EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE PROVINCE OF KWAZULU NATAL

by

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DECLARATION

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I, Gayatri Devi Baruth declare that:

EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE PROVINCE OF KWAZULU NATAL is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

_____   _____

Gayatri Devi Baruth   Date

DEDICATION

I am spiritually and morally obliged and responsible to dedicate this work to all the members of my lineage, namely:

My Great Grandparents

My Grandparents

My parents, Russi and Devendra Maganlal

My darling children Ashlen, Hannah and Shane

And all the members of my lineage yet to come

.

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SUMMARY

The aim of the study was to investigate the experiences and challenges of the SGBs in secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. The research study focused mainly on the following key areas: the handling of learner discipline, the management of school finances, the formulation of the admissions policy and finally, the appointment of staff.

The South African Schools Act promulgated in 1994 was committed to ensuring democracy in education through the active involvement of all stakeholders such as parents, learners (in secondary schools), educators and principal in the decision-making processes in schools. However, the evolution of school governance within the South African context during the past sixteen years has gone through many challenges in its determination to create an equitable society. Many School Governing Boards (SGBs), especially those in rural and previously disadvantaged schools do not adhere to the practices stipulated within the South African School Act of 1996 and as a result fail in their mandate.

The empirical approach, namely qualitative research was successful in obtaining information from participants about the challenges they faced in school governance. The study revealed that SGBs faced immediate challenges and were not adequately capacitated to handle these challenges. Findings on learner discipline included cases such as stabbings, bullying, theft, alcohol and substance abuse, gang fights, school violence and learner fights. Findings on the handling school finances included cases such as the misappropriation of funds and the lack of proper financial planning. The adoption of discriminatory admissions practices by schools was also evident. In particular, cases of discrimination against age, religion and the use of admission tests were reported. A high level of corruption, nepotism, personal preferences and the abuse of power was common in the staff appointments

made by the SGBs were also reported. Finally, the study made a number of recommendations with regard to the research findings for all stakeholders in South African education to consider.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AASA	American Association of School Administration
ACT	Australian Capital Territory (Australia)
ANC	African National Congress
CBE	Community-Based Basic Education (Senegal)
CCF	Christian Children's Fund (Senegal)
DoE	Department of Education (South Africa)
ELAA	Education Laws Amendment Act
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
EMDG	Education Management and Governance Developments
EPA	Education Policy Act
ERS	Education Renewal Strategy
ETA	Education and Training Act
FET	Further Education and Training
GBF	Governing Bodies Foundation
GET	General Education and Training
HKED	Hong Kong Education Department (Hong Kong)
HOD	Head of Department
HTSP	Heads Training and Support Programme
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal

KZN DEC	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture
LEA	Local Education Authority (Finland)
LPSH	Leadership Programme for serving Heads
LRA	Labour Relations Act
LSC	Local School Council (Chicago)
LTSM	Learner Teacher Support Material
MDCEBLN	Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy (Senegal)
MEC	Member of the Executive Committee
MEN	Ministere d' Education Nationale
NAESP	National Association of Elementary School Principals
NASSA	National Association of Secondary School Principals
NCA	National Constitution Assembly (Zimbabwe)
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NCEE	National Commission Excellence in Education
NECC	National Education Crisis Co-ordinating Committee
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
NFE	Non-formal Education (Senegal)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNSSF	National Norms and Standards for School Funding
NP	National Party / Nasionale Party
NRC	National Research Council
NSV	National School Violence (South Africa)

OBE	Outcomes Based Education
Ofsted	The Office for Standards of Education (England)
ONCE	Office of National Education Commission (Thailand)
PASEC	Programme on Analysis of Education Systems
PDEF	Plan decannal de l'education et da la formation
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTSA	Parent Teacher and Student Association
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
REQV	Relative Education Qualification Value
RSA	Republic of South Africa
RNCS	Revised national Curriculum
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SADTU	South African Democratic Teacher's Union
SASA	South African Schools Act (1996)
SBCD	School-Based Curriculum Development
SBM	School Based Management
SDA	School Development Association
SDC	School Development Committees
SDM	Site-Based Management
SDP	School Development Plan
SG	School Governance

SGB	School Governing Body
SMC	School Management Committee (Senegal)
SMI	School Management Initiative
SMT	School Management Team
SRC	Student Representative Council
SSDM	School-Based Decision-Making Development
TI	Transparency International (Senegal)
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USAID/EPQ	USAID Education Priority Quality Project (Senegal)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCING THE STUDY

1.1.   Background and orientation of the study

School-based management (SBM) has become a vehicle for the transformation of public education systems in many countries across the globe (Gamage and Zadja, 2005; Gamage and Hansson, 2008; Arnott and Raab, 2000). From the early 1980s, SBM has become a global trend in public education together with its greater emphasis on parental involvement and community participation (Gamage and Hansson, 2008). According to Myers and Stonehill (2000), SBM is described as a strategy to improve the education systems by the devolution of power from a central to a local school level, emancipating the participation of all stakeholders in management structures and decision-making processes. Consequently, through the involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making processes in a school, a more effective learning environment is generated (Sackney and Dibski, 1994; Brown, 1990). Educational reform has thus become a worldwide trend, making parents ever more accountable for the education of their children. As has been confirmed by David (1990 cited in Abu Duhou 1999:33), "The core of SBM is the idea of participatory decision-making at the school site…."

Researchers have agreed that SBM is a fundamental educational reformation created to meet the challenges of globalisation and the information technology-driven society (Caldwell, 1998; Herman and Herman, 1993; McGinn and Welsch1996; Caldwell and Spinks, 1998; Abu Duhou, 1999). The move towards creating effective and efficient schools, raising the quality of education and inevitably promoting learner performance has called for a move towards decentralisation (Zadja, 2006; Arenas, 2006). Previously, many nation states have been overwhelmed with the demands and responsibilities

of schooling and therefore endeavoured to share its responsibilities with its citizenry. Through such instruments as SBM, schools were able to cope with the changing needs of these nation states and thereby meet all its educational outcomes (Fullan and Watson, 2000; Caldwell, 2003).

1.1.1. The introduction of School-based management in Hong Kong

According to Cheng and Chan (2000), SBM has become a dominant feature in Hong Kong schools and has enhanced the quality of its education. The Hong Kong Education Department (1991) (HKED) saw a need to improve the quality of education and develop strong effective schools. By creating the SMI (School Management Initiative) in 1991, the HKED endeavoured to promote flexibility and identify role functions (Hong Kong Education Department, 1991). The SMI was further transformed by the introduction of SBM, which it went on to steadily develop, thereby giving greater power and autonomy to parents, teachers and school leaders (Pang, 1998, 2000). The new system however was not easily received by the educators who were disgruntled by the new appraisal system and the dominating styles of the school leaders resulting in conflicts among its key stakeholders (Pang, 2000). To ameliorate the situation, the Hong Kong and Chinese universities introduced a new management and leadership programme for all school principals to ensure their on-going professional development (2000). Furthermore, the Hong Kong Advisory Committee (2000) began to delimit the school governing bodies' powers due to the rise in staff conflicts, parents' rising concerns and the abuse of power of various school leaders. While challenges in areas of responsibilities of SMI still exist, it nevertheless ensured that SBM accelerated the emancipation of all stakeholders within Hong Kong schools.

1.1.2. The Introduction of School-based management in England and Wales

Schools in England and Wales have slowly evolved from a centralised bureaucratic system to SBM thereby impacting the quality of education positively (Ranson and Tomlinson, 1994). In England, the Local Education Authority (LEA) has brought about decentralisation, devolving a power shift from central to local school level (Deem, 1993). Governing bodies in England have evolved from the passive participation of parents to that of an active participation which fosters parent partnerships and community involvement (1993). Schools in England and Wales became concerned about the quality of education they offering and questioned whether such education would meet the growing needs of a globalised and information-driven technological era (1993). The Taylor Report (UK, DfES 1989) promoted community and stakeholder participation through governing boards consisting of elected community members, teachers and parents. Here the governing bodies took control over the school finances, teaching and learning, equipment and services (1989). Certain challenges however were noted, especially among the head-teachers and senior managers as many board members did not fully understand their role functions.

1.1.3. The Introduction of School-based management in Thailand

The National Education Act in Thailand also introduced SBM to their education systems so as to promote efficiency-driven schools (Beck and Murphy, 1996; Gamage, 1998, 2005). By 1991, Thailand emerged with SBM empowering all stakeholders of the school organisation to have a voice (Gamage and Sooksomchitra, 2004). In 1997, the Office of the National Education Commission (ONCE) disclosed that the education system within Thailand was inferior and critically needed improvement, especially in the areas of science and technology (2004). Consequently, the Office of the National Education Commission (1999) examined ways to establish educational reform (2004), introducing measures whereby Thai schools

elected governing bodies that consisted of parents and educators to oversee the budget, academic matters, development of staff, provide advice to the school leaders, evaluate and promote school performances and establish relationships between school and other supporting organisations (2004). However, as they progressed with their role functions, many challenges arose as stakeholders lacked the skills, training and knowledge to fulfil their designated role functions and responsibilities.

1.1.4. The Introduction of School-based management in Australia

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) drove the introduction of SBM into the Australian education system (Currie, 1967). The ACT Schools Authority Ordinance made provision for the establishment of governing bodies that managed and co-ordinated educational policies, teaching and learning, school finances, school facilities and management of school buildings (Gamage, 1996). Similarly, the Australian authorities also aimed at improving the state of schools by the notion of SBM which incorporated greater community participation emphasising the principles of equity and diversity (Currie, 1967; Hughes, 1987). Progress however was complicated as it was difficult to establish harmony (Gamage, 1994). As a result, many parents complained that their voice was being ignored and that the decision-making process was being dominated by the decisions of the educators and principals. Central to these struggles were further changes that caused rifts and tensions and contradicted the move towards decentralisation and equality.

1.1.5. The Introduction of School-based management in the US

There was also a move in the United States to improve the state of their schools. As a consequence, SBM became a popular trend in most North American schools, giving parents, educators and community members the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process. The stakeholders of schools felt they had more freedom over the budgetary matters (Weindling,

1998). In 1984, the National Commission on Excellence in Education noted the negative effects of centralisation and bureaucratisation of school administration, making North Americans aware of the negative effects of their education system. Concurrently, these findings were confirmed in other countries as Sweden, France and Finland (Abu Duhou, 1999; Elmore, 1993; Samoff, 1990; Skolverket, 1999, 2000). Consequently, the introduction of educational reforms was overwhelming as educators and parents were not knowledgeable in the area of school finances and administrative matters. As a result, SBM did not initially succeed as it was originally intended.

Boston schools adopted SBM and a shared decision-making policy to promote school reformation and restructuring (Gleason, Donohue and Leader, 1990). Lindle (1996) maintained that the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 established a transition in Kentucky schools towards the adoption of SBM to improve the learning environment. The Chicago School Reform Act revolutionised the state of Chicago schools through SBM, establishing democratic participation and empowering communities to take a more active role in the management and leadership of schools. Through the School Reform Act of 1988, governing bodies known as the Local School Councils (LSCs) were mandated (Fitch, 1990). The LSCs were now given greater decision-making powers over school budgets, staffing, fundraising, teacher appraisal and staff development (Hanson, 1991; Fitch, 1990). However, the LSCs were challenged with the lack of involvement and commitment of parents and educators alike. Evidently, parents from high income districts were more actively involved than parents from low income districts (Hanson, 1991; Fitch, 1990).

1.1.6. The Introduction of School-based management elsewhere across the globe

Similar trends in Russia and the former Soviet bloc countries have openly embraced SBM as a solution to their educational problems (Gamage, 1996). Reforms in Mexico by the federal government have incorporated SBM in their

schools to empower stakeholders to work more effectively (Ornelas, 2000, 2006). By 1992, Mexico embraced decentralisation (2000, 2006). Even in Spain, after four decades of dictatorial rule under General Franco, sweeping reforms were introduced into the education systems through the implementation of SBM (Hanson, 1991). The SBM model became operational in Spain after 1985, creating Local School Council (LSC) for each school, consisting of a principal, parents, teachers, students and government officials (Hanson, 1991). As a result, the LSCs were now responsible for the partnerships of parents, teachers, learners and community members (Llama and Serrat, 2002; Hanson, 1991).

In New Zealand, the Education Act of 1989 moved towards the devolution of power and reform and thereby implemented SBM as an initiative to improve teacher accountability, systematic efficiency and community involvement (Murdock and Paton, 1993). The introduction of the Education Act of 1998 in New Zealand brought about significant educational changes and reforms, decentralising the authority in schools. However this education reform was not easily received by the parents and educators alike.

1.1.7. The Introduction of School-based management in South Africa

Since the first democratic elections in 1994, the South African education system has also gone through a period of radical change and transformation. Through the passing of the White Paper 2 on Organisation and School Funding, the South African School Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 was passed into legislation. According to Adams and Waghid (2005:25), the SASA (1996) was adopted to "advance the democratic transformation of the society." Practically, the establishment of the SASA gave birth to democratically-elected school governing bodies (SGBs). These were created in order to:

    i.   Provide for the democratisation and decentralisation of the education system;

ii.   Promote the devolution of decision-making powers from central to school level;

iii.   Establish the notion of self-managing schools;

iv.   Institute participative management, shared responsibility and accountability among the stakeholders of the school organisation (RSA, 1996).

One hallmark of the SGBs was to advocate the involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making processes at school level (e.g., parents, educators, learners and community members). Traditionally, in contrast to the previously centralised education system that limited the participation of parents, educators, learners and community members, these new democratically-elected school governing bodies promoted collaboration, shared responsibility, shared decision-making and participative management amongst all the stakeholders within the school irrespective of their class distinction and status (Steyn, 1999). The new education system now enshrined in the 1996 Act promoted the principles of democratisation, multiculturalism, equity and desegregation, whereby education was used as an instrument to improve social and economic development within the South African nation as a whole (Kallaway, Kruss, Dunn and Fataar, 1997).

The SASA also gave powers to the SGBs to determine polices and placed them in a unique position to implement, evaluate and supervise policies that are in accordance to national norms and standards. Their mandatory function includes determining the language and admission policy; adopting the code of conduct for learners; determining school hours; maintaining physical facilities; handling disciplinary matters pertaining to learners and educators; establishing and controlling school funds and school budgets (SASA, 1996). In addition, they can also supplement school resources to improve the quality of education. Governing bodies were also given responsibilities by the SASA to oversee the school finances, school policies, appointment of staff, curriculum studies, religious rights, social justice and discipline within the

schools (Adam and Waghid, 2005). Although the SGBs were expected to fulfil the above-mentioned role functions, research has shown that some schools nevertheless were unable to comply with the requirements stated in the SASA and thus failed in the key critical areas of handling school finances, the appointment of staff, the formulation of admissions policy and handling learner discipline (Mkhize, 2007; Bembe, 2004; Mestry, 2004; Van Wyk, 2004; Phahlane, 1999; Chaka and Dieltiens, 2005; Waghid, 2005, Sithole, 2004; Mncube, 2008, 2005, Zulu *et al.,* 2004, Xaba, 2011).

Pillay (2005) has reported that within some SGBs, personal preferences, nepotism, bias, the abuse of power and corruption seriously hampered the interview processes and staff appointments at the school level (Phahlane, 1999). Mkhize (2007) went on to report that promotional posts could not be executed and staff members could not be appointed by the SGBs due to their lack of knowledge, skills and capabilities. Sharing the same sentiment, Heystek (2004) mentions that the parent component on the SGBs was insufficiently knowledgeable about the intricacies of the teaching profession and therefore lacked the expertise to evaluate professional educators and appoint staff members. Pillay (2005) has maintained that the SGBs often made decisions that were biased, unprofessional and not correctly aligned to national policies and norms in terms of staff appointments. Bembe (2004) together with Mestry (2004) argued that the SGBs were ineffective in many schools as they lacked financial management skills to adequately control and administer school finances resulting in the mismanagement and misappropriation of school funds. In line with this argument, Van Wyk (2004) maintains that many members of the SGBs were functionally illiterate and could not fulfil their role functions as stipulated in the SASA due to a lack of skills, knowledge and expertise especially in the area of financial management.

According to Soudien and Sayed (2003), learners from formerly disadvantaged schools were denied access into previously-instituted ex-Model C schools due to language barriers. The seriousness of this situation

demanded the office of the Member of Executive Council (MEC) for education at the provincial level to intervene with an aim to change such rigidly applied admission policies that deny learners admission into ex-Model C schools (Asa, 2010). Furthermore, the Education Superintendent-General, Advocate Modidima Manny, described the former ex-Model C schools in the Buffalo City Municipality in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal as "exclusionist' schools, as they refused admission of black learners from previously disadvantaged schools into their elite schools" (Ntando, 2011). Moreover, schools used discriminatory admissions policies as an excuse to keep learners out of their schools (Ntando, 2011). In this, Chaka and Dieltiens (2005) contested that many SGBs were implementing discriminatory admission policies that were centred upon a certain "inclusivity" and "exclusivity" which were not in line with the SASA and the 1996 Constitution of South Africa.

Another daunting challenge for the SGBs within many secondary schools relates to learner disciplinary problems which had become a national challenge (Marais and Meier, 2010; Naong, 2007; Maree, 2003; Mabeda and Prinsloo, 2000). Khuzwayo (2007) argues that the SGBs were struggling to cope with disruptive learner behaviour. In addition, rising levels of learner violence had become rife in certain secondary schools as many learners carried weapons to school and engaged in gang fights (De Wet, 2003; Mabeba and Prinsloo, 2000). Incidents of bullying in the classroom also resulted in disruptive behaviour in many secondary schools (Smit, 2003; Booyens, 2003). Reflecting on this literature, this is where the SGBs failed in their primary duty to perform their role functions as recommended in the SASA.

Given these scenarios at schools, this present study will explore the experiences and challenges of the SGBs in the following key critical areas:

i.   Handling learner discipline;

ii.   Managing school finances;

iii.   Formulating and implementing admissions policy;

iv.   Appointing staff.

Based upon the research findings, this study will suggest a framework or model that can influence a review of the current policies with a view to overcome the on-going challenges and problems faced by many SGBs within South African schools.

1.2.   Motivation and rationale of the study

The motivation for this study can be traced back to my own experiences as an educator and a member of a School Governing Body (SGB). I was greatly dissatisfied as a SGB educator governor as we struggled to handle the rising challenges in our areas of responsibility. There were enormous problems of ill-discipline and control among the learners for which we did not have a workable strategy on how to deal effectively with the problem. Other issues included the mismanagement of funds by the school and the SGB members. There was also a lack of accountability and transparency regarding the use of public funds. As a result, these issues impacted negatively on the quality of education offered at the school. In addition, I was challenged by the multiplicity of responsibilities and functionalities of the SGBs. We were expected to deal with so many issues that it seriously impacted our efficiency and ability to deliver.

My experiences as an educator and member of a school governing body were not the only reasons for engaging in this study. Another motivating factor which prompted this study relates to a literature review. I read with interest the developments in school governance in other countries. In terms of being more powerful and independent, part of the evolutionary development of governing bodies in other countries has been the adoption of what Keat and Abercrombie (1991) refer to as a sort of "enterprise culture," a form of business culture in which emphasis is placed on entrepreneurial drive,

innovative financial planning and consumer service. Financial responsibilities such as controlling budget are now assumed by governing bodies. The question that arose in my mind was: "how far would this 'enterprise culture' extend insofar as governing bodies in South Africa are concerned?"

A final motivation for this study was based on the question: "what kind of model can one come up with for the future of school governance in South Africa?" In other words, what model could address the current imbalance where the governing bodies of historically-privileged schools have an obvious advantage over the governing bodies of the vast majority of historically-disadvantaged (mainly black) schools? Such a model would need to empower School Governing bodies so that they can become powerful enough to make meaningful changes to improve both the school and the community.

The main force driving force for my study was thus to explore ways of empowering the SGBs to take on their role in an effective and efficient way that would inevitably improve the quality of education. I therefore embarked on this study for both professional and personal reasons. I have seen and experienced the problems first hand. In sum, my experiences as an educator, an SGB governor and my curiosity motivated me to pursue the study.

1.2.1. Focus of the study

This present study will endeavour to answer the following general research question:

> What are the experiences and challenges faced by the SGB in performing their responsibilities contained in the SASA?

More specifically, the study will address the experiences and challenges faced by the SGBs in secondary schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The study will focus on the following key areas:

i.   Learner discipline;

ii.   Handling of school finances;

iii.   Formulation of admissions policy;

iv.   Appointment of staff.

In the recent years, SBGs have experienced many difficulties, challenges and problems and therefore are in need of support strategies to assist them in achieving their role functions as recommended in the SASA. Statistics are taken from the local newspaper where Mnchunu, 2010 (*Daily News*, 2010) claimed that South African schools were failing in their mandate as a result of mismanagement, corruption and nepotism of the SGBs. Although the Department of Education (2000, 2001, 2002) has made significant attempts to support the SGBs in handling these rising problems, the SGBs are still beset with numerous problems and challenges.

1.2.2. Statement of the problem

South Africa, as with many countries, introduced decentralised school governance with a focus on community participation. Participation was made possible by the promulgation of various legislative instruments such as the South African School Act 84 of 1996. This Act provides for the election of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) by learners, parents and staff which in theory, grants schools and their constituent communities a significant say in decision-making by devolving power to stakeholders who participate in the democratic governance of schools. A basic set of functions is stipulated for all SGBs. Among these are: the determination of an admission policy, setting a language policy, making recommendations on teaching and non-teaching appointments, the financial management of the school, the determination of school fees and fundraising. Contrary to what educationists and researchers

have envisioned, these new changes brought with it many profound and daunting conflicts.

Consequently, the SGBs established in many schools failed to perform their duties appropriately. Research has shown that SGBs were failing in their mandate, especially in township and rural-based schools in terms of policy formulation, financial management, staffing, curriculum implementation and learner discipline (Mkhize, 2007; Waghid, 2005; Chaka and Dieltiens, 2005; Sithole, 2004; Mestry, 2004; van Wyk, 2004; Bembe, 2004). This was due to the fact that many of the elected SGB members lacked the appropriate skills to perform their responsibilities effectively. The introduction of a SGB was to promote accountability, school effectiveness, school improvement and develop a school. However, this is not taking place on the ground. For schools to be effective, they need to rely on sound leadership and governance.

It was clear from the foregoing exposition that there are many challenges facing the SBGs in performing their responsibilities as stipulated in the SASA. This present study will therefore endeavour to examine ways and strategies to boost the effectiveness of school governance practices at the school level. It is upon this basis that the following general research question emerges:

> What are the experiences and challenges faced by SGBs in performing their responsibilities as stipulated in the SASA?

This research question finds expression in the following sub-questions:

i. How are SGBs structured?

ii. What are the responsibilities of the school governors?

iii. What theories underpin school governance and decentralised decision-making?

iv.   What are the SGBs experiences and challenges regarding the handling of school finances, implementing an effective admission policy, the appointment of staff and handling learner discipline?

v.   What kind of a model, strategies and recommendations can be implemented to address the challenges facing the SGB, more especially with regard to learner discipline, school finances, the appointment of staff and the implementation of an effective admission policy?

1.2.3. Aims and objectives of the study

The overall aim of this study is to investigate the experiences and challenges faced by the SGBs in secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. This aim is answered by means of a specific focus on the following sub-aims:

i.   Investigate the prevailing theories on school governance and decentralised decision-making

ii.   Ascertain the composition and the responsibilities of the school governing bodies;

iii.   Interrogate the experiences and challenges of the SGBs in handling the following key critical areas: handling school finances, implementing the admission policy, the appointment of staff and the handling of learner discipline;

iv.   Design a model or determine strategies and recommendations that can be implemented to address the following key critical areas: handling school finances, implementing the admission policy, the appointment of staff and the handling of learner discipline.

1.2.4. Explication of the problem

Theoretically, SGBs are supposed to promote the best interests of the school (SASA, 1996). However, this is not taking place on the ground. This study will therefore endeavour to engage in a thorough investigation into the SGB practices in four secondary schools in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal as case studies. From this research study, relevant strategies or frameworks will be developed to address unresolved theoretical problems. There are still gaps in the SGB becoming fully functioning at school level, as there is still a need for skills development, value-based behaviours and attitudes. In the long term, the research study will aim at contributing to the current literature and develop a theoretical base for relevant professionalism.

This study will also aim at making a considered contribution by coming up with some strategies or model that will empower SGBs to be more effective in their assigned responsibilities. This study will have its impact within the education discipline as it will generate knowledge on effective school governance practices in South Africa. It is thus hoped that this study will become a platform for other studies that will examine the effective functioning of SGBs in schools. Research has shown that there have been on-going studies on effective school governance (Mncube, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009).

The findings of this research study will thus seek to:

i. Expose the actual experiences and challenges faced by the SGBs in the following key critical areas: learner discipline, the management of school finances, the formulation and implementation of admissions policies and finally, the appointment of staff;

ii. To provide possible solutions to the actual experiences and challenges faced by the SGBs;

iii. Take cognisance of whether SGBs fully understand their role functions and responsibilities as stipulated in the SASA (1996);

iv.   Contribute to current the knowledge on school governance practices in schools;

v.   Recommend innovative guidelines and initiatives to policymakers and educational authorities for the development, support and improvement of school governing practices within the educational structures;

vi.   Offer empirically grounded knowledge that can be utilised to improve the state of schools;

vii.   Improve school governance practices in South African education;

viii.   Contribute to the improvement of the state of schools in the district of Umlazi in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

In order to effectively address the sub-aims of the present study and to realise the contributions this study can make, the research design will include an exposition of the research plan, structure and execution.

1.2.5. Research design and method

This study is qualitative in approach. Qualitative research is orientated towards exploration, investigation and inductive logic (Patton, 2002:55). It can be further argued that in qualitative research, data is mediated through a human instrument, rather than questionnaires (Cresswell, 1994:145). Qualitative research focuses on descriptive data that is reported in the words (1994). Qualitative study underpins human viewpoints, human judgments, human understandings and decision-making (Muijs, 2004). Qualitative research "aims to understand peoples experiences of their social life and everyday activities and therefore embraces peoples' beliefs, viewpoints and values" (McRoy, 1995:209-215). I have used qualitative design as a method of research in order to gain valuable insight into the experiences and challenges that SGBs currently face as well as retrieve data that will be rich and descriptive (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

I have utilised the qualitative approach to answer the research questions as it allowed the researcher to capture real-life experiences of the participants and take into consideration their context (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). In this study, the core purpose of qualitative research is to understand, explore and interpret the experiences and challenges of the SGBs in secondary schools. In other words, the study will focus on deductive logic rather than inductive logic and be particularly orientated towards exploration, discovery and inductive logic (Kumar, 2011; Cohen *et al.*, 2007, Maree, 2007; Patton, 2002).

The qualitative researcher endeavours to use information gathering methods that are more flexible. By using qualitative research approach, the researcher is able to 'see' the world from the participants' perspectives (Cohen *et al.,* 2007). A qualitative framework serves therefore as a guide to explore the experiences, perceptions of the SGBs in their key role functions and responsibilities. I have endeavoured to employ qualitative research as it focuses on words rather the quantifications of data collections and analysis of data (2007). Additionally, as a qualitative researcher, I endeavour to understand the social phenomena of the respondents in this study. Also, I have utilised a quantitative approach to retrieve data on the background information of each case study school. The quantitative data from questionnaires will thus provide a background history and profile of each case study school.

A research design plans the research project to ensure the validity of the research findings are maximised (Mouton, 2008). The researcher decided to obtain data that can be analysed, synthesised and organised. In this, Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002:29) define a research design as a "strategic framework for action that links research questions to the execution or implementation of the research." Moreover, a research design provides a detailed overview of the plan of the study and how the data is collected and analysed. In sum, the research design provides answers to the research questions (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). Additionally, a research design provides a blueprint to the detailed plan of the study. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) describe a research design as a descriptive methodology

that is used to obtain answers to the questions of the phenomena. The research design outlines the entire plan of the study. The research methodology developed in the context of the SGB and its outcomes and analysis will be applied to the prevailing theories of school governance.

1.2.6. Literature review

A literature study not only provided valuable insight into the research processes, but I also helped integrate the findings of the research study to the knowledge that was already generated (Kumar, 2011). An extensive literature study was conducted to provide a theoretical background in which the key conceptual issues were explained. University dissertations, newspaper reports, educational encyclopaedias, circulars, newspaper articles and journal articles was used to explore the perspectives on the theory and practice of the practice of school governance in South African Education and other countries. International literature was examined to provide the researcher with the experiences of school governance practices in other developing and developed countries such as Finland, England, Zimbabwe and Senegal as (so-called) first and third world countries. Other published and unpublished reports were consulted as secondary data to the research study. The study will inevitably deliberate on the recent developments, selected problems and critical perspectives regarding SGBs in the South African education system.

1.2.7. Empirical study

Empirical study involves the research aims, the context of the study, various research instruments, population and sampling procedures, and data collection and analysis procedures. The aim of this empirical study is to investigate the experiences and challenges faced by the SGBs with reference to secondary schools in the following key critical areas: the handling of learner discipline, the management of school finances, the formulation and implementation of admissions policy, and finally, the appointment of staff. As

mentioned above, a qualitative approach was used for this particular investigation. In particular, I chose the case study method for this research project as it forms a "systematic inquiry into an event or set of related events which aims to describe and explain phenomena of interest" (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2004:123). In using the case study method, it allowed me to conduct an in-depth investigation into a complex situation so that others may understand it, even though they may not have fully experienced the situation for themselves (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002). Consequently, I used the case study method because it allowed me to understand the situation more clearly and systematically as the study unfolded (Cohen *et al.,* 2007).

1.2.8. Context of the Study

In terms of the new political dispensation of South Africa, there are nine provinces, each with its own legislature, premier and executive council. These are: Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, North West and the Western Cape. South Africa extends over a geographic area of some 92,100 km (Statistics South Africa, 2009).

I have chosen the province of KwaZulu-Natal as my area of study as it is where I reside and my sample was easily accessible given various time and financial constraints. KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is the second largest province made up of urban and rural areas. In the province of KwaZulu-Natal, the Education Department consists of twelve education districts. These are: Pinetown, Umlazi, ILembe, Ugu, Sisonke, Umgungundlovu, Othukela, Umzinyathi, Amajuba, Empangeni, Obonjeni and Vryheid. There are a total of 6066 schools in KwaZulu-Natal (Statistics South Africa, 2009), with an overall learner-teacher ratio of 1:32. Yet, there is still overcrowding in rural-based schools (Statistics South Africa, 2009). In line with the 1996 Constitution and the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, the Minister of Education has issued a compulsory education order to extend compulsory education to all

learners from Grade One to Grade Nine so as to ensure that all learners receive a basic education. Within the schooling system in KZN, there are community schools, combined schools, independent schools, ex-Model C schools, private, elite schools, pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools, specialised schools, State schools and subsidised schools. There are many rural schools in the outlying areas of KZN (Department of Education, 2008). The high levels of unemployment with KZN have contributed to a high illiteracy levels and abject poverty within these rural areas. Also, with the HIV and AIDS pandemic having its greatest impact in the KZN region, this has resulted in the highest numbers of single parent families and orphaned and vulnerable children for any province (Statistics South Africa, 2009). To help eradicate poverty within this region, the 'no-fee' school policy was implemented to indigent communities (Department of Education, 2008).

Each education district is made up of a specific number of primary and secondary schools. I have chosen the Umlazi District because it was easily accessible to me as I reside within this district and there were many schools experiencing challenges in these key areas such as: the handling of learner discipline, the management of school finances, the formulation and implementation of admissions policy and finally, the appointment of staff.

1.2.9. Participants in the research

Using purposive sampling (Cohen *et al.,* 2007), I chose four secondary schools in the Umlazi District in KwaZulu-Natal. I chose the schools on the basis of specific characteristics and the selection of information-rich cases, the criteria selected for these schools being location, geographical proximity and accessibility. The secondary schools selected were located in different geo-contextual settings such as urban, peri-urban, township and deep rural areas. In addition, I chose secondary schools given that these schools are experiencing greater challenges in the management of learner discipline, the management of school finances, the formulation and implementation of admissions policy and finally, the appointment of staff. Again, I chose

secondary schools since I also intended to assess the matriculation examination pass rate of these selected schools for the past five years. This was the yardstick used by the Department of Education (2004a) to determine whether the school is functional or dysfunctional. Finally, I chose secondary schools from different contexts so that I would be able to retrieve varied experiences and establish what the different experiences and challenges were in the different schools.

1.2.10. Purposive sampling

The four secondary schools that I selected were as follows:

i. **Shozi Secondary School** is a deep rural school chosen from the deep rural area which is situated at least 100 km from the Durban Central Area as compared to the other schools. School A was randomly selected as most of the secondary schools in the rural area have similar characteristics in this area. I chose a rural school that had been experiencing poor matriculation results for the past five years so as to determine the achievement level of the learners that have been directly influenced by the leadership and management of the school. According to the MEC for Education in the province, Mr. Senzo Mnchunu (*The Mercury*, 2012) there has been a marked decline in the matriculation results, having a 30% matriculation pass rate in the rural schools in South Africa. I therefore chose a rural school to investigate the experiences and challenges in this secondary school.

ii. **Fikile Secondary School** is a township chosen from the peri-urban area which is at least fifty km from Durban Central as compared to the other schools. I chose a township secondary school that had been experiencing poor matriculation results for the past five years. I chose this school given its challenges associated with governance and management in general.

iii. **Hilltop Secondary School** is an ex-Model C school chosen from a semi-urban area which was situated in the Durban Central area. It was an upmarket private school which had excellent facilities. I chose such a school that had been experiencing good matriculation results for the past five years and which is well-governed.

iv. **Sozo Secondary School** is an elite private school chosen from the urban area and which had been experiencing excellent matriculation results for the past five years. The school is well-managed and well-governed. It was hoped that both schools C and D will provide valuable information on how to deal effectively with problems and challenges associated with school governance.

In this study, the sample consists of the following participants:

i. Four (4) principals of each participating schools were chosen for in-depth interviews. I chose the principals of the schools as they are regarded as the key stakeholders of the organisation and they are accounting officers, managers, visionary leaders and administrators (Owens, 1996). I chose the principals of the schools as they would be most knowledgeable of the key critical areas of my study. I choose the principals as they would be able to provide me with firsthand information regarding experiences and challenges that they were facing in their schools.

ii. Four (4) chairpersons of the SGBs were chosen for the in-depth interviews. I chose the chairpersons of the SGBs as they are the most important members of the SGBs since they make the final decisions on governance matters. Furthermore, it is believed that they would be able to provide me with the information on how these decisions were made and what their experiences and challenges were as chairpersons of the SGBs for the past year.

iii.   Four (4) educators of the SGBs of each school were chosen for the in-depth interviews. I chose the educators of the SGBs as they would be able to share objectively their experiences, struggles and challenges encountered in the SGBs.

iv.   Four (4) learners of the SGB of each school were chosen for the in-depth interviews. I chose a learner from the Representative Council of Learners (RCL). According to the SASA, a learner has to be part of the SGB and needs to be involved in the decision-making processes so as to facilitate the furtherance of democracy. I took into account their viewpoints, opinions and experiences and challenges as SGB members.

A total number of sixteen (16) participants took part in this study.

1.2.11. Data collection

Data collection was achieved by conducting individual interviews, observations and document analysis. I specifically chose three different instruments for the purpose of triangulation. According to Wiersma (1991) triangulation is a qualitative cross-validation as the researcher used to verify the information through the different qualitative methods. The various data collection instruments used in this study will be briefly discussed in the next sections.

1.2.11.1. Individual interviews

De Vos (2002) affirms that individual interviews allow the interviewee to express her/himself as clearly and as freely as possible about their personal experiences and challenges. The common goal of the individual interviews is that it provides a quick and easy way to retrieve rich data, while at times participants are unwilling to share confidential information (2002).

I have chosen individual interviews as my research instrument as it gives participants an opportunity to express their views, opinions and experiences as freely and as openly as possible. Interestingly, it allowed for an intimate, repeated and prolonged involvement with the interviewees and, in this way, I could get to the root of what I needed to investigate (De Vos, 2002). Consequently, I was able to retrieve multiple realities through an individual interview (2002). According to Cohen *et al.,* (2007:349) "the interview method is a flexible tool for gathering information, discussing the interpretations of interviewees and understanding their personal experiences." It is for this reason that I chose the interview method so as to understand the experiences and challenges of the SGBs. I asked permission to have the interviews audio-taped and transcribed. My expectation was that, as I conducted the interviews with the chairpersons of the SGBs and the school principals of each school, the educators and the learners, I would be able to capture their perceptions and viewpoints regarding the challenges they were experiencing as school governors. The interviews were conducted after teaching time at the respective schools and varied between forty-five minutes to one hour in length.

1.2.11.2. Observations

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) argue that observations serve as a gathering information tool which focuses on the actual "seeing and hearing" of things rather than the viewpoints of the participants. According to Kumar (2011:140), observation "is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place." The key purpose of the observations in my study was to verify the credibility of the qualitative research findings of the study. I asked the principals and the chairpersons of the SGBs permission to observe the proceedings of the SGBs meetings. I positioned myself as a non-participant observer and thereby carried out my observations as unobtrusively as possible. During the observations, I did not limit myself to the specific questions, but allowed myself to observe what was actually taking place during the SGB meetings. In

this, I followed the guidelines of Cohen *et al.,* (2007). I took field notes during the meetings to supplement and support the information obtained in the official documents. I observed deliberations pertaining to the handling of learner disciplinary problems, the appointment of staff, issues around admission policies and the handling of school finances. I observed firsthand how decisions were being made and how problem areas were being addressed.

1.2.11.3. Document analysis

Documents consist of the actual recorded evidence of what people have done, what they were actually doing and what they actually claimed to do (De Vos *et al.,* 2002). Furthermore, De Vos holds that actual documents are artefacts that support or refute verbal accounts. As a result, this becomes another source for triangulation.

I used document analysis as they were the formal official documents of the school organisation whereby I was able to confirm certain facts. Further, it provided evidence to the actual claims of the participants. These documents included minutes of meetings, agendas, policies in place, financial reports, budgets, learner disciplinary reports, interview schedules, mission statements and various vision statements of the organisations, letters to parents, long, medium, and short term plans. I used document analysis to substantiate what was being said during the interviews and what was observed to ensure accountability and consistency. I selected document analysis for my study because I was able to verify what the other participants were actually saying to what was documented (Cohen *et al.,* 2007). Although the documents can be subjective and bias, they remained a reliable source of information (2007).

1.2.11.4. Data analysis

Henning *et al.,* (2004:164) have stated that data analysis emerges as an "ongoing and iterative non-linear process." A data analysis entails working with data, organising it, searching for patterns, synthesising it and deriving what is important from it (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). Accordingly, the researcher has to read and re-read the data in search for commonalties, patterns and regularities. Thereafter, as the researcher, I saw emerging patterns and was able to develop, themes, categories and sub-categories (2003). Furthermore, I was able to retrieve information that was confidential and valid.

In the case of document analysis, the document sources I used were as follows: agendas of the SGB meetings; school improvement plans, financial reports, minutes of SGB meetings; letters to parents; annual reports to parents; discipline records and curriculum materials. I examined the policies adopted and implemented at the schools under study and in this way investigated the internal school policies that had been adopted and were still in place. I also checked to see if these policies were in line with the South African School Act of 1996. The data from the individual interviews, observation schedules and documents were firstly read and re-read thoroughly, analysed, interpreted and placed in a logical order ascribing them codes for easy access and verification.

I began my analysis by thoroughly reading the transcripts and then dividing them into segments. I transcribed the scripts verbatim. I was able to identify emerging themes that were generated from the interviews. I looked for similarities, differences, themes, categories and common ideas. I analysed each and every emerging theme and compared them with the literature review. I examined the exceptions, differences and similarities in the emerging data. I analysed the data from the observation schedules by taking the words apart and theorising the actual data. I re-organised, reduced and described the data. I verified the documents and compared them with what the participants were saying. The documents were placed in order of preference.

Thereafter, I made detailed comments on the different documents. I analysed the data from the observation schedules by organising the data, describing the data and thereafter interpreting and theorising the actual data. The ascribed codes enabled easy access to the information that was needed to answer the research questions. The formal documents such as the minutes to meetings, financial reports, policies, school allocations and budgets, school improvement plans, mission statements and admission policies were all reflective of the style of leadership and management that was being used as well as it outlined the underlying values (Patton, 2002).

1.2.11.5. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is determined by credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Kumar, 2011). As Lincoln and Guba (1985:331) have defined: "Trustworthiness is when reliability is ensured in the qualitative research." The four aspects of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability determine the validity and reliability of the study. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2007:149), transferability "refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts and settings." I have provided detailed records of the research process so that others can follow and transfer findings to other studies. In other words, the findings of this study can be applicable to other schools in similar contexts. Credibility refers to the "extent of the results of the qualitative study can be credible and believable" (2007:149). I maintained complete honesty and accuracy throughout the study to ensure credibility (Henning *et al*, 2004). Furthermore, I ensured that the data retrieved was accurate and a true presentation of the actual situation.

1.2.11.6. Confirmability

Confirmability refers to "the extent the results of the findings could be confirmed by others" (Trochim and Donnelly 2007:149). To ensure

confirmability, I limited biasness and subjectivity throughout my study. I also validated the actual spoken words of the participants.

1.2.11.7. Dependability

Dependability is associated with reliability and "is concerned with whether we would obtain the same results if we could observe the same thing twice" (Trochim and Donnelly 2007:149). Moreover within the framework of my study I ensured the dependability of my study by following a careful plan of action for my research.

1.2.11.8. Ethical considerations

Ethics refers to adhering to the accepted conduct for acceptable professional practice and ensures that no harm was offered to the research respondents and participants concerned (De Vos *et al.,* 2002). Ethical clearance in terms of the regulations of the policy of the University of South Africa (UNISA) was both obtained and strictly implemented.

Ethical guidelines in research are necessary to guard against any dilemmas and possible harmful effects that may arise from the research. At the outset, letters were written to the senior officials of the Department of Education requesting their permission for the sole purposes of conducting PhD. research at the four secondary schools in the Umlazi district. Research participants were informed of what was expected of them and why it was expected and what would be the purpose of the research study (Kumar, 2011). As the researcher, I made sure that the participants consented to participate in the research study without any coercion. Participants were informed that they would be allowed to withdraw from the study at any given time for any particular reason. All the participants were asked to sign letters of consent. The learner participants consent forms were signed by their parents to allow them to participate in the study. All participants were treated with dignity and

respect. I accessed documents in advance for ethical reasons. I kept an accurate and safe record of all the transcripts and confidential documents and kept them in a safe and secure place. Acronyms were used for the purposes of maintaining confidentiality and the actual names of the participants and school organisations were not disclosed.

1.2.12. Theoretical perspectives

1.2.12.1. Theories of empowerment

The purpose of this research study was to explore the experiences and challenges of the SGBs in performing their responsibilities as contained in the SASA. This study was guided by the theories of empowerment and school governance. The empowerment theory focused on empowering individual within a given organisation. The empowerment theory was relevant to my study as many SGB governors lacked the necessary skills and expertise to function optimally.

Empowerment was characterised by different people in different contexts. A single definition cannot be derived for empowerment. However, at a theoretical level, empowerment can be defined as a "multileveled, context specific and dynamic in nature" (Zimmerman, 1995, 2000). Empowerment assumes the notion of giving power to a person or group of persons with the desired outcome for them to function optimally. Zimmerman (2000) has argued that empowerment is associated with the concepts of motivation, collaboration, self-esteem, self-efficacy, competency and locus of control. Empowerment orchestrates motivation and positive influence so that the persons or group of persons may discharge their duties effectively (Deem, Brehony and Heath 1995). Most importantly, empowerment invokes greater precision, skill, competencies and knowledge into the person to enable them to do extraordinary things despite the challenges and circumstances, for the benefit of themselves, their school and their community (Mabasa and

Themane, 2002). Empowerment is closely related to participatory decision-making processes which is imperative for effective school governance practices within schools.

According to Whitemore (1988:13) empowerment is defined as:

> An interactive process through which people experience person and social change enabling them to take action to achieve influence over the organisations and institution which affect their lives and communities in which they live.

Empowerment theory is characterised by the manifestation of collaborative work structures that accelerate the emancipation of the individual in a given organisation (Zimmerman, 2000). In other words, theories of empowerment promote democratic participation among the participants as they gain control over their lives (2000). During the empowering process, self-efficacy and participatory competencies were but some of the main drivers of the theory. The development of self-efficacy through empowerment theory generated positive changes such as increased self-esteem, self-confidence and assertiveness (Bandura, 1986). Greater emphasis was placed on equity and the building of caring relationships that enhanced the participatory processes within the empowerment theory (1986). According to Steyn (1999), empowerment creates in a person the feeling of control within a given situation.

Empowerment theory clarifies the concepts of power and powerlessness. While on the one hand, Parenti (1978) has argued that power is the ability to control resources and position in the face of resistance. On the other hand, powerlessness reflects the ineffectiveness of the actions of a person in influencing the outcome of her or his life events (Keiffer, 1984). Consequently, powerlessness is an internalised belief that results in apathy and an unwillingness of that person to exert her or his influence positively (Lerner, 1986). The element of powerlessness increases as a result of social isolation, poverty and lack of support. Consequently, most people feel powerless when they lack the knowledge and support to cope in their designated portfolios

(Zimmerman, 2000). Powerlessness is the inability to see oneself in the way that is expected. Hence, through the empowerment process the power structures within the organisation begin to change as there is a greater move towards interaction, shared decision-making, shared leadership and effective communication (2000).

1.2.12.2. Theories of school governance

Theories of school governance underpinned this research study and focused on the different perspectives of school governance such as centralised or decentralised governance or a combination of both, depending on the context of the school and the decision-making within the country. The common move from centralisation to decentralisation has been widely adopted by many countries. However, it can be argued that despite the move to decentralisation, many countries still maintain centralised control over certain educational matters.

1.2.12.2.1. Decentralisation vs. centralisation

Decentralisation which gives more decision powers to the parents and the community a large has become a popular trend throughout the world. Examining the concept of decentralisation, it can be deduced that it has been interpreted differently by different persons. Whereas in the US education system it has interpreted decentralisation as a shift of power from school district to the school, in China's education system it has envisaged decentralisation as a shift in power from national to provincial government (Karlsson, McPherson and Pampallis, 2002). Typically, decentralisation presumes the institutionalisation of the SGBs within the South African education system towards a less bureaucratic system. In this, Gamage and Sooksomchitra (2004:152) have described decentralisation as:

Attempts to devolve power and authority from federal, state, district and local education authority (LEA) levels to either advisory or governing bodies comprising principals, teachers, parents, community members and in the case of secondary school, students.

Consequently, the entire concept of decentralisation emerged when the State failed to efficiently control and manage the local schools and thereby required the interventions of all educational stakeholders to share in this educational partnership (Levin, 1998). Decentralisation is closely related to democracy and embraces the transfer of power and decision-making from central to local government, thereby giving more powers to parents, educators, learners in making new laws, legislations, policies and amendments that are aimed at educational reformation (Gamage and Zadja, 2005; Gamage and Hansson, 2008). In this, the State has shared its power with the stakeholders of the school to form a partnership (Marishane, 1999). In previous times, parents had only limited decision-making powers. However, under the new dispensation of decentralised governance, parents are given considerably more powers. Decentralisation is characterised by power sharing, collaboration and partnerships where ordinary people take the responsibility for the running of the school (Naidoo, 2005). Finally, decentralised school governance is rather challenging for many SGBs who have to adhere to specific rules, regulations and governed policies (Potgieter *et al.,* 1997).

In the case of South Africa, the move towards decentralisation was initiated to reduce the financial burdens of the central government as well as reduce public hostility towards the national government (Karlsson *et al.,* 2002; Department of Education, 2004b). Ironically, despite the promotion of decentralisation and democratisation within schools, conflicts and inequalities at the school level have accelerated (Karlsson *et al.,* 2002). The move of decentralisation involved changes that were difficult to adapt to and caused rifts and tensions among the stakeholders. Theoretically, while decentralisation enhanced the active participation of all stakeholders, educators and parents did not feel they were knowledgeable enough to handle financial issues and administrative matters and had no substantial

experiences in this area (Daun, 2007). Decentralisation has led to a less bureaucratic system with greater emphasis on shared decision-making. As a result, decentralised school governance has effectively redistributed power and authority.

Examining a centralised system of education conceptualised the idea that the State had complete power and control over the schools (Marishane, 1999). According to the Department of Education (2004a), the centralised education system ensured that the State equally distributed resources to schools. Nevertheless, the question remains whether past inequalities have been redressed. While there is little doubt that the centralised education system emphasised social equality and equity, finances and benefits still depend on political influences (Karlsson *et al.,* 2002). Motivations for centralisation include promoting equity in an equal society, overcoming the many cases of fraud and corruption and maintaining greater control of educational matters (2002:143). The notion of strong control is associated with a high degree of centralisation (Broadfoot, 1995). On the contrary, this may not be experienced and is therefore not easy to theorise. Certain educators under a centralised education system seemed to be less restricted than educators under a decentralised education system. Examining this in India which embraced a high degree of centralisation, participation was not active even though there was autonomy (Broadfoot, 1995).

The centralised-decentralised approach existed due to the different school contexts. While it is not fully possible to examine a centralised-decentralised approach for its promotion of equality, equity and democracy, each case study is needed to examine it within its context (Karlsson *et al.,* 2002). Squelch (2000a) concurs with Karlsson *et al.,* (2002) that this approach can be viewed as problematic and hence no form of governance can be viewed as purely centralised or decentralised.

1.2.12.2.2. Co-operative governance

Co-operative governance is another important aspect in school governance. To ensure that school governance is functioning optimally, SGBs need to see the relevance of working co-operatively. The functioning of the SGB is operative within the internal co-operative governance which takes place among the stakeholders within the school (Mahlangu, 2009). The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa clearly demarcates the relevance of co-operative governance as it is applied within the phenomenon of school governance. Furthermore, the SASA emphasises with in its preamble the principles of co-operative governance whereby parents, educators and learners are informed of their rights as regards the governance of the school.

These theoretical perspectives have been integrated in chapter six with a view to arriving at some workable strategies or a framework to deal with the many challenges facing SGBs in performing their responsibilities.

1.3.   Limitations of the study

The research study encompassed a small-scale qualitative study of four secondary schools in the district of Umlazi, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The limitation to this study was that the sample is too small to make generalisations. Moreover, the opinions and experiences of the participants were varied. The researcher acknowledged the limitation of trying to gain access to the official documents of each case study school. Confidentiality had to be assured before the participating schools released the documents. The entire research study may be a long, tedious and time-consuming task. However, despite these limitations, I endeavoured to emphasise quality rather than quantity to provide in-depth case studies with grounded empirical findings.

Additionally, qualitative research can be biased and elements of subjectivity may be present. The inaccessibility of the rural school due to un-tarred roads

was time-consuming and exhaustive. Due to the poor educational level of some of the members of the SGBs, respondents did not always possess the capacity to answer appropriately. The researcher was limited by the responses, viewpoints and opinions of the learner governors as they were often reluctant to respond and discuss the nature of their experiences and challenges. Nevertheless, a wealth of data from interviews, observations and document analysis was generated during this research study.

1.4. Definition of key terms

1.4.1. School governance

Governance refers to the managing of collective decisions of individuals and institutions (private and/or public) to manage their collective affairs and resolve their differences, taking into consideration their diverse interests and opinions (Paquet, 2001). It is an act of determining policy and rules by which a school can be monitored, organised and controlled as stipulated in the South African Schools Act (1996). It is a process whereby policies are formulated, implemented, monitored and adopted. School governance relates to the overall control and authority of the school. Governance promotes relationships between the State and the school which emphasises influence, leadership and accountability (Kooiman, 2000). This also refers to rules and regulations set out by the SGBs and implemented by their policies.

1.4.2. Discipline

Discipline is a set of rules and guidelines (i.e., code of conduct) to be followed to ensure successful teaching and learning in a school. According to Joubert and Squelch (2005), discipline is aimed at promoting appropriate behaviour that encourages self-control, obedience and responsibility and ultimately aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning.

1.4.3. School governing body

In respect to secondary schools, this is a democratically-elected body that comprises of parents, educators, non-teaching staff, and community members in the context of the South African education system (SASA, 1996). The SGB has been set up by the Government of South Africa through the South African School Act No. 84 of 1996 to govern, administer, manage and control education at the school level. The SASA gave more strategic direction and guidance for the organisation, governance and funding of schools to ensure the quality of education at all schools.

A SGB is a statutory body of stakeholders that is democratically elected to govern school organisations. In other words, SGBs serve as the democratic governance in public schools and embrace the concepts of representivity; accountability, liability and partnerships (Serfontein, 2010). It is a body that is solely responsible for the adoption and formulation of policies for public schools which will be in line with the national policies and regulations (RSA, 1996). The core function of the SGB is to take into consideration the best interests of the school. In other words, the SGB is a self-governing community. This body will have to make proposals to determine the school policies which must be in accordance with South African laws and legislations. Ultimately, the SGB serves as the 'mouthpiece' of all the stakeholders of the school organisation.

1.4.4. School management

This refers to the day-to-day running of the school and it includes the management of staff members and of learners and in overseeing the school environment and monitoring the learning activities. Furthermore, it encompasses the organisation, planning, leading and control within the school organisation. School management relates to the daily activities and responsibilities of running a school and learning is ensured through effective school management. It involves the internal control of the organisation, supervision and monitoring of educators and non-teaching staff. High performance through mentoring and coaching is established through school management.

1.4.5. Learner governance

Learner participation was legislated in 1996 through the SASA. Consequently, learners have now become legal representatives at secondary schools (SASA, 1996). According to section 16(1) of the SASA (1996), the learner component of the SGB is elected annually. Learners are enriched by the experience as they serve in the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) in secondary schools, and are able to gain skills and expertise that will be beneficial to them in the future.

1.4.6. Representative Council of Learners

The Representative Council of Learners (RCL) is the only statutory body elected by and representative of all the learners. The RCL structure allows for democracy and participation in school activities.

1.4.7. Educator

An educator is any person who teaches, educates and trains other persons, in this case, learners (Department of Education, 1996a). Furthermore, an educator renders an education service that is based in an education department (National Policy Act No. 27 of 1996). An educator provides knowledge and skills to the learners, serves as a change facilitator, linking agents and views students as equal partners. An educator is a facilitator who is trained in teaching methodologies to promote a learning environment. In this present study, an educator is one who serves as a member of the SGB.

1.4.8. Parent

A parent refers to the person or guardian of a learner who is legally responsible for the custody of the learner, or a person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a guardian (SASA, 1996). In other words, parents are the children's caregivers in the home. According to Patrikakou *et al.,* (2005) a parent is an adult who provides for the child emotionally and financially. Although parents may not be biologically related to the child, they may be given the legal authority to raise the child (Gaetano, 2007). Parents play a significant role in SGBs and parent participation in some schools has been beneficial to address controversial issues such as discipline and finance. In this study, a parent refers to any person elected to serve as a member on the SGB.

1.4.9. Learner

A learner refers to any person receiving education or is obliged to receive education (SASA, 1996).

1.4.10. Secondary school

This is a public institution or an independent school that enrols learners from Grade eight to Grade twelve (SASA, 1996). A school is a juristic entity with the legal capacity to perform its functions in terms of Section 15 of the SASA. The key purpose of a school organisation is to provide education to its learners and is governed by laws and regulations and subsided by the Provincial Department. Moreover, a school is a major social institution that reflects the values of dominant cultures. The purpose of a secondary school is to prepare learners for higher education and for the world of work.

1.4.11. Principal

A principal means an educator appointed or acting as head of a school (SASA, 1996). The principal means a person who plans, organises, leads, controls and delegates the teaching and learning of the activities of the school organisation. The principal plays a pivotal role in a school and is responsible for the professional educational services. According to Mncube (2008) principals are responsible for the day-to-day running and administrative duties of a school.

1.4.12. Experiences

According to the South African Oxford Dictionary (1994), experiences refer to personal encounters that a person has undergone. It also examines the knowledge and wisdom a person may have received from such encounters. In other words, experiences relate to what has happened to a person, his/her involvement, perceptions and understandings. An experience is a phenomenon that a person feels in encountering situations and what they know about it.

1.4.13. Challenges

According to the Collins South African Dictionary (1999) challenges refer to the process of probing or testing a desired phenomenon. Within this present study it refers to provoking a dispute as to expose the problems with a demand to explain and elaborate the problem.

1.4.14. Province

According to the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, a province refers to a district, region or territory. Within the new political dispensation in South Africa, there are nine provinces, each with its own with its own legislature, premier and executive council. These are: Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, North West and the Western Cape.

1.5. Chapter outline of the study

This present study has been divided into six chapters.

Chapter One: This chapter will consist of an introductory chapter that provides a brief overview of the implementation of SBM across the world. It will also provide a conceptualisation of the SBM from its origins, taking into cognisance various international and national perspectives. It will also touch briefly on the development of school governance in South Africa. An outline of the problem formulation, the aims of the study linked to the research questions will also be offered, including the theoretical perspectives underpinning the study. A literature review, data collection techniques and the research design will also be discussed. Finally, the ethical guidelines, limitations of the study and a definition of the key terms will be presented.

Chapter Two: This chapter will provide an overview of the South African Education system prior to 1994. The chapter will also focus on the development of school governance in South Africa. The role functions of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) as contained in the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 will also be discussed. Finally, the chapter will discuss the experiences and challenges faced by the SGBs under study in the areas of school discipline, finances, admission policies and staff appointments.

Chapter Three: This chapter will be divided into three sections. The first and the second sections will outline school governance development in Finland, England, Zimbabwe and Senegal as well as the strategies used by each country to deal with the following key areas: the handling of learner discipline and school finances, the formulation of the admission policies, and finally, the appointment of staff. Finland, England, Zimbabwe and Senegal have been selected given that they represent first world and third world economies respectively. This will provide an interesting discussion especially by comparing the first and third world countries. The final section will focus on the different models of school governing bodies.

Chapter Four: This chapter will focus on methodological issues and will describe the actual methods used in the study. The rationale, choice and assumption behind the qualitative research design will each be discussed. Sampling criteria will follow and data collection strategies will also be discussed.

Chapter Five: This chapter will deal with the presentation of the research findings. Direct quotes supporting the exposition of the report findings will be provided. Documentary analysis and observation will also be used to supplement the overall discussion.

Chapter Six: This concluding chapter of the current research project will include a summary of the research findings of this study as well as conclusions and recommendations arising from the study itself.

1.6. Chapter summary

In this chapter I have demonstrated how the SBM has become a global trend whereby powers have been devolved from central government to the school level. With the introduction of SBMs, democratisation emerged in some schools around the globe including in South Africa. With the establishment of the South African School Act of 1996, democratically-elected school governing bodies (SGBs) were formed throughout all schools. Against this broader exposition, the challenges faced by SGB in performing their role functions as prescribed by the SASA were highlighted.

In the chapter which follows, I will provide an overview of the South African Education system prior to 1994 and explain in detail the development of the 1996 South African School Act (SASA) which led to the establishment of the SGBs in South African schools. I will draw particular attention to the experiences and challenges of the SGBs in handling issues within the following key areas: learner discipline, the administration of school finances, the formulation of admission policies, and finally, the appointment of staff.

CHAPTER TWO

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM PRIOR TO 1994 AND THE SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1.   Introduction

In this chapter two, I will first provide an overview of the South African Education system prior to 1994 and thereby illustrate how the schools were governed. I will also provide an overview of the development of school governance in South Africa post-1994 and the establishment of the new democratic State. In addition, I will review the pertinent national debates on what is expected of the SGBs in schools. Finally, I will discuss the experiences and challenges faced by SGBs in the areas of learner discipline, school finances, admissions policy and staff appointments.

2.2.   An overview of the South African education system prior to 1994

South African society under the previous apartheid regime was considered to be one of the "most unequal societies on earth" (Marais, 2001:16). According to Seekings and Nattrass (2006:55), white South Africans were the "only beneficiaries of every policy within the apartheid regime." The policies that were implemented under the National Party (NP) upon its election in 1948 through to 1994 were rooted in apartheid laws that emphasised bureaucracy, centralisation, separatism, autocracy, discrimination and inequality. This hierarchical, non-participative education system characterised the minimum participation of educators, parents, non-teaching staff and members of the community. Before the establishment of the democratic era post-1994 in

South Africa, the State was solely responsible for the governance of its schools. Its school principals were only mandated to make recommendations for staff appointments and the promotion of staff. In addition, school principals were only responsible to provide the relevant information on the effective functioning of the schools and control the use of school funds from the government. The school inspectors and school principals were the most important personnel in the decision-making processes at the schools. Conversely, the school principal was seen as the "headship" position in the organisation (Murphy, 1993).

With the introduction of the Bantu Education Act No. 47 of 1953, all parents were given the opportunity to participate in all school functions and meetings. However, despite efforts made to improve the education system, the Bantu Education Act continued to institutionalise apartheid and promote the supremacy of whites. As a consequence, black South African communities had to bear the running costs of their schools by paying for private teachers and the building of new class rooms and other facilities (Hartshorne, 1999).

While school boards and committees began to emerge, they were not representative of all stakeholders, as they were inevitably ethnically and gender biased (Hartshorne, 1999). Within the communities, school boards were regarded as promoters of the apartheid government and therefore did not fully receive the support of community members (1999). The school boards attended to matters of learner discipline, teacher discipline, fundraising, parent complaints and teacher evaluations (1999). Ultimately, the school boards advanced the white oligarchic interests of the apartheid regime, thereby disadvantaging the learners, teachers and parents. However, the National Department of Education continued to be focused on the central administration of education (Looyen, 2000).

The Education Act No. 39 of 1967 (EPA, 1967) accelerated racial discrimination giving whites more power over matters of governance. This caused rifts among the majority of black South Africans. This gave rise to the political upheaval of the 1980s, whereby a series of mass actions, strikes,

student violence and protesting students arose during this period (Hendricks, 2000). Students demanded the establishment of Student Representative Councils (SRCs) at their schools (Hendricks, 2000). The 1976 Soweto riots made a significant impact on school governance, demanding participation in all governance structures in education. As a result, the Education and Training Act No. 70 of 1979 was passed into law thereby making it possible for parents to advise the Director General of Education. This led to the formation of participatory systems known as the Parent-Teacher-Students Association (PTSAs). The PTAs replaced the heretofore school boards and committees. However, the PTAs lacked the representivity of all its stakeholders and therefore was unpopular. The sole purpose of the PTAs was to combine the efforts of the parents and teachers in advancing education, but to a limited extent. The PTAs assisted in the transportation of pupils and fundraising (van Schalkwyk cited in Mahlangu, 2009).

As the pace of political change in 1990 increased, the role of the PTSAs became the subject of intense policy debate and discussion. During this period, many policy documents were produced, including: the Educational Review Strategy (ERS), the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) and the African National Congress (ANC) Education and Training Framework Document. Of these, NEPI placed the greatest amount of stress in clearly outlining the role of the PTSAs as organs of school governance. According to the NEPI, School Governance Option, greater participation by legitimately organised constituencies such as parents, teachers and students would be assured. In addition, it recommended that all sectors should have an equal number of representatives on the PTSAs.

2.3. An overview of the developments in school governance policy

Although multi-party democratic elections resulted into a new government for South Africa in 1994, the liberation forces were systematically involved in developing policy for school governance since 1990. During the pre-election

period (1990-1994), policy development was undertaken by the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI).

Prior to 1994, the ruling National Party focussed on the restructuring of white schools which formed only 13% of the total number of schools in South Africa (Department of Education, 1996). It was left to the new democratically-elected government in 1994 to begin the restructuring of the rest of the schools in the country.

In 1990, the minister responsible for white education announced that white State schools would be allowed to change their status from the beginning of 1991. The condition was that a large majority of parents should vote to approve such change. Schools were afforded an opportunity to choose from the following models:

i. Model A which would result in the privatisation of the school;

ii. Model B which would remain a State school but could admit black learners up to a maximum of 50% of its total enrolment component;

iii. Model C schools which would get a State subsidy but would have to raise the balance of their budgets through fees and donations. Model C schools could admit black learners up to 50% of its enrolment component;

iv. A fourth option was introduced in 1992: a Model D school which would be a school belonging to the white Department of Education and Culture that could enrol an unlimited number of black learners due decreasing enrolment of white learners.

In 1993, the white ruling Nationalist government declared that all previous white schools (except Model D schools) become Model C schools unless parents voted by two-thirds majority to retain their old State school status or to become Model B schools. The same government also announced that

subsidies to all Model schools would be reduced. From 1992, almost 96% of the ex-white State schools became Model C schools (Department of Education, 1996b).

Parents had to elect a governing body in each Model C school. The State granted the title to the fixed property (buildings) and equipment to the school to be administered by the governing body. These schools became legal entities with the prerogative to enter into contracts, sue or be sued in law. They enjoyed a high degree of autonomy, with the power to charge compulsory fees and determine the admissions policy of the schools.

The move to change the status of white Model C schools was based on two main reasons:

i. The NP Government was unable to provide the same level of financial support that it had done previously. This was due in part to the slow economic growth of the 1980s and early 1990s and also pressure from domestic and international quarters to equalise spending on black and white education;

ii. Conferring Model C status on white schools would in all probability ensure that control of these schools would remain in the hands of whites rather than fall under the control of the new government which was anticipated in the near future (Department of Education, 1996a, 1996b).

The education system in South Africa was extremely complex prior to 1994. There were fifteen different education ministries—one for each of the Bantustans (separate homelands for the different black ethnic groups); one for each of the four officially recognised race groups outside the Bantustans; and one responsible for the Department of National Education. Each department had its own school model with each model having its own funding formula, its own relationship to the department and to parents and its own governance structure.

Prior to 1996, three types of governance structures existed at school level. These were:

i. School committees or management councils (mainly in ex-House of Representatives, ex-House of Delegates, ex-Department of Education and Training, and KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture schools;

ii. Governing bodies of Model C schools (ex-House of Assembly);

iii. Non-statutory PTSAs in secondary schools and PTSAs in primary schools.

This onerous and chaotic system needed to be rationalised and such rationalisation had to be executed in line with the principles of the new democratically-elected government. The principles upon which the transformation of the entire education and training system were to be based had been set out in the first White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995a). Among these were the following:

i. The physical rehabilitation of educational institutions must go hand-in-hand with the restoration of the ownership of these institutions to their communities through the establishment and empowerment of legitimate representative governance bodies;

ii. The culture of learning, teaching and management involves the creation of a culture of accountability. This means the development of a common purpose or mission among learners, teachers, principals and governing bodies, with clear, mutually agreed and understood responsibilities, and lines of co-operation and accountability;

2.4. School governance policy initiatives

In the section which follows, I will discuss in detail three important policy initiatives in respect of school governance:

i.   The Hunter' Committee Report;

ii. The Education Policy White Papers;

iii. The 1996 South African Schools' Act.

2.4.1. The Hunter's Report

The Hunter Committee (Report of the Committee to Review the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools, August 1995:1) can be seen as the forerunner to the South African School Bill. The committee's brief was to recommend:

> A national framework of school organisation and funding and ownership, and norms and standards on school governance and funding which…are likely to command the widest possible public support… [and] improve the effectiveness of schools.

The Hunter Committee proposed that two categories of schools should operate in South Africa: public and independent (private) schools. It also proposed that parents, students, teachers, non-teaching staff and the principal (ex-officio) should serve on the governing bodies. Provision was also made for members of the community to form part of the school governing body. These community representatives should be nominated by parents or guardians and elected by the governing body. They could be owners, representatives of sponsoring bodies, or of tribal authorities. It must be borne in mind that the community representatives envisaged were people with certain skills or expertise who could make a practical contribution to the improved functioning of the school. It does not include or refer to people from the community who

would be unable to reflect or articulate the opinions and feelings of the community, whatever these may be. The committee felt that parents and guardians should have the largest representation of the constituencies represented on the governing body.

The committee proposed two sets of powers and functions of school governing bodies:

i. Basic powers were those that all governing bodies possessed and included powers such as codes of behaviour for learners, school budget priorities, and community use of school facilities. Such basic powers included: powers to recommend, the appointment of teachers, school-level curriculum choices and the selection of temporary teachers.

ii. Negotiable powers were those which either the province can provide on contract to the school, or the school can contract privately, where the province grants the school the permission to do so. Such negotiable powers included the maintenance of buildings.

The delegation of such powers to governing bodies would thus be conditional. The governing body would have to satisfy the provincial education department that it had the capacity to manage and execute the additional functions according to the standards of provision specified by the province and that the school community had the will to sustain this responsibility. If the provincial authority was not convinced of a governing body's ability to continue exercising such functions, then the province could withdraw these responsibilities from the governing body.

2.4.2. The Education Policy and White Papers

The South African Government's response to the Hunter Committee took the form of two policy White Papers (White Paper 2a: November 1995 and White

Paper 2b: February1996). The White Paper 2a contains the Hunter Committee's proposals and the Ministry's response to them, while the White Paper 2b simply lists the policy choices. In terms of providing an outline of developments leading to the South African School Act, the White Paper 2b is more definite and directed in that it deals specifically with policy issues.

The White Paper 2b suggested similar compositions of governing bodies to that of the Hunter Committee. The main difference is that community representatives are elected by the governing body and not the community. The ministry's motivation for this was that community representatives must be acceptable to all school-based constituencies.

Because of the legal and financial decisions for which governing bodies would be responsible, elected representatives of parents and guardians should be in the majority on the public school governing bodies.

After holding extensive discussions, consultations and deliberations, the White Paper 2b of 1996 was amended to incorporate the South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996, which became law on the 1 January 1997. I will now examine the SASA and its relevance to the SGB, within the South African education system.

2.4.3. The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996

The South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996 was legislated to promote the democratic transformation of school organisations and to this end specifically outlined the requirements and standards for organisation, governance and funding of schools. The 1996 SASA is fundamental to the radical reform and transformation within the South African Education and its main aim is to involve all stakeholders, including parents, educators, learners and community members in the governance, funding and organisation of schools. The 1996 SASA as a by-product of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa which maintains that parents are the most important

stakeholders of the school and together with the educators, non-teaching staff and school principal serve as partners in education at the grassroots level.

According to the SASA (1996:1), the act was meant:

> To provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools; to amend and repeal certain laws relating to schools; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

The SASA promoted a collective effort of all stakeholders in education, instead of individual decisions. According to Marishane (1999), schools benefitted more from decisions made by the local community members as compared to that of the State, as the local people could identify with the problem areas and deal with them immediately. The promulgation of the SASA (1996) ushered in a new era which sought to redress the past inequalities and inequities in South African education. In other words, the SASA promoted the active participation of all the members of the community in shared decision-making and the rights of all stakeholders in the governance of the school organisation (Department of Education, 2000).

The drive and purpose of the SASA (1996:1) is stipulated as follows:

> Whereas the country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of the society, protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages, uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State and whereas it is necessary to set uniform norms and standards for the education of learners at schools and the organisation, governance and funding of schools throughout the Republic of South Africa.

Primarily, the SASA seeks to eradicate the previous racially-divided society into a free, democratic State. According to Harber (2001), the SASA promotes a democratically-governed school system that creates partnerships among all school stakeholders. Substantially, the SASA stipulated legislation which after the amendment of the Educations Laws Amendment Act No. 53 of 2000 introduced the instrument of the School Governing Body (SGB). The SASA clearly maintains that parents are important constituents of the SGB as they serve as partners in education. By so-doing, the SASA recognises that parents need to take on their role actively to positively influence the decision making at schools through the structures of the SGB. Initially, the plan of the South African Government was to transfer more responsibility to parents through the instrument of the SASA. This view is also supported by Marishane (1999) who asserts that parents are not only responsible for their learners' education but need to be partners in the provision of education. The structure and the composition of the SGB will now be discussed in the next section.

2.5. School Governing Bodies (SGBs)

The devolution of power from the schools culminated in the formation of the School Governing Body (SGB). The SGB served as a powerful structure to the improvement of the quality of South African education as well as to embrace the ideals of representation, accountability, liability and partnership (Serfontein, 2010). For the first time schools could adopt a democratic approach towards decision-making, setting school fees, administering school discipline and fundraising. Moreover, the introduction of the SGB promoted transformative, flexible governance for all South African schools.

Section 23 of SASA (1996) stipulates that the SGB should be comprised of the:

   i.   Principal of the school who serves as an *ex officio* (Section 23(1)(b));

   ii. Parents of the school (Section 23(1)(b));

iii. Educators of the school (Section 23(2)(b));

iv. Members of the staff at the school who were not educators (Section 23(2)(c));

v. Learners attending the eighth grade or higher, in the case of secondary schools (Section 23(2)(d));

vi. Co-opted owners or a representative of the owner of the property on which the school is sited (Section 24(1)(e));

vii. The SGB membership comprising of the principal, educators, non-teaching staff, parents, learners in the case of secondary schools and co-opted members is illustrated in Figure 2.1. below:
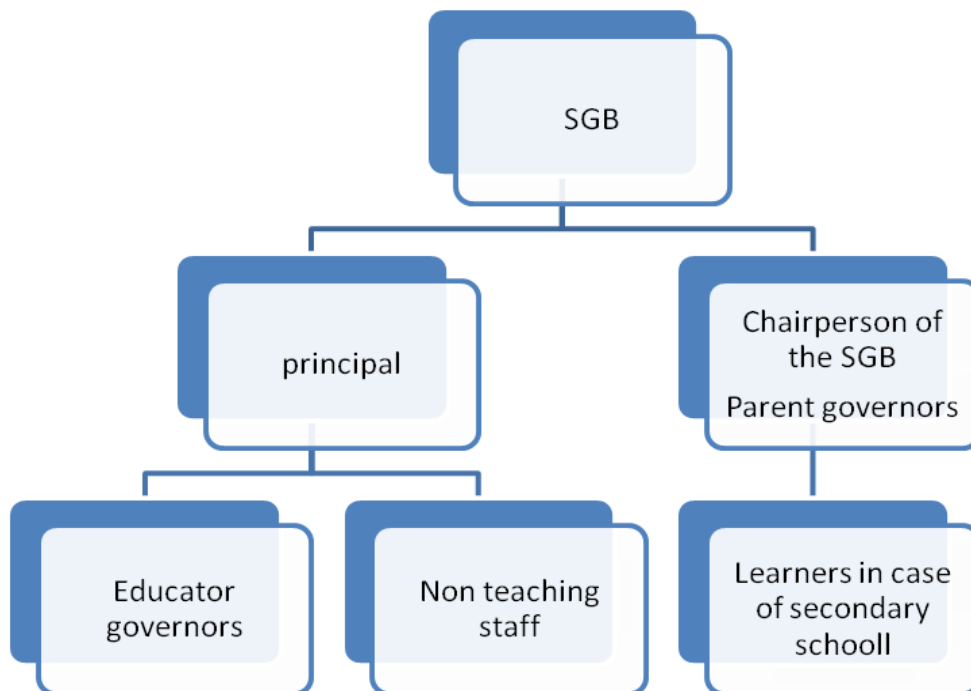
Figure 2.1. The SGB within the South African Education system

The members of the SGB are elected by the parents, educators and non-educators whereby representation of each group is maintained. All schools

have to have an established SGB and thereafter re-elect after every three year cycle. The SASA stipulates that the previous members of the SGBs may be re-elected or co-opted after their expiry term office. Section 2(1) (5) of the SASA states that a learner governor must be established at every public school and be enrolled in grade eight or higher. However, learners may only serve a one year period on the SGB unless they are re-elected by the council of learners.

According to Walters and Richardson (1997), the SGB is a body that acts as the school trustee on behalf of the parents and community within that designated area. As a consequence, the SGB should be the representative of the community's needs. The SGB ameliorate both equity and equality. Parents that are elected on the SGBs should be committed and represent the best interests of the parent body and learners. However, the SGB also has the capacity to co-opt a person or persons with the expertise or knowledge to assist with critical issues that arise from time to time. In this regard, section 23(6) of the SASA stipulates "that the governing body of a public ordinary school may co-opt a member or members of the community to assist in discharging of duties."

In terms of the Act, SGBs are expected to promote equal representation of all stakeholders in the school organisation irrespective of their class, status or position. In the same vein, there is a need to retain a gender and racial balance, thereby ensuring a true representation of all members of society. The lack of equal representation at previously disadvantaged schools was contrary to the democratic ethos that many South Africans fought so long for (Lewis and Naidoo, 2004). In the light of this situation, SGBs should endeavour to render democracy and promote the equal representation and rational discussions of all stakeholders in the organisation. It is important to note that SGB members may not be remunerated for the execution of their duties (RSA, 1996). In addition, SGBs are required to record and minute all SGB meetings and this must be made available to the Head of Department periodically.

2.5.1. Responsibilities of the elected members of the SGB

The SGB chairperson must be a parent governor of the school. The chairperson authorises and chairs meetings at least once every quarter and is one of the signatories on the school's banking account. The chairperson acts as a liaison officer in terms of disciplinary issues. The function of the SGB chairperson is to ensure the smooth running of the school and preside over an annual general meeting. Briefly, the chairperson is responsible for making the final decision on critical issues, giving direction to the school (Department of Education, 1996b).

The SGB treasurer keeps all financial records, makes all payments, handles all financial receipts, gives a report on all income and expenditures, submits annual reports, administers the bank account and is one of the signatories on the school's bank account. The SGB treasurer ensures the financial accountability and transparency.

The members of the SGB have the dual responsibility of being fulltime employees as well as serve as governors in the school organisation. In the same way, educators are elected by the staff; non-teaching staff are elected by the other non-teaching staff members and learner representation is elected by the Student Representative Council (SRC) (Department of Education, 1997).

Learners have a voting right but are limited to third party claims and liabilities (SASA, 1996). In other words, learner governors do not have a voting right in matters of accountability. By allowing learners to be more actively involved in the decision-making of the school, it promotes fair decisions and practices. The Department of Education (2004a) contends that the learners' role in learner discipline and mural activities is deemed beneficial to the SGBs. This is a clear indication that learner-governors have a specific role in making decisions that fully affect the direction of the school. In contrast, it is disheartening to observe the ineffectual functioning of learner governors in

SGBs within ex-Model C schools and their exclusion in those SGBs within rural and township schools (Sithole, 2004).

The parent body serves as an influential component within the school organisation. In particular, the identification of parents involvement within the school provide for public accountability and transparency (Pierre, 2000). Their voice, viewpoints, opinions, suggestions and recommendations should not be overlooked as it is imperative for the success of the school (2000).

In the next section I will provide a detailed discussion of the role functions of the SGB as contained in the SASA.

2.5.2. The role functions of the SGBs

The role functions of the SGBs are clearly outlined in Section 20 of the South African Act No. 84 of 1996, whereby it should meet,

> …at least once every school term, convening an annual general meeting of parents and special general meetings of parents, determining school policies, developing goals and objectives, managing assets and school funds, ensuring financial records are audited and administering and controlling school facilities.

In addition, school governance entails holding an annual general meeting for parents as well as determining the policies and managing the assets of the school organisation. Through the instruments of participation, consultation and participative decision-making, SGBs embrace collaborative management with parents, staff members, educators and community members (Adam and Waghid, 2005). Concurrently, SGBs need to outline clear goals and objectives for the organisation at the annual parent meetings. Particularly, SGBs are also required to support staff members with staff development programmes and in-service training. Overall, SGBs have the power over the finances, school policies, staff appointments, curriculum studies, religious rights, social justice and discipline within the schools (Adam and Waghid, 2005).

Section 20(1) of the SASA (1996) states that that the governing body of a public school must promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at school. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of SGBs to promote the best interests of the school in terms of teaching and learning, staff development, curriculum development and providing quality education that will be beneficial to all learners. The SGBs also make proposals regarding school policies which are needed to be in line with National Education Act (Department of Education, 1998b).

2.5.3. Other role functions of the SGBs

Other role functions of the SGBs include:

i. Adopt a constitution

ii. Develop the mission statement of the school;

iii. Formulate admission policies;

iv. Determine the code of conduct for learners;

v. Set up the language policy for learners;

vi. Determine school fees;

vii. Lay down rules for religious observance;

viii. Prepare a financial budget for each year showing the estimated income and expenditure for the following year. These budgets are mandatory and are subject to the approval of the parents;

ix. Keep records of all funds received and of all the assets, liabilities and financial transactions. In the same light, financial statements should be drawn up annually for presentation to the parent body as well as to the Head of Department for scrutiny;

x. Engage in fundraising and fund allocations to improve the quality of education to all learners at the school;

xi. Draw up and formulate the financial policy for the school;

xii. Ensure quality education in the area of teaching and learning;

xiii. Provide support to educators and principals in professional functions in the area of professional functions;

xiv. Decide on extra mural activities in the area of curriculum;

xv. Purchase textbooks, furniture and equipment;

xvi. Encourage parents to render voluntary service to the school;

xvii. Control and maintain the school assets in the area of property, buildings and grounds;

xviii. Promote the schools' best interests;

xix. Conduct evaluation and make reports to parents;

xx. Make recommendations to the Head of Department for the appointment of educators subject to the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 and the Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995;

xxi. Make recommendations for the position of principal and deputy principal as well as consider disciplinary actions and hearings;

xxii. Make recommendations to the Head of Department for the appointments of non-educator staff subject to the Public Service Act No. 103 of 1994 and Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995;

xxiii. Communicate with various stakeholders in the community in conducting the annual parents meetings;

xxiv. Suspend learners from attending school as a correctional measure after a fair hearing but not exceeding one week;

xxv. Maintain and improve the school property, buildings and grounds;

xxvi. Determine the extra-mural curriculum for the school;

xxvii. Pay for the municipal services to the school;

xxviii. Provide adult education and other training classes;

xxix. Allow the school to be used for community, social and school fund raising purposes.

While SGBs have a great responsibility to fulfil, failure to competently perform their duties may result in the Head of Department intervening to withdraw all their duties and the appointment of another person or candidate to act in place of the SGB (Department of Education, 1996c; SASA, 1996). Consequently, SGBs hold the portfolio of accountability to the Department of Education, the parent body and the community at large. SGBs need therefore to guard against irregular and discriminatory policies as this could cause disputes. Failure to follow the South African Constitution, the SASA and other South African laws and legislation will render the SGB into a state of default. However, the SGB is compelled by the SASA to work alongside the school principal.

2.5.4. The role functions of the school principal

According to section 16(a) of the Education Law Amendment Act of No. 31 (RSA, 2007) the responsibility of the school principal is as follows:

i.   The Principal of a public school represents the Head of Department (HOD) in the governing body when acting in an official capacity;

ii. The principal must assist the SGB in their role functions and responsibilities.

The SASA gives principals active participation in school governance and are required to establish a school management team (SMT) to help assist them in their responsibilities and to follow through with policies (Department of Education, 2000). In essence, principals are required to manage the day-today running of the school such as instructional and operational matters. Unlike the status of the other governors, the principal holds an *ex officio* status on the SGB. Furthermore, the principal advises the SGB regarding critical educational matters. The principal adheres to working co-operatively with the SGB in the development, formulation and implementation of school policies. The principal thereby applies these polices in the day-to-day running of the school. In other words the principal and the SGB work closely and co-operatively to ensure that the school is run effectively and efficiently.

The principals within the SMT are responsible for the professional management functions of the school such as: timetabling, admission of learners, making the best use of the school funds for the benefit of the learners, monitoring the work performance of staff members, mentoring staff members, making critical decisions regarding the teachers' workloads and ensuring that the workloads are equally distributed, organising staff development workshops to help staff develop professionally; promote co-curricular and extra curricula activities, provide the necessary assistance to the SGB to ensure they fulfil their role functions and responsibilities, serve as a communication officer between the Department of Education, the educators,

the parents and the learners. The school principal is also responsible for staff appraisal, improvising teaching strategies and learning innovations, improving the instructional programmes, supporting teaching and learning by organising activities, managing resources, setting up procedures for achieving goals (SASA, 1996; Department of Education, 2000). The school principal is responsible for developing educators professionally through staff workshops, induction programmes and training sessions (Bush and Middlewood, 1996).

2.5.5. The differentiated role functions of the school principal and the SGBs

SASA (1996) section 16(1) and section 16(2) specifically differentiates the role functions of the SGBs and the principals. The school principal role functions within the jurisdiction of the SMT and provides oversight in the professional management of the school. Management functions include the implementation and administration of school policies in the day-to-day running of the school.

Governance refers to the collective decisions of the SGB to manage collective matters with the intention to resolve them (Paquet, 2001). In regard to governance, the SGB stands in a position of trust and it sets out direction-setting for the school through the formulation of policies and monitoring its implementation. In other words, governance entails the managing and controlling of the school for its success and effectiveness (Beckmann and Prinsloo, 2009).

2.5.6. Recapping the differentiated role functions of the principal and the SGBs

The dual role of the principal and the SGBs has become a dominant feature of debate in school governance. Periodically, governance is drawn into the day-to-day running of the school and this has aroused confusion over its role functions. In some instances, it was difficult to make day-to-day decisions

without the agreement of the SGB. Grey areas do exist in the clarity of role functions of management and governance as the role functions are not clear-cut in practice.

Reflecting on the above literature, it is apparent that management and governance is interwoven and cannot be separated. Although the separation of functions is stipulated in SASA, much debate has arisen over the interchangeable roles of the SMT and SGB. Significantly, the role functions of the SGBs and principals cannot be separated as they are intertwined. It is thus difficult to make a clear distinction between governance and management as many decisions required both the inputs of the SMT and the SGB. It is evident therefore that there is often a fine line between these two functions in that they tend to overlap and hence conflicts do arise from time to time. Research has shown that confusion and tension often erupts when SGBs and principals do not fully understand their defined role functions in governance and management (Lewis and Naidoo, 2004). For example, the school principal may requisite funds to improve the learning needs of a particular school; this being within the jurisdiction of the principal's function of the day-to-day running of the school. However, such a requisition must be sanctioned and approved by the SGB. If the SGB disapproves of such a requisition, conflicts of interest may arise, causing disputes, disagreements and conflicts among some or all members of the SGB. This is often because governance and management cannot be separated. The implementation of role differentiation has to be clearly demarcated to prevent such confusion, conflicts and misinterpretations arsing. Furthermore, the presence of power struggles between principals and SGBs continues to brew due to lack of clarification in role functions (Mestry, 2004). While governance and management is tactfully interwoven to create effective, efficient schools, in practice it often fails. Indeed, it has been observed with concern that theoretically and practically the responsibilities within management and governance seem to interchange.

The controversial and ambiguous role of the school principal applies to the fact that s/he is an employee of the Department but at the same time is the

accounting officer for the SGB. In essence, the school principal plays a pivotal role in executing the success of the school and creating a balance between the fine line of management and governance. On the other hand, an engagement with the literature has bought to my attention that the lack of shared decisions among certain principals and SGBs has caused poor governance practices. In this regard, a research study conducted by Lewis and Naidoo (2004) contested that in some instances autocratic principals projected an overpowering role and dominated all decision making; while on the other hand, there were principals who were controlled and dominated by highly qualified SGB governors. In all these situations, disgruntled governors emerged as disputes soared over matters of school governance.

Given that this research project focuses on the experiences and challenges faced by SCBs in performing their responsibilities, in the sections which follow, I will specifically focus on the key role functions of the SGBs relevant to this study, namely: handling of learner discipline, management of school finances, formulating of admission policy and staff appointments.

2.5.7. Functions of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs)

2.5.7.1. Determine disciplinary code of conduct

Section 8 (1) and (2) of SASA (1996) states:

> (1) Subject to any applicable provincial law, a governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for the learners after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school.

> (2) A code of conduct referred to in subsection (1) must be aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process.

According to Section 8(i) and Section 20(d) of SASA (1996), the SGB can determine the code of conduct for learners. The code of conduct for learners is formulated in consultation with the parents, educators and learners and the school management team (SMT). Thereafter, it is presented to the SGB and in turn is adopted by the SGB. Section 8 of the SASA (1996) mandates that all learners need to be admitted to school and are compelled to comply with the school's code of conduct. According to Section 8 and 9 of the SASA (1996) the SGB has the right to suspend any learner found guilty of a code infraction. Furthermore, a learner can either be required to undergo correctional measures or in consultation with the Head of Department for Education face expulsion. The code of conduct for learners is imperative in maintaining discipline at schools. Essentially, the code of conduct is a policy explaining the rules, regulations and standards of behaviour that are required by the learners of a given school. It focuses on the appropriate behaviour that is expected from the learners and the inappropriate behaviour that is not accepted by the learners. What is important is that the code of conduct is based on correct disciplinary procedures, regulations and the principles of human rights.

SGBs are legally empowered to formulate and implement the code of conduct for all learners of the school. The SGB acts on behalf of the school to discipline the learner for the inappropriate behaviour as the school is legally responsible for the code of conduct for the learners (SASA, 1996). Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002) further contend that the code of conduct should ensure that the school rules are fair and realistic, that disciplinary proceedings are strictly adhered to, and that sanctions/actions are formally applied in the case of an offense. Unless a level of trust and confidentiality is adhered to by the SGB, trustworthiness would be in vain. The intention of the SGB is to establish strong working relationships among its stakeholders and promote respect. Appropriate and inappropriate behaviour is clearly stipulated in its code of conduct policy. In addition, disciplinary proceedings must be included in the code of conduct. In the case of a learner transgressing the rules and regulations of the school, the SGB has the right to suspend the learner after a fair hearing (SASA, 1996). In addition, disciplinary proceedings need to be

strictly followed according to the code of conduct policy and the stipulated sanctions/actions carried out in the case of a violation of such rules.

Clearly, the levels of the disciplinary problems are actually reflective of the functionality and work performances of the SGBs. While the SGB is mandated to maintain discipline at the school, it is imperative that the SGB both observes and takes heed of the constitutional rights of the learner. Furthermore, all decisions of the SGB must be procedurally correct and legislatively abiding. For example, SGBs are expected to follow set procedures that are set by the law in a fair and appropriate manner. SGBs are expected to discharge their duties professionally and not violate the rights of the learners. Fundamentally, any incorrect implementation would make the policy legally invalid. It is therefore legally mandated that every SGB adopt a code of conduct or else they could be liable for damages in terms of a breach of the law. SGBs therefore need to familiarise themselves with the Departmental notices and current Government legislation in order to deal effectively with unacceptable learner behaviours.

2.5.7.2. Administer school finances

Section 37(1) of the SASA (1996) states:

> The governing body must establish a school fund and must administer it in accordance with guidelines set by the National Department of Education.

The SGBs are authorised to establish and control school funds and prepare and present the school budget. Financial management is one of the key role functions of SGB. In terms of the law, the SGB is a registered entity and a Section 21 company and is therefore responsible for the correct administration of school finances.

The SASA (1996) makes it clear that SGBs are responsible for supplementing the financial resources of the school so as to provide the best quality

education. Due to insufficient funds received from the State to manage the school, the SASA (1996) duly authorises SGBs to recommend the level of school fees. However, school fees have to be decided and approved by the majority of the parents. The SGB is also required to set a budget and to recommend school fees as part of the budgetary process. In terms of the law, it is the duty of the SGB to ensure that the school has sufficient finances and that the school is being managed and governed effectively.

Section 36 of SASA (1996) states:

> The governing body must take all reasonable measures within the means to supplement the resources applied by the State in order to improve the quality of education provided by the school to all learners at the school.

In the case of parents being unable to pay the school fees, the SGB must make a decision and decide on other alternatives. To compensate parents who need to be exempted from payments of school fees, the chair of the SGB can apply to the Department of Education for exemption. Ultimately, the SGB oversees the planning, controlling, approving and reviewing of the school finances and ensures that quality education is maintained through additional fundraising. It is necessary for the SGB to present a financial statement of the school with a detailed account of the recording of funds that have been utilised at the school for any given year. Furthermore, it is stipulated in the SASA (1996), section 43(1):

> The governing body must follow prescribed accounting procedures in keeping its books, and must report on its financial activities on an annual basis to the provincial Head of Department.

The SGB is required to appoint a registered accountant and auditor to take cognisance of all the income, expenses and financial transactions at the school. The SGB is further required to prepare a budget which is presented at an Annual Budget meeting for it to be accepted (SASA, 1996). Parents, in consultation with the SGB, need to approve of the budget and decide on the

approving the level of school fees before authorising the final budgetary amount. In terms of the law, the responsibility of the SGB is to prepare the financial report, determine the budget and have clear financial goals. School fees should be solely for educational purposes and the SGB needs to ensure that they meet the educational needs of the learners. According to Section 41 of SASA, SGBs are required to enforce the payment of school fees. Furthermore, in terms of the current legislation, SGBs have been given powers in regard to retrieving the school fees. According to Section 41 of SASA (1996), if a parent fails to pay school fees or a part thereof, then steps to retrieve school fee must be taken. SGBs have the capacity to use legal procedures to ensure parents pay their outstanding fees. In this, a SGB can consult an attorney to institute the necessary procedures against the non-paying parent.

According to Section 34(1) of the SASA (1996), it is the State's responsibility to fund public schools on an equitable basis to ensure that all learners receive education. Moreover, Section 21 of the SASA (1996) points out that the State provides funds to the public schools based on their quintiles system, depending on their enrolments, their context of the school and the geographical location of the school.

Section 37(3) of SASA (1996) states:

> The governing body must open a banking account.

All schools, under the jurisdiction of the SGB, are required to maintain a banking account to show evidence of the income and expenses of the school.

Section 37(4) of SASA (1996) determines that:

> Money and other goods donated or bequeathed to or received in trust by a *public school* must be applied in accordance with the conditions of such donations, bequest or trust.

Consequently, all SGBs are mandated by the SASA to record any monies or goods received in their financial incomes statements.

According to Chapter 4, section 38(1) of SASA (1996): Annual budget of public school:

> (1) A governing body of a public school must prepare a budget each year according to prescriptions determined by the Member of the Executive Council in a Provincial gazette, which shows the estimated income and expenditure of the school for the following financial year.
>
> (2) Before the budget referred to in section (1) is approved by the *governing body*, it must be presented to a general meeting of parents convened on at least 30 days' notice, for the consideration and approval by a majority of parents present and voting.

SGBs are mandated by the SASA to prepare a budget indicating the school's expenses and income for the following year. After giving parents a 30-day notice period, the budget needs to be considered and approved by the majority of parents at the annual general meeting. Furthermore, SGBs are required to appoint a registered auditor to audit the financial books annually.

Unless a SGB adopts a stringent financial management policy and implements a systematic control of all funds, the mismanagement of the finances will be unavoidable. It has also been suggested that SGBs organise sub-committees and co-opt members with expertise, skills, and knowledge to assist with the management of the school finances. While this provision is important, a major practical concern is the lack of ability and skills of many rural parent governors in financial management (Mestry, 2004).

2.5.7.3. Formulate an admissions policy

Section 5(5) of SASA (1996) affords the SGBs:

> To determine the right to the admission policy of the school, subject to the provisions of SASA (RSA, 1996) and any applicable provincial law.

The Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools provides a framework for the formulation of the admissions policy in all schools. Section 5 of the SASA (1996) stipulates that the SGB is responsible for the formulation of the school's admission policy. Moreover, the admissions policy needs to be aligned with the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Under no circumstances must the admissions policy discriminate against any learner. All admission policies are thereafter forwarded to the Provincial Head of Department for review. The SASA details a policy formulation whereby deliberation, discussions and decisions are made democratically in agreement with all the stakeholders of the organisation. Admissions to a school lie in the shared-decisions made by all the stakeholders of the school.

A legally adopted admission policy stipulates access of learners to a given school. However, according to the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, no learner should be discriminated against on the grounds of race, culture, language, social position or gender. Particularly, the SASA has given powers to SGBs to determine polices and thereby places them in a unique position to implement, evaluate and supervise policies that are in accordance to national norms and standards of current South African laws and legislations. In this, SGBs are given the power to draw up policies and raise funds (Sayed and Soudien, 2005). While admission policies have to be formulated through consultations and forum discussions among all stakeholders of the organisation, it should be free of all unfair discriminations, inequities and inequalities and racism. In the case of a learner having a mother tongue language that is not within the school's language policy, the learner in question must not be discriminated against on these grounds and

must be admitted into the school. This is in compliance with the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the appended Bill of Rights.

Chapter 2 of Section 5(1) and (2) of the SASA (1996) states that:

> (1) A public school must admit learners and serve the educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way.
>
> (2) The governing body of a public school may not administer any test related to the admission of a learner to a public school, or direct or authorise the principal of the school or any other person to administer such test.
>
> (3) No learner may be refused admission to a public school on the grounds that his or her parent and is unable to pay or has not paid the school fees determined by the governing body under section 39.

Principles of fairness, non-discrimination, equal access should underpin the admission policies generated by all SGBs. According to Potgieter *et al.,* (1997), admission policies should be void of any form of discriminations against race, gender, ethnic or social origins, age, disabilities, religions, languages and sexual orientations.

From the above discussion, it emerges that policies have an influence over the ethos of the school and in many instances many policies are drawn up without the consultation of the entire SGB membership. From the available literature, many SGBs are unclear about the formulation of school polices and therefore experience problems with implementation. Limited knowledge and understanding in this regard fails the purpose of effective policy formulation. Consequently, a well collaborated SGB would be focused towards ensuring collective decisions are being made.

2.5.7.4. Recommend staff appointments

According to section 20 (i) of the SASA, the SGBs have:

> The obligation to recommend to the provincial Head of Department the appointment of educators to the subsidised post establishment of the school, subject to limiting provisions, also the recommendations to the Head of Department on the appointment of non-educators to the subsidised post establishment of the school subject to limiting provisions.

The SASA (1996) stipulates that SGBs are given the power to interview educators and make recommendations for the most suitable candidate for the job. All staff appointments should be done fairly, equally, giving women and those living with physical disabilities an equal opportunity for appointment. All appointments should be done discreetly and nepotism should be avoided. The purpose of interviewing is to promote the best candidate for the desired post. Again, the SASA (1996) gives SGBs the right to advertise, interview and appoint additional governing body educators on condition that the SGBs are responsible for the salary payments of the SGB educators.

In the terms of dealing with educators' disciplinary problems and misconduct, the SGB is to be strictly guided by the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 so as to ensure that correct procedures are being adhered to. The SGB may involve other teacher bodies such as teacher unions and the South African Council for Educators to address critical and problematic issues. Serious cases of theft, fraud, bribery, corruption, sexual relationships with learners and the illegal possession of intoxicating or illegal substances may lead to the dismissal of the educator (SASA, 1996).

In the section which follows, I will examine the literature pertaining to the experiences and challenges faced by SGBs in executing their responsibilities in schools within the South African context.

2.5.8. Challenges faced by school governing boards

The SGB is a relatively new practice that is still being ratified by the racial divisions and inequalities of the past as well as the contextual variations at different schools and psychological stresses (Minister Review Study, 2004). Following many reported cases of poor governance across South Africa's schools, a national urgency has been expressed for the effective training of SGB members (Ministerial of Review, 2004, Mkhize, 2007; Waghid, 2005; Chaka and Dieltiens, 2005; Sithole, 2004; Mestry, 2004; van Wyk, 2004; Bembe, 2004). According to Mnchunu (2010), the majority of SGBs remain dysfunctional and therefore strategies need to be urgently employed to create effective, efficient schools. Research has shown that schools are poorly performing in the Grade twelve national Matriculation examinations (Riekert, 2000). This situation is reflective of the poor state of management and governance at schools.

According to Legotio *et al.,* (2002) schools are faced with inadequate resources, unclear government policies, ineffective school policies, lack of staff and learner discipline, lack of staff commitments, lack of parental involvement and ineffective policies at the school level. Simultaneously, SGBs are striving to improve the quality of education in South African schools and keep abreast with the technological advances and formidable changes that the new century has brought (Khuswayo, 2007). In addition, Legotio *et al.,* (2002) have shown how many SGBs complained about the pressures and challenges they faced and were overwhelmed by the demands made by parents, educators, learners, school principals and the community at large. Furthermore, SGBs are continually affected by the fluctuating economy, increasing legal constraints and growing learners' needs (van Wyk, 2004; Waghid, 2005). Research has also shown that SGBs are still struggling in the following areas: the appointment of staff; the handling of discipline; the mismanagement of school finances and discrepancies with admission policies (Mkhize, 2007; Waghid, 2005; Chaka and Dieltiens, 2005; Sithole, 2004; Mestry, 2004; van Wyk, 2004; Bembe, 2004, Zulu, *et al.,* 2004).

Khuwayo (2007) has pointed out that a lack of effective SGBs has affected the quality and standard of education and this has become a national trend in many South African schools. The poor governance present in many schools has resulted in poor relationships between teaching staff and parents (Sithole, 2004). In some cases, the SGBs blatantly manipulated staff appointments and in other cases educators felt that they were more superior to the parents and did not respect the parents' inputs (Mkhize, 2007; Mestry, 2004). More essentially, a lack of parental support has contributed to more problems being experienced by the SGBs (Mkhize, 2007). According to Saunders (2011), the vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town announced that South African schools are in a worse state than ever before with alarming failure rates and many schools being in a poor state of despair. He added that SGBs were faced with insurmountable pressures at many failing South African schools. According to Herskovitz and Laventure (2012), SGBs have been faced with so many challenges, from structural problems to high absenteeism and parents complaints. In addition, growing incidents of corruption by SGB members have left the South African Education in a state of near total disarray.

Theoretically, school governance is supposed to operate democratically with accountability, trustworthiness, representivity; yet this is contrary to what is actually happening at many South African schools (Mabitsela, 2004). Mkhize (2007) has observed that the SGBs lack of knowledge of school legislative law has seriously affected their role performances. Those SGBs who do not fully understand their role functions feel disempowered, frustrated and are at wits end (Zondi, 2005). Other research studies have shown that SGBs in well-developed communities and in ex-Model C schools were working more efficiently than those schools in rural and townships areas (Mestry, 2004; Sithole, 2004; Zulu *et al.,* 2004). Waghid (2005) has added that many SGBs were not operating democratically and therefore were failing to comply with the legal requirements as set out in the 1996 SASA.

Schools in rural and township areas in particular were grievously disadvantaged with the high level of illiteracy among parents and therefore being unable to get involved in school governance practices (Mothata and

Mda, 2000). In such cases, the school principals dominated the decision-making processes and had authority over all school matters (Mothata and Mda, 2000). Asmal (2000) has argued that the lack of skills development and training of SGBs was one of the major challenges faced by the SGBs. To this end, the alterations of the SGBs powers in terms of their responsibilities and functions have affected the SGBs performances at school (Beckmann, 2007). Despite the fact that there were centralisations of policies, the irregular decisions made by SGBs have affected their performances (Smit and Oosthuizen, 2011).

With reference to the literature review, I will now explore the challenges of the SGBs in the specific areas of school finances, handling of learner discipline, management of school finances, formulation of admission policy and lastly, the appointment of staff.

2.5.8.1. Challenges in the handling of learner discipline

The National Schools Violence Study (NSVs) undertaken by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention in 2007/2008 confirmed that school violence was on the increase with more learners taking to alcohol and substance abuse. It is unfortunate that school violence has increased at such an alarming rate in South Africa, 160 learners out of every 1,000 learners were reported to be involved in serious crimes as compared to the number of violent cases in the US which is 57 learners out of every 1,000 learners. During the past decade, more cases of school violence, truancy, smoking, rape and gang fights have been reported at South African schools (*The Citizen*, 2006). Lansberg *et al.,* (2005) concur with Bester and Du Plesis (2010) that disciplinary problems were rife at secondary schools and manifested in such ways as insubordination, verbal aggression, bullying, gang fights and stabbings. In the opinion of Dimbaza (2006), disciplinary problems have escalated in South African schools due the abolition of corporal punishment at schools. As a result, SGBs have been challenged with soaring

disciplinary problems that were out of their hands. Fundamentally, school discipline has become a major concern for SGBs.

Bullying has now become a serious phenomenon in schools all around the world (Neiser, *et al,* 2004). Beeld (2008) has reported that bullying and continuous teasing over an extended time have inevitably led to violent crime. The prevalent situation of high disciplinary problems at schools has also led to a high school drop out rate (De Wet, 2003). Levin and Nolan (1996) note that derogatory name calling; punching; tardiness; doodling and fidgeting, have made it almost impossible for educators to teach in South African schools. In turn, educator governors complained bitterly to the SGBs about the disciplinary problems in the classroom but these complaints fell on deaf ears as SGBs failed to address the problem. Poor academic performance and poor self image has led to greater disciplinary problems at South African schools (Stout and Wood, 2004). No doubt, SGBs were greatly challenged and sometimes even out of their depth of expertise in curbing the indiscipline at the school level.

Reported incidents of gang fights have been on an increase at many South African schools. SGBs describe such incidents as a "nightmare" to handle (Mboyane, 2001). Mocking, name calling, harassment, deliberate pushing, punching, shoving and malicious gossiping are some of the off- task disciplinary problems experienced by SGBs. According to Adams and Waghid (2005), parents and learners' voices have been excluded in SGB practices which are actually contradictory to democratic practices. As a result, high student absenteeism and truancy has been on the increase and this has been seriously affecting the quality of education.

The consequences of these various disciplinary problems faced by SGBs throughout the country have had often insurmountable repercussions on the quality and standard of education offered at many schools. This national problem of learner violence has become a daunting challenge for SGBs in many schools (Marais, 2010; Meier, 2010; Naong, 2007; Maree, 2003; Mabeda and Prinsloo, 2000). From these published statistics, it is clearly

evident that unless SGBs act seriously and comprehensively with these problematic situations, South African education will be facing a losing battle.

Potgieter *et al.,* (1997) concur with Hill and Hill (1994) that poor disciplinary practices at schools will inevitably cause a breakdown in the educational process. Educators and principals, together with the SGBs feel powerless at enforcing discipline (Coetzer and Le Roux, 1996). The youth seem to have established their 'own way of living' and therefore rebel against authority and discipline as laid out in the codes of conduct promulgated at the school level (1996). Undoubtedly, the SGBs have been given the enormous task of dealing with this national problem which in most cases is actually beyond their skill sets and capabilities.

Brown and Duku (2008) argue that poor parental support opens the doors for peer influences manifesting in indiscipline. Many SGBs have openly admitted that disciplinary problems have soared at rural schools due to a lack of parental support and monitoring (Sithole, 2004). Poor school attendance, vandalism, gang fights, school violence, high school dropout, low teacher morale, dilapidated facilities, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancies, high absenteeism among staff and a general lack of resources have been many of the challenges faced by SGBs at rural schools (Christie, 1998). In part, the increase of indiscipline has been aligned to the breakdown of family structures resulting in rising numbers of single-parent families. Even greater challenges plagued the rural and township schools as SGBs could not grasp a thorough understanding of those education policies that were relevant towards minimising incidents of indiscipline. As a result, many SGBs have become complacent regarding the disciplinary problems and the breakdown in the culture of teaching and learning at rural schools (Christie, 1998). Reflecting on this literature, this was where the SGBs were failing to perform their key role functions as recommended in the SASA.

Problems of indiscipline have had a negative impact on teaching and learning and have inevitably violated the rights of the other learners who are exposed to physical harm, dangers and fear (Levin and Nolan, 1996). Here again,

SGBs have to deal not only with the disruptive behaviour, but are also often themselves the recipients of such abuse and are in need protection and counselling. Khuswayo (2007) has thus confirmed that SGBs could not arrive at proper collective decisions on how to deal effectively with such offenders.

From the educational trend of the top-down approach to the restructuring of participative decision making of all stakeholders, this new education trend has brought with it much resistance by some school principals who found it difficult to adapt. Conflicts between principals and the SGBs have made the situation even worse as many principals were reluctant to share their power (Van Wyk, 2004). Unfortunately, many principals continued to control their schools bureaucratically, autocratically subjecting its stakeholders to tokenism (Heystek, 2004). Instead of working collaboratively in resolving the soaring problems of indiscipline, principals and SGBs have often been ensconced in serious disagreement among themselves and thereby have contributed to defeating the ends of democratisation within school governance structures. Furthermore, a lack of training of newly appointed governors has inevitably made matters worse as newly appointed SGBs were thrown into the deep end and were not surviving.

In the view that many educationalists and scholars, South African schools have become dysfunctional as SGBs continue to face tremendous pressures beyond their given capabilities. According to Alan Clark, former headmaster of Westerford High school and author of the *Handbook of School Management*, SGBs were underperforming due to their lack of commitment to the educational goals of the school (*The Teacher*, May, 2011).

Despite the increasing problems of indiscipline at schools, SGBs are still unable to critically address the problems at hand and are thus failing in their duty to attend to their mandate in terms of the SASA. Soaring rates of indiscipline have worsened the problem due to the lack of control and vigilance of many SGBs especially in rural schools. Only when SGBs begin to improve and arrive at their true identity will they make a valuable contribution to South African schools.

2.5.8.2. Challenges in handling of school finances

The mismanagement of school finances was rife in South African schools despite the intention of the SGBs to promote accountability, democracy and transparency (Khuswayo, 2007). The Ministerial Review Committee (2004) concurs with Caldwell (2004) that one of the most important tasks of the SGBs is their control and management of school fees and associated fundraising. Following much investigation it was found that many SGBs were deficient in financial management skills to effectively manage school finances. An indication of this was the confirmation by the Department of Education (2003) that hundreds of schools had failed to submit their financial audited statements. As confirmed by Mestry and Naidoo (2006), the inadequate training facilitated for SGBs in the area of financial management and school budgeting especially in rural areas has resulted in the rising number of financial mismanagement cases. Reported cases of mismanagement of funds through misappropriation, theft and fraud had also been investigated by the Department of Education. Marishane and Botha (2004) concur with Naidoo (2010) that despite the decentralised financial control of the SGBs, a number of SGBs lacked the financial expertise and knowledge to create financially 'healthy' schools. Bush and Heystek (2003) have observed that most principals and SGBs admitted their anxiety and stress in managing school finances. Although this is the most important function of the SGB, most SGBs were actually inadequately prepared in the area of financial management.

The handling of school finances in schools, particularly those in rural areas, has become problematic (Khuswayo, 2007; Ngwenya, 2010). In addition, the financial situation at previously disadvantaged schools has worsened due to the lack of commitment from the SGBs. Over and above this, the parents in these poor communities struggle daily with financial burdens and therefore are more focused on earning an income rather than being involved in school matters (Hartshorne, 1999). In concert with this, one of the greatest challenges facing SGBs in rural schools is the lack of parental involvement (Naidoo, 2010; Khuswayo, 2007). Currently, parent representation at rural schools is very limited, thereby requiring principals to make autocratic

decisions (Shemane, 2010). Unfortunately, many tensions still persist due to principals wanting to assert their position instead of partnering with SGBs thereby creating poor governance practices (Guskey and Peterson, 1996). The lack of shared decision-making especially in financial matters has weakened democratic governance at schools. The misappropriation of school funds is even more prevalent among those rural schools where parents are ignorant of the laws pertaining to the administration of school finances (Nyambi, 2004). The patent lack of training and proper support structures within the Department of Education has further aggravated the plight of the SGBs. In terms of the previous apartheid government, the education system was racially segregated and resources were unfairly distributed. As a result, many rural and township schools were disadvantaged and suffered due to the lack of resources such as furniture, equipment, textbooks and libraries (Khuswayo, 2007).

Bembe (2004) along with Mestry (2004) have argued that SGBs are ineffective because they lack financial management skills and the concomitant expertise to control and administer school finances resulting in the misappropriation of funds. In line with this argument, Van Wyk (2004) concurs that many members of the SGBs in the rural areas are either illiterate or possess a low educational level and hence lack experience in school budgeting as well as financial accounting and financial statements. Inevitably, this has become a national crisis as many school struggle to survive.

To overcome these legacies of the past and create equity in education, the minister of basic education authorised a pupil subsidy to each school. Each school is subdivided into different categories depending on the financial considerations and communities. The poorest of the school communities receive up to six times the amount as compared to schools in affluent areas (Department of Education, 2000). Schools are also funded by school fees, donations and bequests, sponsorships from businesses and involvement in business ventures. Despite the fact that the National Education Department has allocated a vast sum of monies for education, how these monies are

spent by the SGBs remains highly questionable (Department of Education, 2001).

SGBs are constantly challenged by the huge responsibility of maintaining financially viable schools. It remains a challenge as State funding does not provide the necessary funding and resources to improve and transform the standard of education and therefore schools struggle in the area of school finances, especially in previously disadvantaged schools (Mkhize, 2007; Khuswayo, 2007; Mazibuko, 2004). While those SGBs in ex-model C and private elite schools are committed toward fundraising, the SGBs in rural and township schools have persistently failed in this area. Consequently, many rural and township-based schools are still experiencing financial problems and although training is given towards the effective management of finances at schools, SGBs have made few attempts to change the financial status of their schools (Mestry, 2006). Furthermore, many financial problems that have been forwarded to the Department of Education have not been addressed (Mestry, 2006). Arising tensions between the Department of education and SGBs has often resulted in the severing of such partnerships (Clase *et al.,* 2007).

2.5.8.3. Challenges in administering admissions policy

Given the complexity of the school organisation in different communities, SGBs are faced with diverse learning needs and therefore their admission policies have to comply with the needs of their specific community. Keeping this mind, all admission policies have to be in line with the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the SASA. Beckmann and Karvelas (2006) have shown how two ex-Model C schools in the province of Gauteng employed a discriminatory admissions policy to exclude black learners from their schools in order to retain a white minority group at the school. Referring to this practice as the "channelling of learners," the authors have shown how this has disgruntled the parents and the public at large (Beckmann and Karvelas 2006).

The case in law: *Head of Department, Mpumalanga Education Department v. Hoerskool Ermelo, 2009,* has confirmed the irregularities of the admission policy at this school as it was not aligned according to the provincial government legislation or policy practices. Research has shown that many of Ex-Model C schools have been found to have irregular and discriminatory admission policies that were in favour of one particular race group (Asa, 2010; Beckmann and Karvelas, 2006; Khuswayo, 2007 Ntando, 2011; Mazibuko, 2004, Mkhize, 2007; Xaba, 2011, Soudien and Sayed, 2003). According to Soudien and Sayed (2003), learners from formerly disadvantaged schools were denied access into previous ex-Model C schools due to perceived language barriers. To address this situation, the MEC for education has mandated ex-model C schools to change their rigid admission policies which deliberately deny the admission of black learners into these particular schools (Asa, 2010). As Phuta (2005) has pointed out, the existing policies and procedures at the schools in question were inappropriate and were implemented ineffectively and thus discrepancies arose.

With respect to certain former ex-Model C schools in the Buffalo City Municipality in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, the education superintendent-general advocate Modidima Manny has described them as "exclusionist" due to their refusal to admit black learners from previously disadvantaged schools into their elite schools (Ntando, 2011). Moreover, these schools used discriminatory admissions policies as an excuse to keep black learners out of their schools (2011). Chaka and Dieltiens (2005) have contested that many SGBs in ex-Model C schools are implementing discriminatory admission policies that are centred on the principles of 'inclusivity' and 'exclusivity' which are not in line with the SASA or the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Admission policies that are deliberately ambiguous and unclear inevitably cause problematic situations and therefore SGBs are required to engage in meaningful discussions and deliberations.

At Bryanston High School in the province of Gauteng, black learners were restricted admission due to their age, the passing of aptitude tests as well as personal interviews (Tladi and Mulaudzi, 2003). This contradicted what is

proposed in the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the SASA. Section 5(1) and 5(2) which states that SGBs may not administer any test related to the admission of a learner to a public school. This means that public schools may not use stringent tests as a means of admission into the school.

Sayed and Carrim (1997) have concluded that SGBs have experienced many difficulties in controversial issues such as that of admission policies. In these cases, the lack of democratic governance whereby all members are equally involved in the decision-making process regarding the formulation of the school admission policy is clearly evident. Furthermore, parent governors are not playing their full role in the collective decision-making process and therefore some SGBs are not fully operational and functional. Although theoretically the model of participatory democracy underpins school governance, the contrary is true whereby SGBs continue to find difficulty in attending to urgent matters regarding the formulation and implementation of educational policies.

According to Tladi and Mulaudzi (2003), SGB meetings are seldom attended thus preventing SGBs from in-depth discussions to address critical matters that arise periodically at schools. Essentially, SGBs are faced with many challenges to make collaborative decisions and have difficulty in working co-operatively especially when formulating and implementing admissions policy. In addition, parent governors are reluctant to participate in critical decisions regarding the admissions policy due to their own insecurities and lack of knowledge (Mestry 2004, 2006). Even if parents do not agree with the admissions policy, they often do not act due to fear. Furthermore, most rural-based schools are under an autocratic style of management and therefore decisions are made solely by the principal. In particular, contention arises when the absence of debate regarding aspects of the admission policy is combined with parents who felt incompetent to address such professional matters (Deem *et al.,* 1995).

Kader Asmal (2000) has argued that many SGBs fail to operate democratically because principals still want to dominate the governance practices at schools and thereby want to manage their schools on their own terms and impose their own formulation of the admission policy. Moreover, SGBs fail because principals decide on the specifics of the admission policy instead of allowing for a collaborative decision (McPherson, 2000).

Authors such as Lemmer (2000) and Asmal (2000) confirm that SGBs fail to perform adequately due to ineffective training sessions in policy formulation and implementation. Bush and Middlewood (2005) have noted that for SGBs to function effectively, they must understand their role functions, legislative authority and powers. Some SGBs report that despite attending the training sessions, they are not fully equipped to face the challenges at schools.

Following their empirical investigation, Clase *et al.,* (2007) have pointed to the tension that exists between the Department of Education and certain SGBs and the burden that it places on parents. Admissions policy is a constant hurdle that the Department of Education fails to address. Existing empirical data reveals that the Department of Education has failed to address the associated problems experienced by the SGBs, especially in the rural areas (Bembe, 2004; Clase et al, 2007, Mestry, 2006). Clearly, the rural areas are left neglected by the Department of Education.

Given this backdrop, educator governors are placed under tremendous pressure as they take a more active role in school governance and especially with the formulation and implementation of admissions policy (Asa, 2010; Ntando, 2011). Although educators are more knowledgeable in regard to educational matters, parent governors often do not approve of their involvement. In some cases, the active involvement of educator governors creates inordinate tensions with the parent governors resulting in weak governance practices.

2.5.8.4. Challenges in handling staff appointments

Research has shown that there are on-going contentions and grievances following the appointment of staff (Department of Education, 2001, Khuswayo, 2007; Mkhize, 2007; Phuta, 2005). Pillay (2005) has reported that among SGBs, personal preferences, nepotism, bias and corruption has flawed the interview process and staff appointments at some schools. Inefficiency and inflexibility is a major weakness experienced with the appointment of staff (Mazibuko, 2004). Cases of nepotism, bribery, favouritism and political affiliations in staff appointments have also been reported by the Department of Education (2004a, 2004b). Some SGBs have developed the mentality that they can hire and fire staff members due to their power and position. Consequently, school principals have opted for SGBs that can 'rubber stamp' their decisions. This inevitably contradicts the true intent of democratic participation. Unfortunately, SGBs have abused their power, notwithstanding the dominating role of the principals in SGBs in rural and township schools. Phahlane (1999) has argued that SGBs have yet to change their apartheid mentality to accept the creation of democratic structures. The erosion of order created at previously disadvantaged schools has epitomised the vast inequalities and equities which the years under apartheid rule created.

Another problem faced by SGBs is the dominating role of the principals in the rural schools regarding the appointment of staff. This is due to the perception of certain principals that SGBs are incompetent and thereby unable to make informed decisions due to their low illiteracy levels (Chaka and Dieltiens, 2005). Mhkize (2007) has argued that the SGBs in rural schools are faced with serious challenges with regard to the selection and appointment of educators for promotion posts. Furthermore, selector bias is evident in many SGBs (Mkhize, 2007; Mazibuko, 2004, Xaba, 2011). Mncube (2009) has argued that those parents in rural schools are seldom given the opportunity to make crucial decisions due to their low education levels. This assertion is well supported by Mkhize (2007) and Khuswayo (2007) who state that SGB members in rural areas are illiterate or semi-literate and therefore are undermined in their capabilities and efforts. Failure to deal adequately with

management inefficiencies has seriously contributed to problematic situations continuing in the appointment of staff (Phuta, 2005).

Mkhize (2007) has reported that promotional posts could not be executed by the SGBs in the rural areas due to their lack of knowledge, skills and capabilities. As a result, widespread of corruption, nepotism and the abuse of power by SGBs flawed the interview processes and appointment of staff in many schools (Phahlane, 1999). Moreover, Heystek (2004) has shown that parent governors were not knowledgeable about the intricacies of the teaching profession and therefore lacked the expertise to evaluate professional educators and appoint staff members. Maile (2002) maintains that SGBs often make decisions that are biased, unprofessional and non-aligned to governmental policies and norms in terms of staff appointments.

Heystek (2004) has confirmed that the constant disputes between principals and chairpersons eventually cause many schools to erupt into chaos. SGBs are directed to recommend staff appointments, but ultimately the Department is still the employer. The overlap between the management duties and governance responsibilities of SGBs has had serious implications on school organisation (Maile, 2002). Many SGBs abuse their power and do not understand that they are not the employer (Heystek, 2004). In the case: *The Settlers Agricultural High School v. Head of Department of Education, Limpopo Province, 2002,* it has been clearly shown that although the SGB recommended the appointment of candidate 1, Mr V (a white Afrikaans-speaking candidate), the Department of Education opposed this recommendation, granting candidate 2, Mrs B (a female black candidate), the post of principal at the school. The court however, ruled in favour of the SGB. This is a good example of the disputes that often take place between the SGBs and the Department of Education. According to Pillay (2005) even though many SGBs can read and interpret the school laws and relevant legislation correctly and therefore understand the recommendations for the appointment of staff members and promotion posts, they are often marred by charges of favouritism, nepotism and other irregularities.

Although the SGBs are given considerable responsibility in making recommendations for staff appointments, their involvement and power is in fact somewhat limited (Beckerman and Prinsloo, 2009). The research study conducted by Heystek and Nyambi (2007) has confirmed that many SGBs are not coping with the high demands that are placed upon them. Heystek (2004) has argued that school principals are finding a lack of input and support from SGBs in the daily operational functions at schools as well as staff appointments making it difficult to make decisions single-handedly. Similarly, Maile (2002) has confirmed that there is a lack of accountability among educators, principals and members of the SGBs. Some principals have even expressed their utter frustration over the lack of commitment of SGBs in making critical decisions (2002).

2.6.   Chapter Summary

Research has revealed that the nature of school governance is broad and complex. A strong evidence of regression seems to emerge. The reality to yield to an all empowered SGB that will be relevant for educational reformation is tempered by the fact that many SGBs are still grappling with challenges in the area of school finances, school discipline, and appointment of staff and formulation of admission policy.

On a more positive note, despite all the controversies, it is important to note the many success stories of SGBs, who have taken the time and effort to competently manage schools assets, raise funds, maintain discipline, and establish goals and objectives for the transformation and improvement of South Africa's schools in the democratic era.

In the chapter which follows I will examine the education system and school governance structures in countries such as Finland, England, Zimbabwe and Senegal. Issues of a more critical nature flowing out of a discussion of school governance will then be critically scrutinised. These issues will include strategies used by other countries to deal with challenges relating to learner

discipline, formulation and implementation of admission policies, handling of finances and the appointment of staff.

CHAPTER THREE

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE:
INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

3.1. Introduction

The concept of 'school governing' as a phenomenon advocated in the South African Schools (SASA) Act 84 of 1996 was still a fairly new concept in South Africa. This research study is designed to explore the experiences and challenges faced by school governing bodies in executing their responsibilities as stipulated in the SASA. More specifically, the following key areas form an important part of the investigation, namely, the handling of learner discipline, the administration of school finances, the formulation of the admission policy and finally, the appointment of staff. It is also imperative to look at the development of school governance in other countries and how they handle these key areas. The experiences of other countries in this field will also assist the South Africa authorities to review some of its policies.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first and second sections will outline school governance development in Finland, England, Zimbabwe and Senegal, as well as the strategies used by each country to deal with the following key areas:

i.   The handling of learner discipline;

ii. The management of school finances;

iii. The formulation of an admission policy;

iv. The appointment of staff.

Finland, England, Zimbabwe and Senegal have been selected given that they represented first world and third world economies. This will provide a very interesting discussion especially in comparing first and third world countries. The last section of this chapter will focus on the different models of school governing bodies.

3.2. School Governance in Finland

3.2.1. Development of school governance in Finland

The Basic Education Plan formed in the 1960s initiated the movement towards equality and equity in education. The School System Act of 1968 ushered in a comprehensive school reformation that provided accessibility and compulsory education to all members of society. Striving towards decentralisation in the 1980s, legislation was reformed and Finland's education system evolved from a bureaucratic centralised management structure to a democratic system that promoted diversity and strong social cohesion. This decentralisation process enhanced the redistribution of power whereby a once fragmented corporatist ideology was converted to a new partnership-based configuration. As a result, there was an increase in the decision making powers by local authorities. Radical changes took place, resulting in a shift from socially and regionally inequitable private and State schools to that of a comprehensive education system.

By the early 1990s, the Finnish education system underwent a complete overhaul and the decentralised system of education introduced municipalities to oversee the management and governance of schools. New legislative Acts by 1999 encouraged the joint co-operation of the government, parents and society to work hand-in-hand in managing a decentralised education system. The Finnish education enjoyed close interrelations with society. These new actors in decentralisation governed by the Local Government Act owned, operated and managed the schools. Municipalities were endorsed by specific

legislation to govern education and the financing of the schools. Municipalities were responsible for compulsory education and had authoritative powers. Research has shown that while municipalities were thriving in urban areas, they struggled to cope with the challenges in rural areas (Ministry of Education, 2005; Ministry of Education, 2004).

The municipalities ushered in the establishment of School Boards for schools. The School Boards reported to the municipalities in a given geographical area. While each municipality clearly outlined the framework of duties and responsibilities for the School Boards, it differed from one municipality to another. The School Boards or Councils constituted mainly of parent governors ranging from fifteen to thirty members for a three year term of office. There were a majority of parent governors on the School Board. These School Boards were diverse and followed a structured, systematic approach. All executive and non-executive decisions of the School Board were scrutinised for public accountability. The primary objective of the School Boards was to ensure equal representation for all stakeholders in decision making. Depending on the type of school, the responsibilities of the School Boards was set according to a needs analysis, conducted at each school. In essence, the School Boards were agents of the State. Notwithstanding the limitations of the School Boards, the parent governors had very little power. The acquisition of goods and services depended largely on the municipalities. As a result, each school's autonomy was dependent on the municipality within a given geographic area.

The School Boards were influenced by the municipal governance and were accountable to the municipal governance for all decision making and actions. For example, if a school was experiencing problems, the municipal governance would intervene and provide support and assistance. The municipalities also engaged in a system of self-evaluation whereby the system was able to identify weak areas and rectify such through much negotiation, interaction and participation. Generally, the municipalities were given powers regarding local decision-making on matters such as finances, school budgets and financial planning (Rinnie *et al.,* 2002).

The reason why the State shifted decision-making to its municipalities was mainly to ensure that schools were effectively managed (2002). The State allocated funds to the local authority and municipality for the schools using a formula that depended upon the number of learners at a specific school (National Board of Education, 2005b; Eurydice, 2000). Consequently, different local authorities utilised the monies differently at each individual school. This caused schools to compete with one another for numbers and more funding. Municipalities also funded basic education and special education *per capita* funding of schools. As a result, they could decide how the funds were to be utilised. Furthermore, the municipalities were involved in human resource management and professional development skills for staff members and parents (Hargreaves, 2007). They could also determine specific criteria for principals and empowered them towards professional development (National Board of Education, 2005b). However, the School Boards possessed less decision-making power in Finland than in any other country.

The Basic Education Act of 1998 ushered in more changes in education. The principal's role in the School Board changed significantly and greater accountability was expected from principals. Governed by the National Board of Education, principals were now responsible for the financing, personnel and education results of the learners. In small municipalities, the principal's role in administrative leadership changed dramatically. Although the principal's recommendations and expertise was considered, final decision making was in the hands of the relevant municipality board. Practically speaking, municipalities in conjunction with the School Boards also had the authority to recruit, interview and appoint educators as well as evaluate the educators' work performances. Institutionally, the principal's opinion of these staff appointments had to be considered in the final decision making before the educator's appointment. Finally, the new legislative measures introduced around 1999 encouraged the joint co-operation between the State, parents and society to work hand-in-hand in managing a decentralised education system.

Recent research studies have confirmed that the Finnish education system has been rated one of the best in the world attaining the highest student achievements in reading, scientific and mathematical literacy (PISA, 2004). Their success rate can undoubtedly be accredited to the effectiveness and efficiency of their educational structures, governance and management.

3.2.2. The structure of the school board

According to Carmichael and Wild (2011), the School Board comprises of:

- School Heads (principal)
- Deputy heads of the school
- Parents governors
- Academics: Members of the Higher Education
- Accountancy especially for the audit chair
- Human Resources leadership: members
- Other members for marketing/media/fundraising purposes.

Figure 3.1. below illustrates the structure of the Finland School Board system:
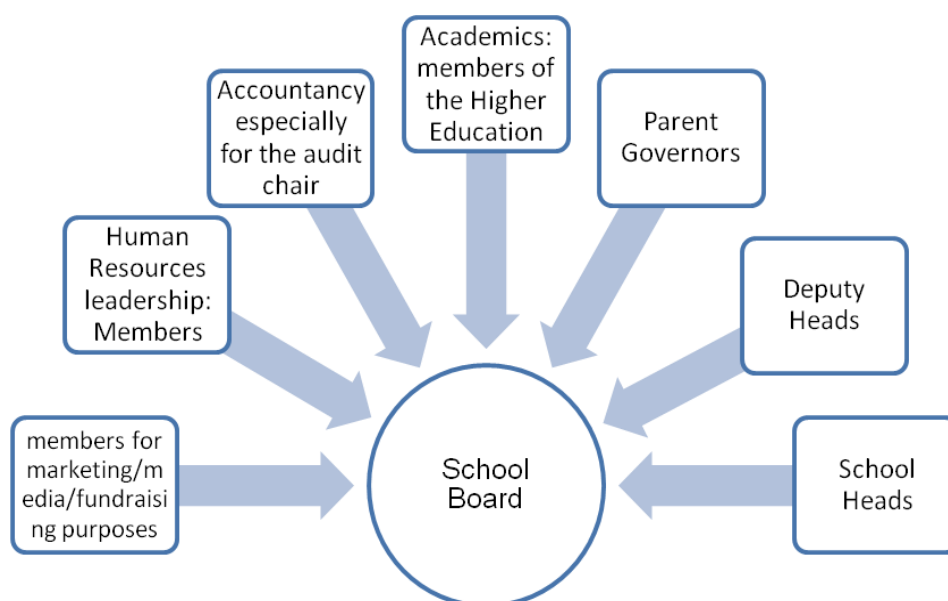
Figure3.1. The School Board within the Finnish Education system

3.2.3. The nature of school governance and its function

According to the National Board of Education (2005a), the key role functions and responsibilities of the Municipalities and School Boards were as follows:

i.   Exert a strong influence on the educational development in the schools;

ii. Maintain the school buildings in terms of school repairs and alterations to improve the school buildings;

iii. Suggest ways for improvement and keep records of all planning;

iv. Present an audited financial statement at the end of each year;

v.   Engage in school-level collective leadership to maintain and control the financial assets of the school;

vi. Maintain the development of the school by setting actions, plans, targets and initiating teambuilding;

vii. Screen and interview staff members according to the needs of the school by screening and interviewing staff members. The final decisions were to be made by the municipality;

viii. Implement legislation with regard to admission policy;

ix. Outline the school discipline policy for the learners;

x.   Advance the cultural, physical and intellectual welfare of the school;

xi. Assist in the administration of the curricular and co-curricular activities of the school, in consultation with the principal;

xii.   Engage in fundraising activities to provide financial support to disadvantaged learners in the school;

xiii.   Provide annual audited financial statements to the Secretary and Higher Authorities;

xiv.   Deliberate on the school fees for the learners and impose such school fees;

xv.   Utilise the school fees in the best interests of the school;

xvi.   Plan and submit the school budget for the next financial year;

xvii.   Evaluate the school to identify areas of weaknesses and improvement strategies for the school.

The sections which follow will focus on the challenges and strategies to deal with the following key research areas: the handling of learner discipline, the administration of finances, formulating admission policy and finally, the appointment of staff.

3.2.4. The challenges in handing learner discipline

Recent research studies have confirmed that various School Boards struggled to deal with the rising problem of student bullying and aggression (Kokko and Pulkkinen, 2000). Municipalities and School Boards faced increased school violence and gang fights in lower income schools (Broidy *et al.,* 2003). Children as young as five years of age displayed acts of physical aggression. The heart of the problem was identified as being the lack of student councils at many secondary schools. These secondary schools had no student councils that represented the student body in matters of disciplinary problems to the principal and School Board.

3.2.4.1. Strategies employed in dealing with the challenges of learner discipline

The Government of Finland (2004) supported by Laminen (2000) put forward the following strategies to deal with learner discipline at schools:

i. Municipalities and School Boards should work together towards high quality teaching and a learner-centred society where learner disciplinary problems can easily be identified and addressed;

ii. A strong culture of learning coupled with a strong teaching culture can contribute to the success of the municipalities where discipline is well maintained especially within private schools;

iii. Class sizes should be kept relatively small and thereby discipline will be kept to a minimum;

iv. Municipalities should focus on high education excellence and performance whereby educators can take measures to ensure that learners are focused and disciplinary problems are curbed immediately. Through such measures, disciplinary problems can be brought to a minimum as educators take a genuine concern for their learners' wellbeing and progress in the classroom;

v. Specialised teams be formed to assist in counselling children with learning and behavioural problems;

vi. Municipalities and School Boards should empower teachers to create a positive learning environment for their children as well as to ensure that learners are well-behaved and attentive during the classroom lessons. Such a positive learning environment can assist in creating a better learning environment for the students in the classroom;

vii.   Teachers should be given the freedom to decide how to teach different subjects. This will lead to teacher empowerment and thereby minimise learner indiscipline;

viii.   Municipalities should support the School Boards in teaching aggressive children conflict management skills from a young age so as to divert them from a lifestyle of violence and aggression;

ix.   School Boards should engage in role-play activities and encourage children to participate in group discussions of their peers to arrive at workable strategies to overcome bullying and aggression;

x.   Interpreting social cues from photographs and playing pantomime games are some of the strategy tools that can be used by parents and educators alike to minimise disciplinary problems;

xi.   Another helpful strategy is the making of videos and writing endings to unfinished stories;

xii.   A student council is to be run by students to represent the students' concerns and problem areas. All issues that are identified should be taken to the principal of the school to be addressed. Thereafter the matter is to brought before the School Board for their intervention and or approval;

xiii.   School Boards and principals should visualise their schools as learning institutions and be willing to share ideas towards improving and solving problems regarding learner indiscipline;

xiv.   School Boards and school principals should engage in the constant self-evaluation of their learners to ensure that learning is being maximised and indiscipline minimised. Periodic questionnaires are to be sent out and teachers are asked to rate the students' discipline through the questionnaires;

xv.   School Boards are encouraged to follow set syllabuses and curriculum that will emphasise corrective and appropriate behaviour;

xvi.   School Boards of failing schools are required to provide a substantial explanation of why their schools are not performing well and why they stay at a stage of permanent failure;

xvii.   The School Boards are to encourage the distribution of leadership roles and shared responsibility is encouraged whereby every person is involved in maintaining learner discipline. All issues of learner indiscipline are to be handled collectively and collaboratively;

xviii. While School Boards and school principals are to be seen as experts, they should not act in an autocratic authoritative way, especially in the classroom environment. Likewise, they should be open to various suggestions and viewpoints regarding learner discipline;

xix.   School Boards should also encourage schools to be creative and flexible when dealing with the learners with disciplinary problems;

xx.   School Boards should ensure that the management of schools is not administered in an authoritarian way, but instead should be co-operative and practical. In such a way, a warm, open and pleasant environment will be created which will be conducive to maintaining good discipline in the classroom;

xxi.   Students are encouraged to think for themselves and to express themselves freely and openly. Discipline will be easily maintained in this way;

xxii.   Educators, principals and academic leaders should all work collaboratively in achieving set goals to ensure learner discipline is maintained at the schools. Educators should be able to collaborate with other educators to maintain learner discipline;

xxiii.   Municipalities and School Boards have been successful due to the minimal interference of politicians. As a result, educators are free to design their own disciplinary measures for their learners. In this way, teaching becomes more rewarding and productive and learners are more focused and well-behaved;

xxiv.   School Boards should take the initiative to address those learners with serious disciplinary problems and under no circumstances are these learners ever sent to another school. As a result, disciplinary problems are identified and addressed.

3.2.5. Challenges in administering school finances

The municipalities financed pre-primary, basic education, upper secondary education and polytechnic institutions, whereas vocational education was co-financed by the government and local authorities. However, the municipalities experienced many difficulties in financing schools due to a shortage of funds (Aber *et al.,* 2003). These shortfalls resulted in low salary structures and a reduction in funding of school fees. This caused tremendous strain on the School Boards and principals who were now accountable for the financial management of the schools. The school principals became highly stressed in terms of the financial undertakings of the schools and felt despondent and hopeless at times (2003). Moreover, the principals were paid according to the size of the school and salaries were thus insufficiently attractive. Consequently, principals were not motivated to carry the heavy loads and responsibilities (2003). There were also reported cases of mismanagement and misappropriation of funds by the School Boards in some Finnish schools especially in disadvantaged areas (2003). Some municipalities failed to produce their annual financial statements and had no control of the funds and hence were irresponsible in managing the finances at these schools.

3.2.5.1. Strategies employed in dealing with the challenges in administering school finances

With reference to Ahola and Kokko (2000), Seppanen (2003, 2006) and the Government of Finland, (2004) the following strategies were put forward to overcome the challenges in administering school finances:

i. All principals were expected to complete their National Qualifications and in this way were sufficiently trained in policy planning, budgets and financial management as well as leadership skills;

ii. To ensure that there was effective financial management at schools, the municipalities and School Boards were to conduct constant evaluations so as to ensure that all funds were utilised effectively and for the sole purpose of teaching and learning;

iii. The municipalities, School Boards and school principals were expected to shared the leadership role and work collectively as a group to solve problems;

iv. The municipalities and School Boards were to exercise their leadership at different district levels. In this way, there was to be an increase in communication and problem-solving capacities when dealing with finances;

v. The municipalities and the School Boards were expected to implement a system of annual audits so as to ensure that all schools were financially viable. In this way, the municipalities were able to monitor the schools more closely so as to identify their financial needs and financial resources;

vi.   There was to be more power and autonomy in the way the Finnish schools were financed. This would ensure there was greater regulatory control within schools in regard to income and expenses as well as long term planning by municipalities and School Boards in order to meet daily expenses;

vii.   Additional support was to be received from other colleagues, schools and municipalities. The strengthening of such networks among School Boards would help them to strategise against various challenges;

viii.   The National Board of Education would fund principals in institutional leadership training programmes to increase their competencies and administrative tasks in financial planning.

3.2.6. Challenges in the formulation of admission policy

Although the municipalities worked together with the school principal and were responsible for learner admissions, there were reported cases at the elite, private schools of the violation of admission rules and regulations set by the Finnish Government (Finlex, 2004; Seppanen, 2003). Many parents criticised the admissions policies in the private elite schools in Finland. These private schools specified an entrance examination and reading test before admission (Finlex, 2004). The special grammar schools focused on academic excellence and also required learners to write an aptitude test. Municipalities and School Boards failed to address these injustices. Many of the learners were denied admission upon failing these tests (Hopkins, 2007).

Paradoxically, these schools benefited the children of wealthy parents who could afford the high school fees, while denying access to children from poor homes. As a result, this suited high ability learners from high economic social populations (The upper secondary schools engaged in an admissions policy to test learner academic performance and this caused some parents to complain bitterly (Kuusela, 2003; Ministry of Education, 2003). Municipalities

oversaw special schools that specialised in visual art, music, dance, mathematics and languages, and had specific criteria in their admission policy that had to be met before admitting learners (Ministry of Education, 2005). This is ironic as these municipalities approved such patent discrimination, which blatantly contravened the constitutional requirements under Finnish law.

3.2.6.1. Strategies employed in dealing with the challenges in the formulation of admission policy

With reference to Finlex (2004); Seppanen (2003, 2006), the Ministry of Education (2005), Lampinen (2000) and Rinnie *et al.* (2002) the following strategies were devised in dealing with the challenges in the formulation of admission policy:

i.   The Ministry of Education (2005) compiled strict regulations regarding the admissions policy at all the different types of schools;

ii. Municipalities empowered teachers, parents and learners by giving them the opportunity to voice their opinions and viewpoints in the formulation of school admission policy and its implementation at the school level;

iii. Initially, parents were not given the choice of schools and learners were allocated to schools closest to their homes. Following the passing of the Basic Education Act in 1998, parents were placed in a position of being able to admit their children to any public school of their choice.

iv. Municipalities and School Boards engaged in the continuous professional development of principals and teaching staff, equipping them in the development of educational policies.

3.2.7. Challenges in the appointment of staff members

The municipalities were responsible for the appointment of staff members. The appointment of staff at Finnish schools has been managed very professionally and efficiently by the municipalities (Aber, *et al.,* 2003). There have been no cases of selector biasness, nepotism and prejudice reported at the schools in Finland (2003). However, the municipalities were highly structured to ensure flexibility, efficiency and effectiveness (2003). In this, the municipalities closely followed the ethics of transparency and accountability when handling the appointment of all staff.

3.2.7.1. Strategies employed in dealing with the challenges in the appointment of staff members

With reference to Hargreaves, Halasz and Pont (2007) and Aber *et al.,* (2003) the following strategies were identified in dealing with the challenges in the appointment of staff members:

i.   Municipalities needed to be willing to co-operate with the national goals, legislation and laws of the country;

ii. The municipalities needed to strictly follow the laws and legislation so as to prevent any form of corruption and unprofessionalism. Strict and precise procedures were to be put in place so as to ensure transparency and accountability at all Finnish schools;

iii. When problematic situations did arise, they must be referred to the municipal governance for their intervention and tactfulness in seeking their resolution;

iv. Staff training needs to be provided for the effective management, training and handling staff appointments;

    v.   Municipalities, together with the school principals, should appoint high quality teachers who are committed to teaching an ethos of economic development, cultural creativity and social justice.

3.3.   School Governance in England

3.3.1. The development of school governing bodies

The Established Church of England (Anglican Church) was largely responsible for the home-based education since the early nineteenth century in England. The Anglican Church authorities influenced the education system emphasising in particular religious instruction. In contrast, a selected board of managers from the affluent sections of the community began developing schools to provide education for poorer learners. Significantly, the British Government began to support these schools by providing them with special grants for the construction of their buildings. The management of these schools began to experience numerous functional challenges and this led to the development of the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) (also known as School Boards). During the 1970s, schools were under the jurisdiction of the LEAs. These so-called School Boards were populated mainly with local representatives of the Anglican Church and local politicians.

Later in the 1970s, parents wanted to become more involved in their learners' education and openly expressed their dissatisfaction to central government. Parents were concerned over the level of expenditure and dubious quality of education. As a consequence, the British Government demanded better education results from those schools which had previously posted failing results. During this time, the education system was widely criticised. As a result, the British Government required that all schools undergo at least four inspections throughout each year together with an assessment of procedures for all educators and principals. Upon the recommendations of these inspections, the school development programme was drawn up. By this time,

the LEAs' powers had been stripped together with a move towards decentralisation and the notion of self-managing schools. However, schools in England were not managed by the school governing bodies up until the 1980s.

The Education Reform Act of 1980 and 1988 and the Taylor Commission made provision for the promulgation of school boards/school councils at schools. This was referred to as the Local Management of Schools (LMS). Importantly, this legislation delegated the financial responsibility to the school governing bodies and was jointly managed by the parents and trustees. The governing bodies were populated mainly by parents, local community members and business representatives. The introduction of these governing bodies constituted a new and radical reform in education and their role and function was stipulated by the British Government and underpinned by the Department of Education and Science (DES).

The School Governance Constitution of England Regulations (2007) further emphasised partnerships between the central government, the LEAs and the new governing bodies. With this new decentralisation in education, principals and parents became more involved in the decision-making at English schools. The term of office for all SGB officers extends over a four year period. The School Governance Constitution of England Regulations (2007) (DFES, 2007) specified that the size and membership of the governing bodies may range from nine to twenty members. While the governing bodies governors were not involved in the day-to-day running of the school, this responsibility was devolved to the head teachers and staff. As a result, the workload of head teachers increased and participative management was advocated.

Uniquely, the Education Reform Act of 1988 brought about significant change to the ways schools were governed. In this regard, it is interesting to note that in terms of the legislation, all governors were given equal rights and responsibilities within the governing bodies. This gave the new governing bodies more power over learner discipline, school finances, admission policy and the appointment of staff. Its implementation however created many fresh

challenges as many governing bodies did not possess the ability to manage their schools effectively.

It is also important to note that if any member of the governing bodies transgressed in their duty in breaking their sworn confidentiality they were liable to be suspended from their position. The British Secretary of State for Education and government ministers controlled central core school policies. Importantly, the Secretary of State had the power to appoint additional governors if the need arose as well as dismiss and replace any existing governors. In addition, governing bodies had to report to the Secretary of State concerning the affairs of the school. With the election of the governing bodies arose the election of the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) committees for each school. These PTA committees were exclusively elected for the purposes of fundraising. The PTAs were responsible for the raising of funds so that the local and central government could be relieved of their financial burden. Schools had the choice to decide whether or not they wanted this parent body.

Although the British Government had given the governing bodies a considerable amount of power and responsibility, the Education Regulations of 1989 contested that these same bodies delegate their powers to sub-committees and in this way reduced their members to fewer than five members. These amendments brought about much conflict among governing bodies members. The Education Act of 1993 also restricted the governing bodies powers with regard to sex education at school. The stakeholders within the governing bodies continued to serve their schools despite these many amendments.

Until 1988, the responsibilities and powers of the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were reduced. However, the LEAs served the purpose of managers for the schools within the jurisdiction of their geographical location. This move towards decentralisation gave greater autonomy to schools but their school budgets were still delegated to the LEAs within each geographical location. Nearly all State-funded schools in England were funded by the LEAs and

depended on the number of learners per school. The LEAs oversaw the teaching staff at each school and were responsible for the admission of learners. However, the role of the LEAs was becoming strained and problematic.

Eventually the fast pace of decentralisation in England gave governing bodies greater control over budgets, staff appointments and suspensions and the day-to-day management of schools. This hallmark of decentralisation developed a relationship of co-operation and mutual trust between the State and the LEAs and governing bodies. The head teachers were required to work co-operatively with the governing bodies especially in the area of critical decision-making processes and the evaluation of the school's performance. Automatically, the school principal became a member of the governing bodies. School principals held a precise position within the governing bodies and many choose to either be a voting governor or not. The school principal served the purpose of the *ex-officio* member and had to attend all governing bodies meetings. The governing bodies specified that no person under the age of eighteen years of age was permitted to be a school governor and therefore learner governors were exempt from participating in the decision-making at schools. However, a learner prefect system served as a vehicle to address learners' concerns with the school principal.

At the heart of such educational reforms, the Office for Standards of Education (Ofsted) was established for the inspection of all schools. The Children Act of 2004 ensured that a new form of community governance emerged. Partnerships with learning communities, institutions and federations strengthened the governing bodies. Most importantly, these partnerships created greater access to resources and thereby enhanced professional development. The Education and Inspection Act of 2006 brought about even greater change with the new role of a commissioner, champion and challenger being out advocated.

3.3.2. The structures of the school governing board

In terms of the new legislation, there are two types of governors promulgated: elected governors and appointed governors, each serving a term of office of four years. Elected governors are the representatives of the parents, non-teaching staff and teaching staff. Appointed governors consist of the head teacher and LEA governor. Most governors offer their services on a voluntary basis to enhance the learning culture of the school. There are subcommittees appointed within the governing bodies that have a mandate over the finances, personnel, school development and health and safety. These subcommittees have to report back to the governing bodies with regards to their action plans and recommendations.

The membership of school governing bodies in terms of the English education system consists of:

i.   Selected parents governors who must be parents of a registered learner at the school;

ii.   Educator governors depending on the size of the school;

iii. Community governors that represent the interests of the larger community;

iv.   LEA governors is any eligible person appointed by the LEA;

v.   Sponsor governors who provide substantial assistance to the school.

Figure 3.2. below illustrates how the governing bodies of English schools are constituted.
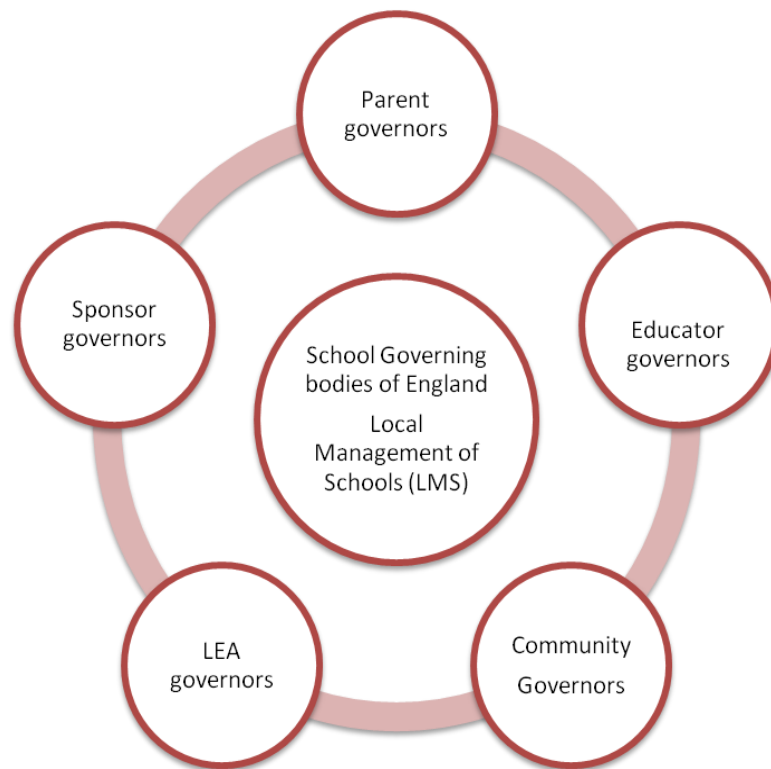
Figure 3.2. The constitution of the SGB in the English education system

It is important to note that a community member must be a representative of a local business. These co-opted members have a voting right. 75% of the governing body must be constituted by parent governors, local authority governors and co-opted governors. The remaining 25% is constituted by educators, principal, non-teaching staff and other nominated persons who have contributed to the development of the school. The school principal or a member of the teaching staff must serve in the capacity of the secretary of the Board of Governors. However, the secretary possesses no voting rights. Fundamentally, the principal holds a profound position on the SGB and must be present at all the meetings. It is also imperative that representation from local businesses is adequately represented on the board.

3.3.3. The functions of the school governing board

In terms of Section 21 of the Education Reform Act, the School Governing Board is mandated to promote educational excellence:

> The conduct of and maintenance of school shall be under the direction of the school governing body (and that) the governing body shall conduct the school with a view to promote the standards of educational achievement at the school.

Fundamentally, the governing body serves as a 'critical friend' to the head teacher and supports all the teachers in their roles, work performance and responsibilities.

In terms of the process of decentralisation, the Statutory Instrument Act No. 2122 of 2000, (School Government) outlined the responsibilities of the SGB, whereby it is seen to have a strategic role in the running of the school. In particular, the SGB must establish a strategic framework for the school by:

i.   Setting the aims and objectives for the school;

ii. Setting policies for achieving these aims and objectives;

iii. Setting targets for achieving these aims and objectives;

Very importantly, governing bodies are responsible for:

i.   The formulation of education policies for the school so as to achieve its aims and objectives;

ii. Setting the school's vision and strategic aims;

iii. Making the appointment of head teacher;

iv. Presenting financial statements at the end of each financial year;

v. Preparing an annual school budget;

vi. Proposing the annual school fees each year;

vii. Deriving strategic plans for long-terms and short-term goals;

viii. Ensuring a financial committee is in place to handle the expenditures of the schools;

ix. Interviewing and appointing staff members and head teachers;

x. intervening in the dismissal of staff members;

xi. Determining the admission policy of the school;

xii. Determining the code of conduct for learners;

xiii. Determining the selection of the learners' uniform;

xiv. Making recommendations for repairs and new building structures;

xv. Managing transport for the learners;

xvi. Managing the training and development of the school governing body;

xvii. Planning set targets for the school;

xviii. Monitoring all educational matters and processes and work performances;

xix. Evaluating all educational decisions;

xx. Holding an annual meeting for the parents;

xxi.   Ensuring the curriculum is in line with current Government legislation;

xxii.   Deciding whether sex education should be offered at the school;

xxiii. Deciding the salary structures of the teachers;

xxiv.   Making recommendations for the National Assessment system;

xxv.   Engaging in open enrolment in order to sustain a grant-maintained status;

xxvi.   Dismissing teachers and non-teaching staff;

xxvii. Engaging in fundraising activities at the school;

xxviii. Engaging in the day-to-day management of school funds;

xxix.   Addressing and resolving disciplinary problems of learners;

xxx.   Training new members of the SGB through induction courses;

xxxi.   Promoting health and security services at the school;

xxxii. Appointing the head teacher;

xxxiii. Playing the role of a 'critical friend' in providing support and challenge.

3.3.4. Challenges of school governing bodies in handling learner discipline

According to Wright and Keettley (2003); Swinson and Cording (2002); Munn *et al.,* (2007), schools in England are also faced with learner disciplinary problems. Cases of criminality and ill-behaviour have been evident at many

community schools. School violence has also been on the increase and more learners are participating in substance abuse. School governing bodies have failed to deal with the verbal and physical aggression, teasing, rowdiness and the infringement of rules and general lack of respect that has been on the increase in the past decade. Learner aggression and bullying are common disciplinary problems that are often being reported. High student absenteeism and truancy are also common problems at secondary schools. Disappointingly, a lack of support from the LEAs contributed to the increase of disciplinary problems at schools. Recent research has shown that schools have faced more disciplinary problems in disadvantaged areas than those in advantaged areas. One of the sure signs of a 'failing' school is the contribution made by poor student behaviour.

3.3.4.1. Strategies employed in dealing with the challenges in handling learner discipline

Drawing upon the DFES (2003) and DfES (2004); Wright and Keettley (2003); Swinson and Cording (2002); Munn *et al.,* (2007) the following strategies have been suggested in dealing with the challenges in handling learner discipline:

   i.   Together with the central government and the Department for Children Schools and Families (formerly known as the DfES), a five point strategic plan has been implemented to improve the quality of education and address the problems with learner discipline and the high learner dropout rate;

  ii.   The programme of continuous school inspection that has been incorporated at the school level has gone a long way towards minimizing learner disciplinary problems;

 iii.   Networking by school governing bodies is encouraged, whereby built relationships within the local communities has assisted with child welfare and disciplinary problems;

iv. Underperforming schools with poor governance structures and serious weaknesses in learner discipline were evaluated by the Local Authorities and together with central government the following recommendations were made;

v. Governing bodies should sponsor educator effectiveness training as part of the initiative made by the government to address disciplinary problems;

vi. A variety of teacher training courses coupled with governances training are strategies that should be used to address disciplinary problems;

vii. School governing bodies should be capacitated to network with surrounding schools for feedback and assistance;

viii. Training programmes are re-evaluated and re-institutionalised in order to adequately equip school governing bodies that experience learner disciplinary problems;

ix. Governing bodies should utilise school learning theory and educational philosophy as strategies to prevent rising violence at schools.

3.3.5. Challenges in administering school finances

Against the background of financial mismanagement, head teachers were criticised for their incompetency within the SGBs (Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2007). Research has revealed that tensions among the governing bodies and head teachers caused the school governing bodies to become unproductive (Earley, 1994). Indeed, school governing bodies have stated that the lack of resources at some community schools contributed to them failing and thereby increasing the decline in pupil achievements. Schools with weak governance structures suffered from budget deficits. Parents bitterly complained against the tenders that were given out to family members' of school governors, a

practice that clearly reflected corrupt practice in school governorship. It should be mentioned that tensions constantly arose among staff members and parents of the school. An aggregate of all the above problems, the school governors felt inadequately equipped and trained to handle the financial challenges (Deem *et al.,* 1995).

3.3.5.1. Strategies employed in dealing with the challenges in the administration of school finances

Drawing upon DFES (2004) and DfES (2007); Deem *et al.,* (1995); Hopkins, 2007; Earley (1994, 2000); Earley and Creese (2003); Huber (1997); Ranson and Tomlinson (1994) and Ranson *et al.,* (2005) the following strategies were devised in dealing with the challenges in the administration of school finances:

i. Parents who could not afford their learners' school fees had the option of home schooling their children known as Elective Home Education;

ii. Simultaneously, the central government together with the Department of Education initiated a strategy plan to address the distribution of resources and in this way achieved greater accountability.;

iii. The UK Government encouraged schools to work with local businesses and establish partnerships with other organisations in order to access additional funding;

iv. Low performing schools were identified so as to examine the disparities in governance with an effort to increase their performances (Hopkins, 2006). In this, an authentic examination of a 'failing' school reiterated the government's role in addressing the lack of functionality with certain school governing bodies;

v.   The emphasis placed on educational partnerships and joint governance had become identified as strategies towards creating educational improvements. Through the sharing and collaboration of knowledge and skills with others, a commitment towards better performing schools was obtained;

vi.   Regular school governing bodies meetings were recommended in order to address learner disciplinary problems;

vii. The institutionalisation of the partnering of schools and promoting the support resulted in capacity building within school governing bodies;

viii. Non-education communities were supportive of schools and assisted with donations, resources and fundraisings.

3.3.6. Challenges experienced in the formulation and implementation of admissions policy

With reference to Deem *et al.,* (1995); Earley (1994, 2000); Earley and Creese (2003); Huber (1997); Ranson and Tomlinson (1994) and Ranson *et al.,* (2005) the following challenges experienced in formulation and implementation of admissions policy were noted:

Many conflicts arose between the school staff and the governing bodies in the community schools in terms of the formulation of admission policy. The school governing bodies that were responsible for the admissions in the community schools and voluntary-controlled schools dominated the mandates on their admissions policy causing conflicts among staff members. Many times these admission policies were discriminatory. On the other hand, the voluntary-aided schools also known as non-denominational schools appointed school governors who made irregular decisions regarding their school's admission policy. In this case, parents objected to the bias employed. Specialist grammar schools engaged in an entrance test for their learners as part of their

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admission policy and these schools were particularly selective with respect to learners' abilities. This was reflective of the lack of accountability within the governing bodies. Many private schools engaged in competitive entrance examinations for the admissions of learners and only those that were academically inclined were admitted into the schools. The notion of a national standardised test for pupils was incorporated into the school's admission policy, thereby discriminating against learners with low intellectual acumen. Many head teachers have openly claimed that the diagnostic tests used for admission have become problematic causing great competitive pressures among various school governing bodies.

3.3.6.1. Strategies employed to deal with the formulation and implementation of admissions policy

With reference to DFES (2004) and DfES (2007); Deem *et al.*, (1995); Earley (1994, 2000); Earley and Creese (2003); Huber (1997); Ranson and Tomlinson (1994) and Ranson *et al.,* (2005) the following strategies were identified to ensure a non-discriminatory admissions policy within British schools.

i.   The Department of Education initiated a plan for schools to network with other schools, colleges and local businesses to provide more support towards the formulation and implementation of educational policies;

ii. A sense of partnership was promoted by the central government and the Department Education and hence all educational policies were to be scrutinised by them to detect unfair practices;

iii. Widespread consultation and communication was encouraged among school heads through the establishment of forums. At such forums, school admissions policies were discussed to ensure that they were in line with the department's legislation and that such policies prevented further competiveness among schools;

iv. The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) provided various strategic training and development initiatives for the advancement of leadership and governance at schools. Within such training sessions, school heads and deputy heads were to be instructed on how to formulate and implement the admissions policy for their schools;

v. A programme for the systematic evaluation of school governing bodies was initiated with a view to improving their role functions. During these periodic evaluations, admissions policies were to be examined and scrutinised for any irregularities in terms of the law.

3.3.7. Challenges in the handling of staff appointments

DFES (2004) and DfES (2007); Earley (2000); Earley and Creese (2003); Ranson and Tomlinson (1994), and Ranson *et al.,* (2005) identified the following challenges with regard to the appointment of staff in British schools:

There have many reported cases of strong disagreements erupting between the SMT and school governing bodies. Reported cases of conflict between the head teacher and the school governing bodies were particularly problematic during the appointment of promotion posts. Staff appointments in disadvantaged areas posed a greater challenge to school governing bodies. Evidence of nepotism and irregular practices were reported in many schools within disadvantaged areas. In many cases the governing bodies were at loggerheads with the school heads regarding their recommendations. It was also reported that school governing bodies did not fully understand their role functions in recommending staff appointments and this created a challenge in

appointing staff members. Governing bodies became even more challenged when school heads were perceived to be making personal preferences or being open to extortion and bribery.

Reported case studies have indicated that some school governing bodies members broke their sworn confidentiality during the interview process and this flawed the entire interview. Many conflicts escalated over the appointment of additional governors and as a result school governing bodies lacked the knowledge and skills towards the effective governance and management of their school. The challenge of inflexible and inefficient governors within the school governing bodies created greater frustration and stress and as a result they were often reported to be unproductive. Many incidents of unprofessional staff appointment decisions made by school governing bodies were also reported. The dominance and influence of the school heads in staff appointments created huge tensions with some school governing bodies. Indeed, some schools were placed in a near state of chaos due to the faulty decisions of the school governing bodies. Recent studies have revealed that disputes between the LEAs and school governing bodies have caused the non-appointment of educators and this has disadvantaged many schools. These problematic situations have created serious challenges to certain governing bodies when staff appointments were being made.

3.3.7.1. Strategies employed to handle the challenges in staff appointments

With special reference to the DFES (2004) and DfES (2007); DCSF (2007); Deem et al (1995); Earley (1994, 2000); Earley and Creese (2003); Hopkins (2007); Huber (1997); Ranson and Tomlinson (1994) and Ranson *et al.,* (2005) the following strategies were identified to ensure a fair and procedurally correct process in terms of staff appointments:

i. A plan towards the improvement of schools and the promotion of creative partnerships has been put forward by the Department of Education to handle the challenges and problematic situations that have arisen with regard to staff appointments. A National Strategy Programme has been established to ensure greater accountability and transparency in matters of promotion posts and in the overall improvement of school management and leadership under the SGBs (DCSF, 2007);

ii. Hopkins (2007) has proposed more emphasis being placed on devolving the responsibility of SGBs as units of accountability in order to assist the employment powers of schools;

iii. As part of the training and development of the governance and management at schools, the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), the Leadership and Management Programme for New Head teachers (HEADLAMP) and the Leadership Programme for Serving Heads (LPSH) have became stepping stones for the advancement of school governance and management;

iv. To improve and strengthen school governing bodies in the execution of their duties, schools should be engaged in a constant programme of self-evaluation;

v. The intervention of the LEAs when problematic situations have arisen has assisted in remedying the problems associated with staff appointments in many schools.

3.4.   Strategies of school governance in Zimbabwe

3.4.1. The development of school governance in Zimbabwe

Up to the early 1960s, Zimbabwe (then known as Rhodesia), was governed by Great Britain as one of its colonies. The eruption of a civil war in 1980 finally established political independence and the country was renamed Zimbabwe. Prior to 1980, there were many imbalances in the education system that had been created by the colonial past. Being similar to the South African education history, this colonial era was characterised by the policies and legislations that were underpinned by racial discriminations, imbalances and inequalities. From the time of independence therefore, education was thus used as a tool to transform what was previously a racially fragmented country. Serious efforts were made to redress these colonial anomalies. With the introduction of the 1979 Education Act, Zimbabwean education developed in terms of a non-racial meritocracy taking into consideration both its qualitative and quantitative educations needs. The new Zimbabwe Government thus aimed at establishing an egalitarian and democratic society to redress the inequalities of the past.

Initially, district council schools were overseen by the district councils themselves. However, reported cases of misappropriation of funds earmarked for education led to the Zimbabwe Government establishing a new form of democratic governance. With the notion of decentralisation, Section 62 of the Education Act of 1987 enshrined the Statutory Instrument No. 87 of 1992 into law as well as the Statutory Instrument No. 70 of 1993. These enactments were instrumental in the establishment of School Development Committees (SDCs) and the School Development Associations (SDAs) respectively. Section 29 of the Education Act Amendment of 1991 confirmed the establishment of SDCs for non-government schools. In the case of government schools, School Development Associations (SDAs) were established. The establishment of the SDCs by the Zimbabwe Government was meant to incorporate the active involvement of parents and communities

in the ownership and management of education in its schools. The Introduction of the 1987 Education Act further emphasised parental involvement in both government and non-government schools. The replacement of the 1979 Education Act by the African Education Act ushered in the establishment of Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs). These new PTAs were specifically designed to turn government schools into community schools. According to Chikoko (2008), this was the starting point of the decentralisation of the functions of administration and governance at the school level.

The SDCs were mandated by the Statutory Instrument No. 87 of 1992 to charge, collect and administer school funds. The SDCs were responsible for managing the finances and curriculum at the school level. The SDCs were expedited to develop and manage schools taking into consideration the best interests of the schools. The SDCs served the interest of the parent body in ensuring the school funds were properly managed and that parents were receiving value for their hard-earned money. The SDCs managed the teaching and learning materials and equipment for the respective schools. Of course the government was expecting that the SDCs and SDAs would be able to utilise the limited resources for the betterment of education. Pursuing a particular purpose, the SDCs were expected to maintain the discipline and ensure the moral wellbeing of the students. The SDCs were expected to work alongside the school principals in improving the level of discipline at schools. Undoubtedly, the SDCs and the SDAs were expected to promote parent participation and the empowerment of teachers and staff members towards improving the quality of education at its schools.

The Statutory Instrument No. 70 of 1993 outlined the responsibilities of the SDCs in the following way:

i. Promote, improve and encourage the development and maintenance of the school;

ii. Assist in the advancement of the moral, cultural, physical, spiritual and intellectual wellbeing of the pupils at the school;

iii. Promote and encourage programmes of interest both educational and social for the benefit of the pupils, their parents and teachers.

The SDCs comprised mainly of parents and principals. However, learners were not indirectly involved in the SDCs. Through the prefect system at schools, prefects represented the learners and reported to the school principals concerning issues of concern which in turn were often brought up at the SDCs meetings. Hence, learners are not part of the decision-making at the school level. Furthermore, amendments to the Education Act of 2006 concluded that parent boards be referred to as SDCs regardless of their geographical locations.

On the other hand, private schools were managed by a Board of Governors or a PTA (Zvobgo, 1996). To assist the SDCs in their work performances, the Zimbabwe government approved of the Cluster Coordinating Committee. Each Cluster Coordinating Committee consisted of a SDC representative for each school, community members with educational expertise, resources educators from each school, the head of department of each school, the area councillor and co-opted members. This body was instrumental in empowering and training the SDCs. It also invested in the equipping and training of the SDCs. The SDCs were also responsible for promoting the best interests of the school in terms of financial management and planning.

Of particular interest was the move towards clustering of schools as a strategy to evaluate, monitor and assess failing and struggling SDCs. A cluster centre was established when four to five schools within the same locality came together and worked together to address their challenges and problematic situations. This strategy enabled the SDCs to solve problematic situations. The cluster centres became training centres to promote training for the SDCs, the teachers and principals alike. Although the SDCs strived to function optimally, they struggled to establish sub-committees for specific functions

such as financial management (Zvobgo, 1996). SDCs are nevertheless gaining momentum but are obviously obstructed by financial constraints.

3.4.1.1. The structure of the school development association

The SDC comprises of five elected governor parents who are legal guardians of registered learners at the school, the school principal and a representative of the registered authority. The members of the SDC are appointed for a period of one year only. Subject to subsection (2) and (3) of the statute, a SDC will consist of:

i.   Five persons elected, subject to these regulations, by parents of pupils at the school;

ii.   The head of the school;

iii. Deputy head of the school;

iv.   A teacher at the school, who shall be appointed by the secretary;

v.   A local authority representative or councillor appointed by the local authority.

Figure 3.3. below illustrates the composition of the SDC.
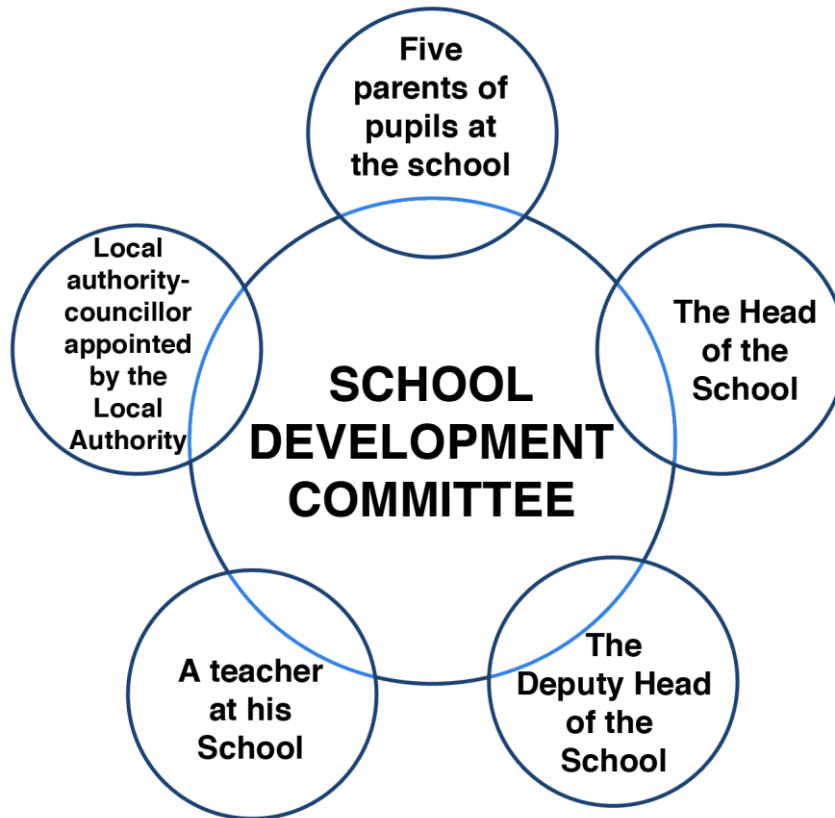
Figure 3.3: The SDC within Zimbabwe's education system

3.4.1.2. School governance and its function

The statute stipulates that no person declared insolvent or with a criminal record may stand for office. All governors are supposed to hold the office for a one year period only and thereby be eligible for re-election. The principal serves as the *ex-officio* member of the SDC and is regarded as the financial officer. According the subsection (3) of the statue, the secretary may by written notice increase or decrease the number of elected members for the sole benefit of the SDC. At the same time, the secretary may revoke the permission granted by written notice by declaration as set out in subsection (4) of the statute.

According to Section 29A of the Education Act, the SDC is responsible for the following functions:

i. Develop the mission statement of the school;

ii. Advance the cultural, physical and intellectual wellbeing of the school;

iii. Maintain and upgrade the facilities of the school;

iv. Apply to the government for funds;

v. Assist in employing staff members according to the needs of the school;

vi. Ensure that quality education is offered to every learner;

vii. Adopt a code of conduct for learners of the school following consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school;

viii. Determine the administration policy and language policy of the school within the framework laid down in the national Education Policy Act (1996b) and any other applicable provincial law;

ix. After a fair hearing, suspend learners from attending the school as a correctional measure for a period not exceeding one week;

x. Recommend to the head of department the appointment of teachers and other staff members at the school;

xi. Provide plans, in consultation with the head and secretary to ensure that alterations, repairs and improvements of existing buildings are carried out expeditiously;

xii. Suggest ways to improve and extend their school provided this finds agreement with the Head of Department;

xiii.   Assist in the administration of the non-academic and secular activities of the school, in consultation with the school head;

xiv.   Hire, screen, and interview potential members of staff in consultation of the Head of Department, provided that they are under seventy years of age and irrespective if they are applying for part-time or full-time teaching posts;

xv.   Ensure that class sizes are maintained with a minimum of fifteen pupils and not more than fifty pupils;

xvi.   Establish committees and sub-committees to expedite the work at the school organisation;

xvii.   Provide financial support to disadvantaged learners in the school through the means of special grants, bursaries and scholarships;

xviii.   Provide annual audited financial statements to the secretary and higher authorities. Financial statements should be drawn annually for presentation to the parent body and onward transmission to the head of department for scrutiny. Such financial statements should indicate the areas of need in which parents must contribute;

xix.   Issue and impose levies for each learner at the school;

xx.   Increase the school levies for the learners for a period of not less than twelve months;

xxi.   Plan and submit school budgets for the school and to justify the increase in school levies;

xxii.   Plan and charge a capital development levy for a fixed number of terms;

xxiii.   Allow the school to be used for community, social and school fundraising purposes;

xxiv.   Supplement the resources supplied by the State in order to improve the quality of education provided to all learners at the school;

xxv.   Keep records of funds received and spent by the public school and a record of all assets, liabilities and financial transactions;

xxvi.   Appoint a registered accountant to audit the schools financial books on an annual basis.

3.4.2. Challenges in handling learner discipline

In accordance with the following authors: Fitzgerald (2004); Mutodi (2006); Moore (2001); Mlambo (1995) and Ngwneya (2010) the following challenges have been identified in the handling learner discipline:

i.   Although the SDCs were committed to education and a high sense of achievement and excellence at their school, they were still experiencing a rising number of disciplinary problems, especially at the secondary school level;

ii.   Student-teacher ratios were very high in Zimbabwe with 1:55 at the primary school level and 1:44 at the secondary school level;

iii.   High student-teacher levels were seen to further aggravate the disciplinary problems in the classrooms.

iv.   The SDCs were further challenged by incidents of theft of school property, outbreaks of violence, bullying, school stabbings, substance abuse and teenage pregnancies, all of which were on the increase at the secondary school level. Despite the number of disciplinary problems that have emerged, the SDC has not found ways to resolve these rising problems;

v.   Reported conflicts between school principals and SDC members regarding the correct procedures in handling learner discipline have been a major challenge for many SDCs. Specifically, disciplinary problems have contributed to more challenges in providing quality education to learners than anything else.

vi.   Many parents appointed onto SDCs have complained bitterly about the lack of training and support that was given to them as they do not fully understand their role function, especially with how to deal with serious learner discipline cases.

vii. Parents were often found to be meddlesome in the disciplinary hearings and suspension of learners and objected to the decisions of the SDCs in many schools. As Chikoko (2007) has concluded, there has been an apparent lack of parental involvement in maintaining discipline and this has resulted in governing bodies becoming frustrated about the soaring rate of disciplinary problems.

viii. SDCs were also feeling pressured about the high failure rates that were being experienced, often due to the poor level of discipline in schools. In this regard, Ngwenga (2010) has reported that there was a high failure rate with only a 9.8% examination pass rate in rural and township schools; a contributory factor being the high disciplinary problems.

ix.   Many SDCs have expressed their inability to deal effectively with the high number of disciplinary problems at Zimbabwean schools.

3.4.2.1. Strategies employed to deal with the challenges in handling learner discipline

According to the following authors: Ansell (2002); Crystal (1997); Davison (1990); Fitzgerald (2004); Mutodi (2006); Moore (2001); Niemann (1997); Mlambo (1995); Nziramasanga (1999) and Ngwneya (2010), the following strategies were noted in dealing with learner discipline:

i. Research has shown that principals have been trained in areas of disciplinary procedure to cope with their challenges experienced in learner discipline;

ii. SDCs used the measures of constant observation and constructive management development as effective strategies to curb the disciplinary problems;

iii. Zimbabwean education fostered a student-centred approach and therefore the teachers are committed to assisting the learners with disciplinary problems;

iv. Zimbabwe has embraced the Vision 2020 document which is aimed at developing people holistically with greater skills, techniques and strategies to cope with the rising disciplinary problem;

v. The Heads Training and Support Programme (HTSP) is an initiative used to empower the SDCs and the principals in the handling of learner discipline. Research has shown that the more empowered the SDCs ware, the more productive the SDCs became;

vi.   While it is generally agreed that classroom practices within Zimbabwean schools emphasised written work as an evidence of the academic achievement of the learner, it placed more emphasis on interactions and dialogues. Through communication and role play the learners with serious disciplinary problems were able to express their feelings in a more constructive way;

vii.   SDCs emphasised a high standard that promoted open-mindedness, self-reliance, resourcefulness and creative persistence and cooperation of all the stakeholders of the education department and this in turn has minimised the number of disciplinary problems.

3.4.3. Challenges in the administration of school finances

Ngwenga (2010) has reported that the quality of education in Zimbabwean schools has been jeopardised by the financial mismanagement and misappropriation of funds by the SDCs as well as the scarcity of resources. According to Makoni (2012), the principal of Tapfuma Primary school faced charges of fraud and corruption as he could not give a proper account of Z$29,000 that was purportedly mismanaged. Since then the situation has resulted in more incidents of theft and mismanagement of school funds. A ministry document dated 8 September 2011 published in *The Zimbabwean* newspaper of 23 June 2011, confirmed the continued mismanagement of funds, missing school assets and other irregularities. The prevalence of resource inequalities at secondary schools in Zimbabwe has led to greater difficulties experienced by the SDCs in providing quality education.

Sallis (1996) have pointed that financial misappropriation was due to the lack of proper management planning and financial skills. Many SDCs had failed to make the right financial decisions. In many instances, the SDCs lacked competencies and skills to make schools financially viable. Many SDCs made careless financial decisions and this compromised the quality in the provision of education at schools (Niemann *et al.,* 2002). The lack of financial

management contributed to poor planning and budgeting and as a result the SDCs failed to raise the quality of education at many schools. Many schools still faced a lack of commitment from SDCs members and as a result there were no proper governance and management structures in place among many township and rural schools (Benza, 1999; Ota, 1995).

According to Chikoko (2008), recent studies conducted on rural primary schools in Zimbabwe have shown that parents were not fully involved in all the decision-making processes at their schools and this impacted negatively on the SDCs. Furthermore, Chikoko goes on to reveal that parents showed no interest in the management of school finances. As a result, many SDCs were struggling to keep their schools financially viable. To contribute to this problem, research has shown that there was limited financial management training for SDCs in township and rural schools (Zvobgo, 2004). For Zimbabwe education to progress, principals need to improve their managerial knowledge, associated skills and expertise in financial management.

3.4.3.1. Strategies employed to deal with the challenges in the administration of school finances

Drawing from the research studies of Ansell (2002); Crystal (1997); Government of Zimbabwe (1987); Mutodi (2006); Fitzgerald (2004); Moore (2001); Niemann (1997); Mlambo (1995); Nziramasanga (1999) and Ngwenga (2010), the following strategies for the administration of school finances have been emphasised:

  i. In order to overcome the misappropriation of funds and corruption at the school level, more emphasis has been placed on financial planning and strategic management;

 ii. Additional workshops have been planned in financial planning and skills training for SDCs;

iii.   Greater parental involvement has been promoted that places emphasis on self-regulation, integrity and accountability within the SDCs;

iv.   Serious challenges in the financing of schools in Zimbabwe have been alleviated by the State collaborating more with the SDCs;

v.   To ensure accountability and prevent the mismanagement of funds, all cheque payments must now be signed by four signatories of the SDC;

vi.   More monitoring and evaluation by the State have proven beneficial for the financial accountability of SDCs;

vii.   It was mandated that SDCs establish a financial subcommittee for the authorisation of school funds and purchases. These finance committees were expected to submit all audited bank accounts to the Secretary for Education annually for scrutiny and validation before the election of new office bearers;

viii.   In the case of SDCs at rural schools, an honorary treasurer is to be elected who is accountable to the head of the station;

ix.   In the case of any person or persons being accused of the misappropriation or mismanagement of school funds, they will be liable for prosecution in terms of the law;

x.   To assist failing schools in particular, the office of the President and Cabinet ensured the equitable distribution of resources to all schools. These in turn would be managed by the SDCs;

xi.   In order to work towards decentralisation, the establishment of the "Better Schools Programme for Zimbabwe" was instituted as a plan for greater effectiveness, efficiency and improvement of all SDCs in areas of financial management and transformational leadership.

3.4.4. Challenges in the formulation and implementation of admissions policy

The research studies by Ansell (2002); Benza (1999); Crystal (1997); Fitzgerald (2004); Moore (2001); Ncube (1993); Niemann *et al.,* (2002); Ngwenya (2010); Nziramasanga (1999) and Zvobgo (1996), provided a background to the challenges experienced by the SDCs in regard to the formulation and implementation of admissions policy.

According to the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the SDCs are responsible for the formulation of a non-discriminatory admissions policy at schools. Despite the efforts of the government to empower and train the SDCs, many of the parent governors of the SDCs were of a low education level and as a result failed to formulate non-discriminatory admissions policies. There was also a definite class distinction and segregation present in terms of the type of schools offered at Zimbabwe. It was therefore not uncommon that these elite schools promoted elitism in education and therefore the admissions policy was used as a bait to control the specified admissions. The Group A type schools were the private, independent schools that were exclusively for whites learners. The school committees failed to identify the presence of such outright discrimination in their admissions policy.

The admissions policies at these Groups A schools carried a level of racial discriminatory in their admissions policy and as a result black learners were not easily accepted in Group A type schools. This was contrary to what was stipulated in the Constitution of Zimbabwe that mandated that there be no discrimination in the provision of education, irrespective of culture, sex, religion, colour, creed, nationality, economic or social background or any disability. As a consequence of the SDCs failing in their responsibility to ensuring democracy, equality and fairness, discriminatory admission policies continued to soar, causing rapid segregation.

The SDCs were still challenged to create policies that were non-racial, non-discriminatory that provided equal opportunities. Many black learners

especially from the rural and township areas were denied entry into these private, elite schools. Research has shown that the government was still at its infancy level in achieving equality and equity at all the school types in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, recent studies have revealed that there was a lack of cooperation of the different educational bodies to afford skills training to SDCs.

3.4.4.1. Strategies employed to deal with the challenges in the formulation and implementation of admissions policy

In the research studies of Ansell (2002); Benza (1999); Crystal (1997); Fitzgerald (2004); Gatawa (1998); Mlambo (1995); Moore (2001); Ncube (1993); Niemann et al (2002); Ngwneya (2010); Nziramasanga (1999) and Zvobgo (1996), the following strategies emerged in dealing with the challenges in the formulation and implementation of admissions policy:

  i.   In order to ensure there is no discrimination in respective of culture, sex, religion, colour, creed, nationality and economical background of the learner, the State is now more vigilant in the formulation and administration of admissions policy at the various school types in Zimbabwe. Such policies are to be reviewed by the State to ensure transparency and accountability in their stated admissions policy;

  ii. Through the networking of schools, the SDCs and principals are in a better position to manage staff development programmes that emphasise the formulation of educational policies for schools in particular non-discriminatory admission policies;

  iii. In the case of SDCs in rural areas, more skill training and assistance has been offered by the Government of Zimbabwe through the establishment of the Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe for the upliftment and quality, efficient education system.

3.4.5. Challenges in the handling of staff appointments

Research has revealed that the SDCs were unable to cope with the appointment of new staff members due to the high illiteracy levels of many of the parent governors. Additionally, parent governors were given the power to appoint and dismiss staff members according to the needs of the school. Their decisions were often not accepted by the teaching staff, who reported that the appointment of teachers was made by illiterate parents (van Wyk, 2000). Clashes between the school principals, members of staff and parents continued to cause serious rifts in many schools as a result of the staff appointments. Cases of corruption and nepotism within the interview committees have also been reported. These are often the cause of many grievances and are a blatant contravention of State legislation and laws. Consequently, many SDCs may incur liability to legal action.

Many SDCs also reported being demotivated at the unfair and irregular practices of the school principals. Principals, especially at disadvantaged schools, seemed to dominate the entire interview process and pushed through their personal preferences (Garudzo-Kusereka, 2009). Overall, the appointment of staff had been a great challenge to the SDCs as the school principals did not know how to handle the dynamics of interviewing and staff selection (Chivore, 2009).

Recent studies have also revealed that many school principals and SDCs have lacked the expertise and knowledge in following the procedures as laid down by the Department of Education. As a consequence, the challenge in selecting quality staff for secondary schools, particularly within the rural areas, has been an on-going problem (Garudzo-Kusereka, 2009). Parental involvement in staff appointments has also been highly controversial as parents from affluent areas are more involved in learner's education unlike parents in poorer communities. This problem was heightened in the rural schools as the illiteracy levels of the parent-governors disadvantaged the SDCs and therefore the committees failed to interpret and understand the educational policies, legislations and procedures with regards to processing

fair and equal staff appointments. Finally, the SDCs limited knowledge on education matters and related legislation prevented them from functioning optimally and serving in the best interests of the school.

3.4.5.1. Strategies employed to deal with handling the challenges in staff appointments

i. One of the strategies identified to improve the quality of education at Zimbabwean school was to ensure that the SDCs and the school principals work collaboratively together in defining the staff position and ensuring the right candidate was appointed in a fair and equitable manner taking into consideration the Educator Employment Act and legislations and laws;

ii. It was believed that the school management teams (SMTs) have excelled in Zimbabwe due to the induction programmes of newly appointed school heads, excellent job training skills of the school heads, on-going SMT conferences and seminars that included skills in corrective staff appointments (Moyo, 2009);

iii. To assist the SDCs in their work performances, Cluster Coordinating Committees have been appointed in each district to assist SDCs in problematic situations;

iv. Each Cluster Coordinating Committee was committed to empowering and training the SDCs towards better governance practices;

v. Many of the SDCs followed the national educational goals, legislation and laws of the country to prevent any form of corruption and unfairness taking place in governance practices.

3.5.   School governance in Senegal

3.5.1. The development of school governance in Senegal

Senegalese education legislation from colonial times through to the 1960s was subject to the dominance of various religious bodies. Islam in particular has influenced the State of Senegal and the Supreme Islamic Council was responsible for Islamic education in Dakar, Senegal. Senegal retrieved its independence from France in 1960. During its pre-democratic era, the Government of Senegal was strongly centralised and school heads had to report directly to a bureaucratic government.

Towards the early 1990s, the Government of Senegal realised that decentralised school governance would serve the best interests of the larger community. With the promulgation of the Education Act of 1991, the first phase of decentralisation was introduced. President Senghor elected a Rural Council with a council chairman for the community schools. However, the Rural Council was still subject to the centrally appointed sub-committees who were responsible for all budgetary implications at schools. During the second phase of decentralisation, regional, technical and administrative units were established and more authority was given to local governments. It was unfortunate that the majority of the spending was authorised by the national government. Keeping this in mind, despite its fiscal transfers, the Government of Senegal struggled to fully decentralise at the school level (Clemons, 2007 cited in Daun, 2007). The resultant imbalance between policy and practice highlighted the need for participatory democratic processes.

The Government of Senegal realised the value of community schools known as ECBs in addressing the high illiteracy levels. Consequently, many NGOs formed partnerships with the government to establish ECBs. Thereafter, school inspectors were established by the government to manage and supervise the community schools as well as support the NGOs. The Ministry of Basic Education and National Languages (MDCEBLN) provided the administrative framework and the legal status for the school inspectors. These

school inspectors oversaw the management at schools particularly in the rural areas. Despite inspectors being given the mandate to govern these schools, NGOs were involved in the hiring and recruiting of teachers as well as initiating fundraising activities for the schools (Diarra *et al.,* 2000). It was ironic that the very school inspectors who were supposed to ensure the smooth running of the schools were at constant loggerheads with the NGOs. Furthermore, the intertwined role functions of the NGOs, the community and the State caused more hiccups to the already fragmented education system (Moran and Batley, 2004). Despite these controversies, school inspectors served their purpose in evaluating and monitoring the provision of education in Senegal.

In later times, more parent involvement was encouraged and Parents Education Associations (PEAs)) were established. These PEAs comprised of parents, school staff, local education authorities, locally-elected authorities, resource people, NGOs and civil society organisations (CREDA and Kamara/Lagardere, 2005). These bodies contributed to the management and governance of schools. Private schools were managed by the Roman Catholic Church or Islamic organizations (Kuenzi, 2003). In the same vein, these APEs worked hard to ensure that quality education was being achieved at the school level. However, the quality of education system in Senegal was being constantly hindered by the lack of resources and finances. Teacher unions came to the forefront and approached the government on issues of educational policy and the rising inequalities. Together with civil society, these collaborated together to become a stronger voice to the government with the central aim of improving the quality of education at all schools in Senegal.

The Government of Senegal moved further towards decentralisation in 1996, where the national structures, education legislation and Constitution were reviewed. The *Parti Socialiste* (PS) established elected regions and released more responsibilities and revenue transfers to the sub-national governments. The Senegal government elected local government bodies such as municipalities in urban areas and rural communities. Each region elected its own regional council with its own president, representatives of the State and

the elected council. As a result, School Management Committees (SMCs) were elected by the village assembly to manage schools. There was more parental involvement evident through the establishment of the SDCs and this served as a major actor in providing formal education (CREDA and Kamara/Lagardere, 2005).

The Government of Senegal approved the establishment of the SMCs to enshrine a bottom-up, collaborative education system. It was mandated that these school management committees be constituted of representatives of the local and ministry officials, civil society and school staff members. Importantly, these committees were expected to implement various school development projects and ensure open discussions and negotiations took place. As a result, school governance was under the jurisdiction of local education authorities and the State. The statutory responsibilities of the SMCs included supporting the principal of the school, thereby ensuring a high standard of education was achieved by appointing the staff for the school and working effectively as a team (Moran and Batley, 2004).

Much debate has been centred on the new educational governance structures as these committees posed much challenges and discrepancies in Senegal. The lack of training coupled by the need for collaboration hindered the effective functioning of the SMCs. In particular, they failed to provide pedagogical supervision to schools (Marchand, 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002). Much tension and conflicts within the private and public sectors also arose as the public sector was heavily dependent on the private sector for funding.

With the election of President Abdaulaye Wade in 2000, a new era of democracy and decentralisation emerged and SMCs were empowered to make decisions regarding spending, funding and the curriculum (Kuenzi, 2003). Furthermore, the school principal was now in the capacity to allocate the funds received from the government to promote quality education at school. Significant changes now mandated the SMCs to raise fiscal revenues for the schools. In particular, they were capacitated and mandated to elect,

appoint and name the school principals. However, while decentralised school governance was fundamental to the changes made to the SMCs, they struggled with the diverse and complex tasks they were now given. Nevertheless, the central government retained the power to make major decisions in governance, policy formulation, curriculum development, staff appointments, educator remuneration and school evaluation and this added more challenges to the SMCs (Niane, 2004). Recent research has claimed that many SMCs failed to perform tasks successfully owing to their lack of specialised knowledge and skills (2004).

Against this background, Aide et Action (2002a) claimed that ambiguities and the lack of clarity in the government policies in terms of the role functions and responsibilities of the school management committees was the cause of huge challenges. There was a clear contrast between the role of central government and local governance in non-formal education (Niane, 2004). In the light of the above problems, SMCs were plagued by inequalities, the lack of resources and a crippling economy. Furthermore, an empirical investigation of the education system in Senegal revealed that SMCs were failing to address the low quality of education at schools coupled with the high learner drop-out rate at the school level (Niane, 2004; Aide and Action, 2002b). Following this, the lack of resources such as a shortage of desks and the lack of textbooks challenged the SMCs even further. Huge disparities and an inequity of the allocation of resources between rich and poor communities aggravated the challenges faced by the SMCs (Government of Senegal, 2002). According to Hermier (2004), SMCs were at their wits ends with the prevailing situations at rural schools and needed urgent help through skills and governance training. Most schools in Senegal were also severely plagued by severe financial constraints.

By 2010, Senegal had succeeded in its determination to promote good governance and establish effective management systems through its ten-year education plan known as the *Plan decennal de l'education et de la formation* (PDEF) (CREDA and Kamara/Lagardere, 2005). Committed towards decentralisation, the ten-year education and training plan (PDEF) increased

the collaboration and negotiations between central government, local authorities, parents, learners and the SMCs (2005). As a result, educational governance structures were established at the regional, departmental and local level as well as at the school level. Within each level, educational development plans had to be advocated with the approval of parents. The PDEF also encouraged the involvement and negotiated partnerships of all stakeholders in education within the SDCs (Government of Senegal, 2002). Senegal's education system has been evolving since 1996 and greater decentralization and delegation has been operative with school principals being empowered to take on their role more efficiently as they make decisions about the curriculum, the syllabus, and financial implications (Diarra *et al.,* 2000). Nevertheless, education reform in Senegal is still in its infancy stage and still needs to review the intergovernmental transfer and bureaucratic management of social funds and other revenues to ensure quality-driven education system for Senegal (Planas, 2001; Cruise O' Brien, Diop and Diouf, 2002).

3.5.2. Composition of school governance in Senegal

According to CREDA and Kamara Lagardere, (2005) the School Management Committees were to be comprised of:

  i.   Parents of the learners of the school;

  ii.   The school principal or school head;

  iii. Educator-governors from the school staff;

  iv.   Members from civil society;

  v.   Non-teaching staff members;

  vi.   An official of the State

Figure 3.4. below illustrates the School management committee within Senegal's education system:
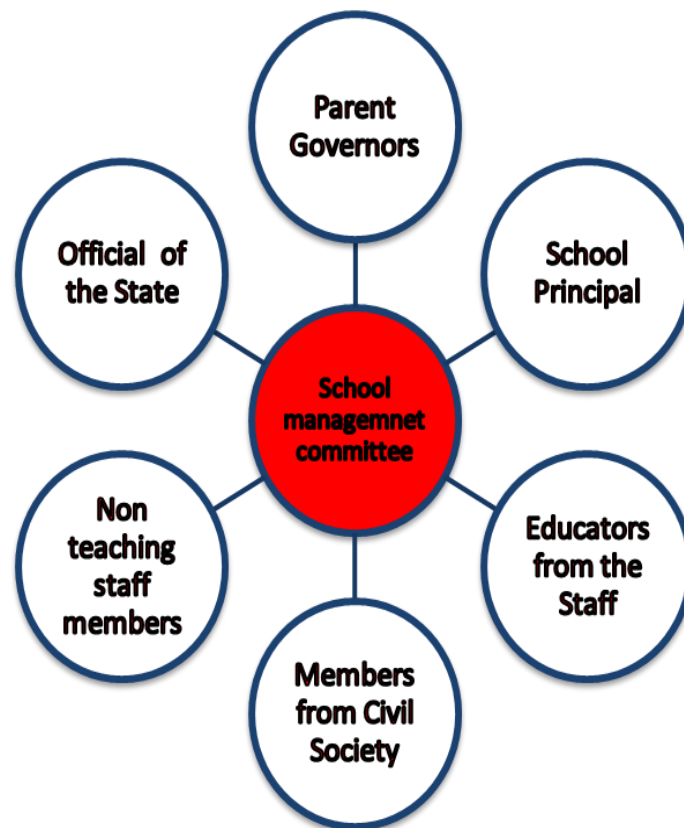
Figure 3.4. The School management committee within Senegal's education system

3.5.3. School governance and its functions

According to CREDA and Kamara/Lagardere, (2005), the school management committee (SMC) is responsible for the following:

i.   The development, implementation and systematic evaluation of the curriculum; as well as develop mission statement for the school;

ii. Providing financial assistance to indigent pupils;

iii. Presenting a financial statement for the end of each financial year;

iv.   Providing a financial budget and financial statements for review by the State;

v.   Negotiating the rise in school fees for the learners of the school;

vi.   Deciding on the extra mural activities for the learners;

vii.   Formulating, implementing and overseeing educational policies such as the admissions policy, discipline policy, financial policy and the educator employment policies, language policy and religious observances and policies;

viii.   Adopting a code of conduct for the learners of the school;

ix.   Maintaining and administering school property and making improvements to school buildings and projecting repair costs of school buildings;

x.   Purchasing learning and teaching materials for the maintenance of the school;

xi.   Interviewing and appointing staff;

xii.   Setting the terms and restrictions on the admission policy;

xiii.   Engaging in fundraising activities to increase funds for the school;

xiv.   Managing services such as lights, water and the purchase of learning support materials for the schools;

xv.   Reporting the results of assessments and examinations.

3.5.4. Challenges in the handling of learner discipline

It has been reported that SMCs have become frustrated with the acceleration of disciplinary problems experienced in the rural and public schools (Diarra, *et al.,* 2000). High student absenteeism, truancy, bullying and gang fights were some of the disciplinary problems reported at the secondary school level. Sadly, when the SMCs failed to adequately address these disciplinary problems, the problem began to increase. In their defence, SMCs have complained that the overcrowding in the classrooms aggravated disciplinary problems, worsening the disciplinary problems that were eventually beyond them. SMCs were also challenged by high teacher absenteeism that was inevitably leading to poor discipline (Ndiaye, 2006; Diop, 1999, World Bank, 2004). Consequently, SMCs were often found in conflict with these belligerent educators over their absenteeism, poor learner disciple and other challenges (Ndiaye, 2006; Diop 1999; World Bank, 2004). The reality is that as society became more fragmented due to financial inequalities, it became increasingly problematic for SMCs to commit themselves to schools that were facing serious disciplinary problems.

The nature of contradiction is such that while the SMCs were supposed to provide stability to a fragmented education system and a strong sense of solidarity among all its stakeholders, in reality they generated more conflicts, divisions, disputes and disagreements. It was not surprising that SMCs faced huge disparities due to the lack of parental involvement in handling learner discipline (Ndiaye, 2006). Consequently, there has been an alarming failure rate at secondary schools and many SMCs confirmed that they had no solutions to offer. An increase in school violence also posed a daunting challenge to many SMCs (Ndiaye, 2006), where in most cases they were simply out of their depth in providing any form of lasting solution (Marchand, 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002; CREDA and Kamar/Lagardere, 2005).

3.5.4.1. Strategies employed in dealing with learner discipline

i. The World Bank and Education For All (EFA) placed immense pressure on the Government of Senegal to re-examine their priorities, partnerships and competencies (Clemons and Vogt, 2002). Through such re-examination of its policies, loopholes could be easily identified and resolved;

ii. The Government of Senegal had adopted a *faire-faire* approach by 'making things happen' through placing A strong emphasis on partnerships, literacy programmes and community schools (Naine, 2004; World Bank, 2004; Kuenzi, 2003);

iii. The Government of Senegal also adopted an outsourcing approach, where each stakeholder within society was required to understand their role functions and responsibilities (Ndiaye, 2006; Diop, 1999 World Bank, 2004);

iv. The Government of Senegal also worked towards decentralisation by creating better working relationships and the ownership of its schools (Clemons and Vogt, 2002; Ndiaye, 2006; Diop, 1999);

v. Significantly a closer partnerships between the SMCs and the community established stronger collaborations and capacity building (Marchand, 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002; CREDA and Kamar/Lagardere, 2005);

vi. The Government of Senegal implemented an evaluation and monitoring system in order to better cope with rising disciplinary problems among school learners (Ndiaye, 2006);

vii. Senegal adopted a participatory system and fostered critical partnerships to enhance a high level of professionalism and deal with the rising disciplinary problems among school learners.

3.5.5. Challenges in the administration of school finances

Senegalese SMCs have long had to struggle with poor infrastructure and inadequate resources at their schools (Diarra *et al.,* 2000). In addition, the poor management of funds earmarked for education and the lack of monitoring and evaluation by SMCs has inevitably placed further strain upon them. Research has also reported that poor governance practices in many schools have resulted in many valuable resources being wasted. SMCs were often guilty of failing to carry out their duties properly, particularly in utilising public funds (Government of Senegal, 2002).

An important point to note is that most schools in Senegal were struggling financially and as a result the SMCs faced an enormous task in rehabilitating schools under their care (Marchand, 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002; CREDA and Kamar/Lagardere, 2005). Although NGOs were responsible for funding certain schools, more funds were still necessary.

Research studies into governance at Senegalese schools have revealed that most of the rural and township schools operate with no committees in place. Devolution has taken place in the lower-income country of Senegal and its education system has needed to adapt to the new era of education transformation. Nevertheless, SMCs are still struggling to cope with the financial challenges that are placed upon them. Diarra *et al.,* (2000) has shown the failure of SMCs at non-formal schools showed no evidence of minutes of meetings being taken or the presence of subcommittees for developing financial budgets. Correspondingly, research has shown that school principals and the SMCs did not have the necessary competency skills to manage the schools effectively (Marchand, 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002; CREDA and Kamara/Lagardere, 2005). Hence, they lacked the expertise and specialist skills to deal competently with matters of budgeting, financial planning, prioritising and financial management and strategic planning (Marchand, 2000; Diarra *et al.,* 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002; CREDA and Kamar/Lagardere, 2005). In practical terms, the SMCs lacked accountability

and failed to monitor tasks that were in the best interests of the schools under their care (2000).

While SMCs required further training to help them cope with their new role functions, the sheer lack of commitment of these committees was clearly in evidence (Clemons and Vogt, 2002; Diop *et al.,* 2000). To this effect, a lack of co-operation and co-ordination between the ministries, the education department and other governmental institutions challenged the SMCs even further because of continued financial constraints (Diarra *et al.,* 2000). Research has shown that SMCs did not receive sufficient support or training and that their responsibilities were beyond their recognised capabilities (Clemons and Vogt, 2002; Diop *et al.,* 2000).

Aide and Action (2002b) have argued that the SMCs failed to understand their role functions in financial management and what was expected of them. This situation had a direct implication of the administration and governance of the school at the level of effective financial management. Reported incidents over clashes between principals and the SMCs in regards to the management of finances have been an on-going since the country's move towards the decentralisation of school governance (Marchand, 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002; CREDA and Kamara/Lagardere, 2005). In accordance with the Constitution of Senegal, a lack of financial planning in terms of the collection of tax revenue caused the SMCs to be heavily dependent on the central government. In this, it is necessary to understand that the lack of evaluation of the SMCs led to a poor quality of education being offered. The poor management of educational funds further contributed to SMCs failing in their duties, responsibilities and functions (Diarra *et al.,* 2000). As a consequence, building effective SMCs was seen to be an essential process if the decentralisation of school governance was to succeed.

3.5.5.1. Strategies employed in dealing with the challenges in the administration of school finances

i. The NGOs were responsible for the effective training of the SMCs (Diarra *et al.,* 1999);

ii. The Senegalese education system established financial partnerships for the sole purpose of developing education;

iii. A detailed description of effective policy structures and educational reforms were seen as ways to overcome the financial difficulties experienced at Senegal schools;

iv. SMCs especially in the township areas did not have the financial expertise and therefore failed to meet their responsibilities. As a consequence, on-going training workshops needed to be employed to ensure school effectiveness and efficiency (Marchand, 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002; CREDA and Kamara/Lagardere, 2005);

v. The Government of Senegal (2002) examined the mobilisation of resources towards implementing education programmes and action-research capacity-building workshops for principals and SMCs (Diarra *et al.,* 2000);

vi. The Government of Senegal proposed to transfer financial responsibilities to the regional level and rural communities (Clemons, 2007 in Daun, 2007);

vii. Regional and rural communities were provided with funds to provide education (Nzouamkou, 1995; Rioleout and Bagayoko, 1994; Rondinelli and Minis, 1990). As a result, regions could negotiate with central government to obtain funds for specific projects;

viii.   In addition, SMCs and principals were now in a position to increase their school revenues as well as allocate these funds for the improvement of education (Diarra *et al.,* 2000);

ix.   Senegal had a ten-year education plan known as the *Plan decennal de l'education et de la formation* (PDEF) which encouraged the involvement and negotiated partnerships of all stakeholders involved in education (Government of Senegal, 2002). Senegal advocated equality and equity to ensure quality education for all (Government of Senegal, 2002).

3.5.6. Challenges in the formulation and implementation of admissions policy

A research study conduced by Aide et Action (2002a) revealed that local authorities and SMCs had failed to understand their role functions and responsibilities and as a consequence had faced major challenges in school governance. It has also been reported by Transparency International (TI) that schools in Senegal fostered poor governance systems and that this contributed to poor quality schools (Kuenzi, 2003).

Given the above scenario, the SMCs drafts and adopts an admission policy in terms of provincial guidelines (Marchand, 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002; CREDA and Kamar/Lagardere, 2005). Policies regarding school governance have to be in line with the Constitution to ensure it satisfies the fundamental rights of equality, equity, non-discrimination, equal access and fair administration. The admissions policy has caused much dispute especially over the discrepancies in its terms and provisions between the elite private schools and rural schools (Marchand, 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002; CREDA and Kamara/Lagardere, 2005). SMCs were challenged to formulate and implement policies that were within the parameters of the Senegalese Constitution. The SMCs within the private elite schools decided on the

adoption of their own specific admission policies. Only those learners who have passed stringent examinations are allowed to enter into these private schools. Failure of SMCs to conform to the State's regulations and legislation and ultimately the Constitution of Senegal impacted negatively on the functioning of governance at these schools (Marchand, 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002; CREDA and Kamara/Lagardere, 2005).

3.5.6.1. Strategies employed in dealing with the challenges in the formulation and implementation of admissions policy

With reference to Marchand (2000); Clemons and Vogt (2002); CREDA and Kamara/Lagardere, (2005) and Diarra *et al.,* (2000) the following strategies were observed in dealing with the challenges in the formulation and implementation of admission policy:

i.   The State specifically outlined in its regulations the processes and procedures for the formulation and administration of the admission policy for school management committees;

ii.   The school management committee, together, with all stakeholders should work collaboratively to achieve common learning goals in the admission policy and thus create a positive learning environment;

iii.   Principals were empowered to see their role function as 'steering' the boat in the right direction. In other words, principals were required to ensure transparency in all school policies;

iv.   A constant system of evaluation of school policies has ensured that admissions policies are accurately in line with the State Constitution;

v.   Where schools were failing in terms of its admission of learners, support team was put in place to provide expert assistance and guidance;

vi.   A distribution of leadership should be encouraged in all school organisations so as to ensure the values of equality and equity are continuously maintained in all school policies, with particular attention given to the admissions policy;

vii.   Educators, principals and academic leaders were empowered to should work collaboratively in formulating fair, transparent and non-discriminatory school admission policies.

3.5.7. Challenges in the appointment of staff

The SMCs are given the mandate to suggest staff members for promotion, although final decisions are made by the local authorities. This has caused disputes and clashes to erupt between the SMCs and the State. In contrast, the SMCs in rural areas with a very low literacy rate were undermined by principals and educators alike when recommendations were made for staff appointments (Marchand, 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002; CREDA *et al.,* 2005). Reported cases of bias and corruption have multiplied in many schools and SMCs were struggling with making cogent recommendations (Marchand, 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002; CREDA *et al.,* 2005). Finally, the SMCs lacked the ability to evaluate the educators of the school and make correct staff appointment recommendations (Marchand, 2000; Clemons and Vogt, 2002; CREDA *et al.,* 2005).

Correspondingly, research has shown that school principals do not have the necessary competency skills to handle staff appointments (Diarra *et al.,*2000). In particular, clarity of the role functions and responsibilities of the governing bodies became problematic as there were no explicit defining functions of each of their key role functions and this caused clashes to occur when recommending staff appointments. To heighten these challenges, overall school governance failed to succeed due to a lack of partnerships between the State, the parents and the NGOs (Clemons and Vogt, 2002).

3.5.7.1. Strategies employed in dealing with the challenges in the appointment of staff

With reference to the research of Marchand (2000), Clemons and Vogt (2002), CREDA *et al.,* (2005), the following strategies have been observed in dealing with the challenges in the appointment of staff:

i. More on-going skills training was facilitated to appoint high quality educators for the schools;

ii. More support was offered to the school management committees in the rural areas due to their high illiteracy level;

iii. The Government of Senegal has called for the greater involvement of communities, pedagogical training and seminars, capacity-building of leaders, sharing information, innovation and creating databases to empower failing school management committees in executing their key role functions and responsibilities.

3.6. International perspectives on school governance: Some concluding remarks

With the notion of decentralisation, every country has its own unique way of interpreting school governance. What is common, locally and internationally, is the concept of school governance and school governance structures and its relevance to improving the quality of education. In some instances, there are some similarities in the practice of school governance. Overall, parent participation was one of the main constituents of the school governing bodies.

Motivated by the research studies consulted, Finland's education system presents a highly structured and highly formalised system of education and therefore Finland has been recognised for its high quality education for all learners. Indeed, Finland's education system encompasses social democracy,

individual-centred learning, and cooperative management. In sum, this speaks to the overall success of the education system in Finland.

In a similar vein, England's education system has excelled through its emphasis on partnerships between central government, the LEAs and school governing bodies. The LEAs oversee the overall governance and management of the schools and has embraced the changes due to decentralisation. The success experienced within the school governance of England's education system has revolved around partnerships with the learning communities, providing support to the governing bodies.

In the case of Zimbabwe, there is still a concern voiced in terms of restoring equality and equity at all its schools. Nevertheless, Zimbabwe has proven that despite its political hurdles, they are still able to provide quality education to their learners.

Senegal is seen to still be struggling in terms of decentralisation and working independently within school governance practices. The plight of the rural schools in Senegal is alarming. Senegal as a independent State is still evolving and is therefore still in transition as it slowly extricates itself of it previous colonial identity. What is clear is that there is a pathway forward to a less liberal educational policy for this fragmented society.

Finally, an analysis of all the different countries has provided an in-depth understanding of what is being experienced, their associated challenges and the strategies used to overcome these challenges.

3.7.   Models of school governing bodies

As the phenomenon of school governance is dynamic and changing, new models are continuously being proposed. In this section, two models in particular will be briefly examined: the Traditional Governing Model and the

Collegial Governing Model (Marishane, 1999). These models depict how school governing bodies fulfil their governance in practice.

An examination of each proposed model will indicate their relevance as well as highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. Beginning with the Traditional Model and Collegial Model, I will thereafter describe, discuss and explore, five models drawn from the School Governance Study undertaken by the University of Bath in the UK. These models are particularly relevant to this study as they contribute towards designing an effective strategic school governing model that can effectively empower school governing bodies to function optimally in South African Schools.

3.7.1. The traditional governing model

The Traditional Governing Model is characterised by the lack of collaboration and of partnership (Marishane, 1999). Marishane (1999) argues that the Traditional Governing Model is more applicable where the principal dominates the decision-making process and where there is a lack of collaboration. A vertical hierarchy exists in the model and decisions are adopted from a top-down approach. This model emphasises authority, order and control. Inevitably, this model fails due to its rigidity and top-down structure. According to Marishane (1999), the school principal and the SGB work side-by-side in this model collaboratively to ensure effective school governance.

Diagram 3.5. below illustrates the Traditional Governing Model.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│       National Education Department       │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Provincial Education Department      │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              District Office              │
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│              Regional Office              │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│            SGB ↔ Principal                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                  Staff                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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│                 Learners                  │
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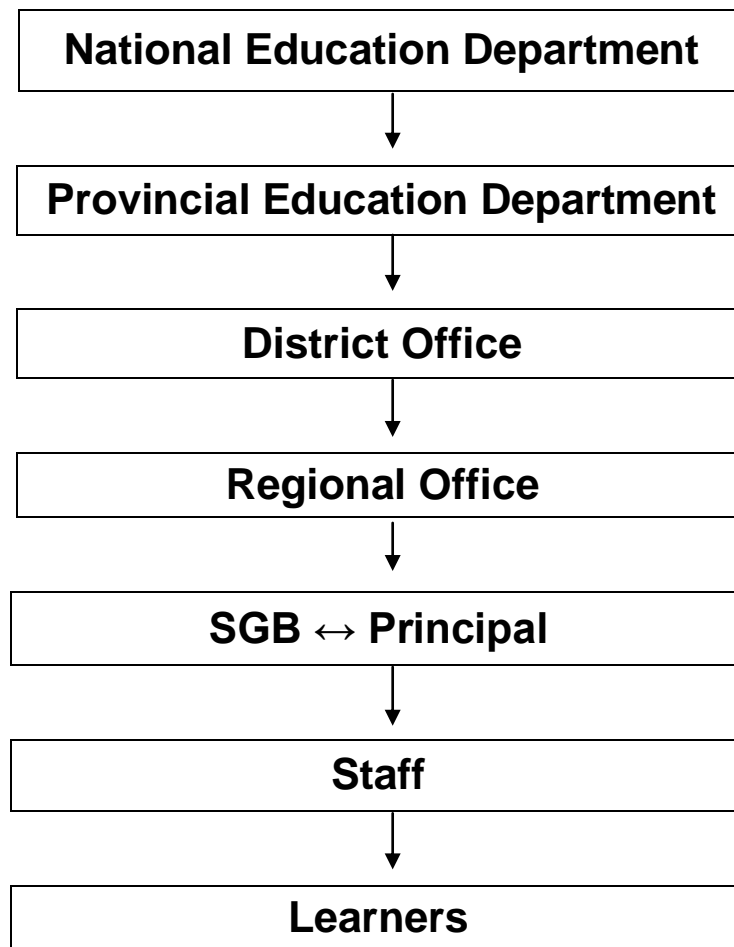
Figure 3.5. The Traditional Governing Model

3.7.2. The collegial governing model

This model applies to democratic societies and replaces the Traditional Governance Model. Within this model, shared decision making, participative management and open discussion is encouraged. All the members are seen to be on the same par and hold equal position. There is no longer a single level of authority and this model encourages healthy relationships between each of the stakeholders where an individual's contributions are considered and enhanced. The members within this model work co-operatively and make decisions collectively. As a result of this, the members are more committed. However, a need for outlined responsibilities and key role functions for each

stakeholder was imperative to make this model work, as the overlapping of functions and responsibilities brought about chaos and conflicts.

Figure 3.6. below illustrates the Collegial Governing Model:
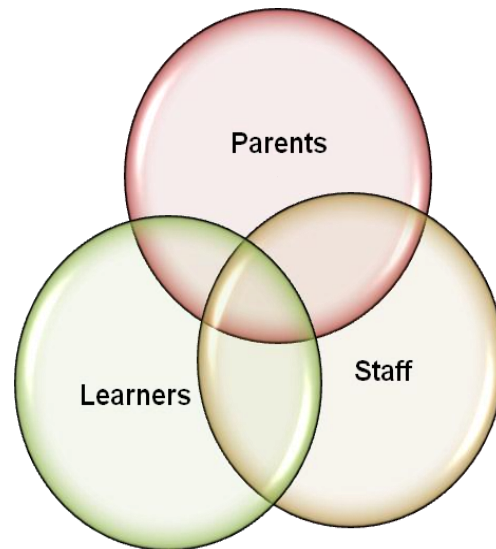
Figure 3.6. The Collegial Governing Model

The next section will focus on research conducted by the University of Bath in the UK on different models of school governance. Together with the literature review conducted on school governance in different countries, this data will assist in recommending a suitable approach for effective school governance in South African schools.

3.7.3. Research conducted by the University of Bath (UK) on models of school governing bodies

3.7.3.1. Model #1 (Current Model Enhanced)

This model is referred to as the Current Model Enhanced and posits a single governing body for each school. A depiction and analysis of what governing

bodies should look like is given and arrangements are made for any enhancements. Some of these enhancements include induction training, excellent administration, excellent recruitment and publicising governing bodies more widely. Here, the head teacher's responsibilities are delegated by the governing body.

3.7.3.1.1. Membership

Representatives of all key stakeholder groups as well as individuals selected for their expertise.

3.7.3.1.2. Functions and responsibilities

   i.   Oversight conduct of the school;

  ii.   Be responsible for the teaching;

 iii.   Set out the school vision;

 iv.   Identify and strategise aims for the school;

  v.   Monitor and evaluate all school performances;

 vi.   Formulate and appoint the school budget;

 vii.   Ensure that there is accountability at the school;

viii.   Appoint and manage the performances;

 ix.   Set salaries for the head teachers.

3.7.3.2. Model #2 (Current Model)

This is known as the Current Model and posits a single governing body. This model seeks to examine what changes can be made to the governing body and greater emphasis to the head teacher's responsibilities in order to make its work more effective. In this instance, more responsibility is given to head teachers and their decisions and plans are scrutinised by the governing body. Here the head teacher oversees the leadership and management of the school.

3.7.3.2.1. Membership

Members of the key stakeholders groups who are capable of scrutinising work.

3.7.3.2.2. Functions and responsibilities

i.   Scrutinise the leadership and management of the school;

ii.   Provide a discussion forum on what they expect the school to resemble;

iii. Appraise all staff work performances;

iv.   Manage key performances;

v.   Set salaries for the teachers;

vi.   Appoint head teachers in consultation of the Local Education Authority (LEA);

vii. Dismiss head teachers when necessary.

3.7.3.3. Model #3 (Unitary Governing Body)

This is known as the Unitary Governing Body and posits a single governing body for each school. It is important to note that in this model there is scrutiny only with no discussion forum. Here the head teacher oversees the leadership and management of the school.

3.7.3.3.1. Membership

Representatives of the State authority and various experts in the field.

3.7.3.3.2. Function and responsibilities

   i.   Monitors the performance of the school;

   ii. Evaluates all school processes, strategies and performances;

   iii. Ensure that all stakeholders complying with the rules and regulations.

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. The governing body is more focused on the clearly defined task of scrutiny;	1. The relationships among stakeholders may become strained;
2. Governor quality would be ensured by the number of governors;	2. Less community and stakeholder involvement;
3. A consistent self-evaluation would improve the governing body practices.	3. The levels of scrutiny may be undermined;
	4. The small number of governors may reduce the level of expertise on critical matters.

Table 3.1. Advantages and disadvantages of Model #3

3.7.3.4. Model #4 (Single Institution)

This is known as the Single Institution and comprises of both the Governing Board and Advisory Council. This entails two-tier governance. The Governing Board oversees the responsibility of scrutiny and the Advisory Council oversees the discussion forum. Here the head teacher gives oversight to the leadership and management of the school and will discuss pertinent issues.

3.7.3.4.1. Membership

Membership comprises of key experts, business representatives, Local Education Authority (LEA) representatives and representatives of key stakeholder groups.

3.7.3.4.2. Functions and responsibilities

i.   Scrutinising work performances;

ii.   Evaluating strategies and performances;

iii. Supporting the head teachers;

iv.   Consulting all stakeholders on school matters.

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. It divides the two tasks into scrutinising and stakeholder discussion and hence the tasks are clearly outlined;	1. Problems loom high due to the interrelationship between the two groups;
2. Recruitment is more clearly defined and members understand what is expected from them; 3. The small groups ensure full stakeholder engagement.	2. The formulation of the two groups results in 'reaction formulation' where the Advisory Board are more supportive to the head teacher while the Governing Body remains restrictive in its ways.

Table 3.2. Advantages and disadvantages of Model #4

3.7.3.5. Model #5 (Collaborative: Governing Board and Advisory Council)

This is known as the Collaborative: Governing Board and Advisory Council and includes the governing board and the advisory council. This model characterises collaborating groups. Each school has an advisory council that

hosts a discussion forum. The Governing Board has a scrutiny responsibility for a group of schools. At this stage, the head teacher collaborates with the Advisory Council regarding long term plans, short term plans and strategies.

3.7.3.5.1. Membership

Membership comprises of key experts, Local Education Authority (LEA) representatives, business representatives and representatives of the key stakeholder groups.

Advantages	Disadvantages
1. It promotes community cohesion by bringing schools together. 2. The position of the shared Governing Board strengthens the scrutiny and accelerates their performances; 3. The status of the Governing Board is raised and thereby given considerable status; 4. It becomes more manageable for Local Education Authorities to oversee their performances; 5. The 24,000 schools in England are able to operate more independently due to this reduction of atomisation;	1. It emphasises a two-tiered governing structure approach instead of one. This can become problematic; 2. The level of scrutiny may be weakened at each School advisory group; 3. If the schools do not have a thorough understanding of the outcomes of each school, then it could impact negatively.

6. Each school still retains its identity and individuality through the Advisory Council.	

Table 3.3. Advantages and disadvantages of Model #5

3.7.4. Concluding remarks on the five models

It is important to note that these models need to be reviewed within the confinements of school governance. The Traditional Governing Model was used during the apartheid era in South Africa. It failed due to its top-down hierarchical approach and was replaced by the Collegial Governing Model. This model promoted collaboration, shared decision-making and open discussion.

In sum:

i.   Model #1 was enhanced only by the provision of training and recruitment;

ii. Model #2 used the head teacher to oversee the management and leadership;

iii. Model #3 emphasised scrutiny with no discussion;

iv. Model #4 embraced two-tier governance and ensured scrutiny with a discussion forum but which could become problematic.

From the above analysis of all these models, the Model #5 (Collaborative Model: Governing Body and the Advisory Council) stands out as it accelerates community cohesion as well as enhancing the quality of governance at the school level. Although the other models make mention of the advisory council,

it is specifically within Model #5 that shared governance operates for the purposes of scrutiny and the increase of work performance.

3.8. Chapter Summary

Having provided a detailed account of the school governance practices in Finland, England, Zimbabwe and Senegal, it is evident that within these countries, school governance is purpose-driven towards improvement and developing effective governance structures despite the fact that governing bodies often have to deal with vast socio-economic inequalities, complexities of tasks and a multiplicity of other functions and responsibilities.

Viewing this objectively, the governance structures operating within Finland's education system were far superior to those in the other countries covered in the survey, with Senegal still struggling at the fiscal and administrative level to fully decentralise. Recent research studies confirms that the Finnish education system has been rated as one of the best in the world, attaining the highest student achievement rating in terms of reading, scientific and mathematical literacy (PISA, 2004).

Despite facing huge challenges, Finland's education system also seems to be the most constructive in the way it handles its challenges. In the main, this is due to the effective guidance of the municipalities which serve as bodies that ensure corrective procedure, transparency and accuracy in school governance in its schools.

The school governance in England adhered to a partnership between the central government, local government and the governing bodies. Here again, despite the challenges, the mutual trust and respect between these bodies contributed to sound governance practices. While Zimbabwe and Senegal are making steady progress towards better governance structures, they nevertheless lag behind the West. Sound training is imperative for the school governing bodies to be capacitated to discharge all their complex

functionalities. The governance structures within Zimbabwe and Senegal are in a hopeless or even failing state with a greater need for partnerships, intensive training and entrenchment of decentralised decision-making. What is especially important to consider is that governance structures in Senegal and Zimbabwe have been crippled by the huge financial disparities and serious weaknesses that existed in the education systems as they were organised under colonial rule.

In the next chapter I will provide a discussion of the methodology used to investigate the experiences and challenges of the SGBs in the following key areas: learner discipline, school finances, formulation of admissions policy and appointment of staff. Additionally, I will elaborate on the rationale for sampling coupled with the data collection methods, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1.   Introduction

This chapter will concentrate on the approach that is to be adopted in gathering data for this research study. This will include a critical examination of the broad methodological and epistemological frameworks as well as the different methods or techniques that were employed and their justification. The actual procedure in connection with each technique will then follow, after which issues of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability and dependability will be explored. Attention will also be given to the analysis of data and the chapter will conclude with some discussion on the limitations of the present study and the importance of ethical clearance.

In this chapter particular focus will be on the qualitative research approach given the nature of the problem to be investigated. The focus of this investigation was on the experiences and challenges of SGBs in the execution of some of their key role functions and responsibilities. These included the handling of learner discipline, the managing of school finances, the formulation and implementation of admission policy and finally, the appointment of staff. The qualitative approach is particularly suitable for the researcher to conduct interviews, observe meetings and, interrogate extant documents.

As introduced in chapter one of this study, the principal aim of the qualitative research approach is to explore and describe events as understood by the participants from their own frame of reference. The results of a qualitative research approach are not arrived at through statistical procedures but are descriptive findings of the phenomenological process under investigation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The motivation for choosing a qualitative research

approach will be elaborated upon later in this chapter. In the section which follows, I will focus on the epistemological and the philosophical position of the research study.

4.2.   Methodological and Epistemological Considerations

The epistemological and philosophical perspective of the present research study is presented in this chapter in its relationship to the research paradigm. A researcher's pragmatic views inevitably influence the purpose and direction of the research study. In this sense, a paradigm refers to the ethics, epistemology, methodology and ontology and is simply a set of "beliefs" that will give direction to an action (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:157). Other scholars describe a paradigm as a collection of theories that are situated in a specific situation and are identified as the positivist (empirical), post-positivist, interpretivist or constructivist and critical theory (McNiff, 2006). Concisely, a paradigm distinguishes between the views of knowledge and how this knowledge can be acquired and generated (2006). In what follows, I will describe how I have used ontologies (theories of realities) and epistemologies (theories of knowledge and knowledge acquisition) and methodologies to create strategies and make recommendations for effective and efficient SGBs.

Ontology is constituted by how we think and understand about a phenomena and the nature of its reality. Whereas epistemology is constituted by the way we look at the phenomena; methodology describes the approaches we use in search of that knowledge (Denzin and Lincoln, 2002). The way in which knowledge is developed and generated in a setting is where epistemological and ontological assumptions are further understood. There is a significant relationship between the epistemological which is the constitution of knowledge and methodological dimensions. This is influenced by my research interests as I investigate the experiences and challenges of SGBs within various different school contexts. In the subsection which follows, I will briefly explain the different paradigms that can be used in research and give reasons why I positioned myself within the critical theory paradigm for my study.

4.2.1. A brief analysis of the different research paradigms

According to Cohen *et al.,* (2007), Denzin and Lincoln (2002), Henning *et al.,* (2004) and Muijs, (2004), the different modalities of each research paradigm can be understood as follows:

4.2.1.1. Positivist / Empirical

i.   The researcher endeavours objectivity and precision through the study;

ii. It focuses on scientific enquiries, facts, theories, laws and predictions;

iii. It makes use of experiments, quasi-experiments, surveys and correlational studies;

iv. The researcher is detached from the study and stays outside the research to maintain objectivity;

v.   It employs systematic quantitative methods to conduct research and collects and records the data systemically;

vi. It predicts the phenomena through various quantitative methods and represents the truth in the most appropriate and objective way in a natural setting;

vii. It uses empirical tests to verify accuracy and its aim is to test hypotheses in order to predict the truth;

viii. It approaches the research by looking at the cause and effect of test results through deductive reasoning, observations, numerical data, large sampling and hypotheses testing to predict their results;

ix.   Results are always obtained through statistical analysis and numerical data and therefore remain guaranteed;

x.   The results can be applied and generalised to other practices.

4.2.1.2. Post-positivist

i.   The research is an approximation of reality;

ii.   The researcher positions herself/himself as the data collection;

iii.   The post-positivist research method ensures that reality exists through rigorous qualitative methods;

iv.   It uses a low level statistical and frequency counts;

v.   The form of knowledge is produced through generalisations, descriptions, patterns and grounded theories.

4.2.1.3. Constructivist / Interpretivist

i.   Through the interpretive or constructivist paradigm, the researcher is able to capture the lives of the participants in order to understand and interpret meaning;

ii.   The interpretive or constructivist researcher is able to offer multiple explanations and descriptions for people's actions and ways of living in a subjective reality;

iii.   The researcher interrogates her/his conclusions based on the opinions, viewpoints and feelings of the participants;

iv.   The researcher also uses symbols, beliefs, ideas and feelings attached to objects, events and activities;

 v.   The researcher examines different places and different things to understand the phenomenon;

vi.   Meaning is constructed by human beings through engagement with the world and how it can be interpreted;

vii.   The interpretivist believes that the mind is active in the construction of knowledge;

viii.   The views, decision-making, perceptions, judgments, beliefs and understandings of humankind underpin the interpretive theory;

ix.   There are multiple realities of people's interpretations and viewpoints;

 x.   The interpretivist is not detached from the research but is actively involved in the research;

xi.   Within the interpretive paradigm, the participants interact with each other to draw out their feelings and viewpoints;

xii.   The interpretivist does not focus on universal laws and generalisations but rather on interpretative inquiry;

xiii.   Interpretivist research focuses on interpretive inquiry which is understood as knowledge;

xiv.   Interpretive research is used extensively in social science and education research;

xv.   A pluralistic view of reality as well as diversity of mutually and socially constructed interpretations are emphasised;

xvi.   The disadvantage of using the interpretive paradigm is that human errors and flaws can be found resulting in complexities.

4.2.1.4. Critical theory

i.   All knowledge is subjective and political;

ii.   It engages in transformative inquiry;

iii.   It encompasses critical consciousness and attempts to examine power relations in order to make sense of the information;

iv.   By understanding the power relations in plays, change is able to be brought about as the situation is further understood;

v.   It endeavours to root out inequalities and act responsibly by searching for solutions so as to change and improve issues in the world;

vi.   It uses a variety of qualitative enquiries for data collections such as personal experiences, case studies, life stories, artefacts, field notes, interviews, cultural texts, visual texts to gather meaningful information;

vii.   It is socially constructed, resulting in multiple realities and its knowledge (epistemology) is focused on interpretations, meanings and experiences, rather than hard reality;

viii.   It uses case studies, narratives, interpretations and reconstructions.

The critical research paradigm was most appropriate and relevant for this study as it attempts to understand and make sense of the information in order to change and improve the present operating models (McNiff, 2006). Consequently, I was able to examine social situations that were created by people so that they can be deconstructed and reconstructed by others. By positioning myself in a critical research paradigm, I was able to understand the human interests and power relations in terms of their dialectical realities (McNiff, 2006). From my reading, I have found that the critical theorist gathers a large amount of data to substantiate her/his findings and illustrate her/his results (Henning *et al.,* 2004; Muijs, 2004). In this way, I was able to explore the experiences, challenges and perceptions of SGBs in handling learner discipline, administering school finances, formulating admission policy and appointing staff.

The paradigm was also able to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, however due to its characteristic of 'rich' or 'thick' data, made up of human experiences, interpretations and meanings; it is inclined more towards qualitative methods of data collection rather than quantitative methods of data collection. Accordingly, this study will follow a qualitative approach since it is interested in human experiences.

In the next section, I will elaborate on the research design of the present research study.

4.3.   The research design

The research design encompasses the way the research is going to unfold in order to answer the research questions. In other words, a research design describes how a study will be conducted (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). According to De Vos *et al., (*2000:77) a research design is a "blue print or detailed plan of how a research study is to be conducted." For this reason, it is an overall plan of how data is going to be collected and how it is going to be analysed. In other words, it is a master plan that will eventually bring about the

research results (De Vos, 2002). This description is well-supported by Babbie and Mouton (2001) who use the analogy of building a house where a plan first needs to be put in place before a house can be constructed. In the same way, the research design denotes the plan of action for the research study (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). In other words, the aim of a research design is to provide an overall framework whereby the researcher is able to draw conclusions from all the data collected (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002).

Each research design differs from one study to another, depending on the actual purpose of the study. Research designs vary from experimental research designs, correlation research designs, surveys and case studies:

i.   A correlation study examines the relationship of two variables or factor variables that range between 1,000 to -1,000;

ii. An experimental research design studies the cause and effect with random selection and, a case study encompasses an in-depth study of the situation;

iii. A case study design is an empirical study which endeavours to examine the experiences and challenges of a particular event or trend.

In the next section I will discuss the individual aspects of the case study method and its particular relevance to this research study.

4.3.1. Case study research design

The understanding of a case study has been interpreted differently by scholars. Sharon Merriam (1998:18) describes a case study research as follows:

A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest was in the context rather than a specific variable in discovery.

Cohen *et al.,* (2007) describe a case study as an analysis of a "bounded" system within a period of time. Merriam (1998) has pointed out that a case study concerns either a single or few cases of the same units of interests. Henning *et al.,* (2004:156) concur with Cohen *et al.,* (2000) in holding that case studies are "intense descriptions and the analysis of the bounded system." Sharing the same opinion, Henning *et al.,* (2004:56) maintain that "a case study is a systematic inquiry into an event or set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomena of interest."

Case studies are used to address descriptive, exploratory research questions. In this regard, this present study endeavours to answer the following central research question:

> "What are the experiences and challenges faced by the SGB in performing their key role functions and responsibilities contained in the SASA?"

The present places its focus on the following key areas: handling learner discipline, administration of school finances, the formulation of admissions policy and finally, the appointment of staff.

As the researcher, I am able to gain a better understanding of the situation by using the case study method (Henning *et al.*, 2004). According to the case study method, it explores the description and analysis of a phenomenon taking into account the respondents' point of view (Merriam, 1998).

Case studies can however become problematic as it can become too lengthy to read, understand and analyse (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). To avoid this, it is imperative that the location and context of the research study be clearly identifiable and outlined (Stake, 1995). In this present study, the focus will be

on the experiences and challenges faced by the SGBs at secondary schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

In the sub-section which follows, I will review the relevance of the qualitative research to this study.

4.3.2. The qualitative research approach

I chose the qualitative research approach as I was able to investigate the phenomena by describing and understanding the phenomena from the perspective of the participants (Leedy and Ormrod, 2004). In addition, the research methodology provides the researcher with guidelines on the research process and the kind of procedures that can be used (Mouton, 2001). Consequently, qualitative research approach uses an inductive method to interpret, analyse the data so as to obtain common themes (McNiff, 2006). The qualitative researcher endeavours to obtain an in-depth understanding and definition of the problem or phenomenon that is presented by the participants. The researcher goes to the research sites where the actual problem is taking place (Creswell, 2002). The qualitative researcher is naturalistic as the researcher examines the place where the events are naturally occurring. In this way, the researcher can attempt to understand the factors that cause effective and/or ineffective school governance practices. Ultimately, the qualitative technique for data collection comprises of words rather than numbers and therefore allows the researcher to retrieve an in-depth description of the observed phenomena (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). The advantage of using the qualitative research study is that it is not controlled, but instead is flexible and allows for freedom of representation and action (Henning *et al.,* 2004)

Through the qualitative research approach the descriptive data allows patterns, themes and holistic features to dominate this approach (Johnson and Christensen, 2012). Consequently, the qualitative study was specifically used to determine the participants' conceptualisation of school governance,

their understanding of the role of the SGB, their views on bureaucratic systems operative at the school and practices and trends in the education system as a whole.

Within the qualitative research study, the researcher is deeply immersed in their natural setting of the phenomena and is therefore able to capture the richness and complexity of the behaviour associated with the phenomena (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993).

An essential consideration in qualitative research design is the explorative strategy that is used to understand how humans explore, describe and relate to the phenomena in their natural setting (Gay and Airasian, 2003). In this way, the researcher is able to explore the experiences and challenges of the participants and simultaneously monitor their evaluations to derive context-free generalisations (Henning *et al.,* 2004). Therefore, the qualitative researcher is more concerned about the social phenomenon and taking into consideration the participants' perspectives and viewpoints.

Qualitative research is an interactive type of field research or non-interactive document research that strives to portray what is actually happening in a given situation (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). Within the qualitative research approach, the researcher is able to have a face-to-face interaction with the respondents and in this way gain in-depth insight into the phenomenon as a whole (Maree, 2007). The qualitative researcher is deeply immersed in the study and observes and interviews the participants in their natural setting (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). The qualitative researcher does not intervene in the human behaviour but rather studies the behaviour naturalistically and holistically (Johnson and Christensen, 2012). Qualitative researchers point to "reality that is socially constructed" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The qualitative researcher tries to get close to the participant, so that s/he can understand the participants' viewpoints. This is referred to as "empathetic understanding" (Johnson and Christensen, 2012). The qualitative researcher is also interested in understanding the insiders' perspectives and peoples' cultures and therefore engages in a participatory contract (Johnson

and Christensen, 2012). Moreover, the qualitative researcher endeavours to learn more about the phenomena and come up with new hypotheses and theories (Johnson and Christensen, 2012).

Through interpretation and observation, the conceptualisations of their conclusions are characterised (Cohen and Manion, 2003). There is a greater use of words, images and categories than with numbers, statistics or numerical analysis. In other words, the researcher is able to generate knowledge, ground theory and hypotheses from data during the field work. A qualitative research project is a more empathetic and explorative approach and examines the breadth, length and depth of the phenomena (Johnson and Christensen 2012).

Within the qualitative research approach, the researcher is the primary data-collection instrument. The qualitative researcher endeavours to reconstruct a picture that will eventually take shape as the different parts are collected (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). The choice of KwaZulu-Natal is a natural setting of the participant and is also purposive. Ultimately, the purpose of the qualitative study tests the general viewpoints and perceptions that the literature study purports to be in a given phenomena for the study (Johnson and Christensen 2012). Most importantly, the theoretical component of the research strengthens the research findings. Evidently, the qualitative researcher relies on the language used and looks at ways of how meaning can be constructed from the aspects of the language that presents the data (Henning *et al.,* 2004). According to Reid and Smit (1981), qualitative research refers to the research gaining first-hand understanding of the phenomena studies, with an intention to have a strategy in place, in order to solve the problems envisioned. In other words, through qualitative research, raw data can be converted into 'thick' data that gives an account of the phenomenon. Additionally, qualitative research is more flexible and changes can be implemented in the course of the study.

Finally, as the researcher, my ontological position (the way I perceive the world) and my epistemological position (knowledge) have a direct influence on

the research study and how I chose to design the inquiry (Henning *et al.,* 2004). As the researcher, I approached the study with an open mind in order to understand the complexity of school governance as it was presented within the four chosen secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

In the next sub-section, I will discuss the sampling technique that was chosen for the study and why it was the most appropriate sampling method for the study.

4.3.3. Sampling

Qualitative studies usually employ a non-probability sampling such as purposive, snowball and theoretical sampling (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). As the researcher in this study, I opted for a qualitative case study approach. In particular, I saw that a purposive study approach was best as it allowed me to select those participants and sites which I assumed to be appropriate for the study. According to Kumar:

> Sampling is the process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group (2011:193).

A sample is a portion of the population which forms a representative of that population (Kerlinger, 1986). In other words, a sample is used to explain the facet of the population (Powers *et al.,* 1985:235). Furthermore, a sample is necessary for reasons of feasibility (Reid and Smith, 1981). As a result, it is important that careful consideration be taken when choosing a sample in terms of its "representability" (Kerlinger, 1986: 10).

In the next section I will describe the procedure I followed in the purposive sampling procedure I utilised in selecting the sites and participants I found suitable for the present study.

4.3.3.1. Purposive sampling

As it is almost impossible to research the entire population, a small group was studied to draw conclusions (De Vos *et al.,* 2000). Importantly, the researcher needs to look at selecting participants that will meet the actual purpose of the study whilst looking at the cost and time constraints (Johnson and Christensen, 2012). In other words, qualitative researchers endeavour to seek the individuals and settings that enable them to study the phenomena more closely and intently (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2000). Furthermore, the sample must be able to provide the necessary information to answer the research questions. In this way, information rich informants and research sites can be identified for this particular research study on the basis of their knowledge, experiences and positions (De Vos *et al.,* 2000:207). Consequently, I took particular care and consideration when choosing the schools and participants for the present research study.

4.3.4. Rationale for school sampling

The research study was conducted in four secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. These schools were purposefully selected. The sample was chosen as follows:

   i.   A deep rural school that had been experiencing poor matriculation results for the past five years and is attended exclusively by black learners;

   ii.   A township school within a peri-urban area that had been experiencing poor matriculation results for the past five years that is attended mostly by 'coloured' and black learners;

   iii.   An ex-Model C school within a semi-urban area that had been experiencing good matriculation results for the past five years that is mostly attended by learners of all races;

iv.	An elite private school within an urban area that had been experiencing excellent matriculation results that is mainly attended by 'white' learners and 'Asian' learners.

The race of the learners attending the four schools has been included as it is reflective of the historical background of South Africa and the racial differences and inequalities of the past apartheid government. For the reasons of anonymity and confidentiality, I used pseudonyms for each school. They were as follows:

i.	The deep rural school was referred to as Shozi High School;

ii.	The township school was referred to as Fikile High;

iii.	The ex-Model C school was referred to as Hilltop High School;

iv.	The elite private school was referred to as Sozo High School.

4.3.5. Participants of the Study

For the study, I chose participants that would be able to supply me with the information that would allow me to understand the experiences of school governance practices in secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. The participant selection was purposeful and dimensional so that it would be of best interest to the investigation (Strydom and Venter, 2002; Meriam, 1998). The participants in the research are all involved in their respective school governing board (SGB).

The sample for this study consists of sixteen participants in a sample of four secondary schools. There were chosen as follows:

i.	Four (4) principals of each participating schools were chosen for in-depth interviews;

ii.   Four (4) chairpersons of the SGBs were chosen for in-depth interviews;

iii.   Four (4) educator governors of the SGBs of each school were chosen for in-depth interviews;

iv.   Four (4) learner governors of the SGB of each school were chosen for in-depth interviews.

The school principal, school chairpersons, school educators and learners of the SGBs all represent a broad socio-economic spectrum of the public school system. In particular, the research sample includes previously disadvantaged schools, disadvantaged township schools, ex-Model C schools and private schools. At least four participants from each respective school participated in the study. Furthermore, the researcher systematically selected the samples according to a specifically controlled condition (Johnson and Christensen 2012). The participants, i.e., school principals, chairpersons of the SGB, educators and learner-governors of each SGB, were all important to the study as they were each chosen for a specific purpose. Furthermore, all the participants that were chosen were knowledgeable in a specific area of concern and possessed in-depth understanding of the phenomena (Ball, 1990). I chose them on the basis that each participant was a member of the SGB and hence they would possess the necessary information in regards to the chosen area of my investigation: handling school discipline, managing of school finances, formulating and implementing of school admissions policy and appointing of staff members.

4.3.6. Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to determine whether the respondents were able to provide the relevant information for the research study. In addition, the researcher wanted to ensure that the questions asked were understood by the participants of the research study. The researcher conducted a pilot study for the purpose of reliability and validity of the research instruments in collecting

sufficient data to answer the research questions (De Vos, 2002). Consequently, the research instrument could be suitably tested and measured. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a pilot study is beneficial for the credibility of the research instruments and to alleviate the possibility of any errors and in this way enhance the quality of the study. In addition, the purpose of the pilot study was to determine the approximate time for each interview and to check for any inconsistencies and vagueness in the structured questions.

A pilot study also provides greater assurance to the researcher and ensures the feasibility of the study. By piloting a study, the researcher is able to check clarity. This is crucial for its overall success (Oppenheim, 1992; Morrison, 1993). In this way, the researcher is able to deduce if the study will be feasible. By selecting appropriate types of questions in the pilot study, the possibly of any unambiguity is negated (Oppenheim, 1992). In this way, the researcher is able to test the readability of the questions asked, be clear as to what is expected from the respondents and avoid any threatening or repetitive questions (De Vos, 2002). In other words, problem areas can be easily highlighted and rectified. Furthermore, the researcher will be able to focus on what is relevant and remove any items of irrelevancy.

Two sets of interviews were piloted at one high school, with one secondary educator and one principal as both participants were available and willing to participate in the pilot study. The participants were asked to comment on the type of questions asked, the level of difficulties experienced, the questions relevant to the objectives of the study and the length of time it took to complete each interview. The participants involved in the pilot study openly shared their opinions, viewpoints and experiences. In addition, I observed a SGB meeting conducted at this respective school. The participants were apprehensive at first to speak openly, but as time elapsed they did not even notice my presence. The school principal also made available documents relevant to the study. These included the minutes of previous SGB meetings, parent letters, official memos, the vision statement and the mission statement of the school and the code of conduct for the learners. The documents were

analysed and scrutinised in order to validate the data retrieved from the interviews and observations.

After the pilot study was conducted, I realised some of the research questions were not suitably worded. I therefore had to rephrase and reword the questions so that the main idea would be communicated to the participants in the final research.

4.3.7. Research questions

The original Interview schedule had the following questions:

i.   Would you describe your SGB as effective and efficient and important to the school?

ii.   What advice would you give to SGBs that are failing?

iii. How do you feel about position in the SGB?

iv.   What is your attitude towards your role as a member of the SGB?

4.3.7.1. Rephrased interview schedule

As stated above, the interview schedule was rephrased and reworded to ensure that the questions were both clear and relevant and that the participants knew what was expected of them. In this way, the vagueness of the earlier questions was dealt with and changed accordingly:

i.   As a chairperson of the SGB, what is the importance of the SGB at your school?

ii.   What are your main functions and responsibilities as the Chairperson of the SGB?

iii.   As a Chairperson of the SGB, what aspects of school governance would you like to change?

iv.   As a principal, what are your key role functions and responsibilities?

4.3.8. Data collection methods

Within this study, various research instruments were used such as observations, interviews and document analysis to provide a deeper understanding of the SGBs' experiences and challenges. This was done in order to gain an overall understanding of the problem of school governance in South Africa and its possible solution.

Since the final data will be retrieved more than one way, I will now examine the concept of triangulation and its relevance, showing clearly why it is necessary to this research study.

4.3.8.1. Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the use of two or more methods of research. These are known as multi-method approaches. Through its use, the qualitative researcher explains the complexity and richness of the human behaviour in more than one standpoint (Cohen and Manion, 2003). To ensure that the data collected is a true reflection of the research study, the researcher uses more than one technique. Through triangulation, multiple sources of data can be retrieved, so that they can converge to develop a theory or hypothesis (Leedy and Ormrod, 2004). In other words, using a multi-method approach will help to explain the richness and complexity of human behaviour Essentially therefore,

triangulation prevents the problem of method "boundedness" (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

Studying the phenomena from more than one viewpoint enhances the validity of the research study (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). To ensure that the data collected will be sufficiently valid, a researcher must employ more than one method to collect data. In terms of this present study, this will be in terms of the challenges and experiences of the SGBs in the area of school discipline, school finances, admissions policy and the appointment of staff members. Triangulation therefore ensures that the researcher looks at more than one perspective to understand the complexity of human behaviour (Cohen *et al.,* 2007). In this way, the researcher is able to look for reoccurring patterns when comparing different settings (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). In this present study, the researcher employed observations, interviews and document analysis to gain an overall understanding of the phenomena of school governance. The use of multiple methods allowed the research to combine dissimilar methods to understand the same phenomena.

Through triangulation, the validity of the data retrieved can be maintained as the researcher reflects on the similarity of information gathered through observations, interviews and document analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The more the outcomes are used in contrast to one another, the greater the similarities that are created. Instead of limiting it to one method, the researcher endeavours to use more than one method to validate the data.

Through triangulation, the data is checked to identity similarities, differences and contrasts. Triangulation is especially useful when a complex phenomena is being investigated (Cohen *et al.,* 2007). However, as Patton (1990) has argued, triangulation does not necessitate consistency and repetition. Accordingly, triangulation is both significant and relevant when a complex phenomenon is being researched. In this way, using the literature review, interviews, observations and document analysis, the problem can be eliminated, problem areas addressed and strategies for improvement recommended.

4.3.8.2. In-depth interviews

According to Terre Blance and Kelly (1999:134) interviews are described as "Interacting with people in naturalistic way that makes it possible to understand their world from the inside out." For Lincoln and Guba (1985) an in-depth interview is a "repeated face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants directed towards understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations as expressed in their own words." Through the interview method, we give people an opportunity to share their beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations, feelings, thoughts, experiences and ideas. In this way, we make generalisations and also validate our own experiences of the interviewee. In other words, the interviewer enters into the world of the interviewee. Presumably, the interviewee is able to "air" her/his frustrations, opinions and viewpoints. Interviews provide personal interpretations and representations of peoples' lives (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). For Cohen *et al.,* (2007.349) an interview is a flexible tool for gathering information, discussing interviewees' interpretations and understandings of their own experiences.

As Silverman (1993) has shown however, it is important to examine the interview data with a deeper lens so as to understand what the crux of the experience is. The interview content may also vary from deep emotions, experiences, facts, opinions. Consequently, data has to be examined for inner truths and underlying meanings. In terms of the present research therefore, the interviews were conducted so as to obtain the respondent's experience of school governance and their endeavour to overcome its challenges.

According to Bogban and Biklen, an interview is described as a purposeful conversation that occurs between two persons and serves the following advantages:

- It is flexible and adaptable and can be easily rephrased if a problem arises.

- It can be assured that all questions will be answered through the interview.

- It can be used for all types of persons, from young children to even illiterate persons.

- It provides for a better response than from questionnaires.

- Interviews have a certain amount of control over the environment.

- Interviews can be controlled by the interviewer to avoid biasness and is tailored to answer the research questions.

- Through interviewing, the interviewer is able to probe and encourage the participants and maintain a relaxing and less stressful atmosphere.

- Through interviewing, the interviewer is able to clarify questions that the interviewee does not understand.

- It establishes an element of trust between the interviewer and interviewee.

- It helps the interviewer to stay focused and to keep to the point.

- Through the interviews, the interviewer is able to give and receive non-verbal clues that help the interviewee to stay relaxed and calm and eases the unfamiliar situation.

- Through an interview, it avoids the interviewer from being an authoritarian figure.

- It can be a positive and rewarding experience.

- It also enables the researcher to go the root problem that is being investigated (Bogban and Biklen 2003:94).

The role of the interviewer needs to assure the interviewee by creating an ambience of trust and accountability during the entire interview period (Johnson, 2002). During the entire interview, the interviewer needs to be confident and know her/his subject thoroughly before engaging in the interview proper (Bogban and Biklen, 2003). There also needs to be face-to-face interaction between the interviewer and the informant in order to build up mutual trust and respect (Johnson, 2002). Moreover, there should be sufficient guidance given by the interviewer to ensure that the focus of the question is not lost (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002). Any misinterpretation of the research questions should also be easily clarified and rephrased for a better understanding. Before starting the interview, it is important to explain to the participants of the key purpose of the study. These include:

i.   The contents of the study;

ii. The use of a digital tape recorder during the interview;

iii. The procedures that would be followed during the interview;

iv. The undertaking that confidentiality would be maintained with respect to all information given.

As a consequence, the interviewer needs to give interviewee sufficient time to answer the questions to the best of their own understanding. Finally, the interviewer needs to be more sensitive and empathetic to the needs and feelings of the interviewee (Oppenheim, 1992).

The purpose of interviews is to retrieve information concerning the feelings, viewpoints, beliefs, experiences and encounters of the participants. In other words, in-depth interviews were conducted to fully understand how the SGBs felt about their key role functions in the secondary schools and what challenges are they were facing. Interviews were undertaken with the school principal of each school, who is also be the *ex-officio* member of the SGB; the chairpersons, an educator-governor and the learner governor of each SGB. For this reason, I chose in-depth interviews as one of my research instruments to give participants an opportunity to express their views, opinions and experiences.

All participants signed a letter of consent wherein their confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed before the interviews began. As the researcher, I was able to get close to the participants and also get to know them personally. I have chosen interviews because as a researcher I should not access the answers as right and wrong but allow the interviewees to express themselves as clearly as they can from their own experiences. In this way, the interviewees were able to express themselves as freely as possible as they described their experiences.

It is imperative to debrief the respondents in order to minimise misunderstandings (Judd *et al.,* 1991). All the interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis in the principal's office, ranging in time from 50-60 minutes. All the participants agree to be audio-taped. The interview questions were structured in such a way that participants were able to relate their actual experiences as members of the SGBs. Most of the questions were open-ended and this encouraged the respondents to analyse and explain issues in their own way (Henning *et al.,* 2004). I used interviews as they were most suitable for all types of persons, including the illiterate or those too young to

read and understand. Accordingly, I adapted the questions to the level of understanding of the respondents. I also posed open-ended questions to arouse the thinking capacity of the participants as well as to investigate their own solutions to their problems.

It was also advantageous to use the interview method since some of the interviewees, especially in the rural schools, spoke mainly in the Zulu language. Hence, it was easy to explain through the translator what I expected of the respondents. Once all questions had been answered, I thanked each of the participants for their time, effort and contribution and thereby ended the session on a positive note.

On the other hand, the disadvantage in using the interview method is that there could be a tendency to show bias on the part of the researcher. Interviews may also be hard to analyse and could be costly (Henning *et al.,* 2004). To overcome this, I decided to allow the participants to express themselves as openly as possible.

I conducted forty-five minute in-depth interviews for all the participants of the study. This included:

   i.   Four (4) principals of each participating schools were chosen for in-depth interviews;

  ii.   Four (4) Chairpersons of the SGBs were chosen for the in-depth interviews;

 iii.   Four (4) educators of the SGBs of each school were chosen for the in-depth interviews;

 iv.   Four (4) non-teaching staff of the SGB of each school were chosen for the in-depth interviews.

A total number of sixteen (16) participants were involved in the research study. In addition, I supported the data from the in-depth interviews with that from documentary sources and observations of the SGB meetings in the secondary schools.

4.3.8.3. The interview schedule

According to Kumar (2011:145), an interview schedule is a "written list of questions, open ended or closed, prepared for use by the interviewer in a person-to person interaction." A literature review usually guides the interview schedule and focuses on the core questions that need to be asked. Most importantly, in terms of the present research, it was focused on the general research questions that interrogated the experiences and challenges faced by the SGBs in managing the following key areas: handling of school discipline, managing of school finances, administration and implementation of the admission policy and lastly, the appointment of staff members. The interview schedule (appendix B) was comprised of open-ended questions. I asked the participants' permission to have the interviews digitally recorded. All the interviews were conducted after school hours so as to avoid disruptions and disturbances in the school programme.

4.3.8.4. Observations

According to Johnson and Christensen (2012: 206), observations are defined as "watching of behavioural patterns of people in certain situations so as to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest." In particular, observations consist of recorded events of what the researcher sees and hears so as to gain insight into situations (Cohen and Manion, 2003). In summary therefore, observation is a systematic process of recording behavioural patterns (Henning *et al.,* 2004).

According to Kumar (2011:140) "observations are purposeful, systematic and a selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place." Ultimately, observations provide real-life experiences in a real world (Robson, 2002). Observations are categorised into two main types: participant observations and non-participant observations. In making participant observations, the researcher endeavours to be fully immersed in the research study and become a member of the group or body. As a result, the researcher begins to feel and understand what the respondents are actually going through (De Vos *et al.,* 2000). In other words, the researcher gets involved in the activities and becomes a participant. Through participant observation, the researcher is able to make sense and attach meaning to the world. During non-participant observations, the researcher does not get fully immersed in the study and is not influential to the research study. Moreover, the observations are unstructured and the researcher records the actual activities taking place at the research site. During non-participant observation, observations are carried out as unobtrusively as possible without actually changing the situation (Patton, 2002).

Within this research, I engaged in non-participant observation study. In this, I visited the natural setting to observe the phenomena and see how people reacted to the phenomena. I explained to the SGB group that I was sitting in as a non-participant observer to their meetings as part of my research study. Importantly, I was able to explore and examine their thinking process and interpret their discussion and reflections. I further explained to the participants that it was advantageous for me to use observations in my research as I would be able to observe facial expressions, impressions, gestures and voice tone used during the SGB meetings. I also explained to the participants that they should not be hindered by my presence but should carry on with executing their duties and role functions. As the researcher, I observed the feelings, attitudes and beliefs of the SGBs. I also observed the facial expressions, the demeanour, attitudes and reactions of all the respondents at the meetings. It was important for me to understand how participants perceived and gave expression to their frustrations to understand the

phenomenon of school governance. Moreover, as the researcher, I was able to build good relationships with the participants.

Inevitably, as the researcher, I need to be able to understand how the school is being governed. I therefore took down notes, deciding what was important; and what data should be recorded. As the researcher, I kept a detailed and accurate record of my field notes which included all the activities, conversations and their decisions (Cohen *et al.,* 2007).

As the researcher, I was able to recognise the emotions of the participants and the dynamics that were taking place at the SGB meetings. The participants were able to give their subjective views of their opinions and positions that could be included in the data and form part of the accessible text for analysis. My field notes served to supplement the data collected from the interviews and documentary research. My field notes served as sources of data of my evidence, of what actually took place during the SGB meetings. Inevitably the field notes provided me with an unfolding analysis as I made reflections and deductions (Terre Blanche and Kelly, 2002).

Advantageously, as the researcher, I was not influenced by the previous experiences of the participants and observed what was presently happening (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). However, as the researcher, it was important for me to note that it may be possible to express a sense of bias as I closely observed the norms and values of the participants (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). A distinct disadvantage of observations is that it tends to be laborious and time-consuming. Silverman (1993) argues that the observations can become subjective, liable to bias, impressionistic and have the potential to lead to unquantifiable conclusions. It may therefore become difficult to interpret behaviour.

4.3.9. Document analysis

As the researcher, I had to request the official documents before the commencement of the study, as participating schools may be unwilling to share these documents. Ethically, I had also to negotiate with the participating schools for permission to access the documents and records of the past six months to validate the data retrieved in the interviews and observations. At first, the participating schools were reluctant to release the documents to me. Once however I assured them of my confidentiality, they were freely made available to me. These documents reflected the decisions made by all the stakeholders of the school organisation. Knowing that they reflected the decisions made by the SGBs confirmed the accuracy of the information.

With reference to the documents, a distinction between primary and secondary sources should be clarified. Primary sources refer to the original texts that produce raw evidence. Secondary sources refer to sources that interpret and elaborate on the primary sources (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). For example, a school's code of conduct is a primary source, whereas a memoir is a secondary source. The advantage of using documentation reviews was to provide a comprehensive and historical store of information which does not interrupt the teaching programmes or affect the client's routines (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Fortunately, the information was already documented and was easily available.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:361), "document analysis describes functions and values and how various people define the organisation." In addition, Henning *et al.,* (2004) argued that document analysis was a non-interactive data collection form that would be able to compliment the semi-structured interviews.

In this study, the official documents were able to verify and support the data retrieved in the interviews and observation. Document analysis provides an important source of information for the researcher and serves as a supplementary source (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Consequently,

these "internal documents showed the official chain of command and provided clues about leadership styles and values" (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:361). Official documents of an organisation are complied on a daily basis and serve as raw data sources. Document analysis refers to the analysis, synthesis and examining of official documents systematically (Henning *et al.,* 2004). Documents are like texts that can be analysed for their historical value. These are referred to as official documents that are compiled, maintained and organised in a continuous and systematic way. I used document analysis to compliment the observations and interviews thereby ensuring accountability and consistency. However, it was imperative that I also considered the validity, reliability and authenticity of the documents before I could use them in this research study, as some authors may be express bias and/or have ulterior motives (Cohen and Manion, 2003).

The main documents that I used in this research study were as follows:

    i.   Agendas of SGB meetings;

    ii.   Minutes of SGB meetings ;

    iii.   Letters to parents;

    iv.   The mission statement of the school;

    v.   The vision statement of the school;

    vi.   The admission policy of the school;

    vii.   The annual reports to parents ;

    viii.   The disciplinary reports from the school;

    ix.   The financial statements;

x.   The income and expenditure statements;

xi.   The code of conduct for learners;

xii.   The code of conduct for educators;

xiii.   The employment policies;

xiv.   The interview processes and policies utilised at the school.

As the researcher, I studied the official documents for reasons of reliability, validity and authenticity. In addition, through a close examination of the documents over the period of year, I was able to explore the rational decisions, professional decisions and the subsequent actions that took place among the SBGs under study over the period of a year. Ultimately, the documents were used to establish accountability within the school organisation. However, it is important to note that the information may be restrictive and bias may occur in the information. In this, each school's documentation provided a greater understanding of the school's working philosophies, operations and systems. Ultimately, the information reflected in the official documents was used to verify the data retrieved from the interviews and the non-participant observations. Moreover, it was important for me to compare the documents to ensure that there was no expressed bias or 'hidden agenda' present.

4.3.10. Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a data-collecting instrument that is utilised to capture information on each case study school i.e., an elite private school, an ex-Model-C school, a township school and a deep rural school. Questionnaires were used to retrieve information on the location, enrolment, staffing compliments, racial composition of the learners, the Grade twelve pass rate for the past five years, the staff ratios, the school facilities, the admission

regulations, the educational levels of the parent governors and the background and demographics of each school. It serves as a versatile tool to collect data (Cohen *et al.,* 2007). An effective questionnaire is one that includes questions that are in line with the research objectives (Henning *et al.,* 2004). I have used both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Overall, the questionnaire is a self-report data collection instrument that each participant in the research study completed.

4.3.11. Data analysis and presentation

In qualitative research, data analysis is an on-going, emerging and non-linear process (Henning *et al.,* 2004). Before commencing with the analysis of the data, it was imperative that the texts from the interviews, memos and observational notes were all typed out in a word-processing document (Cohen et al, 2007). Words and sentences needed to be analysed literally to interpret and theorise the data. According to Dey (1993:30) "data analysis is a process of resolving data into its constituent components, to reveal its characteristics, elements and structures."

Data analysis is a process whereby data can be analysed to discover what is of importance (De Vos, 2002). In addition, it is a process whereby the data is actually made sense of. In this way, I was able to scrutinise the data further. In other words, data analysis is a 'breaking down' of data into smaller units, guided by the research objectives (Dey, 1993). Through this process the data was organised and taken into account to explain the data. Hence themes, categories and regularities were established. After the data was classified, relationships between the different categories were studied to derive codes in the data (De Vos, 2002). As soon as an interview was completed, I transcribed the data immediately. In this way the data was seen in an objective and unbiased manner. In addition to digitally recording the interviews, I also made handwritten field notes during the interviews.

According to De Vos *et al.,* (2000), the first step in analysing qualitative research involves organising the data. Immediately, I had typed up data, the drafts were edited for errors and thereafter filed according to specific themes. In particular, I looked for the thickest and richest portion of the interview transcripts. Specific meanings and themes needed to be outlined as I read and re-read the scripts thoroughly. I developed a filing system where the data was filed according to themes and then placed in appropriate folders. I also looked for reoccurring themes. I hand coded the data in the margins and made copies of the coded data. All data was numbered according to the interviews. Finally, all data was matched, compared, contrasted and ordered so as to ensure it was systematically done. It was imperative to repeatedly read the transcripts in order to familiarise myself with the data and analyse it accordingly (2000). In this way, the underlying meanings were identified.

As the researcher, I analysed the data by reflecting on the relationships and connections when collecting the data, searching for similarities, differences, themes, concepts and specific ideas (Henning *et al.,* 2004). In this way, I was able to establish important linkages and relationships. By examining relationships, I was able to speculate inferences and make summaries with the aim to generating a theory. The data had to be summarised, coded, categorised and reduced from its bulk form to smaller units of information so as to make it easy to understand and comprehend. The data was organised around central themes to make it understandable with reference to the point of view of the participants. I also used direct quotes of the participants to capture what the participants were actually saying. This allowed participants to 'speak' their minds. Lastly, the final version of the transcribed notes was stored, marked clearly with the name of the data, the place and identity code. I used pseudonyms to distinguish between each documents participant's responses. I re-coded the data if I found any confusing.

To prevent data overload and the distortion of data, the first step after the interviewing process was to transcribe the notes. In this way, there was no massive data loss. Data analysis means making sense of the data without

actually fragmenting the whole plot of the research study. In this way, as the researcher, I was able to identify relevant words, phrases and pieces of data. This formed a significant part of the data analysis whereby I was able to classify, categorise and order the units of meaning. In addition, I took note of the themes and patterns which emerged from these categories. Through these classifications and categories, I brought the data to a definite meaning whereby I was able to unpack the ideas and mind sets and create codes and labels. During this data categorisation process, labels and categories were put in place. Through such synthesis, key concepts were identified and examined.

By conducting culling exercises, I was able to reinterpret the data in order to make sense of it. Hence qualitative data analysis helped me to make sense of the data by detecting patterns, themes, categories, regulations, idiographic features, differences and similarities (Cohen *et al.,* 2007). Considering, the qualitative researcher needed to sift, sort, review and reflect on data in order to reduce the data. The data were also analysed by comparative methods, whereby themes were derived and in this way assertions were developed (Merriam, 1998). However in some instances, the data would be reported verbatim.

My field notes were contrasted, matched, compared and aggregated so that I was in a position to generate a theory (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). In my study, I sought to organise the data through the instrument. De Vos (2002) has pointed out that data analysis has to be systematic whereby groups are compared, responses are matched, negative cases are analysed, frequencies are calculated and data assembled. In data analysis, it was important to form a cluster by setting the items into categories, incubating by reflecting and interpreting on the data, culling it by means of condensing and interpretation and thereby making better sense of it.

4.3.12. Trustworthiness

The notion of "trustworthiness" has replaced the more conventional view of reliability and validity in qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln as cited in Cohen *et al.,* 2003). Trustworthiness of data is linked to authenticity, neutrality, conformability, consistency, applicability, credibility, transferability and dependability and is equated to external validity, internal validity, reliability and objectivity in quantitative research design (De Vos, 2002). To ensure trustworthiness (validity) of this research study, I digitally recorded and transcribed each interview session. By so doing, I presented an accurate account of what the participants actually spoke during the interviews (McMillan and Schumacher, 2003). In this way, the transcribed interviews were made available to verify the authenticity of the actual data.

The participants were also given the opportunity to express their own opinions and suggestions, and in this way, I ensured the trustworthiness of the research study. Furthermore, to ensure trustworthiness, as the researcher, I did not influence the interviewees in pursuing them to support their notions, but remained as neutral as possible (Denscombe, 1995). To ensure trustworthiness within the research study, I maintained a good rapport with all the respondents. Furthermore, much care and consideration needed to be given to developing the interview questions to ensure that all the respondents would have a crystal clear understanding of the interview questions and in this way eliminate all possible bias (Oppenheim, 1992). It was in this way that credibility and dependability was achieved. As I engaged in qualitative research, I adhered to trustworthiness throughout the study.

4.3.13. Credibility

Credibility can be equated to internal validity in a positivist research study and thereby examines the way participants project their viewpoints in relation to what they actually perceive it to be as social constructs (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Credibility maintains that the results of a research study are trustworthy

and reasonable and this view is enhanced as the research attempts to eliminate all bias and possible error (Cohen *et al.,* 2007). It is therefore essential that the researcher designs the research study carefully to eradicate any form of bias and/or error (2007). As the researcher, I ensured the credibility of the study by staying long in the field until I had achieved the desired results (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). In other words, as the researcher, I endeavoured to triangulate the data by using different methods of data collection such as interviews, observations and document analysis. Furthermore, as the researcher, I was involved in a number of member checks so that all possible bias was removed and errors eliminated (2001). Using triangulation in the research study, I was constantly able to check the data and thereby ensure its credibility (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). In summary, credibility is when the researcher maintains complete honesty throughout the study (Henning *et al.,* 2004).

4.3.14. Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which the findings of one study can be transferred to the findings of another (De Vos *et al.*, 2002). In other words, transferability refers to the similarity between the actual research study site and the receiving context. The researcher will have to convince the reader of the authenticity of the research study by providing as much information as possible. Moreover, the transferability of findings can be enhanced by others using the findings to understand similar situations that they are facing (McMillan and Schumacher, 2005). In this way, improvements and evaluations can be achieved.

Since this is a small sample of qualitative research, it would be difficult to ensure transferability. In terms of transferability, it may be difficult to achieve as interviewees share their innermost thoughts, feelings, fears and desires that are generated from their own experiences and from their own unique way of viewing their world. In addition, all interviewees need to understand the interview questions in the same way to ensure transferability (Silverman,

1993). However it can be argued that there is difficulty in achieving transferability due to the interviewees' own experiences of their definition of their world (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). Nevertheless, the findings may contribute to a greater understanding of similar problems in other secondary schools. The researcher thus ensured transferability by purposively selecting the participants for the study and by using the direct quotations of the participants retrieved from the data.

4.3.15. Conformability

Conformability addresses whether the findings of the study can be confirmed by others, without any subjectivity (Cohen *et al.,* 2007). Conformability refers to the extent to which findings can be freed from all bias and errors and shows the neutrality of the findings (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). The issue of conformability could be achieved through audit trails. This means that the same observations could be done at another time, occasioning similar results. Conformability explains that the interpretation declared by the researcher is not a figment of the researcher's imagination, but that the qualitative data can be traced back to its original sources and was logically explicit (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Throughout the study, as the researcher, I constantly examined my own feelings and emotions to ensure that they did not influence the research study. I tried at all times not to show bias throughout the entire research study. I would not allow own personal views and attitudes to override the interviews. In this way, I sought to minimise the possibility of bias so as to ensure conformability. By constantly checking the responses of the interviewees, as the researcher, I was able to check the consistency of the responses. Moreover, I was able to ensure conformability of the participants' comments and responses.

4.3.16. Dependability

In a qualitative research study, the notion of reliability can be referred to as dependability (Henning *et al.,* 2004). Dependability is assured by the notion of triangulation and the making of persistent observations in the field which inevitably leads to consistent results (Cohen *et al.,* 2007). Furthermore, by debriefing the peers and extending engagements in the field, this results in assuring dependability (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Dependable researchers always go back to the respondents to check if the findings are dependable and trustworthy over a certain period of time. However, caution is needed when placing too much emphasis on the participants. Dependability is also a critical feature in respondent validation. I did not allow my experiences as a SGB member, educator, researcher or labour union member to influence the interpretations, opinions, viewpoints and discussions of the participants and this inevitably ensured dependability of the research findings. Substantially, I ensured reliability of the data information through dependability and in this way the phenomena of governance could be better understood by policy makers, education specialists and all stakeholders of the South African education system.

4.3.17. Ethical Considerations

Educational research encompasses human beings and therefore it is imperative that ethical and legal responsibilities are understood when research is being conducted (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Ethics refers to correct behaviours and procedures that are necessary for the researcher to conduct a research study. Furthermore, ethics provides standards by which the researcher can examine her/his own work. Ethical issues refer to the honesty and integrity of professional colleagues during the entire research study (Leedy and Ormrod, 2004). In other words, ethical guidelines in research are needed to guard against any dilemmas and the possibility of any harmful effects that may arise in research. This refers to moral principles that are widely accepted and which provide rules and regulations. As the

researcher, I informed the respondents that there was no right or wrong answer to the questions and therefore they were encouraged to express themselves freely, without any interrogation or persuasion (Saunders *et al.,* 2000). In this, it was imperative that I remain open, honest and transparent to ensure all information was valid and that no information was withheld.

It was ethically important to uphold self respect and human dignity when conducting the research study. A sense of caring should always be present in the mind of the researcher so as to promote personal morality and fairness (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:339). Ethical principles need to be applied throughout the study. This can be achieved by ensuring the following:

   i.   By getting the informed consent form signed;

   ii. By encouraging the voluntary involvement and participation of all respondents;

   iii. By assuring confidentiality and anonymity and privacy;

   iv. By respecting all respondents in terms of their viewpoints;

   v.   By avoiding misrepresentation of all collected data;

   vi. By ensuring no physical harm and distress comes to any of the participants of the study.

Finally, all participants must be informed that they can withdraw from the research study at any given time.

According to Maree (2007), the researcher should be able to produce an ethical research design. Ethical clearance, in terms of the regulations and policy of the University of South Africa (UNISA) are expressly required. Moreover, all UNISA students who wish to conduct research were bound by the same ethical framework. All students and members of staff have to

familiarise themselves with and sign an undertaking to comply with the University of South Africa, Code of Conduct for Research. In the case of maintaining strict privacy and confidentiality, no participant or organisation can be revealed and therefore acronyms must be used. I also made sure that participants who consented to participate to the research study without coercion. In addition, I made a concerted effort not to exploit the participants but rather encourage and value them for all their contributions. All the participants were asked to sign letters of consent. I forwarded a letter to the Director of the KwaZulu-Natal provincial Department of Education requesting permission to conduct research in selected secondary schools in KwaZulu Natal (Annexure I). I also forwarded a supporting letter from my supervisor, Professor SP Mokoena to accompany my request (Annexure K). I hereby received permission from the Director of Education of KwaZulu Natal granting me permission to conduct this research study (Annexure J).

The participants were assured that all information disclosed would be used for research purposes only. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured at all times. Throughout the research study, I made sure that all participants were aware of all the practices they would be involved in. In this way, the participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any given time for any particular reason. I also kept an accurate record of all transcripts and confidential documents and placed them in a safe and secure place for a period of five years which is an ethical research clearance policy requirement of the University of South Africa.

Maintaining the privacy of all respondents was also an important imperative in the research study. In other words, privacy was ensured through anonymity, confidentiality and strong correct data. I thus endeavoured to keep the participants anonymous. In this way, no one would be able to identify the participants from all the gathered information. I also endeavoured to keep the names of all of my participants confidential, giving no access to individual data or the names of the participants. I further ensured that the data collected could not be linked to any individual. During the research, no participant was in any way forced, compelled or coerced to participate in the research study I

explained, in detail to all participants what was expected from them and thereafter gave them the choice to consider participation or not. For ethical reasons, as the researcher, I needed to ask the participants their permission to collect data and record all the data (Johnson and Christensen, 2012).

According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), consent forms should include the purpose of the study; a description of the study, the time and length of the study, the benefits of the study, a statement of confidentiality and finally, a statement of voluntary acceptance or refusal of the study. In regards to a learner participant, the consent form had to be signed by the parent or legal guardian of said learner before commencing with the interview. In addition, the consent form needed to be precisely and clearly written with logical understanding. The informed consent form was required to be filled in by all participants at the outset of the research study. In this consent form, details of the research study were included so that the participants understood what the research was about (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). It was ethically fair that all participants make their own decisions, without the influence and coercion of the researcher. All consent forms were signed, dated and safely filed. All participants needed to be informed of their free choice of participation during the entire research study.

The participants were assured that there was no right or wrong answer for the interview questions and were encouraged to answer the questions freely and openly, relating their own experiences (Saunders *et al.,* 2000). The participants were assured that no negative consequences would result from this research study.

Importantly, the participants' need to be assured that there will be no form of interrogation conducted during the research process. As the researcher of the study I took careful consideration of all ethical issues during the sampling procedures, the data processing, the analysis of the data and during the utilisation of the methodologies used. Through participant observations, as the researcher, I was able to observe small groups of people over a short period of time to reach towards the 'inside' of the problem in order to 'get under the

skin' of the organisation (Cohen *et al.,* 2007:404). I took heed of the ethical principles throughout the research study so as to ensure honesty, accuracy and trustworthiness in this research study

As a non-participant observer, I took the 'insider' role functions and recorded what was actually taking place (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993:93). Furthermore, I did not react to what was taking place within the SGB meetings I attended. As a non-participant observer is immersed in the given context over a stipulated period of time to gain a more holistic view of the given situation is achieved (Morrison, 1993). As the non-participant observer, I was able to take down key words, symbols, transcriptions, descriptions and portraits of the respondents as well as their conversations, coupled by a description of the events, behaviours and activities of the group (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). It was imperative that as the researcher, I recorded the physical and contextual setting, the number of participants, the time of the observations, the layout of the settings and the incidents that took place. In terms of ethical considerations of a non-participant observer in a research study, it was important that my presence at the meeting was not perceived as an invasion of privacy. Consequently, as the researcher I looked for ways of protecting the public by taking into consideration my moral obligation to protect all participants from any harm (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003).

Engaging in non-participant observation must not violate the privacy of the participants and therefore as the researcher I needed to assure the privacy of all the respondents. While I served as a spectator I had to ensure that no harm was caused to any of the respondents in the study. I thus needed to express caution against making preferences and setting high expectation levels. During the actual observations, it was imperative that as the researcher I recorded everything that I saw to ensure credibility and dependability. Observations are useful tools but can also prove problematic if they are left unstructured. Likewise, it can be influenced by personal judgments and the bias of the researcher (Moyles, 2002: Robson, 2002).

4.3.18. Limitations of the present study

I have only involved four schools in my research study and therefore it makes it difficult to make generalisations towards other schools. The disadvantage of this study is that this sample is small and therefore does not represent the entire population. Moreover, opinions and experiences may differ according to the different geographical contexts of other schools.

The interviews were time-consuming. The analysis and interpretation fo the data was also a laborious task. Some of the data collected from the interviews may therefore be inadequate. Furthermore, the respondents may be reluctant to be truthful in answering all the questions they were asked. However, I will emphasise on quality rather than quantity and endeavour to provide in-depth information from this small sample. As the researcher, I relied heavily on the information from the respondents which may not be reliable. Despite all the limitations here mentioned, I hope that the study will be beneficial to the SGB bodies within South African schools.

4.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter has focused on the research findings and explanation of the study. The research design coupled with the chosen data collection techniques allowed for the research analysis and presentation. Consequently, my constant reflection during the research study assisted me in answering the following central research question:

> What is the role and function of the SGB in these specific key areas: handling of school discipline, managing of school finances, the formulation and implementation of the admission policy and the appointment of staff members?

In particular, this chapter has provided a description of the research methodology utilised by this study to understand the operation of school

governance within the four chosen secondary school in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

In the next chapter, I will provide an interpretation and analysis of the data collected from the chairpersons, school principals, educator governors and learner governors of each of the school SGBs under study.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter outlined and discussed the research design and methodology used in this study. This chapter presents and discusses the research findings. Data was generated through semi-structured interviews with the principals of selected secondary schools, chairpersons of the SGBs, educator governors and the learner governors. Three other strategies were also employed, namely, the questionnaire, observations and document analysis.

The findings obtained through the questionnaire were presented first and then followed by those obtained by means of interviews, observations and document analysis. The questionnaire was designed to retrieve background information for each case study. It focused mainly on the location, the background of the school, the racial composition of the learners, the pass rate of the Grade twelve learners for the past five years, the staff ratios, the number of teaching posts, the school resources, the school facilities, the admission regulations for the learners, the educational levels of the SGB members and the sporting facilities offered. For the purposes of anonymity and confidentiality, I have given each school a pseudonym. These are as follows:

    i.   The deep rural school is referred to as Shozi secondary school;

    ii.   The township school is referred to as Fikile secondary school;

    iii.   The ex-Model C school is referred to as Hilltop secondary school;

iv.   The elite private school is referred to as Sozo secondary school.

The discussion which follows presents the findings obtained through the questionnaire of each case study.

5.2.   Background information about the schools

5.2.1. A deep rural school: Shozi secondary school

Shozi secondary school is situated at least 100 km from Durban Central and is a deep rural school. This school was randomly selected from among all the secondary schools in the area that had similar characteristics. This was a previously disadvantaged school and did not have all the necessary resources and facilities. The roads leading to this school were badly gravelled. The neighbourhood consisted mainly of poor homes and impoverish families and there was a high level of unemployment in the area. There was no proper housing and most people live in shacks or informal settlements.

While the spoken languages used in the area were mainly isiZulu, Ndebele and Sotho, the school uses English as its medium of instruction. Most of the learners walk long distances to school. The school was declared a no-fee paying school by the government. As a result, learners are exempted from paying school fees. The school falls into quintile one category. By and large, this school receives funds from the Department of Education to cover all its expenses. Other sources of income come from agricultural activities. The matriculation pass rate was 35 % in 2007; 38% in 2008; 42% in 2009; 33% in 2010 and 41% in 2011. It is reported that the learners experience problems in English, Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Accounting. From this statistics it could be concluded that the learner results have not improved significantly in the past five years.

Shozi secondary school is a co-education rural school offering limited academic subjects and was attended by black learners only. The school buildings were of wooden construction, dilapidated and in need of renovations and repair. There were only twelve classrooms with additional shelters on the outside of the school. Due to the lack of classroom facilities, some educators taught up to seventy-one learners in one small classroom. Besides that, there was no library, no computer room and no sports ground at this school. Other resources which were unavailable at the school included electricity, flushed toilets and a municipal water supply. The school was in an area of high unemployment and the community consisted of illiterate people with no or little interest in education.

During data gathering phase of the research, the school consisted of 968 learners and with a staff compliment of thirty-six staff members. The staff compliment includes thirty-one educators, two heads of departments, one deputy principal, a school secretary and a school principal. In terms of school governance, the SGB is comprised of thirteen members: the chairperson, the school principal, two educator-governors, one non-teaching staff, seven parent-governors and one learner-governor. All SGB members are black and the majority of parents are illiterate.

Many of the challenges facing the school include a lack of resources, retaining capable educators, a lack of qualified teachers and high absenteeism of the learners and educators. The school also had a shortage of textbooks, teacher reference materials and library books. It was reported that crime, violence, vandalism and theft was prevalent in this area.

In terms of sporting facilities, the learners were engaged in the following sporting codes: soccer for the boys, netball for the girls and volleyball for both boys and girls and these sporting activities are played in the open field adjacent to the school.

5.2.2. A township school: Fikile secondary school

Fikile secondary school is a township school located on the outskirts of Inanda lying at least 50 km away from the Durban Central. The school had a brick building with twenty-five classrooms. The school did not offer a wide range of academic subjects. The surrounding community consisted of working class and poorer residents. The school buildings looked dilapidated and neglected and renovations were desperately needed. There was a lack of maintenance of the school property as the window panes appeared to have been broken for many years.

This township school had limited resources in human resources and finances. The annual school fees were R350.00 per learner. It falls into the category of quintile two type schools. As a result, this school receives a substantial amount of funds from the Department of Education for its day-to-day running expenses. The learners walked long distances to come to school whilst others used the buses and taxis. The medium of instruction at this school is English and isiZulu and learners are predominantly black. The matric pass rate was 53% in 2007, 58% in 2008, 69% in 2009, 65 % in 2010 and 63% in 2011. From this data, it could be concluded that the matriculation results had not improved over the past five years and remained moderately poor.

At the time of data gathering, there were 1304 learners with forty-eight educators. Most of the learners were black, as were the members of the teaching staff. The entire staff component included: the school principal, deputy principal, the heads of departments, an administrative officer and educators. In terms of school governance, the SGB was comprised of thirteen members: the chairperson, vice-chairperson, the treasurer, the principal, four parent-governors, two educator-governors, one administration staff member, and two learner-governors. Generally, the parent-governors who served on the SGB were illiterate.

The school is disturbed by drug and substance abuse, high absenteeism among the learners, truancy, bullying and gang fights, teenage pregnancies,

vandalism, theft, school violence, cultural conflicts and general learner violence. In addition, the school had been vandalised on numerous occasions and computers have been stolen from the school.

In terms of sporting facilities, the school has soccer field and netball court. Generally, learners participate in the following sporting codes: table tennis, netball, volleyball and soccer.

5.2.3. An ex-Model C school: Hilltop secondary school

Hilltop secondary school is an ex-Model C school located within the urban region of KwaZulu-Natal. The school exhibited excellent and well-maintained buildings. The school also displayed well-manicured gardens and excellent landscapes. The annual school fee per learner was R28, 875.00. The school falls under quintile five category. As a result, the school did not receive any additional finances from the Department of Education.

The surrounding community was well-established and parents were highly educated and were very involved in the learners' academic performances. Most of the learners travelled by car or by bus to school. At the time of data gathering, the school had an enrolment of 1066 learners. Most of the learners attending this school were from different race groups and cultures. Roughly, 32% of the learner populations were black, 40% were Asian, 23% were Whites and, 5% were coloured. The pass rate for the matriculants for the past five years was 100%. By and large, this school had experienced excellent results in the past five years.

In terms of teaching staff component, there were sixty-nine educators, of which twenty-nine are State-aided posts. The SGB comprises of thirteen members: the chairperson, the vice-chair, the treasurer, the school principal, two educators, one non-teaching staff, four parent-governors and two learner-governors. All the parent-governors are well educated and had a minimum level of educational qualifications.

Although the school is well-managed, there had been reported cases of theft, truancy, alcohol and substance abuse, bullying, vandalism, racial conflicts and learner fights.

In terms of sports, learners participate in the following sporting codes: rugby, soccer, water polo, basket ball, athletics, badminton, squash, cross country running, soft ball, surfing, golf, sport climbing, indoor hockey, tennis, volleyball, hockey, swimming, golf, athletics and horse riding. The school co-curricular activities included chess, debates teams, speech contests and reader leader programmes.

5.2.4. A private elite school: Sozo secondary school

Sozo secondary school is a private elite school situated in an elite area in the city of Durban. The buildings were in excellent condition and well-maintained. The school offers private boarding for the high school learners. Facilities available at the school included sporting grounds, library, swimming pool, science laboratory, computer class and administration block. The school had good learner attendance and the learner composition included Asian and black and white pupils. While the local neighbourhood was racially integrated, the community comprised mainly of Asians and whites. Tuition fees at this school were highly competitive as compared to other schools of similar status. The annual school fees were between R36, 000.00 to R45, 000.00. The school fell under quintile five. As a result, the school did not receive any financial assistance from the Department of Education. The matric pass rate for the past five years had been 100%. The school was recommended by the Department of Education for its outstanding teaching aids, teaching resources and teaching materials.

At the time of data gathering the school had 250 learners with a staff compliment of forty-five members. The SGB comprised of eight members, namely the chairperson, the school principal, two educators, one non-teaching staff, two parent-governors and one learner-governor. All the parent-

governors were highly qualified. The parents were actively involved in their learners' academic performances and were involved in many fundraising activities.

The school had no serious disciplinary problems. In terms of sports, learners participate in the following codes: rugby, soccer, water polo, basket ball, athletics, badminton, squash, cross country running, soft ball, surfing, golf, sport climbing, indoor hockey, tennis, volleyball, hockey, swimming, golf, athletics and horse riding.

In the next section, I will present the findings obtained through semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis.

5.2.5. Data retrieved from the interviews

The themes and sub-themes generated through the interviews for each case study are summarised as follows.

5.2.5.1. Themes and sub-themes for Shozi secondary school

5.2.5.1.1. Themes

Theme	Section #
The composition of the SGBs and their key role functions	5.3.1.
Learner discipline	5.3.2.
School Finances	5.3.3.
Admissions policy	5.3.4.
Staff appointments	5.3.5.

5.2.5.1.2. Sub-themes

Sub-themes for learner discipline	Section #
Learner stabbings	5.3.2.1.
Gang fights	5.3.2.2.
Stealing and vandalism	5.3.2.3.
Lack of parental involvement	5.3.2.4.
Learner drop-outs and high failure rates	5.3.2.5.

Sub-themes for school finances	Section #
High level of illiteracy among parent governors	5.3.3.1.
Dominating role of the school principal	5.3.3.2.
Lack of finance policy and finance committee	5.3.3.3.
Lack of accountability	5.3.3.4.
Issues of budgeting	5.3.3.5.
Lack of proper financial planning	5.3.3.6.

Sub-themes for admissions policy	Section #
Discrimination in admissions policy on age levels of learners	5.3.4.1.
Uneducated parent-governors	5.3.4.2.
Lack of capacity building and training	5.3.4.3.

Sub-themes for Staff Appointments	Section #
Lack of knowledge in areas of staff appointments	5.3.5.1.
Issues of corruption and unfairness	5.3.5.2.

5.2.5.2. **Themes and sub-themes for Fikile secondary school**

5.2.5.2.1. Themes

Theme	Section #
The composition of the SGBs and their key role functions	5.4.1.
Learner discipline	5.4.2.
School finances	5.4.3.
Admissions policy	5.4.4.
Staff appointments	5.4.5.

5.2.5.2.2. Sub-themes

Sub-themes for Learner discipline	Section #
Serious drug problem	5.4.2.1.
Cultural conflicts	5.4.2.2.
High absenteeism and truancy	5.4.2.3.
Poor learner results	5.4.2.4.

Sub-themes for School Finances	Section #
Lack of financial commitment of parents	5.4.3.1.
Late arrival of subsidies	5.4.3.2.
Lack of resources	5.4.3.3.
Lack of control over cash receipts and cash transactions	5.4.3.4.

Sub-themes for Admissions policy	Section #
Irregular use of admission test	5.4.4.1.
High illiteracy level of the parent-governors	5.4.4.2.

Sub-themes for staff appointments	Section #
Lack of knowledge and skills	5.4.5.1.
Lack of training and empowerment	5.4.5.2.

5.2.5.3. Themes and sub-themes for Hilltop secondary school

5.2.5.3.1. Themes

Themes	Section #
The composition of the SGBs and their key role functions	5.5.1.
Learner discipline	5.5.2.
School finances	5.5.3.
Admission policy	5.5.4.
Staff appointments	5.5.5

5.2.5.3.2. Sub-themes

Sub-themes for Learner discipline	Section #
Disruptions in the classroom with cell phones and distribution of pornography	5.5.2.1.
Lack of parental involvement	5.5.2.2.
Bullying, verbal aggression and gang fights	5.5.2.3.
Racial conflicts	5.5.2.4.
Cultural conflicts	5.5.2.5.

Sub-themes for School Finances	Section #
Lack of financial commitment from parents	5.5.3.1.
Lack of proper planning and budgeting	5.5.3.2.

Sub-themes for Admission Policy	Section #
Use of irregular proficiency admission tests for learners	5.5.4.1.

Sub-themes for staff appointments	Section #
Conflicts over staff appointments	5.5.5.1.

5.2.5.4. Themes and sub-themes for Sozo secondary school

5.2.5.4.1. Themes

Themes	Section #
The composition of the SGBs and their key role functions	5.6.1.
Learner discipline	5.6.2.
School finances	5.6.3.
Admission policy	5.6.4.
Staff appointments	5.6.5.

5.2.5.4.2. Sub-themes

Sub-themes for Learner discipline	Section #
Zero tolerance	5.6.2.1.

Sub-themes for School Finances	Section #
Lack of financial commitment of parent body	5.6.3.1.
Non-involvement on sub-committees of the SGB	5.6.3.2.

Sub-themes for Admissions policy	Section #
Discriminatory admissions policy against religion and irregular use of admission tests	5.6.4.1.
Lack of equal access	5.6.4.2.

Sub-themes for staff appointments	Section #
Lack of understanding of their role function and responsibility	5.6.5.1.
Issues of bias	5.6.5.2.
Lack of learner involvement	5.6.5.3.

5.3. A deep rural school: Shozi secondary school

5.3.1. The composition of the SGB and their key role functions

The legal situation for the composition of the school governing body is defined by Section 24 of SASA (1996:18). This section stipulates that the SGB will consist of a member or members from each of the following categories:

I.   Parents of learners at school;

II.   Educators at the school;

III. Members of staff at the school, who are not educators;

IV.   Learners in the eighth grade or higher at the school.

In relation to the other groups on the SGB, it is expected that the parent component will always be in the majority. In terms of current legislation, the SGB is expected to perform the following general functions (Mothata, and Mda, 2000:10-11):

I.   To provide a uniform system of organisation, governance and funding of schools;

II. To establish minimum and uniform norms and standards for the provision of education at schools;

III. To ensure the provision of quality education across the school system;

IV. To amend or repeal certain laws relating to schools.

The following responses were received from the principal, SGB Chairperson, educator-governor and learner-governor regarding the composition of the SGB and their roles.

The school principal responded:

> *Our SGB is fully functional and comprises of thirteen members who included myself, the Chairperson, two educator governors, one non-teaching staff, seven parent governors and one learner governors. My responsibilities on the SGB are ensuring that the school is running well and that the learners are learning and teachers are playing their role. I also do the administration and keep account of all the monies spent. I also formulate all the policies and I make curriculum changes. I ensure that the monies received from the Department are well spent. I also make sure that there is enough stationery for the learners. I manage this entire school.*

The SGB chairperson made the following comment:

> *I do a lot of stuff here at this school. I decide with the principal what we should do to make this a better school. I decide on all purchases and also attend to disciplinary problems. I make sure the school is maintained well. I prepare the budget and do fundraising activities. I do my best.*

The educator-governor had the following to say:

> *I am the secretary for the governing body and I take notes, nothing more.*

The learner-governor responded by saying:

> *I go to the SGB meetings and I listen to all what they say. They sometimes ask for my advice, other times the SGB ask me not to attend the meetings.*

The analysis of this data revealed that all members of the governing body were representative of the core body of learners and educators and thus representivity was evident. The information also corresponds with the data collected by means of the questionnaire (5.2.1). Furthermore, the school principal was very assertive about his duties and functions and was quick to reiterate his active involvement in the SGB. The SGB chairperson was able to cover most of his responsibilities accordingly. However, the role of the educator-governor and learner-governor was of some concern as they did not appear to fully understand their role functions within the SGB. From their responses, it appears that they were not fully and actively involved in the decision-making at this rural school. The learner and educator representatives were not able to discuss their conceptualisation regarding their role function in the governing body. Learners, in most cases, found it difficult to challenge the decisions of the other members and there still exists a power struggle within the board.

5.3.2. Learner discipline

5.3.2.1. Learner stabbings

Currently, one of the most prominent factors influencing the learning environment in South African schools is the conduct of learners. Research by Maree (2000:1) has revealed that some South African schools "are increasingly beginning to resemble war zones. It has become clear that some schools are not free to teach and all pupils are not free to learn."

During the interviews with the school principal, the chairperson, the educator-governor and learner-governor of this deep rural school, it emerged that this school had faced an alarming challenge with respect to learner stabbings. As a result, the SGB was still grappling with this serious disciplinary challenge.

As the principal was to state:

> *We had learners who were bringing dangerous weapons to our school. Especially last year in 2011, because there were learners from different zones who were quarrelling, mainly the boys are fighting over the girls, over issues pertaining to their residential area. The learners are lacking discipline and engaged in gang fights. There have been reported cases of learner stabbings at our school. We don't know what to do about this. The teachers and learners are afraid to come to school.*

Furthermore, the educator-governor expressed her utter sense of frustration and hopelessness with regard to the learner stabbings:

> *We have had many disciplinary problems. We can do nothing about the school stabbings and bullying in the classroom. We are stressed and frustrated and don't want to be in this unsafe and violent environment.*

It was clearly evident that this SGB were challenged with serious disciplinary problem of learner stabbings. The principal expressed understanding how learners were bringing dangerous weapons to school. Again, the educator-governor expressed her anxieties, stress and fears about teaching in a violent school zone.

This challenge with learner stabbings was well-documented in the "Minutes of the SGBs meetings" of the previous six months confirming that this school was rife with learner indiscipline, in particular, learner stabbings. According to section 8(4) of the SASA, learners are obliged to comply with the code of conduct of the school. Following the interviews, it seemed the school management and other structures had lost the battle, given the high number of reported cases of learner stabbings and bullying.

5.3.2.2. Gang fights

After interviewing the participants, it was established that gang fights were prevalent in this deep rural school and the SGB were concerned over this challenge. The chairperson of the SGB had this to say:

> Last year we had problems with learners who were very violent at our school. We had many cases, which were very serious such as gang fights that needed suspension and recommendations for expulsion. These violent learners were hostile towards the teachers and other learners and constantly intimidated and bullied them.

The chairperson of this rural school related his experiences and how he had to deal with very serious disciplinary cases such as gang fights that required learner suspensions and recommendations for expulsions. Section 8(5) of the SASA states that a learner may be suspended or recommended for expulsion by the SGB after having been given a fair hearing. Consequently, the SGB has the legal right to deal with learner discipline according to SASA, section

8(4). The responses from the participants revealed that the situation of learner discipline was far worse than it seemed and therefore needed serious attention and intervention. All the participants agreed that they were overwhelmed by the high incidents of gang fights.

With respect to the document analysis, the letters to parents sent by the school clearly revealed that this governing body was struggling with learner discipline which included gang fights. This finding affirms the research by Joubert and Bray (2007) that rural schools are being plagued by school violence, high school drop-outs and gang fights. Nevertheless, it the responsibility of the SGBs and the school management team to create a safe environment for both learners and staff in schools. From the interviews, it seemed that the SGB faced insurmountable pressures as they endeavoured to deal with this ever-growing phenomenon.

5.3.2.3. Stealing and vandalism

Stealing and vandalism were common issues raised by the participants during interviews. They agreed that it was very challenging to handle the stealing and vandalism at this rural school.

The principal expressed her comments and pointed out that:

> *The gangs walk into the school, stealing and vandalizing the school properties. It has become out of hand here. It has become a nightmare to handle this challenge. Our own learners are also involved in these criminal activities. They don't consider the rules of our schools. They simply don't even respect us.*

All the participants agreed that the soaring rate of stealing and vandalism was a major concern for this SGB. The learners were seemingly in rebellion and were not conforming to the school's code of conduct. Despite the fact that the SGB had formulated a strict code of conduct, the learners did not adhere to

the rules and regulations. The document analysis such as minutes of the meetings confirmed that a strict code of conduct had been given to all learners admitted to the school.

During the visit to the school, the researcher observed appalling conditions, including, graffiti on the buildings and broken windows. This confirmed that this school was facing serious issues of school vandalism and stealing. In addition, educators did not have tables and chairs and some classrooms did not even have chalkboards. However, it appeared in the SGB meetings agendas that they have been trying to address the problem for almost a year. It was of little doubt to the present researcher that this SGB was greatly challenged by the incidents of theft and vandalism and that the situation had become uncontrollable for this governing body. Literature studies confirmed that it has become a huge challenge for SGBs to deal with the pressures and challenges created by learner discipline (Khuswayo, 2007; Beeld, 2008).

5.3.2.4. Lack of parental involvement

Following the interviews with the chairperson, school principal and educator-governor, they all seemed to come to the same conclusion that the lack of parental involvement aggravated the serious disciplinary problems at this rural school. The learner-governor did not make any comments on this matter. In particular, the principal and educator-governor complained about the lack of interest from the parents especially when disciplinary problems were concerned.

The school principal made the following comment:

> *The parents show no interest whatsoever in the lives of their children. Parents don't attend meetings and even when we request them to come to school, they don't attend. The parents in this area care nothing about the wellbeing of their children.*

In the same vein, the educator-governor shared similar challenges:

> *It has become a fruitless activity to ask parents to attend school meetings. Even though most of our parents are illiterate, this is no excuse for their lack of involvement in their children's education. They cannot expect the teachers to do everything for them. What about the learners with serious disciplinary problems, we need parents to support us and help us with this.*

Educators and the school principal were at their wits ends with regard to the parent's attitude towards their children. This educator was feeling demoralised and frustrated by parents who had abdicated their responsibility to the educator, principal and the school as a whole.

While the lack of parental involvement and support in dealing with the disciplinary problems had worsened the situation at this rural school, it can be argued that most of the parents within this rural area were abjectly poor and most lived in the shacks or informal settlements. Furthermore, most of the parents were plagued with high illiteracy levels and high levels of unemployment. Hence, most of these parents were more interested in making a living, than being concerned with the dynamics of education. As a result, parents transferred their responsibility to the school to discipline their children. The research study articulated by Mncube (2009) emphasised that active parental involvement empowers parents towards more participation and responsibility which inevitably enhances a better-functioning school.

5.3.2.5. Learner drop-outs and high failure rate

Due to the rising learner disciplinary problems at this rural school, this had impacted negatively on the learners' results. All the participants reported that the poor matriculation results were a major challenge for the learners and educators alike.

The learner-governor appeared to be equally frustrated and said:

> *Because they come from different backgrounds, some are unruly, they bring their cell phones to school, even though it is not allowed. The learners put on headphones whilst the teacher is teaching. They do not want to listen to the teachers. The disciplinary problems have caused most of the learners to fail in March, which was a disaster. Most of our learners are failing their grades and thereafter drop-out from school.*

This learner-governor stated that many learners were failing due to problems of indiscipline. This clearly revealed that the problem of indiscipline at this rural school had impacted heavily on the quality of education that it could offer. This was confirmed from the data retrieved by the questionnaire which stated that the pass rate had been 35 % in 2007; 38% in 2008; 42% in 2009; 33% in 2010 and 41% in 2011 (5.2.1). The document analysis of the disciplinary reports confirmed that that this school also had an alarming number of learner failures and drop-outs.

Research conducted by Dimbaza (2006) and Sithole (2004) has claimed that disciplinary problems have escalated in schools causing learner failures and drop-outs. In the case of this school, the SGB faced major challenges and had no solutions. Nevertheless, in terms of the current legislation, it is the SGB that is expected to maintain the discipline at schools. The SGB needs to create a learning environment conducive for the learners. Given the inability of the SGB to address some of these challenges, their effectiveness was to some extent questionable.

5.3.3. School finances

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 prescribes how a school should manage its funds. It includes guidelines for the SGB and the school principal on their key roles and responsibilities in managing the finances of the school.

According to chapter 4, section 36 of the Act, the responsibility of the governing body is to take reasonable measures to supplement the resources of the State in order to improve the quality of education at the school.

5.3.3.1. High level of illiteracy among parent-governors

All four participants of the SGBs agreed that the high level of illiteracy among the parent-governors was a serious challenge to the SGB functioning optimally.

The educator-governor had the following to say:

> *It is only the school principal and SMT that are involved in the financial management of the school and drawing of school annual budget. The other members of the SGB are illiterate and they don't know anything about financial management. This causes more problems as the schools face many shortages of resources and learning materials.*

Given that there was a high level of illiteracy among the parents from rural areas one could argue that the parent-governors of this school had difficulty in fulfilling their key role functions. In terms of the research observations, this did disadvantaged the SGB in fulfilling their role functions and responsibilities, particularly in regard to their lack of a thorough understanding of financial management. Document analysis of the financial statement for the past year revealed that the school account was in arrears. The question that may be posed concerns whether the funds received from the provincial Department of Education were properly managed by the SGB, taking into consideration that the majority of the SGB members were illiterate.

The research study conducted by Shemane (2010) confirmed that the illiteracy of parent-governors at rural schools was the cause of major challenges in the administration of school finances. It can also be argued that

there has been a lack of training and capacity-building to provide SGBs with efficient financial management skills especially at rural schools (Ministerial Review Committee, 2004). Tsotetsi *et al* 92008) confirmed that the rural schools have been neglected, causing for the problems to worsen and hence training cannot be over-emphasised.

5.3.3.2. Dominating role of the school principal

In most cases where the majority of the parent governors were illiterate and did not understand the State legislation and laws, the school principal took on a more dominating role resulting in conflicts and divisions among members of the SGB.

Following an interview with the chairperson on the issue of school finances, the following statement was made with regard to the school principal:

> *The principal makes all the major decisions regarding the school finances and does not consult us. The principal also feels that we are not knowledgeable in the area of school finances and therefore makes his own decisions. This has become difficult to work like this in this SGB.*

The dominating role of the school principal over the management of the school finances inevitably caused serious challenges in the administration of school finances. This illustrates a key challenge in enabling participation of all stakeholders in governance. Clearly, there is a lack of collaboration among the members of this SGB and it seems that the principal has overridden all its decisions. This is actually contrary to the SASA whereby it stipulates that all members of the SGB should work democratically and collectively in the governance of the school. It can however be argued that one reason the principal had taken on a more prominent role in the decision-making of this school was due to the lack of expertise of the parent-governors in making sound decisions. On the contrary, the principal serves as the ex-officio

representative of the Department of Education and therefore plays a pivotal role in governance.

Research has confirmed that many members of the SGBs within rural schools are either illiterate or possess a low educational level and therefore lack the necessary expertise and knowledge in school budgeting and financial management (Mestry, 2004, 2006). In such cases, the principal takes on a more dominating and prominent role in executing role functions single-handedly without the approval of the other SGB members.

The research study by Mncube (2009) has confirmed that democratic school governance is accelerated by the sharing of power by all stakeholders of the SGB whereby financial decisions and financial management is deliberated by all its members. Ultimately, democratic governance should improve the discipline at the school and reduce conflicts. From the responses however, a general lack of democratic governance emerges from within this governing body.

The issue of the dominating influence of a school principal has become a significant feature in many research studies relating to SGBs (Adam and Waghid, 2005; Mkhize, 2007; Waghid, 2005; Chaka and Dieltiens, 2005; Mestry, 2004; Van Wyk, 2004).

5.3.3.3. Lack of finance policy and finance committee

The chairperson, educator-governor and learner-governor all reported that they were not involved in the administration of the school finances and that there was no finance policy or finance committee operative. Although the school principal stated in the interview that there was a finance policy and finance committee in place, the principal was unable to produce the relevant documents to me.

The educator-governor shared her views and frustrations in this regard:

I know nothing about the school fees and what is actually being collected and received at my school. There is no finance committee. I have also not seen the finance policy.

It was not surprising to note that this school did not have a finance policy or finance committee in place given the challenges facing the school. In this case, the governing body was found to have failed in its responsibility in terms of the law to maintain a financially viable school owing to the fact there were no strategic financial measures put in place. The importance of a finance policy and a finance committee cannot be over-emphasised.

According to the SASA, it is the responsibility of the SGB to oversee the financial management of the school fees and any other funds and donations received. To ensure that the SGB is effective in fulfilling its role functions and responsibilities, there needs to be strategic finance policy in place. The formulation of such a finance policy would serve to create a sense of ownership and legitimacy on the part of governing body; however this is lacking in this SGB. This serves as a means of accountability and transparency.

From the document analysis it also became clear that there were no financial statements available or income and expenditure accounts. Although the principal maintained that the school had a finance policy, patently, it did not exist. This was a severe disadvantage to this school, in that the SGB did not have the ability to correctly execute its role functions and responsibilities. Seemingly, the SGB was not managing the funds effectively despite the fact that the school was subsidised 100% by the provincial Department of Education. In this case, the SGB failed to take responsibility and control in effectively managing the available funds and in consequence, circumstances at the school were horrendous. The SGB was not taking ownership or the initiative in managing the school finances. It was evident that the members of the governing body were at loggerheads with one another and that they were

not able to able to work collaboratively in managing the school finances. In addition, there was evidence of the misuse of funds and violating the laws set down in the Act. To ensure good governance practices, participatory decision-making and empowerment is paramount in making collective and transparent decisions.

5.3.3.4. Lack of accountability

After interviewing the chairperson of the SGB, the educator-governor and learner-governor it emerged that there was a lack of accountability in the managing of the school fees.

The chairperson pointed out the following:

> *We don't know what is happening with our school fees and our annual budget. The principal is not being honest about the school funds. We get a subsidy from the Department and the SGB don't know how this is being managed. We need to work together on this. What is happening with the funds? Our learners need more books, computers and stationery.*

The chairperson of the governing body appeared devastated by the lack of accountability over the management of the school funds. The chairperson also made it clear that the governing body was not aware of how the school funds were being managed. To heighten the problem, there was a lack of collaboration among the governing body in terms of it decision-making and management.

Financial accountability is one of the key obligations of the SGB, whereby they are expected to be accountable for the funds they manage according to section 21 of the SASA. Furthermore, SGBs are expected to submit all financial reports to the State for verification. In this case, the school principal was unable to produce the financial documentation for analysis. A research

study conducted by Caldwell (2004) argues that one of the most important tasks of the SGB is to manage and control the finances so as to ensure effective operation of the school. In this case, the governing body had failed in its duty. A research study conducted by Mestry (2004) confirmed that annual budgeting, regular checks and counter-checks were imperative to ensure sound financial management. In terms of the law, SGBs are required to control and manage finances in an efficient and responsible manner

At one SGB meeting I attended, none of the parent-governors were present. The meeting was conducted solely by the principal and the educator-governor. This contradicted the central purpose of the SGB being a vehicle for the emancipation of all school stakeholders. Clearly, this school reflected a weak democratic status where there was a lack of collaboration and shared decision-making. It is imperative that all SGB members attend all meetings and become part of the general school activities. By so-doing, they can provide efficient reporting of school activities for scrutiny, questioning and accountability.

5.3.3.5. Issues of budgeting

Section 38 of the SASA requires that the SGB of a public school needs to prepare a budget each year. Such a budget must show the estimated income and expenditure for the school throughout the coming year.

Following the interviews with the SGB chairperson, educator-governor and learner-governor, it emerged that there was no budget prepared for the following year. This went against the principal's personal assurance that he had prepared the financial budgets for this rural school. From the document analysis, it emerged that there were no financial budgets available.

Significantly, the educator-governor had the following to say:

> *I have been at this school for many years now and there are no budgets prepared for the following year. The school finances are strictly controlled by the school principal and he cannot be questioned on any of his financial decisions. The principal authorises the payments.*

The educator-governor complained about not being actively involved in the managing of school finances and budgeting. Importantly, a school budget reflects the planning and controlling of the school funds and how resources are to be utilised. Within this SGB, the principal authorises all expenditure and payments. However, this contravenes the SASA, whereby decisions have to be made collectively and democratically.

The issues of budgeting have become a major concern for this rural school and apparently the SGB was not fully trained in this area of responsibility. What is of major concern was that the annual budget needs to be presented and approved at a Annual General Meeting, to be convened at least with thirty days notice for the consideration and approval of the majority of the parents (SASA, 1996).

Evidently, there is a lack of consultation, consensus and participation within this governing body. This was in clear violation of the SASA, which highlights the active involvement of all stakeholders in the governance and management of the school. This SGB was clearly violating the rules and regulations of the SASA. Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive budgeting had impacted the culture of teaching and learning at this school negatively.

5.3.3.6. Lack of proper financial planning

The learner-governor at this rural school complained about the lack of resources and explained how it had negatively affected the quality of education that the school provided.

The learner-governor elaborated about his experiences and challenges thus:

> *We do not have pens and much stationery at this school. We cannot Google on the internet. Teachers give us tough work, in which we cannot cope with….We have no books, no maps, and no textbooks. Besides we are not even consulted to add our inputs when issues of school finances are discussed.*

The learner-governor shared the frustrations they were experiencing at this school. In similar vein, the chairperson and educator-governor also shared the same sentiments:

> *Had there been an efficient system of budgeting, then the needs of the learners would have been taken into account.*

This situation cannot be allowed to continue like this, something must be done.

5.3.4. Admissions Policy

The SGB drafts the admission policy of the school in terms Section 5 of the Act (SASA 1996) taking cognisance of the right to education as enshrined in the Bill of Rights (Section 29). In drawing up an admissions policy, the SGB must adhere to the requirements of the South African Schools Act that stipulates the following:

    i.   No learner may be discriminated on the basis of race;

ii.   No tests should be administered when admitting a learner to a school;

iii. No learner may be refused admission on the basis that his parents cannot afford to pay school fees, do not subscribe to the mission statement of the school or refuse to sign an indemnity provided by the school;

iv.   The age requirements for admission are determined by the Minister of Education in consultation with the Council of Education Ministers to publish the age in the Government Gazette.

5.3.4.1. Discrimination in admissions policy on age levels of learners

The principal of Shozi secondary school shared his experience and highlighted his challenges with learners who are older than the cohort age group. He remarked:

Learners want to be admitted for a certain grade, you might find they are two years above the grade and they are older than the cohort age. So we do not admit them.

The principal further stated that the school had to reluctantly admit learners who were two years older than the cohort age group, which makes it a serious challenge. This response was confirmed by the document analysis of the resolution taken by the SGB on the admission of older learners. It was clearly stated in the admission policy that learners who are two years older than the specified grade entry would not be admitted to the school. This discussion however was in violation of the SASA that clearly stipulates that there should be no discrimination on the grounds of age, other than what was stipulated by the Minister of Education in consultation with the Council of Education Ministers. Consequently, this SGB failed to comply with the principles of fairness and non-discrimination enshrined within the 1996 Constitution of the

Republic of South Africa. Clearly, the SGB was not familiar with their role functions and responsibilities and displayed poor governance practices.

It might be argued that the parent-governors within the SGB were not fully involved in the formulating of the admission policy. It may also be argued that given the poor level of their education, these illiterate parent-governors did not have the confidence to participate in the discussions pertaining to the formulation of the admissions policy. It may thus be concluded that the principal drew up the school policy alone. This deduction was confirmed by the observations made at the SGB meetings, where it became evident that most of the parent-governors did not attend the governing body's meetings.

5.3.4.2. Uneducated parent-governors

The learner-governor of Shozi secondary school shared his discontent and frustrations about the parent-governors who were illiterate and lacked understanding of the school policies.

His remarks were as follows:

> *The parents are not educated in the SGB and don't know anything about policies. They don't even understand what are policies are, so how are they going to help us. We are also not informed about these policies.*

The chief challenge experienced by the learner-governor of this rural secondary school was the level of illiteracy of the parent-governors. As a result, the parent-governors were not aware of the school policies. This learner-governor was frustrated about his position within the SGB as he felt his 'voice' was not being heard. As a result, the lack of learner empowerment and capacity building had become detrimental to the good governance practices within the SGB (Pampallis, 2005).

5.3.4.3. Lack of capacity building and training

Following the interviews I had with the chairperson of the SGB, it emerged that SGB members were not provided with any capacity building workshops and training sessions to enable them to fulfil their role functions and responsibilities. The school principal, educator-governor and learner-governor agreed with the chairperson on this relevant point.

The chairperson made the following comment during the interview:

> *I have found it difficult to be part of this governing body as I don't know much about education. I had to do my own reading to help myself. I don't blame the rest of the parents who seem helpless about all the decisions they have to make. The Department of Education has not visited our school and we have not attended any trainings and meetings. We have to rely on own knowledge to understand that is required of us.*

The lack of capacity building workshops in the rural areas gave rise to further problematic situations as the SGB did not understand what was actually expected of it as stipulated in the SASA policy. Given the challenges faced by many other SGBs in the rural schools, there is a need for capacity building and empowerment workshops. Heystek (2004, 2006) concurs with Mathonsi (2005) that capacity training mainstreams, guides and shapes the SGB governors into actually fulfilling their responsibilities which is essentially the responsibility of the Department of Education.

5.3.5. Staff appointments

According to section 20 (i) and (j) of the SASA, the governing body is obligated to recommend to the Provincial Head of Department the appointment of educators and non-educators, subject to the Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act No. 76 of 1998) and the Labour Relations Act, 1995.

Therefore, it is a constitutional requirement for all SGBs to make recommendations on staff appointments. However, what needs to be considered is fairness, integrity and transparency during the interview processes.

When a governing body exercises its function in terms of section 21(1) (i) of the SASA and Chapter 3 of the Employment of Educators Act, 1998, it must accommodate the obligations of the employer towards the educator as its employee. The governing body must also take into account the requirements for appointment as determined by the Minister of Education and the requirements of the post as determined by the Head of the Provincial Education Department (Department of Education, 1996b).

The legal position of SGBs is clear and has significant implications on the abilities of parent-governors to handle the challenges of recommending educators for posts, as it needs some educational background. Additionally, the process of recruiting and interviewing educators is very demanding and requires a deep understanding of the interviewing procedure.

5.3.5.1. Lack of knowledge in areas of staff appointments

The principal of Shozi secondary school shared his frustrations and challenges over the filling of vacancies at the school. His frustrations were linked to the inabilities of certain SGB members.

In this regard, the school principal stated the following:

> *We still need qualified educators to be appointed to my school however the rest of the governing body doesn't want to co-operate with me in this process. I have tell them what to do. They don't have any idea about interviews and shortlisting processes. This governing body doesn't know their duties. This*

is becoming frustrating for me as my school and my learners
suffer much for these inadequate SGB members.

The principal went on to say that the situation of insufficient teaching staff has impacted negatively on the education of the learners. Following the response from the principal, it could be concluded that the illiteracy level of the parents was a hindering factor in successfully recruiting qualified teachers at this school. Research conducted by Pillay (2005) confirms the fact that the illiteracy levels of the parent-governors in most cases disadvantages schools and has serious bearing on the performance of rural schools in particular.

The same sentiments as that of the principal were highlighted by the learner-governor who was disappointed that the school could not employ quality educators owing to the fact that the SGB was incapable of performing their duties properly due to their lack of knowledge.

The learner-governor of Shozi had the following to say:

Because we are not involved in the appointment of the
teachers….and we do not get quality teachers to teach us. This
is very disappointing….the SGB don't know what they are doing
at this school.

The minutes of the SGBs meetings also confirmed that for the past six months, the SGB had not appointed a suitable candidate for the vacant grade eleven teaching position of technology specialist. As a consequence, the governing body had reneged on its responsibility to recommend staff appointments. Accordingly, the principal seemed to be frustrated over this serious challenge.

5.3.5.2. Issues of corruption and unfairness

The educator-governor of Shozi Secondary indicated that there was a lack of fairness when it came to handling staff appointments.

He shared his concern as follows:

> *When it comes to staff appointments, there's no fairness and no transparency…our unions are not represented during the interviews.*

The educator-governor of this rural school admitted that there was no fairness and transparency in the making of staff appointments. The educator-governor understood her role function and stated that she always strove to ensure fairness, equity and equality when staff appointments were concerned.

According to Section 20(e) of SASA, the SGB are supposed to support the educators, school principal and other staff members in their work performance and be co-operative. It is important to point out that the teacher trade unions were not present at the interviews. In this, trade unions serve as powerful stakeholders in ensuring that the interview processes for new staff appointments are conducted in a fair and just manner and that all the educational and labour laws and legislation are closely adhered to at all times. The documentation analysis reflected that teacher unions were absent from the previous shortlising processes and interview processes.

5.3.6. Strategies recommended by participants in the key project areas

5.3.6.1. Learner discipline

Despite considerable learner-discipline problems, the following strategies were recommended to deal with learner discipline at Shozi secondary school:

i.   The learners had to abide to a strict code of conduct;

ii.   All staff members and SGB governors should be involved in the disciplinary procedures at the school;

iii.   Learners with serious disciplinary problems should not re-admitted at the school;

iv.   Teachers must be trained and developed in the knowledge base of learner discipline;

v.   Learners who 'broke the rules' had to make a public apology at the assembly;

vi.   The SGB, together with the school principal, can recommend for suspension and expulsion any learner involved in serious disciplinary cases;

vii.   All stakeholders, i.e., the school principal, educators and all members of the SGB should be involved in maintaining discipline at the school and formulating the disciplinary code of conduct;

viii. Learners must be asked for their viewpoints, opinions and considerations for the disciplinary code of conduct for the school;

ix. Discipline must be constantly monitored and the procedures taken must be seen to be consistent;

x. Parents must be notified timeously of their learners' disciplinary problems;

xi. The school must ask the assistance of the SAPS in searching learners for illegal weapons and drugs;

xii. Social workers, school counsellors and psychologists from the Department of Education must be utilised to motivate and empower the learners;

xiii. That a tribunal be established to discuss serious cases of drug and alcohol abuse.

5.3.6.2. School finances

The research study conducted by Joubert and Prinsloo (2009) claims that for SGBs to succeed in effective financial management, SGB members need to understand the financial concepts thoroughly as well as prioritise their school's individual financial needs. Furthermore, constant monitoring, evaluation, planning and supervising are necessary for effective financial management (Mestry, 2004).

I share the same sentiments with these authors, that greater emphasis on understanding financial budgets and financial management is important. Hence, developing of skills and knowledge in this area for SGB members would promote better and create more effective financial management within schools.

Following the interviews with participants, the following strategies were suggested to deal with the financial crisis at the school.

i. The school principal of Shozi secondary school must try to network with other schools and NGOs for donations and sponsored furniture;

ii. The SGBs must take reasonable measures such as fundraising to supplement the available financial resources in order to improve the quality of education provided by the school;

iii. Most importantly, the SGB had to be committed in drawing up the budget and managing financial statements to ensure financial accountability and ensure that the school is being properly managed.

5.3.6.3. Admissions Policy

From the interviews and responses of the participants; it was clear that there were no practical and significant strategies for the formulation of a fair and non-discriminatory admission policy. In many cases, the SGBs relied solely on the principals for their final decisions. This SGB chairperson served to merely 'rubberstamp' the school principal's decisions.

Other research studies have confirmed that an effective SGB encourages the active involvement of all its members in the decision-making process (Mhkize, 2007; Mothata and Mda, 2006). In this way, a sense of ownership can be generated among the members of SGB and this can accelerate the commitment of the SGB towards meeting the educational goals and expectations of the school.

5.3.6.4. Staff Appointments

Section 20 (a) of the SASA states that SGBs were fundamentally established for the best interests of the school. As a consequence, the handling of staff

appointments is a key function towards ensuring the provision of quality education for all learners at the school.

After interviewing the participants, the following strategies were suggested:

i. The provincial Department of Education is expected to take on a more committed role to assist in the appointment of specialist educators, especially in rural and township areas;

ii. The SGB suggested that the provincial Department of Education should consider organising more workshops for the selection of promotion posts;

iii. In cases where the SGBs are considered incapable of fulfilling their duties, the provincial Department of Education is expected to step in and follow through the interview process and in this way prevent cases of nepotism and bias;

iv. SGB must commit themselves to following fair and equitable principles and procedures when appointing staff members;

v. SGBs must be committed towards working co-operatively and democratically when handling staff appointments.

5.4.   A township school: Fikile secondary school

5.4.1. The composition of the SGB and their key role functions

The principal of Fekile secondary school detailed the composition of the SGB at the school and her understanding of their role.

This is what she said:

> *The SGB at this school is made up thirteen members and this includes the Chairperson, vice-chairperson, the treasurer, four parent governors, two educator governors, one administration staff member, and two learner governors and myself as an ex-officio member. I am fully involved in all aspects of the SGB. I make sure that the teachers are teaching the learners. I also oversight the finances of the school and I am responsible for all payments. I also determine the school fees for the learners. I also organise the SGB meetings. I make sure that the learners are abiding by the rules of the school. I also suspend the learners and I pay for the services for the school. I liaison with the Department of Education for funding and I also do fundraising. I work over the weekends to ensure the school is well run by me.*

The SGB chairperson also outlined his responsibilities within the SGB:

> *I always ask the principal advice on the school matters before I make the final decisions. I am taking care of the property of the school and I also get the people to repair the windows and broken chairs. I also go the Department and fetch the textbooks for the students. I also hire teachers.*

The educator-governor added:

> *I present all the complaints of the teachers to the SGB. I talk to them about the problems. I am also involved in staff appointments and staffing at my school.*

The learner-governor expressed his discontent by stating:

> *I am not sure what my responsibilities are. I try to say something but I am not heard.*

The information shared by the school principal on the composition of the SGB corresponds with the data collected by way of the research questionnaire instrument. Analysing the responses on the role of the SGB, it appears that the principal did not fully understand her own role functions in terms of professional management. Consequently, some of the responsibilities that she mentioned fall squarely within the ambit of the SGB. In a case where there is a clear overlapping of responsibilities one could expect misunderstanding and conflict arising from among the SGB members themselves. Such a concern was raised by the learner-governor.

5.4.2. Learner discipline

5.4.2.1. Serious drug problem

The principal of this township school identified drug abuse among the learners as a major challenge for the school. This had become a daunting task for the governing body of the school. The learner-governor and SGB chairperson agreed with the school principal and confirmed what the principal had expressed.

Sharing his views, the principal of Fikile secondary school stated:

> *We are facing the challenge of learners who are taking drugs.*
> *The learners are using all kinds of drugs here and the most*
> *common is marijuana and sugars.*

Similarly, the educator-governor of Fikile secondary school raised similar concerns.

She responded:

> *Our SGBs do not attend the meetings to discuss the serious*
> *drug problems that we are facing at this school. Learners are*
> *using drugs. The situation is worsening.*

The issue of drug abuse also surfaced during data collection by way of the questionnaire. From the observations of the SGB meetings I attended, most issues which appeared top on the agenda related to serious drug problems at this township school. Other research has shown that SGBs at many rural and township schools have failed to address the growing drug problem and the serious disciplinary issues that arise as a result of drug abuse (Mestry, 2004; Sithole, 2004). As a consequence, disciplinary problems have caused many SGBs to fail.

5.4.2.2. Cultural conflicts

Another serious challenge faced by the governing body of this school concerned the growing cultural conflicts among the learners. This was confirmed by all the participants during the interviews.

The learner-governor illustrated this point by making the following remarks:

The learners come from different backgrounds and different beliefs systems and also different cultures. Some learners think they are superior to others because of the clan they belong to. They start bossing the other learners and pick fights with other learners from the other cultures.

Sharing similar sentiments, the educator-governor went on to say:

How are we supposed to teach these learners as they constantly pick on one another calling each other name, teasing, bullying and verbally abusing each other? There is very little teaching taking place in the classroom as they are more cultural problems to sort out than actual teaching. We cannot even use corporal punishment.

This respondent reported that the governing body had to deal with rising cultural conflicts within this community which spilled over into the school fields. Fights over culture were becoming quite serious and had resulted in bullying, fighting and quarrels breaking out in the school. It emerged from the interviews conducted that this had become an alarming problem and the educators were at their wits ends to find a workable solution to this challenge. It also surfaced from document analysis that the SGB had written several letters to the provincial Department of Education seeking their intervention on the matter. This suggests that something must be done about the problem given that the SGB has been unable to deal effectively with it.

5.4.2.3. High absenteeism and truancy

All the research participants agreed that the serious drug problem among the learners at this school had contributed to the high incidence of absenteeism

and truancy. In this, the chairperson of Fikile secondary school shared his experiences openly.

This is what he said:

> *Learners are dodging classes at this school and this has resulted in high absenteeism. Learners don't want to come to school. They prefer taking to the streets. The learners are truanting from school. We also have a problem with the principal who does nothing about this.*

This governing body was struggling to cope with the high incidence of absenteeism and truancy. Apparently, the SGB chairperson shared his frustration with the school principal, who in turn failed to act on the matter. Inevitably, this was a sign of poor management and governance at this school. Interestingly, the SGB had formulated a strict code of conduct aimed at creating an environment conducive for teaching and learning but which had not effectively addressed the drug problem at hand.

5.4.2.4. Poor learner results

All the research participants of Fikile secondary school had similar viewpoints regarding the poor matriculation results of the learners. Inevitably, poor examination results could be linked to the serious learner disciplinary problems present at this school.

The principal made the following comment:

> *The learners of this school are under-achieving and the results are poor. No matter how much I try to improve my school, it keeps failing. The educators try hard, I know, they do. But I don't see the learners trying to achieve.*

Data collected through the instrument of the questionnaire confirmed the poor academic results indicating the school had a 53% pass rate in 2007, 58% pass rate in 2008, 59% pass rate in 2009, 55 % pass rate in 2010 and 53% pass rate in 2011 (5.2.2). What is positive to note is that the principal and educators of this school have persevered to improve the quality of education offered, even though they failed to be successful! This suggests that an intervention is needed at this school.

5.4.3. School finances

5.4.3.1. Lack of financial commitment of parents

A major challenge facing Fikile secondary school was that the majority of parents did not pay school fees on behalf of their children attending the school. This had become a daunting problem for the SGB as meaningful financial decisions could not be made without the school being financially viable. From the interviews I conducted with the principal, the following emerged:

> *We have a problem as only 20% of the learners pay their school fees for the year and this is a big problem. We don't know what to do anymore. The parents are mostly domestic workers and others are unemployed and they don't pay their fees. The Department of Education does not pay our subsidies on time.*

The South African Schools Act No. 41 of 1996, Section 40, indicates that parents are liable for pay school fees that have been duly approved. However, the Act does make provision for certain parents who, under certain conditions, can be exempted from paying school fees.

During the analysis of the documents, this gave rise to the question whether the parents of learners who do not meet their financial obligations towards the

school are duly exempted. As a consequence, the documents were thoroughly examined for challenges experienced by the SGB related to the exemption of parents from paying school fees. Generally, it was found that parents do apply for exemption and in most cases they were legally exempted from paying after their circumstances, as explained in the application forms, had been verified. These exemptions apart, there were still a relatively large number of arrears cases on the books which created serious cash flow problems for the SGB.

5.4.3.2. Late arrival of subsidies

According to the SASA, Section 14, it is the responsibility of the State to provide schools with both the necessary infrastructure and requisite funds for their day-to-day operation. These funds are annually made available to schools in the form of subsidies from the provincial Department of Education. According to the SASA, Section 159, the provincial Department of Education must ensure that the relevant finances reach the school in good time. During the interviews it emerged that State subsidies sometimes were paid in late to the school under study.

The SGB chairperson commented:

> *State subsidies sometimes comes late in year and even at the beginning of next year and this makes it difficult for the SGB to execute its task*

Sharing the same sentiments, the school principal stated:

> *How are we expected to run the school without subsidies for the whole year and also expected to fulfil additional functions.*

According to the SASA, Section 23, the first term subsidy has to be paid to schools not later than 1 April in each school year. Following the interviews

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with the chairperson and the principal it seemed as though the provincial Department of Education often fails to adhere to this provision of the SASA Act.

5.4.3.3. Lack of resources

With respect to resource provision, the SGB chairperson of Fikile secondary school painted a very gloomy picture. In his interview, he expressed how the school had been severely challenged by the lack of resources due to the poor financial management of the school.

> *We are rated quintile two school and we are a very poor school. We don't have the teaching resources to promote quality education. We don't have books. We don't have computers.*

The educator-governor described the problem she faced in the classroom due to the lack of resources.

This is what she said:

> *We find that we don't get what we want, especially in our learning areas where it is a practical subject. This makes teaching even more difficult and frustrating as we don't have our tools to make sense of the work. Most of the time we have no electricity; this is a big problem. We don't have a library in our school. How are the learners going to learn? We cannot make copies of our worksheets. We don't have textbooks and this has become a crisis. We are stressed and pressured. The SGB is doing nothing for us.*

The learner-governor shared his own experiences by indicating that the school was struggling financially and that they did not have the necessary books, pens and laboratory equipment.

5.4.3.4. Lack of control over cash receipts and cash transactions

The South African Schools Act, Section 42, places a duty on the SGB to keep written records of everything that has to do with money or the property of the school. All the money that the school receives must be recorded in its financial statement. If the school pays out money to anyone, it must be recorded in the same manner.

From the interviews with the participants, both the chairperson and educator-governor agreed that one of the reasons for the school experiencing financial difficulties was the patent lack of control of cash receipts and other financial transactions. The educator-representative on the SGB, who had been a teacher at this school for more than fifteen years, shared the following:

> *It is a case of having accountability and transparency over the school funds of the schools and this cannot ever be attained if the principal is not producing cash receipts for all the cash transactions. The petty cash is being abused with no receipts shown for the purchases being made. I don't know how long this is going to carry on as this is corruption.*

It was confirmed by the document analysis of the published financial statements that the school's bank account was in arrears. Moreover, the school had no finance committee or finance policy in place. Accordingly, the SGB lacked the finance procedures and policies to assist them with their functions. Furthermore, they lacked training in this important area.

5.4.4. Admissions policy

Section 5(5) of the SASA stipulates that the SGB is responsible for the formulation of the admissions policy. Furthermore, the admissions policy needs to be aligned to the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

and the appended Bill of Rights that ensures that no learner is discriminated against.

5.4.4.1. Irregular use of admission tests

Evidence obtained by way of the questionnaire revealed that the school had an admissions policy which required competency in English and a mathematics admission test. The document analysis of the school's admission policy confirmed that learners would only be accepted at this township school if they passed the admission proficiency tests. In line with the SASA and the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, no learner can be refused admission to the school based on their tests results.

5.4.4.2. High illiteracy level of the parent-governors

Section 5(5) of the SASA (1996) contends that the SGB has the mandate to determine the admission policy for the school. Moreover, the admission policy must be formulated in partnership and agreement with all the members of the SGB, and has to be in line with the regulations of the SASA. During the interviews, the chairperson commented as follows on the issue of admissions:

> *There seems to be a serious problem as all our SGB members are illiterate. We don't know what to do anymore with the admissions policy. The principal formulates the admission policy. The system is failing and this SGB is failing because of the illiteracy of the parents. Why is the Department of Education not helping us?*

In this case, the school principal assumed the full responsibility to formulate the admission policy due to the high illiteracy level of the parent-governors. It was thus very evident that there was a lack of collaboration when the admissions policy was formulated. From an analysis of this data, the

chairperson of this township school indicated that the parents were illiterate and this had had a negative bearing on the admissions policy. This suggests that there is a need for the members of the SGB to be trained in this area so that they can be effective in their role function as prescribed by the SASA.

5.4.5. Staff appointments

5.4.5.1. Lack of knowledge and skills

Although teacher appointments and staff promotions are some of the key functions of the SGB, one teacher-governor interviewed was openly opposed to this function. She maintained that "*the school governing body does not have the expertise to do so."* Furthermore, she felt that SGB members often looked for *"…people whom they know even though they do not know that person's qualification."*

This is what she said:

> *Sometimes the members of SGB have relatives at school so they may choose their relatives and do not consider the competence of educators.*

In terms of Section 6 of the Employment of Educators Act of 1998 (RSA, 1998) the appointment of staff is the collective responsibility of all stakeholders serving on the SGB. The participation of all parties is aimed at affirming both transparency and the democratisation of the process. Pillay (2005) have supported this provision by arguing that school governors have their most direct impact on teaching and learning when they appoint new staff members.

5.4.5.2. Lack of training and empowerment

Although the participants differed over many issues, all the participants came to the conclusion that the provincial Department of Education had failed in its duty in capacitating the SGB in their role functions and responsibilities.

The educator-representative of the governing body was very clear in this:

> *I've worked at this school now for many years and not once did we receive special trainings or attend workshops and this would have been helped us to do more for our school. Why are we failing? Do you know why we are failing? Because of the lack of skills training and the lack of support from the department, our schools fail!*

This response serves as a 'cry out' for the provincial Department of Education to get more involved in the much neglected rural and township schools. If the newly-appointed SGBs undergo extensive training and development, then the rising problematic situations can be effectively addressed. In fact, the SASA clearly obligates the provincial departments of education across the country to capacitate all stakeholders of the SGB.

5.4.6. Strategies recommended by participants in all key areas

5.4.6.1. Learner discipline

The following strategies were suggested to deal with learner discipline at the school:

i. One of the important roles of the SGB is to consult learners, parents and teachers about a code of conduct for the school. The code of conduct sets out school rules and details what punishments can be given if the rules are broken;

ii. The code of conduct also sets out a grievance procedure so that parents and learners can take up the matter if they feel they have been badly treated by a teacher or another learner at the school;

iii. The kinds of punishments that school can use include a demerit system, detention, picking up rubbish on the playing field and so on. Degrading punishments such as the cleaning of toilets are no longer allowed. In 1997, the government banned corporal punishment such as physical beatings and canings at schools. The reason for this is that the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides that no person should be punished or treated in a cruel or degrading way;

iv. For serious offences, the school may suspend a learner for up to one week from school. This can only take place once there has been a fair hearing where the learner has had a chance to put her or his side of the story;

v.   If a school feels that the offence which the learner has committed is so serious that she or he should be expelled from the school, the learner can be suspended from the school while the provincial Head of Department decides whether or not to expel the learner. Only the provincial Head of Department can expel a learner from a school. The school principal cannot take such a decision. If a learner is expelled, she or he can appeal to the MEC of Education to re-consider the case;

vi.   Regular meetings between teachers, parents and learners can promote more discussions and collaborations to improve discipline at schools;

vii. The educator-governor pointed out that one of the best ways to curb disciplinary problems was to approach the child individually so as to find out what the root problem was and in this way counsel them into doing the right thing. She added that rebuking learners in front of the class would only worsen the matter;

viii. The SGBs should be provided with more workshops and programmes from the provincial Department of Education to assist them with this rising problem.

5.4.6.2. School finances

The governing body of this township school faced a mammoth task of rectifying the challenges they were facing. These were some of the proposed strategies to deal with financial challenges for the school:

i.   The SGB members should be involved in drafting of the annual budget and the budget should be approved by the larger school community;

ii.   The provincial Department of Education should be committed to providing their financial subsidies on time to prevent schools from experiencing financial difficulties;

iii.   The provincial Department of Education must organise more induction programmes and more workshops on effective financial management;

iv.   The SGBs should encourage greater parental involvement, especially at the meetings.

5.4.6.3. Admissions policy

From the interviews of the participants, the SGB did not have a thorough understanding of the laws and legislation related to the formulation of admission policy and relied completely on the school principal for its creation. It could be argued that due to the high illiteracy levels of the parents within this SGB, this caused to depend on principal for his expertise. As a result, no substantial strategies were implemented by this SGB.

5.4.6.4. Staff Appointments

Drawing from the interviews of the participants, it was evident that this SGB did not have any strategies in place. The facts presented here are alarming and have serious implications for effective school governance practices. The insistence on practicing the correct laws and legislation pertaining to fair labour practices and transparency during the interviewing processes would ensure exemption from corruption, nepotism, personal preferences and bias which are all contrary to effective governance practices.

Other research studies have shown that SGBs have often been negligent and irresponsible in the handling of staff appointments (Department of Education,

2001; Khuzwayo, 2009; Mkhize, 2006; Phuta, 2005). In accordance with the SASA, the SGB is responsible for recommending the appointment of new staff to the Head of Department. In this case, the SGB failed to do so. Also, other research has confirmed that the provincial Department of Education needs to become more vigilant in terms of staff appointments, especially in those cases where no appointments were made by the SGBs (Mestry, 2004, 2006; Mkhize, 2007). It was therefore necessary that the SGB be trained and empowered in their role functions.

5.5. An ex-Model C school: Hilltop secondary school

5.5.1. Composition of the SGB and their key role functions

Every SGB has to abide by the SASA's requirements in terms of their composition and key role functions and responsibilities. The following responses were received from the school principal, SGB chairperson, educator-governor and learner-governor regarding its structure and functions.

The principal clarified the structure of the SGB and her role functions:

> *The SGB comprised of thirteen members. These include myself, the chairperson, the vice-chair, the treasurer, two educators, one non-teaching staff, four parents and two learner governors. I do many duties such as organising the SGB meeting, attending to parent complaints, liaisoning with the SGB members, making purchases, making payments, ensuring school fees are collected on time, disciplining the learners, disciplining the educators in violation of their duties, finalising the curriculum, organising workshops for my teachers and I manage my staff.*

The SGB chairperson described his role functions as follows:

> *I do a variety of tasks but most importantly I make the final decisions on governance matters. I do leave the educational matters to the principal to handle. But I chair the meetings.*

The educator-governor shared her duties as follows:

> *I attend all SGB meetings and I am involved in the fundraising committee. We go to lengths to make sure the school has the necessary funds and monies. We make sure that the school has everything it needs.*

Finally, the learner-governor made the following remarks:

> *I go to the SGB meetings and I contribute to all the discussions. I also give my own viewpoints and the viewpoints of the learners.*

The information on the composition of the SGB shared with the researcher corresponds with the data collected by way of the questionnaire. Discussion of the responses above revealed that the school principal was engaged in many governance duties which were supposed to be done by the SGB. In addition, the SGB chairperson had more confidence in the school principal in regards to educational matters. However, in terms of the SASA, it is the duty of the SGB chairperson to execute her or his duties to promote the best interests of the school.

It can be argued that an effective SGB emerges when there is collaboration between all its stakeholders. The response captured from the educator-governor clearly indicates that she was actively involved in the fundraising committee and was committed to creating a positive ethos for the school. It was encouraging to note that this learner-governor was empowered within his jurisdiction to project his own opinions, viewpoints and suggestions on the SGB.

5.5.2. Learner discipline

5.5.2.1. Disruptions in the classroom with cell phones and distribution of pornography

After interviewing all the participants, all agreed that the use of cell phones had become a major challenge for the school and the governing body.

The principal of this ex-Model C school of Hilltop secondary school expressed her own experiences and challenges with learner discipline. She commented as follows:

> *Cell phones are causing disruptions especially when the cell phone rings during an examination. There are lots of cases of school theft as a result of the cell phones and also competition. Even though cell phones are not allowed into the school premises, learners still violate the rules and carry their cell phones to schools. The use of cell phones has caused the distribution of pornography and profanity has increased. The results are being affected.*

All the participants of this governing body agreed that the learners were adamant about using their cell phones at school. It became clear however, that cell phones were responsible for introducing pornography into the school. This had become a serious learner disciplinary challenge.

The document analysis of the learner disciplinary reports revealed that five learners at this school had been caught distributing pornography among the other learners. Levin and Nolan (1996) argue that exposure to pornography led to serious mental and psychological problems and hence has a negative impact on the academic performance of the learners. The authors further suggest that schools need guidelines from the provincial Department of Education on how to govern the inappropriate cell phone use. What was clear

was that cell phones had become a permanent part of society, even among children.

5.5.2.2. Lack of parental involvement

In the study of parental involvement, Sithole (2004) observed that the lack of parental partnership in schools lead to excessive peer influence on learners. This inevitably created negative educational outcomes which ranged from truancy to drug abuse and from depression to low grades, poor attendance and disciplinary problems resulting in violence.

All participants agreed that the only solution to improve the disciplinary problems at Hilltop Secondary was by encouraging greater parental involvement and parental support with the serious disciplinary problems. These are the negative outcomes when parents do not participate as partners in the education of their children.

The educator-governor of Hilltop secondary school highlighted the fact that the lack of parental support contributed to greater disciplinary problems at their school. She commented that the active involvement and participation of parents in their education was important as this supported the learning structures at the school. The document analysis of the letters to parents confirmed that this governing body had made several appeals to parents to support them with the rising disciplinary problems.

Schools alone cannot resolve the supposed failure of the education system. Instead, it should be the shared responsibility of the entire community and requires cooperation between parents, educators and community leaders alike.

5.5.2.3. Bullying, verbal aggression and gang fights

Reported cases of bullying, teasing and name-calling over an extended period of time eventually led to increased crime, school violence and gang fights (Beeld, 2004). According to the research study conducted by Neiser *et al.,* (2004), bullying has become a serious phenomenon across all South African schools.

The learner-governor of Hilltop secondary school expressed similar experiences and challenges. He cited the following:

> *Yes, there are lots of disciplinary problems such as bullying, gang fights, theft and stealing and truancy. The other learner intimidates us, making us do things that we don't want to do. The senior learners bully us into making picking litter and shining their shoes and carrying their bags. If we rebel, a gang fight erupts. It is not easy being part of this hostile and aggressive environment.*

It was noted that as an e-model C school, Hilltop secondary school had been experiencing serious disciplinary problems such as bullying, verbal aggression and gang fights and this was confirmed in the questionnaire. The document analysis of the disciplinary code of conduct revealed that each learner was given a code of conduct to sign and return to the school. The document provided the structural framework for appropriate behaviour at the school and the repercussions for inappropriate behaviour. The document highlighted the learner infringements of vandalism, gang fights, theft, and serious disruptions in the class by the use of cell phones, cigarette smoking, gambling, and serious assault. The document also set out the prescribed procedures for alleged misconduct. The format of the document was user-friendly and easy to understand. However, learners continued to disobey the rules as prescribed by this SGB. These disciplinary problems impacted the rights of other innocent learners who were being exposed to physical harm, danger and abuse. The situation as it stands requires alternative intervention.

5.5.2.4. Racial conflicts

In 2002, it was reported that the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) legal department received the second highest number of complaints regarding racism from the education sector. In a study conducted by the SAHRC in 2000, 62% of the 1, 700 learners surveyed from ex-Model C secondary schools felt that there were racial problems at their schools. The report includes incidents of racism towards students as well as minority black teachers.

Participants interviewed in this research project shared similar opinions regarding the racial conflicts at this ex-model C school.

The SGB chairperson shared his experiences and challenges in the following way:

> *Racial conflicts have also broken out amongst Indian and Black boys resulting in serious learner fights. We try to resolve the racial conflicts but it now out of hand. Name-calling, abusive and profane languages are being used during these racial conflicts. The fights usually happen during a cultural event.*

The document analysis of the minutes of the SGB meetings confirmed that racial conflicts had been on the agenda for the past six months. The effects of these racial conflicts caused teacher stress and pressure, learner anxiety and negative learning that evoked feelings of hopelessness in the lives of many of the learners.

5.5.2.5. Cultural conflicts

The notion of cultural conflicts emerges especially in schools where there were different learners from different cultural backgrounds. As the SGB chairperson had stated: *"The fights usually happen during a cultural event."*

The questionnaire confirmed that there were learners from different race groups and cultures with an estimated 32% of the learner population being black, 40% Asian, 23% white and 5% coloured. However, it is important that South African schools become more racially diverse. Racial integration implies that individuals from all racial backgrounds enjoy the rights to access and participation in all levels of management, service delivery and quality education at South African schools.

5.5.3. School finances

5.5.3.1. Lack of financial commitment from parents

Section 5(3) of the SASA states that no learner can be denied access to a school when the learner's parents have not paid the school fees determined by the school governing body. It is also illegal for a school to refuse to allow a learner to take part in the school's sporting activities on the grounds that fees have not been paid. However, in terms of the SASA, parents have a legal obligation to pay public school fees, as determined by the SGB.

The principal of Hilltop secondary school reported that the SGB had been challenged by the lack of commitment of some parents in paying their school fees timeously. He stated:

> *Yes, with regard to some parents, this is a major problem experienced by all schools regarding a certain percentage of parents who do not pay regularly. We send them letters regularly. This becomes very frustrating for us to run the school effectively.*

A document analysis of school financial report revealed that the running expenses for the month were greater than the total income received by the school via fees received from parents. Given that the school charges high

fees and was still experiencing financial difficulties, one may argue that the principal was either not prioritising or was overspending on unnecessary items.

According to the SASA, one of the responsibilities of the SGB is to ensure that all funds received are properly managed and there is accountability on every item purchased.

5.5.3.2. Lack of proper planning and budgeting

The annual budget is a statement of what the likely income and expenditure will be in a school for the following year. It needs to be considered carefully so that the school can weigh up whether they have enough funds to pay for the activities that they believe are necessary for the school to deliver its school development plan. Unplanned over-spending or under-spending of a school budget can deflect schools from previously agreed spending priorities and this can seriously affect the achievement of school development plans. Under- or over-spending can equally be a sign of weak financial management on the side of the SGB.

Interviews conducted with the chairperson and the school principal indicated that the SGB members were lacking in preparing proper planning and budgeting statements. This suggests that workshops should be arranged specifically in this area of expertise.

5.5.4. Admissions policy

In terms of the SASA, the SGB has the unique responsibility of formulating and implementing the admissions policy. According to Chaka and Dieltiens (2005) some SGBs have implemented discriminatory admission policies to ensure so-called racial inclusivity and exclusivity within specific schools. Likewise, other research has shown that there has been much discrepancy in

in the admission policy adopted in those schools who were in favour of one race group above another (Asa, 2010; Beckmann and Karvelas, 2006; Khuzwayo, 2007; Ngcobo and Ngweny, 2005; Ntando, 2011; Mazibuko, 2004, Mkhize, 2006; Soudien and Sayed, 2003).

5.5.4.1. Use of irregular proficiency admission tests for learners

From the document analysis of the admission policy document, specific proficiency tests were to be administered for the admission of learners. Based on the results of these tests, learner's applications for entry into the school were either accepted or rejected. This policy however was in clear violation of the SASA which stipulates that no public school can refuse admission to a child based on the result of an admission test.

Document analysis of the letters to parents also confirmed that parents would only be notified of their child's admission after writing the admission test. It was unfortunate that this SGB formulated policies that were not in line with the SASA and the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and appended Bill of Rights

The educator-governor of Hilltop secondary school freely admitted the requirement of an admissions test when he stated:

> *All may apply but not everyone is admitted to the school. You will only be admitted if you passed the admission test. Again, you still have to go through rigorous process before you can get space at this school. There is confusion and vagueness in the admission policy.*

According to the SASA, the SGB of a public school—including ex-Model C schools—may not subject a child to the writing of an admission test in order to receive admittance. This is in direct violation of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and appended Bill of Rights.

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5.5.5. Staff appointments

According to Section 20 of the SASA, the SGB is obligated to recommend to the provincial head of department the appointment of educators. However, their recommendation of the appointment of staff has become a controversial issue among many SGB members (Waghid, 2005, Sithole, 2004). This was confirmed by reported cases where SGBs had been involved in the manipulation of staff appointments (Mestry, 2004; Mkhize, 2006). In some cases, parent-governors are subservient to senior staff members over staff appointments and prefer accepting the professional teaching staffs' decisions as parent-governors feel that the professional teaching staff would handle the educational matters better. However, this is reflective of a poor and ill-run governance structure.

5.5.5.1. Conflicts over staff appointments

The chairperson of Hilltop secondary school, with a staff compliment of sixty-nine members seemed to attribute his challenges to the conflicts and disagreements taking place among members of the SGB. He further commented:

> *As described above a process is followed together with discussions among the selection committee for the appointment of staff. However there are always times of disagreements and conflicts.*

It is evident that this SGB was challenged by the rising number of conflicts and disagreements among the staff. It may be argued that conflicts and disagreements arise when SGBs lack fair labour practices and lack transparency. The conflict that had been experienced within this SGB was also indicative of the lack of effective communication among the SGB members themselves.

The successful execution of this SGB in finalising staff appointment was hindered by a lack of response from the provincial Department of Education. Seemingly, this SGB could not finalise its staff appointments. To alleviate this problem, it is recommended that the provincial Department of Education render greater support to the SGBs in their handling of staff appointments.

5.5.6. Strategies recommended by participants in all key project areas

5.5.6.1. Learner discipline

From the analysis of the data provided by the participants of Hilltop secondary school, the following strategies were recommended to deal with learner discipline:

i. Cell phones must be confiscated if they are seen or used during school times;

ii. The defaulting learners must be sent for ten hours detention before the cell phone can be returned to them;

iii. Schools must buy or hire lockers for the safe-keeping of confiscated cell phones;

iv. If a learner is caught stealing, then they will be subject to a disciplinary hearing where sanctions will be imposed ranging from detention to removal of accolades;

v. Pastoral care must be arranged for defaulting learners and thereafter sent on a "disruptive educative teaching and learning programme";

vi. All learners must be informed on a regular basis about the code of conduct with the related levels of misconduct and raft of imposed sanctions.

vii. All learners must be issued with the code of conduct booklet;

viii. The school's assemblies must be used to recognise good and appropriate behaviour and to caution learners of negative behaviour;

ix. An active LRC should be in place to address learners' problems and issues;

x. The SGB must address all disciplinary problems through negotiation, deliberations and collaboration;

xi. The SGB must establish a disciplinary sub-committee as well as a disciplinary officer to deal with disciplinary issues at the school.

5.5.6.2. School Finances

Due to the fact that the school is a State-owned institution, it is imperative that the SGBs are accountable to parents, the general public, the community and State for the financial management of school funds.

After interviewing the participants, the following mechanisms suggested to address the financial challenges of the school:

i. The principal must employ the services of a competent bursar to ensure that the school remains within its budget;

ii. Regular meetings should be held with the bursar and SGB chairperson;

iii. The SGB and school principal must address the financial challenges by employing a full-time debt collector and notifying parents that the school is a fee-paying institution to which parents have to be committed.

iv. Greater collaboration of all SGB and school stakeholders was imperative for effective school governance practices;

v. When the new SGBs are appointed, it is imperative that orientation training development seminars be held so that the SGBs members are familiar with the necessary procedures, policies and expectations;

vi. The school must adhere to prioritised projects and keep within allocated budgets;

vii. The principal must involve all stakeholders in the decision-making at the school as the SASA stipulates the importance of shared decision-making.

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5.5.6.3. Admissions Policy

The principal, educator-governor and learner-governor did not comment and had no suggestions to ensure non-discriminatory admission policies.

5.5.6.4. Appointment of Staff

From the data retrieved from the interviews, no suggestions and recommendations were put forward on this matter.

5.6. A private elite school: Sozo secondary school

5.6.1. Composition of the SGB and their key role functions

The role functions of the SGBs are clearly prescribed in Section 20 of the SASA. It is imperative that the SGBs fulfil their key role functions and responsibilities. The SASA details the structure, role, function, composition, regulations and rules for its operation and organisation as the school governing body.

The following responses were received from the principal, SGB chairperson, educator-governor and learner-governor regarding the structure and composition of the SGB and the roles of its members.

The school principal clarified the structure of the SGB and her role functions as follows:

> *The SGB comprised of eight members, namely the chairperson, the school principal, two educators, one non-teaching staff, two parent governors and one learner governor. I manage the school and ensure everything is in order. I have parent meetings, staff meetings and learner assembles to inform every person of this school of the vision and mission statement of the school. I also make sure that we have the funds to do what we need to do. I employ staff members and develop staff. I present a budget to parents annually. I do lots more.*

The SGB chairperson shared the following information:

> *I chair the meetings and we make decisions about important issues. I attend to parent complaints and the principal does the rest.*

The educator-governor indicated that his role was to raise funds:

I do the fundraising at my school.

Unlike the other governors at this school, this learner-governor uttered the complaint:

I have no duties on the SGB.

The SASA acknowledges management and governance as distinct concepts. These concepts were clearly demarcated in chapter two of this research study.

From those interviewed at Sozo secondary school it surfaced that the principal had taken on more responsibility than was required under the SASA regulations. The budget is the duty of the SGB and not the principal alone. Section 16(3) of the SASA stipulates that the professional management of the school is undertaken by the school principal whereas governance according to section 16 (1) of SASA is vested in the SGB. Again, it was also noted that the SGB chairperson relies on the school principal for guidance and clarity in educational matters.

Within the interviews it also became apparent that the educator-governor was not comfortable in matters of governance and his role was thus confined to fundraising alone. Again, the role function of the learner was discouraging as it defeats the whole purpose of democratisation of the SGB. The SASA promotes the active participation of all stakeholders of the school organisation in shared decision-making in the governance of the school organisation and this includes learner-governors (Department of Education, 2000).

5.6.2. Learner discipline

5.6.2.1. Zero tolerance

Research studies conducted by Stout and Wood (2004) and De Wet (2003) argue that an efficient, effective SGB contributes to a more disciplined school with a high quality of education. The more effective the SGB is in fulfilling its role functions and responsibilities, the more functional and successful the school will be.

The principal of Sozo secondary school expressed the view that he was able to maintain good discipline among the learners. He noted that he had no challenges in this regard as he engaged in a zero tolerance policy, a strict code of conduct and had the positive support of his parent body.

His demonstrated this by making the following comments:

> *We have maintained good discipline at our school because our strict code of conduct and zero tolerance and constant motivation. Our learners abide to our strict Code of Conduct and we have the support of all our parents. We have not experienced any serious disciplinary problems that were of a major concern to us.*

The educator-governor of Sozo secondary school also echoed the same sentiments and indicated that there were minimal disciplinary problems in her classroom.

In confirming that she had experiencing no challenges in regard to learner indiscipline, the educator-governor was to state:

> *There are no much of disciplinary problems in my classroom. The disciplinary problems are identified early and addressed.*

Based on the interviews it can be concluded that the SGB at this school was effective in handling disciplinary problems. As a result, this SGB was able to create and maintain a safe and disciplined environment for effective teaching and learning. Commenting on private schools and some ex-model C schools, Lekalakala (2007) has argued that this type of school operates more successfully as compared to rural schools that often remain dysfunctional. Sharing the same sentiments, Mabitsela (2004) argues that if discipline was monitored continuously at the school and if SGBs developed strategies for corrective behaviour, this would create a well-disciplined school.

5.6.3. School finances

With reference to other research studies, it can be noted that many SGBs were struggling in the areas of financial management as they were inadequately trained for the financial management of their school (Bembe, 2004; Mestry, 2004).

If greater emphasis is placed on training facilities and training skills, then the SGBs would be better equipped to managing the school finances of the school (Nyambi, 2004; Segoati, 2006). At Sozo secondary school it emerged that the SGB had a finance officer for the collection of school fees with a treasurer whose responsibility was ensure that there was proper record-keeping of all important financial documents such as cheque books, invoices, receipts and bank statements. This SGB submitted quarterly financial reports to the provincial Department of Education circuit office.

5.6.3.1. Lack of financial commitment of parent body

All the participants in the research site concurred that the lack of financial commitment by the parents was a major challenge for the SGB and had been the cause of much pressure and undue stress on the members of the school governing board.

The principal of Sozo secondary school had this to say:

> *We have a major problem with finances. We struggle to get all our fees on time. We still have outstanding fees of last year and some parents have been handed over to debt collectors. Parents do not pay tuition fee on time.*

The chairperson of Sozo secondary school also shared similar sentiments regarding the problem with cash flow which had become an on-going problem. He stated:

> *The problem with cash flow has become an on-going problem in our school. We have no monies for our monthly expenses. We have to use overdraft facilities as a coping mechanism since parents do not pay on time.*

From the document analysis of the letters to parents, it revealed that the SGB had sent constant reminders to parents to pay their school fees. It can be understood that this SGB was trying to retrieve outstanding school fees despite their challenges. It should be noted that this governing body of this private, elite school had a comprehensive finance policy in place with all the income and expenses statements, including bank statements.

5.6.3.2. Non-involvement on sub-committees of the SGB

According to Section 30 of the SASA the SGB may form committees and sub-committees to provide assistance to in its tasks. In this regard, the SGB may delegate various financial functions to committees especially set up to manage aspects of the school's finances.

From the interviews at this research site, it surfaced that an educator-governor did not serve on the SGB finance sub-committee. As result, the educator-

governor at Sozo secondary school lacked information on how the school finances were both managed and utilised.

As the educator-governor was to remark:

> *We don't know what the principal is planning. We are only told at the end, what is his decision and we have to approve. I am not part of the finance committee and don't know the financial position of the school as it is private and confidential. We don't know if the school funds are managed properly.*

The learner-governor also shared similar sentiments:

> *I am not involved in the meetings and I am not aware of the financial status of my school. I know nothing.*

The non-involvement of these important stakeholders was evidence of a lack of democratic practice within the SGB and this was in violation of the SASA regulations. Likewise, these two respondent's responses were indicative of a general lack of transparency and accountability in the managing of the school's finances.

5.6.4. Admissions policy

5.6.4.1. Discriminatory admissions policy against religion and irregular use of admission tests

The SASA mandates SGBs to formulate admission policies that embrace the principles of equality and equality and clearly states that no learner should be denied access to a school. The admission policy serves as a powerful policy document for the entry of learners to the school and is need submitted to the head of department for verification and approval. Furthermore, all admission

policies needed to comply with the principles of fairness, equal access and non-discrimination (RSA, 1996). Most importantly, the admission policy must be void of any form of discriminations such as: race, gender, ethnic or social origins, age, disabilities, religions, languages and sexual orientation (Potgieter et al, 1997). Fundamentally, SGBs need to be fully briefed on the laws and regulations that are in place in South African education in order to ensure a fair and non-discriminatory admission policy is adopted by a school.

It emerged from the interviews with the school principal that he did not comply with the principles of fairness, equal access and non-discrimination as contained in the SASA.

This was the school principal's comment:

> *We have diagnostic test and depending on the results, we take on the children. We have problems with children of different religions applying for admission. Unfortunately we turn them down because we are a strictly Christian school with a Christian ethos.*

The chairperson of Sozo secondary school was to share a similar view:

> *It has become more challenging admitting learners from other schools, as they do not fall within our categories and we have to refuse their applications. We have specific criteria for our school. The learners have to be Christian.*

The document analysis of the Sozo secondary school's admissions policy document clearly stipulated that only "Christian" learners were permitted admission into this private elite school.

This restriction, based as it was on the need for membership of a particular religious group that the SGB formulated a discriminatory admission policy that only permitted the admission of Christian learners. This was a clear violation

of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and with the SASA and was reflective of the fact that this SGB was not complying with the South African laws and legislation. As research conducted by Ntando, (2011) has confirmed, many other SGBs have utilised the same discriminatory admissions policy as an excuse to keep learners from other religious groupings out of their schools.

5.6.4.2. Lack of equal access

In her interview, the educator-governor of Sozo secondary school clearly pointed out that non-Christians were not permitted to this private elite school:

> *Non-Christians are not allowed at our school according to our admission policy. This decision was made only by our parent body. We have no say in the formulation of the admission policy.*

From the response of this educator governor, it seems that this educator-governor was not in agreement with the stipulations made in the admissions policy. Importantly, the educator-governor went on to say that her viewpoints were not considered.

The success of a SGB largely depends on collaboration and teamwork among the parents, educators, non-teaching staff, learners and school principal. In this case, the educator-governor needed to be empowered and trained in her role function to expedite democratic school governance (Lemmer, 2000). It was important that the educator's voice be heard. Good governance structures advance the best interests of the school and such was not in evidence at this school.

In contrast, the learner-governor of Sozo secondary school also shared his experience within the SGB.

He had the following to say:

We do not admit non-Christians into our school.

From this response, it was clear that this learner-governor was aware of the admission policy but did not object to the discriminatory practice within this policy. Seemingly, the need to establish democratic practices within the SGB of this private elite school will be an on-going challenge and will in all probability have to be officially addressed by the provincial Department of Education as clearly there is lack of equal access for all learners, regardless of their religious affiliation.

5.6.5. Staff appointments

5.6.5.1. Lack of understanding of their role function and responsibility

The SGB within this private, elite school established its own constitution that provided the criteria for their staff appointments. The principal of Sozo secondary school confirmed that the SGB followed their own constitution in making its staff appointments and was experiencing no challenges in this regard.

We have our own constitution in terms of our staff appointments.

On examining and analysing their policy document for staff appointments, it was discovered that one of the criteria for staff appointments was that the successful candidate selected at the interview had to be of the Christian religion and a member of a church organisation. Again, this SGB had been using policies which were not in line with the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the appended the Bill of Rights as well as the SASA which clearly specifies that no person should be discriminated against based on religious affiliation. Not only was this an unfair labour practice, but the policy

adopted by the SGB clearly violated South African law. In this, the SGB patently lacked a thorough understanding of their key role functions and responsibilities in terms of the SASA. Given this scenario, this SGB failed to comply with the regulations of the provincial Department of Education, having drawn up their own constitution that was reflective of discriminatory criteria. It could be argued that the SGB were not only following unfair and inequitable practices, but that they were actually religiously biased against non-Christians.

According to the SASA, in a case where the SGB is clearly violating the South African laws and legislation, the provincial head of department may suspend, reverse or even withdraw the functions of the SGB.

5.6.5.2. Issues of bias

It is important to note the unfairness and biasness within the SGB of this private, elite secondary school.

The views expressed by the chairperson of Sozo secondary school were clear evidence of bias towards the adherents of the Christian religion:

> *The candidates must be Christian otherwise they will not be employed.*

It was also important to note that this SGB followed unfair labour practices. In other words, this SGB stipulated in their employment policy that a candidate may only qualify for appointment if they are from the Christian religion. These were signs of a weak democracy operating within the SGB. The educator governor also agreed with the chairperson in this discriminating policy.

This SGB specifically appointed staff members who complied with the school vision and mission statement. The document analysis of the mission statement of this school readily confirmed that all learners, educators, principals and parents had to uphold Christian ethics and philosophy.

Furthermore, the document analysis of the employment policy document revealed that all selected and appointed staff members must be affiliated to the Christian religion.

The issue of bias is a serious violation according to the Employment of Educators Act of 1998 and the Labour Relations Act of 1995. This SGB is clearly contravening the laws and legislations of the SASA. This is confirmed by the research studies of Pillay (2005) and Mkhize (2006), both of whom have shown that many interview processes have been flawed through the application of bias, corruption and nepotism.

5.6.5.3. Lack of learner involvement

Echoing similar sentiments, the learner-governor of Sozo secondary school was to state:

> *I would appreciate if the SGB members have more respect for me. They often disregard me. I am not involved in this SGB.*

From the analysis of the data, many other learner-governors have similar experiences, in that they were not involved in making staff appointments and their inputs disregarded at the meetings. Consequently, the learner-governor had limited participation in the SGB and no influence in its decision-making processes.

For the majority of the members of the AGB, the learner-governor's inputs were undoubtedly non-existent or irrelevant. This creates a great challenge to the promotion of democratic decisions. Decisions need to be reached through consensus and is a process whereby all members come to a common agreement. In this way democratic school governance practices are promoted.

In reference to other research studies, those learner-governors who were excluded from SGB meetings had serious implications in terms of the legal status of the SGB as well as in terms of the promotion of democratisation (Heystek, 2001).

For SGBs to become successful and effective, learner-governors must take a more active role in important and critical decision making processes (Mncube, 2008; Mestry, 2006; Mestry, 2004; Waghid, 2004). Moreover, when learners participate in school governance practices, this contributes to the decentralisation of control and participatory decision-making (Bush and Heystek, 2003; Mncube, 2008). Learner-governors need to be empowered to be part of the problem-solving and decision-making processes within the SGB.

5.6.6. Strategies recommended by participants in all key areas

5.6.6.1. Learner discipline

From the analysis of the data that was retrieved by the participants of Sozo secondary school, it was clearly evident that this SGB was effective in maintaining excellent discipline by implementing a zero tolerance policy for its learners.

From the discussions and interviews, the following recommendations were implemented by the participants successfully to establish minimum disciplinary problems.

i. The SGB used a merit and demerit system whereby the learners were awarded accordingly, merits for appropriate behaviour and demerits for inappropriate behaviour. When the learner had accumulated a certain number of demerits, this resulted in detentions and the withdrawal of privileges;

ii.   If the disciplinary problems continued to persist even after the use of the merit and demerit system, an interview was set up with the parents of the learner concerned. The consequences of inappropriate behaviour were clearly outlined to the learner and parents alike;

iii.   The SGB and school principal encouraged the learner, parent and teacher to work as an educational team to ensure discipline was well-maintained at schools;

iv.   The SGB, together with the school principal, recommended smaller class sizes with up to twenty-five learners per class to minimize disciplinary problems;

v.   Greater support structures from the parents, community members, the police and social services assisted the school with learner discipline;

vi.   The SGB ensured that a strict code of conduct was signed by all parents and learners on admission to the school, declaring their commitment to a strict code of conduct;

vii.   The SGB and the school principal used encouraging and praiseworthy words to award the learners with excellent behaviour. Positive reinforcement was also promoted;

viii. The school principal recommended that all members of the school staff work collaboratively and collectively to ensure the strict code of conduct was maintained at all times;

ix.   The SGB and school principal recommended role models for the learners and this was backed up with religious referencing from the Christian bible;

x. The SGB recommended greater parental involvement especially in problematic cases and at all meetings;

xi. Learners were taught self-control, a sense of responsibility and excellence in obedience through stories, the morning assemblies and Life Skills lessons from the Christian bible.

5.6.6.2. School Finances

Although the SGB struggled to retrieve the school fees from parents timeously, the participants recommended the following strategies to alleviate their financial challenges:

i. The SGB and the principal must employ the services of a reputable collection agency for retrieving outstanding school fees so as to ensure that school fees are paid timeously and to prevent the problem of cash flow;

ii. This SGB recommended a number of fundraising activities to supplement the collection of school finances at this school;

iii. The school principal recommended financial training for the newly inducted SGB members so that they were made aware of the finance committees and financial responsibility to the school.

5.6.6.3. Admission Policy

According to Section 2(5) of the SASA, the SGB were supposed to comply with the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the appended Bill of Rights, the Admission Policy for Ordinance Public Schools and the Education laws Amendments when formulating the school's admission policy. From the analysis of the above data, it was deduced that the participants used

the school's admissions policy to enforce its own religious preferences and choices.

The SGB would not acknowledge that they had violated the laws within the SASA and hence lacked a thorough understanding of the SASA rules and regulations. From the analysis of the data there was a need for adequate training in regard to the formulation of an admissions policy that was in line with the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and all current legislation for this SGB to function optimally. Unfortunately, there were no strategies in place to make this a reality.

5.6.6.4. Staff Appointments

This SGB formulated its own staff appointment policy and constitution that was contrary to the SASA, the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the appended Bill of Rights. As a consequence, this SGB needs to be made aware of the rights and provisions contained within these two seminal documents, as well as current legislative instruments when formulating polices.

When the participants were interviewed regarding their recommendations and strategies, none of the participants recommended any strategies as this SGB was content with the way they were appointing staff. Hence no new strategies were suggested.

5.7. Chapter Summary

The research findings confirmed that the SGBs were facing daunting challenges with the learner discipline. This was a mammoth task in all school types except for the private elite school that implemented a zero tolerance discipline code of conduct and had succeeded in its determination to deal comprehensively and positively with learner disciplinary issues. Although the

other school case studies had suggested strategies to be put in place to deal with serious elements of learner discipline, most of the SGBs were failing to maintain good discipline.

The management of school finances is yet another issue that affected the SGBs. All of the SGBs were struggling to manage their finances successfully and all were experiencing challenges in financial management and making sound financial decisions. The lack of capacity building and support from the provincial Department of Education clearly aggravated the plight of many of the SGBs in regard to their lack of skills training and expertise. Participants concurred that more training and development from the provincial Department of Education would assist SGBs in understanding their role functions and responsibilities more meaningfully.

The admission policy seems to vary at the different schools and discriminatory policies have emerged especially at the private school in the research component. A lack of training as well as capacity building contributed to poor governance structures at many South African schools. Hence, SGBs were still struggling with their key role functions and responsibilities.

With the appointment of staff, the SGBs did convey their concerns in terms of the lack of knowledge and skills, the lack of teacher trade union involvement, rising conflicts among many SGB members and a general lack of training and development. Here again, the rural school had been severely affected by its inability to make staff appointments as the majority of its SGBs members were illiterate and were unable to understand the interview processes clearly. Conversely, the SGB within the private elite school had its own constitution and followed its own terms and conditions which were in clear violation of the SASA, the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Bill of Rights.

Chapter six will focus on the summary, conclusions and recommendations for the study.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

This concluding chapter presents a brief summary aimed at giving a general overview of the research study in order to show that the research aims originally expressed in Section 1.2.3., as well as the research questions (1.2.2.) have been addressed and achieved.

Fundamentally, the theories of school governance and empowerment provided a framework for this study. The qualitative research method was employed to explore the challenges and experiences faced by school governing bodies in four secondary schools located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

This chapter will seek to present a synthesis of the major research findings and recommendations that can serve as guidelines for the school governing bodies. Finally, recommendations for future research and some limitations of the study are also provided. The chapter concludes with a summary statement.

6.2. An overview of the previous chapters of the study

This research study has been divided into six distinct chapters.

i. **Chapter One** dealt with an overview and background to the phenomenon of school governance. An analysis of the global trend of

establishing SBMs was discussed in the context of different countries in order to highlight their purpose of providing a participatory and shared decision-making body, thereby giving greater parental involvement with the overall goal of moving towards improving the overall quality of education.

Drawing particular reference to the South African context, as the researcher, I examined the radical changes of transformation in the education system post-1994. Having discussed the SASA document, I followed this up by showing that the establishment of SGBs was meant to usher in a new era of democratisation within education.

The study drew particular attention to the experiences and challenges of the SGBs in the following key areas: learner discipline, school finances, formulation and implementation of the admission policy and finally, staff appointments. The theories of school governance and empowerment were given special attention as the framework for school governance.

ii. **Chapter Two** provided a comprehensive literature review of the South African education system with a particular focus on the historical journey of the development of school governance. This was achieved by referencing the Hunter's Committee Report followed by the two White papers that led to the establishment of the SASA in 1996.

Attention was drawn to the powerful structure of the SGB, focusing on the role functions, experiences and challenges of the SGBs in the key areas of learner discipline, school finances, the formulation of admission policy and finally, staff appointments.

iii. **Chapter Three** presented international perspectives on school governance in the global north countries of Finland and England, and the global south countries of Zimbabwe and Senegal.

Within the school governance study of Finland, the establishment of municipalities and SGBs was to play a pivotal role. The Local School Authorities (LSAs), together with the SGBs were the vehicles of school governance for England schools. Fundamentally, the establishment of Local School Authorities and SDCs within the school system in Zimbabwe aimed to establish a system of democratisation so as to address the past inequalities under colonial rule. Within the context of Senegal, the Local School Authorities together with the school management committees strived to promote the devolution of power within its education system despite the country still being at its infancy stage of decentralisation.

An overview of how the experiences and challenges of SGBs in these four specific countries was presented with particular reference to learner discipline, school finances, the formulation of admissions policy and staff appointments.

Finally, the School Governance Study conducted by the University of Bath in the UK provided a helpful analysis of the different governing body models that would be the basis for my recommendations in Chapter six.

iv. **Chapter Four** was concerned with an explication of the research methodology utilised in this study as well as the various methodological and epistemological considerations. A presentation of the case study research design and the relevance of qualitative design to this research study were provided. In addition, the rationale for sampling, followed by the data collection methods was also discussed. Attention was drawn to the use of individual interviews, observation document analysis and questionnaires. The advantage and disadvantage of each data collection method was explored in depth followed by an elucidation of the concepts of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, conformability and dependability. Finally, attention was drawn to the

importance of ethical considerations within the field research phase, followed by the limitations of the study as a whole.

v. **Chapter Five** provided a detailed exposition of the research findings from each case study school followed by an analysis of the data. Special reference was made to the themes and sub-themes depending on the context of the school and the effectiveness of the SGB in question. The themes broadly related to the experiences and challenges of school governing bodies in the following key areas: learner discipline, administration of school finances, formulation of admission policy and finally, staff appointments. The experiences and challenges of each SGB were identified through the tool of individual interviews. The research participants also provided strategies for overcoming these challenges.

vi. **Chapter Six** presented a summary of the theoretical bases underpinning the research study together with a series of its major findings and recommendations. General recommendations were made as to how SGBs should be structured and operate within the South African school system as well as areas for future research identified. The chapter concluded with a summary statement.

6.3. Summary of the theoretical basis of the study

Before presenting the major research findings and recommendations of the study, an overview of the theories underpinning the study as discussed in chapter one (Sections 1.19.1., 1.19.2., 1.19.3.) will be presented in the section which follows.

6.3.1. Theory of empowerment

The concept of empowerment may be interpreted in different ways for the purpose of training and development. As the researcher, I examined the educational perspectives of the theories of empowerment and its application to this research study. Empowerment advocates the equipping of the person, group, or organisation with the necessary skills, capacity and knowledge to make a significant impact and institute meaningful change within a given organisation. Accordingly, empowerment delivers power and authority to people or structures that never had them before, probably because of the lack of skills, knowledge or for political reasons. Empowerment can be likened to the process of motivation whereby each individual is given the power to do more and to do it well. For this reason, by training SGB members, they can be empowered to discharge their functions in an expert and optimal manner.

6.3.2. Theory of school governance

Within school governance theory there emerges the perspective of cooperative governance. Cooperative governance advocates shared decision–making through working relationships and participatory management. For SGBs to move towards greater effectiveness, all relevant stakeholders need to work collectively and collaboratively to achieve the common goals of the school organisation. To assist with school governance, there needs to be a deliberate sharing of executive powers between all stakeholders with the SGB concerned, including the parent body, the community, the school principal and the Department of Education (Laffan *et al.,* 2000).

6.4. Synthesis of the major findings and the recommendations

There are important findings which emerged from this investigation. This summary of the research findings is not meant to be exhaustive but instead is aimed at highlighting the major issues pertinent to the research as a whole.

A close examination of the research data clearly reveals that SGBs in the South African school system are faced with enormous challenges, including the pressure to ensure excellence in education through competently handling learner discipline, administering school finances and formulating admission policy and making informed choices with regard to the appointment of new staff. The SGBs under study were clearly plagued by enormous challenges that sullied any of their efforts at ensuring quality education for their schools.

6.4.1. Structure, role functions and responsibilities of the SGB

The structure and composition of the SGBs in the four case study schools were elected bodies which constitutionally complied with the requirements of the SASA (1996) (Sections 5.3.1., 5.4.1., 5.5.1., 5.6.1.). The differences in terms of the number of members elected to serve on the four SGBs depended on the number of learners enrolled at each particular school. It was clear from the data analysis that the principal and the SGBs could not differentiate between the roles functions of professional management and governance (Sections 5.3.1., 5.4.1., 5.5.1., 5.6.1.). From the data analysis, the roles and functions of the principal and SGBs overlapped and were ambiguous, a situation which caused conflicts to arise (Sections 5.3.1., 5.4.1., 5.5.1., 5.6.1.). In terms of the conducted research, it was apparent that the principals at each of the schools took on more governance responsibilities than those stipulated within the SASA. This was particularly true when decisions had to be made and they were reluctant to share their positions of authority. Consequently, a lack of involvement and authority of the SGB members contributed to their record of ineffectiveness.

6.4.1.1. Recommendations

Due to the apparent disparity in the role functions between professional management and governance, I recommend that the SGBs be given greater clarity regarding their specific role functions. While the SASA (1996) determines the functional distinctions that should operate between governance and management, there is much debate about what can be termed management and what can be termed governance. My Additional recommendation to enhance of the effectiveness of SGBs, especially in the rural and township areas would be to simplify their role functions and the complexity of their responsibilities.

To achieve such redefinition of the role functions and responsibilities of the SGB, it is imperative that the SASA document be re-examined. Furthermore, its terminology needs to be simplified so as to prevent any confusion, contradiction or ambiguity. Additionally, the governance portfolio of school principals should be clarified so as to ensure they do not abuse their position and power within the SGB structures.

Importantly, SGBs need to be empowered to relate to each other with tolerance, openness and shared goals and in this way promote the best interests of the school. The more empowered SGBs are, the more motivated they will be to take on the challenges militating against school efficiency and the delivery of quality of education. I therefore recommend that all members of the SGB undergo a series of training sessions and skills programmes to better capacitate them towards fulfilling their role functions and responsibilities. According to Section 19 of the SASA (1996), it is clearly stated that it is the responsibility of the provincial Department of Education to train SGB members and provide them with the necessary skills and expertise. This is a new experience for the SGBs and therefore I recommend extensive training and support be given at least during the initial period. On-going, systematic and proactive training is imperative for the establishment of a fully functional SGB. In this way, SGBs will be enabled to undertake the task that is before them. Finally, capacity training session and induction training programmes

conducted by the Department should make school principals and SGB members aware of their key role functions and responsibilities in terms of the SASA as well as emphasise the importance of teamwork, collaboration and shared decision-making.

6.4.2. The handling of learner discipline

Data findings have confirmed that the SGBs under study faced serious disciplinary challenges except the private, elite school that displayed effectiveness in handling learner discipline. The SGB at Shozi Secondary and Fikile Secondary faced almost similar disciplinary problems such as learner stabbings (Section 5.3.2.1.) stealing and vandalism (Section 5.3.2.3.), gang fights (Section 5.3.2.2.), serious drug problems (Section 5.4.2.1.), high failure rates and learner drop-outs (Sections 5.3.2.5., 5.4.2.4.), high absenteeism and truancy (Section 5.4.2.3.) and cultural fights (Section 5.4.2.2.). In the same vein, the SGB of the ex-Model C school had experienced serious disruptions due to cell/mobile phones (Section 5.5.2.1.), bullying, verbal aggression and gang fights (Section 5.5.2.3.) and racial conflicts (Section 5.5.2.4.). Against this barrage of problems, the SGB became overwhelmed and consequently ineffective (Sections 5.5.2.1.-5.5.2.5.). In contrast to this, the private elite school proved to be efficient, reliable and effective in handing learner discipline (Section 5.6.2.1.).

In examining the school governors' role in dealing with problems of learner discipline, the SGBs under study seemed incapable and woefully ill-equipped to provide effective strategies (Sections 5.3.6.1., 5.4.6.1., 5.5.6.1.). Furthermore, the SGBs appeared to have become frustrated with the patent lack of parental involvement especially in the rural school (Section 5.3.2.4.). It can thus be concluded that while theoretically SGBs had many strategies in place, practically they were not working and hence were failing in their responsibility to cope with the challenges. In contrast, it must be noted that the private elite school maintained good disciplinary practices as compared to rural, township and ex-Model C schools (Section 5.6.2.1.). In other words, the

SGBs were failing to perform their duties and responsibilities as prescribed in the SASA in terms of handling learner discipline.

In reference to other research studies, Khuwayo (2007) has contended that SGBs were often faced with huge responsibilities in curbing disciplinary problems such as insubordination, verbal aggression, bullying, gang fights and stabbings. Echoing similar sentiments, Legotio *et al.* (2002) has confirmed that SGBs were unable to cope with disruptive learner behaviour at schools and hence became completely overwhelmed with the situation. A lack of parental involvement coupled with a lack of commitment from the SGBs further aggravated the situation (Mestry, 2004, 2006; Mncube, 2007).

6.4.2.1. Recommendations

The poor record of learner discipline has the potential of making schools collapse and education to fail under its weight. It is thus recommended that purposive intervention strategies be initiated at the highest level concerning the issues of learner indiscipline and poor behaviour. It is important that discussion takes place in a framework where the accountability and responsibility of everybody operating within the environment of the school is made clear so as to avoid the suggestion that learners are the specific and only subjects of this kind of attention. A national intervention programme with a buy-in from the highest office in government is required if the student sector is to develop an implementable code of conduct for learners. Such a programme and initiative must give clear guidelines towards implementable alternatives to that of corporal punishment. Initially, the National Department of Education and Training should draft a generic code for application in schools that includes clear policy guidelines to support their practice both provincially and locally.

It is further recommended that the implementation of a code of conduct be the responsibility of all relevant stakeholders. Importantly, learners must be

empowered to determine the difference between right and wrong as they learn to think, create, read and write.

Figure 6.1. below is a recommended model to be implemented in schools to effectively deal with learner discipline.
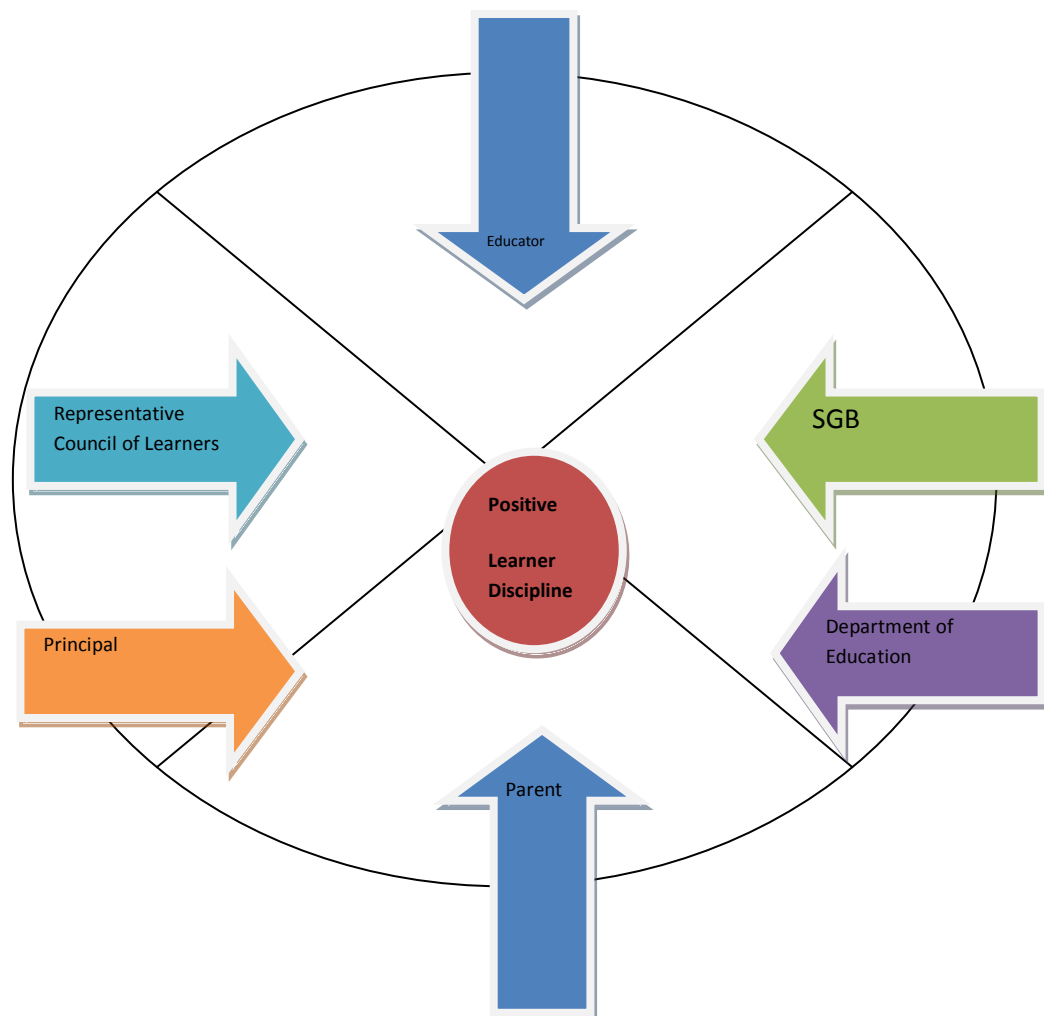

Figure 6.1. Model for handling learner discipline

This model inevitably emphasises the networking and collaboration of all stakeholders in handling of the learner discipline. All relevant stakeholders

including the school principal, the SGB, parents, the provincial Department of Education, the RCL and all educators are to be actively involved in handling the rising phenomenon of learner indiscipline at schools. Indeed, it is my measured opinion that strong working relationships between all stakeholders will eventually have a positive impact on learner discipline.

This model emphasises that all stakeholders focus towards effective disciplinary practices and a well thought out disciplinary code of conduct policy that will be in line with the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Bill of Rights and section 8(2) of the SASA (1996). In this way, a disciplined environment will be established to minimise disciplinary problems. To achieve this end, the SGB should elect a disciplinary committee to address problems of learner indiscipline. In serious cases of learner indiscipline, the SGBs may suspend the learner for a period, not longer than one week. That said, Departmental regulations and recommendations must be adhered to in order to maintain a level of trust, while not disclosing confidential information of the specific learners.

The above model further proposes that the SGB adopt a restorative disciplinary programme to inform parents regularly of the disciplinary measures that are in place. Furthermore, the SGB should adopt an effective prefect programme to emphasise role model learners for the school and the election of the RCL, whereby learners' complaints can be addressed. In this, the model proposes the active involvement of learner-governors at the SGB meetings to ensure that learners' problems are discussed.

In terms of the above recommended model, SGBs should develop workshops to assist learners to negotiate, meditate and manage conflict constructively. I therefore recommend that SGBs encourage parents, educators and the school principal to become more familiar with individual learners' emotional, cognitive and psychological development and in this way assist them to deal effectively with problems of indiscipline. I further recommend that the SGBs improvise and implement special campaigns, workshops and seminars for

learners, educators, parents and the community in addressing learner disciplinary problems.

If this model is to be effective, it is also important that the provincial Department of Education become more vigilant in learner discipline and re-define and simplify the guidelines for the handling of learner discipline. Suggested strategies such as detention, verbal warnings, demerits and community service, counselling, the installation of metal detectors and random checks are ways of ensuring strict discipline at schools. Furthermore, the provincial Department of Education needs to become intimately involved in the disciplinary procedures undertaken at schools. Towards this, the Department should offer more professional seminars, workshops and conferences to empower and educate school principals, educators and parents on how to deal with the arising problem of learner indiscipline. Importantly, the provincial Department of Education needs to provide more support to SGBs, especially those in rural and township schools in the quest to address learner indiscipline.

Towards this goal, the model also recommends that educators become proactive in facilitating sound discipline within the classroom. Most importantly, educators need to use positive words to build up learners' self-esteem and develop a partnership with the parents of those learners concerned to address the problem of indiscipline collaboratively. Through this, the educator creates a learner-centred environment whereby the lessons are structured and a sense of order is achieved. Educators, who are consistent in addressing disciplinary problems in the classroom, have a record of success. It is thus of great importance that educators do not work in isolation of one another in dealing with serious disciplinary problems but seek the assistance and co-operation of the school principal and the SGB. Clearly, educators need to be more vigilant during lesson time and monitor their learners' behaviour constantly.

Significantly, this model encourages active parent involvement as parents become more aware of what is actually happening at schools. Towards this,

recommend that the parents take on a more active role in learner discipline at their respective schools. Parents, who have a thorough understanding of the rules and regulations of the school, will be able to consolidate said rules and emphasise the importance of respect to the learners. The model thus recommends that parents take the primary responsibility in establishing the concept of self-control and responsibility. Parents need to create warm, open and loving environments so that their children develop positive behaviour practices. It is thus imperative that parents and educators listen to the child's concerns and make time to investigate problems of indiscipline. I recommend therefore that parents and educators alike teach the learners themselves to find possible solutions towards maintaining discipline.

This model encourages the incorporation of senior, experienced educators, staff, principals and community workers to assist with disciplinary problems. I also recommend that each SGB creates opportunities for its learners to develop holistically as well as develop leadership skills.

This model recommends that all stakeholders work together to ensure that all learners who enrolled at a school are made fully aware of the disciplinary code of conduct. In this, I recommend that all relevant stakeholders deal with all learners in a fair and equal manner, taking into consideration their rights in terms of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Towards this, I recommend that school principals organise professional counselling sessions.

The model further proposes that the school principal conducts staff meetings and discussions with all educators, parents and learners to find ways of overcoming rising problem of learner indiscipline. In this, I recommend that the school principal conducts parent interviews with the concerned parents before initiating any plan of action. All stakeholders need to constantly aware of what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate learner behaviour and how to initiate action plans towards creating an atmosphere of positive discipline as well as reward positive discipline accordingly.

The model also recommends that all relevant stakeholders conduct regular meetings with school learners to discuss potential problems and look for ways of resolving any potential or present problems of indiscipline. In this, I recommend that school principals engage in continuous staff development sessions, programmes and workshops to empower and instil in staff members a culture and regimen of positive learner behaviour as well as provide a good orientation programme for new learners coming into this school to highlight the culture of positive behaviour.

Finally, the model suggests that all relevant stakeholders work as a team to provide feedback to the SGB regarding problems of learner indiscipline. To ensure a strict code of conduct, I recommend that parents, educators and the school principal create a caring environment which contains much encouragement and love. Community involvement also plays a significant role in maintaining discipline at schools such as correctional service workers, health sector workers and other NGOs. The creation and sustenance of positive relationships between all stakeholders of the school organisation will greatly assist the development and maintenance of a well-disciplined school. In other words, a strong sense of partnership will go a long way in maintaining an atmosphere of good discipline at any school.

6.4.3. The management of school finances

Although many action plans and initiatives have been introduced by SGBs to effectively manage and administer school finances, a number of SGBs at different schools have faced enormous financial constraints (Sections 5.3.3., 5.4.3., 5.5.3., 5.6.3.). In particular, those SGBs at rural and township schools have faced more challenges than those ex-Model C and private schools. Such challenges that have disadvantaged rural and township school SGBs from fully executing their responsibilities include, the dominating role of the school principal (Section 5.3.3.2.), lack of accountability (Section 5.3.3.4.) lack of an effective finance policy and of a finance committee (Section 5.3.3.3.), issues of budgeting (5.3.3.5.), lack of proper financial planning (Section 5.3.3.6.),

high levels of illiteracy, especially among parent-governors (Section 5.3.3.1.). In such cases, school principals have taken upon themselves to make important decisions without consulting the parent-governors (Section 5.3.3.2.). This has opened the door to problematic situations and alleged cases of financial mismanagement (Section 5.3.3.3.).

Although Shozi secondary school and Fikile secondary school both receive a 100% subsidy from the State, their SGBs still face crippling financial problems (Section 5.3.3.5.). Data findings and research observations revealed that both the school principal and the SGB chairperson at Fikile Secondary were at loggerheads over financial matters (Section 5.3.3.2.). It should also be pointed out that there had been a reported case of financial mismanagement on the part of the SGB of Fikile secondary school (Section 5.4.3.4.). Despite SGBs resorting to fundraising activities and seeking financial donations, the financial woes at many schools continues to be alarming (Sections 5.3.3., 5.4.3., 5.5.3., 5.6.3.). Unfortunately, many SGBs are losing the battle in maintaining effective financial management at their schools. Nonetheless, the data findings reveal that both Hilltop secondary school and Sozo secondary school have attempted to resolve their financial problems through introducing many new initiatives. On the other hand, although the SGBs of Shozi secondary school and Fikile secondary school had strategies in place, their financial woes did not seem to change for the better.

Other research studies have confirmed that the many SGBs, especially those in rural and township schools lacked in financial expertise. In addition, there were many cases of alleged financial mismanagement through misappropriation coupled with theft and fraud being constantly reported (Marishane and Botha, 2004; Naidoo, 2010). Given the narrow focus of previously disadvantaged schools, Ngwenya (2010) has argued that the lack of financial management skill and commitment on the part of many SGBs has worsened considerably during the past five years. In addition, research conducted by Mestry (2004) and Mestry and Naidoo (2006) has confirmed that many SGBs continue to struggle to maintain financially viable schools. As a result, cases of financial mismanagement and misappropriation of funds

were rife. The research conducted by Marishane and Botha (2004) concurs with that of Naidoo (2010) that a number of SGBs have lacked the financial expertise and knowledge to create financially viable schools. Consequently, most SGBs were actually inadequately prepared to handle this huge responsibility.

6.4.3.1. Recommendations

Many SGBs continue to be incapable of managing school finances appropriately. Indeed, it is patently unfair practice on the part of the provincial Department of Education to expect ill-equipped SGBs especially in rural and township schools to manage their financial budgets effectively. The financial situation at most rural and townships has indeed worsened when compared to schools located in urban areas (Khuzwayo, 2007, Ngcobo and Ngwenya, 2005). In this regard, it should be mentioned that although financial management is considered to be one of key functions of the SGB, it is also an area that has not been given priority in terms of sound training by provincial education departments. Therefore extensive training and equipping of SGBs in this area cannot be over-emphasised. It is highly recommended that the provincial Department of Education prioritise and promote the effective financial training and empowerment of SGBs especially in rural and township schools.

According to Nyambi (2004) the financial status of the majority of rural schools has worsened due to the high illiteracy levels of parent-governors who are ignorant of financial laws and legislations. In such situations, the principals make autocratic decisions. As a result, some SGBs become saddled dominating principals who want to regain their former positions of power. Adam and Waghid (2004) have confirmed that the overpowering voice of the school principal often restricts the opportunity of other SGB members to participate, resulting in a weakened form of democracy. In many instances, these illiterate parent-governors do not even question the principal's decision as they feel the principal is more capable and knowledgeable in areas of

school governance practices. The data findings confirm that the dominating role of the principal at Fikile Secondary was the cause of the school undergoing financial struggles (Section 5.3.3.2.).

Independent research has shown that many SGBs are not operating democratically as they do not fully understand their role functions and responsibilities in financial management and therefore lack the legal knowledge, skills, expertise in executing their duties effectively and efficiently (Marishane and Botha, 2004; Mestry, 2004, 2006; Mhkize, 2006; Mothata and Mda, 2006). Consequently, skills training cannot be over-emphasised. It is in this light that the following recommendations are made:

i. SGBs should adopt stringent financial management procedures and systematic controls over school funds. According to the Public Finance Management Fund (1999), all monies that have been used must be correctly accounted for;

ii. Strict control over cash receipts and cash transactions must be sanctioned and authorised by all SGB members;

iii. SGBs need to organise financial sub-committees and co-opt members with expertise to assist with the management of the school finances according to section 30 of the SASA (1996). Furthermore, SGBs need to delegate duties to these sub-committees who should report back to the main body.

Accountability is one the key concerns in the area of school governance and refers to both internal and external accountability. For a SGB to be accountable it means it must be accountable for all its actions and decisions. Internal accountability characterises the sense of responsibility of the individual in a particular school. External accountability occurs when the school undergoes performance measures. Governing bodies need to work within the boundaries of external and internal accountability. Accountability embodies inspection, scrutiny and regular check-ups.

To ensure that SGBs function optimally, it is important that measures are put in place that ensures greater accountability. I thus recommend that a high level of accountability is required of all SGBs especially in the areas of financial planning, financial management and financial budgets. I further recommend that the provincial Department of Education organise workshops and training sessions for SGBs to enhance their level of accountability.

Data findings reveal that there were tensions between the principals and the SGBs at Shozi secondary school and Fikile secondary school as the principals did not want to share their responsibilities with the SGB members. Research however has shown that for an organisation to be successful, the issue of collaboration and teamwork has to be emphasised. The fine line between the role functions of the SGB and school principals has also caused much confusion and disagreements. I therefore recommend that school principals and SGBs manage conflict effectively and thereby focus on organisational effectiveness. I further recommend that workable solutions be devised to bridge the gaps between the two parties. This can only be achieved if the democratic values of responsibility, courage, loyalty, dedication, commitment, tolerance, accountability are promoted to advance conflict resolution and conflict management at schools. In addition, I strongly recommend that SGBs drafts and implement a school finance policy that clearly illustrates the effective management of the school finances. Such a financial policy should be in line with the requirements of the SASA and must articulate the basic principles of financial planning and financial management. In this, it is important that SGBs make financial decisions collectively and collaboratively to prevent overspending and financial mismanagement.

To overcome the financial challenges, SGBs are encouraged to network in order to organise workshops in financial planning, financial management and strategic planning so as to prevent corruption and misappropriation of funds within cluster schools. In this, I recommend that the provincial Department of Education offer a series of on-going trainings and workshops to ensure school effectiveness and school efficiency.

According to Section 19 (1) (a) of the SASA, the provincial Department of Education advocates introductory training sessions for newly appointed SGBs. To this end, funding has been allocated by the State for such training to take place. Preparing SGBs is often an overwhelming task and therefore new appointees should be inducted into school governance so as to familiarise and prepare them for the complex responsibilities that arise as well as quickly adapt them to their new role functions and responsibilities.

According to the *Review of the Financing, Resourcing and Costs of Education in Public Schools* (Department of Education, 2003); SGBs have been struggling to perform due to a lack of induction problems as well as general confusion over their role functions and responsibilities. I therefore recommend that newly appointed SGBs need to be informed of what is expected of them in terms of the laws and regulations under the SASA (1996). Newly appointed SGBs are usually thrown in at the 'deep-end' and not given the necessary assistance. As a result, they lack the knowledge of correct procedures that need to be taken when handling learner discipline, the administration of finances, the formulation of admissions policy and the appointment of staff. Had SGBs be more empowered, they would not feel so intimidated and simply be a 'rubber stamp' for the decisions of many school principals.

According to Serfontein (2010), many SGBs have yet to acquire the necessary skills and experience to govern schools. As a result, many SGBs lack the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions in regards to school discipline, the administration of school finances, formulating of school policies and the appointing of staff. This in turn leads to misinterpretation and mistrust. As Xaba (2011) has pointed out, many SGBs have been unable to fulfil their duties and responsibilities as they require specialised skills and training in the areas of financial management, budgeting and formulation of policies.

To overcome these problems, SGBs must be made aware of the importance of fundraising to supplement school funds. Accordingly, SGBs must establish partnerships within the community for assistance in fundraising, donations and sponsorships. I therefore recommend that SGBs apply to the provincial

Department of Education for additional support. In addition, they should make application for exemption of school fees for those parents who cannot afford school fees. In particular, I strongly recommend the intervention of the provincial Department of Education in those rural and township schools where SGBs are incapable of resolving their financial challenges.

SGBs need to work collectively and collaboratively to achieve common goals so as to ensure that their schools are financially viable. In this, I recommend that SGBs implement short, medium and long term improvement plans to create financially viable schools. I also recommend the re-examination of the SASA document in terms of the terminologies and contradictions implicit within it with regard to the financial management of the schools. Furthermore, it is important that all governors be trained and skilled in the area of analysing and interpreting educational policies and documents.

Given the high incidence of illiteracy among parent-governors in rural and township schools which has resulted in the ineffectiveness of school governance practices, I contend that the higher literacy levels of school governors will assist in their role functions and responsibilities. While Marishane (1999) has contested that governor's educational qualifications did not make any difference to a school governor's work performances. I strongly disagree with this assertion. Instead, I argue that educational qualifications, skills and knowledge of SGB governors can either cause a school to succeed or fail. Indeed, it would be disadvantageous to utilise the services of illiterate or ill-equipped SGBs to make critical decisions regarding learner discipline, school finances, the formulation of admission policy and staff appointments. I therefore recommend that training sessions be given after hours and over weekends to accommodate for those who are confined by work constraints. It is also advisable that SGB members, especially those in previously disadvantaged schools, attend financial management workshops.

It is imperative that the key stakeholders of the SGB, i.e., the school principal and chairperson of the SGB, be knowledgeable in educational laws and legislations and be familiar with the SASA. As Mestry (2006) has confirmed,

SGBs and school principals do not know the provisions contained within the SASA and this has inevitably caused high levels of financial mismanagement. Illiterate parents who have served on SGBs have been severely disadvantaged as it has preluded them from processing important information essential to the success of school governance (Maile, 2002).

For Mestry and Naidoo (2009), the level of education among SGB members has significance for the way school budgets are monitored and controlled. Consequently, many SGB members and school principals need to improve their level of education to make critical budgetary decisions that can positively affect the status of their schools. In other words, the more knowledgeable SGBs are, the better their position will be in handling educational challenges. The Department of Education has responded by implementing a compulsory professional qualification for principals by introducing the Advanced Certificate in Education as a national qualification for school leadership (van der Westhuizen and van Vuuren, 2007). Institutionally, I recommend that SGB members have at least a minimum set of educational qualifications so that they may fulfil their key role functions and responsibilities. This would also make them more confident and competent in their work performances. Ideally, SGBs should be appointed according to their commitment, motivation and drive to the school's vision and mission statement.

After much consideration, I recommend that (apart from learner-governors), all SGB members need a minimum educational qualification of a National Senior Certificate matriculation to serve in the office of governance. In addition, I recommend the following minimum requirements for the SGB chairperson to be as follows:

i. S/he should have at least five years of work experience;

ii. S/he should posses the minimum educational qualification of a National Senior Certificate matriculation;

iii. S/he should not have been found guilty in a court of law of any criminal offence in the past five year period;

iv. S/he should clearly embrace the democratic values of responsibility, courage, loyalty, dedication, commitment, tolerance, accountability and drive to ensure that they are democratic citizens of education.

Furthermore, I recommend the following minimum requirements for SGB Treasurer to be as follows:

i. S/he would need at least five years of work experience;

ii. S/he should posses the minimum educational qualification of a National Senior Certificate matriculation;

iii. S/he should not have been found guilty in a court of law of any criminal offence in the past five year period;

iv. S/he should show competency in financial management. A qualification in financial management and skills training would be a distinct advantage.

The traditional model of democracy embodied by the SGB is now being scrutinised for its systematic weaknesses and lack of application of democratic principles. In other words, it is clear that many SGBs are still not implementing democratic value systems and principles in the governance practices and ethos of their schools. Indeed, it cannot be doubted that the lack of democratic principles coupled with systematic weaknesses has led to the patent dysfunctionality of many SGBs. I therefore recommend that SGBs be evaluated by the parents of the school for their inputs, work performances. Such evaluation forms should be completed by all parents and safely retained by the school for scrutiny by the provincial Department of Education. Such evaluation should be conducted on a quarterly basis so as to monitor SGB

performance in accordance with the requirements and regulations contained within the SASA (1996).

The provincial Department of Education should also regularly conduct a survey to evaluate and assess the performance of all SGB across all schools. Such a system of evaluation would improve and enhance transparency and accountability at the school level. Through such an appraisal system, problem areas would be identified and addressed. Indeed, by putting an appraisal system in place, it would not only empower school governance of the school towards attaining greater levels of excellence, but would also result in SGBs becoming more effective. Finally, I recommend at the end of their school governance term, all SGB members should be publicly acknowledged for their tireless efforts and services to the school and the community and that letters of commendation be sent out by the provincial Department of Education.

From the data findings, the principal at Fikile secondary school took on a more defined and dominating role within the SGB, resulting in a lack of shared governance, shared-decision-making and collaboration, causing this SGB to fail. In this regard, I recommend the active involvement of all SGB members in the decision-making process as this would inevitably improve their levels of efficiency, thereby creating effective and viable schools. In other words, effective communication and negotiation is enhanced through active parent participation to promote power-sharing and co-operative partnerships.

6.4.4. Formulation of admissions policy

My research found that discriminatory admission policies and practices were rife at the schools under study (Sections 5.8.6., 5.9.6., 5.10.6., 5.11.6.). From the research data collected, it was evident that the SGBs formulated discriminatory admission policies to restrict only certain 'types' of learners into their schools (Sections 5.3.4.1., 5.4.4.1., 5.5.4.1., 5.6.4.1.). For example, within Shozi secondary school, the SGB formulated an admission policy which discriminated against the age of the learners, i.e., if the learners were two

years older and above the grade, learners are not permitted (Section 5.3.4.1.). At Fikile secondary school, the SGB used stringent admission tests to limit the number of learners in a specific grade; a practice which clearly discriminated against the learners and which was contrary to the guidelines laid down in the SASA (Section 5.4.4.1). In contrast, the ex-Model C school used specific proficiency tests for admission into their school. If the learner failed these proficiency tests, they were denied access (Section 5.5.4.1.).This practice was also in clear contravention to the legislation contained in the SASA (1996) document which stipulates that the governing body of a public school may not administer any test related to the admission of a learner to a public school.

Drawing on the research data, SGBs did not possess the knowledge, skills or expertise to formulate admission policies that were in line with the SASA document. Fundamentally, SGBs need to be empowered and capacitated to ensure admission policies are devoid of any discriminatory practice or provision that contravenes race, gender, ethnic or social origins, age, disability, religion, language or sexual orientation.

In their research study of an ex-Model C school, Beckman and Karvelas (2006) discovered that discriminatory admission policies were employed by the governing body to exclude black learners, thereby making it an exclusively 'whites only' schools. There have been other reported cases of governing bodies that employed discriminatory admissions policies (Asa, 2010; Khuzwayo, 2007; Ntando, 2011). These studies include the SGB of ex-Model C schools which purposefully employed discriminatory admission policies to deny learners entry on the basis of their home language (Soudien and Sayed, 2003). That said, the challenges faced by SGBs in regards to the formulation and implementation of admissions seems to be overwhelming and as suggested by Lemmer (2000) and Asmal (2000) sound training is a prerequisite to ensure their ultimate success.

It is therefore my studied recommendation that training sessions and workshops should be continuously held on a monthly basis. Such workshops should be aimed at enhancing and empowering SGBs. Through receiving

such training they should be in a position to plan, develop and become more conscious of their key role functions and responsibilities. Special provision should be made to assisting illiterate members of SGBs in rural and township areas whereby such training should be conducted in indigenous or 'mother-tongue' languages. When these SGB members are adequately trained, they will become confident of their role functions and knowledgeable of what is actually expected from them in terms of the law.

It is particularly recommended that the provincial Department of Education employ a special school governance team to assist schools that are failing as well as monitor the school governance within the circuits. In regard to previously disadvantaged school, a special task team should be appointed to support those schools where the illiteracy of SGB members is a major problem. The provincial Department of Education needs to provide more support and infrastructure to struggling and failing schools especially in previously disadvantaged areas. It is in this regard that I recommend an umbrella "School Governance Body" that regulates the functioning of the SGBs as well as provides additional support for problems arising within school governance. It is also recommended that the provincial Department of Education take a greater interest in evaluating, monitoring and assessing the SGBs in schools, especially in previously disadvantaged schools. Greater support structures from the provincial Department of Education would be able to help alleviate difficulties experienced by these otherwise failing SGBs.

6.4.4.1. Recommendations

Exploring the above mentioned experiences and challenges of the SGBs in the formulation and implementation of the admissions policy clearly shows a lack of expertise in formulating non-discriminatory admission policies. Other research studies (Asa, 2010; Beckmann and Karvelas, 2006; Chaka and Dieltiens, 2005; Ntando, 2011; Sayed, 1999; Tladi and Mulaudzi, 2003) have confirmed that many SGBs formulated admissions policy documents which

purposefully discriminated against race, gender, ethnic or social origins, age, disability, religion, language and/or sexual orientation.

With this in mind, the following recommendations are made with respect to School Governing Bodies:

i. That admission policies are formulated in line with SASA that stipulates that all policies must be void of any form of discrimination such as, race, gender, ethnic or social origins, age, disability, religion, language and/or sexual orientation;

ii. That all admission policies be aligned with the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Bill of Rights as well as comply fully with the regulations as stipulated in Section 2(5) of the SASA (1996);

iii. That all SGBs work collaboratively in drawing up and formulating their school's admissions policy;

iv. All decisions made by school principals, educators, parents and learners should be done collectively and collaboratively as greater co-operation and consultation will enable SGBs to function more effectively and efficiently;

v. That the principles of fairness and equal access should be central when formulation admissions policy;

vi. Once the admission policy has been drawn up collaboratively by all relevant stakeholders of the school organisation, it should be forwarded to the provincial head of the Department for scrutiny and acknowledgement;

vii.   That the provincial Department of Education be more vigilant in identifying discriminatory admission policies and take forthright and decisive action against any form of discrimination, inequality or racism;

viii.   That the provincial Department of Education offer extensive training programmes for the formulation and implementation of admissions policy that fully accords with current legislation;

ix.   That the provincial Department of Education intervene in those rural and township schools which face the on-going challenge of illiteracy and lack of commitment among SGB members as well as a lack of involvement among the parent body;

x.   That regular SGB meetings are held in order to build collegiality and greater collaboration;

xi.   More emphasis is to be placed on openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence.

6.4.5.   Handling of staff appointments

From the data analysis, it was evident that SGBs struggled in the area of staff appointments (5.3.5., 5.4.5., 5.5.5., 5.6.5.). With the appointment of staff, the SGBs of rural and township schools did convey their disquiet in appointing suitably qualified staff (Sections 5.3.5., 5.4.5.). Furthermore, the high levels of illiteracy among parent-governors in rural and township schools disadvantaged the SGBs from fully understanding their role functions and responsibilities in handling staff appointments (Sections 5.3.5.1., 5.4.5.1.). SGBs at rural schools in particular, were dysfunctional due to their lack of knowledge in the area of school governance (Section 5.3.5.1.). In essence, SGBS within rural schools have lacked the expertise, knowledge, skills and training to understand their role, responsibilities and the correct functioning of

school governance in terms of the SASA (1996) legislation (Sections 5.3.5., 5.4.5., 5.5.5., 5.6.5.).

From the analysis of the research data retrieved from Fikile secondary school, located in a township, the SGB was found to be irresponsible and negligent in appointing appropriate staff persons and accordingly required more assistance from the provincial Department of Education (Sections 5.3.5.1., 5.3.5.2.). The research further revealed that the ex-Model C school of Hilltop secondary school faced much discord, conflict and disagreement among its SGB when it came to appointing staff members (Sections 5.3.5.1., 5.3.5.2.). With regard to Sozo secondary school, a private elite school under study, there were found to be unfair labour practices present in that the SGB would only appoint staff from the Christian religion (Section 5.6.5.2.). This was in clear violation of the SASA (1996) document and the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and Bill of Rights. Finally, SGBs were not knowledgeable in handling staff appointments. From my engagement with the data, it was very apparent that many SGBs are not aware of their role functions and responsibilities in handling these specific key areas.

Drawing from the literature studies, many SGBs have become negligent and irresponsible in the handling of staff appointments (Department of Education, 2001, Khuzwayo, 2007; Mkhize, 2007). As a consequence, SGBs were not acting responsibly in ensuring fair and equitable staff appointments according to Section 20(1) of the SASA (1996). Hence, a lack of knowledge coupled by a lack of commitment of the SGBs severely hindered staff appointments (Phuta, 2005).

Other research studies have shown that certain parent-governors felt intimidated by their lack of expertise, knowledge and training in handling these critical issues. In regard to rural schools, the high illiteracy rate of parent-governors, coupled with the dominating role of school principals often flawed the interview process (Mhkize, 2007). Reported cases of SGBs personal preferences, nepotism, bias and corruption have also thrown schools into a state of chaos and despair (Mhkize 2007; Department of Education, 2004).

Clearly, the SGBs have not followed the correct procedures when appointing staff and have lacked the legal knowledge in executing their functions optimally. It is thus recommended that greater support be given to those SGBs identified as 'failing' in an effort to salvage rural education. It is further recommended that the provincial Department of Education prioritise a programme of assisting those SGBs at rural schools. Constitutionally and legislatively, it is the responsibility of the provincial Department of Education to train and develop the skill sets of SGBs.

The lack of learner-governance also militated against strong democratic structures within SGBs. The unequal representation of learner-governors implies the need for transformation and empowerment of SGBs towards equal power sharing. In this, it is imperative that all stakeholders begin to work collectively in directing their energies towards greater school effectiveness (Sections 5.3.5., 5.4.5., 5.5.5., 5.6.5.). Other research studies have also maintained that it was imperative to include the 'voices' of learner governors in all the decision-making of the SGB as their perspectives, opinions and viewpoints were important to overall school management (Mncube, 2008). Indeed, it can be argued that collaborative decision-making would be ineffective without learner representation especially in the areas of learner discipline and learner admissions. Effective participatory decision making is thus enhanced by the active involvement of learner-governors (Heystek, 2004).

Finally, it should be observed that school governance is a weighty responsibility with legal implications that cannot be neglected. With reference to other research studies and an analysis of the research data, it can readily be concluded that many SGBs are struggling, particularly at rural and township-based schools and no real attempt is being made by the provincial Department of Education to help support and assist them overcome their many problems. As a result, there was an apparent dearth in skills, legal knowledge, transparency, accountability, as well as a general lack of commitment and involvement by SGB members and parent alike. In addition, the lack of capacity building empowerment on the part of the department and

the incompetence of certain governors is the true cause of a general meltdown of effective school governance. Quality education is at stake and if SGB do not assume their responsibilities and role functions more meaningfully, South African schools will be negatively impacted.

6.4.5.1. Recommendations

After having considered the experiences and challenges of the SGBs in the handling of staff appointments, there is a serious need for capacity building of SGBs in their role functions and responsibilities.

To overcome these problems, the following recommendations are made:

i.   That the provincial Department of Education engage in thorough training sessions for SGBs in regards to appropriate staff appointments;

ii. That SGBs be trained in all relevant South African laws and legislation with reference to making staff appointments;

iii. That the Department of Education clearly define the role of the SGB in the processes of shortlisting and interviewing candidates;

iv. That the provincial Department of Education re-visit and re-define the role of the school principal in making staff appointments as many problematic situations have emerged, including cases of bribery, corruption and nepotism;

v.   That the provincial Department of Education intervene in the case of struggling or failing schools and in this way prevent any manipulation by school principals;

vi. That more support be offered to failing SGBs by the provincial Department of Education.

vii. That SGBs work collaboratively in hiring the right candidate for the post applied;

viii. That all SGBs apply the principles of fairness, equality, transparency and accountability in all staff appointments.

It was clear from the research data analysis that those SGBs in ex-Model C schools were performing better than their counterparts in rural areas in terms of how they managed issues of discipline and school finances. In this regard, I recommend that those innovative and fresh strategies utilised by effective SGBs be adopted by struggling SGBs who face the same challenges. It is further recommended that SGBs be empowered to fully understand their role functions and responsibilities for optimal performance and in establishing educational equity. Research has shown that SGBs relinquish their duties when they feel they are not adequately trained, empowered and qualified to make critical decisions (Sithole, 2004; Mestry, 2004; van Wyk, 2004).

It is also recommended that all SGB governors be empowered in understanding their role functions and responsibilities. It is imperative that all members of the SGB be part of the decision-making processes at schools. Research has shown that SGB members face much dissatisfaction and frustration and therefore need to be empowered to be part of the school governance (George *et al.* 2008). Currently, some members of the SGB are being overlooked as the core decision making is often left to the discretion of the school principal. To ensure effective governance therefore, all relevant stakeholders need to be actively involved in every decision made on behalf of the school by the SGB (Botha, 2007; Berkhout, 2007).

In some cases, parent-governors were found to be overpowering and determined in their actions to undermine the credentials and qualifications of the educator-governors and learner-governors. This was particularly observed

in affluent areas, where highly qualified parent-governors projected a more active stance in SGB matters than their educator-governor counterparts (van Wyk, 2004). As a result, power relationships between educators and parents became problematic and conflicts of interest did arise. It is therefore recommended that all SGB-governors be empowered towards understanding their equal status on the SGB.

In regard to school governance, the election and participation of learner-governors it is a relatively new and often controversial concept. It is therefore recommended that learner-governors be empowered in their role functions and responsibilities so as to become productive within the SGB. Research has revealed that learner-governors are not satisfied with their status in many SGBs and would prefer having an equal status as the other members of the governing board (Bisschoff and Phakoa, 2006). More and more learners have voiced their opinions in this regard, stating how they are asked to withdraw from many meetings when interviews, budgeting and financial decisions are being made (2006).

Finally, effective communication among all school governors would enable them to function optimally. Many SGBs have become dysfunctional due to poor communication and this has substantially accelerated the number of conflicts, misunderstandings and sense of mistrust among many school governors. Furthermore, the lack of effective communication has undoubtedly led to more aggression, anger and even hostility among school governors. I therefore strongly recommend that effective communication skills be adopted through workshops and training sessions held under the auspices of the provincial Department of Education.

6.5. General recommendations for SGBs within South Africa

This research study has sought to show that many SGBs are faced with the mammoth task of promoting quality education through good governance practice. Accordingly, the proposed strategic SGB model illustrated in Figure

6.2. below is recommended as a means of implementing the effectiveness and efficiency of SGBs within South African schools.
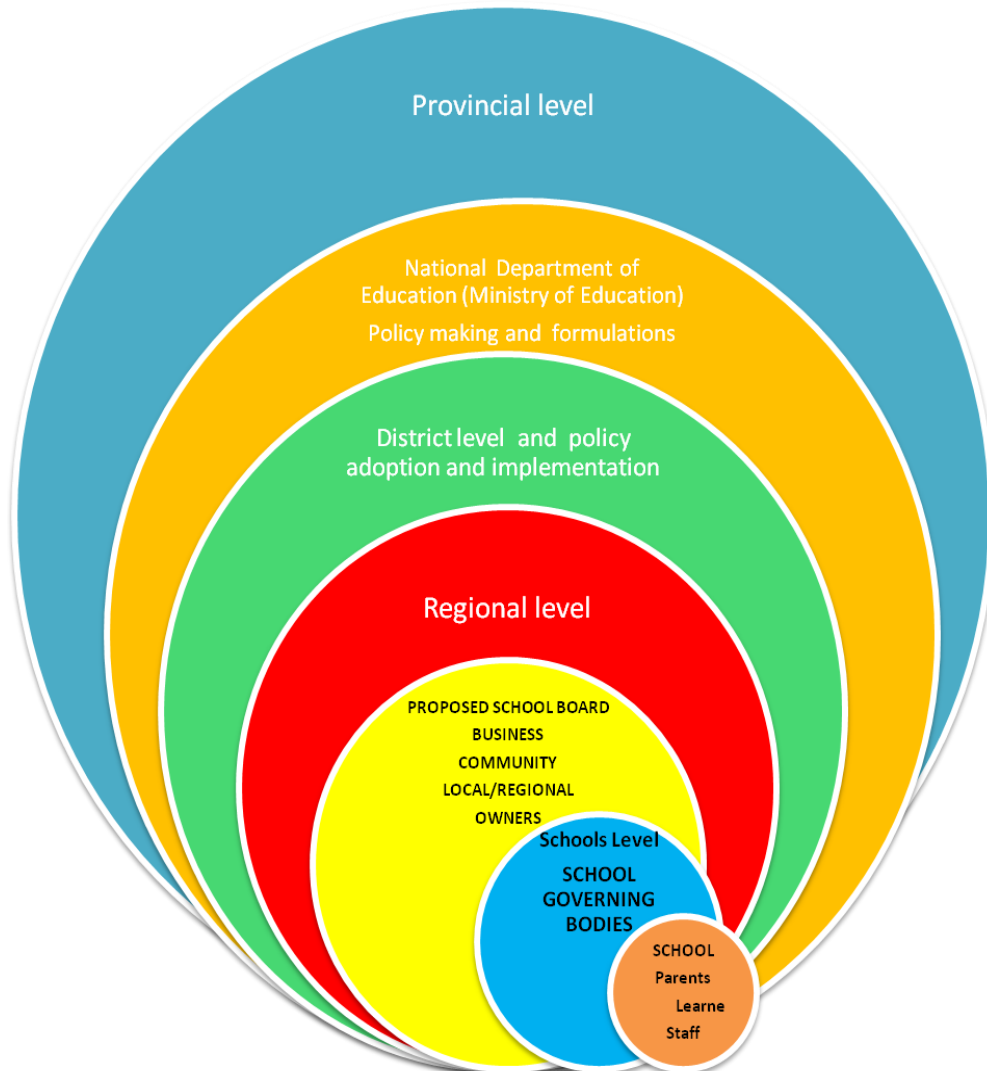
Figure 6.2. The proposed strategic SGB model

Despite the attempt of the State authorities to use the SGB as a means towards creating reform and transformation in school education and thereby overcome the legacies of the past social and racial inequalities legislated under the apartheid regime, school governance has still remained fragmented and inefficient. SGBs are faced with the omen of a collapsing culture of teaching and learning across the country. In this, SGBs have fallen far short of

becoming an effective vehicle towards transformation and democratisation. As a consequence, a general lack of legitimacy is evident across South African education and hence greater attention needs to be rendered to the practice of governance at the school level.

In terms of the literature review offered earlier and from my engagement with other research studies of the different SGB models, I have been able to devise an appropriate SGB model for South African secondary schools. It is in this regard that I have offered the above recommendations:

From the discussion of school governance systems in various countries offered earlier in this present study, I have noted that many countries possess a school council body or municipality that governing bodies are accountable to. It has been shown that they are supportive and consultative in nature and that they assist in supporting governing bodies in their role functions and responsibilities. More especially, they were shown to render support to struggling or failing governing bodies. As a consequence, the municipal councils in European countries such as Denmark, France, Italy, Romania and Spain provide a framework of activities for their school boards. Within these same countries, the municipal councils oversee the governance and management of schools under their jurisdiction and provide supportive governance structures for their governing bodies. Suffice it to say, such supportive governance structures have empowered school governors in their role functions and responsibilities and have thereby enabled them to function optimally.

Borrowing from this conceptualisation of municipality governance, it can be argued that maintaining good governance has become a daunting and challenging task and therefore more attention needs to be given to the empowerment of this body in the context of South Africa.

In examining the different SGB models as discussed in chapter three of this present study (Section 3.7.) and from an examination of the different layers of governance, it can be observed that the South African educational system

lacks the layer of an Advisory Council/School Board/School Council to assist SGBs with their many challenges and problems.

It is in this light that I strongly recommended that a proposed Advisory Council/School Board/School Council be set up to achieve greater effectiveness, efficiency, competencies and accountability for school governance within South African schools. The study presented here of the internal dynamics of the SGBs cannot underestimate the amount of overload, complexity, fragmentation, ambiguity that has proved counterproductive to the logic of school effectiveness. A proposed Advisory Council/School Board/School Council would thus go a long way in addressing the huge challenges and discrepancies that SGBs face.

Furthermore, a proposed Advisory Council/School Board/School Council would work in conjunction with municipality governance. School effectiveness is best defined by strong partnership and leadership. Recognising the synergy between a proposed Advisory Council/School Board/School Council and the SGBs would cause the latter to become more defined in their role functions and responsibilities. A proposed Advisory Council/School Board/School Council would serve the purpose of training, facilitating, empowering, strengthening, motivating, guiding, assisting, coaching, developing and shaping the SGBs to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. For example, a SGB experiencing challenges in staff appointments can receive valuable feedback from the Advisory Council/School Board/School Council that will enhance its governing potential and the quality of education ultimately offered by the school.

Through its implementation, the complexity and workload of the SGBs would be streamlined by the Advisory Council/School Board/School Council to make school governance a more rewarding task. The relevance of an Advisory Council/School Board/School Council is even more critical to those struggling and failing SGBs, who face overwhelming challenges. Through such an Advisory Council/School Board/School Council a new networking of SGBs may emerge to enhance community cohesion and successful partnerships. In

such a setting, an Advisory Council/School Board/School Council would provide extensive infrastructural support for SGBs.

The instrument of an Advisory Council/School Board/School Council would thus serve as a supporting body to SGBs that have failed in the execution of their duties. Some SGBs are in isolated locations and therefore it is recommended that a proposed Advisory Council/School Board/School Council would counteract any looming crisis.

The empirical evidence provides an understanding for the specific purposes of rural and township schools whereby SGBs require a proper governance support structure to overcome the social and racial inequalities created by the previous apartheid government. Regardless of the phenomenal and transformative changes within South Africa post-1994, the radically differentiated schooling system has brought serious challenges for many SGBs. The recently reported cases drawn from the literature review coupled with the research data analysis reaffirm the urgent need for support that SGBs require if they are to successfully transition in their role functions.

For the purposes of enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of SGBs and to promote a culture of professionalism and high ethical conduct in school governance practices, such a proposed Advisory Council/School Board/School Council is highly recommended.

Large scale government training programmes have failed in the past to institutionalise effective school governance practices in South African schools and therefore this layer of an Advisory Council/School Board/School Council is highly recommended. Such a proposed body would provide for the evaluation and assessment of all existing SGBs and enlarge their capacity through skills training programmes.

To fully develop this new layer of school governance within South African education would require the allocation by National Government of a large financial budget. In addition, to implement such a plan, would require the co-

operation of all educational bodies and structures to share the financial burden that such an undertaking would impose.

To sum up, a proposed Advisory Council/School Board/School Council would provide a comprehensive policy framework towards systematic and effective school governance. This opens up a platform for decentralisation and large-scale school reform. Furthermore, a balanced reciprocal relationship between SGBs and an Advisory Council/School Board/School Council would signal an important turning point in an otherwise fragmented South African education system.

The new paradigm of governance that such a proposed Advisory Council/School Board/School Council offers, promises the logic of school effectiveness and school reform. Its focus should be on making significant improvements to the current model of school governance. In some of its functions, such a proposed body would serve as an evaluation board to assess governance practice. In addition, the vision of democratic governance contained within the SASA (1996) would be further enhanced by such a proposed body that would be able to provide random inspections especially where challenges have been reported. Moreover, such a body would serve a cluster of schools within a given geographic area or educational district and thereby provide remedial actions for failing or struggling SGBs.

In addition, such a proposed Advisory Council/School Board/School Council could also incorporate education and business partnerships to promote better governance at schools. By providing a cooperative network of businesses and educational institutions, the number of experts available to SGBs would increase, particularly for those facing critical challenges and problems. Such a proposed Advisory Council/School Board/School Council would also provide direction to schools and promote networking and high quality education. With predicted high expectations, such a body would serve as a constant means of evaluating and improving governance practices across all South African schools.

6.6. Recommendations for future research

The following areas that have been identified during this research study that while outside the immediate remit of this thesis need to be researched and investigated further:

i. An investigation into how collective decision-making and collaboration can be achieved at the school governance level which will ensure the success of SGBs;

ii. An investigation of the deepening awareness of collaboration and the relevance of shared-decision making at the SGB level;

iii. An investigation into the greater learner involvement of learner-governors within SGBs. The inclusion of learner-governors has not been easily accepted by many SGBs, as they feel that learners are still children whose inputs are immature. The issue of developing learner-governors through a series of leadership programmes and skills training sessions would enhance their leadership capacity within the SGB model. In this way, learners would be empowered and encouraged to participate within the structures of school governance without fear and intimidation;

iv. An investigation into the directions and methods of collective decision-making with respect to the inputs of learner-governors and their contribution to promoting effective SGBs. The findings of this research as well other studies signal a weak presence of learner-governance at the SGB level. Workshops and training sessions are imperative for the empowerment and development of learner-governors

v.   An investigation into democratic governance and the role of learner-governors within the SGB to reinforce transformation and development of education governance. Workshops and training sessions are imperative for SGB members as to the importance of learner-governors and the role they play in building democratic governance in education;

vi.   An examination into the role of the teacher unions at the school governance level. Teacher unions can play an influential role in making critical decisions such as staff appointments. Furthermore, it can be beneficial for teacher unions to become involved in equipping and preparing educator-governors, non-teaching staff governors and learner-governors for their role within the SGB. Although teacher unions have not taken an active role in school governance, their contribution can also be beneficial for the politicisation of the school;

vii.   An investigation into struggling and failing SGBs and the kind of support they need to function optimally. In this, more funds need to be generated for the empowering, strengthening and improvement of SGBs;

viii.   An investigation of the role and function of school governance within rural and township schools. Such research is necessary if rural and township-based school governance is to become more effective and efficient;

ix.   An investigation into a suitable system of evaluation of the roles and function of SGBs within rural and township schools. Such a study will go along way to drawing more attention to rural and township school education which at least in part has been neglected.

6.7.   Limitations of the present research study

Gaining access to critical documents at the various schools was a severe limitation in the present research. As the researcher, I had to go to great lengths to assure the participating schools that confidentiality would be prioritised before the documents were released to me.

Considering the small-scale qualitative size of the research study, the research study was limited to only four secondary schools in the district of Umlazi within the province of KwaZulu-Natal. This resulted in obvious limitations to the number of SGBs to four as to their involvement in the handling of learner discipline, the administration of school finances, the formulation of admissions policy and the appointment of staff. This limitation was able to be eased by comparing the findings of this research study with other research studies.

Reflecting on the experiences, perceptions and challenges of the SGBs as indicated in the research findings was limited to the extent that they could be accepted as being trustworthy. While assuming an underlying subjectivity and presence of bias in the research data, a comparison with other studies was sufficient to assure the researcher that the findings were on par.

A further limitation of the present research was the issue of ready access to the rural school, which proved to be a long and difficult journey. Furthermore, some of the participants from both the rural and township schools experienced problems in communicating their experiences openly and freely and therefore as the researcher I had to employ an interpreter. I nevertheless endeavoured to provide a quality in-depth research study with empirical findings.

Although during the research observations of the SGBs at the four school types the learner-governors were hesitant to share their thoughts and feelings. While this proved a limitation to the study, as the researcher, I was nevertheless still able to retrieve a wealth of data from the other interviews, SGB observations and documents analysis.

6.8. Some final conclusions

School governance is a relatively new phenomenon that is facing insurmountable challenges. School governance provides rules, regulations and guidelines through which schools are organised and managed. Consequently, the role and legitimacy of SGBs has been the subject of much debate in recent years. The creation of SGBs was meant to redress the racial barriers of the past. However, their success rate has been greatly minimised by the lack of training and empowerment of many of its member-governors. This has resulted in a crisis of education erupting particularly among previously-disadvantaged schools.

Contrary to what is often reported, research studies conducted across fifty Gauteng schools by Joubert (2009) has found that SGBs are employing democratic values of equality, human dignity, non-sexism, non-racism and are thereby providing fresh innovative ideas to school communities to face the prevailing challenges within South African education.

School governance is a new terrain and is certainly not without its challenges. SGBs are in a state of disrepair and many SGBs are simply at the point of giving up. Although my research presented here does not cover all aspects of school governance, it is expected to instigate further research on the relevance of an empowered SGB in its contribution towards providing quality education. A greater consciousness of the role and function of the SGB should arouse sufficient interest for further research and thereby add to the knowledge base in the field of education and management.

In order for SGBs to face the new responsibilities and challenges that have been brought to education in this new century, they need to be prepared to face the contemporary challenges head on both with courage and determination. In this, it is important that they will be able to analyse the gaps and contribute to education excellence. Naturally, good governance can only be regulated when SGBs have a clear and thorough understanding of their responsibilities and role functions. In this, necessary mechanisms need to be

put in place to empower SGBs. These newly empowered SGB can be evaluated by their practice of equality, equity, social justice and accountability to epitomise the pedagogy of empowerment.

Although it is problematic to establish good governance at all South African schools, it is nevertheless crucial for such changes to take place if the development and future success of South African education is to be secured. Together with the National and Provincial Department of Education, SGBs face a huge responsibility in rehabilitating schools, releasing them from the clutches of those inequalities created under the previous apartheid regime. Undoubtedly, SGBs are to be vehicles of restoration and transformation. If we do not invest in SGBs, South Africa faces an ever-looming crisis in education. Matched with policy perspectives, if the SGBs are not empowered, they will eventually deteriorate into undemocratic entities.

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ANNEXURE A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

University of South Africa

Pretoria

Private Bag

Pretoria

Telephone No:

1 June 2012

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

</div>

I, ……………………………. consent to participate in this study conducted by Mrs G Baruth for her research study: Experiences and challenges of SGB in secondary schools in KwaZulu Natal.

I understand that all information provided would be treated in strict confidence and would be used for research purposes only.

- I understand that no harm will come to me and the study is only for educational purposes.

- I consent to participate voluntarily in this research study and I may withdraw from the study at any given time.

- I understand that I have the right to review the questionnaires that I have completed and read the transcripts that are used for analysis.
- I can also delete or amend my remarks accordingly.

- All the information that will be kept confidential by the interviewer.

- I also consent to being audio-taped during the interviews.

- I understand that my identity will be kept anonymous at all times.

- I understand confidentiality and anonymity is assured and names will not be disclosed.

- I will have access to the thesis when completed so ensure that it is truthful and accurate as possible.

I, _____hereby willingly participant in the above-mentioned study. I understand all the conditions in participating in this study.

Signed: _____
Date: _____

I, Grace Baruth, the researcher, hereby declare that all information provided will be treated in strict confidence and for research purposes only.

Signed: _____
Date: _____

ANNEXURE B

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

The purpose of this observation schedule is to collect information on school governance practices at secondary schools.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Site of the Meeting: _____

Duration of the Meeting: _____

No present at the Meeting:

_____

<table>
<tr><td>

  Agenda of the Meeting:

</td></tr>
</table>

Matters Discussed:

Plan of Actions:

Decisions Made:

What decisions have been made?

Next meeting schedule: _____

ANNEXURE C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE CHAIRPERSON
OF THE SGB

NAME OF SCHOOL: _____

DATE OF SCHOOL: _____

TIME OF INTERVIEW: _____

1. As the Chairperson of the SGB, what is the importance of the SGB at your school?

2. What are your main functions and responsibilities as the Chairperson of the SGB?

3. In terms of school discipline, are you experiencing disciplinary problems at your school?

    3.1. What disciplinary problems are you experiencing at your school?

    3.2. Have you managed to curb the discipline at your school? How?

    3.3. Do you receive any support from the parent community in terms of the school discipline? Explain?

3.4. As the chairperson of the SGB, what are some strategies you have implemented, that has worked effectively, to ensure that learners and teachers adhere to a strict code of conduct?

4. In terms of school policies and in particular, the admissions policy, are you experiencing problems in this area?

4.1. If any, what problems are you experiencing?

4.2. Are there specific tests that have to be written to ensure learners access into your school?

4.3. What tests are these? (Aptitude, language proficiency, personality profile etc);

4.4. Are the tests constructed by the school, the Department of Education or outside agency?

4.5. Do all learners, irrespective of race, culture, creed, have equal access to this school?

4.6. Do you refer to the Department's legislations and laws when you formulating the admission policy? In what way?

5. In terms of the school finances, is your school financially viable?

5.1. Having you been experiencing problems in retrieving the school fees?

5.2. What actions do you take to ensure that the school is financially variable?

5.3. Have there been any cases of fraud and bribery at your school?

6. In terms of appointment of staff members, how do you appoint staff?

    6.1. Do you make decisions collectively and democratically in terms of appointment of staff members?

    6.2. Have there ever been reported cases of nepotism and corruption in terms of staff appointments?

7. As a Chairperson of the SGB, what aspects of school governance would you like to change?

8. What are your strengths of the SGB?

9. What are the most critical problems you are experiencing in the SGB?

10. If there anything else you would like to add?

ANNEXURE D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LEARNER-GOVERNOR OF THE SGB

NAME OF SCHOOL: _____

DATE OF SCHOOL: _____

TIME OF INTERVIEW: _____

1. Now that you have been elected as part of the SGB, are you actively involved in the SGB at your school? How?

2. How are you involved?

3. What are your key functions and responsibilities as a learner in the SGB?

4. What motivated/prompted you to become part of the SGB?

5. In terms of school discipline, what disciplinary problems are you experiencing at your school?

    5.1. What suggestions do you make towards school discipline at the SGB meeting?

    5.2. Do they include your perspectives when making decisions about school discipline? In what way?

6. In terms of school policies and in particular, the admissions policy, are you experiencing problems in this area?

   6.1. If yes, could you point out some of the problems that arisen from the formulation of the admissions policy?

   6.2. Are you actively involved with the SGB when formulating the admissions policy? In what way?

   6.3. Are there specific aptitude tests that have to be written to ensure learners access into your school?

   6.4. How would rate the aptitude tests?

7. In terms of the school finances, what is your understanding of the school finances at your school?

   7.1. How does the financial status of your school affect you as learner of the SGB?

   7.2. Are you disadvantaged in the teaching and learning processes at your school?

8. In terms of appointment of staff members, are you included in the decision-making of the appointment of staff?

   8.1. If not, why?

   8.2. If yes, how are you involved?

9. What aspects of school governance would you like to change?

10. Do you think that being part of the SGB has made a difference to the decision-making at your school? How?

11. What are the positive aspects of your SGB?

12. What are the problem facing your SGB?

13. Since your appointment, have you realised your goals? How have you achieved this?

14. In conclusion, what skills, knowledge and attitudes have you gained as part of the SGB?

ANNEXURE E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE EDUCATORS OF THE SGB

NAME OF SCHOOL: _____

DATE OF SCHOOL: _____

TIME OF INTERVIEW: _____

1. As an educator governor, what is your understanding of school governance practices at your school?

2. How many years have you been teaching?

3. How many years have you served on the SGB?

4. What are your main functions and responsibilities as the educator in the SGB?

5. Are you actively involved in the all the formulation of policies at your school?

6. In terms of school discipline, are you experiencing disciplinary problems at your school?

    6.1. What disciplinary problems are you experiencing at your classroom?

    6.2. How do you manage to cope with the disciplinary problems at your school?

6.3. As an educator governor, what contributions have you made in overcoming the disciplinary problems at your school?

7. In terms of school policies and in particular, the admissions policy, are you experiencing problems in this area?

7.1. Are there specific aptitude tests that have to be written to ensure learners access into your school?

7.2. Do all learners, irrespective of race, culture, creed, have equal access to this school?

7.3. As an educator, do you consult the Department's policies when formulating the admission policy?

8. In terms of the school finances, what is the financial status of your school?

8.1. How has the financial situation at your school affected you as an educator in the classroom? In what ways?

8.2. How have you impoverished in the classroom despite your financial status of your school?

9. In terms of appointment of staff members, are you involved in the staff appointments done at your school?

9.1. How are you involved?

9.2. Are your recommendations accepted at the SGB meetings?

9.3. Are the decisions made democratically and collectively?

9.4. Have there been reported incidents of nepotism and corruption at your school?

9.5. Are the SGB in conflict when making decisions about staff appointments? If yes, how is it resolved?

10. What aspects of school governance would you like to change?

11. What are the strengths of your school SGB?

12. What are the critical problems faced by the SGB?

13. Are there any other comments you would like to make?

ANNEXURE F

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE PRINCIPAL OF THE SGB

NAME OF SCHOOL: _____

DATE OF SCHOOL: _____

TIME OF INTERVIEW: _____

1. As principal of the school, what is your understanding of school governance practices at your school?

2. What are your main functions and responsibilities as a principal in the SGB?

3. In terms of school discipline, what disciplinary problems are you experiencing at your school?

   3.1. Elaborate how do you manage to the disciplinary problems at your school?

   3.2. As the principal, what are some strategies you have implemented to ensure that learners and teachers adhere to a strict code of conduct?

   3.3. Do you receive support from the parent community in terms of the school discipline? In what way?

   3.4. Could you tell me how have you made school a safe haven for both learners and teachers?

4. In terms of school policies and in particular, the admissions policy, are you experiencing problems in this area?

    4.1.If any, what problems are you experiencing?

    4.2.Are there specific aptitude tests that have to be written to ensure learners access into your school? Discuss?

    4.3.Do all learners, irrespective of race, culture, creed, have equal access to this school? Elaborate?

    4.4.Are there any objections in your admissions policy in regard to admission of learners?

    4.5.What regulations and procedures do you use to ensure that the policies are in line with the Departments' regulations and South African laws?

5. In terms of the school finances, is your school financially viable?

    5.1.Having you been experiencing problems in retrieving the school fees?

    5.2.Discuss the financial status of your school?

    5.3.What actions do you take to ensure that the school is financially viable?

    5.4.How do you ensure that all that you intend to do with your financial resources is achieved at your school at the end of the year?

6. In terms of appointment of staff members, have you been experiencing problems in this area?

   6.1. Do you make decisions collectively and democratically in terms of appointment of staff members?

   6.2. Discuss the procedures taken when appointing a staff member?

   6.3. Have there ever been reported cases of nepotism and corruption in terms of staff appointments?

7. What aspects of school governance would you like to change?

8. Is your SGB fully functional?

9. What are the strengths of your SGB?

10. What are the main problems faced by your SGB?

11. Is there anything you would like to comment on?

ANNEXURE G

QUESTIONNAIRE: PROFILE OF EACH SCHOOL

The questionnaire forms part of a research project that explores school governance in secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

The questionnaire has been used as a baseline for each school and provides a case study of each particular school or an in-depth study of each school. The purpose of the questionnaire was for analysis and deriving statistics.

Thank you for your co-operation and contributions.

NAME OF SCHOOL: _____

DATE OF SCHOOL: _____

TIME OF INTERVIEW: _____

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1.   Physical Address of the School:

_____

1.2.   District:_____

1.3.   Province: _____

1.4.   Quintile level of the school: _____

SECTION 2: LEARNERS

2.1   Number of learners: _____

2.2.   Total Number of boys: _____

2.3.   Total number of girls: _____

2.4.   Does your school have a Learner Representative Council? _____

2.5.   How was the LRC chosen? _____

                              (Principal, staff, learners)

2.6.   How do the learners travel to school? _____

2.4.   RACIAL COMPOSITION OF LEARNERS

Race	Number of learners	% of learner population
Black		
Coloured		
Asian		
White		
Other		

2.5. PASS RATES OF THE GRADE 12 LEARNERS FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS

Grade 12	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total No.					
No. Passed					
No. Failed					

SECTION 3: STAFF INFORMATION

3.1   Number of staff: _____

3.2.   Number of State-paid posts at your school? _____

3.3.   Number of part-time teaching posts at your school? _____

3.4.   Number of SGB staff members? _____

3.2   POST STRUCTURE

Description	Post level	Qualifications / Degrees	REQV 10-17	Years of Experience
a. Principal				
b. Deputy Principal(s)				
c. Head of Department				
d. Grade 12 Educator				

SECTION 4: SCHOOL FACILITIES

Facilities	Yes or No
a. Electricity	
b. Running water	
c. External security fencing	
d. Computer room	
e. Library	
f. Photocopying Room	

4.1   Sporting facilities at your school: _____

4.2.   What sports do you engage in? _____

4.3.   How would you rate your School? _____

SECTION 5: ADMISSION OF LEARNERS

5.1.   Do you specific admission tests for the new applicants? _____

5.2.   What tests are these? (Aptitude, language proficiency tests, personality profile, Departmental tests, Outside Agency tests) _____

_____

5.3.   Are there any restrictions to the tests? _____

5.4.   If yes, what are they? _____

SECTION 6: SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

6.1.   Does your school have a school governing body? _____

6.2.   If yes, when was the governing body established? _____

6.3.   How many members serve on the governing body? _____

6.4.   How often do you meet for SGB meetings? _____

6.5.   When are the SGB meetings mostly conducted? _____

_____

6.6.   What are the main areas of concern in the school governance practices? _____

Educational Qualifications of the SGB				
SGB member	Qualifications	Race	Gender	Service years
Chairperson				
Principal				
Vice Chair				
Treasurer				
Parent Governor				
Educator Governor				
Admin staff				
Learner-Governor				

SECTION 7: FINANCING THE SCHOOL

7.1.   Are there outstanding fees? _____

7.2.   What is the financial position of your school? _____

7.3.   What are the school fees per annum at your school? R_____

7.4.   Do the parents pay their school fees? R_____

7.5.   Do you receive additional funds from the Department of Education?

_____

7.6.   How much do you receive? R_____

SECTION 8: SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

8.1.   Are you experiencing disciplinary problems? _____

8.2.   Do you a code of conduct policy? _____

8.3.   What are some of the disciplinary problems? _____

Disciplinary Problems	Yes or No
High absenteeism	
Truancy	
Violence Incidents	
Theft	
Alcohol and Substance abuse	
Bullying	
Gang Fights	
Teenage Pregnancy	
Vandalism	
Racial conflicts	
Leaner fights	

SECTION 9: STAFF APPOINTMENTS

9.1.   How many staff vacancies are there in your school? _____

9.2.   Have there ever been reported cases of nepotism and corruption in terms of staff appointments? _____

9.3.   What criteria do you use for your staff appointments? _____

SECTION 9: SKILLS TRAINING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOPS

9.   In terms of skills training and capacity-building workshops:

9.1.   How many capacity-building workshops have you attended?

9.2.   Who conducted the workshop(s)?

9.3.   How did you benefit from the workshop(s)?

9.4.   How would you rate the workshops?

ANNEXURE H

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR
LEARNER-GOVERNOR

University of South Africa

Pretoria

Private Bag

Pretoria

Telephone No:

1 June 2012

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I, ……………………………., parent of ……………………………consent for my son/daughter to participate in this study conducted by Mrs G Baruth for her research study: Experiences and challenges of School Governing Bodies in secondary schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

- I understand that all information provided would be treated in strict confidence and would be used for research purposes only.

- I understand that no harm will come to me and the study is only for educational purposes.

- I consent to participate voluntarily in this research study and I may withdraw from the study at any given time.

- I understand that I have the right to review the questionnaires that I have completed and read the transcripts that are used for analysis.

- I can also delete or amend my remarks accordingly.

- All the information that will be kept confidential by the interviewer.

- I also consent to being audio-taped during the interviews.

- I understand that my identity will be kept anonymous at all times.

- I understand confidentiality and anonymity is assured and names will not be disclosed.

- I will have access to the thesis when completed so ensure that it is truthful and accurate as possible.

I, _____hereby willingly allow my son/daughter to be a participant in the above-mentioned study. I understand all the conditions in participating in this study.

Signed: _____
Date: _____

I, Grace Baruth, the researcher, hereby declare that all information provided will be treated in strict confidence and for research purposes only.

Signed: _____
Date: _____

ANNEXURE I

LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Director of Education

Umlazi Region
Umlazi
Durban
4000

1 January 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Participation in this Research Study: Experiences and Challenges faced by the School Governing Bodies in Secondary Schools in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal.

I am Mrs. Grace Baruth and I am currently completing my PhD studies at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Dr. S. P. Mokoena. My research study is as follows: Experiences and Challenges faced by the SGBs in Secondary Schools in the province of KwaZulu Natal. I have included a letter from Dr Mokoena, in support of my research study.

On the basis of my degree requirements, I intend conducting a research study on how SGBs are coping in the handling of school finances, the handling of school discipline, the formulation of the admission policy and the appointment of staff. My research study would be using four specific schools namely an Ex-Model C school, a private elite school, a township school and a rural school. My study involves interviewing the members of the SGBs in these respective schools. Hence I write to inform you on this research study. All information provided for this research; would be ensured anonymity and confidentiality; and would be treated in strictest confidence; and would only be used for research purposes. All participants in this study; would be on a voluntary basis; and at any given time would be free to discontinue their

participation. Furthermore confidentiality and anonymity is assured throughout this research study and names would not be disclosed; and pseudonyms would be used. The interviews would take place after school hours to avoid any disturbances in these schools. I thank you in advance for your acknowledgement and co-operation in this research study.

Yours faithfully

_____

Gayatri (Grace) Baruth
PhD student at UNISA

ANNEXURE J

SUPPORTING LETTER FROM SUPERVISOR

UNISA | university of south africa

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Kwazulu-Natal Department of Education

Dear Sir / Madam

Kindly be informed that Ms Baruth GD (St. no. 35185554) is a registered doctoral student at UNISA. She is currently doing her thesis titled: EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES OF GOVERNING BODIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE PROVIENCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL. The study requires involvement of school governing bodies during data gathering process. As Supervisor I trust that you will grant her permission to conduct her research in certain selected secondary in KZN. Once the project is complete, I trust that she will share her findings of her research with the relevant people in the Education Department.

Thanking you in advance

Kind regards

Dr SP Mokoena
(Supervisor)

Tel. 012 429 4606
E-mail: mokoesp@unisa.ac.za

ANNEXURE K

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM KWAZULU-NATAL DEPT. OF EDUCATION

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UMLAZI DISTRICT OFFICE

Enquiries:E.N. Magwaza Imibuzo: CSS-GET UMLAZI D/O	Reference: Inkomba : Verwysing:	Contact: 082 2236 177 Office: 031-906 5665 Fax: 031-906 0295

1 March 2011

Mrs G Baruth

University of South Africa

P O BOX 392

UNISA
0003

RE: PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH ON SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU NATAL

With reference to your application to the above-mentioned research study, I hereby give permission to Mrs Gayatri Baruth to conduct her research study on SGBs within the schools of the Department of Education of KwaZulu Natal. I give her permission to conduct the interviews provided that all information is kept confidential and anonymous. However, I advise you that you negotiate your times and dates of your interviews and observations and documents with the principal of the school. I would appreciate if your final research study can reviewed for the further development of education with this province. Wishing you success.

MR B.H. NTULI

DISTRICT DIRECTOR - UMLAZI