

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN FACILITATING
THE EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING
BODY IN PROMOTING QUALITY EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

BY

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:


- My late parents, for the sacrifices they made to educate all fourteen of us with the little school education they received and the limited resources they had.
- My brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces and all family members who have passed away.

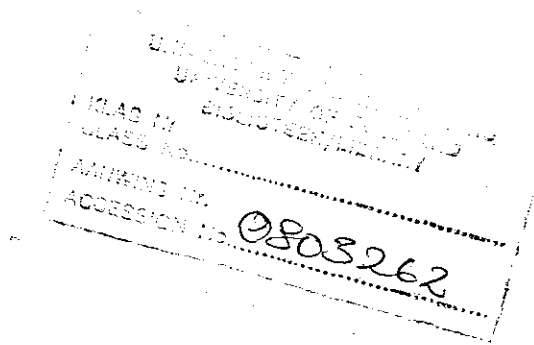
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that:

“An investigation into the principal’s role in facilitating the effective participation of the School Governing Body in the provision of quality education in public schools”

represents my own work and that all sources that are used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.


F.L. HAINES
JUNE 2007



ABSTRACT

The South Africa Schools Act, (Act No. 84 of 1996) which came into effect on 1 January 1996 and the National Education Policy Act, (Act No. 21 of 1996) introduced a new approach to the South African Education system. These acts, and many policy documents produced by the National Department of Education, provide for the active participation of parents, educators, learners and other members of the community in the governance of schools. Whilst policy mandates stakeholder participation, in practice parent participation is problematic.

This study therefore, investigates the role of the principal in facilitating the effective participation of the parent component of the SGB in the provision of quality education in public schools.

A review of national and international literature was conducted to establish strategies principals use to facilitate the effective participation of the SGB. An empirical study was also undertaken. A questionnaire with closed-ended and open-ended questions was utilized with the aim of accessing the level of interaction between the SGB and principals of schools.

Data from the questionnaire revealed the following key findings, namely:

- There is a lack of effective management of parent involvement in school governance.
- Limited communication exists between the principal and SGB regarding planned school activities where the SGB is supposed to have an input.
- As leaders, principals are grappling to secure effective parent participation in the provision of quality education.

Some recommendations are as follows:

- Principals should develop orientation and on-going training programmes to capacitate parents to participate effectively in promoting quality public education
- Principals should develop an invitational environment at the school
- Principals should promote a climate for sound conflict management
- Principals should provide sufficient information to SGB members and communicate these timeously to them

It is hoped that through this study, principals will be inspired to identify their limitations relative to the facilitation of parent participation and subsequently adopt one or more of the recommendations offered to armour themselves with strategies to facilitate the effective participation of parents in the provision of quality education for all learners.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY

ANC	African National Congress
CRSA	The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
HOD	Head of Department
NATU	National Teacher's Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
QPE	Quality Public Education
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SAPS	South African Police Services
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
WPEA	White Paper on Education and Training

<u>LIST OF TABLES</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
TABLE 4.1	Frequency distribution according to gender	60
TABLE 4.2	Frequency distribution according to location of schools	61
TABLE 4.3	Frequency distribution according to previous education departments	61
TABLE 4.4	Frequency distribution according to number of parents on the SGB	63
TABLE 4.5	Frequency distribution according to number of co-opted parents on the SGB	63
TABLE 4.6	Frequency distribution according to the number of times the SGB meets per a year	63
TABLE 4.7	Frequency distribution of sub-committees	64
TABLE 4.8	Frequency distribution according to the role of principals in managing SGB participation	65
TABLE 4.9	Frequency distribution with regard to the role of principals in ensuring effective communication with the SGB	70
TABLE 4.10	Frequency distribution of items according to the principals leadership role in facilitating SGB participation	75
TABLE 4.11 (a)	Frequency distribution of constraining factors	80

LIST OF FIGURES**PAGE**

Figure 1	The role of principals in managing SGB participation in promoting quality education	65
Figure 2	The role of the principal in communication to facilitate effective SGB participation	70
Figure 3	The principals leadership role in facilitating SGB participation	75

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter to KwaZulu Natal Department of Education
for permission to conduct research

Appendix 2: Approval to conduct a research from KwaZulu
Natal Department of Education

Appendix 3: A letter to Circuit Manager for permission to
conduct a research

Appendix 4: Approval to conduct a research from Circuit
Manager

Appendix 5: The Questionnaire

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

PAGE

1	ORIENTATION	
1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	BACK GROUND OF THE STUDY	2
1.3	STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	5
1.4	DEFINITIONS OF OPERATIONAL TERMS	6
1.4.1	Effective Participation	6
1.4.2	Facilitation	6
1.4.3	School Governing Body (SGB)	7
1.4.4	Quality Education	7
1.4.5	Public Schools	9
1.5	AIM OF THE STUDY	9
1.6	ASSUMPTION	9
1.7	RESEARCH QUESTION	10
1.8	METHOD OF INVESTIGATION	10
1.9	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	10
1.10	PARAMETERS OF STUDY	11
1.11	LIMITATIONS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY	11
1.12	STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY	12
1.13	CONCLUSION	12

CHAPTER 2

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN FACILITATING EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS

2.1	INTRODUCTION	13
2.2	MANAGING PARENT PARTICIPATION	14
2.2.1	The legislation that mandates parent participation in school governance In South Africa	15

2.2.1.1	The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996)	15
2.2.1.2	The South African Schools (Act No. 86 of 1996)	16
2.2.2	The management of parent orientation	16
2.2.3	The management of parent training	18
2.2.4	Managing change	20
2.2.4.1	Adapting to changing circumstance	20
2.2.4.2	Accommodating parents as partners in education	21
2.2.4.3	Promotion of sound human relations	21
2.2.5	Managing of parents in role functions	22
2.2.5.1	Dissemination of information	23
2.2.5.2	The formation of sub-committees	23
2.2.5.3	Delegation	24
2.2.5.4	Teamwork	25
2.2.5.5	Managing conflict	26
2.2.6	Managing unity among the SGB	27
2.3	COMMUNICATION	28
2.3.1	The importance of effective communication	29
2.3.2	Guidelines for effective communication	29
2.3.3	Practical communication strategies to facilitate parent participation	30
2.3.3.1	Direct communication	31
2.3.3.2	Requirements for good communication	34
2.4	LEADING PARENT PARTICIPATION	35
2.4.1	Selecting an appropriate leadership style facilitative of parent participation	37
2.4.2	Situational leadership	38
2.4.3	Behaviour leadership	39
2.4.4	Leadership traits	39
2.4.4.1	Motivation Traits	40
2.4.4.2	Skills Traits	40
2.4.4.3	Personality traits	40
2.5	CONSTRAINING FACTORS THAT HAMPER SGB PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION	42
2.5.1	The SGB has limited skills and knowledge	43
2.5.2	Reluctant to implement change	43
2.5.3	Lack of full parental participation	44

2.5.4	Serving on the SGB for differing reasons	44
2.6	CONCLUSION	45

CHAPTER 3

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

3.1	INTRODUCTION	46
3.2	RESEARCH PLAN	46
3.2.1	Preparation	46
3.2.2	Permission	46
3.2.3	Selection of respondents	47
3.2.3.1	Population and sampling consideration	47
3.2.3.2	Sampling method	47
3.3	THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT	49
3.3.1	The questionnaire	49
3.3.2	Advantages and disadvantages of written questionnaire	50
3.3.3	Construction of the questionnaire	51
3.4	VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE	53
3.4.1	Validity	53
3.4.2	Reliability	54
3.5	Administration of the questionnaire	55
3.5.1	PILOT STUDY	55
3.6	ACTUAL STUDY	56
3.7	PROCESSING OF DATA	57
3.7.1	Descriptive statistical analysis	57
3.8	LIMITATIONS OF EMPIRICAL STUDY	58
3.9	ETHICAL CONSIDERATION	58
3.10	CONCLUSION	59

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1	INTRODUCTION	60
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4.2	PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA	60
4.2.1	Demographic Information	60
4.2.2	Management	65
4.2.3	Communication	70
4.2.4	Leadership	75
4.2.5	Constraining factors	80
4.2.6	Other responses	83
4.3	CONCLUSION	84

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1	INTRODUCTION	86
5.2	SUMMARY OF STUDY	86
5.3	FINDINGS	88
5.3.1	Orientation and training programs for SGB	88
5.3.1.1	The SGB lacks knowledge and skills	88
5.3.1.2	The SGB lacks experience and confidence	89
5.3.2	Invitational environment	89
5.3.2.1	An unwelcoming environment exists at schools	89
5.3.2.2	Schools do not disclose policies and information to the SGB	89
5.3.3	Effective and efficient communication	90
5.3.3.1	Communication involving the SGB is insufficient	90
5.3.3.2	Communication with the SGB is insignificant	90
5.3.4	Promote climate for conflict resolution	91
5.3.4.1	Conflicts are suppressed	91
5.3.4.2	Discretion is problematic	92
5.4	RECOMMENDATIONS	93
5.4.1	The SGB should be trained	93
5.4.2	Opportunities should be created to actively involve the SGB	94
5.4.3	A welcoming environment should be created	94
5.4.4	Policies and vital information should be disclosed	95
5.4.5	Communication should be sufficient	96

5.4.6	Communication should be valuable and significant	96
5.4.7	Conflict should be amicably resolved	97
5.4.8	Discretion should be observed	97
5.5	FURTHER RESEARCH	98
5.6	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	99
5.7	FINAL REMARK	99
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	101

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study examines the role of the principal in facilitating effective parent participation in school governance for the purpose of promoting quality education for learners. The principal and the school governors need to establish a positive working relationship if they are to effect meaningful change mandated by policies such as the South African School Act (No. 84 of 1996), and the National Education Policy Act (No. 27 of 1996). These documents provide school leaders (principals and governors) with an increased sense of autonomy, accountability and ownership, and strive to wean them off dependency on the state.

The principal's meaningful support and guidance of school governors will also greatly enhance the achievement of effective school governance. It is, ultimately, the responsibility of the school principal to ensure that the school delivers on its mission, vision, curriculum goals and action plans. The success of the school depends on its leadership's ability to create a supportive environment where parents are acknowledged as crucial components of school governance.

According to Gabela (1983: 142), parents are also able to enhance the quality of education services – depending on their areas of expertise. The principal and governors need to develop a symbiotic relationship, as their mutual interdependence is critical for the advancement of sound education service and delivery. The achievement of a school's effectiveness requires co-operation between the principal and SGB, at all levels of management and governance.

Dekker and Lemmer (1998: 157) state that educators cannot perform their educational tasks without full partnership with the parents. Educators and parents are responsible for the same child, which means that they accept responsibility for the child, as partners. Effective schools that seem to perform well have a history of effective parent involvement in school activities (Prinsloo 1996: 274).

Prinsloo (1996: 274) believes that a good parent-teacher relationship ensures successful discharge of duties by the school. A school that has the support and co-operation of the learner's parents and produces bad results will lose the support of those who have the school's interests at heart. Thus, parents and teachers must work as co-partners to effect quality public education.

In this study, an investigation is conducted on the role of principals in facilitating effective participation of school governors in promoting quality education in public schools.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Prior to 1994, education was based on separate schooling systems in South Africa. According to Govender, Mnyaka and Pillay (1999: 180), quality education was reserved for the White minority. The remaining racial groups, namely Blacks, Coloureds and Indians in South Africa, were subjected to poor quality education, which caused a great socio-educational gap, especially between Blacks and Whites, with Whites becoming the dominant group.

Govender et al (1999: 180) affirm that the changes initiated by Verwoerd, (who succeeded Strydom as Prime Minister of South Africa), namely separate education for Blacks, Coloureds, Indians and Whites, were based on the following statement made by him in 1953:

“When I have control over native education, I will reform it so that natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them.”

The education policies were clearly designed to keep Blacks subservient and to ensure a supply of non-competitive and cheap labour in a capitalistic economy. Education was thus a fundamental pillar of the policy of apartheid (Govender et al. 1999: 180 - 183). The Bantu Education Act (No. 47 of 1953) separated the learner from his parents (Coutts 1992: 2). This prevented the parent from having an input in the learner's educational development. The exclusion of parents from their children's educational life greatly affected the learners, and many were subjected to emotional stress. The separated education system also led to the passing of the Coloured Person's Act (No. 47 of 1963) and the Indian Education Act (No. 61 of 1965) (Coutts, 1992: 4). These divisive Acts gave birth to different education departments, namely the House of Delegates (for Indians); the House of Representatives (for Coloureds); two National Education Departments (for Blacks); the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Education and Culture. Schools for Black learners were poorly built, under-resourced and predominantly confined to rural areas.

The above-mentioned Acts were intended to ensure that the policy of divide and rule would prevail. Separate Black School Committees and School Boards were established in Black communities (Govender et al. 1999: 181). The committees had no clearly defined function. Instead they were regarded as watchdogs for the respective departments of education and were subjected to rules and norms prescribed by a centralized system of management and governance.

According to Christie (1991: 55), White education was free and compulsory, and the system was expanding. Black education was neglected. Discrepancies and inequalities in education caused learners to question and reject certain policies imposed by the then government. The discrimination in the quality of education provided by the State left many students disgruntled. This resulted in students taking to the streets to vent their disagreement when the education authorities insisted that

Arithmetic and Social Studies be taught in Afrikaans (Govender 1999: 209). They were met with strong resistance from the police during a procession to Orlando Stadium. The police resorted to shooting and killing learners who had come out to vent their frustration. This action resulted in the 16 June 1976 uprising. The revolt sparked a rolling mass action that included class boycotts and the burning of so-called Bantu administration offices, post offices, buses etc. It is evident from the abovementioned facts that schools were used as a political vehicle for the perpetuation of apartheid in South Africa. Democracy, with regard to stakeholder participation in decision-making on education policies, was non-existent.

The turning point for transformation occurred on 2 February 1990, when the then State President, F.W de Klerk, un-banned several political organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC) (Govender 1999: 182). This unbanning paved the way to the 1994 democratic elections that brought the ANC into power. The new ruling party was guided by the Freedom Charter, which led to the drafting and adoption of the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). The Act made it a prerequisite for every public school to establish a governing body to be known as the School Governing Body (SGB). The main job of the governing body is to help the school principal develop policies and practices to promote quality public education (QPE). The South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996: 31) declares that a governing body stands in a position of trust towards the school. The state, school managers, learners and educators are, however, also expected to perform in such a way that education in South Africa is improved.

SASA calls for the active participation of all stakeholders, including the principal, parents, learners, the community, educators and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the educative process. In this study however, particular attention will be given to the principal's role in facilitating effective participation of parents in the SGB.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Transformational documents, such as the White Papers 1 and 2 on Education and Training (1995 - 1996), the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996); and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (No. 108 of 1996), give authority to parents to play a central role in the governance of schools. However, it appears that the SGB does not have adequate information or the appropriate skills to be effective role players in schools.

The researcher agrees with Dekker and Lemmer (1998: 155) who contend that many parents are insufficiently involved in the education of the learners. This is evident in many South African schools. According to Prinsloo (1996: 169), parents send their children to school and provide for their basic needs, such as clothes and food. They are often unaware of the quality of education provided to the children, and by whom. The only means of communication is a quarterly or an annual report sent to parents. It becomes essential for parents to know how the school functions.

A lack of parental involvement in school governance is precipitated by multiple factors relative to changes in social structures. In many areas, a great responsibility is placed on ageing or aged grandparents who are forced by circumstance to take care of grandchildren but are unable to get involved in school affairs due to ill health or frailty. Examples of such changes are: migratory labour; family and community instability; family distress; the increasing divorce rate; industrialisation; urbanisation and the increasing number of unmarried mothers. As a result, teachers experience frustration, stress, discouragement and conflict over what they view as abdication of responsibility by parents (Prinsloo 1996: 246).

Another issue confronted by schools, is that parents are not remunerated for the services they perform for the school. In fact, some parents in rural areas occasionally have to use their own money to transport themselves to and from school functions and meetings. This situation does not encourage active parent participation; instead, it de-

motivates other prospective parent governors from participating actively in school governance.

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

1.4.1 Effective Participation

Fowler and Fowler (1990: 374 & 867) describe the word “effective” as having the desired or definite effects or results and “participation” as “taking part or sharing.” Van Deventer (2000: 20) explains that through participation, you could seek to develop and maintain sound communication and good public relations with the community and more especially the parents. This will assist in identifying their needs and expectations for the school.

According to Dekker and Lemmer (1998: 912), the possibility of effectiveness in education lies firstly in the organisation thereof by structures such as governing bodies, which can be conducted through meaningful interaction and communication at all levels with other partners in the teaching sector.

In this study, effective participation means the roles played by the SGB, both elected and co-opted, in ensuring that desired and meaningful education takes place at the schools where they serve as school governing body members.

1.4.2 Facilitation

According to Van der Westhuizen (1991: 247), the concept “facilitator” is synonymous with the words supporter and mediator. Facilitation is the action the principal will take to empower the parent component of the SGB to provide meaningful support to the school. In this study, “facilitator” will refer to the principal as the motivational agent who encourages, inspires and creates opportunities for the SGB to participate actively in the educative process as stipulated by SASA.

1.4.3 School Governing Body (SGB)

The School Governing Body includes the principal (who is an ex-officio member by virtue of being the principal of the school), biological parents, legal guardians (or co-opted parents), educators, learners from grade 8 to 12, workers at the school (who are non teaching staff), as well as other members of the school community who may be co-opted for their expertise.

The White Paper on Education and Training (WPET) (No. 196 of 1995) stipulates that the School Governing Body must be representative of the main stakeholders in the school, as parents have the most at stake in the education of their children. This should be reflected as practically as possible. The governing body must make sure that the school is run in the best interests of all the stakeholders. It stands in a position of trust towards the school. Members must always put the best interest of the school before any personal benefits.

WPET (No. 196 of 1995) also directs that in the primary schools, the main stakeholders (for purpose of governance) comprise the parents and teachers. The reasoning is that, at this stage, the learners are still too young to make informed decisions. At secondary schools, pupils are included as members of the school governing body.

In this study, the concept “school governing body” will refer specifically to the parent component, which means parents democratically elected to be members of the SGB.

1.4.3 Quality Education

According to Fowler and Fowler (1990: 373&977), the definition of the word “quality” and “education” is as follows:

- Quality: a degree of excellence (Fowler, 1990: 977).
- Education: Among many definitions, the researcher regarded the following definition by Fowler and Fowler (1990: 373) relevant to this study: “A systematic instruction aimed at development of character or mental powers.”

“Quality education” will therefore mean the imparting of quality information with a degree of excellence, ensuring that the recipient is able to comprehend what is being disseminated and that he/she can apply it in everyday life when the need arises. Quality education involves improvement of intellectual potential and the establishment of effective resource capacity through effective teaching and learning.

Gunter (1979: 182) contends that while teaching is more specifically concerned with the development of the intellect, on the one hand, education, on the other hand, is aimed at the development of the whole child, or the child in his totality, with the child as an indivisible spiritual, physical unity in his total existential situation.

The National and Provincial Departments of Education, through the Quality Promotion and Development Unit, is responsible for providing strategic leadership for the development of policies and programmes in order to ensure access to quality education for all learners in the system. Quality Education may be achieved over a period of time by replacing the apartheid curriculum with a new curriculum aimed at meeting the needs of a democratic South Africa and establishing democratic governance in schools. Through establishing a system to promote life-long learning and rendering professional support, some development could be achieved towards providing a better education. Quality education aims at more than just knowledge, skill and independent thought. It is especially concerned with the positive formation of a moral character and the development of the entire personality of the emerging adult (Gunter, 1979: 182).

In this study “quality education” refers to a high standard of education and excellence in the teaching and learning process.

1.4.5 Public school

A public school may be an ordinary public school or a public school for learners with special needs (SASA 1996: 29). In this study “public schools” will refer to schools which are government owned or schools under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education of South Africa, which enroll learners from grade R to grade twelve.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aims of this study are formulated as follows:

- To conduct a study of relevant national and international literature on the *principal’s role in facilitating effective participation of the SGB in promoting quality education for learners in public schools;*
- To conduct an empirical investigation on the role of principals in *facilitating effective participation by the SGB in promoting quality education for learners;*
- *In the light of the findings obtained from the literature and empirical studies, recommendations will be formulated.*

1.6 ASSUMPTION

Sound leadership, effective communication and efficient management by the principal will encourage and motivate the SGB to participate effectively in producing quality education.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In carrying out the research, the researcher will strive to answer some fundamental questions relative to this study, namely:

- What strategies can principals adopt to ensure effective participation of the SGB in promoting quality education?
- Are principals effective in facilitating meaningful participation of the SGB in promoting quality education in public schools?

1.8 METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Research with regard to this study is conducted by way of: -

- A literature study of available, relevant literature relative to the role of principals in facilitating effective participation of the SGB in promoting quality education in a public school;
- An empirical survey comprised of structured questionnaires. The questionnaires consist of closed and open-ended questions that were completed by principals selected randomly.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is aimed at highlighting the strategies that a principal can adopt in order to ensure that school governors participate effectively and meaningfully in education. Recommendations are offered on the different activities that a principal could employ in an effort to engage the SGB in promoting quality education. It is hoped that, through this study, the principal who has not yet realised the importance of the role that the SGB can play in facilitating and promoting quality education, will be inspired

to acknowledge the important educational role that parents can play and that he/she will employ their services meaningfully in the context of the school. Likewise, it is hoped that parents who have not yet seen the need to get involved in school matters will experience a change of heart and become more involved in the governance of their schools.

1.10 PARAMETERS OF THE STUDY

Although SASA mandates the participation of all stakeholders in the education of their learners, this study concentrates on the participation of the parent component in school governance so as to establish whether an effective working relationship exists between the principal and the parents.

1.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The main limitation of this study is that the schools that form part of the sample are widely scattered. The researcher therefore had to travel long distances to reach schools, as postal services in this area are unreliable. The roads to some of the schools are dirt roads with no gravel and it is very difficult to reach these schools on rainy days. In instances where schools were inaccessible, the researcher had to ask learners to deliver the questionnaires by hand.

Some of the principals chosen as respondents did not seem comfortable with the exercise, in spite of being provided with proof of permission to conduct the study. They also appeared not to trust the assurance that all responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality. Many of the respondents seemed to have responded in a way that would give a good impression of themselves as managers rather than give an honest report on what they are experiencing in the schools.

1.12 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

Chapter one provides a brief orientation of the study.

Chapter two is a literature review on strategies that principals can apply in facilitating effective participation of parents in the school governing body, in an effort to provide quality education for the learners.

Chapter three discusses the research methodology adopted to undertake the empirical investigation.

Chapter four provides a presentation, analysis and the interpretation of data collected.

Chapter five presents the main findings of the investigation and offers a research report and recommendations.

1.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an introduction that outlines existing problems at schools regarding the role of principals in facilitating the effective participation of the SGB in the provision of quality education.

Some concepts, which are of significance to this study, have been defined in this chapter and it has also provided the research questions as well as the aims of the study. Limitations and the parameters of the study are also provided in this chapter, while the structure was devised so as to reveal to the reader what to expect in forthcoming chapters.

CHAPTER 2

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN FACILITATING EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF THE SGB TO PROMOTE QUALITY EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It must be emphatically stated, at the outset of this chapter, that the principal per se does not play an exclusively dominant and/or leading role within the governance structure of a school as he is by virtue of SASA (1996) an ex-officio member of this structure. A parent member is to hold the executive position of chairperson and therefore has mandatory leadership powers to govern the school (SASA 1996: 16).

The principal, however, by virtue of his occupational position, has the professional obligation to encourage and motivate parents to take an active part to govern the quality of education in schools. In this sense, he should not only be an effective manager and good communicator, but should also play a leading role in terms of taking decisive action to promote parent participation.

In this chapter, a review of literature is provided with regard to the role that principals can play in facilitating the participation of parents in governing schools effectively. An in-depth study of multiple literary works reveal that, in order for school principals to facilitate effective participation of school governors, three basic role functions are imperative, namely:

- The role of *managing* participation;
- The role of *communicating* effectively to secure participation;
- The role of *leading* the participation process.

It is acknowledged that there are multiple roles that a principal has to play in order to facilitate parent participation. This chapter will, however, focus on the three role functions mentioned above, namely leadership, communication and the management of

parent participation. The rationale for selecting these specific role functions is multifaceted and will be explained below.

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997: 157) assert that management is one of the important role functions of a principal because it ensures that things are operating smoothly, that structures such as the SGB are in place to support forward movement, and that the school is operating efficiently with all role players. Glichman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (1998: 47) place emphasis on the importance of communication for effective stakeholder participation. They state that formal channels of communication (upwards, downwards and horizontally or laterally) have to be created so as to ensure that information reaches the people concerned without delay in order to ensure that they are kept informed of developments taking place. Schaleman (1987: 67) affirms that sound leadership is the cornerstone in harnessing parent participation. She believes that successful leaders are those who are capable of getting the SGB to work together effectively. She also contends that by assisting the SGB in developing their skills and abilities as optimally as possible, these leaders will afford the SGB as much work satisfaction as possible and guide them towards making their needs, interests and ambitions to coincide with those of the school. Due to their relatively new role functions and their lack of experience and knowledge of policies, parents adopt a passive stance towards school governance. These and a number of other factors serve to impede principals of schools in facilitating effective participation of governors. Some of the other constraints will also be alluded to in this discussion.

2.2 MANAGING PARENT PARTICIPATION

Since parent participation has become an indispensable part of the school organisation, it becomes the responsibility of the principal, as accounting officer, to manage parent participation effectively. In striving to ensure that the school functions optimally, the principal has to, amongst others, create a harmonious, non-threatening environment where parents can participate effectively.

SASA delegates powers to principals to manage the process of parent participation (DEC 1996: 70). The Act also states that the governing body must help and support the principal, educators and others in the performance of their professional functions. It is

evident from the above that interdependency between the principal and the SGB is central to the promotion of quality education. The principal, therefore, has the responsibility to ensure that activities involving the SGB are managed efficiently.

Parent participation in schools is governed by national policies such as The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (CRSA) (1996) and South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996). These policies mandate the role that governors have to play in the educative process. The principal, as manager, should be familiar with the policies governing parent participation if he is to manage the execution of these policies effectively.

2.2.1 The legislation that mandates parent participation in school governance in South Africa

As stated above, two national policies namely, The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (No. 108 of 1996) and the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) will be discussed. These policies have been specifically chosen for discussion because the National Constitution deals in general terms and stresses democracy based on fundamental human rights, while The South African Schools Act is specific and deals directly with education in South Africa.

2.2.1.1 *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (No. 108 of 1996)*

The management of school governance is guided by democratic values and principles espoused in The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (CRSA). The main values, in terms of the constitution, are:

- human dignity
- the achievement of equality
- and the advancement of human rights and freedom (South Africa 1996: 7)

2.2.1.2 The South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996)

The supreme law governing education in the country is the South African Schools Act (No. 86 of 1996). The Act directs that every public school should be governed by a governing body that is representative of all the stakeholders. SASA gives meaningful functions to the SGB. Their functions may also be increased in accordance with governing body's expertise, ability and experience, with due permission from the Head of Department (DEC 1996: 34).

An important principle of SASA is that there must be a working partnership between the principal and parent governors. Potgieter, Visser, van der Bank and Squelch (1997: 21) state that parents have a fundamental role to play in the education of their children. Parents are often in the best position to see what the school really needs and what problems there are in the school. SASA stipulates that the SGB is responsible for governing schools. This does not mean that the governing body must run the school on a day-to-day basis, but that the SGB should contribute to policies regarding school hours, language policy, religious policy, dress code, learners' code of conduct and the school goals. The SGB also takes care of the school's development by looking after the school's buildings, grounds and other property and decides when others may use this property. The SGB furthermore participates in the appointment of staff members, decides on annual general meetings of parents and report to the school community (Harvorsen, De Lange and Motchumi 1997: 7).

It is evident from the discussion above that the role of parents as school governors is firmly embedded in the South African Schools Act. Principals therefore have a key role to play in managing the participation of the SGB. This researcher believes that in order for parents to function according to their abilities, interests and potentialities, it becomes necessary to engage them in relevant workshops and in well-planned orientation programmes.

2.2.2 The management of parent orientation

Parent orientation means preparing the SGB for the execution of their tasks as partners in the education of their children. The process must aim at developing a spirit of co-

operation and the sharing of skills and information among parents and teachers (Dekker and Lemmer 1998: 156). Through parent orientation, attempts are made to create a relationship where the parent community and the school can work collaboratively.

Before an orientation programme can be implemented to capacitate school governors, it becomes necessary for the principal to formally introduce governors to the staff and to the learner population of the school. According to Harvorsen et al. (1997: 50), governing bodies need to know:

- about each other;
- about the school;
- about previous governing bodies;
- about laws to do with school governance.

Harvorsen et al. (1997: 50) advise that a good start to a term of office could be achieved by:

- an informal meeting where new members can meet each other;
- a social event where governors and staff can interact informally;
- asking each member to say something about himself at the first meeting;
- arranging nameplates, or labels, for each member;
- distributing or circularising members' names and addresses of school governors to the general parent component.'

Harvorsen et al. (1997: 50) believe that it is a good idea to arrange a visit or a tour of the school with the principal. Such a tour or visit should form part of the orientation process. Harvorsen (1997: 50) suggests that visits would be better if the SG do not simply look, but also talk with educators, non-educators and learners in order to try to get to know as much about the school as possible. One of the first jobs of the newly elected SGB is to discuss and to come to an agreement with the principal about how visits should take place.

Dekker and Lemmer (1993: 174) are of the opinion that parent orientation will succeed if attention is paid to the form it takes. Orientation should strive to accommodate all parents elected onto the SGB. Some parents will be comfortable with a simple programme, while others will welcome more active participation.

Arguably, some of the greatest uncertainties among governors relate to their roles. Role clarity should form part of the orientation process. The following are three key areas that the SGB must be clear about and which are cited by Smit and Cronje (1999: 248), namely:

- **Accountability:** the school governing body is expected to perform its duty to the best of its ability and to be accountable for monitoring education services and delivery;
- **Advice:** as a team, they have the liberty to discuss pertinent issues with the principal and to accept and give advice;
- **Support:** since the success of the educative process is based on support, the key words throughout this process is partnership; the parents should be informed about their role in the partnership process. The principal and parents should stand together and be there for each other.

2.2.3 The management of parent training

Parent training involves “skilling” the SGB in terms of regulations and legislation concerning school governance. Although governors undergo orientation shortly after their election, training is an ongoing activity that will take place during their term of office. The principal should therefore arrange for meetings with parents to familiarise them with their roles, provide them with a simple account of working-together rules and with an equally simple guide on how the school works as an organisation. Dekker and Lemmer (1993: 169) advise principals to use the following methods as part of their training programme:

- organising guidance of parents through workshops;

- formal lectures, informal discussions or talks on matters relating to the laws of school governance, in particular the laws governing finance;
- discussion on matters relating to the schools' mission and vision;
- procedures relating to the employment of educators and non-educators;
- constructive, practical discussion evenings and educational excursions may be arranged ;
- parents should also be prepared for group meetings and conferences;
- allow parents to make requests.

Harvorsen et al. (1997: 58) suggest that members of the SGB should use existing documents that the school has accumulated on governance, such as governing body minutes, annual reports and policy statements, to establish the level at which the school is functioning. The principal should ensure that documents relating to school governance are filed for regular use, especially by the SGB.

Dekker and Lemmer (1998: 172) are of the opinion that school governance demands that the SGB be kept abreast of new developments in education. It therefore becomes incumbent on the principal to inform parent governors of developments in school governance. The principal should encourage the SGB to attend departmental workshops on school governance as well as workshops arranged by the school where *the contents of relevant legislation and regulation are brought to their attention through formal training sessions*. Dekker and Lemmer (1998: 170) further contend that responsible education and teaching require that the parent becomes full partners who will be able to accept co-responsibility.

The SGB must be trained to feel able to raise a concern openly with the principal without fear that he will take it as a criticism. The principal should also feel free to be able to share a concern or failure with them without fear that they will automatically regard it as a sign of incompetence. If the school is to be improved, the school needs *parents who provide concrete criticism, make sensible judgements and who do not view changes in the education system as a threat*. It is usually to the detriment of any organisation to discuss issues that are not meant for the public, in public. The SGB must resolve privately any differences they may have.

In order for schools to cope with the new demands placed on the education system, principals and the SGB have to realise that change is inevitable. Through effective training sessions, the SGB should be informed about changes that are to be implemented, but principals need to manage changes (relative to governors, etc.) effectively.

2.2.4 Managing change

Ngubane (2000: 36) advocates that principals, as leaders, have to play a strategic role in not only managing, but also initiating change. The principal is required to make necessary changes so that new methods of education are introduced gradually. Chetty (2003: 119) believes that when change is introduced, the organisation moves to another level. The movement to the new level should take place in such a manner that all stakeholders are part of the process of development. It is during this period of change that principals have to ensure that the transition takes place smoothly. Change must always be aimed at improvement and take place under controlled conditions as it can do more harm than good if it takes place haphazardly.

2.2.4.1 Adapting to changing circumstances

According to Chetty (2003: 119), the principal should be prepared to think critically about matters such as culture and tradition, and about other related subjects such as cultural transmission, equal opportunity, equality and equal rights. For schools to meet the needs of the community, the school has to adapt to changing circumstances. However, the complexity of introducing change may lead to conflict, resistance, aggression, opposition, suspicion and the like. Chetty (2003: 119) believes that once principals understand the modus operandi of change, and explain this to those required to implement it, together they will be able to sufficiently empower themselves with the ability to defuse conflict situations in a manner which is acceptable and amicable. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991: xii – xiii) affirm that change is part of daily realities and hence, that managers resisting the inevitable are likely to become less effective.

2.2.4.2 Accommodating parents as partners in education

The new governance paradigm introduced by SASA provided the SGB with diverse powers in school governance. From the researchers' experience, this "sudden change" met with the resistance of many educators, who viewed the new responsibilities given to the SGB as an attempt to "police" them. Parents, in the past, have been regarded as participants who were initially not welcomed by the teachers and some principals. However, with the passage of time, much development has taken place regarding a co-operative working relationship between parents and the school.

To be successful in accommodating parents as partners in the educative process, the principal has to establish an environment at the school where parents feel welcome. Grobler and Schalekamp (1996: 12) furthermore believe that people perform better and work more willingly at something if they are welcomed and given a say than, when they are merely ordered to do something. In accommodating parents as partners, Grobler and Schalekamp (ibid) advise that principals should have an open door policy with an invitational approach. Such a policy will motivate parents to come to school, take part in school activities and enquire about learners' progress. An open door policy that stands as an open invitation to parents promotes cordial human relations between educators and parents. The principal has a central role to play in fostering harmony between the SGB and educators so that parent participation does not only exist in policy documents, but becomes a reality in practice.

2.2.4.3 Promoting sound human relations

It is important for principals to be mindful of the fact that organisations, such as schools, are first and foremost social systems. Without people, there would be no organisation. Gray (1983: 103) is of the opinion that the key attribute to an effective principal is the effectiveness of his human relations. A school principal's capacity to work with and through others is of paramount importance in promoting effective school governance.

According to Neale, Bailey and Ross (1981: 14), in order to inspire and recruit support for improvement and development in a school, a humanistic attitude should be adopted.

Principals have to develop people skills. Sterling and Davidoff (2000: 69) maintain that good leadership means learning to work effectively with people. The parent component of the SGB is its most important resource. Parents have skills and talents that principals could draw on to make the school a creative and dynamic centre of learning.

Parents may offer their skills and talents voluntarily if they enjoy a sound relationship with the principal.

2.2.5 Management of parents in role functions

Role functions are those functions parents are expected to perform as laid down in South African National Constitution (1996: 32). It is therefore, vital that a collaborative working relationship be established between the principal and the SGB. The elimination and eradication of school problems will not be tackled in a sustainable way unless the SGB becomes part of the problem solving team at schools and begin to think of themselves as responsible for the building and maintenance of both the physical and learning environment of the school (Chetty 2003: 343).

Schools are therefore challenged to assess whether maximum use is being made of parents in decision making about school improvement and, if not, develop strategies to recruit their services in this regard. Bayne-Jardine and Holly (1994: 80) maintain that, *although the policy-making role of governors is legally paramount, they have an important role in consultation because they represent the diversity of interests in the immediate environment.*

The principal is to engage the SGB in the analysis of both the curricula and non-curricula programmes. According to Chetty (2003: 94), it is important to investigate *whether there is a collective intention to develop the whole child in terms of values, skills, knowledge and attitudes.* The orientation and training of parents to play their rightful role is necessary, but it is not sufficient to ensure that parents perform their roles effectively. Potgieter et al. (1997: 7) believe that *as the SGB gains the necessary experience and expertise and grow in confidence and ability, the desired transformation in education may be achieved.* Other role functions that will supplement parent

orientation and training include the dissemination of information that is relevant for school governance, the formation of sub-committees, delegation, the implementation of teamwork, managing conflict and managing synergy.

2.2.5.1 Dissemination of information

According to Ngubane (2000: 74), dissemination of information is the process whereby information is passed on to those people for whom it is intended. The developments in education are usually circulated on a regular basis to principals of schools via circulars, periodicals, manuals, etc. Principals are advised therefore to make these documents available to members of the SGB as resource materials as a means of keeping them informed on regulations and legislation on school governance. Where it is necessary, these documents should be translated into the language understood by the members of the SGB.

2.2.5.2 The formation of sub-committees

According to Harvorson et al. (1997: 22), a good SGB uses the different talents of the members and works together as a team. Harvorson (ibid) goes on to say that, as members of the SGB, parents should participate in the work of the SGB, for example, by forming committees and working in groups. A committee may also deal with staffing, sport, finances, fund-raising or the hiring out of premises. Committees report back to the full SGB, which should consider their minutes and accept them formally. It must be noted that these committees have no authority to make binding decisions. They can only make recommendations to the SGB. Official decisions can only be taken by the full SGB complement at an official meeting. Harvorsen (ibid) offers the following advice with regard to sub-committees:

- the committee must be chaired by a member of the SGB;
- the appointed or co-opted person may not have voting rights;
- the SGB of a public school with special educational needs should establish a committee on special education needs;

- appointing outside people as co-opted members (if they have the expertise) is encouraged.

The number of sub-committees established by an SGB should be determined by the school's needs. However, it would be unwise to have too many sub-committees that would be difficult to manage. Once sub-committees have been put in place, they have to be delegated responsibilities according to their expertise.

2.2.5.3 Delegation

Delegation is a useful management strategy that may be used by the principals to support parents to engage actively in their role functions. Delegation does not merely exist for the purpose of getting work done or for principals to pass their responsibilities to parents. It is the prime process by which the leader exercises and develops his staff (parents) to the sensible limits of individual capability and potential (Goodworth 1986: 50).

Van Deventer (2000: 50) believes that delegation involves trusting others to perform tasks effectively so that the objectives of the school can be realised. He offers the following advice:

- choose the correct person – thereafter ensure sufficient information, resources, understanding and acceptance;
- decide on applicable authority and responsibility, and on expected standards and feedback mechanisms;
- decide on the objectives to be realised and then make a decision on the work to be done in order to achieve them;
- now decide whether the selected task(s) can be delegated;
- establish time frames and budget limits.

Van Deventer (2000: 54) cautions that responsibility is delegated, but accountability remains the responsibility of the principal. Education managers are not only accountable for their own performance, but also for the performance of the SGB.

According to Masinga, Dlamini and Ngema (2000: 40) the following may be regarded as some advantages of delegation:

- skills development and decision making skills;
- improved relationships and increased knowledge.

However, Masinga et. al. (2000: 43) detect the following disadvantages:

- One may be tempted to delegate everything, leaving you, as the manager, without any work to do – thus creating a negative image about yourself;
- There may be resistance by delegates who think that they are being exploited and overburdened by you;
- Delegation may lead to displacement of power, and the delegatee may take total control of given power.

Delegation is a useful strategy that principals may use to promote a sense of shared power with the SGB. This facilitates the development and maintenance of a team spirit.

2.2.5.4 Teamwork

The SGB is made up of people from different backgrounds and may have different ideologies. Unfortunately, some of these ideologies may be in conflict with each other.

One of the challenges for a school principal is to find ways to support the SGB to work together, otherwise the main goal of improving the quality of education in the school will not be reached.

According to Harvorsen et al. (1997: 27), there has to be trust and respect among SGB members. Trust is built when people get to know each other's beliefs, values, interests and strengths. As trust develops over time, members of the SGB will be more open to sharing their opinions, taking risks and resolving conflict in a positive way.

Harvorsen et. al. (1997: 23) advocate that principals will know that a solid team is evolving when:

- the members value each other, look ahead and share their goals, values and principles;
- the work is shared and the way of working is agreed on;
- new members are accepted and welcomed and tasks are divided and shared;
- the chairperson does his job properly;
- the team takes responsibility if things go wrong;
- the members communicate regularly, support and encourage each other;
- every member is involved and there is a high level of co-operation.

It is acknowledged that with many different personalities, there will be some possibilities of conflict in the group.

2.2.5.5 Managing conflict

Naicker and Waddy (2003: 13) explain that conflict arises when individuals or groups have incompatible interests. One party may feel that the situation is unfair, unjust or discriminatory. When people are unhappy about the status quo, they will want to take action to change things.

Conflict can cause an organisation to cease to function if it is not addressed timeously and adequately. School principals therefore have to devise methods of how to deal with conflict. Harvorsen et al. (1997: 25) provides the following advice:

- acknowledge the conflict – admit there is a problem;
- define the conflict – agree on what the problem is and what is causing it;
- plan on how to deal with the conflict;
- discuss the problem openly;
- work out a way of solving the problem.

It is advisable that principals have structures and procedures in place to deal with conflict. This may include grievance procedures or committees for conflict resolution in the SGB. Amicable resolutions of conflicts lead to a restoration of harmonious relations and unity among team members.

2.2.6 Managing unity among the SGB

Caldwell and Spinks (1988: 75) identify unity in management as one of the fundamentals in a self-managing school. They define unity as a group of people working together to achieve more than individuals working separately. Unity emerges when a symbiotic relationship is created among the various team members. However, unity through the merging of the principal and the SGB by way of legislation does not automatically result in them becoming a team. Kemp and Nathan (1989: 139) stress that teams have to be built – they do not just happen. According to Chetty (2003: 173), Bath (1990) believes that teamwork creates an engaging and stimulating environment where individuals and groups support each other with the goals of maximising quality of education in the school.

Cutbolt and McDonough (1985), as cited by Keith and Girling (1991: 72), see trust as the “fundamental cement that builds an organisation together, facilitating good communication, rectifying badly timed actions, making goal attainment possible and creating the conditions for organisational success.” Dean (1986: 768) believes trust, *unity and authenticity in management practices* are valuable principles in ensuring the effective participation of parents in the provision of quality education. They are prerequisites for the existence of teamwork and unity.

As a result of the numerous educational policies promulgated by the new dispensation to transform schools, positive attitudinal changes are required so that schools can become monuments of pride and progress. *All members working in unison strengthen the possibility of creating progressive schools where both the individual and the institution are continually evolving* (Chetty, 2003: 64). However, good individuals do not automatically make a good team until they learn to operate as one and commit to openness, privacy and loyalty to the institution. It is crucial for a working relationship to exist between the principal and the SGB, where everyone is prepared to give of their

best. For such a working relationship to exist in the school, a spirit of openness, respect for privacy and a commitment to loyalty should prevail. Mutual respect, acknowledgement and commitment promote a sense of loyalty and team identity with the organisation and subsequently encourage a co-operative working spirit. For these ideals to exist at a school, sound communication is imperative.

2.3 COMMUNICATION

As head of a school, the principal plays a central role in communicating with stakeholders, such as the SGB. According to Glickman, Gordan and Ross-Gordan (1998: 31), communication is the transmission of ideas, information, opinions, attitudes and feelings through one or more media that produce some response. Weller and Weller (2000: 63) state that principals are required to have good communication skills for promoting effective human relations.

In order to establish a working relationship between himself and the school governing body, communication for the principal will mean the informal and formal interaction between himself and the SGB with the aim of imparting and delivering on the respective duties of each party. Communication for the sake of communicating is fruitless. For various reasons, the principal's communication with parents will vary from scholastic and behavioural problems of children to dental appointments (Van der Westhuizen 1991: 430).

Communication is the tool for achieving the effective functioning of an institution. It is of such importance that it can never be overemphasized, because communication can be regarded as the glue that bonds the organisation (Theron, 1996: 189). Grobler and Schalenkamp (1996: 34) believe that communication is the central nervous system of the school. It is for this reason, among others, that the principal should have a thorough knowledge of communication in all its facets. However, communication with a specific aim in mind is only meaningful if it is done effectively (Theron, 1996: 189).

2.3.1 Importance of effective communication

Ngcongong (1995: 28) believes, depending on how it is handled, that communication can contribute to the effectiveness of the school system and the facilitation of the achievement of the school's aims. If the principal is an effective communicator, he will be able to motivate parents to strive towards the achievement of educational outcomes. This ability enables the principal to co-ordinate various activities that a school wishes to achieve through the assistance of the governing body consisting of parents. If that which is communicated is understood by all, it will help to ensure that various duties are delegated appropriately and that the SGB works harmoniously. Through effective communication, the parents will understand the educational objectives of the institution and strive towards achieving the objectives. It allows for the smooth flow of information between principal and the governors. In order to be effective in achieving the school's goals, the principal and the governors, together with other relevant stakeholders, must share a common vision. The vision will be best understood if it is effectively communicated to all involved. To ensure that everyone is on board, the most suitable way of communication is to be decided upon, tried and tested for effectiveness.

2.3.2 Guidelines for effective communication

According to De Wet et al. (1981: 174), three basic questions serve as guidelines in all communication:

- Who ought to know what and when?
- How do they get to know it?
- How do you know they know?

Glichman et, al (1998: 174) state that formal channels of communication (upwards, downwards and horizontal or lateral) have to be created to ensure that information reaches people concerned without delay so as to ensure that they are in the know. The principal and the S.G.B. will know what is expected through planning and analysing policies together. Regular contact with each other will enable the principal to ensure that parents are updated on developments in education and that education policies

concerning the SB are discussed and understood by all concerned. Van der Westhuizen (1991: 206) gives a few reasons why effective communication is essential, namely:

- to ensure the flow of information by conveying messages;
- to ensure effective functioning of the organisation through clear instructions;
- to inform people about what should be done, how it should be done, when it should be done, thus to ensure effective delegation;
- to facilitate guiding;
- to ensure an effective control structure.

A principal who applies any of these as a reason for communication adds to a mutual exchange of ideas, interpretation of messages and the creation of meaning that is achieved when others understand what is being communicated.

2.3.3 Practical communication strategies to facilitate parent participation

In order to promote interest in the school and attain active participation by governors in development and improvement programmes, communication of school goals is not only necessary, but becomes important if the achievement of such goals are to be accomplished. Koon (1991: 375) states that communication between the principal and SGB parents may take different forms, namely:

- informal communication, for example, by word of mouth, telephonic, or by means of gestures;
- formal communication, for example, official circulars, internal memos, letters given to parents via learners (or posted), as well as SGB meetings.

A principal may use one or both forms of communication, as the need demands, in getting a message across to parents. He has to assess, however, which one of the two is most effective under the circumstances. Where necessary and possible, he will have to choose and settle for the most effective method of communication that will be understood by all concerned.

Van der Westhuizen (1991: 209) identifies other important methods of communication, which may take place formally or informally, namely direct communication, indirect communication and two-way communication.

2.3.3.1 Direct communication

a) Verbal communication

Verbal communication involves informal discussions, meetings, telephone calls, messages conveyed by other people, interviews, debates etc. Verbal communication is by far the most important medium of communication used to convey messages or feelings. Theron (1996: 163) asserts that the SGB will prefer verbal communication because it is simple, natural and lends itself to immediate feedback. It is usually quicker and cheaper than written communication. It is more personal and less formal and authoritarian and can be an accurate way of conveying information. It makes questioning possible, which means that grey areas can be classified immediately, and it creates a friendly atmosphere.

The educational leader should make use of meetings with parents as the main communication tool. A meeting is one way of engaging parents in addressing education issues, discussing the quality of education and talking about future plans for the school.

Van Deventer (1998: 163) provides the following purposes of meetings, namely:

- to exchange ideas and share information;
- to create a working environment that stimulates the generation of new ideas through the rapid exchange of thoughts and views;
- to reduce semantic problems through face-to-face interaction;
- to get the people present to be more committed to stated proposals and procedures than they might otherwise be.

Meetings between the principal and parents should have a two-fold purpose, namely to run the school efficiently, to ensure effective education and to ensure the upkeep of the establishment and safety of the school community (Van Deventer 1998: 166). This can be done by the principal stating some of the problems that he is experiencing at the school. Parents should be allowed to make suggestions and propose solutions. Together the principal and parents can analyse each situation and together find solutions (Van der Westhuizen 1991: 430). For this to be possible and honest, an open relationship between parents and principal is crucial. The principal has to ensure that verbal communication is frank and takes place in an atmosphere that is relaxed and non-intimidating.

b) Telephonic conversation (ear to ear)

Telephonic conversations form an important part of an education leader's communication strategy. However, because of the cost of this form of communication, the principal is advised to use his discretion. In an emergency, or when a message has to be communicated at short notice, it is advisable to use the telephone.

Of utmost importance, is that the principal is expected to keep his word as given in telephonic arrangements. A parent will have confidence in a principal who keeps his word (Van der Westhuizen 1991: 439). This will create or strengthen the spirit of trust, if it already exists. Every effort should be made to ensure that telephonic conversations *do not deteriorate into calling a "connection,"* as this can be costly and undermine the business stance that should prevail. At no stage should a telephone be used to avoid a one-on-one situation, or for a principal to express his disapproval of what a parent has done if it is at all possible to speak to the parent personally (Van der Westhuizen 1991: 440).

c) Written Communication

Written communication is the most important medium of communication. In writing, simplicity and clarity are of the utmost importance. According to John and Ngobese (2000: 47), written communication involves the following instruments in an organisation:

- report writing;
- letter writing;
- written proposals;
- instructions;
- writing minutes of meetings;
- notices;
- official circulars and others.

In some contexts, parents may not be able to read and write. Therefore, principals should make alternative arrangements by inviting parents and reading the notice to these parents, or by asking the chairperson to visit these parents and read the notices to them.

d) Listening

Fielding (1995: 105) believes that “listening actively” means giving your attention to what is said and striving to understand the facts, opinions and attitudes expressed by the speaker/s. To communicate effectively, one has to listen. The principal has to be a good listener so that he is able to solve problems that arise. The SGB members are chosen because of the leadership they display, the skills they possess or because they are reasonably intelligent. These people have vital information or valid ideas to share. The SGB will speak what is in their hearts if they know they will be heard. Van Niekerk (1987: 230) states that in order to motivate parents to provide input, express needs or give their opinions, the following listening strategies may be adopted:

- show that you are willing to listen by putting the person at ease, asking him to sit down and leaning forward attentively;
- try to eliminate all possible interruptions;
- use certain responses to indicate your interest and empathy; for example, by a nod of the head, or a simple, “yes,” or “I see.”

Adopting the above strategies allows the principal to demonstrate tolerance, interest and respect. These are managerial virtues that enhance sound school community relations. Such virtues are inspirational and facilitative of parent participation. If the principal is a good listener, the SGB becomes willing to participate in the effective functioning of the school. It is important to ensure that information intended for a specific person or group of people reaches them through a form of feedback.

e) Feedback

John and Ngobese (2000: 110) define feedback as information or an opinion in response to an enquiry or a proposal. The SGB should be updated on the progress made by their children, specifically, and the school in general. Therefore regular updating and feedback in this regard is crucial. It is vital that the principal ensures that information that he wishes to communicate to the SGB does in fact reach them. Feedback from the SGB in this regard is also necessary. Gorton (1983: 472-475) gives the following methods of feedback:

- a tear-off slip can be attached at the bottom of the circular that provides for questions to be answered or suggestions made;
- the SGB could meet the principal over a cup of tea and discuss progress made on several planned issues;
- a well-structured questionnaire to be completed periodically by the SGB.

The above are methods principals may adopt in facilitating parent participation in the educative process.

2.3.3.2 Requirements for good communication

Reynders (1977: 118) states the following as requirements for effective communication:

- the message should be clear;
- it should be complete and details not be omitted;

- it should be reasonable;
- communication channels should be clear and suitable to bring about effective communication;
- the communicator(s) should be competent to transfer ideas and information clearly to others, and also be willing and able to understand and apply ways of communicating.

Lotter (2003: 89) gives the following advice with regard to communication:

- before trying to communicate with someone, it is essential to prepare for the process so that it can be managed so as to ensure that its outcomes are predictable;
- to prepare for communication, one should know to whom one is speaking, what needs to be said, when it needs to be said, and where and how it will be communicated.

Once the content to be communicated has been analysed, the next important responsibility is to choose the most effective method of communication, which will achieve maximum results. Parents who know exactly what is expected of them become motivated participants as any doubt is removed when objectives are understood. With the most effective communication strategies in place, efficient management can be realised. With an effective method of communication established between SGB parents and the principal, leading is enhanced and growth of the organisation can be envisaged.

2.4 LEADING PARENT PARTICIPATION

Bennis and Nannes (1985: 17) view leading as a form of power that represents one's capacity to translate intention into reality and sustain it. The most successful leader of all is one who sees another picture, but which is not yet there. Above all, he should make his co-workers see that it is not *his* purpose that is to be achieved, but a *common* purpose, born of the desires and aspirations of a group.

Zalenznicle (1997: 1) describes leaders as people, who are proactive instead of reactive, actively involved in shaping ideas instead of responding to them. Leaders adopt a personal and active attitude towards goals. The influence that a leader exerts in altering goals evokes images and expectations, and in establishing specific desires and objectives, this determines the direction that an organisation will take. The principal is responsible for ensuring that the SGB participate in provision of quality education to learners in public schools. To achieve this he has to know what effective leading entails.

The principal of the school is the person with whom the SGB will be dealing with during their term of office. To ensure that this term is spent as profitably as possible for all, it is important that the principal leads in such a way that parents are motivated to give of their best. This will be achieved by:

- creating opportunities for parents to exercise their legitimate rights to govern schools. This is critical if they are to perform their duties effectively;
- *having a professional commitment to being culturally sensitive, open-minded and tolerant;*
- being someone the parents regard as dependable, trustworthy and respectful.

It is desirable therefore, for the principal to have a warm and inviting personality. The principal should be a person who recognises the interdependence of human beings. The promotion of co-existence between the principal and governors is thus imperative. To be successful in soliciting the support of the SGB, parents require a leader to be competent. Competent leadership requirements, according to Theron (1996: 70) and Chetty (2003: 131), include the following:

- dedication and loyalty to the task and to the clientele, respectively;
- enthusiasm and the way you present yourself;
- intelligence, knowledge, willpower and a sense of purpose;
- the way you behave, the skills you have and the values you hold;
- your beliefs, understanding and knowledge of human nature;
- character and your overall purpose.

The principal needs to positively drive the organisation and create a good impression to all stakeholders, both internally and externally. He should also create an atmosphere conducive to parent involvement and growth.

Gray (1997: 103) believes the key attribute of an effective principal is the skill he displays in personal relationships and the effectiveness of his human relations. This will also have a bearing on his leadership.

2.4.1 Selecting an appropriate leadership style facilitative of parent participation

Musaazi (1982: 54) believes that no two leaders can administer and lead their organisations in the same way. The school principal adopts a leadership style that is conducive to his school's situation.

It is incumbent on the principal to choose a leadership style that will suit the situation he finds himself in. Lussier (2000: 456) defines leadership styles as a combination of traits, skills and behaviours that principals use to interact with employees.

Lussier (2000: 456) further classifies leadership styles as:

- autocratic – the leader makes decisions, tells employees (parent governors) *what to do and closely supervises them*;
- democratic – the leader encourages employees (parent governors) to participate in decisions and works with employees (parent governors) to determine what to do without closely supervising them;
- laissez-faire – the leader allows the employees to make decisions on their own, while he/she doesn't follow up.

The effectiveness of leadership styles in eliciting goods SGB performance depends on the governors themselves. The SGB member who lacks competence, or one who neglects his/her work, must be encouraged in the hope that he/she will experience a change of attitude. Principals must however be mindful that parents render their

services voluntarily, but this in no way suggests that their responsibilities may be neglected or compromised. Diligent and motivated governors should be asked to assist in motivating and empowering other SGB members who are less enthusiastic. The principal should be a leader who will discuss problems with the SGB and acknowledge their ideas and opinions, and allow them more participatory roles. The manner in which a leader leads will be dictated by the circumstances under which he is expected to lead, and these vary greatly.

2.4.2 Situational leadership

Every school is unique and will present unique challenges. However, there are certain characteristics of a situation that can help the principal to influence parent governors to produce work of a high standard. These situational characteristics of the school may compel the principal to change his/her leadership style. When SGB members, for example, have high ability and clear understanding of what they have to do, the role of the principal becomes less directive. When parent governors are motivated and work as closely knit and cohesive groups, supportive leadership becomes relevant. When the SGB show no interest in school matters and are not clear about what they have to do, the role of the principal should be more supportive and where necessary, it should be directive.

Stoner and Freeman (1992), as cited by Mkhize (2005: 15), assert that if managers are flexible, or if they can be trained to vary their style, they will be effective in a variety of leadership situations. If, on the other hand, managers are relatively inflexible in leadership styles, they will operate effectively only in those situations that match their style or can be adjusted to match their style.

Mkhize (2005: 15) believes it is important that principals develop the capacity to diagnose the demands of the situation and then choose and implement an appropriate leadership response. They need to recognise the level of readiness of parent governors to perform tasks so that they can decide on the guidance, direction and support that they can give. *Parent governors can respond positively to the principal's expectations when they realise that their efforts are recognised and acknowledged.*

2.4.3 Behaviour leadership

The effectiveness of the principal in influencing parent governor performance cannot only be attributed to traits or to the situation. The action of the principal is also one of the factors that bring about the success of parent participation.

Behaviour theories focus on what the leader does. Lussier's (2000: 455) comment (which is also applicable to the relationship between the principal and parent governors) on behavioural theories indicates that what leaders do and how they behave provides an insight into the relationship between leaders and followers. Smit and Cronje (1997: 289) assert that managers who are trained in the right behaviour of a principal can have an impact on SGB performance.

It is imperative in harnessing support from governors that principals demonstrate the qualities of a leader. The principal should use his leadership traits to acknowledge and embrace the leadership within the SGB parents. By virtue of their election to the governing body, an indication exists that the community sees leaders in them. This leadership ability should be channelled to the leadership of sub-committees so as to ensure that as much as possible is gained from the expertise of parents in achieving the school's goals.

2.4.4 Leadership traits

A great deal of debate exists on whether leaders are born or made. There is, however, a combination of traits associated with the effectiveness of principals as leaders in governing parent bodies' performance, although it cannot be said that all effective and influential principals possess the same traits.

Hoy and Miskel (1996: 378) classify traits into three categories, namely:

- motivational traits;
- skills traits;

- personality traits.

The traits inherent in the principal will determine his success in facilitating effective participation by the SGB.

2.4.4.1 Motivation Traits

A highly motivated principal has a much greater chance of success than one who has a low need, value, expectation and goal level. It is therefore crucial that the principal be self-motivated and that he/she also possesses and develops skills to motivate others.

For some authors, motivation is so important in their entire management action and in the leadership task, that it is elevated to the position of most important of all management tasks. In this regard, Megginson (1977: 357) states that “Management is Motivation.” The principal's motivational skill will help him to motivate the SGB to perform their duties as prescribed by SASA.

2.4.4.2 Skills Traits

According to Mkhize (2005: 14), the principal's competence and mastery of task-related knowledge and skills should help him improve the performance of the SGB. These skills include technical, interpersonal and conceptual skills. Technical skills equip the leader with specialized knowledge, procedures and techniques to accomplish a task. Interpersonal skills equip the leader to understand the feelings and attitudes of parent governors and to establish co-operative work relationships with them. Conceptual skills enable the principal to develop and use ideas and concepts to solve complex problems.

2.4.4.3 Personality traits

The personality traits of leaders can influence performance. A principal who accepts the position with the inner commitment of doing his best for the benefit of himself and those he serves has a recipe for success.

The following table reflects the traits associated with effective leadership

Fig 2.1 Traits associated with effective leadership

PERSONALITY	WORK MOTIVATION	SKILL
Self-confidence	Task and interpersonal needs	Technical
Stress tolerance	Achievement orientation	Interpersonal
Emotional maturity	Power needs	Conceptual
Integrity	Expectation	Administrative

Hoy and Miskel (1996: 378)

The above table shows how effective leaders may use their personalities and skills. An enabling environment is one with a highly motivational leader who believes in the growth and development of others. According to Hellreiger (1999), as cited by Chetty (2003: 148), transformational leaders provide extraordinary motivation to their followers. Effective leaders may influence their followers through the following personality traits:

- Self-confident leaders are more likely to set high goals for themselves and their followers to attempt difficult tasks, and to persist in the face of problems and defeat;
- Stress tolerant leaders are likely to make good decisions, to stay calm, and to provide decisive direction to subordinates in difficult situations. As shown in structural observation studies by Hoy and Miskel (1996: 378), the pace, long hours, fragmentation and demands for decisions place leaders under intense pressure that can best be addressed by stress-tolerant individuals;
- Emotionally mature leaders tend to have an accurate awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and can be orientated towards self-improvement. They do not deny their shortcomings or fancise about success. Consequently, emotionally mature administrators can maintain co-operative relationships with subordinates, peers and supervisors;

- Integrity means that the behaviours of leaders are consistent with their stated values and that they are honest, ethical, responsible and trustworthy. Bayne-Jardine and Holly (1994: 41) believe that integrity is an essential element in building and retaining loyalty and obtaining co-operation and support from others.

The characteristics mentioned above are vital, and if these attributes exist collectively in a school principal, they will greatly influence him in his quest for eliciting high standards of performance from the SGB.

According to Van der Westhuizen (1991: 88), leadership may be summarised as a calling. The manner in which the leader, in a creative and dutiful way, stimulates, directs and co-ordinates group interaction, determines his effectiveness. It is critical for the school principal, therefore, to lead in such a way that the school's goals can be achieved through the support and co-operation that he harnesses in the SGB.

Although much has been done to improve the standard of education, there are, however, a number of factors that hamper the SGB in participating fully and effectively in the education of their children.

2.5 CONSTRAINING FACTORS THAT HAMPER SGB PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

During this discourse, a number of factors that hamper parent participation in the education of the children have been alluded to. There are, however, several key factors that affect parent participation and which have been selected for special mention.

As much as SASA implores parents to take ownership of schools, the "how" issue still remains unanswered in many schools. As stated earlier, many parents are willing to help, but do not know how. The following constraining factors have been identified as having the most negative impact on education:

2.5.1 The SGB has limited skills and knowledge

As mentioned in chapter one, many parents have received very little education during the apartheid era. Some parents, therefore, are illiterate or have very little self-confidence. This has a negative impact on the effectiveness of the SGB because parents are reluctant to get involved in the education of their children, grandchildren or foster children because they feel inadequate.

According to Potgieter (1997: 13), the SGB is responsible for making policies or laying down broad guidelines for planning and decision-making at the school. It is, however, difficult to acquaint members of the SGB with education policies if they are illiterate or find it hard to read or write. Limited knowledge often results in parents feeling inadequate.

Wolfendale (1989: 17) states that one reason given by parents for not getting involved in education matters is the lack of confidence in the face of professional expertise. New fields such as modern mathematics and computer technology make it difficult for parents to help their children. Parents therefore choose to surrender their educational rights and responsibilities for their children's education to the school.

2.5.2 Reluctance to implement change

The new democracy prescribes that the education system in South Africa be transformed (changed for the better). National and Education documents, such as South African Schools Act, the National Constitution, the National Education Policy Act among others, mandate that schools engage in restructuring programmes for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency.

Most schools have complied with the legal obligation of appointing an SGB. However, the researcher agrees with Chetty (2003: 8) who contends that there is evidence to indicate that some principals are still applying traditional models of school management and have resisted adjusting their management style to accommodate the changes mandated by education acts and policies

2.5.3 Lack of full SGB participation

It is understood that our parents work to earn a living and can ill-afford to take a day off work to tend to school issues. However, parents who agree to serve on the SGB and do not avail themselves when the need arises, do the school a disservice. It becomes difficult to develop the school and implement change if these vital stakeholders do not participate fully. Prinsloo, (1996: 274) asserts that parent participation in school activities is a method of ensuring effective control of the school system and that it enables the translation of idealistic, abstract and dynamic objectives of democracy into something more concrete and realistic. The lack of full SGB participation in school matters can hamper the development of the school and deprive it of much needed support.

2.5.4 Serving on the SGB for differing reasons

Unfortunately, some parents strive to serve on school governing bodies for personal reasons. According to Biyela (2004: 4), there are three types of Governing Bodies, namely:

- *Governing Bodies with leadership skills necessary to bring about improvement in the quality of education provided;*
- *Power hungry members of the parent community without the necessary skills for governance and little time for empowerment of teachers, pupils or the school;*
- *Members who accept the position for prestige, but who are ignorant of the needs of the school and do not push for empowerment and growth.*

It becomes evident, therefore, that unless the SGB is fully committed to improving the quality of education at the school, the school's objectives may not be achieved.

2.6 Conclusion

It is conceded that effective leading, sound communication and decisive management are central role functions of school principals so as to facilitate the effective participation of parents in the delivery of quality education to learners in public schools. The next chapter explains how the empirical investigation was designed and conducted.

Chapter 3

Research methodology and research design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the method used to undertake the empirical study. The study's research plan includes aspects such as: the acquisition of permission from the Department of Education to conduct the research; the selection of respondents; the research instrument, namely the questionnaire; the pilot study; the administration of the questionnaire; the processing of data; the limitations of the study, and ethical considerations with regard to the study.

3.2 Research plan

3.2.1 Preparation

Research is a systematic activity directed towards the development of an organised body of knowledge. Gidders (1989: 660) states that some research tells us what is happening while other research tells us why something is happening. He believes that in order to successfully conduct research, it is vital that thorough preparation and good planning is done. Part of the planning of research includes accessing permission from the relevant authorities.

3.2.2 Permission

In order to conduct this particular research study, the researcher had to acquire approval from the Department of Education of KwaZulu Natal. An application (Appendix 1) to conduct research was forwarded to the Regional Director of Education. The Chief Director of Education, Pietermaritzburg Region, duly granted permission (Appendix 2) for the research study to be conducted.

Thereafter, permission was sought in writing (Appendix 3), from the Chief Superintendent of Education and Management in the Ixopo Circuit. Unfortunately the Chief Superintendent was on leave at the time, and the researcher was advised to ask for permission from the officer second in charge. This officer, in turn, also

had to get permission from the Chief Superintendent to grant the researcher permission. This caused a considerable delay before permission was finally granted. The Chief Superintendent eventually granted permission to the officer second in charge, who duly granted permission in writing (Appendix 4).

3.2.3 Selection of respondents

3.2.3.1 Population and sampling consideration

The population chosen for this empirical study was that of principals of high schools as well as principals of primary schools.

The area chosen to conduct the research was the Ixopo Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal. At the commencement of the research study, the circuit consisted of twenty-six high schools and eighty-two primary schools. Fifty percent of the schools were chosen for the study, as this was deemed a convenient sample size. To conduct the research at all of the schools would have been a difficult and expensive venture. Cohen, Marion and Morrison (2000: 87) believe that it is often not practical or possible to study an entire population. Choosing a smaller percentage, on the other hand, may have meant running the risk of acquiring less accurate information.

3.2.3.2 Sampling Method

Ary, Jacobs and Razavich (1990: 169) affirm that sampling involves making decisions about people, settings, events, behaviour and generalising from those observations to a wider population. It is with this in mind, and the advice given by Bertram et al, (2003: 169), namely that the main concern in sampling is being representative, that the choice of sample was made.

A choice was made to use cluster and simple random sampling. The Ixopo circuit was the chosen circuit from a cluster of circuits in the Kokstad District. The Ixopo Circuit consists of four clusters, namely Miskoffil Ward, Jamangweni Ward, Jolivet Ward and Lufafa Ward.

The wards mentioned above are represented in the table below, which reflects the number of high schools and primary schools in each ward; the number of selected schools per ward, as well as the number of principals who participated fully in the investigation.

Table 3.1 IXOPO CIRCUIT

Name of Wards	Total no. of schools per Ward	No. of selected schools per Ward	No. of principals who fully participated
Lufafa	30	15	13
Jolivet	24	12	10
Jamangweni	26	13	12
Miskoffil	28	14	13
TOTAL NO.	108	54	48

The schools in each ward were chosen by means of simple random sampling. The names of the schools of each ward were placed into a hat and drawn at random. This method was used to avoid any possibility of biased sampling. Bertram et al (2003: 5) warn that if a sample is not representative of the whole population, bias may be suspected. However, the sampling exercise was done per ward so as to accommodate inclusiveness. This allowed schools the same probability of being selected and avoided bias, as advised by Cohen et al (2000: 99)

At the commencement of research, a decision was made to conduct it at fifty percent of the schools in each ward. There were 30 schools in the Lufafa ward at the time and 15 were chosen for investigation; Jolivet had 24 schools, and 12 were chosen; Jamangweni had 26 schools, and 13 were chosen, while Miskoffil had 28 schools and 14 schools were chosen for the investigation. In total, out of the 108 schools located in the area of research, 54 schools were chosen to participate. All school principals were approached, and all but one agreed to participate. Another school in the ward was subsequently chosen at random to take the place of the school whose principal declined. However, only 48 of the questionnaires retrieved

were completed correctly. Two of the questionnaires sent out were spoilt and four were not returned.

3.3 The research instruments

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 61) assert that researchers have to measure data somehow, and that any device used for measurement is called an instrument. Bearing in mind the aims of the study, the researcher decided that a survey would be best suited to accomplish the goals of the research. Cohen (1988: 38) states that a survey is the gathering of data at a particular point in time with the aim of describing the nature of existing conditions, identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared and determining the relationship that exists between specific events. The survey in this study was used to access data about the role of the principal in *facilitating participative management between himself and the SGB*.

While there are many ways of investigating variables in research, the researcher chose to use a questionnaire with the view of obtaining facts and opinions about the principals' experiences in their leadership roles and to find out how they encouraged and facilitated participative involvement among school governors. Cohen (1988: 109) is of the opinion that questionnaires are the best form of survey when carrying out an educational enquiry.

3.3.1 The questionnaire

A well-designed questionnaire is the culmination of a long process of planning the research objectives, formulating the problem, etc. A questionnaire is not simply thrown together. A poorly designed questionnaire can invalidate any research results, notwithstanding the merits of the sample, the field worker, and the statistical techniques.

It stands to reason that questionnaire design does not take place in a vacuum. Bearing this in mind, the researcher considered all the factors mentioned in this context by the researchers cited so as to develop a suitable questionnaire. In doing

so, it was necessary to consider questionnaire content, question format, question order, type of questions, formulation of questions and the validity and reliability of questions. Bertram et al (2003: 69) advise that the design of a questionnaire must be properly done so as to ensure that the respondents understand what the researcher is asking them. A questionnaire design requires thorough planning.

3.3.2 Advantages and disadvantages of the written questionnaire

The researcher used the questionnaire as a research instrument after taking both the advantages and disadvantages into consideration, especially those eluded to by authors such as Gall, Borg and Gall (1996: 289), Bourque and Fielder, (1995: 8 – 9) Mahlangu (1987: 94 – 95) Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988: 190) and Kidder and Judd (1986: 223 – 224).

The researcher was furthermore influenced in choosing the questionnaire as a research instrument by the fact that questionnaires are efficient and practical, and that large samples can be reached by means of either hand-delivering the questionnaires or mailing them to respondents. The researcher noted the following advantages and disadvantages alluded to by Chetty (1998: 135 – 136) and found them to be in keeping with to the expectations and aims of the research study:

- The questionnaire permits anonymity. Where the questions are arranged so that responses are given anonymously, it increases the researcher's chances of receiving responses that genuinely represent a person's beliefs, feelings, opinions or perceptions.
- Affordability is the primary advantage of a written questionnaire, because it is the least expensive means of data gathering.
- Generally, the data provided by questionnaires can be more easily analysed and interpreted than the data obtained from verbal responses.
- Questionnaires provide greater uniformity across measurement situations than do interviews. Each person responds to exactly the same questions because standard instructions are given to the respondents.

- Questionnaire design is relatively easy, if the test guidelines are followed.
- Data obtained from questionnaires can be compared and inferences made.
- Questionnaires can elicit information that cannot be obtained from other sources. This renders empirical research possible in different educational disciplines.
- The administering of questionnaires, the coding, analysis and interpretation of data can be done without any special training.

The questionnaire has its obvious disadvantages, which are advanced by Mahlangu (1987), in Chetty (1998: 137) as the following:

- People are generally better able to express their views verbally than in writing.
- Questionnaires do not provide the flexibility of interviews.
- Questionnaires can be answered only when they are sufficiently easy and straightforward to be understood with the given instructions and definitions.

The researcher provided an open-ended questionnaire to counteract the above-mentioned disadvantages.

3.3.3 Construction of the questionnaire

Leedy (1993: 130) advises that when constructing a questionnaire the researcher must ensure that it is designed to fulfil a specific objective. The respondents must also know exactly what the research is about. Questionnaires should be clear, unambiguous, as short as possible, but long enough to get the essential data and worded in a simple and straightforward manner. It should be arranged in a systematic order, being processed from a general to a more specific or sensitive order. Questionnaires should be arranged in such a way that they are able to capture the respondents' interests and motivate them to complete the exercise.

In this research study, demographic information is solicited with sufficient options and tagging on the “please specify” option. Thereafter, questions relating to leadership, communication and management are presented.

Chetty (2003: 89) advises that, in constructing a questionnaire, it is vital to express the statement in an explicitly clear way to the respondents so that accurate responses can be obtained. Every effort should be made to avoid vagueness, bias, prejudice and complex technical language in the questions.

Both “closed” and “open” questions were used. Descombe (1998: 101) cites the advantages of closed ended questions as follows:

- The responses are easily coded to produce meaningful results to analyse.
- The provision of alternatives may help clarify the intent of the question for the respondent, or help their memory.

Bailey (1987: 121) advises that closed-ended questions are generally self-contained, can be answered quickly and require fewer instructions than open-ended ones. Possible disadvantages are that respondents are forced to choose alternatives that may not be suitable to their situation.

Open-ended questions leave the participants completely free to express their answer as they wish, as detailed and complex, as long and as short as they feel is appropriate (Bless and Higson-Smith 1995: 120).

Bailey (1987: 12) contends that open-ended questions are used for complex questions that cannot be answered in a few simple categories but require more detail and dimension. They are used to solicit the respondent’s unique views, philosophy or goals. The questions for this research study were constructed as follows:

The first section dealt with demographic information. This section consisted of seven questions.

Question two focussed on Communication between the S.G.B. and the principal. Respondents chose from 3 options provided in the response column, namely “Always;” “Sometimes,” and “Never.”

Question three focussed on Leadership, where the researcher wanted to establish the leadership role in involving parents in school governance. Respondents chose from the three options namely “High,” “Medium” and “Low.”

Question four questions were aimed at ascertaining how the school principal managed the involvement of the SGB in school activities. Here, respondents had to choose from the three options, namely “Agree,” “Disagree” and “Uncertain,” as listed.

Question five consisted of six questions about factors that hampered efforts to involve parents in school governance. One open-ended question required respondents to express their views and thoughts on other factors that hampered efforts to involve parents in school governance.

3.4 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

3.4.1 Validity

Pillay (1998: 115) defines validity as the extent to which a measuring instrument satisfies the purpose for which it was constructed. In general terms, validity refers to the degree in which an instrument succeeds in measuring what it has set out to measure. The validity of the questionnaire as a research instrument reflects the sureness with which conclusions can be drawn.

Many authors such as Leedy (1993: 24 – 25), Dyer (1979: 127), Bertram et al. (2003: 70), Chetty (2003: 96) and Dyer (1979: 127) agree that “validity” is concerned with the soundness or the effectiveness of the measuring instrument by focusing on the results of the measurement. When we refer to something as “valid” in our daily conversations, we often mean that it is sound and justifiable

(Bertram 2003: 70). Chetty (2003: 95) believes that validity is essential in a research questionnaire so as to lend credibility to the questionnaire.

One can never be sure that the questionnaire, as devised, will actually obtain what it sets out to measure. However, the researcher (guided by the criteria for a valid questionnaire and the careful planning of questions) is convinced that the particular questionnaire used in this study was, to a great extent, suited to measure that which it was designed to measure.

3.4.2 Reliability

According to Pillay (1998: 117), and Van Rensburg and Landman (1994: 84), reliability is a statistical concept and relates to consistency and dependability of obtaining the same relative answer when measuring phenomena that have not changed. A reliable measuring instrument is one that, if repeated under similar conditions, will present the same result, or a near approximation of the initial result.

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 138) state that, since reliability is concerned with consistency of measurement, therefore the greater the consistency, the greater the reliability of the measuring procedure.

Dane (1990: 256) contends that the reliability of the question is no proof that the answers given reflect the respondents' true feelings. Therefore, truthfulness is not guaranteed. Sources of error, according to Kidder and Judd (1986: 45), are the following:

- Fluctuation in the mood or alertness of respondents because of illness, fatigue, recent good or bad experiences or temporary differences amongst members of the group to be measured.
- Variation in the condition of administration between groups. These range from various distractions, such as unusual outside noise to inconsistencies

in the administration of the measuring instrument, such as omission of verbal instructions.

- Differences in scoring or interpretation of results, chance differences in what the observer notices and errors in computing scores.
- Random effects by respondents who guess or check off attitude alternatives without trying to understand them.

The researcher agrees with Cohan et al (2000: 105) who state that it is impossible for research to be one hundred percent reliable as some respondents respond differently to questions. However, all respondents promised to answer honestly and frankly. This provides a possibility of maximum reliability.

3.5 Administration of the Questionnaire

3.5.1 Pilot study

A pilot study is a shortened form of the actual research project. It aims at testing whether the project is feasible or not. Bertram et al. (2003: 83) believe that a pilot study is an experimental exercise or a “trial run,” where similar aspects of the final survey are put to the test. According to Chetty (2003: 89), Dyer (1979) contends that, for a questionnaire to be successful, it has to undergo pre-testing to ensure that it is perfect in all aspects – a good questionnaire is one that has undergone several pilot tests. Specialists should check the questionnaire using a procedure designed to identify problems and omissions before the final questionnaire is completed. All the necessary changes should be undertaken right until the stage of administering the questionnaire. This promises to eliminate flaws, ambiguities and misinterpretations.

The researcher conducted a pilot study at four neighbouring schools, piloting the questionnaire with people similar to the actual respondents so as to establish what possible problems they could find. Bailey (1987: 143) advises that a researcher may ask colleagues or people familiar with questionnaire construction for their critical analysis of all aspects of the questionnaire, such wording, question order.

redundant questions, missing questions, inappropriate and inadequate questions, confusing response categories, insufficient space for answering open-ended questions and any other aspects of the questionnaire that they may find inadequate.

Some responses received from participants in the pilot study included ambiguous statements and multiple response questions where single responses were anticipated. Questions and instructions that were misinterpreted were reformulated.

The necessary adjustments to the pilot study questions were made before the administration of the questionnaire. The results of the pilot study enabled the researcher to make the necessary adjustments and to re-test the pilot study. This increased the chances of obtaining clear-cut findings in the main study. Hence, the pilot study served as a valuable trial run in this regard.

3.6 Actual Study

In administering the questionnaire, the researcher consulted the school principals and provided proof of permission to conduct the research. The researcher chose to administer the questionnaire personally where it was possible so as to clear up uncertainties. The personal administration of the questionnaires facilitated a friendly, relaxed atmosphere where the respondents seemed keen to answer the questions without any suspicion. In this way, the return rate was guaranteed. However a few principals asked to take the questionnaires home to complete in their spare time. Unfortunately many principals took a long time to return the questionnaire.

In order to motivate principals to participate fully, a detailed explanation of the purpose of the study was given. Many of the principals seemed more relaxed when anonymity was guaranteed as advised by De Vos (1998: 157). This seemed to spark some enthusiasm and made the respondents seem interested in actively getting involved in answering the questions. All returned questionnaires were filed for safekeeping in preparation for processing.

3.7 Processing of data

Once the data was collected, it was manually captured and presented on frequency tables in a format that would permit analysis and interpretation.

3.7.1 Descriptive statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics is the most fundamental way to summarise data, and it is indispensable in interpreting the results of quantitative research (Schumacher & McMillan (1993: 192).

Descriptive statistics serve to describe and summarise observations, while frequency tables are useful in forming impressions about the distribution of data – frequency distribution being a method used to organise data obtained from questionnaires to simplify statistical analysis. A frequency table provides the following information: -

- It provides percentages that reflect the number of responses to a certain questions in relation to the total number of responses.
- It indicates how many times a particular response appears on the completed questionnaire.

The interpretation of data was facilitated by the use of the test called the related (correlated) method. A content analysis was performed on responses to open-ended questions. This meant first identifying themes in the responses and then calculating the frequency with which each of them appeared

According to Chetty (1998: 143), descriptive statistical analysis limits generalisation to the particular group of individuals observed. No conclusions are extended beyond this group, and similarity to those outside the group cannot be assumed. The data described one group and that group only. In this study, descriptive analysis provides valuable information about the nature of the

relationship between the principal and the SGB. The data was calculated manually; the scores were computed and data was classified using frequency and percentages.

3.8 Limitations of the empirical study

The researcher experienced problems with regard to slow responses, where respondents asked to complete the questionnaire at home. The researcher believes that the slow response was due to the fact that the questionnaires were administered towards the end of the trial examinations when respondents were actively engaged in the checking of schedules and other administrative activities. Some respondents went into the holidays with the questionnaires. The fact that some of the respondents mislaid their questionnaires caused a further delay because they had to be issued with a new set of forms. This resulted in a staggered collection of questionnaires, thereby delaying the process of data analysis. Other questionnaires had to be collected after several reminders, and a clear indication was forthcoming that some principals were not altogether pleased with the exercise. However, no respondent refused to participate in the exercise in spite of being given the option to do so.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Ethics in research is very important, particularly with regard to research involving humans. Bertram et al (2003: 70) state that collecting data from respondents often gives rise to ethical concerns. It is imperative that respondents' rights to privacy are protected. It is therefore imperative that all research studies follow certain ethical principles. According to Durrheim and Wessena (2001: 66), these principles include: -

- Autonomy
- Non malefic (non-hurtful)
- Beneficence (doing good)

Bertram et al (2003: 72) advise that the researcher must respect the autonomy of all the people participating in the research. The researcher thus assured participants that information supplied by them would be treated confidentially. The researcher therefore included a covering letter that assured the respondents that the names of persons and schools participating in the research would remain anonymous and that confidentiality would be guaranteed.

The researcher sought the consent of every person to be part of the study and explained that their voluntary participation in the study implied their freedom to withdraw at anytime. However, according to Cohen et al. (2000: 123), researchers need to reflect attitudes of compassion, respect and gratitude without being too evasive.

Reassurance was also extended to respondents on matters of anonymity, and they were assured that the data would only be used for the stated purpose of the research. Assured of these conditions, the respondents agreed to participate.

3.10 Conclusion

The planning and design of the research was discussed in this chapter, which also includes discussion on permission for research and the selection of respondents. The questionnaire as a research instrument, limitations and ethical considerations with regard to the study were also discussed. The researcher furthermore dealt with the manner in which the questionnaires were administered and the methods that were used to analyse the data. The following chapter provides a clear and practical analysis and interpretation of data.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the data obtained from the questionnaires is analysed and interpreted. As outlined in Chapter One, the aim of this research study was to investigate the role of the principal in facilitating effective participation of the SGB in promoting quality education in public schools. Descriptive research was employed to describe numerical data solicited from principals about their roles in facilitating effective participation of the SGB in the provision of quality education.

According to Fink (1995: 75), the choice of method of analysis is dependent on the type of data available. Thus tables and graphs were used to represent the numerical data obtained to analyse the responses from principals. The data collected is analysed in accordance with the following themes:

- The principals' management style;
- Communication methods employed;
- The style of leadership;
- Constraining factors.

4.2 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.2.1 Demographic information

Table 4.1 Frequency distribution according to gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	26	54%
Female	22	46%
Total	48	100%

The frequency distribution according to gender shows that more males, (54%) as compared to females (46%) participated in the research study. Table 4.1 reveals that there are more male educators than female educators occupying posts of principal in the Ixopo District. This gender imbalance is often misunderstood to mean that males are better leaders.

Table 4.2 Frequency distribution according to the location of schools

Location	Frequency	Percent
Rural	46	96
Urban	2	4
Total	48	100%

Table 4.2 reveals that 96% of the schools where this research took place are located in rural areas and 4% are located in urban areas. This verifies that, as much as there are a number of schools in the cities as a norm, there are also a number of schools situated in rural areas, where a large number of the school-going population live. Unfortunately, the majority of people who live in rural areas are the elderly, who have had little schooling, or people who have been forced to quit school and have not been able to find employment in the cities. The result is that some people elected onto the SGB cannot read or write. The schools are often forced to elect members of the community who have had some schooling but work in the towns or cities. The result is that their attendance at SGB meetings is not regular at times.

Table 4.3 Frequency distribution according to previous education departments

Location Depart	Frequency	Percent
HOR	2	4
DET	18	38
DEC	26	54
NED	1	2
OTHER	1	2
TOTAL	48	100%

Table 4.3 reveals that 54% of the schools before 1994 belonged to the Department of Education and Training; 38% belonged to the Department of Education and Culture; 4% to the House of Representatives, 2% to the Natal Education Department and 2% to other systems of education. It is evident from Table 4.3 that the sample did not come from one sector of the previous governments of education, but from schools in all the ex-departments of Education and others. Unfortunately, the policy of the Apartheid government created a situation where schools in Black Education Departments were poorly built and under-resourced. In previous disadvantaged schools, the SGB are therefore called upon to be innovative in order to provide competitive education.

Table 4.4 Frequency distribution according to the number of parents on the SGB

No. of parents on S.G.B.	Frequency	Percent
None	0	0
1 to 2	0	0
3 to 4	17	35
5 to 6	22	46
More than 6	9	19
Total	48	100%

According to Table 4.4, forty-six percent of the schools have 5 to 6 parents on the SGB, while 35% have 3 to 4 members, and 19% have more than 6 parents on the SGB. The South African Schools Act (1996: 37) states that the number of parents elected to serve on the SGB will be determined by the schools' enrolment, the number of educators as well as non-educators employed at the school.

Table 4.5 Frequency distribution according to the number of co-opted parents on the SGB

No. of co-opted parents on SGB	Frequency	Percent
None	0	0
1 to 2	0	0
3 to 4	17	35
5 to 6	22	46
More than 6	9	19
Total	48	100%

According to Table 4.5 none of the schools co-opted less than three parents onto the SGB; 35% co-opted three or four; 46% co-opted five or six parents, while 9% co-opted more than 6 parents. SASA (1996: 35) stipulates that schools may co-opt parents onto the SGB for their experience, expertise, skills etc. The evidence provided by Table 4.5 indicates that principals are applying SASA to harness parents' skills, knowledge and expertise on governance structures in an effort to provide quality education. The process of co-opting parents onto the SGB broadens the horizon of external participation of parents in the school in an effort to provide quality education to learners.

Table 4.6 Frequency distribution according to the number of times SGB parents meet per year

No. of times S.G.B. parents meet per year	Frequency	Percent
None	7	15
1 to 2	17	35
3 to 4	20	42
5 to 6	4	8
More than 6	0	0
Total	48	100%

Table 4.6 indicates that 15% of the principals never hold meetings with the SGB; 35% of the principals indicated that they held SGB meetings at least once or twice a year; 42% held meetings three to four times a year; 8% said they held meetings five to six times, and none of them held more than six meetings a year. According to

Harvorsen et al. (1997: 26), schools should have at least one SGB meeting per term. Table 4.6 indicates that 45% of the schools do not hold the minimum number of SGB meetings as recommended by SASA (1996: 31). This could have a negative impact on the working relationship between the principal and the SGB, because meetings are intended to strengthen working relations.

Table 4.7 Frequency distribution of sub-committees

In which sub-committees are parents involved at your school?	Frequency	Percentage
School Maintenance	23	48%
School grounds & buildings	24	50%
Catering	23	48%
Sport, culture & recreation	25	52%
Safety & security	31	65%
Fundraising	23	48%
Discipline	22	46%
Disaster management	4	8%
Other (Specify)	1	2%
None of the above	0	0%

- **School sub-committees**

According to Table 4.7 forty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that SGB members are part of the school maintenance sub-committee; 50% of the SGB serve on the grounds and buildings sub-committee; 48% of them serve on the catering sub-committee; 52% serve on the sport culture& recreation sub-committee; 65% of the SGB members serve on the safety and security sub-committee; 48% serve on the fundraising sub-committee, and 46% serve on the discipline sub-committee. The fact that parents are serving on multiple sub-committees indicates that the school communities are prepared to take charge of the welfare of their schools. All members working in unison strengthen the possibility of creating progressive schools where both the individuals and institutions stand to benefit (Chetty 2003: 64).

4.2.2 MANAGEMENT

Table 4.8 Frequency distribution according to the role of principals in managing parent participation to promoting quality education

In securing SGB participation in promoting quality education, do you agree, disagree or are you uncertain that principals should...					
		Agree	Disagree	Uncertain	Total
4.8.1	Establish a welcoming environment	46 96%	0 0%	2 4%	48 100%
4.8.2	Have an inviting attitude	45 94%	0 0%	3 6%	48 100%
4.8.3	Be a good listener	45 94%	0 0%	3 6%	48 100%
4.8.4	Treat confidential matters as such	44 92%	0 0%	4 8%	48 100%
4.8.5	Have an open door policy	38 79%	3 6%	7 15%	48 100%
4.8.6	Develop capacity building programmes for parents	24 50%	2 4%	22 46%	48 100%
4.8.7	Educate the SGB about policies relevant to school governance	44 92%	0 0%	4 8%	48 100%
4.8.8	Involve the SGB in strategic planning for school improvement	35 73%	1 2%	12 25%	48 100%
4.8.9	Ensure schools are held accountable for quality education	43 90%	0 0%	5 10%	48 100%
4.8.10	Encourage the SGB to play role in safety and security at the school	37 77%	0 0%	11 23%	48 100%

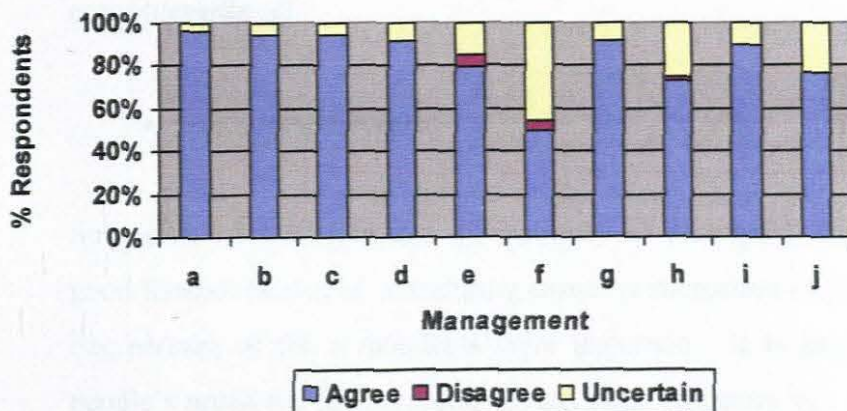


Fig. 4.1 Graph indicating the role of the principal in managing SGB participation in promoting quality education.

- **Establishing a welcoming environment**

Sub-table 4.8.1 reveals that 96% of the respondents agreed that they should establish a welcoming environment, while 4% of the respondents were uncertain. It thus can be inferred that principals are aware that unless you, as a manager, are welcoming, parents will not feel free to come to the school, or develop some rapport. Smith (1993: 228) advises that the successful school must assist individuals and the SGB to acknowledge the school's values by having a policy in place that will ensure a welcoming environment where all are happy, feel valued and co-operate with each other.

- **Have an inviting attitude**

Ninety-four percent of the respondents indicated that they are in agreement that principals must be inviting towards the SGB, as revealed by sub-table 4.8.2. The SGB will not frequent a school where they are made to feel that they are un-welcome guests. When problems do emerge and parents are asked to come to the school, many would do so reluctantly or find excuses for not having a face-to-face meeting with someone who is not inviting. However, 6% of the respondents were not certain whether being inviting is always the route to go. Principals may, however, have reasons for feeling this way, as some people tend to just walk into the school premises at any time, which could pose a safety risk. In schools where such behaviour is experienced, the principal should ensure that the SGB members are aware of their roles as well as of the rules that govern school visits. Times for school visits should be arranged so that they are convenient for all.

- **Be a good listener**

Sub-table 4.8.3 reveals that the majority of principals, namely 94%, regard being a good listener as crucial in securing parent participation in promoting quality education. Six percent of the respondents were uncertain. It is important for one to listen to people's opinions, concerns and advice, so as to ensure that whatever decision or action is taken, other people's opinions and views are accommodated. Prinsloo (1996: 267) contends that parents provide vital information. Therefore, a person who is a good

listener will glean valuable information and is usually repaid in that others will also listen to him/her.

The SGB has information of what goes on in the communities and may want to share information with the principal, especially if it involves the school. It would therefore be in the principal's interest to listen carefully to what the SGB have to say about issues pertaining to the school.

- **Treat confidential matters as such**

Most respondents, namely 92% as revealed in sub-table 4.8.4, agreed that confidential matters should be treated as such, while 8% of principals were uncertain about this. It is important to treat certain matters, such as the appointment of educators, as confidential. Sometimes elected members of the interview committee tell people they "trust" about the outcome of interviews conducted. When this "secret" is heard in public, it often results in affected parties declaring disputes. A crucial aspect of parent training is to ensure that members respect things that are confidential. Harvorsen et al. (1997: 59) advise that the SGB must decide whether anything discussed is confidential. Two things that have to be kept confidential are, among others, how one votes and what one thinks of members of the community.

- **Have an open door policy**

Sub-table 4.8.5 reveals that the majority of respondents (79%) agreed that an open door policy is necessary in securing parent participation in promoting quality education. However, 15% were uncertain and 6% disagreed. It is expected of principals to establish a co-operative working relationship with the SGB and the best way to achieve this would be by having an open door policy, where parents feel that they are able to approach the principal when a need arises.

- **Develop capacity building programmes for the SGB**

The new SGB members voted in usually have very little knowledge of what is

expected. Sub-table 4.8.6 reveals that 50% of the respondents agreed that capacity building programmes for parents should be developed; 46% were uncertain about this, while 4% disagreed. Davidoff and Lazarus (1997: 16) assert that people who hold positions of power (principals) should ensure that all role players in the school feel able to participate meaningfully in the life of the school. SASA (1995: 35) reveals that legislation under the new government mandates a democratic system that provides for the participation of all stakeholders with vested interest in education. It is therefore, vital that principals build the capacity of the SGB in order to empower them to participate effectively. This not only enables the SGB to play their rightful roles in ensuring the delivery of quality education, but it also improves the quality of life at school when everyone works collaboratively.

- **Educate the SGB about policies relevant to school governance**

It is evident from the data provided in sub-table 4.8.7 that a great number of principals, namely 92%, agreed that parents must be educated about relevant policies. Whilst this may be the case, in practice principals are complacent about educating the SGB about policies relevant to school governance. The SGB is a juristic body, therefore knowledge of education policies will enable them to function effectively and to remain within the legal framework in the execution of their duties. It is therefore crucial that the SGB are well informed about policies relating to school governance and the legal implications thereof. When the SGB are familiar with school policies and when they are able to implement policies that they have participated in drawing up, the possibility of delivering quality education is enhanced.

- **Involve the SGB in strategic planning for school improvement**

The school belongs to the community, therefore parents should have a say on how they would like their children to be educated, how their school should look and what facilities to offer to their children. It is encouraging to note that sub-table 4.8.8 reveals that 73% of the principals believed that parents must be involved in strategic planning; 25% were uncertain and only 2% said that they did not agree. It is in the principal's interest to allow parents to have an input in what they would like to improve or develop

at the school. The principal must compare the parents' expectations with that of his own, while also taking into consideration budgetary constraints in deciding about whether common needs could be met. It is imperative that the principal and the parents engage in strategic planning to implement improvements according to set priorities. Many researchers, such as Rue and Byars (1980: 117), are emphatic that involvement in the planning process fosters a greater personal commitment to the plan as it develops an attitude towards the plan as "our plan," rather than "their plan." As such, principals who involve the SGB in strategic planning are much more likely to improve the management of schools.

- **Ensure schools are held accountable for quality education**

Sub-table 4.8.9 reveals that the majority of respondents, namely 90%, agreed that schools should be held accountable for quality education, while 10% were uncertain about this. It is crucial that principals keep schools accountable for the provision of quality education. The principal as well as the SGB must work towards common objectives. It is when the principal and the SGB accept co-responsibility that they will be able to forge ahead with school plans to achieve set goals. According to Potgieter (1997: 21), co-operative governance is essential for the successful functioning of the school. All stakeholders must co-operate and accept responsibility to ensure that a culture of teaching and learning is fostered.

- **Encourage the SGB to play a role in safety and security at the school**

Seventy-seven percent of the respondents agreed that parents should play a dominant role in safety and security at the school, while 23% were uncertain, as revealed in sub-table 4.8.10. According to Naicker and Waddy (2003: 5), a school should be a place where learners can concentrate on their studies without being concerned about issues of discipline, safety and security. All schools are instructed to heed the call to establish discipline, safety and security committees.

According to Naicker (2001: 5), Education Department Government Notice No. 1040 contains the regulations for safety measures in schools. Section 9 (5) of these regulations require of all public schools to develop action plans on safety at schools, of

which parents should take charge. It can be deduced that those principals (29%) who indicated that they were uncertain about encouraging parents to play a role in the safety and security at the school are either ignoring policy or are indifferent about encouraging parents to play their rightful roles.

4.2.3 COMMUNICATION

Table 4.9 Frequency distribution with regard to the role of principals in ensuring effective communication with the SGB

How often do you engage in...	Always	Seldom	Never	Total
4.9.1 Keeping the SGB informed about new developments in education?	15 31%	32 67%	1 2%	48 100%
4.9.2 Keeping the SGB Informed about urgent matters concerning the school?	28- 58%	18 38%	2 4%	48 100%
4.9.3 Listening to suggestions put forward the SGB?	18 38%	29 60%	1 2%	48 100%
4.9.4 Encouraging suggestions from SGB with regard to the school year plan?	12 25%	33 69%	3 6%	48 100%
4.9.5 Providing the SGB with financial statements?	29 60%	19 40%	0 0%	48 100%
4.9.6 Discussing the budget with the SGB?	41 85%	7 15%	0 0%	48 100%
4.9.7 Discussing school functions to be held during the year?	15 31%	32 67%	1 2%	48 100%
4.9.8 Soliciting input from the SGB about the school's social matters?	9 19%	29 60%	10 21%	48 100%
4.9.9 Involving the SGB in strategic planning for school improvement?	18 38	29 60	1 2	48 100%
4.9.10 Requesting language translation when communicating with governors?	5 10	13 27	30 63	48 100%

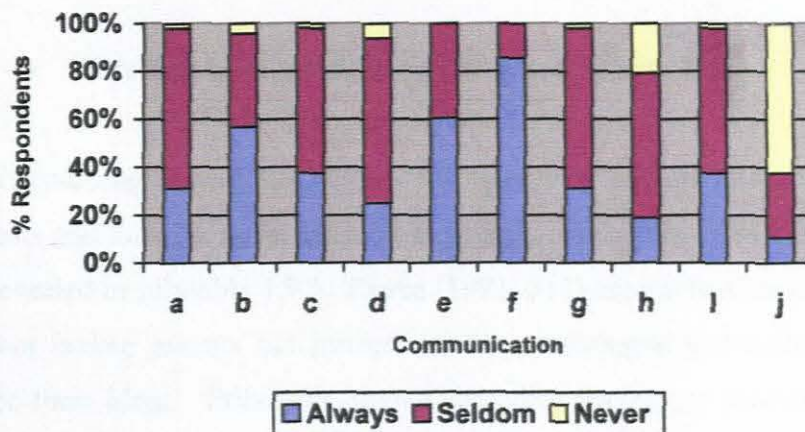


Fig 4.2. Responses relating to the role of principals in communication to facilitate effective SGB participation.

- **Keeping governors informed about new developments in education**

Sub-table 4.9.1 reveals that 31% of the respondents indicated that they seldom informed the SGB of new developments in education, whereas 67% always informed the SGB and 2% never informed them. This finding indicates that communication in terms of information dissemination about new developments in education is not effective. This situation reflects a lack of transparency between the parents and the principal. Ngcongo (1995: 28) advises that communication can contribute to the effectiveness of the school system and the facilitation of the achievement of the school's aims. It is important to keep the SGB informed on new developments as information could allow the governing body to evaluate progress made.

- **Keeping the SGB informed about urgent matters concerning the school**

Fifty-eight percent of respondents always informed the SGB about urgent matters concerning the school, while 38% seldom informed them. It is disconcerting to note that 4%, as revealed in sub-table 4.9.2, never informed the SGB. The question one must ask is, why elect an SGB if they are going to be ignored? Whereas it is crucial for school principals to keep parents informed about urgent matters, it is also important to keep them informed about positive developments, including successes achieved, so that they can feel part of the establishment. This is in line with Van der Westhuizen's (2002: 246) emphasis on the importance of informing SGB parent members about issues that affect them and their function with regard to school governance.

- **Listening to suggestions put forward by the SGB**

It is disturbing to note that 60% of the principals seldom listened to suggestions from parents and that 2% never listened to parents, while only 38% always listen to parents as revealed in sub-table 4.9.3. Rosen (1991: 351) asserts that the most effective schools do not isolate parents but instead encourage dialogue and collaboration to let them voice their ideas. Principals should therefore encourage parents to have input with

regard to matters that concern the school by listening to their suggestions. Van Niekerk (1987: 230) advises that, if the principal is a good listener, the SGB becomes willing to participate in the effective functioning of the school. If everyone understands what is communicated, the principal and SGB can work towards the schools goals together without anyone feeling left out because they do not comprehend the message communicated to them.

- **Encouraging suggestions from the SGB with regard to the school year plan**

Sub-table 4.9.4 reveals that 69% of the respondents seldom encouraged the SGB to make suggestions about the school's year plan, while 6% never asked for suggestions. The fact that only 25% always approached the SGB in this regard is an indication that schools predominantly take decisions without consulting parents on their school's planned activities. If the SGB is not encouraged to have any input in the improvements or planned activities for the year, they will not experience owning or being part of that which takes place at the school. Poster and Day (1988: 59) are of the opinion that principals should promote a participative ethos. Principals who exclude the SGB from having an input in the school's year plan are depriving their schools of a valuable resource in initiating change and in planning with regard to sustainable developmental programmes for the future.

- **Providing the SGB with financial statements**

It is encouraging to note that 60% of the principals always provided the SGB parents with a financial statement, as revealed in sub-table 4.9.5. However, the fact that 40% seldom did this is disconcerting. Principals who seldom provide financial statements are either not communicating effectively or have chosen to ignore a directive by SASA (1996: 39), which directs that the SGB is to establish a school fund, raise funds for the school, open a bank account and control school funds. However, there is an indication that some principals and the SGB are working collaboratively in this regard. If a lack of communication about financial matters, however, persists, parents may be discouraged from raising funds for the school.

- **Discussing the budget with the SGB**

Sub-table 4.9.6 reveals that 85% of the principals discussed the budget with SGB, while 15% seldom did this. The law prescribes that the SGB should participate fully in financial matters, especially in the budget. Van der Westhuizen (1991: 373) states that the budget is the primary business-planning instrument in a school's future programme. Parent involvement will increase the spirit of co-operation to achieve common goals. Sharing of ideas on financial matters serves as an important control mechanism for efficiency in resource management. According to Oosthuizen (2005: 222), all parties concerned should be involved in compiling the budget. Principals have a central role to play in ensuring that the SGB participates in drawing up the budget and presents it to the parent community at an official parent meeting.

- **Discussions about school functions to be held during the year**

It is disturbing to note that 67% of the principals, as observed from sub-table 4.8.7, seldom discussed the school functions for the year with the SGB, while 2% of them never involved the SGB in such pertinent discussions. Thirty-one percent of the principals, however, always informed SGB parents about functions planned for the year. It is the responsibility of the SGB to assist at school functions. If the SGB are not involved in the discussions about planned functions to be held at the school, it would mean that the principal has neglected to ensure their participation, as directed by SASA.

- **Soliciting input from the SGB on the school's social matters**

Sub-table 4.9.8 reveals that only 19% of the respondents solicited input from the SGB on social matters. Sixty percent of the principals seldom solicited input, while 21% never asked parents for their input. This information indicates that the SGB could seldom be in a position to acknowledge the educators for their hard work, especially when the school has produced good results. It is advisable that the SGB should spend some time with the educators at the beginning and at the end of the year as it is hoped that in doing so, a friendly working relationship may be fostered. In some areas, schools

experience serious social evils, such as drug abuse, ethnic tensions and other problems. Strategies should be in place to deal with these as well as with deaths that may occur. These are realities that the school will have to deal with when they do occur.

- **Involving the SGB in strategic planning for school improvement**

Parents are concerned about their children's progress at school. They are usually willing to address issues that hamper their children's progress. Therefore, it is disturbing to note that only 38% of the principals always involved parents in school improvement plans. The information contained in sub-tables 4.9. 4; 4.9.6 and 4.9.9 indicate that the SGB are seldom involved in decision-making with regard to crucial issues that involve their children. The fact that 60% of principals seldom involved parents, while 2% do not involve parents at all, indicates that, in the new democratic era, some principals still plan improvements without establishing community needs and without soliciting community support by means of the school SGB. This is unfortunate, as many parents have aspirations for their children to pursue certain careers. Given the opportunity, certain parents may choose to improve the sports field, while others may want to build a library. Although the SGB is not involved in decisions involving professional matters, Gray (1983: 74) advises that the SGB members do have fruitful ideas, by virtue of their election. Principals should encourage the voicing of such ideas through mutual dialogue and the planning process.

- **Requesting language translation when communicating with the SGB**

Sub-table 4.19.10 reveals that 63% of the principals do not have to translate from one language to another during a meeting. This indicates that the SGB and principals commonly speak the same language. However, 10% of the respondents always have to interpret, while 27% seldom do so. It is vital for interpretation to be done so as to ensure that everyone knows what is being discussed, what is to be done, how it should be done, and by whom. This will enable all concerned to make their points of view known. Enhanced understanding also facilitates effective delegation when responsibilities are passed on to the SGB. Meaningful participation and team building is enhanced when people communicate in a language understood by all.

4.2.4 LEADERSHIP

Table 4.10 Frequency distribution of items according to the principal's leadership role in facilitating SGB participation

As principal of the school, how would you rate the degree of SGB involvement in...				
	High	Medium	Low	Total
4.10.1 Drawing up the school's vision statement	3 6%	25 52%	20 42%	48 100%
4.10.2 Formulating the school's mission statement	3 6%	25 52%	20 42%	48 100%
4.10.3 Drawing up the learner's code of conduct	10 21%	25 52%	13 27%	48 100%
4.10.4 Drafting of the school constitution	7 15%	16 33%	25 52%	48 100%
4.10.5 Drawing up the school's improvement plan	6 13%	14 29%	28 58%	48 100%
4.10.6 Discussions about school fees	33 69%	15 31%	0 0%	48 100%
4.10.7 Discussions about the learner's progress at school	10 21%	25 52%	13 27%	48 100%
4.10.8 Discussions about improving the quality of education in the school	9 19%	23 48%	16 33%	48 100%
4.10.9 Discussions about improving the school buildings	12 25%	23 48%	13 27%	48 100%
4.10.10 Discussions on safety and security	16 33%	24 50%	8 17%	48 100%

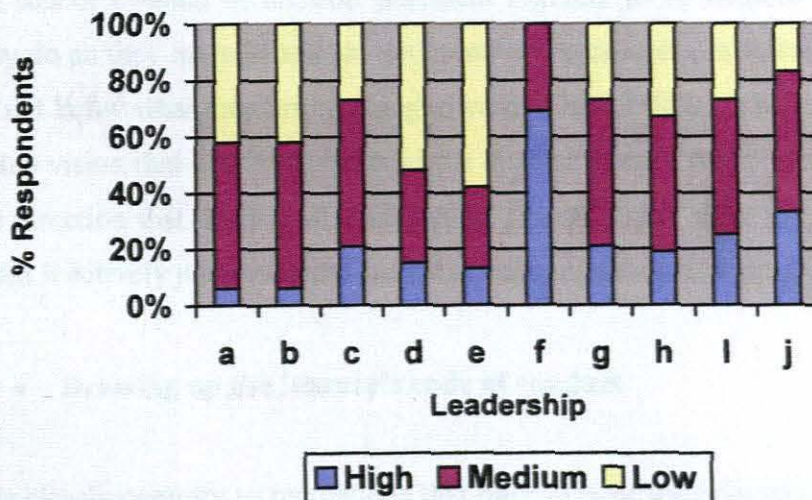


Figure 4.3 A graph indicating the distribution of items according to the principals' leadership role in facilitating SGB participation

- **Drawing up the school's vision statement**

It is noted with much concern that only 6% of the respondents indicated that they fully involved the SGB in drawing up the schools vision statement. Fifty-two percent engaged the SGB at a medium degree, while 42% engaged the SGB at a low degree, as revealed in sub-table 4.10.10. Principals who do not engage parents in this vital decision making process should take full responsibility when very little progress takes place at their schools. Duke (1990), as cited by Dimmock (1997: 101), states that a vision is a statement of what is desirable, but it must expressed in such a way that so it can inspire and motivate people to work towards improvement.

Finnigan and Schmidt (1993: 51) contend that people (the SGB included) work more productively when they have relevant information about the school's vision. Developing a vision, as a team, is therefore beneficial in that it encourages teamwork

- **Drawing up of the school's mission statement**

Sub-table 4.10.2 reveals that 6% of the respondents indicated that they involved the SGB at a high level; 52% indicated that they involved them at a medium level, and 42% stated that they involved the SGB at a low level. An SGB that does not know the school's vision or mission statement is likely to be reduced to robots, where they do as they are told and do not creatively participate in school activities. They do not know what they are working towards. John (1980: 2) believes that a clearly stated vision that is complemented by a distinct mission statement clearly indicates the direction that the school should take. Leadership is most likely to be effective when it actively pursues approved aims, using methods that are appropriate

- **Drawing up the learner's code of conduct**

It is clearly contrary to regulations that only 21% of the principals engaged parents at a high level in the drawing up of schools' codes of conduct, as revealed by sub-

table 4.10.3. This means that the SGB is expected to endorse school rules that they did not necessarily agree upon. It is easy to understand the frequency of disciplinary problems experienced at schools in the light of questionnaire results showing that 52% of the principals engaged parents at a medium level only, while 27% engaged them at a low level when drawing up the school code of conduct. It would, in these circumstances, be unacceptable to expect the SGB to be accountable for the poor behaviour of learners or to enforce rules that they did not agree on. Section 8 of SASA (1996:27) states that, *after consultation* with parents, a code of conduct for learners should be adopted the governing body. Principals who do not engage parents fully in this regard, violate this regulation and deprive the SGB of participating in one of the most crucial role functions.

- **Drafting of the school constitution**

In order to function effectively, any organisation has to be guided by a constitution that is drawn up by all the stakeholders. It is therefore disturbing to note that 52% of the principals engaged parents at a low level, while 33% of them engaged parents at a medium level when drawing up the school's constitution, as revealed in sub-table 4.10.4. The fact that only 15% of the respondents indicated that they engaged parents at a high level when drawing up the constitution indicates that the majority of schools are functioning unconstitutionally. The fact that the majority of parents do not participate in drawing up the school's constitution, indicates that parent involvement in school issues is not treated with the seriousness that it deserves. Harvorsen et al. (1997: 35) insists that the SGB must write up their own constitution. It is important to have the input of all stakeholders in the process. It must be remembered that the SGB are juristic persons who can sue and be sued SASA (1996: 28). It is of importance therefore that they should perform their duties within the school's constitution, as informed by governmental prescriptions.

- **Drawing up the school's improvement plan**

Thirteen percent of the principals engaged the SGB at a high level when drawing up their school's improvement plans, while 29% participated at a medium level and

52% participated at a low level, as revealed by sub-table 4.10.5. This information indicates that some principals have not yet acknowledged that the SGB and parents have expertise, experience, knowledge and information that could be useful in discussions on improving the school. The cost of improving the school can run into large sums of money and take a long time to complete. If the SGB and parents are included in planning the school's improvement, they could give guidance, offer their services, provide the building material or even offer financial assistance. It is necessary therefore to engage the SGB as well as the parent community, as schools often experience budgetary constraints.

- **Discussion on school fees**

Sub-table 4.10.6 reveals that 69% of school principals engaged parents at a high level in discussions about school fees. It is imperative that parents approve all decisions involving school fees SASA (1996: 39). However, the fact that 31% of the respondents consult the SGB at a low level on matters regarding school fees indicates that some principals make decisions about school fees without proper consultation. It is crucial that proper consultation takes place so as to ensure that regulations regarding the payment of school fees are correctly applied. SASA gives guidance as to who should pay school fees. Special attention should be given to different categories of learners for the purpose of exemption from the payment of school fees.

- **Discussion on the learners' progress at school**

One of the most important reasons why parents are asked to serve the school as school governors is to ensure that they monitor the quality of education and assist to improve it. It is disappointing to note that, as revealed by sub-table 4.10.6, only 21% of principals engage parents at a high level on matters concerning the learners' progress. The fact that 52% of principals allow parents to participate at a medium level and 27% at a low level, indicates that many principals do not encourage parents to take an active interest in their children's progress or that parents are themselves not interested in how their children are performing at school. This is

disturbing and confirms the findings in figure 4.11(a) on constraining factors where 40.2% of principals indicated that parents showed a lack of interest in school matters.

- **Discussion on improving the quality of education in the school**

The SGB is concerned about the condition and appearance of their children's school. An indication exists that parents believe that improving the quality of education should be the responsibility of the principal and school management team only. Sub-table 4.10.8 reveals that only 19% of respondents indicated that the parents are involved at a high level in discussions concerning improvement of the quality of education in the school. Forty-eight percent of the principals rated the involvement of parents in discussions about improving the quality of education in school as medium and 33% rated parent participation as low. According to Ubben and Hughes (1987: 31), the establishment of a school culture that positively influences academic achievement is based on the existence of good traditions in the school. The principal should put relevant policies in place to achieve these ideals. The involvement of the SGB in discussions aimed at improving the quality of education cannot be overemphasized.

- **Discussion on improving school buildings**

A school that has well-kept trees, gardens and buildings, indicates that the stakeholders have the appearance of the school as well as its buildings as one of their priorities. According to Neale, Bailey and Ross (1981: 14), the appearance of the school tells a story about the school. Unfortunately, only 25% of the principals' responses indicated that the SGB participated at a high level on discussions about improving the school's buildings. However, 48% of the principals rated the discussion of improving the school buildings as medium and 27% rated parent participation as low, as revealed in Table 4.10. This information indicates that very little is required of the SGB regarding the physical condition of the school. This lack of communication is unfortunate, as many parents are usually skilled at

improving buildings and they may well be prepared to render such a service to the school if asked.

- **Discussion on safety and security**

Safety and security has been high on the agenda, with regard to action plans for the Department of Education. Many workshops have been conducted to set up safety and security structures at schools. Thirty-three percent of the respondents indicated that they had worked with the SGB at a high level; 50% indicated that they engaged parents at a medium level, while 17% engaged parents only at a low level. According to Naicker (2003: 5), the school's discipline, safety and security committee is responsible for ensuring that learners are taught in a safe environments. It is pleasing that some attention is being given to safety at schools. Naicker furthermore advises that schools should work together with community policing forums, the local SAPS services, local influential people and educator union representatives.

4.2.5 Constraining factors

Table 4.11 (a) Frequency distribution of constraining factors

In my attempts as principal to involve parents, I experience the following constraints...	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain	Total
4.11.1 High illiteracy rate among governors	39 81%	7 15%	2 4%	48 100%
4.11.2 Lack of interest in school matters by governors	20 40,2%	7 15%	21 44,8%	48 100%
4.11.3 Poor attendance at SGB meetings	35 73%	11 23%	2 4%	48 100%
4.11.4 Too much power given to governors	11 23%	15 31%	22 46%	48 100%
4.11.5 Lack of support from community members	23 48%	12 25%	13 27%	48 100%
4.11.6 Difficulty in getting a quorum, especially when urgent matters arise	39 81%	6 13%	3 6%	48 100%

- **High illiteracy rate among the SGB**

Table 4.2 reveals that most respondents indicated that schools are situated in rural areas. Most people, especially those who have received some schooling, tend to leave the rural areas and migrate to urban areas in order to find employment. The elderly and some of those who received limited education usually remain behind. These people are, however, often called upon to serve on the SGB.

Sub-table 4.11.1 (a) reveals that 81% of the respondents agreed that SGB members are illiterate; 15% disagreed, while 4% were uncertain. Where parents are illiterate, an added responsibility rests with the principal. He has to ensure that these parents are empowered to a level where they are able to perform their duties with a reasonable level of competence. It may be expected of the principal to plan oral empowerment programmes to accommodate SGB members who cannot read or write.

- **Lack of interests in school matters by the SGB**

There were mixed feelings as to whether the SGB members are interested in school matters or not. Fifteen percent said that parents were not interested; 40,2% agreed that parents are interested in school matters, while 44,8% were uncertain, as revealed in sub-table 4.11.2 (a). This information indicates that while some parents do not show an interest in school matters, many do. Parents may have an interest in school, but if their input is not sought, they may be seen as uninterested.

- **Poor attendance at SGB meetings**

It is noted with concern that 73% of the respondents, as revealed in sub-table 4.11.3(a), indicated that SGB members do not attend meetings, while 4% are uncertain and only 23% of the parents attend meetings. In the open-ended responses, respondents complained that parents agreed to serve on the school governing body by accepting nomination, but failed to avail themselves when the need arose. It is therefore advisable for principals to plan in such a way that SGB

meetings are held at a time convenient for all members to attend. Poor attendance at SGB meetings prevents the principal from harnessing full co-operation and developing the SGB.

- **Too much power given to the SGB**

The majority of respondents, namely 46%, were uncertain about whether the SGB had been given too much power, while 31% disagreed. This indicates that a working relationship does exist between the SGB and principals. However, 23% agrees that the SGB had too much power, as revealed in sub-table 4.11.4 (a). This information indicates that, while some principals may enjoy a cordial working relationship, other schools have to deal with parents who are domineering. It is advisable that principals of schools with enthusiastic SGBs should try to establish a balance and strive to create a collaborative working spirit. By educating them on their roles and responsibilities as mandated by SASA, the SGB can be encouraged to actively engage in school matters, while desisting from undermining school structures. Potgieter (1997: 6) advocates that the SGB should make decisions on behalf of the school and see to it that the school is administered properly. However, professional matters remain the responsibility of the principal.

- **Lack of support from the community**

Forty-eight percent of the respondents agreed that community members do not support the school, while 25% disagreed and 27% were uncertain, as revealed in sub-table 4.11.5 (a). According to Prinsloo (1996: 262), the school and the parents are in pursuit of a common goal, that is, the education of their learners. Prinsloo (ibid) asserts that parents belong to the centre of their children's education. Since the school takes care of the school community's educational needs, it would be in the learners' interest if the community did support the school. The school and the parents need each other; therefore a close working relationship is imperative. The information received indicates that the community has not embraced the fact that the school belongs to them and that, without their support the school's progress will

be slow. Without support from the community, the provision of quality education cannot be guaranteed.

- **Difficulty in getting a quorum, especially when urgent matters arise**

The information supplied in sub-table 4.11.6 (a) indicates that although the SGB members attended meetings, 81% of the meetings failed to muster a quorum. Unless the school's policy states otherwise, a quorum constitutes 50% of the full SGB compliment. If meetings are held without a quorum, decisions taken may have to be re-visited when other members attend. Six percent of the respondents were uncertain, while 13% of the respondents disagreed that they had difficulty in getting a quorum. This information indicates that properly held SGB meetings are very few. Poor parent attendance at meetings implies that decisions about school matters are made by the minority. This leads the researcher to deduce that principals make decisions without or with very little input from the SGB.

Table 4.11 (b) Open-ended questions

Other constraining factors	Number of respondents	Percentage
4.11.1 SGB members joined for personal gain	22	46%
4.11.2 SGB experience problems when appointing educators	19	39%
4.11.3 Attending SGB meetings is inconvenient and costly	16	33%
4.11.4 SGB members are harassed by learners' parents	14	29%

4.2.6 Other responses

The responses from the open-ended question indicate that there is a lack of commitment from the SGB at some schools. Sub-table 4.11.1 (b) reveals that 46% of the respondents indicated that members of the community joined the SGB for personal reasons. Respondents complained that parents initially agreed to serve on the school's governing body, but were frequently not available when the school needed them. However, when political figures visited the school, or at political

functions, such as when voting takes place at the school, then these SGB members are in the forefront. This clearly indicates that some parents join the SGB with ulterior motives.

Sub-table 4.11.2 (b) reveals that 39% of the respondents indicated that SGB members who served on interview committees during the appointment of educators are accused of bias. The respondents indicated that SGB members were accused of applying the “jobs for pals” policy. Many SGB members complained that educators asked them to secure posts for them. When their requests were not honoured, an unpleasant working relationship usually prevailed at the school.

Thirty-three percent of the respondents indicated that the SGB complained that SGB meetings were held at inconvenient times and that travelling costs to and from SGB meetings were high, as some SGB members worked out in the cities.

Some respondents stated that SGB members complained that members of the community were abusive towards them. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents, as revealed in sub-table 4.11.4 (b), said that some SGB members lived in fear because parents accused them of gossiping about them, while other members were accused of practicing witchcraft. As a result, many SGB members had resigned.

It is therefore incumbent on principals to be mindful of challenges encountered by SGB members and to strive to find ways of ensuring that their term of office is not a regrettable experience.

4.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter an attempt was made to provide some order to the range of information provided by principals as respondents in the completion of questions in the questionnaire. Data used in measuring the role of the principal in facilitating the effective participation of the SGB in the provision of quality education was obtained from questions about:

a) Communication

- b) Leadership
- c) Management
- d) Constraining factors

The data was analysed and interpretations were provided. The next chapter presents details pertaining to the findings and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a summary of findings from both the literature review and the empirical study; recommendations are made that are based on these findings and, finally, a conclusion is drawn from the study. The recommendations that are provided offer practical guidelines for principals on effective ways to involve the SGB in the provision of quality education for learners at public schools.

5.2 SUMMARY OF STUDY

This study investigates the role that principals play in facilitating effective participation of parents on the SGB in promoting quality public education. In the literature study as well as the empirical study, it is established that basic conditions, for example, sound management, directive leading and effective communication, must exist in order to realise parent participation in school governance. The absence of sound management, efficient leadership and effective communication creates a situation in which the participation of parents in school governance may not materialise.

Chapter one provides a logistical framework under which the study was conducted. It provides a historical background to the study which depicts the divisions in the educational structure of the apartheid era. It also provides a statement of the problem which argues that as much as many transformational documents give authority to parents to play a central role in the governance of schools, in reality parents do not have adequate information or the appropriate skills to be effective role players in the governing of schools.

Operational definitions have been provided to facilitate a better understanding of the study. The researcher formulated specific aims to determine the course the study should take. The study also consists of a literature review together with an empirical

study which consists of structured questionnaires. A research methodology is also provided which is accompanied by the parameters and limitations of the study.

Chapter two provides the theoretical framework of the principal's role in facilitating effective participation of the SGB to promote quality education in public schools. This chapter pays particular attention to three basic role functions, namely:

- Managing participation;
- *Communicating effectively to secure participation;*
- Leading the participation process.

The chapter also provides crucial aspects of national policies that mandate parent participation in school governance.

Special mention is made on the orientation and training of parents with the aim of empowering them with skills on school governance. Reference is made to key areas such as delegation, teamwork and managing conflict. Stress has been placed on managing unity among governors.

The chapter also highlights the central role a principal has to play in communicating with stakeholders. Guidelines for effective communication and strategies for practical communication are eluded to. Emphasis is placed on leading as a form of power that represents ones capacity to translate intention into reality and sustain it. A number of leadership styles as well as leadership traits are examined.

Chapter three outlines the methodology the researcher employed in order to obtain data from respondents concerning the study. The study's research plan includes the acquisition of permission from the Department of Education to conduct the research; the selection of respondents; the research instrument; namely the questionnaire; a pilot study; the administration of the questionnaire processing of data; limitations as well as an ethical consideration.

The chapter has information on the value and structuring of questionnaires. The researcher used closed and open ended questions to solicit information from respondents..

The population chosen for the empirical study consisted of principals from primary and high schools, from both rural and urban areas. The respondents were randomly chosen.

Chapter four focuses on the analysis, presentation and interpretation of data. The chapter provides the following information:

- *Demographic information;*
- The principal's role in managing parent participation;
- The principal's role in ensuring effective communication with the SGB;
- The principal's leadership role in facilitating SGB participation.

Responses are also provided to constraining factors as well as open ended questions. The data was analysed graphically and descriptively.

5.3 FINDINGS

5.3.1 Orientation and training programmes for the SGB

From the literature study, it was found that the role of the principal in facilitating the effective participation of the SGB in the provision of quality education for learners in public schools might be inhibited by the following factors:

5.3.1.1 The SGB lacks knowledge and skills

It is evident from the study that a large number of SGB members are illiterate. Although SASA places school governors in a position of power, they usually know very little about what is happening in the school. Governing body members who are newly appointed do not necessarily have an understanding of policies that govern

their roles. Many parents are indifferent towards taking an active role in providing quality education.

5.3.1.2 The SGB lacks experience and confidence

The SGB usually consists of parents who are serving on the governing body for the first time and who may, therefore, have very limited or no experience and confidence. These parents are often persuaded by other parents to serve on the SGB without really knowing what the job entails. However, in order to gain some experience and confidence, governors who are newly appointed should actively participate in activities relating to school governance.

5.3.2 Invitational environment

5.3.2.1 An unwelcoming environment exists at schools

On the one hand, many parents complain that schools are uninviting, while some educators, on the other hand, view efforts by parents to assist in their children's education as interference. An unhealthy school environment, however, will surely arise when the principal and teachers give of their best in order to maintain a reasonable standard of education while parents sit back and do not get involved.

Educators are also inclined to view parents as abdicating their responsibilities by leaving the disciplining of their children to the educators. They also believe that some parents do not respond when they ask them to, but will question or over-react when their children perform poorly at school.

5.3.2.2 Schools do not disclose policies and information to the SGB

Members of the SGB are not informed about developments in education (cf. 4.9.1). Likewise, SGB members also believe that principals do not disclose relevant policy documents to them and that they withhold information regarding their (the SGB's) responsibilities. Parents believe that they are excluded from the decision making process and are merely told what to do when decisions have been made.

5.3.3 Effective and efficient communication

5.3.3.1 Communication involving the SGB is insufficient

Data in table (4,9) indicates that communication between the principal and the SGB is insufficient. The overload of administration work coupled to numerous departmental meetings and workshops often hinder effective communication. As a result, the SGB seldom visits the school to evaluate progress made with regard to planned activities and to address learners on issues affecting the provision of quality education. The SGB, therefore, seldom reports to the parent community about developments taking place at the school.

5.3.3.2 Communication with the SGB is insignificant

Communication between some principals and the SGB is superficial rather than profound. The SGB is overlooked as an insignificant resource to facilitate quality education. Communication is unidirectional, that is, communication is directed at parents from the school while very little communication is forthcoming from parents.

a) Communication should be sufficient

Principals are required to have good communication skills in order to promote effective human relations. The following activities will enhance the working relationship between the principal and the SGB:

- The SGB is regularly “workshopped” on policy documents;
- The SGB is encouraged to report back on progress made within the sub-committees in which members serve;
- SGB is given a platform to address learners on pertinent issues relative to quality education, such as discipline, homework, studying, reading, etc;
- SGB addresses parent community on critical themes, such as HIV/AIDS, drug and alcohol abuse, child abuse, etc;
- SGB presents the budget.

b) Communication should be valuable and significant

Principals should communicate significant information to parents so as to ensure that stakeholders are kept abreast of developments at the school as well in education. It is crucial for the principal to provide the SGB with the most relevant information, at the most suitable time and to solicit feedback timeously. This will be possible when principals:

- Telephone, or visit the SGB if necessary, to ensure that they are informed of urgent matters concerning the school;
- Ensure that urgent information reaches parents timeously by giving letters or copies of documents to the children to deliver;
- Ensure that communication with parents is on-going and that parents are not only called upon when problems arise;
- Invite motivational speakers to visit the school at least once or twice a year;
- Create environments that will stimulate the generation of new ideas through the exchange of thoughts and views, for example: parent-teacher conferences, discussions with career guidance teachers, informal contact with parents and teachers where parents are given time to discuss challenges and successes.

As relations become more cordial, parents will hopefully become more relaxed and will be able to talk to teachers about the education their children.

5.3.4 Promote a climate for conflict resolution

5.3.4.1 Conflicts are suppressed

Conflict is inevitable where people work in groups. It is unhealthy to allow conflicts to persist between SGB members. Similarly, a situation where conflict between the principal and SGB is allowed to ferment will do much to bring the progress of the school to a halt. Very often people believe that “turning a blind eye” on problems is a better solution than to confront the problem head on. This tactic is not advisable,

because if the problem is not addressed timeously, when it erupts it will plunge the organisation into chaos that may take a long time to remedy.

5.3.4.2 Discretion is problematic

It should be a rule that, whatever the SGB engages in, should be done in such a manner that no rule is transgressed. When something is regarded as confidential, it should be treated as confidential. While it is important to apply this rule at all times, it is, however, sometimes difficult to uphold. Very often SGB members have relatives about whom a decision may have been made in the community. “Trusting” SGB members may disclose information that they hope will be treated confidentially – and that may very well not be the case. It is also unwise to discuss private issues in public as such matters often have legal implications.

a) Conflict should be amicably resolved

The existence of conflict can cause the most stable institution to grind to a halt if it is left unchecked. Principals are advised to look for early warning signs of conflict threatening to destabilise relationships with the SGB. Once conflict has been positively identified, corrective supervision should be implemented immediately. The following recommendations are offered to deal with conflict:

- Conflict should be noticed, acknowledged and dealt with in a humane manner;
- In resolving conflict, the mediator should be impartial, or else further conflict may be fuelled;
- Feuding parties must be allowed sufficient time to try to resolve their differences once the conflict has been acknowledged;
- If no solutions are forthcoming, a neutral mediator may be asked to assist in *resolving the conflict*;
- The mediator should strive to achieve a win-win resolution to the conflict;
- Conflicting parties should be supported to ensure that their differences are in fact resolved.

b) Discretion should be observed

It has to be remembered that the SGB is not remunerated for the service they offer and that they usually make every effort to attend SGB meetings, often at their own expense. However, while being discreet, policies on school governance should not be compromised. Therefore, the principal should use his discretion when he engages the SGB in their role functions and activities at SGB meetings. The following is advised:

- The principal and SGB should decide which matters will be treated as confidential. Matters regarded as confidential, should be treated as such;
- Private matters should not be discussed at meetings as this is a catalyst for fuelling conflict;
- Every effort should be made to avoid discussing personal issues at meetings;
- Personal matters involving the school should be discussed between the people directly involved;
- Conflict or disagreement that may exist within the SGB complement should not be publicised.

The principal and SGB are accountable and therefore have to take responsibility for the decisions that they take. They should therefore be discrete in all matters.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above findings, the following is recommended:

5.4.1 The SGB should be trained

The SGB should be trained and skilled so that they can do their work as prescribed by SASA. They should be orientated, attend workshops and be provided with in-service training and assistance by those SGB members who have some experience in school governance and training.

In order to improve the knowledge base and governance skills of parents, they should be engaged in the following activities and bodies:

- Group discussions on contents of selected and relevant policy documents;
- School committees and management councils;
- Serve on tribunals or interview committees;
- Regularly attend and actively participate in SGB meetings;
- Attend SGB workshops arranged by the Department of Education.

5.4.2 Opportunities should be created to actively involve the SGB

The SGB should be encouraged to serve on committees. They could also work in groups where some of the members have some experience and are prepared to share their skills. Principals can engage parents in mock demonstrations on issues of school governance so as to create opportunities for parents to develop confidence. Principals should create opportunities for parents to participate in a variety of school activities and should encourage the SGB to persuade other parents to participate in school activities. In order to build capacity, it is important for SGB parents as well the parent community to become engaged in the following school activities:

- Supervising classes when teachers are absent;
- Assisting with artwork and library book displays;
- Organising sport and cultural events;
- Assisting with fund raising;
- Accompanying pupils on excursions or field trips;
- Maintenance and repair of school facilities.

5.4.3 A welcoming environment should be created

In a school where parents are accepted and welcomed, a great deal can be done to create an environment where everyone works in unison to achieve the school's objectives and to provide in the community's needs. This creates a healthy relationship between the school and the community and provides an environment for

effective learning. Every effort should be made to motivate the SGB to function optimally. Principals should therefore make every attempt to create a warm, friendly and inviting environment as a means to cultivate participation from school governors. The following are some suggestions that principals may adopt in order to create an inviting environment:

- A sign such as: “WELCOME TO KWADLADLA PRIMARY SCHOOL,” will go a long way towards making visitors to the school feel welcome;
- The principal can organise parent-teacher social gatherings in order to provide opportunities for parents and teachers to get to know each other;
- Newsletters and brochures can also be used as icebreakers at meetings and workshops;
- An invitation to the SGB to plan an athletic sports day where they are asked to serve as officials will help to create good relations between school and parents;
- Parents could be invited to participate in discussions about the planned developments of the school;
- The principal can invite motivational speakers to speak to the staff as well as the SGB.

5.4.4 Policies and vital information should be disclosed

Policies and crucial information should be brought to the attention of the SGB. The following methods could be used:

- Copies of policy documents should be made and given to SGB members;
- Documents on governance should be kept in a special place that parents have access to, and they should be encouraged to read these documents;
- Special SGB meetings should be held to update parents on the latest developments and policy mandates;
- Oral discussions and sessions involving visual aids and practical demonstrations should be arranged for those parents who cannot read and write;

- Parents should be encouraged to spend time with the more experienced members of the SGB to discuss policy documents.

5.4.5 Communication should be sufficient

Principals are required to have good communication skills in order to promote effective human relations. The following activities will enhance the working relationship between the principal and the SGB:

- The SGB is regularly “workshopped” on policy documents;
- The SGB is encouraged to report back on progress made within the sub-committees in which members serve;
- SGB is given a platform to address learners on pertinent issues relative to quality education, such as discipline, homework, studying, reading, etc;
- SGB addresses parent community on critical themes, such as HIV/AIDS, drug and alcohol abuse, child abuse, etc;
- SGB presents the budget.

5.4.6 Communication should be valuable and significant

Principals should communicate significant information to parents so as to ensure that stakeholders are kept abreast of developments at the school as well in education. It is crucial for the principal to provide the SGB with the most relevant information, at the most suitable time and to solicit feedback timeously. This will be possible when principals:

- Telephone, or visit the SGB if necessary, to ensure that they are informed of urgent matters concerning the school;
- Ensure that urgent information reaches parents timeously by giving letters or copies of documents to the children to deliver;
- Ensure that communication with parents is on-going and that parents are not only called upon when problems arise;
- Invite motivational speakers to visit the school at least once or twice a year;

- Create environments that will stimulate the generation of new ideas through the exchange of thoughts and views, for example: parent-teacher conferences, discussions with career guidance teachers, informal contact with parents and teachers where parents are given time to discuss challenges and successes.

As relations become more cordial, parents will hopefully become more relaxed and will be able to talk to teachers about the education their children.

5.4.7 Conflict should be amicably resolved

The existence of conflict can cause the most stable institution to grind to a halt if it is left unchecked. Principals are advised to look for early warning signs of conflict threatening to destabilise relationships with the SGB. Once conflict has been positively identified, corrective supervision should be implemented immediately. The following recommendations are offered to deal with conflict:

- Conflict should be noticed, acknowledged and dealt with in a humane manner;
- In resolving conflict, the mediator should be impartial, or else further conflict may be fuelled;
- Feuding parties must be allowed sufficient time to try to resolve their differences once the conflict has been acknowledged;
- If no solutions are forthcoming, a neutral mediator may be asked to assist in resolving the conflict;
- The mediator should strive to achieve a win-win resolution to the conflict;
- Conflicting parties should be supported to ensure that their differences are in fact resolved.

5.4.8 Discretion should be observed

It has to be remembered that the SGB is not remunerated for the service they offer and that they usually make every effort to attend SGB meetings, often at their own expense. However, while being discreet, policies on school governance should not be compromised. Therefore, the principal should use his discretion when he engages the SGB in their role functions and activities at SGB meetings. The following is advised:

- The principal and SGB should decide which matters will be treated as confidential. Matters regarded as confidential, should be treated as such;
- Private matters should not be discussed at meetings as this is a catalyst for fuelling conflict;
- Every effort should be made to avoid discussing personal issues at meetings;
- Personal matters involving the school should be discussed between the people directly involved;
- Conflict or disagreement that may exist within the SGB complement should not be publicised.

The principal and SGB are accountable and therefore have to take responsibility for the decisions that they take. They should therefore be discrete in all matters.

5.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

The information provided by the literature review and empirical study reveals that one of the challenges that schools are faced with is the acute passiveness of some parent governors. The need for parent participation in school activities cannot be over-emphasised.

It is hoped that this research study will be instrumental in helping principals to realise that without the participation of parents, success cannot be envisaged. In the same way, it is hoped that parents will realise that without their committed support, the school cannot function optimally. If parents are not effectively engaged in the educative process, the education of learners will be stifled and this will impact negatively on society as a whole.

It is recommended that an investigation be conducted on the factors that discourage parent participation. It is also advised that empirical study be applied in order to elicit comment and possible suggestions in this regard from SGBs, especially in such schools where this problem is rife. In this way the opinions and suggestions of SGBs

could be used in devising strategies that may encourage and harness parent participation more effectively.

5.6 Limitations of the study

This study was thought provoking in that it presented many challenges for the researcher to deal with. Limitations and problems encountered in the study are as follows:

- In spite of their approval, some principals completed the questionnaire hastily. It is suspected therefore, that some of their responses may not have been carefully considered;
- It is presumed that some principals saw the exercise as an attempt at “whistle blowing,” while a few principals have seemingly provided “expected responses” so as to project a better image of their schools;
- Seven percent of the respondents handed in their questionnaires too late, in spite of being given an extension of time in an effort to secure a hundred percent return rate. These responses were classified as questionnaires that were not returned;
- Four percent of the respondents made careless mistakes in their responses, which resulted in their questionnaires being spoilt;
- The research sample comprised of principals only. Dissimilar responses may have been elicited from SGB members.

5.7 Final Remark

The aim of the study was to explore the role of principals in facilitating effective participation of the SGB in the provision of quality education. The study concentrated specifically on the role of principals in managing, leading and communicating with the SGB. It was noted, however, that as much as some principals welcomed contributions made by the SGB to education, many others were still struggling to harness their effective participation. Until such time as the principal and the SGB work together as a team in order to ensure the provision of quality

education, excellence in educational outcomes will remain a theoretical ideal rather than a practical reality.

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APPENDIX 1

KwaDladla Primary School
P.O Box 633
Ixopo
3276
12 June 2004

The Regional Director
Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education and Culture
Ex-Durban College of Education
Private Bag X05
Rossburgh
4072

Sir

RE: REQUEST FOR PREMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

I am in the process of conducting a research project aimed at examining the role principal's can play in ensuring the effective participation of parents in schools. Permission is therefore requested to conduct such a research in your schools. This research is towards my M.ed degree and is being carried out and the supervision of Dr M.K.K Chetty of the University of Zululand.

The topic of my dissertation is: An investigation into the principal's role in facilitating the effective participation of School Governors. For the purpose of this research a questionnaire will be developed which will be administered to principals located in the Ixopo Circuit. All information elicited from the research will be treated as confidential and anonymity is ensured.

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours faithfully


F.L Haines



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
 ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATAL
 PROVINSE KWAZULU-NATAL



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
 UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO NAMASIKO
 DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS EN KULTUUR

ADDRESS IBUSU ADRES	EXETERIAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION CHR. NICHOLSON ROAD AND QUEEN MAY AVENUE UMHLO	PRIVATE BAG IBUKHAMA SEPOSI PRIVAATSAK	X06 ROSBURGH 4872	TELEPHONE UCBHO TELEFONU	031 2744821
				FAX	031 2744822

ENQUIRIES IBHULI NAVRAE	P. T. ZUNGU	REFERENCE INKOMBA VERWYSING		DATE USUKU DATUM	19 July 2004
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TO: **FREDERICK LOUIS HAINES**
 Kwa-Dada Primary School
 P. O. Box 772
 IXOPO
 3276

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Please be informed that you have been granted permission to conduct research with the following terms and conditions.

- That as a researcher, you must present a copy of the written approval from the Department to the Head of the Institution concerned before any research may be undertaken at a departmental institution bearing in mind that the institution is not obliged to participate if the research is not a departmental project.
- Research should not be conducted during official contact time, as education programmes should not be interrupted, except in exceptional cases with special approval of the KZNDEC.
- The research is not to be conducted during the fourth school term, except in cases where the KZNDEC deem it necessary to undertake research at schools during that period.
- Should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application for extension must be directed to the Director: Research, Strategy Development and ECMIS
- The research will be limited to the schools or institutions for which approval has been granted.
- A copy of the completed report, dissertation or thesis must be provided to the RSDE Directorate
- Lastly, you must sign the attached declaration that you are aware of the procedures and will abide by the same

B. H. MTHABELA
 RESEARCH, STRATEGY, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ECMIS

APPENDIX 3

KWADLADLA PRIMARY SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 772
IXOPO
3276
22 JULY 2004

THE CIRCUIT MANAGER
DEPT. OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 133
HIGHFLATS
3306

SIR

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SELECTED
SCHOOLS IN THE IXOPO DISTRICTS.**

I am in the process of completing my M. ED Degree with The University of Zululand. I therefore ask your permission to conduct an educational research in several schools under your jurisdiction. I have applied for permission from the Regional Director to embark on this project who has kindly agreed. Find a copy of the letter enclosed.

The topic of my dissertation is: An investigation into the principal's role in facilitating the effective participation of school governors in promoting quality education in public schools. The research will be conducted by developing a questionnaire that will be administered to principals of schools. All information furnished by respondents will be treated confidentially and anonymity is assured.

Thanking you in anticipation.

YOURS FAITHFULLY



F.L. HAINES.



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATAL
PROVINSIE KWAZULU-NATAL



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO
DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS

IXOPO CIRCUIT**ISEKETHE LASEXOBHO****IXOPO CIRCUIT**

Address: Next to Phungashe Magistrate Court,
Ikheli Eluphepheni, St Faiths Rd, Highflats
Address 3306

Post Box P O Box 133
Ibhokisi leposi: HIGHFLATS
Pos Boks : 3306

Telephone (039) 835-0309
Ucingo
Telephoon
Fax (039) 835-0233

Enquiries:
Imibuzo : Mr BH Mdluli
Navrae :

Reference :
Inkomba : Permission - research
Verwysing:

Date :
Usuku: 15 October 2004
Datum:

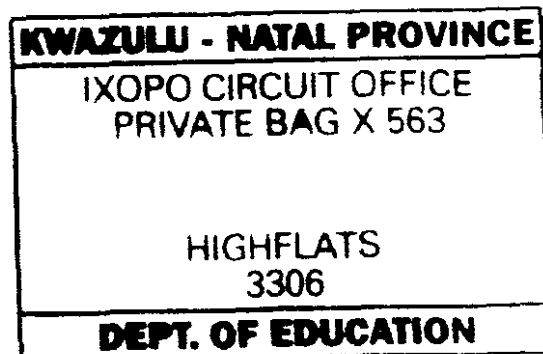
Mr F. L. Haines
PO Box 335
HIGHFLATS
3306

Dear Sir

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH - IXOPO CIRCUIT

1. *Your letter of the 22nd July 2004 has reference.*
2. *Permission is hereby granted to conduct research along the lines of your proposal.*
3. *You are to make your own arrangement regarding access to schools in your sample. Ensure that teaching and learning are not negatively affected by your project.*
4. *I take this opportunity to wish you well in your studies.*


BH MDLULI
CIRCUIT MANAGER



APPENDIX 5.

DEAR RESPONDENT

I wish to inform you that you have been chosen at random to be a respondent to my questionnaire. I thank you for giving of your time to answer these questions, which will help me to gather some data about school governance.

I assure you that all information supplied by you will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Please answer the questions as honestly as possible as I wish to obtain reliable information from this research. Please give a written comment where necessary.

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS AS FOLLOWS:

1. Tick where applicable.
2. Where required write in the space required.

SECTION ONE: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

QUESTION 1

1.1. Gender of Respondent		
Male	1	
Female	2	

1.2. Location of School		
Rural	1	
Urban	2	

1.3. Previous Education Department		
HOR	1	
DET	2	
DEC	3	
NED	4	
OTHER	5	

1.4 Number of parents on SGB		
None	1	
1 – 2	2	
3 – 4	3	
5 – 6	4	
More than 6	5	

1.5. No. of co-opted SGB members		
None	1	
1 – 2	2	
3 – 4	3	
5 – 6	4	
More than 6	5	

1.6. No. of times your SGB meets per year		
Once a year	1	
2 – 4 times a year	2	
4 – 6 times a year	3	
More than 6 times a year	4	
Never	5	

1.7. In which sub-committees are the SGB involved at your school		
School Maintenance	1	
School Grounds and Buildings	2	
Catering	3	
Sports, Culture & Recreation	4	
Safety and Security	5	
Fund-raising	6	
Discipline	7	
Disaster Management	8	
Other (Specify)	9	
None of the above	10	

QUESTION 2

1.8 PRINCIPAL AS COMMUNICATOR

How often do you engage in.....	Always	Sometimes	Never
1.8.1 Keeping the SGB informed about new developments in education.			
1.8.2 Keeping the SGB informed about urgent matters concerning the school.			
1.8.3 Listening to suggestions put forward by the SGB.			
1.8.4 Encouraging suggestions from the SGB with regard to the school year plan.			
1.8.5 Providing the SGB with financial statements.			
1.8.6 Discussing the budget with the SGB			
1.8.7 Discussing school functions to be held during the year.			
1.8.8 Soliciting input from SGB about the schools social matters.			
1.8.9 Involving the SGB in strategic planning for school improvement.			
1.8.10 Requesting language translation when communicating with the SGB.			

QUESTION 3

1.9 THE PRINCIPAL AS LEADER

As principal of the school, how would you rate the degree of SGB involvement in	High	Medium	Low
1.9.1 Drawing up the school's vision statement.			
1.9.2 Formulating the schools mission statement.			
1.9.3 Drawing up the learner's Code of Conduct.			
1.9.4 Drafting of the school constitution.			
1.9.5 Drawing up the schools improvement plan.			
1.9.6 Discussions on school fees.			
1.9.7 Discussions the learners' progress at school.			
1.9.8 Discussions on improving the quality of education in the school			
1.9.9 Discussions on improving the school buildings.			
1.9.10 Discussions on safety and security.			

