



THE OVERSIGHT ROLE OF GOVERNING BODIES IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN THE  
UPPER XOLOBE ADMINISTRATIVE AREA, TSOMO MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters in Public Administration (MPA)

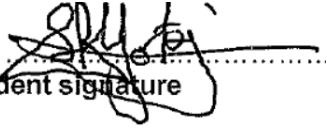
to be awarded at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU)

January 2015

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## DECLARATION

I, Bafo Synford Yotsi student number 211210811, hereby declare that the treatise for Masters in Public Administration (MPA) to be awarded is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another University or for another qualification.

  
.....  
Student signature

Bafo Synford Yotsi

## **DEDICATION**

This treatise is dedicated to:

My late parents, brothers and sisters; for their care, love, and support which provided a solid foundation in my physical, spiritual and intellectual development.

My wife, Nontuthuzelo Yotsi; for her motivation, which sponsored resilience at times when I felt like giving up the study. Her support, material and otherwise, and for her sacrifices in order to give time and space to pursue the study.

My children, Qaqamba, Lithalethu and Sinezipho; for sacrificing their father's love and other material benefits in support of the cause.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

It would be a serious omission not to acknowledge the following categories of people who played a significant role in assisting and supporting me to pursue and to complete the study:

- Researchers, scholars and writers on school governance, whose work I acknowledged throughout my research study.
- My friends and colleagues, especially Siphokazi Ngqungqu, Nkosinathi Tetani, Nontuthuzelo Cekiso, Zamikhaya Ronoti and many others.
- My editors and language proof-readers, Ms Renee Van der Merwe and Ms Helen Allen.
- Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education for financing me to pay for my studies.
- King William's Town Education District for its permission to conduct research in its schools.
- Principals and school governing body (SGB) members of the four selected schools for this study.
- The Almighty God for taking care of me and sustaining my state of health throughout my studies.

My unconditional sincere gratitude and appreciation is extended to my Supervisor, Prof Derek Taylor for his mentorship, inspiring motivation, guidance, support, patience, enthusiasm, encouragement and developmental opinions. Without him I would not have completed the study.

## **ABSTRACT**

The South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) ushered in democratic election of school governing bodies (SGBs) to replace old apartheid structures. The main function of SGBs is to develop the vision and mission statements and various policies for implementation by principals in their respective schools. In the SGBs, parent members constitute the majority in order to strengthen their position in decision-making processes for the future of their children. However, there is quite a huge number of challenges that hamper the effective oversight of policy implementation by school principals among SGBs, especially in rural areas and poor townships. The following are the most glaring of those challenges: low level of education, non-availability of versions in legislation and policy documents that guide the SGBs in their roles and functions; in the eleven official languages prescribed by the Constitution, inadequate number of capacity-enhancement training workshops offered by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to SGBs. Among the recommendations which are in concurrence with many other researchers on SGBs, the researcher listed the following: introduction of bench-mark policy in terms of both age and level of education for nomination of potential parent SGB members eligible for election to serve on SGBs, amendment to SASA to give voting powers to co-opted members of SGBs, especially retired professionals due to their experience and the development of curriculum for short courses to be offered by Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges, in particular to serving SGB members.

### **KEY WORDS:**

- Upper Xolobe
- Tsomo Magisterial District
- School governing bodies (SGBs)
- Oversight
- South African Schools Act (SASA)
- SGBs' capacity
- School management teams (SMTs)

- SGBs' roles and functions

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH OVERVIEW**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

According to Ramadiro and Vally (2005: 1), in the past, school governance in South Africa was characterised by a top-down approach. Educators, learners, parents and communities were excluded from making important decisions about schools. Principals and inspectors were the main decision-makers for the schools. The racially based system of education gave white parents decision-making powers. This was not the case in schools serving black communities. Many communities, though, formed Parent, Teacher, Student Associations (PTSAs). As part of the efforts to make schools democratic, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (the SASA Act) was passed. An important provision in the Act was the establishment of democratically elected school governing bodies (SGBs). The scrapping of school committees and their replacement by the democratically elected school governing bodies (SGBs) was hailed as significant milestones in improving school governance and general management of schools. This was also perceived as an important step towards the improvement of the quality of the culture of learning and teaching as well as the start of transparency and accountability to the people who elected them (Nyambi, 2005: 1). According to the Educators' Voice (March 1999: 16), the old apartheid school committee system was characterised by undemocratic practices, racism and inequality as well as being gender insensitive. The SASA Act, 1996, mandates all public schools to have democratically elected school governing bodies (SGBs) to ensure that properly elected, competent and visionary SGB members assume governance and responsibility of our public schooling system in support of quality teaching and learning (National Guidelines for School Governing Body Elections, 2012: 5-6).

It is essential for parents on school governing bodies of rural schools to be given the necessary training so that they can have a working knowledge of school governance activities (Duma, Kapueja & Kanyile, 2011: 44). The inclusion of parents on a school governing body is translated into the democratisation of education as stipulated in the

South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, which stipulates that parents must participate in school governance (RSA, 1996). This participation involves, *inter alia*, planning, organising, leading, supervising, policy-making, decision-making, controlling and coordinating, which are some of the management duties of school governance structures (Duma et al, 2011: 1). In terms of Section 16A(1)(a) of the SASA Act, the principal of a public school represents the Head of Department in the governing body when acting in an official capacity as contemplated in Sections 23(1)(b) and 24(1)(j). The following are some of the functions of all school governing bodies, in terms of Section 20 of the above-mentioned Act:

- To promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school;
- To adopt a constitution;
- To develop the mission statement of the school;
- To adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school;
- To support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions; and
- To adhere to any actions taken by the Head of Department in terms of Section 16 of the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, (EEA Act) to address the incapacity of a principal or educator to carry out her or his duties effectively.

## **1.2 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the role of school governing bodies in their oversight role of the implementation of education departmental policies by school principals in selected schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area. According to Clarke (2009: 14), there is no doubt that a school improves when a school's governors exert their governance oversight authority in a way that promotes the effective use of resources and establishes a climate which encourages teaching and learning. South African schools, especially in rural areas, are still grappling with the challenges of electing effective people into school governing bodies (National Guidelines for School Governing Body Elections, 2012: 6). The Upper Xolobe Administrative Area is a rural

traditional authority area under the traditional leadership of a headman who is appointed in line with traditional chieftainship under the supervision of a chief. There is also a democratically elected ward councillor as a political leader. In the area, there are seven General Education and Training (GET) band schools and one Further Education and Training (FET) band school or senior secondary school which offers tuition for grades 10 to 12. There are, therefore eight (8) governing bodies for the eight institutions. The majority of SGB members are not adequately educated. According to Clarke (2009: 1), schools are effective when there is an institutional environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. There is significant research identifying the characteristics of schools where good teaching and learning are evident, where there is a good work ethic and where children are provided with opportunities to develop to their full potential (Clarke, 2009: 1). The challenge for school governors is to see that they perform their governance functions in a way that will create a school environment where these characteristics are evident. The perceptible indications are that against the background of the challenge of the level of education of the majority of the parent members of SGBs, their mandatory term of office which is only three years and a myriad of other environmental challenges, the eight SGBs of the eight institutions in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area are to grapple with, creating a school environment where the characteristics mentioned might be challenging. Two important principles of the South African Schools' Act are concerned with inclusivity and decentralisation. Inclusivity means the participation of parents, educators, non-teaching staff, learners, and other people who are willing and able to make contribution to the school. Bringing decision-making closer to the people is desirable, but this in itself will not solve all the problems and challenges faced by school governing bodies. Research has shown that school governing bodies face many problems despite the fact that decisions are made by people closest to the situation (Ramadiro & Vally, 2005: 1). This study intends to investigate the combined effect of the various components constituting the school governing body members of eight schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area in their oversight role of policy implementation by school principals or school managers.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

As previously mentioned this study will investigate the role of school governing bodies (SGBs) in their oversight function pertaining to the implementation of education departmental policies by school principals. According to Section 29(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is practicably reasonable. This constitutional mandate includes the idea that stakeholders like parents, teachers, learners and members of the community should be able to participate in the activities of schools (Department of Education, 1997: 5-6). A problem in executing this constitutional mandate relates to the effectiveness of school governing bodies (SGBs), especially in rural areas, in terms of understanding their roles and responsibilities and their capacity to execute those roles and responsibilities. Van Schalkwyk (1998) in Duma (2009) warns that some educators have a negative attitude towards parents in the school governing bodies. Educators with such an attitude, tend to blame parents for meddling in the school governance operations (Duma et al, 2011: 44). Badenhorst (1992) in Mkentane (2003), contends that if educators ignore the strengths that father and mother figures can bring to schools, valuable resources that could have a positive impact on the school governance activities are neglected. According to Charlton and David (1994:6); Buck, (1992:36) and Whedall, (1992:2) in Mestry and Khumalo (2012:98) there is a perception among stakeholders that learner discipline, is a serious problem rendering many schools as ineffective institutions of teaching and learning.

Section 9 of The Education Laws Amendment Act, No.31 of 2007 opens up the possibility of more direct involvement of governing bodies in professional activities because principals must table school improvement plans and provide feedback on the implementation of such plans and present a report on professional management to the governing body (Heystek, 2010:99). This view is supported by Section 58B of the Act because the Provincial Heads of Departments (HoDs) may suspend the functioning of a governing body if it prejudices quality education. The implication here is that the governing body has some power in professional matters related to ensuring quality of

education (Heystek, 2010:99).The South African Schools Act, 1996, ushered in 'governance' in all South African public schools, by introducing school governing bodies (SGBs) that have overall control and authority in the school, its policies and its direction. However, the introduction of SGBs in schools created two centres of power (Bagarette, 2011:223).Joubert and Bray (2007:30) in Bagarette (2011) posit the view that devolution of authority is one of the basic principles of a democratic state and in effect, requires the democratisation and decentralisation of education. In South Africa, the various stakeholders such as principals, parents and learners have in the past been exposed to authoritarian modes of management and as a result of this they have a daunting task of converting participative management into reality (Mosoge& Van der Westhuizen, 1997) in Nyambi, (2005:11).According to Ramadiro and Vally (2005:1-2), some SGBs are not functioning properly because they do not have the necessary skills and they are not sure about their roles and responsibilities. This mostly happens in poorer communities, where people have few resources and many cannot read and write. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that some of the schools do not obtain sufficient money, support and training from the government.

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:120) in Nyambi (2005:11), stress that it is particularly important at this point in the history of South Africa, when schools are being given more financial autonomy, to build the capacity of schools to manage their own resources. However, Davis (1999:106) warns that it is only when members of the governing body have a clear conception of their functions that they will be able to perform their tasks in a morally responsible and accountable manner and will be able to improve their skills. Heystek (2010: 99) postulates the view that new powers given to governing bodies allowing them to be more responsive to professional matters in schools may affect the professional rights of teachers, since unprofessional or lay educational people (the parents) can now be involved in professional activities. Heystek (2010) further asserts that the intention, however, is not that parental representatives be involved in professional matters for which they are not trained, but that they should be in a position to act in cases of gross negligence. They should focus on the positive aspects and promote quality via support and good relationships, building up a positive climate and

encouraging ownership rather than using the negative approach of threatening people. Bagarette (2011:224) proposes that a solid working relationship between the principal and the SGB creates the opportunity for the stakeholders to develop a sense of ownership of the school with its challenges and will therefore compel both partners to jointly take responsibility for the betterment and advancement of the school and its community. Bagarette (2011) further argues that the question that is often asked is whether this working relationship between SGBs and principals in public schools is successful. Bagarette (2010) contends that this question is based on numerous reports, for instance, Moon et al, (2000:57-62); Heystek, (2004:150); Karlsson, (2002:332); and Mestry, (2006:28) that refer to the power relations between the principals and the SGBs in public schools.

Expositions by various authorities and researchers referred to in this problem statement depict that the issue of school governance as regulated by the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, as amended, is a complex issue ranging from levels of literacy, capacity building, power relations and environmental impact, to mention but few. The complexity of the school governance terrain, therefore, justifies research on the subject. This research will therefore investigate the role of SGBs of selected schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area, which is a completely rural environment to play their oversight role in order to hold principals of schools in the area accountable for implementation or non-implementation of education departmental policies. To investigate the problem more effectively, the following issues, among others, will need to be addressed:

- To establish the average literacy level of SGB members in the research area;
- To investigate the commitment of school principals in terms of developing the capacity of SGB members as expressed in the SASA Act;
- To identify the roles of SGB members and those of the school principals; and
- To establish whether there are issues of 'power relations' between the SGBs and school principals at the selected schools.



## **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research study questions are proposed to address the aims of the study:

- Is there a correlation between the average literacy levels of parent SGB members and their role in making school principals account for implementation or non-implementation of departmental policies in the selected schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area?
- Do school principals in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area take advantage of the average literacy levels of parent SGB members in the execution of their functions and responsibilities as stated in Section 16A of the South African Schools Act?
- Does the Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education (ECDBE) enhance the capacity of SGBs in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area as stated in Section 19 of the above-mentioned Act?
- Do SGBs in the selected schools from the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area expedite their functions as stated in Section 20 of the Act?
- Is there an issue of power relations between school principals and SGB members in the functioning of SGBs in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area?
- What is the opinion of SGBs at the selected schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area in relation to their legislated three-year term of office?
- Is there a correlation between the general functioning of SGBs in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area and the fact that SGBs do not receive an allowance, stipend or honorarium for the execution of their functions?

## **1.5 DELIMITATION AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Calitz and Beckman (1994: 7) in Nyambi (2005: 14) define delimitation as the continuous narrowing and precise definition of the field of study so that the field becomes specific through the process of particularisation. The study will be limited to school governing body (SGB) members of four of the eight schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area. The maximum number of participants to be interviewed will be

thirty six (36). The number might be fewer owing to time constraints and the availability of the target interviewees.

## **1.6 HYPOTHESES**

Accountability by school principals could improve significantly if school governing bodies (SGBs), as elected public representatives of school communities, could be more effective in their oversight role of policy implementation by school principals. This study is based on the assumption that, schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area, could improve their overall school functionality if their SGBs were to execute their functions and responsibilities as stipulated in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.

For the purposes of this study, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1.6.1 There is correlation between the average literacy levels of SGBs in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area and their ability to effectively play their oversight role of policy implementation by school principals in the area; and

1.6.2 Principals of schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area take advantage of average literacy levels of parent SGB members in the execution of their functions and responsibilities as contemplated in Section 16A of the Act;

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

There is a myriad of factors to which serious challenges affecting institutional governance in schools, especially those in rural areas, are attributable. The following are some of the inferences drawn about the failure of institutional governance in schools (Charlton & David, 1994: 6; Buck, 1992: 36; Gina, 2006;Whedall, 1992: 2; Nyambi, 2005: 5; Ramadiro & Vally, 2005: 1-2; Heystek, 2004: 310; Mathonsi, 2001 and Dean, 1995: 208):

- Relegation of parental responsibility by parents;
- Low average literacy levels of SGB parent component members, especially in rural schools;

- Collapse of discipline among learners, which is in itself attributable to a myriad of factors;
- Intentional or unintentional omission by school principals to provide guidance to SGBs;
- Inadequate capacity building programmes offered to SGBs; and
- The three year legislated term of office for SGB members, which is generally claimed to be too short when compared to other public representatives.

According to Heystek (2010: 99), governing bodies are expected to play an important role in promoting quality education in schools. According to Section 20 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, they have to support the principal and teachers and promote the best interests of the school. Ensuring that principals account for implementation or non-implementation of education policies as promulgated in the relevant pieces of legislation is one of the most sacred governance responsibilities of SGBs (Heystek, 2010: 99). It is against the background described above that the researcher considered this study on the effectiveness of SGBs in their oversight role of the implementation of education departmental policies by school principals in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area significant.

## **1.8 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW**

Undertaking a literature review builds on the idea that knowledge accumulates and that we can learn from, and builds on what others have done (Neuman, 2011: 124). Legislation, enabling the institution of school governing bodies (SGBs) in South Africa, is the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 which was signed into law in 1996 with its foundation based on Section 195(1)(e) of the Constitution: People's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making and (f) public administration must be accountable. Because of the importance of the topic under investigation, a number of scholars have contributed various reports in the form of journal articles, dissertations and other literature on school governance. An overview on the initial literature consulted and reviewed pertaining to school governance now follows.

Section 195(1)(e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, prescribes that the peoples' needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making initiatives. Section 41(1)(c) further states that all spheres of government and all organs of state within each sphere must provide effective, transparent, accountable and coherent government for the Republic as a whole.

According to Section 16A(2) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, the principal of a public school must (a) in undertaking the professional management of a public school as contemplated in section 16(3), carry out duties which include, but not limited to the implementation of policy and legislation; (b) attend and participate in all meetings of the governing body; (c) provide the governing body with a report about the professional management relating to the public school; (d) assist the governing body in handling disciplinary matters pertaining to learners; and (e) inform the governing body about policy and legislation. Basically, the role of the policy is to provide consistency in the implementation of legislation. Policy provides guidelines for the uniform interpretation of legislation. In addition, the principal must;-(f) assist the governing body with the management of the school's funds. Subject to this Act, the governing body of a public school must (g) promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school; and (h) support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions (Section 20(1) of Act 84 of 1996).

Nyambi (2005: 4) proposes that school governing bodies (SGBs) make decisions on behalf of the school and see to it that the school is administered properly and that all stakeholders share in the decisions of that body. Mathonsi (2004: 20) in Nyambi (2005: 4), argues that while the new policy requires that governors and managers work in a democratic and participatory manner to build relationships and ensure the efficient and effective delivery of educational goals, translation of the policy into practice remains a mammoth challenge because "poor communities tend to lack access, resources, information or organisational skills to appropriately influence decision about education or other social services". Many principals continue to deprive parents and other stakeholders of essential information, which they need in order to participate fully in the

activities of the school and they do not want their decisions to be criticised or challenged (Nyambi, 2005: 5).

Ndou (2012:4) holds the view that members of school governing bodies have to be capacitated to perform their duties well. Kani (2000: 38)-, in Ndou (2012: 4), states that the empowerment of school governing bodies is meaningful towards their development as well as their individual schools. In support of the above notion, Dean (1995: 208), in Ndou (2012: 4) suggests that the training for SGBs should be an ongoing process as new governors become involved in the work. Heystek (2004: 38) in Ndou (2012: 4) is of the opinion that the limited training of the main role-players in the management of schools, coupled with their uncertainty regarding their functions and duties, sometimes makes it difficult for principals and parent governors to work together harmoniously. According to Marishane (1999: 54) in Ndou (2012: 23) school governance has the following three dimensions:

- Sovereign governance – which entails full public accountability for the work of the school as a whole to all interested parties rendered in various forms, including the presentation of the annual report to parents.
- Judicial governance – which entails accountability for meeting all the legal requirements to which the school is subject, including law relating to finance, employment, the curriculum and health and safety.
- Performance governance – which entails accountability for carrying out the activities of the school through which the vision of the school for providing a service to pupils is put into practice. These dimensions of governance entail specific and legal obligations, which require particular knowledge, skills and expertise.

School governance, as regards the SGB's functions means determining policies and rules by which the school has to be organised and controlled. It includes ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively in terms of the law and budget of the school (Zulu, 2000: 16; and Potgieter, 1997: 11)-, in Ngongoma, (2006: 24). The SGB has a social responsibility to ensure that the educational service offered is congruent

with the knowledge requirements and skills requirements of the serviced communities and that learners are equipped to become agents of social improvement. Berger (2000: 458) concurs that parents have a right to choose and guide their children's education. Keeping schools accountable in this respect is part of securing the well-being of the people of our country.

Mbunyuza-De Heer Menlah (2013:74) articulates the view that school governing bodies (SGB's) are a legal institution that is meant to bring about democracy in the governance of secondary schools in South Africa. Representation is prescribed by the state and there are tasks assigned to each portfolio. Principals have a duty to develop each member of the SGB with special emphasis on learner representatives. A study of 16 schools was recently undertaken in the Engcobo District of the Eastern Cape. The results revealed that learner representatives are not provided with the opportunity or guidance they need to make a meaningful contribution to the governance of the schools through their role as learner representatives on the SGB, as prescribed by the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. The formation of SGBs points to the importance of recognising all members of the SGB, as equally important and indispensable in the successful functioning of the school. Through training each member is helped to develop the latent potential to perform and contribute to the democratic governance of the school (Maile 2002&Ngidi 2004). Edward and Daniels (2012) place emphasis on the manner in which the training of the SGB is introduced to the members so as to ensure their buy in, in the process (Mbunyuza-De Heer Menlah, 2013: 74-75).

Heystek (2004) suggests that the limited training of the main role-players in the management and governance of schools, coupled with their uncertainty regarding their functions and duties, makes it difficult for principals and parental SGB members to work together harmoniously. Although the emphasis of this study is on issues relating to school governance and management, there are many schools with a good relationship and where trust and support ensure effective education. On the other hand, the relationship between school principals and the SGBs of public schools in South Africa is not always very good (Heystek & Bush, 2003: 10). Power play and domination are normally part of any teamwork and interpersonal interaction (Moon, Butcher & Bird,

2000: 57; 62). An SGB is not different. These power plays may be conscious or unconscious but they do happen, for example, a principal trying to dominate the rest of the SGB or the chairperson of the SGB trying to dominate the principal on behalf of the parents. This power play may have a detrimental effect on issues of relationships, trust and mutual support (Heystek, 2004: 308 – 309).

## **1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

According to Pollit and Handler (1993: 445), the term- ‘research design’- is used to refer to the overall plan for collecting and analysing data, including specifications for enhancing the internal and external validity of the study. Research design and planning also include the researcher’s assessment of carrying out the study design within the requisite time frame and with the available resources, and an analysis of the trade-offs to be made in the design and other planning decisions (Bickman & Rog, 1998: 6 – 7).

According to Babbie (2011: 93), research design involves a set of decisions regarding what topic is to be studied, among what population, with what research methods and for what purpose. Research design is the process of focusing one’s perspective for the purposes of a particular study. Fundamental to every scientific research is a method which can be explained as a prescribed manner for performing a specific task, with adequate consideration of the problem, objectives and hypotheses. For purposes of this study, the researcher will employ the qualitative research method for data collection. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008: 10) define qualitative research as a broad approach to the study of social phenomena and it is based essentially on a constructivist or critical perspective or both. Kumar (2005: 12) states that the qualitative approach is classified as unstructured because it allows flexibility in all aspects of the research process. The researcher will interact with the participants in a natural and unobtrusive way to avoid influencing the results. The researcher will engage the following data collection strategy: focus group interviews. According to Bickman and Rog (1998: 11) a credible research design is one that maximises validity, provides a clear explanation of the phenomenon under study and controls all possible biases or confounds that could cloud or distort research findings. The qualitative approach will be employed as the

researcher intends to obtain detailed and “rich” information or data of the actual situations in the selected schools through the sample groups. Interviews will be held with the SGB members to understand the situation correctly from their perspective, (Heystek, 2004: 309).

### **1.10 RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

The sample population for purposes of this study will be members of the school governing bodies (SGBs) of four of the eight schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area; one senior secondary school (Zwelivumile S.S.S); two junior secondary schools (Albertina Sisulu J.S.S. and Nolusapho J.S.S) and one senior primary school (Campbell Mnyhila S.P.S). On average, there are ten (10) SGB members, inclusive of all the applicable categories or components in each institution that is; the principal as an *ex officio* member of the SGB, educators, parents and non-teaching staff. In qualitative research projects, the sampling of subjects may evolve as the structure of the situation being studied becomes clearer and certain types of subjects seem more central to understanding than others (Babbie, 2011: 179). For purpose of this study the sample focus group will comprise of the following categories of SGB members and their involvement is justified on the basis of their membership of the participating SGBs:

- The chairpersons;
- The secretaries;
- The treasurers; and
- Additional parent members of SGBs.

The maximum number of participants to be interviewed in each focus group for the purposes of this study is nine (9) and that constitutes a total of thirty six (36) participants in the four sampled schools.

### **1.11 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Data collection is the precise and systematic gathering of information relevant to the research purpose or the specific objectives, question or hypothesis of the study



(Neuman, 2004: 20). Focus group interviews will be used to collect data from the sampled population for purposes of this research.

### **1.12 DATA ANALYSIS**

The interview processes will be structured to gather data about the widest possible range of issues associated with the phenomena under investigation. The research questions will guide the data-gathering process in an effort to obtain –‘rich’- and relevant information. Interviews will be open-ended and semi-structured. Interview lengths will range from approximately one hour, to one and a half hours. The Interview questions will be open-ended so as to allow respondents to expand on their initial comments, particularly with regard to the roles of SGBs and principals. The openness of the selected research design, as well as the flexible approach of the semi-structured nature of the interviews, should encourage participants to direct their responses towards issues that they deem appropriate and applicable to the phenomenon under investigation.

The analyses of the qualitative data will commence after the interview process has formally ended. The researcher will work under the supervision and guidance of the supervisor and a statistician from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in the analysis and presentation of the collected data.

### **1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The following ethical principles will be promoted and observed: voluntary participation, no harm to participants, anonymity and confidentiality, informed consent and no deception:

- **Voluntary participation:** The researcher will promote and allow voluntary participation by respondents with no fear of reprisals. No coercion or pressure will be exerted on participants and withdrawals from participation will be allowed.
- **No harm to respondents:** Respondents will not be exposed to any harm or danger; be it physical, emotional or psychological.

- **Anonymity and confidentiality:** No names or any other form of participant identification will be made in the final treatise.
- **No deception:** The researcher will identify himself and inform the respondents about the objective of the research. All necessary documents explaining the purpose of the research and the choice of respondents will be issued to the respondents in order to instill trust and consequently enjoy full cooperation and maximum participation.
- **Informed consent:** The purpose of the study and risks involved will be conveyed to the respondents in order for them to decide whether they are willing to participate in the research. The respondents will also be informed of their right to withdraw from the study should they no longer feel comfortable about participating.

## **1.14 CHAPTER ORGANISATION**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Overview**

Chapter 1 will contain short introductory paragraphs including an introduction with general statements about the need for the study. The statement of the problem, objectives of the research, purpose, significance of the study, research questions and hypotheses will be reviewed in chapter 1.

### **Chapter 2: Background literature review**

Chapter 2 will comprise a review of literature. Since democratically elected school governing bodies (SGBs) are a relatively new development in South Africa, the literature review will provide the theoretical background to the study.

### **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter will describe the research design and methodology employed for purposes of the study as well as the population sample.

### **Chapter 4: Findings and Interpretation**

Chapter 4 will review the findings from the qualitative study and interpretation and analysis of the data.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter will present the findings, recommendations and inferences drawn from analysis of the research findings.

### **1.15 CONCLUSION**

Democratically elected school governing bodies (SGBs) are a constitutional mandate guided by the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, as amended. The research is therefore both valid and pertinent. The rural setting of the proposed research area is relevant considering the fact that it is the area where a myriad of challenges is mostly attributable to ineptitude as a result of low literacy levels and other environmental factors. The proposed study is intended to comply with the generic five chapter approach to meet the prescribed minimum research standards. The budget estimates of the study will be projected when all the cost factors have been assessed.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **BACKGROUND LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothata and Squelch (1997: 11) in Maile (2002: 326) regard school governance as an act of determining policy and rules by which a school is to be organised and controlled. It includes ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively in terms of the law and the budget of the school. As part of the efforts to make schools democratic, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA), was passed, and an important provision in the Act was the establishment of democratically elected school governing bodies (SGBs) (Ramadiro & Vally, 2005:1). According to Clarke (2009: 2) school governing bodies (SGBs) have an important responsibility in relation to their schools in terms of its policies, its educational ethos and priorities, the quality of teaching and learning, and the management, care and use of its financial and other resources. School governing body members' can be the principal's strongest ally in times of difficulty, and are a critical link between the school, the parents and the community. Good school governing bodies, like good principals, can make or break schools. As statutory bodies, SGBs ensure the participation of parents, educators and other staff members, principals, learners and co-opted SGB members of public schools in South Africa (Beckman & Blom, 2000: 1). In terms of section 16(1) of SASA, the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body and the principal of the school has the formal legal authority for the overall management of the school.

Duma, Kapueja and Khanyile (2011: 44) postulate the belief that it is difficult to dispute the benefits that parent involvement can have for children's school experiences, yet parents in school governing bodies and educators often hold one another at arm's length, unsure of the role that each should play. Decker, Gregg and Decker (1994) in Duma (2009) observed that educators and parents in school governing bodies often have uncertainties about the roles that each should play in the governance of schools. Some educators love to have parents in the school governing bodies intricately involved in the governance of their schools, while others feel that too much parental involvement

in the governance of schools violates their sense of professionalism. Van Schalkwyk (1998) in Duma (2009) warns that some educators have a negative attitude towards parents in the school governing bodies. Educators with such an attitude tend to blame parents for meddling in the school governance operations. Clarke (2009: 1), asserts that one of the realities that those involved in education should never forget is that schools are for the children – not for teachers, not for principals, not for departmental officials and not for governors. According to Clarke (2009: 30-31), one area where governors, particularly the chairperson of the school governing body, need to tread with care is in their relationship with the principal and his or her duties as the operational head of the school. Included in the functions and responsibilities of the principal is a requirement that the principal provides the school governing body with a report on the professional management of the school. Regularisation of the report on the professional management of the school should be a negotiated arrangement between the SGB chairperson as the governance oversight head of the governing body and the principal as the head of school operations.

Heystek (2004: 308), argues that the South African Schools Act, 1996 (section 16) describes governance and management in schools as two separate activities with two teams responsible for these activities. The professional management, that is, daily teaching and learning activities and the support activities needed in the school, is the responsibility of the principal and professional staff, whilst the school governing body is responsible for the governance of the school. Roos, (2009: 58) asserts that it is essential for the healthy and effective functioning of a school to understand and to respect the separation of school governance from the professional management of the same school. While SASA attempts to define these two related but different activities, in real life the distinction is not easy to manage. Apart from the usual contestations that take place between different functions in the same institution, the position is complicated by the fact that the person responsible for the professional management of the school, the principal, is also an ex-officio member of the school governing body.

In this chapter a background literature review is undertaken, which entails invaluable assertions, positions, arguments and postulations contributed by a number of authors,

scholars and other researchers on the complexity of factors affecting governance of the public schooling system in South Africa. Through an intensive literature review, the researcher has presented contributions by a number of other authorities on the effectiveness of SGBs in their oversight role in the public schooling system in South Africa. Joubert and Bray (2007: 30) in Bagarette (2011: 223) posit that the devolution of authority is one of the basic principles of a democratic state and in effect, requires the democratisation and decentralisation of education. These authors further state that the decentralisation of education to the institutional (school) level and sharing of powers between state and parent community are in line with the constitutional imperatives of democratic governance in which the principles of public cooperation, participation, transparency and accountability are indispensable (Joubert & Bray, 2007: 26). The question that is often asked, is whether the working relationship between the SGBs and principals in public schools is successful, since there are numerous reports (Moon et al. 2000: 57-62; Heystek 2004: 150; Karlsson 2002: 332 & Mestry 2006: 28); in Bagarette (2011: 224) that refer to the power relations between school governing bodies and the principals. Maile (2002: 331), in Ngidi (2004: 260), argues that it is not enough to simply state that parents are responsible for school governance and principals deal with professional management without clearly demarcating roles and indicating their meeting point.

## **2.2 WHY IS GOOD GOVERNANCE IMPORTANT?**

School governance, as regards the governing body's functions, means determining the policy and rules by which the school is to be organised, managed and controlled (Mestry, 2004: 127). There is no doubt that a school improves when its governors exert their governance oversight authority in a way that promotes the effective use of resources and establishes a climate which encourages teaching and learning (Clarke, 2009: 14). Mokoena, (2005: 2) argues that the school governing body (SGB) is a body on which all components of the school community (that is, parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and learners in secondary schools) are represented. According to Heystek (2004: 308-309), for many schools in South Africa, especially the former black schools, the involvement of parents in school governance is relatively new. The limited

training of the main role-players in the management and governance of schools, coupled with their uncertainty regarding their functions and duties, sometimes makes it difficult for principals and parental SGB members to work together harmoniously. Heystek (2004:310) further argues that although many principals have many years of experience, the participative and democratic management approach is also new for most of them, with the result that not even their experience can prepare them for this changed situation. It is a new experience to the principals to have to share their authority and power with other people, hence the claim by some of the existence of power relations between school principals and the parent component members of the SGBs.

Clarke (2009: 15) points out a number of laudable reasons that justify the establishment of local governance structures in schools as follows:

- A belief that providing the local community with a say in how schools should be managed will ensure that schools better meet their specific needs;
- A belief that providing the local community, and particularly parents, with a say in how schools should be managed will promote quality and improve standards;
- A means of making education more democratic;
- A way of ensuring that the parents and members of the local community have a greater say in how state funding of education is spent at a local level;
- A means of encouraging parents and the local community to contribute additional funds to schools in the form of fees, subsidies, donations and sponsorships, and
- An opportunity for parents and community members to have a say in the appointment of staff.

Clarke (2009: 15) goes further to caution that problems, however, arise when the local community and parents do not have the experience, expertise and resources necessary to perform duties that the governance structures require of them. In these instances, responsibility for providing this expertise falls to the principal and his or her management team, creating the bizarre situation where they must provide oversight of their own performance. In many schools they do this heroically, often in very difficult

circumstances. At others, the lack of adequate governance oversight creates an environment in which dishonesty, nepotism and indolence flourish (Clarke, 2009:15).

According to van Wyk (2004: 50), the government recognises the fact that many school governing bodies (SGBs), particularly in the rural and less advantaged urban areas, do not have the required skills and experience to exercise their new powers and may have difficulty fulfilling their functions. To deal with this, the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996, in section 19, obliges provincial governments to provide training for SGBs. In this way, the state hopes to build a framework for the governance of schools which is characterised by power sharing among parents, educators and the community in order to support the core values of democracy and contribute to more effective schools. Thus the broadsheet on governing bodies and effective schools points to six features for effectiveness: working as a team; good relationships with principals; effective time management and delegation; effective meetings; knowledge of the school; and the training and development of school governors (Creese & Earley, 1998: 8). Heystek (2004: 309-310) extends the discussion on power relations as follows: power play and domination are normally part of any teamwork and interpersonal interaction (Moon, Butcher & Bird, 2000: 57; 62). It is proposed that an SGB is no different. These power plays may be conscious or unconscious but they do happen:- for example, a principal tries to dominate the rest of the SGB or the chairperson of the SGB trying to dominate the principal on behalf of the parents. This power-relationship may have a detrimental effect on the relationship of trust and mutual support. There are many examples of a poor relationship between principals and school governing bodies. They vary from a simple misunderstanding or minor difference to some of the following as reported in the media:

- A principal and the governing body officially accusing each other of misconduct (Rapport, 2001: 7).
- Principals who are angry about the “tin pot tyrants” (the parents in the governing body) who want to make all the decisions in the school. This might have contributed to the suicide of a principal (Sunday Tribune, 2001: 3); and



- A principal who was chased out of the school grounds by angry parents for disbanding a governing body election, as the community believed it was a fair election (Natal Witness, 2001: 1).

The arguments in the above paragraph highlight the vital role played by the relationship of trust between the principal and the school governing body.

### **2.3 THE FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGBS)**

Clarke, (2009: 16) proposes that although most parent-governors will have attended school and therefore have experienced it from the perspective of a pupil, and some may also have had experience as teachers, these perspectives do not necessarily provide the kind of knowledge and insights that governors need if they are to exercise the governance, leadership and management functions effectively. One of the most common errors that governors make is to think that they are responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. This is certainly not their function. Governors or governing bodies that attempt to assume these functions create significant difficulties for the principal and management team. Heystek, (2004: 308) postulates that for many in South Africa, especially the previously black schools, the involvement of parents at the governance level is new. The limited training of the main role-players in the management and governance of schools, coupled with their uncertainty regarding their functions and duties, sometimes makes it difficult for principals and parental SGB members to work together harmoniously. Mestry, (2004: 128) argues that principals have the duty to facilitate, support and assist the SGB in the execution of its statutory functions relating to the school's assets, liabilities, property and financial management.

According to Roos (2009: 58), it is essential for the healthy and effective functioning of a school to understand and respect the separation of school governance from the professional management of the same school. While SASA attempts to define these two related but different activities, in real life the distinction is not easy to manage. Apart from the usual contestations that take place between different functions in the same institution, the position is complicated by the fact that the person responsible for professional management of the school, the principal, is also an ex-officio member of

the SGB. In addition, in order for certain activities to be effectively carried out, the SGB and the principal have to act in tandem. Bagarette (2011: 223) claims that the introduction of school governing bodies in schools created two centres of power. Bagarette (2011: 226), further claims that there are still many principals who are undermining the status, roles and functions of SGBs in their schools – a situation that has the potential to lead to power struggles and ultimately conflict. Joubert and Bray (2007: 30), in Bagarette (2011: 225) posit that the SGB, with the principal as an ex-officio member of the SGB, is responsible for the governance of the school. According to these authors this implies that the SGB contributes to, or decides on all the functions as described in the South African Schools Act (SASA); for example, the school's vision and mission, the school's policies and the school's development plans, amongst others. The principal and the school management team (SMT), on the other hand, are responsible for the day-to-day professional management of the school. This implies that the management of the curriculum and the administration of the school are under the authority of the Head of Department of Education in the province. It is thus evident that the principal functions in two capacities: firstly, as an employee of the Department of Education (DoE) and secondly, as a member of the SGB.

According to Nyambi, (2005: 22-23), the SGB functions as a unit, although individual members have individual responsibilities and it is allowed to set up committees in order to fulfill its tasks effectively. SGBs are given functions according to their experience, knowledge and capacity. The South African Schools Act of 1996, in section 20, outlines a range of functions that the governing bodies of all public schools must undertake. Section 21 lists functions that may be allocated to a school if its SGB demonstrates the competence to perform such functions effectively. The school governing body should try to use its knowledge, skills and expertise to improve the quality of education for learners at the school. Section 20(1&2) of the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 lists the functions of the school governing body as follows:

- Promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school;
- Adopt a constitution;

- Develop the mission statement of the school;
- Adopt a code of conduct for all learners at the school;
- Support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions;
- Adhere to any actions taken by the Head of Department in terms of section 16 of the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, to address the incapacity of a principal or educator to carry out his or her duties effectively;
- Determine times of the school day consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school;
- Administer and control the school's property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels, but the exercise of this power must not in any manner interfere with or otherwise hamper the implementation of a decision made by the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) or Head of Department (HoD) in terms of any law or policy;
- Encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school;
- Recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of educators at the school, subject to the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, and the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995;
- Recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of non-educator staff at the school, subject to the Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation No. 103 of 1994), and the Labour Relations Act, 1995. Recommendations contemplated in this paragraph are to be made within the time frames contemplated in section 6(3)(l) of the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998;
- At the request of the Head of Department, allow the reasonable use under fair conditions determined by the Head of Department of the facilities of the school for educational programmes not conducted by the school;
- Discharge all other functions imposed upon the governing body by or under this Act;

- Discharge other functions consistent with this Act as determined by the Minister by notice in the Government Gazette or by the MEC by notice in the Provincial Gazette; and
- Allow the reasonable use of the facilities of the school for community, social and school fund-raising purposes, subject to such reasonable and equitable conditions as the governing body may determine which may include the charging of a fee or tariff which accrues to the school.

Functions or roles of school governing bodies (SGBs), as contemplated in section 20 of SASA, extend up to sub-section 11. This is clearly a complex situation for SGBs in general and for SGBs in rural areas in particular when the general level of education of most SGB parent members is taken into account. According to section 19(2) of SASA, the Head of Department must ensure that principals and other officers of the Education Department render all necessary assistance to governing bodies in the performance of their functions. This could be the reason why quite a number of researchers and other writers in the field of school governance emphasise seamless teamwork and the relationship of trust between the school governing body (SGB) as lead by its chairperson and the school management team (SMT) as lead by the school principal. Heystek, (2004: 308-309) argues that the limited training of the main role-players in the management and governance of schools, coupled with their uncertainty regarding their functions and duties, often makes it difficult for principals and parental SGB members to work together harmoniously. Although many principals have many years of experience, the participative and democratic management approach is also new for most of them, with the result that not even their experience can prepare them for this changed situation.

## **2.4 FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT AND FINANCIAL REPORTING**

Clarke (2009: 146), posits the belief that the school governing body needs to appreciate that it, not the principal and his or her staff, is responsible for all matters relating to school finance, including oversight of the daily financial transactions. It is the governors' responsibility therefore to see that there are policies and systems in place which set out

exactly how the school money should be handled, what records need to be kept, and who has responsibility for the handling of school money and the keeping of school records. The governing body may delegate a number of its duties to the principal, members of the senior management team, and bursar, but it remains responsible and liable should serious problems arise. According to Mestry, (2004: 126), there are school governing bodies and principals who have little knowledge of the contents of the Schools Act (SASA) or are simply interpreting it incorrectly and this has led to many schools being victims of mismanagement or misappropriation of funds in the form of embezzlement, fraud and theft. Although the Department of Education provides training for school governing bodies in financial management, financial problems in many schools have not abated. The principal or members of the school governing body (SGB) may choose to sweep these financial problems under the carpet for fear of being implicated. In terms of section 37(1) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA), the governing body must establish a school fund and administer it in accordance with the directions issued by the Head of Department (HoD). Mestry, (2004: 128) avers that principals are accountable to the SGB for the financial and property matters which are not specifically entrusted to him or her by statute (SASA).

Bisschoff and Mestry (2003) in Mestry (2004: 129) assert that the school governing body (SGB) needs to bear in mind the following aspects that constitute good financial management:

- The responsibility of the governing body, its committees (especially the financial committee), the principal and staff should be clearly defined and the limits of delegated authority should be clearly established;
- The budget should reflect the school's prioritized educational objectives, seek to achieve the efficient use of funds and be subjected to regular, effective financial monitoring;
- The school should establish and implement sound internal financial control systems to ensure the reliability and accuracy of its financial transactions;
- The school should be adequately insured against exposure to risks such as theft, vandalism and fraud;

- If the school uses computers for administrative purposes, all data should be protected against loss, for example, when computers are stolen or if the system is infected with a virus. It is advisable to have a back-up system and all data should be updated on a regular basis;
- The school should ensure that purchasing arrangements comply with good accounting practice, that is, quality should not be sacrificed. The finance committee or SGB should put control mechanisms in place to ensure that authorisation is given for all purchases;
- There should be sufficient procedures for the administration of personnel matters;
- Stocks, stores and other assets should be recorded, and adequately safeguarded against loss or theft. Asset registers should be maintained;
- All income due to the school should be identified and all collections should be receipted, recorded and banked promptly;
- The school should properly control the operation of only one bank account and reconcile the bank balance with the accounting records;
- The school should control the use of petty cash. The system of funding petty cash items is one way of controlling petty cash. An amount is given to the petty cashier, for example, R400. If the petty cashier spends R250 for a particular period then the treasurer will reimburse the petty cashier R250 that will restore the imprest to R400; and
- School funds should be administered as rigorously as public funds.

According to Mestry (2004: 130), it should be noted from the preceding discussion that the school governing body is responsible and accountable for the management of funds of the school. The principal must facilitate, support and assist the SGB in the execution of its statutory functions relating to the assets, liabilities, property and other financial management issues. In the case of *Schoonbee and others v MEC for Education Mpumalanga and Another* (Unreported case no. 33750/01)(T) in Mestry (2004: 128) the MEC alleged that the principal of a high school in Ermelo had misappropriated the school funds and the principal was charged accordingly. On investigation it was found that the principal had acted on the instruction (policy) of the school governing body

(SGB). The MEC for Education suspended the principal and deputy principal and dissolved the SGB. The following were some of the deliberations in the case:

- The professional management of a school is vested in the principal and the overall governance of the school is vested in the school governing body. Principals have a duty to facilitate, support and assist the SGB in the execution of its statutory functions relating to the schools assets, liabilities, property and financial management. Principals are thus accountable to the SGB for the financial and property matters which are not specifically entrusted to him or her by statute (SASA). The employer is not entitled to hold the principal liable for the SGB's obligations. The suspension of the principal following the forensic audit of the school's finances was set aside.
- The principal and senior deputy principal were both suspended by the provincial head of education following a forensic audit of the school. It was established that there are confusing roles played by the principal and the deputy principal in their capacities as members of the SGB and as employees in terms of the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (PAM, Chapter A, Section 4). The employer is entitled to hold the employees liable and accountable for the professional development of the school, but is not entitled to prescribe to employees, and hold them liable for statutory functions vested in the SGB relating to assets, liabilities, property and financial management of the school. The suspension of the principal and deputy principal was also set aside.
- The provincial head of education, immediately following the forensic audit of the school, dissolved the school governing body. The audit report raised concerns about the expenditure of school funds and the use of school property. The SGB agreed to take corrective measures as communicated in the audit report. However, the head of education dissolved the SGB. The SGB was not afforded the opportunity to deal with the head of education's intention to dissolve it. The judge found that it was not necessary to dissolve the SGB in order to deal with concerns raised in the audit report. There was no proportionality between the SGB's conduct and the head of education's action. The dissolution of the SGB

was also set aside. It is the SGB that could hold the principal accountable for financial and property matters, which are not specifically entrusted upon the principal by SASA.

According to Mestry, (2006: 28-29) many principals and SGB members are placed under significant pressure to manage their schools' finances because they are unable to work out practical solutions to financial problems, on account of their lack of financial knowledge, skills and expertise. In many instances it has been reported that principals and school governing bodies have been subjected to forensic audits by the Department of Education owing to the mismanagement of funds through misappropriation, fraud, pilfering of cash, theft and improper control of financial records (SamaYende & Arenstein, 2003: 8; Khumalo & Mbanja, 2002: 1; Khangale, 2002: 13). Mestry, (2013: 162) further argues that despite substantial revisions of the education system, there is still widespread misconception as to who is accountable for public schools' finances, and whether social justice and equity have been adequately served by the implementation of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF).

In terms of Basic Education Laws Amendment Act 15 of 2011, SASA, in section 16A (2)(h-k) states that the principal must:

- assist the governing body with the management of the school's funds, which assistance must include:
  - a) the provision of information relating to any conditions imposed or directions issued by the Minister, the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) or the Head of Department (HoD) in respect of all financial matters of the school contemplated in Chapter 4; and
  - b) the giving of advice to the governing body on the financial implications of decisions relating to the financial matters of the school.
- take all reasonable steps to prevent any financial maladministration or mismanagement by any staff member or by the governing body of the school;



- be a member of finance committee or delegation of the governing body in order to manage any matter that has financial implications for the school; and
- report any maladministration or mismanagement of financial matters to the governing body of the school and to the Head of Department.

However, to the knowledge of the researcher, these amendments have not been subjected to expert analysis and interpretation before a judge in a court of law for a possible decision contrary to that in the case of *Schoonbee and others v MEC for Education Mpumalanga and Another* (Unreported case no. 33750/01)(T). However, the Research and Policy Officer (RPO) of the Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools (FEDSAS), has proposed that amendments to SASA are another means by which the state attempts to interfere in school governance. The state seeks to abuse the principal's position as a member of the governing body to gain some control over the governance of a school by imposing certain duties on the principal as a departmental employee (Van der Merwe, 2013: 243).

## **2.5 FOR WHICH PUPIL CODES OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES IS THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY (SGB) RESPONSIBLE?**

According to section 8(1) and (2) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA), subject to any applicable provincial law, a governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for the learners after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school. A code of conduct referred to in sub-section (1) must be aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process. Bray, (2005: 134) argues that, to govern efficiently and effectively, a governing body must be able not only to make rules for good governance, but also to have the capacity (and will) to implement these rules in the school situation and enforce them in cases of learner misconduct by means of specific disciplinary measures provided for in the code of conduct (Guidelines for the consideration of school governing bodies in adopting a code of conduct for learners, 1998; and Visser, 2000:147; 150). Discipline is indispensable for effective teaching and learning in a school, but is not defined in the South African Schools Act 84

of 1996 (SASA) or the Minister's guidelines, (Rogers, 1998: 11; Squelch, 2000: 2; Van der Bank 2002: 302) in Bray, (2005: 134).

Bray (2005: 135) argues that the drafting procedure and final adoption of a code of conduct constitute a process in which all stakeholders have to be consulted. This participatory process is reflective in nature and a prime example of democracy in action: a democratic, transparent and responsible process, as illustrated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, (the Constitution) in sections 16, 32, 33, 34, and 195, to name but a few. Squelch (2001: 141) asserts that a primary role of school governing bodies is to develop school policy, which includes policies dealing with safety and school discipline. Sections 20(1)(d) and 8(1) of SASA require school governing bodies to adopt a code of conduct for learners after consultation with learners, parents and teachers of the school. This places a positive duty on the governing body. The primary aim of the code of conduct is to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process. Squelch (2001: 141) further avers that a code of conduct, based on human rights principles, contains school rules, regulations, sanctions and disciplinary procedures. This should include rules dealing with school safety and security, and the consequences for breaching safety and security. Practical examples are safety rules and procedures that deal with matters such as school outings, the after-hours use of school facilities, late-coming, criminal acts (for example, vandalism and assault) and conducting searches and seizures. Although the burden of responsibility for ensuring implementation of the code of conduct rests with the principal and teaching staff, the school governing body (SGB) has an active role to play in supporting the school staff in this regard. The SGB is also directly involved in managing discipline matters. For instance, a parent governor is generally required to serve as the chairperson of the disciplinary committee and preside over disciplinary hearings involving learners. It is also the duty of the school governing body to decide on suspensions and make recommendations for expulsion. According to Joubert, (2008: 237-238) the code of conduct is aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment. Joubert(2008: 238) further asserts that the code of conduct for learners may be

developed by the educators or members of the governing body (SGB) of a school upon consultation with the learners, parents and educators. However, the final code of conduct must be adopted by the governing body. The Guidelines for a Code of Conduct for learners (Department of Education 1998a) recommend that the purpose of a code of conduct should be to inform learners on how to conduct themselves and to provide for their safety. A code of conduct should contain a set of moral values, norms and principles for developing learners into responsible citizens.

## **2.6 POWER RELATIONS IN SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

On the issue of power relations and their implications for effective school governance, Bagarette, (2011: 224) postulates the fact that the introduction of the SASA to the new education dispensation, provided for the decentralisation of power to school governing bodies (SGBs). Van Wyk, (2004: 52) in Bagarette, (2011: 224) expresses concern that the SGBs in South Africa have at their disposal a considerable amount of power and authority bestowed upon them by the SASA; a situation which has the potential to result in conflict. In explaining the concept of government, Foucault (1982: 791-793) in Bagarette (2011: 225) asserts that “power always entails a set of actions performed upon another person’s actions and reactions”. This implies the actions taken by either the SGB or the principal in their power struggle over each other in the school, in order to be in a position of power. Bagarette (2011:225) further elaborates by opining that the analysis, elaboration and bringing into question of power relations and the ‘agonism’ between power relations and the intransitivity of freedom, is a permanent political task inherent in all social existence.

According to Heystek (2004: 308), the legislated functions of the governing body do not provide enough clarity on its daily functioning and this sometimes makes it difficult for principals to manage schools effectively. Heystek(2004:308) further argues that the professional management of the school, that is the daily teaching and learning activities and the support activities needed in the school, is the responsibility of the principal and professional staff, whilst the school governing body is responsible for the governance of

the school. A staff member appointed and remunerated by the SGB falls exclusively under the jurisdiction of the principal as far as professional activities in the school are concerned. A practical example of the intrusion in the professional area of the principal was where parents felt they had the right to pay a class visit as a form of professional assessment because the SGB was paying the salary of the educator concerned (the Principal in an Afrikaans medium school). In this specific case, the parents felt that they were supporting the principal and were not aware that they were operating in forbidden territory. Heystek and Bush, (2003: 10) assert that the relationship between school principals and the SGBs of public schools in South Africa is not always very good. Moon, Butcher and Bird, (2000: 57;62) in Heystek (2004: 309) argue that power play and domination are normally part of any teamwork and interpersonal interaction. An SGB is not different. These power plays may be conscious or unconscious, but they do happen, for example, a principal trying to dominate the rest of the SGB or the chairperson of the SGB trying to dominate the principal on behalf of the parents. This power play may have a detrimental effect on the relationship of trust and mutual support (Heystek, 2004: 309).

Maile (2002: 326) espouses the view that the notion of accountability conjures up power struggles that plague schools. Maile goes on to express the opinion that where decisions were taken by the principal alone in the past, it is no longer possible. Principals may no longer be able to take decisions unilaterally because parents now have more power within the school and especially within the school governing body. According to the Department of Education (1997: 19), monitoring is a joint process of accountability in which all members of the governing body have an equal right to participate and give their opinion. It must be noted that although power plays an important part in organisational activity, not all decisions and actions within an organisation involve power to the same extent, nor are conflicts of power equally common in every organisation. Pfeffer (1992: 38) espouses the belief that power is used more frequently under conditions of moderate interdependence. With little or no interdependence there is limited or no need to develop power or exercise influence. By the same token, when the SGB and the school management team (SMT) work together,

interdependence is enhanced thereby nurturing the organisation's growth through sheer mutualism. It means that one's perceptions of outcomes of management activity are superseded by group interdependence where one actor does not entirely control all of the conditions necessary for the achievement of the goal of education. The essence of interdependence in accountability lies in obtaining the assistance of others in order to accomplish the goal of education. According to section 29(1) of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA), section 29(1) a governing body must, from among its members, elect office-bearers, who must include at least a chairperson, a treasurer and a secretary. In terms of section 29(2), only a parent member of governing body who is not employed at the public school may serve as the chairperson of the governing body. In essence, the SGB derives its power from the statutory provisions. The implication is that neither the principal nor a teacher can be elected as the chairperson of the school governing body. Maile, (2002: 328) argues that it appears that this provision seems to be a threat to most principals because they used to take decisions alone. Now their powers have been taken over by the SGBs. In the same vein, the duty to account is vested in the governing body (Potgieter et al, 1997: 50). Principals' fear of losing power originates in previous management practices where consultation was overlooked. Bagarette (2011: 225) states that there are still principals who are undermining the status, roles and functions of SGBs in their schools, a situation that has the potential to lead to a power struggle and ultimately conflict. McLellan (1996: 44) in Bagarette (2011: 225) states that a principal can no longer regard himself or herself as the sole governor of the school because school governing bodies (SGBs) have been elected to govern schools. Mestry (2006: 28) supports McLellan's statement in that many principals feel threatened, because SGBs have been given the responsibility of managing the school's finances. It therefore stands to reason that some principals would resist sharing power, because they have become used to having all the power to manage the school, including the finances.

## **2.7 THE CAPACITY OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGBS) IN RURAL SCHOOLS**

In terms of section 19 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA), out of the funds appropriated for this purpose by the provincial legislature, the Head of Department (HoD) must establish a programme to:- (a) provide introductory training for newly elected governing bodies to enable them to perform their functions; and (b) provide continuing training to governing bodies to promote the effective performance of their functions or to enable them to assume additional functions. The Head of Department must ensure that principals and other officers of the Education Department render all necessary assistance to governing bodies in the performance of their functions in terms of the Act. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2002: 129) in Maluleka (2008: 14) warn that in order to perform their duties and carry out their responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner, school governing bodies should have the necessary capacity to do so. Heystek (2004: 308) posits the view that for many schools in South Africa, especially the previously black schools, the involvement of parents at governance level is new. The limited training of the main role-players in the management and governance of schools, coupled with their uncertainty regarding their functions and duties, sometimes makes it difficult for principals and parental SGB members to work together harmoniously. Mathonsi, (2004: 20) argues that while the new policy requires that governors and managers must work in democratic and participatory ways to build relationships to ensure efficient and effective delivery of educational goals, the translation of these policies into practice remains a mammoth challenge because “poor communities tend to lack access to resources, information or the organisational skills to appropriately influence decisions on education or other social services”.

Gann(1991:11) in Selesho and Mxuma (2012:495), observes that as far as the part played by the governors in the management of school finances is concerned, only a few governing bodies are assertive. Van Wyk (2007:135) argues that, despite having the majority representation on the SGB, many parents serving on SGBs are reticent and rely on the principal and teachers for leadership and guidance in decision-making.

Karlsson (2002:332) ascribes this to parents' weak understanding of their role, a capacity deficit in the range of skills needed to perform governance functions and irregular attendance of meetings. The Ministerial Review Committee (Department of Education, 004: 91) notes in its report that 47 percent of teachers and principals interviewed felt that skills deficit among SGB members weakens the effective functioning of SGBs (Van Wyk, 2007: 35).

All eight schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area (which form the basis for this study) are Section 21 schools. According to Nyambi, (2005: 37-38) the allocation of Section 21 status depends on the capacity of its SGB to perform the allocated functions in terms of section 21 of the SASA. It is for this reason that the capacity-building programme is of considerable practical relevance (Visser, 1997: 635) in Nyambi, (2005: 37). Furthermore, Van Wyk (2004: 53) adds that the competence of the members of the school governing body (SGB) is directly related to the amount of training they receive. The provincial departments of education have a responsibility to provide capacity-building to the SGBs in the province. While SGBs in the former state-aided schools are better equipped with skills and knowledge, "many governing bodies, particularly in poorer schools are in need of the capacity-building programmes that the SASA requires the provincial education departments to provide" (Motala & Pampallis, 2001: 172). Beckmann (1999: 158) in Nyambi (2005: 38) warns that the capacity-building programme should be holistic and integrated in terms of time and content and should not be provided on an adhoc basis, as seems to be the case at present. Beckmann (1999: 158) suggests that a programme for capacity building should cover the following:

- Aspects of the Constitution, which impact directly, or indirectly on the functioning of the governing bodies and the achievement of which could in turn impact on the SGBs in a school setting;
- Aspects of the Schools Act (SASA), in particular those sections which provide directly for particular facets of the functioning of governing bodies. These include mandatory, allocated and optional functions;
- Various policies and regulations, for example those regarding norms and standards for language policy;

- Administrative law aspects that inform the implementation of certain policies; and
- Certain province-specific provisions or policies.

In order for the training to be successful, Beckmann (1999: 159) suggests the following:

- Assessment procedures should be built into programmes. This is supported by Van Wyk (2004: 53), who states that follow-ups should be implemented to evaluate their performance;
- Governors should identify their training needs themselves;
- Capacity-building programmes should be based on recurrent short, medium and longer terms;
- The success of all programmes should be assessed and refined regularly;
- The diversity of schools and governors should be recognised in order to eliminate the need to force people to make use of inappropriate training; and
- Accredited service providers or special sections of the Provincial Department should provide programmes.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

School governing bodies (SGBs) carry a very important responsibility in relation to their schools in terms of its policies, its educational ethos and priorities, the quality of teaching and learning, and the management, care and use of its financial and other resources. Good governing bodies, like good principals can make or break schools. Governance and management in schools are two separate activities with two teams responsible for these activities. There is no doubt that a school improves when a school's governors exert their governance oversight authority in a way that promotes the effective use of resources and establishes a climate which encourages teaching and learning. It is a new experience to the principals to have to share their power with other people, hence the claim of existence of power relations between school principals and the parent component members of the SGB. The limited training of the main role-players in the management and governance of schools, coupled with their uncertainty regarding their functions and duties, makes it difficult sometimes for principals and



parental SGB members to work together harmoniously. The governing body may delegate a number of its duties to the principal, members of the senior management team, and bursar, but it remains responsible and liable should serious problems arise. The SGB is directly involved in managing discipline matters. The Head of Department (HoD) must ensure that principals and other officers of the Education Department render all necessary assistance to governing bodies in the performance of their functions in terms of SASA. Many governing bodies, particularly in poorer schools are in need of the capacity-building programmes that the SASA requires the provincial education departments to provide.

In the chapter that follows, the research design adopted for the study is explained.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

According to Pollit and Handler (1993: 445), the term 'research design' is used to refer to the overall plan for collecting and analysing data, including specifications for enhancing the internal and external validity of the study. Research design and planning also include the researcher's assessment of carrying out the study design within the requisite time frame and with the available resources, as well as an analysis of the trade-offs to be made in the design and other planning decisions (Bickman&Rog, 1998: 6–7). According to Babbie (2011: 93), research design involves a set of decisions regarding what topic is to be studied, among what population, with what research methods and for what purpose. Research design is the process of focusing one's perspective for the purposes of a particular study. House (1991: 4), in Gina (2006: 27), describes a research design as a flexible set of guidelines that connect theoretical paradigms to strategies of enquiry and methods for collecting empirical materials.

Mouton (1996: 107) in Ndou (2012: 50) postulates that a research design is a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem. Huysamen (1994: 20) defines the research design as the plan or blueprint which specifies how research participants are going to be obtained and what is going to be done to them with a view to reaching conclusions about the research problem. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 22), a research design indicates the general plan of the research. This includes when, from whom and under what conditions the data is obtained. It indicates how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects and what methods of data collection are used. Kumar (2005: 84) avers that a research design is a procedural plan that is adopted to answer research questions objectively, accurately and economically. According to Jones, Wahba and Van der Heiden (2007: 12), the research should correspond with the research problem which links the collected empirical data to the study's initial questions and leads to the study's conclusions. Blanche and Durrheim (1999: 29) in Nyambi (2005: 40) argue that a research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research. Schumacher and MacMillan (1993: 31) further claims that the purpose of a research design is to provide the most valid and accurate answers possible for research questions.

Fundamental to every scientific research project is a method which can be explained as a prescribed manner for performing a specific task, with adequate consideration of the problem, objectives and hypotheses (Babbie, 2011: 93). According to Patton (2002: 69), in Ndou (2012: 50), methodology refers to the rationale and psychological assumptions that underline a particular study relative to the scientific method used with a view to explaining the researcher's ontological and epistemological views. Mouton (1996: 35) defines the research method as the total set of means that researchers employ in their goal of obtaining valid knowledge. Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004: 36) assert that methodology refers to the coherent group of methods that complement one another to deliver data and findings that reflect the research questions and suit the research purpose.

### **3.2 THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH**

McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 390) maintain that qualitative research is basically a naturalistic enquiry, which takes place in the real-world setting and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest. The phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally, in that it has no predetermined course established by and for the research. For purposes of this study, the researcher will employ the qualitative research method for data collection. Kumar (2005: 12), states that the qualitative approach is classified as unstructured because it allows flexibility in all aspects of the research process. Patton (2002: 48), claims that a major distinguishing attribute of the qualitative approach is that it requires the researcher to go into the field and move close enough to the people and circumstances there to capture what is happening. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002: 415), a qualitative research approach is an approach which attempts to understand human behavior and the meaning people attach to their settings. Straus and Corbin (1990: 17) define qualitative research as a kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or by any other means of quantification. It can also refer to research on personal lives, stories, and behaviour, but also research on organisational functioning, social movement or international relationships. Straus and Corbin (1990: 19), further postulate that the qualitative research approaches can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is known. According to Nyambi (2005: 41), a qualitative approach, however, has the following limitations:

- It can be time-consuming and demanding as the data obtained through it is voluminous (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: 14);
- It is more expensive because of travelling costs and the need for a voice recording device; and
- There are chances of human bias and error because the researcher becomes immersed in the phenomenon being studied (Bailey, 1996: 176; McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: 15).

Despite the above limitations, the researcher considered the use of the qualitative approach as appropriate owing to the fact that it is concerned with understanding behaviour from the research subjects' frame of reference (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: 373). Flick (1998: 13) avers that qualitative research is oriented towards analysing concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity, starting from people's expressions and activities. According to Merriam (1998: 6), in Mestry (2006: 29), qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed in making sense of the world and the experiences they have in it, and all parts of a phenomenon are seen as interactive and dynamic, with each influencing the other (Brotherson, 1994: 103).

In this research, the researcher will interact with the participants in a natural and unobtrusive way to avoid influencing results. The researcher will use focus group interviews as the only data collection method. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 292), focus groups are useful because they tend to allow a space in which people may get together and create meaning among themselves, rather than individually. Wibeck, Dahlgren, and Oberg (2007: 262), in Neuman (2011: 459), observe that since the interpretative frames and the previous experience of the participants may differ, it is crucial to ensure that the preconditions for focus group participation are clear to all participants before the discussion starts. Focus group interviews will be held with the school governing body (SGB) members from the target categories to understand the situation correctly from their perspective (Heystek, 2004: 309).

### **3.3 CASE STUDY**

Leedy (1993: 123), in Nyambi (2005: 49), describes a case study as a type of descriptive research in which data is gathered directly from individuals (individual cases) or social or community groups in their natural environment for the purpose of studying interactions, attitudes or characteristics of individual groups. In this research, school governing bodies (SGBs) of four schools were selected as a case study. The researcher believes that the number was sufficient to draw meaningful conclusions pertaining to the attitude and feelings of the SGBs towards their oversight role of policy implementation in

their respective schools. Purposive or judgmental sampling method was used to select the four schools. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 166) argue that it is appropriate to select a sample on the basis of one's own knowledge of the population, its elements, and the nature of the research aims: in short, based on one's own judgment and the purpose of the study. According to Kumar (1999: 162), the primary consideration in purposive sampling is the judgment of the researcher as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study. Singleton, Straits and Straits (1993: 160) posit that the researcher relies on his or her expert judgment in selecting units that are representative or typical of the population. In other words the researcher chooses to interview those people who in his or her opinion are likely to supply him or her with the required information and who are willing to share it. The researcher handpicked the schools and the SGBs, which formed the sample group for the study on the basis of his judgment and knowledge of the typicality and suitability of the schools for the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 103) in Nyambi (2005: 50).

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION**

Nyambi (2005: 42), states that the manner in which data is collected is a crucial aspect of the research process as it determines its success or failure. The fact that this is a case study provides a detailed description and analysis of processes or themes voiced by participants in a particular situation (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: 377). In this way data is gathered directly from individuals in their natural environment in order to study their interactions, attitudes and their characteristics (Leedy, 1993: 123). According to Merriam (1998: 20), case studies are ambiguous, particularistic, descriptive and heuristic because they allow the researcher to adapt to unforeseen events and change direction in the pursuit of a rich description of the particular situation, event, programme or phenomenon under study. The researcher employed focus group interviews as the only data collection method in pursuit of the study. Focus group interviews were conducted with both the parent and educator components of the SGB members. The interviews for the various groupings were held separately. The focus group interviews helped to identify trends, perceptions and opinions that the SGBs have in relation to their oversight role of implementation of departmental and governance policies by

school principals. According to Nyambi (2005: 42-43), focus group interviews allow the participants to express their views within a context that is useful to their scientific community and this helps them to provide information that is fuller and richer than the one the researcher would obtain from an individual source.

The focus group interview method is best suited for this study on the oversight role of SGBs as it allows the researcher to uncover “data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group” (Morgan cited in Flick, 1998: 122). The focus group is suited for interviewing school governing body (SGB) members and educators because it makes participants feel more comfortable and secure in the company of people who share similar opinions, views and behaviour than in the company of an individual interviewer. McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 432) argue that this kind of interviewing creates a social environment in which group members are stimulated by the perceptions and the ideas of each other and this increases the quality

and richness of data through more efficient strategy than one-on-one interviewing. This was made possible because in these interviews, there was open conversation and participants could comment or ask questions on issues raised by other participants (Nyambi, 2005: 43). Flick (1998: 116) stresses the fact that participants in a group are advantageous because corrections by the group concerning views that are not correct, not socially shared or extreme are available as a means for validating statements and views.

May (2002: 205), cautions that a successful interview study depends on the prior construction of a theoretically informed and user-friendly interview schedule or questionnaire, because the researcher needs to know what kind of information to gather. Equally important, is the fact that those who have offered to give their time and share the intimate details of their lives also have the right to expect clear, understandable and supporting guidance throughout a process that can be confusing and unsettling. Considering that the main method of data collection in this research was focus group interviews, adequate preparations were made to ensure that the study is successful in every respect. The interviews were semi-structured in order to allow new

ideas to be raised during the interviews based on what the focus group interviewees say. The focus group interview schedule needs to be prepared well in advance to address the research topic in question. However, the interview questions in the schedule were asked in different ways for different participants in order to address their specific environments. A thoroughly prepared focus group interview schedule guides the researcher to focus the interview on the topic at hand without constraining the interviewees to a particular format. Semi-structured interviews help the researcher to tailor the interview questions in the schedule to the interview context or situation and to the participants to be interviewed in the focus groups. The researcher followed the guide and was able, through the use of semi-structured interviews, to follow topical trajectories in the conversations that may stray from the guide (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation:[www.googlesearch/semi-structuredinterviews](http://www.googlesearch/semi-structuredinterviews)). According to Merriam (1998: 76), the way in which questions are worded in an interview is a crucial consideration in extracting the type of information desired. On the basis of the reality of the fact that most current parent component SGB members in schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area are semi-literate, questions in the interview schedule were translated into isiXhosa by the researcher during the focus group interviews. IsiXhosa is the mother tongue in the area. It should be noted that the focus group questions were approved by the various committees of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, which deal with post-graduate research.

### **3.4.1 Format and Content of Questions in the Interview Schedule**

The interview schedule was divided into three sections as follows:-

- The general explanation section: This section basically covered the following aspects:- introduction by the researcher to the focus group members collectively; freedom of use of the language of choice at any stage of the interview process; allowance to interviewees to ask questions for clarity; request to interviewees to sign consent forms and guarantee of freedom to withdraw from the interview at any time as participation in the study by interviewees is voluntary; guarantee by the interviewer not to influence the interview process beyond giving clarity on

questions when solicited by the interviewees or respondents; and the extent to which confidentiality can be guaranteed.

- Section A: This section contained demographic information about the focus group interviewees. The purpose of the demographic information is to check whether the ability and capacity of the school governing bodies (SGBs) to execute their oversight role is by any means attributable to any part of the demographic information given.
- Section B: Section B contained questions aimed at giving answers to the following research hypotheses and questions:- research hypotheses:- there is correlation between the average literacy levels of SGBs in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area and their ability to effectively play their oversight role of policy implementation by school principals in the area; and principals of schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area take advantage of the average literacy levels of parent SGB members in the execution of their functions and responsibilities as contemplated in Section 16A of the Act. Research questions:-
  - Is there a correlation between the average literacy levels of parent SGB members and their role in making school principals account for implementation or non-implementation of departmental policies in the selected schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area?
  - Do school principals in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area take advantage of the average literacy levels of parent SGB members in the execution of their functions and responsibilities as stated in Section 16A of the South African Schools Act?
  - Does the Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education (ECDBE) enhance the capacity of SGBs in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area as stated in Section 19 of the Act?
  - Do SGBs in the selected schools from the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area expedite their functions as stated in Section 20 of the Act?
  - Is there an issue of power relations between school principals and SGB members in the functioning of SGBs in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area?



- What is the opinion of SGBs at the selected schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area in relation to their legislated three-year term of office?
- Is there a correlation between the general functioning of SGBs in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area and the fact that SGBs do not receive an allowance, stipend or honorarium for the execution of their functions?

### **3.5 SAMPLE**

A sample of four school governing body members (SGBs) from four out of eight schools, according to the selected categories or portfolios participated in the four focus group interviews. The selected categories or portfolios are as follows: - the chairpersons, the secretaries, the treasurers and additional parent members of SGBs. The maximum number of participants interviewed in each focus group for the purposes of this study was nine (9) which constitutes a total of thirty-six (36) participants in the four sampled schools. Principals of the four sampled schools were approached as the gatekeepers to arrange for the interviews with the SGB members.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Data collection is the precise and systematic gathering of information relevant to the purpose or the specific objectives, question or hypothesis of the study (Neuman, 2004: 20). Focus group interviews will be used to collect data from the sampled population for purposes of this research. A voice-recording device or tape-recorder was used during the interviews with the consent of the focus group interviewees. This is because semi-structured interviews often contain open-ended questions and discussions may diverge from the interview guide. A voice recording device or tape-recorder helps the researcher to transcribe the tapes for analysis.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992: 123) data analysis is a process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials accumulated to increase the understanding of them and to enable the researcher to present what has been discovered to others. Mouton (2001: 108), defines data analysis

as the “breaking up of the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships”. Glesne (1999: 130) asserts the view that data analysis involves organizing what has been seen, heard and read so that sense can be made of what has been learned. MacMillan and Schumacher (1993: 383) and Glesne (1999: 130) maintain that in qualitative research, data collection and analysis are interactive processes that occur in overlapping cycles.

The interview processes was structured to gather data about the widest possible range of issues associated with the phenomena under investigation. The research questions guided the data-gathering process in an effort to obtain “rich” and “relevant” information. The interviews contained questions that were open-ended and semi-structured. The interview lengths ranged from approximately one hour, to one and a half hours. The interview questions were open-ended so as to allow respondents to expand on their initial comments, particularly with regard to the roles of SGBs and principals. The openness of the selected research design; as well as the flexible approach of the semi-structured nature of the interviews encouraged participants to direct their responses towards issues that they deemed appropriate and applicable to the phenomenon under investigation.

The analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data commenced after the interview processes had formally concluded. The researcher worked under the close supervision and guidance of the supervisor and a statistician from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in the analysis and presentation of the collected data.

### **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 397), caution qualitative researchers of the need to be sensitive to ethical principles because of the nature of their research topics, face-to-face interaction, data collection, an emergent design, and reciprocity with participants. Criteria for a research design involve not only the selection of information-rich informants and efficient research strategies, but also an adherence to research ethics. Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 138) posit the need for the collected data to be accurate because fabrication and contrivances are both non-scientific and

unethical. Researchers, therefore, should tell the truth when writing up and reporting their findings. The most important trademark of researchers is their devotion to report what the data actually reveal. Fabricating or distorting data is the ultimate sin of a scientist.

The following ethical principles were promoted and observed: voluntary participation, no harm to participants, anonymity and confidentiality, informed consent, and no deception:

- **Voluntary participation:** The researcher promoted and allowed voluntary participation by respondents with no fear of reprisals. No coercion or pressure was exerted on participants and withdrawals from participation was allowed.
- **No harm to respondents:** Respondents were not exposed to any harm or danger, be they physical, emotional or psychological.
- **Anonymity or confidentiality:** No names or any other form of participant identification was made in the final treatise. Letters of the alphabet - A, B, C, and D- were used to refer to the four selected schools in the sample. However, it cannot be disputed that an inquisitive investigator can use other elements of the sample data to ultimately identify the respondents. Therefore, confidentiality can only be guaranteed to a certain extent. This was explained to the focus group members before the interviews commenced.
- **No deception:** The researcher identified himself and informed the respondents about the objectives of the research. All necessary documents explaining the purpose of the research and the choice of respondents was issued to the respondents in order to instill trust and consequently enjoy full cooperation and maximum participation.
- **Informed consent:** The purpose of the study and risks involved were conveyed to the respondents in order for them to decide whether they were willing to participate in the research. The respondents were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study should they not feel comfortable about participating at any stage of the process.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

Research design is used to refer to the overall plan for collecting and analysing data, including specifications for enhancing the internal and external validity of the study. It involves a set of decisions regarding what topic is to be studied, among what population, with what research methods and for what purpose. Fundamental to every scientific research is a method which can be explained as a prescribed manner for performing a specific task, with adequate consideration of the problem, objectives and hypotheses. Methodology refers to the rationale and psychological assumptions that underline a particular study relative to the scientific method used with a view to explaining the researcher's ontological and epistemological views. Aqualitative research approach was employed for purposes of this study owing to the fact that it is concerned with understanding behaviour from the research subjects' frame of reference. Semi-structured focus group interviews were used as the sole data collection method. The research took the form of a case study approach and school governing bodies (SGBs) from four schools were purposefully or judgmentally selected for purposes of the study. Focus group interviews allow the participants to express their views within a context that is useful to their community and this helps them to provide information that is fuller and richer than what the researcher would get from an individual source. The analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data commenced after the interview process was formally concluded.

In the chapter that follows an analysis and discussion on the data collected is undertaken



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

According to Van Wyk (2004: 50) the government recognises that many school governing bodies (SGBs), particularly in the rural areas and less advantaged urban areas, do not have the required skills and experience to exercise their new powers and may have difficulty in fulfilling their functions. Duma, Kapueja and Khanyile (2011: 44) postulate that participation of parents in school governance involves planning, organising, leading, supervising, policy-making, decision-making, controlling, and coordinating, which are some of the management duties of the school governance structures. Badenhorst (1992) in Mkentane (2003) as cited in Duma et al. (2011: 45) contends that if educators ignore the strengths that the father and mother figures can bring to schools, valuable resources that could have a positive impact on the school governance activities are neglected.

The following research study questions as given in Chapter 1 were proposed to address the aims of this research study:

- Is there a correlation between the average literacy levels of parent SGB members and their role in making principals account for implementation or non-implementation of departmental policies in selected schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative area?
- Do school principals in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area take advantage of the average literacy levels of parent SGB members in the execution of their functions and responsibilities as stated in Section 16A of the South African Schools Act?
- Does the Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education (ECDBE) enhance the capacity of SGBs in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area as stated in Section 19 of the above-mentioned Act?

- Do SGBs in the selected schools from the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area expedite their functions as stated in Section 20 of the Act?
- Is there an issue of power relations between school principals and SGB members in the functioning of SGBs in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area?
- What is the opinion of SGBs at the selected schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area in relation to their legislated three-year term of office?
- Is there a correlation between the general functioning of SGBs in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area and the fact that SGBs do not receive an allowance, stipend or honorarium for the execution of their functions?

In order to collect sufficient data to answer these questions, the researcher employed both a literature study and an empirical investigation based on a qualitative research design. The researcher consulted literature which is relevant to the topic in order to provide a critical synthesis of what has already been written on SGBs, (Duma, Kapueja & Khanyile, 2011:46). The researcher focused on extrapolation rather than generalisation of the research findings, especially when the biographic and demographic data of parent SGB members in the focus groups is taken into account (Joubert, 2008: 240).

## **4.2 SETTING FOR THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

As indicated in Chapter 3, focus group interviews were the only source of empirical data collection for this research study. The researcher employed a qualitative approach in order to obtain detailed descriptions (“rich” data) of the actual situations impacting on the oversight role of the SGBs, (Heystek, 2004: 309). Four focus group interviews were held with the members of SGBs from the four selected schools. Venues for the focus group interviews were the participants’ respective schools. The target population comprised the SGB chairpersons, secretaries, treasurers and any additional members of the SGBs.

Ethical measures are important in all research (Mestry, 2006: 30). The significance of this research project was explained to all the participants in the four focus group

interviews. All the participants agreed to take part voluntarily in the focus group interviews. All parties were informed about the aims of the research project, research methods, and the nature of participation, confidentiality, and possible publication of results (Burgess, 1989: 6) in Mestry (2006:30). Participants' anonymity as well as voluntary participation in the research project was assured. Participants were also informed that they were free to withdraw their participation in the research project at any time. All participants willingly agreed to participate and contribute in the focus group interviews. All participants in the focus group interviews willingly agreed to sign the consent forms. A voice recording device was used during focus group interviews and none of the participants indicated objection or reluctance to the use of the device. Field templates were also used to record participants' biographic and demographic information data.

All the participants in the focus group interviews preferred to use IsiXhosa during the interviews. Although all the questions in the interview schedule were prepared in English, the researcher was compelled to switch to IsiXhosa. The switch to IsiXhosa presented another problem which centred on the accuracy of the translation of questions from English to IsiXhosa. In trying to overcome this problem, the researcher followed Denzin's (1978: 118) in Mabasa and Themane (2002: 113) advice: *The meaning, not the wording, of questions should be fixed; this gives interviewers flexibility, so that they can fit their questioning to the experiences of those questioned.*

The interview schedule was divided into two sections. Section A focused on the biographic and demographic information about the participants and their respective institutions. Section B comprised of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Where applicable the researcher tactfully probed responses to encourage further debate in an effort to obtain "rich" and relevant data.



## **4.3 PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

### **4.3.1 Biographic and Demographic Findings**

The researcher interviewed a total of twenty five participants in the four focus group interviews. The smallest number of participants in the focus group interviews was in school C, with five participants, and the most were in both schools A and school D with seven participants each. The total of parent SGB members in the four focus groups was seventeen – seven educator members and one non-teaching staff member. None of the twenty-five participants claimed to be uneducated, but one of the parent SGB members could not write his name or append his signature although he was not visibly disabled.

Six participants claimed to have achieved standard five (Grade 7) and below in terms of their level of education, ten achieved standard eight (Grade 10) and below, one achieved standard ten (Grade 12) and below, and eight achieved three-year diplomas and above. It appears that the eight participants with the three-year diploma and above qualifications were the seven educators and one non-teaching staff SGB member. Out of a total of seventeen parent SGB members who participated in the four focus group interviews, only one parent achieved a level of education that is above Grade 10 or standard eight.

The range of years of experience in the SGB activities of the interviewed participants was between two and eighteen years in school(A), between two and nine years in school (B), between seven and nineteen years in school (C) and between two and twenty years in school (D). The average range of years of experience in the SGB activities of the participants in the four focus group interviews was ten years. The legislated term of office for parents, teachers and non-teaching staff members of SGBs is three years. The scenario of the average of ten years of experience in the SGB activities of the participants shows that each elected parent, teacher and non-teaching staff member of the SGB in the selected schools spent three terms on average as a member of the SGB. School A was established eighteen years ago; school C, nineteen years ago and school D, twenty years ago. On the basis of these findings, in each of

these three schools there is at least one member of the SGB who has been in office since the establishment of the school to the date of the interview.

The school with the least number of learners in the four selected schools had enrolled between one hundred and two hundred learners, and the one with the highest learner enrolment had enrolled between five hundred and one and six hundred learners. The average learner enrolment in the four selected schools was three hundred and one learners. The youngest participant in the focus group interviews was in the range of twenty to thirty years and the oldest was above sixty one years. The average age of SGB members in schools A, B and D was approximately fifty four years and in school C, it was forty six years. The overall average age of SGB members in the four schools was fifty two years. The shortest focus group interview took thirty-nine minutes and four seconds and the longest took one hour, thirty-four minutes and thirty-two seconds. The respondents were asked the same number of questions. The average duration for the four focus group interviews was fifty-six minutes and fifty-one seconds.

#### **4.3.2 The Main Qualitative Interview Schedule**

##### **4.3.2.1 Parent Component Members Who Serve SGBs**

The focus group participants in school A replied that there were a total of ten parent SGB members including co-opted members in their SGB. There was a total of seven parent SGB members in school B, seven parent SGB members in school C and seven parent SGB members in school D. Van Wyk (2007: 135) points out that in spite of having the majority representation on the SGB, many parents serving on SGBs are reticent and rely on the principal and teachers for leadership and guidance in decision-making. Karlsson (2002: 332) in Van Wyk (2007: 135) ascribes this to parents' weak understanding of their role, a capacity deficit in the range of skills needed to perform governance functions and irregular attendance of meetings. The SGB deputy chairperson in school C mentioned that the parent SGB members in their school were strictly in accordance with the quota given in the schedule from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) which was based on learner enrolment. *"Asisakrwezi mntu ngoku kuba*

*anele la mava sele sinawo*”, (We no longer see any reason to co-opt SGB members because of our experience in SGB activities), the SGB deputy chairperson in school C claimed. SGB chairpersons in schools A and D which were eighteen years and twenty respectively since their establishment claimed that they had been members of SGBs of their schools since they were established and had continuously held the position of chairperson since then. The deputy chairperson of SGB in school C, which was established nineteen years ago, made a similar claim. Joubert (2008: 231) maintains that despite training of school governing bodies over a number of years, research, surveys and reviews on the status and functionality of SGBs in the country and in individual provinces revealed that conceptualisation of the role the SGB had to play in executing its functions, remained a challenge. Levacic (1995:30) in Ngidi (2004: 260) asserted that there was an absence of hotly contested elections to SGBs in the majority of schools. The fact that there were parents who had been in executive positions in the SGBs in three of the four selected schools in this study since their establishment, was testimony to Levacic’s statement.

Mabasa and Themane (2002: 114) in their research study found that although the SGBs were duly constituted in accordance with policy stipulations, in the case of parental representation, they found that grandparents, not parents, often served in the SGBs. This is a challenge especially in rural areas where most parents work away from their homes. In schools A and D, at least two female parent members of the SGB were too old to have children of their own at the General Education and Training (GET) level of basic education. This could be ascribed to either of the two possibilities; living with children of their relatives or living with grandchildren. Resorting to representation by grandparents is problematic because their views may not necessarily be those of the parents (Mabasa & Themane, (2002: 114).

#### **4.3.2.2 Copies of Pieces of Legislation in Possession of SGBs, as Amended**

All four focus groups stated that they had copies of all the four pieces of legislation listed in the interview schedule as amended. However, although the researcher did not ask the respondents to produce the copies, only school C bothered to table the copies

of all available pieces of legislation. On tactfully probing responses to encourage further debate on the matter in school B, one educator member and one parent member of the SGB, responded as follows concerning the significance of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (SASA): *“iyasinceda ukuba sazi indlela isikolo esiqhutywa ngayo siyi SGB kulawulo olu lwethu” (It helps us to understand how to run the school in terms of governance). “Isinceda ukuba sazi ukuba iintlanganiso zesikolo ze-SGB nezabazali ziyangena, nasekubeni xa kukho ukungevisisani kwimiba ethile simele ukuba silamle kanjani” (It helps us to monitor whether SGB meetings and parents meetings are convened accordingly and also on how to resolve potential and actual disagreements based on the prescripts of SASA).*

According to Section 16 of SASA, the SGB must be in a position of trust towards the school, and in terms of Section 19, the principal must support the members of the SGB in their governance functions. Section 20 states that the SGB must support the educators in their professional functions. Based on the fact that to the knowledge of the researcher, all the pieces of legislation referred to in the interview schedule are available only in English, proper functioning of the SGB, especially in rural schools, is reliant on the existence of a relationship of mutual trust and support by the SGB and the school as complementing role players (Heystek, 2004: 308). This argument is significant in this research study when considering the literacy levels or educational achievement of parent SGB bodies in all four selected schools, as evident in the biographic and demographic data presented in paragraph 4.3.1 above. Duma, Kapueja and Khanyile (2011: 44) submit that it is essential for parents in the school governing bodies of rural schools to be given necessary training so that they can have a working knowledge of school governance activities. Mashile (2000) in Duma et al. (2011: 46) posit that the process of involving parents in the governance of rural schools is difficult to manage because of the high rate of illiteracy among the parent governors.

#### **4.3.2.3 Governance and Professional Management Support Documents in Possession of the Selected Schools**

Lello (1993: 1) in Ngidi (2004: 260) maintains that as much as the school principal is accountable to the Department, to the school governing body, to the teachers, to the parents and learners, by the same token the school governing body should be accountable to these stakeholders. Maile (2002: 329) in Ngidi (2004: 260) remarks that illiteracy among the members of SGBs, which is specially the case in the rural areas, may contribute to their inefficiency. He argues that this is possible because illiteracy precludes parents from accessing relevant managerial information from the principal. The biographic and demographic data presented in 4.3.1 above empirically indicated that the most educated parent SGB member in the four selected schools achieved just above Grade 10 but below Grade 12 in terms of mainstream education.

All the respondents in the four focus groups claimed to be in possession of all seven documents listed under B3, and school C continued with their approach of tabling or displaying all the seven documents listed, although they were not necessarily asked to do so. In school B the respondents were not sure about the availability of a School Records Management file, and one educator member remarked *“Andiqinisekanga ngobukho bayo” (I am not sure about its availability)*. On the availability of the school budget for the current school financial year, respondents in school B responded as follows concerning the budget review:- one parent member *“Qho ngenyanga siyahlala siyi SGB sijonge ukuba sisahamba ngokwezicwangciso na kwi-budget yethu” (once every month we sit and look into our budget for possible reviews)*. A second parent member *“Ngamaxesha eentlanganiso se SGB sithi sihlale siyi SGB sijonge apho sibetheka khona sibonisane sicuntsule kwelinye icala sifake kwelinye” (During SGB meetings we look into our budget and streamline our needs:- if necessary we shift funds from slow and less needy cost centres to fast and urgent needy cost centres)*. One educator member concluded:-*“Qho ngekota sibamba iparents meeting si-report(e) ngendlela esetyenziswa ngayo imali ngokwe-budget yesikolo, qho ngekota” (Quarterly we hold parents meetings and progress on financial expenditure features in all those quarterly meetings)*. In school C, one parent member commented *“Besinokuvuya ukuba*

*urhulumente ebenokukhe onke la maxwebhu orhulumento lwesikolo awakhuphe ewabhale ngolwimi lwethu lwesiXhosa” (We would be very happy if the government could issue all the governance related documents in our IsiXhosa language).* In school D, one educator member commented about the school budget *“Esi sikolo sikhe sahlala isisikolo esingakhiwanga ngurhulumente, lo ibisenza ukuba sifake imali eninzi kwi-maintenance, sithe sakwakhiwa atsho avuleka amehlo ethu nangokhuthazwa yinkqubo karhulumente kazwelonke ebizwa ngokuba yi-mid-term budget review speech, yasenza loo nto nathi sanaso isakhono sokuphonononga i-school budget sethu sithathe ngapha sifake ngapha” (It took a long time before the government built our school, as a result we used to budget a lot of our allocated funds towards school maintenance budget; now that our school is built by the government and also influenced by national government policy known as mid-term budget review speech, we developed the capacity to review and re-align our annual school budget according to the nature of needs).*

Heystek (2010: 99) remarks that governing bodies are expected to play an important role in promoting quality education in schools. According to Section 20 of the SASA, they have to support the principal and teachers and promote the best interests of the school; in addition, according to SASA Section 16, they are responsible for the governance of the school but may not be involved in the professional management by the principal and teachers. Section 9 of The Education Laws Amendment Act (ELAA) of 2007 opens the possibility of more direct involvement of governing bodies in professional activities because principals must table the school improvement plans, and provide feedback on the implementation of this plan as well as presenting a report on professional management to the governing body. This view is supported by Section 58B of SASA because the Provincial Heads of Departments (HoDs) may suspend the functioning of the governing body if it prejudices quality education. The implication here is that the governing body has some power in professional matters related to ensuring quality education. Heystek (2010: 99) indicates that the new powers given to SGBs allowing them to be more responsive to professional matters in schools may affect the professional rights of teachers since unprofessional or lay educational people (the parents) can now be involved in professional activities. The intention, however, is not

that parental representatives be involved in professional matters for which they are not trained, but that they should be in a position to act in cases of gross negligence. In their oversight role, parental representatives should focus on the positive aspects and promote quality via support and good relationships, building up a positive climate and encouraging ownership rather than using the negative approach of threatening people.

#### **4.3.2.4 Regular Meetings of SGB Members**

All four focus groups attested to regulated meetings of their respective SGBs. Their elaborated responses were as follows: School A; *“Ngenyanga sidibana kabini, kodwa sithi ngoku besele sidibene kuphinde kuthiwe masikhawuleze sidibane nanini na xa kukho umba ongxamisekileyo ofuna ukuba sikhawuleze siwuqwalasele”* (We normally meet twice per month, but if there is an urgent matter to be attended to, we convene our SGB meetings as and when it is necessary to do so). School B; *“I-SGB ihlala kanye inyanga ngenyanga ukuze ke ibize intlanganiso yabazali kanye ngekota ngaphandle kokuba kukho umba o-special njenganamhlanje”* (the SGB meets once every month, unless there is a special issue to be attended to, like today). School C; *“intlanganiso ye-SGB ibanjwa kanye ngekota, kodwa ke siyakrwecana xa kukho into engxamisekileyo”* (SGB meetings are convened once per quarter, but we convene an SGB meeting at any time when there is an urgent matter to be discussed). School D; *“I-SGB idibana kanye ngekota ngaphandle kokuba kukho into engxamileyo ekufuneka ixoxiwe”* (The SGB meets once per quarter unless there is an important urgent matter to be discussed).

Mabasa and Themane (2002: 111) emphasise that serious challenges with respect to stakeholder participation in SGBs remain. The challenges include the actual constitution of SGB membership, the divisive and competing interests served in the SGBs, and the manner in which decisions are taken in governing bodies (Mabasa & Themane, 2002: 111). According to Mabasa and Themane (2002: 112) SGBs are required to be involved in making important decisions that have an impact on the quality of education. They observe, however, that this has not been easy. One of the challenges has been the lack of preparation for new governors before they start with their work, which results in the following problems: governors tend to be unfamiliar with meeting procedure; there are

problems with the specialist language used; the difficulties of managing the large volumes of paper; not knowing how to make a contribution; the lack of knowledge of appropriate legislation; feeling inhibited by the presence of other colleagues who seem to have more knowledge; and perceiving their role as simply ‘rubber stamping’ what others have already decided upon. This study found that out of a total of seventeen parent SGB members who participated in the four focus group interviews, only one (1) achieved above Grade 10 but below Grade 12, whereas all the seven educator members and one non-teaching staff member had a three-year diploma and above in terms of educational qualifications.

#### **4.3.2.5 Preparation of Budget for the Following Year by the Finance Committees (FINCOMs)**

According to Mestry (2004: 129) the SGB needs to bear in mind the following aspects that constitute good financial management, among others:

- The responsibility of the governing body, its committees (especially the financial committee (FINCOM)) –The principal and staff should be clearly defined, and the limits of delegated authority should be clearly established.
- The budget should reflect the school’s prioritised educational objectives, seek to achieve the efficient use of funds and be subjected to regular, effective financial monitoring.
- The school should establish and implement sound internal financial control systems to ensure the reliability and accuracy of its financial transactions.

The responses of the participants to the preparation of school budgets by FINCOMs were as follows: School A: *“Idibana ngo-October, ukuze phambi kokuba kuvalwe isikolo ngo-December babe sebebiziwe abazali ukuza kuphehlelela i-budget” (FINCOM meets in October and a general parents’ meeting is convened before schools close in December to approve the budget).* School B: *“Idibana ngo-October kwaye ngoku nangoko emva koko sibe sesibiza i-annual general meeting yabazali beze kuyiphehlelela, njenganamhlanje, ukuphuma kwethu apha siya kwi-meeting yabazali” (FINCOM meets in October and immediately after that, we convene parents’ annual*



*general meeting to approve the budget, like today, after this interview session we will be attending the parents' annual general meeting). School C: "Idibana by the end of Term 3 and within thirty days into the last school Term we call an annual parents' meeting for i-approval" (FINCOM meets by the end of the third school term and within thirty days into the last school term, parents' meeting is convened to approve the budget). The response in school C was supported by the educator SGB member, and the other respondents in the focus group concurred. School D: "Siyahlala kwikota yesithathu sijonge ukuba ithini na inkcitho-ngeniso mali yethu sithi ke ngoku ngo-October senze i-budget yonyaka olandelayo, size ngo-November sibize intlanganiso yabazali ukuza kuphumeza i-budget" (We sit in the third quarter to review our budget patterns and sit in October to budget for the following year; annual parents' meeting is called in November to approve the budget).*

Heystek (2004: 7) in Nyambi (2005: 57) argues that for parents to be able to perform the expected policy and financial functions, they must have the ability to read and understand the policies in order to implement them and the legislation. Van Wyk (2004: 54) emphasises that the shift to decentralised school governance and management requires governors, principals and educators to develop a wide range of skills and capacities to deal with the complex issues and tasks they are expected to fulfil. Out of seventeen parent SGB members who participated in the interviews, only one had achieved a level of education above Grade 10 but below Grade 12. Mestry (2004: 127) explains that school governance, as regards the governing body's functions, means determining the policy and rules by which the school is to be organised, managed and controlled. Oversight means seeing to it that the policies and rules determined by the SGB are implemented by the principal.

Mestry (2004: 127) notes that there is a perception among many parents, educators and principals, that the principal is the accounting officer of the school and that he or she is thus accountable to the Department of Education for the school's finances. Some indicated that the finance committee is accountable while others rightly pointed out that the SGB is responsible for the management of the school's finances. Prinsloo (2006: 365) states that in the case of *Schoonbee and Others v MEC for Education*,

Mpumalanga & Another 2002 (4) SA 877(t), the assumption was seemingly made that the principal is also the accounting officer of school funds. The principal and deputy principal of Ermelo High School were suspended by the Head of the HoD concerned on alleged charges of misusing school funds, and the SGB was dissolved. In a landmark judgement in the Schoonbee case, Judge Moseneke treated the relationship between the school governing body (SGB) and the principal in a way that should give direction to the way one thinks about this relationship. The judge found that:

- The principal has a duty to facilitate, support, and assist the governing body (SGB) in the execution of its statutory functions relating to assets, liabilities, property, and financial management of the public school and also as a person to whom specific parts of the governing body's duties can be delegated.
- The principal is accountable to the governing body, and it is the governing body that should hold the principal accountable for financial and property matters that are not specifically entrusted to the principal by the statute.

Van der Merwe (2013: 238) avers that good public school governance requires a flourishing partnership, based on mutual interest and mutual confidence, between the many constituencies that make up and support the school. The different role players in education should respect each other and the roles they play. Van der Merwe (2013: 239) adds that in good governance practices, it is generally accepted that a governance structure will determine policies and strategies for an organisation or a corporate entity, whereas the implementation of these policies and strategies is the function of the executives of that organisation or entity. In the school setup, the governing body is responsible for determining policies, while the principal and other educators must implement them. It is the governing body's duty to strike a balance between the interests of the different parties involved in education, and to ensure that the school provides quality education, while also running a financially stable school. According to Van der Merwe (2013: 243) amendments to SASA are another means by which the state attempts to interfere in school governance. The state seeks to abuse the principal's position as a member of the governing body to gain some control over the governance of a school, by imposing certain duties on the principal as a departmental

employee. In concluding her article, Van der Merwe (2013: 250) argues that Section 16A (3) oversteps certain boundaries set by other sections of SASA that were promulgated prior to the commencement of the Amendment Act, and eventually interferes in school governance. As mentioned earlier, the underlying objective of Section 16A (3) is to hold the principal responsible for the governing body's actions. There would be serious implications for the DBE if Van der Merwe's explanation of the unconstitutionality of Section 16A before a high court judge could succeed. Such a scenario would warrant further amendments to SASA at huge costs to the tax payers.

Heystek (2004: 310) sees policy formulation and budgeting as two of the key responsibilities of SGBs that require more specialised skills and knowledge from principals as well as parents. The competency and literacy level of parent members of SGBs, as reflected in the biographic and demographic data of this research may place restrictions on the functioning of the SGBs (Heystek, 2004: 310). Responses of SGB members during focus group interviews, judged from their consensus in their responses, reflected the existence of a relationship of trust. Heystek (2004: 310) further argues that in a school where parents have limited skills, knowledge or experience and even lower levels of literacy, they may find it difficult or impossible to assume responsibility for drafting and managing the budget. In such a situation, is it the responsibility of the principal, as ex officio member of the SGB and according to SASA Section 19(2), to support the parents by drafting and managing the budget? According to Heystek (2004: 310) if the parents trust the principal and the educators, they will accept the budget and the management thereof. However, if the parents do not trust the principal – which often happens – it may lead to constant conflict because the parents may feel disempowered. If the parents know they do not have the skills to manage the budget, they will also realise that they have no option but to trust the principal with the details. When they discuss the monthly budget management with the principal, they will have to trust that he or she is honest with the figures that are submitted to them. This kind of relationship will succeed as long as their relationship is marked by mutual goodwill and trust. A lack of trust will, however, disturb this relationship, and the support from the parents may become a burden in the governance process. The meetings may

develop into a power struggle and the aim may change from working together for the benefit of the school to a power struggle between parents and principal (Heystek, 2004: 310).

Mestry (2004: 127) espouses that the governing body in most cases delegate various financial tasks to the principal and thus hold the principal accountable. A problem with delegation of duties from the SGB to the principal is that the principal is generally better informed with regard to the delegated tasks than the SGB. The danger in this is that the principal may use this information to pursue his or her own objectives at the expense of the school. This implies that the principal is in the position of wielding power when the members of the SGB are either illiterate or have little knowledge when dealing with school financial matters. Mestry (2004: 129) suggests that Section 19 of SASA stipulates that the HoD should provide introductory training for newly elected governing bodies to enable them to perform their functions. They should also be provided with continuous training to promote the effective performance of their functions or to enable them to assume additional functions. Training in financial school management should be practice based and the following sections should be covered in training:

- The legal framework that underpins financial school management
- Funding of schools. This includes state funding and school contribution. Training in the management of school fees is crucial.
- Financial planning which includes budgeting
- Financial organisation
- Financial control
- School information systems.

Mestry (2004: 129) further argues that training in financial management is fundamental in preparing and equipping school managers with financial skills. This training should enable the SGB to be responsible and accountable for funds that have been received for the attainment of specific school objectives. The full control of funds in the school therefore becomes the responsibility of the SGB. The state, apart from paying teachers' salaries, providing school buildings and allocating financial resources for learning

support material, services and maintenance of schools, has very little influence over the school's finances. The SGB must ensure the existence of and the effective execution of sound, watertight financial policy and also management procedures. Regular checks and counter checks are necessary to avoid the mismanagement of funds by any person or group of persons. The above arguments detail the significance of the effective oversight role of school governing bodies in their respective schools. In this scenario the principal performs a consultative role and will be called upon to advise the SGB on financial matters.

#### ***4.3.2.6 Submission of Annual Financial Statements (AFS) to the District Office***

According to Section 42 of the SASA, the governing body of a public school must – (a) keep records of funds received and spent by the public school and of its assets, liabilities and financial transactions; and (b) as soon as practicable, but not later than three months after the end of each financial year, draw up financial statements in accordance with the guidelines determined by the Member of the Executive Council (MEC). In terms of Section 44 of SASA, the financial year of a public school commences on the first day of January and ends on the last day of December each year. According to Section 43 of SASA, (1) the governing body of a public school must appoint a person registered as an auditor in terms of the Auditing Profession Act, 2005 (Act No. 26 of 2005), to audit the records and financial statements referred to in Section 42. (2) If the audit referred to in subsection (1) is not reasonably practicable, the SGB of a public school must appoint a person to examine and report on the records and financial statements referred to in Section 42, who: - (a) is qualified to perform the duties of an accounting officer in terms of Section 60 of the Close Corporations Act, 1984 (Act No. 69 of 1984); or (b) is approved by the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for this purpose. (3) No person who has a financial interest in the affairs of the public school may be appointed under this Section. (4) If the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) deems it necessary, he or she may request the Auditor-General to undertake an audit of the records and financial statements of a public school. (5) A governing body must submit to the HoD, within six months after the end of each financial year, a copy of the annual financial statements, audited or examined in terms of this Section.

Responses of the each of the focus groups in respect of the submission of annual financial statements for 2013 were as follows: School A; *“Ifakwe ingekabethi i-30 ka-June 2014”* (was submitted to the District Office before 30 June 2014). School B; *“Thina siyisa ngo-Matshi siyisela unyaka oqale nge-1 April 2013 ukuya kutsho nge-31 March 2014”* (We submitted it in March 2014 for the financial year that started on 1 April 2013 and ended on 31 March 2014”. School C; *“Yafakwa kwakwi-First School Term of 2014 for 2013”* (was submitted during the First School Term of 2014 for 2013). School D; *“Seyiyile mfundisi seyide yabuya nefayile yasayinwa yi-SGB”* (it is submitted already to the extent that it was confirmed to be in order and the copy returned and signed by the SGB).

All the selected schools complied with the requirement of submitting annual financial statements to the District Office and all of them claimed to have met the deadline date of 30 June 2014. However, school B chose to follow the National and Provincial Governments’ financial year which extends from 01 April to 31 March and that is in contravention with Section 44 of SASA.

#### **4.3.2.7 Enhancement of Capacity of Governing Bodies Workshops on Roles and Functions Conducted by the Department of Education**

According to Section 19 of SASA – (1) Out of the funds appropriated for this purpose by the provincial legislature, the HoD must establish a programme to – (a) provide introductory training for newly elected governing bodies to enable them to perform their functions; and (b) provide continuing training to governing bodies to promote the effective performance of their functions or to enable them to assume additional functions. (2) The HoD must ensure that principals and other officers of the education department render all necessary assistance to governing bodies in the performance of their functions in terms of this Act.

Focus group interviewees responded as follows pertaining to enhancement of their capacity: School A; *“Ewe, sasikhe sabizwa kwa-Rashimani, ezona zinto babegxile kuzo kukusixelela ngezinto emazenziwe esikolweni, bantu bajongene nesikolo masisijonge kanjani, siyijonge kanjani impahla nokhuseleko lwesikolo sithini ngalo, imali yesikolo*

*isetyenziswa kanjani*” (Yes we were called twice at TRC Hall, Rashmere, first for a workshop on our roles and responsibilities and secondly, the workshop focused on procurement procedures and utilisation of resources, including school funds). School B; *“Ewe yayikwa Rashimani, ngathi unyaka nonyaka imana ibizwa, kwakugxininiswa ekujongeni imigaqo-nkqubo yesikolo, kanti nokujongwa kwemicimbi yeemali zesikolo, nokhuseleko lwesikolo*” (Yes, if we are not making a mistake, once every year SGBs are invited to a workshop at TRC Hall; the workshops, basically focus on policy development, school finances and school safety). School C; *“Ewe, izihlandlo ezibini e-TRC Hall, iinkalo ekwakujongwe kuzo kukuphathwa kweemali zesikolo eyona siyikhumbula kakuhle*” (Yes, we were invited to a workshop at TRC Hall two times since the beginning of our term of office and financial management is one of the focus area we can recall very well). School D; *“Sesikhe saya sibizelwe kwa-Rashimani, imiba ekwakugxilwe kuyo luxanduva lwe-SGB ingakumbi abo babambe izikhundla kwakunye nokuphathwa kweemali zesikolo ne-fund-raising*” (Yes, we were invited at TRC Hall and the focus areas were the roles and responsibilities of SGB office bearers, financial management and fund-raising).

All four focus groups, except school B who were not sure about the number of capacity enhancement workshops they attended, indicated that they had attended a total of two training workshops at TRC Hall since the beginning of their current term of office in 2012. All the focus groups mentioned SGB roles and functions and financial management as key focus areas of those training workshops. Heystek (2004: 308 – 309) avers that the limited training of the main role-players in the management and governance of schools coupled with their uncertainty regarding their functions and duties, makes it sometimes difficult for principals and parental SGB members to work together harmoniously. The current term of office of elected SGB members comes to an end by end March 2015. To learn that since their election in 2012 they have been subjected only to two training workshops is a serious cause for concern, especially when this is considered against the background of their level of education as found in the biographic and demographic empirical data above. However, throughout the four focus group interviews, the relationship of mutual trust and support by the SGB and the

school as complementing role players seemed to be in existence (Heystek, 2004: 308). This was evident through their consensus in responding to questions in the interview schedule. Given the lack of training given to SGBs to enhance their capacity, and the low literacy levels of parent SGB members, this relationship of trust and mutual support seems to be the only factor that sustains cooperation between parent SGB members and the school principals. According to Heystek (2004: 310) a lack of trust will however disturb this relationship and the support from the parents may become a burden in the governance process.

Mestry (2006: 32 – 33) protests that training given to SGBs by school districts (departments) is generally ineffective, because departmental officials selected to train the SGBs are not experts in financial school management. Some school districts employ the services of consultants who do not necessarily have a sound knowledge of school finances to train SGBs. Mestry; (2006: 35) postulates that training in financial management is fundamental in preparing and equipping school managers with financial skills. Research done by Du Preez and Grobler (1998: 39) cited in Mestry (2006: 35 has indicated that there is correlation between sound financial management and effective, efficient SGBs. The HoD must ensure that school governing bodies are trained continually. On probing participants in the focus group interviews, it came out that only selected members of the SGBs from each school were invited to participate in the two training workshops they had attended since 2012. Mestry (2006: 35) argues that every member, not just a few, must receive training. Where provincial departments are unable to provide the training to every member because of cost implications, schools should take the initiative of forming partnerships with tertiary institutions or other service providers that offer training in financial management. The training should enable the SGB to be responsible and accountable for funds that have been received for the attainment of specific school objectives and will also equip the SGBs to make a contribution towards the improvement of the overall quality of teaching and learning.

Joubert (2009: 231) contends that despite training of SGBs over a number of years, research, surveys and reviews on the status of functionality of SGBs in the country and individual provinces reveal that conceptualisation of what role the SGB has to play in



executing its functions remains a problem. This research showed that in the four focus groups there were parent members of SGBs who had been serving in their respective SGB structures for more than a decade; this did not imply that they were fully capacitated in terms of both understanding and executing their roles and functions as SGB members of their respective schools. Adequate training of SGB members is pivotal in the maintenance of the relationship of mutual trust and partnership between SGB members and school principals. In the research findings by Mbokodi and Singh (2011: 43) illiteracy was found to be one of the major reasons why parents do not form a partnership with other stakeholders in the governance of schools. According to Mbokodi and Singh (2011), because parents lack literacy skills and cannot contribute much to issues of governance, chairpersons of SGBs admitted that they keep away from schools for fear of embarrassment about their shortcomings.

Duma, Kapueja and Khanyile (2011: 44) in their research study submit that it is essential for parents in the SGBs of rural schools to be given the necessary training so that they can have a working knowledge of school governance activities. Duma et al's submission is relevant in this study when the educational level of parent SGB members who participated in the focus groups is taken into account. It is also relevant for as long as there is not yet a benchmark policy in terms of potential parent SGB members to be considered for election to SGBs. It is also relevant for as long as co-opted members of SGBs based on their skills and expertise do not have voting powers in decision-making. Duma et al. (2011: 45) insist that success in the execution of school governance duties by parent SGB members is determined by the extent to which they have received good capacity building and empowerment skills in school governance. In the conclusion of their study, Duma et al. (2011: 51) highlight the following: one of the great challenges is the illiteracy rate of parents in SGBs, who should be playing a significant role in school governance activities. But, they lack the knowledge and training to do so. It is essential for them to be given the necessary training which should include the opportunity to acquire the necessary knowledge to they be in a position to participate meaningfully in the school governance activities.

#### **4.3.2.8 Power-Struggle Relationship between the SGBs and School Principals**

Bagarette (2011: 223) maintains that the SASA ushered in governance in all South African public schools, by introducing SGBs that have overall control and authority in the schools, their policies and direction. However, according to Bagarette, the introduction of SGBs in schools created two centres of power. Van Wyk (2004: 52) in Bagarette (2011: 224) expresses concern that the SGBs in South Africa have at their disposal a considerable amount of power and authority bestowed upon them by the SASA; a situation which has a potential to result in conflict. On the other hand, Heystek (2004: 308 – 309) suggests that the limited training of the main role-players in the management and governance of schools, coupled with their uncertainty regarding their functions and duties, make it sometimes difficult for principals and parental SGB members to work together harmoniously. Power play and domination are normally part of any teamwork and interpersonal interaction (Moon, Butcher & Bird, 2000: 57; 62) in Heystek, (2004: 309). Heystek (2004: 309) considers that these power plays may be conscious or unconscious but they do happen, for example, a principal trying to dominate the rest of the SGB or the chairperson of the SGB trying to dominate the principal on behalf of the parents. This power play may have a detrimental effect on the relationship of trust and mutual support.

The participants in the focus group interviews responded as follows to the question on power-struggle relationship: school A: *“Zange tu, zonke izinto siyevana sibonisane ngazo”* (There was never a power-struggle, we reason together with the principal and resolve any issue). School B: *“Hayi azange lubekho, siyathetha sivane zonke izinto ziqala apha kwintlanganiso ze-SGB sibonisane sivane”* (There was never a power-struggle, all issues begin in the SGB meeting and we reason together to resolve them). School C: *“Hayi, zonke izigqibo zithatyathwa kuviwana”* (No, all decisions are taken amicably without tensions). School D: *“asizange sibe nangquzulwano akukho ufuna ukuba ngumagunyakhe xa sixoxa imiba, sifikelela ezigqibeni sivana”* (There was never any conflict or any indication or element of power abuse by anybody, we take decisions amicably).

All the participants or respondents in the four focus groups distanced their relationship with their respective principals from power-struggles. This state of affairs could possibly be ascribed to the existence of a relationship of mutual trust and support by the SGB and the schools as complementing role players (Heystek, 2004: 308). On the other hand it could be ascribed to unconscious power plays which might lead to the detrimental effect on the relationship of trust and mutual support in the long run (Heystek, 2004: 309). The state of affairs in the four selected schools could also be attributed to the assertion that the composition of the SGB of a public school consists of all the stakeholders of the school. Through the employment of this structure in a school, SASA envisages a partnership between all the stakeholders in the best interests of the learners and the school (Bagarette, 2011: 227). Karlsson's (2002: 332) in Bagarette (2011: 227) findings in her research with 27 schools throughout South Africa's nine provinces show that in almost every SGB, the principal plays a dominant role in meetings and decision-making. According to her, this dominant role can be attributed to the principal's position of power within the school, the level of his or her education in contrast to other members, their first access to information from the education authorities and the fact that it is he or she, (the principal), who executes the decisions taken by the SGB. Khuzwayo and Chikoko (2009: 147) in Bagarette (2011: 227 – 228) believe that an effective partnership and trust between the principal and the SGB is essential if the staff and governors are to contribute positively to the effectiveness of the school.

According to Bagarette (2011: 231) the key reason for the unsuccessful partnerships is the SGB's lack of understanding of its role and functions. This may lead to power struggles on the one hand and an abdication of power on the other. Heystek (2006: 474) in Bagarette (2011: 232) attests that being a member of the SGB means that an individual accepts the trust vested in him or her, which means that the member should act in good faith and with due diligence towards the school. He also warns that warns that members of the SGB should avoid the kind of behaviour which might lead to fraudulent conduct, recklessness or dishonesty. According to Bagarette (2011: 231) the literature confirms the findings of his study, namely, that some SGB members tend to

misuse their power to promote their own interests and in the process break their positions of trust towards the school. He argues that the tension between the two centres of power is not only obvious in the participants' discussion of SGBs' fraudulent actions, but also in the explanation by some of the participants that there are SGB members at their respective schools who wish to be in control. Khuzwayo and Chikoko (2009: 147 – 149) in Bagarette (2011: 232) are of the opinion that the two centres of power which were created by SASA have the potential to create conflict between the SGB and the principal if this power is not managed properly. According to responses from participant in Bagarette's study (2011: 233) there are schools where the SGBs are not actively involved in decision-making of the school, because they lack knowledge and experience in school matters. Mncube (2009: 99) in Bagarette (2011: 233) finds that the reason for this lack of participation by the SGBs is that they lack confidence and that they need to have a certain level of competency, literacy and skill to be able to make positive contributions. Mncube also states that SGBs are not always given sufficient opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. This lack of confidence may also be attributed to a perception that the principals and school management teams (SMTs) are more educated and knowledgeable about educational aspects, in which case the SGBs may be led to believe that they should leave all decisions in the hands of the principal and the SMT and simply carry out orders. The findings of all the researchers and scholars cited so far in this study are relevant to the research terrain of the researcher when the educational gap between the seventeen parent SGB members who participated in the focus group interviews, the non-teaching staff member and seven educators are taken into account.

#### ***4.3.2.9 Account by School Principals for any Non-implementation of Departmental Policies Relating to Schools***

Duma, Kapueja and Khanyile (2011: 44) postulate that participation of parents in school governance involves among other things planning, organising, leading, supervising, policy-making, decision-making, controlling, and coordinating, which are some of the management duties of the school governance structures. Section 9 of the Education Laws Amendment Act of 2007 opens the possibility of more direct involvement of

governing bodies in professional activities because principals must table the school improvement plans, and provide feedback on the implementation of this plan as well as presenting a report on professional management to the governing body. This view is supported by Section 58B of the Act because the HoDs may suspend the functioning of the governing body (SGB) if it prejudices quality education. The implication here is that the governing body has some power in professional matters related to ensuring quality education (Heystek, 2010: 99). Heystek further argues that governing bodies must have sufficient power to hold not only principals who cannot or do not want to implement their own improvement plans accountable for quality education, for example, but also the provincial officials supposed to support the principal. In *Schoonbee and Others v MEC for Education, Mpumalanga & Another* 2002(4) SA877, Judge Moseneke found that the principal is accountable to the governing body, and it is the governing body that should hold the principal accountable for financial and property matters that are not specifically entrusted to the principal by the statute.

Participants in the focus groups responded as follows to the question on holding the principal accountable to the SGB: school A: *“uyasinika ingxelo ngokusilela kwakhe”* (She accounts for non-implementation of policies or decisions). School B: *“Akakhe abe nento ayenza ngaphandle kwethu kwaye ke sihamba smooth ngenxa ye-vision”* (She always implements as guided by the vision of the school). School C: *“Enyanisweni kuba njalo uyasixelela izizathu zokungafikeleli kwindawo ethile ngexesha ebesimbekele lona”* (in fact he accounts for non-implementation or non-implementation as resolved or decided). School D: *“Uyayenza loo nto ade acacise ukuba kutheni engayenzanga into ebesigqibe ngayo, izizathu ezifana nokuba mhlawumbi usilele kuba i-district office imfunene enye into”* (he always accounts and even elaborates, for example, his non-implementation may be due to other commitments he was subjected to by the district office).

All the participants seemed to have difficulty in responding to the question, despite the interviewer trying to probe for “richer” information. It was one of the questions in the research schedule where factors such as lack of capacity and low level of education seemed to be glaring. In linking the relationship of trust with the specific roles and

functions expected of an SGB, Heystek (2004: 310) postulates as follows: All the functions of the SGB are stipulated in the SASA sections 20 and 21. In his article, however, he chooses to focus on their responsibility for school policies and for the school's budget. According to Heystek (2004: 310) these two functions may require more specialised skills and knowledge from principals as well as parents. He argues that the competency and literacy level of parent members of the SGB place restrictions on the functioning of the SGB. Mestry (2004: 127) stresses that the governing body in most cases delegates various financial tasks to the principal and thus holds the principal accountable. A problem with delegation of duties from the SGB to the principal is that the principal is generally better informed with regard to the delegated tasks than the SGB. According to Mestry (2004: 128) this implies that the principal is in the position of wielding more power when the members of the SGB are either illiterate or have little knowledge when dealing with financial matters.

#### **4.3.2.10 Comments on Legislated Three-year Term of Office for Elected SGB Members**

According to Section 31 of SASA, (1) the term of office of a governing body member other than a learner may not exceed three years. (2) The term of office of a member of a governing body who is a learner may not exceed one year. (3) The term of office of an office-bearer of a governing body may not exceed one year. (4) A member or office-bearer of a governing body may be re-elected or co-opted, as the case may be, after the expiry of his or her term of office.

Participants in the focus groups commented as follows regarding the three-year term of office for SGB members: School A: first parent member *“Ayanelanga, ayanelanga, noko mayikhe iye apha esihlanwini kuba kaloku kufuneka nibe nezinto enibonisana ngazo nizijonge, xa imithathu ayanelanga mayikhe iye phaya esihlanwini”* (It is not enough, it is not enough, if it could be five years at least because after planning your governance approach, it is important to observe and monitor how your plan works). Second parent member *“Mr Yotsi le minyaka ayonelanga, yonele ngoba akukho lula ukuphatha abantu kungekho lula nje ukuphatha abantu, akukho mntu ufunayo ukuba si-school governing*

body ndiphawula into yokuba apha ingangula- tata oqalayo ukuba si-school governing body kuba esandula kuhlala phantsi. Ubuncinane mna ndicinga ukuba esi sisikolo sesithathu okanye sesesine ndililungu elinyuliweyo le-SGB yesikolo ithi ke ngoku le nto umntu uyonyulwa le-three years yaye akukho tshintsho lungakanani linokwenziwa nge-three years ithi xa iphelayo i-three years kube kukhona nibonayo ukuba nibheka ngaphi na kube kufuneka niphumile but ayenzeki loo nto kwesi isikolo, ndithethela esi ndikuso; bayabizwa abazali ukuba kuzokwenyulwa, babeke izizathu ezininzi, omnye athi uyagula, omnye athi akanakulunga. Ngoko kuphindwe kwa-aba bantu, bebeyi-SGB; sicenge kwabona ukuba baphinde bangene. Sesibacenga kuba bona noko indlela bebekhe bayihamba, sebesazi ukuba kwenziwa kanjani. Aba bebengafunanga kwenyulwa baphinda kwabona bagxeke aba bavumileyo ukuphinda bonyulwa bebatyholo ngezinto ezide ziquke nokutyiwa kweemali njalo, njalo. Ngako oko ukuba singathi le minyaka mayibe mihlanu; kungadikwa kwathina, kuba sizakuphindwaphindwa. Njengalo- tata uthi oko sasekwa esi sikolo waba lilungu le-SGB, kudala ecela ukuphuma kodwa soloko ecengwa aphinde angene kuba abantu abafuni konyulwa” (Mr Yotsi, this three-year term is both enough and not enough because, in the first place it is not easy to lead people and most parents decline to be elected to the SGB. In the parent component SGB members present here, only one of us is in his first term as SGB member due to the fact that he has just retired from his past employment away. As for me, this should be the third or fourth school to serve in the SGB as an elected member. It is of course; true that the three years is not enough to make a reasonable change, but in this school parents are invited to a meeting for nomination to be elected to the SGB and most of them cite a plethora of reasons why they are not available for election to the SGB. In that predicament, we are usually left with no option but to plead with the outgoing SGB members to avail themselves for election for another term. It is at that time that those who declined to be elected would start blaming those who accepted to serve in the SGB accusing them of every wrong doing including embezzlement and misappropriation of funds. In that situation, five years would be too much as it could turn out to be multiples of five years. The practical example is our current chairperson; it is not his choice to have been an SGB member since the school was established in 1996).

School B: first parent, *“Andifuni kuthetha kuba eyam sele ilithoba”* (I will not comment because I have nine years already serving in this SGB) second parent *(Iphela isanela kuba lithi ixesha lakuphela baphinde abazali bathi basathanda aba bebeqhuba)* (it is enough because, more often than not, parent SGB members serve multiple terms in SGB office). School C: *“Yanele titshala le minyaka mithathu, usebenze uphume, yanele le minyaka mithathu. Xa ungumntu osebenza ngokuzimisela mininzi loo minyaka mithathu”* (the three-year term is enough. Three years is enough for a committed person to play his or her role and move on). School D: *“Mna ndifuna ukuthi yanele, qha ke isuka ibe ngabahlali abathi phinda ube uqonda wena ukuba kwanele; izinto ongakwazanga ukuzenza zingenziwa nangabanye abantu”* (In my opinion, the three years is enough; let alone that we end up being in office for multiple terms due to appeals from parents. Otherwise there are other people with skills to finish any unfinished responsibilities). Levacic (1995: 30) in Ngidi (2004: 260) asserts that there is an absence of hotly contested elections of SGBs in the majority of schools. The detailed comment by parent SGB member two in school A; points clearly to the reliability of Levacic’s assertion.

#### **4.3.2.11 Principals’ Support to the SGB**

According to Section 19(2) of SASA, the HoD must ensure that principals and other officers of the education department render all necessary assistance to governing bodies in the performance of their functions. Heystek (2004: 311) accentuates that the support that is offered must occur in a relationship of trust because parents and educators are intended to work towards the improvement of teaching and learning in the school.

Participants in the focus groups interviews responded as follows to this question: School A: *“Inkulu kakhulu inkxaso asinika yona u-principal, sithi xa sibuyayo nakwezo ntlanganiso zibizwa lisebe sihlale sihlalutya imiba ebixoxwa kuba xa nisentlanganisweni niva ngokuva. Sibuya xa silapha sinikana idinga sibonisane naye ngezinto zorhulumento lwesikolo sisahlulelana nangokumiselwa kwezisombululo”* (The principal is playing an important role in support of the SGB. Even when we are from the meetings



convened by the department, we sit down with her to analyse decisions taken in the meeting and delegate among ourselves for implementation of resolutions). School B: *“Uyasixhasa uprincipal kakhulu”* (She gives us all the necessary support). School C: *“Ewe titshala uyasixhasa uprincipal”* (Yes, he gives us the support). School D: *“Leyo into ayibuzwa yibhasi ebhaliweyo, yikati emhlophe ehlungwini”* (the answer to this question is obvious in every respect; we get all the support we need from our principal).

#### **4.3.2.12 SGBs’ Feeling of Intimidation by the School Principal**

The study conducted by Mabasa and Themane (2002: 111) found that serious challenges with respect to stakeholder participation in school governing bodies (SGBs) remain. According to Mabasa and Themane (2002:111) the challenges include the actual constitution of SGB membership, the divisive and competing interests served in the SGBs, and the manner in which decisions are taken in governing bodies. Mabasa and Themane (2002: 115) claim that from their observations, decisions at meetings were undemocratically taken. Some groups, like the principal and teachers, were more domineering than others. For example, Mabasa and Themane claim, if an issue came from their (principals’ and teachers’) side, it had to be accepted no matter how others felt about it. During the interviews, however, both principals and teachers claimed that there was democratic participation in decision making – despite what Mabasa and Themane observed.

Participants in the focus groups responded as follows: School A: *“Ukoyika? Hayi akakhe asoyikise tu uprincipal wethu”* (Our principal had never intimidated us). School B: *“asinayo loo nto, sibambene siyasebenzisana sihleli siyalangazelelana, asidikwa”* (No, we are one cohesive team with our principal, we always long to work together). School C: *“Hayi mfundisi”* (no sir). School D: *“Akanakukwazi ukuyifumana leyo into; uzakuthetha ne-SGB kakuhle ayibonise. Ukuba asikholwanga sithi asikholwanga, akanakusiqweqwedisa”* (there was no way that he could even try to intimidate us, even if he would have preferred to use that approach. He would reason with the SGB and convince us, if we did not buy to the idea we would vehemently tell him to back off).

#### **4.3.2.13 Principal Intentionally or Unintentionally Taking Advantage of the Average Literacy Level of the SGB Members**

Biographic and demographic empirical data in this study revealed that the most educated parent SGB member did not pass Grade 12. Quite a number of responses by principals in a study by Bagarette (2011: 233) suggested that there were schools where the SGBs were not actively involved in the decision-making of the school, because they lacked knowledge and experience in school matters. Mncube (2009: 99) in Bagarette (2011: 233) found that the reason for this lack of participation by SGBs was that they lacked confidence and that they needed to have a certain level of competency, literacy and skill to be able to make positive contributions. Mncube (2009) also states that SGBs are not always given sufficient opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. This lack of confidence may also be attributed to a perception that the principals and the SMTs are more educated and knowledgeable about educational aspects, in which case the SGBs may be led to believe that they should leave all the decisions in the hands of the principal and the SMT and simply carry out orders.

Participants in the four focus group interviews responded as follows to this question: School A: *“Alikho ithuba esikhe sikrokrele ukuba u-principal uthatha amathuba ache kwinto yokuba singafundanga. Nasezintlanganisweni simxelela ngokwethu ukuba asifundanga makathethe isiXhosa esi sisaziyo”* (We never suspected that the principal is taking advantage of our lower educational or literacy levels. In our meetings we impress upon her that we are not educated and as such she should express herself in isiXhosa during discussions). School B: *“Hayi asikhe siyifumanise loo nto mfundisi kangangoba uthi xa eqonda into ukuba yeyethu asicacisele ukuba yena uhamba eme phi. Kangangoba nathi siyayiqonda ukuba zikhona iindawo esingafanelanga kungena kuzo nangona nje singurhulumente wesikolo”* (We never suspected that sir, the principal always guides us satisfactorily, openly giving us our space to carry out our specific roles and functions. Also, on our side we openly give her space to carry out her professional school management functions without undue interference from the SGB). School C: *“Asikhe siyiqaphele tu into yokuba u-principal usithatha amathuba; uyasicacisela yonke into engasiqweqwedisi”* (We never peak that the principal is taking us for a ride.

*He explains everything and we take decisions in our meetings amicably). School D: “Hayi; into yonke uyayandlala kakuhle kangangokuba, akafane alisebenzise nokulisebenzisa ulwimi lwesiNgesi. Izinto ezichaphazela urhulumentu lwesikolo uzicacisa ngesiXhosa” (our principal does not take advantage of our lower educational level. He clearly explains everything to the extent that he hardly expresses himself in English when dealing with school governance issues. He usually opts for isiXhosa).*

#### **4.3.2.14 Evaluation of the SGBs’ Oversight Function in Relation to the School Principal**

According to Heystek (2004: 308 – 309) the limited training of the main role-players in the management and governance of schools, coupled with their uncertainty regarding their functions and duties, makes it sometimes difficult for principals and parental SGB members to work together harmoniously. Heystek (2004: 310) further suggests that the competency and literacy level of parent members of the SGB may place restrictions on the functioning of the SGB. Mestry (2004: 127) concludes that school governance, as regards the governing body’s functions, means determining the policy and rules by which the school is to be organised, managed and controlled. The principal of the school, as a functionary, is responsible for the implementation of the policies and rules as determined by the SGB or school governors. The oversight function of the SGB finds expression in monitoring whether those policies and rules are implemented by the principal and make her or him account to the SGB. Mestry adds that to ensure consistency every SGB will have to govern their school according to a legal framework, namely, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA). Karlsson’s (2002: 332) in Bagarette (2011: 227) findings in her research with 27 schools throughout South Africa’s nine provinces reveal that in almost every SGB, principals play a dominant role in meetings and decision-making. According to her, this dominant role can be attributed to the principal’s position of power within the school, the level of his or her education in contrast to that of other members, first access to information from the education authorities and the fact that it is he or she (the principal) who executes the decisions taken by the SGB.

Participants in the four focus groups responded as follows: School A: *“Siziva siqinisekile mfundisi ngokwenza umsebenzi wethu kule ndawo sabekwa kuyo. Kunjalo nje siziva siqiniseke ngokokude kunge kukho into esizakuyifumana. Siyaqiniseka kuba njengoko usiva imfundo yethu ayibhekelanga phi, isuke ngathi ubhetele wena awuva buhlungu bokungafundi. Thina siyasokola thina bangazange bafunde, nokuba siyaphindaphindwa ukwenyulwa siyazimisela. Khawutsho kakade mfundisi; sawukhe side sifumane ntoni, ngalo msebenzi ungaka siwenzayo?”* (We are committed in our oversight function. We are committed as if we would one day get remunerated for what we are doing. It looks as if you are better off because you are not going through the pain of inadequate education level. Our goal is to save our children from what we, as their parents are going through. Tell us sir, when do you think the department will ever consider remunerating us?) School B: *“Ndiyawuvuyela loo mbuzo; xa sihleli apha siyi-SGB sinombono wokubona isikolo sethu siphumelela. Ukuza kutsho ngoku, sizibona zonke izinto zethu ziphumelela. Ewe zikhona esingekafikeleli kuzo”* (I am glad with that question, up to now we are satisfied with our oversight function. We have achieved quite a number of things as the SGB, of course with a number of hurdles to jump; but the truth is that we still have some, that are outstanding). School C: *“Nokuba kungathiwa namhlanje mandehle mna, ndiqinisekile ukuba mna ngexesha lam ndiluphumezile uxanduva ebelisemagxeni am kwesi sikolo. Ewe sizamile mfundisi ngexesha lethu ukuwenza umsebenzi ngempumelelo kwaye nenkxaso yabazali ibonisa oko”* (Even if I could be called to step down today, I would tell myself that I have made my mark in carrying out my functions as an SGB member. Support from parents is testimony to that). School D: *“Ngakwelam icala; ndiqinisekile ukuba ndiwenzile owam umsebenzi. Nangakwicala labazali, asikafumani zikhalazo”* (we are confident that so far we have made our mark in our oversight function).

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

In Chapter 4, the researcher presented an introduction and background to the research study, which included the research questions. Articles and findings by past researchers on school governing bodies were extensively consulted and quoted in an attempt to expose possible challenges faced by school governance structures, especially in rural

areas. The four focus group participants in the four selected schools displayed a high level of enthusiasm during their participation and in their responses to the interview questions. Empirical data on biographic and demographic findings exposed a number of challenges school governance activities are faced with in rural school governing bodies. The following items featured prominently among the challenges:- There is a worrying low level of education among parent members of school SGBs which inadvertently impacts negatively on their literacy skills. The range of ages of parent SGB members points to the possibility that grandparents and not parents of learners participate in SGB activities in rural schools.

In three of the four selected schools there are parent SGB members who have been members of SGBs since the schools were established, with the record of twenty years for the longest serving member of the SGB. This points to the low level of contestation of SGB elections in rural areas. The positive responses on the relationship of parent SGB members, in particular, with their principals; points to the strength of a relationship of mutual trust between principals and their parent SGB members. Parent SGB members who participated in the focus group interviews pointed to the limitations imposed by unavailability of school governance policy documents and legislation in their home language (IsiXhosa). The participants in the four focus groups were consistent in their responses in terms of the number of capacity enhancement workshops organised by the Provincial Department of Education. This is a serious limitation considering the fact that the current term of serving elected SGB members is coming to an end at the end of March 2015. The presentation of only two capacity enhancement training workshops is an embarrassment to the Department, to say the least, especially when the level of education and skills of rural school parent governing bodies is taken into account.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **RESEARCH CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Research findings and academic articles on school governing bodies (SGBs) indicate the following challenges facing school governance, especially in rural areas and townships: high illiteracy rates among parent members of SGBs, inadequate training offered to SGBs by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), a lack of interest by potential SGB parent members in participating in school governance, and the language used in legislation and policy documents designed to assist and guide SGBs in the execution of their roles and functions. In this chapter, salient facts emanating from an extrapolation of the findings from this research will be presented and certain recommendation will be proposed.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

##### **5.2.1 Chapter 2: background literature review**

School governing bodies (SGBs) carry a very important responsibility in relation to their schools in terms of their policies, their educational ethos and priorities, the quality of teaching and learning, and the management, and the care and use of their financial and other resources. Good governing bodies, like good principals, can make or break schools. Governance and management in schools are two separate activities, with two teams responsible for these activities. There is no doubt that a school improves when a school's governors exert their oversight authority in a way that promotes the effective use of resources and establishes a climate which encourages teaching and learning. It is a new experience to the principals to have to share their power with other people, hence the possibility of potential power relations between school principals and the parent component members of the SGBs. The limited training of the main role players in the management and governance of schools, coupled with their uncertainty regarding their roles and functions, makes it difficult sometimes for principals and parental SGB

members to work together harmoniously. The SGB may delegate a number of its duties to the principal, members of the senior management team (SMT), and the bursar, but it remains responsible, accountable and liable should serious problems arise. The SGB is directly involved in managing matters of discipline. The HoD must ensure that principals and other officers of the Education Department render all necessary assistance to governing bodies in the performance of their functions in terms of SASA. Many governing bodies, particularly in poorer schools, are in need of the capacity enhancement programmes that SASA requires the provincial education departments to provide.

### **5.2.2 Chapter 3: Research design and methodology**

Research design is the overall plan for collecting and analysing data, including specifications for enhancing the internal and external validity of a study. It involves a set of decisions regarding the topic to be studied, the population, the research methods and the purpose. Fundamental to every scientific research activity is the method which can be explained as a prescribed manner for performing a specific task, with adequate consideration of the problem, objectives and hypotheses. Methodology refers to the rationale and psychological assumptions that underly a particular study relative to the scientific method used, with a view to explaining the researcher's ontological and epistemological views. A qualitative research approach was used in this study because it is concerned with understanding behaviour from the research subjects' frame of reference. Semi-structured focus group interviews were used as the sole data collection method. The study adopted a case study approach, and SGBs from four schools were purposefully selected for purposes of this study. Focus group interviews permit the participants to express their views within a context that is useful to their community, and this helps them to provide information that is fuller and "richer" than what the researcher would obtain from a questionnaire. The analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data commenced after the interview process had formally ended. The researcher worked under the supervision of the supervisor and a statistician in the analysis and presentation of the collected data.



### **5.2.3 Chapter 4: Research findings and interpretation**

In summarising this chapter the researcher presents questions in the interview schedule, shortened participants' responses, and salient facts extrapolated from the findings from the empirical data.

#### ***5.2.3.1 Biographical and demographical information***

Of seventeen parent SGB members who participated in the four focus group interviews, the most highly educated had not passed Grade 12, and the least educated member was not able to append a signature. At least two of the female parent SGB members who participated in the study were too old to have children of their own in the basic education level, up to Grade 12. It is therefore assumed that they had grandchildren living with them or children of their relatives. The seven educators and one teaching staff members contributed significantly in bringing the average age of the twenty-five participants down to fifty two years.

#### ***5.2.3.2 Parent component members who serve on SGBs***

From the participants' responses, it appeared that there are an adequate number of parent component members serving on the SGBs. This is noted in terms of SASA requirements, but a shortage of skills, based on literacy levels and capacity enhancement, was glaring.

#### ***5.2.3.3 Copies of pieces of legislation in possession of SGBs***

All the participants claimed possession of all four pieces of legislation listed in the interview schedule, but only School C tabled same. Apart from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution) which is also available in IsiXhosa, the other three documents, including core legislation, were only available in English. Considering the level of education of the parent SGB members who participated in the focus group interviews, they were reliant on the principal's assistance and support in making sense of what is contained in the documents.

#### ***5.2.3.4 Governance and professional management support documents in possession of the selected schools***

All the participants from the four selected schools confidently claimed possession of the seven documents, but again it was only School C who tabled the documents. The first three documents as listed under B3 of the interview schedule and are pivotal in terms of enhancing policy development at school level. They are also available in English. Based on the relationship of mutual trust and support, the principal and educators clearly play a leading role in terms of policy development at school level.

#### ***5.2.3.5 Regular meetings of SGB members***

Participants in all four focus group interviews confidently detailed their respective regulated SGB meetings.

#### ***5.2.3.6 Preparation of budget for the following year by the finance committees (FINCOMs)***

The decision in the case of Schoonbee and others v MEC for Education, Mpumalanga and Another has far reaching implications for the various role players in school financial management. This is especially so when the decision in this case is viewed in conjunction with Susaan van der Merwe of the Federation of South African School Governing Bodies's (FEDSAS's) article challenging the constitutionality of Section 16A of SASA. The decision in the case of Schoonbee and others v MEC for Education, Mpumalanga and another was unequivocal in its conviction that the SGB is both responsible and accountable for school finances. Considering the level of education of parent SGB members who participated in this study, inadequate training offered by the Department of Education for members of SGBs, it is again clear that the principal and other educator members of the selected SGBs play a prominent role in drafting the budget.

#### ***5.2.3.7 Submission of annual financial statements (AFSs) to the District Office***

Based on their responses, all four schools submitted their AFS for 2013 within the time frames prescribed by SASA. However, the financial year observed by School B is in contravention to Section 44 of SASA as their financial year extends from 01 April to 31 March every financial year instead of 01 January to 31 December. In the experience of the researcher, these AFSs are prepared by professionals in English. In other words, although in terms of legislation (SASA), these AFSs are supposed to be tabled before an SGB, it is highly unlikely that parent SGB members of the four selected schools would ever comprehend the presentation of the AFS.

#### ***5.2.3.8 Enhancement of capacity of governing bodies training workshops on roles and functions conducted by the Department of Education***

Despite being towards the end of their three-year term which officially started in April 2012, all the participants in the four focus group interviews were uniform in stating that they were invited to only two capacity enhancement workshops by the Department of Education. This is of grave concern when considering the role played by SGBs in bringing about quality education, which is perpetually in a sorry state, especially in rural areas of the Eastern Cape Province.

#### ***5.2.3.9 Power-struggle relationship between the SGBs and school principals***

All the participants vehemently rejected the existence of power-struggles in their relationship with their principals. This was a strong move in the right direction, irrespective of the factors to which it could be attributable. There are quite a number of SGBs in the history of rural schools who are notorious for “chasing away” school principals without following proper procedures.

#### ***5.2.3.10 Account by school principals for any non-implementation of departmental policies relating to schools***

All the participants voiced their satisfaction with the way their principals accounted to their SGBs for any resolution, decision or policy which was not implemented as decided

or agreed. This again is a positive indication in the relationship of mutual trust and support between the SGB and the principal.

#### ***5.2.3.11 Comments on legislated three-year term of office for elected SGB members***

A parent participant in School A produced an interesting analysis in response to this question. The respondent started by stating that the three-year term is both enough and not enough. The respondent highlighted the prevalence of multi terms served by SGB members in schools in the area, including the fact that she was in the third or fourth school serving as an elected member of the SGB. This was due to lack of interest by parents in serving on SGBs in order to affect the quality of their children's education. In three of the four selected schools, two chairpersons and one deputy chairperson had been serving in the SGB since their respective schools were established, the range was between twenty and eighteen years. Although respondents in the three other focus groups indicated that the three-year term was adequate, most were themselves in multi-terms.

#### ***5.2.3.12 Principal's support to the SGB***

The relationship of mutual trust and support between the SGB and the principal is legislated in SASA. All the participants in the interviews concurred in appreciating the support they received from their respective principals.

#### ***5.2.3.13 SGBs' feeling of intimidation by the school principal***

All the participants vehemently denied feeling intimidated by their respective principals. This is a strong indication that there are a myriad of reasons, including, but not limited to educational levels, skills, and capacity; SGBs in rural areas are dependent on school principals for guidance; the principals on the other hand are dependable. This also reflects a strong indication of the existence of a relationship of mutual trust and support.

#### ***5.2.3.14 Principal intentionally or unintentionally taking advantage of the average literacy level of the SGB members***

Biographic and demographic empirical data in the study revealed that the most educated parent SGB member of the seventeen participants did not pass Grade 12. Despite that, all the participants in the four focus group interviews rejected with contempt any suspicion of being taken advantage of by their principals on the basis of their low level of education. All indicated that their respective principals always came to their level when addressing issues. They added that their principals addressed them in IsiXhosa on all issues of school governance.

#### ***5.2.3.15 Evaluation of the SGBs' oversight function in relation to the school principal***

School governance, as regards SGB functions, means determining the policies and rules by which the school is to be organised, managed, and controlled. Given the limited training that SGBs receive, coupled with competency and literacy level of parent SGB members in rural areas, it is inconceivable that they could develop credible policies and rules on their own. Although all the participants indicated confidence in their oversight function, again it could be a matter of dependability on the side of the principal, coupled with that spirit of mutual trust and support between the principal and the SGB as complementing partners in school governance. Focus group participants from School A, as we were about to close the interview, asked when the Department would consider paying them an allowance for being elected as SGB members, like other public representatives.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY**

This study was limited to an investigation on the oversight role of SGBs in four selected schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area, Tsomo Magisterial District in the Eastern Cape. The researcher consulted literature which is relevant to the topic to provide a critical synthesis of what has already been written on school governing bodies and the following challenges featured prominently in many research studies and articles on SGBs of rural schools and poor townships:

- A low level of education among parent component members of SGBs.
- A lack of training workshops facilitated by the provincial departments of education to enhance the capacity of school governing bodies as stipulated in SASA.
- Old people who serve as parent members of SGBs; most “parents” who serve on SGBs in rural areas are grandparents to the school children in the basic education phases.
- Apathy displayed by parents in making themselves available for election to serve on SGBs.
- This salient factor was brought to the attention of the researcher by both the responses from the interviewees and the number of parent members in the focus group who were serving multi-terms in SGB activities.
- A relationship of mutual trust was found to be prevailing between SGB members and school principals in the four selected schools.
- Another salient factor was that SGBs in the four selected schools were reliant on the school principals for guidance in executing their roles and functions. This could be attributable to the following factors: inadequate training to enhance the capacity of SGBs, low literacy levels and the foreign language used in many SGB legislation and comprehensive policy documents.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

In concurrence with other researchers and writers on SGBs and based on the findings from the qualitative study which formed part of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

**Recommendation 5.4.1:** The applicable legislation needs to be amended to give voting powers to co-opted SGB members. This would encourage retired professionals to lend their skills and expertise to SGBs in their areas of birth. Retired professionals are withdrawn because they have no power in making their ideas and knowledge available to school governing bodies in their own areas.

**Recommendation 5.4.2:** It is time to bench-mark in terms of eligibility for election to SGBs. This bench-marking should be in terms of both age and level of education. Owing to the prevalence of secondary schools in rural areas, there are adequate numbers of young parents with at least Grade 12 certificate who could be considered for membership of SGBs.

**Recommendation 5.4.3:** The Department of Education should consider designing some form of allowance to compensate parents who serve on SGBs. This is relevant considering the significance of the role played by parent SGB members in shaping the socio-economic standard of future adults, especially in the rural areas where socio-economic challenges lead to a myriad of social ills.

**Recommendation 5.4.4:** The term of office of elected SGB members needs to be increased to five years, like all other public representatives. The current term is too short for most SGB members to fully comprehend their roles and functions, and to execute them in accordance with the prescripts of SASA. This would bring in a wealth of experience among community members to make a valuable contribution to the future of their children; even when they are no longer serving as SGB members.

**Recommendation 5.4.5:** The Department of Education needs increase or improve on its commitment to build the capacity of SGB members on governance aspects including, but not limited to, financial management, discipline, school safety and an awareness of various pieces of legislation that affect school governance. This is particularly relevant when the decision in the case of *Schoonbee and others v MEC for Education, Mpumalanga and Another* is taken into account. In addition, the challenge on the constitutionality of Section 16A by FEDSAS's Susaan van der Merwe and a many other cases that the Department has lost at the expense of the taxpayer, makes this recommendation extremely relevant and urgent.

**Recommendation 5.4.6:** All legislation and policy guideline documents relevant to school governance must be adequately available in all eleven official languages. This would help to enhance consistent interpretation and application of such documents.

**Recommendation 5.4.7:** The National Department of Education should introduce short courses at tertiary institutions, especially Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, to capacitate SGBs and SMTs to master a number of skills such as problem solving, conflict resolution, change management, tolerance, and financial planning, to mention but a few.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY**

As mentioned earlier, this study was limited to four selected schools in the Upper Xolobe Administrative Area, Tsomo Magisterial District in the Eastern Cape Province. From literature and other researchers, it appears that challenges facing education governance, especially in rural areas, are gargantuan. Researchers are, therefore, implored to extend their research widely into the state of rural education in South Africa and to alert the authorities before it collapses beyond redemption.



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## **ANNEXURES**

### **ANNEXURE 1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO PARTICIPANTS: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**



#### **LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO PARTICIPANTS: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

The researcher will introduce himself to the respective focus groups and explain the significance of the study. Every member of each focus group will be allowed to answer in the language of her or his choice as the researcher is fluent in both English and IsiXhosa, which are the only applicable languages in the location of the schools participating in the study.

The respondents will be allowed time to ask relevant questions of clarity. A request will be made for consent forms to be signed and every member will be informed that he or she is at liberty to withdraw their participation in the interview at any given point. It will be stressed that participation is voluntary. The interviewer will try his level best not to influence the interviewee's responses beyond giving clarity to questions when solicited by the interviewee or respondent. The researcher will use letters of the alphabet: (A, B, C and D) instead of the names of the four schools to avoid precise identification of the respondents.

However, it cannot be disputed that an inquisitive investigator can use other elements of the sample data to ultimately identify the respondents. Therefore, confidentiality can only be guaranteed to a certain extent. This will be explained to the focus group members before the interview commences.

Mr Bafo Yotsi

Researcher: (Treatise)

MPA Degree

## **ANNEXURE 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR SCHOOLS A, B, C AND D WITH SECTION A COMPLETED:**



### **2.1 Interview Schedule for School A:**

#### **INTRODUCTION AND QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

The researcher will introduce himself to the respective focus groups and explain the significance of the study. Every member of each focus group interview will be allowed to use the language of her or his choice as the researcher is fluent in both English and IsiXhosa, which are the only applicable languages in the location of the selected schools. The respondents will be allowed time to ask relevant questions for clarity. A request will be made for consent forms to be signed and every member will be informed that he or she is at liberty to withdraw from the interview at any given point. It will be emphasised that participation in the study is voluntary. The interviewer or researcher will try his level best not to influence the interviewee's responses beyond giving clarity to questions when solicited by the interviewees or respondents. The researcher will use letters of the alphabet, for example, Schools A, B, C and D) instead of the names of the four schools to avoid identification of the respondents. However, it cannot be disputed that an inquisitive investigator can use other elements of the sample data to ultimately identify the respondents. Therefore, confidentiality can only be guaranteed to a certain extent. This will be explained to the focus group members before the interviews commence.

## SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

A1: LEVEL OF EDUCATION (Mark the relevant block): the relevant blocks will be marked to reflect the range of education levels of the members of the focus group:

Uneducated	0
Standard 5 (Grade 7) and below	4
Standard 8 (Grade 10) and below	2
Standard 10 (Grade 12) and below	0
Three (3)-year Diploma and above	1

A2: COMPONENT REPRESENTATION IN THE SGB AND EXPERIENCE IN SGB ACTIVITIES (Mark the relevant block): Relevant blocks will be marked to indicate the range of components representation in the SGB:

Parent	6
Educator	1
Non-teaching staff	0
Range of years of experience in SGB activities	2 – 18

A3: NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN THE SCHOOL (Mark the relevant block with an X):

Below 100	
100 – 200	<b>x</b>
201 – 300	
301 – 400	
401 – 500	
501 – 600	
Above 600	

A4: AGE IN YEARS (Mark the relevant block): Relevant blocks will be marked to indicate the spread of ages of the focus group members:

Below 20	0
20 – 30	0
31 – 40	0
41 – 50	3
51 – 60	1
Above 61	3

**SECTION B: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS: WHERE APPLICABLE THE RESEARCHER WILL TACTFULLY PROBE RESPONSES TO ENCOURAGE FURTHER DEBATE IN AN EFFORT TO OBTAIN “RICH” AND “RELEVANT” DATA.**

B1. How many parent component members serve on your SGB?

B2. Is your SGB in possession of copies of the following pieces of legislation, as amended:

B2.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, (Y/N)

B2.2 South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996, (Y/N)

B2.3 Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 and (Y/N)

B2.4 The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), Act 1 of 1999. (Y/N)

B3. Is your school in possession of the following documents:

B3.1 Manual for School Management, (Y/N)

B3.2 Resource File, (Y/N)

B3.3 School Records Management, (Y/N)

B3.4 School budget for the current school financial year, (Y/N)

B3.5 School Development Plan (SDP), (Y/N)

B3.6 Up-to-date SGB minute book, (Y/N) and

B3.7 Up-to-date school management team (SMT) minute book. (Y/N)

B4.1 Does your secretary meet on a regular basis with SGB members? For example, once per month, once per quarter, once in six months, once in nine months, once per year or not at all?

B4.2 If you do not meet on a regular basis what are the possible reasons for this?

B5. During what time of the academic year does your finance committee (FINCOM) start preparing its budget for the following year? In January, in April, in July or in October?

B6. Have you submitted the annual financial statements (AFS) to the District Office this year? Yes or no. If no, why not?

B7. Have you been invited to a capacity-building workshop on the SGBs' roles and responsibilities by the Department of Education since the beginning of your current term of office? Yes or no? If no, what could the reasons be?

B8. Is there a power-struggle relationship between the SGB and the School Principal? Please provide reasons to substantiate your answer.

B9. Does your School Principal give account for any non-implementation of departmental policies relating to the school? Please provide reasons for your answer.

B10. The legislated term of office for SGB members is three years. What is your comment on this?

- B11. Do you feel as SGB members that the School Principal supports the work that you do? Please provide reasons for your answer.
- B12. Do you as an SGB member ever feel intimidated by the School Principal? If yes, please provide examples of such intimidation.
- B13. Have you ever felt that the School Principal might intentionally or unintentionally take advantage of the average literacy levels of SGB members? Please provide reasons for your answers.
- B14. Do you think that your oversight role as an SGB member (in relation to the School Principal) is adequate? Please provide reasons for your response.

**Thank you very much for your participation in this focus group interview session.**



## 2.2 Interview Schedule for School B:



### INTRODUCTION AND QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The researcher will introduce himself to the respective focus groups and explain the significance of the study. Every member of each focus group interview will be allowed to use the language of her or his choice as the researcher is fluent in both English and IsiXhosa, which are the only applicable languages in the location of the selected schools. The respondents will be allowed time to ask relevant questions for clarity. A request will be made for consent forms to be signed and every member will be informed that he or she is at liberty to withdraw from the interview at any given point. It will be emphasised that participation in the study is voluntary. The interviewer or researcher will try his level best not to influence the interviewee's responses beyond giving clarity to questions when solicited by the interviewees or respondents. The researcher will use letters of the alphabet, for example, Schools A, B, C and D) instead of the names of the four schools to avoid identification of the respondents. However, it cannot be disputed that an inquisitive investigator can use other elements of the sample data to ultimately identify the respondents. Therefore, confidentiality can only be guaranteed to a certain extent. This will be explained to the focus group members before the interviews commence.

## SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

A1: LEVEL OF EDUCATION (Mark the relevant block): the relevant blocks will be marked to reflect the range of education levels of the members of the focus group:

Uneducated	0
Standard 5 (Grade 7) and below	0
Standard 8 (Grade 10) and below	4
Standard 10 (Grade 12) and below	0
Three (3)-year Diploma and above	2

A2: COMPONENT REPRESENTATION IN THE SGB AND EXPERIENCE IN SGB ACTIVITIES (Mark the relevant block): Relevant blocks will be marked to indicate the range of components representation in the SGB:

Parent	4
Educator	2
Non-teaching staff	0
Range of years of experience in SGB activities	2 – 9

A3: NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN THE SCHOOL (Mark the relevant block with an X):

Below 100	
100 – 200	
201 – 300	x
301 – 400	
401 – 500	
501 – 600	
Above 600	

A4: AGE IN YEARS (Mark the relevant block): Relevant blocks will be marked to indicate the spread of ages of the focus group members:

Below 20	0
20 – 30	0
31 – 40	0
41 – 50	2
51 – 60	2
Above 61	2

**SECTION B: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS: WHERE APPLICABLE THE RESEARCHER WILL TACTFULLY PROBE RESPONSES TO ENCOURAGE FURTHER DEBATE IN AN EFFORT TO OBTAIN “RICH” AND “RELEVANT” DATA.**

B1. How many parent component members serve on your SGB?

B2. Is your SGB in possession of copies of the following pieces of legislation, as amended:

B2.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, (Y/N)

B2.2 South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996, (Y/N)

B2.3 Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 and (Y/N)

B2.4 The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), Act 1 of 1999. (Y/N)

B3. Is your school in possession of the following documents:

B3.1 Manual for School Management, (Y/N)

B3.2 Resource File, (Y/N)

B3.3 School Records Management, (Y/N)

- B3.4 School budget for the current school financial year, (Y/N)
- B3.5 School Development Plan (SDP), (Y/N)
- B3.6 Up-to-date SGB minute book, (Y/N) and
- B3.7 Up-to-date school management team (SMT) minute book. (Y/N)
- B4.1 Does your secretary meet on a regular basis with SGB members? For example, once per month, once per quarter, once in six months, once in nine months, once per year or not at all?
- B4.2 If you do not meet on a regular basis what are the possible reasons for this?
- B5. During what time of the academic year does your finance committee (FINCOM) start preparing its budget for the following year? In January, in April, in July or in October?
- B6. Have you submitted the annual financial statements (AFS) to the District Office this year? Yes or no. If no, why not?
- B7. Have you been invited to a capacity-building workshop on the SGBs' roles and responsibilities by the Department of Education since the beginning of your current term of office? Yes or no? If no, what could the reasons be?
- B8. Is there a power-struggle relationship between the SGB and the School Principal? Please provide reasons to substantiate your answer.
- B9. Does your School Principal give account for any non-implementation of departmental policies relating to the school? Please provide reasons for your answer.
- B10. The legislated term of office for SGB members is three years. What is your comment on this?

- B11. Do you feel as SGB members that the School Principal supports the work that you do? Please provide reasons for your answer.
- B12. Do you as an SGB member ever feel intimidated by the School Principal? If yes, please provide examples of such intimidation.
- B13. Have you ever felt that the School Principal might intentionally or unintentionally take advantage of the average literacy levels of SGB members? Please provide reasons for your answers.
- B14. Do you think that your oversight role as an SGB member (in relation to the School Principal) is adequate? Please provide reasons for your response.

**Thank you very much for your participation in this focus group interview session.**

### 2.3 Interview Schedule for School C:



### **ANNEXURE A: INTRODUCTION AND QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

The researcher will introduce himself to the respective focus groups and explain the significance of the study. Every member of each focus group interview will be allowed to use the language of her or his choice as the researcher is fluent in both English and IsiXhosa, which are the only applicable languages in the location of the selected schools. The respondents will be allowed time to ask relevant questions for clarity. A request will be made for consent forms to be signed and every member will be informed that he or she is at liberty to withdraw from the interview at any given point. It will be emphasised that participation in the study is voluntary. The interviewer or researcher will try his level best not to influence the interviewee's responses beyond giving clarity to questions when solicited by the interviewees or respondents. The researcher will use letters of the alphabet, for example, Schools A, B, C and D) instead of the names of the four schools to avoid identification of the respondents. However, it cannot be disputed that an inquisitive investigator can use other elements of the sample data to ultimately identify the respondents. Therefore, confidentiality can only be guaranteed to a certain extent. This will be explained to the focus group members before the interviews commence.

## SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

A1: LEVEL OF EDUCATION (Mark the relevant block): the relevant blocks will be marked to reflect the range of education levels of the members of the focus group:

Uneducated	0
Standard 5 (Grade 7) and below	0
Standard 8 (Grade 10) and below	2
Standard 10 (Grade 12) and below	0
Three (3)-year Diploma and above	3

A2: COMPONENT REPRESENTATION IN THE SGB AND EXPERIENCE IN SGB ACTIVITIES (Mark the relevant block): Relevant blocks will be marked to indicate the range of components representation in the SGB:

Parent	2
Educator	2
Non-teaching staff	1
Range of years of experience in SGB activities	7 – 19

A3: NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN THE SCHOOL (Mark the relevant block with an X):

Below 100	
100 – 200	
201 – 300	
301 – 400	
401 – 500	
501 – 600	x
Above 600	

A4: AGE IN YEARS (Mark the relevant block): Relevant blocks will be marked to indicate the spread of ages of the focus group members:

Below 20	0
20 – 30	1
31 – 40	1
41 – 50	1
51 – 60	0
Above 61	2

**SECTION B: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS: WHERE APPLICABLE THE RESEARCHER WILL TACTFULLY PROBE RESPONSES TO ENCOURAGE FURTHER DEBATE IN AN EFFORT TO OBTAIN “RICH” AND “RELEVANT” DATA.**

B1. How many parent component members serve on your SGB?

B2. Is your SGB in possession of copies of the following pieces of legislation, as amended:

B2.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, (Y/N)

B2.2 South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996, (Y/N)

B2.3 Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 and (Y/N)

B2.4 The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), Act 1 of 1999. (Y/N)

B3. Is your school in possession of the following documents:

B3.1 Manual for School Management, (Y/N)

B3.2 Resource File, (Y/N)

B3.3 School Records Management, (Y/N)



- B3.4 School budget for the current school financial year, (Y/N)
- B3.5 School Development Plan (SDP), (Y/N)
- B3.6 Up-to-date SGB minute book, (Y/N) and
- B3.7 Up-to-date school management team (SMT) minute book. (Y/N)
- B4.1 Does your secretary meet on a regular basis with SGB members? For example, once per month, once per quarter, once in six months, once in nine months, once per year or not at all?
- B4.2 If you do not meet on a regular basis what are the possible reasons for this?
- B5. During what time of the academic year does your finance committee (FINCOM) start preparing its budget for the following year? In January, in April, in July or in October?
- B6. Have you submitted the annual financial statements (AFS) to the District Office this year? Yes or no. If no, why not?
- B7. Have you been invited to a capacity-building workshop on the SGBs' roles and responsibilities by the Department of Education since the beginning of your current term of office? Yes or no? If no, what could the reasons be?
- B8. Is there a power-struggle relationship between the SGB and the School Principal? Please provide reasons to substantiate your answer.
- B9. Does your School Principal give account for any non-implementation of departmental policies relating to the school? Please provide reasons for your answer.
- B10. The legislated term of office for SGB members is three years. What is your comment on this?

- B11. Do you feel as SGB members that the School Principal supports the work that you do? Please provide reasons for your answer.
- B12. Do you as an SGB member ever feel intimidated by the School Principal? If yes, please provide examples of such intimidation.
- B13. Have you ever felt that the School Principal might intentionally or unintentionally take advantage of the average literacy levels of SGB members? Please provide reasons for your answers.
- B14. Do you think that your oversight role as an SGB member (in relation to the School Principal) is adequate? Please provide reasons for your response.

**Thank you very much for your participation in this focus group interview session.**

## 2.4 Interview Schedule for School D:



### **ANNEXURE A: INTRODUCTION AND QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

The researcher will introduce himself to the respective focus groups and explain the significance of the study. Every member of each focus group interview will be allowed to use the language of her or his choice as the researcher is fluent in both English and IsiXhosa, which are the only applicable languages in the location of the selected schools. The respondents will be allowed time to ask relevant questions for clarity. A request will be made for consent forms to be signed and every member will be informed that he or she is at liberty to withdraw from the interview at any given point. It will be emphasised that participation in the study is voluntary. The interviewer or researcher will try his level best not to influence the interviewee's responses beyond giving clarity to questions when solicited by the interviewees or respondents. The researcher will use letters of the alphabet, for example, Schools A, B, C and D) instead of the names of the four schools to avoid identification of the respondents. However, it cannot be disputed that an inquisitive investigator can use other elements of the sample data to ultimately identify the respondents. Therefore, confidentiality can only be guaranteed to a certain extent. This will be explained to the focus group members before the interviews commence.

## SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

A1: LEVEL OF EDUCATION (Mark the relevant block): the relevant blocks will be marked to reflect the range of education levels of the members of the focus group:

Uneducated	0
Standard 5 (Grade 7) and below	2
Standard 8 (Grade 10) and below	2
Standard 10 (Grade 12) and below	1
Three (3)-year Diploma and above	2

A2: COMPONENT REPRESENTATION IN THE SGB AND EXPERIENCE IN SGB ACTIVITIES (Mark the relevant block): Relevant blocks will be marked to indicate the range of components representation in the SGB:

Parent	5
Educator	2
Non-teaching staff	0
Range of years of experience in SGB activities	2 – 20

A3: NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN THE SCHOOL (Mark the relevant block with an X):

Below 100	
100 – 200	
201 – 300	x
301 – 400	
401 – 500	
501 – 600	
Above 600	

A4: AGE IN YEARS (Mark the relevant block): Relevant blocks will be marked to indicate the spread of ages of the focus group members:

Below 20	0
20 – 30	0
31 – 40	0
41 – 50	2
51 – 60	4
Above 61	1

**SECTION B: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS: WHERE APPLICABLE THE RESEARCHER WILL TACTFULLY PROBE RESPONSES TO ENCOURAGE FURTHER DEBATE IN AN EFFORT TO OBTAIN “RICH” AND “RELEVANT” DATA.**

B1. How many parent component members serve on your SGB?

B2. Is your SGB in possession of copies of the following pieces of legislation, as amended:

B2.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, (Y/N)

B2.2 South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 84 of 1996, (Y/N)

B2.3 Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 and (Y/N)

B2.4 The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), Act 1 of 1999. (Y/N)

B3. Is your school in possession of the following documents:

B3.1 Manual for School Management, (Y/N)

B3.2 Resource File, (Y/N)

B3.3 School Records Management, (Y/N)

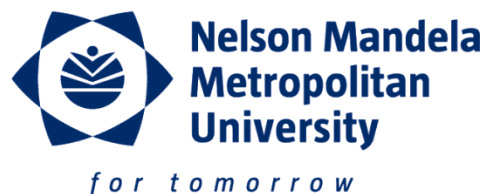
- B3.4 School budget for the current school financial year, (Y/N)
- B3.5 School Development Plan (SDP), (Y/N)
- B3.6 Up-to-date SGB minute book, (Y/N) and
- B3.7 Up-to-date school management team (SMT) minute book. (Y/N)
- B4.1 Does your secretary meet on a regular basis with SGB members? For example, once per month, once per quarter, once in six months, once in nine months, once per year or not at all?
- B4.2 If you do not meet on a regular basis what are the possible reasons for this?
- B5. During what time of the academic year does your finance committee (FINCOM) start preparing its budget for the following year? In January, in April, in July or in October?
- B6. Have you submitted the annual financial statements (AFS) to the District Office this year? Yes or no. If no, why not?
- B7. Have you been invited to a capacity-building workshop on the SGBs' roles and responsibilities by the Department of Education since the beginning of your current term of office? Yes or no? If no, what could the reasons be?
- B8. Is there a power-struggle relationship between the SGB and the School Principal? Please provide reasons to substantiate your answer.
- B9. Does your School Principal give account for any non-implementation of departmental policies relating to the school? Please provide reasons for your answer.
- B10. The legislated term of office for SGB members is three years. What is your comment on this?

- B11. Do you feel as SGB members that the School Principal supports the work that you do? Please provide reasons for your answer.
- B12. Do you as an SGB member ever feel intimidated by the School Principal? If yes, please provide examples of such intimidation.
- B13. Have you ever felt that the School Principal might intentionally or unintentionally take advantage of the average literacy levels of SGB members? Please provide reasons for your answers.
- B14. Do you think that your oversight role as an SGB member (in relation to the School Principal) is adequate? Please provide reasons for your response.

**Thank you very much for your participation in this focus group interview session.**

## ANNEXURE 3: ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE LETTER:

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**Ref: H/14/ART/PGS-0014**

09 SEPTEMBER 2014

Mrs B. S. Yotsi

PO Box 348

Tsomo

5400

Dear Mr Yotsi

### **THE OVERSIGHT ROLE OF GOVERNING BODIES IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN THE UPPER XOLOBE ADMINISTRATIVE AREA, TSOMO MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT**

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval served at the FPGSC Higher Degrees sub-committee of the Faculty of Arts Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee.

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee. The Ethics clearance reference number is **H/14/ART/PGS-0014**, and is valid for three years, from 03 SEPTEMBER 2014 – 03 SEPTEMBER 2017. Please inform



the FPGSC, via your supervisor, if any changes (particularly in the methodology) occur during this time. An annual affirmation to the effect that the protocols in use are still those, for which approval was granted, will be required from you. You will be reminded timeously of this responsibility.

We wish you well with the project.

Yours sincerely

Mrs N Mngonyama

FACULTY ADMINISTRATOR

cc: Promoter/Supervisor

HoD

School Representative: Faculty FPGSC