An Evaluation of Parent Involvement in the Governance of Primary Schools

by

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Date submitted : 2009
Declaration

I, Zamambelu Ruth Msani, hereby declare that "An Evaluation of Parent Involvement in the Governance of Primary Schools" represents my own work both in conception and execution and that all sources used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

Z-R Msani
March 2009
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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the entire Msani family. My special dedication goes to:

- My late husband Mthoko who always provided unwavering support and encouragement for my studies.

- My mother, Anna Jwara, who is my pillar of strength and inspiration.

- My sons Thabani, Mondli, Ntando and Aphile.
Abstract

This study offers a critical appraisal of the role that the parent component of the School Governing Body (SGB) plays in governing primary schools. A literature review established the functions and significance of parent contributions to school governance. The study investigated strategies that can enhance parent participation. An empirical study then set out to test the extent and success of parent involvement in school governance.

The study revealed that parent involvement in schools is limited and superficial. The empirical data suggested that:

- Some principals are reluctant to allow parents their legitimate right to participate actively in the governance of schools. Governors in some schools merely exist to 'rubber-stamp' decisions already made by principals.
- Many parents do not have the necessary knowledge about school governance in general, and lack the necessary expertise required to enable them to participate effectively in decision-making on school issues.

The study was concluded by way of recommendations which point to the means to improve efficiency in governance and to promote significant parent participation in school governance.
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<tr>
<td>EMS</td>
<td>Economics Management Science</td>
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<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualification Framework</td>
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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The democratisation of education in South Africa is underwritten by the philosophical principles espoused in the new constitution and is legally guaranteed by the South African School Act, No. 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996b; 4). Three core aspects of education have been targeted for reform, namely,

- Curriculum reform;
- Structural reform;
- Reform of educational management and governance.

Curriculum reform is aimed primarily at creating productive and responsible citizens that embrace the democratic ideals of the country. Reform in this respect is driven by the adoption of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and its integration into the Revised National Statement Curriculum (RNCS) and the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The learner is placed firmly at the centre of task-based learning activities. The focus is on the holistic development of the learner, to equip him or her with relevant knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in order to make a valuable contribution to industry and civil society (RSA, 2002:6).

Structural reform of education recognizes the need to accommodate life-long and experiential learning. Provision is made for an integration of a host of educational channels, both formal and informal, that make allowances for multiple entry and exit points for learners at various stages of their personal and professional development. Reform at this level is driven by the National Qualifications Framework (Jiya, Samuel, Marrow 2005:6).
Reform of educational management and governance is primarily aimed at making education more relevant, inclusive and transparent. The South African School Act, (SASA), No. 84 of 1996, drives this kind of reform in the case of schools. Hierarchical, exclusive management and governance structures are replaced by more level, inclusive and participatory management structures. SASA promotes co-responsibility for education by encouraging and specifically provides partnerships between parents, learners, educators and the host community in general (RSA, 2002:16).

This study focuses primarily on the evaluation of parent involvement in the governance of primary schools.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Prior to 1994, parents did not have much say in the governance and management of schools. They were not actively involved in decision-making and had no positional power to leverage or influence the quality of education offered by schools. With the passing of the SASA, this situation was rectified and parents were given significant roles in the governance of schools. SASA provides for the establishment of inclusive and representative School Governing Bodies (SGBs), which are constituted of teacher, parent and learner communities. According to SASA the functions of SGBs are as follows:

- to promote the best interests of the school by striving to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners;
- to take responsibility for formulating and adopting a school constitution;
- to assume responsibility for formulating and adopting a mission statement (that is a brief document that sets out the goals of the school, which are based on shared values and beliefs);
- to make recommendations on the appointment of educators;
- to be responsible for formulating and adopting a code of conduct for learners at school;
- to encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to offer voluntary services to the school;
- to develop a mission statement for the school;
- to support the principal and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions; and
- to determine times of the school day, consistent with applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school (RSA, 1996b:7)

Although parents have been granted legitimate powers to participate actively in the governance of schools, their involvement remains superficial. Ntshele (2004: 56) submits that parents do not fulfil their roles as SGBs because:
- they lack skills;
- some parents are illiterate;
- some principals are still autocratic.

This study subjects these findings to further scrutiny in order to establish the truth-value of the statements and to establish underlying reasons for non-participation. It tests what is being done to address these issues. The research objection of the study are articulated hereunder:

Research questions that are addressed in this study are:
- What strategies can be adopted to facilitate effective school governance?
- To what extent do parents participate in school governance?
1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study were:

- To determine through literature review, effective strategies that facilitate parent participation in the governance of primary schools;
- To evaluate the extent of parent involvement in the governance of the primary schools, and
- To identify strategies to be used to improve governance efficiencies and promote greater parent participation in school governance.

1.4 ASSUMPTIONS

(i) One of the assumptions of this study is that despite policy mandates for parent participation in school governance, parent involvement remains superficial.

(ii) Parents are either deliberately excluded from governance matters because of factors such as autocratic management styles. Alternatively they are characterised by non-participation due to factors such as apathy or lack of confidence.

1.5 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Although the SGB consists of parent, learner and educator representatives, this study isolated and evaluated only the contributions of the parent component of the SGB to school governance. The study also focused exclusively on primary schools in Amafa, Amanzimtoti, Folweni, and Umbumbulu Central wards of the Umbumbulu circuit. Insights gathered from studying SGBs in these wards were extrapolated to the general education population.
1.6 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

For the sake of clarity, it was essential to define the relevant concepts that are used in the study. The discussion hereunder defines several key concepts.

1.6.1 Parent Involvement

According to SASA a parent is not only a biological parent; parent means more than a natural progenitor. A parent is a person who has custody of a learner as well as the one who understands and acts as parent of a child for the purpose of his or her education. (RSA 1996b:4). This means those parents referred to in this study are both natural and biological or the ones, who are regarded as guardians.

Labahn (1995: 16) defines parent involvement as a combination of commitment and active participation of the parent to the school and to the learners. Wolhuter (2003:50) and Wolfendale (1989:36) assert that parent involvement is the active willingness, support and participation of the parent in all aspects of the child’s formal schooling.

In this study parent involvement refers to active participation of parent and the willingness to work co-operatively with the school.

1.6.2 School Governance

“School” means a public school or an independent school which enrols learners in one or more grades from grade R (Reception) to grade twelve. A school is an institution of learning and teaching (Davidoff & Lazarus, 1997:8). Governance means the act of governing, guiding or ruling an organisation (DoE, 2000:5).
School governance means to determine the policy and rules by which the school is to be governed and controlled and by ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively in terms of the law and budget of the school (RSA 1996b:4). According to the Department of Education, school governance is the assistance provided by SGB to the principal by offering leadership and deciding on a direction in which the school should go (DoE, 2000a:8).

School governance means performing the following by the SGB:

- promoting the best of interest;
- ensuring the development of the school by providing quality education for all learners at school;
- developing and adopting policies;
- supporting the principal, educators and other staff in carrying out their duties;
- controlling and maintaining school property (DoE, 2000a: 9).

In this study school governance means the manner in which, and policies by which, the school is governed at the hands of parents.
1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study is beneficial to those who are engaged in, or have an interest in, the governance of schools. The study is significant in that it highlights problems in the balance and execution of power within SGBs, and provides practical strategies to improve efficiency in governance, participation, and restoration of the balance of power.

1.8 METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The researcher wished to determine parents' opinions, attitudes and perceptions of their roles, responsibilities and involvement in the SGB. A descriptive research design was selected for the study. The questionnaire was the appropriate for obtaining the information. The questionnaire had close and open questions.

Research was done at Umbumbulu Circuit. The four wards were selected, namely Folweni, Mafa, Amanzimtoti and Umbumbulu Central. Only 3 schools were selected from each ward. In each school, 6 SGB parents were selected. There were 24 parents selected for the sample.

A pilot study was conducted in 3 schools. These schools were part of the general population from which the sample was drawn but not part of the sample itself. The SGB parents were selected to participate in the pilot study.

The questionnaires were personally delivered to the principals of the schools which, in turn, distributed them to parents serving on the SGB. The researcher explained the procedure to the principals of the schools. The researcher also collected the completed questionnaires personally.
There was 90% return rate, which was sufficiently high for generalisability of the findings.

1.9 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The study is structured as follows:

- **Chapter one** provides the orientation to the study, namely; statement of the problem, method of investigation, definition of key concepts, delimitation of the study and purpose of the study.
- **Chapter two**: provides a review of literature on parent involvement in school governance at primary schools.
- **Chapter three** describes the research methodology used in empirical investigation.
- **Chapter four** provides an analysis and interpretation of data and presentation of results
- **Chapter five** presents the summary of findings and recommendations on school governance.

1.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter serves as a general overview of the scope of the study, its purpose and significance. The chapter also offers definitions of key concepts which have been used in the study. The next chapter provides a literature review and a theoretical framework for parent involvement in school governance.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher reviews, literature on school governance within South Africa; the chapter will also relate models of school governance.

Van der Westhuizen (1994:96) point out that the history of school governance evolved from policy investigation by various organisations, such as National Policy Investigation Unit, the National Education Coordinating Committee, and the Centre for Education Policy Development. The related issues of governance and funding of schools were tied together through various commission reports and the white papers, culminating in the South African Schools Ac, Act 84 of 1996. The process of democratising school governance aimed at addressing past inequalities and institutionalisation of equity in education.

The new constitution of South Africa, as is the supreme law in the country, encapsulates values and principles, such as human dignity, achievement of equality and advancement of human freedom. By recognising the parents as partners and stakeholders in the education of their children, the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 advances freedom of expression and participation. It enables parents to participate, in and account for, the education of their children. SASA shows explicitly why parent involvement in school governance is important. Parents form the main client group of the school. According to SASA (1996), they form the community to which school role players are accountable. The act further maintains that parents are stakeholders in the school and they are eligible for school governance.
Several policy documents provide for greater participation of parents, non-management educators and in school governance. This chapter also reviews the roles and responsibilities that are assigned to parents in terms of school governance. It also explores international examples regarding parent involvement in school governance. It presents experiential lessons and strategies to promote efficiencies pertaining to parent involvement in school governance. The levels of parent involvement as well as its benefits are explored. This chapter also highlights pitfalls and factors that hinder parent involvement in governance.

2.2 POLICIES THAT MANDATE PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

In order to assist schools to exercise good and wise discipline, all schools must have policies to direct effective management (Buchel, 1995: 86). School policies exist for the benefit of all members of the school community. Buchel (1995) emphasises the point that the school is responsible for formulating and applying its own institutional policies. Policies and guidelines significant to parent involvement in school governance include the National Constitution, No. 108 of 1996, and South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996. These pieces of legislation are analysed in greater detail hereunder, with the intention of highlighting implications for parent involvement in school governance.

2.2.1 National Constitution, No. 108 of 1996

The Constitution of South Africa (RSA, 1996a: 7) sets the tone for democratic participation in all aspects of civil life. While the right to education is constitutionally guaranteed, the constitution goes a step further to highlight the corresponding responsibility that the country's citizens have in terms of this right. It is the responsibility of the parents,
educators and learners to act in order to capitalise on the benefits of education, so that it can be made relevant, transparent and accountable. Structures to assist educators, parents and learners in this regard are given legal articulation in the SASA.

2.2.2 South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 (SASA)

The SASA is primarily aimed at devolving responsibilities and requisite decision-making powers concerning the structures, governance, and funding of schools to school-based organisations. One such organisation is the SGB. SASA prescribes the SGB composition in order to ensure an equitable governance partnership between the school and the community that it services. The philosophy that motivates this act is the recognition that:

- parents are often best placed to know and understand the real needs and problems of their children;
- schools do not exist in isolation and must be adaptive and responsive to the needs of the host community in which it is embedded;
- schools and the communities they serve are capable of developing symbiotic relationships that will enrich both constituencies, and
- the host communities can best monitor and ensure delivery of quality public education as they are most intimately engaged with the educational services offered by the school (Oosthuizen 1998:201; RSA, 1995:16).

SASA provides a legal framework for decentralisation of school governance and professional management. It provides for support structures to help schools fulfil their expanded management and
governance roles. One such support structure is the SGB. The primary
functions of SGB are defined as follows:

- to promote the best interests of the school and ensure its
development;
- to adopt a constitution;
- to adopt a mission statement for the school;
- to adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school;
- to administer and control the school's property;
- to make recommendations on the appointment of non-educators
and educators; and
- to allow the school facilities to be used for educational programmes
not offered by the school (RSA, 1996b:14).

The SGB functions are discussed more fully hereunder, with special
reference to the role that parents have to play in fulfilling their functions
through the policies that they are responsible for the life and functioning
of the school.

2.2.3 School Policies

A policy is a standing decision which guides action and decision-making.
Policies help in decision-making that involves the communities' values and
main beliefs. They are guidelines for action in day-to-day running of the
school. According to the Department of Education, policies developed by
school should:

- reflect the vision and mission of the school;
- be developed in consultation with all sectors which have an
  interest;
- be approved by SGB, and
- be easy to carry out (DoE, 2000A:29).
2.2.3.1 The school constitution

The school's constitution is a roadmap for the school community. It is a rallying point for the school as it promotes the values enshrined in the National Constitution (RSA, 1996a: 7). It encompasses all that the school stands for, what it is, and how it wants to achieve its goals and objectives. It also spells out how it intends to promote its value (RSA, 1997: 14).

Ndelu (1999: 5) asserts that drafting the school's constitution calls for legal insights. SGB members must understand the legal implications of the school constitution. Parents are mostly lay people. Consequently they will have to be trained to understand the legal ramifications of a school's constitution. Only then can they be expected to make a meaningful contribution to drafting the school constitution.

2.2.3.2 Mission statement

A mission statement is a short, positive statement that describes the method and means by which the school’s vision will be achieved. It is the vision stated in achievable and realistic terms. The mission statement should reflect a balance between idealism and workable reality. The vision must be a balance between the dream of ideal school and the realities that the community faces (DoE, 2000:36).

2.2.3.3 The school religious policy

Religious policy sets down the rules and guidelines that should be followed if religious activities are to be conducted at the school. These activities may include scripture reading, prayer and religious singing (DoE, 2000:41).
According to section 15 of the National Constitution everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. It further mentions that religious observance may be conducted at state or state-aided institutions, provided that those observances follow rules made by the appropriate public authorities; they are conducted on an equitable basis, and attendance at them is free and voluntary (RSA, 1996a: 26). The staff and learners' right to have their own religious observances is thus acknowledged and respected. According to SASA religious observance may be conducted at the public school under the rules issued by the governing body, if such observances are conducted on an equitable basis and attendance at them by the learners and members of the staff is free and voluntary (RSA, 1996b:9) It is the responsibility of the SGB to protect each learner's religious right in schools (Joubert and Prinsloo, 2001: 45).

2.2.3.4 The School Language Policy

The SGB must honour Section 29 of the South African Constitution, which, amongst other things, states that everyone has a right to receive education in the official language or languages of his or her preference in public institutions (RSA, 1996a:13). According to SASA, SGB may determine the language policy of the school subject to the constitution. No form of racial discrimination may be practised in implementing policy determined under this section. The SGB is required to select a language to be used for teaching and learning and must offer additional languages that are congruent with the needs of the community and the resources available to the school (RSA, 1996b: 6).

Parents have a central role to play in determining and implementing the school's language policy. According to Oosthuizen (1998: 207), the SGB
must bear the following in mind when drafting a language policy for the school:

- provincial legislation in terms of language requirements;
- provisions of the SASA;
- Provisions in the National Constitution.

Parents must also be made aware of current language requirements and recommendations in the employment market, availability of learning materials and multimedia resources, usage contexts and international opportunities, so that they can make informed choices.

2.2.3.5 The School Admission Policy

The admission policy sets out the procedure for admitting learners to the school. It determines who may be admitted to the school and the manner in which this would happen (DoE, 2000:38). The admission age limits are a controversial issue between the school and governing body. The admission age for a grade one learner is seven years before the end of the first year in school. SASA directs that a public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfair discrimination. (RSA, 1996b:6). According to Oosthuizen (1998: 209), the SGBs must adhere to the following when drafting an admission policy:

- no admission test may be administered;
- discrimination of any sort must be eradicated;
- Learners should not be excluded due to financial considerations.

Parents must be made aware that conditions for exemption of school fees and rebates exist in terms of the (RSA, 1996b:6). Hess (1992: 20) suggests that once the admissions policy is drafted, it should be given the maximum amount of publicity, both inside and outside the school.
2.2.3.6 The School Code of Conduct

A code of conduct is a policy that not only reflects the rules of the school but also promotes positive discipline and self discipline. It sets rules that must be followed by the members of the school community (DoE, 2000: 6). According to SASA, (1996b:7), a code of conduct for learners is developed to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of quality learning (RSA, 1996b: 7). According to Oosthuizen (1998: 209) the SGB has a legal duty to adopt a code of conduct which creates an enabling environment and contributes to, and maintains the quality of the learning and teaching in the school. A school’s code of conduct must define misconduct and how it will be dealt with at school. It must also indicate how infringement of learners’ rights will be dealt with (Joubert and Prinsloo, 2001: 40).

All stakeholders need to be involved in the formulation of policies. The content of code of conduct informs the learners about the way in which they conduct themselves at school. In formulating a code of conduct, the principals involve the parents, learners, educator, and support staff at the school.

Parents must be encouraged to ensure that the school code of conduct is congruent with, or at least complementary to, the disciplinary strategies commonly employed at home. Consistency in this regard is extremely important.
2.3 THE STRATEGIES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

According to Vandergrift and Greene (1992: 57), parent involvement in education has two essential dimensions, namely,

- supporting their children in their schoolwork;
- Participating actively in the education of their children.

Vandergrift and Greene (1992: 58-59) further categorise parents into four types, namely:

- **Type 1**: These are parents who support their children at home and are also actively involved in school activities. At times they even serve on the SGB.
- **Type 2**: These parents support their children, but are not actively involved in school activities. Newsletters, circulars and other forms of communication with the home are very effective in engaging these parents.
- **Type 3**: Parents in this category are very difficult to identify. They may attend parents' evenings and they may even participate actively in some school activities. But they do not give their children any support at home.
- **Type 4**: These parents neither support their children, nor do they participate actively in school activities. These are uninvolved parents and they are difficult to reach.

Van Schalkwyk (1990: 35-36) describes parent involvement as the co-responsibility that parents must assume with regard to essential concerns of the education of their children. Co-operation, participation and
partnership are three precepts that inform effective parent involvement in school governance. These precepts are discussed in greater detail below.

### 2.3.1 Co-Operation

Dekker and Lemmer (1993: 155) maintain that the quality of teaching and learning improves with an improvement in the quality of co-operation between parents and educators. Real co-operation presupposes an acknowledgement that parents and teachers need each other. They must work collaboratively toward the common goal of promoting effective teaching and learning.

According to Macbeth (1993: 48), parents and professionals have to share skills and information with each other and do so in an open and honest way, which includes recognition of each other's limitations in knowledge and expertise. According to Gorton and Schneider (1991: 472) co-operation is important for truthful and effective communication among SGB members as it promotes good rapport and ensures the accuracy of the information relayed between them.

### 2.3.2 Participation

Wood (1988: 40) suggests that participation refers to the activities that parents undertake under the direction of professionals. Examples of these activities include participation in committees or in general maintenance of the school's resources. Dekker and Lemmer (1993: 156) point out that through participation, the parents can restore their natural right in education. Participation between governors is important for creating a relationship of trust. Potgieter (1997: 89) suggests that a nominee for SGB membership must of necessity be a person of high integrity. A relationship of honesty between the members of the governing body is an important factor to secure trust and confidence in school governance.
2.3.3 Partnership

A partnership approach to curricular and non-curricular matters promotes ownership and accountability. Parents feel that they have a significant contribution to make and, therefore, feel more committed to the school and its mission. Partnership involves sharing of power, resources, knowledge, and decision-making.

Postma (1990: 164) encourages educative teaching as a collaborative act, where parents and teachers are both engaged in educating and teaching the same child. According to Van Schalkwyk (1990: 39), a partnership between parents and teachers is the best way of getting parents and teachers to work together on education and to share the responsibilities. Such partnership calls for reciprocal confidence, reciprocal understanding, mutual respect, openness, supportive relationship, effective communication, reciprocal encouragement, assistance and loyalty (Van Schalkwyk, 1990: 40).

2.4 LEVELS OF EFFECTIVE PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Van Schalkwyk (1990: 91-96) draws attention to three levels at which parents can be involved in a school. Parents can be involved at individual, class or school level, as discussed hereunder.

At school level, parents can serve on school statutory or non-statutory bodies. They can also serve as members of the SGB; the school’s central and overall control body. The SGB, together with staff, controls various school activities and also appoints various non-statutory bodies and sub-committees that are concerned with curricular, non-curricular and school management activities. Such sub-committees differ from school to school.
but they may address buildings and grounds, finance, curricular matters, school marketing and communication, and sports matters.

2.5 MANAGEMENT OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

As noted earlier, co-operation between teachers and parents is vital for school governance. Such cooperation is, however, not an automatic and uncoordinated process. Vandergrift and Greene (1992: 57) maintain that improvement of parent involvement in school governance is "... one of the most challenging tasks facing educators today." Van Schalkwyk (1990: 116) stresses that efficient school management is a precondition of parent involvement. The principal plays a leading and decisive role in creating an enabling management culture and environment that is characterised by parent involvement. Effective management of parent involvement requires:

- an unambiguous school policy document on parent participation that defines the parameters of said participation;
- solid administrative support for parent representatives, and
- Ongoing training and information sharing workshops for parents, especially for those that are members of the SGB (Van Schalkwyk, 1990:117).

2.5.1 Written policies

It is important for the school to have a clear, written policy that:

- defines the parameters of parent involvement;
- outlines roles and responsibilities for parent representatives, and
- provides procedural guidelines for participation.

Care must be taken not to inhibit participation and to ensure compliance with the conditions prescribed by SASA (RSA, 1996b: 14).
2.5.2 Administrative Support

The written policy of the school regarding parent involvement must clearly state the type of administrative support to be given to parents who cooperate with the school at whatever level. Such administrative support will be an incentive and an inducement for continued involvement with, and support of, the school. Williams and Chavkin (1989:18-20) reveal that the following four elements are vital for administrative support of parent involvement, namely,

- training;
- open-communication;
- liaison;
- evaluation of parent involvement.

Each of these aspects is explored more fully hereunder.

2.5.2.1 Training

Kruger, DU Plessis, and Maseko, (1996: 76) argue that training in parenting skills as well as skills in other areas where parents feature in the sub-committees of the SGB must be guaranteed, in order to enhance cooperation, support and partnership with the school. According to Badenhorst (1993: 116), parents who give their support to the school need not feel that they are appendages that can be driven from pillar to post. With proper training they can fit in well in the school's programmes of activities.

Van Schalkwyk (1990: 115) makes several suggestions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of training directed at parents:

- Training programmes may be more acceptable if the parents themselves design or have input into the design of the programmes.
• Training sessions will be more effective when they are conducted in small groups.
• Training material designed around real examples of problems facing schools and that allow for parent groups to discuss and suggest solutions can be particularly effective.
• Sufficient time must be allocated for preparation of training sessions.

Van Schalkwyk (1990: 116) goes on to suggest that principals will have to initiate training for parents. This ensures institutional endorsement at the highest level and promotes credibility. Training sessions can be executed during general parents' meetings; at class parents' committee meetings, and in interest group meetings.

2.5.2.2 Open Communications

Badenhorst (1993: 25) views communication as a tool that enables an organisation to work towards its goals. Regular communication with parents and the school is critical to school management. Communication channels can be improved by leveraging of communication opportunities offered by newsletters, planned visits, parents' evenings, sports days and telephone help desks.

Parents need to feel that they are part of the school. Swap (1993:61) observes that open communication is essential for developing a solid partnership between parents and the school.
2.5.2.3 Liaison

Implicit in the concept of “liaison” is the notion that communication is not un-directional or prescriptive. Liaison implies consultative and bi-directional communication in which negotiation is the key concept. Schools must recognise parents as equal partners who have significant contributions to make to school improvement and governance. Kruger et al (1996: 76) suggest that liaison within the school and internally and externally with other stakeholders will go a long way to building lasting relationships between the school and its parents. Liaison will also add value to parent involvement by allowing other SMTs to share their own experiences and activities.

2.5.2.4 Evaluation of Parent Involvement in School Governance

Constant monitoring of parent involvement is important. Efforts to increase parent involvement must be sustained. Schools must be sensitive to the evolving needs of both parents and learners and must acknowledge shifts in parent demographics. Strategic planning for SGB succession and continuity is essential for any school. Swap (1993: 55-57) maintains that parent involvement is based on the assumption that both teachers and parents share a common mission that cannot be achieved without collaboration. The educative needs of the communities that the school services and the programmes offered by the school must be synchronised and engendered in the shared school mission. Swap (1993: 57) observes that programmes designed to enhance and support parent involvement “demand a commitment to continual reflection, inquiry and evaluation in the contexts of jobs with moment-to-moment responsibilities.”
2.6 BENEFITS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

According to Squelch and Lemmer (1994: 93), benefits of parent involvement in school governance include:

- improved school performance;
- reduced dropout rates;
- a decrease in delinquency, and
- a more positive attitude towards the school.

Van Schalkwyk (1990: 25-32) contends that parent involvement has advantages for the teacher, the learner and the school as a whole.

2.6.1 Advantage for the teacher

According to Van Schalkwyk (1990: 25-28), the advantages for teachers are as follows:

- parent involvement can engender a more positive spirit between teacher and parent;
- it can work to restore trust between the home and the teacher;
- parent involvement means that the teachers can rely on parents’ support;
- knowledge of the learner’s home circumstance can help the teacher in his or her instructional task;
- it can work to improve the conduct of learners, and
- parents can lighten teachers’ workloads.

Parent involvement is advantageous to the teacher and the parent, because it leads to a reciprocal understanding of one another’s potentials and an acceptance of one another’s limitations and strengths in attaining
goals. It is, therefore, imperative for teachers and parents to work collaboratively in educating the children.

2.6.2 Advantages for the learner

Van Schalkwyk (1990: 28-30) contends that parent involvement benefits learners in the following ways:

- parent involvement can improve the child's learning performance;
- it can improve school attendance;
- it can help to eliminate learning and behavioural problems, and
- parent involvement can increase the child's sense of security and emotional stability.

Parent involvement can be advantageous to the learners, because it allows them to see the relationship between school and the home as important. Learners will be less inclined to look at the school in isolation from the home situation.

2.6.3 Advantages for the school in the terms of school governance

According to Van Schalkwyk (1990: 30-32), the entire school benefits from parent involvement. He summarises the benefits of parent involvement as follows:

- parent involvement can improve the unity and co-ordination of education;
- it can be the source of valuable service in the interests of the school;
- it can lead to an improvement in support from the community, and
- lead to greater financial support.

Parents who are involved in the education of their children are more likely to create a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning.
2.7 FACTORS THAT HAMPER PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Parent involvement, important as it is, may be constrained by divisive factors, such as the educational background of parents, social class, race, and religion. These factors are discussed here in order to highlight pitfalls that should be avoided, while mechanisms to minimise their negative impact, are devised.

2.7.1 Educational background of parents

The educational background of parents may adversely affect the relationship between the parent and the school adversely. Meighan (1986:16) states that the less educated the parents are, the more intimidated and confused they will be, and the less likely it will be for effective communication to proceed between them and the school staff. Teachers may also be unhappy to work with parents who may not understand them. Matching tasks with skills is one strategy that promises to promote mutual respect and a balance of power in this regard (Meighan, 1986:17). Another strategy to counter the effects of intimidation is to create opportunities for informal social events, where educational background does not play a role in the interaction and where parents, learners and teachers can interact freely. Schools can host family fun days, for example, or cake sales and tuck-shop days. These events can be linked to fund-raising initiatives.

2.7.2 Socio-economic constraints

According to Wood (1988:2), race and religion have a socio-historic influence on how parents perceive of their possible contributions to school governance. Parents, who have historically been marginalised, because of either race or religion, may not be keen to participate freely in
democratic processes. One would have to actively restore their confidence before expecting unfettered participation.

Parents who are poor and do not have resources may not have the psychological energy to participate in school programmes. Wood (1988: 2) asserts that when parents from low economic group have to compete for limited resources education services. The feel forced to accept a demeaning relationship with professionals. Activities and events that minimise the impact of socio-economic constraints, such as crafts exhibitions and cultural activities, will build confidence and increase participation of individuals and groups affected by these constraints.

2.7.3 Languages

Kisanji (1995: 14) found that in Tanzania the language spoken by the parent and the professional becomes a major barrier to parent involvement if the parent and the professional cannot communicate in the same language. Wood (1988: 36) asserts that the parent may decide to agree to whatever is said and offered by the professional, in order to secure services desired for his/her child. There is no doubt that common language promotes effective communication between the parent and the professional. Language as a cultural factor contains the fundamental beliefs and primary ideologies of each society. Kisanji (1995: 106) asserts that the success of parent involvement will be a function of acknowledgement and acceptance of the culture of the parent by the professional.

Educators must be encouraged to learn the indigenous languages used in their service community. Incentives like merit certificates can be provided for doing so. Strategies, such as using learners as translators for communication with parents, should also be considered.
2.7.4 Inability to resolve conflict

Steyn (1993: 32) defines conflict as the existence of divergent aims or goals within a person or a group. He argues that conflict between parents and the school is inevitable, thereby highlighting that a school’s service offerings are misaligned with the educative needs of the communities that it services.

Conflict can be avoided through tolerance, mutual understanding and negotiation. Kruger (1989: 17) asserts that one of the reasons why schools have failed to improve as organisations is that they have failed to learn how to deal constructively with conflict between the school and the parents.

Schools need to involve parents more closely in formulating a shared vision and mission for the school. Parents should also be consulted in designing programmes and procedures that aim at realising the vision and mission of the school.

All schools should have a clearly defined plan for conflict resolution with strong, simple and transparent procedural guidelines. Both educators and parents need to be trained in conflict resolution and negotiation techniques.

2.7.5 A school culture that is resistant to change

Mader and Mader (1990: 52) note that some schools have a culture that is very hard to change. These schools usually enforce tradition indiscriminately; have authoritarian leaders that support a formulaic approach to school governance and management. According to Seeley (1989: 27) professionals and parents are faced with a need to change the basic structures, roles, relationships, attitudes and assumptions.
The school must develop the necessary skills in both the educator and parent component of the SGB, in order to become efficient change-agents. This will require a participatory approach to management and governance that is built on democratic principles of inclusivity, active participation, proportional representivity, transparency and accountability.

2.7.6 Limited resources support parent

A lack of time and money, according to Swap (1990: 22), are two of the primary barriers that prevent schools from actively engaging parents in school management and governance. Time is allocated for crises, not for building relationships. In most schools insufficient time is allocated to collaborative planning for continual school improvement. This is primarily a result of a singular pre-occupation with teaching; the inability to co-ordinate schedules for parents and educators to meet; a reluctance to schedule meetings outside school hours, and practical limitations, such as availability of public transport to travel to school for meetings. All these factors severely impact on success in forging a strong home-school partnership.

Often both parents and professionals interpret the time constraint as a signal of lack of interest and concern for the education of the learner. When parents fail to attend conferences or neglect to carry out agreed upon educational activities at home, teachers become angry and frustrated. On the other hand, parents also despair when teachers talk to them only for a very short time and fail to recognise their child’s special strengths. Swap (1990: 23) suggests that this environment lends itself to conflict.
2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter reviews educational policy documents and other education research literature in presenting a critical appraisal of the roles and responsibilities of parents. It draws attention to educational policy mandates aimed at promoting parent involvement in managing and governing schools. It also highlights strategies for improved parent involvement.

The factors that hampered parent involvement have been explored, whilst the researcher cautions against pitfalls and suggests ways of countering the effects of these factors. The key benefits of greater parent involvement in school governance were also made explicit. The following chapter discusses the research methodology used in the study.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to collect data from respondents about their roles and responsibilities as school governors as well as factors that facilitate or hamper fulfilment of their obligations in this regard.

The discussion in this chapter focuses on the research design; the research instrument used, and the sampling techniques used.

3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a descriptive research design. Such design was appropriate for determining the extent of parent involvement in school governance. The empirical investigation was carried out through the use of a questionnaire.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Umbumbulu circuit is a predominantly rural area with a few semi-urban pockets. The sample for the study was drawn from the Umbumbulu circuit for three reasons, namely,

- The researcher is familiar with the area and currently serves as an educator in the area;
- Permission to conduct research in this area would be easy to obtain, and
- Cost of accessing respondents would be low.

Parents serving on the SGB were targeted as respondents. Best (1977: 267) asserts that a population is a group of individuals who have one or more common characteristics that are of interest to the
researcher. As previously stated, parents serving on the SGB were targeted as respondents.

According to information obtained from the Umbumbulu circuit office, the circuit is divided into four wards, namely,

- Folweni, with 37 schools;
- Amanzimtoti, with 35 schools;
- Mafa, with 27 schools;
- Umbumbulu Central with 27 schools.

The researcher, used a random sampling procedure to selected 3 schools from each ward and to sample for 2 respondents from each school. The table below shows how the sample was constructed:

Table 3.1: Sample selected for the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of wards</th>
<th>Total number of schools</th>
<th>Number of schools selected</th>
<th>Number of SGB parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Umbumbulu Central</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafa</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanzimtoti</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folweni</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>126</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total, 24 parents were selected for the sample

3.4 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

According to Gumede (1999: 69) “survey research typically employs questionnaires and interviews in order to determine the opinions, attitudes, preferences and perceptions of the persons of interest to the researcher.” The researcher wished to determine parents’ opinions, attitudes and
perceptions of their roles, responsibilities and involvement in the SGB. This instrumentation was deemed appropriate for obtaining data for the study.

3.4.1 The questionnaire as the research instrument

In order to improve the efficiency of data collection, a written questionnaire was constructed. According to Van Rensburg, Landman, and Bodenstein (1994: 504), a questionnaire is a set of questions dealing with some topic or related group of topics given to a selected group of individuals for the purpose of gathering data on a problem under consideration.

Dane (1990: 315) suggests that a questionnaire be tailored with due consideration for:

- the choice of the subject to be researched;
- the aim of research;
- the size of data collection, and
- the analysis of the data.

He suggests that three aspects of the questionnaire will be affected by these considerations, namely,

- the length of individual questions;
- the number of response options, and
- the format and wording of questions.

Special attention was given to these aspects of the questionnaire. To ensure that the questionnaire was well-constructed, it was first administered to a pilot group, refined, and then finally administered to the actual sample. Several other considerations went into the construction of the questionnaire. Both the advantages and drawbacks of the questionnaire are explored more fully hereunder.
3.4.2 Advantages of the questionnaire

The researcher decided to use a written questionnaire because of its advantages. This is confirmed by Cohen and Marion (1989:111-112), who describe the advantages of written questionnaires as follows:

- Affordability is the primary advantage of written questionnaires, because it is the least expensive means of data gathering.
- A questionnaire permits anonymity; if it is arranged in such a way that responses are given anonymously. It increases the chances of receiving responses that genuinely represent a person's beliefs, feelings, opinion or perceptions.
- Questionnaires permit respondents a sufficient amount of time to consider answering before responding.
- They provide greater uniformity across the measurement situation than do interview. Each person responds to exactly the same questions because standard instructions are given to the respondents.
- Generally the data provided by the questionnaires can be more easily analysed and interpreted than the data obtained from verbal responses.
- Through the use of the questionnaire approach, the problems related to interviews may be avoided. Interview "errors" may seriously undermine the reliability and validity of survey results.
- Respondents can complete questionnaires in their own time and in a more relaxed atmosphere.

These advantages informed the researcher's decision to use a written questionnaire as the research instrument.
3.4.3 Disadvantages of the questionnaire

The researcher took note of the following drawbacks of using a written questionnaire, as pointed out by Van den Aardweg, and Van den Aardweg (1990: 190) and Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 112):

- Questionnaires do not provide the flexibility of interviews. In an interview and idea or comment can be probed. This makes it possible to gauge how people are interpreting the question. If different respondents interpret questions asked differently, the validity of information obtained is jeopardised.

- Some people are generally better able to express their views verbally than in writing. Questions can be answered only when they are sufficiently easy and straightforward to be understood with the given instructions and definitions.

- The questionnaire does not make provision for obtaining the view of more than one person at a time. It requires uninfluenced views of one person only.

- Answers to questionnaires must be seen as final. Re-checking of responses cannot be done. There is no chance of investigating beyond the given answer for clarification of ambiguous answers. If respondents are unwilling to answer certain questions nothing can be done about it later.

- In a questionnaire the respondent examines all the questions at the same time before answering them and the answers to different questions can, therefore, not be treated as independent.

- The researcher is unable to control the context of question answering and specifically, the presence of people. Respondents may ask friends or family members to examine the questionnaire or
comment on their answer, causing bias if the respondent’s own private opinions are desired.

- The investigation could be affected by the above-mentioned disadvantages because the questionnaire does not cater for follow-up. All the questions were examined at the same time. The researcher was unable to control the context of question answering. Questionnaire did not provide the flexibility of interviews and it did not make provision for obtaining views from more than one person at a time. Once the respondents had answered the question it ended there. No clarification could be requested.

The researcher tried to counter each of these drawbacks proactively by including both closed or restricted and open-ended questions in the questionnaire. The researcher also edited questions to ensure clarity. Questions were phrased in simple language. As the questionnaires were hand-delivered, the researcher could personally clarify any questions and address any concerns as they arose.

3.4.4 CONSTRUCTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Closed questions and open-ended items were used in the construction of the questionnaire. Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh, (1972: 169) state that structured questionnaire items and alternative answers are exhaustive of all possible answers. Unstructured questions may fall short of this.

According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990: 1998) the researcher should consult and seek advice from specialists and colleagues at all times during the construction of the questionnaire. Paying heed to this advice, the researcher tested the questionnaire for validity, reliability, simplicity and clarity by administering it to colleagues at school and to selected members of the general population, from which the
sample was drawn. Feedback was used to make modifications to the questionnaire. A pilot study was also launched to test validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

3.4.5 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Kidder and Judd (1989: 53-54) propose that although reliability and validity are two different characteristics and measurements, they “shade into each other.” They are two ends of a continuum but at point in the middle it is difficult to distinguish between them. Validity and reliability are especially important in education research because most of the measurements attempted in this area are obtained indirectly. Researchers can never guarantee that an educational or psychological measuring instrument will precisely and dependably measure what it is intended to measure (Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg 1990: 198). It is essential, therefore, to assess the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The discussion which follows explores these concepts further.

3.4.5.1 Validity

Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994: 560) define validity as the extent to which a measuring instrument satisfies the purpose for which it was constructed. A valid research instrument is one that has demonstrated that it detects some “real” ability, attitude or prevailing situation that the research can identify and characterise (Schenetler, 1993: 71). A test for validity ensures that each administration of the instrument yields essentially the same result (Dane, 1990: 158). The validity of the questionnaire as a research instrument reflects the sureness with which conclusions can be drawn.

A pilot study was used to ensure that the questionnaire was directed to respondents who were qualified to give information and that the
information obtained was representative of information elicited from the entire population. Data obtained from the pilot study was tested for response relevance, before the format and content of the questionnaire were finalised.

3.4.5.2 Reliability

Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994: 512) define reliability in terms of consistency and dependability. Consistency is confirmed when the same relative answer is obtained under conditions where the measuring phenomena have not changed. A reliable measuring instrument is one that, if repeated under similar conditions, would present the same (dependable) result or a near approximation of the initial result.

The questionnaire was first used in a pilot study to test for response-consistency. Furthermore, paraphrasing was used to ensure that multiple questions drew similar responses as they sought to solicit the same information. A review of the responses to these questions reinforced the claim that the instrument was reliable.

3.5 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

3.5.1 Permission

Best and Kahn (1986: 23) advise that if a research is to be conducted in public schools, it is essential that approval be secured from the relevant authorities prior to undertaking the study.

Permission to conduct the research was solicited from the Umbumbulu District Manager (Appendix B). Permission was duly granted (Appendix C). The nature and objective of the study were explained to individual school principals in a letter requesting permission to conduct the research.
in their schools. Approval to conduct the research was granted in all cases.

3.5.2 The pilot study

According to De Vos (1998: 178) a pilot study is an abbreviated version of a research project in which the researcher practices or tests the procedures to be used in the subsequent full-scale project. The pilot study is a preliminary or "trial run" investigation, using similar questions and similar subjects as in the final survey.

Kidder and Judd (1986: 211-212) suggest that the basic purpose of a pilot study is to determine how the design of the subsequent study can be improved and be used to identify flaws in the measuring instrument. A pilot study gives the researcher an idea of what the method will actually look like in operation and what effect (intended or not) it is likely to have on the respondents.

Lowe (1991: 49-66) proposes that the purpose of a pilot study includes:

- reducing the number of treatment errors;
- getting feedback on question clarity and simplicity from other people;
- approximating the time required to complete the questionnaire; and
- reformulating instructions that may be ambiguous.

A pilot study was conducted in three primary schools in Magabheni Township near Umkomaas. These schools were part of the general population from which the sample was drawn, but not part of the sample itself. SGB parents were selected to participate in the pilot study.
The questionnaires were personally delivered and the researcher explained the procedure of the pilot study to the respondents, after arrangements were made with the principals of the three pilot schools. The researcher collected the completed questionnaires personally. No inherent weaknesses were found in the research instrument and the data solicited confirmed the instrument's validity and reliability. There was thus no need to modify the questionnaire.

3.5.3 The actual study

The researcher distributed the questionnaires personally to the principals who then distributed them to parents serving on the SGB. The respondents were given a day to complete the questionnaires. The researcher then collected the completed questionnaires personally. There was a 90% return rate, which was sufficiently high to provide for generalisability of the findings.

3.5.4 Data processing

The data was manually captured so that it could be analysed and interpreted. Frequency tables were used to analyse and interpret data. These were then interpreted. Van den Aardweg (1998: 65-76) stresses that frequency are very useful as they provide the following information:

- The frequency of responses, and
- Comparative response percentages.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Issues of confidentiality and anonymity are critically important in ensuring truthful and uninhibited responses. It was especially important to maintain confidentiality and anonymity in this study, as the researcher resides and works in the targeted area. The author took special care to make it explicit in the questionnaire that information could be furnished anonymously and
that responses would be held in the strictest confidentiality. No compulsion was placed on respondents to participate in the survey. Access to the raw data was strictly guarded.

3.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter a detailed description of the method used in the research is presented. The appropriateness of using a questionnaire as research instrument has been critically evaluated. The chapter also discusses the sampling procedures used and methods of data analysis and interpretation. In the next chapter, analysis and interpretation of collected data is provided.
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses and interprets data gathered by means of the questionnaire from parents serving on the SGBs of 12 primary schools in the Umbumbulu circuit in KwaZulu-Natal. The discussion is structured as follows:

- An analysis of demographic information
- An analysis of responses to close items
- An analysis of open items

4.2 AN ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Demographic information helped to provide the demographic profile of respondents. Information gathered in this section included data relating to age, gender, home language, relevant qualifications and the number of years associated with the school.

Table 4.1: Respondents according to gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 shows that 77% of the respondents were females and 23% were males. This data suggests a clear female-bias in parent representation on SGBs. It is possible that females, as the primary caregivers, participate more freely in the education of their children. It is also possible that the lack of male representation would be attributed to differentiated family roles. The male parent more likely to be the primary income earner, who is,
therefore too much engaged in job-related activities to freely participate in SGB activities.

Table 4.2: Respondents according to age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30 years</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 40</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 50</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 shows that only 14% of the respondents were below the age of 30 years; 32% were between the ages of 31 and 40, and most respondents (45%) were in the 41-50 age groups. Only 9% of the respondents were older than 50. This breakdown seems to suggest that younger parents (under 30) are not available for membership on the SGB. This may be a consequence of their relative inexperience in engaging in school matters. This could also be attributed to electoral bias in voting members for the SGB.

Older parents (31-50) may constitute the majority and could be more experienced in dealing with school affairs. They may consequently be inclined to participate more freely in SGB activities.

It should be also clear from the data that some 9% of the parents are over 50 and may in fact be guardians (such as grandparents) that are assisting their relatives to attend school. Their representation on SGBs may, however, also be a consequence of electoral bias in voting members onto the SGB, where age and experience are welcome attributes in the perceptions of the electorate. This is particularly true in African
communities, which traditionally places a premium on the wisdom of elders.

Table 4.3: Respondents according to home language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home language</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IsiZulu</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 reveals that the large majority (91%) of respondents identified IsiZulu as their home language. Only 9% of respondents reported English as home language. This bias is expected, if one considered that Umbumbulu District is a deeply rural area, where IsiZulu is the dominant language. This breakdown has far-reaching implications for information exchange and the language used to facilitate it.

Table 4.4: Respondents according to qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower than Matric</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/university diploma</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University degree e.g. BA</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other post university degree</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 reveals that most respondents (82%) had not matriculated. This may impact negatively on participation in a forum which includes highly education participants, such as educators. Only 14% of the respondents reported to have matriculated, and a single respondent reported to have a university degree. The generally low qualifications of the parents might
lead to some stereotyping and a lack of effort in involving themselves more actively in decision-making on academic matters.

Table 4.5: The number of years associated with the school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 20</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 shows that (27%) of the respondents had been associated with the school for less than 5 years. Three respondents (14%) reported that they had been associated with the school for between 6 and 10 years. A further 18% of the respondents had been associated with the school for between 11 to 15 years. A large proportion of respondents (32%) suggested that they had been associated with the school for 16 to 20 years, whilst almost 9% suggested that they had been associated with the school for over 20 years.

This response suggests that many parents represented on the SGB may themselves, at some stage, have been learners at the school. It may be intimidating for ex-learners to seek equal stature with some of their former teachers and at times even contest or question their decisions or views. Such a situation may, in fact, stifle interaction.

On the other hand, a long association with the school bodes well for brokering sound interpersonal relationships and ensuring continuity in the governance of the school.
Table 4.6: Responses according to school location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep rural</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-urban</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 shows that half (50%) of the respondents classify the location of their schools as deeply rural and 14% classifies theirs as rural. Twenty-two percent of the respondents suggested that their schools were in semi-urban areas, while 14% reported that their schools were in urban areas. Often people stereotypically translate rural to mean backward. This stereotyping may taint the perceived value of parent contributions and this, in turn, can undermine parent involvement in school governance.

4.3 AN ANALYSIS OF CLOSED-ENDED QUESTIONS

The responses to each item are summarised in a frequency table. This section deals with parents participation in SGB, including knowledge of polices, parent participation and responsibility for school governance.
4.3.1 Response According to Knowledge of Policies

Table 4.7: Knowledge of selected policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.1 South African School Act</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.2 National Constitution</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.3 Mission Statement</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.4 Learner Code of Conduct</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a consolidation of sub-tables from 4.7.1 to 4.7.4

- **South African School's Act**

Sub-table 4.7.1 reveals that most of the respondents (73%) acknowledged that their knowledge of the SASA was average; whereas 23% indicated that they have a good knowledge of the SASA. Only one respondent had poor knowledge of the SASA.

SASA prescribes the SGB composition in order to ensure an equitable governance partnership between the school and the community that it serves (RSA, 1996b:16). While it is evident that most parents have a working knowledge of the SASA, they need to be further trained on finer details of this act. Thus it is of critical importance to understanding their rights and responsibilities for school governance. Many aspects of the school admissions policy, such as conditions for school fee exemptions...
and relief are covered by this act. One respondent, who indicated that he or she had poor understanding of SASA, needs to be questioned.

- **National Constitution**

  Sub-table 4.7.2 reveals that the majority of the respondents (82%) had an average knowledge of the National Constitution; whereas 14% had good knowledge, and only one respondent admitted to have poor knowledge of the Constitution. The Constitution of South Africa (RSA, 1996a:7) sets the tone for democratic participation in all aspects of civil life. This suggests that principals do not do enough to cascade information about the National Constitution down to the parents. More needs to be done to assist parents to understand the link between the National Constitution and education, specifically where it affects curriculum content, values, attitudes and methodology.

- **Mission Statement**

  Sub-table 4.7.3 reveals that most of the respondents (73%) indicated that they had an average knowledge of the school’s mission statement; whereas 18% indicated that they had a good knowledge, and 9% indicated that they felt that they were poorly informed about the school’s mission.

  In order to govern the school, parents need to be sure that the school policies are in line with national and provincial laws and policies (DoE, 2000a:15). The school policies are developed within the framework of the national legislation (DoE, 2000b:16). It is the responsibility of the principal to assist SGB and educators in promoting school policies.

  It can be inferred from these responses that many schools have not discussed their mission statements in sufficient detail with parents, or that
they have not yet sufficiently involved them in the formulation of mission statements.

- **Learner Code of Conduct**

Sub-table 4.7.4 reveals that the majority of the respondents (82%) had an average knowledge of the school's code of conduct, while 14% indicated that they had a good knowledge of the code. It is heartening to find that none of the respondents suggested that they had poor knowledge of the learner code of conduct.

According to SASA a code of conduct must be developed to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement of the quality of the learning process (RSA,1996b:35). Oosthuizen (1998:209) maintains that the SGB has a legal duty to adopt a code of conduct that creates an enabling environment and contributes to, as well as maintains, the quality of learning and teaching in the school. According to Allan (1999:120) all stakeholders need to be involved in the formulation of policies. The content of code of conduct informs the learners about the way in which they should conduct themselves at school. In formulating a code of conduct. The principals should involve the parents, learners, educators and support staff at school.

It appears that, although schools inform parents about the learner code of conduct and their involvement in ensuring compliance, most parents (86%) are not actively engaged in actually helping to formulate the code of conduct. If parents were co-architects of the code of conduct, then more parents would have indicated a good knowledge of the code of conduct. Opportunities to synchronise school and home discipline are bound to lose if parents are left out of decision making regarding the school code.
### 4.8: Responses on parent participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.8.1 Parents use of opportunities to exercise their power to govern the school</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8.2 Parents are actively involved in the education of their children</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8.3 Parents help with supervision in times of need</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8.4 Parents participate in drawing the learner code of conduct</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8.5 Parents are involved in fund-raising</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8.6 Parents are involved in drafting the school's budget</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8.7 Parents participate in drafting of the school languages policy</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a consolidation of sub-tables from 4.8.1 to 4.8.7
• Parents make use of opportunities to exercise their power to govern the school

Sub-table 4.8.1 reveals that the small fraction of respondents (09%) agreed that parents make use of opportunities to exercise their power to govern the school, whereas twenty-seven percent disagreed. Sixty-four indicated that they neither agree nor disagreed.

A very small number of parents exercise their duties. It could be deduced that very small number agreed.

• Parents are actively involved in the education of their children

Sub-table 4.8.2 shows some of the respondents (36%) agreed that they agreed that parents are actively involved in the education of their children; whereas 28% indicated that they were not willing to commit themselves to a definitive response. Thirty-six percent disagreed with the statement.

One would have expected a larger percentage of respondents agreeing with the statement that parents are actively involved in the education of their children. The responses suggest that many parents still delegate the responsibility of educating their children solely to the educators. It is unlikely that parents who are not actively engaged in supporting and supervising their children's education at home will become involved in any meaningful way in school governance. Parents must first be engaged by schools in order to recognise their own roles as co-educators who support and reinforce lessons learnt at school at home. They must also be engaged in order to give practical application to learning by harnessing learner skills and knowledge in social improvement programmes.
• Parents help with supervision in times of need

Sub-table 4.8.3 reveals that less than half of the respondents (36%) indicated that parents help with supervision in times of need. Thirty-six percent respondents indicated that they were neutral on this point, and 28% indicated that they disagreed with the statement.

These responses suggest that very few parent governors (36%) are willing to actively step into leadership/supervisory roles despite many (64%) being willing to involve themselves in their children’s education. It is likely that these parents do not feel capable or comfortable in fulfilling the obligations of supervisory roles. Parents could be encouraged to become more active in this area by being trained specifically to handle the duties required and by being involved in mentorship programmes, where they are assisted in fulfilling their obligations by more experienced supervisors.

• Parents participate in drawing up the code of conduct for learners

Sub-table 4.8.4 reveals that more than half of the respondents 59% neither agreed nor disagreed that parents participate in drawing up the learner code of conduct. Nine percent indicated they agreed and 32% indicated that they disagreed.

These responses are consistent with results listed in table 4.8, where only 14% of the respondents claimed to have good knowledge of the learner code of conduct. It would appear that most schools are happy to involve parents in implementing the learner code of conduct, while few provide for parent involvement in drafting the learner code of conduct. This is a rather strange position for schools to adopt, as parents are best positioned to know what disciplinary measures work on their children.
• **Parents are involved in fundraising**

Sub-table 4.8.5 reveals that most respondents 64% disagreed that parents were involved in fundraising; whereas 22% indicated that they agreed and 14% adopted a neutral stance on the issue.

It is striking to note that few schools are involving parents in fundraising initiatives. Schools are expected to supplement state funding and in the long term become financially independent. Fundraising efforts reach into the community and parents are best positioned to ensure maximum benefits in this respect.

• **Parents are involved in drafting the school’s budget**

Sub-table 4.8.6 shows that half of the respondents (50%) indicated neither agreed nor disagreed that parents are involved in drafting the school budget. Thirty-two percent indicated that they agreed, and 18% disagreed with the statement.

The respondents suggest that the SMTs are still hesitant about involving parents in school budgeting. This may be due to a perception that parents are not skilled in dealing with financial matters. For the sake of promoting transparency, it is crucial for schools to encourage greater parent involvement in prioritising needs, as this promotes accountability. Schools may have to capacitate parent governors by training them in financial management. This can easily be achieved by allowing in-house EMS and Accountancy educators to offer workshops and training sessions. External help can also be sought, particularly from school graduates who are employed in the financial services sector.
- Parents participate in the drafting of the language policy

Sub-table 4.8.7 reveals that 27% of the respondents indicated agreed that parents are involved in the drafting of the school language policy. Twenty-seven indicated that they neither disagreed nor agreed, and 46% disagreed with the statement.

The language of teaching and learning in a school must take into account the language demographics of learners and parents, as well as the socio-economic status and language weighting/bias. Provision must be made for variance in language proficiency.

It is also important for parents to recognise that proficiency in additional languages is an empowerment tool. The impact that language proficiency has on the success of the learning process cannot be over-stated. Parents must be involved in formulating language policy for the school and should be encouraged to test language choices for relevance.
4.3.3 Responsibility for School Governance

Table 4.9: Responses on responsibility for school governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent component of our school SGB...</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.9.1 Is involved in the development of our school's mission statement</td>
<td>11 50</td>
<td>09 41</td>
<td>02 09</td>
<td>22 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9.2 Supports the School Management Team in promoting education in our school</td>
<td>03 14</td>
<td>02 09</td>
<td>17 77</td>
<td>22 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9.3 Offers their skills to our school to promote quality education</td>
<td>08 36</td>
<td>11 50</td>
<td>03 14</td>
<td>22 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9.4 Assists in the appointment of School Governing Body and paid educators in our school</td>
<td>12 54</td>
<td>03 14</td>
<td>07 32</td>
<td>22 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a consolidation of sub-tables from 4.9.1 to 4.9.4

- **Involvement in the development of our school’s mission statement**

Sub-table 4.9.1 reveals that 50% of the respondents agreed that the parent_component is involved in the development of a school mission statement. Forty-one percent of the respondents neither disagreed nor agreed, and 9% of the respondents disagreed with the statement.
The school policies are developed within the framework of the national legislation (DoE, 2000: 15). It is the responsibility of the principal to assist SGB in promoting school policies. It is strange to note that 50% of the respondents are not actively involved in the development of a school mission statement. Parents have to be encouraged to recognise that a shared mission statement ensures that all constituents of the school are working jointly towards school improvement in complementary ways.

- **Support SMT in promoting education in our school**

Sub-table 4.9.2 reveals that a small number of respondents (14%) agreed that parents support SMTs in promoting education; whereas 77% disagreed, and 09% neither agreed nor disagreed.

SASA provides a legal framework for decentralising school governance and professional management, thereby providing support structures to help schools fulfil their expanded management and governance role (RSA, 1996b: 13).

It is heartening to note that in most schools (77%) SMTs and SGBs are working collaboratively to promote quality education. Some parents (14%) are still passive when it comes to supporting the SMTs. It can be deduced that these parents lack motivation or capacity to support SMTs.

- **Offer their skills to our school to promote quality education**

Sub-table 4.9.3 shows that one third of the respondents (36%) agreed that parents offered their skills to the school to promote quality education. Fifty percent of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, and 14% disagreed.
Kruger et. al. (1996: 76) point out that training in parenting skills as well as skills in other areas where parents feature in sub-committees of the SGB must be guaranteed, in order to enhance co-operation, support and partnership within the school.

The responses seem to confirm the view that parents still see themselves as lacking skills to make valuable contributions to quality improvement in schools. Training and confidence-boosting strategies are urgently required to counter this perception.

- **Assists in the appointment of SGB - paid educators in our school**

Sub-table 4.9.4 reveals that many respondents (54%) agreed that parent-governors assisted in the appointment of SGB paid educators. Thirty-two percent indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed and 14% percent disagreed.

These responses suggest that a significant percentage of parent-governors are not invited, or do not feel qualified to make decisions about appointments. This may be a result of inadequate human resources management skills. It may also be the result of autocratic human resources decision making by the principal and/or his/her SMT. According to the SASA (1996b: 12); the SGB must recommend the appointment of educators. The need to equip parent-governors with human resources management skills is imperative - and an aspect that must be addressed urgently. Autocratic decision-making processes must be discouraged.
4.4 AN ANALYSIS OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

One open item was aimed at giving the respondents the opportunity to express their own views on the strategies that schools adopt to get parents involved in school governance.

Table 4.10: Responses according to strategies for involving parent in school governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.10.1 Conduct adequate workshops</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10.2 Hold regular meetings</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10.3 Invite parent during special days</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10.4 Invite them to participate in decision-making</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a consolidation of sub-tables from 4.10.1 to 4.10.4

- **Conduct adequate workshops**

Sub-table 4.10.1 reveals that 68% of respondents indicated that their schools involved parents in workshops as a strategy to motivate parents to participate in school governance. According to Losoncy (1995: 5), accountable training in skills necessary to perform specific functions will improve performance; enhance self-esteem, and thus result in empowerment. Parents are trained in specific functions and portfolios allocated to them.

- **Hold regular meetings**

Sub-table 4.10.2 reveals that 59% of the respondents suggest that scheduling regular meetings with parents promotes greater involvement in school governance. Meetings are seen as important and necessary for keeping parents updated about daily events that occur in the school.
Meetings ensure that the lines of communication always remain open (Badenhorst, 1993: 25).

- **Invite parents during special days**
According to sub-table 4.10.3, 41% of the respondents indicated that parent involvement in school governance is encouraged by regular invitations extended to parents to participate in special school events and functions. Such invitations are used as a means of inspiring parents to take an interest in schools. Van Schalkwyk (1990: 12) suggests that inviting parents to the school also promotes community warmth and togetherness, and makes parents feel significant.

- **Invite them to participate in decision-making**
Sub-table 4.10.4 reveals that 14% of the respondents indicated their attempt to stimulate greater parent involvement by making explicit the school's desire to have parents participate in decision-making.

### 4.5 CONCLUSION

The data presented in this chapter revealed that although parent involvement in school governance is constitutionally guaranteed and legally sanctioned, the actual degree of parent participation in school governance remains superficial. Parent support networks, access to policy document, skills development programmes and team building have to be stepped up if parent-governors are to fulfil their duties as members of SGBs. In the next chapter the summary, findings and recommendations are presented.
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the study together with findings, conclusions and recommendations derived from it. The empirical research conducted, as explained in chapter three, and the data analysis and interpretation that follows in chapter four, are integrated in order to present the conclusions and recommendations. An attempt has been made to collate responses to individual aspects so as to arrive at specific findings, conclusions and recommendation that may hopefully help to assuage the problems identified in the study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Throughout the study, emphasis was placed on the evaluation of parent involvement in the governance activities, more particularly involving them in the school decisions and developing them as parent governors, for purposes of promoting quality education for learners.

5.3 FINDINGS

5.3.1 FINDINGS FROM LITERATURE STUDY

5.3.1.1 Policies that mandate parent involvement

Literature review has highlighted the policies which provide for parent involvement such as National Constitution, SASA, the school policy, language policy, school admission policy and code of conduct. These legislative provisions were analysed in greater detail, with the intention of highlighting their implications for parent involvement.
5.3.1.2 Strategies of parent involvement in school governance

In this study it was noted that there are strategies of parent involvement, namely, co-operation; participation and partnership.

These strategies suggest that parents must work collaboratively to support the common objectives of effective teaching and learning. Parents must be assisted to create a relation of trust and sharing of power, resource, knowledge and decision making.

5.3.1.3 Benefits of parent involvement in school governance

The study further highlighted the benefits of parent involvement in school governance, namely, advantages for the teacher, for the learner and for the school in general. Parent involvement creates the positive spirit between teacher and parent. It is also advantageous for the learner by creating relationship between school and home.

5.3.1.4 Management of parent involvement in school governance

The study further revealed that effective management of parent involvement would assist the process of drafting a functional school policy document which would define parameters of parent involvement; outline roles and responsibilities, and provide procedural guidelines for participation. Literature also highlighted the use of administrative support, namely, training, open-communication, liaison and evaluation of parent involvement.
5.3.2 FINDINGS FROM EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

5.3.2.1 Poor levels of parent literacy are sometimes used to undermine effective school governance

The study found that low levels of parent literacy are bound to preclude parents from participating in school governance. This also often results in low self-esteem, which is sometimes exploited by educators and school managers, who wrest the power of governing the school from parents. Parents are then used to merely rubber-stamp decisions that are made by school managers.

5.3.2.2 Parents are not given a chance to exercise their responsibilities and power

The study established that parents do not exercise their duties fully as outlined in SASA, Act No 84 of 1996. (See sub-table 4.10.3). There was also an indication that the parent component (SGB) is not assisted through workshops to develop capacity for their duties. This problem may induce low esteem among many parents. Even if the parent governors would like to participate in the running of the school, they might not be sure of their rights and activities in which they should be involved.

5.3.2.3 Parents are not involved in drafting school policies

The study established that there is lack of parent involvement in the drafting of school policies, such as code of conduct, language policy, and fundraising policy. Evidence revealed that many school governors were not involved in drawing up school policies indicated above, although there appeared to be some efforts in this direction. The same experience of
non-involvement affected the development of policies for school language as well as fund-raising. In such cases there were also indications of minimal or limited involvement.

5.3.2.4 Lack of involvement of parents in education of their children

Evidence from thus study showed that few parents are not encouraged to participate in school activities. Parent involvement in school or learner activities has an important effect on the quality of teaching and learning experience in the school and learner performance in school work.

Many parents indicated that there was lack satisfactory co-operation between them and educators, which means that learners could not be adequately supported. The school which involves parents in school activities would assist the academic achievement of learners and improvement of their behaviour.

5.3.2.5 There is lack of training and information sharing

The research findings revealed the lack of training and sharing of information. This lack makes parents function in a state of indecision. Many parents indicated that they do not have access to policy documents and other sources. This effectively leaves them powerless when it comes to making decisions which could contribute to effective school governance. (See paragraph 2.7.4).
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 SGB members must be invited to participate in policy discussion forums

Schools managers need to invite parent to participate in policy discussion forums. Meetings must be scheduled for the times that are convenient to working parents. Departmental circulars that are relevant to parents should also be discussed at these forums.

New technologies that can be used to keep parents involved in school includes of cell-phones messaging and e-mail (also in bulk format) and internet chat rooms. The means of communications, such newsletters and bulletins, can also be used.

5.4.2 Principals should arrange meetings to promote healthy relationships with parents

Parents must be positively motivated. It is desirable for schools to maximise contact opportunities with parents. Parent governors should be invited to accompany educators on team-building outings. The use of school resources by the community during weekends and holidays should be encouraged.

5.4.3 Regular review of organisational goals, aims and objectives

The study revealed that the parent component of the SGB is not sufficiently orientated with regard to organisational goals, aims and objectives. It is suggested that these be regularly reviewed in SGB meetings. To gain the co-operation of the parent members, the school
staff must set and define goals, and objectives for the school, in collaboration with the parents.

Parents have their own goals as beneficiaries in education. These goals need to be incorporated in the organisational goals of the school. Articulating goals, and objectives at SGB meetings is likely to attract participation of parents in decision-making.

5.4.4 Networking with SGBs of neighbouring schools

Networking with neighbouring SGBs could assist in creating a sense of community and relevance and compensate for the lack of organised training sessions and workshops. Sharing information, experiences and governance success stories could stimulate greater parent participation.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Effective school governance ensures that schools are well resourced, motivated and capable of delivering relevant education, tailored to the needs of the host communities in which schools are embedded. Parent involvement in school governance ensures links to the community; a learner-centred and community-centred approach to education and promotion of accountability and transparency. School improvement plans must, therefore, target improved parent involvement in school governance as a core strategy for overall improvement of the quality of education.
REFERENCES


*Challenges and Opportunities*. Detroit W.M.C: Dubuque.


Dear Respondent

Thank you for taking time to answer my questionnaire. The fact that you have been chosen as a respondent is quite coincidental. You have been selected randomly for the purpose of this survey.

I would like to assure you that all the information that you provide would be regarded with strict confidentiality. Thus, in order to obtain reliable, scientific information it is necessary that you answer the questions as honestly as you can. Your opinion is important.

Please answer ALL these questions by:

a) Placing an X in the space provided.
b) Write comments in the space provided

SECTION A

A. DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. GENDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. AGE GROUP

| Under 30 |          |
| 30 - 40  |          |
| 41 - 50  |          |
| 50 and over |        |
### 3. HOME LANGUAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xhosa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sesotho</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. MY HIGHEST QUALIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower than matric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/ University Diploma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Degree e.g. B.A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5. AREA WHERE MY SCHOOL IS SITUATED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep Rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi Urban</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### B. PARENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In our school</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents make use of opportunities to exercise their power to govern the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are actively involved in the education of their children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents help the supervision in times of need</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents participate in drawing the learners code of conduct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are involved in fund raising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are involved in drafting the school's budget</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are supportive of the school's discipline policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents assist in educational tours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents participate in drafting of language policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are involved in safety and security of the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents attend briefing session about their children's performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The parent component of our school SGB...</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is involved in the development of our school's mission statement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports the school management team in promoting education in our school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers their skills to our school to promote quality education.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assists in the appointment of SGB paid educators in our school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION B
OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Please could you list some strategies that your school adopts to get parents involved in school governance?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
The Circuit Manager
The Department of Education and Culture
Private Bag XI 022
Umbumbulu
4105

Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I kindly seek your permission to disseminate questionnaires to the principals from a randomly selected school in your circuit.

I am an educator at Magabheni J.P. School I am a second year MEd student at the University of Zululand. My limited dissertation topic is 'An Evaluation of Parent Involvement in School Governance of Primary Schools.'

It would be greatly appreciated if my request is taken into consideration. On completion of my project I will share, at your invitation, a summary of the findings.

Thank you for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours faithfully

Msani Z. R
TO: Principals of Schools
UMBUMBULU CIRCUIT

The above-named educator has approached this office for assistance to conduct a research that will benefit not only our schools but also the entire education system. Kindly assist her with the necessary information that will assist in achieving the desired goal.

Note, however, that time accorded to her should take into account the instructional time.

Your assistance in this regard will be much appreciated.

CIRCUIT MANAGER