

**STRATEGIES TO BUILD THE GOVERNANCE CAPACITY OF  
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN PREVIOUSLY  
DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES**

**BY**

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## **SUMMARY**

In this study, a literature review and qualitative research design are used in an attempt to establish the obstacles to the effective governance of schools in previously disadvantaged communities. From the research, it emerges that the SGBs govern their schools intuitively. This is because they lack knowledge of how schools should be governed. Various strategies to build the governance capacity of these SGBs are formulated in this study to assist them to govern their schools effectively. Effective governance is an important instrument that can restore order, protect the rights of both learners and educators, prevent discipline problems amongst learners and establish the provision of quality education in these communities.

## **KEY TERMS**

Governance strategies, governance capacity, capacity-building, governance models, Bantu local authorities, school committees or school boards, school governing bodies, Parent Teacher Associations, Parent Teacher Student Associations and previously disadvantaged communities.

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my late beloved mother, Khasita Mirriam Sindane, my late uncle Solomon Mandla and his caring wife, Girly Nsingwane. They inspired me to value education. Whatever I have achieved academically in life is indebted to them.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE STUDY**

ANC	African National Congress
ATASA	African Teachers' Association of South Africa
CCMA	Council of Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
DoE	Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTSA	Parent Teacher and Student Association
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SASA	South African School's Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
USA	United States of America

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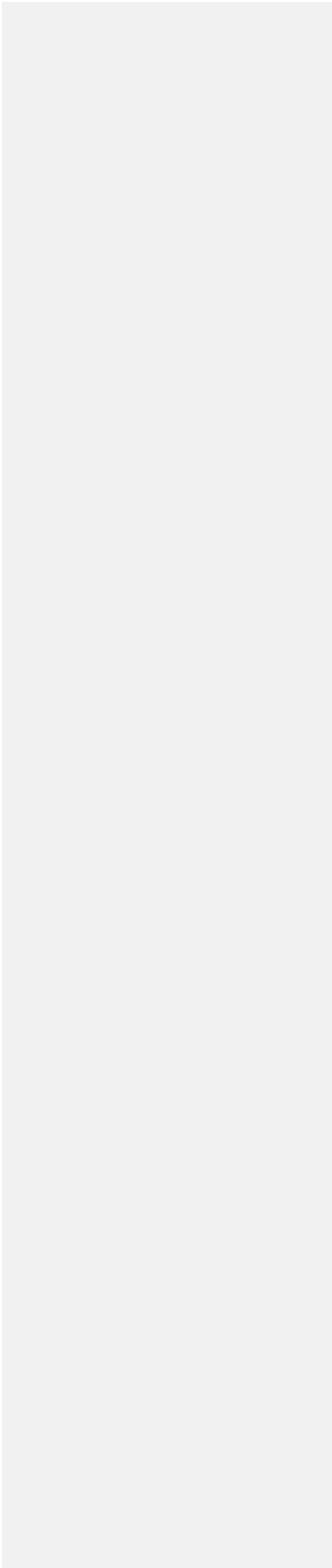
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I declare that STRATEGIES TO BUILD THE GOVERNANCE CAPACITY OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN PREVIOUSLY DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted, have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Signature

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Date



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## **CHAPTER 1: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

According to the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (SASA), school governing bodies are vested with the power to govern public schools in the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996b). A school governing body (SGB) is a “deliberate body with legislative and other powers delegated to it by the laws of the state” (Lamola, 1996: 9). It is “a body which acts as the school’s trustee on behalf of the community which it serves” (Walters & Richardson, 1997:27). This body is charged with “the duty of helping the principal to organise and manage school activities in an effective way” (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2002a:5). Members of this body are appointed or elected legally from the school and parent community and are responsible to the state and the community that elected them for making and implementing school policies which will reflect the community’s aspirations and values (see paragraph 2.8.3). Sayed and Carrin, In Segwapa ( 2008: 47), concur by confirming that school governance structures should ensure that the school reflects the community in which it is located and which it serves.

Most school governing bodies’ members are people who have dual responsibilities, as they are busy with their full time jobs during the day in addition to being governors of schools. They are responsible to parents (and learners in secondary schools) who have children in the public schools where they are governors and for putting into effect the plans of the state and the community for public schools. This body must make proposals regarding general school policies and make judgments concerning these proposals to determine the general school policy. Such policies must be in line with the National Educational Policy Act (see paragraph 2.8.3) (Department of Education, 1996). School policy-makers must accept responsibility for adopting such policies that act as guidelines for any decisions and actions taken. Thus, school policies give direction regarding what the community thinks will bring about educational advancement.

In order to serve both the community and the state, school governing bodies should be familiar with the educational laws, rules and regulations relating to the control and operation of schools. It would be advantageous for SGB members to have a certain level of education to be familiar with educational laws, rules and regulation. In practice, the parent component of school governing bodies is elected solely on the grounds that their children are in that particular school. This leads to “the election of members who are illiterate, who lack the expertise to serve on this body and who may have their certain ulterior motives that have nothing to do with the advancement of education” (Badenhorst, 1993:22). This state of affairs makes it essential that SGBs should “exempt schools from the promotional schemes of corruption, nepotism and political parties” (Danzberger, 1992:49).

In previously disadvantaged schools, it appears that SGB members do not apply the laws, rules and regulations for controlling schools. This is because some can neither read nor interpret the governmental guidelines on school governance, so they cannot follow the guidelines set out in those documents (see paragraph 2.1). Nevertheless, SGB members are still expected to recommend school principals and school management team (SMT) members to the Department of Education (DoE). However, due to their lack of expertise and experience regarding the major and crucial function of recommending principals and their staff, their recommendations are often marred “by favouritism, political affiliation and nepotism” (Budhal, 2002:40).

It can be problematic to expect that “such an unsalaried group can provide a fair service to schools without trying to serve their own interests as a payment for the service they render to schools” (Rallis, Deal & Bolman, 1995:54). This is because they are not used to rendering services free of charge.

## **1.2 Historical background to the problem.**

Before the introduction of school boards, previously disadvantaged schools were under the control of the local Bantu authorities. This was prior to 1955 when schools were still built by missionaries but controlled by the government of South



Africa. Due to the resistance encountered by the local Bantu authorities, as agencies of the then apartheid government, the government was compelled to dissolve them before 1955 and introduced school committees or school boards. As such, school boards were local governors that were also appointed by the apartheid government with the “aim of creating among the Bantu (previously disadvantaged communities) a sense of responsibility by allowing them to accept that their development is their own concern” (Hartshorne, 1992:37). The Bantu were expected to carry the financial responsibility for their own development. As a result, the then Minister of Native Affairs (previously disadvantaged communities), Dr. H.F Verwoerd, in his Senate speech of 7 June 1954, announced “that the cost of running education in black communities was placed on parents who would contribute by paying private teachers and build classes in cases where the department was unable to provide adequately” (Hartshorne, 1992:38).

School boards or school committees provided for a modicum of stakeholder involvement but were not truly representative of stakeholders. This is because they were organised on an ethnic basis. The communities they represented eventually “regarded them as agents of the apartheid government which promoted the mostly hated Bantu Education” (Hartshorne, 1992:42). Bantu Education promoted the supremacy of Whites and their education system (see paragraph 1.8). The school board members “did not enjoy the support and trust of parents and teachers because they were viewed as agents of the apartheid government” (Hartshorne, 1992:39). Furthermore, the school board system was characterised by undemocratic practices, racism, and inequality and was also gender biased.

The duties of school boards were “to appoint, discipline and dismiss teachers” (Hartshorne, 1992:289) and “to mobilize the community to provide funds for running the school, maintain it and to expel learners and teachers from schools for reasons considered to be sufficient to do so” (Lamola, 1996:19). They also ensured that complaints about principals and teachers in schools where they were school board members were addressed. They had to “enquire about teachers’ capabilities of effective delivering the subject matter to the pupils”

(Lamola, 1996:20). They endorsed the authority of the principal, as they could “not decide on the curriculum and medium of instruction to be used at school” (Quan-Baffour, 2006:27). Dekker and Van Schalkwyk, in Nyambi (2004:1), assert that the school boards were instituted in order to entrench apartheid education, which required each racial group to have a virtually separate education system. Very few school board members were effective and fair in their dealings with teachers. The majority of school boards “were incapable of carrying out their responsibilities and used the powers of recommending teachers for their own ends” (Hartshorne, 1992:289). Consequently, the period from 1955 to 1980, (the school board era), was a demoralising time for teachers and parents alike as it did nothing to advance their interests. Ultimately, parents had no opportunities for delivering input regarding the education of their children. Thus, external forces decided the future of their children.

Because of the poor relationships between school boards and teachers: in certain cases, school boards were boycotted by teachers. School boards also encountered problems from the apartheid government because of their opposition to the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in African schools. Through the resistance of previously disadvantaged parents and teachers as well as the growing demand of the 1980s for consumers to have a say in the decision-making process at schools, “the autocratic school board system was eliminated in 1980 and teachers were directly employed by the department” (Hartshorne, 1992:302).

In 1985, the Soweto Parents’ Crisis Committee was formed as a community organisation that had an interest in education. At the December 1985 Witwatersrand Conference of the African Teachers Association (ATASA), “it was resolved that the PTAs in primary schools and PTSAs in secondary schools be set up in all previously disadvantaged school” (Hartshorne, 1992:311). The PTSA was a:

...representative body of school governance comprising parents, teachers and students of a particular secondary school. At primary school level, the body was called parent teacher associations, the student component was

excluded presumably because students at that level were too young to be involved (Sithole, in Mahlangu, 2008:19).

The Parent Teacher Association's (PTSA's) role was "limited to the signing of school cheques and contract forms of newly appointed educators and accompanying learners on school trips" (Mkhonto, in Quan-Baffour, 2006:27). Van Schalkwyk, in Mahlangu (2008:21) states that the purpose of PTSAs was to combine the efforts of parents and teachers to a very limited extent, collect funds, assist with the transportation of pupils and entertainment. Attacks on both teachers and learners militated against the functioning of these associations. However, this laid the foundation for the establishment of an education system that later replaced the Bantu Education system with its school board system. This was hailed by previously disadvantaged communities as a milestone in the provision of democratic school governance and quality education.

After the first democratic elections of 1994, a Reconstruction and Development Programme was introduced. The programme was followed by the SASA (RSA, 1996b), which called for the involvement of stakeholders at grassroots level. This act made the Parent Teacher Associations (PTSAs) and PTAs unpopular because they lacked representativity of all the major stakeholders. The new democratic Schools Act implied a collective and joint effort of stakeholders rather than an individual effort of the school principal (RSA, 1996b). The African National Congress (ANC) as a political party's educational department, takes a step further by saying that in principle, the governance of all schools should include parents, teachers and learners (at secondary schools) as elected representatives of the wider community, with the principal as an *ex officio* member of the board (The ANC today, 1994:26). SGBs as they are known today are "as relevant today as they were in the 1980s when they first emerged" (Lamola, 1996:3) as PTAs in primary schools and PTSAs in secondary schools. The introduction of SGBs was seen as "an important step towards the improvement of the quality of learning and teaching as well as transparency and accountability to the people who had elected them" (Nyambi, 2004:1).

SGBs are established “to further the educational aims of the school within the community, inculcate a democratic approach to decision making, problem solving, fund-raising and monitoring the usage of school funds” (Lamola, 1996:27). They are not expected to work in isolation but to “act as a corporate entity in everything they do” (Walters & Richardson, 1997:27). They should share responsibilities with the school principal and the staff. They should “make decisions on behalf of the school, see to it that the school is administered properly and all stakeholders share in the decisions of that body” (Nyambi, 2000:2). They should introduce a system of governance “which would be transformative, inclusive, flexible and democratic In order to accommodate the different contexts in which the school operates” (Quan-Baffour, 2006:27). In most previously disadvantaged schools, SGBs still “lack expertise, experience and maturity” (Lamola, 1996:4) which results in the poor governance of such schools and the misappropriation of school funds. Consequently, a national sense of urgency arose for the more effective training of the SGBs to ensure their smooth functioning.

The poor governance is made even worse by unhealthy relationships between teachers and school governors. Most school governors think that the school belongs to them and that they can hire and fire teachers as was the case with the apartheid era’s school boards. Teachers on the other hand, “regard themselves as superior, think that they know better than parents and regard them as inferior, intrusive, illiterate and troublesome” (Badenhorst, 1993:23). Hence principals and teachers dominate SGBs’ meetings Furthermore, teachers appear to feel that parents have no role to play in the teaching environment. Notwithstanding their perceptions of parents as inferior and troublesome, they should still be in the majority on the SGB (see addendum 1 and paragraph 2.1). The idea that “the parental component should be in the majority is problematic because of the high rate of adult illiteracy” (Nyambi, 2004:4); consequently, this results in the “inaccessibility of policy materials which are written in an unfamiliar language” (Matalasi, in Segwapa 2008:50). In addition, illiteracy contributes to the lack of readiness by SGB members for the roles they will be expected to play as governors. This is further “exacerbated by the use of English at meetings” (Segwapa, 2008 :48).The governors who are caught up in such a situation, fail to

recruit experts to this body who can deal with matters for which they feel properly qualified (see paragraph 2.2).

School principals have the authority and power to create a positive attitude in teachers regarding SGB members. This can “create a warm and inviting climate in schools that can motivate parents to become involved in the governance of the school” (Badenhorst, 1993:45). The parents should be made aware that being a member of a SGB could benefit not only the school and the community, but themselves as well. The principal has an important role to play in providing relevant information on laws, regulations, policies and other information required by the governing body so that they can make informed decisions.

### **1.3 Motivation for the research**

Sustained erosion of a healthy school culture and school climate is experienced at many of the previously disadvantaged schools as is evident in the lack of learner discipline, learner fighting, stabbing of learners and educators, the low teacher morale and the lack of instructional leadership. This erosion cannot be ascribed to the management team alone, having said that, it does appear that some of the SGBs are guilty of favouritism, nepotism and certain political affiliations and that their school governance is not up to standard.

Though the erosion of order in previously disadvantaged schools is ascribed to the management team, it must be emphasised that all the elements of a school are mutually related and interdependent to such an extent that a change in one of these aspects influences the others. Therefore, the SGBs selection of SMTs should be fair so that only qualified and capable SMT members are selected. Such a SMT would be in a position to effect changes that will lead to a transformed and a qualitatively different school.

Since education engages the time of more citizens than most available occupations, it implies that more money is spent on education. For the year 2009/2010, the government allocated 19.7 billion Rand to the National Education Department (City Press, 2009). However, it is essential that the funds should be

managed and utilised properly by those in charge of governing schools. Without proper governance knowledge, this allocation would be a waste of taxpayers' money. According to Blasé (1977:9), it is disappointing that we have not empowered parents regarding financial management as if we do not want them to participate in the institution that belongs to them.

This research aims to determine both the obstacles to effective governance as well as the strategies that can be utilised to build the governance capacity of previously disadvantaged SGB communities so that they can govern their schools effectively (see paragraphs 2.8 & 5.3). Furthermore, it aims to offer suggestions regarding how the poor perceptions regarding previously disadvantaged SGBS can be improved. The greatest contribution would be to provide SGBs with guidelines and information regarding how they can govern their schools effectively, similar to what the DoE is providing presently, but on a wider scale. Success in the implementation of such strategies will contribute to the provision of quality education. This will result in an improved image of the school in the community and in restoring the culture of learning in previously disadvantaged schools.

#### **1.4 Demarcation of the field of study**

The study will be conducted in the Nkululeko Circuit in the Matsulu Township in the Ehlanzeni Region of the Mpumalanga Province. Matsulu is a semi-urban area situated 42 kilometres East of Nelspruit. Many inhabitants of this township were evicted from the surrounding farms of Kaapmuiden, Hectorspruit, Malelane and Waterval Boven. It is important to point out that very few inhabitants attended school. In fact, in the area mentioned, there is only one engineer, only a few teachers and many farm workers. The rest earn a living from selling fruit along the N4 highway; whereas some are fishermen; while the rest are unemployable. This tends to influence the degree of community involvement and desire to participate effectively in educational matters. The Nkululeko Circuit has been selected for this study because its SGBs are a prototype of the SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities (see paragraph 3.2). The lack of discipline amongst learners is a major problem in previously disadvantaged

schools. The undesirable behaviour of these learners contrasts strongly with that of learners from previously advantaged schools.

Learners in this circuit can be seen hanging around the streets and shopping malls during school hours. In addition, learners are also “seen arriving at school at different times and they also leave whenever they like” (Mpumalanga Province, 2002a:5). Furthermore, the learners openly reject any form of authority. They allege that many of their teachers are unhelpful, lacking in commitment and complain that they fail to explain new work. Educators also face the indignity of being bullied by learners who are supposed to respect them.

During breaks, “learners tend to leave the school premises without permission and sometimes do not return to school for the rest of the school day” (Mpumalanga Province, 2002a:9). Some of these learners have been found to be under the influence of alcohol during school hours. It appears that they have ready access to drugs and alcohol. Both boys and girls have been found behind the toilets and car wash bays, smoking dagga. In fact, dagga plants are even grown on some school premises as if it is a legalised drug (see paragraph 5.4.8). When such learners fail at the end of the year, they refuse to accept blame for their failure. Instead, they blame their failure on the incompetence of educators whom they allege had grudges against them and who deliberately failed them.

Most of the learners referred to in the previous paragraph, were identified by their school uniforms as learners enrolled at two local secondary schools. It is significant that these two secondary schools have SGBs that do not function very well. In one of these schools, the chairperson of the SGB is the only representative of the parent component on the SGB. All the other parent members have resigned from this body because of conflict about how the school should be governed. Importantly, the members who have resigned have not been replaced.

In the other secondary school, members used SGB meetings as a forum for political debates, which has resulted in the principal governing the school alone. The principal controls the school funds, which are usually exhausted before the

end of the academic year. Teachers in this school complain that there is no development in their school and the photocopying machine has not been repaired since it stopped functioning at the end of the second term in 2008. Consequently, tests have to be written on the board. The grade 12 pass rate for the year 2008 was 17% while the pass rates of the other three secondary schools in the circuit ranged between 50% and 75%.

Furthermore, it is a cause for concern that two primary schools are about to close down because parents are withdrawing their children from these two schools. In one of these schools, parents complain about the lack of maintenance of school property such as the failure to replace windowpanes broken some years before. In the other primary school, there is an exodus of educators to other schools because of the SGB's chairperson who deals with school matters as if the school is his own private property.

It is clear from research conducted in the area under discussion that the lack of discipline in previously disadvantaged schools emanates from how the schools are governed and how the governors relate to other members of this body, the school managers and administrators. Many previously disadvantaged SGBs have little or no expertise in and experience of governing schools (see paragraph 1.1). Consequently, they find themselves in a complex and challenging situation where they must try to function effectively on their own without any proper training.

Undoubtedly, they need to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills regarding the governance of schools to "help them figure out what is going on, identify options and encourage them to move ahead" (Deal & Bolman, 1995:4). The capacity-building programmes should enable them to develop their schools into places that promote the culture of learning and teaching (see paragraph 5.3). This activity will be more successful if SGB members are offered the opportunity to state what type of information they need, which will to make them more competent school governors (see paragraph 5.6)



### **1.5 Problem statement**

The problem statement based on the situation described above, can be formulated as follows: There are many obstacles or problems that prevent SGBs in previously disadvantaged communities from becoming effective governors of their schools.

These problems will be addressed in this research and strategies will be suggested to solve the problems.

### **1.6 Research questions**

A number of research questions can be formulated on the basis of the problem identified in the previous section.

#### **The main research question**

The main research question is: What strategies can be developed to build the governance capacity to eliminate the obstacles that prevent the SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities from becoming effective governors of their schools?

#### **Sub-research questions**

The sub-research questions are:

- What are the obstacles that result in ineffective governance of previously disadvantaged schools ineffective?
- How can the ineffective governance be transformed into effective governance of previously disadvantaged schools?

### **1.7 Aims of the study**

The main aim of this study is to determine strategies that can be utilised to build the governance capacity of SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities (see paragraphs 2.8 & 5.3). The sub-aims are:

- To identify factors that may be obstacles to the effective governance of previously disadvantaged schools (see paragraph 4.3).
- To provide SGBs with guidelines and information regarding the functions and activities they will be expected to carry out (see paragraph 2.5).

## **1.8 Research methods**

In this study regarding the building of the governance capacity of SGBs in previously disadvantaged communities, a literature review and qualitative research methodology were used to achieve the aims of the study.

### **1.8.1 Literature review**

In the study of the literature, relevant data stating the significance and nature of this problem were gathered from primary and secondary sources. In addition, a careful selection of books, journals, government circulars and other publications was made. The contributions of other researchers to the problem were also acknowledged (in chapter 2). The researcher relied on the descriptive method to describe the status of the problem. The literature study formed the basis for understanding the problem and for constructing an interview schedule for empirical research.

### **1.8.2 Qualitative research methodology**

MacMillan and Schumacher (1993:371) define the qualitative research approach as a primary interactive field of research or primary non-interactive document research. On the other hand, Cohen and Manion (2003:415) define it as an approach, which attempts to understand human behaviour and the meaning people attach to their settings (see paragraph 3.2). Information on how previously disadvantaged schools are governed was collected by observing the activities of these SGBs in their site of practice. Interviews were conducted to find out why certain types of behaviour were prevailing in their schools. The observations and interviews required that the researcher should be present in the field where the

governance process manifested itself. The data collected were portrayed in words (in chapter 4) and compared to the whole class of similar behaviour as reported in the literature survey in chapter 2.

#### **1.8.2.1 Participant observations**

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:219) define participant observations as where a situation where the researcher attempts to participate fully in the lives and activities of subjects and become a member of their group, organisation or community. This enables them to share their experiences by not only observing what is happening but also feeling it, without changing the situation (see paragraph 3.3.2).

In this research, the researcher was an *ex officio* member of the SGB in one of the secondary schools in the area under study. The researcher was always at the site of the study through his attendance of school and circuit SGB meetings. Through circuit SGB meetings, the researcher was able to obtain feedback regarding SGB members' feelings about and beliefs of how schools were governed in the Nkululeko Circuit. He recorded what occurred in the participants' daily lives. These loosely recorded notes were converted into field notes at the end of every observation session (see paragraph 3.3.2). Field and Morse (1985:102) describe these field notes as written accounts of the things the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks in the course of collecting data obtained during the study (see paragraph 3.3.3). These field notes assisted the researcher in making accurate and systematic notes at the end of every observation session. The researcher was actively involved in the site whilst assuming a participant-observer role at school and also at SGB meetings.

#### **1.8.2.2 Focus group interviews**

Kruger, in De Vos, Strydom, Fouchè and Delport (2000:206), defines a focus group interview as a planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive non-threatening environment. Carey, in De Vos, Strydom, Fouchè and Delport (2000:291) asserts that this method is

meaningful if one wants to explore thoughts and feelings and not just research behaviour. De Vos *et al.* (2000:305) define it as a means of understanding better how people feel or think about an issue, product or service. On the other hand, Mahlangu (2008:76) sees it as an opportunity to investigate what cannot be observed visually and to obtain alternative explanations for what is observed visually.

The group is focussed in that it involves some kind of collective activity. In this research, the collective activity was school governance. The participants in this study were selected because there was a common theme that concerned them all, namely, the ineffective governance of previously disadvantaged schools. Importantly, the researcher was able to conduct interviews with these SGBs to obtain information about their perceptions, thoughts and beliefs regarding the actual practical situation under study. In addition, the interview “can be adapted to their level of comprehension and at times be translated to the language they understand better” (Mahlangu, 2008: 78). The researcher was able to record detailed descriptive field notes (see paragraphs 1.7.2.1 and 3.3.2) and had access to various kinds of unique information.

### **1.8.3 Triangulation**

To make sure that the data collected at the site is a valid reflection of the site’s dynamics, the researcher used more than one technique to collect data. By including more than one standpoint regarding the topic under study, the validity of the study is enhanced. Cohen and Manion (2003:113) state that triangular techniques in qualitative research attempt to map out or explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint. This present research compared “different resources, situations and methods to see if there are recurring patterns in the topic under study” (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1993:498). The use of multiple methods of data collection combines various dissimilar methods to study the same topic so that the flaws of one method are utilised as the strength of the other methods (see paragraph 3.3.1).

From the literature review, participant observations and interviews, the obstacles to effective governance of previously disadvantaged schools emerged. This was the point of departure for finding solutions to eliminate the problem. The researcher then made probability statements about the results, as exact measurement is imperfect in education. After that, the researcher generalised the results to similar groups of SGBs regarding the problem areas of school governance when strategies for improvement were suggested.

### **1.9 Clarification of concepts**

The following concepts are frequently used in this study.

#### **Bantu Education**

Bantu Education refers to an education system introduced in September 1953, through the Bantu Education Act No. 47, for Africans (Bantu) by the Department of Native Affairs (South Africa, 1953). Bantu Education with its underlying apartheid policies was imposed on Africans to promote the supremacy of Whites over Africans and separate development of the two races. This education system resulted in the under provision of African education, to promote the supremacy of Whites and their education (see paragraph 1.2).

#### **Capacity- building**

Capacity-building in this study means providing sufficient knowledge to work out what is going on and identify options to increase effectiveness and efficiency when undertaking an activity in order to attain a desired outcome (see paragraphs 1.4 and 2.7). It may be seen as the introductory or continuing training provided to SGBs in public school in terms of section 19(2) of SASA (RSA, 1996b). Mahlangu (2008:9) refers to capacity-building as a form of assistance and training provided to those governors who performed similar functions in the past but who need to be informed especially about the provisions of the SASA.

## **Governance**

Halfani (1996:4) refers to governance as the relationship between civil society and the state, between rulers and the ruled, the state and society and the government and the governed. Thus, according to this definition, governance entails interaction of subsystems of a social whole. Lamola (1996:8) states that the interaction of subsystems is dynamic in the sense that various subsystems move from one stage to another in the interaction process influenced by social, political and technological forces. In this study, governance refers to the manner in which the school affairs are controlled.

## **The Nkululeko Circuit**

The Nkululeko Circuit is the name of one of the five circuits in the Nelspruit District, namely, Mgwenya, Sikhulile, Nelspruit, Waterval Boven and Barberton, which amalgamated with the Malelane District to form the Ehlanzeni District (see paragraph 1.4)

## **Previously disadvantaged schools**

The concept 'previously disadvantaged schools' refers to schools in areas where Africans or previously disadvantaged communities are located and which are not former model C schools. These schools are still disadvantaged because they are still lagging far behind regarding educational facilities such as laboratories, laboratory equipment and libraries. The personnel in these schools are often partially skilled and some are still struggling to upgrade themselves to the required professional level.

## **School governing body**

A SGB is a body made up of learner representatives, educators, the non-teaching staff members, the principal and the parents of learners who attend that particular school (see paragraph 2.1). Mothata, Lemmer, Mda and Pretorius (in Mahlangu, 2008:9) refer to SGBs as democratically elected bodies charged with

the governance of public schools. According to Marishane (1999:24), a school governing body “is a democratically elected body composed of representatives who are elected from the parent and educator components in primary schools, but include learners in secondary schools (see paragraph 1.2). The parent component of this body “is democratically elected tri-annually to perform the governance functions for a school” (Mbatsane, 2006:18); whereas the learner component of a secondary school is elected annually as stipulated in section 16(1) of the SISA (RSA, 1996b). SGBs act on behalf of a school as a juristic person with the legal authority to sue, defend, to make and execute contracts in the name of the school. It is therefore vested with the authority, responsibility and functions that make it independent and sovereign under state law for performing its legal functions. Thus, the SGB is “the official mouthpiece of the parents of the learners, the educators and learners of the school on all matters other than those relating to professional, administration and management of the school” (Mahlangu, 2008:10).

### **Strategy**

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary of Current English (1983), the concept ‘strategy’ refers to an art or tactic or the skill of planning how an activity or action will be undertaken.

### **Parent Teacher Association and Parent Teacher Student Association**

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) were associations formed by the Soweto Parents’ Crisis Committee in the 1980’s to replace the apartheid era’s school boards or school committees. At the December 1985 Witwatersrand conference of the ATASA, it was resolved that these associations would be set up in all previously disadvantaged schools as democratic governors of these schools. Due to continuing dissatisfaction experience by previously disadvantaged communities, the “Soweto Parents Crisis Committee was later transformed into the National Education Crisis Committee in 1986” (Segwapa, 2008:33) One of its objectives

was “to obtain community control over schools, hence the establishment of PTAs and PTSAs” (Segwapa, 2008:33).

### **School management team**

A SMT refers to a small group of three to five people who are in the top management team of a particular school. This team consists of the principal, deputy principal and heads of various departments. The team specifically deals with the professional matters of the school.

### **1.10 Organisation of the study**

The study is organised as follows:

**Chapter 1** dealt with the nature and scope of the study as well as the aims, problems and research methods that will be used in this study.

**Chapter 2** will contain the literature review regarding the topic under study and the theoretical framework.

**Chapter 3** will set out the methodology and data collection procedures of the study as well details of how the data will be analysed and recorded.

**Chapter 4** will present the data as well as the findings and discussion of the findings.

**Chapter 5** will give a summary of the research, conclusions reached on the basis of the findings; recommendations based on the conclusions as well as recommended future research.

### **1.11 Summary**

In this chapter, motivation for the research was provided and the research problem, aims and research questions were also stated .In addition, the research



methodology was introduced briefly and several key terms were defined. The following chapter contains a literature survey on school governance in order to provide the necessary grounding for the empirical research.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Learners in previously disadvantaged schools of the area under study tend to play truant from school and hang around shopping malls during school hours. These learners also “come to school at different times and leave whenever they feel like it” (Mpumalanga Province, 2002a:9). Furthermore, educators in these schools have to face the indignity of being bullied by learners who ought to respect them. One wonders what went wrong with learners from those communities.

During the apartheid era, previously disadvantaged communities complained loudly about their exclusion from the education of their children. The SASA called for the involvement of stakeholders at grassroots level and entrenched them with the authority of governing these schools attended by their children (RSA, 1996). Parents as community members “are closest to the learners and can easily influence their behaviours to reflect what the community desires and moreover, stakeholders know and understand their environment and context better than anybody else” (Quan-Baffour, 2006:29). This chapter aims at providing a literature review that can assist in improving the interaction of stakeholders with learners in order to elicit the types of behaviour that are desirable within the community.

Previously disadvantaged communities have a wide range of educational responsibilities, some of which they neglect. Among these responsibilities are “sending children to school regularly, maintaining continuous contact with their children’s educators” (Sibuyi, 1997:8) and to be actively involved in the governance of the schools attended by their children. Further responsibilities include giving informal home instruction to their children because they are their first educators. What this really means is that parents are co-educators. Education, whether formal or non-formal, is about teaching a child to live in his/her community. Consequently, education can help to advance the

community's interests. Thus, schools reflect the image of the community and are responsive to the community's educational demands.

Parents are not only co-educators but statutorily, they should be involved in the governance of schools where their children attend. As a statutory body, the governance structure must "ensure the participation of parents, educators, other staff members, principals, learners and co-opted members" (Lekalakala, 2006:20). This body must consist of "parents of learners at the school who are not educators of the same school, educators at the school, members of the non-teaching staff at the school and learners in grade eight or higher at the school" (Quan-Baffour, 2006:31). These SGBs replaced the PTAs and PTSAs after the democratic elections of 1994. The number of parents on the SGB should be more than any other members serving on it (see addendum 1 & paragraph 1.2). This is a way of bringing the governance of schools closer to those near the school.

The structure of this body as stipulated by the SASA should commit itself to partnerships in school governance (RSA, 1996b). Today, South African parents no longer hold the notion that education is a matter of partnership between the government and the parents of learners who attend that particular school. The type of partnership envisaged here differs from that in the apartheid era when "parents represented the interest of the ruling party which provided the school" (Marishane, 1999:6). The partnership of the democratically elected SGB is one where "local community members are democratically elected to govern schools according to local and national needs" (Quan-Baffour, 2006:26). This body is "vested with the power and authority to determine the school policy and a wide range of duties" (Lamola, 1996:20). Therefore, the South African education system complied with global trends when it ceased to be the private reserve of the provider alone "as clients of education wanted to see and know what is happening in schools" (Thody, 1994:213). These structures made the South African education a public matter open to debate and empowerment.

The adoption of the new South African Constitution of 1996 enabled the new democratic government to formulate and implement new educational policies. The changes purported by the Constitution of 1996 gave birth to the SASA, which

entrenches the governance power of public schools to SGBs further (RSA, 1996a; RSA, 1996b). These SGBs “are charged with the duty of helping the principal to organise and manage the school effectively” (Badenhorst, 1993:34).

SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities should assist SMTs and educators in curbing the undesirable behaviour displayed by learners. However, teachers still regard these parents as intruders that have no role and function in the eyes of the teaching fraternity (see paragraph 1.2) (Badenhorst, 1993:34). The failure of SGBs in winning the educators’ confidence is exacerbated further by the high illiteracy rate, which makes it impossible to understand and interpret some school policies written in English, which is unfamiliar to them (see paragraph 1.2). This creates doubt whether these SGBs can achieve the goals of the SASA, which is written in a language that is strange to some SGB members.

## **2.2 Barriers regarding parental involvement and motivating parents to partake in school governance**

The fact that chapter 2 of the SASA section 29(1) (RSA, 1996b) provides for the right of every citizen to basic education, implies that parents should provide their children with informal instruction and should also ensure that their children attend school regularly (RSA, 1996b). The SASA places the responsibility for the governance of the school on the shoulders of the parents of such learners. This ensures that “those closest to learners are offered the authority to make key decisions that ensure school improvement” (Quan-Baffour, 2006:29).

One may be tempted to think that parents who should be in the majority on the SGB (see paragraph 1.2) will simply partake in these structures of school governance. Most parents of learners in previously disadvantaged communities are not willing to serve as SGB members. This is revealed in the first SGB election meetings, which generally have to be postponed because parents fail to form a quorum (SGB election diary, 2009). According to Nyambi (2004:4), a major barrier that hampers the involvement of parents from previously disadvantaged communities, is illiteracy. Segwapa (2008:49) contends that certain SGB members are not proficient enough to use English in meetings, lack

knowledge about the appropriate legislation and do not know how to make a contribution to the SGB. Educators confirm that SGB members do not know what is expected of them. This appears to be their reason for regarding parents as inferior, intrusive, troublesome and having no role to play in the teaching fraternity (see paragraph 1.2). Principals and teachers tend to “dominate all other participants” (Segwapa, 2009:50). This prevents parents from participating in SGBs but “when requested to participate in school activities, they do so by way of contributing money” (Sibuyi, 1997:24). When such parents are elected as SGB members, they merely endorse the decisions made by the principals, as was the case with the pre-democratic school boards of South Africa (see paragraph 1.2). Though such parents endorse the principal’s decisions, principals on the other hand, have serious doubts about parents’ competence in governing the school.

Lamola (1996:54) asserts that the current leadership in schools does not correspond with the new mode of governance stipulated by the SASA (RSA, 1996b). The values upheld by the school’s leaders are in conflict with those propagated by lay governors. This is because even previously disadvantaged parents come from a wide range of backgrounds with diverse sets of experience that can contribute to improving the quality of learning and teaching in schools. Parents should not be regarded as amateurs as they can become an asset to the school if they receive adequate training.

Some parents from previously disadvantaged communities are willing to give their time to the school. They believe that their input can improve their children’s behaviour and the quality of education provided by their schools. This is a way of “giving local communities an opportunity to make important decisions regarding the governance of institutions to which they are attached” (Bisschoff & Phakoa, in Mahlangu, 2008:26). All interested structures and people from these communities “should be offered an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and enjoy the right to shape the direction of the education of their children” (Raywind, 1990:142). Such parents need to understand that illiteracy will not disqualify them from governing their schools. The Mpumalanga School Education Act No. 88 of 1997, in line with the SASA, section 4, states that a person shall be eligible for SGB membership if he/she:

- Is not a minor except in the case of learner representatives.
- Is a South African citizen.
- Is not mentally ill.
- Agrees to accept and abide by the code of conduct for governance.
- Has not been convicted without an option of a fine.
- Is not an unrehabilitated insolvent.
- Is not the owner of the property where the school is built (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 1997a; RSA, 1996b).

Both the Mpumalanga Schools Act (1997a) and the SASA (RSA, 1996b) are silent regarding the educational qualifications of parents who should be governors. Marishane (1999:133) asserts that educational qualifications should not be the norm for becoming a school governor, but continuous guidance is needed to govern their schools efficiently. Illiterate parents can harness the help of experts who are recruited to help them with matters for which they do not feel qualified (see paragraph 1.2). However, Quan-Baffour (2006:32) argues that the fact that recruited experts have no voting rights makes them act like toothless bulldogs that can only bark but cannot bite.

As part of relationship building between the SGB and the school staff, principals should be more open and inviting regarding parents. They should provide governors with the information they need in order to govern schools effectively. This is because the principals are familiar with the new policies. However, this does not mean that he/she is free to manipulate the SGBs so that “the SGB has an appearance of an executive authority which in practice is exercised by the principal” (Thomas, 1992:332). A well-informed SGB knows its role, does not interfere with the principal’s professional duties and gives him/her the freedom to manage the school in accordance with the agreed policies. Close contact between the SGB and staff members may avoid conflict; strengthen the effective functioning of the school and the provision of equality education. The number of parents, educators, learner members and non-teaching staff are determined by the type, size and grading of the school by the DoE (see addendum 1). Due to the limitations regarding the length of this study, the election of SGB members is

not discussed here because election procedures are applied by school principals who should be knowledgeable regarding that aspect.

### 2.3 Office bearers and SGB committees

The SASA makes provision for the SGB to elect office bearers among its members. This is done at the first meeting of the newly-elected SGB. The office bearers should include a chairperson, a treasurer and a secretary (RSA, 1996b). It is important to point out that it is only “a parent member of the SGB who is not employed by the school who may be elected to serve as a chairperson” (Quan-Baffour, 2006:32). No more than two educators can serve as office bearers. The term of office bearers must not exceed 12 months from the day of their election. However, office bearers may be re-elected after the expiry of their terms of office.

The possibility of the “re-election for office bearers and ordinary members of the SGB indicates that those who serve the school well stand the chance of being re-elected when their term of office expires” (Quan-Baffour, 2006:33). If the position of an office bearer becomes vacant, other SGB members with voting rights should elect one of its members to fill the vacancy. In most previously disadvantaged communities, the vacant positions of office bearers are not filled if the chairperson fails to convene a parents meeting. That is why the chairperson usually serves as the only parent office bearer on the SGB, which is unconstitutional (see paragraph 1.4). The task description of the various office bearers are provided in table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1 Functions of SGB office bearers**

<b>A chairperson</b>	<b>A secretary</b>	<b>A treasurer</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorises meetings</li> <li>• Calls and chairs meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arranges meetings</li> <li>• Keeps accurate minutes of meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeps all financial records.</li> <li>• Makes all payments</li> </ul>

<b>A chairperson</b>	<b>A secretary</b>	<b>A treasurer</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs agreements reached by the SGB Is one of the signatories of the school's banking account.</li> <li>• Ensures the smooth running of the SGB's activities.</li> <li>• Presents the annual general meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draws up the agenda for any meeting</li> <li>• Informs other members of meetings.</li> <li>• Keeps copies of all correspondences.</li> <li>• Acts as one of the signatories on the school account.</li> <li>• Ensures that minutes are in safe custody at the school and are open for inspection by other SGB members' circuit managers and any other authorised officers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handles all financial receipts.</li> <li>• Gives reports that reflect income and expenditure.</li> <li>• Submits annual financial reports.</li> <li>• Administers the bank account.</li> <li>• Is one of the signatories of the school's bank account.</li> </ul>

(Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2002:15)

According to section 30(1) (a) of the Constitution, SGBs may establish various committees amongst which is an executive committee (RSA, 1996a; RSA, 1996b). The four most common committees found at most schools are the "finance, staffing, curriculum and premises" committees." Subcommittees such as "fund-raising, tuck shop and school fee committees may be formed" as well (Lekalakala, 2006:21). Parents with specific scarce skills can be co-opted to serve on the SGB as well, but have no voting rights. The committees are given delegated powers to act, but final approval must be given by the whole SGB. The procedural rules followed by the whole SGB should be followed by the committees as the ultimate responsibility remains with the entire governing body.

#### **2.4 Meetings of SGBs**

The chairperson should convene ordinary meetings of SGBs at least once per quarter. Extraordinary meetings should be convened by the chairperson if the



situation necessitates such a meeting because he/she is the one who maintains close contact with the school and is up to date with the daily functioning of the school as well as other school activities and developments.

Meetings held once a term makes it difficult for the SGBs to have a sense of continuous involvement in the life and work of a school. Meetings held twice a term enable SGBs to deal with school issues adequately. This is more preferable than one meeting, which drags on for three to four hours. In order for meetings to be successful, "there should be a well-planned agenda that reflects the priorities of the SGB" (Creese, 1995:40). Matters seen as central should be placed high up on the agenda. It is important that the agenda should reach members seven days in advance to allow members to have a chance to study it. Any other business must be limited to items of real urgency, which could not be placed on the agenda in advance. These items "should neither be used as an opportunity to air petty grievances nor be attempts to ambush the headmaster or the chairperson" (Creese, 1995:40). A quorum is reached for all meetings if "50% of the SGB members are present. If this is not the case, the meeting must be postponed for at least eight days but not for more than twelve days" (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 1997a:35).

## **2.5 Functions of SGBs**

During the apartheid era, the function of school committees was "to mobilize the community to provide funds for running the school, maintain it and to expel learners from school for reasons considered by the committee to be sufficient enough to do so" (Lamola, 1996:19). School committees ensured that complaints affecting the schools were attended to (see paragraph 1.2). They had to enquire about staff members' capability to teach subject matter effectively to the learners. In contrast with the school committees' activities, the SGB is not involved in the day- to- day running of the school because this is the responsibility of the school's SMT. SGBs make decisions "on behalf of the school and see to it that the school is administered properly and all stakeholders share in the decisions of the body" (Nyambi, 2004:2).

Section 20 of the SASA sets out the stipulated functions of the governing body (RSA, 1996b). The SGB has an obligation to “draw up a constitution for the school in which community values and norms are reflected” (Segwapa, 2008:47). A particular school’s constitution serves as an umbrella under which all other policies are drawn- up and must be in line with the Constitution of the RSA, the SASA and other relevant provincial laws (RSA, 1996a; RSA 1996b).

Apart from the stipulated functions, SGBs from previously disadvantaged communities have a strategic role to play as they are expected to:

...know the school where SGBs are governors, to set the school’s vision and mission, share responsibility with local school authority, plan for the future, monitor the work of the school and promote the best interest of the school (Creese, 1995:16).

As governors, they are expected to work as a corporation in decision making, problem solving and budgeting with the school principal, students, staff members and other stakeholders.

SGB members from previously disadvantaged communities need to know that failure to perform their functions will have negative consequences. However, Heystek, in Nyambi (2004:3), questions whether the SGBs of such communities will be able to perform these functions because the illiteracy level of parents is high and parent governors are not well equipped for their expected governance functions. According to section 25(1) of the SASA, if the Head of the Department (HOD) determines that a governing body has ceased to perform the functions allocated to it or has failed to perform one or more such functions, the HOD has reasonable grounds to appoint sufficient persons to perform one or more of the allocated functions for a period not exceeding three months (RSA,1996b). The appointed person may still be nominated to build the capacity of the SGB to ensure that the governing body performs its functions effectively (RSA, 1996b). The researcher aims to find out how these SGBs can be capacitated in order to facilitate the application of section 25(1) of SASA (see also paragraph 2.8) The next section discusses the various governance models that can be utilised by SGBs.

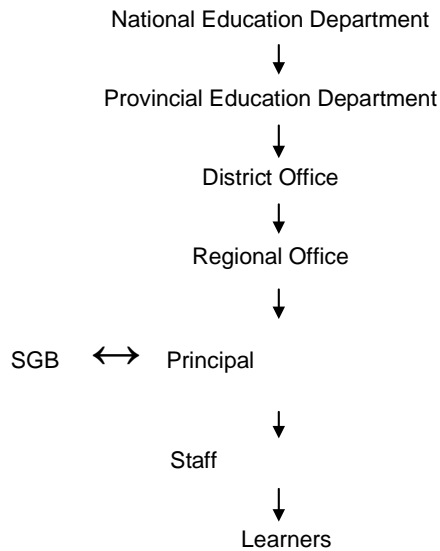
## **2.6 SGB models**

There appears to be no single generally accepted model for SGBs from previously disadvantaged communities regarding the fulfilment of their functions. However, there are two well-known models, which can be used by the SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities, depending on what the school governing body wants to achieve. However, knowledge of the models of governing schools does not imply that one knows how to govern. These models “display how the SGB sees, thinks and explain their site of governance” (Education Management, Law and Policy Study Guide, 2002:35)

### **2.6.1 Traditional governing model**

According to Marishane (1999:50), the traditional governing model is characterised by a lack of partnership and teamwork in the decision making process of a school, which was the general situation during the apartheid era. Packwood (1989:10) remarks further that the basic property of this model is the way in which organisational roles are graded in a vertical hierarchy.

Decisions taken on matters are communicated from the top or senior structures of education to the bottom or junior structures with no bottom- to- top mutual relationship. The main function of the bottom part of this model is to submit to whatever the top structure demands. Authority and accountability is attached to roles instead of personalities occupying various positions. Accountability for “the performance of work passes in the reverse direction from junior to senior” (Law and Policy Study Guide, 2002:70). Thus, formal authority and accountability of post holder is stressed and not the person This means that “every person who fills a particular post has the same degree of power irrespective of his expertise, qualifications or interests” (Law and Policy Study Guide, 2002:75) This model is portrayed in figure 2.1 on the following page:



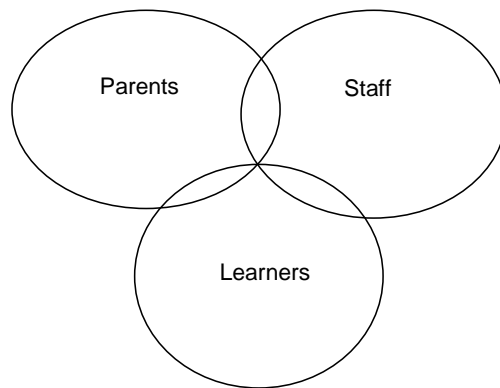
**Figure 2.1 The traditional governing model** (Marishane, 1999:51)

This model placed SGBs alongside the principal because he/she is also a member of the SGB and both are concerned with the smooth and effective running of the school. This model, which existed during the apartheid era, was applied to school committees that could not question the orders of the Secretary of Bantu Education.

### 2.6.2 The collegial governing model

The traditional approach is no longer relevant for democratic countries and has been replaced by the collegial model. This is because this model approaches "decision-making as a democratic process with the idea to establish consensus among different stakeholders" (Education Management Law and Policy Study Guide, 2002:78). The salient feature of this model is that role players share their roles and decisions are made through discussions. This model acknowledges expertise rather than authority inherent to a post. Members of the SGB are thought to have a mutual understanding about the objectives and hold a common set of values the authority of the SGBs is dependent on the consent of those that the SGB seeks to govern. The SGB should listen to good ideas from those who

are governed and acts as a team leader. This makes the model qualify as an open process aimed at the production of commitment from all members of the SGB. Each partner is a specialist in his specific role but the overall result of the specific roles become more than the sum of the individual's effort as is illustrated in the collegial governing model below:



**Figure 2.2 Collegial governing model** (Mpumalanga Province, 2002:49)

This model recognises the individual contributions as well as the active participation of all stakeholders in the provision of quality education. Active participation without direction is meaningless; hence, the next section looks at how these SGBs can be assisted to perform their duties effectively.

### **2.7 The need for building the governance capacity of SGBs in previously disadvantaged communities.**

Since SGBs come from diverse backgrounds, members of this body tend to display a wide range of governance competencies. Some of these competencies do not comply with the governance requirements enshrined in the SASA (RSA, 1996b). There is therefore, a need for “the establishment of a capacity-building programme to empower the SGBs to be more effective and efficient” (Mahlangu, 2008:24). Segwapa (2008:55) contends that the capacity-building programme is necessary to acquaint SGBs with meeting procedures, to manage paperwork and to make positive contributions to the meeting with confidence. Capacity-building

in this study refers to the transformation of a person's ordinary performance into a superior performance with the aim of benefiting the individual, group and his/her community. Lamola (1996:39) refers to capacity-building as an enlightening process, which helps people to see opportunities for change and break the bounds imposed by habitual ways of knowing and doing. Wolfendale (2000:3) refers to this process as a means as well as an end for realising and expressing the wants and needs of people as well as their ensuring the rights of parents so that the parental voice is heard and has an influence.

The capacity-building of SGBs is not a new concept for previously disadvantaged communities. It can be traced back to Dr. H.F Verwoerd's era when "Bantu local authorities were empowered to add 20c per month to site rental in the townships in order to cover the interest and redemption costs of loan made for building primary schools" (Hartshorne, 1992:32). Since the introduction of SGBs, the critical problem confronting provincial departments of education has been the capacity-building of SGBs. According to Motlala, in Nyambi (2004:6), many of these SGBs do not yet have the required skills and experience to exercise their new powers and fulfil their functions. Without knowledge and skills, people cannot make informed decisions to achieve their goals. However, assisting SGB members to gain the required knowledge and skills SGBs is hampered by the high rate of illiteracy. Consequently, these SGBs defer to school managers and rubber-stamp all decisions made by the manager (see paragraph 1.2).

The main aim of capacity- building is to direct the energies of participants towards attaining the objectives they have set. The purpose of capacity-building is to assist the inexperienced governors to perform their required functions with confidence" (Mahlangu, 2008:50). For community members to be actively involved in a school's decision-making, it needs support and empowerment from both the state as well as non-governmental organisations. Section 19 (1) (a) of the SASA asserts that, the Head of the Department must establish a programme to promote introductory training for newly-elected SGBs out of funds designated for this purpose by the provincial legislature, to enable them to perform their functions adequately (RSA, 1996b).

At national level, the South African Government has set aside a Conditional Grant for improving and developing functional and effective school governing bodies. Section 19 9(1) (b) of the SASSA makes provision for a continuous training programme for SGBs in order to promote the effective performance of their functions and to enable them to assume additional functions (RSA, 1996b). The SGB's responsibilities should be highlighted during the training process. Lekalakala (2006:6) contends that SGB members, who do not have the required skills to perform their functions, will not be able to complete their work effectively. Hence, the training intervention should provide sufficient information for SGB members to acquire the ability to handle the functions allocated to them by the SASSA. The state alone cannot provide support effectively but needs other stakeholders to assist it.

In Britain, various support programmes have been put into operation for school governors by local education authorities, business enterprises and non-governmental organisations (Marishane, 1999: 94). In the United States of America (USA), some businesses have initiated a programme to give extra annual leave to their employers who are school governors. In South Africa, the Inter-university Centre for Education Law and Education Policy and the Human Research Council have taken the initiative to publish manuals for school governors (Loock, 2003:50).

Most school principals of previously disadvantaged schools are products of the apartheid era's Bantu Education that was characterised by the top- to- bottom approach (see paragraph 2.6.1). These school principals are familiar with the development of policies in isolation and expect the other stakeholders to implement them. The policy making approach of such principals is not aligned with the new perspectives of governing schools, as these principals are still unaware of "the changes in the responsibilities of the governing bodies set out in new legislation or they simply lack the confidence to share in policy-making" (Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothata & Squelch, 1997:23).

School managers create the impression of consultation while retaining their policy-making powers. Unless the school principal aligns his/her interest with the

interests of the school's clients; the community will not regard him/her as a genuine service provider. Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994: 15) assert that empowerment will be ineffective in a centralised decision making environment where ideas flow in a one-way top- down direction with increasing control over policy and direction. Importantly, the policy – making processes of a school should be decentralised to widen the scope of accountability to all involved within the school. Illiterate parents must be empowered in order to partake in and contribute effectively to the process of policy-making in schools. They can then be in a position to achieve their goals and improve the quality of life of their communities.

According to Lamola (1996: 44), SGBs come from a larger community consisting of *inter alia*, the unemployed, employees, religious ministers, employers, illiterates, politician, lawyers and traditional leaders. The diverse backgrounds of SGB members can lead to a conflict of interest amongst the governors. Furthermore, conflict within SGBs prevents members from transforming their schools into safe places that benefit the society from which the SGB members are drawn. Importantly, capacity-building will “assist SGBs to develop a common focus through a shared vision” (Mahlangu, 2008:51).

Interpersonal and inter-community relationships will assist in minimising tensions between SGB members of previously disadvantaged communities. This can contribute to the development of a sense of trust between members. This sense of trust enhances integrity, accountability and reliability that can promote teamwork.

Motlala and Pampallis, (in Nyambi, 2004:70), contend that although the department appears to encourage community participation, little practical support is provided that can assist with empowering SGBs. The next section describes various strategies that can be utilised to build the governance capacity of previously disadvantaged communities.



## **2.8 Strategies to build the governance capacity of SGBs**

There are a number of strategies that can help SGBs to improve their governance capacity that will lead to the enhanced performance of their schools.

### **2.8.1 A school orientation strategy**

It seems obvious that the first duty of SGBs is to get to know the school where they are governors. SGBs have a number of legal responsibilities and are also required to make decisions which affect the future of the school. Without a detailed knowledge of the school, its staff and learners, it will be difficult for them to make such decisions properly because their needs are unknown to the SGB. Visits by SGB members will relieve the tension existing between them and the teachers and can help to establish the necessary atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Creese (1996:11) asserts that SGB members who only visit the school for governors' meetings and for formal school functions are failing to obtain a well-balanced and complete view of the school.

SGB members can become more involved in schools in various ways. Although school governors have limited time at their disposal:

...they can be invited by the educator governors or by the school principal to attend staff meetings, concert, plays, visit classrooms and in-service events while the governors themselves invite staff members to attend governors' meetings as observers or to make presentations about their work (Creese, 1995: 13).

Some governing bodies deploy one or two governors per term to visit the school and to report to the governing body. Such visits can enable SGB members to make proper decisions against the background of a real understanding of the school. However, these members must keep sight of the fact that they do not visit schools as inspectors who are on a fault-finding mission, but as friends to obtain the necessary information about the school and in their capacity as part of the school team.

Creese (1995: 35) indicates that the information that SGBs need to know when they visit schools includes the history of the school, its size, how it is organised, policies, links with parents, the curriculum and recent exam results compared with those of previous years. Most of this information can be found in the school's prospectus and can also be obtained by talking to the school principal, learners and the staff. However, other aspects such as the school ethos cannot be acquired by studying the school prospectus, but need the SGB members' physical presence at the school at least once a year when the school is in session.

### **2.8.2 Team building strategy**

SGBs consist of the unemployed, employers, religious ministers, politicians, lawyers, traditional healers and also traditional leaders. All these members "come with a diversity of interests and experiences" (Creese, 1995:11). Furthermore, people involved in the governance of the school can be divided into groups consisting of teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and learners (in secondary schools). If the school is to function effectively, every individual SGB member must operate as a part of a team that works towards the fulfilment of the school's aims.

Teams do not just develop automatically; there should be a common factor, which binds the members together. The binding factor encourages listening and constructive responses to teammates' views and the provision of support to fellow members. In a school context, a SGB's members are bonded together because they share a common aim that can be broken down further into precise objectives. In order for "a school to achieve its aim, each of the groups working with particular objectives, must contribute towards the achievement of the broad aim of the school" (Creese, 1995:24).

It is important to point out that newly-elected governing bodies need capacity-building in order to work towards the achievement of the schools' aim. Tuckman, (in Creese, 1995: 24), identifies four stages in the process of working together as a team. The forming stage is when elected SGB members meet for the first time.

They are polite and avoid committing themselves. During this stage, discussions focus on the nature of the task. Leaders are criticised if they fail to provide what they regard as real leadership. The second stage of storming is characterised by a display of very negative feelings and participants challenge the value of the task. Tensions can build up and members can become unwilling to take risks. During this stage, it looks as if a team spirit will never develop. The third stage is the norming phase where members are co-operative and open to each other. They express their feelings, views and support each other. The final stage of performing is reached when the group knows where it is going to and what is to be achieved. All members work hard to achieve these common aims.

No team can succeed if the players are playing towards different goalposts or each player puts his self-interest above the team's interest as often happens in the SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities. During capacity- building programmes, SGBs must be allowed to discuss what they regard as the purposes, aims and objectives of their governing body with the aim of reaching consensus on the topics discussed. During these discussions, some members will emerge as being able to develop priorities, motivate the group, get decisions made, have numerous ideas and who can turn plans into actions. Successful teams need these types of people.

Successful teams need to develop sound communication procedures, which will be known and understood by all team members to ensure that all members are kept informed. In other cases, "a communication 'tree' is organised through which messages are passed along rather than having to rely upon an individual to contact every member" (Calvert, 1983:38). A good relationship between SGB members must be maintained, because if there is a group within the team, which is more privileged than the rest, the team spirit is endangered.

For teams to be effective, they should constantly be engaged in reviewing their activities and performance over the preceding years. Contributions from previous SGBs must also be valued and interested groups from the previous SGB can be incorporated into the new SGB because of their expertise in certain areas of governance. However, it must also be realised that there will always be one or

two SGB members who will shirk their responsibilities. Furthermore, only in exceptional cases will all members agree all the time. The opposite is more likely to be the case and it is quite possible that frequent conflicts will arise, in which case it will be the responsibility of the SGB to devise a strategy for managing conflict. For this reason, a conflict resolution strategy is discussed in paragraph 2.8.6.

### **2.8.3 School policy determination strategy**

The SGB is responsible for developing “policies regarding the school’s vision, mission, discipline and the code of conduct of the school based on shared values and beliefs of stakeholders” (Quan-Baffour, 2006:34). Section 20(1) (c) of the SASA further supports the above mentioned statement and stipulates that the SGB must develop a mission statement for the school (RSA, 1996b). According to Marishane (1999:84), this mission statement should state the goals of the school clearly and they should be based on the shared values and beliefs of all the stakeholders. Importantly, this mission statement provides the guidelines to which everyone must adhere and it promotes the best interests of the school. To achieve this goal, the daily actions and decisions of all stakeholders must be directed towards realising the school’s mission. These daily actions are a reflection of the SGB’s mission.

According to Section 32(1) of the SASA, the term of office of SGB members expires after three years. The election of new SGB members entails the introduction of new perspectives on certain matters, which requires a shift in focus from the aims that the outgoing SGB wanted to achieve (RSA, 1996b). This demands that all SGBs should develop their own vision of what the school wants to achieve and what it wants to look like when it reaches its education destination. The set of guidelines and principles according to which the school operates, forms the basis of a school’s constitution that should be based on the norms and values enshrined in the SASA, the National Education Policy Act and the South African Constitution (Department of Education, 1996; RSA 1996a; RSA, 1996b). However, in practice, dealing with the above-mentioned documents might pose a serious problem for illiterate parents.

The school's constitution outlines which outcomes the SGB wants to achieve for the school and the ways in which they can be achieved, where they want the school to be and what the school should look like when it has reached its educational goals. It is a guiding document regarding the behaviour of learners, teachers and other stakeholders in an attempt to ensure development through quality education. Its aim is to bring order and guide the transformation processes. This constitution will always serve as a directive and for corrective purposes when problems are encountered during operations. It will also serve as the pivotal document from which the SGB will derive all its other policies. Thus, a school's constitution reflects the community's aspirations and values. It is therefore, the duty of the SGB to explain the contents of the constitution to all people affected by it so that it always acts in the interests of everyone. The constitution must be clear, simple and understandable so that can implement and comply with it. Walters and Richardson (1997:39) state that for a SGB's policy to be effective it must answer the following questions:

- What does the governing body want to happen?
- How can this be done?
- Which process does the governing body adopt to drive this policy?

The following section deals with how stakeholders should behave in order to take the school to where the SGB wants it to be in terms of its constitution, policies and most importantly, its code of conduct.

#### **2.8.4 Codes of conduct**

In order to transform and create order within schools, members of a school community need to behave in a particular way. The school's code of conduct is aimed at creating a disciplined and effective school. Nyambi (2004:35) points out that the school's code of conduct aims at creating conditions conducive to a peaceful environment that is a prerequisite for quality education. Quan-Baffour (2006:36) describes it as a document that guides the behaviour of learners and those responsible for their conduct at their school.

In order for a school policy to be implemented successfully, members within the school organisation should work together with the aim of attaining the policy's goal(s). A document that contains agreed upon behavioural guidelines for members must be drafted by the SGB and it is referred to as a school's code of conduct (Quan-Baffour, 2008:37). It is important to point out that different codes of conduct are established for different members within the school's organisation.

#### **2.8.4.1 The SGB's code of conduct**

The SASA "does not make explicit provision for the establishment of a code of conduct for the SGB that will be adhered to by all SGB members" (Nyambi, 2004:36). Most SGBs do not have a code of conduct, which explains why many members act the way they do. This state of affairs sets them up for failure. The SGB's code of conduct should "focus on the expected behaviour of its members in meetings, set out the responsibilities of all stakeholders in education and how members of these structures should interact" (Lusaseni, 1998:24).

#### **2.8.4.2 Code of conduct for educators**

Section 6(1) of the South African Council of Educators (SACE), Act 31 of 2000, states that the South African Council of Educators is a lawful body. It consists of representatives from the National Department of Education, the teaching profession and representatives from SGBs. This body "regulates the conduct of educators and aims at promoting the professional development of educators" (Sections 2(b) and (c) of SACE) (RSA, 2000). SGBs from previously disadvantaged communities need to understand that educators must be registered with this Council. When they deal with a teacher's conduct, reference must be made to the SACE. Should an educator be removed from this council, the educator can no longer teach in South Africa, as he/she would have been eliminated from the educators' roll of the country.

Another document, which regulates the educators' code of conduct, is the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998, which provides principles with regard to the misconduct of educators and incapacity. Importantly, the SGB

should not attempt to draw up a school's code of conduct for teachers (DoE, 1998).

#### **2.8.4.3 The learners' code of conduct**

Section 8(1) of the SASSA stipulates that a governing body of a school must adopt a code of conduct for the learners after due consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school (RSA, 1996b). This code of conduct must be written in simple and understandable language and must be aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment dedicated to the promotion and maintenance of a quality learning process.

The emphasis of the code of conduct must be on the adoption of a culture of learning in order to ensure that learners are engaged in school activities during school hours. It must teach learners to "appreciate and respect the value of time and many other rules promoting effective learning, which will prevent learners from arriving late at school at school" (Mpumalanga Province, 2002a:5). The code of conduct must address the lack of commitment, *inter alia*, reflected in the neglect of the dress code by pupils from previously disadvantaged communities. For the code of conduct to be effective, each learner should have a copy of it and teachers must discuss it with learners.

#### **2.8.5 Strategy for school safety**

Safety, especially in previously disadvantaged schools, has become an issue of concern to learners, parents and education authorities. Section 6(a) of the SASSA stipulates that the Minister may establish regulations to provide for safety measures at public schools. This safety entails the safety of property and human beings on the school premises (RSA, 1996b).

The SGB with the powers vested in it has the responsibility for making the school a safe haven for educators, learners and school property. Netshitahane, (in Nyambi, 2004:5), asserts that schools do not have safety rules and lack constant enforcement procedures and safety committees. When policies are drawn up for

a school, the element of safety and security must be included in the policy, especially in schools which are characterised by the late coming of learners and teachers, alcohol and drug abuse, fighting between teachers and learners and the administering of corporal punishment. Therefore, such schools can be turned into places where the safety of learners is guaranteed. The Mpumalanga Department of Education has drafted a list of offences as well and corresponding disciplinary measures that should be implemented to promote safety and security,. Table 2.2 below contains a list of offences as well as the corresponding disciplinary measures to deal with them.

**Table 2.2 Offences and corresponding disciplinary measures**

<b>Warning</b>	<b>Suspension</b>	<b>Expulsion</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petty theft.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of alcohol at school or during school trips/functions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serious assault.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulgar language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major theft.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated defiance of school authority.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irregularities in exams/tests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selling /use of drugs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheating in class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blatant dishonesty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serious violent theft.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing the school's name into disrepute.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued sexual and gender harassment .</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Found guilty in a court of law.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor damage to school.property.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threats to educators and learners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possession of weapons at school or on school trips.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual harassment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliberately undermining the principal's authority.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any act that the disciplinary committee deems fit for expulsion.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistent disobedience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Racist acts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual coercion.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribution of pornographic material.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intimidation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual assault.</li> </ul>



Warning	Suspension	Expulsion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsporting behaviour.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non- co-operation with authorities.</li> </ul>		

(Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2002a:20)

It appears that SGBs in previously disadvantaged communities disregard this classification of offences and their corresponding disciplinary measures. Learners found selling drugs or using them within the school are only given stern warnings by some SGBs. This is what turns previously disadvantaged schools into places of lawlessness because offenders are not punished with the full might of the law. SGBs must ensure that schools become places where crime receives zero tolerance. Marishane (1999:95) states that to avoid legal action against the disciplinary subcommittee of the SGB, the disciplinary committee must consider the following aspects when dealing with offences:

- The nature of the offender.
- Previous conviction of the offender.
- Offender's feelings about the offence.
- The offender's previous record of behaviour.
- The safety of the learner..
- The community, parents and learners' familiarity with the school policy with respect to conduct and discipline (Marishane, 1999:95).

Although certain powers have been delegated to the governing body to govern schools, it does not mean that its powers can be applied indiscriminately to discipline learners. In fact, these actions can lead to SGBs being challenged in court. The disciplinary subcommittee must make sure that when disciplining learners, the proper procedures are applied.

### **2.8.6 Strategy for creating a school's development plan**

It is the responsibility of the SGB to develop the school's development plan, which was introduced recently as a means of facilitating a planned response. The

plan is a strategy that is being implemented on a widespread scale in schools as teachers and school leaders struggle to take control of the process of change. The aim of the plan is the provision of an outline of the needs of the school for its development and improvements. Everything the SGB does is based on this development plan. There is no point in having a plan if it does not lead to visible actions and tangible improvements. Planning translates the vision, mission and objectives into actions, measurable outcomes and priorities that enable one to realise the visions and missions of SGBs. This plan spells out what must be done to bridge any gap between where the school is and where it wants to be.

According to Creese (1995:62), the development plan is about raising standards, enhancing quality and in creating efficiency in terms of the school and in the interest of parents, learners and staff. Attaining improvement in a school depends on the determination of the school's stakeholders and the conviction that the school cannot remain where it is, but can improve its performance through a development plan. By coordinating separated aspects of planning, the SGB acquires a sense of direction and control regarding the development tasks. A good development plan entails that SGB members, teachers and other stakeholders are clear about the goals and the set of steps with which the desired ends are to be achieved. Without this plan, the school would lapse into confusion. Such a plan must be "an ongoing cyclic process moving from reviewing the present situation, through planning, implementation, monitoring and back again to review" (Creese, 1995:63).

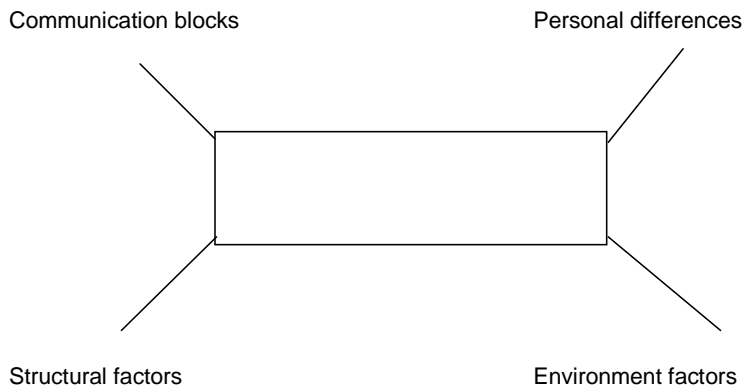
The reviewing of the school "entails a process of collecting information about the school's present position in order to plan how to arrive at the desired goals" (Creese, 1995:64). Once the current situation has been established, the SGB needs to develop a set of priorities in order for resources to be allocated to them. The "who" part of the development plan is provided by the SASA, which permits SGBs to encourage parents, learners, educators and either staff members to render a voluntary service to the school. In addition, sub-committees may be established to deal with specific projects that are determined by the plan (RSA, 1996). Everyone involved with the SGB must be included in the planning process regarding the attainment of the desired goals, so that they can

understand the objectives of the SGB, what needs to be done and how well it should be done. The SGB's role would then be to promote ways in which the people involved can work together so that each person finds his/her role enjoyable and rewarding and at the same time, the aims of the school as a whole can be attained successfully. However, during such interactions, conflicts are likely to occur.

### **2.8.7 Conflict resolution strategies**

A school is an institution that includes people from diverse backgrounds. Consequently, conflict can arise as no two people can think, and feel in the same way and have the same needs even if they are doing the same job. It is a fact that people have different tastes and interests because of their differences and uniqueness as human beings. Confrontation is likely to occur, for instance, if a resource is needed simultaneously by two people and this can result in interpersonal conflict. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2005:82) point out that conflict occurs because people have different perceptions, beliefs and goals.

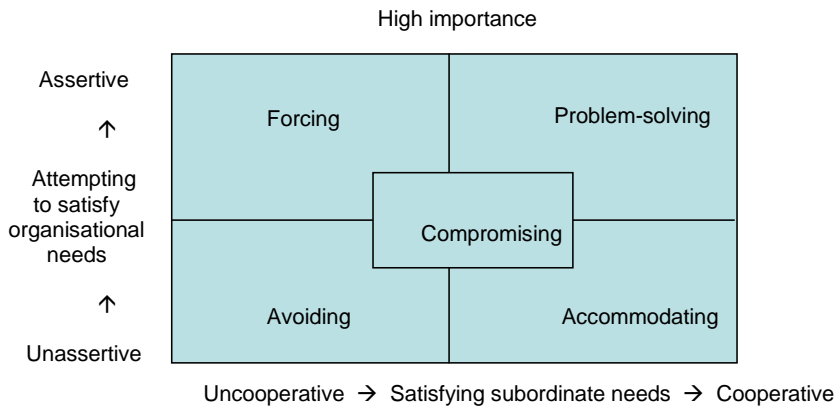
A conflict manifests itself "when the expectations or actual goal-oriented behaviour of one person or groups is blocked by another person" (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2005:70). A conflict is a disagreement between two or more people or groups of people. In a school situation "conflicts occur because of conflicting interests, goals, values, opinions, attitudes and motives within stakeholders of an institution where there is harmony" (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2005:83). The causes of conflict are countless, but only four are identified in this study as shown in figure 2.3 on the following page.



**Figure 2.3 Causes of conflict** (Steyn, 1996:83)

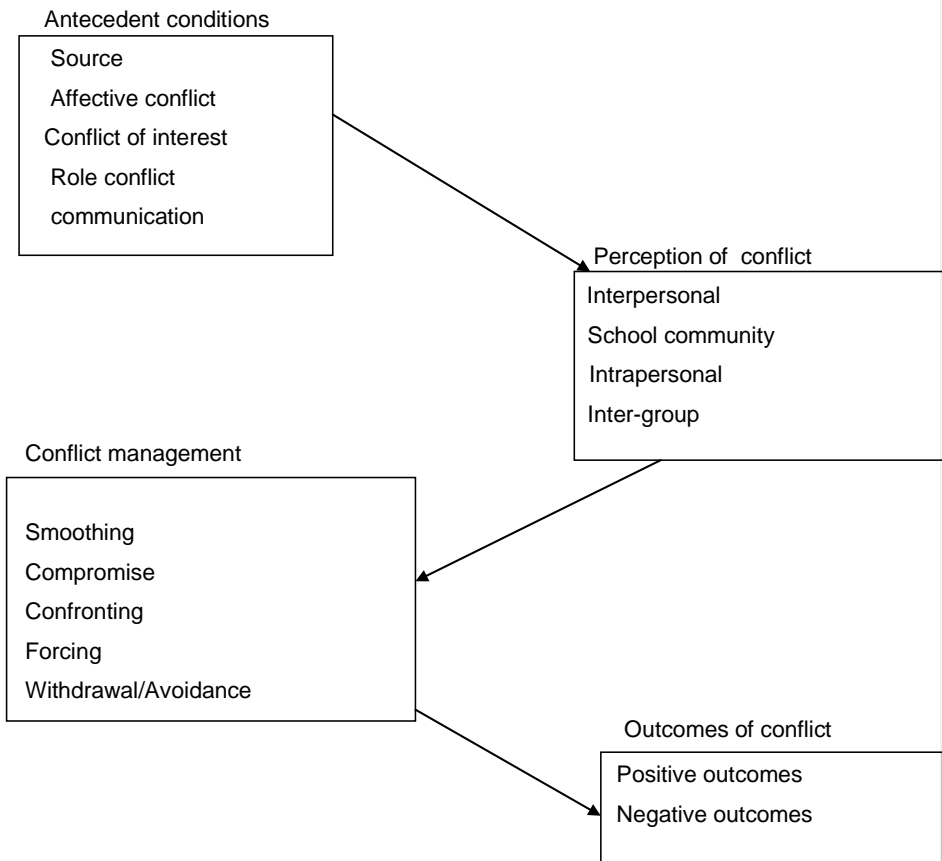
There are two different viewpoints regarding conflict; one viewpoint is that conflict is something bad and harmful; while the opposing viewpoint regards it as inevitable and that it should even be encouraged. SGBs must understand the causal factors of a conflict in order to identify the type of solution needed to deal with it effectively. Conflict “can be intrapersonal, interpersonal, inter-group and school-community based” (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2005:83).

Different strategies can be utilised to resolve conflict depending on the participants and the current circumstances of the person dealing with the conflict... The strategy applied depends on the value attached to goals of the conflict and the relationship between conflicting parties. When SGBs are faced with such a situation, they should determine “whether they want to achieve goals at the expense of the relationship or vice versa or whether they want to either maintain or lose both goals and the relationship” (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2004:300). Thomas (in Steyn and Van Niekerk, 2005:79), identifies five major styles of conflict management and these are depicted in figure 2.4 on the following page.



**Figure 2.4 Strategies for managing conflicts** (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2005:79).

Conflict is not always negative; on the contrary; it can be useful for structures such as SGBs. Importantly, conflict can help with identifying two or more alternative approaches that can be valuable for the structure. This may help parties to monitor the implementation of a resolution, which keeps the SGBs alert and communicating with other members of the structure about the outcomes of the resolution. The structure's effectiveness is increased. Conflict can also be negative, especially if the conflict is about personal glory. This is because "as the conflict develops, the personal glory becomes more of an issue, which makes it difficult to resolve the conflict" (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2005:89). Such conflict results in a decline in communication between SGB members as well as hostility and over-conformity to group demands. In such a case, an impartial third person or a mediator is needed to assist the different parties to reach a mutually acceptable settlement to the problem. When the involved parties can identify a common goal and shared responsibilities, a team is built, which fosters mutual respect and the awareness of the potential of others. The following diagram (figure 2.5) can help SGB members of previously disadvantaged communities to find out how conflict finds expression in a formal structure.



**Figure 2.5 Conflict resolution model** (Steyn, 1996:102)

The above diagram illustrates the sources of conflict, how some SGBs perceive and respond to conflict as well as the consequences of the conflict itself and also the consequences of their responses to the conflict.

Conflict can destroy the *esprit de corps* in a school situation to such an extent that effective teaching and learning is disrupted.

### **2.8.8 Financial management strategies**

In the 2008/9 financial year, 121.1 billion Rand was allocated to the national DoE (see paragraph 1.3) (City Press, 2009). Public schools receive this money in

various forms such as learners' support materials, furniture and direct deposits into certain schools' bank accounts. In South Africa, parents are expected to assist the Department of Education in funding schools through the payment of school fees, which are decided by the SGB. The school fees are used to maintain the school in terms of the payment of electricity, equipment and other items used for education. This means that more financial management powers have been devolved to SGBs. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the state to empower the governors with the requisite financial management skills to assist them in managing the school finances effectively.

If SGBs are capacitated, this will ensure greater accountability by the school management and will help to curb the exorbitant amounts spent on the principals' and staff members' transport. The school funds must be utilised for educational purposes that promote the provision of quality education. Greater accountability can also move SGBs away from "the legacy of thinking that any four-walled structure is a school because learners require sports fields, tennis courts, swimming pools and more importantly, classrooms" (City Press, 2007). Such funds can be used for providing structures that contribute to the provision of quality education.

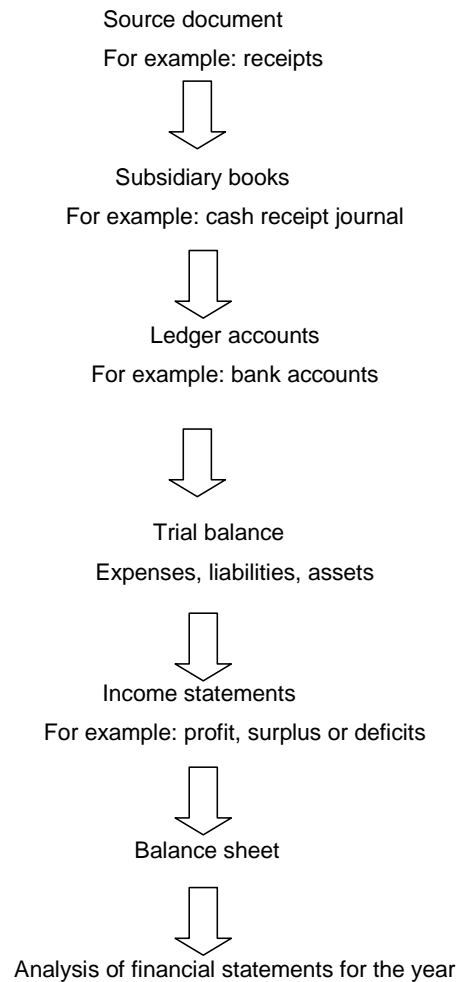
Comment [C1]: Explain.

Without empowerment in financial management, "the schools' clients will be without books, equipments and the funds for the daily running the school, will be exhausted before the end of the year" (Sokana, 2006:4). In addition, schools will be in a state of disrepair and many schools will be forced to close down because the environment is not conducive to the provision of quality education. It is important to note that the allocated funds must be accounted for by the SGBs to both the parents and the state. In turn, the state must exercise control over the usage of this money. This compels SGBs to draw up a budget that reflects how the money will be utilised. By budgeting, the SGB ensures that "there are sufficient funds to supplement resources provided by the state, that funds are available at the right time to act on priorities and control spending" (Mpumalanga Province, 2002b:50). The budget is determined "by the number of pupils attending a school and the ability of the budget to meet the anticipated expenditure" (Thomas, 1992:329).

Lekalakala (2006:32) defines a budget as a management tool or mechanism by means of which the SMT can estimate, plan and utilise, coordinate, control and evaluate the human material and other resources. In addition, Mbatsane (2006:27) defines it as a guide to spending the school funds; while Bisschoff and Mestry (2005:65) define it as the mission statement of a school expressed in monetary terms. In this research, a budget is a plan of income and expenditure for the following year.

The budgeting process begins “ from the 30<sup>th</sup> of September of each year when the Provincial DoE informs each school of the amount of money allocated to schools ranging from poorer to least poor schools” (Mpumalanga Province, 2002b:52). After receiving this indicative budget, the SGB decides on the extent to which it will supplement this budget and ask the SMT and the school staff to develop a further detailed operational budget. The SMT then asks each department or structure within the school to draw up a plan of activities for the following year. Based on the SMT’s summary, the SGB then draws up a draft budget that is presented to a general parents’ meeting. After this, parents should “vote for the approval of budget” (Mpumalanga Province, 2002b:52). At the beginning of the following year, the SGB utilises this budget to monitor and control the income and expenditure of the school. The public, which is the source of the school’s money, must be informed regarding how this money is used. For this reason, the state stipulates that the financial statement of each school should be audited each year before money for the coming year can be deposited into the school’s bank account. It is important that the treasurer of the SGB “must be well versed in financial matters such as the accounting cycle” (Mbatsane, 2006:94, depicted in figure 2.6 on the following page.





**Figure 2.6 Accounting cycle.** (Mbatsane, 2006:94)

In order to ensure that SGBs are functioning properly, they must be checked or appraised regularly. According to Marishane (1999:64), inspections are conducted regularly to ensure that SGBs operate in accordance with the law, not only in meeting their financial obligations, but also in performing all their duties. The inspection “is not a witch-hunt but it involves all participants of a school governing body, which makes it a partnership inspection” (Marishane, 1999:64). It is essential that SGB members should know what is expected of them.

The result of this “inspection should be discussed with SGB members in order for it to realise whether it has “failed” or “succeeded” in terms of meeting its financial obligations” (Mbatsane, 2006:94). Its “success” or “failure” is reflected in an audited statement from qualified auditors that must be submitted to the provincial head of the DoE.

### **2.8.9 A school marketing strategy**

Since 1994, there has been a marked emigration of learners from previously disadvantaged schools to former model C schools to the extent that the former model C schools cannot accommodate all these learners. On the other hand, previously disadvantaged schools have encountered a sudden drop in their enrolment figures. Consequently, schools, which have lost learners have a lower income than before and need to redeploy some of their staff.

The sudden drop in the enrolment of learners in previously disadvantaged communities can be ascribed to the fact that these schools were under the impression that their schools were providing high quality education, which matched the standards maintained by previously advantaged schools. These schools are currently failing to attract as many learners as the previously advantaged schools are able to attract. Competition between the two communities strengthens accountability and renders it necessary to raise the standards of education in the previously disadvantaged schools and to strive to provide quality education.

SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities are in similar positions to the boards of directors of organisations in the business world. A business organisation ensures success by researching the demands and expectations of its customers (Management Today, 2006:43). Schools too, should be clear about the demands and expectations of those who use their services. SGBs can “acquire information about their school by deciding on the type of information needed and why it is needed” (Raab, 1994:35). The information can then be arranged in a form that makes it easier to understand and assimilate. It is

important that decisions should be made about how the information will be collected and by whom.

Understanding the image of the school is very important in terms of understanding the client's demands, namely the parents of learners.. One needs an instrument, which is simple to use in order to maximise the client's responses and quality of the client's demands. SGBs can conduct brief interviews with parents after meetings with them in order to obtain information on how their school is viewed, which can be used to improve future events. A suitable instrument "that maximises the response and its quality is called "words." (Stott 1992:15) Through this instrument, one can gauge the perceptions of people regarding how they see the school by analysing the words they use to describe the school. According to Stott (1992:15), the advantage of using words as an instrument is that it is simple to handle and takes a matter of seconds to apply.

#### **2.8.10 Curriculum determination strategy**

Quan-Baffour (2006:40) describes a curriculum as a planned teaching and learning activity or programme for which an educational institution is responsible. Since schools reflect the expectations of a society, the curriculum must make it possible for learners to realise the goals and ideals that society wants it to realise.

Previously disadvantaged communities must ensure that the curriculum of the school is based on the values and rights enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa. The school curriculum must aim at fostering respect for rights and values such as equality, dignity, religious, racial, language and gender tolerance. Furthermore, it must help learners to understand their individual duties and responsibilities.

Curriculum development must be an ongoing process inclusive of all stakeholders and adapted to the changing needs of the school as well as the larger community. Subjects or learning areas such as school guidance, which are neglected in schools of previously disadvantaged communities, must be brought

back into the school curriculum. Misconceptions held about the difficulty of subjects such as Mathematics and Physical Sciences should be addressed. Learners should be offered an opportunity to choose subjects in accordance with their future goals. Career guidance must be introduced in schools to ensure that previously disadvantaged learners can plan their future careers in time. This “can help those learners to attain their goals on the way to receiving worthwhile employment. It can also expose those learners to a situation where they can discuss issues such as teenage pregnancy, xenophobia and HIV/AIDS\* (McPherson & Dlamini, 1998:20). The SGBs and the school principal should make provision for learners with special educational needs. In this regard, the SGBs can “identify a responsible person who can care for such learners and make all these learners’ needs known to the teachers who are likely to teach them (Monareng, 1995:32).

#### **2.8.11 Communication modes between SGBs and parents**

SGBs should adhere to the stipulations set out in the SASA to avoid their abolishment by the HOD in accordance with Section 25(1) of this Act (RSA, 1996b). The SGBs should also work towards meeting the needs of the community. The community needs to be informed about the school’s achievements and failures. There must be regular and open communication between all the stakeholders so that everyone can be informed about important matters. The nature of the issue under discussion determines the medium that will be used for communication. This will help parents to be kept abreast of what is expected of the teachers and learners at school. It will also provide guidance on how they can help their children at school. Parents will also be informed about any positive strategies that the school intends to implement to address certain disciplinary problems regarding the learners, for instance. Such a communication strategy will ensure that all the stakeholders will work towards attaining the schools’ goals. The communication channels should be as open as possible in order to facilitate the maximum participation of all stakeholders.

Failure to communicate with the larger community will mean that the parents will not become involved in SGBs and consequently, they will not be able to help

effect changes in the behaviour and performance of their learners. Furthermore, “failure to communicate with parents from the larger community deprives them of the right to ask, know, advise and make recommendations about the school that their children attend” (Wolfendale, 2008:72).

In the following section a number of communication modes that a school can utilise, will be discussed.

#### **2.8.11.1 Use of newsletters**

In the school context, “newsletters are the most common means of communicating school developments, plans and other activities to the larger community”.(Wolfendale, 2000:73). The advantage of this mode of communication is that the language used is not too formal and the tone is friendly. To ensure that newsletters or circulars reach their destination, the circulars should have a space for acknowledgement that the circulars have been received, by means of the signature of the recipients, before they are sent back to the school. However, this mode of communication does not replace face-to-face contact with parents.

#### **2.8.11.2 Meetings with teachers, learners and parents**

The basic purpose of meeting with learners and parents is to exchange information on the behaviour and performance of learners. Parents are called upon to address the misbehaviour and underperformance of their children. Teachers are able to state their problems in the presence of their learners’ parents and, it is hoped that the corrective measures will be owned by parents, learners and educators.

#### **2.8.12 Monitoring strategy**

Monitoring is the “process of consistently measuring performance and providing ongoing feedback against the development plans” (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2000:20). When designing a school development plan or policy, the

SGBs must address the process for reviewing the policy and monitoring its implementation. This ensures that deployed members of this body and the people involved in the organisation direct their efforts at achieving this body's objectives.

The reviewing process can be undertaken when the need becomes apparent and can provide the stakeholders with an opportunity to influence changes. In most cases, "the reviewing process is conducted quarterly and the attained objectives are compared against the objectives of the SGB in terms of the development plan" (Walters & Richardson, 1997:58). The dates for quarterly reviews must be agreed upon between the implementers or performers and all the SGB members, but should fall within the review periods.

It is most important for the SGBs to decide what information is needed to ascertain how well the planned activities are working. Most SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities are unclear about what they should monitor. A large proportion of the information kept in schools "has little value regarding the assessment of the success of the planned activities" (Creese & Bradley, 1998:112). The SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities "should set out what it wants to achieve clearly, then the process of monitoring becomes easy because the actors can focus on what the SGB wants to achieve" (Deal & Peterson, 1998:62).

Basic information about planned activities can be collected in the school. The information will form a measurement criterion of how successful the planned activities are. Walters and Richardson (1997:57) argue that the SGB does not need to monitor the progress of planned activities or implemented policies itself. On the contrary, this is a function of the school's management team. All that the SGBs "need to know are the results of the monitoring gathered on its behalf, so that the SGB can be informed about the progress made regarding the achievement of its goals" (Walters & Richardson, 1998:51). The management team of the school is not expected to guess what the SGB needs; instead, it can obtain information from other staff members and governors in order to help improve the performance of all concerned. In addition, successful actors may

also be assisted to improve even further. Furthermore, areas that need further development are also identified and addressed.

Apart from using the principal and the management team to monitor the implementation of planned activities, the SGBs may “choose to commission an external expert to monitor the implementation of planned activities, do an evaluation and report on it” (Walters & Richardson, 1997:58). The commissioned external person must report only on activities planned by the SGB and not on what someone else thinks is important.

In other instances, SGBs may “delegate monitoring to a committee or individual governor, who will in turn report to the governing body” (Walters & Richardson, 1997:60). Individual governors delegated by the full governing body must not be involved in any other matter of their liking except those in which they have been delegated to take part. The biggest danger of individual governors is that they try to monitor the job of the principal or staff members instead of serving the SGB’s delegated duties. That is why the role or duties of individual governors must be defined clearly by the whole SGB.

A formal annual evaluation process of all the planned activities must be conducted to decide whether all the planned goals have been attained successfully. It is important that a good performance receives appropriate recognition. Furthermore, areas that need further development should be identified and addressed, in order to accelerate the movement of the school towards the goal of attaining effectiveness in terms of providing quality education.

### **2.8.13 Strategy for developing “moving schools”**

SGBs can succeed in drawing up their schools’ policies, which guide the actions of everyone involved in the school. They can even design instruments to measure the success of the implementation of such frameworks, but without “a strategy that addresses the culture of the school, the school would lapse into confusion” (Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1994:88). The culture of the school has to do with the ways in which certain aspects operate at the school. It is the

“observed behavioural regularities when the stakeholders of a school interact, the language they use and the rituals they establish” (Hopkins *et al.*, 1994:89). It must be stated that the school culture is not fixed and static, but is created by the stakeholders to influence the level of commitment of teachers as well as the achievement of learners.

The effectiveness of a school driven by its culture can be linked to a notion of movement. School effectiveness enables us to distinguish between two stereotypical schools, namely “moving” and “stuck” schools. These two types of schools may both be previously disadvantaged, but a “moving” school produces much higher outcomes in terms of development and provision of quality education than the so-called ‘stuck’ school. Moving schools are “institutions that promote the culture of learning, but stuck schools are dilapidated places where learners and educators stay away from classes and SGB members fail to attend meetings to the detriment of the school’s development” (Hopkins *et al.*, 1984:84).

The expectations of SGBs of “stuck schools” are low in terms of improving the poor conditions encountered at the school. Teachers in such schools have “never heard of a school culture and even when it is explained to them, some regard it as something imposed on the school from above” (Hopkins *et al.*, 1994:89). In fact, teachers believe that the school culture has been created by parents and the Department of Education. Teachers from such schools often use phrases such as “there is not much we can do with these learners.” Learners in those schools play truant by leaving the school premises on Fridays without permission and mostly do not return to school. If they do come back, they sometimes do so under the influence of alcohol (see paragraph 1.4). In addition, “teachers are still administering corporal punishment” (Notshulwane, 2006:9). Furthermore, it is a matter of concern that the matriculation pass rate of such schools is below 50%.

However, the emphasis should not fall on merely identifying ‘stuck schools’ or telling them that they are stuck, but it should rather be on how to assist the SGBs of such schools to transform their schools into moving schools that sustain quality education. The SGB of a ‘stuck school’ “cannot move directly and change into a moving school but stages will have to be passed by the SGB” (Hopkins *et al.*,



1994:91). This includes the wondering stage, which is “characterized by the SGB’s movement towards developing the school but the movement lacks a clear destination and there is no agreement on purpose of development” (Hopkins *et al.*, 1994:92). It is a characteristic of this stage that individual SGB members pursue their own aims. Importantly, development of the school is initiated, but is not finished. Very few SGBs of previously disadvantaged schools progress beyond this stage to the promenading stage.

During the promenading stage, the SGB tends to bask in its past achievements. Moreover, the SGB’s development programme is not implemented properly. Any activities undertaken tend to be for “personal gain and glory rather than for the improvement of the school” (Hopkins *et al.*, 1994:92). This type of SGB sees no reason for change as the school has been responsible for successful developments in the past. Instead, this stage should rather be regarded as the starting point for laying the foundation for further improvements to schools that will benefit the school and the learners alike.

In the above paragraphs, various stages connected with the concept of ‘moving schools’ and ‘stuck schools’ have been discussed. Most SGB members are likely to prefer certain stages to others because they might feel that some stages make more sense; while others are unnecessary. Such preferences are sources of misunderstanding because each stage contributes to the movement of the school. It is important that SGBs should locate their position within these different developmental stages. Once the position is located, it can be utilised as a point of departure from which ‘stuck schools’ can be changed into moving schools. When their schools succeed in sustaining quality education, the schools would have started with the promotion of quality education.

## **2.9 Summary**

In this chapter, the transformation process, which entailed replacing the school committees of the apartheid era with democratically elected SGBs of previously disadvantaged schools, are discussed. In addition, strategies for improving the functioning of the SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities are also

discussed with the aim of developing a positive approach in schools within these communities so that they become progressive and can operate optimally. What remains is to determine how best these SGBs can be equipped with these strategies and also whether they are utilising them in order to govern their schools effectively.

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

### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter dealt with the roles and responsibilities of SGBs. The purpose of this study is to identify obstacles to effective governance and develop strategies that can be utilised in the capacity-building of SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities. This is an endeavour to assist them in discovering new ways of governing their schools effectively. Effective governance entails managing human and physical resources and designing and implementing policies. In order to identify areas that need capacity-building, a qualitative research approach is utilised to gather the information.

### **3.2 The qualitative research approach**

According to Cohen and Manion (2003:415), the qualitative research approach is an approach, which attempts to understand human behaviour and the meanings people attach to their settings. MacMillan and Schumacher (1993:371) define the qualitative research approach as a primarily interactive type of field research or primarily non-interactive document research. The qualitative research approach attempts to understand human behaviour from the perspective of the individual who is part of the ongoing action and who is being investigated. The focus is on understanding the human behaviour as it presents itself. In addition, the qualitative research approach strives to portray what it is like to be in a particular situation. Therefore, it describes the participants' lived experiences, thoughts and feelings regarding the situation under study.

Information and knowledge about SGBs' behaviour in a particular setting is collected by observing the behaviour of SGBs in their natural settings. The observed behaviour is portrayed in words rather than numbers and is compared to a whole class of similar types of behaviour. However, it is not possible for the researcher to observe all types of behaviour in a class for the purpose of drawing conclusions and this then "leaves room for the researcher to make incomplete observations" (Cohen & Manion, 2003:50). The conclusions made are limited to

the observed class but can be generalised to other similar types of behaviour. These conclusions are “interpreted and contextualized in an open manner” (Cohen & Manion, 2003:50). The openness of the interpretation and contextualisation of the conclusion characterises this approach as an approach with an open agenda. MacMillan and Schumacher (1993:12) indicate that this research reconstructs a picture that takes shape as the parts are collected and examined.

Understanding the natural setting from the participants’ perspective does not imply that the researcher is completely detached from the situation. On the contrary, he/she is deeply immersed in the situation and becomes part of the situation in order to gain better understanding of the observed phenomenon. Thus, the researcher becomes a participant observer “present in the field or site for an extensive time” (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1993:417) observing and interviewing in the participant’s natural setting. This then qualifies the qualitative research approach to be a multi-layered interactive approach.

The above-mentioned characteristics of this research approach make this approach appropriate for this research topic. The choice of the Nkululeko Circuit as the natural setting for the study is purposive in itself. The poor governance of schools, lack of learner discipline, poor matriculation results and a general lack of progression in the development of schools, characterise the circuit. These factors caused the researcher to spend an extended amount of time at the site of study observing, and interviewing the participants and collecting certain documents in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of the site. It is important to note that the researcher must allow both human behaviour and the natural setting to speak for itself rather than for it to be interpreted or judged by the researcher. For this purpose, the researcher used non-interfering data collection strategies to discover the natural flow of the governance process of previously disadvantaged schools.

### **3.3 Research methods**

The nature of qualitative research requires the use of multi-methods to ensure that the study yields the intended results in a reliable manner. A detailed explanation of the methods used to collect data in the governance of previously disadvantaged schools is given below after the benefits of triangulation have been pointed out.

#### **3.3.1 Triangulation**

To make sure that the data collected at the site remains a valid reflection of the site's dynamics, the researcher used more than one technique to collect data and explain the problems experienced with governance in previously disadvantaged communities. By studying the research topic from more than one viewpoint, the validity of the study is enhanced (see paragraph 1.7.2.3). Cohen and Manion (2003:113) explain that triangulation in qualitative research attempts to map out or explain the richness and complexity of human behaviour more fully by studying it from more than one perspective. The advantage of the multi-method is that "it helps to overcome method boundedness" (Cohen & Manion, 2003:113). In this regard, MacMillan & Schumacher (1993:498) state that researchers should compare different resources, situations and methods to see if there are recurring patterns.

The use of multiple methods of data collection combines various dissimilar methods with an aim of studying the same topic. The use of multiple methods enables the researcher to compensate for the flaws of one method used with the strength of the other methods. In this study, the researcher uses participant observations, interviews and document analysis to yield a more complete picture of the governance process of previously disadvantaged schools. The researcher asks '*why*' '*when*' and '*how*' questions for every conclusion made after an observation or interview. This ensures that the researcher remains critical of the data and the process.

### 3.3.2 Participant observations

De Vos, Strydom, Fouchè and Delport (2000:280) define participant observations as a qualitative research procedure that studies the natural and everyday set-up in a particular community or situation. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:219) explain that participant observations are used when the researcher attempts to participate fully in the lives and activities of subjects and thus becomes a member of their group, organisation or community. This enables him/her to share his/her experiences by observing not only what is happening, but also to feel it. Participant observations require that the researcher becomes part of the situation without changing the situation. Importantly, the researcher's aim is to get to the root of what is going on in that particular setting. The degree of the researcher's involvement should depend "on the objective of the study, available resources and the need of field workers" (De Vos, 1998:280).

In this study, the researcher stayed with participating SGBs for a certain period to reduce their reactivity effects and recorded what was happening in their daily lives. He was actively involved in the site whilst assuming a participant-observer role in that situation. This helped him to gain insight into the situation and build interpersonal relationships. The focus of the researcher was on gaining "feelings, impressions and experiencing the circumstances of the real world of SGBs by living alongside, interpreting and sharing their activities" (De Vos, 1998:280).

The level of the researcher's participation can be conducted at one of two levels. The complete participation level is when the researcher becomes a full member of the group in which the research is performed. The other level is apparent when the researcher functions as an observer who participates to gain rapport with the subjects, thus gaining a better understanding of the group dynamics. In this research, the researcher functioned as a participant-observer in order to gain firsthand experience of the daily life experiences of the participants.

By immersing himself/herself in the research situation over an extended period, the researcher is able to get close to the participants; he/she can observe how events evolve and can examine the phenomenon under study as a participant in that natural setting. This method affords the researcher an opportunity to

experience the real emotions of those who are researched. The researcher can therefore be in a position of observing the dynamics of the situation, the participants and the contexts in which events unfold.

Salient features of the phenomenon can emerge which help to construct a picture that takes shape as parts are collected (see paragraph 3.2). The advantage of this method is that it is flexible and allows the researcher to ask questions informally without them being regarded as intrusive or insensitive. However, the researcher can identify so closely with the norms and values of the participants, which can result in some bias in data collection. MacMillan and Schumacher (1993:258) point out that the perceptions and interpretations of the observer, influenced by previous experiences, affect the recording of the behaviour.

In this study, the recording of observations was done using field notes. Since it is difficult to remember everything the researcher sees and hears, the researcher makes field notes while observing. The loose notes are converted into field notes at the end of every observation session. These field notes contain a comprehensive “account of the SGBs’ responses, the events taking place, the actual discussions, communications and the observer’s attitude and feeling” (De Vos *et al.*, 2000:286). In addition, these field notes help the researcher to make accurate and systematic notes at the end of every observation session. Some of these field notes may not be utilised in the researcher’s final report but it is advantageous to the research to have sufficient information in the final report.

### **3.3.3 Focus group interviews**

Mahlangu (2008:16) defines a focus group interview as an opportunity for the researcher to investigate what cannot be observed visually and to obtain alternative explanations for what is observed. Kruger, (in De Vos *et al.*, 2000:206), defines a focus group interview as a planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive non-threatening environment. Carey, (in De Vos *et al.*, 2000:291) explains that this method is meaningful if one wants to explore thoughts and feelings and not just research behaviour. A focus group interview “is a means of better understanding how

people feel or think about an issue, product or service' (De Vos *et al.*, 2000:305). The focus group interview is an advantageous tool for collecting data since some SGB members "may not read and write or provide answers in English. For this reason, the researcher can conduct the interviews in a language the SGBs understand best" (Segwapa, 2008:8). The researcher can readjust the interview schedule to the SGB's level of understanding. The responses of SGBs can "be translated into a scientific language suitable for research at a later stage" (Segwapa, 2008:8).

The group is focussed in that it involves some kind of collective activity. The participants are selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic of the focus group. Importantly, the researcher creates a friendly and respectful environment that encourages the participants to share experiences, wishes, concerns and points of view. According to De Vos, (1998:307), people may be more, rather than less likely to self-disclose or share personal experiences in groups rather than in individual settings.

A facilitator guides the interview while the focus group discusses the topics raised by the facilitator. An audio-recorder is used to avoid delaying the interviews and to ensure that a complete record is obtained of their verbal interaction. An assistant facilitator could take detailed field notes during the focus group session. Field and Morse (1985:102) describe these field notes as a written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks in the course of collecting or reflecting on the data obtained during the study (see paragraph 1.7.2.1). After the group session, the facilitator should synchronise the field notes with the audio-recorded notes that are an exact written transcription of the audio recordings.. Both parties discuss the field notes after the group session. The purpose of the focus group is to promote self-disclosure by participants regarding how they think and feel about a particular area of interest. This is because the participants are likely to share governance experiences and feelings in the presence of people perceived to be like them. Because of the presence of several SGBs, this type of a situation "allows a variety of viewpoints to emerge and for the SGBs to respond and discuss these views" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000:268).



The SGBs also feel empowered and supported when others surround them. Diversity of opinion may emerge and needs to be understood because it helps all the SGBs as well as the facilitator to understand the variety of others' experiences. It needs to be noted that the facilitator should guard against one or two SGB members dominating the discussions. He/she should try to draw responses that lead to the achievement of the aims of the study. Throughout the process, the researcher should remain motivated to listen and learn from participants.

In this study, focus group interviews were utilised to gather data about the participants' experiences, thoughts, feelings and ideas concerning the governance of schools in previously disadvantaged communities. Different types of qualitative interviews were used depending on the nature of information, which the researcher intended to gather. At the beginning of the study, informal conversation was used on site to allow questions to emerge from the immediate context of school governance. The initial exploratory discussions that took place while the researcher was studying the situation helped the researcher to formulate subsequent questions for the focus group interviews.

In the focus group interviews, the researcher "asks the same questions in the same order, thus reducing interview effect and bias" (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1993:426). The questions asked by the researcher in this study are presented in addendum 4. To ensure the reliability and validity of the focus group interviews, the focus groups were divided into three groups consisting firstly, of school principals, secondly, of parents who were SGB chairpersons of schools managed by the aforementioned principals and thirdly, of teachers and learners (see paragraphs 3.4 & 4.2). The data from the three groups were collected and compared to find similarities and disparities. The same data was further compared to the data obtained by using other methods of study and other sources. If the "data obtained is similar then it can be safely assumed that the results are valid" (Cohen & Manion, 2003:273). All interviews were conducted at the circuit office as participants came from different sites. The circuit office represented all their schools and served as a familiar environment. From the

start, the researcher informed the participants about the confidentiality of the interviews.

### **3.3.4 Document analysis**

Delport and Strydom, (in De Vos 1998:323), define official documents as documents that are compiled and maintained on a continuous basis by large organisations. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:190) define documents as raw data sources as well as a storage medium for compiled data. These documents may include documents such as the minutes and agendas of meetings, financial records and annual reports. MacMillan and Schumacher (1983:45) simplify the definition of documents by stating that documents may be written or printed materials, which may be official, public or private, published or unpublished, prepared intentionally to preserve a historical record or prepared to serve an immediate practical purpose ,

For the purpose of this study, when the researcher studied the official documents, it was of cardinal importance to evaluate the authenticity, validity and reliability of the documents. The reason for this lies in the fact that some authors of these documents tend to have ulterior motives according to Cohen and Manion (2003:240). That is why it is important to compare the relevant documents with other written documents containing data that have been collected in various other ways. In any event, SGB members can be interviewed to validate the validity and reliability of the documents.

In this study, the analysis of official documents was used to verify the data obtained through participant observations and interviews. White (2003:40) recommends designing and presenting a study in such a way that it allows verification so the results can be confirmed or revised in follow-up research allows. In this study, verification entailed going through documents such as SGB minutes, school policy documents, annual reports, development plans and financial records. The advantage of this method is that the contents of the documents studied cannot be affected by what the researcher does.

The researcher's use of the verification process can be affected by their availability and the willingness of participating schools to share the documents with the researcher. Hence, the researcher "requested permission to peruse the documents" (Segwapa, 2008:69). However, the disadvantage of this method in this study is that the minutes and financial records of previously disadvantaged communities are not written for research purposes and may therefore be formulated to influence the readers positively.

### **3.4 Purposive sampling**

Qualitative research utilises non-probability methods, particularly purposive sampling techniques rather than random sampling. Denzin and Lincoln, (in De Vos, 1998:334), point out that qualitative researchers seek out individuals, groups and settings where the phenomenon under study is likely to occur. This enables the researcher to "use his/her judgment to select cases that will best enable him/her to answer the research questions and meet the research's objectives" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000:174). The selected cases are chosen because of their richness in illustrating some features of the governance phenomenon studied.

In this study, the sample was selected from the Nkululeko Circuit, which lies approximately 45 kilometres east of Nelspruit on the left hand side of the N4 to the Malelane Gate of the Kruger National Park (see paragraph 1.4). The main reason for selecting this circuit is that it is far from previously advantaged schools; consequently, the governance of previously disadvantaged schools can be studied at these schools. A group consisting of 42 participants was chosen to form three focus groups based on the richness of the information that could be obtained pertaining to the governance of previously disadvantaged communities. In order to categorise the research results meaningfully, schools that responded to the invitation to participate in this research were labelled A to J. The first group consisted of ten primary school principals and four secondary school principals. The second group consisted of fourteen parents who were chairpersons of SGBs of schools managed by the above-mentioned principals. The third group consisted of fourteen educator governors and four learner governors (from the

four secondary schools) from the Nkululeko Circuit of the Ehlanzeni Region in the Mpumalanga Province in terms of the SASA prescription (see paragraph 4.2). These groups represented fourteen of the nineteen schools in the Nkululeko Circuit.

### **3.5 Obtaining permission to conduct the research**

Participant observations, interviews and the study of official documents entail the gathering of data from the actual situation. It is therefore imperative to gain permission to enter the field where the study will take place (see addendum 2). It is important to remember that the researcher should “not attempt to apply pressure on intended participants to gain access” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000:133). Individuals have the right to privacy, which means that the researcher will have to accept refusal to take part in the research.

The granting of permission by a higher authority is important in making him/her aware of the study and it also serves the purpose of letting the people in the area to be studied know what the project seeks to accomplish (see addendum 3). De Vos (1998:283) states that all the people directly involved with the project should be consulted during the process of gaining access to the community.

A letter of application for permission to undertake the study was written to the regional director of the Ehlanzeni Region (see addendum 2). His response is included in this study as addendum 3, which grants the researcher permission to undertake research in the actual situation. To ensure that the participants feel secure and provide trustworthy answers to the researcher, he/she assures them that there are no wrong and right answers and that the research will not harm them, but will help them with the effective governing of their schools.

To prevent feelings of exclusion developing amongst those stakeholders who were not selected, the researcher should remain unobtrusive because participants might sometimes feel overly flattered by the researcher's decision to involve them in the project. The researcher treats the participants with openness,

respect and in a warm professional manner rather than by gaining forced entry in order to achieve the aims of the study.

### **3.6 Ethical issues**

According to Levy (in De Vos, 1998:63), the concept 'ethics' implies preferences that influence behaviour in human relations. In this vein, ethics deals with what is right or wrong. De Vos (1998:63) defines ethics as a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual or group and are widely accepted to offer rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards participants of a research project. Sanders, Lewis and Thornhill (200:130) define ethics as the appropriateness of the researcher's behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become participants of the research or who are affected by it. Strydom (in White, 2003 :57), defines ethics as a set of moral principles, which is suggested by an individual or group, which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents.

During this research project, the researcher clarified the reason for the study, assured participants that there were no correct or wrong answers, reassured them that the research would not harm them either emotionally or physically. In addition, they were informed that the research process was not an interrogation, but would benefit them in terms of helping them to improve the way they governed their own schools. The researcher refrained from making any value judgment about the participants' points of view by stating that "there are no right or wrong answers, even if their viewpoints are in conflict with those of the researcher" (Saunders, *et al.*, 2001:36). A clear explanation of how observations and interviews are conducted was given in paragraphs 3.3.2 and 3.3.3. The researcher "assured participants that the entire interview would remain confidential and that the information obtained would be used for research purposes only" (Saunders *et al.*, 2001:37). They were also told that they could withdraw at any time if they felt uncomfortable with the research process (Segwapa, 2008:62).

### **3.7 Summary**

This chapter focussed on the research approach and the reason why this approach was utilised in this research. This chapter also outlined the methods and techniques used for collecting data for this study. The ways in which the researcher gained the confidence and trust of the SGBs were also discussed as well as the relevant ethical issues. The focus of chapter 4 that follows next will be on the interpretation and analysis of the data obtained through the application of the research methods.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter dealt with the design and methodology utilised for data collection regarding the identification of obstacles to effective governance and strategies for building the governance capacity of SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities. In paragraph 2.7 of this study, capacity-building was referred to as “an enlightening process which helps people to see the opportunities for change and break the bounds imposed by habitual ways of knowing and doing” (Lamola, 1996:39). It is against this background that chapter 4 presents and analyses the data collected by means of observing participating SGBs at their sites of governance and interviewing them about certain governance phenomena occurring at their sites. This was done with the aim of detecting whether the participants had utilised their maximum knowledge and skills to achieve good governance at their sites of practice. If it was found that this was not the case, then further probing would be done to ascertain the reasons for the state of affairs.

The literature surveyed in chapter 2 made it clear that without knowledge and skills, people cannot make informed decisions that can lead to the achievement of goals and that can improve. By observing the participants at their actual sites of practice, the researcher tried to find out whether the participants directed most of their energies towards the achievement of the set goals. These set goals were ascertained by consulting each previously disadvantaged school’s policy, official documents such as the SGBs’ minutes of meetings, year plans and development plans. Unfinished projects at their sites of practice were indications of the failure to achieve certain goals. In addition, the interviews were conducted to determine how much effort was utilised to achieve the set goals.

It is important to note that document analysis revealed no role prescription for SGB members for the attainment of goals. Furthermore, no monitoring instrument was recorded to indicate the extent of attaining goals. Factors that resulted in the failure to attain goals were mentioned verbally by the chairpersons of the SGB

and the school principal. No documentation recording the activity was kept for future use, which meant that there was no record of the activity leading to the attainment of goals. Consequently, problems that could prevent the achievement of goals could not be avoided in future by SGBs.

Participant observations revealed that the principal and the chairperson were active participants in the attainment of goals. However, the other SGB members were not assigned duties that could lead to the attainment of goals. In other words; there was no team effort to attain goals.

A copy of the interview schedule used for the focus group interviews is presented in addendum 4 to support the analysis of the data.

The data obtained were compared with the standards prescribed for governing schools obtained from the literature studies in chapter 2. This was done to determine whether their failure to achieve goals could be attributed to insufficient knowledge of procedures pertaining to SGBs. Where necessary, additional information was provided to cast further light on the findings.

This analysis was supported by data obtained from previously disadvantaged schools' official documents and participant observations. Therefore, chapter 4 compares the data obtained from certain documentation and interviews with the data obtained from the literature survey undertaken in chapter 2 of this study.

#### **4.2 Presentation of data collected through interviews, participant observations and analysis of documents**

The interviews were undertaken following the observations of participants' behaviour and attitudes at their sites of practice. In turn, the responses of the interviewees were verified through analysis of the schools' official documents such as financial records, school policies, year plans and development plans. Document analysis was undertaken to determine whether the SGBs' actions and behaviour were guided by the guidelines set out in the official documents. The responses obtained from the three research methods were compared with the



national standards prescribed for governing schools. It is important to point out that the national standards set out in the SASA served as a norm or yardstick for measuring the success or failure of the governance of schools (RSA, 1996).

Three focus group interviews were conducted. The first group with whom interviews were conducted, consisted of ten principals from primary schools and four principals from secondary schools. The second group consisted of fourteen parents who were the chairpersons of schools managed by the above-mentioned school principals. The third group consisted of fourteen teachers and four learners (from four secondary schools) from the Nkululeko Circuit of the Ehlanzeni Region in the Mpumalanga Province (see paragraph 3.4). The three groups consisting of 42 members each were purposive samples of the SGBs of ten out of fourteen schools (see paragraph 1.4). These SGB members were all asked the same focus group interview questions presented in addendum 4 of this dissertation (see paragraph 3.4).

The interviews focussed on identifying factors that were obstacles to effective governance as well as the strategies that could be utilised in building the governance capacity of SGBs in previously disadvantaged communities. This was because previously disadvantaged communities still lagged far behind as far as educational developments were concerned, because of the lack of effective governance in their schools. There is therefore a need to analyse the work of the SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities systematically with the aim of detecting the shortcomings or problems that prevented them from being effective governors. The three research methods utilised in this research attempted to uncover the causal factors for the ineffective governance prevailing in these schools. Recommendations for overcoming the obstacles to effective governance will be made in chapter 5 to promote the good governance of these schools. As effective governors, the SGBs “can assist their schools to attain high quality education and to promote a culture of teaching and learning” (Moate, 1996:22).

Next, the focus group interview questions are discussed by means of an analysis of the responses of the interviewees regarding the work done by the SGBs in previously disadvantaged communities. With the presentation and analysis of the

responses of the interviewees, the same questions appearing in addendum 4 are repeated to avoid wasting time (by having to page back to addendum 4 to obtain the relevant questions). For each response, reference is made to addendum 4 to ensure that the question eliciting a particular response is the same as the one given in addendum 4.

The responses of the respondents are expressed as responses by the fourteen participating schools elicited from fourteen principals, fourteen parents, fourteen educators and four learners respectively. In the instances where the representatives of the same school within the three groups presented contradicting opinions, verification of the information was obtained by going through official documents and additional participant observations. The verification enhanced the reliability of the information gathered from the three groups representing the same school. It is the verified information that is portrayed in words uttered by members of schools participating in the research (paragraph3.2). Whatever response was elicited, can be regarded as a reflection of the activities occurring at their respective schools.

In cases where there is a difference in opinion among the participating representatives of schools, the viewpoints of principals, parents, teachers and learners are presented separately for each group's responses. The difference in opinions is of great significance for this study as it enhances the comparison of the various viewpoints with national documents on the governance of schools. National documents are guidelines and serve as corrective measures in cases of deviation from the required national standards of governing schools.

The discussions follow the same sequence as the questions in addendum 4.

#### **4.2.1 Orientation of new members**

The aim of question 1 of the interview (see addendum 4) was to determine the feelings and perceptions of how the participants were inducted into the SGB and how they found out what they had to do.

**The interview question SGB members were asked was as follows:**

*As a newly appointed SGB member, how do you get to know the school where you are a governor?*

In chapter 2 of this study, it emerged that SGB members need to visit the schools regularly, which they govern in order to relieve any possible tension between themselves and the teachers and also to gain more detailed knowledge of the school, its staff and pupils (see paragraph 2.8.1). That makes it easier for the SGB to make informed decisions that could affect the future of the school.

The responses of the participants are summed up below in the form of a selection of the quotations. The chairperson of secondary school J remarked as follows:

*Though I was not introduced to the staff and learners and offered no induction, it made me feel motivated to know that I'm joining a school's decision-making body. I found it motivating to discover new knowledge on my own.*

All the SGB members agreed that no induction was carried out regarding school governance when they became governors. Some of their actions contradicted what is prescribed by the SASA regarding the governance of schools (RSA, 1996). Such SGBs cannot bring about effective changes when they lack the prerequisite governance skills. Passing the responsibility of governing schools onto such governors without induction turns previously disadvantaged schools into schools where everyone does as he/she wishes.

When the researcher went through the visitors' registers of all the schools that participated in the research, it was evident that there was not a single SGB member's name in them. The researcher realised that the visits took the form of impromptu five to ten minute visits made by the chairpersons when invited to sign cheques. No site visits were ever undertaken by SGB members to familiarise themselves with the school environment to obtain detailed knowledge of the school. Furthermore, no social functions were organised by schools to make the newly-elected SGB members feel at home.

The significance of these findings is that the SGBs of previously disadvantaged schools “govern schools without adequate knowledge of the schools within their jurisdiction” (Rallis, Deal & Bolman, 1995:43). This makes it difficult for them to make informed decisions that could affect the future of the school.

#### **4.2.2 Formulation of school policies**

**The question participants were asked was as follows:**

*How do you draw up policies for the school where you are a governor?*

The aim of question 2 of the interview schedule (see addendum 4) was to find out how SGBs draw up policies, which will be acceptable to all stakeholders. In chapter 2 (paragraph 2.8.3) of this study, it was stated that each SGB must develop its own mission statement and vision which forms a picture of where the school wants to be and what the school wants to look like when it has achieved its educational aim. This is the basis for the behaviour of all stakeholders in order to achieve the school’s vision and mission. Van Deventer and Kruger (2003: 91) state that in a school situation, a policy refers to the general plan of action that is designed to achieve a particular aim of the school. It may contain guidelines regarding how the stakeholders should make decisions and exercise their powers. These guidelines contained in policies always serve as a directive and a corrective measure when problems are encountered during operations.

It is the duty of the SGB to explain the contents of these policies to all people affected by it so that it always represents the aspirations and interests of all the stakeholders. These policies become the constitution of the school which serves as an umbrella under which the SGB, after consultation, will formulate and apply all its other policies (paragraph 2.5). In order for these policies to be implemented successfully, all the actions of the members of that organisation should be aimed at the attainment of the policies’ goals.

The responses of the interviewees to question 2 of the interview schedule (see addendum 4) varied according to each category of respondents:

The principal of school F assured the researcher that: *“All policies are available in my school.”* Generally, principals did not want to admit that their schools did not have the relevant policies. When educators and parents were asked the same question, the responses were different regarding the availability of policies. The researcher then wanted to know how the policies were drawn up. One educator from school K responded by saying:

*We draw up our policies by consulting parents, teachers and learners in connection with what is good or bad for them and the school. We also refer to the South African Schools Act and Constitution of the RSA.*

The researcher requested the participants to produce policies that had been drawn up by the SGB and applied in practice. Significantly, only schools D, G and K were able to produce the following policies:

- A school discipline policy
- A parental involvement policy
- A religious observance policy
- A language policy

Participant observations were undertaken by the researcher to see how policies were applied in practice. The researcher realised that although the lessons commenced at 7h30, many learners were still busy walking to school at this time. In fact, late coming was the general trend at these schools. This fact reveals that the school discipline policy did not achieve what the SGBs had set out to achieve and had not been implemented successfully. Moreover, the learners were not even aware of the various policies in the schools. Consequently, these policies could not provide solutions to the problems these schools faced, because those affected by the policies did not understand the reasons for complying with them. No minutes were available to show that the strategies for implementing policies had been revisited and revised when it was realised that these policies had not been implemented successfully.

It is necessary to provide details regarding the governance of a school in advance to governors. This enables all parents, educators and learners to

evaluate themselves to determine whether the way they govern the school is in line with what the school wants to achieve regarding its educational destination. Dielfiens (1994: 48) argues that SGBs are not the appropriate structures to advocate a new policy. He adds that they can only make decisions in terms of the prescriptions of the SASA (Dielfiens, 1994: 48). The procedures for drawing up a policy that can be implemented successfully in a school seem to be beyond the capabilities of the SGBs unless they receive adequate training, as can be seen from the results of these interviews and participant observations. Furthermore, Van Deventer and Kruger (2003: 19) argue that the drawing up of an education policy is the task of the national government, the province, the management team and the SGB of each school.

Without capacity- building, such communities may be stuck in a continued pattern of dependence on the government for the provision of effective governance policies without being able to draw up their own policies, which would be to their own advantage. Such policies should always be in line with the country's Constitution, the SASA and other relevant provincial policies, which vests enough power in them to draw up their own policies. The procedures for drawing up and implementing a successful policy were discussed in chapter 2 (paragraph 2.7) and will be discussed further in chapter 5 (see paragraph 5.4.2).

#### **4.2.3 Joint (team) decision making**

**Participants were asked the following question about working together as a team:**

*Does the SGB work together as a team? Motivate your answer.*

The aim of question 3 of the interview schedule was to determine whether SGB members have their own personal motives and interests that they want to advance when governing their schools (see addendum 4). This question was asked because many people interested in education try to gain power and monopolise the control of the school at the expense of the school's well-being. However, this possibility need not prevent SGBs from making determined efforts

to lead and govern their schools in the same way that previously advantaged schools are governed.

Creese (1995: 11) states that SGB members come into office with a diversity of interests and experiences. However, the common aim of the school to function effectively should be the unifying factor that holds them together. Tuckman, (in Creese, 1995: 24), identifies four stages of developing a SGB so that it can function as a team. These stages were discussed in chapter 2 (see paragraph 2.8.2) of this study. It was emphasised in chapter 2 that no team can succeed if its players are playing towards different goals or each player puts his/her self interest above the team's interest. Individual members should "encourage and facilitate each member's effort to achieve and complete duties delegated to them in order to reach the group's aims" (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003: 190).

The results of this investigation can be summarised by the following remark by a political activist from school B who is also a member of the SGB: "...if this body makes decisions in this fashion, I'll withdraw my membership because I cannot be part of structures that are dominated by traditional methods of decision making."

The researcher then tried to determine the areas in which there was a general lack of consensus by SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities.

- All the SGB members of the participating schools agreed that the contentious areas that had the potential for serious conflict were when:
  - Making decisions about the relatives of SGB members.
  - Advertisements for job tenders were circulated within the school.
  - A teacher or general worker's post was advertised..
  - When interviews for such posts were held at school.
  
- All the principals agreed that they remained objective when dealing with persons regardless of whether the individual was related to a member of the SGB or not.

The researcher then tried to identify cases where consensus prevailed in the interest of the SGB members.

All the representatives of schools agreed that no conflict of interest prevailed in cases where more conceptual activities were dealt with such as budgeting, the drawing up of policies and the allocation of duties to the grounds persons already employed.

The significance of these findings is that the attitudes and decisions of SGBs in previously disadvantaged communities are marred by nepotism and the lack of confidentiality in certain cases, especially regarding of the filling of advertised vacancies for both the teaching and non- teaching staff. Nepotism results in the employment of incompetent candidates who have different goals from those of the whole team or who may put their self-interest above the interests of the whole team. Consequently, only certain SGB members and their school registered relatives benefit by being appointed in advertised posts to the detriment of the school and quality education.

#### **4.2.4 Action taken against undisciplined members**

**The next question pertained to undisciplined members:**

*What actions are taken against members who deviate from the agreed course of action?*

The aim of question 4 of this interview (see addendum 4) was to determine the nature of disciplinary actions taken against SGB members. In chapter 2 (see paragraph 2.8.6) of this study, reference was made to Steyn (1996:82) who pointed out that people have different perceptions, beliefs and goals about a certain type of behaviour or course of action. This is because no two people have the same feelings and needs regarding important matters even if they are busy with the same jobs.

Different strategies are mentioned in paragraph 2.8.6 of this study that can be utilised to resolve deviations from the agreed course of action. The strategy utilised depends on the value attached to the goals of the action and the



circumstances. SGBs should determine “whether they want to achieve goals at the expense of the relationship or vice versa or whether they want to either maintain or lose both the goal and the relationship” (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2004:3). Various strategies shown in figure 2.4 of this study can also be utilised to resolve the deviation from the course of action with consideration to the value attached to the goals. Deviations from the agreed course of action do not always have negative outcomes but can also help with identifying two or more alternative approaches, which can help both affected parties to monitor the implementation of the resolution. When the parties involved can “identify a common goal and shared responsibilities, a team is built which fosters mutual respect and the awareness of the potential of others” (Steyn, 1996:87).

In this research, the responses of the interviewees were as follows:

According to the principal of school E:

*We reprimanded misbehaving SGB members verbally to address certain instances of misbehaviour.*

In contrast, the chairperson of school A explained:

*We ignore the conduct or rather refrain from calling members to order as those members are not paid and in any case, they have no code of conduct.*

It has become evident from this research that no matter what SGB members do, no strong disciplinary action is taken against them by fellow members. The significance of these findings should be understood in terms of figure 2.6 of this study, namely that the failure to discipline members who misconduct themselves implies that the maintenance of the relationship between members is of greater importance than the attainment of the schools' goals. SGBs govern previously disadvantaged schools without the firm intention of taking the schools to where the schools want to be. Good relationships with fellow SGB members are maintained at the expense of the schools' good governance.

#### 4.2.5 Changing the negative attitudes of learners and teachers

The following interview question was asked about the methods used to change negative attitudes:

*How do you manage to change the undesirable behaviour and negative attitudes of previously disadvantaged learners and teachers?*

In question 5 of the interview (see addendum 4), the interviewer wanted to determine the extent to which the school policy, the SASA and the South African Constitution are utilised to maintain discipline in previously disadvantaged schools. These specific schools were selected because they were characterised by a lack of respect for school property, allegations of teachers practising witchcraft, gangsterism, stabbing, mugging of both teachers and learners, late-coming and leaving the school premises without permission, were predominant.

The question was then divided into two sections, namely a section on disciplining learners and one on disciplining teachers. According to an educator from school K:

*Since the abolishment of corporal punishment it has been difficult to discipline learners in a language they understand; apart from admonishing, suspending, encouraging and motivating them to refrain from unacceptable activities. However, these disciplinary measures are disrupted by previously disadvantaged parents who defend their children and become aggressive when cases of ill discipline involving their children are discussed by the SGB. Learners also request outsiders to act as representatives of their parents, sometimes they even ask strangers to pretend that they are their real parents. Learners offer such people monetary bribes not to disclose the nature and extent of ill discipline to their real parents who might punish them.*

The chairperson of secondary school M outlined the school's approach as follows:

*In our school, we try to approach the learners at their level of understanding, try to accommodate their feelings and try to find out what attitudes they have. Motivational speakers and role models are invited to present motivational talks to regenerate both their morals and their morale. By so*

*doing the learners develop trust in us, which enables us to help improve their attitude*

The following extract reveals the opinion of a learner from secondary school L:

*A code of conduct for learners drawn up collectively, by the SGB, teachers and learners was used to change the undesirable behaviours of learners. For the code of conduct to be effective, each learner should have a copy of it and teachers must discuss it with learners.*

The analysis of documents shows that schools failed to keep all the minutes of disciplinary hearings of learners. Only records of those cases where learners were involved in serious misconduct and their offences that would require that they be suspended or transferred from the school, were available. This is because in such cases, the Department of Education would demand supporting documents of the disciplinary hearing's verdict.

The second part of the question was on changing the behaviour of teachers who misbehaved. All the principals agreed that educators should be summoned by the SGBs from previously disadvantaged communities to appear before them. However, few parents supported summoning personnel to appear before the SGBs.

This implied that parents regarded the principal as the only person with the authority to discipline the staff. This focus group interview revealed that the reason behind that belief was that teachers were undermining the SGBs. They alleged that teachers openly proclaimed that most parents in SGBs were not educated. This inherent inferiority complex amongst the parent component "*compels us to succumb to their undesirable behaviours. Only a few of us can stand up against them,*" according to the SGB chairperson of primary school D.'

The document analysis confirms this belief; as there were no minutes of disciplinary hearings of teachers. According to the SGB chairperson of secondary school M, this is because SGBs were

*...intimidated by teachers who portrayed unacceptable behaviours together with their unions to destroy any evidence, which could lead to the expulsion of any teacher.*

However, in personal communications, SGB members of previously disadvantaged schools referred to serious offences committed by educators in those schools. The offences varied from late coming and absenteeism to falling in love with female learners, physically assaulting learners, selling reports to learners who failed a grade, threatening the school principal with legal action and coming to work under the influence of liquor.

Teachers claim that their conduct falls beyond the SGB's sphere of influence as the South Africa Council of Educators controls their conduct. Contrary to this assumption is section 46(a) of the Provincial Gazette Extraordinary No. 229 of 19 April 1997 (Mpumalanga, 1997b), which states that the function of the SGB is to promote the best interests of the school. It also stipulates that the SGB should strive to ensure the school's development through the provision of quality education for learners, in order to attain its mission, goals and objectives. This can be attained when the SGB supports the principal, educators and other staff members in the performance of their professional functions. Section 48(a) of the Provincial Gazette Extraordinary No. 229 of 19 April 1997 (Mpumalanga, 1997b) permits previously disadvantaged SGBs to summon teachers who are guilty of unacceptable behaviour to their meetings, not to discipline, charge, give warnings or fire them, but to provide support to these teachers who hinder the development of the school in its task of providing quality education.

In chapter two (see paragraph 2.8.3.1), it was indicated that when SGBs deal with a teacher's misconduct, reference must be made to sections 2 (b) and (c) of SACE which aims at promoting the professional development of educators and regulates their conduct, so that the SGBs can fulfil the aims and objectives of their schools (RSA, 2000).

The SGBs can provide support only when there is a clear indication of the nature of the misbehaviour, the place where it took place, who should set it right and what should be done to set it right.

A parent member of school K made the following suggestion:

*The learner members of the SGBs should be excluded when teachers are disciplined. Previously disadvantaged learners tend to be passive when dealing with issues that involve people older than them. Some of the issues are beyond children's level of thinking.*

Learner members of the SGBs expressed the view that teachers were their parents. They respected them and were reluctant to hear about the alleged misdemeanours of their teachers. Thus, according to previously disadvantaged communities, the state should reconsider the inclusion of students in SGBs, as it offends their cultural norms.

#### **4.2.6 Ensuring that the school is a safe haven**

**The following critically important question was asked:**

*How do you make sure that your school is a safe haven for both learners and teachers?*

The aim of question 6 of the interview schedule (see addendum 4) was to identify the measures utilised by previously disadvantaged communities to make their schools a safe haven for both learners and teachers. It is common to hear of teachers being assaulted by their learners. In addition, the learners attack each other physically and boys have no respect for girls and teachers either. Moreover, learners swear at teachers and other learners. Furthermore, they have no qualms about stealing teachers' and other learners' property. Even more concerning is the fact that boys are even found smoking dagga behind the toilets.

It is an unfortunate fact that dagga plants are grown in the schoolyards of schools G and J as if it is a legalised drug. Another serious problem is that teachers are accused of witchcraft. The HRC report in the *City Press* of 18 November (2006:21) reveals that teachers administer corporal punishment and male "teachers engage in sexual activities with schoolgirls on school premises." This exposes female learners to sexual exploitation.

Safety in schools entails the safety of property and human beings within the school (see chapter 2, paragraph 2.8.4). When policies are drawn up for a school, the elements of safety and security must be included in the policy, especially in schools which are characterised by the late coming of learners and teachers, where there is alcohol and drug abuse and conflict between teachers and learners. The Mpumalanga Department of Education has drafted a list of offences and the respective disciplinary measures that should be meted out (see paragraph 2.8.4) as a measure to address safety and security,

In an attempt to identify the measures utilised by previously disadvantaged communities to make their schools a safe environment, the principal of school K commented as follows:

*We try to ensure that our schools are a safe environment by erecting fences, locking gates and having a neighbourhood watch, but the thefts and robberies continue. This is also confirmed by the vandalised ceilings, broken ceiling fans and windows in classrooms.*

The principal of school expressed the following opinion:

*We have established a safety committee working with members of the police force .that we invite to our school to educate learners about the consequences of crime and using drugs.*

The document analysis showed that some schools' policies recommended that offenders should be summoned to the SGB for serious offences. The SGB could then make recommendations to be referred to the regional director for sanctioning of the dismissal of offenders. However, criminal offences should be referred to the police immediately. In addition, disciplinary action against educators should proceed through the SACE, which has the power to ban the culprits from ever teaching in South Africa again.

The significance of these findings is that most assaults, robberies and theft emanated from inside the schools. Fencing the perimeters of the school grounds and locking gates did not appear to minimise crime in previously disadvantaged schools. In contrast, a change in the perception that the school is government

property to the perception that it is the community's property proves effective in curbing misconduct and promoting the school as a safe haven. Other strategies that emanated from the interviews, that can also be utilised by the SGBs could be meeting with the parents of learners who render the school unsafe. The SGBs guided by the school policy and the code of conduct, can request the parents of these learners to remove their children from the affected school. Such learners can pursue their studies at home under the supervision of their parents or be transferred to other schools, far from where they misbehaved. This could assist them to start a new life in other schools.

Following the removal of such problematic learners, the former schools have a better chance to become safe havens for both teachers and learners; while the transferred learners have a chance to rebuild their reputations in new schools.

#### **4.2.7 Financial management**

**The question regarding the control of finances was phrased as follows:**

*Who controls your finances? How do you ensure that everything you intend to do with your financial resources is achieved at your school?*

The aim of question 7 of the interview schedule (see addendum 4) was to find out exactly who is in control of the school finances and what serves as guidelines for spending those finances.

Parents are expected to assist the Department of Education with the funding of schools through the payment of school fees, which are determined by the SGBs (see paragraph 2.8.3). As governors, they are expected to collaborate with the school principals and other stakeholders regarding decision-making, problem solving and budgeting. The SGBs and not the principals must control the usage of school fees. The school principals remain chairpersons of the schools' financial committees, but they are not signatories of the schools' bank accounts. Regular monitoring appraisal and control play an important role in ensuring that the SGBs from previously disadvantaged communities perform their financial functions effectively, According to Marishane (1999:64), auditing is conducted

regularly to ensure that school SGBs operate in accordance with the law, not only in meeting their financial obligations but also in performing all their duties.

In reply to who is in charge of school finances, the principal of school F stated that:

*.. Our school's financial committee consists of the school principal, teachers, the school's financial officer, the SGB's chairperson, the treasurer and the LRC's treasurer. The school's financial officer and the SGB's treasurer collect the school funds and bank them. Then the teacher representative on the SGB, together with the principal or the principal and the school's financial officer, made sure that what was budgeted for, was attained*

The SGB chairperson of school K commented as follows:

*[The principal] comes to us when he/she needs us to sign what he intends to do in that academic year. Towards the end of the year, he/she convenes a meeting where he/she updates the SGB on how the money was spent. The principal and the administrative clerk then prepare the financial statement that will be used for the parents' meeting.*

The participant observations show that the funds controlled by an individual lead to a number of problems because they are often not handled properly. In certain cases, the individual can be tempted "to utilise the school funds to solve personal problems" (Sokana, 2006). In most schools, financial responsibility is in the hands of administrative clerks who collect and bank the money. They also decide how the school funds will be utilised. However, these administrative clerks are monitored inadequately and in some instances, cannot account to SGB members or the parents what has been done with the parents' money.

Failure to account for the use of school funds resulted in 60% of the participating schools receiving only half of the financial aid they were supposed to receive in 2007 from the Department of Education in August 2008. This low figure can be ascribed to the fact that their expenditure did not match their incomes. In addition, this also prevented the auditors from providing these schools with audited financial statements, which was the reason why they did not receive timely financial aid from the Department of Education. This state of affairs



indicates an urgent need for a monitoring instrument for the proper control of the usage of school funds.

Lusaseni (1998:54) states that giving parents power to control the funds implies that the power is given back to where it rightfully belongs. Parents are paying school funds and the SGB should therefore be able to account for the use of those funds. It is important to point out that the funds are public funds and taxpayers are involved; therefore transparency about their usage is essential. Parent representatives on the SGB should work closely with the principal because both are accounting officers (see figure 2.1). At the end of the year, the principal and the SGB should be answerable if the funds have not been used for what they were intended. However, this does not imply that the principal should handle or spend the money alone because of his accountability.

The significance of these findings is that principals should work closely with the SGBs' treasurers and not the school's administrative clerks. Once the school has identified its needs, the principal, the treasurer and the chairperson of the SGB as well as the chairperson on the school's development plan should utilise the funds. However, this does not imply that the principal should abdicate his responsibility in favour of the parents. What this does mean is that parents and the principal should monitor each other to ensure that the correct procedures are carried out for the benefit of the school.

At a parents' meeting held in September/October of the previous year, a budget and not a written draft must be presented to the parents for their approval for the following year. An opportunity should be provided for parents to ask questions and pursue discussions. Voting should take place before the budget can be approved and if rejected, the SGB will have to draw up a new proposal and convene another meeting.

Participant observations and document analysis also revealed that most school funds are usually exhausted before the end of the academic year. Consequently, some principals resort to borrowing money from money launderers on behalf of the school to buy duplicating paper for the final exams. This is caused by poor

budgeting methods and many excuses are offered by parents for not paying school fees. Some parents still fail to pay even if the school fees have not been increased for the past three or five years. This situation is aggravated by the high unemployment rate and the SASA that stipulates that no child should be turned away because he/she cannot pay school funds (RSA, 1996b). In previously disadvantaged communities, a large proportion of the budget is used to buy wood for the cooking of food for the feeding schemes and to pay the local municipality, which sometimes fails to supply schools with water for a whole day. This is exacerbated by previously disadvantaged SGBs' failure to apply for the exemption of unemployed parents from paying school fees. This has resulted in the reduction of the government subsidy paid to these schools because it assumes that parents can afford to pay school fees.

#### **4.2.8 Ensuring that schools' plans are carried out**

**With regard to the execution of plans, the next question was asked:**

*How do you ensure that what you planned to do for your school in a particular year is achieved?*

The aim of question 8 of the interview (see addendum 4) was to find out whether the SGBs were able to achieve the goals they set every year. Section 20 of the SASA states that the stipulated functions of the governing body are, amongst others, to draw up a school development plan (RSA, 1996b) (see also paragraph 2.8.4). There is "no point in having a development plan if it does not lead to visible actions and tangible improvements" (Sandhi, 2005:6). Far from being mere theory on paper, the school's development plan is the master plan for the school for the following three years, that is, the SGB's serving period. Progress must be monitored continuously against the plan to ensure that the changes and improvements planned for that year do materialise. Planning translates the vision, mission and objectives into action. The action results in measurable outcomes and priorities that enable SGBs realise its vision of serving schools in previously disadvantaged communities.

**In answer to the question, a learner from school K responded as follows:**

*The year plan is drawn up in terms of our priorities is followed consistently*

However, the researcher could not get satisfactory answers regarding whether adherence to this year plan continued even if the envisaged goals had not been achieved. Neither could he receive satisfactory feedback regarding whether they regarded it as a development plan or not. A parent from school C commented that:

*We achieve our goals by drawing up a budget and a development plan, which set out everyone's respective duties. The plan is implemented and duties were delegated. Follow-up was done and changes were made where necessary. Delegated members were required to report at the end of every quarter regarding the progress of the project with which they were busy.*

Analysis of the development plans, which some SGBs confused with year plans, shows which goals SGBs from previously disadvantaged communities are supposed to achieve. On the other hand, participant observations revealed that SGBs were unable to measure their progress through an ongoing process of self-evaluation. This was supported by the fact that projects were left uncompleted because funds were exhausted or because buildings were constructed incorrectly due to the employment of cheap labourers. Without a measuring instrument, it seems highly unlikely that SGBs can help previously disadvantaged communities attain their goals.

#### **4.2.9 Conflict resolution**

**With regard to the resolving of conflicts, the participants were asked:**

*How do you resolve conflicts between:*

- *Teachers.*
- *A parent and a teacher,*
- *A learner and a teacher.*
- *Learners?*

In question 9 of the interview schedule (see addendum 4), the aim was to find out whether SGBs were able to resolve conflicts between the various stakeholders. In chapter 2 (see paragraph 2.8.6), a conflict was defined as a confrontation for a resource needed simultaneously by two people. In this vein, Steyn (1996:82) states that a conflict occurs because people have different perceptions, beliefs and goals. A conflict manifests itself when the expectations or actual goal-orientated behaviour of one person or group is blocked by another person. In a school situation “conflicts occur because of conflicting interests, goals, values, opinions, attitudes and motives within stakeholders of an institution where there is harmony” (Steyn, 1996:83). Conflict can also arise from communication problems or from problematic personal relations.

Most principals, parents, a few educators and two learners said that they had played a role in solving conflicts. There was a feeling among most SGB members from previously disadvantaged communities that school principals were able to handle and manage conflicts better in schools than the SGB itself. That feeling was rooted in the belief that conflict resolution is the principal's job.

The question that arose from that epistemology was: *What happens where there is conflict between the principal and any other stakeholder?* The principal cannot be a player and a referee simultaneously in such a case.

From the focus group interviews (see paragraph 4.2.1), it becomes obvious that everyone in a school regards the SGB as the most neutral body connected with the school where complaints can be lodged or dissatisfaction can be expressed. Therefore, this demands a paradigm shift from the traditional belief that the principal was trained to resolve conflicts. Modern organisations rely on neutral bodies like the Council of Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) to resolve conflicts for them as they are professionals in this regard.

The literature review reveals that conflicts in schools can be controlled by the consistent application of school policies, procedures, school rules and regulations, legislation, the recognition of agreements, such as safety and health

agreements. Importantly, collective bargaining is the most effective method of controlling conflicts.

For educators employed at school, conflict “is managed through the valid, fair, consistent and reliable implementation and application of the school and departmental policies and procedures” (Management Today, 2006:74). The golden rules for managing or resolving a conflict successfully include the principle of *audi alteram partem*, investigating the circumstances fully, concentrating on the facts, remaining neutral, not acting as a judge and playing the ball, not the man.

SGBs will be able to minimise hostility between the school’s stakeholders by preventing the conflict from ever arising. Zide, (in *Management Today*, 2006:74) asserts that SGBs can prevent conflict by:

- *Communicating effectively with stakeholders,*
- *Keeping stakeholders informed.*
- *Criticising with caution.*
- *Avoiding the use of threats, demands and put-downs.*
- *Confronting an emerging conflict head on.*
- *Utilising the technique of Management by Wandering Around (MBWA) (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2005:83) which can be transformed into the technique of Governing by Wandering Around (GBWA).*

Participant observations support the findings obtained from the interviews that SGBs do not even attempt to resolve conflicts. Instead, they shift this responsibility to the principal. As the SGBs of such schools do not become involved in conflict resolution processes, they risk nothing to resolve conflicts. By attempting to solve a problem, the SGBs can solve serious conflicts they never thought could be solved. However, SGBs are advised to consider the feelings and emotions of others before they try to act or resolve a conflict as they could end up harming themselves as well as the other stakeholders if they are not careful.

#### 4.2.10 Communication with stakeholders

**The participants were asked how they communicated with the various stakeholders:**

*How do you inform parents, teachers and learners about a development that is about to take place in the school where you are a governor?*

In question 10 of the interview schedule, the interviewer wanted to determine the communication modes utilised by previously disadvantaged communities (see addendum 4). Not only should a SGB work towards meeting the needs of the community; it should also inform the community about the school's achievements and failures. It is essential that adequate communication should be maintained between all stakeholders so that everyone concerned is informed of the news, developments and decisions regarding SGB matters. The nature of the issue under discussion determines the type of communication medium that would be utilised to transmit the information.

Failure by the SGB to communicate with the larger community reduces the impact that stakeholders can have on the school. This lack of communication results in the lack of involvement of parents in the governance of schools; consequently, they cannot play a meaningful role in improving the behaviour of the learners, their performance, the educational standards, the quality of instruction nor help to promote new developments in schools. Failure to communicate with parents from the larger community deprives parents of the right to ask, know, advise and make recommendations about the schools that their children attend.

The most common mode of communication entails the use of written and spoken words to communicate with stakeholders. The written messages are sent to parents through learners and spoken messages are communicated telephonically. However, these modes of communication do not replace face-to-face contact with parents, teachers and learners. The basic purpose of the face-to-face meetings with stakeholders is to exchange information and to influence the behaviour and performance of learners, parents and teachers. The written

communication modes utilised by most SGBs are newsletters whose language is “less formal and the tone is friendlier” (Wolfendale, 2000:73).

**The response of a parent from school G on the communication modes utilised by previously disadvantaged communities was as follows:**

*We use meetings to inform stakeholders about any new developments that are about to take place.*

This implies that when a new development is planned, a meeting with parents should be convened. The chairperson of school L’s SGB stated that:

*We prefer to utilise the representatives of the stakeholders, who are the SGB members, to convey the messages to their constituencies.*

It appears that parent representatives always convened parents’ meetings to discuss each new and minor planned development.

Document analysis reveals that parents’ meetings are convened twice a year. It is imperative for the SGB to inform parents about its development plan when the first meeting is convened. The second meeting is usually about developmental budgets for the following year. This makes it unnecessary for SGBs in previously disadvantaged communities to convene meetings every time a new development has to take place in a school. This would decentralise the development plan to give parents a greater sense of ownership and set the required standards for any school project.

When SGBs in previously disadvantaged communities report to parents on the progress of projects, the report should contain “enough accurate information so that parents (and others) can have a reasonably fair understanding of the activities of the governing body” (Visser, 1977:632). Parents must also be offered an opportunity to ask questions on the matters reported; in addition, they must be given a chance to discuss and react to such matters.

#### 4.2.11 Attendance of workshops

**Regarding the attendance of workshops, the following question was asked at the interview:**

*Since you became a governor, how many capacity-building workshops have you attended? Who conducts the workshops? How did you benefit from the workshop(s)?*

In question 11 of the interview schedule (see addendum 4), the interviewer wanted to ascertain what the influence of workshops was on the governance of schools. The second aim was to find out who conducted the capacity-building workshops and what was covered at those workshops.

In paragraph 2.7, it was stated that the main aim of capacity-building workshops is to assist the participants to direct their energies towards attaining their goals. It is important to note that capacity-building should be a process rather than a single event.

Due to the different needs of organisations, capacity-building programmes should be designed to meet the needs of each organisation. In addition, certain guidelines should be followed when drawing up the programme. This programme should be run in phases for at least three years. However, it is not necessary to have a formal capacity-building programme. Instead, the programme can be part of the normal course of events of the organisation. In addition, a mentor governor should be allocated so that participants will feel free to ask for advice so that unnecessary mistakes are prevented. If SGBs are better equipped for their tasks, the chances are better that they will govern their schools successfully. Regarding the need for capacity-building, the responses of the interviewees were as follows: The general feeling of all the participants was expressed as follows:

*We all feel that workshops are necessary to empower us.*

Regarding who should conduct the workshops, the response of the chairperson of school I's SGB was as follows:



*School principals should conduct the workshops because they know the strengths and weaknesses of the SGBs.*

An educator from school D expressed the following opinion:

*I feel that our workshops should be conducted by government officials who are responsible for SGBs. This is because when workshops are conducted by school principals, they tend to base the workshops on what they want to achieve with the school. The government officials should be provided with information regarding problem areas in the governance of schools. Importantly, all workshops should be based on this problem area instead of what officials anticipated would benefit those SGBs.*

Concerning the number of workshops attended by SGBs, the responses to the interviews revealed that all the executive members of the SGB had attended one workshop conducted by a government official and another one arranged by the school principals. Furthermore, it was reported that the principals of some schools supported one another by attending meetings convened by the respective principals of schools. Those workshops were conducted for newly-elected SGBs. In both cases, the workshop facilitators decided on the topics of capacity-building without prior consultation with the SGBs.

Further findings obtained from the interviews revealed that while only a few parents attended the four to five workshops conducted by private institutions, such as Penreach, all the school principals attended them for which they were awarded certificates in recognition of their attendance. Neither the learners nor the teachers had ever attended any capacity-building workshops.

The significance of these findings is that the majority of the SGBs are willing to receive capacity-building training. The awarding of certificates by private institutions motivates participants and they regard the workshops as opportunities for improving their schools. Surprisingly, the Department of Education, which realised the need for involving parents in the governance of schools, arranges only one capacity-building workshop after they have been elected. Furthermore, the government officials who conduct workshops neglect the areas where most SGBs need capacity-building; instead they make unilateral decisions regarding

the areas where these SGBs need to be capacitated. Consequently, such workshops fail to bring about sustainable changes in the governance of schools because of their irrelevance regarding the needs of SGBs. Problem areas that need capacity-building include knowing what is expected of SGBs.

The chairperson of primary school H's SGB stated that the aims of workshops should be:

*Establishing friendly and cooperative relationships with other stakeholders of the school, communication with teachers, learners and parents and achieving personal and professional self-confidence. Workshop facilitators tend to manipulate SGBs into thinking in a particular direction desired by workshop facilitators.*

Furthermore, workshops should be about changing the governance of the school in order to make the school a centre of change that can improve the quality of education. In addition, SGBs should be equipped effectively in order to stay abreast of new developments in school governance so that they can serve their schools optimally. Workshop facilitators do not carry out evaluations to ascertain if the workshops meet the needs of the participants. The evaluation of workshops can include:

...a face to face meeting with participants in order to ask participants to critique the weakness of the programme, the use of unsigned questionnaires completed by all participants and in depth interviews of randomly selected SGB members. (Nel, Gerba, Van Dyk, Sono & Werner, 2001: 260-261).

#### **4.2.12 Contributions to the effective functioning of schools**

**Participants were asked to answer the following question regarding their respective contributions to the effectiveness of schools:**

*What contribution did you, as a governor, make to ensure the effective functioning of the school? Give reasons why you feel satisfied with any contributions you have made.*

In question 12 of the interview schedule (see addendum 4), the interviewer wanted to find out about any significant contributions made by each SGB member towards the effective functioning of the school where he/she was a governor.

In paragraph 2.8.12, an effective school was defined as a school, which succeeds in establishing the frameworks, which guide the actions of all who are involved in the school and is actively improving the achievement of those frameworks. The school should also be a safe and secure place for everyone involved with it and for all the stakeholders to work in. In addition, it should provide quality education and should obtain a pass rate of above 50% in grade 12.

It was apparent that contributions towards the effective functioning of the school varied from school to school. The sizes of the contributions were determined mostly by the school's income. School B's principal replied as follows:

*Contributions are determined by the funds available for the development and maintenance of the school's property. Contributions vary from erecting particular structures, renovating existing structures, and procedural changes with regard to the curriculum.*

The chairperson of school G's SGB remarked that:

*It gives me pleasure as well as a sense of pride when my school functioned effectively. I also derive satisfaction from promoting the culture of learning and the drawing up of policies and implementing them successfully. This develops a sense of personal growth in me.*

Document analysis shows some planned developments were not relevant to the schools' needs and that those developments were not monitored. The aim of the development plan was not measurable as some projects were implemented hastily and sometimes left uncompleted due to the lack of monitoring instruments.

The significance of these findings is that SGBs do not govern schools for any financial gain. Most interestingly, is the fact that SGB members experience a sense of personal growth from school governance. However, some of their developments were not planned to effect relevant changes. The purpose of developments should be the creation of a work-oriented climate in which teachers and learners are involved to a maximum extent.

#### **4.2.13 Willingness to be re-elected**

**Regarding their willingness to be re-elected, the participants were asked the following question:**

*Will you be willing to serve for another term as a member of the SGB at the end of your term of office if you are re-elected? Motivate your answer.*

In question 13 of this interview schedule (see addendum 4) the aim of the interviewer was to find out whether the SGB members found it enjoyable enough to serve as SGB members to serve for another term. From the responses it appeared that some parents were unwilling to serve again. Various opinions were voiced in this regard, such as the response of a learner from school J:

*Give others a chance and if a governor remains in office too long, it could result in him/her mastering the tactics of manipulating the financial records of the school.*

Others declared that serving as a governor is time consuming. Principals were not asked to respond to this matter because it is compulsory for them to be *ex officio* members of SGBs. However, some parents were willing to serve on the SGB again as they felt that they wanted to apply the knowledge they had gained during their previous term of office. The respondents also mentioned that they would like to serve as mentors to the newly-elected members because they now knew what was expected of them. It would also be a chance for them to take the development plans further, which might not have been carried out by the outgoing SGB.

The participant observations showed that ex-SGB members who wanted to be re-elected, recruited other people whom they thought would be capable school governors to join the SGB to strengthen the structure's effectiveness.

The significance of these findings is that SGBs are willing to turn their schools into an environment conducive to learning. Even if they are not compensated, they are prepared to sacrifice their time to develop their schools. This could help to ensure that their children do not have to be educated in an environment that is as harsh as the one to which they had been exposed.

#### **4.3 Issues emerging from the data presented**

The main issue that emerged from the analysis of the data is that the SGBs of schools in previously disadvantaged communities tend to rely on their general knowledge and intuition to perform their tasks. In addition, it appears that very few capacity or empowerment workshops are arranged for these SGBs. Furthermore, the workshops that are arranged do not focus on those areas in which the SGBs need to be capacitated. Consequently, these workshops fail to bring about an improvement in the governance of schools, as they do not help SGB members to acquire the skills necessary for performing their duties effectively. One SGB member complained as follows:

*We are given documents to read on our own. Government officials who conducted the workshops asked about problems we anticipated as newly-elected SGBs of our schools. How could we know them, as we were still new in this structure?*

The perception that SGBs in disadvantaged communities should govern schools intuitively is a misconception. This governance style creates more problems than it solves especially when policies or rules have to be developed. However, continuous and effective capacity-building workshops can provide them with viable strategies for changing ineffective schools into schools that provide quality education.

According to the SASA, the Head of the Department must provide introductory training for newly-elected governing bodies, as well as continuing training for the newly--elected SGB members out of funds granted to them by the provincial legislature. The goals of this training are the enhancement of the capacity of governing bodies to promote the effective performance of their functions and to enable them to assume additional functions (RSA, 1996b) (see also paragraph 2.7).

#### **4.4 Summary**

From the data collected and analysed, it has become evident that most SGBs of previously disadvantaged schools depend on their intuitive knowledge when they have to perform their governance tasks. Furthermore, it appears that SGBs find it difficult to initiate new educational developments. Consequently, they fall back on their intuitive knowledge, even if their actions make things worse. The following chapter will concentrate on strategies for transforming their intuitive knowledge so that the effective governance of schools can be brought about.

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

The present chapter serves as a summary of the research findings discussed in chapter 4 and also as a summary of the strategies that can be utilised to overcome the obstacles facing effective governance highlighted in chapter 4. Various strategies that supplement the strategies discussed in chapter 2 (see paragraph 2.8) are discussed. Finally, the limitations of the study are discussed and recommendations are made.

### **5.1 Summary of findings**

From the findings presented in chapter 4 (paragraph 4.2), it emerged that SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities experience many problems that prevent them from governing their schools effectively. These problems include a lack of knowledge regarding:

- The orientation of newly-elected SGB members.
- The formulation of policies.
- Joint (team) decision making.
- Communication skills.
- Conflict resolution.
- Changing the negative attitudes of both learners and teachers.
- Financial management.
- The fact that schools should be safe places for both teachers and learners.

Section 19 of SASA states that provinces must offer a programme of introductory and sustained training for newly-elected governing bodies (RSA, 1996b) (see also paragraphs 2.7 & 4.3). This programme must be pursued immediately the outgoing SGB hands over power to the newly-elected SGBs (see paragraph 2.6). Hold and Murphy, (in Magabane, 1999:105), argue that if parents, teachers and other participants within the school governing structure do not receive adequate and ongoing capacity-building, school governance will be reduced to a “muddling through” decision making activity. It appears that one or two workshops attended by SGBs are not sufficient to equip them to govern their schools effectively (see

paragraph 4.2.11). SGBs are rushed into assuming certain responsibilities while they still lack proper knowledge regarding the governing of their schools.

Although the SASA provides guidance on the governance of schools, the knowledge provided is too abstract for these communities to understand. Members of these communities tend to fall back on intuitive knowledge, which might create further problems when attempting to bring about improvement in their schools. It is essential that governors of schools should be well informed so that they can be aware of the realities of the schools' changing environment. Schools are "institutions that are affected by change and also effect changes in the world around them" (St. John, 1995:79). The governors of such institutions should acquire the skills that will enable them to respond to the challenges of the changing world. Lebethe (1999:27) asserts that such information will not come by osmosis, but through the establishment of an honest and open relationship between the SGBs and the Department of Education.

A compulsory capacity-building programme should be undertaken to make SGBs familiar with efficient strategies that can prepare them to carry out the tasks entrusted to them (see paragraphs 2.6 & 4.3.11). The capacity-building programme for SGBs should bring about changes in the execution of these tasks. As these SGB members undergo the capacity-building programme, they need support as well as the necessary coping skills. Without support, the capacity-building exercise is turned into a futile exercise. However, the support should not be provided by the school alone, but also by the circuit, region and provincial offices and even NGOs should play a role (see paragraphs 2.7 & 4.2.11).

Skills acquired by means of the capacity-building programmes can provide the SGBs with the knowledge and expertise needed to govern their schools effectively. In turn, schools can become more capable of providing quality education. In this way, SGBs can be regarded as effective and proactive developers of their schools.



## **5.2 The nature of the capacity-building programmes**

The capacity-building programmes should be a continuous activity rather than a solitary event (see paragraph 4.2.11). It should run for at least three consecutive years in various phases. A formal capacity-building programme may not be necessary, but it can be made part of the normal course of events. Section 19(d) of the SISA states that the Head of Department must ensure that school principals and other officers of the education department render all the assistance needed by SGBs for the performance of their functions (RSA, 1996b). Furthermore, knowledgeable practitioners or mentors should also be allocated to SGBs (see paragraph 4.2.11). In addition, the programme may be delivered by divisions within the various provincial education departments. In cases where such divisions do not exist, "it can be offered on a contract basis by any one or a combination of service providers within a network of potential providers who have been scrutinized to render services of impeccable quality in this regard" (Beckman & Visser, 1999:156). This should not be a matter of the blind leading the blind.

Governors should be at liberty to consult the practitioners/mentors before making decisions. In addition, the practitioner or mentor should inform governors with information about a wide variety of opportunities for professional growth and development in school governance. The development material should be at the SGB's level of governance and be understandable (see paragraph 4.2.11). Importantly, progress in assigned activities should receive due recognition. This will help to generate enthusiasm for the work SGB members do. Practitioners or mentors should guard against setting time frames for completing the programmes in order to cope with the time schedules. Stipulating time frames for the completion of programmes will make mentors rush through the programmes to meet these deadlines even if the governors do not cope with the programme materials.

Governors on the other hand, should acknowledge that they lack knowledge of school governance. Consequently, they should be prepared to undergo capacity-building programmes. Participants should state their needs to the practitioners or

experts instead of the practitioners deciding what they needed. In addition, both practitioners and participants need to be committed to the programme.

### **5.3 Strategies to build the governance capacity of SGBs.**

In paragraphs 4.3 and 5.1, it emerged that SGBs experience many problems, which hamper the effective governing of their schools. Schmuck and Runkel, (in Ramroop, 2004:83), identify the following phases of a capacity-building model, which could be utilised when building the governance capacity of SGBs.

#### **Phase one: Start up**

During this phase, the mentor or practitioner sets up initial meetings with newly-elected office bearers. He/she tries to gain the trust of the new governors and their confidence in him/her. Official school documents are studied in depth and notes are made. In addition, all the SGB members are interviewed to assess their understanding of school governance, how they perceive their roles and the obstacles that prevent effective governance from taking place. Based on these interviews, the practitioner/mentor makes a presentation of the findings and how he/she sees the way forward. The practitioner and the SGB jointly identify the short and long-term goals, as well as the training and support programmes that will be required to bring about more effective governance.

#### **Phase two: Training**

Training programmes are conducted by combining all the SGBs within the circuit so that they can receive training in a common venue. However, the number of participants should be reasonable to ensure that the group is manageable.

#### **Phase three: Support and monitoring**

This phase becomes pertinent when SGBs exhibit characteristics of a certain level of competence in school governance. The practitioner continues with re-training and support in identified areas. He/she assists each school's SGB to set

up strategies of finding a way in which SGBs can become self-sufficient. SGBs within a circuit are clustered in accordance with their proximity to meet regularly, discuss, support and share ideas and strengths. In this way, schools develop at the same level and are able to provide the same quality of education.

#### **Phase four: Closure**

During this phase, the mentor/practitioner prepares to leave the newly-elected SGB. He/she does not withdraw completely, but rather minimises the support. This allows the SGBs to practise the skills they have acquired from the programme on their own.

#### **5.4 Application of Schmuck and Runkel's model to build the governance capacity of SGBs.**

The strategies discussed here supplement the strategies discussed in chapter 2 (see paragraph 2.7).

#### **Phase one: Start up**

The practitioner sets up an initial meeting with the newly-elected SGB members and tries to win their confidence and trust (see paragraphs 3.5 and 5.3). Official documents are studied and in-depth notes are made on areas that need capacity-building. Participants' needs are addressed by providing them with the relevant information that addresses their needs. In addition, interviews are held with these SGBs to gauge their understanding of the governance process (see paragraph 5.3).

This phase is covered in chapter 4 (see paragraphs 4.2 & 5.3) where the researcher presents the findings and how he plans the way forward by identifying short and long-term goals, training and support programmes with regard to SGBs.

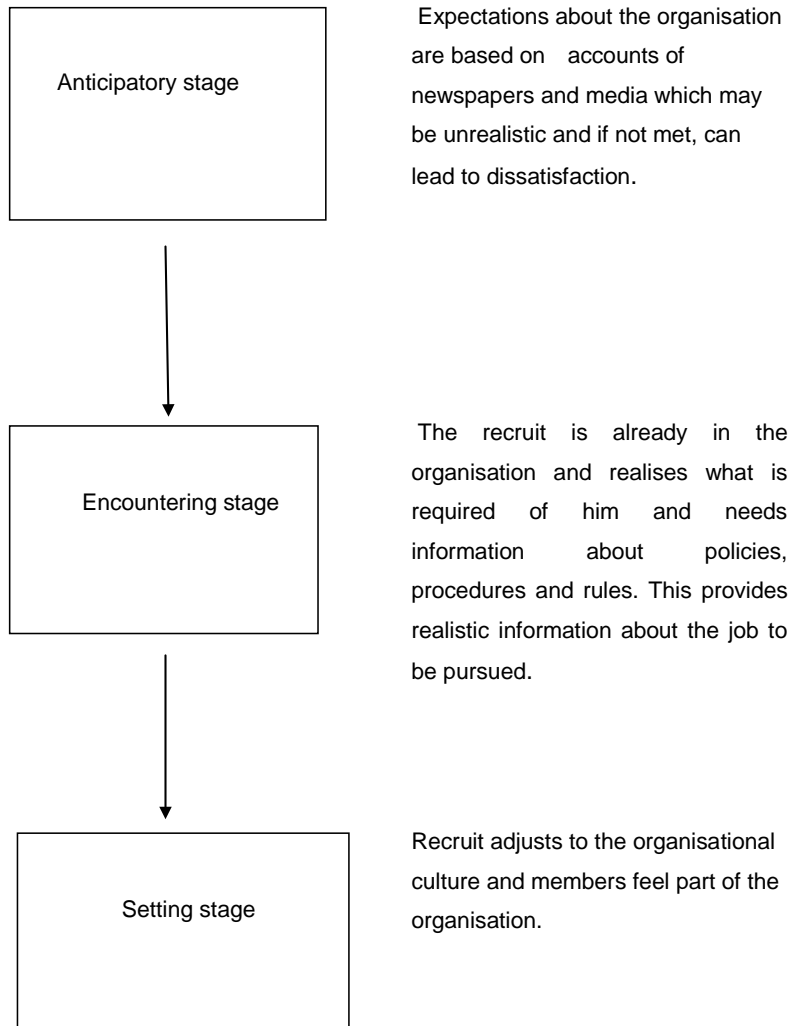
## **Phase two: Training**

Training takes place during phase two. This training programme is an attempt to provide SGBs with the relevant information that addresses their governance needs. The training programme is conducted by inviting all SGBs within a circuit to a common venue (see paragraph 5.3). The numbers of participants are kept within reasonable limits to make the training as viable and effective as possible. During this phase, detailed information is provided to them. In this research, the information provided during this phase is additional to the information provided in chapter 2 (see paragraph 2.8) of the literature review of this study. Areas that needed capacity-building were identified in chapter 5 (see paragraph 5.3). In this regard, the following topics were identified.

### **5.4.1 Orientation of new members**

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary of Current English (1983), the concept 'orientation' means bringing an understanding of relations with a particular event. This entails an introduction to a particular event, which "is part of the process that endeavours to absorb new members into an organisation and turning them into productive members" (Nel, Gerba, Van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono & Werner, 2001:260 – 261). In other words, orientation is an activity that is concerned with informing newcomers about what is expected of them (see paragraphs 2.8.1 & 4.2.11)

Orientation has the advantage that it introduces the participants to the actual situation and reduces absenteeism. Consequently, it promotes job satisfaction, quicker acceptance by peers and improves relations between members. Nel *et al.* (2001:62) suggest that the orientation process occurs in three stages that follow each other consecutively, namely, the anticipatory stage, the encountering stage and the setting stage. More information is given in figure 5.1 on the following page:



**Figure 5.1 The three stages in the orientation process (Nel *et al.*, 2001:62)**

The orientation process can be evaluated through face-to-face meetings with participants and by asking them to comment on the weaknesses of the programme by means of questionnaires and in-depth interviews with randomly selected participants.

#### **5.4.2 Formulation of school policies**

According to section 20 of the SASSA “the governing body of a school must adopt a constitution on how the governing body is to function” (RSA, 1996b:14). The constitution is the main document on which other policies are based. However, it emerged from paragraphs 2.6 and 4.2.11 that some SGBs of previously disadvantaged schools do not have policies because they lack knowledge about drawing them up. Though they have the policy- making power, they still need to be sensitised to the fact that they need not repeat the enabling laws but should devise strategies to realise the values that underpin such laws. Potgieter, Squelch, Visser, Mothata and Van der Berg (1997:30) point out that many principles and rules guiding the way in which the stakeholders of the school must function, should be written into the constitution (see paragraphs 2.8.3 & 4.2.11). SGBs must first consult with stakeholders and receive input from them about sections that should be included in or left out of the policy.

Each school is self- reliant and has to take the responsibility for developing policies, which suit its unique situation. Policies at school level are subordinated to provincial and national policies. Therefore, school policies should be planned with both provincial and national policies in mind. Grobler, Campher, Du Preez, Shaba and Looock (2003:85) suggest that the following guidelines should be considered when developing a policy:

- It must be constructed in consultation with stakeholders.
- It must be goal orientated and fall within the framework of different education laws,
- It must not be inflexible and have long-term validity.
- It must be in writing and available to all stakeholders.
- It must give guidelines for task performance.

It is essential that SGBs should be assisted to draw up policies in the manner proposed above.

Darling-Hammond (1990:240) asserts that a policy must be communicated well if it is to be understood by everyone concerned (see paragraphs 2.8.3 & 4.2.2). Meaningful discussions and developments at all levels are critical components of such communications. Directives are not enough and they render the policy vulnerable to failure following its implementation. The “consultative process is not spelt out clearly in the SASA, but is loosely directed by the provisions of the schools act” (Maraj, 2000:300). Consultation helps stakeholders to have a sense of ownership regarding the running of the school.

The school policies must be aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process (RSA, 1996:8). If the norms stipulated in the policy are clear and unambiguous and are implemented in practice, it will be possible to bring about significant, continuous and widespread improvements in the behavioural patterns of learners and educators. . It is important that the school policies should be made available and explained to the newly admitted learners and their parents during the formal orientation process at the beginning of the year, so that everyone within the school can become familiar with the relevant policies, (see paragraph 4.2.2).

#### **5.4.3 Joint (team) decision making**

In chapter 2 (paragraph 2.8.3), it was stated that SGBs are composed of the unemployed, the employers, the employees, the religious ministers, politicians, lawyers, illiterates and even traditional leaders. All these members come with a diversity of interests and experiences (see paragraph 4.2.3). There should be some common factor that binds the members together. In the school context in this case, the binding force is the common aim they share regarding the school they govern. Each member must contribute towards the achievement of the school’s aims. In fact, no team can succeed if the members have different goals or each player puts his/her interest above the teams’ interests (see paragraph 2.8.2).

Section 14 of the SASSA 1996 stipulates that a governing body stands in a position of trust regarding the school and should act in good faith. This implies that when appointing contractors or issuing tenders for an advertised job within the school (RSA, 1996b) (see also paragraph 4.2.3), the interest of the school should be put above the interests of individual SGB members. This implies the strict accountability of the SGB to the school, where each member is accountable to the stakeholders he/she represents (see paragraph 2.3). Decisions made by the SGBs are binding on each individual SGB member because the SGB functions as a team.

It is also imperative that the SGB should be knowledgeable about team building in order to develop itself into a strong team. SGB members are people who should start trying to improve how effectively their team functions. It was mentioned earlier on that SGBs in previously disadvantaged communities tend to rely on their intuitive knowledge when faced with new challenges (see paragraphs 4.3 & 5.1). A disadvantage of this method is that it cannot be understood by other SGB members. A systematic approach is therefore needed when people work as a group. This approach lays the foundation for teamwork and involves developing a series of steps when tackling a problem as a team. Everard and Morris (1996:181) identify certain steps in a systematic approach, namely, defining what you seek to achieve in a situation, identifying why you seek to achieve it, deciding which means you will adopt to act on the decision and review past successes and failures to improve future performance.

This approach emphasises the importance of knowing where the SGB wants to take the school and that everyone works towards that desired goal. Objectives should be clear but time-bounded and measurable. It is of utmost importance that quality should be encouraged. When various teams report on the progress of a particular task, the other members should pay attention to the report so that their suggestions are heard. If this does not happen, communication problems may develop that can give rise to frustrations and participants can withhold any further contributions. Ownership of the decision will then rest primarily with a few persons; consequently, the commitment of the other members regarding the decisions may be non-existent. Therefore, it is important that decisions should be



supported with no reservations. This prevents the eruption of unnecessary conflict between members. Importantly, individual members should not be allowed to undermine decisions made by the team. This reflects that team members pull into the same direction and have similar goals (see paragraph 2.6). Members help each other to win, take pride in successes and also to speak positively about each other.

#### **5.4.4 Conflict resolution**

A conflict manifests itself when the expectations or actual goal-orientated behaviour of one person or groups is blocked by another person (see paragraph 2.8.6). It can also be a disagreement between two or more people or groups of people concerning a matter of scarcity (see paragraph 2.8.6). It also occurs when people hold different beliefs about facts, values and strategies. In all these definitions, the individual or groups are obstructed from getting what they need and become locked into that position. Effects of conflicts in a school situation can be so dangerous that they can lead to the complete sabotage of the efforts of teachers, principals and the SGB. In such a case, the control and management of schools can disintegrate completely.

In such instances when “existing routines, norms and expectations are already entrenched; efforts to eliminate them are confronted with resistance, bitterness and conflict” (Lebethe, 1999:17). In schools, conflicts can be controlled by the consistent application of school policies, procedures, rules and regulations (see paragraph 4.2.9). According to the Mpumalanga Department of Education (1999:3), no party to a conflict can solve the problem unilaterally. The strategy that can be utilised to resolve the conflict depends on the value attached to the issues pertaining to the conflict and the relationships between conflicting parties (see paragraph 2.8.6). A practical solution may be to seek a friend of both parties to act as a catalyst to ensure that both parties are sincere in their intentions of solving the problems.

In an attempt to resolve conflicts peacefully, an arbitrator may be needed. Everard and Morris (1990:105) refer to a harmony model whose aim is the

collective and participative involvement of interested parties before a decision is taken. This allows for differences of opinions to be addressed before a position is taken. The arbitrator, who should be impartial and objective, identifies areas where there are differences of opinion. In addition, he/she should be “understandable, ask questions and should think about consequences, possible solutions, offer reasonable compromises and negotiate a fair agreement” (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 1999:7).

When a conflict involves groups, the following problem solving approaches can be utilised: The arbitrator should set the stage for individual key players. He/she should open the group dialogue by establishing ground rules which will entail respecting the right to disagree, .opening oneself to different points of view, expressing one’s real concerns, sharing common goals and interests and listening with the aim of understanding the major issues (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 1999:4).

The arbitrator should explore the conflict by allowing group members to explain what is happening and reasons for the tension. He/she has no right to comment on the issues but can draw attention to any departure from the discussions.

He/she should reach an agreement as a final resolution that helps both parties to rise above their differences and look forward to the future. He/she should continuously review the future and avoid talking about the other person behind his/her back. He/she should avoid setting up a conflict situation through the reward structures because those that are in conflict see themselves as competing for his/her favour. On the other hand, the absence of conflict may indicate a renouncement of responsibility, lack of interest and lazy thinking.

Conflicts can sometimes be about personal glory. This makes the conflict difficult to resolve because as it develops, personal glory becomes more of an issue. Such a conflict can result in the decline of communication, hostility and over-conformity to group demands between conflicting parties. In such a case, an arbitrator can be utilised to foster mutual respect and the awareness of the

potential of others (see paragraph 2.8.6). The next section deals with how the negative attitudes of both educators and learners can be changed.

#### **5.4.5 Changing the negative attitudes of both teachers and learners**

Attitudes are an emotional way of expressing one's feelings, thought and behaviour. The mode of expressing one's feelings, thoughts and behaviour is already entrenched in a particular individual and efforts to reform or eliminate this mode may be met with bitterness and resistance (see paragraph 2.8.4). Change is difficult and leaves some people uncertain of the future. However, educators and learners cannot be allowed to maintain their nihilistic attitudes (see paragraph 4.2.5). If such attitudes are not addressed, it can hamper the provision of quality education.

Before attempting to change the perceived negative attitudes of educators and learners, the SGB itself should change the preconceived ideas regarding educators and learners.

Lebethe (1999:17) recommends that a plan should be drawn up by stakeholders to implement the change process. The plan can work very well when people "see that something is wrong and they need help to correct it" (Ramroop, 2004:24). Although the whole school community should commit itself to the change process, the SGB should play a leading role in this process. It is essential to involve the whole school community at the inception phase of the change process and that the involvement should continue up to the implementation phase. This will ensure that the people who will be affected by the change process will be involved in the process... This prevents members blaming each other when dissatisfaction is experienced at the implementation stage.

Respecting the involvement and role of each constituent lays a strong foundation for change. The establishment of a relationship involving respect for each stakeholder's role, results in the achievement of an effective partnership characterised by shared goals, values, open communication and joint decision-making is achieved. In essence, the lost authority of adults in previously

disadvantaged schools can be recovered. Furthermore, an effective school is created where educators and parents can take learners to a higher level of moral awareness as part of their development on the way to adulthood. In this way, the culture of teaching and learning can be restored because educators and parents will be in a position to oppose any undesirable actions and attitudes and indicate the direction they want the school to take.

It must be borne in mind that change requires commitment, dedication and hard work. As both educators and learners attempt to acquire new ways of behaving, they will not always be successful in changing in the beginning. It takes time to become proficient, as new skills need to be practised. Moreover, people may develop negative attitudes and become demotivated if they fail to master the new skills. Therefore, they need support, which should be provided by the DoE and NGOs, so that they do not stop trying to master the new skills.

#### **5.4.6 Communication skills**

Communication can be defined as the exchange of ideas and the interpretation of messages. Communication is “a means employed by the leadership of an organisation to make its vision and decisions known to fellow members and stakeholders” (Van der Westhuizen, 1994:420). In the school governance context, communication entails the exchange of information between the SGB and the larger community of the school with regard to developments in connection with the school as well as the behaviour and discipline in schools. Such a communication process ensures that all the stakeholders strive to attain the school’s goals (see paragraph 2.7.8). Bisschoff and Mestry (2005:154) define communication as any kind of interaction by means of words, letters, telephones, faxes as well as certain actions. In previously disadvantaged schools, the most common modes of effective communication are newsletters, circulars and radios. In paragraphs 2.7.8 and 4.2.10, it was stated that the nature of the issue to be discussed determines the type of medium that will be used for communication.

When messages are communicated, it must be kept in mind that the recipient and the sender have their own points of view and it is imperative to understand

each other's views (see paragraph 4.2.10). The message sent should be owned by the school. Each sentence in the message should commence with "the school" and then state the main idea that needs to be communicated. Whether the message is verbal or non-verbal, the following factors that could either strengthen or weaken the act of communication, should be kept in mind. Look (2003:37) points out that in the process of transferring the message, misconceptions arise, sentences and facts are omitted; consequently, the message continually becomes weaker.

The second factor affecting messages is that the sender tends to appeal to the emotions of the readers rather than to present a well-structured argument to get his /her point across when a message is conveyed. The ability to convey a message clearly, vividly and convincingly through speech or writing is the key demonstration of power amongst civilised communities. Spoken words are powerful and useful for short-term persuasion, while written ones are for long-term directions. To be effective, both methods necessitate the possession of accurate facts, the use of simple and precise language as well as fluency of expression. Therefore, it is essential that SGBs should be proficient in speaking and writing the type of language utilised by the school.

#### **5.4.7 Financial management**

Parents are expected to assist the DoE in funding schools by means of the payment of school fees determined by the SGBs (see paragraph 2.8.3). On the other hand, SGBs are expected to work collaboratively with the school principal and other stakeholders in decision making, problem solving and budgeting. Although the principal is an *ex-officio* member of the SGB, he/she and the SGB remain the primary accountable officers of the financial committee. This does not give him/her *carte blanche* to administer the school funds as he/she wishes. Importantly, school funds should not be used without the sanction of SGB members as the representatives of taxpayers. In turn, taxpayers should know how their money has been spent. Therefore, parents must have free access to the school's financial records and books, which must be kept by the treasurer. The school's treasurer should be a parent and not a school administrative clerk

(see paragraph 4.2.6). However, there are still some school principals who show little respect for SGBs and resort to manipulating them financially to achieve their own personal agendas.

Since the introduction of the SASA of 1996, these two parties have had to play an important role in the governance of the school. Therefore, they should stop undermining each other and should rather focus on their own specific roles. It is important to point out that principals have an advisory and guiding role to play. Furthermore, the roles of the two entities should complement each other.

When schools have prioritised their needs for a particular school year, a budget should be drawn up. A budget is “a plan expressed in quantitative terms for the allocation and expenditure of financial resources” (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2005:129). The school budget is more than the presentation of anticipated expenditure in the form of figures. It is rather a financial interpretation of the school's plan. The school's financial plan should be prepared by the SGB of that school before the end of the year. Subsequently, the budget should be presented to parents during the fourth quarter.

The SGB must keep in mind that without monitoring, it will not know whether it is still on the right financial track or not. Therefore, continuous reports are needed to determine whether the school is moving towards attaining its financial goals or not (see paragraph 4.2.8).

#### **5.4.8 School safety**

Safety in schools has become an issue of concern for learners, parents and education authorities (see paragraph 2.8.4). From the research findings, it was discovered that schools experience serious criminal activities due to their locality (see paragraph 4.2.6). These schools have lost control of learners who are guilty of crime and violence. Undeniably, no effective learning can occur in an environment governed by crime and fear. The relaxed school laws, peer pressure and highly overcrowded classes, can give rise to a desire for recognition through the defiance of authority. Although learners and teachers are likely to be victims

of crime at school, any individual activity of crime is more far-reaching than that and disrupts the learning process, bystanders, the school itself and the community.

Velile Notshulwane (2006:18) suggests that for parents, school staff and policy-makers to address school crime effectively, an accurate understanding of the extent and nature of the problem is needed. However, it is difficult to gauge the scope of crime in schools, because they usually involve isolated incidents. Measuring the progression towards safer schools requires the establishment of indicators of the state of school crime, monitoring and updating the indicators. Furthermore, a systematic strategy that may be effective in combating violence and crime must be implemented. Some schools resort to the employment of metal detectors; other methods entail inviting police to search and patrol the school and inviting guest speakers. All these strategies seem to be ineffective as they mostly prove to be no more than makeshift programmes.

An effective strategy would be summoning the wrongdoer to appear in front of the disciplinary council of the SGB, so that he/she can answer for all her/his actions and be reminded what the code of conduct demands of him/her. Njozela (1998:21) asserts that direct discussions with people produce satisfactory results. This is because during discussions, people are presented with new information from others and this situation creates disequilibrium and causes them to re-examine their behaviour. In general, people behave well, but situations may put them under pressure. Consequently, they then tend to behave negatively.

### **Phase three: Support and monitoring**

This phase becomes salient when SGBs begin to show that they have reached a certain level of competence in phase two, such as showing an understanding of school governance and their functions (see paragraph 5.3). Retraining continues in identified areas, while problem areas receive attention as well. Schools are also clustered in accordance with their proximity so that the SGBs can meet regularly, discuss matters, support each other and share ideas.

This stage is attained by SGBs when they are able to apply the various strategies discussed in chapters 2 and 5 (see paragraphs 2.8 & 5.3). When problems are encountered by SGBs, the facilitator will still be available to provide support and monitor how effectively these SGBs utilise these strategies.

#### **Phase four: Closure**

During this phase, the practitioner prepares to leave the newly- elected SGBs; however he/she should not withdraw altogether, but should rather minimise the support (see paragraph 5.3). Beckman and Visser (1999:159) recommend that assessment procedures need to be included in the programme to avoid the ineffective “shotgun” approach to training. It is during this phase that assessment and certification of proficiency should be provided. Meeting the requirements of the programme must “lead to a certificate of proficiency which must be linked to the NQF and satisfy the requirements as laid down by the South African Qualifications Authority” (Maraj, 2000:321). Clustered SGBs can share discussions, celebrate success together and those SGBs that need assistance, are assisted.

If the various stages discussed above can be implemented properly to build up the governance capacity of SGBs, they can assist them to become veteran governors who understand where they want to take their schools. Their schools can become centres that promote quality education, maximise student achievement and prioritise excellence by inculcating the correct social values. However, this study could not provide enough strategies to build the governance capacity of SGB due to certain obstacles encountered in the process of conducting the research.

#### **5.5 Limitations and strengths of the study**

Not all the schools in the Nkululeko Circuit participated in this study. The generalisations to a wider education fraternity are limited to the SGBs from previously disadvantaged communities, because the information was obtained from respondents selected from those communities only.



In addition, some members of SGBs were unable to respond to certain questions because they had never experienced certain situations at their sites of governance. Furthermore, some members of the SGBs did not have a clear understanding of what research entailed; therefore, the research process could have been seen as a “witch hunt” aimed at exposing the weaknesses of their malfunctioning schools in spite of assurances made by the researcher to the contrary (see paragraph 3.5).

The strength of this study is that all the participants in the study were SGB members who were serving on the SGB for the first, second or third time. The study will help interested parties such as the DoE and SGBs to decide which areas need capacity-building. Furthermore, it is envisioned that the strategies discussed in this study will be useful in building the governance capacity of SGBs.

## **5.6 Recommendations**

In an attempt to promote the good governance of schools, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

- More experts in school governance should be employed by the DoE for deployment to the various circuits to build the governance capacity of SGBs and to monitor their operations.
- As suggested by Maraj (2000:321), SGBs who fulfil the requirements of the capacity-building programme must be awarded certificates of proficiency, which must be linked to the NQF and must satisfy the requirements stipulated by the SAQA. Those SGBs that fail to meet the requirements must be supported until they meet those requirements. The reason for this is, if they are expelled, other people will be scared of joining the body out of fear of exposing their shortcomings and weaknesses.
- A transition period of at least three to six months should be introduced allowing the outgoing SGB to orientate and provide training for the newly-

elected SGBs to avoid a knowledge and skills vacuum during this interim period.

- Awards for the best performing SGBs should be provided annually at circuit, provincial and national levels, which would add to the certification of outgoing SGB members at the end of their period of governance.
- Circuit SGBs should be developed, which are accountable to the regional SGB that further reports to the provincial SGB. The national SGB should be the umbrella organisation, which regulates the functioning of the SGBs and ensures that they meet nationally required standards.
- School needs vary from school to school; therefore, the various strategies utilised to build the governance capacity of previously disadvantaged SGBs should suit the situational needs of each school.
- The strategies applied should be assessed continuously by means of questionnaires, face- to- face interviews and critiques in order to keep refining them on an ongoing basis.
- School governance is not static, therefore, other researchers should continue with research to identify more strategies that can be utilised to build the governance capacity of SGBs.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

The struggle leading to the abolishing of the Bantu Education system created the impression that Africans can be responsible for their own education. However, the democracy attained in 1994 brought about a crisis regarding authority and discipline in many previously disadvantaged schools. The new democratic principles resulted in schooling being undertaken in a disruptive, hostile and unrewarding environment for both educators and learners in some schools. Furthermore, schooling is continuously being disrupted by unruly learners who bully both the educators and their fellow learners. Other factors are also

instrumental in creating a negative environment in schools where a culture of teaching and learning is totally lacking. Increasingly, these adverse conditions are causing frustration and despair amongst teachers and learners.

Undoubtedly, this authority crisis cannot be allowed to continue at the expense of the taxpayer any longer. School governors should transform previously disadvantaged schools so that they become centres where learners are prepared and equipped for the kind of society in which they want to live and work. Therefore, SGBs should focus on initiating the process by means of which the transformation of these schools can be attained. This process demands that the SGBs should have a common purpose, consensus regarding their priorities, commitment to their tasks and their perceptions of success.

To this end, SGBs should address questions such as where do they want the school to go, what should be done to take the school to where the SGB wants the school to be and how can that be achieved and what are the positive factors on which these SGBs can build?

The emphasis is on getting SGBs to commence with the transformation process because if no action is taken, the consequences will be extremely serious for schools and they might run into severe problems in future. If this happens, it will take years for such schools to attain the desired academic standards at the expense of the taxpayers.

The transformation process should commence with the drawing up of policies that will yield outcomes that are consistent with the policies and laws of the country. Without a vision, the SGBs of these communities would be directionless in whatever they do. The policies should be instruments of control that protect educators and learners, tackle the chaos in education, restore order and ensure the provision of quality education.

This study has revealed that most SGBs in previously disadvantaged communities tend to rely on intuitive knowledge, as they have neither the expertise nor the experience needed to govern schools effectively. In this

research, various capacity-building strategies have been discussed with the aim of providing these SGBs with some guidelines so that they can turn their schools into effective schools that provide high quality education. When their schools have attained the desired standards, order will be restored in such schools that can then become places where effective teaching and learning can take place. Ultimately, the goal will be to prepare learners to function effectively in the kind of society in which they will have to live and work one day.

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**ADDENDA**

**ADDENDUM 1: GRADING OF SCHOOLS AND THE NUMBER OF SGB MEMBERS FOR EACH GRADE**

Type of education institution	Grading	No. of Learners	Principal	Educators	Non-educators	Learners	Parents	TOTAL
Primary Ordinary Schools	P1	<80	1	1	1	NIL	4	7
	P2	80 – 159	1	1	1	NIL	4	7
	P3	160 – 719	1	1	1	NIL	5	8
	P4	720+	1	1	1	NIL	6	9
Secondary Ordinary Schools								13
And Combined Ordinary Schools	S3	< 630	1	2	1	2	7	20
	S3	630+	1	3	3	3	10	

**ADDENDUM 2: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

P O BOX 524  
MATSULU  
1203  
05/07/2006

THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
EHLANZENI REGION  
PRIVATE BAG X1014  
KANYAMAZANE  
1214

Sir

Re: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE NKULULEKO CIRCUIT

I am a deputy principal at Masitakhe Secondary School and I am currently registered at UNISA for an M. Ed. degree. This envisaged research project is essential for the completion of my degree .I therefore request permission to conduct this research in the Nkululeko Circuit. My research topic is: *Strategies to build the governance capacity of SGBs of previously disadvantaged communities.*

Hoping that my request will be considered favourably.

Yours faithfully

Murray E. Mashele



**ADDENDUM 3: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

**MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Government Building  
KaNyamazane  
Nelspruit, 1200  
Republic of South Africa



Private Bag X1014  
KaNyamazane, 1200  
(013) 794 0304

**EHLANZENI REGIONAL OFFICE**

Litiko leTemfundvo

Umyango weFundo

Departement van Onderwys

TO: THE CIRCUIT MANAGER- For Information

ATT: MURRAY E. MASHELE: For Action  
MASITAKHE SECONDARY SCHOOL.

FROM: THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
MR M.J. LUSHABA

DATE: 06 JULY 2006

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT NKULULEKO CIRCUIT**

1. The request from Murray E. Mashele, Deputy Principal of Masitakhe School, dated 5 July 2006, refers.
2. Unless otherwise indicated by the Team Leader of Nkululeko Circuit Management Team, the Regional Office hereby approves the request.
3. For Logistics, the Circuit Manager/ Team Leader should be approached.
4. Wishing the educator success in the research.

*M. J. Lushaba*

06/07/2006

.....  
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

.....  
DATE

#### **ADDENDUM 4: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

1. As a newly appointed SGB member, how do you get to know the school where you are a governor?
2. How do you draw up policies for the school where you are a governor?
3. Does the SGB work together as a team? Motivate your answer.
4. What actions are taken against members who deviate from the agreed course of action?
5. How do you manage to change certain undesirable behaviour and the negative attitudes of previously disadvantaged learners and teachers?
6. How do you make sure that your school is a safe haven for both learners and teachers?
7. Who controls your finances? How do you ensure that all that you intend to do with your financial resources is achieved at your school?
8. How do you ensure that what you planned to do for your school in a particular year is achieved?
9. How do you resolve conflicts between:
  - 9.1. Teachers.
  - 9.2. A parent and a teacher?
  - 9.3. A learner and a teacher
  - 9.4. Learners?
10. How do you inform parents, teachers and learners about any new development that is about to take place in the school where you are a governor?
11. Since you became a governor, how many capacity-building workshops have you attended? Who conducted the **workshop(s)**? **How** did you benefit from the **workshop(s)**?

12. What contribution did you make as a governor to ensure the effective functioning of the school? Are you proud of this contribution? Give reasons why you feel satisfied with any contributions you have made.
  
13. Will you be willing to serve for another term as a SGB member at the end of your term of office if you are re-elected? Motivate your answer.