT RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE CHRIS HANI WEST DISTRICT, EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

by

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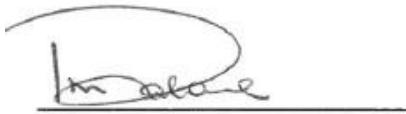Supervisor: Professor Susanna A Coetzee

January 2020

DECLARATION

"I declare that the above dissertation 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.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS (English)

By means of a qualitative multiple case study, I investigated the compliance of the administrations of three rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District, Eastern Cape Province with the constitutional democratic principles of cooperation, accountability and transparency. I consulted legal sources to identify provisions dealing with the implementation of these principles and to create a framework for data analysis and interpretation. Fieldwork commenced with a document analysis of relevant school documents, followed by focus groups with members of representative councils of learners, school management teams and school governing bodies. I concluded with semi-structured interviews with principals. I discovered a general lack of compliance with the identified principles, possibly attributable to the exclusion of learners from decision-making processes, unhealthy relationships among educators, autocratic leadership style, lack of communication, and lack of knowledge of the legal prescripts on the part of learners and the parent component of the school governing body.

Key words

Accountability, compliance, cooperative governance, management, public administration, rural secondary schools, transparency

ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS (IsiXhosa)

Ngokwenza uphando olusebenzisa imizekelo yeemeko ezininzi, ndiphande indlela eziyithobela ngayo imigaqo yolawulo izikolo ezithathu kwisithili sakuKomani eMpuma Koloni ngokumalunga neenqobo zedemokhrasi zentsebenziswano, ukwamkela uxanduva nokusebenza ngokungafihlisiyo. Ndithethe namaziko omthetho ngenjongo yokuchonga izibonelelo eziphathelene nokusetyenziswa kwezi nqobo, ndifuna nokuqulunqa uphahla lokwakha isakhelo sokuhlalutya nokutolika iinkcukacha zolwazi eziqokelelweyo. Umsebenzi wasentsimini (ukutyelela amaziko achaphazelekayo) uqale ngokuphengulula imibhalo yesikolo ebalulekileyo, kwalandela amaqela angundoqo namalungu eekomiti ezimele abafundi, abalawuli besikolo nabameli babazali abakwiikomiti ezilawula isikolo. Kugqityelwe ngodliwano ndlebe oluphantse lwaqingqwa neenqununu zezo zikolo. Ndifumanise ukungathotyelwa jikelele kweenqobo ezichongiweyo, mhlawumbi ngenxa yokungabandakanywa kwabafundi kwiinkqubo zokuthatha izigqibo, ukungavisisani kwabafundisi ntsapho, ukuphatha ngegqudu, ukungabonisani, nokungabi nalwazi lomthetho kwabafundi nabazali abangabameli bekomiti elawula isikolo.

Amagama abalulekileyo

Iisekondari zasemaphandleni, ulawulo, ulawulo kuwo wonke, ulawulo ngokusebenzisana, ukumelana nezigqibo, ukusebenza ngokungafihlisiyo, ukuthobela

ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS (Afrikaans)

Die navorser het 'n kwalitatiewe veelvoudige gevallestudie gebruik om die administrasies van drie landelike sekondêre skole in die Chris Hani West-distrik, Oos-Kaap, se nakoming van die grondwetlik demokratiese beginsels van samewerking, aanspreeklikheid en deursigtigheid te ondersoek. Die navorser het regsbronne geraadpleeg om bepalings rakende die implementering van hierdie beginsels te identifiseer en 'n raamwerk vir die ontleding en vertolking van data tot stand te bring. Die veldwerk het met 'n analise van tersaaklike skooldokumente begin, wat deur fokusgroepsessies met lede van verteenwoordigende leerlingrade, skoolbestuurspanne en skoolbeheerliggame opgevolg is. Die veldwerk is met semigestruktureerde onderhoude met skoolhoofde afgesluit. Die navorser het 'n algemene gebrek aan nakoming van die geïdentifiseerde beginsels gevind, wat moontlik aan die uitsluiting van leerders van besluitnemingsprosesse, ongesonde verhoudings onder opvoeders, 'n outokratiese leierskapstyl, 'n gebrek aan kommunikasie en 'n gebrek aan kennis van die tersaaklike regsvoorskrifte onder leerders en die ouerkomponent van die skoolbeheerliggame toegeskryf kan word.

Sleutelterme

Aanspreeklikheid, bestuur, deursigtigheid, landelike sekondêre skole, nakoming, publieke administrasie, samewerkende bestuur

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LIST OF ABBREVIATED TITLES OF LAWS AND POLICIES

Constitution	Constitution the Republic of South Africa of 1996
Employment of Educators Act	Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998
Guidelines for Governing Bodies	Guidelines for the consideration of governing bodies adopting a Code of conduct for learners
Language Policy	Norms and standards for language policy in public schools
National Education Policy Act	National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996
Promotion of Access to information Act	Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000
Regulations for Initiation Practices	Regulations to prohibit initiation practices in schools
Safety Regulations	Regulations for safety measures at public schools
Schools Act	South African Schools Act 84 of 1996

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DG	Director General
ECDoE	Eastern Cape Department of Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
HoD	Head of Department
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
SMT	School management team

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study investigated the compliance of selected secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District of the Eastern Cape Province with the constitutional principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. In this chapter, I explain the research problem, the research questions which informed the aim and objectives of this study and the methodology for data collection, analysis and interpretation of this research.

1.2 Background to the study

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (hereafter referred to as the Constitution) supports democratic governance that is grounded in the principles of "openness, responsiveness and accountability" (Currie & De Waal 2013:17). These principles, which are the focus of this research, form part of the democratic principles and values prescribed for public administration in section 195 of the Constitution (RSA 1996a, s 195(1) (e) - (g)).

The Constitutional framework for public administration is given effect in education-specific legislation such as the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Schools Act)[1] which provides the opportunity for all members of the school community, e.g. parents, learners and educators, to exercise their rights and become actively involved in school education. The meaning attached to "democracy" in the Schools Act is very similar to Best's (1958:185) designation of "democracy" as the consideration for the feelings of others, respect for another person's point of view, co-operation and appreciation for the efforts and dignity of other people.

The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (hereafter the National Policy Act)[2] (RSA 1996c, ss 2 (b)) requires that the National Minister of Basic Education will provide for stakeholder participation in national policymaking. It also provides that national education policies should be directed towards ensuring broad public

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[1] In this report the consolidated version of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 that contains all the amendments till date, was used. In Boshoff, E. & Morkel, P. 2015. *Education Law and Policy Handbook*. (Revision service no 15).

[2] In this report the consolidated version of the National Policy Act 27 of 1996 that contains all the amendments till date was used. Available from http://wwwsafll.org/za/legis/consolact/nepa1996256pdr

participation in the development of education policy and the representation of stakeholders in the governance of all aspects of the education system (RSA 1996c, s 4(m)). Section 3(1) requires the Minister to adopt national policy in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution (including section 195 that contains the democratic principles and values prescribed for public administration) and the National Policy Act. Furthermore, all national policies must be directed to the "advancement and protection of the fundamental rights of every person guaranteed in terms of chapter 2 of the Constitution" (RSA 1996c, s 4(a)). The school management team (SMT) and the school governing body have a great responsibility to create an orderly, harmonious and effective school administration. Together they should lead, guide, direct and manage the school towards the attainment of the set educational goals and objectives. If there is no co-operation between them, that will have a negative impact on both governance and professional management of the school.

1.3 Motivation of the study

Ferreira (2012:31) combines the "motivation" and the "significance" under the heading "rationale". Ferreira argues that this section will cover what has personally motivated the researcher, as well as why it is worthwhile to conduct the specific study. I have presented these sections as separate sections and, in this section, only address what has motivated me personally to choose this topic.

As an educator at a rural secondary school and a member of the school governing body, I observed many instances where principals, SMTs and governing bodies failed to act in accordance with the constitutional principles and values of democratic public administration. Mafora (2013:10) alludes to this when referring to principals that prefer to adhere to their schools' traditions rather than the democratic principles for public administration because those traditions suit their personal interests better. Dlamini (1994:538) aptly states that education is the primary instrument to ensure the safeguarding, protection and the transference of a society's constitutional values and a community's culture. It is thus essential that the school administration set the example and model the constitutional norms and democratic principles. I would like to see rural secondary schools democratised and compliant with constitutional principles of democratic administration such as co-operation, accountability and

transparency. For these reasons, I chose to investigate the compliance with the constitutional principles in rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District, Eastern Cape.

1.4 Statement of the problem

With the new dispensation in South Africa, one of the reforms introduced in education after the adoption of the South African Constitution, was the democratisation of school administration (e.g. school management and governance). Despite the new South African Constitution, relevant legislation and prescribed procedures and guidelines on democratic public administration, some schools, still overlook the basic democratic principles regulating public administration (Spaull 2015:136-37). Democratic school administration requires that principals, SMTs and governing bodies have a sound knowledge of the democratic principles and values prescribed for public administration in section 195 of the Constitution. Smit (2011b:69) contends that inadequate knowledge of democratic principles constrains democracy. Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (RAPCAN (s.a.) found that this is indeed a problem in South African schools since "there is a general lack of consensus on what democratic decision-making means". The way principals, as leaders of their schools, promote and observe compliance with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency in their schools determines the success or failure of the adherence of the SMTs and the governing body to these principles. RAPCAN (s.a.) states that principals are sometimes reluctant to create spaces for dialogue to ensure participation of all stakeholders. Mestry (2006:33) argues that principals fear that supporting the democratisation of their schools may result in their abdicating the powers traditionally afforded to them. This may be the reason why principals resist change and prefer to preserve the old order.

Studies by Bagarette (2011), Brevis, Ngambi, Vrba and Naicker (2004), Mabovula (2008) and Mafora (2013) offer various reasons to explain why schools do not adhere to democratic principles and values. A possible reason offered by Mafora (2013:1) is that school governing bodies are still marginalised. On the other hand, there is the argument that chairs of governing bodies interpret the fact that the parent members must be in the majority as they (parents) are now in charge. This

may undermine the principle of partnership and participative decision-making (Bagarette 2011:231-233). Brevis et al (2004:224) contend that people resist change if they think that it will cause them to lose something of value and that they then tend to emphasise their own interests at the expense of the institutional interest. Although democratic governance requires inclusive participation of all stakeholders including learner and parent representatives, learners are often marginalised. Learner members of governing bodies are not regarded as capable of making meaningful contributions and they are not allowed to voice their views during governing body meetings (Mabovula 2008:9).

Participation, inclusion, transparency, openness and accountability are indispensable to substantive participatory democracy (Smit 2013:23). It is thus essential that schools not only advocate but observe these principles. Emanating from the problem statement elucidated above, the main question I attempted to answer was: *How do the administrations of selected rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District comply with constitutional principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency*?

Taking into consideration the importance of rural secondary schools complying with Constitutional principles, the following questions had to be addressed to fully explore the primary question.

- What is the legal framework for co-operative, accountable and transparent governance?
- What are the perceptions of the principals, members of SMTs, RCLs and governing body regarding co-operative, accountable and transparent governance?
- How do principals of the selected rural secondary schools promote and observe compliance with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency in their schools?
- Which factors hinder compliance with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency at the participant schools?
- What recommendations can be made to improve compliance of the selected schools' administration with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency?

1.5 Aim and objectives of the research

To answer a research question, a researcher needs to formulate not only a research aim, but also, achievable objectives that would enable the researcher to achieve that aim (Hofstee 2006:86). A research aim is a "brief statement of what the researcher plans to investigate" (Van der Riet 2011:84).

1.5.1 Aim

This research comprises an investigation into compliance of the administrations of selected schools in Chris Hani West District with the constitutional, democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. Pinpoint objectives were formulated to achieve this.

1.5.2 Objectives

The following objectives were the focus of this research:

- To uncover the legal framework for, and meaning of, co-operative, accountable and transparent governance.
- To explore perspectives of the principal, members of the Representative Council of Learners (RCL), the members of the SMT and the school governing body on the meaning of co-operative, accountable and transparent governance.
- To determine what the principals of selected secondary schools do to promote and observe compliance with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency in their schools.
- To investigate the factors that hinder compliance with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency at the participant schools.
- To make recommendations on how to improve compliance in the selected schools' administrations with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.

1.6 Significance of the research

This study contributed towards promoting compliance with democratic principles (co-operation, accountability and transparency) by all stakeholders who are involved in school administration in the participant schools. Feedback given

assisted participant schools to develop school policies in line with these Constitutional principles. As an exploratory study, it contributed towards the better understanding of a democratic institution and how to ensure that the principals, the school governing body, the SMTs and the members of the RCLs uphold the Constitutional principles.

1.7. Delimitation of the field of research

The study is limited to three rural secondary schools; two are from a rural village and one from the countryside in the tribal authority area. Tribal authority is a royal institution, which has jurisdiction over the communities under its control and the responsibility for meeting the needs of those communities (Native Affairs 1958:15). The selected schools offer education from grade eight to grade twelve. These schools were chosen because of their rural background and the assumption that the rural schools seemed to be administered undemocratically.

1.7.1 Conceptual analysis

The following terms are defined and explained below: "compliance", "co-operative governance" "management", "accountability", "transparency", and "public administration".

1.7.1.1 Compliance

"Compliance" means the action of agreeing with or obeying rules and commands (Stevenson & Waite, 2011:293). According to Hornby (1977:174) "compliance" is the action of giving up one's own wishes to accommodate the principles of others or a tendency to give way to others. The above definitions give a general understanding of "compliance" as a binding co-operation between parties which are engaged in a common agenda. For this study "compliance" refers to the adherence of all stakeholders in the selected rural secondary schools to constitutional norms and democratic principles for public administration, specifically the principles of co-operative governance, accountability and transparency. The "common agenda" is created by the constitutional mandate contained in chapter 10 of the Constitution and in this instance, it binds not only the stakeholders, but also schools as organisations. This "common agenda" referred to is section 195 of the Constitution, which states that all organs of the state must be encouraged to participate in policy-

making processes, be accountable and be transparent in whatever they do, and must include accessibility to accurate information.

1.7.1.2 Co-operative governance

"Governance" refers to the way in which the institution exercises its authority. The term includes co-operative engagements in policy formulation and implementation (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2018). The principle of co-operative governance thus rests mainly with the members of the school governing bodies because, as school governors, they are supposed to create space for the parents, educators and learners to work together with the principals and SMT for the welfare of the school (Smit 2011c:259).

"Governance" is the action of ruling, e.g. of having control and influence over the policies and affairs of an organisation (Stevenson & Waite 2011:616). According to Du Toit, Van Niekerk, Van der Waldt and Dolve (2013:64) "governance" implies the actions undertaken to improve the general welfare of a society by means of delivering services. They further state that it refers to the connections and interactions between national, provincial and local authorities with the public they serve.

According to Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothata and Squelch (1997:11) "governance" refers to the determination of policy and rules by which a school is to be organised and controlled. It also includes ensuring that such policies are carried out effectively in accordance with the law and the budget of the school. In this study, "governance" refers to the control and influence exercised by all stakeholders as represented in the governing body (parents, educators, non-teaching staff and learners) over the policies and affairs of the school, with the view to promote the best interests of the school.

1.7.1.3 Management

"Management" is the process of planning, organising, leading and controlling the resources of the organisation to achieve stated organisational goals as productively as possible (Kruger, 2011:65; Springer, 2013:255; Wydeman 2019:37). According to Stevenson and Waite (2011:866-867), "management" is the process of being in charge, administering, regulating, influencing and maintaining control over the staff

and physical resources of the organisation. "Management" is a process through which persons achieve outcomes or goals via an organisational aggregation of human, financial and technical resources (Schoderbek, Cosier & Aplin 1991). For this study, "management" refers to th*e professional day-to-day duties performed by the SMT under the leadership of the principal.*

1.7.1.4 Accountability

UNDP (2008) defines accountability as a demonstration that the work has been done appropriately with pre-determined rules and standards and the results and outcomes of the work reported honestly and openly. On the other hand, Stevenson and Waite (2011:8) refer to "accountability" as the responsibility for the implementation of actions, which must be in accordance with set requirements and which must be reported on. "Accountability" is a key requirement for good governance because it is a state of being answerable for actions and decisions taken (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2018). Based on the definitions given above, "accountability" in this study means giving reasons or answers why decisions were taken during the execution of administrative responsibilities.

1.7.1.5 Transparency

"Transparency" refers to decisions taken and enforced in a manner that is compliant with the rules and regulations of that specific institution. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcements (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2018). According to Smith (2013) "transparency" involves clear and public disclosure of information, rules, policies and processes of an institution by those in authority, and that all involved must ensure sustainability of such processes. In this study "transparency" means availability and open access to information to all stakeholders who are affected by administrative decisions and actions.

1.7.1.6 Public (school) administration

In section 1 of the Public Administration Management Act 11 of 2014, ''public administration'' is defined as the public service, municipalities and their employees.

The definition of "public service" includes national and provincial departments and their employees. A "public body", in terms of section 1 of Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (hereafter Promotion of Access to Information Act)[3] (RSA 2000), is

> (a) any department of state or administration in the national or provincial sphere of government or any municipality in the local sphere of government; or
>
> (b) any other functionary or institution when
>
> (i) exercising a power or performing a duty in terms of the Constitution or a provincial constitution; or
>
> (ii) exercising a public power or performing a public function in terms of any legislation

This definition is in line with the definition of an organ of state in section 239 of the Constitution, in terms of which., public schools are organs of state because they are institutions that exercise public power and perform public functions in terms of legislation. As a result, schools are bound by the democratic principles and values as prescribed for public administration in section 195. The status of the school as organ of state was confirmed in *Western Cape Minister of Education v Governing Body of Micro Primary School* 2005 10 BCLR 973 (SCA) at 20:

> In terms of the definition in the Constitution any institution exercising a public power or performing a public function in terms of any legislation is an organ of the state. The second respondent, a public school, together with its governing body, the first respondent, is clearly an institution performing a public function in terms of the Act. It follows that it is an organ of state as contemplated in the Constitution

Now that it is clear why schools are part of the public administration, it is necessary to determine what and who schools' administrations consists. Your Dictionary (2018 vs 'administration') indicates that, a school's administration consists of "[t]he groups of people who manage or direct" it. Graig (2018 vs 'educational administration') describes "educational administration" as a practice of managing the resources, tasks and communications involved in running a school. According to Karavagh (2008:14), "school administration" refers to the persons responsible for the organisation, day-to-day running of the school and the exercise of control over the

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[3] In this report the consolidated version containing all amendments till date was used. Available from Saflii Consolidated Acts http://www.saflii.org/za/legis/consol_act/poatia2000366/.

affairs of the institution, embracing the principal, SMT and school governing body. This is also the meaning I attached to "school administration" in this study.

1.7.1.7 Public, rural, secondary schools

"Public schools", are schools which are mandated to offer education to all children and are funded in whole or in part by taxation. The Schools Act emphasises that a secondary school is a school which enrols learners in the eighth grade or higher (RSA 1996b, s 11(1)). Mahlangu (2008:4) refers to the concept of "rural secondary schools", as schools situated in the disadvantaged areas such as villages or tribal authority areas. A rural secondary school is a school that is situated in the countryside rather than town (Stevenson & Waite 2011:1260).

1.7.1.8 Chris Hani West District

"A District", is a geographical unit as determined by relevant provincial legislation, or prevailing provincial practice (RSA 1996b)). According to Stevenson and Waite (2011:416) "a district", is a division of a country or region that elects its own councillors. In the context of the study "Chris Hani West District" refers to a region which consists of two hundred schools as demarcated by the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE). Out of the two hundred schools there are thirty-six public rural secondary schools offering education from grade eight to twelve. Note that at the time when I began this study, the district was still known as the Queenstown District. The form and letters requesting permission to conduct the research were completed and sent out before the name change was affected. The ethical clearance certificate was also issued before the districts name was changed.

1.7.2 Scope of the study

As mentioned, I focused only on three constitutional principles, namely co-operative governance, accountability and transparency. They are the cornerstone of democratic school administration. If there is misapplication of these principles, the school will be dysfunctional (Bagarette 2012:105 Taylor 2006:2).

The research was conducted at three rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District of the Eastern Cape Province. "Chris Hani West District" refers to the region which consists of 200 schools as demarcated by the ECDoE. Of the 200 hundred public schools there are 44 rural secondary schools. I chose three of the

public secondary rural schools to participate in the research. The reason was that the road networks made them easily accessible to me. The total number of participants was 39 (i.e. 13 participants from each of the three schools). The participants per school included one principal, four learners who are RCL members, the chairperson, treasury, and secretary of the school governing body and four members of the SMT. However, in School A and B only acting principals were available to be interviewed. In School A, the principal was absent due to illness. School B has an acting principal since 2015, following the Matric exam scandal of 2014.

1.7.3 Assumptions

Assumptions can be defined as ideas that inform the theoretical framework and which are accepted as true or certain to happen (Allen 2012:40). This research was undertaken on the assumption that:

- School administrations of rural schools (such as the participant schools) do not comply with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.
- Participation, inclusion, transparency, openness and accountability are essential to the democratisation of school administration.

1.7.4 Outline of the research report

Chapter 1: In this chapter, I introduced the study by outlining the research problem, presenting the aim and objectives of the research and defining the key concepts. I also briefly explained my choice of research question, aims and objectives; the approach, paradigm and design, data collection methods and methods of data analysis.

Chapter 2: In this chapter I included both a literature review and a literature study. The literature review was used to determine what literature is available on the theme of this study. The literature study was used to study laws and policies to identify the requirements for democratic school administration and specifically for the promotion and observance of the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.

Chapter 3: This chapter focuses on the research question, method and design of the study, data collection methods and providing the framework for the data presentation, analysis and interpretation that follow.

Chapter 4: In this chapter the data is presented, analysed and interpreted.

Chapter 5: In chapter 5, I formulated findings and conclusions and presented the recommendations. Additionally, I pointed out areas for future research.

1.8 Methodological account

A qualitative study was conducted with 39 participants to achieve the objectives of the research. Under this section the research paradigm, qualitative research approach, research design (multiple case study) and methods for data gathering were included. Data was collected using literature study, focus groups with members of the RCLs, SMTs and school governing bodies and the semi-structured interviews with the school principals. Data was analysed using thematic content analysis.

1.8.1 Research paradigm

A "research paradigm" is a cluster of "assumptions about the world, and about what constitutes proper topics and techniques for inquiring into that world" (Punch & Qancea 2014:380). There are two main types of paradigms, namely, positivist paradigm and post-positivistic paradigms. The positivist assumes that the truth is objective. Positivists consider that the truth is out there to be discovered and should be used to formulate laws (Barnard 2011:10). The positivist paradigm is especially suitable for quantitative research. On the other hand, supporters of post-positivistic paradigms such as the interpretative paradigm regard reality as subjective and individually construed (Scotland 2012:11). The interpretative paradigm assumes that the "complex" world of lived experiences can only be understood from the point of view of those who live it (Creswell 2009:195, Maree 2010:70, McMillan & Schumacher 2010:320-321).

In this research, assumptions are embedded in the interpretative framework which can be considered as a basic set of beliefs that guide this research. To investigate participants' subjective reality, I followed Lopez-Ruiz's (2016) suggestion and relied on participants' views, interpretations, insights and the participants' perspective

regarding compliance of these selected schools with democratic principles (cf. section 3.2). I chose the interpretive paradigm to explore knowledge and understanding of the participant schools regarding co-operative, accountable and transparent governance.

1.8.2 Research approach

Kumar (2014:14) refers to a "research approach" as a mode of inquiry. In social research. There are three main research approaches, namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research. I chose the qualitative approach as it was the best mode of inquiry for this study to determine the compliance of the school administrators in the implementation of democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency in the selected participant schools. The qualitative approach implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency (Maree 2010:51).

In addition, the qualitative approach is a holistic approach because it is involved with the natural human environment in all its complexities (Fouchè & Delport 2011:64; Maree 2007:75; McMillan & Schumacher 2010:321; Rule & John 2011:61). Additionally, Durrheim et al (2011:287) state that a central axiom of qualitative research is to work with data in context, which is the reason that I saw fit to visit the participants in their schools (three sites) in order to establish their understanding of democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.

Qualitative researchers make sense of the participants' feelings; experiences and social situations as they occur (Creswell 2014:37-39; Maree 2010:51; McMillan & Schumacher 2010:32). Ritchie et al (2014:38) argue that the research of qualitative nature requires that information be collected from highly specialised individuals or groups – in this case the RCLs, SMTs, school governing bodies and school principals. Researchers following the qualitative approach welcome multidisciplinary participation because richness of insight is enhanced by deferring perspectives (Padgett, 2008:19). Therefore, a qualitative multiple case study was the suitable choice of design for this study (cf. section 3.3).

1.8.3 Research design (case study)

A research design is a pattern or a plan which researchers use during the research process to obtain rich information to answer the research questions (cf. section 1.4) (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:31). Moreover, a case study is described as an in-depth analysis of a single entity, issue or theme through interviews and observations. In this specific research, a multiple case study was used to evaluate whether administrators at selected rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District, Eastern Cape, observe and promote the constitutional and democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency or not. A multiple case study is a systematic and in-depth investigation of a specific problem in its context to generate knowledge and it "allows" comparison across cases (Rule & John 2011:4, 21).

Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (2014:371) describe a multiple case study as the combination of different cases in a single study. In this study, each school was regarded as a case, so the three selected schools under investigation formed the multiple cases. Using more than one setting (three rural secondary schools) allowed me to describe and compare, develop better understanding of participants' perceptions of compliance of their school administrators. Multiple research settings therefore increase the trustworthiness of the research findings (Anney 2014:275) (cf. section 3.7). The multiple case study design was thus appropriate because I was able to compare the data sets from the participant schools which allowed me to sample enough rich data to come up with valid conclusions (cf. section 3.4).

1.8.4 Population and sampling

"Sampling" is the process of selecting a few members of a chosen population to act as participants in your study and represent the whole of the population (Kumar, 2014:382). In addition, McMillan and Schumacher (2010:129) define "population" as a group of elements or cases, whether individuals or objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalise the results of the research of which the sample is representative. As Punch and Qancea (2012:381) suggest, a population should be seen as "the target group, usually large, about whom we want to develop knowledge, but which we cannot study directly in its entirety; therefore, we sample from that population".

Bryman (2012:417) indicates that qualitative researchers, who have opted for case study design, should first select the case or cases before sampling units within the case(s). Three schools in the Chris Hani West District, Eastern Cape Province were selected (cf. section 3.5.1). The selection of these schools was important because it enabled me to understand the reasons for non-compliance with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.

For this study, qualitative purposeful criterion sampling was used to select participants involved in the school administration, e.g. members of the RCL, SMT, school governing body and the principals. Thirteen participants were selected from each school. These participants were regarded as information-rich because of the positions they hold in school administration. The SMTs were selected because they are involved in school management and the principals because they are both ex-officio members of the governing bodies and managers of these schools. School governing bodies are responsible for school governance and have a crucial responsibility for making essential contributions to ensure effective learning and school development (Van Wyk 2004:54). Similarly, Clarke (2009:14) argues that schools improve when governing bodies exert their governance in a way that promotes the effective use of resources. The characteristics or criteria used to select the participants are discussed in more detail in chapter 3 (cf. section 3.5.1).

1.8.5 Literature review

A literature review was used to investigate literature on the topic being studied on constitutional norms and democratic principles for public school administration (see chapter 2). According to Creswell (2009:25) the literature review shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the one being undertaken. Creswell further states that the review provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study as well as a benchmark for comparing the results with other findings. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:73) support this argument by stating that "literature review" establishes important links between existing knowledge and the research problem being investigated and provides helpful information about methodology that can be incorporated into a new study.

In this study, I focused on various writers have stated regarding schools' compliance with the principles of co-operative governance, accountability and transparency as

constitutional principles for democratic public administration. I gathered as much information as possible from various sources such as books, newspapers, magazines, periodicals, speeches presented by academics and prominent leaders in education, electronic media, CDs, cassettes, theses and dissertations. Democracy and education and constitutional principles for public administration were discussed in detail in chapter 2 (cf. sections 2.2, 2.3 – 2.5).

1.8.6 Data collection methods

Qualitative data collection methods were used because qualitative research allows researchers to interact with and talk to participants (McNabb 2013:301). It thus allowed me to ask participants about their perceptions on the compliance of their schools with constitutional norms and principles of public administration.

TABLE 1.1: THE RELATION BETWEEN THE OBJECTIVES, DATA COLLECTION METHODS OR INSTRUMENTS AND THE POPULATION

Objectives	Data collection method and instrument	Population
Objective 1: To uncover the legal framework for and meaning of co-operative, accountable and transparent governance.	• Literature study of the Constitution and relevant laws and policy.	• NA
Objective 2: To explore perspectives of the principal, members of the (RCL), the SMT and the school governing body on the meaning of co-operative, accountable and transparent governance.	• Focus group (Focus group guide) • Focus group (Focus group guide) • Semi-structured interviews (Interview guide)	• Focus group: SMT • Focus group: RCL • Semi-structured interview: Principals • Focus group: school governing body members
Objective 3: To determine what the principals of the selected secondary schools do to promote and observe compliance with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency in their schools.	• Focus group (Focus group guide) • Focus group (Focus group guide) • Semi-structured interviews (Interview guide)	• Semi-structured interview: Principal for the purpose of triangulation • Focus group: SMT • Focus group: RCL • Focus group: School governing body members
Objective 4: To investigate the factors that hinder compliance with principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency at the participating schools.	• Semi-structured interviews (Interview guides)	• Focus group: SMT • Focus group: RCL • Focus group: School governing body members • Semi-structured interview: Principals

Source: Adapted from Mpunzana, 2018:18

Data collection included: Literature study, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. I opted for a literature study rather than a document analysis because I merely wanted to determine the relevant law and policy provisions that deal with the constitutional principles and then use those provisions to deduce the responsibilities of stakeholders in relation to observance and implementation of the three constitutional principles. A literature study of the South African Constitution, relevant legislation, regulations and policy documents was conducted to extract data on

provisions dealing with or prescribing co-operative governance, accountability and transparency in school governance. These documents include information on democratic school governance which was relevant to my study and forms the theoretical framework for my study. As Ferreira (2012:34) indicates, a theoretical framework "provides the researcher the necessary platform to plan the study on existing ideas in the field". In a legal study such as this one, the legal framework provides the best theoretical framework to work from. The Constitution is the supreme law of the country and it lays down the foundation for a democratic public administration in every sphere of government (such as the ECDoE) and public enterprises (RSA 1996a, s 195(2)). It is relevant because, it contains democratic values that govern public administration namely: co-operative governance, accountability and transparency (RSA 1996a, s 195)).

The School Act (RSA 1996b, preamble) was promulgated in 1996 to provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of the schools. It lays a foundation for the development of all people's talents and capabilities to advance the democratic transformation of the society. The Act protects and advances our diverse cultures and languages, 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.

The Act emphasises the promotion of democratic values in general and co-operative governance and accountability specifically. To ensure co-operative governance, governing bodies were given the mandate to exercise their powers in public schools. The Schools Act encourages parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services at the school (RSA 1996b, sections 20 (h)). Another prescription indicative of the cooperative governance mandate is that governing bodies must adopt a code of conduct for learners only after consultation with learners, parents and educators. This mandate is also evident from section 11 of the Schools Act that requires every public school that enrols learners from the eighth grade and higher to establish RCL (RSA 1996b, section 11(1)) (cf. section 3.5.1).

The second data collection method was focus groups with members of the RCLs, SMTs and governing bodies of the selected schools. Focus groups encourage participants to share their perceptions, points of view, experiences, wishes and

concerns without being influenced by the facilitator (Greef 2011:360). According to Greef (2011:362) focus groups create a process of sharing and comparing among participants. Focus groups as a qualitative evidence-based technique are most suitable for evaluation and policy studies (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:363) (cf. section 3.6.3.2).

The focus groups were followed by semi-structured interviews for the sake of triangulation, ensuring validity of data. The different responses from the participants enabled me to determine the specific issues the selected participants have in common on a topic. An interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviour of the participant (Maree 2007:87). There is thus a personal contact and interaction between an interviewer and the interviewee (Creswell 2009:177) that make interviews most appropriate for this research because I aimed at getting first-hand information directly from the participants. During the focus groups and interviews, I could also observed the interviewees' expressions and gestures. That gave me greater insight. I recorded these expressions and gestures in my field notes and used that as non-verbal data and triangulate with other data to ensure accurate interpretation.

I used a qualitative approach through interviewing school administrators (RCLs, SMTs, governing body members and the principals) of the selected schools to gain in-depth understanding of how these participants understand compliance of their schools with democratic principles. These school administrators are essential participants who are directly involved in the implementation of education policies concerning the effective application of public administration. Therefore, by collecting data from the four groups of participants I was able to provide a comprehensive picture (Williams 2015), in this case, of the schools' compliance with the constitutional principles (cf. section 3.6.3.3).

1.8.7 Data analysis

Since the study was undertaken in three rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District, I decided to utilise what authors such as Rule and John (2011:78) and, Shrunk, Fouché and De Vos (2011:414) refer to as thematic analysis. Following this process, allowed me to compare data extracted from the three

selected schools about their compliance with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency (cf. section 3.8).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:366) thematic analysis is regarded as an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories. The goal of data analysis was to summarise what I had seen or heard in terms of common words, phrases, themes or patterns that would enhance my understanding and interpretation of the data (Maree 2007:99-100). Data consisted of the literature study such as minutes of the governing body meetings, attendance lists, audited statements and budget, focus group discussions with the members of the RCLs, SMTs and the school governing body, and individual semi-structured interviews with school principals.

The literature study was undertaken first, followed by the focus group discussions and later semi-structured interviews. Valuable information and varied data were thus obtained. After I had read the transcripts of the focus group discussions and the interviews, I coded data and grouped transcripts obtained from the focus groups and the interviews according to themes of how school administrators comply with the principles mentioned above. Interrelated themes that emerged were arranged together to ensure that data were accurate and answered the research question (Creswell 2009:185, Strydom 2011a:246).

1.9 Ethical considerations

The research process is sensitive and should be handled with great care (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:47). The behaviour and conduct of researchers are governed and controlled by rules, regulations and guidelines so that certain ethical standards are maintained before, during and after the research process is completed (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:117) (cf. section 3.9). Tables 2 and 3 provide a summary of precautions that I, as researcher, took to obtain permission to conduct the research and to obtain ethical clearance.

TABLE 1.2: SUMMARY TABLE ON OBTAINING PERMISSION

Obtaining permission to conduct research	Permission requested	Letter granting permission
Letter requesting permission from the ECDoE ***Appendix B*** Letter requesting permission from the principals ***Appendix D***	Permission to do focus group discussions with 12 members of the RCLs, 12 members of the SMTs, 12 members of the school governing bodies, individual interview with 3 principals and the analysis of documents relevant to the study (finance policies, minutes including the agendas of those meetings, attendance registers of the governing bodies, financial reports and the Code of conduct for learners.	Permission letter from District Office ***Appendix C*** Permission letters from the principals ***Appendix E 1-3***

TABLE 1.3: CONSENT AND ASSENT

Obtaining consent and assent			
Obtaining consent / assent to participate in the research	**Sample**	**Consent / assent granted**	**Data collection instrument involved**
Letter requesting participation and consent from the principals ***Appendix F***	3 Principals	Consent letter from the principal ***Appendix F***	Interview guide
Letters requesting participation and consent from the chairperson, treasury, and secretary of the school governing bodies ***Appendix G***	Members of the governing bodies: 3 chairpersons, 3 treasurers and 3 secretaries	Consent letters and Confidentiality disclaimer from chairpersons, treasurers, and secretaries also members of the school governing bodies ***Appendix H***	Interview guide
Letters requesting participation and consent from SMT members ***Appendix I***	12 SMT members	Consent letters and Confidentiality disclaimer from the SMTs ***Appendix J***	Focus group guide
Letters requesting learner participation and consent from parents ***Appendix K*** Letters requesting learner participation and assent from learners ***Appendix L***	12 RCL members	Consent letters from parents ***Appendix M*** Assent letters and Confidentiality disclaimer from learners ***Appendix N***	Focus group guide

I obtained ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the College of Education at Unisa (Appendix A). Maree (2012:225) suggests that researchers obtain permission to do the research, in advance, from the education department and institution(s) where the research will be conducted. I obtained permission from the ECDoE to conduct the research and from the school principals of the participating schools. After obtaining permission to conduct the research, I approached prospective participants. All of them were presented with an information letter wherein the aim of the research and how it would be conducted were set out. I explained the contents of the information sheet to all prospective participants in the language they know. Once they agreed to participate, I gave them consent forms to sign. I asked parents of prospective learner participants who are minors to sign consent forms and the learners to sign assent and confidentiality disclosure forms.

Prospective participants were assured that their right to privacy would be guaranteed and that confidentiality and anonymity would be observed throughout the process of data collection and in the writing up of the report. I further assured them that they would be protected against any possible physical, mental or emotional harm. The participants were advised of their right to withdraw their participation at any given time without any penalty.

During the research process, it was my responsibility as researcher to make sure that my actions did not seriously affect the validity and reliability of the research results. I followed McMillan and Schumacher's advice (2010:118) and encouraged the participants (e.g. RCLs & the governing bodies) to use their mother tongue so that they could express themselves freely and accurately during the discussions.

In addition, for the principles of anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for schools and participants (cf. section 3.9.5). To ensure that I had eliminated all instances of lack of originality, the report was run through the turn-it-in program (cf. section 3.10).

1.10 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter the motivation for the research, the problem statement, research question, aim of the research, concept clarification, research methodology and chapter division were discussed. This chapter is of prime importance as it sets out

the basis of the research and aims to ensure that the subsequent chapters remain in line with the general aim of the research, namely to investigate the compliance with constitutional norms and principles for democratic public administration at the selected rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District of the Eastern Cape Province. For school administrators to maintain functional and effective schools, it is imperative for all stakeholders to act in accordance with democratic principles as enshrined in the South African Constitution and the Schools Act which guides school administrations on how schools should be managed and governed.

Chapter 2 comprises both the literature review and the literature study. I interacted with the available literature on the constitutional principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. The literature study and review provided a clear perspective on how school administrators should comply with democratic principles of public administration.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

The focus in chapter 2 is on the literature review and literature study relating to the research question: compliance with constitutional principles in the administrations of the selected rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District. I drew a distinctive line between literature review and literature study. The literature review is a process of consulting the available literature or sources (Creswell, 2009:25) on the three basic constitutional principles for democratic administration at the core of this research. The said literature sources include, amongst others, relevant books, magazines, periodicals, dissertations, newspapers and documented presentations by academics. Consulting these literature sources assisted me in gaining a better understanding of what research had already been done and what had already been reported on the topic under review. The focus was to review the published perspectives of various researchers and authors on the South African constitutional principles and to find out where there are gaps in the literature.

Literature study, on the other hand, is a data collection method. I studied laws, policies and guidelines which govern school administration to identify provisions dealing with the implementation of the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency as they form the core of this research. Consulting these legal sources gave me an understanding of the topic that was researched and a good platform for analysis and interpretation, drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

I combined literature review and literature study in this chapter because the literature review provided me with information related to this research, while the literature study enabled me to evaluate the compliance of the selected schools with constitutional and democratic principles for public administration. Thus, I studied law and policy to determine those instances where law and policy either created a legal obligation to uphold one of these principles or implied that one of these principles must be taken into consideration. Combining the literature review and the literature study ensured that I could make a logical argument on the topic under review.

In this chapter, I have discussed the information uncovered by means of the literature review and literature study. Although I present the information obtained by means of the literature review and the literature study separately, I took great care to create a synergy in the flow of argument. Before discussing co-operation, accountability and transparency in detail, I first give the concept of "democracy" and explain its implication for school education. This was necessary because the constitutional principles are embedded in democracy and one cannot simply discuss them without touching on "democracy" itself.

2.2 Democracy and public-school administration

Stevenson and Waite (2011:381) define "democracy" as a system of government in which the people have a voice in the exercise of power, typically through elected responsibility. Similarly, Lust and Ndengwa (2012:20) define "democracy" as a political regime installed by free and fair multiparty elections in which all stakeholders accept the results.

Smit (2011a:2013) refers to democracy as not only based on political rights (e.g. voting; regular elections; party political association and state power), but also on the extended notion that "democracy" is a condition where collective participation and deliberation is characterised by a shared concern for the common goal.

Similarly, Bekink (2012:34) defines "democracy" as a concept which originated from the idea that no person or institution has the divine right to govern over others. "Democracy" does not mean majority decision-making only but involves respecting certain fundamental principles or rights that even the majority is not allowed to limit or take away. Scholars such as Edelstein (2015:19) and, Mncube, Naidoo and Potokri (2015:322) concur that democracy is a system of government which allows rights of citizenship such as freedom of speech, religion, opinion and association. It is also evident from the argument of Miller (2008:15) that, for democracy to be effective in schools, it is essential that administrators consider the importance of human rights.

The new dispensation in South Africa after 1994 caters for the protection of the voices and rights of RCLs in schools. Learners' rights must therefore be promoted in schools, since they contribute to smooth running of the school administration. They must perform their responsibilities in accordance with democratic principles

for public school administration namely, co-operation, accountability and transparency. As young leaders, they must be given an opportunity to use their leadership skills when performing their duties. Mncube (2008:3) supports the notion that the RCLs are mandated by law to promote democracy by being provided an opportunity to participate in school gatherings. If RCLs are silenced and denied their legal right to participate in school governance, democratic principles would be undermined, and the administration would not be complying with democratic principles (Mncube 2013:5).

2.2.1 Implications of democracy for public school administrations

According to Smit (2011a:4), Smit (2011b:68-69), Smit (2011c:255 - 273) and Currie and De Waal (2014:17), democracy brought about the following changes to our education system:

- The previously fragmented education systems were unified into one national education system.
- Various education Acts were promulgated to promote a democratic system, e.g. the National Education Policy Act, the South African Schools Act and the Employment Educators Act. Education regulations, procedures, guidelines, norms and standards were gazetted with the view to shed light on how educational institutions must be governed and administered. Democracy brought about accountability and joint public decision-making processes which must be respected by all stakeholders at the school level. Schools have become the most important social institutions where respect for basic human rights should be instilled.

The importance of human rights to democratic school administration is evident from the Constitution itself. Not only is a whole chapter devoted to Bill of Rights, but the Bill of Rights is labelled "the cornerstone of democracy" (RSA 1996a, s 7(1)). School administrations as functionaries of the organs of state, are mandated to, "respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights" (RSA 1996a, s 39(1)(a)).

The principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency, enshrined in the South African Constitution, form the crux of this research hence these principles are

discussed in detail below.

2.3 The principle of co-operation and co-operative governance

School administrators need to adhere to the democratic principle of co-operation. This statement is supported by Smith (2013:265) who argues that democratic schools should be based on the premise that wisdom should be shared by all involved. Edelstein (2015:21) further emphasises the importance of the ability to relate to others and to co-operate with other democratic institutions. He states,

> A collectively shared sense of recognition and responsibility arising from the experience of belonging to a community that shares the same purpose will transform the closely regulated life of an educational institution into a democratic school culture characterised by reciprocal recognition, by the self-efficacy of motivated actors and by the shared responsibility of cooperating members – the principles guiding participation in school as a moral community

2.3.1 Conceptualising the principle of "co-operation"

Scholars such as Stevenson and Waite (2011:314) and Serfontein (2010:97) regard "co-operation" as the action or process of working together towards the achievement of the same goal. Co-operation is thus not possible without predetermined goals. To maximise school functionality, it is essential for schools to observe and promote co-operation, accountability and transparency (Rainey 2014:147). Co-operative governance requires that interests, ideas, expertise and experiences carefully be channelled and directed towards achieving the goals set up by the state organs such as schools (RSA 1996b, s 20(1)). Goals are significant organisational values that can stimulate and generally orientate employees to work together towards the organisation's mission (Rainey 2014:150). The achievement of goals depends on shared responsibility amongst all stakeholders. Shared responsibility assists the stakeholders to understand and respond to the learners' needs (Epstein 2011:70). Working together should be preceded by the clarification of roles for individuals to improve co-operation, accountability and transparency (Epstein 2011:70). This argument is in line with the two basic principles identified by Woolman and Roux (2014:14) as underlying co-operative government:

> [O]ne sphere of government or organ of state may not use its powers in a way as to undermine the effective functioning of another sphere or organ of state. Second, the actual integrity of each sphere of government and organ of state must be understood in light of the powers and the purpose of that entity

People need power and authority to participate in the decision-making processes (RSA 1996b, s 62(1)) which is why duties should be delegated to all stakeholders. Co-operative governance calls for team spirit; therefore, Clarke (2012a:90) suggests that committees at schools should be established to discuss issues of common interest between stakeholders. Clarke and Jooste (2010:56), Risimiti (2001:36), Smit and Oosthuizen (2011:362-363) add that teamwork includes joint decision-making, delegation of authority and shared responsibility, which are directed towards the production of ideas and expertise because teamwork is a key ingredient for school success. To achieve unity of action, the school itself should develop or draw up a school policy in such a way that power and authority do not reside with the principal only but are decentralised to stakeholders at the school (Clarke 2012a:81).

Sound co-operation requires a solid foundation for a synergy of effort where the whole school system works bottom-up with a view to create opportunities for working together within the relevant internal structures (Wringle, Thomson & Lingard 2012:3 - 4). Internal structures consist of sub-committees that must be chaired by a member of the school governing body (parent component). The principal as a leader, who oversees these committees, should enhance the active participation of all members including learners (RCLs) as mandated by law (cf. section 2.2). The committee members in the school should work hard towards policy implementation and achievable goals in the best interests of the school. This includes reporting back mechanisms, evaluation of progress and clarification of uncertainties and ambiguities until the desired roles are attained (Serfontein 20101:97).

Layman (2003:9) states that administrators must take concrete steps to ensure that they comply with the law and ensure co-operative governance. As governors, the members of the school governing body have a huge responsibility to ensure that good working relations are developed and maintained, e.g. when performing functions allocated to them by the Schools Act. Governing bodies need to carry out functions as a team, in partnership of trust and in collaboration with other stakeholders to achieve the outcomes, set for the school. Co-operation maximises excellence in delivery of services to clients as it motivates members (Zuern 2009 cited in Mncube 2013:8). Good leadership is a prerequisite for co-operative

governance. The stakeholders must be motivated to achieve the targeted outcomes.

School leaders need to empower stakeholders in matters related to school governance so that they can participate fully. If school governing bodies, especially in disadvantaged schools are not empowered, they will fail to perform their responsibilities because of a lack of knowledge and expertise (Mashele 2009, cited in Ngobeni 2015:18). Training plays an important role in the empowerment of governing body members, but unfortunately that is not currently receiving the attention it deserves (Clarke 2012b:154; Smith, Beckmann & Mampane 2015:2367).

For public administration and governance to be effective, teamwork that is characterised by well -co-ordinated plans of action and which outlines the roles and responsibilities of school administrators is required. To avoid conflict and tension, all the role players must carry out their duties and tasks in a manner that shows respect for opposing views and other stakeholders' roles and functions. That is why Smith, et al. (2015:19) state that principals must not become "parent pleasers" and permit parents to a greater or lesser degree to interfere in the professional management of the school without due consideration for the implications it may hold for the educators and learners.

Considering the above literature review and using the list compiled by Rainey (2014:182) as ways of empowering team members or groups to co-operate towards the attainment of a common goal, I identified the following constituting elements of cooperation:

- Good leadership
- Creating organisational values supportive of co-operation – promoting a team spirit
- Building trust by recognising and respecting the integrity of stakeholders and individuals; acknowledging stakeholders and individuals as essential contributors towards attaining a common goal; and promoting good working relationships
- Open communication channels
- Promoting participation and consultation - involving all stakeholders in decision-making processes.

- Influencing the premises behind decision-making processes. This requires goal setting and delegation so that everyone understand shared responsibility towards goal attainment. It could also include creating internal structures to facilitate co-operation and space for interaction.
- Channeling experience, skills, knowledge and training people so that they can confidently fulfil their new roles.

2.3.2 Determining the legal prescripts in relation to co-operative governance

The next sub-section focuses on the legal framework that guides the co-operative governance at school level.

2.3.2.1 Constitutional prescripts in relation to co-operative governance

The importance of co-operative governance in South Africa is evident as a complete chapter, chapter 3, of the Constitution, is devoted to it (RSA 1996a). Before discussing the relevant provisions of the Constitution in more detail, it is necessary to briefly address why public schools are bound by chapter 3 and the requirements of co-operative governance. Although the Constitution provides the framework for co-operative government for all spheres of government, which is for national, provincial and municipal spheres, it cannot be argued that public schools are organs of state *within* the national, provincial or municipal sphere of government. This was confirmed by the Supreme Court of Appeal in the *Minister of Education (Western Cape) v Mikro Primary School Governing Body* (140/2005) [2005] ZASCA 66; [2005] 3 All SA 436 (SCA) (27 June 2005) at 20 and 21

> In terms of the definition in the Constitution any institution exercising a public function in terms of the legislation is an organ of state. The second respondent, a public school together with its governing body, the first respondent, is clearly an institution performing a public function in terms of the Act. It follows that it is an organ of state as contemplated in the Constitution. [22] The first respondent is, in so far as the determination of language and admission policy is concerned, not subject to executive control at the national, provincial or local level and can therefore, like the Electoral Commission, in so far as the performance of those functions is concerned, not be said to form part of any sphere of government.

As a result, the court held that although not part of any of the spheres of government, public schools are organs of state in terms of section 239(a-b); (i) and (ii) of the Constitution because they exercise public power and, together with their

governing bodies, perform a public function. This means that public schools and their functionaries are bound by chapter 3 of the Constitution. Of specific importance is the fact that they are bound by the constitutional principles of co-operative governance (RSA, 1996a, s 41(1)). One of these principles which is of specific importance to public schools, is that organs of state should not exercise their powers and perform their functions in a manner that encroaches on the geographical, functional or institutional integrity of another organ of state (RSA 1996a, s 41(1)(g). Section 41(1)(h) contains the principles required for promoting mutual trust and good faith which is required for effective co-operation. Those are:

     (i)   fostering friendly relations;
     (ii)   assisting and supporting one another;
     (iii)   informing one another of and consulting one another on matters of common interest;
     (iv)   co-ordinating their actions and legislation with one another;
     (v)   adhering to agreed procedures; and
     (vi)   avoiding legal proceedings against one another.

Because they are organs of state, public schools also have a legal obligation to implement, promote, protect and uphold all the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution. Section 195 of the Constitution contains the basic values and principles governing public administration which the school, as a public institution and an organ of the state, must abide by without fail. Bray (2007:15-20) mentions that governing bodies govern public schools as autonomous institutions, but because they govern organs of state, they are obliged to "adhere to the basic democratic values and principles governing public administration." In terms of section 195(2)(b) of the Constitution, the values and principles for public administration apply to organs of state (RSA 1996b). That implies that organs of state are part of public administration for the purposes of these values and principles.

2.3.2.2 The Schools Act

Joubert and Bray (2007:18-19) support the fact that the Schools Act in section 16(2)) places the governing body in a position of trust in relation to the school it serves and that promotes a relationship of co-operation, participation and accountability.

In line with the argument stated above, the principal is expected to co-operate with the governing body of his or her school by attending and participating in all

meetings, assisting the governing body in handling disciplinary matters pertaining to learners, informing the governing body about policy and legislation, supporting the governing body with the management of the school funds and being an active member of the finance committee (RSA 1996b, s 16A (2)(b)(d)(f) & (h)). Similarly, in terms of the Guidelines for the Consideration of governing bodies in adopting a Code of conduct for learners (Hereafter referred to as Guidelines) (RSA 1996bb, item 7), all stakeholders must co-operate and participate in the adoption of a Code of conduct for learners. And since the governing body is a representative of all stakeholders and responsible for making school rules and policies one can argue that co-operation is required in this regard too. Co-operation requires governing body members to receive training to be well equipped with the disciplinary processes.

The principal, in his or her official capacity must be a member of the school governing body (RSA 1996b, s 23(1)(b)). As manager and an ex-officio member of the governing body, their task is to ensure that stakeholders accept as legitimate the school's Code of conduct for learners. If they do, again the Code of conduct for learners could be utilised to:

(i)   promote the school standards and assist the disciplinary committee to take corrective disciplinary actions against learners who seek to disrupt teaching and learning or breach the Code of conduct for learners.

(ii)   promote progressive action and the enforcement of discipline because a disciplined school has functional rules.

(iii)   protect the safety of individuals involved in the disciplinary process (Smith, et al 2015:2375).

Moreover, the governing body must co-operate and support the principal, educators and other staff members in the performance of their professional functions (RSA 1996b, s 20(1)(e)). School governing bodies and SMTs are required to meet their obligations to maintain democratic values when disciplining learners and it is important that when conducting disciplinary proceedings, members of the disciplinary committee should respect the legal principles. In addition to that, learners have the legal obligation of participating in school governance processes to provide them with the necessary opportunity to acquire democratic leadership skills (RSA 1996b, s 23(4)). To foster co-operation amongst the relevant

stakeholders at the school, the governing body may exercise its powers to co-opt parents and community members who are not necessarily members of the governing body, on the new smaller ad hoc committees which may be established to perform certain duties at the school (RSA 1996b, s 23(6) & 30 (1)(a) & (b)).

Section 19(1)(a) & (b) of the Schools Act requires the provincial HoD to co-operate and assist and develop programmes to provide introductory training for the newly elected governing bodies to enable them to perform their functions. The element of co-operation comes to the fore in section 19 of the Schools Act that requires that the HoD must support the governing body in cases where the enhancement of capacity of the governing body is needed. He or she may request or appoint a service provider to train the members of the governing body for a specific school or group of schools. Section 20(1)(h) further expects the governing body to co-operate and assist the principal by encouraging the parents, learners, educators and other staff members at the school to render voluntary services to the school. The state, on the other hand, has an obligation to co-operate and assist the school with funding in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and the redress of the past inequalities in education provision. Additionally, a governing body should take all realistic measures within its means to supplement the resources supplied by the state to improve the quality of education it provides (RSA 1996b, s 36(1)).

Section 11 of the Schools Act stipulates that public schools that enroll learners in the eighth grade or higher should establish an RCL as the only recognised and legitimate representative learner body at the school (RSA 1996, s 11(1)). It is the duty of the principal to convey the importance of the RCL structure to governing body, educators and non-teaching staff, as well as the broader learner body at the school. The above stated section implies that the principal and the school governing body are obliged to encourage learner participation by providing timely information in a learner-friendly manner. According to the legal framework, learners should actively take part in all the processes of the school administration and are also accountable for how they exercise their responsibilities.

The following are the roles and responsibilities RCLs need to perform to ensure that there is co-operative governance in schools. The RCL must:

- contribute to the practice of democracy in the governance of the school
- develop increased confidence, which in turn, will increase a sense of personal control and better relationships with other stakeholders
- be part of the collective decision-making process which provides opportunities for learners to develop social competence, independence and shared responsibilities.
- promote greater educational commitment, higher educational expectations, improved practical reasoning skills and promotion of democratic values and procedures.
- contribute to a better functioning school and promotion of social cohesion
- assist in drawing up a Code of conduct for learners and maintaining order in the school in accordance with such code
- assist in the drawing up of the constitution for the RCL (Van der Vyver 2015:372-373).

I consulted section 41 (h)(i-vi) (RSA 1996a, section 41 (h)(i-vi)) of the Constitution and section 41 (1)(h) (vi) of the Schools Act. RSA 1996b, s 41(1)(h)(vi) stipulates that public schools should do the following in order to promote co-operation:

- set time-frames
- co-ordinate the actions of all stakeholders
- focus on the task at hand and avoid focusing on petty issues
- respect agreed upon decisions and procedures.

2.3.2.3 National Education Policy Act

The National Education Policy Act (RSA 1996c, s 3(4)(p) & 5 (1)) states that there must be co-operation between the National Department of Basic Education and other state departments such as provincial education departments, local government and non-governmental organisations. Sections 4(m) and 4(o) encourage administrators at school level to forge and achieve close co-operation between stakeholders on matters relating to education, including the development of capacity of all administrators and the effective management of the schools.

Therefore, principals as managers of institutions are encouraged to forge and achieve close co-operation between SMTs, RCLs and school governing bodies. In addition, it is also their duty to promote and observe prevalence of co-operation for the effective management and governance of these schools and to develop administrators' capacity where and when necessary.

Co-operation in the form of consultation is proposed by section 5(1), (2) and (3) of the National Education Policy Act. This section requires the Minister to determine the national education policy only after consultation with appropriate consultative bodies which have been established for that purpose.

2.4 The principle of accountability

This section elaborates on the principle of accountability and how it must be put into practice by the school administrators. The discussion below is divided into two parts, administrative accountability and legal accountability.

2.4.1 Conceptualising the principle of "accountability"

The concept of accountability can be summarised by answering this question, " Who is responsible to whom and for what?" (Adams & Hill 2006, cited in Himmetoglu, Aydug & Bayrak 2013:43). Døssing, Mokeki, Weideman and Verbreeks Education Specialists (2011:5) define accountability as "holding individuals and organisations responsible for executing their powers properly". It thus relates to the process of answering the questions concerning usage of resources, obtained outcomes, organisational effectiveness and productivity (O' Day, 2002 cited in Himmetoglu et al 2013:43). It is further stated that accountability has a close relationship with responsibility, transparency and ethics (Bulbul 2011, cited in Himmetoglu et al 2017). Responsibility is the term that is embedded in accountability. Although accountability refers to compliance with authority, taking responsibility refers to a behaviour or action that seeks to comply with the same authority, or one's own actions (Himmetoglu et al 2017:44 citing Cendon 2000). Transparency and accountability are interdependent of one another and this relationship implies that transparency promotes openness in the decision-making processes, whilst accountability demands reasons why such decision-making processes were chosen (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2018). Transparency further provides various, beneficial outcomes such as accountability

to the organisation as well as co-operation and building trust (Johansoozi 2006 cited in Himmetoglu et al 2017:44).

Ntsele (2014:56-57) defines accountability as a calling upon an individual or group to answer for their actions or omissions. She further refers to accountability as a demand for efficiency and a promise or moral obligation to be answerable to meet the expectations of those who have entrusted duties to you. Further, Mabovula (2008:361) defines accountability as accepting responsibility and taking ownership for the decisions one makes and the results flowing from such decisions.

For example, the school governing body has been given a collective responsibility to manage resources and finances of the school. The principal on the other hand, must understand that he or she has an individual responsibility to lead and manage the school and that responsibility focuses on the management functions that he or she is expected to perform (Bredeson 2006:386). The management functions include, amongst others, reporting to the stakeholders through the minutes of meetings, holding information sharing sessions, distribution of newsletters and making verbal announcements on matters that affect the school. On behalf of the school governing body, the principal may lead or represent the school at accountability forums organised by the Department of Education (Mestry 2006:31).

According to Bernstein (2017:9) there are two forms of accountability, namely, professional and bureaucratic accountability. On the other hand, Darling-Hammond and Ascher (1991) cited in Spaull (2015:118) identify five types of accountability, namely,

- political accountability
- legal accountability
- bureaucratic accountability
- professional accountability and
- market accountability.

According to Himmetoglu et al (2017:45) political accountability in the school context refers to the accounting of the educators and administrators to the political heads of government on the general performance of the school. Van Deventer (2016:232) argues that educators working in the public sector must be held accountable at an individual and organisational level for how they exercise their responsibilities in

relation to teaching and learning. Professional accountability refers to educators' professional sense of ethical responsibility towards those that they serve and holding them accountable to a professional standard of conduct. This professional standard is set out in the South African Council for Educators' Code of Professional Ethics (Van Deventer 2016:233). According to Anderson (2005) cited in Himmetoglu et al (2017:46), professional accountability refers to the implementation of the professional norms, standards and principles of the profession. According to him, professional accountability emphasises that educators and administrators should behave in accordance with the norms of the profession.

Uganda Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2011:26) in turn, distinguishes between legal and financial accountability. Bureaucratic accountability (administrative) involves promulgation of laws and regulations that specify norms and standards of what agents must do (Spaull 2015:119). Legal accountability refers to abiding by the legislative regulations (Anderson 2005 cited in Himmetoglu et al 2017:45). This type of accountability checks whether schools are functioning properly and in accordance with legal prescripts. Financial accountability demands that funds should be handled with care, honesty, commitment and responsibility. School administrators are responsible for the effective and efficient management of school finances since money is used to meet the vision of the school, which implies that the school as an organisation has a moral or legal duty to explain how funds, equipment or authority received have been used (Bray 2007:10; Mestry 2006:28; Ngidi 2004:260) .

The school governing body and the principal are responsible for taking care of those funds. That is why the principal must ensure that school governors have the necessary skills needed for financial management (Clarke 2012a:113). Financial accountability is aimed at ensuring that the school (as an organ of the state through their elected representatives) is informed about how finances should be managed (Ngobeni 2015:26). The principal as the school manager is responsible for training and assisting the governing body in matters regarding financial management and must therefore be well acquainted with principles of financial accountability (Bray 2007:13; Døssing et al 2011:9; Gambetti & Quigkey 2013:59; Mahlangu 2008:50). Besides that, the principals must monitor and control management of school finances to avoid mismanagement and corruption. To do away with corruption or

maladministration of funds, administrators must be in a position to manage school accounts, have knowledge of the procurement and the budgeting processes and be able to manage funds effectively (Clarke 2007:278, 280-281; Mestry 2013:165). School administrations' lack of knowledge of financial management is a challenge that administrators are faced with because members have not all been trained in financial management (Ngobeni 2015:74).

For the school to have effective, efficient and accountable administration, administrators are supposed to execute their responsibilities, comply with the set of requirements (implementation of school policies in accordance with the law) and report on progress made (syllabus coverage, learner outcomes, learner and teacher absenteeism and quarterly reports to District offices). Thus, accountability demands reporting to other stakeholders such as the school governing body, parents, educators, RCLs and the ECDoE. Accountability further demands that stakeholders be responsible for what administrators do when exercising their administrative functions in schools. Thus, the RCLs, SMTs, the school governing body and the principals are answerable to parents and responsible for the decisions taken regarding financial management, management of school physical and human resources and management of the school curriculum. One can thus agree with Mabovula (2008:360) that "accountability is only possible if there is transparency in governance".

Since transparency is the cornerstone of accountability, it is imperative that each school must have policies that accord with democratic principles for schools to be administered effectively and efficiently. During the drafting of these policies, all stakeholders must be part and parcel of the decisions taken. They need sufficient knowledge, and a good understanding of interpretation of the law and policies governing the schools. Stakeholders should be able to perform as required by African standards, but they often lack knowledge of accountability and may not know how to exercise internal (management) and external control in school administration. However, if stakeholders' responsibilities are monitored and found to conflict with policy, then they need to be answerable for how they exercise their obligations (Fox 2007:664). Mabovula (2008:361) warns that accountability should not be interpreted as working in one direction only. Thus, it is not only subordinates that should account to those in authority, but those in authority should also account

to subordinates. This argument makes sense in the light of the interdependence between accountability and co-operative governance.

For example, the school principal and the SMTs are responsible for the day to day running of the school; and the school governing body on the other hand is responsible for school governance. For school governing body members to perform their duties (governance) efficiently and effectively, stakeholder meetings should be held. Below are duties of the school governing body (Van der Vyver 2015:370).

(i)   the governing body ought to hold meetings on a quarterly basis to discuss various issues that affect the school e.g. finances, academic progress of learners and discipline.

(ii)   the decisions taken in these meetings must be reported to other stakeholders at the school.

(iii)   stakeholders include parents, SMTs, RCLs, staff members and the learners.

(iv)   each of these stakeholders must get an opportunity to comment before those decisions are endorsed.

(v)   If there is dissatisfaction from some of the stakeholders about the decisions taken, then the matter at hand should be further discussed until there is a general consensus.

(vi)   the reporting procedure mentioned above applies also to other stakeholders who sometimes meet and discuss issues affecting them, after which the decisions taken will be reported back to the school governing body for endorsement.

For this research, administrative and legal accountability were chosen because of their relevance, since the study's focus is on compliance with democratic principles.

Accountability is a pillar of democracy and good governance which compels the organisation to focus on results; seek clarity; develop effective strategies; monitor progress and report on performance (Davies 2012:97). Spaull (2015:115) defines accountability as having to account for one's outcomes or performance and to accept responsibility for those outcomes, which implies that one must be ready to accept consequences for non-performance. Thus, accountability demands efficiency and moral obligation to be answerable to meet the expectations of those

who have entrusted duties to stakeholders e.g. the Head of Departments of the provincial departments of education and the Department of Basic Education (Clarke 2012a:112-113; Fox 2007:665; Govindasamy 2009:28; Van der Waldt & Du Toit 2012:384-385).

The legal and administrative responsibilities need collective accountability, which should include all stakeholders. Collective accountability, in this case, refers to a group of people or school governing body members who must report to the head of department on the general progress of the school, whilst individual accountability calls upon an individual to explain to the group or governing body members why a lawful instruction was not carried out (Sharma 2015). Hence, the school administrators are expected to know that they may be expected to account as a group or individuals to the relevant authorities.

2.4.2 Determining the legal prescripts in relation to "accountability"

School administrators must adhere to the principle of accountability without fail. Accountability involves collective responsibility, which includes all stakeholders regarding various legal prescripts. For members of the RCLS, SMTs, governing body and the school principals, this means they must implement the principle of accountability in a manner that is in accordance with prescripts of the law. These legal documents are the Constitution, the Schools Act and the Employment of Educators Act.

2.4.2.1 The Constitution

The school as an organ of the state must be administered in a manner that promotes the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution, and one of those principles is the principle of accountability. Sections 41(1)(c) and 195(1)(f) of the Constitution call upon all organs of the state to provide public administration that is effective, transparent and accountable to citizens of the Republic. Therefore, the school administrators have a responsibility to involve other stakeholders in the decision-making processes, explain to them why a specific course of action was followed and what the expected outcomes of that action are. If the principle of accountability is correctly implemented, there is a better chance for stability, respect and co-existence at the school (Spaull 2015:120).

2.4.2.2 The Schools Act

The Schools Act encourages the election of a school governing body that will assist the principal, SMT, educators and other stakeholders at school in the smooth running of the institution. As an elected structure at the school, the governing body has a responsibility to carry out certain functions that they will report to the Head of Department, parents and other stakeholders at the school. Section 16(1) and (2), section 20(1), (2) and (3) and section 21 of the School Act stipulate what the school governing body is responsible for and what they must report on to the parents, principal and Head of Department. Failure to perform those functions will make the governing body accountable to the stakeholders and the Head of Department, who may invoke sections 22(1) and 25(1) of the Schools Act, with a view to either disband the governing body, suspend their activities or even withdraw their functions. The principal, as the accountability officer, will not be excluded from this action.

Accountability further touches on learner discipline at the school, which is maintained through the Code of conduct for learners that must be developed by the school governing body and later be adopted by the school community. When learners transgress, the school governing body must conduct a disciplinary hearing to investigate the seriousness of the case and circumstances surrounding its occurrence, after which a suitable punishment shall be meted out to the guilty learners as a corrective measure. Section 8(a) of the Schools Act states that for a Code of conduct for learners to be implemented fairly and effectively, the learners must be consulted regularly so that they understand what is expected of them.

Accountability also binds the school administrators to act with great care, honesty, commitment and responsibility when managing the school finances. Purchase receipts, invoices, bank statements and audited financial statements must be regularly submitted to the Head of Department for inspection (RSA 1996b, ss42 (a) & (b), 43 (1), (5) & (6)). Failure to account for the school funds will be regarded as financial maladministration and the relevant authorities will take appropriate actions against the guilty parties.

2.4.2.3 Employment of Educators Act

To give effect to and guide the implementation of the Employment of Educators Act, the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) was adopted. PAM contains guidelines on how the principal, deputy principal, schools' heads of department and educators should execute their obligations. Paragraph 4.2(e)(i) of the PAM elucidates the core duties and responsibilities of the principal which must be carried out on behalf of HoD. Some of those duties are to:

- prepare and submit to the HoD an annual report on the academic performance of the school.
- implement educational programmes and curriculum activities of the school.
- manage all educators and support staff.
- implement the educational policies and legislation.
- take all reasonable steps to prevent any financial maladministration by any staff member or by the governing body of the school (RSA 1996b, 16A).

The principal of a public school is a representative of the department, hence he or she is accountable to the HoD and must carry out his/her professional management duties in accordance with the Constitution (RSA 1996b, ss 16(2) & 16A (1)(a)). The principal and his/her team are required to meet their obligations to maintain democratic values when executing their responsibilities. Moreover, sections 16A(1)(b), (c)(i), (ii)(aa), (2)(e), (g) & (k) of the Schools Act, outline the professional management functions of the principal regarding finances that must be reported to the HoD of the provincial department of basic education.

According to the PAM document, the deputy principal must assist the principal by performing the duties and tasks outlined in paragraph 4.3(e)(i), (iii) & (iv). Furthermore, the deputy principal has the responsibility to perform all the functions of the principal if   the principal is absent from work.

The same call is made to HoD at school level in paragraph 4.4(e) (iii) & (iv) and to educators in 4.5(e) (ii)-(v). These functions can be summarised as follows:

- To co-ordinate and control all the academic activities of each subject taught
- To control and co-ordinate stock and equipment which is used and required

- To perform or assist with one or more of other non-teaching administrative duties such as:
  - o Secretary to general staff meeting and others, and
  - o Staff welfare, but the most important functions are to:
- ➢ Participate in agreed school/educator appraisal processes to regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving, learning and management
- ➢ Contribute to the professional development of colleagues by sharing knowledge, ideas and resources
- ➢ Remain informed of the current developments in educational thinking and curriculum development
- ➢ Participate in the school's governing body if elected to do so.

Over and above that, the school heads of departments should:

- Co-operate with colleagues of all grades to maintain a good teaching standard and to foster administrative efficiency within the school.
- Meet parents and discuss with them the conduct and progress of their children.

2.5 The principle of transparency

The concept of transparency and the legal prescripts on how the principle of transparency should be implemented in schools are discussed below.

2.5.1 Conceptualising the principle of "transparency"

Stevenson and Waite (2011:1534) define "transparency" as the condition of being open to public scrutiny; the condition of allowing information to pass through to other people. Similarly, the Uganda Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, (2011:5) adds that "transparency" means that citizens may attend public meetings and are free to obtain information on what happens in public offices. Moreover, a transparent person is always eager to account because they have nothing to hide (the Uganda Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung 2011:5). Døssing et al (2011:4) contend that transparency "involves clear and public disclosure of information, rules, plans, processes and actions by governments, companies, organisations and individuals." Fox (2007:664-667) refers to transparency as access to policies and programmes

that reveal reliable information about the institutional performances, responsibilities and books. Transparency refers to the availability of information to the general public and clarity about government rules, regulations and decisions. Transparent governance, therefore, means not hiding anything from citizens, not engaging in shady deals and not making imaginative discretionary decisions; and it is a step towards accountability.

One example of transparency transgressed is the case of the school authorities in Siyathuthuka (KZN) who mishandled the matter of a female learner who was punched and kicked by a male learner with the intention to cause grievous bodily harm (NCA 14th August 2017) at the same school. Instead of calling the two learners and their parents to attend a school disciplinary trial, the school authorities decided to keep quiet until the case was circulated by the social media, after which the father of the male learner handed him over to the police. The parents of the female learner and the officials of the DoBE (KZN) only came to know about this incident when the NCA presenter was reading the news on 14 August 2017 and were obviously distressed and dissatisfied with the way the incident had been handled.

Characteristics of transparent school governance are discussed below (DoBE 2011:20):

1. **Openness**

    The school administrative programmes, processes and procedures must be made known to all stakeholders so that all the information about the school can be subjected to public scrutiny.

2. **Co-operative governance**

    All the stakeholders within the school environment must work together; assist and support one another; promote good working relations and co-ordinate their actions towards achieving their set objectives; mission and the targeted objectives.

3. **Access to information**

    Stakeholders have a right to all the information about their school, so that their actions can be informed by what takes place there. Access to the right information leads to informed decision-making processes.

Transparency in this research means accessibility and availability of information to all stakeholders who are affected by decisions and actions taken by school administrators (cf. section 1.7.1.5). Knowing the details of an event or process helps to give a clear picture of what is going on in the school. Naidoo and Ramphal (2018:88) express the notion of transparency as "Being aware of what the important pieces of information are, and how they can be communicated effectively to the public."

School policy guides the way in which the information is transparently disseminated in the school (Smit & Oosthuizen, 2011:338). Information can also be disseminated in schools through reports, meetings, newsletters, school magazines, pamphlets, flyers, noticeboards, circulars, newspapers and bulletins. To promote transparency, the principal is required to provide appropriate and meaningful information on the professional management of the school to all stakeholders (Mabovula 2008:15). Transparency calls upon all stakeholders to consult with one another on matters of common interest at the school (cf. section 2.5.2.1). Like the principal, the governing body members are required to report progress to parents, HoD and other stakeholders (cf. section 2.4.2.2). Failing to do so, they will be held accountable for disregarding the principle of co-operation amongst the stakeholders.

Openness on school matters promotes public confidence in the administration of the school. Reliability and validity of the information presented to the stakeholders boosts the image and the pride of the school in the eyes of the public (Currie & De Waal 2013:699). Furthermore, transparency calls upon the school governing body to decentralise powers vested in them and show commitment to democracy by allowing the free flow of information to the relevant partners (Dieltiens 2005:18). According to Bekink (2012:38) the principle of transparency entails access by all stakeholders to school information. Access to information keeps the stakeholders at the school well informed and enables decision makers to make informed decisions (Fox 2007:667). In addition, having access to the relevant information is essential for a school administration to make informed decisions.

2.5.2 Determining the legal prescripts in relation to the principle of transparency

The democratic principle of transparency is so important that it is enforced by the following documents: The Constitution, Schools Act, National Education Policy Act, and Promotion of Access to Information Act.

2.5.2.1 The Constitution

The Constitution requires all stakeholders to consult with one another to promote democracy in a school (RSA 1996a, s 32 (1) (a-b), 41(1) (c)(h)(iii) &195(1) (g)). The stakeholders must be equipped with the necessary skills so that they can understand and interpret the Constitutional provisions.

2.5.2.2 The Schools Act

Section 11(1)(a) of the Schools Act states that "a requester of information must be given access to any record held by a public institution with a view to promote transparency, but the requester must comply with all the procedural requirements relating to a request for access to that record". Therefore, the Act compels the institution to provide access to information that is in its possession when required to do so by any person who wants to exercise or protect his or her fundamental rights. In line with what is stated above, the principal must provide the school governing body with a report about the professional management of his or her school (RSA 1996b, section 16A (2)(c)). For the governing body to perform its functions efficiently and effectively, it must know and understand the contents of the Schools Act. In the spirit of openness, the principal must interpret and simplify the contents of the Act for them to understand it (RSA 1996b, section 16A (2)(f)).

Furthermore, the principal is obliged to reveal any maladministration or mismanagement of funds to the governing body of the school and the HoD of the provincial department of education (RSA 1996b, section 16A (2)(k)). Thus, the constitution of the governing body must clearly indicate how the general meetings disseminate information to the parents and state how the information will be disseminated to them (RSA 1996b, section 18(2)(b)). In addition, the minutes of the governing body meetings must be recorded, kept and made available to the provincial HoD (RSA 1996b, s 18(2)(c) & (d)).

It is also the governing body's responsibility to inform the parents about when the budget will be made available for inspection at the school at least 14 days prior to the date of the meeting (RSA 1996b, section 38(1), (2) and (3)). To give due consideration to the principle of transparency, the governing body of a public school must prepare and keep all the financial records and statements of a school for auditing purposes (RSA 1996b)). The auditing process must be undertaken by a competent and registered auditing firm, and a copy of the audited statement must be submitted to the HoD for approval. The same audited statements must be made available to the members of the school governing body, parents of learners in the school, educators, RCLs and learners themselves (RSA 1996b, ss 42 & 43).

2.5.2.3 National Education Policy Act

The Minister of Education is responsible for directing the standard of education provision, delivery and performance. Provincial Education Departments should monitor and implement this directive.

When the Minister investigates the monitoring and evaluation of education policy implementation, the principle of transparency calls upon the Minister to first discuss the results contained in such a report with the parties concerned and give them the opportunity to make representations before the results of that report are published (RSA 1996c, section 8(5)).

Provincial Education Department should monitor the implementation of educational policies and progammes by each school. This implementation should include transparency and inclusivity within the parameters of legislation. The stakeholders should hold workshops on the expectations of the Department.

2.5.2.4 Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000

The Promotion of Access to Information Act mandates that all government institutions must promote the principle of transparency. The Act demands that the shareholders, partners and stakeholders of the institution be given an opportunity to access any information which is kept in the books and accounts in order to safeguard the interests of the institution or school, as it is their right to do so. These records will assist the stakeholders to detect any corrupt activities in the school (Bekink 2012:39). For purposes of promoting access to information at the school,

the principal is expected to submit the audited statements annually to the district officials, as well as reports on learner academic performance on quarterly basis.

2.6 Factors hampering compliance with democratic principles

There are various factors that hinder compliance by organs of the state (the school in this case) namely, lack of effective communication between stakeholders, lack of involvement, unhealthy relationships, autocratic leadership styles and a lack of knowledge and understanding of the policies. Since the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency are interdependent, the absence of one will hamper the compliance with the other.

2.6.1 Lack of communication

Prinsloo (2016:198, 199) refers to communication as being "the life-blood of a school", an essential element of effective leadership and "the cement in the management process, which holds it together". Good school governance will never be possible without proper communication because communication is vital in any institutional interaction. The stakeholders must frequently communicate with a view to advising one another on how to improve school governance. For communication to be effective, it needs the stakeholders to show good spirit, teamwork, good human relations, trust and partnership (cf. section 2.3.1). Communication is a vital ingredient to sound relationships (Rainey 2014:182). The way the principal, SMT members, colleagues and learners communicate with one another shape the nature of their relationships (Prinsloo 2016:200). Communication refers to a two-way process whereby information is sent from one person to another and the receiver in turns reacts by providing feedback (Bowler, Erasmus-Kritzinger & Goliath 2015:3). Failure to communicate properly will hamper the compliance of the school with the democratic principles for public administration as there will be no feedback. For example, in a school where stakeholders are at loggerheads there will be no effective channels of communication, which will not only jeopardise compliance with democratic principles but also negatively affect the effectiveness of school governance.

2.6.2 Lack of commitment to democratic principles

The principal has a responsibility to encourage other stakeholders to perform their duties with excellence (Chukwusa 2018). In fact, Maxwell (as cited in Van Deventer 2016:232) contends that accountability is a "daily – if not hourly – school leadership responsibility". According to Van Der Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaull and Armstrong (2011:3 & 21) school leaders who understand and can fulfil their leadership roles must be selected for the implementation of effective management of the schools. Without school leadership, which is committed to effective school administration, the democratisation of schools will be merely wishful thinking. That is why the Schools Act requires principals to forge co-operative relationships between all stakeholders (cf. section 2.3.2.2).

School governance requires a competent manager who aims at ensuring that all stakeholders are monitored, the rule of law executed, and the institutional objectives realised. Tsheletsane and Fourie (2014:45-46) suggest that the principal as a manager ought to play a significant role regarding the implementation of school policies because he or she has powers to influence the institutional conditions essential for the attainment of the expected outcomes. Furthermore, principals must ensure that there is maximum stakeholder participation and that the rule of law is used to enforce compliance. Those found neglecting government policies at the expense of the public should be prosecuted.

In the process of performing their duties at the school, the school administration and educators must ensure that they abide by the law and implement the democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency for public administration.

2.6.3 Lack of participation cohabitation

Edelstein (2015:20-21) emphasises the importance of working together, relating to others and the ability of stakeholders to resolve conflicts. He contends that it is especially important for State institutions to promote participative and collective decision-making processes. This, however, is not always the case in schools. For example, a study by Mncube (2013:4) reveals that learners are not involved in the school decision-making processes enough for them to acquire democratic capacity and leadership skills. A multicultural society should enable learners to acquire knowledge and skills to promote social cohesion which will successfully integrate

learners into decision-making processes. Edelstein and Mncube (2013:5) further call upon schools to observe children's rights to participate in administrative matters because their involvement gives them an opportunity to assist in the smooth running of the school. Moreover, learners are expected to report back to their fellow learners on the progress made. Failure to observe responsibilities could be a recipe for poor relations between learners and the school authorities (Van der Vyver 2017:373).

Good governance promotes participation, transparency, accountability and the rule of law (United Nations, cited by Gisselquist 2012:6). Additionally, effective and competent institutions require governance characterised by the inclusion of all stakeholders, respect for the rights of all, sound financial management and sensible utilisation of resources (Carothers & Brechenmacher 2014:8). If there is a lack of involvement, either by learners or any other stakeholder in a school, that is a clear indication of the absence of democratic governance in that institution (Uganda Office of the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung 2011:11).

2.6.4 Autocratic style of management

A democratic school administration needs a leader who will inculcate a spirit of working together as a team and to inspire a sense of ownership and participation in the decision-making processes in all stakeholders (Van der Waldt & Du Toit 2012:199). Section 16A(1)(a) of the Schools Act legally mandates the principal to represent the HoD as an ex-officio member of the governing body as contemplated in section 23(1)(b) and 24(1)(j) of the same Act (RSA 1996b). The success of the implementation of the above stated democratic principles depends largely on the manager's leadership style. Rotich and Kipkoech (2012:126) refer to management as a process of working with and through others to achieve the organisational objectives in a changing environment. The school as an organisation with a vision and objectives requires a manager who will manage the school towards attaining its objectives. In addition, Tsheletsane and Fourie (2014:45) believe that managers are crucial to achieving institutional goals and keeping the institution focussed on its strategic vision.

There are various types of leadership style, such as autocratic and democratic styles of leadership. A democratic manager activates stakeholders to participate in decision-making processes to enhance inclusion and transparency as mentioned

by Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashim and Shaikh (2012:193). Smith, Carpenter and Fitzpatrick (2015:203) add that a democratic leadership encourages open communication between stakeholders and participation in decision-making. On the other hand, in an autocratic environment, stakeholders may well become reluctant to participate because they are aware that their views and opinions will not be considered.

Mpunzana (2017:50) claims that the autocratic leadership style can assist in the management of policy implementation, especially in instances where subordinates are not willing to comply. Her view is supported by Chukwusa (2018) who states that "autocratic leadership could be good at times, but there may be occasions where this leadership style could be a reason for inaction". This type of leadership should be used minimally because I observed that when it is used excessively, stakeholders simply withdrew their services. As a result, in an institution where there is an autocratic manager, there is no accountability to the stakeholders. Instead, the principal uses them as his or her tools to pursue his or her personal interests, which can result in the misuse and wasteful management of funds (Ragongo 2017:75).

2.6.5 Lack of knowledge and understanding of the legal prescripts

For meaningful stakeholder participation it is imperative that stakeholders know exactly what roles and functions they are supposed to perform. The Uganda Office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2011:11) suggests that during the execution of such responsibilities, stakeholders should nurture democratic administration through the implementation of educational policies. Furthermore, school administrators must submit to the law in the process of decision-making to enhance effective and efficient school administration (Mncube 2013:15). Similarly, Bagarette (2012, cited in Ragongo 2017:93) shows that the school governing bodies and the principals as school managers are still struggling to understand their responsibilities. The principal is obliged to work hand in glove with the RCLs, SMTs and governing body to effectively manage, support and promote the best quality teaching and learning to attain the highest levels of achievement for their schools, community and the country (RSA 2016:). Section 16A(2)(f) of the Schools Act gives the principal responsibility to inform the governing body about policy and legislation.

Legislation must be used to enforce compliance. Those who neglect the policies must be prosecuted (Tsheletsane & Fourie 2014:46).

The principal of a school must have knowledge of educational policies underpinning democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. Lack of knowledge and understanding of the legal framework by school administrators result in ignorance in school administration matters. Ignorance leads to poor school governance as members become unable to interpret what the law requires of them and they sometimes end up being the puppets of the school principal. In addition, Mestry cited in Ngobeni (2015:20) argues that some of the governing bodies and the principals have little knowledge of the Schools Act. To assist them, school governing bodies and principals need training in school administration matters. The governing bodies, especially in the disadvantaged areas, often lack the necessary skills and knowledge to govern the schools effectively and efficiently (Isabella, 2010:1). In this study, I assert that by RCLs, SMTs, governing body and the principal need to have knowledge of policies to enable the proper implementation of democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.

2.7 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter I gave operational definitions of "co-operative governance", "accountability" and "transparency" based on a literature review and a literature study. The literature review and study enabled me to determine what exactly is required from the principal, SMT, governing body, educators and learners, regarding their duties and responsibilities towards compliance with the principles of co-operative governance or co-operation, accountability and transparency. The chapter focused on the core duties, functions and responsibilities of the principals and governing bodies in promoting effective administration and observing the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. In the following chapter, the focus is on the research methodology, which includes the paradigm, approach, methods of data gathering, multiple case study design, selection of participants and analysis.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter comprised the literature review and the literature study on the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. The discussion of the above-mentioned principles laid a foundation for investigating whether the selected secondary schools' administrations comply with them (cf. sections 2.3-2.5).

In chapter 3, I described the research questions and the research methodology. I discuss the qualitative research approach and the research design before elaborating on the data collection process. I used the following data collection methods: literature study; focus group discussions with the SMT members and RCL members of each participant school; and individual semi-structured interviews with the principals and members of the school governing body.

The information gathered allowed me to make informed decisions in the subsequent chapters, with regard to data analysis and interpretation; the formulation and comparison of findings. I then consider possible policy implications and recommendations on how the affected rural secondary schools comply with the three basic constitutional principles for democratic administration.

3.2 Research paradigm

As indicated in chapter 1, a research paradigm is a perspective or way of looking at reality which is used to frame and communicate knowledge (Ferreira 2012:35). The interpretive paradigm emphasises the importance of examining the complex world and making sense of it through participants' point of view (Tracy 2013:62).

Based on the explanation in chapter 1 and the argument given above, I chose the interpretive paradigm instead of positivism or constructivism. The interpretive research paradigm is regarded as relevant for this study because I wanted the in-depth knowledge and understanding of the participants' perceptions (Clow & James 2014:19, Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011:28) regarding compliance with constitutional democratic principles of public administration, namely, co-operation, accountability and transparency.

This research paradigm allowed me to investigate how the selected school administrators comply with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. The interpretive "lens" referred to by Ragongo (2017:120) also helped me to understand, interpret, describe and explain the meaning participants attach to the understanding of the rural secondary schools' compliance with principles for democratic administration. I used focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews to collect data which I then analysed and interpreted.

3.3 Research approach

This is a qualitative, exploratory and contextual study that aims at answering the research questions pertaining to the compliance of members of the RCLs, SMTs, school governing body and principals of the selected rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District, Eastern Cape Province with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency (cf. section 1.7.1.2, 1.7.1.4 & 1.7.1.5). A qualitative approach was considered appropriate for this study because, as explained by Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton Nicolls and Ormston (2014:15), it is a process of enquiry that draws data from the context in which the events occur. Thus, it is regarded as an attempt to "pronounce" on incidents, as a means of determining the process in which the events are implanted. Hancock and Algozzine (2011:9) add that qualitative research is used by researchers who want to establish participants' lived experiences to provide an in-depth understanding of the perceptions the participants have about the research topic.

The advantage of the qualitative approach is that it provides researchers with a better, richer and in-depth understanding and description of the phenomenon as it occurs in the natural setting (Babbie & Mouton 2011:270; Bryman 2012:28; Creswell 2014:36; Greef 2011:359; Maree 2010:51; McMillan 2012:18). The natural data acquired is used to determine the "what", "why" and "how" participants attach meaning and perceive and understand compliance with the principles of democratic administration (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit 2011:3).

The qualitative approach permitted me to acquire different opinions from the participant perspective and to observe various actions exhibited by the interviewees. In that respect, I followed Hancock and Algozzine (2011:9) who explain the goal of qualitative approach as a means to acquire different opinions

and perceptions from participants, and in this case, concerning the issue of compliance with democratic principles. Subsequently, the opinions of participants were considered when I visited the schools to understand the practice regarding the implementation of co-operation, accountability and transparency in the Chris Hani West District. I next discuss my role as researcher in the three selected rural secondary schools.

3.3.1 My role as researcher

Reay (2007) cited in Caricativo, Molintaz, Palaganas and Sanchez (2017:430) argue that reflexivity is "about giving as full and honest an account of the research process as possible, in particular, explicating the position of the researcher in relation to the research." According to Mann (2016) cited in Attia and Edge (2017:35) reflexivity is [f]ocused on the self and ongoing intersubjectivities. Thus, the researcher's perspectives and considerations cannot be excluded in the qualitative report.

It was not difficult for me to conduct research in these schools because I am an educator in a school which is not too far from the participant schools. That allowed me to get access to the sites and to create good relationships with RCLs, SMTs school governing bodies and their principals. In qualitative research, the researcher is never truly "outside" the research because the researcher is a primary instrument in the research (Durrheim et al 2011:286). The researcher needs to facilitate the research process, ensuring that the necessary procedures are adhered to so that credible data can be generated. Despite my interaction with the participants, I did not interfere with their responses and I tried to be as objective as possible throughout the research process.

During the process, I ensured that participants understood the research questions so that I could use follow-up questions and probing questions. I avoided using leading questions or being biased to increase the validity of the study (cf. section 3.9.6).

3.4 Qualitative research design (multiple case study)

I chose the multiple case study design for this study as pointed out in chapter 1 because I wanted to extract detailed data from participants' perspectives on the

research topic under investigation. Moreover, I believed it was a suitable design to scrutinise the extent to which the selected schools comply with principles of democratic administration namely, co-operation, accountability and transparency. A multiple case study allows comparison of a group of similar cases (Arthur, Waring, Coe & Hedges 2012:102; McMillan & Schumacher 2010:20; McNabb 2013:237; Rule & John 2011:5). In addition, researchers used case study design to identify various co-operative procedures at institutions and how they affect the implementation of systems and influence the way an institution operates. A multiple case study design was most suitable for this qualitative, interpretive investigation into the participants' understanding of the democratic principles and how the school administrators of their respective schools comply with these principles.

A case study design allowed me, as the researcher, to gather enough reliable data to answer the main and sub-research questions as outlined in section 1.5 of this report. Although a multiple case study was chosen as the best to be utilised, I had to take note of the limitations typical of this design. As such I avoided the temptation to focus only on the similarities and to disregard the differences because all institutions and individuals have their common and exclusive characteristics. The aim was to identify the contextual similarities and differences and to generate new knowledge regarding how the participant rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District understand compliance with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.

Fox and Bayat (2012:69) suggest three steps that researchers should utilise when conducting a case study research:

- Demarcate each case by determining its boundaries (cf. section 1.8.4)
- Describe the data collection techniques used (cf. section 4.5.1).
- Utilise triangulation. To measure validity, I used semi-structured interviews with the principals to triangulate the data gained from the three focus groups (cf. section 1.9).

In this study, I was an instrument of data collection and analysis to attain the outcomes of the multiple case study. After presentation, analysis and interpretation of the gathered data, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of school administration regarding compliance with democratic principles.

3.5 Research population, selecting and sampling participants

The research population is determined with consideration of the specific research and the data that needs to be collected to answer the research sub questions (cf. section 1.8.6). In line with the qualitative approach, where researchers aim to include only highly specialised individuals or groups, I decided to target a small population which was easy to work with, hence the term "sampling" see (cf. section 1.8.3). In the next section I indicate how I have selected the participant schools and sampled the participants.

3.5.1 Population and sampling

Three schools in the Chris Hani West District, Eastern Cape Province were selected out of forty-four rural secondary schools as I wanted to sample schools on a smaller scale. To do this, criterion sampling was utilised. This sampling was in line with the suggestion of McMillan and Schumacher (2010:129) who describe the term "sampling" as the selection of a group of subjects or participants to represent a larger group of persons identified as the research population.

The schools were identified after I had considered factors such as time, expenses and accessibility at the initial stages of the study. It is imperative that researchers can gain data from a smaller group in such a way that knowledge gained is representative of the total population studied. There are numerous methods of sampling in qualitative research, but I opted for purposeful criterion sampling which was appropriate as it targets a smaller number of sites and participants that are manageable and easily accessible (cf. section 1.8.4). According to Maree (2010:79) criterion sampling implies that you decide on the typical characteristics and the number of participants relevant to the study at the design stage.

The success of a qualitative study depends heavily on the availability of information-rich participants who can provide crucial information because they have experienced the phenomenon directly (Patton 2014 cited in Himmetoglu et al 2017). The individual participants in this research are regarded as custodians of knowledge or information and have experiences of the investigated topic (Babbie 2013:128; Cohen et al 2011:156; McMillan & Schumacher 2014:143).

A brief profile of the three selected rural secondary schools is presented in the table below:

TABLE 3.1: EDUCATION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (EMIS) QUINTILE LEARNERS' STATISTICS PER SCHOOL

School A	School B	School C
Quintile 2, no fee school, a rural secondary school	Quintile 2, no fee school, a rural secondary	Quintile 2, no fee school, a rural secondary
244 learners in grade 8 – 12	711 learners in grade 8 - 12	411 learners in grade 8 – 12

Source: ECDoE Database 2015

This table signifies that all selected schools are at the same quintile level. They are all rural secondary schools in the same district. In these schools all learners are in grade eight to twelve. In the instance of this research, the selected participants of the respective schools are all at the centre of their schools' administration.

I sampled participants in the following manner:

- Four RCL members
- Four SMT members (deputy principal & three Heads of Department)
- Four school governing body members (Chair, vice chair, secretary & treasurer)
- The principal

The targeted group was selected according to certain characteristics:

- Two male and female learners were selected.
- Learners had to be sixteen years or above because learner participants needed to be able to recognise and explain their experience, feelings and opinions.
- Learners had to be in grade 10 -12 because learner participants needed to be able to reason and argue on the points that were presented to them.
- Learners must have been in the same school for three to five years because it was assumed that they would then have enough knowledge of the school's administration.

Learners were chosen from the office bearers of the RCL (chairperson, secretary and treasurer) because, as office bearers, these RCL members have close ties to other members of the school administration. RCLs were chosen because they are actively involved in matters affecting the entire learner population, are members of their schools' governing bodies and are also members of the disciplinary committees. Thirteen participants were chosen to provide data through the focus group discussions, followed by the interviews in each of the selected schools.

Authors such as McMillan (2011:286) and Ritchie et al (2014:38) assert that purposeful sampling in qualitative research has the advantage of adding credibility, which requires that information be collected from the highly specialised individuals or groups. Thus, the participants have valuable information which provides answers to the research questions to realise the aim and objectives of the research.

3.6 Data collection

Soanes (2007:103) describes the term, "collection" as an act of bringing or putting together loose items or components to form a whole. After discussing and illustrating the data collection process, I explain how I piloted the data collection instruments which I employed during the fieldwork. The feedback on the outcome of the pilot study is followed by a discussion of the data collection methods.

3.6.1 Data collection process and order

I followed the following steps before and during the data collection process. I:

- studied relevant laws and policies to identify the requirements for democratic school administration and specifically for the promotion and observance of the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency (cf. section 2.3, 2.4 & 2.5)
- developed the data collection instruments (cf. sections 3.6.3.2a, 3.6.3.2b & 3.6.3.2.c)
- pilot-tested and improved the data collection instruments (cf. section 3.6.2)
- conducted focus groups and interviews in School A (cf. section 4.5.1)
- conducted focus groups and interviews in School B (cf. section 4.5.2)
- conducted focus groups and interviews in School C (cf. section 4.5.3)

- wrote the data collection up, analysed and interpreted the data (cf. section 4.2)

- formulated findings, recommendations and a conclusion (cf. section 5.2, 5.5 & 5.8).

The data-collection methods and instruments used during the fieldwork are discussed below.

Diagram 3.1: Flow diagram of data collection process
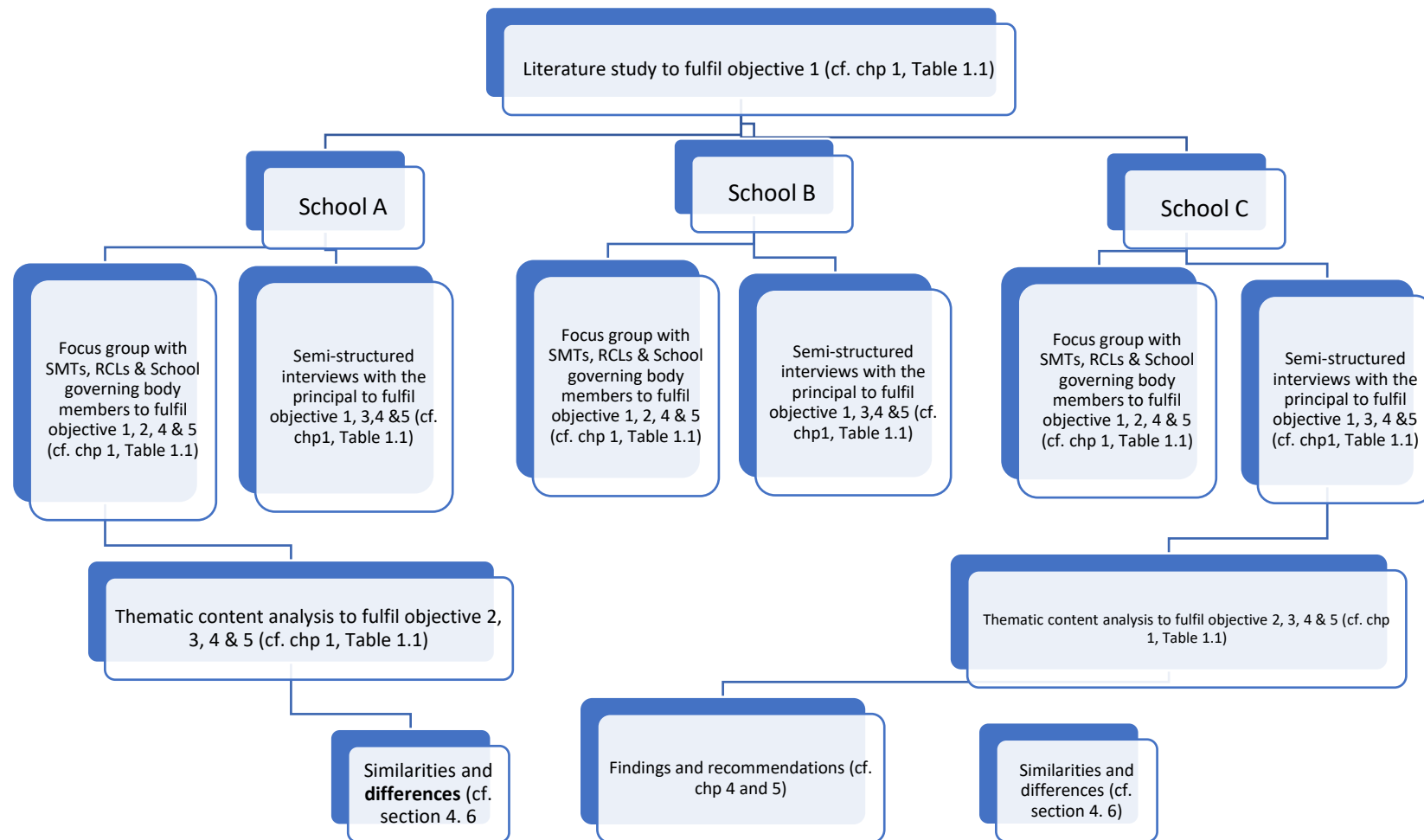
Source: Adapted from Mpunzana (2017:71)

3.6.2 Pilot study

Delport and Roestenburg (2011:146) define a pilot study as a procedure for testing and validating data collection instruments by administering them to a small group of participants from the intended research population. My reasons for conducting a pilot study are in line with the common purposes for conducting pilot studies as identified by scholars such as Bryman (2012:247), Delport and Roestenburg (2011:146) and Strydom and Delport (2011:384). According to these authors, pilot studies are conducted to:

- determine the feasibility of the study
- verify the accuracy and appropriateness of the research instrument used to extract data from participants
- establish the quality of the data collection instruments
- validate that the data collection instruments will enable the researcher to extract relevant data
- acquaint the researcher with the worldview of participants

Bryman further states that a pilot study serves to orientate researchers towards their research field and it will assist them in planning for their modus operandi and determine the range of their investigation. The pilot study took place in a rural secondary school close to where I reside.

The pilot study was conducted in February 2018 after the school had completed the beginning-of-the-year programmes. The participants were selected in the same way as those who participated in the main study. The focus group guides were pre-tested with a group of RCLs, SMTs and members of the school governing body and semi-structured interviews with the school principal to determine whether the questions that were formulated would allow me to extract enough relevant data that could be used to answer the research questions. A period of four days was enough to complete the pilot study. The sets of questions for all participants needed some amendments (see amendments for all groups of participants below).

Because English seemed to be a barrier, especially for the members of the school governing body and the RCLs, questions in the main study were asked in the language that was understandable to them (IsiXhosa). This was done to accommodate all participants and to do away with the language barrier which could

have resulted in poor interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. During the process, learners and governing bodies seemed to dwell more on financial accountability and transparency. That forced me to ask probing questions in to gain rich data that would reveal compliance with the principles in other areas also. Data collection instruments were restructured to obtain data required to answer the research questions specified in chapter 1 (cf. section 1.4).

The findings of the pilot study are shown in the tables below:

TABLE 3.2: AMENDMENTS TO THE DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS FOR THE RCLS, SMTS, GOVERNING BODY AND PRINCIPAL

Data collection instrument	Original question	Reformulated question	*Explanation*
Focus group guide for RCLs	1.4. Which are the most important law and policies that all RCL members must have knowledge of, for you to meaningfully participate in democratic school governance?	1.4. Which are the most important laws and policies that all RCL members must have knowledge of for them to meaningful participate in democratic school governance?	I wanted to identify laws and policies that assist RCLs to bring about democratic governance in these schools.
	1.5. What does co-operation mean to you?	1.5. What does the principle of co-operation mean to you regarding your role as a member of the RCL?	I wanted participants to link the definition with their mandated obligations as RCLs.
	1.12. What is the RCLs' role regarding the promotion of co-operation in this school?	1.12. Which role do RCLs play to ensure that other learners co-operate and adhere to the school's Code of conduct for learners?	The new question allowed the participants an opportunity to express themselves clearly.
	1.13. What is your perception regarding co-operation in this school?	1.13. What does the principal do to promote and observe the principle of co-operation?	I decided to amend the question because the original question may not have yielded information on whether and how the principal promote the principle of co-operation.

Focus group guide for SMTs	1.6. In your view what is meant by co-operative governance?	1.6. What does the principle of co-operation mean to you as members of the SMT?	I wanted participants to link the definition with their mandated obligations as SMTs.
	1.8. What is your perception regarding co-operation between stakeholders in this school?	1.8. Who are the stakeholders that the SMT of a school co-operate with and why?	The question was replaced because the original question did not extract the data I hoped to extract with this question.
	1.9. What is your perception regarding the principal's financial management in this school?	1.9. What role does the principal play to solicit a buy in from all parties involved to ensure that they co-operate for the benefit of the school?	The amended question allows for triangulation.
Focus group guide for governing bodies	1.4. Which laws and policies do you regard as essential to democratic school management?	1.4. What are the most important policies or aspects of a policy that all school administrators should have knowledge of for them to meaningfully participate in democratic school governance?	I wanted to establish the SMT members' knowledge of the policies. which govern school administration.
	1.8. Which are the most important law and policies that all governing body members must have knowledge of for them to meaningfully participate in democratic school governance?	1.8. What do you regard as the governing body's obligations regarding the implementation of the Schools Act in order to enhance co-operation with RCLs?	The amended question allows for considering that participants might have knowledge of the laws and policies but not being involved in the implementation of the process.
	1.9. What is your perception regarding the principal's financial management in this?	1.9. What should the governing body do to ensure co-operative relationships with the principal and other stakeholders?	The amended question is more relevant to the crux of this study and would be better able to yield the required data

Interview guide for principals	1.4. For your school to be able to meaningfully practise democratic governance there are most important policy documents that must be available. Which laws and policies do you regard as essential to democratic school administration?	1.4 What are the most important policies that all school administrators should have knowledge of for them to meaningfully participate in democratic school governance?	The question was too long, and I decided to make it clearer for the participants to understand.
	1.10. Does your school have copies of these laws and policies and if so, where are they kept? And if no, how do you feel about that?	1.10. As a principal of this school, how do you ensure that there are harmonious relationships between learners, educators and parents?	I covered this question already.
	1.7. What is your perception regarding co-operation between stakeholders in this school?	1.7. What mechanism is in place or should be in place to foster co-operation between you and other stakeholders?	The question did not sufficiently cover the mechanisms that are in place to promote or support co-operation between stakeholders.
	2.4. Which measure are in place to ensure accountability regarding how the school finances are managed and expenditure controlled?	2.4. To whom are you accountable and for what?	I reformulated the question in simpler terms.
	3.10. When do you regard school management and governance as being transparent?	3.10. Would you say the SMT is transparent to the school governing body and RCL?	The original question was too vague.

Source: Idea adopted from Mpunzana 2017

3.6.3 Data collection methods

In this section I briefly revisit the literature study, before giving an account of the data collection methods and instruments used during the fieldwork.

3.6.3.1 Literature study

In the context of this research, I understood a literature study to be the study of the legal documents like the Constitution, the Schools Act, policies and guidelines which are determined by the DoE for the administration of all public schools in all the three spheres of government (the national, provincial and the local levels, e.g. a school in this case) (cf. section 1.8.6). A literature study of legal documents entails studying legal and policy documents to determine the relevant legal prescripts. When a literature study is taken beyond what an Act provides regarding a specific issue, and the provision is analysed, that will constitute a document analysis. Literature study is suitable to determine the legal framework on compliance of school administrators with democratic principles such as co-operation, accountability and transparency (cf. section 1.7.1.2, 1.7.1.4 & 1.7.1.5) especially since it entails studying only primary sources. In line with objective 1 of this research, I had to study the legal prescripts with a view to check whether there was compliance by the three selected secondary schools with the principles for democratic administration. I carefully utilised the information relevant to my research from the literature study together with the data collected during the fieldwork to formulate findings, draw conclusions and to make recommendations on the compliance of the selected rural secondary school with principles for democratic public administration. The reason was that written records provides the researcher access to subjects that may be difficult or impossible to reach through direct, personal contact (Johnson & Reynolds 2012:205). I considered the following documents important, namely, the Constitution of South Africa, the Schools Act, the National Education Policy Act, PAM document and the Promotion of access to information because the information obtained from them would be compared with the gathered by focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Since the focus of the study was education law, these documents assisted me to establish whether the school administrators in these schools comply with the regulations and policies to create co-operative, accountable and transparent governance.

I requested the minutes; attendance registers of the governing body meetings and the Code of conduct for learners so that I could verify whether the governing body meetings were conducted according to the provisions relevant to the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.

3.6.3.2 Focus groups

As I have explained in chapter 1, focus groups are an appropriate data collection method for this study (cf. section 1.8.6). The group discussions were approximately 60 minutes long and all groups consisted of four members each.

According to Maree (2010:90) and Greef (2011:360) focus groups are discussions where the participants build on each other's ideas, understanding of feelings, reactions and comments to provide an in-depth view not attainable from individual interviews. They are also of the view that a group discussion is a debate which results in conflict of ideas that assist in data generation. The various ideas, feelings, reactions and conflicts are regarded as the essential building blocks of this research, as I needed to understand what the RCLs, SMTs and members of the school governing bodies' perceptions about compliance of these schools with principles for democratic administration.

Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick and Mukherjee (2018:22) emphasise the contribution that a participant can make as the main recruitment criterion when selecting possible participants for a focus group. This also explains why purposive sampling, as utilised in this study, is most appropriate for selecting focus group participants. As Morgan (2013:35) emphasised, "a randomly sampled group is unlikely to hold a shared perspective on the research topic and may not even be able to generate meaningful discussions". Considering this, I selected participants based of the roles they play in these rural secondary schools' administration. I conducted three focus groups respectively with RCLs, SMTs, and the school governing body members in that order. I chose to separate the three categories of participants because RCL members, as children, may not feel free to share their opinions openly with school governance and management members. Following Morgan's (2013:37) advice that the social roles of the different categories of participants should be kept in mind, I decided against grouping the SMT and governing body members together.

Choosing appropriate participants is however, but one element that contributes towards meaningful discussions; another is the quality of rapport that the researcher creates with these participants. Torelli (2019:65, 67) emphasises that although rapport is essential, researchers should keep a professional but emphatic distance, not confuse establishing rapport with creating friendships, and avoid role confusion.

Morgan (2013:32) warns that because of the group dynamics, what participants disclose is automatically shared with other focus group participants as well, which may have serious ethical implications. With this warning in mind, I assured participants at the beginning of each focus group session that I would take every possible precaution to protect the confidentiality of the data. However, I explained that focus group participants also carry an obligation to protect the confidentiality of other participants and that they should not discuss what transpired during the discussion with others. One precautionary measure I took was to request each participant to sign a confidentiality disclaimer (non-discloser agreement form). The disclaimer was included in the consent forms for the SMTs and the governing body members and in the assent forms for learners.

I urged participants to be free and open and explained that the information they provided would be used to the benefit and democratisation of the school administration.

Voice recording is the best way to capture the participants' actual words (Greef 2011:359; Van Der Riet 2011:307), I subsequently opted to voice record the focus groups. I also jotted down field notes in the form of key words (Tessier 2012:452). Initially I was going to be accompanied by a scribe, but because of the tight schedule of her work and the transport challenge, I had decided to jot the word down instead. I transcribed the voice recordings as transcripts are more reliable and complete than the field notes (Lapadat & Lindsay 1999 cited in Tessier 2012:450). Transcripts enable the researcher to quote the participants' words verbatim to ensure that I did not miss valuable information during the focus group discussions. The voice recorder was locked in a place of safety to ensure confidentiality of the information.

Because I conducted the research in two villages and one tribal area, I expect that using only English might create a language barrier for some participants. That is why, if I found during the focus groups that participants did not understand a

question fully, I translated the question into IsiXhosa to ensure increased understanding and participation.

To extract data from RCLs, SMTs and members of the school governing body to fulfil objective 2, 3 and 4 (cf. section1.8.5) I prepared a focus group guide. Data from the participants would reveal their understanding of co-operative, accountable and transparent governance. The schedule included questions on what the principals did to promote compliance with these principles in their respective schools.

3.6.3.2a Focus groups with RCLs

The focus group for RCLs consisted of two boys and two girls in each of the selected schools. All the members of the group were contacted four days before to confirm their participation in the study. I conducted the discussions during school breaks because later in the afternoon, learners may suffer from fatigue and struggle to concentrate. Furthermore, some stay in neighbouring villages and public transport is not available in the afternoon.

When I arrived at each of the three schools, I introduced myself and briefly explained the crux of the research and the group discussion specifically. The reason for that was to set the RCL members at ease since I assumed that learners would l be afraid to reveal to a stranger what was taking place in their school. When I found during the discussion session that English is a barrier for participation, I translated the questions into isiXhosa to ensure increased understanding and participation. As stated in section 3.6.3 above, I used a voice recorder to capture the participants' responses and jotted down field notes. Thereafter, I transcribed data from the voice recorder and the field notes.

The coded themes included the participants' perspectives on the meaning of co-operative, accountable and transparent governance and their perceptions of what the principal did to promote and observe compliance with the above-mentioned principles, as well as factors which hinder compliance with democratic principles in these schools. A thematic analysis was undertaken to identify similarities and differences between the three groups of RCLs. Below are the "biographic profiles" of the RCLs who participated in the study and the prepared focus group guide for the RCLs. At the beginning of the discussions I asked each participant to give his

or her profile by filling a questionnaire on biographic information according to the following: current grade, years at the school, age, and gender or sex).

Below are prepared questions that assisted me during the focus group discussion sessions with the members of the RCLs:

Current Grade	Years at the school	Age	Gender/Sex

1   The principle of co-operation

The Constitution contains some guidelines on governance that are also important to school governance and one of these is "co-operation/co-operative governance"

1.1.   Which laws and policies do you regard as essential to democratic school management?

1.2.   Explain your understanding of democratic school governance.

1.3.   What role should RCLs play in democratic school governance?

1.4.   Do you have access to relevant law and polies which assist the democratic governance of the school and if so, where are these kept?

1.5.   What are the most important laws and policies that all RCL members must have knowledge of for them to meaningfully participate in democratic school governance?

[If the group mentions the Constitution, I will refer to that, if not I will mention it: The Constitution contains guidelines on governance that are also essential to school governance. One of these guidelines is "co-operation or co-operative governance"]

1.6.   What does the principle of co-operation mean to you with regard to your role as a member of the RCL?

1.7.   With whom should the RCL of a school co-operate?

1.8.   What will co-operation with each of these stakeholders (identified by RCL or interviewer mentioned the principal, SMT, governing body) entail?

1.9.   What measures are in place to ensure co-operation between the RCL and …...? (Mention those mentioned in answer to question 5.2 and if not mentioned, add the principal and SMT).

1.10. What does the principal, SMT and the school governing body (parent component) do to ensure that RCLs co-operate for the benefit of the school?

1.11. An essential requirement for co-operation is being allowed to participate. In which ways do the RCL participate in the school management and governance?

1.12. One specific legal obligation placed on the SMT and RCL is to co-operate to remove barriers to learners' school attendance. In which ways do the SMT and RCL co-operate to identify and remove barriers to learners' school attendance in your school?

1.13. Which role do RCLs play to ensure that other learners co-operate and adhere to the school's Code of conduct for learners?

1.14. What does the principal do to promote and observe the principle of co-operation?

1.15. What would you say hampers the co-operation between the

- members of the RCL
- RCL and the principal
- RCL and the SMT
- RCL and the school governing body
- RCL and co-learners?

2   The principle of accountability

Another important principle is accountability.

2.1   What does it mean to be accountable?

2.2   For what is the RCL accountable?

2.3   To whom is the RCL accountable?

2.4   Was the RCL ever held accountable and if so

2.4.1 By whom?

2.4.2 For what?

2.5   How do you understand the legal responsibilities of your school principal regarding financial management?

2.6   What does the principal do to promote accountability in the school?

2.7   In general, what would you say are factors that hamper accountability in your
        school?

3   The principle of transparency

A third principle that is essential for proper school administration is transparency.

3.1.   What does transparency mean to you?

3.2.   What does RCL members do to be transparent with regard to their activities
        at school?

3.3.   How do you ensure that every learner has a copy of the Code of conduct for
        learners?

3.4.   In which way, were you consulted by the school governing body before the
        Code of conduct for learners was adopted?

3.5.   Would you say that the school administration is transparent, e.g. the school
        governing body is kept in the loop so to speak?

3.5.1. If not, what would you say are the reasons for that?

3.5.2. If so, how?

3.6.   What do you think are factors that hamper transparency in this school
        between the school governing body and

- The SMTs

- The parents

- The learners

- The educators?

3.6.3.2b Focus group for SMTs

I followed the same procedure during my interaction with the RCLs above. I selected
the four SMT members according to the positions they hold in the specific schools
(deputy principal and the Heads of Department at school level). As school
managers, one of their obligations is to draft school policies which must be in
accordance with the Constitution. Some of the members form part of school finance
committees which is chaired by a member of the school governing body (see RSA
1996b). The group discussions were conducted in their respective schools during
school hours because several of the participants stay far from the school.

I gave due consideration to the advice of Torelli (2019:64) that "[r]esearchers doing fieldwork must be very sensitive to the impression that they exude on their informants and the connections that they make when entering the field". When I arrived at each of the three schools, I introduced myself and briefly explained the crux of the research and the group discussion specifically. The reason for that was to set the participants from the SMTs at ease, since I assumed that school management would be afraid to reveal to a stranger, events taking place in their school. I voice recorded the participants' responses and jotted down field notes and thereafter, I transcribed the data obtained from the voice recorder and the field notes.

Below is a prepared focus group guide for SMTs which I used during the group discussion sessions. The guide was prepared in such a way that it contained questions relevant to objectives 2, 3 and 4 (cf. section 1.4). At the beginning of the discussions I requested each participant to give his or her profile by filling a questionnaire on biographic information according to the following: Years of work experience, qualifications, age and gender or sex.

Years of work experience	Qualifications	Age	Gender/Sex

Focus group guide for SMTs

The Constitution contains some guidelines on governance that are also important to school governance and one of these is "co-operation/co-operative governance".

1.   The principle of co-operation

The Constitution mandates to all government institutions that they should practice the principle of "co-operation" in the execution of their duties.

1.1   What role should school governing bodies play in democratic school governance?

1.2   How do you keep RCLs informed of their responsibilities in school governance in this school?

1.3   In your opinion which process constitutes school governance and why?

1.4   What are the most important laws and policies that all school administrators should have knowledge of for them to meaningfully participate in democratic school governance?

1.5   Does your school have copies of laws and policies and if so, where are they kept? And if no, how do you feel about that?

[If the group mentions the Constitution, I will refer to that, if not I will mention the Constitution] The Constitution contains guidelines on governance that are also essential to school governance. One of these guidelines is "co-operation or co-operative governance"]

1.6.   What does the principle of co-operation mean to you with regard to your role as member of the SMT?

1.7.   If one regards administration as consisting of the management and the governance components of the school, which stakeholders will form the administration of the school?

1.8.   Who are the stakeholders that the SMT of a school co-operate with and why?

1.9.   What role does the principal play to solicit a buy-in from all parties involved to ensure that they co-operate for the benefit of the school?

1.10.   What do SMTs do to ensure that educators and parents co-operate and understand the provisions of the Schools Act?

1.11.   What would you think hampers co-operation between SMTs and

- The principal
- The governing body
- The educators
- The learners

2.   The principle of accountability

Another essential principle is accountability.

2.1.   What does it mean to be accountable?

2.2.   What is the SMT accountable for?

2.3.   To whom is the SMT accountable? Elaborate by giving few examples.

2.4.   What legal prescript do you consult regarding to school financial management?

2.5.   Which measures are in place to ensure accountability regarding to how the school finances are managed and money spend?

2.6.   What is your understanding of the governing body's responsibility regarding financial management in this school?

2.7.   What measures are in place to ensure that recommendations of the finance committee are approved by members of the school governing body?

2.8.   In general, what would you say are factors that hamper accountability in your school?

3.   The principle of transparency

Another principle essential for proper school administration is transparency.

3.1 When would you regard school management and governance as being transparent?

3.2 What does your school do to be transparent regarding to how the school is managed and governed?

3.3   How do you ensure the accessibility of the policy documents, departmental circulars and other important information to other stakeholders?

3.4   What does the principal do to promote and observe transparency in this school?

3.5   Would you say the school administration is transparent?

3.5.1. If yes, give a brief explanation of how transparency is ensured.

3.5.2. If not, what could be the reasons for that?

3.6   In your opinion, what would you say are the factors that hamper transparency in your school?

3.6.3.2c Focus group with school governing body members

Four members were selected in each of the three selected schools. This group of participants consisted of the chairperson, vice chair, secretary and the treasurer of the school governing bodies. They are at the centre of each school and the school governance rests upon their shoulders (see RSA 1996b, ss 20 & 21). Initially I arranged the focus group sessions for the afternoon. The focus group discussions were conducted during school hours because some members of the governing body

stay in nearby villages and public transport to these locations was not available in the afternoon.

When I arrived at each of the three schools, I introduced myself and briefly explained the crux of the research and the group discussion specifically. The reason for that was to set the participants from the school governing body at ease since I assumed that they would be afraid to reveal to a stranger what was taking place in their school. I assured the governing body members at the beginning of the group session that I would take every possible precaution to protect the confidentiality of the data.

However, I explained that as group participants, they also carried an obligation to protect the confidentiality of other participants and that they should not discuss what transpired during the discussion with others. One precautionary measure I took was to request each participant to sign a confidentiality disclaimer (non-discloser agreement form) (*Appendix I, K & N*).

When I found that English was a barrier for participation, I translated the questions into isiXhosa to ensure increased understanding and participation. As stated in section 3.6.3 above, I captured the participants' responses obtained using a voice recorder and jotting down field notes. Thereafter, I transcribed data obtained from the voice recorder and the field notes. The focus group discussions consisted of open-ended questions because open-ended questions because they allow the opportunity to expand their answers, which is an effective way of attaining rich data (Creswell 2009:179; De Vos et al 2011:360; Maree 2010:87, McMillan & Schumacher 2010:297). Participants were expected to answer the questions as individuals, not as a group, to create order. At the beginning of the discussions I requested each participant to give his or her profile by filling a questionnaire on biographic information according to the following: Qualification, age, gender or sex and period serving in the governing body. Below there are prepared questions that assisted me during the discussion sessions with the members of the school governing body.

Qualification	Age	Gender/Sex	Period serving in the governing body

1 The principle of co-operation

1.1. What role should school governing bodies play in democratic school governance?

1.2. In your opinion which processes constitutes democratic governance and why?

1.3. What are the most important laws and policies that all school administrators should have knowledge for you to meaningfully participate in democratic school governance?

[If the group mentions the Constitution, I will refer to that, if not I will mention it] The Constitution contains guidelines on governance that are also essential to school governance. One of these guidelines is "co-operation or co-operative governance"] The Constitution contains some guidelines on governance that are also important to school governance and one of these is "co-operation/co-operative governance".

1.4. What does co-operation mean to you with regard to your role as the school governing body?

1.5. If one regards "administration" as consisting of the management and the governance components of the school, which stakeholders will form the administration of the school?

1.6. What do you think school governing bodies should do to ensure co-operation between governing body member?

1.7. What do you regard as the governing body's obligations with regard to the implementation of the Schools Act in order to enhance co-operation with the RCLs?

1.8. What should the governing body do to ensure co-operative relationships with the principal and other stakeholders?

1.9. Have you ever been involved in the adoption of the Code of conduct for learners and the drawing of school policies?

1.10. In your opinion, what are the factors that hamper co-operation between the school governing body and

- The principal
- SMTs
- RCLs
- Other members of the school governing body?

2. The principle of accountability

Another important principle is accountability.

2.1. In your opinion what does it mean to be accountable?

2.2. For what is the school governing body accountable?

2.2.1. How does school governing body demonstrate the sense of accountability?

2.3. Was the school governing body ever held accountable and if so

2.3.1. By whom

2.3.2. For what?

2.4. What does the principal do to promote and observe accountability in this school?

2.5. Who is responsible for budgeting of the school fund and expenditure?

2.6. What Acts or policies do you consult when you do the annual budget?

2.7. Have you ever been invited to a disciplinary hearing of a co-learner? If yes, what was your response?

2.8. What measures are in place to ensure accountability with regard to how school finances are managed, and money spend?

2.9. What is your understanding of the principal's legal obligation of accountability regarding financial matters in your school?

2.10. What is your role in budgeting?

3. The principle of transparency

Another essential principle is transparency.

3.1. What does transparency mean to you?

3.2.   What do school governing body members do to be transparent with regard to their activities at school?

3.3.   Were you ever informed about legal documents that you are supposed to comply with when you govern this school?

3.4.   How does the school governing body ensure that every learner has a copy of the Code of conduct for learners?

3.5.   How do you ensure that parents of learners in your school know what is happening in the school?

3.6.   Would you say that the school administration is transparent, e.g. the school governing body is kept in the loop so to speak?

3.7.   If not, what would you say are the reasons for that?

3.8.   What do you think are factors that hamper transparency in this school between the school governing body and

- The SMTs
- The parents
- The learners
- The educators?

3.6.3.3 Semi-structured interviews with the principals

As I have explained in chapter 1, the interview is another appropriate data collection method for this study (cf. section 1.8.6). The interviewing session took approximately 30 minutes. Individual interviews were conducted with the school principals at the respective schools, giving them an opportunity to speak in the absence of other participants for them to be free to express themselves.

Maree (2010:87) describes semi-structured interviews as a two-way conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. I visited the three selected schools to conduct the individual semi-structured interviews with school principals of the selected schools. According to Davies (2015:21), semi-structured interviews follow a general order where an interviewer will have a series of questions and themes that are flexible and need not to follow a linear path. Additionally, the interviews were designed 'to encourage a conversation and to allow participants to give their own account (Bryman 2012:12) on compliance of their schools with principles of co-

operation, accountability and transparency. All participants were contacted prior the research process to confirm the appointment (Morris 2015:73). Torelli (2019:67) refers to this part of the process as "establishing a presence". During every contact session with the participant, I introduced myself and clarified the purpose of the interview. When I met the participants for the interview sessions, I assured the participants about the importance of the confidentiality of data they would share with me. During the commencement of the research process, participants were encouraged to be free, open and transparent because the aim of the study was the improvement of compliance in rural secondary schools with democratic principles. Consent forms were signed by all participants and the importance of confidentiality was emphasised to all participants.

The relevant questions were prepared in advance and provision was made for further questions determined by the situation. This is what Davies (2015:21) refers to as a mechanism for steering the discussion in an interview. Some of the questions in the principal's interview guide were not identical with those of the focus groups (RCLs, SMTs and members of the school governing body) because of the different roles they execute in school administration. For example, the responsibilities performed by the principal in the school administration are dual in nature, they are an ex-officio member of the school governing body and a manager of the school, while the other groups hold only one "cap", that of either a manager or school governor. A voice recorder was used to capture data and permission to do so was obtained beforehand (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006:318). Data captured during the interview was transcribed every day after each session. Data were thematically analysed, categorised and interpreted.

To fulfil objective 1, it was important that I determine what principals do to observe and promote compliance with the principles of democratic administration (objective 3): what is his or her perspective regarding co-operation, accountability and transparency? And I aimed to establish factors which hinder compliance in these schools. Below are the biographic profiles of the principals. At the beginning of the interview I asked the participant to give his or her profile by filling a questionnaire on biographic information according to the following: Years' work experience, qualifications, gender or sex and age. Next, the prepared interview guide was used during the interviewing sessions with the school principals.

Year's work experience	Qualification	Gender/ Sex	Age

1. The principle of co-operation

The Constitution contains some guidelines on governance that are also important to school governance and one of these is "co-operation/co-operative governance".

1.1. How do you see the role that school governing bodies should play in democratic school governance?

1.2. In your opinion which processes constitutes democratic governance and why?

1.3. What are the most important laws and policies that all school administrators should have knowledge of, for them to meaningfully participate in democratic school governance?

1.4. Briefly explain what the principle of co-operation means to you with regard to your role as principal?

1.5. If one regards "school administration" as consisting of the management and governance components of the school, which stakeholders will form the administration of a school?

1.6. What tracking mechanism is in place or should be in place to foster co-operation between you and other stakeholders?

1.7. Regarding which aspects are principals legally obliged to co-operate with and assist the governing body?

1.8. What role do you play as a school principal to solicit a buy in from all parties involved to ensure that they co-operate for the benefit of the school?

1.9. As a principal of this school, how do you ensure that there are harmonious relationships between learners, educators and parents?

1.0. In your opinion what would you think hamper co-operation between you and other stakeholders?

2. The principle of accountability

Another essential principle is accountability.

2.1. In your opinion what does it mean to be accountable?

2.2. How do you account to parents on the learners' progress and conduct?

2.3. What is your perception regarding your management of funds?

2.4. To whom are you accountable and for what?

2.5. The principals are supposed to submit written reports on the progress of their school to the district office for approval.

2.5.1. What type of reports do you submit?

2.5.2 How often must those written reports be submitted?

2.6. Have you ever been held accountable either by the Head of Department or parents? If so, by whom? And for what?

2.7. What is your understanding of the governing body's execution of financial management in this school?

2.8. In your opinion, what would you say are factors that hamper accountability in your school?

3. The principle of transparency

A third principle essential for proper school administration is transparency.

3.1. In your opinion what does "to be transparent" mean to you?

3.2. How do you ensure that parents have knowledge of the learners' progress and conduct?

3.3. Do they (learners) have copies of the Code of conduct for learners? If so, were the contents clearly explained to them?

3.4. How did you do that?

3.5. To whom were you supposed to be transparent?

3.6. How did you ensure that school finances and physical resources are taken care of?

3.7. What measures do you take into consideration to ensure that members of the governing body access the legal documents that govern the school administration?

3.8. Do they have copies of these documents?

3.9. Were the contents of these legal documents explained to the school governing body? If so, how did you do that?

3.10. Would you say the SMT is transparent to the school governing body and RCL?

3.11. In your view what do you regard as factors hampering transparency in your school between yourself and

- SMTs
- RCLs and learners at large
- Educators
- Parents

3.7 Trustworthiness of the research

Bryman (2012:230) refers to trustworthiness as the quality of qualitative enquiry. Therefore, this definition serves as a caution that whatever information was gathered during the research process had to be valid and reliable. To make the collected data valid and reliable, I ensured that the note-taking process was accurate and the voice recording suitable. Furthermore, I made certain that the data collection instruments were of good quality, functioning well and were able to yield enough data that to address the sub-questions in chapter 1 before the main research started. For this purpose, a pilot study was conducted (cf. section 3.4.1). Credibility; transferability; dependability and confirmability are the key criteria of the trustworthiness of the research (Maree 2010:80) and are briefly discussed below.

3.7.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to a condition that promotes the accuracy and accountability of the whole process (Tracy 2013:248). Stevenson and Waite (2011:336) further define "credibility" as the quality of being able to be believable and convincing to other people. Researchers are thus required to provide documentary proof that the research was indeed conducted and that the research findings were real, not theoretical or formulated outside the site and therefore, can be believed and trusted. I kept the following documents as a proof of the visits to the selected secondary schools:

- Participants' signed attendance registers that are securely kept for anonymity

purposes.

- Participants' signed consent letters that are also securely kept for anonymity purposes.

- Permission letters from the principals of the three selected rural secondary schools (Appendix G).

- Participants' voice recordings which are also securely kept for anonymity purposes.

Another way of ensuring credibility is through so-called member-checking, the correctness of the data collected from the participants (cf. section 3.4).

3.7.2 Transferability

Tracy (2013:239) and Grbich (2013:11) define transferability as a condition of permitting the readers, audience and participants to make connections between the findings presented in one study and those of other studies or situations. Williams (2011) argues that thick description of the phenomena under study and the context in which the study took place are the most powerful techniques to facilitate transferability. According to Punch and Qancea (2014:382) qualitative researchers get a thick description through "capturing and conveying the full picture of the behaviour being studied – holistically, comprehensively and in context". In this study, I gave a detailed discussion of democratic principles in chapter 2 to enable the readers to understand the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency as applied in a public-school context (cf. sections 2.3, 2.4 & 2.5). I also gave a thick description of the context in which the study took place (cf. section 1.8.4). Anney (2014:277) argues that, transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to a greater degree to other contexts with other participants.

3.7.3 Dependability

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:54-57) and Soanes (2007:145) depict dependability as a condition where the outcome or consequence of an action has been caused by something else. As mentioned earlier, I utilised three cases (schools) to identify similarities and differences on how they comply with the democratic principles. The questions for focus groups and interviews were the same

for all participant schools to check for reliability in the answers provided. The results of the action rely on something else to exist; occur, succeed or to be true. That is why data collected from the members of the RCLs, SMTs, governing body members and the principal were triangulated. Dependability is linked to credibility. Findings will not be dependable if the research itself was not conducted in a credible manner. To make the research findings authentic, I ensured that:

- questions were correctly and accurately formulated so that I was able to get the answers I was looking for (cf. section 3.6.2).
- data collection instruments were correctly applied to gather only what was necessary for the success of the research (cf. sections 3.6.3.2a, 3.6.3.2b & 3.6.3.2c).
- participants had enough time to express their opinions freely on the matter under investigation
- analysis and interpretation of data was accurate and impartial and was justified by my analysing and interpreting data within the framework created by existing literature.
- research findings were verified and ratified by the participants through member- checking of the participants' views (cf. section 5.3).

3.7.4 Confirmability

Anney (2014:279) describes confirmability as the degree to which the results of an inquiry could be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers. Confirmability relates to the quality of the results (Williams 2011). Confirmability can be proved by using member-checking, that is, the researcher goes back to participants to verify whether the interpretations and conclusion are true reflections of the participants' perspectives (Mertler & Charles 2010:199) and confirms the preliminary research findings with the participants themselves, before finalising and publishing the findings (Williams 2011). I went back to the participants to present my findings and gave them an opportunity to make corrections. After the acceptance of the findings by the participants as a true reflection of the research proceedings and outcome, I finalised my report. I further ensured confirmability by using the literature review and literature study when I interpreted the analysed data.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis involves making logic out of the collected data. Data analysis is essential as it provides the researcher with the summary of what was investigated (Spencer, Ritchie, Ormston, O'Connor & Barnard 2014:270). The aim is to understand the various constitutive essentials of one's data through an inspection of the relationships between the data collected. To do that, I followed a thematic approach which "involves the discovering, interpretation, reporting patterns and clusters of meaning within the data" (Spencer et al 2014:271). Data analysis requires one to understand and to make sense out of text and images to provide answers for the research question (Creswell 2012:236). This data analysis was done to find links between the themes and the main emphasis of objectives. Data consisted of data sets obtained from interviews with school principals, focus group discussions with the RCLs, SMTs and the governing bodies of the three selected rural secondary schools. Data was analysed using themes.

Act at this stage, I read each transcript and made sense of data gained from participants to answer research questions regarding compliance of the selected schools with constitutional norms and democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. Data was organised according to main aspects covered in each objective to form themes (cf. section 1.5.2). I combined data sets dealing with a specific objective to ensure that research questions were addressed in this study.

I used data extracted from the focus group discussions and interviews to encode themes according similarities and differences and used those against the legal prescript to determine whether these schools comply with the constitutional democratic principles of co-operative, accountable and transparent administration. Thereafter, I decided to systematically work through various data sets by preparing, organising, reducing, visualising, representing and displaying data (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos 2011:403). I chose to analyse data manually as suggested by (Creswell 2012:239).

3.8.1 Preparing and organising data

Preparation of data involves making data ready for use and consideration (Stevenson & Waite 2011:133). Following the steps identified by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:369) I:

- put together the data collected from each secondary school visited
- separated the data collected from the various participants (principals, school governing body members, SMTs and RCLs)
- separated the data collected through each method of data collection, e.g. literature study, focus groups, semi-structured interviews.
- put together data relevant to each of the three objectives outlined in section 1.5.
- transcribed data from the voice recordings
- typed the hand-written data
- secured the data.

In addition, "organising" involves putting your work together and arranging it systematically (Stevenson & Waite 2011:1009). To make the data manageable, I cut and sorted the data into sets or batches, pasted together all the similar data sets or batches and put similar data sets or batches in flip files. These files were marked with the names on the outer cover, e.g. data sets from RCLs were marked as RCL member A; SMTs data sets marked as SMT member A; School governing bodies marked as member A and those of the principals were marked as Principal A.

I used pseudonyms to identify participants and different groups for confidentiality purposes (cf. section 4.4). The identification process helped me to arrange and easily sort the data obtained from the four groups of participants in relation to the matter that was being investigated; and I facilitated the data analysis and interpretation processes.

3.8.2 Reduction of data

Stevenson and Waite (2011:1206) describes the word "reduction" as the amount by which something is reduced. The data collected from the field in the form of field notes and voice coverage was too long, tedious; repetitive and bulky to work with. I followed the process suggested by Maree (2010:105) to reduce data into a small

meaningful and workable size, by use of a technique called "data coding". Data coding is the process of reading carefully through your transcribed data, line by line and dividing it into meaningful analytical units called segments; categories and patterns or themes (Maree 2010:105; McMillan & Schumacher 2010:370-379).

I looked for patterns to make meaning of the whole study. Ultimately this helped me to follow the direction of ideas or thinking of the participants, regarding the matter under investigation. Patterns facilitated the process of data analysis and interpretation.

3.8.3 Visualising, representing and displaying the data

The concept "visual representation" means an organised assembly of information such as figures; matrices; diagrams and flow charts, which assist in the data analysis process (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:380). Additionally, Maree (2010:110-111) describes the "diagrammatic representation" as the process of making a sketch; drawing or outline to show how something works or to clarify the relationship between the parts of the whole. What is important at this stage is the presentation of data collected during the focus groups with members of RCLs, SMTs, school governing bodies and the semi-structured interviews with the school principals. Flick (2014:180) refers to this process as presenting the frame, which is illustrated through quotations. Data in this study was presented according to the objectives of the study (cf. section 4.2).

3.9 Ethical considerations

Research ethics are moral principles; rules or codes of professional conduct for researchers and are concerned with beliefs about what is right or wrong when dealing with participants or when assessing archival data (Kamla-Raj 2016:686; McMillan & Schumacher 2010:117). To abide by the research ethics, I considered the ethical standards which had to be maintained in the process of data collection and analysis, particularly regarding the participants. Such ethical issues are the avoidance of harm; voluntary participation; informed consent and assent; deception of the participants; violation of privacy; anonymity; confidentiality and lastly, the competence of the researcher (cf. section 1.9). A disclaimer agreement form was designed for participants who were taking part in the focus group discussions to ensure strict confidentiality measures were maintained throughout the process.

Participants were reminded not to breach the contents of the agreement by discussing what had transpired during discussions (cf. *Appendices I, K & N*). The three selected rural secondary schools were identified by means of the pseudonyms, e.g. School A; School B and School C. Below there are various examples of ethical issues to be taken into consideration when one conducts research and which I considered during the research process (Liamputtong 2013:42; McMillan & Schumacher 2010:388).

3.9.1 Avoidance of harm

Soanes (2007:255) defines the term "harm" as a deliberate injury or damage to another person. Veal (2011:112) points out that there may be a risk of harm to participants during the collection of data, in its handling and its storage and in its publication. It must be in the researcher's mind that the possibility of risks should be eliminated by using pseudonyms for schools and participants, by ensuring that data is secured and cannot be linked to any one of the schools or participants.

During the process, I also avoided the following:

- asking offensive questions about the participants' personal lives
- rebukes and talking down to the participants and focused on persuasive language
- bombarding and interrogating the participants with questions
- demanding participants to give quick answers and responses to questions

3.9.2 Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation means that participants cannot be compelled to participate (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:118). I informed the participants that they had a right to choose to participate or withdraw their participation. I also told the participants that non-participation in the study would have no negative consequences.

3.9.3 Informed consent and assent

Beckmann (2017:12) refers to consent as the agreement between the researcher and the participant as embodied in a letter of informed consent. This letter forms a contract or agreement which is subject to the law. That is why I informed participants prior to the research about the contents of the letter for them to make informed

decisions on whether to participate or not. To avoid unethical conduct on the side of the researcher, participants should be made aware of any risks involved in the study so that their consent can be informed (Veal 2011:109). To ensure the consent given was free and voluntary, I:

- explained the purpose of the research, how the research was going to be conducted and the duration of the research, and
- provided prospective participants with information letters to sign.
- informed the participants that they may withdraw their participation at any time if they were not comfortable with the research process.
- gave the assurance that withdrawal from participation had no penalty.
- fully disclosed all potential risks (if any) that participating in the research may hold for them
- gave participants enough time to consider their participation and to sign the consent form.

3.9.4 No deception of the participants

Deception means an act or behaviour intended to mislead, cause someone to believe something false or to give a mistaken impression (Soanes 2007:139; Stevenson & Waite 2011:371). In order to avoid misleading the participants, I told the participants openly about all the aspects of the research, particularly the purpose of the study and that participation in the research was not accompanied by any form of remuneration, either in cash or kind.

3.9.5 Violation of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

The aspects of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were emphasised in this study to comply with ethics of conducting the research and they were discussed below:

- **Privacy**: "Privacy" refers to an act or state in which you are not watched or disturbed by others without your permission (Soanes 2007:437). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:121-122) suggest that to guarantee participants' privacy, researchers should ensure anonymity, confidentiality and appropriate storing of data.
- **Anonymity:** means the non-identification of the participant, hence I used pseudonyms for the selected secondary school and for the participants, e.g.

School A, B and C. Anonymity was not compromised in this research but that is not possible with the focus group, but precautions were taken as described earlier in chapter 3. Security of information was controlled as much as possible by requesting participants not to share their focus group discussion with anyone. I also asked them to sign a disclaimer which is a non-disclosure form.

- **Confidentiality:** means that the names of the participants cannot be divulged to anyone. To promote confidentiality, I used pseudonyms such as RCL A, SMT A, governing body member A and principal A (cf. section 4.5) to identify the data collected from various groups of participants. In addition, focus group participants were asked to sign a disclaimer (non-disclosure agreement) that they would not disclose either the identities of other participants or what was discussed (cf. *Appendices I, K & N).*

- **Appropriate storing of data**: the best way to ensure that data was appropriately stored was to keep it for a period of five years in a locked cupboard once the research was completed where it would not be erased. Having done that, I had to be certain that there was no trace of paper work, voice recordings and electronic data used during the time of data collection to ensure anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of data; to be destroyed later (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006:318).

TABLE 3.3: PSEUDONYMS FOR SCHOOLS AND PARTICIPANTS

School	Principal	SMT members Pseudonyms	RCL members	Position in governing body (
School A	Principal A	SMT A1	RCL chair A	Chair A
		SMT A2	RCL vice chair A	Vice chair A
		SMT A3	RCL secretary A	Secretary A
		SMT A4	RCL treasurer A	Treasurer A
School B	Principal B	SMT B1	RCL chair B	Chair B
		SMT B2	RCL vice chair B	Vice chair B
		SMT B3	RCL secretary B	Secretary B
		SMT B4	RCL treasurer B	Treasurer B
School C	Principal C	SMT C1	RCL chair C	Chair C
		SMT C2	RCL vice chair C	Vice chair C
		SMT C3	RCL secretary C	Secretary C
		SMT C4	RCL treasurer C	Treasurer C

3.9.6 My competence as researcher

Stevenson and Waite (2011:292) describe the term "competence" as having the ability; power, authority, skill and the necessary knowledge to be able to do what is needed. Moreover, it means to have subconscious knowledge of the rules governing the formation of speech and have effective performance of normal function. Walliman (2011:148) emphasises that all researchers are obliged to ensure that they are competent and skilled to conduct any investigation. I obtained a Secondary Teachers Diploma in Education, BA, ACE, BEd (Hons) and a post graduate diploma (PGDE). I successfully completed the research proposal module, which is a module that focuses on research skills and methodology. I have been teaching for 26 years and am currently a deputy principal in a school in the Chris Hani West District, Eastern Cape Province. I studied various articles, journals and books, which built my confidence. I attended workshops where students are capacitated on how to conduct research at Unisa (Tshwane). As a competent researcher, I was expected to have the ability to successfully perform the tasks listed below:

- Develop data collection instrument such as an interview guide and a focus group guide.
- Facilitate discussions in the focus groups and individual interviews.
- Collect data as accurately as possible.
- Analyse and interpret data.
- Triangulate data collected from the three selected rural secondary schools.
- Write a convincing report on the research findings.

3.10 Plagiarism

Neville (2011:30) describes "plagiarism" as copying another person's work, including the work of another student, with or without their consent, and claiming or pretending it is your own. He continues to say that another form of plagiarism is paraphrasing another person's work but not giving due acknowledgement to the original writer or organisation publishing the writing, including internet sites. The academic community requires that academic authors, whether undergraduate, postgraduate or researcher, should attribute the ownership of ideas, text and other forms of work to the original writers (McMillan & Weyers 2013:4). To avoid plagiarism, the researcher should:

- Ensure that all the consulted sources should have references in the references list
- insert text references in the report
- reference and correctly quote all legislation and policy documents
- Attend to all comments made by the supervisor
- run the final report through Turnitin (cf. *Appendix O*).

3.11 Limitations of the research

The research was limited to the members of the school governing body, SMT members and the RCLs who are also members of the school governing body. The study was limited to three rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District in the Eastern Cape Province. Some of the parents were illiterate and the questions put to them were translated into isiXhosa, to get the appropriate responses. This research was limited to the three rural secondary schools and took place on a small

scale. Therefore, it may not be fully transferable to other contexts, but could be helpful in similar schools related the situation to a degree.

3.12 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, a qualitative approach was described regarding data collection and data analysis. An interpretive paradigm was used; and the qualitative multiple case study was explained. The sampling of schools and participants were discussed. The chapter included a discussion of trustworthiness, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. In the next chapter, the qualitative data collected is presented, analysed and interpreted.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

Data collection methods were discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter data is presented, analysed and interpreted. The main aim of the research was to investigate the compliance of the administrations of the selected schools in the Chris Hani West District, Eastern Cape Province with constitutional norms and principles for democratic public administration, namely, co-operation, accountability and transparency.

To achieve this aim, focus group discussions were conducted with three groups of participants (Representative Council for Learners (RCLs), School management team (SMTs) and the governing bodies) followed by individual semi-structured interviews with the principals of the three selected rural secondary schools. The data was collected in May 2018. I present the data, analyse and interpret it per case before a comparison of the three cases.

4.2 Data presentation

Collected data was transcribed and then sifted through coding. To identify themes that emerged, I analysed the transcripts of the focus groups and interviews and the literature study line by line. Data was then reduced to meaningful units: the categories or themes (Maree 2010). Thereafter, data was triangulated to promote credibility of the research. Data was presented according to the objectives of the study (see objectives, data collection methods and instruments in sections 1.5.2, 1.8.6, 3.6.3.2a, 3.6.3.2b & 3.6.3.2c). I presented a brief profile for each group of participants. Since the data extracted through the literature study was presented together with the literature review in chapter 2, the researcher only provides a summary, analysis and interpretation of the legal prescripts in relation to co-operation, accountability and transparency in this chapter. This was done in fulfilment of objective one, that is, "to uncover the legal framework for and meaning of co-operative, accountable and transparent governance". I have also presented data in this chapter according to objective two, three and four of this study. The literature review and the literature study on the legal prescripts were used during

the interpreting of the data from the case studies; thus, the data was interpreted against the theoretical, as well as the legal, framework.

4.3 The biographical data of participants

The data in relation to the participant profiles is presented here and where relevant, included in the analysis and interpretation of the data.

TABLE 4.1: BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILES OF THE RCL MEMBERS

RCL members	Current grade	Years at the school	Age	Gender/Sex
School A chair	12	5	18	Male
School A vice chair	11	4	17	Female
School A secretary	12	5	18	Female
School A treasurer	12	5	19	Male
School B chair	12	6	19	Male
School B vice chair	11	4	18	Male
School B secretary	10	3	17	Female
School B treasurer	10	4	15	Female
School C chair	10	3	16	Female
School C vice chair	11	4	17	Female
School C secretary	11	4	17	Male
School C treasurer	10	3	15	Male

The years that each RCL member attended the specific school varied from three years to six, respectively. The RCL members had worked for relatively long periods at the schools, so I deduced that they have experience and knowledge of how their schools are administered.

TABLE 4.2: BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILES OF THE SMT MEMBERS

SMT members	Years' work experience	Qualifications	Age	Gender/Sex
School A SMT A1	16	STD, ACE	46	Female
School A SMT A2	22	STD, BTech & Education management	43	Male
School A SMT A3	10	BSC, ACE, B Ed (Hons) & MEd	34	Male
School A SMT A4	16	STD & FDE	52	Female
School B SMT B1	10	BEd (Hons)	38	Female
School B SMT B2	20	STD & ACE	58	Female
School B SMT B3	22	STD & ACE	49	Male
School B SMT B4	17	STD & ACE	46	Female
School C SMT C1	18	BEd (Hons)	50	Male
School C SMT C2	18	STD & ACE	46	Male
School C SMT C3	22	STD & FDE	52	Female
School C SMT C4	25	STD & BA	56	Male

All the SMT members who participated in the study (i.e. Schools A, B and C) possess the necessary professional qualifications required for school managers. SMT members may be promoted to management of a school because of their qualifications, knowledge of management skills, and their commitment regarding school activities. Management means that they perform the day to day running of the school in co-operation with the principal.

TABLE 4.3: BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

Position in governing body (e.g chairperson and a treasurer)	Qualifications	Age	Gender/Sex	Period serving in governing body
School A chair	Grade 6	70	Male	3 years 2 months
School A vice chair	Grade 9	49	Female	3 years 2 months
School A secretary	Grade 10	36	Female	3 months
School A treasurer	Grade 11	43	Female	3 months
School B chair	Grade 5	56	Male	3 years
School B vice chair	Grade 7	54	Male	2 months
School B secretary	Grade 10	47	Female	3 years
School B treasurer	Grade 6	63	Male	2 months
School C chair	Grade 9	45	Female	3 years
School C vice chair	Grade 7	58	Female	3 years
School C secretary	Grade 10	54	Male	3 years
School C treasurer	Grade 8	49	Male	2 months

The parent members are between 45 and 70 years of age. These members were elected according to the mandate of the Schools Act (cf. section 2.3.2.2), that is, they are parents of learners in the respective schools where they serve as governors and received the highest number of votes during the election. A minority of the members were re-elected, which off course means the majority are serving for the first time and may be inexperienced.

None of the parent governors has an academic qualification. The grades passed vary from grade 5 to grade 11. As a result, they may lack competencies in understanding and adhering to democratic principles as prescribed in the law and educational policies. Their possible lack of knowledge and understanding could have a negative impact on how the schools should be administered in accordance with principles of democratic public administration in this district.

TABLE 4.4: BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILES OF THE PRINCIPALS

Principal	Years' work experience at school	Qualifications	Gender or sex	Age
School A	25	B.SC (Hons)	Male	56
School B	22	STD, ACE	Male	53
School C	17	STD, B tech	Female	45

Interviews revealed that principals in School A and B are acting principals for more than a year. One can accept that the acting principals have experience in everyday management of the schools because they were SMTs before being promoted and are now ex-officio members of governing bodies.

4.4 Synopsis of the legal framework in relation to the constitutional principles

Below is a summary of the legal framework used to verify the compliance of the selected schools with principles for democratic public administration. I conducted a literature study of relevant law such as the Constitution, Schools Act, National Education Policy Act, Employment of Educators Act and Promotion of Access to Information Act to determine the legal obligations in relation to the observance and promotion of the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency in the selected schools. School administrators, as functionaries of the organ of state, are mandated to respect, protect, promote and uphold the democratic principles of administration (cf. section 2.3, 2.4 & 2.5). As determined in chapter 1 and 2, public schools are organs of state and part of the public administration (cf. section 1.7.1.6, 2.2). As such, they are bound by the Bill of Rights and have a constitutional mandate to protect, promote and respect the rights of all outlined, and observe and adhere to the democratic principles and values as prescribed for public administration in section 195 of the Constitution.

4.4.1 Legal framework in relation to co-operation

The Constitution, as supreme law of the country, provides the main framework for co-operative governance. Public schools' administrations, as represented by the principals, SMTs, governing bodies and RCLs, are bound by the principles of co-operative governance as set out in section 195. This implies that members of school administrations are expected to co-operate with one another by taking over one another's functions where necessary; fostering friendly; supportive relationships; being transparent and to keep each other informed. They should be tolerant; working in a co-ordinated manner and; following agreed (or prescribed) procedures (cf. section 2.3.2.1).

The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s 16A (2)(b)(d)(f) and (h) mandates that principals must inform the governing bodies on all law and policies relevant to the exercise of their functions, and not only in relation to finances. The principal is expected to understand that to manage and to lead the school is their individual responsibility. On the other hand, as an ex-officio member of the governing body, they must ensure that they carry out their legal responsibilities collectively as a team (cf. section 2.3.2.2).

The governing body must co-operate, inter alia, by encouraging parents, learners, educators and staff members to render voluntary services to the school (cf. section 2.3.2.2). Similarly, the governing body is expected to co-operate and support the principal, educators and staff members in the performance of their professional functions (cf. section 2.3.2.2).

The National Education Policy Act (RSA 1996c, section 3 (4)(p) & (5) (1)) mandates that there must be co-operation between the National Department of Basic Education, provincial departments of education and school administrations. This Act asserts that administrators such as the RCLs, SMTs, governing body members and principal are bound by law to promote and observe prevalence of co-operation for effective management and governance of the schools (cf. 2.3.2.3).

It is imperative that school administrators foster co-operation through communication, partnership, mutual trust, teamwork and participation.

4.4.2 Legal framework in relation to accountability

Section 195 of the Constitution mandates school administrators to promote, protect and uphold democratic principles. Likewise, the Constitution places an obligation on school administration to promote efficient, economic and effective use of resources and accountable governance (cf. section 2.3.2.1).

Functions of the governing body include adopting the Code of conduct for learners, and the proper control of the school finances. As stipulated in the Schools Act, section 8(5)(b), the governing body must report to the HoD when requested to do so on the execution of these functions (cf. section 2.4.2.1). RCL members who are part of the governing body must be aware that are bound by law to respect and comply with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency when executing their roles as representatives of the learners. This is done to ensure efficient and effective governance and management in the schools.

Accountability also binds school administrators to act with great care and commitment when dealing with financial matters. For, example, purchase receipts, invoices, bank statements and audited financial statements must be submitted regularly to the HoD for inspection (cf. section 2.4.2.2).

Section 16A of the Schools Act promotes increased accountability and controls wasteful expenditure as it is their most important responsibility to ensure that school finances are managed effectively (cf. section 2.4.2.3). Therefore, this section requires that the principal must prevent any form of corruption but gives guidelines on how these finances must be managed.

4.4.3 Legal prescripts in relation to transparency

Again, the Constitution states that all organs of the state are obliged to promote transparency in a manner that provides the public with timely, accessible and accurate information. For good governance, administrators should comply with the principle of transparency when performing their duties. Transparency requires the school principals to report on matters of professional management to the governing body (cf. section 2.5.2). To solicit the buy-in from other stakeholders regarding the principle of transparency, the principal needs to, inter alia, keep minutes of meetings and interpret and simplify the legislation and policy for school governing body members.

As an ex-officio member of the school governing body, the principal is directly and indirectly responsible (accountable) for the effective and efficient management of the school's finances and to ensure that everyone complies with the legal prescripts. In addition, the school as an institution of the state needs to maintain effective, efficient and transparent financial management and internal control. Section 59 (1) and (2) of the Schools Act requires all schools to make information available for inspection by any person who has a right and permission to do so. That permission may be obtained from the Head of Department or the Director-General of the National Department of Education.

The school administrators need to keep proper records of finances of the school in line with the provisions prescribe in the Schools Act (cf. section 2.4.2.3). The same records of finances will be presented to the parents for adoption before these records are submitted to the Department for scrutiny.

The state institutions are obliged to foster a culture of transparency and accountability by giving the right of access to information to all stakeholders (cf. section 2.5.2.4). Furthermore, stakeholders should be able to fully exercise and protect their rights, which includes the right of access to records of public bodies (RSA 2000, s 11(1)(a)). As discussed above, this clearly indicates that school managers must enable school governors to access all school documents and assist with the safeguarding of school resources and finances. If not, the school administration will not be cooperative, accountable and transparent.

Case studies

The data for each case study was organised in line with the objectives (cf. section 1.5) and presented under the following headings:

- **The meaning participants attach to co-operation, accountability and transparency**

Data gathered to fulfil the second objective, that is, "[t]o explore the perspectives of the principal, RCLs, SMTs and the school governing body regarding the meaning of co-operative, accountable and transparent governance".

- **Principals' promotion of democratic principles**

Secondly, the data collected to fulfil the third objective, which is "[t]o determine what the principals of selected secondary schools do to promote and observe compliance with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency in their schools" in their schools.

- **Factors hindering compliance with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency**

Lastly, the data extracted to fulfil the fourth objective, which is "[t]o investigate the factors that hinder compliance with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency at the participant schools" were then presented, analysed and interpreted.

4.5 The meaning of the principle of co-operation

The meaning that the participants attach to the principle of co-operation will be discussed below.

4.5.1 School A

It was evident that the RCL members of School A as a collective had a good idea of what co-operative governance entails since they identified most of the constituting elements of co-operative governance identified in the literature review (cf. section 2.3.1). Yet they feel they are not always included. The element of creating space for co-operation which goes together with participation was mentioned by three of the members. RCL chair A stated:

"[It] is to invite all RCLs to attend meetings where all the necessary information of the school is discussed by learners, educators, parents and the principal and such discussions which will in turn assist in the development of the school". RCL vice chair A mentioned the importance of creating the opportunity for inclusion: *"If RCLs are involved in all the school decision-making processes that will create co-operative relationships between all stakeholders of the school".* Lastly, RCL treasurer A indicated that, *"I think if we can be part and parcel of every governing body meeting, relationships will be upheld between administrators".* It is, however, evident from the use of *"if"* that RCL members are not currently included and invited to the governing body meetings.

RCL chair A mentioned the importance of information-sharing and communication for effective co-operation. RCL secretary A: added the significance of trust and respect for human rights.

"In the past there were no relations between RCLs, parents, educators and the principal, and that ended when democracy came with the rights for all. I think if SMTs can respect the rights of all stakeholders, relationships between them and stakeholders will be maintained for the betterment of the schools."

Stakeholders should acknowledge and observe everybody's rights as a constituting element for co-operative governance. Thus, co-operative governance requires a rights-based approach to school administration (cf. section 2.2).

Regarding co-operation and their role as SMT members, SMT A1 said, *"Co-operation means availability of open lines of communication between stakeholders".* Additionally, SMT A2 asked, *"Is the involvement of all stakeholders in school administration?"* SMT A3 echoed this notion by stating that, *"SMTs should maintain consistent and on-going communications at all times with all stakeholders".* SMT A4 commented that, *"SMTs and other stakeholders must work together in a position of trust to ensure that the vision of the school is achieved".*

The responses indicate that the participants understand what co-operation entails. The governing body of School A echoed the latter two groups (RCLs & SMTs). Secretary A confirmed that, *"SMTs must involve every stakeholder in the decision-making process so that everyone develops a sense of ownership and that will lead to collective ownership to school improvement".* Treasurer A believed, *"[It] is to work as a team which is characterised by trust amongst stakeholders of the school that will ensure good co-operative stance in our school".*

The responses of the governing body members stated above show that communication, collective decision-making processes and teamwork are perceived as important elements of co-operation (cf. section 2.3.1). However, the use of "must" by the chair *"SMTs must improve communication skills",* and by vice chair when indicating that, "*SMTs must focus on communicating with others prior the decision has been made with other stakeholders about what has to happen"* indicated that there is a lack of communication in School A. The principal confirmed that: *"co-operation is teamwork and is characterised by constructive relationships".* The principal has knowledge of the principle of co-operation. The principal understands that teamwork is one of the constituting elements co-operative governance although other participants mentioned more elements than he did.

The responses from School A participants indicate that the RCL, SMT, the governing body and the principal understand the principle of co-operation, since they mentioned a number of the constituting elements for co-operation, which also came to the fore in the literature review (cf. section 2.3.2). But chair A and the vice chair recommended that the SMT must devise measures to improve communication. This could be a revelation that lack of communication is one of the elements hampering the implementation of the principle co-operation in this school.

4.5.2 School B

The RCL in School B identified only three of the constituting elements of co-operation namely, creating space for all stakeholders, participation and teamwork. One can thus safely deduce that the RCL do not fully understand that for administrators to co-operate with one another successfully they must be able to communicate, share ideas, respect and trust one another towards the achievement of a certain goal as indicated in literature review (cf. section 2.3.1). RCL chair B said, *"Co-operation is an interaction that is taking place between stakeholders who are afforded an opportunity to manage the school".* RCL vice chair B indicated that, "*Co-operation exist when everyone has a space to take part in decisions taken".* The same notion was confirmed by RCL secretary B: *"[Co-operation] means that everyone must have equal opportunity of participation in the decision-making process of the school irrespective of age, young or old".* Although not identified as such, it is evident that RCL secretary B is aware that a co-operative school administration is an administration that regards itself as bound by the Bill of Rights and specifically the right to equality (cf. section 2.2). RCL treasurer B echoed this understanding: *"Co-operation entails working together towards the attainment of the achievable goals".* When the SMT members were asked about co-operation in relation to their role, most of the constituting elements of co-operation were identified.

SMT B1 identified trust and respect, *"Co-operation means working together with the aim of building trust and respect between stakeholders".* In support, other group members nodded their heads, revealing the fact that they agree; hence, SMT B4 shared the same sentiment as SMT B1.

SMT B2's reference to "*working together in a good atmosphere is characterised by harmony and less disputes between staff members"* as the constituting elements of co-operation. In

addition to what the above participants referred to as essential elements of co-operation, SMT B3's reference to "*recognised by all in the school*" also speaks to trust and respect.

SMTB4 said, *"Co-operation is when people work together to achieve certain outcomes"*. SMT B4 also mentioned teamwork as essential for co-operation to happen. SMT B2 stated that *"Co-operation refers to working together"*.

The participant members of School B's governing body demonstrated an understanding of what co-operation entails. In this focus group, all the constituting elements of cooperation apart from creation of space conducive to cooperation, communication and information sharing were explicitly mentioned. Chair B indicated that "*Co-operation means to involve stakeholders in the decision-making processes so that everyone has a sense of ownership of decisions taken"*. Vice chair B stated that *"Co-operation means working together as a group in a tolerant atmosphere"*. Secretary B confirmed by stating, *"Co-operation happens when people work together towards the betterment of the school"*. Treasurer B had this to say, *"Co-operation is a condition where people work hand in hand for a specific purpose"*.

The acting principal responded that co-operation between stakeholders and the principal *"refers to co-operation as a process of working together and taking ideas from one another in order to reach consensus"*.

All the participants of School B seem to know and understand the constituting elements for co-operative governance (cf. section 2.3.1) although the governing body and the principal mentioned fewer elements than the other groups of participants (RCL and SMT).

4.5.3 School C

The literature study (cf. sections 2.3.1 & 2.3.2.2) evidenced that RCLs as members of school administration should co-operate with each other, that is, work together as a team to achieve specified goals. RCL members must co-operate to create a harmonious environment where there is mutual respect and trust. Co-operation also involves the communication of important decisions taken by the stakeholders.

Although the RCL members of School C referred to participation, teamwork, communication and information sharing as essential elements for cooperation, their

right to participation appear to be limited. They emphasised that in their school, no space for participation and information sharing was created.

RCL chair C described, *"co-operation as a way of working together with other members where there is clear communication of the vision of the school. Unfortunately, learners are not afforded the opportunity to co-operate with the school authorities at the present moment [sic]".*

RCL vice chair C agreed with the chair: *"Co-operation means working together of all stakeholders in the school, promotion of teamwork, where parents, educators and learners are members of each team. But learners are not included in the team in our school".*

RCL secretary C stated, *"Co-operation is a way of communication where school managers get an opportunity to clarify rules and policies of the institution to all members of the school governing body but as RCLs, we haven't yet received any clarity on the Code of conduct for learners".*

RCL treasurer C echoed the sentiment: *"Co-operation is a process where stakeholders work together with the aim of deciding on important information".*

What has been gathered from the RCL is in line with what came to the fore in the literature study (cf. section 2.3.2.2), that learners should be enabled to participate in the decision-making process with other members of the school administration. In the group discussions, all participants were vocal about the issue of participation and the learners' desire to become part of the discussions about issues affecting them.

Collectively, the SMT participants of School C indicated that working together, communication, and participation in the decision-making processes are the constituting elements for co-operative governance as identified in the literature review (cf. section 2.3.1).

SMT C1 alluded to the importance of respect and trust and stated that space must be created. The participant described co-operation as, *"The ability of stakeholders to tolerate one another, especially in committees established to deal with issues affecting the school such as financial issues".* SMT C2 accentuates participation in decisions by all administrators as one of the constituting elements of co-operation, *"Is to take part in all decisions-making processes and activities carried out at the school".* The participant further said that they co-operate with parents, school governing body members, educators and learners. SMT C3's response revealed the element of information sharing and open communication. She stated, *"Co-operation is a platform for exchanging ideas on school administration matters with special focus on laws governing the institution".* SMT C4 indicated

that, *"Co-operation occurs when the organisation opens lines of communication for all stakeholders".*

The governing body members of School C identified four essential elements of cooperation, namely: teamwork, communication, creating space and achieving a common goal: Chair C indicated that *"Co-operation is a situation a space is created for people to interact in the decision-making processes".* Vice chair C indicated that *"Co-operation refers to the promotion of good relationships between stakeholders so that as administrators we attain our achievable goals".* She thus added the elements of goal achievement and good relationships, which, of course requires mutual trust and respect. Both Secretary C and Treasurer C accentuated participation. Secretary C said, *"Co-operation means working together as one team where aspects of importance are communicated to all stakeholders for the good name of the school"* and Treasurer C explained that *"Co-operation refers to the involvement of all those who are responsible for the development of the school programmes either young or old".*

The responses of the governing body members show that they all know and understand the constituting elements of co-operative governance because they mentioned working together, and involvement and promotion of good relationships (harmony). Nevertheless, they did not mention trust, respect and co-operating towards achievable goals as other elements which came to the fore in the literature review (cf. section 2.3.1).

The principal of School C explained co-operation as being **"***able to establish sub-committees for various activities which are led by different stakeholders so that submissions either to the district or provincial office is done on time".*

As mentioned, the interviewees seemed to know and understand what the principle of co-operation entails. They mentioned the essential elements of co-operative governance (cf. section 2.3.1). I also gathered their expectations that the principal co-operates with the governing body of his or her school by attending and participating in all meetings, assisting the governing body in handling disciplinary matters pertaining to learners, and informing the governing body about policy through the literature review (cf. section 2.3.2.2).

4.5.4 Comparison

The above definitions of co-operation in Schools A, B and C make it clear that participants have correctly interpreted the concept of co-operation. However,

School A, School B and School C's principals did not mention creation of space and achievable goals as other essential elements of co-operation, School B's principal seemed to have more understanding of the essential elements which constitute cooperative governance. All schools identified communication, working together, teamwork, participation, involvement and taking part in decision-making processes as the constituting elements of co-operation. It was ascertained that School A, School B and School C participants have knowledge of the principle of co-operation.

The RCLs of all the secondary schools felt that there were no spaces created for them to participate in the decision-making processes. However, RCLs are also administrators and must also be decision-makers of these schools as stipulated in the Schools Act (cf. section 2.3.2.2). Below is a summary table on comparative findings regarding the meaning attached by participants to co-operation.

TABLE 4.5: VARIOUS ELEMENTS THAT CONSTITUTE CO-OPERATION AS STATED BY THE PARTICIPANTS OF SCHOOL A, B AND C

	School A	School B	School C
Principle	The principle of co-operation	The principle of co-operation	The principle of co-operation
RCL members	- Involvement - Part and parcel decision-making process - Communication - Trust and respect - A human rights-approach	- Interaction - Creation of space - Consultation - Involvement - Participation and - Working together	- Participation - Working together - Communication and - Participation
SMT members	- Communication - Working together - Involvement and - Trust	- Working together - Harmony - Trust and respect - Teamwork and - Achievable goals.	- Tolerance - Participation - Platform for changing ideas - Communication
Governing body members	- Teamwork - Communication - Involvement	- Involvement - Working together	- Working together - Involvement

		• Participate in decision-making processes • Achievement of purpose	• Promotion of good relationships
Principals	• Teamwork • Constructive relationships	• Working together • Taking ideas from one another. • Reach consensus in decision-making processes	• Establishment of committees • Submissions done on time

The study showed that participants in School B mentioned more of the constituting elements of co-operation than School A and School C. School B has a better comprehension of the principles than School A and C. The reason for this might be that the principal has obtained Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE).

4.6 Meaning of the principle of accountability

The meaning that participants attach to the principle of accountability is discussed below:

4.6.1 School A

4.6.1.1 Meaning participants attached to accountability

The literature review brought to light that the school administrators are accountable for various aspects of administration such as proper financial control, curriculum management, discipline and safety measures for all, effective communication channels, monitoring and reporting to stakeholders through the availability of agendas and minutes of meetings held at the school, audited bank statements and specific information sharing meetings (cf. section 2.4.1). Data collected during the group discussions with RCLs proved beyond doubt that the RCL members of School B have knowledge of the concept of accountability. It was further indicated that accountability requires evidence because accountability is linked with responsibilities of each stakeholder.

RCL chair regarding answerability for learner discipline: He stated that, *"Accountability means to answer for the actions taken by learners either good or bad".* The responses of other

RCL members illustrate an understanding of the link between responsibilities and accountability. They all understand "accountability" as being answerable in relation to one's responsibilities. RCL vice chair A indicated that, *"Accountability is to provide answers for our responsibilities".* RCL secretary A revealed that, *"RCLs have to give answers to other learners".* RCL treasurer A confirmed the above that it*, ".... means to give answers for the learner misconducts or discipline and we were supposed to inform them about school finances, but it is so unfortunate that we do not form part of financial management".*

The SMTs are responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, which includes amongst other duties, reporting, taking minutes of meetings conducted at management level, holding information sharing meetings with the RCLs and announcements of important activities in the school (cf. sections 2.4.1 & 2.4.2.3).

SMT A1 indicated that, *"accountability is to give appropriate answers for your actions and decisions".* In support of what has been alluded to by SMTA1, SMT A2 said, *"Accountability means to be answerable for one's responsibilities".* SMT A3 confirmed that *"It is true".* SMT A4 echoed what has already been alluded to above, by saying, *"accountability means to give reasons for actions taken by those given responsibilities to execute".*

The governing body members echoed what had been implied by the SMTs of this school. The chair A indicated that, *"To be accountable means to justify for actions taken by someone who knows what he was doing and the reasons for his or her actions".* The vice chair A remarked, *"accountability means being answerable for the roles played by everyone in this school".*

Secretary A indicated that, *"Accountability means that stakeholders are answerable for their responsibilities".* Treasurer A said that, *"The school to me is accountable if every stakeholder affected by the decisions taken is informed of the school's financial position and how these funds are controlled in order to avoid financial maladministration by everyone".*

The literature review revealed that the principal is responsible for training and assisting the governing body in matters regarding financial management so that when they execute their responsibilities, they act in accord with the constitutional framework. In terms of the Schools Act, the principal is obliged to see to it that their schools' governing bodies are informed about their functions by conducting the necessary training since all administrators are answerable for efficiency and to meet obligations and expectation as per the legal prescript (cf. section, 2.4.2). Because of his or her position as a school manager and an ex-officio member of the

governing body, he or she must implement financial management in an effective, transparent and accountable manner (cf. section 2.4.2.2 & 2.4.2.3).

When the principal was asked what accountability means to him, he explained that, *"accountability means all those who hold key positions in their workplaces are answerable for their responsibilities and have to justify actions taken by them during the execution of such a responsibility"*.

From the responses stated above, the RCL, SMT, governing body and the principal correctly understand the crux of the principle of accountability as a condition where one needs to answer for decisions and actions taken (cf. section 2.4.2). All participants in School A, including the principal, seem to have knowledge and understanding of the principle of accountability because they stated that school administrators should be answerable, informed about decisions taken and justify them.

4.6.1.2 To whom accountable and for what

When they were asked to whom and for what RCLs are accountable, the members were able to describe the responsibilities, but stated that they felt excluded. RCL chair A mentioned that, *"We are accountable to our parents, SMTs and the principal for learners' misconduct"*. RCL vice chair A stated that, *"We were supposed to be accountable for all the duties of the governing body, but we are not given a chance of executing those functions and we assume that the school authority thought we do not have the potential of taking important decisions*.

RCL secretary A felt that, *"As young leaders we are not involved in the budgeting processes of this school, so we are not accountable for finances"*.

And RCL treasurer A nodded in support, *"Our views are not taken into consideration by school administrators, especially in issues connected with school finances and employment of workers and service providers; we are only accountable for learners' conduct"*.

In addition to what the RCLs stated above, when asked to whom they are accountable and for what, SMT A1 stated, *"The school administration accounts by making quarterly reports to parents, by submitting school monthly reports to the circuit manager and annual reports to the ECDoE"*.

SMT A2 agreed with SMT A1. *"Since we are in 'loco parentis,' meaning in the place of the parents, we are accountable to parents for their children's well-being and their academic performance to the district officials and the HoD"*.

SMT A3 *revealed that,* *"As educators we are accountable for everything happening in this school, which includes physical and human resources to the governing body, parents of learners, principal and the HoD of the ECDoE".*

SMT A4 commented, *"I believe we are accountable for the learners' education to their parents, governing body, principal and our district manager, but not accountable with [sic] school finances because we are not involved in financial issues".*

The responses of the school governing body members regarding to whom and for what they are accountable showed that all except the RCL were regarded as responsible.:

Chair A said, *"We are accountable for school governance and the responsibilities delegated to us by our principal such as the management of finances and maintenance of school resources".* Vice chair A echoed that, *"As governing body members we are accountable for school finances, i.e. Audited reports, financial statements and school grounds and school resources".* Treasurer A said, *"Sometimes we account for school finances, physical resources, ground and buildings".* Secretary A stated that, *"we are supposed to hold meetings and explain what our plans are, what decisions and action have been taken during the course of executing our functions, write and to keep minutes of our meetings".*

When the acting principal was asked to whom and for what he is accountable, he stated that, "*I am accountable to the HoD for day-to-day running of the school. Further than that, as an ex-officio member of the governing body, I am also accountable for the effective management of school funds and accountable to parents and the HoD, ECDoE".*

From the responses provided above, it is evident that the RCL, SMT, governing body and the principal know to whom they are accountable and for what, but the RCL revealed that they are not accountable for school finances. The reason was that they are not taken seriously regarding school finances and are therefore, not able to be accountable to anyone. This means that the school administration is not complying with what is legally prescribed for governance of schools (cf. sections 2.4.2 & 2.4.2.2). RCLs ought to take part in the decision-making processes of this school.

4.6.1.3 How they do account

Participants in School A agreed that reporting, meetings, announcements, newsletters, receiving bank statements and copies of annual budget for school

finances are ways in which school administrators are supposed to account to their superiors.

The RCL in School A mentioned various ways in which they account to other learners and other school administrators. RCL chair A stated that, *"We conduct learner meetings in order to give feedback to other learners"*. RCL secretary A confirmed that, *"We conduct meetings and sometimes give announcement of matters of importance"*. RCL vice chair voiced his view by saying *"Yes, it is true".* Whilst RCL treasurer agreed by nodding his head.

SMT A1 mentioned, *"we conduct meetings for the teaching staff and account for what has been happened [sic]"*. In addition to what SMT A1 mentioned, SMT A3 said that, *"we even give staff members reports of what we agreed upon in our meetings pertaining school developmental matters"*. SMTA4 indicated that, *"we even put the school governing body members on board by inviting them to attend meetings and explain learners' academic progress and give reasons for failure or success".* SMT A2 confirmed that *"we even report and announce issues of great concern to the RCLs".*

The school governing body also mentioned that they hold meetings with RCLs, SMTs and the school principal. Chair indicated that, *"We account to parents who elected us to be in these positions by giving explanations in a meeting situation as to how funds were utilised in this school".* Treasurer further stated that, *"We even provide all parents with financial statements and issue copies of annual financial budget".* Vice chair responded by clapping hands and said, *"We are accountable for financial management to parents".*

The principal said, *"I account by conducting meetings, giving reports to other members and writing newsletters to parents quarterly, issuing bank statements and audited financial statements to RCLs and educators".*

From the responses stated above, RCL, SMT, governing body and the principal clearly account for their actions by conducting meetings, issuing reports and making announcements of important issues or activities. Administrators should account by means of reports, meetings, newsletters, school magazines, pamphlets, flyers, noticeboards, circulars, newspapers and bulletins in the literature review and literature study (cf. sections 2.5.1 & 2.5.2.2). All administrators in School A give account in different ways because they occupy different levels of authority. Accounting includes giving reports, and conducting meetings where minutes are kept for accountability purposes**.** However, it is evident in the literature review and

the literature study (cf. section 2.4.1) that meetings, reports and announcements are forms in which administrators can give account of their responsibilities.

Participants in School A agreed that reporting, meetings, announcements, newsletters, receiving bank statements and copies of annual budget for school finances are ways in which school administrators are supposed to account to their superiors.

The RCL in School A mentioned various ways in which they account to other learners and other school administrators. RCL chair A stated that, *"We conduct learner meetings in order to give feedback to other learners"*. RCL secretary A confirmed that, *"We conduct meetings and sometimes give announcement of matters of importance"*. RCL vice chair voiced his view by saying *"Yes, it is true"*. Whilst RCL treasurer agreed by nodding his head.

SMT A1 mentioned, *"we conduct meetings for the teaching staff and account for what has been happened [sic]"*. In addition to what SMT A1 mentioned, SMT A3 said that, *"we even give staff members reports of what we agreed upon in our meetings pertaining school developmental matters"*. SMTA4 indicated that, *"we even put the school governing body members on board by inviting them to attend meetings and explain learners' academic progress and give reasons for failure or success"*. SMT A2 confirmed that *"we even report and announce issues of great concern to the RCLs"*.

The school governing body also mentioned that they hold meetings with RCLs, SMTs and the school principal. Chair indicated that, *"We account to parents who elected us to be in these positions by giving explanations in a meeting situation as to how funds were utilised in this school"*. Treasurer further stated that, *"We even provide all parents with financial statements and issue copies of annual financial budget"*. Vice chair responded by clapping hands and said, *"We are accountable for financial management to parents"*.

The principal said, *"I account by conducting meetings, giving reports to other members and writing newsletters to parents quarterly, issuing bank statements and audited financial statements to RCLs and educators"*.

From the responses stated above, RCL, SMT, governing body and the principal clearly account for their actions by conducting meetings, issuing reports and making announcements of important issues or activities. Administrators should account by means of reports, meetings, newsletters, school magazines, pamphlets, flyers, noticeboards, circulars, newspapers and bulletins in the literature review and

literature study (cf. sections 2.5.1 & 2.5.2.2). All administrators in School A give account in different ways because they occupy different levels of authority. Accounting includes giving reports, and conducting meetings where minutes are kept for accountability purposes. However, it is evident in the literature review and the literature study (cf. section 2.4.1) that meetings, reports and announcements are forms in which administrators can give account of their responsibilities.

4.6.2 School B

The meaning the participants attach to the principle of accountability is discussed below.

4.6.2.1 Meaning participants attached to accountability

The literature review (cf. section 2.4.1) showed that the school administrators are accountable for various aspects of administration such as proper financial control, curriculum management, discipline and safety measures for all, effective communication channels, monitoring and reporting to stakeholders through the availability of minutes of the meetings held at the school, agendas of such meetings, audited bank statements and information sharing meetings (cf. section 2.4.1). Data collected reflected that the RCL members of School B have knowledge of the principle of accountability. RCLs are aware that accountability requires evidence-based roles which are performed by different administrators so that they can be held accountable for the execution of those responsibilities.

When they were asked what accountability means to them, their responses were as follows: RCL chair B stated that, *"Accountability occurs when someone gives a report back and reasons why a particular action was taken".* RCL vice chair B indicated that, *"Accountability refers to giving answers for actions taken".* RCL secretary B said*, "Accountability means carrying out a particular action and provide reasons for the actions taken".* RCL treasurer B indicated that *"Accountability refers to responsibilities that must be carried out and evidence must show the results of the actions that were performed".*

SMT B1 said, *"Accountability means to have knowledge of the assumed responsibility and to justify for actions and decisions taken".* SMT B2 indicated that, *"Accountability involves the implementation, reporting and to be answerable for the roles delegated".* SMT B3 explained that, "*Accountability means providing answers for responsibilities delegated by those in power".*

SMT A4 confirmed that by saying, *"Accountability means to accept responsibility and to be able to explain actions taken.* The SMTs are quite aware of the meaning of accountability and that they are accountable regarding their mandatory functions.

The governing body members echoed the SMTs: chair B said, *"Accountability is described as process where everyone accounts by giving answers for the efficient and effective management of processes and structures in the school".* Vice chair B stated that, *"Accountability means to be responsible or answerable to someone for duties delegated to you".* Secretary B has this to say, *"Accountability means one should take responsibility for his or her actions and be able to give convincing explanation for actions taken".* Treasurer B responded by saying, *"Accountability means giving reasons for poor or good performance of stakeholders".* In the school context, the principal is accountable for the day-to-day management of the school and is also obliged to ensure that school governing body members acquire knowledge of all the duties enshrined in the Schools Act (cf. sections 2.3.2.2, 2.4.2.2 & 2.5.2.2) and to be able to explain how those responsibilities are implemented.

The acting principal defined accountability as, *"Being answerable for one's actions and responsible for creating an environment of trust and honesty. Accountability further requires that administrators open doors for other stakeholders to have an [sic] access to the minutes of the previous meetings, audited financial statements and learners' academic reports".*

From the responses given above, it is clear that RCL, SMT, governing body and the principal of School B seem to understand the principle of accountability as was stated in the literature review, that accountability holds individuals and organisations responsible for executing their responsibilities in a proper manner (cf. sections 2.4.1 & 2.3.2.2). Those include constituting elements such as being answerable for actions and decisions, giving reasons for failure or success of executing responsibilities. This implies that accountability demands reporting to other stakeholders such as the school governing body, parents, educators, RCLs and the ECDoE.

4.6.2.2 To whom accountable and for what

Below are some of the responses by School B RCLs. RCL treasurer said, *"RCLs are accountable for giving learners information from the school authorities and the way we behave, and we are accountable to the SMTs and the principal".* RCL vice chair echoed, *"We visit each class establishing class leaders and reporting on new developments which affect learners".* RCL secretary indicated that, *"we are accountable to the school SMTs for ensuring that learners wear*

uniform and culprits are brought to the principal's office". Secretary further stated that if they fail to bring culprits to the front, the principal holds them accountable for not bringing the matter to the fore. Chair commented, *"which is not fair".* This response indicates a misunderstanding of the concept of accountability.

The SMT is responsible for giving assistance to the principal. Moreover, SMT members ought to work hand in hand with the RCL in maintaining order and discipline in the school. They can work together only if the SMTs manage to train the RCLs on the responsibilities of RCLs (cf. section 2.4.2). When asked to whom they are accountable, and for what, SMT B1 indicated that, *"We are responsible for ensuring that learners are taught and the development of the school to the principal and the HoD".* In support of SMT B1, SMT B2 stated that, *"Our duty is to ensure that we maintain order and stability in the school".* SMT B4 confirmed that, *"We ensure that teachers do their responsibilities by supervising and controlling the work done".* SMT B3 said, *"As SMTs we are accountable for the promotion of teamwork and the encouragement of sound communication between staff members".*

The school governing body is responsible for financial management, resources and their maintenance. Moreover, they are supposed to hold meetings and let parents know what is happening in the school (cf. section 2.4.2.2).

Chair commented, *"We account for the discipline of learners and to give feedback of what has been discussed [sic] and agreed upon during our governing body meetings and furthermore, we are accountable to parents of this school".* Secretary B said, *"Governing body members are obliged to account for school activities and physical resources and to ensure that these resources are maintained and kept safe".* Supporting what the other members stated above, treasurer said, *"As governing body, we are accountable for school finances and learner discipline to parents and the HoD".*

The principal (ex-officio member) is supposed to provide guidance and mentoring programmes to the governing body in relation to their duties regarding proper financial management (cf. section 2.4.2.2). He or she needs to ensure that proper budgeting is done, and relevant stakeholders are consulted, and that school needs are identified (cf. sections 2.3.2.2, 2.4.2.2 & 2.5.2.2). When the principal was asked to whom and for what he is accountable, he said, *"I am accountable to the governing body, parents of learners, district officials and the HoD of ECDoE for the day-to-day running of the school and management of school finances".*

Participants in School B seemed to understand and know exactly for what and to whom they are accountable because their responses were reflected in the literature study (cf. sections 2.4.2.2). The principal did not mention that he needs to ensure that the rights of everyone are taken care of, which is an important component of democratic school administration (cf. section 2.2).

4.6.2.3 How they do account

Administrators in School B account by reporting, making announcements, meeting, making minutes of the meetings available to parents, issuing audited statements and bank statements to district officials, other stakeholders who have an interest in education and the HoD of the ECDoE. In School B, RCLs also mentioned how they account. RCL vice chair B said, *"As RCLs we conduct learner meetings whenever we have to explain anything regarding our responsibilities in this school".* RCL secretary B indicated that, *"sometimes we write letters where we have to explain what happened during the execution of our responsibilities".* RCL treasurer B stated that, *"As learners we are invited to an accountability meeting which are conducted quarterly where we have to give answers for how we conduct ourselves as RCLs".* RCL vice chair remarked that, *"we also receive reports from our principals in the form of announcements".*

In response to SMT's account, SMT B1 indicated that, *"we conduct meetings with both the teaching and non-teaching staff in order to explain or answer on actions and decision taken".* SMT B2 just said, *"hmmm".* This indicated that the participant agreed with SMT B1. SMT B3 said, *"we conduct meetings for procurement, financial report and budget".* SMT B4 confirmed, *"we compile monthly reports for the departmental officials and hold quarterly meetings for parents".*

Like other participants, the governing body also mentioned meetings as a place where they account to other stakeholders for decisions taken. Chair B said, *"we conduct meetings quarterly with other stakeholders to give explanation on governance issues".* Secretary B said, *"sometimes we write reports in letters and send those letters to parents".*

The principal stated that as school managers, they invite all relevant stakeholders to meetings to inform them about school occurrences. He said, *"as school management we invite parents, governing body members and RCLs to our meetings where we provide them with information concerning learners' academic progress and professional management of the school".* However, this contradicts what the RCLs have said, namely, that they are not invited

to governing body meetings and that the only way they receive information from other administrators is through announcements.

Participants clearly understand and know the ways in which they must officially account to parents, principal and the department by conducting meetings, reporting, compiling monthly and quarterly reports. However, they did not mention that they need to account to learners because the RCL are also members of the school administration. The literature study (cf. section 2.4.2.2) showed that the governing body must conduct the general meetings for parents and provide them with the necessary documents. The principal needs to disseminate information to all stakeholders through reports, meetings, minutes, newsletters, school magazines, pamphlets, flyers, noticeboards, circulars, newspapers and bulletins.

4.6.3 School C

The meaning attached to the principle of accountability by participants is discussed below.

4.6.3.1 Meaning participants attached to accountability

RCLs are the only recognised and legitimate representative learner body at the school. They should actively take part in all processes of the school administration. They are accountable for their actions and the decisions they take (cf. section 2.4.2.2) and must have knowledge of the principle of accountability. Most of School C's RCL members understand that accountability deals with being answerable. For example, RCL chair C stated that *"Accountability in this school means that everybody must answer for his or her actions, report regularly, respect colleagues and respect individual rights".* RCL treasurer C stated that *"Accountability means to give reasons for the actions taken whether right or wrong".* RCL chair C's response illustrates that reporting is used in this school to give account of their actions: "*We compile monthly and quarterly reports for parents and the government officials*". RCL vice chair C's answer illustrates that accountability involves collective responsibility and involves (cf. sections 2.3.1, 2.4.1 & 2.5.1) co-operation and transparency: *"We are accountable for promoting unity amongst learners and ensure that learners receive the relevant information".*

When the SMTs were asked what accountability meant to them, SMT C1 said, "*Accountability is about reporting to the relevant authorities about the reasons for taking a particular*

decision, progress made and how the desired outcomes were achieved". SMT C2 stated that, *"Accountability refers to giving answers to the questions raised by the relevant authority on how lawful instructions were carried out, what progress has been made and whether the intended outcomes were achieved or not".* SMT C3 indicated that, *"we are answerable for the curriculum activities".* SMT C4 defined accountability *"As an act of being answerable for one's actions, decisions mistakes and successes to others".*

During the governing body focus group, the governing body members' responses revealed that they understood what accountability needs. Chair's response further illustrated understanding of the interdependence between accountability, co-operation and transparency: *"Accountability means to explain decisions taken and to keep those working in collaboration informed about every occurrence in the school".* One can deduce that the vice chair understands the meaning of accountability. She indicated that, *"Accountability occurs in a situation whereby those who take decisions conduct meetings or briefings where important issues will be explained ".* Secretary C's explanation that, *"Accountability is the ability of committee members to perform their responsibilities and give explanation for their punishment when instructed to do so by the authority".*

From Principal C's response, it is apparent that she understands the crux of accountability as: *"Being answerable for whatever is happening in the school starting from the learner discipline up to the school finances".*

The responses given above suggest that all the interviewees know and understand the essential elements of accountability. They said that it refers to collective responsibility, answerability, justification of actions taken (cf. section 2.4.2) and that the principle of accountability is a precondition for transparency and vice versa.

4.6.3.2 To whom accountable and for what

The RCL members are school administrators who are responsible for the maintenance of learner well-being, discipline and to represent the rights of learners (cf. section 2.2) in the school. They are accountable to parents, educators and other learners. When the RCLs were asked to whom and for what the RCLs are accountable, RCLs felt that they are accountable to their parents and educators. RCL chair C stated that, *"We are accountable to our parents because we have to fulfil their expectations at the end of the year".* RCL vice chair C's statement was that *"As RCLs we are accountable for duties such as dealing with learner misconduct, reporting school processes to the entire learner body and we are accountable to our principal and educators".* RCL secretary C

indicated that, *"One of our duties is to take learners' concerns and report them to the principal and her staff members and vice versa. Furthermore, we are accountable to learners, SMTs and the educators"*. Lastly RCL treasurer also indicated that, *"RCLs are accountable to parents, other learners, educators and the principal for the manner the perform their functions as RCLs".* Not all the RCL members mentioned that they are responsible for the well-being of learners, but they seem to prioritise discipline.

SMT C1's focus was on accountability as a management function, describing it in this way:

"We are accountable for teachers and learner performances and monitoring to ensure desired results and accountable for that to the school principal, parents, district manager and the HoD of the ECDoE".

SMT C2 indicated that, *"Accountable for maintaining discipline and curricular matters to the learners, the educators, school governing body, principal, HoD and the parents of learners for how the functions have been executed".*

SMT C3 stated that, *"Accountable implementation of the departmental policies that govern the school and being answerable for school management and reports on the progress made and we have to give answers to the principal, district officials who used to come as a team for accountability meetings in every term".*

SMT C4 said, *"We are accountable for the development of the school and the performance of educators and learners to school authorities such as the governing body, principal, inspectors and the HoD".*

The chair C indicated that *"we are accountable for the maintenance of school resources, answer for their safety and maintenance to the principal, parents of the school and the departmental officials".*

Vice chair C confirmed that, *"Governing bodies are answerable for financial management and [that] records of the school are in place as well as the normal functioning of the school, we are accountable to the people who elected us (parents), the principal and circuit managers for the way in which we execute our duties".*

Secretary C said, *"As governing body members, our duty is to ensure that the school is governed correctly and financial are budgeted for and expenditure is controlled, and we are accountable for the smooth running of such processes to parents and the department".*

Treasurer C's explanation of accountability focused on how administrators should govern, protect and respect every stakeholder's rights, and said, "*the ability to govern and to protect and respect everyone's rights and to maintain discipline as per the legislation guiding schools and we are accountable to the governing body even to learners and departmental officials".*

The principle of accountability is the cornerstone for democratic administration (cf. section 2.2).

The principal stated that, *"I am accountable to parents and the Department of Education for learner academic achievements day-to-day running of the and school governance, where I am supposed to mentor school governors in school finances and resources".*

School C's participants seem to have a sound interpretation of the concept of the principle of accountability and understand to whom and for what they are accountable. From the literature review (cf. sections 2.2.4.1 & 2.4.2.2) it is evident that accountability requires a sense of intrinsic ownership of the task and willingness to face the consequences that come with success or failure.

4.6.3.3 How they do account

Administrators in School C also give account by reporting, making announcements, holding meetings, making minutes of the meetings available to parents, issuing audited statements and bank statements to district officials, and writing newsletters to parents. RCLs in School C mentioned various ways in which they account to their fellow learners, the school management team, governing body members and the principal. RCL chair C indicated that, *"we usually conduct learner meetings to give them feedback on issues affecting the school".* RCL vice chair C said, *"our principal reports to us by announcing what we need to know".* RCL secretary C said that, *"If we received anything to perform as RCLs, we address all learners about the results after morning devotions".*

The SMTs confirmed the above. SMT C2 indicated that, *"We conduct meeting for educators, SMTs, governing body members and parents".* SMT C3 said that *"SMTs write letters inviting parents to learner performance meetings and also announce important information every Friday during the assembly."* SMT C4 said, *"We always prepare monthly and quarterly reports to parents and the district officials".* The governing body members also stated that, *"Our secretary writes minutes of the meeting every day when during the course of the meeting and those minutes are utilised when stakeholders have to account for certain issues".* The secretary, in support of the SMTs, said, *"As governing body members we prepare minutes for accountability purposes". The principal stated that she convened meetings, makes announcements, provides administrators with minutes of previous meetings and reports to relevant stakeholders about school activities".*

The responses show that all participants give an account through making announcements, writing reports and by conducting meetings. After that they report

to the RCL members since they do not take part in the governing body meetings. As the literature review shows, RCLs as administrators must take part in the decision-making meetings but RCL members are not always afforded their right to attend meetings.

4.6.4 Comparison

Table 4.6 gives a comparative summary of the elements that constitute accountable governance as pointed out by the participants of School A, B and C.

TABLE 4.6: GIVES THE CONSTITUTING ELEMENTS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

	School A	School B	School C
Principle	The principle of accountability	The principle of accountability	The principle of accountability
RCL members	• To be answerable for actions and decisions taken. • Accountable to parents, SMTs and the principal	• To be answerable for one's actions • Requires evidence • Dissemination of information • Reporting • Accountable to parents, SMTs and the principal	• Entails collective responsibility • Answerability • Giving reasons • Interdependent with co-operation and transparency • Reporting decisions agreed upon • Accountable to SMTs for learner discipline. • Other learners
SMT members	• Giving answers for decisions, responsibilities and actions taken • Accountable for learner academic performance and annual and monthly reports	• To be answerable for decisions taken. • Justify for actions taken • Accountable for learner academic progress, school development, discipline and promotion of teamwork	• To explain for decisions taken • Reporting issues of paramount importance • Accountable for learner and educator performance, implementation of departmental policies and school development

	• Accountable to parents, governing body and HoD	• Accountable to parents, principal and the Department of Education	• Accountable to learners, parents, principal and district managers
Governing body members	• Answerable for responsibilities and roles played • Be informed about decisions taken • Accountable for school governance, decisions taken and financial management and school resources • Accountable to the principal, parents and HoD	• Being answerable • Take responsibility • Give reasons for actions taken • Account for physical resources • Finances • Learner discipline • Accountable to parents, principal and HoD	• Promotes responsibility • Answerability • Give reasons for decisions taken • Interdepended with co-operation and transparency • Accountable for school maintenance • Resources • Finances • Respect for others' rights • Accountable to parents, principal, district officials and HoD
Principal	• Answerable • Informed • Justify for actions • Accountable for financial management and the empowering of the governing body. • Accountable to parents, governing body members and HoD	• Answerable for actions and decisions taken. • Accountable for creating trust and honesty • Opening doors for all • Guiding the school governors. • Accountable to learners, parents district officials and HoD	• Being answerable for what is happening in the school • Accountable for school management and learner academic achievement • Accountable to district managers and HoD

The RCLs of all the selected schools referred to accountability as being answerable for decisions and actions taken by individual stakeholders or collectively. They

indicated that they are accountable to their parents, SMTs, the governing body and the principal for dissemination of information and reporting to others about school activities and one referred to the well-being of learners.

All SMTs in these schools saw accountability as being answerable for decisions and actions taken by stakeholders. Further, School C SMTs saw reporting as paramount to all stakeholders. In School A, School B and School C, SMTs perceive that they are accountable to parents, governing body, principal and the district officials. They are accountable for learners' academic performance, and monthly and annual reports. In School A, School B and School C, governing body members described accountability as being answerable and giving reasons for decisions and actions taken. In addition, accountability means being informed of responsibilities that are carried out by school administrators. They feel accountable to parents, the principal and the HoD and they are accountable for school governance, decisions taken, financial management and resources. School C said further that they are accountable for the maintenance of school resources.

The principals of the three schools indicated that they are answerable for decisions and actions. School A principal stated that accountability includes the justification of actions taken. All principals indicated that they are accountable to governing body members and HoDs and they are accountable for financial management and the empowering of the school governing body.

4.7 Meaning of the principle of transparency

The meaning that the participants attach to the principle of transparency is discussed below.

4.7.1 School A

As indicated in chapter 2 (cf. section 2.5.2.2) all stakeholders are to access information about decisions taken by the school administrators, school policies (financial policy) and to receive reports about what is happening in the school.

Interviews and focus group showed that the RCLs of School A understand the principle of transparency: RCL chair A indicated that, *"transparency means to have access in order to get relevant information"*. RCL Vice chair A commented, *"transparency is to get clarity about everything that you need to know"*. RCL Secretary A said, *"transparency means to*

be informed of every development in the school". RCL treasurer A stated that*, "It means to the disclosure of all-important matters like finances of the school and the employment of new staff".*

The SMTs perceived transparency as follows:

SMT A1 stated that *"A transparent school is a school which allows all members of the school community access to everything that belongs to the schools"*. He further said, *"School management must uncover everything, e.g. school activities, resources and decision-making processes to all stakeholders"*. SMT A2 said, *"Transparency means open access to information, clear plans and objectives be stated to other stakeholders and people with interest in education, all stakeholders be part of the budgeting processes and utilisation of finances".*

SMT A3 further stated that *"we should hold meetings regularly and there should be open access of circulars; and I will never say administration in this school is transparent because of inadequate communication with stakeholder: communication is limited to individuals due to lack of trust amongst members and unresolved conflicts".*

SMT A4 stated, *"For example, school administration is transparent where there are no latent agendas, everything is done openly and there are no secrets except for confidential information".*

The chair A stated that, *"Transparency means the ability of stakeholders to have access to relevant information and knowledge of these school policies and access to school documents"*. Vice chair A said that, *"Transparency means the communication of important information with all those entitled to such information and accessed by all involved in administration"*. Secretary A stated that, "*Transparency is the disclosure of essential information which can contribute positively to school administration"*. Treasurer A added to the above by saying that, *"Transparency means the involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making process".*

The principal stated that, *"Transparency means conducting quarterly meetings where issues about the school are discussed; moreover, I make copies of financial reports and those are explained in governing body meetings where they are made available for inspection".*

The participants' views as stated above were confirmed in the literature review (cf. section 2.5.2.2). The principle of transparency entails access to information by all stakeholders. All participants understand what the principle of transparency entails. They mentioned clarity, access, disclosure, communication being informed and participatingas essential elements of transparency.

4.7.2 School B

In the literature review (cf. section 2.5.1) "transparency" is defined as the condition of being open to public scrutiny; the condition of allowing the information to pass through to other people. Further than that, it means that citizens can attend public meetings to obtain information on what happens in schools. Additionally, transparency must not be based only on the will of the majority but should also respond to the needs of individuals. This implies that stakeholders need to have access to the available information and be able to communicate it effectively to other members. The administrators need to protect, promote and entrench the principle of openness and access to information in schools (cf. section 2.5.1). RCLs seem to understand what the principle of transparency entails.

RCL chair B said, *"Transparency is a process whereby one reports everything done in the school and support that by making important information accessible to those concerned"*. RCL vice chair B indicated that, *"Transparency is to come clean when reporting what has been performed for example, reporting back to the school stakeholders on financial matters by giving financial report to parents, learners, educators and other staff members"*.

RCL secretary B stated that, "*Transparency means to create access to anything that concerns the school".* RCL treasurer B explained that, *"Transparency is a process of reporting school finances and learner results to the parents of learners at the school"*.

In response to the question on the meaning of transparency, SMT B1 commented that *"Transparency means having access to documents and policies regulating the school".* SMT B2 indicated that *"Transparency means receiving reports on school finances and the ability to report learners' progress to parents and to the district officials"*.

SMT B3 confirmed that *"Transparency is to have access to school documents and important information about the school".* SMT B4 echoed that, *"Transparency is reached when one has open access to all the information and documents, and this is done through delegation and shared responsibilities"*.

The governing body: chair B said, "*Transparency means to receive correct information from the school, and it includes regular reporting to all stakeholders".* Vice chair B stated that, *"Transparency means to receive information from the school and be able to participate in school decision-making processes".* Secretary B indicated that, *"Transparency means to have knowledge of how school finances are managed and have access to information of what concerns us as governing bodies".* Treasurer confirmed that, *"Transparency refers to the access of all*

stakeholders to school properties and to receive sufficient knowledge about what is taking place in the school".

The principal stated that, *"Transparency means a condition where parents may access information about the school curriculum, finances, resources and physical resources, learner progress of each and every quarter and school activities for each year and every year. He further stated that transparency is the ability of one to give feedback for what has been done already".*

The participants' responses confirm what has been evidenced in the literature review (cf. sections 2.5.1 & 2.5.2.4).

Transparency involves reporting, open access to information, participation and to receive information about what happening in the school. Therefore, the above responses show that all participants in School B seemed to understand that transparency means the availability of information and access to the decisions taken by a school. Therefore, at School B, stakeholders might have access to school information which could explain why they are well informed about the concept of transparency.

4.7.3 School C

As already established; school administrators must have knowledge of the principle of transparency to create a transparent school administration. Transparency entails a condition of being open to public scrutiny and that implies that administrators must allow information to be conveyed to other stakeholders (cf. section 2.5.1). However, the responses that follow seem to indicate that the school is not fully transparent.

Although the principal is obliged to play a major role in ensuring that school administrators have knowledge and understanding of the principle of transparency for effective and efficient school administration (cf. section 2.5.2). RCLs must be transparent about decisions taken in the school governing body meetings, make sure that every learner is in possession of the Code of conduct for learners and understands what is contained in it. When they were asked about the meaning they attach to transparency,

RCL chair C stated that, *"Transparency means a situation whereby we are informed about everything that is taking place in this school which includes finance of the school".* RCL vice chair C indicated that *"The school is transparent when all stakeholders receive clear reports about the school finances and other activities that are taking place in the school".* RCL3 confirmed that

stakeholders receive financial reports and other activities instead of participating in such activities: *"Transparency means everybody must know how much the school has in the bank and what are these funds budgeted for and where learners must form part of the decision makers".* RCL treasurer C stated that*, "transparency means to be in a state of being open and honest about school processes and procedures".*

SMT C1 responded by saying, *"Transparency is the when [sic] the principal convenes meetings, make laws, policies and circulars accessible to everyone, involves every stakeholder in decision making processes, but school policies are not accessible".* SMT C 2 said, *"For a school to be transparent, the principal must work in close co-operation with all stakeholders and open doors for all and this is not the case in this school".* SMT C3 indicated that, *"But there is nothing done by the school to be transparent the reason is that some members have more knowledge of school issues than the others".* SMT C4 stated that, *"Conducting governing body meetings where important issues are discussed, and representation of all stakeholders is taken into consideration".* He further added,

"I wish that the school establish parent teacher association where all stakeholders will be in a position to know exactly everything happening inside". The above responses show perceived lack of transparency in School C.

The governing body members defined "transparency" as follows: Chair C explained it as the*, "Disclosure of information, processes and actions to other stakeholders".* Vice Chair C said,

"To give information to other stakeholders about the activities of the school". Secretary C defined it as, *"The sharing of information with all the relevant stakeholders".* Treasurer C stated it as, *"The action of giving full information to other stakeholders so that planning and decision-making processes can take place easily".* The principal explained it as, *"The process of consulting with all relevant stakeholders on the school administration matters".* From the responses given above, the RCL, SMTs, members of the governing body and the principal of School C seem to understand the concept of transparency as it is stated in the literature review (cf. sections 2.5.1 & 2.5.2), but some of the participants indicated that in practice, the principle of transparency was not fully implemented.

4.7.4 Comparison

Table 4.7 summarises elements that constitute transparency as indicated by participants of the three selected schools.

TABLE 4.7: VARIOUS ELEMENTS THAT CONSTITUTE TRANSPARENCY AS THEY WERE STATED BY THE PARTICIPANTS OF SCHOOL A, B AND C

	School A	School B	School C
Principle	The principle of transparency	The principle of transparency	The principle of transparency
RCL members	• Open access • Disclosure • clarity	• access to information • clarity •	• Be informed • Receive reports of finances
SMT members	• Open access to information • To uncover things • To open	• Reporting leaner performance • Access to information and documents	• Access to information • Meetings • Informed about laws and policies • Work together
Governing body members	• Involvement • Access • Communication • Disclosure of information	• Reporting • Receive information • Participation • Acknowledgement of events	• Reporting • Participation • Access • Disclosure of information, rules and regulation
Principal	• Clarity • Access • Disclosure • To be informed • participate	• Reporting • Open access to information • participation	• access • Reporting • Participation

In all the selected schools, RCLs indicated that transparency refers to open access to information. School A and B further included clarity and disclosure as the element of transparency. In School C RCLs further stated that transparency includes being informed and reporting about school finances but the SMTs said it was not happening in their school.

SMTs in all the selected schools indicated that transparency referred to open access to school information. School A differed from School B and School C in that SMTs transparency includes disclosing events that occurred at school. SMTs in School B added reporting as another element of transparency. School C SMTs on the other

hand mentioned that transparency includes the fact that administrators should be informed of educational laws and policies.

All governing body members of the respective schools mentioned access to information as an essential element of transparency. In School A, governing body members also included involvement and communication as other elements. This clearly means that there is interdependency between these democratic principles. In School B and C, governing body members mentioned participation as another important element for transparency to occur.

All principals in these schools identified open access to information as the main element of transparency. School A principal indicated that clarity and disclosure are other elements of transparency. On the other hand, School B and C principals identified reporting and participation as elements which clearly indicate that democratic principles are interdependent.

4.8 The principals' promotion of democratic principles

The discussion with RCLs, SMTs, governing body and the principals of School A, School B and School C respectively follows.

4.8.1 School A

Principals, as functionaries of state organs, are obliged to promote the democratic principles for public administration namely, co-operation, accountability and transparency (cf. sections 2.3, 2.4 & 2.5). They must co-operate with colleagues of all grades to maintain a good teaching standard and progress among learners, and to foster administrative efficiency within the school (cf. 2.4.2.4). In addition, principals must implement and then monitor the educational policies and legislation in the school (cf. section 2.4.2.3). They need to ensure that the collective decision-making processes are as inclusive as possible.

The participants felt that the principal did not take measures to involve all stakeholders in the school's administration. He (or she) does not encourage co-operation. For example, RCL chair A said,

"In spite of the fact that we are not involved in the decision-making process, the principal is not doing anything to promote and observe the principle of co-operation in this school. According to our knowledge, he is supposed to consult us as RCLs whenever [sic] is going to do something which

involves the pillars of the school. For example, learners be represented in meetings discussing school finances and employment of whoever is going to perform any form of work in this school, but this is not the case here".

RCL chair A stated that "I believe the principal is transparent because matters of concerns are announced during morning devotions by the principal". Besides that, RCL vice chair A said, *"Sometimes as RCLs we are told to announce certain issues class to class for other learner to be aware".* RCL secretary A *"I do not think this school is transparent enough if we still remain sidelined because we do not have evidence of what is decided upon".* RCL treasurer A stated that, *"We receive information through announcements at times since we are unable to attend meetings because they are conducted during school hours".*

The acting principal's failure to promote co-operation is also evident from RCL vice chair A's statement that *"we are left behind ".* RCL secretary A commented that the RCL is not included and not allowed to participate in the school's administration. RCL treasurer A agreed that as RCLs, "*we are being sidelined".*

The perspectives of the RCL members are supported by the SMTs and the governing body members. According to SMT A1, the principal does not take leadership seriously and failed to facilitate the promotion of the democratic principles and neglected to "*cultivate leadership qualities in members of the school governance".* SMT A2 mentioned that even where plans are drawn up, the principal fails *"to initiate the plans"* which then *"renders the whole exercise useless".* SMT A3 just nodded his head as an indication that he agrees with what is articulated by other members stating *"ja, ja, ja! That is what is happening in this school".* SMT A4 confirmed this perspective, stating that,

"The real principal is supposed to: build teamwork, distribution of leadership empowerment, development and motivation of stakeholders including educators, develop a sense of trust and commitment amongst members particularly school governing bodies in terms of empowerment or training but there is nothing done by the principal here".

These participants describe what can be expected from principals, especially the need for principals to empower governing bodies to be able to perform their functions effectively. The principal needs to meet parents and discuss the conduct and progress of their children.

According to policies, the principal should co-operate with colleagues of all grades to maintain a good teaching standard and progress among learners, and to foster

administrative efficiency within the school in the literature review (cf. section 2.4.2.3).

Chair A mentioned that the principal does nothing to promote co-operation: *"The principal is sometimes not open about school finances to the RCLs and I assume that they are not supposed to be involved in meetings discussing school financial position".* Vice chair A confirmed that *"what we want is for school processes to run in a correct manner and in addition to that there is lack of co-operation between us, RCLs, educators and the principal".* The principal avoids teamwork and is seemingly not ready to share the decision-making processes with some stakeholders who will be affected by the results. Secretary A expressed his own view that, *"The principal seemed not to be willing to promote co-operation because the school is characterised by conflicts between him and other educators".* However, Treasurer A seems to have a different opinion from others, *"The principal invites us by writing letters which provides us with the date of the meeting and so far, as governing body we are happy about how things are handled".*

The above responses reveal that the principal is not perceived as not promoting the inclusion of learners and fails to build a team spirit amongst the administrators. Considering that the constituting elements for co-operation include team spirit, building of trust and the promotion of participation and consultation by all stakeholders, one can conclude that School A does not have a co-operative administration. According to the Schools Act, the principal is expected to co-operate with the governing body of his or her school (cf. section 2.3.2.2). The reason that Treasurer A has given a different view could be due to the fear of exposing lack of good governance in this school. When the principal was asked what does to promote and observe democratic principles, he claimed, *"I try by all means to incorporate every stakeholder in decisions taken in the school".* This contradicts what other stakeholders have said, as stated above.

Concerning the principle of accountability, RCLs felt that the principal is not promoting compliance with the principle of co-operation. RCL Chair A indicated that nonetheless, regarding learner discipline *"we receive reports as learners".* RCL Vice chair A indicated that,

"Our principal does not promote the principle of accountability in some cases because I believe we will never be able to answer for our decisions and actions as long as we did not take part in such decisions; ours is to get into the classroom and learn".

RCL secretary A confirmed the above: *"As long as we are not provided with our responsibilities as RCLs I think we are not answerable to anything happening in this school.* RCL treasurer A said*, "The principal is not promoting participation of learners. As a result, I am not sure as to whether I can say he is promoting the principles or not".*

From the above, it transpires that the RCLs are not doing what they were supposed to be doing in this school because they are neglected by the school principal. This is a sign of lack of consultation, transparency and accountability in School A.

SMT A1 confirmed this:

"I feel there is nothing done by the principal to promote and observe compliance by imparting information to us as SMTs and by encouraging others to be more autonomous, but I haven't seen that here. What I know is that he is a dictator".

SMT A2 said that, *"the principal should promote and observe compliance by making people who work under his leadership feel responsible for what they are obliged to render".* SMT A3 commented that,

"In this school the principal, is 'an all-rounder' there are no committees involved like the finance committee. Whenever something is going to be purchased; that will be a deal between him and some members of the governing body".

SMT A4 explained that, *"The budget here is drawn by the principal and his administrator in so much that they once made to account by the governing body members".*

From the responses stated above, one can deduce that the principal and SMT members seem not to have fulfilled their obligation of mentoring the RCL members on administrative matters as required by policies discussed in the literature study (cf. section 2.4.2.2). SMT A3 stated that, *"The principal does not implement the school policies which are supposed to assist the learners, parents and the governing body.* SMT A4 indicated that, *"The principal does not maintain order in the school".* Vice chair A4 supports what SMT A3 said earlier that, *"we are not assisted to understand the school policies". "What I know is that he is a dictator".* The Chair A's commented that,

"Since we do not understand what is supposed to take place in the school regarding the administration matters, we often utilise funds without following the proper budgetary processes".

The acting principal's failure to promote co-operation is also evident from Secretary A's statement that, *"in terms of development only those who are in close relationship with the principal are on board".* Treasurer A commented that the parents are not all in good standing with the principal: *"parents are often not informed about school activities and decisions*

because some of us are left behind". Treasurer A indicated that, *"The principal does not encourage the governing body members to attend the scheduled quarterly meetings, hence some of those meetings are often postponed to later dates due to poor attendance".* According to the literature review (cf. section 2.6.1) there needs to be frequent communication between stakeholders to advise one another on how governance should be improved. Further, if administrators conduct meetings with the aim of reporting to other stakeholders, everyone will be able to gain enough knowledge and understanding of the principle of accountability. However, if the school principal fails to incorporate all stakeholders in school meetings that will hamper compliance with democratic principles. Some decision-makers will be unable to receive feedback of what is happening in School A.

The participants thus all agreed that the acting principal does not do much tangible to promote and observe compliance with democratic principles in this school. According to participants, the principal usurps the powers of many stakeholders and does not understand or carry out co-operative, accountable and transparent requirements. The SMT members also felt excluded and referred to him as a "dictator". Regardless, the principal and his team are required to meet their obligations to maintain democratic values when executing their responsibilities (cf. section 2.4.2.3). The principal, as a representative of the Department of Education, is accountable to the HoD and needs to carry out his or her professional management duties in accordance with the Constitution (RSA 1996b, ss 16(2) & 16A (1)(a)). On the other hand, the principal believes he is doing all it takes to ensure that everyone is accountable at this school by stating that, *"I am making sure that every stakeholder account for his or her responsibilities by requesting evidence of the work done from the different stakeholders".* These statements were contradicted by the participants.

The governing body perceived a lack of transparency between the principal and the other members of the school administration. However, Treasurer A stated that the principal communicates everything with them. A possible explanation for this discrepancy between Treasurer A's response and that of the rest of the governing body members is that she is, because of her position as treasurer, more regularly in contact with the principal than the other members. She has the highest qualification of all governing body members; and might be afraid of going against the principal. Secretary A's comment, "*Only those who are in close relationship with the*

principal are on board" confirms that the principal is selective regarding with whom the information is shared. From the literature review (cf. section 2.5) it was evident that lack of transparency in the school administration will create an atmosphere which is not conducive to cooperation and will hamper efficient and effective school administration.

4.8.2 School B

According to the literature review and the literature study, the principal is obliged to forge co-operation between stakeholders and himself. As school leaders, principals can empower stakeholders to participate in school governance. When stakeholders are empowered, they will have knowledge of laws and policies and be able to implement them. Principals must give all stakeholders access to information through reports, meetings, newsletters, notice boards and flyers (cf. sections 2.3.2.2, 2.3.2.3 & 2.5.1). Data evidenced that, as in the case of School A, the administrators of School B lack knowledge of their legal obligations and one can deduce that the acting principal at School B fails to fulfil his obligation to inform them of the relevant laws and policies where requirements are set out (cf. section 2.6).

For example, RCL chair B said, *"Ever since I was elected, the principal has never provided us with the necessary tools . . . to be able to lead other learners".* RCL vice chair B stated that, *"Our parents are given reports without being given evidence of how school finances are used".*

RCL secretary B indicated that, *"As members of the RCL, we are unable to share information with other learners on the processes that take place at the school, because of being excluded by the principal from those processes".*

RCL treasurer B further stated that *"As RCLs we are supposed to be involved in financial deliberations so that we give financial report to other learners but that has never happened here".* The participants in School B felt that the principal fails to put appropriate measures in place to involve all relevant stakeholders to participate in the decision-making processes. There are still state institutions that overlook the importance of democratic administration by denying learners their legal right of participating in decision-making processes (cf. section 2.2).

The SMT members, as partners of the principal in school management, are equally obliged to assist the principal in promoting democratic principles and ensuring that administrators are monitoring and controlling the school funds. They need to be

willing to justify decisions taken. In addition, they contribute to the professional development of colleagues by sharing knowledge, ideas and resources (cf. section 2.4.2.3). There are mixed opinions. SMT B1 and B2 indicated that the principal is promoting democratic principles by incorporating everyone for participation in decisions taken in this school. SMT B1 stated that

"Stakeholders are given opportunity to come in and out of the school attending meetings conducted by the school, "SMT B2 said that, "*I believe that the principal is doing all he can to incorporate other stakeholders into our school matters pertaining the future of our school".*

SMT B3 and B4 however, disagreed and indicated that the principal needs to do much more, especially to improve communication and accountability. SMT B3 has this to say, *"The principal must enhance harmonious working relationships so as to increase accountability in this school, but this is not yet practiced here".* SMT B4 confirmed that, *"The principal will be able to promote accountability only if he is able to promote teamwork, communicate issues regularly because when there is co-operation there will be much more to account for".*

In support of what the SMTs stated above, Chair B stated that, *"Committees in this school are supposed to include a member of the governing body but there is nothing done by the school to ensure that we are invited when committee issues are discussed instead, we only receive reports about resolutions taken in such meetings"*

Vice chair B emphasised the lack of inclusion:

"Lack of co-operation and transparency put us as governors in the dark because the principal is supposed to reveal everything pertaining administration so that we can be at the same level of understanding".

Secretary B3 stated that,

"Learner participation and involvement is not a matter of importance in this school because no one seemed to be interested as to why we are not attending our school meetings".

Treasurer B4 supported the other participants' opinions: *"Our school results are deteriorating because of poor school management, lack of consultation and unity between stakeholders".*

It is therefore clear that the SMT members also believe that the principal fails to promote and observe the democratic principles. The governing body members revealed that the principal does not promote co-operation. As a result, stakeholders are not involved in committees and school governors are also left in the dark about events in this school. Treasurer B4 indicated the deterioration of school results could

be at least partially caused by lack of promotion and observance of democratic principles due to poor management. The acting principal must be held responsible for failing to involve learners in the school matters.

The acting principal said that at the beginning of each year, new learners and those who serve on the RCL are welcomed and a Code of conduct for learners is read and explained to them. Regarding their involvement in financial issues, he said,

"Issues regarding finances are delicate and therefore, they cannot be discussed with learners and it is also difficult for us to convene frequent parents' meetings as we do not have amply time for that".

In addition, the principal claims to promote accountability by making sure that, educators teach, and learners learn. He further stated that the RCL's duty is to look after learner discipline and to supervise them in the absence of educators.

The acting principal's comments, as stated above, indicate that he does not understand his leadership role as principal. The Schools Act (cf. section 2.4.2) brought to light that democratic principles are interdependent. The principal seems not understand that they need to implement educational policies and legislation as it is one of their obligations of maintaining democratic values when executing his or her responsibilities through the literature review (cf. section 2.4.2.3). Therefore, principals of the selected schools must assist, facilitate, support, promote, observe and uphold the democratic principles of administration as prescribed in the Schools Act. The decline in the school's academic achievement could possibly be the result of the lack of management skills

4.8.3 School C

This section focuses on strategies used by Principal C in ensuring that compliance with the principles of co-operation; accountability and transparency are promoted and observed in this school. The members of the RCL, SMT and governing body gave different responses as to what the principal does to promote and observe compliance with democratic principles to ensure a co-operative, accountable and transparent school administration.

Some signs of non-compliance were evident. The RCL pointed out that they were often not invited to attend any governing body meeting; as a result, they do not regard themselves as being essential members of it. RCL chair C said, *"The involvement of stakeholders is not done in a proper way because there are certain processes where*

we are not invited to take part in as RCLs, for example, in school finances; and we are unable to report back to learners on matters regarding finances". RCL vice chair C stated that, *"We know nothing about school finances and we do not even bother ourselves about it because our teacher always reminds us that finances have nothing to do with us and I believe our principal does not take any initiative in this matter".* RCL secretary revealed that, *"As much as she communicates every step to be taken by the school there is not even a single day that we were called to participate in financial meetings although we would love to, even if one can ask us about how much does the school received from the government we won't be able to provide the answers for that and I believe our principal is failing to promote the principle of inclusion and participation".*

They all claimed that the principal is doing almost nothing to promote accountability and transparency, but as far as co-operation between stakeholders is concerned, the principal is reporting everything. This indicates that she does not open a space for RCLs to take part in the decision-making processes especially finances, as mentioned. The principal as the ranking member of school administration is responsible for the involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making processes and to ensure that these principles are implemented (cf. section 2.4.1 & 2.4.2.2).

Like the RCL members, the SMT members and the governing body believed that not much is done by the principal to promote democratic principles. This implies that the principal as a manager is not fully promoting and observing the principles of democratic administration as mandated by law and policy documents, to ensure that all stakeholders uphold the constitutional principles (cf. section 2.3.1, 2.4.1 & 2.5.1).

SMT C1 said, "*The principal must carry out orientation and induction sessions of new staff members, learners and governing bodies where they will receive training about what is contained in the legal prescript governing schools,* "He added, *the principal must make it possible for all stakeholders to familiarise themselves with and understand the contents of the Schools Act, but this is not the case at present moment".* SMT C2 said that, *"Lack of professionalism and approach to matters of conflicting views and different approach to disciplinary issues and matters regarding learners' rights and the Code of conduct for Learners make things difficult for the principal to promote and observe compliance with the principle of accountability".*

SMT C3 indicated that, *"The principal schedule regular meetings with the SMT to discuss pertinent issues instead of focusing on the organisation, planning and how regular feedbacks can be done in order to develop this school".* SMT C4 claimed that *"The principal should handle and*

maintain all financial records and keep those neatly in a safe custody and that must be done efficiently in our school".

The SMTs felt that the principal does not implement the principle of accountability correctly in that learners' rights are not promoted, financial matters are not accounted for, and school records are not made available to other stakeholders. The principal does not carry out the induction of new staff members and the planning and organisation of school activities are generally poorly done.

Regarding how the principal promotes the democratic principles, the governing body members stated the following:

Chair C indicated that, *"The principal does not make provisions or support the involvement of learners in anything that concerns school administration".* Vice chair C stated that *"there are still things done without our consent, e.g. procurement and budgeting and good tendering processes of jobs to be done".* Secretary C stated, *"There are no clear plans and regular consultative meetings to say [sic] our views on how financial management should be run".* Treasurer C confirmed that, *"There are no meetings conducted for sharing important information on departmental circulars and we have no copies of various policies guiding administration".*

One of the principal's obligations is to encourage stakeholder participation in implementing decisions taken by the school. As the pillars of the school, they must ensure maximum participation in all school activities. The RCLs, SMTs and governing body agreed that the principal does almost nothing to promote democratic principles of administration in the school, but the principal claims that he tries his best to promote these principles. *"I am trying to distribute leadership roles, empower and develop educators, SMTs, members of the school governing body to motivate them but some refuse instructions".* Policies described in the literature review show that the principal is expected to co-operate with the governing body of his or her school by attending to and participating in all meetings (cf. section 2.3.2.2). The principal did not fully observe and promote democratic principles in this school.

4.8.4 Comparison

The principals in School A, B and C, did not promote and observe the principles for democratic administration as they could not ensure that there was consistent consultation, involvement and information sharing. They thus, failed to fulfil a legal obligation. The observance and promotion of these principles are mandated by law,

as in the Constitution and Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) (cf. section 2.4). Furthermore, failure to observe the importance of these principles negatively affects the effective and efficient school governance (cf. section 2.2).

In School A, the RCL members felt that the principal did not take measures to involve all stakeholders to participate in the school's administration. The responses from the SMTs reveal that the principal does not consistently promote the inclusion of learners and, he fails to build a team spirit amongst his staff members. The principal is supposed to know that team spirit, building of trust, the promotion of participation and consultation with all stakeholders are essential elements for co-operative administration. The reason that Treasurer A has given a different view could be the fear of exposing wrongdoing in this school.

The governing body members agreed that almost nothing is done by the acting principal to promote and observe compliance with democratic principles in this school. The principal appears to usurp the powers of stakeholders and does not understand or wish to comply with democratic school administration. The principal is supposed to provide guidance to all stakeholders and allow everyone to take part in the decision-making processes regarding their roles and responsibilities.

In School C, the principal fails to fully promote and observe the democratic principles. The governing body revealed that the principal does not promote co-operation; stakeholders, including school governors, are not included in committees in this school. All but one response showed that there is lack of transparency between the principal and the other members of the school administration.

4.9 Factors hindering compliance with democratic principles of co-operation,
    accountability and transparency

To uncover the factors hindering compliance with the democratisation of schools, factors hindering co-operation, accountability and transparency in School A, School B and School C are now discussed.

4.9.1 School A

Data was collected by means of focus groups with the RCL members, SMT members and the governing bodies of these selected schools, as well as interviews with school principals. Factors that hinder compliance, according to the literature

review (cf. section 2.6) are as follows: lack of participation, lack of commitment, poor communication, leadership style which is not promoting good working relationships, and lack of consultation between stakeholders. It is difficult for them to take part in the decision-making processes according to the participants from School A.

According to the literature review, exclusion and the lack of participation were identified as factors hampering the observance and promotion of the constitutional principles for democratic school governance (cf. section 2.6.3). Responding to the question on which factors were hampering the observation of the constitutional principles in the school, RCL chair A identified, *"The fact that we are not involved in certain issues and decision taken unilaterally in many cases by the principal and his governing body".* RCL secretary A believed that, *"We are not encouraged to participate in school governing body meetings because those meetings are always conducted during tuition time".* The exclusion of RCLs is confirmed by Chair A:

"The meetings are usually attended by parents and educators when we ask about the learners who are supposed to represent others the feeling is that they must not be disturbed because it is still tuition time".

Interestingly, the RCL members believe the principal and governing body exclude them, as seen above. However, the governing body also felt marginalised. They claim the principal usurps its powers and functions. The lack of cooperation and unity in School A's administration is also confirmed by SMT A4's statement: *"Personal interests shown by stakeholders and the style of leadership result in us not functioning in accordance with educational policies".* And by Treasurer A,

"Unresolved personal conflicts fuel the atmosphere of animosity and cliques amongst staff members which could have been avoided by allowing everyone access to school issues and that results in under performance of our school".

The absence of healthy relationships between the administrators of School A will make cooperation impossible because there is a need for healthy working relationships amongst stakeholders (cf. section 2.3.1). The participants' responses reveal that in this school there is not enough space created for interaction and co-operation as required by the Schools Act (cf. section 2.3.2.2). And the principal is failing to perform his management function to promote collective accountability.

The members of the RCL, SMT and governing body agreed that, not all administrators could actively fulfil their administrative duties and the fact that

interaction is not encouraged contributes to the formation of non-effective and inefficient school administration. RCL chair A stated that a, *"Lack of communication between stakeholders' hampers co-operation and accountability because our principal does not encourage interaction between members of school administration".* SMT A3 said *"Poor communication and lack of space created for RCLs to apply their views hinder compliance".* Vice chair A indicated lack of participation and poor communication, *"Lack of participation by some the stakeholders, results in poor communication amongst school administrators and that affect school administration negatively".*

Although a lack of commitment and active involvement of administrators was identified by several participants, the parties identified as non-committed and inactive differed according to the responding participants. RCL treasurer A confirmed that,

"My feeling is that democracy is utilised selectively because there are issues where accountability is needed but it won't be observed, and the parent component is not challenging such irregularities that occur in this school".

The Vice chair A indicated that *"Lack of information sharing sessions, lack of participation in school activities and communication especially between the principal and educators hinders co-operation between stakeholders".* Secretary A stated that lack of commitment and disputes amongst educators hindered compliance with the principles, *"I think the lack of commitment by members particularly the school management team, results in the formation of disputes which made educators to be in different camps".* But Vice chair mentioned that in School A, *"We are also obliged [sic] for learner discipline at this school but we never developed any Code of conduct for learners and also we have never been involved in any hearing". "The school is drafting the budget for us and thereafter we take it to the parents, but you will find out that there are goods or activities that will be paid for which were not budgeted for".*

These responses signify that in School A there is a lack of or no accountability in certain instances; participants mentioned factors hampering accountability such as lack of information sharing, participation, communication, commitment, teamwork and the mismanagement of school finances.

The acting principal supports the vice chair's point of view that non-participation by educators in school activities is a hampering factor:

"Some educators have a tendency of not contributing in whatever activity are taken in this school except for attending to their periods". They do not involve themselves in any

deliberations or extra-curricular activities even if I want to delegate some duties this seemed impossible".

The SMT members emphasised the problems caused by lack of knowledge and understanding of law and policy supporting democratic governance. The principal is supposed to channel experience, skills, knowledge and to conduct training so that stakeholders can confidently fulfil they obligations (cf. sections 2.4.2). SMT A1 responded by stating *"I think lack of understanding and knowledge of the legislation that governs education is a contributing factor".* SMT A2 added that *"Lack of understanding of what one has to perform lead to non-compliance with official instructions".* Treasurer A4 emphasised the lack of financial management skills as another factor affecting compliance, *"financial management which includes control and expenditure".* The lack of monitoring and reporting exacerbated the problem. The acting principal confessed that, *"In this school there is no collective decision-making. Maybe the reason is that there is no trust between us as stakeholders".*

Exclusion of RCL members, marginalisation of the governing body, lack of unity, absence of healthy relations amongst stakeholders, personal interests, lack knowledge and understanding of legal prescripts governing schools and the lack of collective decision-making due to mistrust amongst stakeholders were identified as factors hindering compliance with democratic principles in this school. The fact that the RCL and the SMT identified lack of communication and participation strongly indicate that communication and participation elements were needed for accountable and transparent administration.

4.9.2 School B

To uncover factors hindering compliance with the democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency, data was gathered from the focus groups with the RCLs, SMTs and the governing bodies of these selected schools, as well as interviews with school principals. Factors that hinder compliance were identified in the literature review (cf. section 2.6). They include lack of participation, lack of commitment, poor communication, leadership style, and lack of consultation between stakeholders. These factors were also identified by the participants in School B.

In the literature review, exclusion and the lack of participation were identified as a factor hampering the observance and promotion of the constitutional principles for

democratic school governance (cf. section 2.6.3). Participants in School B, specifically the RCL, also felt excluded from the school administration. RCL chair B stated that, "*Those in possession of power do not support learner participation in the* confirmed that, "*As RCLs we felt left behind because we are not consulted so as to become part of the decision makers of this school*".

The exclusion of RCL members is confirmed by SMT B1: "*RCLs never took part in the decision-making processes even if that involves them directly or other learners*". Surprisingly, no effort is made by the school to engage RCL members on any issues and excluded from the decision-making process at this school. Lack of involvement in School B's administration made learners the most neglected stakeholder, with no decision-making power.

SMT B3 confirmed that, "*As SMTs we are not informed as to how finances are managed by the principal and his governing body*". The lack of trust in School B is confirmed by SMT B4's statement: "*Another hampering factor is that financial matters are implemented without being communicated with us as educators*". The Chairperson confirmed the above: "*The principal and his SMTs should have devised means to involve learners particularly in meetings where school finances are to be discussed for every stakeholder to be at the same level of understanding in this school.*"

The lack of co-operation due to lack of communication, commitment, consultation and trust between administrators of School could make co-operation impossible. For co-operation to take place effectively there must be trust amongst stakeholders (cf. section 2.3.1).

The RCL, SMT and governing body members agreed that because not all administrators could actively participate to execute their duties and partnership was not encouraged, it led to poor communication between stakeholders. RCL chair B said that,

"*We have no say in this school, it is always our desire to see us discussing or being included in financial issues but there is nothing done by our principal to promote and ensure that we take part in those discussions*".

SMT B3 mentioned that, "*Poor communication affect the way in which the school is administered because lack of communication result in lack of compliance with the principles of co-operation*". Vice chair B stated that:

"The reason why as administrators to fail to comply with the principle of accountability is that there is lack of partnership between us and other members as a result, we do not communicate ideas".

Chair B confirmed lack of learner participation: *"No effort at all is made to engage learners on decisions taken on how finances and other staff are to be managed"*. Secretary B believed that the lack of commitment, promotion and observance of the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency resulted in non-compliance with these principles,

"*There are no measures in our possession regarding the late coming and absenteeism of educators and there were no disciplinary hearings ever taken in relation to educators and workers, but we conduct disciplinary hearings for learners in possession of drugs and dangerous weapons without the Code of conduct".*

The treasurer confirmed the above:

"To take decisions as far as punishment of learners who transgressed the law without the proper understanding of the Code of conduct hinders compliance with the principles of accountability and transparency".

Although lack of commitment by administrators was acknowledged by several participants, responses contrasted according to responding participants. RCL vice chair B confirmed that *"In my view the principal is not committed to provide guidance to other stakeholders regarding how their duties are to be executed".* SMT B1 claimed that educators and parents are unwilling to participate in school activities,

"Lack of commitment on the part of parents and educators hinders compliance because parents do not attend meetings unless the meeting has to do with financial matters and I assume the reason for non-attendance is that they are always of the opinion that educators have corrupt practices".

SMT B3 believed that another factor hindering the democratic principles was the wasteful expenditure of funds by the principal and his governing body: *"Up to date, the school does not have a proper budgeting plan. Attempts are always made to hold a budgeting meeting. It fails due to poor attendance".* Chair B confirmed a lack of commitment by indicating that *"We were held accountable by the parent body for failing to involve and to report the employment of a caretaker to other stakeholders".* In the literature review, the lack of commitment and lack of accountability on the part of administrators were identified from the focus groups and interview.

The members of the RCL, SMT and governing body agreed that administrators such as RCLs and governing body do not receive enough training and are not mentored. Lack of training contributes to reduces knowledge and understanding of the law and

policies supporting democratic governance. RCL vice chair B stated that *"As the RCL, we do not know which type of punishment should be meted out to learners who disobey the school rules, because of the absence of copies of the Code of conduct for learners"*. RCL secretary B revealed that *"Lack of compliance with democratic principles is aggravated by the lack of mentoring programmes from our school".* RCL treasurer B confirmed the above statement: *"Since we were elected as members of the RCL we have only received training from the Department of Education, but nothing done in our school to ensure that each and every learner has a copy of the Code of conduct as a result as RCLs we are unable to encourage commitment of learners to their Code of conduct".*

Vice chair B perceives that, *"There is nothing done by the principal and his educators to ensure that we perform our duties according to what is stipulated in the law".*

The leadership style was identified by various participants as one that hampers compliance in School B. In the literature review the leadership style was acknowledged as an obstacle (cf. section 2.6.4). In democratic terms, a school becomes more effective and accountable only if it involves all stakeholders in school activities (cf. section 2.3.1 & 2.4.1), but some of the RCLs feel that the school administration is not inviting to learners because doors are still closed to them. RCL chair B indicated that *"We would love to form part of the decision-making parties of this school to gain knowledge on how funds are supposed to be distributed to different cost centres".* RCL vice chair B believed that, *"RCL members are not encouraged by the school SMTs to have knowledge of financial management of which we would love to have an understanding".* SMT B1 indicated that, *"The principal takes decisions and executes them in various ways e.g. budgeting and spending of school finances without any communication with us as SMTs".* Interestingly even the SMT's feeling is that, in this school the governing body is advantaged because of its proximity to the acting principal. SMT B2 exposed that, *"The manner in which our principal manages the school makes me believe that it's actually teachers who are often the last to know new developments and plans at this school."* SMT B4 confirmed the lack of management and mentoring programmes for school administrators as identified by RCL vice chair B:

"There is no training conducted by the principal for the governing body to address how funds are managed and to me I felt that they are just watchdogs fumbling without the knowledge and understanding of how school matters are governed".

The above responses show that learners' right to participate in decision-making processes is not generally respected. As a result, they are gaining no experience

and lack knowledge of how their duties are to be carried out. This hindered compliance with the principle of co-operation and accountability.

It is the responsibility of the school principal and the SMTs to ensure that all stakeholders have sufficient knowledge and understanding of law and policies governing the school as mandated by the Schools Act, National Education Policy Act and Promotion to Access of Information Act (cf. section 2.3.2, 2.4.2 & 2.5.2). Stakeholders gain knowledge through training conducted by those in the authority as mandated by the Schools Act. In School B, stakeholders lack knowledge of law and policies because of the non-availability of training.

The SMT members stressed that the autocratic leadership style is one of the factors hampering compliance in School B. SMT B1 pointed out that, *"Our principal does not take other people's views and she is so selective when dealing with important issues".* SMT B3 added, *"As stakeholders we are operating in an environment of mistrust which is the biggest hindrance to transparency".* SMT B4 indicated that

> *"In this school the observance of the principles because the "modus operandi" is centred around [sic] secrecy, and teachers and committees are always cautioned and reminded about communicating decisions and talking about them. In addition to that, a culture of communication is stifled due to this insistence on being secretive about decisions taken".*

The success of compliance with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency depends largely on the manager's leadership style (cf. section 2.6.4). Autocratic leadership style encourages withdrawal of educators in school activities because it is characterised by the lack of communication, consultation, participation, partnership and lack of trust (cf. section 2.6.3). In support of what has been stated above, Treasurer B4 revealed that *"There are things which I think are not transparent enough in order to pave way for other stakeholders to participate freely in the governing body and parents' meetings."* Secretary B3 said, *"Certain members of the committees do not perform their duties and do not even account for their failure to perform those duties".*

The acting principal of School B further mentioned hampering factors as the lack of communication between stakeholders, poor co-operation between staff members, absence of positive contribution from educators and arrogance of members who regard themselves as having more information than others:

"Certain staff members do not contribute positively towards the development of this school." He further cited that some of the staff members simply keep quiet in the meetings as if nothing is happening.

The factors mentioned above clearly have a negative effect on school compliance in School B. The principal is supposed to ensure that these principles are promoted and observed by all stakeholders in a school (cf. section 2.6).

4.9.3 School C

The success of democratic school administration depends on the effective implementation of democratic principles such as co-operation, accountability and transparency. But rural secondary schools often face tremendous challenges emanating from incompetency of school managers to comply with the above stated principles. It is necessary to ensure that stakeholders participate, commit, communicate, consult and have a good leadership style. As stated in the cases above (all three schools) hampering factors identified in the literature review (cf. section 2.6) included lack of participation, lack of commitment, poor communication, leadership style, lack of consultation between stakeholders and lack of knowledge and understanding of the law and legal prescript.

The literature review identifies lack of participation and involvement as a factor hampering the compliance with the constitutional principles for democratic school governance (cf. section 2.6.3). It was mainly the RCL members who felt left behind regarding school administration because they were not being kept in the loop; being invited to meetings or informed of events which resulted to the lack of teamwork which seemed to be the barrier blocking the implementation of democratic principles of co-operation; accountability and transparency (cf. section 2.6). School administrations must co-operate to achieve a set goal: co-operation thus requires team effort.

RCL C1 commented on *"Lack of engagements where learners will be sharing ideas with the elderly members such as the governing body and the educators".* RCL C3 confirmed the lack of engagement by stating that *"As far as financial management is concerned; we are regarded as not part of it because we were never invited to such meeting of which I think the school lacks*

financial accountability". Chair C, for example, said,

"Sometimes the principal is taking decisions without our involvement. We believe that everything has to be communicated with us because we are supposed to take part in the decision-making process of this school".

In contrast with other participants, the vice chair C perceived non-involvement of learners as being triggered by negative learner attitude. She commented, *"Learner attitude towards school and security is another factor hampering accountability in this school".*

SMT C1 indicated that *"A lack of consultation between the principal and the SMT and the principal that withheld information as factors hampering transparency".* Treasurer C explained that, *"Poor communication [of] objectives between stakeholders, lead to mistrust amongst members because there are those who thought some of us are loyal to the principal even if she is not doing something good".* The responses above clearly indicate that there are poor inter-staff relations at School C.

RCL treasurer C claimed that, *"We have never received any form of empowerment or training in this school either from the principal or the other members of the SMT as a result we end up being confused on what to say to the student masses".*

In chapter 2 (cf. section 2.5 2 & 2.5.2.4) it became evident that RCL members are supposed to have access to relevant school information. As administrators, learners must be consulted regularly so that they can understand their responsibilities. All participants agreed that they receive almost no [sic] support from the SMT. SMTs are supposed to empower the RCLs, but in this case they did not do their duty as mandated by the Schools Act (cf. section 2.4.2).

The lack of knowledge and understanding of the law (Schools Act) and policies was pointed out by RCL chair C who commented that,

"The fact that we have no access to school finances and its processes and to policies that are relevant to school administration proves beyond doubt that there is a problem here. As RCLs we will never defeat a battle of learners' discipline without having knowledge and copies of the Code of conduct for learners".

RCL vice chair C confirmed the lack of knowledge and understanding of law and policy by saying that

"You will hear educators or the management team quoting sections of these rules when one learner transgressed rules without making copies available for us to read and understand what is stated".

When the SMT members were asked about factors hindering the implementation of democratic principles in this school, SMT C2 stated that,

"The principal exercises different administrative styles for the same thing. For example, if she is dealing with your case, it will be different from another educator's case, even if the cases are the same to her. |What is important is the person not the case itself".

SMT C3 confirmed that, *"The principal uses different approaches to matters of conflicting views and she does not use the same approach or check what does the law says about such a type of a conflict".* SMT C4 mentioned that,

"Pertaining disciplinary action to matters regarding learners' misconduct, there is no respect for learners' rights and learners do not have the Code of conduct. As a result, the parent and the learner are not aware of the form of punishment if he or she committed an offence".

The Chair C said, *"Communication breakdown in certain issues hampers compliance with the principle of accountability".* Secretary C confirmed the SMT 4's statement that, *"Learners do not seem to know which role to play in the governing body except to perceive the principal's office as courthouse to report learner misconduct".*

The non-compliance with democratic principles for public administration can thus be ascribed to a paucity of the required management competencies and knowledge of the legal prescripts from which the school policies should be derived.

Principal C pointed out that, *"A poor staff relations escalates mistrust because of competition amongst staff members that has a negative impact on accountability".*

The principal touched on an important requirement here, because good working relationships are a constituting element for co-operation and without co-operation, transparency and accountability also suffer (cf. section 2.4.1). The principal, as an ex-officio member of the school governing body and a school manager, has a legal obligation in terms of the Schools Act (cf. section 2.4.2.1) to see to it that their school's governing bodies are informed about relevant laws and policies. The focus group and interviews showed that the administration of School C lack the will to carry out their legal obligations. The principal of School C also fails to fulfil her obligation to inform stakeholders of relevant laws and policies regarding their obligations. For instance, Chair C mentioned that, *"The principal does not promote compliance at all because we are not involved in the compilation of school policies; we just amend what has already done".*

4.9.4 Comparison

Table 4.8 below lists factors that hinder compliance with democratic principles as identified by participants of the three selected schools.

TABLE 4.8: LIST OF FACTORS HAMPERING COMPLIANCE IN SCHOOLS A, B AND C

	School A	School B	School C
RCLs	• Lack of participation • Lack of commitment • Communication • Lack of consultation • Exclusion • Unilateral decision-making • No space created for other stakeholders	• Exclusion of RCLs • Communication • Commitment • Consultation • Lack of partnership • Lack of guidance • Lack of understanding and knowledge of the law and policies • Absence of positive contribution and arrogance of members	• Lack of engagements • Exclusion of RCLs • Lack of access to financial matters
SMTs	• Lack of communication • Lack of interaction • Commitment • Involvement • Selectivity in issues of democracy • Disputes	• Lack of communication • Lack of partnership • Lack of engagement • Lack of commitment • Lack of reporting • Lack of mentoring • Lack of school developments and plans • Lack of training • Mistrust	• Different administrative styles • Different approaches • Communication breakdown • Staff relations foster mistrust • Lack of involvement in school policies

School governing bodies	• Lack of understanding and knowledge of legislation. • Lack of understanding of responsibilities • No understanding of how funds are managed • Participation • Exclusion of leaners • Lack of information on financial matters	• Lack of proper understanding of the Code of conduct for learners. • Lack of commitment to provide guidance • Lack of reporting • Lack of mentoring • Unilateral decision-making	• Lack of involvement • Lack of communication • Learner attitude • Lack of empowerment or training
Principals	• Lack of teamwork • Teamwork • Lack of contribution from educators	• Lack of positive contribution from educators	• Poor staff relations

The RCLs of the participating schools indicated that communication, commitment, consultation, exclusion of stakeholders and lack of partnership are factors hindering compliance in Schools A, B and C. School A added other factors such as unilateral decision-making and no space created for participation. On the other hand, School B RCL members identified lack of guidance, absence of positive contribution and lack of understanding of educational laws and policies governing these schools. RCL members in School C regarded the lack of engagements as another hindrance to compliance with democratic principles.

The SMTs of the participating schools identified lack of communication, commitment and involvement as factors hindering compliance with democratic principles in School A, B and C. in addition to what they all stated above, School A regarded selectivity in issues of democracy and disputes as another hindrance to compliance. On the other hand, School B indicated lack of reporting, lack of information, and lack of training as hindrances to compliance. School C also cited different approaches to some issues of concern and different administrative styles and staff relations that hindered compliance with democratic principles.

4.10 Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, I presented data obtained by means of focus groups with RCLs, SMTs and governing bodies, and semi-structured interviews with principals of the selected schools. I analysed and interpreted research findings. Participants' own words were used to illustrate their perceptions. The literature review and study, the focus group discussions and interviews contributed to an understanding of how selected schools comply or otherwise with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. Data collected also revealed that there are still factors hampering the compliance of these schools with democratic principles for public administration. In the next chapter, a summary of the research findings, conclusions, recommendations and areas of further research are discussed.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented of data, the thematic analysis of the data, the interpretation of the analysed data and the formulation of findings. The research took place in three rural secondary schools; two of them are situated in villages and the third one in a "tribal authority" area. Focus group discussions took place with members of RCLS, SMTs and school governing bodies; and interviews were conducted with school principals to collect the relevant data to answer the research question. The aim of the research was to investigate the compliance of the selected rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District, Eastern Cape Province with the democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. Chapter 5 presents the summary of the entire research, with the findings and recommendations based on democratic principles for public administration.

5.2 Summary of the study

Chapter one gave the background of the study and the statement of the problem in relation to the adherence of school administrators with constitutional and democratic principles for public administration in their schools. These are the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. Thereafter, the research question, sub-questions, aims and objectives were outlined (cf. sections 1.4 & 1.5.2). The conceptual framework was stated (cf. section 1.7.1).

The qualitative research approach, research paradigm, multiple case study design, sampling techniques, and data collection methods were outlined. Data was analysed using thematic content analysis.

In chapter two, I covered the review of literature relevant to the study topic and the literature study of legal prescripts governing school administrations' adherence to the constitutional principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. The literature review focussed on the concepts of co-operation, accountability and transparency and the literature study on the implementation of those principles.

Chapter three discussed how I employed the research methodology introduced in Chapter 1 when gathering primary data from the three selected secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District, Eastern Cape Province. The main data collection

instruments employed during the fieldwork were focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. The focus groups were important in that they allowed me to elicit the responses of the members of the RCLs, SMTs and the governing bodies within their prescribed scope of their obligations as mandated by the legal prescripts. The interviews yielded rich description of the participants' perceptions.

Chapter four contained the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data obtained through the literature study and during the fieldwork conducted with the RCLs, SMTs, governing bodies (focus groups) and principals (semi-structured interviews). The areas covered by the focus groups were like those of the interviews; however, the questions were asked relative to participants' obligations. The literature review, literature study, focus groups and interviews enabled me to obtain all the information that was considered necessary for the study. In addition, the fourth chapter also discussed the similarities and differences in the way these schools comply with the democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. The data were presented, analysed and interpreted according to themes in each of the three cases.

5.3 Synopsis of the findings

From the findings in chapter four it was evident that the selected rural secondary schools do not do enough to comply with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency, because the principals failed to fully promote and observe democratic principles for public administration. Below is the summary of the research findings.

TABLE 5.1: THE SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS

The main research question: How do the administrations of selected rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District comply with constitutional principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency?	
Research sub-questions	**Research findings**
2. What are the perceptions of the principals, members of SMTs, RCLs and governing body regarding co-operative, accountable and transparent governance?	**SCHOOL A ((cf. sections 4.5.1 & 4.6.1.1)** **RCLs, SMTs, governing body members and the principal of School A (cf. sections 4.5.1 & 4.6.1.1).** **RCLs referred to co-operative, accountable and transparent administration as an administration where the following elements are present:** • communication • teamwork • participation • trust • respect for human rights • access to important information and documents • stakeholders are answerable for their actions and decisions taken. **SMT members described a co-operative, accountable and transparent governance as an administration where the following elements are present:** • communication between stakeholders • stakeholders working together for common goal • participation

	• inclusivity
	• informed administrators
	• trust
	• members can justify for their actions
	• open access to important information
	Governing body members described co-operative, accountable and transparent administration as an administration where the following elements are present:
	• teamwork
	• communication
	• participative decision-making processes
	• disclosure of information
	Principal described co-operative, accountable and transparent administration as an administration where the following elements are present:
	• teamwork
	• participative decision-making processes.
	• constructive relationships amongst team members
	SCHOOL B (cf. section 4.5.2)
	RCLs members referred to co-operative, accountable and transparent administration as an administration where the following elements are present:
	• interaction between administrators
	• consultation
	• space for participation

	• open access to information
	• reporting
	• collective decision-making processes
	• participation.
	• teamwork
	• actions aimed at the school's best interests
	SMTs described co-operative, accountable and transparent administration as an administration where the following elements are present:
	• teamwork towards achieving a common goal
	• harmonious environment
	• trust
	• respect for human rights
	• meetings
	Governing body members described a co-operative, accountable and transparent administration as an administration where the following elements are present:
	• involvement of all members of school administration
	• answerable administrators
	• teamwork
	• reporting mechanisms
	• inclusive decision-making processes
	Principal described co-operative, accountable and transparent administration as an administration where the following elements are present:

	• teamwork
	• harmonious relationships
	• informed administrators
	• openness and tolerance (administrators willing to take ideas from one another)
	SCHOOL C (cf. section 4.5.3)
	RCL members referred to co-operative, accountable and transparent administration as an administration where the following elements are present:
	• participation
	• teamwork
	• open access to important information
	• communication
	• reporting mechanisms
	• participative decision-making processes
	• administrators are answerable for decisions taken
	SMT members described a co-operative, accountable and transparent administration as an administration where the following elements are present:
	• tolerance
	• directed towards achievable goals
	• participation
	• openness
	• access to information and policies
	• information distribution

	Governing body members described a co-operative accountable and transparent administration as an administration where the following elements are present:
	- teamwork - participation - open access to important documents - good relationships - administrators enabled to answer for their responsibilities **Principal described a co-operative, accountable and transparent administration as an administration where the following elements are present:** - co-operative, accountable and transparent governance; administrators must be able to establish committees **SCHOOL C (cf. section 4.8.1)**
3. How do principals of the selected rural secondary schools promote and observe compliance with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency in their schools?	**RCL members** - The principal is doing nothing to promote and to observe democratic principle. - The principal is supposed to empower governing body members but there is no empowerment taking place in this school. **SMT members** - Felt that there is nothing done by the principal to promote and observe democratic principles. - Learners are excluded in the decision-making processes. **The governing body felt:** - There is lack of inclusion - Lack of team spirit

	• The principal is not building trust between members.
	• The principal does not promote participation in school activities.
	• The principal is not transparent about school matters.
	The principal:
	• The principal believes that he promotes and observes democratic principles by encouraging participation of all relevant stakeholders in the decision-making processes and giving reports of the relevant information.
	RCL members in School B (4.8.2)
	• Felt that the principal fails to promote democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.
	• She fails to allow participation of all stakeholders
	SMT members:
	• Also felt that the principal is not promoting and observing democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.
	The governing body members:
	• The principal does not promote the principles the reason is that committee and the other stakeholders are left behind because of lack of management skills.
	The principal:
	• Believes he is doing all in his power to promote democratic principles in this school such as the incorporation of all relevant stakeholders in the decision-making processes and requesting evidence of the executed function from stakeholders.
	RCLs in School C (cf. section 4.8.3)

	• They felt that there is nothing done by the principal to promote democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. **SMT members:** • They also echoed the RCL that the principal is doing nothing to promote these principles. **The governing body members also felt:** • There is nothing done by the principal to promote democratic principles. **The principal indicated that he:** • Delegates leadership tasks • Develop the capacity and competencies of educators, SMT members and governing body members

5.4 Factors hindering compliance at the participant schools

Although participants in School A, School B and School C seem to understand democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency, they still have challenges which hinder the proper implementation of these democratic principles identified in the focus groups, and interviews and corroborated by the literature review (cf. section 2.6). This study confirmed those hindering factors as follows:

- Non-involvement of RCLs and governing bodies in the decisions undertaken by all stakeholders.
- Lack of personal interest
- Leadership style
- Unresolved conflicts
- Formation of cliques
- Lack of guidance
- Lack of communication
- Lack of space for other stakeholders
- Lack of information
- Lack of commitment
- Scarcity of the parent component in disciplinary hearings (cf. section 4.10.1).

School B identified the following factors:

- Exclusion of learners
- Lack of communication
- Lack of consultation
- Lack of financial management
- Lack of partnership and guidance
- Lack of knowledge of law and departmental policies
- Leadership style and absence of positive contributions and arrogance of members.

In School C, participants identified the following factors as hindering compliance in this school:

- Lack of engagement
- Lack of financial accountability
- Lack of involvement
- Learner attitude
- Lack of support
- Different approaches to matters of conflicting views
- Lack of respect for learners' rights.

Some of the factors such as communication, involvement, participation, leadership style and lack of commitment were common in all schools selected schools as hindering compliance with democratic principles, but some of the identified differed according to school situations.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher proposed the following recommendations for the selected rural secondary schools:

To observe and promote the democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency, School A principal needs to:

- Promote access to school information
- Encourage all principals to commit themselves to their responsibilities by arranging training
- Strengthen their communication skills by allowing every member to participate in school activities
- Conduct mentoring programmes for RCLs and governing body members
- Include RCLs in the decision-making processes
- Use a more democratic leadership style
- Resolve conflict amongst educators
- Create space for the participation of all stakeholders by including them in meetings and communications
- Acknowledge the contributions made by other stakeholders
- Improve staff relationships by promoting team spirit amongst staff members.

The School B principal needs to:

- Promote access by sharing school information with relevant stakeholders and ensuring they are invited to meetings
- Assist the governing body to perform their mandated functions in a proper manner
- Ensure that school administrators receive relevant training on administration matters.

As required of him by law, the School C principal needs to:

- Provide the relevant stakeholders with copies of legal prescripts
- Forge good relationships and form partnerships with all relevant stakeholders
- Promote inclusivity and representativity by involving learners in the decision-making processes
- Open lines of communication by disseminating information through the establishment of consultation forums and regular meetings
- Create space for the participation of all stakeholders for co-operative governance.

Further recommendations for all schools are listed below:

- Respect and promote individual rights of all stakeholders at the school
- Enforce accountability through the application of the consequent management measures and clear disciplinary procedures convene meetings at the most convenient times
- Resolve conflicts amicably; Copies of the Code of the conduct should be made available to all learners to enable them to get know the school rules, understand their duties and responsibilities
- Promote the interest of the school above those of the individuals
- Encourage unity amongst the stakeholders and discourage cliques

5.6 Limitations of the research

As the researcher, I experienced some obstacles during the investigation, which can be summarised as follows:

- The principal of School A was absent due to illness, but the acting principal, SMT and the senior educators came to my assistance (cf. sections 4.3).

- At the time of the fieldwork, the principalship post in School B was vacant, but the acting principal and the senior educators managed to assist me (cf. sections 4.3).

- While conducting the fieldwork, I was forced to deviate from the original plan (cf. Appendix A). Firstly, some of the participants, such as members of the RCLs, SMTs, governing body and the principals stay in nearby villages and townships. Public transport to these locations is not available in the afternoon, so the interviews had to be conducted during normal school hours. Secondly, departmental officials visited School A on the pre-arranged date and interviews had to be delayed for some hours. Thirdly, participants from School B had to attend a workshop which was held at a nearby school, and the interviews had to be postponed until their return (cf. section 3.11).

- Lastly, the language barrier was a common limiting factor in all the selected schools, particularly regarding the members of the school governing body and learners. The participants were therefore interviewed in the language they understand very well (which is IsiXhosa in this case) to give them an opportunity to express themselves clearly during the discussions. This was done to ensure that the researcher obtained valid answers. During the research process, the researcher continuously assured the participants that all the collected data would remain confidential and they could feel comfortable expressing themselves (cf. section 3.9.5).

Findings reflected the three selected secondary schools in a specific context and cannot be generalised to all secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District (cf. sections 4.5.1, 4.5.2 & 4.5.3).

5.7 Areas for further research

The findings of this research leave room for further research on a larger scale. Therefore, further research can be conducted on the following topics:

- How to promote and maintain good working relations at schools
- How participation and inclusion can be encouraged at schools
- What measures can be put in place to ensure compliance with legal prescript
- What impact compliance has on school effectiveness and efficiency
- How to promote effective communication and commitment amongst the stakeholders at school
- What measures could be put in place to promote effective and efficient school administration.

5.8 Conclusion

In this study, the researcher consulted the relevant literature as well as legal documentation like the Constitution, Schools Act, Employment of Educators Act, National Education Policy Act and the Promotion of Access to Information Act. The literature study was conducted to extract data (cf. section 1.8.6) that enabled me to check whether the selected schools implement these principles or not. The following answers emanated from the focus groups with the RCLs, SMTs and the governing bodies and the semi-structured interview with the principals of the selected schools regarding the research sub-questions:

- What are the perceptions of the principal, members of the SMTs, RCLs and the governing body regarding co-operative, accountable and transparent governance?

Participants in the selected schools provided answers which were similar in that there was a lack of compliance perceived in all the three selected rural secondary schools regarding the democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. The common perception of participants was a lack of full compliance by the three selected rural secondary schools regarding the democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. All the selected secondary schools seemed to have knowledge and understanding of the three principles but would like to know how to implement these democratic principles more efficiently.

- How do principles of the selected rural secondary schools promote and observe compliance with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency in their schools?

The participants in the selected schools felt that there was not enough done by the principals to promote and observe democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.

- Which factors hinder compliance with the principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency at the participant schools?

A serious degree of non-compliance was exposed regarding the lack of communication between stakeholders, non-involvement of learners in the governing body meetings, and lack of willingness on the part of the principals to consult other stakeholders on issues that concerned them. In addition, there was a lack of commitment on the part of the school principals. This led to a lack of knowledge and understanding of individual responsibilities because of the absence of training. However, in one of the selected secondary schools situated in a tribal authority area, the chief and his subordinates did not interfere with the implementation of the democratic principles at this school. Democratic principles for public school administration are still a serious challenge in rural secondary schools in the Chris Hani West District, Eastern Cape.

5.9 Chapter conclusion

Chapter 5 contained the summary of the previous chapters which described the research method. The sample of the three secondary schools from which data was collected was described, pinpointing the various groups of participants who were interviewed to answer the research questions. This chapter also contained the summarised findings, recommendations and conclusion of the research, which focused on an examination into the compliance of the selected rural secondary schools with democratic principles for public administration.

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APPENDIX A: Ethical clearance certificate

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2017/11/15

Dear Mrs Ralane

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2017/11/15 to 2022/11/15

Ref: **2017/11/15/30751144/11/MC**
Name: Mrs M K Ralane
Student: 30751144

Researcher:

Name: Mrs M K Ralane

Email: mkralane@gmail.com

Telephone: +27 73 317 8638

Supervisor:

Name: Prof SA Coetzee

Email: Coetzsa1@unisa.ac.za

Telephone: +27 12 361 0392

Title of research:

Compliance with the Constitutional norms and principles for democratic public administration at rural secondary schools in the Queenstown District, Eastern Cape Province

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Qualification: M Ed in Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2017/11/15 to 2022/11/15.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2017/10/18 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

University of South Africa
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The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date 2022/10/18. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.
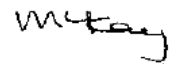
Note:

The reference number **2017/11/15/30751144/11/MC** *should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,

Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Prof V McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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APPENDIX B: Letter requesting permission Eastern Cape Department of Education

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THIS APPLICATION FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED IN HARD AND ELECTRONIC COPY TO:

The Director
Strategic Planning Policy Research & Secretariat Services
Eastern Cape Department of Education

Private Bag X0032
Bhisho
5605 (Postal address)

OR

Fax to: 040 608 4574/ 086 742 4942

OR
email: babalwa.pamla@edu.ecprov.gov.za
cc fundiswa.pakade@edu.ecprov.gov.za

OR

Deliver to
Steve Vukile Complex
Zone 6
Zwelitsha
5608 (Physical address)

ENQUIRIES: Babalwa Pamla
Tel: 040 608 4537/4035/4773

APPENDIX C: Permission letter from the District office

Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CHRIS HANI WEST DISTRICT

Physical Address: The Homestead Building, 02 Limpopo Drive, LAURIE Deshwood Park, Queenstown; **Postal Address**: Private Bag X7053, QUEENSTOWN 5320, REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, Contact: 083 9594966 **e-mail**: thomas.kolo@edu.ecprov.gov.za

13 March 2018

TO: Mrs MK Ralane

P.O. Box 522

Whittlesea

5360

Dear Mrs Ralane

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE CHRIS HANI WEST DISTRICT

The Department finds pleasure when there are a lot of emerging Academics who research about the Education systems in the country. Your application to conduct research in this field of study in the District is therefore granted.

The Department wishes you every degree of success in all your endeavours in an attempt to shape the policies of the education in the country. Your adherence to all Research Ethics will be appreciated at all times.

Congratulations once more.

Yours in Education

HN GODLO

DISTRICT DIRECTOR

APPENDIX D: Letter requesting permission to conduct research from the principal

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Request permission from the District Director to conduct research at t research at the participating schools

Title: Compliance with the Constitutional principles for democratic administration at rural secondary schools in the Queenstown District, Eastern Cape Province.

24 August 2017

The District Director

Department of Basic Education, Eastern Cape

045-8085700

Dear Sir

I, Maureen Khanyiswa Ralane am doing research under supervision of Coetzee, SA, a Professor in the Department of Education Management and Leadership towards a M Ed at the University of South Africa. We have funding from Unisa for printing, editing and binding of the document, voice recorder and fuel to and from the selected sites. I humbly request your permission to carry out the research in these secondary schools under your control and the title of my research is **Compliance with the Constitution principles for democratic administration at rural secondary schools in the Queenstown District, Eastern Cape Province**. The aim of the study is an investigation into compliance of the administrations of the selected schools in the Queenstown district with constitutional norms and democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.

The study will entail 3 focus groups with four RCLs, four SMTs and four members of the school governing body and an individual semi-structured interview with the principal of each school. Each group will be recorded by the researcher herself. The benefits of this study are to promote compliance with democratic principles by all stakeholders who are involved in school administration in the participant schools.

There will be an incentive for the scribe who will be taking field notes but there is no incentive for participants in this study. Feedback will entail going back to participants in order to inform them with the findings of this research.

Yours sincerely

……………………………………

Mrs MK Ralane

Request for permission to conduct research from principals

Title: Compliance with the Constitutional principles for democratic administration at rural secondary schools in the Queenstown District, Eastern Cape Province

Date

The Principal
Department of Education
XXXX School
Whittlesea

Dear Principal

I, Maureen Khanyiswa Ralane am doing research under supervision of SA Coetzee, a Professor in the Department of Education Management and Leadership towards Med the University of South Africa. We have funding from Unisa for printing, editing and binding of the document, voice recorder and fuel to and from the selected sites. I humbly request your permission to carry out the research in these secondary schools under your control and the title of my research is **Compliance with the Constitutional principles for democratic administration at rural secondary schools in the Queenstown District, Eastern Cape Province**. The aim of the study is an investigation into compliance of the administrations of the selected schools in the Queenstown district with constitutional principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.

The study will entail 3 focus groups with four RCLs, four SMTs and four members of the school governing body and individual semi-structured questions with the principal of each school. Each group will be recorded by the researcher herself. The benefits of this study are to promote compliance with democratic principles by all stakeholders who are involved in school administration in the participant schools.

There will be an incentive to employ a scribe to take field notes but there is no incentive for participants in this study. Feedback will entail going back to participants in order to inform them with the findings of this research.

Yours sincerely

_____

Mrs MK Ralane_____
Student number _____

APPENDICES E1 to E3: Permission letters from the principals

CONFIRMATION LETTER FOR MAUREEN KHANYISWA RALANE

We as the school mentioned above gave a permission to Maureen Khanyiswa Ralane to do her research at our school with the topic Compliance with the constitutional norms and principles for democratic public administration at rural secondary schoolsin Queenstown district, Eastern Cape.

Yours sincerely

_____ (Acting principal)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SIGNATURE: _____ 28. 05. 2018

APPENDIX E2: Permission letter from the principal of school B

ENQUIRIES;

Cell:

Date: 04/05/2018

Dear Madam/Sir

RE: CONFIRMATION LETTER

This serves to confirm that Mrs Ralane M.K has been given permission to conduct her research towards her studies with UNISA at the above mentioned school.

I hope you will find the above information in order.

Yours Faithfully

PRINCIPAL :   SIGNATURE :   DATE : 04/05/2018

APPENDIX E3: Permission letter from the principal of school C
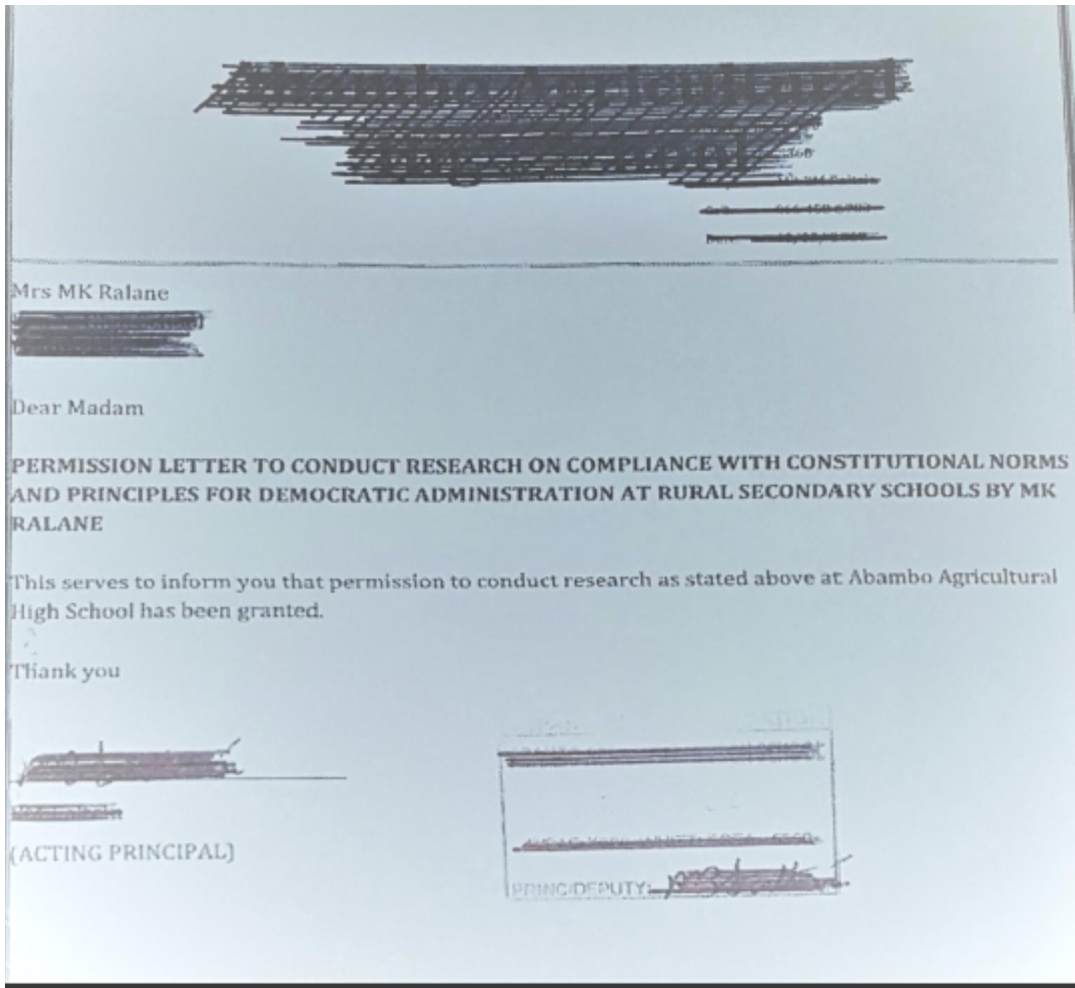
Mrs MK Ralane

Dear Madam

PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON COMPLIANCE WITH CONSTITUTIONAL NORMS AND PRINCIPLES FOR DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION AT RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY MK RALANE

This serves to inform you that permission to conduct research as stated above at Abambo Agricultural High School has been granted.

Thank you

(ACTING PRINCIPAL)

PRINC/DEPUTY

APPENDIX F: Letter requesting participation and consent from the principal

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Example letter requesting principals to be interviewed

Dear Principal

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, Maureen Khanyiswa Ralane, am conducting as part of my research as a Master's student. The dissertation entitled **Compliance with the Constitutional principles for democratic public administration at rural secondary schools in the Queenstown District, Eastern Cape Province** at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study was obtained from the Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education and an ethics clearance certificate was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. A copy of the permission letter and the ethical clearance certificate can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

The purpose of the study is to investigate compliance of the administrations of selected schools with constitutional, democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. I purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. This study is expected to collect important information about schools' adherence to the Constitutional principles in establishing democratic schools. This information can be used to promote compliance with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency by all stakeholders who are involved in the school administration in the participant schools. Additionally, the study may also promote co-operation and develop synergy between stakeholders such as the school principal, members of the Representative Council for Learners (RCL), the SMT and the school governing body.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 30 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. With your kind permission, the interview will be recorded by the researcher herself to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. The scribe will assist the researcher during the interview, but he/she will be requested to sign a confidentiality agreement beforehand in order to ensure confidentiality. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points.

All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be securely retained on a password protected computer for five years in my locked office.

There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

If you would like to be informed of the research findings or have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact MK, Ralane on 073 3178 638 or email mkralane@gmail.com. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has conducted, you may contact 012 361 0392 or Coetzsa1@unisa.ac.za.

I look forward to speaking to you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form.

You may keep a copy of this letter.

Sincerely

_____   _____   _____

Researchers name (print)   Researcher's signature   Date

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study in education. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all the foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

_____   _____   _____

Participant's name (print)   Participant's signature   Date

APPENDIX G: Letter requesting participation from the governing body

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LETTER REQUESTING PARTICIPATION AND CONSENT FROM GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS

Date: 26 September 2017

Title: Compliance with the Constitutional principles for democratic administration at rural secondary schools in the Queenstown District, Eastern Cape Province

Dear school governing body member

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, Maureen Khanyiswa Ralane am conducting as part of my research as a master's student entitled **Compliance with the Constitutional principles for democratic administration at rural secondary schools in the Queenstown District, Eastern Cape Province** at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study was obtained from the Eastern Cape department of basic education and the principal. An ethics clearance certificate was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. Copies of the permission letters and the ethical clearance certificate can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

The purpose of the study is to investigate into compliance of the administrations of selected schools regarding constitutional, democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. I purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. This study is expected to collect important information about schools' adherence to the Constitutional principles in establishing democratic schools. This information can be used to promote compliance with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency by all stakeholders who are involved in the school administration in the participant schools. Additionally, the study may also promote co-operation and develop synergy between stakeholders such as the school principal, members of the Representative Council for Learners (RCL), the SMT and the school governing body.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve participation in a focus group of four participants. It will be of approximately 30 minutes in length and it will take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to all participants in the focus group. You may decline to respond to or discuss any of the focus group questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. With your kind permission, the interview will be recorded by the researcher to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. The scribe will assist the researcher during the interview, but he/she will be requested to sign a confidentiality agreement beforehand. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points.

There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

I will treat all the information you provide as completely confidential. Confidentiality and anonymity will be protected because your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give because you will be referred to by a pseudonym However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for 5 years in my locked office. Further to the above I attach the Confidentiality Agreement, the intention of which is to indicate to you that strict confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

If you would like to be informed of the research findings or have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact MK, Ralane on 073 3178 638 or email mkralane@gmail.com. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has conducted, you may contact 012 361 0392 or Coetzsa1@unisa.ac.za.

I look forward to speaking to you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form.

You may keep a copy of this letter.

Sincerely

_____   _____   _____
Researchers name (print)   Researcher's signature   Date

CONSENT FORM AND CONFIDENTIALITY DISCLAIMER

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study in education. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing the focus group to be recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the focus group may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

_____   _____   _____
Participant's name (print)   Participant's signature   Date

APPENDIX I: Letter requesting the SMT members to participate in the research

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LETTER REQUESTING PARTICIPATION AND CONSENT FROM THE SMT MEMBERS

Date: 26 September 2017

Title: Compliance with the Constitutional principles for democratic administration at rural secondary schools in the Queenstown District, Eastern Cape Province

Dear SMT member

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study which I, Maureen Khanyiswa Ralane am conducting as part of my research as a master's student entitled **Compliance with the Constitutional principles for democratic administration at rural secondary schools in the Queenstown District, Eastern Cape Province** at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study was obtained from the Eastern Cape department of basic education and the principal. An ethics clearance certificate was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. Copies of the permission letters and the ethical clearance certificate can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

The purpose of the study is to investigate into compliance of the administrations of selected schools with constitutional, democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. I purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. This study is expected to collect important information about schools' adhere to the Constitutional principles in establishing democratic schools. This information can be used to promote compliance with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency by all stakeholders who are involved in the school administration in the participant schools. Additionally, the study may also promote co-operation and develop synergy between stakeholders such as the school principal, members of the Representative Council for Learners (RCL), the SMT and the school governing body.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve participation in a focus group of the SMTs. It will be of approximately 30 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to all participants in the focus group. You may decline to respond to or discuss any of the focus group questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. With your kind permission, the interview will be recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. The scribe will assist the researcher during the interview, but he/she will be requested to sign a confidentiality agreement beforehand. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points.

There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

I will treat all the information you provide as completely confidential. Confidentiality and anonymity will be protected because your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give because you will be referred to by a pseudonym However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for 5 years in my locked office. Further to the above I attach the Confidentiality Agreement, the intention of which is to indicate to you that strict confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

If you would like to be informed of the research findings or have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact MK, Ralane on 073 3178 638 or email mkralane@gmail.com. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has conducted, you may contact 012 361 0392 or Coetzsa1@unisa.ac.za.

I look forward to speaking to you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form.

You may keep a copy of this letter.

Sincerely

_____   _____   _____

Researchers name (print)   Researcher's signature   Date

CONSENT FORM AND CONFIDENTIALITY DISCLAIMER

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study in education. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing the focus group to be recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the focus group may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

_____   _____   _____

Participant's name (print)   Participant's signature   Date

APPENDIX K: Letter requesting learner participation and consent from parents

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LETTER REQUESTING PARENTAL CONSENT FOR MINORS TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS GROUP

Dear Parent

Your child is invited to participate in a study entitled **Compliance with the Constitutional principles for democratic administration at rural secondary schools in the Queenstown District, Eastern Cape Province** which I, Maureen Khanyiswa Ralane am conducting as part of my research as a master's student at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study was obtained from the Eastern Cape department of basic education and the principal. An ethics clearance certificate was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. Copies of the permission letters and the ethical clearance certificate can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

The purpose of the study is to investigate into compliance of the administrations of selected schools with constitutional, democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. This study is expected to collect important information about schools' adherence to the Constitutional principles in establishing democratic schools. This information can be used to promote compliance with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency by all stakeholders who are involved in the school administration in the participant schools. Additionally, the study may also promote co-operation and develop synergy between stakeholders such as the school principal, members of the Representative Council for Learners (RCL), the SMT and the school governing body.

I am asking permission to include your child in this study because the researcher regards him/her as somebody who is knowledgeable, has experience and represents other learners in decision-making processes in his/her school. Should you agree and your child assents thereto, he or she will participate in a focus group of approximately 60 minutes together with three RCL members. The focus group discussions will take two days conducted in a quiet environment. During the process notes will be jotted down and recorded in order to contribute positively to the study. I therefore, ask permission to record the focus group.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His/her responses will not be linked to his/her name or your name or school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such report will be used for research purposes only. Your child will receive no direct benefits from participating in the study, however, the possible benefits to education are:

- The research will assist policy makers to contribute to the development of policy by identifying some problems that have to be addressed by all stakeholders.

- it will generate an understanding and insight into compliance with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency.

- it will promote compliance with democratic principles by all school administrators and

- it will develop school policy which are in line with the Constitutional principles of his/her school.

Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly, you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without penalty.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in this study and you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in this study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from this study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

If you have any questions about the study please ask me/my study supervisor, Prof Coetzee, SA, Department of College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is 0733178638 and e-mail is mkralane@gmail.com. The e-mail of my supervisor is Coetzeesa1@unisa.ac.za. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and you allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Sincerely

_____   _____   _____
Researchers name (print)   Researcher's signature   Date

_____
Name of the child

_____   _____   _____
Parent/ guardian's name (print)   Parent/guardian's signature   Date

APPENDIX L: Letter requesting learner participation and assent from learners

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LETTER REQUESTING ASSENT FROM LEARNERS IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL TO PARTCIPATE IN A FOCUS GROUP

Title: Compliance with the Constitutional principles for democratic administration at rural secondary schools in the Queenstown District, Eastern Cape Province

Dear Learner

Date 26 September 2017

I am doing a study on compliance with constitutional norms and democratic principles as part of my studies at the University of South Africa. Your principal has given me permission to do this study in your school. I would like to invite you to be a very special part of my study. I am doing this study so that I can find ways that your principal, SMT, school governing body can use to improve their school administration. This may help you and many other learners of your age in different schools.

This letter is to explain to you what I would like you to do. There may be some words you do not know in this letter. You may ask me or any other adult to explain any of these words that you do not know or understand. You may take a copy of this letter home to think about my invitation and talk to your parents about this before you decide if you want to be in this study.

I would like to participate in a focus group discussion together with three other RCL members. It should not take longer than 60 minutes. I will write a report on the study but I will not use your name in the report or say anything that will let other people know who you are. Participation is voluntary and you do not have to be part of this study if you don't want to take part. If you choose to be in the study, you may stop taking part at any time without penalty. You may tell me if you do not wish to answer any of my questions. No one will blame or criticize you. When I am finished with my study, I shall return to your school to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I found out in my study. I shall invite you to come and listen to my talk.

This study will contribute towards promoting compliance with democratic principles by all stakeholders who are involved in school administration in the participant schools. The study will assist policy makers in schools to contribute to the development of policy by identifying some problems that have to be addressed by all stakeholders. Moreover, the study will generate an understanding and insight into compliance with democratic principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. The study will deeply involve the school governing body of the

selected schools at every step of the critical decision-making process and will also infuse compliance with principles of co-operation, accountability and transparency. Besides, it will inculcate co-operation and develop synergy between stakeholders such as the school principal, members of the Representative Council for Learners (RCL), the SMT and the school governing body.

You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research.

If you decide to be part of my study, you will be asked to sign the form on the next page. If you any other questions about this study, you can talk to me or you can have your parent or another adult call me at 0733178638. Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I would like you to do.

Sincerely

_____   _____   _____
Researchers name (print)   Researcher's signature   Date

Do not sign the written assent form if you have any questions. Ask your questions first and ensure that someone answers those questions.

WRITTEN ASSENT

I have read this letter which asks me to be part of a study at my school. I have understood the information about my study and I know what I will be asked to do. I am willing to be in the study.

_____   _____   _____
Learner's name (print)   Learner's signature   Date

APPENDIX O: Turnitin

Turnitin Originality Report

Processed on: 06-Feb-2020 17:31 SAST
ID: 1252554874
Word Count: 61833
Submitted: 1

Compliance with Constitutional Norms & Principles for Democratic
Administration at Rural Secondary Schools in the Chris Hani West
District, Eastern Cape Province By Mk Ralane

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