The impact of parent involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit of Mpumalanga

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements for

the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the subject

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

at the

University of South Africa

Supervisor:Prof M.W. Maila

March 2015

DECLARATION

I declare that ***The impact of parent involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit of Mpumalanga*** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

_____   _____

SIGNATURE   DATE

(Mr)

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

My wife, Getrude, and my 3 children, Themb'elihle, Sihle and Thandiwe, for their unconditional love, support and encouragement.

My father, Jeremiah, and late mother, Ntombi, for raising us the best way parents could and for giving us a solid foundation for education and life.

The Nhlabati family at large who always encourage and support me on the journey of my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I take this opportunity to express gratitude to the following persons for their respective contributions to this dissertation:

- God Almighty for giving me the strength and wisdom to complete my studies.
- A special thank you to my supervisor, Prof M.W. Maila, for his unqualified guidance, support and encouragement.
- All the participants from the 5 schools in the Breyten Circuit for their willingness to participate in this study.
- The Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDoE), for giving me permission to conduct the study in the 5 schools.

ABSTRACT

The decentralisation of governance in South African schools as embodied in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 has placed considerable responsibility in the hands of parents for the governance of schools through the School Governing Bodies. In the light thereof, research was conducted in 5 secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. A phenomenological qualitative approach was used to gather data from a purposeful sample of members of School Governing Bodies from selected secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit. The purpose was to explore the impact of parental involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit. The findings revealed that many parents did not take their role seriously due to poor educational levels and the lack of training and familiarity with the legislation embodied in the Act. This compromised their ability to govern schools. Based on the findings, recommendations are made for improvement of practice.

KEY TERMS

Parent
School governance
School governing body
South African Schools Act
School policies

LIST OF TABLES:

LIST OF FIGURES:

LIST OF ACRONYMS:

BOG	Board of Governors
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
EAK	Education Act of Kenya
EEA	Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998
ELL	English Language Learners
ELPRC	Education Law of the People's Republic of China
EPA	Education Policy Act 39 of 1967
GBARDS	Governing Body Amendment Regulations for Public Schools
HDSS	Historically disadvantaged Secondary Schools
LEA	Lesotho Education Act 3 of 2010
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
MDoE	Mpumalanga Department of Education
MHSC	Model of Home-School Cooperation
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NECC	National Education Coordination Cooperation
NEIMS	National Education Infrastructure Management Systems
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NZEA	New Zealand Education Act 80 of 1989
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
PRC	People's Republic of China
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTSA	Parent Teacher Student Association
SASA	The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996
SES	Socio-economic Status
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
US	United States

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1:   INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1   INTRODUCTION

This research was conducted in 5 of the 6 secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit which is one of 18 circuits in the Gert Sibande District of the Mpumalanga province. Breyten Circuit covers an area that includes small towns such as Lothair, Chrissiesmeer, Breyten, villages like Warburton and The Gem, and a number of farms. Breyten Circuit is a relatively rural circuit that consists of 28 primary schools, 3 secondary schools and 3 combined schools. In the context of this study, a combined school is a school that offers Grade R to Grade 12. The 3 combined schools are classified in the category of a secondary schools and so there are 6 secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit. According to Section 12 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA), all these schools are public schools (RSA, 1996b).

According to SASA (RSA, 1996b), the governance of every public school is vested in its School Governing Body (SGB). Further, the SGB is comprised of the following elected members:

- Parents of the learners at the school;
- Educators at the school;
- Members of staff at the school who are not educators; and
- Learners in the 8th grade or higher from the school.

Parents are required to be the majority component of the SGB at all times. Section 23(9) of SASA (RSA, 1996b) stipulates that the number of parent members must comprise one more than the combined total of a governing body members who have voting rights.

Considering the above, it is relevant to conduct a study of this nature because the effectiveness of the SGB will, to a very large extent, depend on the level of involvement of the parents who are the majority component. They are able to influence the decisions taken by the SGB and its ability to function effectively.

According to Gold, Simon and Brown (2005:237), during the 1990s, schools changed for the better in Chicago's Logan Square in the United States (US). Gold et al. (2005) attribute

the increase in student achievement to a programme offered to parents in which they were trained in pedagogy and taught leadership skills. This in turn enabled them make a positive contribution to the classroom. They argue that since the inception of the programme, parent representatives in the local school council are more knowledgeable and capable leaders.

Gold et al. (2005:241) argue that, despite the challenges of building bridges between schools and communities, educators have come to embrace the value of parental involvement in schools. Many challenges arose from the failure of stakeholders to draw a distinction between governance and management: management deals with the day-to-day running of the school. Decisions made are executed by the School Management Team (SMT) which is made up of the school principal, deputy principals and education specialists.

Parental involvement improves the school climate and is linked to higher student achievement. Parents who spent quality time with their children each day tend to be good motivators of their children (Singh, Mbokodi & Msila, 2004:305). The value and importance of parental involvement in the education of children in general, and in school governance in particular, cannot be over-emphasised. The progress or regress that a school makes is often a reflection of the type of SGB it has, and is a good indication of how effective it is in governing the school.

In this study, the researcher investigated the level of parental involvement in the governance of secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit. Their capacity, knowledge and the skills required to perform the duties of the SGB were examined.

In the ensuing Section, the background to this study and preliminary literature review is provided.

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Certain problems stand out in any examination of the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit. These are:

- Vandalism;

- Dilapidated school buildings;
- Challenges with financial management;
- Difficulty in raising funds;
- Non-existent or non-functional vision and mission statements;
- Lack of school policies that direct school activities; and
- Disciplinary problems.

The SGBs of the 5 secondary schools are responsible for addressing these very prevalent problems.

According to Section 20 of SASA (RSA, 1996b), the SGB is required to execute the following tasks:
- Ensuring the development of the school;
- Adopting a constitution for the SGB;
- Developing a vision and mission statement;
- Adopting a code of conduct for the learners at the school;
- Developing a school policy; and
- Managing the school's resources, both financial and physical.

As already stated, the parents of the learners at the school should form the majority of the SGB which is responsible for the governance of the school. In other words, it is the parents who assume a dominant role in the SGB. Parental involvement is thus crucial to addressing challenges in the governance of schools. Thus, a preliminary literature review on parental involvement and governance is an essential foreground for the study.

According to Mouton (2001:48), a preliminary literature study provides evidence for initial reading on the topic. It indicates how one has developed one's initial ideas which ultimately result in the statement or formulation of the research problem. Where appropriate, it provides information concerning the available theoretical literature on the topic. Some reasons why a review of existing scholarship is important are:
- To ensure that one does not merely duplicate a previous study;
- To discover the most recent and authoritative theorising about the subject;
- To find out widely accepted empirical findings in the field;
- To identify available instrumentation that has proven valid and reliable; and

- To ascertain the most widely accepted definitions of key concepts in the field (Mouton, 2001:87).

The South African Constitution embraces the fact that the country's democracy is both representative and participatory (Lewis & Naidoo, 2004:102) and Karlsson (2002:332) argues that the primary aim of school governance reform is the democratisation of schooling.

According to Bush and Heystek (2003:127), a major shift to self-governance for schools has occurred in many countries during the past two decades. This trend is evident in England and Wales, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, parts of the US and South Africa. They further argue that there is a considerable diversity in the forms of self-governance adopted in these countries but say that they are generally underpinned by principles of democracy and school effectiveness.

According to Greenlee (2007:224), the requirements in Florida in the US are that elected parent and community members of a board exceed the number of school employees. This seeks to minimise professional privilege and offset pro forma endorsements of decisions made by the principal. Consequently, the principal and teachers no longer dominate the decision making process. It is suggested that participation does not extend simply to the right to elect representatives but that it translates instead into the right to influence decisions (Lewis & Naidoo, 2004:102).

Quan-Bafour (2006:5) argues that experience indicates that despite the emphasis on parents' and guardians' roles in school governance, many parents (especially in rural areas) are not involved in any school matters at a grassroots level. If they do get involved, the parents do not feel that they can question the authority of the principal even though they may inquire about aspects of the school's progress (Ranson, Farrel, Peim & Smith, 2005:305).

Schools have the ability to change how they motivate parents to become involved in their children's education (Shah, 2009:213). Shah (2009) refers to a model by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler that emphasises the psychological factors that impact on parental involvement in their children's learning. Thus, if participation is partly driven by psychological

resources, policies to motivate parental involvement must include strategies that alter beliefs in parents.

There are two belief systems that are critical in motivating parental involvement:

- Role construction: This refers to parents' beliefs about what they are supposed to do in relation to their children's education (Shah, 2009:215).
- Efficacy: This is the belief that one's action will produce a desired outcome (Shah, 2009:217).

Shah (2009:216) also highlights different views of parental participation. Many Latino parents in the US confine their role in their children's education to the home; they see involvement in schools as an encroachment and these schools generally have an alternative view of participation. In particular, teachers and administrators tend to focus on activities that bring parents to the school, while parents confine their roles in their children's education to the home.

A more in-depth study of specific stakeholders' views also reveals that participation by parents in school governance is individualistic and sporadic. It depends almost entirely on the good graces of principals or the initiative of individual parents who may or may not have the power to challenge existing patterns of participation. Furthermore, participation is limited to certain issues determined by the principal and/or the parent serving as the SGB chairperson. Across a majority of the schools studied, learners and parents faced real challenges in expressing their voices in school governance through the SGB (Lewis & Naidoo, 2004:105). According to Epstein (in Gordon & Nocon, 2008:321) the term parental involvement encompasses both the involvement of individual parents in their children's education and the collective involvement of parents in school decision-making bodies.

Kani (2000:57) argues that in historically disadvantaged schools, codes of conduct are drawn up by the principal and handed down to the learners without any parental involvement or consultation. The government recognises that many SGBs, particularly in the rural and less advantaged urban areas do not have the skills and experience required to exercise their new powers and so may have difficulty in fulfilling their functions (Van Wyk, 2004:50).Van Wyk (2004:53) also states that the competence of the SGB is directly

5

related to the training they received. The parent governors' (the parent members of the SGBs) level of formal schooling is important to their ability to perform school governance functions (Chikoko, 2008:251). Training for SGB members in the Gert Sibande District is usually done by conducting a 2-days workshop at the circuit level facilitated by retired principals of schools. The training mainly covers the functions of the SGB as stated in SASA (84 of 1996, Section20) (RSA, 1996b).

Ranson, Arnott, McKeown and Smith (2005:357) argue that questions have again been raised about the roles and responsibilities of governing bodies. The issues of whether the boundary between governance and management of schools is appropriately drawn and whether too much is expected of volunteers in terms of time and responsibility are being debated. According to Bush and Heystek (2003:136), most education systems, including the South African education system, make a distinction between policy-making (which is the responsibility of the governing body) and operational management (which is the preserve of the principal).

The day-to-day running of the school is the responsibility of the principal and the SMT (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2006:11). According to the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) (76 of 1998:C64) (RSA, 1998), the following are some of the duties of the school principal:

- To be responsible for the professional management of a public school;
- To give proper instructions and guidelines for timetabling, admission and the placement of learners;
- To handle all correspondence received at the school;
- To provide professional leadership within the school;
- To guide, supervise and offer professional advice on the work and performance of all staff in the school; and
- To ensure that workloads are equitably distributed.

According to the EEA (76 of 1998:C65) (RSA, 1998), the responsibilities of the post of deputy principal is to assist the principal in managing the school and to promote the education of learners in a proper manner. The EEA (76 of 1998:C66) (RSA, 1998) tasks the head of the department to engage in class teaching, be responsible for the effective functioning of the department and for organising relevant/related extra-curricular activities

so as to ensure that the subject, learning area or phase and the education of learners are promoted in a proper manner.

The above mentioned duties of the school principal, deputy principal and the heads of department indicate that the SMT is responsible for the professional management of the school and its day-to-day running. The SGB is not involved in the day-to-day running of the school. The SASA (84 of 1996) (RSA, 1996b) stipulates, amongst others, that the functions of the SGB include:

- Adopting a constitution [Section 20(1) (b)];
- Developing the mission statement [Section 20(1) (c)];
- Adopting a code of conduct for learners [Section 20(1) (d)];
- Supporting the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions [Section 20(1) (e)];
- Administering and controlling the school's property, buildings and the grounds occupied by the school [Section 20(1) (g)].

All the previously mentioned functions of the SGB are policy related. The governance of every public school is invested in its governing body [SASA 84 of 1996, Section 16(1)] (RSA, 1996b). The professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the head of department [SASA 84 of 1996, Section 16(3)] (RSA, 1996b). Thorough workshops can assist to educate those tasked with these responsibilities.

According to Lewis and Naidoo (2004:101), policy makers often equate policy intention with policy practice and exhibit a simplistic understanding of the motivations of individuals to participate. The intention of the SASA (84 of 1996, Section 12) (RSA, 1996b) is to have parents in the majority and to have them influence the decision making process. Murphy and Beck (in Greenlee, 2007:22) argue that teachers and principals, the people closest to the school, would be the best decision-makers for the school because they have the most information about the school. After the principal, educators are the next important people in decision-making processes. Thereafter are members representing non-educator staff, parents and learners (Karlsson, 2002:332). Seen from this point of view, the involvement of parents in governance structures of public schools often becomes a struggle for control (Fege in Greenlee, 2007:22).In some instances, school principals can

limit issues debated by councils, control information, and restrict the decision-making influence of parents, thus making school councils little more than 'rubber stamps' for decisions made by principals (Hess in Greenlee, 2007:223). It is expected that an SGB should not enter into any contract that exceeds its 3 year term of office (Governing Body Amendment Regulations for Public Schools (GBARPS) of 2012, Section 12). Before the end of its term, the SGB must prepare a handover report for the incoming SGB and must submit the report to the District Director (GBARPS of 2012, Section 14).

Carter (2002:3) argues that parent/family involvement has a significantly positive impact on student outcomes throughout the elementary, middle school, and secondary years. According to Gianzero (1999:3), there are many research studies that document the association between parents' involvement in their children's schooling and a host of benefits accruing not only to students themselves, but to their schools and parents as well. Among the documented findings are strong positive correlations between parental involvement in children's schooling and improved student attitudes, achievement and attendance. Gianzero further indicates that various studies report higher grades and test scores, more homework completed, fewer placements in special education programmes, higher graduation rates, more positive attitudes and behaviour, and increased enrolment in post-secondary education for students whose parents were involved in varying degrees in their school education.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1 Research problem

The purpose of the study was to explore the impact of parental involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit. It aims to improve secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit by highlighting the challenges faced by SGBs and then presenting recommendations for improvement.

1.3.2 Research questions

1.3.2.1 The main/ focus question

What is the impact of parental involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit?

1.3.2.2 Sub-questions

    (a) What is the level of parental involvement in the governance of secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit?

    (b) How can the factors that influence parental involvement on school governance be classified or categorised?

    (c) How can the performance of the SGBs of the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit be determined?

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to determine the impact of parental involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit.

1.4.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- To determine the level of parental involvement in secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit;
- To establish how factors that influence parental involvement in school governance can be classified or categorised; and
- To determine how the SGBs of the selected secondary schools are performing.

1.5 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Prior to 1994, some of the members of the school committees were chosen by the government (see Section 2.3.1.1). Since 1995 there has however been a shift in school governance in South Africa. Schools have been given the responsibility to govern and manage, effectively decentralising governance and management. Since 1996, all the members of the SGB (except the principal) have been democratically elected in properly constituted electoral meetings of that component of the SGB. According to SASA (RSA, 1996b), the SGB is responsible for school governance. In the SGB the parent component is in the majority. A study of this nature is deemed important as it evaluates the impact of parental involvement in the effective governance of secondary schools and determines the

extent to which parents in the SGB are able to influence the decision-making process in the SGB. The level of parental involvement in the governance of schools is of utmost importance for the effective governance of secondary schools. This study was motivated firstly by the need to identify factors which prevent parent members of the SGB from contributing to effective SGB actions and secondly the need to make recommendations that may contribute to the improvement of their participation in the decision making process in schools.

Generally it has been argued that parents from previously disadvantaged communities do not participate optimally in school governance (Kani, 2000:57). Those who do participate appear to make little contribution to the decision-making process due to a variety of factors that may include their level of formal schooling, lack of skills and proper training for their role in the SGB. In this study, the researcher explored the capacity of the parent members to execute their tasks, parental skill levels and the level of training received, with particular reference to the SGBs in the Breyten Circuit. Further, in the context of this study, it was assumed that SGBs in the Breyten Circuit do not perform at the level expected by the SASA (RSA, 1996b).The study aimed at determining factors that impact negatively on the effective governance of secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit. Recommendations identified in the study will be submitted to the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit, the Breyten Circuit office and the Gert Sibande District office.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:75), research methodology focuses on the research process selected and the kind of tools and procedures to be used. It focuses on the individual (not linear) steps in the research process and the most 'objective' (unbiased) procedures to be employed. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:8) argue that research methodology entails all the ways in which one collects and analyses data. These methods have been developed in order to acquire reliable and valid knowledge.

In this study, the researcher conducted himself in an unbiased manner by eliminating any preconceived ideas on parental involvement and the impact it may have on school governance in the secondary schools. Data collection methods relevant to a qualitative

study – interviews and document reviews – were used. Primary sources of information were used as often as possible.

1.6.1 Philosophical research paradigm

Constructivist researchers use systematic procedures but maintain that there are multiple socially constructed realities (unlike post-positivism, which postulates a single reality) (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:6). Fossey, Harvey, McDermott and Davidson (2002:718) argue that a major criticism of the positivist paradigm is the assumption that an objective reality, or truth, exists independent of those undertaking the inquiry and the inquiry context.

The interpretive approach is the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds (Neuman, 1997:68). According to Willis (2007:8), interpretivists favour qualitative methods, such as case studies, interviews and observations because those methods are better ways of getting at how humans interpret the world around them. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:6) favour an approach that places less emphasis on numbers and more on values and context.

The study of phenomena in their natural environment is key to the interpretivist philosophy. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:23), qualitative research designs emphasise the gathering of data about naturally occurring phenomena. The interpretive approach is considered the most appropriate approach for this study because the researcher is interested in the way the participants experience their world and how they view their experiences working in the SGB.

1.6.2 Research approach

A qualitative approach was used in this study. This approach was chosen because of the following characteristics embodied in it:
- Behaviour is studied as it occurs in natural setting;
- There is consideration of situational factors;
- The researcher collects data directly from the source;

- The researcher gets detailed narratives that provide an in-depth understanding of behaviour;
- The focus is on why and how behaviour occurs;
- The emphasis is on participants' understanding, descriptions, labels and meanings;
- The design evolves and changes as the study progresses;
- Understanding and explanations are complex and allow for multiple perspectives; and
- Generalisations are induced from synthesising the gathered information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:321).

Qualitative research is an inquiry process and a distinct methodological tradition in which a social or human problem is explored. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998:15). Qualitative research uses text as empirical material (instead of numbers) and starts with the notion of the social construction of realities under study. It is interested in the perspectives of participants in everyday practices and everyday knowledge which refers to the issue under study (Flick, 2007:19). In this study the researcher interacted with the participants in their natural settings, understood issues from the participant's perspective and witnessed reality emerging as the study progressed.

1.6.3 Research design

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:20) state that research design indicates the general plan adopted. In other words, this is how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects, and what methods of data collection are used. Phenomenology is used in this study. The phenomenologist emphasises that all human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their world (and life).We continuously interpret, create, give meaning to, define, justify and rationalise our actions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:28). Babbie and Mouton talk about giving meaning to our actions, while Cresswell (1998:51) states that a phenomenological study describes the meaning of lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or phenomenon. Phenomenology aims to understand and interpret the meaning that subjects give to their everyday life. In order to accomplish this, the researcher should be able to enter the subject's world and place himself in the 'shoes of the subject' (De Vos & Fouché, 1998:80).'Shoes of the subject' in this context refers to the researcher putting himself in the place of the participant, from the perspective of the

participant. Phenomenology is the study of people's perception of the world (as opposed to trying to learn what 'reality' is in the world) (Willis, 2007:16). O'Leary (2007:2) argues that phenomenologists believe that reality is always socially rather than naturally constructed, and is therefore unavoidably ambiguous and plural.

1.6.4 Population and sampling

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:129), a population is a group of elements or cases. These can be individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which researchers intend to generalise the results of the research. This is the total set from which the individuals or units of the study are chosen (Seaberg in Strydom & De Vos, 1998:190). The researcher did not interview all the participants in the population; instead he took a sample of the total population. A sample is a group of subjects or participants from whom data are collected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:129).A sample can also be viewed as a subset of measurements drawn from a population (Strydom & De Vos, 1998:191).Neuman (1997: 202) on the other hand indicates that a researcher draws a sample from a larger pool of cases or elements and in this context, the large pool is the population.

In this study the population consists of all 85 SGB members from the selected secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit (a total of 17 from each).

Sampling not only focuses on the selection of people to be interviewed or situations to be observed, but also on the selection of sites in which such persons or situations can be expected to be found. Sampling in qualitative research in most cases is not oriented towards a formal selection of part of an existing or assumed population. Rather it is conceived as a way of setting up a collection of deliberately selected cases, materials or events for constructing a corpus of empirical examples for studying the phenomenon of interest in the most instructive way (Flick, 2007:4). The sample consisted of 15 participants, 3 from each of the 5 selected secondary schools. The 3 participants from each secondary school comprised the chairperson of the SGB, the secretary of the SGB and the principal of the school. Purposive sampling was used in this study. In purposive sampling the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:138). The chairperson, the

secretary and the principal are members of the executive of the SGB; they are the people who are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the topic and for this reason they were included in the sample.

1.6.5 Instrumentation and data collection techniques

Interviews and document reviews were used to collect data in the study.

An interview involves a one-on-one verbal interaction between the researcher and a respondent (Goddard & Melville, 2001:49). A semi-structured or less formal interview was used in this study. The interviewer sought both clarification and elaboration on the answers given and recorded qualitative information about the topic. This grants the interviewer more latitude to probe beyond the answers and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee (May, 2001:123). The researcher used non-focused interviews directed at individuals to collect the data used in this study.

The following official school documents were reviewed: minutes of the SGB meetings, school policies, records of training of the SGBs, reports on financial management, records of fund-raising projects, year plans of the schools, and minutes of the sub-committees of the SGBs.

1.6.6 Data analysis and interpretation

The collected data was analysed and interpreted by using inductive analysis. Inductive analysis is the process through which qualitative researchers synthesise and make meaning from the data, starting with specific data and ending with categories and patterns. In this way, more general themes and conclusions emerge from the data rather than being imposed prior to data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:367).When analysing a data set, a researcher is usually understood to examine the data to make sense of it, and to arrive at an interpretation of the phenomenon that is dealt with in the data (Coffey & Atkinson in Moisander & Valtonen, 2006:3).

According to Moisander and Valtonen (2006:5), it is widely agreed upon among contemporary qualitative researchers that interpretations never simply 'emerge' in the process of making sense of the data. It is rather the interpretive framework and attendant

principles, constructs, techniques and methods that produce particular interpretations. They further confirm that in this context, the term 'interpretive' framework refers to a set of assumptions, ideas and principles that define a particular, theoretically informed perspective and set of appropriate practices for the process of interpretation, thus opening the data to particular interpretations. Qualitative data are frequently expressed in words and the researcher must organise this data into groups and patterns in order to understand its meaning (Clamp, Gough & Land, 2004:37).

Once data has been carefully analysed, the next step is to present it verbally and/or in writing in the most clear and unambiguous way so that others will have no difficulty in its interpretation (Clamp et al., 2004:88).

The analyses of results can be discussed according to 3 interrelated activities. These are: seeking patterns/themes, generating description and interpretations, and synthesising information (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008:7).

(a) Seeking patterns/themes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008:10).

Analysis is essentially about searching for patterns and themes, that is, the trends that emerge from among the findings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008:7).

(b) Description and interpretation

The details in the description are the evidence and logic used to build the argument. It follows therefore that description must precede interpretation. Description is intended to convey the rich complexity of the research.

(c) Synthesis

Synthesis is the process of pulling everything together, that is:

- How the research questions are answered by the findings;
- To what extent the findings emanating from the data collection methods can be interpreted in the same way; and
- How the findings relate to the researcher's prior assumptions about the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008:13).

When researchers analyse the data, they search for themes emanating from the data as it is analysed. The themes assist the researcher in interpreting the data so that at the end of the analysis, the findings can be put together.

1.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability is the extent to which independent researchers discover the same phenomena and to which there is agreement on the description of the phenomena between the researcher and the participants (Bester, Smit & Swanepoel, 2011:50). According to Quinton and Smallbone (2006:8), it is important that qualitative researchers address reliability issues when designing their studies and in their data collection strategies. Reliability is sometimes seen as an assessment of whether the same findings would be obtained if the research were repeated, or if someone conducted the same study.

Bloor and Wood (2006:2) argue that reliability is the extent to which research findings are reproducible, that is whether a different researcher who replicated the study would come to the same or similar conclusions. Strategies to improve reliability include maintaining meticulous records of fieldwork and documenting the process of analysis (in a research diary or in analytical memos).

Validity of qualitative designs is the degree to which the interpretation and concepts have shared meanings between the participants and the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:330). To enhance validity in this study, the researcher used a combination of the following strategies:

- Participant language (e.g. verbatim accounts);
- Low-inference descriptors;
- Mechanically recorded data through the use of a tape recorder;
- Participant review by allowing participants to review the researcher's synthesis for accuracy of representation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:33).

Alhedi and Johnson (in Flick, 2007:10) suggest that the concept of validity is 'reflexive accounting' in which a relation between researcher issues and the process of making sense is created. This locates validity in the process of research and the different relationships at work in it. For instance:

- The relationship between what is observed (i.e. behaviours, rituals and meanings) and the larger cultural, historical, and organisational context within which the observations are made (i.e. the substance);

16

- The relationship between the observer, the observed and the setting;
- The issue of perspective (or point of view) where the observer or member renders an interpretation of the ethnographic data (i.e. the interpretation);
- The role of the reader in the final product (i.e. the audience);
- The issue of representational, rhetorical or authorial style used by the author(s) to render the description.

According to Bloor and Wood (2006:3), when considering the validity of conclusions drawn from a research project, 2 types of inferences are involved. The first of those is the internal validity of the study. This is the degree to which the investigator's conclusion correctly portray the data collected. The other inference concerns external validity (also referred to as generalisability). This is the degree to which conclusions are appropriate and transferable to similar populations and locations outside of the study area.

Finally, strategies to improve validity include thorough data analysis in which the researcher searches for deviant cases and revises the theory in the light of this data.

1.8   DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Key terms and concepts used in this study are defined and explained below.

1.8.1   Impact: This is the powerful effect that something has on somebody or something (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005). It is the effect of impression of one thing on another (The Free Dictionary, 2012). In this study, impact refers to the powerful effect or impression somebody has on something or somebody.

1.8.2   Parent: A person's father or mother (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005) or the parent or guardian of a learner [SASA 84 of 1996, Section 1 (xiv)]. In this study, parent refers to the parent or guardian of a learner.

1.8.3   Involvement: This is the act of taking part in something (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005) or the act of sharing in the activities of a group (The Free Dictionary). In this study, involvement refers to the taking part in and sharing in school activities.

1.8.4   Parental involvement: Parental involvement is a combination of commitment and active participation on the part of the parent in the school and towards the student (LaBahn, 1995). Parental involvement refers to the amount of participation a parent

has when it comes to schooling and a child's life (Ireland, 2010). In this study, parental involvement refers to the amount of active participation that a parent has when it comes to schooling and the learner's life; it includes participation in the SGB.

1.8.5   Effective: Effectiveness refers to the degree to which something produces the result that is wanted or intended, or the production of a successful result (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005). It is the producing of or capability to produce an intended result or having a striking effect (Web Dictionary). In this study, effective means producing the intended result.

1.8.6   Governance: This refers to the activity of governing a country or controlling a company or an organisation (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005). It is the act of governing and exercising authority (The Free Dictionary). In this study, governance means the act of governing, controlling and exercising authority at a school.

1.8.7   Circuit: A series of places or events of a particular kind in which the same people appear or take part is called a circuit (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005). It is a regular set of events or places for people involved in a particular activity (Kernerman English Learner's Dictionary). In this study a circuit refers to a cluster of schools in the same district that have been put under the management of a circuit manager.

1.8.8   School Governing Body: The SGB is a democratically elected structure representing various stakeholders in the school (MDoE, 2006:6). In this study the SGB has been defined according to SASA (RSA, 1996b) which stipulates that all stakeholders in education must accept responsibility for the governance of schools and points out that parents and members of local communities are often the best people to identify the school's needs and problems. Every school must have the SGB and it must consist of:
    (a) The school principal;
    (b) Elected representatives (parents, educators, other staff members and learners in Grade 8 or above); and
    (c) Optional co-opted members who do not have the right to vote (DoE, 2003).

1.8.9   Stakeholders: A person or company that is involved in a particular organisation, project or system is called a stakeholder. It is a person, group, organisation, member or system that affects or can be affected by an organisation's actions (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005). In this study, stakeholders refer to the

learners, educators, non-teaching staff, parents, and all community organisations that have an interest in education.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following ethical principles were adhered to:

1.9.1 The principle of voluntary participation in research. This principle implies that in order to save subjects from 'intrusive' research procedures, participation in the research is made a choice, that is, it is under the control of the potential subjects. In order for them to make a well-reasoned choice, they must be informed beforehand about the nature of the project and all that their participation would entail (Angrosino, 2007:3).

1.9.2 The principle of informed consent refers to the fact that the research participants should at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and that they must give their consent to participate in the research. This is done after they are provided with an explanation of the research topic and its potential benefits and risks. At all times this remains a two-way dialogue and an on-going process (Strydom, 1998:25).

1.9.3 The principle of safety in participation, that is, the participants must not be placed at risk or harm of any kind at any stage of the research process (Strydom, 1998:25).

1.9.4 The principle of privacy incorporates the principles of confidentiality and anonymity. The identity of the participant and all information gathered should be kept anonymous and confidential. In this regard it is important to beforehand explain to the participants how pseudonyms will be used, how data will be collected and stored, and how it will contribute to this process (Strydom, 1998:27).

1.9.5 The principle of trust is of paramount importance especially since in interpretive research and through conducting interviews and other in-depth data collection methods, trust develops gradually. The researcher must be careful and sensitive so as not to exploit this trust for personal gain or benefit by deceiving or betraying the participant throughout the research process or in its published outcomes (Strydom, 1998:25).

1.9.6 The principles of actions taken and assumed competence of researchers requires that researchers be ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation (Strydom, 1998:25).

1.9.7 Release or publication of the findings necessitates that researchers compile their report as accurately and objectively as possible (Strydom, 1998:25).

1.9.8 The important principle of the restoration of subjects or respondents through debriefing must be faithfully applied. Sessions, during which subjects are provided with an opportunity after the study to work through their experience and its aftermath, are possibly one way in which the researcher can assist the subjects with minimising any unintended harm that has taken place (Judd et al. in Strydom, 1998:33).

1.9.9 All data must be treated in an academically accepted way. One common procedure is the use of codes (such as numbers or pseudonyms) when describing people in field notes and in any reports generated from the research. The researcher might also decide to keep all notes in a secure place or specify that they will be destroyed upon completion of the project (Angrosino, 2007:4).

It is imperative for the researcher to adhere to the ethical principles clearly outlined above, and not to demean the participants in any way.

1.10 ANTICIPATED LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study, like any other of its kind, has its own limitations that had to be taken into consideration before the study was undertaken and when recommendations were generated. It should be clear from the onset how far generalisations can extend. The following points were considered on the limitations of this study;

- Limitations identify potential weaknesses in the study's research design or methodology that restricts the study's scope (Colorado State University in Calabrese, 2006:12).
- According to Hofstee (2006:87), limitations affect either how far you are able to generate your conclusions (scope), or how confident you can be about your conclusions (reliability).
- Lunenburg and Irby (2008:133) indicate that the limitations of a study are not under the control of the researcher. Limitations are factors that may have an effect on the interpretation of the findings or on the generalisability of the results. Such limitations may arise from the methodology selected, data collected, or analysis undertaken.

- Presenting the problems or limitations experienced while collecting data helps others to better understand how conclusions were arrived at (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003:9).
- This study focuses on only 5 of the 6 secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit. In addition, not all members of the SGB were interviewed; the principal, chairperson and secretary were the members selected to interview. In spite of this, the sample was representative of the population.
- Data collected consisted of information generated during the interviews and through document reviews.
- Primary sources were used as the preferred sources of data.
- In this study, a phenomenological approach was used and collected data was analysed and interpreted using inductive analysis.

The anticipated limitations of the study required that caution be applied when extrapolating recommendations to the rest of the schools in the District and to the Mpumalanga Province at large.

1.11 CHAPTER DIVISION

1.11.1 Chapter 1: Introduction and background

Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the study, the background of the investigation, the research problem and research questions, aims and objectives of the study, motivation for the research, a description of the research methodology and the definition of key concepts.

1.11.2 Chapter 2: Literature study

A review of the literature is provided in this chapter. The literature study ensures that the researcher does not merely duplicate a previous study and acknowledges what other researchers have already done on the subject.

1.11.3 Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter contains the research methodology and includes discussions on: the philosophical research paradigm, research approach, design, population and sampling, instrumentation and data collection techniques, data analysis and interpretation.

1.11.4 Chapter 4: Presentation and discussion of the findings

In Chapter 4, the research design is described, the research method is explained, the collected data is presented and analysed, and results are discussed.

1.11.5 Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

A summary of the research results is given and conclusions and recommendations are made.

1.12 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the background and context of the study (the schools and their locations within the country) were discussed. The decentralisation of schools as stipulated in the SASA (84 of 1996) was looked at, and in particular the parts that deals with the democratisation of schools. The democratisation of schools entails stakeholder representation and participation. The stakeholders identified are the educators, the learners, the parents, the principal and the non-teaching staff. The parent component is required to be in the majority in the SGB. The SASA (RSA, 1996b) clearly states the functions of the SGB and these are discussed.

In this study the researcher investigated the impact of parental involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit. The impact that parent governors make depends to some extent on their capacity to govern. It depends to a greater or lesser extent on their level of formal schooling, training, understanding of their responsibilities and their ability to differentiate between management and governance.

A qualitative research approach has been chosen as being the appropriate one to gather primary data from the participants in their natural settings. The above chapter division has outlined the structure of the dissertation and in accordance with this, the next chapter will provide a relevant literature study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to and background for the study, the research problem and research questions, the aim and objectives of the study, a motivation for the research, research methodology and other applicable concepts.

This chapter presents a literature study. According to Creswell (2008:89), a literature review is a written summary of journal articles, books and other documents that describe the past and current state of information. It is a means of organising the literature into topics under discussion and documents the need for a proposed study.

A literature review is based on the assumption that knowledge accumulates and that we learn from and build on what others have done (Neuman, 1997:89). Gravetter and Forzano (2009:48) argue that research does not exist in isolation and state that each research study is part of an existing body of knowledge, building on the foundation of past research and expanding that foundation for future research.

Mouton (2001:87) mentions that a good review of available scholarship not only saves you time in the sense that it helps you to avoid making errors and duplicating previous results unnecessarily, but also because it provides clues and suggestions about what avenues to follow.

The authors mentioned above emphasise that any research is part of a number of studies conducted before on a particular subject or topic. Babbie and Mouton (2001:565) assert that every research report should be planned in the context of the existing body of scientific knowledge and say that the researcher must indicate where their report fits into this picture.

Turning to the purpose of a literature review, Neuman (1997:89) indicates the following as being critical factors. The research must:
- demonstrate a familiarity with a body of knowledge and establish credibility;
- show the path of prior research and how the current project links to it;

- integrate and summarise what is known in an area; and
- learn from others so as to stimulate new ideas.

Mouton (2001:87) asserts that there are a number of reasons a review of the existing scholarship is so important. These include:

- ensuring that one does not merely duplicate a previous study;
- discovering the most recent and authoritative theorising about the subject;
- investigating the most widely accepted empirical findings in the field of study;
- identifying the available instrumentation that has proven valid and reliable; and
- ascertaining the most widely accepted definitions of key concepts in the field.

Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006:24) write that the purpose of the review of existing literature is one or a combination of the following:

- To sharpen and deepen the theoretical framework of the research, that is, to study the different theories related to the topic, taking an interdisciplinary perspective where possible;
- To familiarise the researcher with the latest developments in the area of the research, as well as in related areas;
- To identify gaps in the knowledge, as well as weaknesses in previous studies so as to determine what has already been done and what is yet to be studied or improved;
- To discover connections, contradictions or other relations between different research results by comparing various investigations;
- To study the definitions used in previous works, as well as the characteristics of the populations investigated with the aim of adopting them for new research; and
- To study the advantages and disadvantages of the research methods used by others in order to adopt or improve on them in one's own research.

By the time a researcher conducts the actual research, he should be familiar with what other researchers have done on the subject as this will reduce the chances of the researcher merely duplicating a previous research. He should have discovered the most recent and authoritative theories on the subject and be aware of the widely accepted empirical findings in the field of study. Finally, he should have identified some gaps in previous research, which will make the current research relevant.

Having established the aim of the literature study, the main perspectives of this study will be discussed in the ensuing section.

The main research question is: What is the impact of parental involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit?

Following on the main research question, national and international perspectives, theoretical perspectives and the researcher's own views on the concepts of parental involvement, school governance and factors influencing parental involvement ensue.

2.2 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement is defined as being the parents' interactions with schools and with their children so as to promote academic success (Hill et al. in Hill & Tyson, 2009:740). The policy of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (in Hill & Tyson, 2009:741) defines parental involvement as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving students' academic learning and other school activities. According to Epstein (in Gordon & Nocon, 2008:321), the term parental involvement encompasses both the involvement of individual parents in their children's education and the collective involvement of parents in school decision-making bodies. Gordon and Nocon (2008:322) argue that parental involvement in school-based shared decision-making continues to be seen as having a democratising and legitimising function.

2.2.1 National perspective

In South Africa, the introduction of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) paved the way for greater parental involvement in public education (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:176; Singh, Mbokodi & Msila, 2004:301). Singh et al. (2004:301) further argue that the transformed system expects parents to play a crucial role in education. For most parents the initial challenge has been to understand the new curriculum and get involved in the governing bodies of schools. The expectation is that parents should be actively involved in the schooling of their children in one way or the other.

In spite of the expectation that parents will be involved in the education of their children, there are concerns on their current level of involvement. Mestry and Grobler (2007:177)

contend that presently in South African schools, most parents do not participate meaningfully in their children's education. They say that this is especially evident in the poor attendance of parents at parents' meetings, their limited involvement in fund-raising projects, low attendance at parent-teacher meetings, recalcitrance in paying school fees, inability to maintain proper control of learning support material issued to their children, poor matric results, and lack of interest in learners' school work and homework. These practices can be observed mainly in rural and township schools.

Ballen and Moles (in Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177) assert that parents who are among the poorest sections of society are locked in the difficult struggle to survive: they live in inadequate housing, are badly paid, work unsocial hours and/or are unemployed. With the increase in either one parent or both parents working in more than one job, the children are often left alone. In such a situation, parents often do not actively participate in the education of their children. They will not be able to assist their children with their school work and will not be able to attend parents' meetings at the school.

However, parents' working conditions are not the sole reason for their lack of involvement (Calabrese & Crozier in Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177). According to Mestry and Grobler (2007:177) some hurdles to effective parental involvement are negative communication from the schools and insufficient training for teachers on how to reach out to parents. Parents believe that they are not welcome in schools and report a high degree of alienation and hostility towards them (Gonzalez-DeHass& Willems, 2003:88, Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177). The low level of meaningful contact between the school and parents, especially black parents, has led to some teachers and principals to concede that such parents lack sufficient interest in their children's education and state that they do not want to work with the schools (Michael, Wolhuter & Van Wyk, 2012:71). According to Van Wyk and Lemmer (in Michael et al., 2012:72) schools in poorer communities tend to make more contact with parents regarding the problems their children are having at school, rather than making frequent contact with such parents about the positive accomplishments of their children. Hoover-Dempsey (in Ho, 2009:102) argues that certain school leadership practices can mobilise a substantial number of parents to work with their children's schools regardless of their social background. Patterson, Hale and Stessman (2007:13) assert that in schools with high levels of parental involvement, the school has taken

responsibility for getting parents involved. It is up to individual schools to deal with the parents' perceptions that they are not welcome in their children's schools.

Epstein and Dauber (in Michael et al., 2012:71) contend that these perceptions are not unique to South Africa. International research indicates that teachers are less likely to know the parents of children who are culturally different from their own background and to label such parents as being uninterested or apathetic. Michael et al. (2012:71) further argues that in South Africa the situation is exacerbated by the fact that few teachers have been taught how to deal with diversity, both in and out of the classroom. The management of diversity should be prioritised in schools.

Singh et al. (2004:301) argue that parental involvement in education is beset with problems because it is influenced by a number of factors including the parents' socio-economic status (SES). McGrath and Kunloff (in Singh et al., 2004:301) point out that policymakers and school administrators cannot be indifferent to the effects of SES on parental involvement in education. Singh et al. (2004:301) further write that efforts to involve parents may be biased by giving further advantage to wealthier parents while creating hindrances to the involvement of the working class. The imbalance in parental involvement is clearly identified in historically disadvantaged secondary schools (HDSS) where most of the parents lack the required literacy levels for participation (Singh et al., 2004:301). Many of these parents are unemployed and this reduces their ability to negotiate from a point of strength.

Singh et al. (2004:306) suggest that the following 5-stage framework for parental involvement be applied:

- Stage 1 Convening level
  At this level, leadership is demystified for external stakeholders and partners in education. The importance of parent/community involvement in education is explained and opportunities for parents to become partners in education are created.
- Stage 2 Clarification level
  Here the role of parents in education is clarified.
- Stage 3 Commitment level
  Parents and teachers must have the will to work together and so at this level, relationships between all the stakeholders is developed and improved.

- Stage 4 Attainment level

  Activities should be coordinated and controlled, and a transparent approach in policy implementation should be adopted.

- Stage 5 Evaluation level

  Educational outcomes should be jointly evaluated and faulty communication channels corrected.

The above framework indicates that it is to the parents' advantage if they unite under a common banner to contribute effectively to education as decreed in the SASA (RSA, 1996b). The above stages are essential in the empowerment of parents (Singh et al., 2004:306).

In their study Michael et al. (2012:70) found that all participants agreed on the advantages to be derived from active parental involvement in schools. The benefits mentioned by the participants include:

- Developing a sense of ownership and pride in the school;
- Morale building, which in turn has an uplifting effect on the entire community;
- Reduction in costs;
- Improved learner behaviour;
- Parent awareness of school matters;
- Building a sense of community; and
- Improving academic achievement (Michael et al., 2012:70).

By achievingmost of the above-mentioned benefits, an overall improvement in the management and governance would be reached. According to Michael et al. (2012:71), there is a lack of an organisational structure when dealing with parental involvement, for example, few schools have a parent support team. Epstein and Saunders (in Michael et al., 2012:71) assert that there is an absence of a school policy on parental involvement even though international research has shown it to be the most important determinant of effective home-school programmes. Chrispeels (in Michael et al., 2012:72) contend that when it comes to parental involvement, schools tend to direct their efforts at fixing parents rather than altering school structures and practices. Schools have to deal with the generalisation that parents are not willing to involve themselves in the education of their children.

2.2.2 International perspectives

According to Griffith (in Barnyak and McNelly, 2009:38), the greatest amount of parental involvement occurs when teachers with positive attitudes regarding parental involvement maintain open communication with parents and collaborate with them. When administrators and teachers initiate and welcome parental involvement, it can be successful. When parents are invited to participate in their children's education, strong bonds are made between the home and school (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009:51). It is unfortunate that the importance of communication is not always emphasised in schools.

Gonzalez-DeHass and Willems (2003:87) assert that parental involvement has been documented to be academically beneficial by educational researchers, supported politically, and valued by a great many educators as well as individuals in the general public. The importance of parent/family involvement was reaffirmed in the US in 1997 when the National Parent Teachers' Association, in cooperation with education and parental involvement professionals, developed 6 National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs (White in Carter, 2002:1).

Epstein (in Fan & Chen, 2001:2) defines the following 6 levels (types) of school-related opportunities for parental involvement:
- Parenting – assisting parents in child-rearing skills;
- Communicating – school-parent communication;
- Learning at home – involving parents in home-based learning;
- Volunteering – involving parents in school volunteering opportunities;
- Decision making – involving parents in school decision making; and
- Collaborating with the community – involving parents in school-community collaborations.

According to the Michigan Department of Education (2002:3), the following National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement are built upon the 6 types of parental involvement as identified by Joyce L. Epstein of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University. These Standards are tabulated in the Table 2.1.

National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programmes	
Standard 1:	Communicating: Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful.
Standard II:	Parenting: Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
Standard III:	Student Learning: Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
Standard IV:	Volunteering: Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
Standard V:	School Decision-Making and Advocacy: Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
Standard VI:	Collaborating with Community: Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

Table 2.1 National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programmes (Source: Michigan Department of Education (2002:3)

Peňa (in Patterson, Hale & Stessman, 2007:7) argue that in the US Latino parents' work schedules make it difficult for them to be involved in school in ways expected by the dominant culture.

In the educational context of Hong Kong, Ng (2007:488) developed a 6-level Model of Home-School Cooperation (MHSC), in which parents can be involved in children's education. This is split as follows:

- 3 levels of involvement outside school, namely
  - Communicating with the school;
  - Helping with the actual learning of individual children; and
  - Taking part in parent programmes and organisations.
- 3 levels of involvement inside school, namely
  - Assisting in school operations;
  - Helping with decision making; and

- Participating in decision making.

Christianakis (2011:160) argues that parental involvement definitions draw upon two distinct models:

- The parent-teacher partnership model which seeks to align parents with teachers. Epstein (in Christianakis, 2011:160) offers a model that outlines 6 components for home-school partnerships;and

- The parent empowerment model which advocates for decision-making opportunities. Finc (in Christianakis, 2011:161) argues that the empowerment model seeks to minimise the asymmetrical power employed by schools, anticipate misunderstandings, and build on children's home cultures, thus helping parents to participate in school decision-making.

Participation in the decision-making process by parents is commendable.

Berger (2008:139) has identified the following roles for parents in schools:
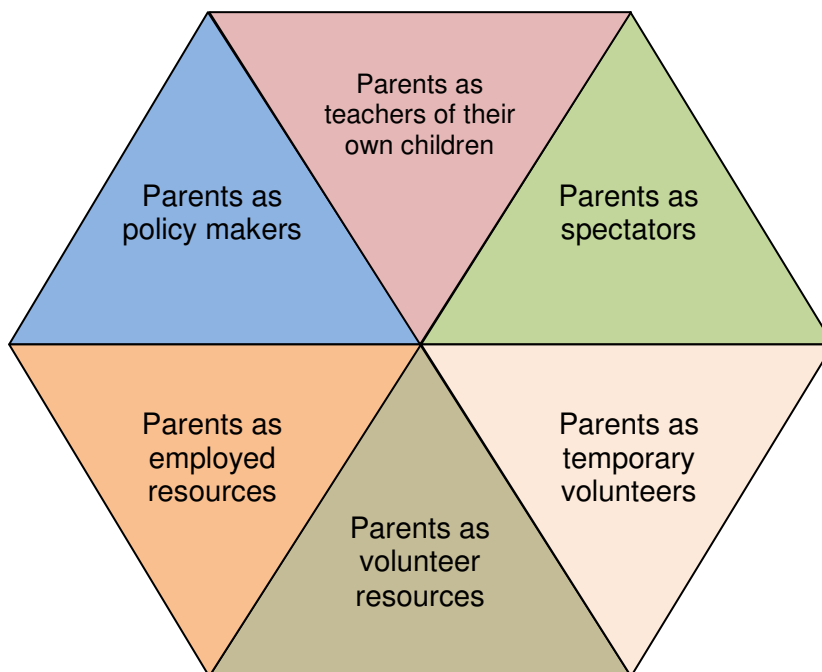
Figure 2.1 Roles for Parents in Schools (Source: Berger, 2008:139)

According to Berger (2008:241), parents may be involved with schools on 9 different levels:

- The parent as an active partner and educational leader at home and at school. The parent who is actively involved both at home and at school;

- The parent as a decision maker. These parents may serve on the school board, on a site-based management team, or on an advisory council;

- The parent as an advocate to help schools achieve excellent educational offerings. Some parents are primarily involved with the schools as advocates for the schools and as fund-raisers;

- The parent actively involved with the school as a volunteer or paid employee. These parents can act as advocates for the school in the community;

- The parent as a liaison between school and home to support homework and be aware of school activities. They are most interested in the school as the agency that educates their children;

- The parent who is not active in the support of the educational goals of the school but encourages their child to study. These parents, similar to those that serve as liaisons, are supportive of the school but are perhaps too busy to be involved;

- The parent as recipients of support from the school. Offerings in the school may include family literacy classes, clothing donations and parent education. Schools can also serve as referral agencies for community services if families are in need;

- The parent as a member of parent education classes. If parents can be encouraged to attend classes, knowledge of child development and literacy education may help with the raising of their children; and

- The parent as representative and activist in the community. Parents who know the community strengthen the school's ability to use community offerings.

According to Berger (2008:249), the characteristics of effective parent-school collaboration include the following;

- Principals, teachers, child-care providers, staff, and parents who believe in parental involvement;

- Schools and child-care centres that encourage parent collaboration by encouraging parents to participate at the level that best fits their interests and time;

- An open-door policy and climate that respond to parent concerns with effective communication;

- The pairing of children who are new to the school or centre with a classmate to help the new child to more easily become a class member;

- The holding of conferences or similar at times that are possible for parents to attend; and

- A feeling that the family, schools, centres and community are joined together in a cooperative effort to support children's health and educational growth.

Carter (2002:1) argues that schools that recognise the "interdependent nature of the relationship between families and schools and values parents as essential partners" in the education process will realise the full value of this collaboration. Christenson and Sheridan (in Carter, 2002:1) concur that such an approach recognises the "significance of families" and the "contributions of schools" as a "necessary framework" for working together in "complementary efforts towards common goals" to maximise success for students as learners. Barnyak and McNelly (2009:50) assert that universities and colleges must consider if parental involvement should be infused directly into coursework. This could benefit schools because educators do not get training on how to involve parents in the education of their children.

According to Shah (2009:213), schools have the ability to change how they motivate parents to become involved in their children's education. Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Wilkins and Closson (2005:107) suggest that parents' involvement is motivated by two belief systems: role construction for involvement and a sense of efficacy for helping a child succeed in school.

- Parental role construction

  Parental role construction refers to parents' beliefs about what they are supposed to do in relation to their children's education and the patterns of parental behaviour that follow these beliefs (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005:107). Drummond and Stipek (in Shah, 2009:216) argue that recent research suggests that how parents construct their role within the school-parent relationship is a strong indicator of their desire to be involved in schools. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005:107) further argue that because role construction is shaped by the expectations of pertinent social groups and relevant personal beliefs, it is constructed socially.

- Parents' sense of efficacy for helping a child succeed in school

  Parents' sense of efficacy for helping a child succeed in school is a belief in one's abilities to act in ways that will produce a desired outcome (Bandura in Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005:107). Self-efficacy, like role construction, is socially constructed

(Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005:109). According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (in Shah,2009:217), parents who believe that their actions impact school decisions and feel that their expectations are met have high efficacy will participate in schools, whereas those who believe their actions will be useless will not participate.

Barnyak and McNelly (2009:51) assert that a school's size generally affects parental involvement; smaller schools have more involvement.

Parent involvement typically decreases as children get older (Griffith in Barnyark & McNelly, 2009:39). According to Gonzalez-DeHass and Willems (2003:88), even if parental involvement in elementary school is minimal, it declines even further as children move to secondary school. They further argue that parental involvement at the secondary school level is just as important, if not more important than in elementary years, especially in inner city areas and high risk communities. Hill and Tyson (2009:740) argue that federal policies, like NCLB, mandate parental involvement in education and family-school relations across elementary and secondary levels. Barnyak and McNelly (2009:39) offer the following reasons for weak involvement in secondary schools:

- Parents believe that children become more independent as they grow older and parent support is no longer needed;
- Parents also feel that they lack the skills to assist their children with more difficult content in the various subject areas.

According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005:111), of particular note is the role of the principal in developing, supporting, and maintaining a fully welcoming school climate. When a person walks in to a school, it is important that a person be able to sense its spirit. It must seem inviting to the visitor and make them feel welcome (Berger, 2008:130). Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005:111) report that principal practices that develop a positive climate include clear principal efforts to meet the needs of all school members (students, staff and parents), regular visits to classrooms and a consistent public advocacy for school improvements.

Darch, Miao and Shippen (in Barnyak & McNelly, 2009:51) suggest 4 broad features for the implementation of effective parental involvement programmes:

- The establishment of proactive programmes to foster positive interactions with parents at the beginning of the school year;

- A focusing on a 180-day plan which entails developing handouts for parents, offering a variety of opportunities to become actively involved and taking families' interest into account;

- The informing of parents about classroom management and instructional activities; and

- The accommodation of attempts to meet the needs of families by supplying knowledge of community resources (e.g. information on places with internet access and suggesting significant websites).

According to Greenwood and Hickman (in Barnyak & McNelly, 2009:51), parent programmes/workshops should be offered and teachers should either play a direct role (by conducting a workshop) or an indirect role (by motivating parents to attend). They further argue that parents should be encouraged to partake in school governance activities such as advisory committees. Given the widespread recognition that parental involvement in schools is important and unequivocally related to improvements in children's achievement, and that improvement in children's achievement is urgently needed, it is paradoxical that most schools do not have comprehensive parental involvement programmes (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003:87).

2.2.3 Conceptualising parental involvement for this study

In this study, parental involvement entails the daily interaction between the parent of the learner and the school on issues related to the education of the learner. This interaction ranges from individually helping a child with his/her school work and the collective participation in school governance structures where decision-making takes place. The level of participation depends on the confidence level of the individual parent and is motivated to a certain extent by the parent's SES. Parental involvement is influenced by a number of factors, like the leadership style of the principal, the school environment, and the attitude of educators and administrators.

2.2.4 Theoretical perspective

Theories that are pertinent to parental involvement in this study are Singh et al's 5 stage framework for parental involvement (Singh et al.,2004); Epstein's framework of 6 levels/types of parental involvement (Epstein in Fan & Chen,2001); the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement (Michigan Department of Education,2002); the Model of Home-School Cooperation (Ng, 2007); Berger's roles for parents in schools (Berger, 2008); and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's two belief systems on parental involvement (Shah, 2009).

2.3   SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005:646) defines governance as the activity of governing a country or controlling a company or organisation. Other authors view school governance as a form of decentralisation and it is this that is discussed in this section. A distinction is made between school governance and the professional management of schools. Values and principles pertinent to school governance are also mentioned.

Gamage (in Van Wyk, 2002:123) define decentralisation in education as the devolution of adequate decision-making authority from a central authority to a lower or local level, such as the school. The concept of decentralisation derives from the belief that the state alone cannot control schools, but has to share its power with other stakeholders on a partnership basis, particularly those close to the school. This is based on the belief that administrators, teachers, and parents are the ones who best understand the context and cultures of the school environment (Van Wyk, 2002:123). The researcher concurs with this statement on the basis that teachers and parents interact with the learners on an almost daily basis. They therefore know the learners better than the other parties interested in the education of the learner, such as the MDoE.

Moller (1999) and Ngidi (in Mestry & Grobler, 2007:176) write that many governments in both the developed and developing worlds support a greater decentralisation of school governance and the empowerment of interest groups for educational benefits. Van Wyk (2002:123) argues that since the 1960s, cooperative school governance, decentralisation and self-management have been 'buzz' words in educational reform throughout the world.

Van Wyk (2002) expands on this by saying that the rationale is, in essence, a desire to make schools more efficient and effective, to improve the quality of education, to raise the level of performance of learners and to be able to respond rapidly to the needs of schools and their learners. In keeping with international trends, South African legislation has moved towards decentralisation by devolving more power over education and school governance to schools (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:176). Mestry and Grobler (2007:176) further argue that while there is a clear evidence of a shift in authority to the local level, the devolution of power is not absolute, with control still remaining firmly in the hands of central education authorities.

Kidanemariam (2003:16) contends that the decentralisation of power is aimed at reducing the centralised bureaucratic control of schools that often prevents them from responding to changing and transforming environments in order to meet the needs of the community they serve. He elaborates that there should be at least a balance of power and authority between state departments and local schools. Decentralisation has a chance to work if, to those at the local level, participation is not merely a procedural exercise, but a conscious effort at allowing marginalised persons to voice their concerns, thereby creating a meaningful opportunity for them to affect decision-making, and hence, change (Kidanemariam, 2003:33). Squelch (in Kidanemariam, 2003:33) notes that the main aim of decentralised school governance is to reduce bureaucratic control and enhance shared decision-making at local school levels. Parents are placed in a powerful position and have authority to influence decisions on very fundamental issues, for example the school budget, allocation of school fees, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of school activities. Maintenance of buildings and school properties are included in the duties vested in them. Kidanemariam (ibid) states further that principals no longer play the role of primary-decision maker. Despite this position, the primary locus of power, authority and decision-making often remains with the principals because they are the key educational leaders in a school and are responsible for its day-to-day running (Squelch in Kidanemariam, 2003:34).

Given that decentralised school governance is a democratic form of government based on the principles of representivity, equity and participation, school governance in South Africa has changed considerably with the political change (Van Wyk, 2002:123). Parents, learners, teachers and non-teaching staff are now more involved in the decision-making process through the SGB.

The professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the head of department [RSA, 1996b: Section 16(3)]. According to the MDoE (2006:11), the day-to-day running of the school is the responsibility of the principal and the SMT. The SMT includes the principal, the deputy principals and the heads of department. The EEA (RSA, 1998) states that the aim of the job of a head of department is to engage in class teaching, be responsible for the effective functioning of the department and the organizing of relevant and related extracurricular activities so as to ensure that the subject, learning area or phase, and the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner. Additionally, the deputy principal is to assist the principal in managing the school. The following are some of the core duties and responsibilities of the post of a principal (RSA, 1998):

- To be responsible for the professional management of a public school;
- To give proper instructions and guidelines for timetabling admission and placement of learners;
- To handle all correspondence received at the school;
- To provide professional leadership within the school; and
- To ensure that workloads are equitably distributed amongst the staff.

The above-mentioned duties of the principal, deputy principal and heads of department clearly show that the SMT is responsible for the professional management and day-to-day running of the school.

The SGB is not responsible for the professional management of a school, or its day-to-day running. According to the SASA [RSA, 1996b: Section 16 (1)], the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body. Section 16(3) states that the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the head of department.

Tsotetsi (2005:29) states that all the principles and values listed below are relevant to SGBs in South Africa (and elsewhere) and says that the challenge lies with the SGBs to realise these values and principles in their daily governance responsibilities. According to Tsotetsi (2005:34-48), the values and principles are:

- Accountability and responsibility;
- Equity and social justice;
- Equality;
- Respect;
- Openness and transparency;
- Empowerment;
- Ubuntu (human dignity and tolerance);
- Cooperation;
- Multilingualism;
- The rule of law;
- Transformation; and
- Reconciliation.

These values and principles provide additional guidelines to the SGBs on top of the functions stipulated in the SASA (RSA, 1996b).

2.3.1 National perspective

Van Wyk (2002:124) postulates that two distinct periods can be distinguished in the recent history of school governance in South Africa: the period before 1994 and the period thereafter.

2.3.1.1 School governance prior to 1994

According to Van Wyk (2002:124), in the period prior to 1994, different education departments served the needs of the various racial groups. Provision for parental involvement in decision-making at school level also differed. According to Hendricks (in Segwapa, 2008:26), blacks were deprived of high quality education by the following legislation:

- The Bantu Education Act no. 47 of 1953;
- The Coloured Persons Education Act no. 41 of 1963; and
- The Indians Education Act no. 61 of 1965.

These Acts were designed to provide, promote and entrench the provision of separate and unequal education for the different racially segregated population groups (Segwapa, 2008:26).

Segwapa (2008:26) argues that in contrast with the above-mentioned Acts, the Education Policy Act 39 of 1967 (EPA) was promulgated for the betterment of governance in white schools. Segwapa (2008:26) further argues that the Act made provision for parent and educators' participation in school education as contained in the EPA. The aim was to intensify the distinction between the provision of education for whites and blacks. Bathon, Beckmann and Björk (2011:350) contend that the apartheid system in South Africa created a race-based system of education with 5 main structures (see Figure 2.2) composed of 17 separate systems or departments of education.

Education for White people	Education for Coloured people	Education for Indian people	Education for Black (African) people

Education for Black persons living in the Republic of South Africa	Education for Black persons living in the independent (homeland) countries and self-governing territories
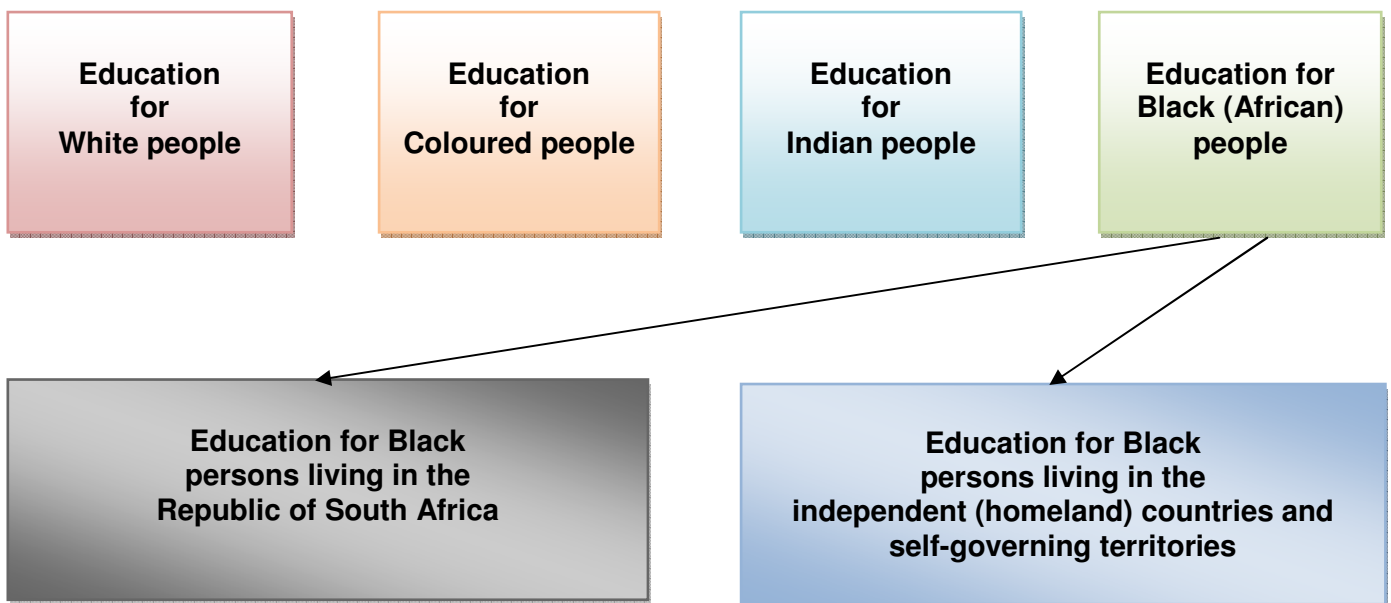
Figure 2.2: The Apartheid Education Dispensation in South Africa (Source: Bathon, Beckmann and Björk, 2011:350)

Each structure operated under different laws and governance systems that provided little substantive coordination of the whole enterprise. Apart from in the White system, there was little encouragement of parent education (Bathon et al., 2011:351).

Van Wyk (2002:124) argues that in most schools serving the white population, statutory parent bodies (usually called management councils) were established. Van Wyk (2002:124) further argues that, although such bodies could not be directly involved in the professional activities of the school, they could report on them and make recommendations to the director of education. This included recommendations regarding the appointment of educators. The management council could also collect school fees to defray current expenditure and control such funds. All parent members of the management council were elected by parents of the school (Van Wyk, 2002:124).

In contrast, in black schools only 4 of the 6 members of the management council (often called school committees) could be chosen. The rest were appointed by the government (Van Wyk, 2002:124). Van Wyk (2002:124) further asserts that the school committees were to be the link to the community, and responsible for controlling school funds, erecting new buildings and advising the regional school boards. These school boards represented a number of school committees in the region and had extensive powers. According to Van Wyk (2002:124) all the members of the regional school boards were appointed by government. In most cases, the black communities rejected the governance structures that the government instituted as they offered them little say in the running of their schools. By 1976, parents in urban areas had started their own representative committees, precisely because they felt that the school committees and boards were not representing them adequately (Van Wyk, 2002:124).

The South African ideal of democratic governing bodies which would involve representatives of various constituencies in a school community was born in the aftermath of the 1976 Soweto school uprisings and the development of a People's Education discourse in the 1980s (Karlsson, 2002:328).

According to Dekker and Van Schalkwyk (in Mahlangu, 2008:19), the Education and Training Act of 1979 recognised active parental involvement through a Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA) or the local committees or council. Sithole (in Mahlangu, 2008:19) asserts that the PTSA, as the name indicates, was a representative body of school governance comprising parents, teachers and students of a particular secondary school. At primary level, the body was called Parent Teacher Association (PTA); the student component was excluded presumably because students at that level were too young to be

involved (Mahlangu, 2008:19). Mahlangu further contends that the acceptability of these structures by the community was highly contested because they were perceived to be illegitimate structures imposed by the apartheid government on communities which had no people representation. Sayed and Carrim (in Mahlangu, 2008:20) concurs saying that these structures consisted of individuals nominated by the minority white state and were consequently viewed by the oppressed community as being illegitimate. The PTSAs operated parallel to the school management councils. They acted as broad-based representative bodies, which were parallel and alternative structures which attempted to take over both the policy-making (governance) and day-to-day management of the schools (Mahlangu, 2008:20). According to Karlsson (2002:328), the National Education Coordination Committee (NECC) supported the establishment of Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSAs) in schools as an alternative to the puppet governance structures of the apartheid-era education authorities. During the early 1990s the NECC conducted the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) which examined school governance as a key focus area for reform (Karlsson, 2002:328).

The rationale behind the establishment of the PTSAs was the desire to shift the balance of power away from the much despised school committees to parents, workers, teachers, students and their organisations (Mahlangu, 2008:20). Mahlangu continues arguing that the PTSAs were seen as instruments through which People's Education could be implemented, albeit in a limited form. Therefore, it was recognised in the beginning that as long as the real power still rested with the apartheid state, People's Education would not be achieved on a large scale; the full implementation would have to await the installation of a democratic state (Mahlangu, 2008:20). Members of the PTSAs were not necessarily the parents of pupils enrolled in that particular school. Membership consisted of guardians or other members of the community with a stake in education. They were either elected by the community or seconded by the organisations such as civic or existing management councils (Mahlangu, 2008:20). According to Sithole (in Mahlangu, 2008:20), generally the aims and objectives within the community were to inculcate a democratic approach to decision-making and problem solving, raising funds and monitoring its usage. This would be achieved by involving all stakeholders in democratically elected structures.

Mahlangu (2008:21) argues that in most white schools in South Africa these associations were called Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). They were composed of parents and

teachers only. They functioned on a local level only and were not permitted to liaise with the existing coordinating bodies at regional, provincial and national levels (Mahlangu, 2008:21). Mahlangu continues stating that the PTAs aims were to combine the efforts of both parents and teachers when serving the school; they were not allowed to contribute to the more fundamental matters of education such as policy-making. Their duties were to collect school funds and, for example, assist with the entertainment and transport of pupils.

According to Van Wyk (2002:125), just prior to the democratic elections of 1994 the previous government launched the Education Renewal Strategy which contained proposals for the decentralisation of the education system through the establishment of management councils at all schools. These structures were to have increased the decision making and executive functions of the school management councils (Van Wyk, 2002:125). However, the feeling of the majority of black academics and parents was that the concessions were too few and too late (Van Wyk, 2002:125).

2.3.1.2 School governance after 1994

Bathon et al. (2011:351) argue that when the democratically elected government assumed power in 1994, apartheid ended and a comprehensive suite of policies and laws were developed to deal with its legacy of inequality, discrimination and race-based education. They further argue that one of the most urgent matters focused on addressing the wide disparity in the quality of education and the related undemocratic nature of school governance. For example, there was little provision for parent and community input in Black schools. The local education systems were led by autocratic administrators and financial inequalities in the system were rampant (Bathon et al., 2011:351).

Since 1994 the South African government adopted a number of policy documents aimed at democratising education (Van Wyk, 2002:125). One of the most important policy documents is the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996* (RSA, 1996a). In Section 9 is says that the state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race. The principle of representivity of stakeholders in schools was reconfirmed in the *White Paper on Education and Training, Notice 196 of 1995*[Department of Education, Chapter 4 (11)]

which states that the principle of democratic governance should increasingly be reflected at every level of the system. This paper was the first education document to emerge from the newly formed government that embodied a comprehensive set of new public education policies. It unambiguously stated that parents have the primary responsibility and inalienable right to be involved in the education of their children and it asserted the rights of parents and citizens to be participants in the governance process. Bathon et al. (2011:352) assert that the White Paper 1 indicated that the local communities own their schools and that the costs of education should be borne by more than just the public funds. Van Wyk (2002:126) asserts that the *White Paper on Education and Training, Notice 196 of 1995* was the first initiative taken by the government to eliminate the inequalities within the provision of education and that it strove to implement a governance system that mirrored the hopes and aspirations of the community. It addressed the following important aspects:

- Part 1: Introduction
- Part 2: The Reconstruction and Development of the Education and Training Programme;
- Part 3: The Constitutional and Organisational Basis of the New System;
- Part 4: The Funding of the Education System; and
- Part 5: Reconstruction and Development in The School System.

The second document to emerge was *Education White Paper 2: The Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools Notice 130 of 1996* (Department of Education, 1996). This document articulated:

- The structure of the school governing bodies (See Sections 3.8-3.16);
- The roles and responsibilities of public school governing bodies (See Sections 3.17-3.21);
- The employment of teachers in public schools (See Sections 3.24-3.34);
- The legal personality of schools (See Sections 3.35-3.36); and
- The governance of schools and learners with special education needs (LSEN) (See Sections 3.37-3.41).

The two White Papers mentioned above articulated important policy decisions that were subsequently reflected in the SASA (Van Wyk, 2002:126; Bathon et al., 2011:352). Van Wyk (2002:126) confirms that the principles relating to governance as proposed in the

White Paper on Education and Training, Notice 196 of 1995 were included in the SASA (RSA, 1996b), which came into effect in January 1997.

2.3.1.3 The South African Schools Act (84 of 1996)

The SASA (RSA:1996b) was promulgated on the 15 November 1996. For the purpose of this study the researcher focuses on the governance and management of public schools overseen by this Act.

Governance and professional management of public schools

According to the SASA [RSA, 1996b: Section 16(1)], the governance of every public school is vested in its governing body and a governing body stands in a position of trust towards the school [RSA, 1996b: Section 16(2)].

Functions of all governing bodies

Section 20(1) of the SASA (RSA, 1996b) stipulates the following functions of all governing bodies. The governing body of a public school must, amongst other functions:

- adopt a constitution;
- develop the mission statement for the school;
- adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school;
- support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions;
- recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of educators at the school; and
- recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of non-educator staff at the school.

All these functions are policy related, a fact which emphasises the fact that the SGB is responsible for the governance of the school.

Allocated functions of governing body

- According to the SASA [RSA, 1996b:Section 21(1)], a governing body may apply to the Head of Department in writing to be allocated any of the following functions:

- To maintain and improve the school's property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels, if applicable;
- to determine the extra-mural curriculum of the school and the choice of subject options in terms of provincial curriculum policy; and
- to purchase textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school.

🔸 The Head of Department may refuse an application contemplated in Subsection (1) only if the governing body concerned does not have the capacity to perform such a function effectively.

🔸 The Head of Department may approve such applications unconditionally or subject to conditions.

🔸 The decision of the Head of Department on such applications must be conveyed in writing to the governing body concerned, giving reasons.

🔸 Any person aggrieved by a decision of the Head of Department in terms of this Section may appeal to the Member of the Executive Council.

🔸 The Member of the Executive Council may, by notice in the Provincial Gazette, determine that some governing bodies may exercise one or more functions without making an application contemplated in Subsection (1), if-

- he or she is satisfied that the governing bodies concerned have the capacity to perform such a function effectively; and
- there is a reasonable and equitable basis for doing so.

Membership of governing body of ordinary public school
According to the SASA (RSA, 1996b: Section 23):

🔸 the membership of the governing body of an ordinary public school must comprise:
- elected members;
- the principal in his or her official capacity; and
- co-opted members.

🔸 Elected members of the governing body must comprise a member or members from each of the following categories:
- parents of learners at the school;
- educators at the school;
- members of staff at the school who are not educators; and
- learners in the eighth grade or higher at the school.

- A parent who is employed at the school may not represent parents on the governing body in terms of Subsection (2)(a).

- The representative council of learners referred to in Section II(1) must elect the learner or learners referred to in Subsection (2)(d).

- The governing body of an ordinary public school which provides education to learners with special needs must, where practically possible, co-opt a person or persons with expertise regarding the special education needs of such learners.

- A governing body may co-opt a member or members of the community to assist it in discharging its functions.

- The governing body of a public school contemplated in Section 14 may co-opt the owner of the property occupied by the school or the nominated representative of such owner.

- Co-opted members do not have voting rights on the governing body.

- The number of parent members must comprise one more than the combined total of other members of a governing body who have voting rights [RSA 1996b: Section 23)].

The SASA [RSA, 1996b: Section 16(3)] states that the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the Head of Department.

The main thrust of the Act is to provide organisational capacity to do everything for schools. All stakeholders, parents, educators, learners and local community members should be actively involved in the organisation, governance and funding of schools. Marishane (in Van Wyk, 2002:126) argues that the idea of involving all the stakeholders in school governance stems from the strong belief that schools run well when governed by the local people, since these people are well placed when it comes to identifying the problems and needs of their schools, but this depends on them being prepared to accept responsibility for their governance. Van Wyk (2002:126) asserts that the SASA mandates the establishment of SGBs in all schools in the country in order to ensure that parents, teachers, learners and non-teaching staff will actively participate in the governance and management of their schools with a view to providing better teaching and learning environments.

While transformation of education in the South African context involves changing education for the better, democratisation of education encompasses the idea of a partnership in which stakeholders such as parents, learners, educators and members drawn from the school community, not only play an active role in the school activities and functions, but also jointly constitute a body that represents stakeholders and takes decisions on behalf of the school (Van Wyk, 2002:125).

Squelch (in Mestry & Grobler, 2007:176) assert that democratic school governance has been initiated and formalised through legislative mandates intended to exact compliance with regulation concerning the election, composition and functioning of governing bodies. According to Mestry and Grobler (2007:178) there are noteworthy consequences of the SASA and these are:

- An increased autonomy of schools;
- Clearer definition of the legal position of the SGB (S16);
- Extension of the powers, duties and responsibility of parents and communities; and
- The curtailment of the principal's role as the primary decision maker.

Mestry and Grobler (2007:178) assert that empowering governing bodies in shared decision making requires active participation of all the stakeholders who have a vested interest in the school. They further argue that this implies creating the necessary climate, structures, processes and support mechanisms for engendering genuine participation and involvement. This is essential if all stakeholders are to be involved in raising the quality of education. Parents now have a potentially greater opportunity, through membership of the SGB, to have a say in the decision making process and management of the school (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:184; Van Wyk, 2002:123).

The success of the SGB performing the compulsory functions (RSA, 1996b:Section 20) depends on support, cooperation and trust amongst all the relevant shareholders (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:179). They continue by saying that parents should be empowered and equipped with the necessary skills to enable them to facilitate learning at home and make informed decisions about the future of their children. Mestry and Grobler (2007:183) argue that most parents have interest, but lack the necessary knowledge and skills to perform the duties of governors. They therefore need practical advice and detailed explanations on how to be actively involved in school governance and how they can play

an active role in the education of their children (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:183). The school, together with the education district, should take the initiative to plan induction programmes for new parent governors elected or co-opted to SGBs. This developed programme should help capacitate parents as to their role and function on the SGB, the demarcation of their school management duties and the encouragement of parent-educator collaboration through advisory team links on issues (for example, pupil behaviour, discipline and school uniform).

Duke (in Brown and Duku, 2008:414) contends that the SASA (RSA, 1996b) has been criticised for being steeply middle class in identity and for normalising parental involvement in middle class terms, without much regard for the underprivileged. Brown and Duku (2008:414) emphasise that many underprivileged are products of an apartheid system which denied them the opportunities to engage in school governance. However, policies of decentralisation are seeking to redress this (Sayed & Soudien in Brown & Duku, 2008:414). Sayed and Soudien (Brown & Duku, 2008:414) highlight the fact that the SASA makes the following 2 assumptions about parents:

- They can all afford personal time to spend on school activities, which are not related to any form of remuneration; and
- They have the resources to make choices about their children's education.

These implicit assumptions mean that parents, especially in rural areas, who do not meet these qualities, might be pushed to the margin of school governance participation. The message of insignificance communicated to this segment of society is often overlooked (Brown & Duku, 2008:414). When poor and privileged parents gather, the resulting effect is often a sense of social tension, rejection, domination and psychological stress. This in turn often leads to isolation and this is the antithesis of participation (Brown & Duku, 2008:414).

Lewis and Naidoo (2004:106) write that school personnel appear not to want parental involvement beyond token involvement in fund-raising and other support activities, thus they inhibit parent involvement in decisions about curriculum and school organisation. Mestry and Grobler (2007:176) assert that as parents, teachers, and the general public become more involved in school affairs, a shift in power and authority occurs. They further argue that a principal can no longer be 'lord' of an educational fiefdom. Lewis and

Naidoo (2004) argue that in almost every school the decision-making process appears to be similar to that described by the principal of a township school: decisions are taken after consultation and a decision is taken by consensus. However, in practice, the consultation process is managed by the principal and all stakeholders are not equal participants. Often consensus is more illusory than real. According to Goodman, Baron and Myers (2005:309), in most schools official power flows from the principal down to the teachers and staff, and then to students and their parents. Goodman et al. (2005:309) state that in all complex organisations, the flow of power is more multifaceted than the previous statement would imply. Koross, Ngware and Sang (2009:63) argue that in some cases school administrators do not actively involve parents in the affairs of the school and such schools are known to experience financial mismanagement.

2.3.2 International perspective

In this Section, school governance in Britain, People's Republic of China (PRC), Kenya, Lesotho and New Zealand will be briefly discussed.

According to the Education Reform Act (1988: Section 53) in Britain, the governing body of a school must comprise of the following categories of people: parent governors, teacher governors, the head teacher, first governors and the foundation governors. The governing body is responsible for the governance of schools in Britain. No mention is made of learners in this Act, which may indicate that they are not involved in the governance structure of schools in Britain.

Gu (2008:573) states that as the highest education authority in the PRC, the Ministry of Education (MOE), determines the education policies and curriculum and that these are applied universally in all schools across the country. According to the Education Law of the People's Republic of China (ELPRC) (PRC, 1995: Article 14), secondary and lower education is managed by the local people's government under the leadership of the State Council. The departments in charge of educational administration under the local people's government at and above country level are responsible for the educational works within the jurisdiction of the respective administrative region. Other relevant departments of the people's government at and above the country level are responsible for all relevant educational works within their terms of reference (PRC, 1995: Article 15). The ELPRC

(PRC, 1995: Article 16) states that the State Council and the local people's government at and above country level shall report to the People's Congress at the respective level or its standing committee on educational works, budgets and financial accounts of educational expenditures, and submit these for their supervision. According to ELPRC (PRC, 1995: Article 30), headmasters of schools are responsible for teaching and learning activities and administration. The ELPRC further states that schools and other educational institutions shall guarantee the participation of teachers and staff in the democratic management and supervision through an organic form such as the teachers and staff congress. This mainly consists of teachers in accordance with relevant provisions of the state. It is noteworthy that learners are not mentioned in the governance of schools in China.

According to the Education Act of Kenya (EAK) (The Republic of Kenya, 2012: Section 6), every primary school that is maintained by a local authority shall be managed by that local authority. Every maintained or assisted school other than a primary school maintained by a local authority shall be managed by a Board of Governors (BOG). Section 6 of the EAK states that the Minister may establish a BOG for any maintained or assisted school, other than a primary school. The Education Act of Kenya (EAK) (The Republic of Kenya, 2012: Section 11) mentions that an order establishing a BOG shall provide for the membership of the Board and include representatives of the communities served by the school, persons representing any voluntary body which was the founder of the school or its successor, and any other persons or representatives of bodies or organisations that, in the opinion of the Minister, should be included. The appointment and resignation of members and the continuity of the membership of the board are also covered in this section. Koross et al. (2009:62) assert that over the years, the management of secondary schools has changed considerably. The change has been towards more democratic decision-making in schools. They further state that such change has come about due to the changes in school size, composition, demand for greater accountability and the fact that parents, who in this case are the major stakeholders in education, are putting a lot of resources and time into the education of their children. Koross et al. (2009:62) contend that the day-to-day management of a secondary school is the responsibility of a school principal appointed through merit by the Ministry of Education. Each secondary school in Kenya has a BOG and a PTA. The BOG is largely appointed by the Minister of Education and has parent representation while the PTA is elected by parents of the respective school. Koross et al. (2009:62) point out that the BOG enjoys legal backing from the education legislation

whilst the PTA does not. The PTA is largely concerned with resource mobilisation while the BOG has the overall authority on all school affairs. Unlike in the SASA (RSA, 1996b), learners are not included in the governance of schools in Kenya.

According to the Lesotho Education Act 3 of 2010 (LEA)[Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010: Section 20(2)], a principal of a public school shall be appointed by the appointing authority on such terms and conditions as may be specified by the Minister in consultation with the Minister responsible for finance and for a period not exceeding 5 years. The duties of a school principal include the responsibility for the organisation, management and day-to-day running and leadership of a school [Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010: Section 21(a)]. The principal is also the chief accounting officer of the school and is responsible to the school board for the control and use of school funds [Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010: Section 21(b)]. Section 25 of the LEA states that the school board shall manage and administer the school and oversee its proper and efficient running. Once again, there is an absence of learners in the governance structure in Lesotho.

According to the New Zealand Education Act 80 of 1989 (NZEA) [New Zealand, 1989: Section 94(1)], the board of a state school shall comprise parent representatives and the principal of the school or, in the case of a combined board, the principals of the schools administered by the board, except where the principal is the only member of the school, a staff representative. According to Section 94(2) of the NZEA (New Zealand, 1989), the board, except to the extent that a board has decided otherwise, it shall have 6 parent representatives, in the case of a board that administers more than 2 schools; and 5 parent representatives, in every other case.

The NZEA [New Zealand,1989: Section 75(1&2)] outlines the functions and powers of the school board. It is required to perform its functions and exercise its powers in such a way as to ensure that every student at the school is able to attain his or her highest possible standard in educational achievement. The school principalis the board's chief executive in relation to the school's control and management. He or she has complete discretion to manage the school's day-to-day administration [New Zealand, 1989: Section 76(1&2)].

It is clear from the above that only South Africa includes learners from grades 8 to 10 in the governance of schools so that they can contribute to the decision-making process of their school.

2.3.3 Conceptualising school governance for this study

An overview of the literature highlights the concept of decentralisation. Decentralisation is the way for governments to democratise the governance of schools by involving all the stakeholders in the decision-making process in schools. The principals of schools are no longer the primary decision-makers; they are part of SGBs that make many important decisions at the school. The principal and the SMT are responsible for the day-to-day running of the school, that is, the professional management of the school, while the SGB is responsible for the governance of the school. The success or otherwise of the school rests on the leadership of the principal who is entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating all the activities that occur within a school. For this to work, there should be cohesion between all management and governance responsibilities.

2.3.4 Perspectives of educational policies

Educational policies that are pertinent to school governance in this study are the SASA (RSA, 1996b), the Education Reform Act (RSA, 998), the Education Law of the People's Republic of China (PRC, 1995), Education Act of Kenya (The Republic of Kenya, 2012), the New Zealand Education Act (New Zealand, 1989) and the Lesotho Education Act (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010). These policies are not given in any particular order.

2.4 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Michael et al. (2012:70) assert that the following barriers to parental involvement have been identified by school managers, members of governing bodies and parents:

- Apathy: Many parents are apathetic and do not seem to feel a need to become involved in their children's education.
- Transport: Travelling distances to schools and the lack of transport are a problem.
- Financial problems of schools and families: Parents are expected to contribute to the finance and fundraising activities of the schools. As a result, poor parents especially

keep their distance as they feel that if they become too involved at the school, they could be asked for additional contributions.

+ Working parents: Many parents are not involved in school activities due to work commitments.
+ Low self-esteem of parents: Many parents feel that they cannot communicate adequately with the educators due to language barriers or their own poor education.
+ Lack of knowledge: Many parents are ignorant of issues pertaining to parental involvement in schools.

Barnyak and McNelly (2009:39) argue that barriers to parental involvement include:
+ Parents' fatigue;
+ Parents' lack of awareness of their rights as well as of school policies and procedures; and
+ Limited opportunities for parental involvement.

Barnyak and McNelly (2009:39) further argue that logistical limitations such as a lack of transportation or child care and language barriers often also exist. They say that families with a lower SES usually have lower parental involvement. Their limited involvement may be due to time demands or work schedules as well as attitudes and practices within schools.

Barnyak and McNelly (2009:51) identify the following obstacles regarding parent-involvement:
+ Insufficient teacher education related to parental involvement;
+ Limited time constraints for teachers and parents;
+ Parents' and teachers' diverse goals for children;
+ Parents' lack of knowledge on how to serve as a classroom volunteer or advisory committee member; and
+ Feelings of a lack of power to influence within a school setting.

According to Barnyak and McNelly (2009:52) some of these obstacles may be eradicated through school and state leadership, such as through the provision of parental involvement coordinators. They also argue that in order to minimise and alleviate barriers, parental

involvement practices and the self-efficacy of teachers and administrators should be carefully examined to ensure that they support children.

Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008:8) assert that the barriers that most often confront the parents of English Language Learners (ELL) when it comes to engaging with schools include:

- School-based barriers such as a deficit school perspective, unidirectional approach to parental involvement or the existence of a negative school climate;
- The lack of proficiency in the English language;
- Varied parental educational levels;
- Disjunctures between school culture and home culture; and
- Logistical issues like the timing of meetings, child care needs and transportation.

Gonzalez-DeHass and Willems (2003:96) contend that systematic and meaningful parental involvement is hindered by many obstacles which include:

- Parents who lack the desire and confidence to become involved;
- Educators who lack the desire to encourage parental involvement;
- Teacher's preconceptions surrounding parent capabilities;
- Home-school scheduling conflicts;
- Conflicting beliefs about the way parents should be involved in school life;
- Vagueness surrounding the changing role of parental involvement during the adolescent years; and
- Lack of teacher preparation and administrative support.

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005:114) assert that parents' perceptions of their personal skills shapes their thinking about the kind of involvement that would be possible if they were to have a reasonable likelihood of achieving success. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1995:115) write that if parents believe their skills are inadequate, they tend to ask others in the family to help, ask their child to get more information at school, or seek additional help themselves (e.g. by calling the teacher or a knowledgeable family member or friend). If they perceive their skills to be adequate, the parents tend to be positive about engaging in an activity. This finding is clearly consistent with parent tendencies to value their children's success. According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), in general, parents' self-perceived skills and knowledge appears to figure heavily in their decisions concerning

school involvement as their children progress from elementary through middle and high school.

Gonzalez-DeHass and Willems (2003:96) mention that unless we address these concerns among parents, we will not reap the rewards that widespread parental involvement can offer.Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008:9) suggest the steps tabulated in Table 2.2 below if they wish to address the barriers to parental involvement and to increase parental participation.

Barrier	Promoting ELL Parental Involvement
Communication	♦ Provide a home-school coordinator or liaison ♦ Initiate home visits by teachers ♦ Send out bilingual newsletters ♦ Provide a multilingual telephone homework line ♦ Schedule monthly meetings at a local community centre
School/Parental Perceptions	♦ Acknowledge parents' cultural values ♦ Incorporate community into curriculum ♦ Invite extended family members to school activities
Logistics	♦ Modify meetings to accommodate parents work schedule ♦ Provide child care to facilitate parent attendance at school functions ♦ Arrange transportation to facilitate student involvement in school activities

Table 2.2: Addressing Barriers to Increased ELL Parental Involvement
(Source: Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008:9)

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005:120) suggest the following strategies for schools to enhance parents' capacities for effective involvement:
♦ Communicate clearly that all parents have an important role to play in their children's school success;
♦ Give parents specific information about what they can do to get involved;
♦ Give parents specific information about the general effects of involvement on student learning;

- Give parents specific information on how their involvement activities influence learning;
- Give parents specific information about curriculum and learning goals;
- Offer parents positive feedback on the effects of their involvement; and
- Create and support parent and parent-teacher networks in the school.

2.4.1 Conceptualising the factors that influence parental involvement in this study

From the literature, the most common factors that influence parental involvement are:
- Transportation issues;
- The fact that many are working parents;
- The SES of the parents;
- The education level of the parents;
- The time of scheduled meetings; and
- The parents' own perceptions of their skills or lack of skills.

All these factors have been elaborated upon in Section 2.4 above. They affect parental involvement positively or negatively depending on the circumstances of an individual parent or group of parents that find themselves in a similar situation. Each community should be aware of the challenges the parents are faced with in order to maximise the participation of parents in the governance of schools.

2.5 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE EFFECTIVE SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

2.5.1 The school environment

The most striking feature is that of inequality. While privileged and reasonably well resourced schools exist in the education system, the vast majority of children continue to be educated in conditions of extreme neglect (Van Wyk, 2002:136). According research published by Van Wyk in 2002 (page 137), 1.9 million learners are still without proper toilet facilities, 36.4% are without telephones, 27% do not have access to running water, and only 54.9% have access to electricity. Van Wyk (2002:137) argues that the lack of resources implies that many governing bodies, set up with the aim of improving the quality of education provision explicitly, have been placed in a fund-raising role. Moreover, the burden of establishing, exempting and retrieving fees is particularly

difficult for governing bodies without the requisite expertise and skills and most governing bodies still require extensive training in financial and administrative management (ibid). More recently, however, the National Education Infrastructure Management Systems(NEIMS) (RSA, 2014:1-6) states that in Mpumalanga, 97.7% of schools have electricity supply, 99.5% have a water supply, only 0.63% of schools are without ablution facilities, 9.5% of schools do not have fencing, 18.7% have libraries, and overall 37% of schools in Mpumalanga do not meet adequate standards.

2.5.2 The school community

2.5.2.1 Widespread poverty and illiteracy

According to Hartshorne in Van Wyk (2002:137) the South African education system operates in a society in which 18 million people (about 45.7% of the total population) live in poverty and unemployment is estimated to be 37.6 %. According to *Census 2011*(RSA, 2011:42), the average annual household income is R60 613 and the unemployment rate is 29.8% (RSA, 2011:49).Parent involvement in schools in such communities is often difficult as many parents and caregivers are struggling to survive and have little or no energy left for social obligations such as becoming involved in school activities (Van Wyk, 2002:137). Van Wyk (2002:137) asserts that another problem which besets parents in the previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa is the high level of illiteracy. Shindler and Bot (in Van Wyk, 2002:137) argue that an estimated 37% of the population of the country is functionally illiterate. According to *Census 2011* (RSA, 2011:34) 10.5% of Black Africans do not have schooling. Coombe and Godden in Maluleka (2008:35) argue that the rurality and illiteracy of a large proportion of the population and unrealistic educational requirements for membership of school bodies are additional challenges to involving communities in the decision-making process of local schools. Reiter (2009:353) concurs saying that parents with very low levels of education almost never influence decision-making. He also found that decision-making frequently followed the recommendations of the principal and that parents acted as active deliberators, but played secondary extra roles.

2.5.2.2 Location of schools and representivity

Motala, Vally and Modiba (in Van Wyk, 2002:138) argue that parents have the right to choose a school and say that the phenomenon of learner migration is widespread throughout the South Africa system. Van Wyk (2002:138) further argues that many schools to which learners migrate are situated far from the children's homes making parent participation in school governance difficult or impossible. In a country where schooling for different racial groups was segregated and where society is still divided along socio-economic, language and religious lines, it is imperative that SGBs take it upon themselves to represent the interests of all learners and parents in their school community (Van Wyk, 2002:138).

2.5.2.3 Training of school governors

Coombe and Godden in Maluleka (2008:35) argue that there is confusion over varying roles of governing bodies in different categories of schools. Looyen (in Van Wyk, 2002:138) is of the opinion that training is the cornerstone of affirming governors in the execution of their roles and responsibility. Lekalakala (2006:100) asserts that the training of SGBs is imperative for capacity building and skills development at school level. He continues saying that this implies that even if the MDoE provides training, schools must also have a way of further training. What makes the situation problematic is that broad policy is determined by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), while the provincial departments are responsible for the implementation of policies (Valley & Spreen in Van Wyk, 2002:139). Van Wyk (2002:139) argues that the provincial departments do not have the resources to do so and this makes it extremely difficult for provinces to provide adequate training for SGB members. He concludes that the lack of adequate training for SGBs could defeat the whole object of instituting governing bodies as it is unlikely that governing body members will be able to make informed judgments without adequate training. Heystek (in Maluleka, 2008:34) asserts 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. Although many principals have long years of experience, the participative and democratic management approach is new for most of them, with the result that not even their experience can prepare them for this changed situation. This poses a serious challenge to the functioning of the SGB because principals are supposed to

guide and even train the governing body members on their roles and responsibilities (Maluleka, 2008:34).

In response to this challenge, Van Wyk and Lemmer (in Maluleka, 2008:34) advise that school principals get intensive training regarding a more participative style of management that embraces the values of cooperative governance. Likewise, principals need to develop a more participatory style of management that allows staff and parents to play a meaningful role in decision-making. Maluleka (2008:34) concludes that the principal is a central figure in both the effective and efficient functioning of the school and so they should be the most knowledgeable persons regarding all the aspects of school governance and governing body functions.

According to Van Wyk (2002:139) the challenges for the year 2000 and beyond are how to make the illusion of democracy a reality. Kidanemariam (2003:29) asserts that parents who lack relevant skills are influenced and manipulated by school authorities, namely, teachers and, in particular, principals. The issue of capacity is key to parents being trained to be able to deal with the highly complex subject of school governance, a responsibility that includes the handling of finance, policy formulation and maintenance of schools.

2.5.2.4 Monitoring and control

According to Maluleka (2008:43), it is not only training that is important in the functioning of the SGB Constant monitoring and control is also crucial to ensure that the intended functions are fulfilled. He advises that in order for the SGBs to perform as expected, they need to be appraised or inspected from time to time. This is critical because of the vast amount of responsibility given to the SGB by the community and government through the DBE. Maluleka (ibid) identifies 4 main areas on which the SGBs can be appraised and inspected:

- The quality of education provided to the learners;
- The quality of standards achieved by the school;
- The efficient management of the school's financial arrangements; and
- The spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils.

Performance in these areas gives an assurance to the DBE that the SGB is able to account for the powers and authority that have been delegated to them. Such appraisals also provide the DBE with sufficient grounds to deal with incapable governors (ibid).

2.5.2.5 Access to information and resources

According to Van Wyk (2002:139), governing body members need ready access to knowledge and reliable sources. The latter are often in the hands of school principals and provincial education departments who need to ensure that relevant information is disseminated and that people are kept up to date with developments and issues. In this way they will be in a better position to make informed decisions. Van Wyk (ibid) argues that overall, only 1 in 5official documents reaches its intended target. Moreover, in many schools, both governing body members and educators complain that policy documents and other directives from the DBE and MDoE are kept in the principal's office and as such are not easily available to them (ibid). Van Wyk (2002:140) writes that in addition, most policy documents and directives from the DBE and MDoE are very difficult to understand and governing body members are seldom given assistance in the interpretation of these official documents.

2.5.2.6 Leadership of the school principal

Looyen (in Van Wyk, 2002:140) asserts that school principals have for the most part controlled South African schools with little or no teacher and parent participation. Van Wyk (2002:140) further argues that only the principal's leadership style and frame of reference drove the school's ethos, culture and impetus. Educators, parents and learners contributed very little to policy and decision-making; for the most part their role was supportive in nature. According to Maluleka (2008:35), there is a general perception of lack of power among school staff, parents and others in the community. Kidanemariam (2003:29) argues that the locus of control and decision-making powers have mainly resided in school principals with minimal participation from teachers, parents or students. He continues by saying that principals view the schools as their domain, organising and managing them according to their particular frame of reference and leadership styles. Although PTAs have played an important role in school management, this role has been of a supportive nature, with limited decision-making powers (Kidanemariam, 2003:29). In contrast to this centralised, authoritarian and non-participative approach, the decentralised,

cooperative (participative) approach gained increasing favour during the 80s and 90s (ibid). Van Wyk(2002:140) concludes that the demise of a rigid, centralised and bureaucratic approach to education brought about by the SASA (RSA, 1996b) paved the way for a more interactive approach to school governance and management.

2.5.2.7 Appointment and promotion of educators

Van Wyk (2002:140) claims that school governors have their most direct impact on teaching and learning when they appoint a new member of staff. In many instances the selection process has been the source of angry clashes between groups of educators, with parents inevitably finding themselves at the centre of conflicts. Van Wyk (2002:141) continues to say that in many instances the concerns of the educators are understandable because few governing body members have a grasp of the tasks and responsibilities required at different post levels and therefore select candidates on dubious grounds.

2.5.3 Conceptualising the factors that influence school governance for this study

From the literature study the following factors stood out prominently:
- Poverty and illiteracy levels among parents;
- Learner migration to schools far from parents' homes;
- Training, or the lack thereof of SGB members;
- Monitoring and control of SGBs; and
- The leadership style of the principal.

These constraints or factors may lead to a jostling for power and fighting over territory between the school governors and the school managers; this in turn can impede the performance and development of the school (Maluleka, 2008:35). Thus, Van Wyk and Lemmer (in Maluleka, 2008:35) maintain that although the establishment of democratically elected governing bodies has changed the political structure of schools and the nature of decision-making, principals are in practice often reluctant to relinquish or even share their power and authority. This is also compounded by the SGBs who often delegate authority back to the principal, thus preserving the status quo.

2.6 CONCLUSION

2.6.1 Knowledge

In this chapter the researcher became aware of a general concern among stakeholders on the level of parental involvement especially in township schools and schools in the rural areas. A number of factors impacted parental involvement. The SES of the parents influenced to a very large extent their level of involvement in school governance. The parents' perceptions of their skills or lack of skills impacted on their involvement in school governance, both negatively and positively. What the researcher learnt is the importance of communication between the school and parents, especially on the role that parents should play in school governance. Transport between the parents residences and school also played a big role on their ability to attend meetings and other activities at school. This in some cases is as a result of learner migration from the township schools to the former Model C schools.

The researcher also became aware of the existence of a number of frameworks on parental involvement, but the one that attracted the attention of the researcher the most is Epstein's 6 levels of parental involvement as this provides guidelines to all the stakeholders in education. Schools want to involve parents in school activities, but often lack the knowledge of how to achieve this.

Decentralisation of power is now a global trend which includes South Africa. Parents in South African schools are also more involved in the decision-making process. From *White Paper on Education and Training* (Department of Education, 1995), *Education White Paper 2: The Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools* (Department of Education, 1996) and finally the SASA (RSA, 1996b), the process of the democratisation of schools progressed well. At this level the challenge to the democratisation of schools remains a lack of adequate training for the SGB members.

The literature study also clarified factors that influence parental involvement in schools. Factors that influence parental involvement include: the school environment, poverty and illiteracy, the location of the schools affected by the migration of learners and the leadership of the school principal.

2.6.2 Gaps identified

A study of this nature has not yet been done in the Breyten Circuit. The researcher has not come across a study that seeks to address the lack of training programmes for teachers and principals of schools on parental involvement in this geographical area. The researcher feels that other areas for research are the involvement of fathers in the education of their children and an investigation into the development of a comprehensive training programme for SGB members on their responsibilities in school governance.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology focuses on the research process and kind of tools and procedures to be used. It focuses on the individual (not linear) steps in the research process and the most 'objective' (unbiased) procedures to be employed (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:75). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:8) assert that research methodology entails all the ways in which one collects and analyses data. These methods have been developed to acquire knowledge reliably and with a high degree of validity. In this study the researcher used reliable methods consistent with qualitative research to gather and analyse data.

In this chapter the kind of tools, procedures and ways used to collect, present and analyse data are discussed. The following concepts and the reasons for use and application in the study are explained: philosophical research paradigm, research approach, population and sampling, instrumentation and data collection techniques, and finally data analysis and interpretation. The discussion commences with comments on the philosophical research paradigm.

3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Filstead (in Ponterotto, 2005:128) a paradigm can be defined as a set of interrelated assumptions about the social world which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organised study of that world. Babbie and Benaquisto (2010:32) define paradigm as a model or framework for observation and understanding which shapes both what we see and how we understand it. Guba and Lincoln (in Mittwede, 2012:36) define paradigm as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways. For the purpose of this study, a paradigm is defined as the basic belief system or world view.

This research is placed within the constructivist or interpretivist philosophical research paradigm. Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010:14) assert that traditionally, purely qualitative research is done by persons who hold a framework referred to as interpretive, constructivist or naturalistic. They use the term social constructivism to refer to this

approach and argue that phenomena must be understood as complex 'wholes' that are inextricably bound up with the historical, socioeconomic and cultural contexts in which they are embedded. Therefore, social constructivists attempt to understand social phenomena from a context-specific perspective. Lodico et al. (ibid) further argue that the researcher must attempt to understand the complex and often multiple realities from the perspectives of the participants. Constructivism adheres to a relativist position that assumes multiple, apprehendable and equally valid realities that are based in human experience (Schwandt in Ponterotto, 2005; Guba & Lincoln in Mittwede, 2012). Ponterotto (2005:129) elaborates saying that essentially constructivists hold that reality is constructed in the mind of the individual, rather than in it being an externally singular entity. Charmaz (in Lauckner, Paterson & Krupa, 2012:6) concur that constructivism assumes that the meaning of experiences and events are constructed by individuals, and therefore people construct the realities in which they participate. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:6), interpretive or constructivist researchers use systematic procedures but maintain that there are multiple socially constructed realities. This is unlike post-positivism which postulates a single reality. Fossey, Harvey, McDermott and Davidson (2002:718) agree that one of the major criticisms is that within the positivist paradigm it is assumed that an objective reality, or truth, exists independent of those undertaking the inquiry and the inquiry context. Neuman (1997:68) asserts that the interpretive approach is the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds. According to Willis (2012:8), interpretivists favour qualitative methods because these methods provide better ways of getting at how humans interpret the world around them.

The constructivist or interpretive approach is the best approach for this study because the researcher is interested in the meaning that the participants attach to naturally occurring phenomena. The researcher is interested in what the participants experience and feel in their natural setting. He has endeavoured to 'bracket' any preconceived ideas about the phenomenon under investigation and present the experiences and interpretations of reality from the perspective of the participants.

3.3   RESEARCH APPROACH

A qualitative research approach is used in this study. Martella, Nelson, Morgan and Marchand-Martella (2013:294) define qualitative research as research whose concern is understanding the context in which behaviour occurs, not just the extent to which it occurs. Qualitative research explores attitudes, behaviour and experiences through such methods as interviews or focus groups (Dawson, 2007:15).

Gaskell (2000:41) contends that the real purpose of qualitative research is not counting opinions or people but rather exploring the range of opinions, and different representations of an issue. McMillan & Schumacher (2010:324) assert that historically, qualitative researchers cite two major purposes of a study: to describe and explore, and to describe and explain. Qualitative research uses an emergent design where the methodologies may change throughout the study in order to better represent the reality of the persons and settings studied (Lodico et al., 2010:143). According to Denzin and Lincoln (in Lodico et al., 2010:32), qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world; this means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings and attempt to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Lodico et al., 2010:32). Qualitative research designs emphasise gathering data on naturally occurring phenomena. Most of the data is in the form of word rather than numbers and, in general, the researcher must search and explore with a variety of methods until a deep understanding is gained (McMillan & Schumacher 2010; Flick, 2007). The data are collected in the natural setting, meanings and understandings are reached by studying cases intensively and inductive logic is used to place the resulting data in a theoretical context (Martella et al., 2013:294). Lodico et al. (2010:142) concur that qualitative researchers use the inductive method of reasoning and strongly believe that there are multiple perspectives to be uncovered in the research. They add that qualitative researchers focus on the study of social phenomena and on giving voice to the feelings and perceptions of the participants under study.

Martella et al. (2013) and McMillan and Schumacher (2010) present the following major characteristics of qualitative research:

- Naturalistic inquiry: A study of behaviour as it occurs or occurred naturally in a non-manipulative, unobtrusive and non-controlling manner.

- Inductive data analysis: Generalisations are induced from synthesising gathered information to discover important categories, dimensions and interrelationships.

- Qualitative data: This is characterised by detailed, thick descriptions, in-depth inquiry, and direct quotations which capture people's personal perspectives and experiences.

- Direct data collection. The researcher collects data directly from the source, and has direct contact with and gets close to the people, situation and phenomenon under study. The researcher's personal experiences and insights are an important part of the inquiry and critical to understanding the phenomenon.

- Context sensitivity: Qualitative research places findings in a social, historical, and temporal context and is dubious of the possibility or meaningfulness of generalisations across time and space.

- Rich narrative description: Detailed narratives providing in-depth understanding of behaviour are encouraged.

- Participant perspectives: The study focuses on participants' understanding descriptions, labels and meanings (Flick, 2007:19).

- Emergent design: The design evolves and changes as the study takes place. It is open to adapting inquiry as understanding deepens and/or situations change, avoids getting locked into rigid designs that eliminate responsiveness, and pursues new paths of discovering as they emerge.

- Complexity of understanding and explanation: Understandings and explanations are complex and often embrace multiple perspectives.

This was the best approach for this study because the researcher wished to interact with the participants in their natural settings and obtain understanding of issues from the perspective of the participants. The researcher wished to witness reality emerging as the study progressed. Eventually conclusions were drawn from the participants' understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

3.4   RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is a phenomenological research project. Gray (2009:171) writes that phenomenological ideas were first applied to social science research by the German philosopher Alfred Schutz (1899-1959) who argued that social reality has a specific meaning and relevance structure for people who are living, thinking and experiencing it.

According to Willis (2007:16), phenomenology is the study of people's perception of the world, as opposed to an attempt to learn what 'reality' is in the world. Phenomenological research is the study of everyday, lived experiences and the meanings that people construct from them (Lodico et al., 2010; Higgs & Cherry, 2009). Qualitative researchers are concerned with phenomena such as values, attitudes, assumptions and beliefs, and they explore how these affect the individuals under investigation. Research that is directed at investigating such phenomena is called phenomenology (Martella et al., 2013:303). Martella et al. (2013:303) assert that phenomenology is the study of people's experiences in terms of how people make meaning in their lives by examining relationships between what happened and how people have come to understand these events. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010:141), a phenomenological study is a study that attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular situation.

Lodico et al. (2010:37) are of the opinion that phenomenological researchers work to describe lived experiences. In doing so they attempt to capture the 'essence' of the human experience by describing with great precision the personal experiences of the participants of the study. Lodico et al. (ibid) further argue that phenomenological researchers attempt to capture the everyday experiences of those being studied. Moreover, they stress the importance of capturing the view of reality described in the words of the participants. Babbie and Mouton (2001:28) write that phenomenologists emphasise that all human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their (life) world. We continuously interpret, create and give meanings to define, justify and rationalise our actions. Phenomenologists attempt to understand the meaning of experiences from the perspective of the participant (Lodico et al., 2010; Martella et al., 2013). They recognise that there are many different ways to interpret the same experience and never assume that the researchers know what things mean to the people they study.

Martella et al. (2013:303) mention an important concept in phenomenological research: bracketing. Bracketing involves a process whereby researchers explore their biases and assumptions before their studies begin. It is an attempt to maintain objectivity in its account of subjective experience (Olivier in Martella et al., 2013:303). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:24) concur that the researcher brackets or puts aside all prejudgments and collects data on how individuals make sense out of a particular experience or situation. Martella et al. (2013:303) further argue that once these biases and expectations are understood, they are set aside so that researchers can reflect on the world of participants.

Hays and Wood (in Martella et al., 2013:303) suggest the following steps when conducting phenomenological research. Researchers should:
- bracket their assumptions and approach the phenomena with a fresh perspective;
- conduct interviews to obtain participants' unique perspectives;
- look for patterns and variations in participants' experiences; and
- describe the phenomenon, including textual descriptions of individuals and of the group as a whole.

Gray (2009:28) writes that phenomenological research:
- emphasises inductive logic;
- seeks the opinion and subjective accounts and interpretations of participants;
- relies on a qualitative analysis of data; and
- is not so much concerned with generalisations to larger populations, but with contextual description and analysis.

In this phenomenological research, the researcher has endeavoured to avoid any prejudgments on the phenomena under investigation and has allowed the participants to make sense of reality as they perceive it.

In the next section, population and sampling are discussed.

3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The population for a study is that group (usually of people) about whom we want to draw conclusions (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002:108). In Section 1.6.4 it was sated that McMillan and Schumacher define population as "a group of elements or cases." In this study the population consists of all the 85 SGB members: 17 at each of the 5 selected secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit.

Babbie and Benaquisto (2002:108) assert that the process of selecting observations is called sampling. According to Bauer and Aarts (2000:21) sampling uses a set of techniques to achieve representativeness. Flick (2007:4) asserts that sampling not only focuses on the selection of people to be interviewed, for example, or situations to be observed, but also on the selection of sites in which such persons or situations can be expected to be found. The meaning of sample' is also described by McMillan and Schumacher, and Strydom and De Vos (see Section 1.6.4).

In this study purposive sampling is used. According to Lodico et al. (2010:34) purposeful sampling involves the selection of participants who have key knowledge or information related to the purpose of the study. These participants are called key informants. Purposeful sampling is defined as deliberately selecting particular persons, events, or settings for the important information they provide (Martella et al., 2013; Creswell 2008). Gobo (2004:448) asserts that purposive sampling consists of identifying cases within extreme situations for certain characteristics they possess or cases within a wide range of situations in order to maximise variation, that is, to include all possible situations. Patton (in Lodico et al., 2010:134) writes that the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the aims of the research. Lodico et al. (2010:134) argue that the goal of purposeful sampling is not to obtain a large and representative sample, but to select persons, places or things that can provide the richest and most detailed information to help answer the research questions. Purposive sampling groups participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research question (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005:6). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:326) conclude by saying that the samples are chosen

because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena the researcher is investigating.

The researcher chose purposive sampling using the criterion that participants were members of the SGB and the SGB executive. In this study the sample consists of 15 participants: 3 participants from each of the 5 secondary schools chosen in the Breyten Circuit. The 3 participants comprised the chairperson of the SGB, the SGB secretary or any other parent member, and the principal of the school. Thus, participants are members of the SGBs of their respective schools. They were considered knowledgeable about the research problem and therefore the best people to provide the researcher with the information required to address the research question.

In the next section the instrumentation and the data collection techniques used in this study are explained.

3.6 INSTRUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

3.6.1 Entry into the field

An important characteristic of qualitative research is that it is typically conducted in the field, on the participants' turf. These places are called the natural settings in which participants exhibit normal behaviour. They may include schools, classrooms, universities, churches, homes and other places where participants spend their time in work or play (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:348). In this study, the researcher studied the behaviour of the participants in their natural setting and collected most of the data directly from the participants.

This research was conducted in the 5 identified secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit. The researcher sought permission from the Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education to conduct research at the schools identified for inclusion in this study. Once access to the schools had been approved, the process of data collection was planned and executed in consultation with the principals of the schools.

Interviews and document reviews were used in this study.

3.6.2 Use of in-depth interviews

The interview was the major data collection tool of this study. Interviewing involves an interaction with at least two people (Olsen, 2012:33). Rapley (2004:16) argues that interviews are, by their very nature, social encounters where speakers collaborate in producing retrospective (and prospective) accounts or versions of their past (or future) actions, experiences, feelings and thoughts. Gaskell (2000:38) describes qualitative interviewing as being essentially a technique or method for establishing or discovering that there are perspectives or viewpoints on events other than those of the person initiating the interview. Babbie and Benaquisto (2002:341) assert that qualitative interviewing involves asking open-ended questions, listening to and recording the answers, and then following up with additional relevant questions. Babbie and Benaquisto (2002:342) define the qualitative interview as an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry but not a rigid set of questions that must be asked in a particular order. Mack et al. (2005:29) argue that an in-depth interview is a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participants' perspective on the research topic. Goddard & Melville (2001:49) agree that an interview is a one-to-one interaction between the researcher and a respondent. Creswell (2008:226) concurs that the one-on-one interview is a data collection process in which the researcher asks questions to and records answers from only one participant in the study at a time. Babbie and Benaquisto (2002:341) also say that beneath the surface, interviewing becomes an art and science requiring skill, sensitivity, concentration, interpersonal understanding, insight, mental activity and discipline. The interviewer, who can seek both clarification and elaboration on the answers given, can record qualitative information about the topic. This enables the interviewer to have more latitude to probe beyond the answers and thus enter a dialogue with the interviewee (May, 2001:123).

Semi-structured or less formal, non-focus interviews that were directed at individuals were used in this study. The researcher conducted one-to-one interviews with the interviewees because they allow for privacy and confidentiality which is essential. Lodico et al. (2010:124) say that the interview is only semi-structured in that the researcher can change the order of questions, omit questions, or vary the wording of the questions depending on what happens in the interview. The researcher could also add other questions during the interview to probe unexpected issues that emerge (ibid). Gray (2009:373) concurs that the

semi-structured interview allows for the probing of views and opinions where it is desirable for the respondents to expand on their answers. Semi-structured interviews are clearly identified as interviews, with specific times, dates, and topics identified in advance.

The researcher used an interview protocol that included the list of questions or topics to be addressed in the interviews with all the participants. Creswell (2008:233) describes interview protocol as a form designed by the researcher that contains instructions for the process of the interview, the questions to be asked, and space to take notes of responses from the interviewee. Lodico et al. (2010:124) maintains that an important component of conducting a good semi-structured interview is the construction of a written interview protocol. An interview protocol includes a header containing places to record the interviewer's name, date and the location of the interview, as well as background information on the interviewee. Lodico et al. (2010:125) explain that the header includes a brief script that is read to the interviewee, explaining the purpose of the study and how the results will be used. It also includes a statement of confidentiality. Lodico et al. (2010:124) assert that the interview protocol helps guide the collection of data in a systematic and focused manner. Below the header, the preliminary questions to be used in the interview are listed and these serve as a starting point because procedures for conducting qualitative interviews are flexible.

In conducting a good interview the researcher must listen very attentively and be acutely aware of his own behaviour, striving at all times to avoid doing things that might change or bias what the interviewee says (Lodico et al., 2010:127).

The researcher followed the following sequence suggested by Mack et al. (2005) and Lodico et al. (2010) when conducting the interviews. These are that the researcher should:

- greet the participant in a friendly manner to begin establishing positive rapport;
- re-introduce himself;
- briefly describe the steps of the interview process (remind the participant of the confidentiality of his or her responses, obtain informed consent, allow for questions and answer them, and discuss the matter of reimbursement);
- obtain informed consent;
- turn on the tape recorder and verify that it is working;
- verify informed consent orally, with the tape recorder on;

- obtain general descriptive information which could include information about the particular participant or phenomenon being studied;
- present all questions starting with the least sensitive or most general questions;
- end the question-asking phase of the interview;
- strive for neutrality throughout the interview;
- give the participant the opportunity to ask questions;
- reconfirm the participant's consent while the tape is still on;
- turn off the tape recorder and thank the participant; and
- reimburse the participant in accordance with study procedures.

After the interview, the researcher should:
- check the tape to see if the interview was recorded, if it was not, he will expand the notes immediately;
- punch out the re-record tab;
- make sure all materials are labeled with the archival number;
- assemble all materials into one envelope, double check that all the forms have been completed and that all materials are appropriately labeled; and
- expand on his written notes within 24 hours if possible.

3.6.3 Use of documents, images and artifacts

Documents are printed or written records that may have existed before the start of the study (Lodico et al., 2010:130).According to Creswell (2008:230), documents consist of public and private records that qualitative researchers obtain about a site or participants in a study and may include newspapers, minutes of meetings, personal journals, and letters. Lodico et al. (2010:130) further explain that images can include maps or diagrams of a classroom or programme site or photographs or videotapes of events at a setting. Artifacts are objects used in the setting such as a map, textbook or desk (Lodico et al., 2010:131). Lodico et al. (ibid) assert that documents and artifacts produced by the participants as part of their regular lives generally include familiar things like public records or reports, minutes from meetings, personal letters, bulletin boards, newspapers, yearbooks, or instructional materials. Typically, these are collected from the site and their contents analysed. Some documents and artifacts, such as bulletin boards, meeting minutes, newspapers, or yearbooks may be publicly available documents (Lodico et al., 2010:131).

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:361) argue that artifacts of present-day groups and educational institutions may take the form of personal documents, official documents and objects. Bryman and Bell (in Gray, 2009:497) suggest a checklist that researchers should use when making use of documents. The criteria include:

- Who produced the document?
- Why was it produced?
- Is the material genuine and produced by someone who could write authoritatively and objectively on the subject?
- Can the events or accounts presented in the document be corroborated by other evidence?

In this study the researcher reviewed the following official school documents: records of the election of the SGB members, the constitution of the SGB, minutes of SGB meetings, minutes of the SGB sub-committees, school policies, records of training for the SGBs, reports on financial management, records of fund-raising projects and the year plan of the school.

The researcher maintained a journal for this study to record and examine his subjective impressions during the study to control researcher bias. The journal provided a flexible space for recording and analysing some types of data (Lodico et al., 2010:131).

3.6.4 Ethical considerations

When gathering data in the field, the researcher adhered to ethical principles outlined in Section 1.9 above. In this study, ethical clearance was obtained as follows:

- Ethical clearance for conducting research in the 5 secondary schools was obtained from the MDoE, under whose jurisdiction Breyten Circuit falls (see Appendix E).
- The Circuit manager signed the consent letter granting permission to conduct the study in the 5 secondary schools in his circuit (see Appendix F).
- The principals of the 5 secondary schools also gave signed consent to conduct research in their schools in a letter that articulated all the details of the research (see Appendix C).
- The participants also gave signed consent in a letter that articulated all the details of the research, agreeing to voluntarily participate in the study (see Appendix D).The

principle of informed consent was at all times taken into consideration (see Section 1.9).

🞣 The principles of safety in participation, privacy, confidentiality, anonymity and trust were all carefully adhered to (see Section 1.9).

It was of utmost importance for the researcher to do his best and adhere to the ethical principles as clearly outlined above, and to never demean the participants in any form.

3.7 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to Olsen (2012:65) observer bias refers to the possibility that there is sometimes an essentially one-sided viewpoint or specifically grounded standpoint on a phenomenon. He expounds saying that observer bias might also refer to the 'affect' or emotive aspect of a situation as they are seen or described by an observer.

3.7.1 Coding

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:371), a code is a name or phrase that is used to provide meaning to a segment of data. Coding is the process of segmenting and labeling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data (Creswell, 2008:247). Babbie and Benaquisto (2010:395) assert that qualitative analytic coding usually proceeds in two different phases: open coding and focused coding.

Open coding is one of the initial steps in making sense of the mass of qualitative data that the researcher faces (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2010:394). Babbie and Benaquisto (2010:395) state that in open coding the fieldworker reads field notes line-by-line to identify and formulate any and all ideas, themes or issues they might suggest, no matter how varied and disparate. Strauss and Corbin (in Babbie and Benaquisto, 2010:394) explain that open coding is the means by which concepts are discovered. It is at this early stage in the process where the researcher "entertains all analytic possibilities," trying to identify as many ideas or themes as time allows (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2010:395). At this stage the researcher is not concerned with how these ideas or themes will be used or how they may be related to one another. They argue that code concepts developed in the process of open coding are the labeled phenomena, themes or ideas that emerge in the examination of data.

The next stage in the process is termed focused coding. It is at this stage when the researcher considers the utility of the themes and how they may be related (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2010:395). Themes, also called categories, are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database (Creswell, 2008:252). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:376) agree that themes or categories are entities comprised of grouped codes. A single theme is used to give meaning to codes that are combined. Babbie and Benaquisto (2010:394) further assert that the process of coding is the identification and labeling of concepts. It is the process by which classification of phenomena occurs. Babbie and Benaquisto (2010:395) write that in focused coding the fieldworker subjects field notes to the fine-grained, line-by-line analysis on the basis of topics that have been identified as being of particular interest. The fieldworker uses a smaller set of promising ideas and categories to provide the major topic and themes for the final report.

Babbie and Benaquisto (2010:396) stress that the process of coding provides the researcher with a large number of ideas, themes, and potential relationships. Writing down the ideas and insights during the coding process and elaborating upon them is referred to as memoing. According to Strauss and Corbin (in Babbie and Benaquisto, 2010:396), memos are the researcher's record of analysis, thoughts, interpretations, questions and directions for further data collection. Babbie and Benaquisto (2010:397) contend that code notes indicate the code labels, provide information on the meaning and definition of the codes and detail information obtained from the different types of coding.

In this study the researcher followed the following steps suggested by Lodico et al. (2010:180):
- He prepared and organised the data;
- He reviewed and explored the data;
- He coded the data into categories;
- He built themes; and
- He reported and interpreted the data.

Olsen (2012:56) contends that to interpret is to re-present something in a way that delivers a new meaning. The ultimate goal of qualitative research is to make general statements about relationships among categories by discovering patterns in the data. A pattern is a

relationship among categories and is sometimes called a theme (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:378).

3.7.2 Analysis

Data collection and analysis in qualitative research are inductive processes (Lodico et al., 2010:180). According to Creswell (2008:244), analysis is inductive in form and it progresses from the particular or detailed data (e.g., transcriptions or typical notes from interviews) to the general codes and themes. Creswell (2010:246) explains that transcription is the process of converting audiotape recordings or field notes into text data. Lodico et al. (2010:180) further explain that this means that numerous small pieces of data are collected and gradually combined or related to form broader, more general descriptions and conclusions. Gray (2009:499) argues that descriptions can lay the basis for analysis, but that researchers need to go beyond descriptions; they need to interpret, understand and to explain. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367) argue that inductive analysis is the process through which qualitative researchers synthesise and make meaning from the data, starting with specific data and ending with categories and patterns. In this way more general themes and conclusions emerge from the data rather than having them imposed prior to data collection. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367) further explain that qualitative analysis is a relatively systematic process of coding, categorising and interpreting data to provide explanations for a single phenomenon of interest. The analyses of results can be discussed according to 3 interrelated activities: seeking patterns or themes, description and interpretation and synthesis (see Section 1.6.6).

Inductive analysis was used in this study.

3.8   CONCLUSION

The researcher has outlined the research methodology that was used in this study. The researcher chose the constructivist or interpretivist philosophical research paradigm, because he was interested in the meaning that the participants attach to phenomena. The philosophical research paradigm chosen influenced the researcher to select a phenomenological qualitative research design. Phenomenology emphasises the study of the participants' perceptions of their world, reality or phenomenon under study. In line with many qualitative studies, purposive sampling was used to select the participants from

the population. In-depth interviews were used as being the major data collection tool in this study was, complemented by the use of documents, images and artifacts. Inductive analysis was used in this study. The findings from the analysis of the data are shared in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

It was indicated in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.5) that in this study the population consists of all the 85 SGB members: 17 from each of the 5 selected secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit.The purposive sample consisted of 15 participants:3from each of the 5 secondary schools. These participants occupied 3 key positions in the SGB: the chairperson, the secretary or any other parent member, and the school principal.

From School A, Participants 1, 2 and 3 were interviewed. From School B, Participants 4, 5 and 6 were interviewed. From School C, Participants 7, 8 and 9 were interviewed. From School D, Participants 10, 11 and 12 were interviewed and from School E, Participant 13, 14 and 15 were interviewed.

As stated in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.6.2), data was collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews with each participant individually. In addition, the following official school documents were reviewed: records of the election of the SGB members, the constitution of the SGB, minutes of SGB meetings, minutes of the SGB sub-committees, school policies, records of training for the SGBs, reports on financial management, records of fund-raising projects and the year plan of the school.

The following are the findings of the study and the discussion thereof.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: INTERVIEWS

4.2.1 The level of parental involvement in the governance of secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit

4.2.1.1 Parental involvement

Parents in general: Participant 3 acknowledged that parent participation in secondary schools is rather low; parents are not fully involved in school activities. Participant 4 concurred that parents in School B were developing confidence and said that parental involvement used to be very poor. In most cases they "push" (exert pressure on) the parents who are in the SGB but they remain behind (Participant 3). Participant 3 went on

to rate parental involvement in School A as satisfactory. Participant 11 said that some parents failed to play their role. This is evident from the following statements:

"Sometimes when you try to balance the number of learners that we have and the number of parents who take part in the school activities there is always no balance because we find very few parents coming to parents meetings, and who frequent the school just to check on the progress or to make a follow up on the progress of their children."(School A, Participant 1)

"In most cases if there are parents meetings, the parents do not come in numbers to assist those people whom they have elected to the SGB. Parents will only come when there are problems, say learners have failed, that is where you will see a bigger number of parents attending a meeting, or if we are going to talk about money, and the budget."(Participant 11, School D).

"I think most parents rely too much on those people they have elected into the SGB" (Participant 11, School D).

Even on book viewing days that are organised by the schools so that parents can review children's work, some parents do not attend. This indicates a lack of concern on the part of some parents about the educational needs of their children. Schools A, C, D and E hold parents' meetings on Sundays to accommodate parents who stay on farms some distance from the schools. In spite of this, attendance remained poor.

Parents in the SGB: Participant 1 stated that the majority of the parents elected to the SGB take their roles seriously: they understand their duties at school and their role in participating in activities at the school. They attend and make inputs during meetings and ensure that they assist during functions. The chairperson of this SGB is a parent. Participant 3 concurred that in School A the chairpersons of all the sub-committees are parents. The parents also contribute to procurement and budget monitoring. Participant 1 emphasised that not all parents understand and play their expected role. Some agree to be elected but after election, their role is minimal. Such parents do not attend school functions and usually have excuses to avoid attending parents meetings. Participant1 further mentioned, *"If something is organised for them, for example, you want to train*

them on certain things, you organise your own workshop, they will always have excuses."
Participant 1 remarked that parents form a significant part of the SGB sub-committees,
which includes committees like the disciplinary committee and finance committee. Some
parents are chairpersons of the sub-committees. Participant 1 also explained that parents
form part of the selection panel during the process of staff recruitment. They assist with
the creation of a shortlist of candidates and are part of the selection panel during
interviews. Parent members express the feelings of the general parent body (Participant 1).
According to Participant 4, parents are there to make sure that they are the "eyes" of the
rest of the parents. "*They are like monitors; they are like supervisors at times, because
they advise the committees on governance.*"Participant 1 concluded by saying that at the
beginning of the year, parents also make inputs on the year programme of the school, such
as important activities "*like tours that the school organises for learners, like functions for
parents, but during school trips, they also accompany the team to be of assistance in case
there is something that needs to be attended to, but also to be just the eyes and the ears of
the parents out there.*"

4.2.1.2 Parenting

Participant 4 felt that there are times when the schools need the parents to be there to
support the school, especially when it comes to disciplinary matters. Participant 4 further
argued that schools demand that "*parents should be there in front of their kids, telling the
management of the schools about the behaviour of their kids and how best they can be
able to assist the schools in terms of making sure that there are no disturbances in terms
of teaching and learning.*" If parents are called to school, they generally know it is not for
something good, because the majority of the children are troublesome. "*So the parents
would not want to be embarrassed, hence they would not come to school if asked to do so*"
(Participant 4). If parents are aware of truancy at home and fail to solve the problem, they
could not be expected to discipline the children when they are at school. Participant 4 felt
this was not possible.

4.2.1.3 Procurement

The SGB, with the parents in the majority, is also responsible for procurement. Through
the Finance Committee, the SGB procures everything that the school needs. The parents
are in the majority on the Finance Committee. Participant 3 explained that if School A

wanted to buy something, they reported it to the SGB. The SGB looked at the budget of the school, checked the bank balance and checked if that item had been budgeted for or if it was an emergency issue. Thereafter, depending on how important that item was, they recommended the purchase or its inclusion in the budget for the following year.

4.2.1.4 School policies

Participant1 asserted that parents are part of the SGB sub-committees, which are responsible for developing school policies. Schools A, B, C, D and E each received a disc with exemplars of school policies. Participant 1 contended that parents in the SGB assisted in developing policies as a process for the different committees. The SGBs adapted the exemplar policies to the needs of their respective schools before their adoption. Once adopted, policies were signed off in a full SGB meeting.

Schools B and D started the process of policy development with help of the SMT and proceeded to the SGB for discussion and adoption of the policies in their meeting. The reason for this approach is that the level of contribution of the parents in policy development meetings is, according to Participant 4,"*pathetic*." Participant 4 stated that most parents do not have any formal training and said that "*when you talk about the parents putting rules and regulations, making policies, it is something new for them. In certain areas like HIV/AIDS they were trying; in matters of security and parent visit to school, they were fine. There were areas where the parents are blank.*"Parents at School B struggled with homework policy, admissions policy and other policies.

4.2.1.5 SGB meetings

Participant 1 and Participant 2 acknowledged that parents participate in all the aspects of SGB meetings, including the decision-making process in SGB meetings. Participant 1 asserted that in their case those parents who are on the SGB are part of sub-committees, Participant 2 concurred and listed the SGB sub-committees: the Finance Committee, Fund-raising Committee and the Disciplinary Committee. According to Participant 1, parents also form part of the meetings of the sub-committees of the SGB.

4.2.2 Factors that influence parental involvement in school governance

4.2.2.1 Apathy and expectations

Participant 1 said, "*Most of our parents normally don't take the education of their children seriously; it's like a culture.*" Participant 1 said some parents in School A just participated in the SGB because they were elected. Participant 4 contended, "*It is very pathetic to understand or to see as part of observation that we still have parents who do not want to participate, parents who stand aloof, who are not involved in anything.*" Participant 4 further argued that although the DBE provided funding for learners in terms of education, it did not cover everything. Participant 2 argued, "*Some parents in School A do not see the need to attend meetings because they tell themselves that the education of their children is the responsibility of the educators. They just have to send the children to school, and the educators will teach them.*" According to Participant 1 during SGB elections some parents got so interested that they canvassed and mobilised support from other parents. Once the SGB began functioning and things did not happen the way they anticipated, they became reluctant to participate. This is self-interest and not community service. Participant 2 said, "*The challenge is that when elections are conducted some parents decline to be nominated, hence they end up electing people who are willing to serve but who add little in terms of the contributions they will make.*" According to Participant 7, "*Some parents in School C, even if they work, if they see the importance of their children's education, they will find a way to come to the school, but in the same School C there are parents, who, even if they stay next to the school, they won't come to the school, they would say this is the educators' work, so they would not involve themselves there.*"

According to Participant 2 meetings held during weekends could be a challenge to most men, who consider weekends their own personal time. They see the school as encroaching on their time and prefer to enjoy themselves instead of attending school meetings.

4.2.2.2 Attitude of the educators and the principal

According to Participant 1 where there are problems with parents and teachers or parents and principals, "*It's because some educators and principals think that parents are interfering in school business.*"Participant 1 further asserted, "*The more you embrace the parents, the more you show you appreciate their contribution, the better things will work,*

because some come with the perception that they are 'watchdogs.'" According to Participant 1, *"The vocabulary of some parents in School A needs to change. They need to understand they are partners in education with the other stakeholders. All the stakeholders are there because they have a role to play."*

Participant 1 contended that school managers should appreciate that they cannot run the school on their own. They need parents. According to Participant 11, the attitude of the principal towards the parents in the SGB can impact on the participation of the parents. *"It is the right thing for the principal to advise the SGB on the decisions that are taken, but what is happening is that some principals instruct the parents as to what needs to happen."* According to Participant 11 in School D the participation of the parents has declined from previous levels. *"Some of the SGB members in School D do not want to attend meetings now. They say the principal must make the decisions on his own anyway."*

According to Participant 2 there are educators in School A who have a very negative attitude towards parents. These educators would make such comments as: *"What is it that these people know, this is our work"* (Participant 2, School A).

Participant 2 went on to say that as a result of this negative attitude, relations had become strained. Participant 8 concurred that the negative attitude of educators may have influenced the participation of parents in school activities. According to Participant 9, *"Some of the educators in School C must refrain from making the comments that they were not employed by the SGB if they speak when there are problems at the school. Of course the parents are not their employers, but they teach their children."* Participant 2 and Participant 6 maintained that some educators in School A and School B respectively always looked down upon the members of the SGB, parents in particular. These educators in School A failed to greet the parents. However, during interviews for promotional posts, their attitude changed drastically because they knew that SGB members were part of the selection panel and expected favours during the interviews. During this period they greeted parents in an attempt to curry favour (Participant 2).In School B Participant 6 said: *"We feel free if we are alone with the principal. I see even the other parents show a higher degree of freedom. But if the educators are in attendance, the challenge starts again."*

According to Participant 5 parents in School E generally fear or are uncomfortable around the educators and this discourages participation in the SGB.

4.2.2.3 Financial management

According to Participant 8, the main source of conflict between the SGBs and the principals in a school situation is the use or misuse of funds. "*Previously in the SGBs old people would be elected, who did not know much. The chairperson would be told that blank cheques should not be signed, and also that they were not supposed to put their signature on something they did not understand*" (Participant 8). According to Participant 9, the SGB treasurer of School C, claimed that he still signed blank cheques. Participant 9 argued that some of the signatories sometimes complained about the signing of blank cheques. This statement was supported by Participant 2 who mentioned that he had heard similar comments at an SGB workshop.

According to Participant 2 some SGB members in School A think that the actions of the principal should not be challenged. Should cases of fraud occur, the parents are unaware that they can be prosecuted for involvement in wrong doing because they had signed the cheques without knowing what they would be used for. Participant 9 argued that if the suggestions of parents on financial issues were not taken into consideration and the questions they asked did not get convincing answers, they were left in a precarious position. "*Instead parents are moved from pillar to post, that takes away the interest of making a follow up on what is happening at the school, because that would show that there was no transparency, things happen behind the backs of the parents. Some parents then decide to withdraw from the SGB*" (Participant 9).

4.2.2.4 Incentives

Participants 2 and 6 argued that the lack of a stipend impacts negatively on the level of participation of parents in the SGB. Participant 2 went on to say, "*Some SGB meetings in School A are held at 18:00 on Fridays, staying up to 22:00. Instead of coming to the SGB meetings other parents prefer doing their own things or staying with their families.*" According to Participant 4 commitment is affected by the lack of incentives for the SGBs as there was no budget from which the SGB members could be paid:

"This demotivates and demoralises the SGB members because the government seems to be so generous in terms of giving a lot of packages. These people do a lot, they come, they are using their own time, they sacrifice, yet they are not paid, that is a very bad thank you card if one looks at this that they are not getting paid and they are demoralised, and there are other people who are not doing anything, yet they get monthly stipends" (Participant 4).

According to Participant 7 at School C, the parents' expectation was that they would be compensated for SGB membership. Participants 9 said, *"When you have been elected in your area, and not gained anything, you don't get much respect. Like educators do not take you seriously, if you are a member of the SGB."*

4.2.2.5 Level of education

Participant 15 said some parents did not play their role due to poor literacy or illiteracy. Participant 15 further said that in their area in School E parents' education level was very low, which creates a challenge for parents to be elected in the SGB. Participant 14 argued, *"The majority of our parents are illiterate, that impacts negatively on the level of participation."* Participant 2 agreed with the other participants and went on to say, *"Those few parents that are literate do assist, but those that are illiterate drag their feet."* Participant 4 explained, *"When you call some parents of the learners in School B they say they are not familiar with these things, why should they come and assist educators, professionals, when they themselves are not professionals."* Participant 4 further asserted that parents felt, *"that the professional is getting paid, and they are not."* This was confirmed by Participant 11, in School C who said: *"More especially us who have children in the public schools, most of our parents are not educated. Issues of education are not so serious to them. So they don't even bother to look at the books of their children because they would not see anything anyway because they are not educated."* Participant 14 agreed that the low level of education of the parents of School E affected their level of participation in school governance negatively.

4.2.2.6 Management style of the principal

The level of participation in school governance amongst the parents is according to Participant 6 greatly influenced by the level of openness and transparency of the school

principal. If the principal is transparent, takes the parents on board on all the developments at the school, and works together with the parents, parents participate more readily. However if the principal is not transparent in his dealings, then parents do not come forward in terms of participating in school activities. According to Participant 2, "*If there is no openness and transparency from the side of the principal, there will always be issues to be solved.*" Participant 2 elaborated, "*If there is information, the principal should not 'hide' it from other members of the SGB.*" Participant 6 affirmed that the principal in School B was transparent and disclosed all information to SGB members. In School A Participant 2 indicated, "*Sometimes principals feel that if they disclose some information to the SGB, they may use it against them because they may not be doing what is stipulated in the school policies in the information he is holding back from the SGB.*" Participant 2 went on to explain that if a principal deviated from what was stipulated, he would not disclose the information to avoid the SGB challenging his actions. Participant 2 argued that in one of the workshops they had attended, some parents in the Breyten Circuit were complaining that in their school, blank cheques were still being signed, under the pretext that in the case of an emergency, they did not want to bother the signatories. "*You find that the principal will be sitting with blank cheques; in that case there is no transparency. Transparency and openness is very important so that everything that happens is known by all the SGB members, and there would be ownership of every decision taken or anything that happens.*" In School A, Participant 2 said:

> "*Even if there is a conflict, or if the bank phones the chairperson and the other signatories, trying to confirm a cheque, there should be no problems, but if we do not know anything about it, I will say so, and even stop the cashing of the cheque.*"

In cases of conflict, the relationship between the principal and the SGB deteriorated and parents began to lose interest in participation.

4.2.2.7 Socio-economic status of parents

According to Participant 4 most parents in School B did not have the means to survive. Some parents worked on farms. "*When you need them you must understand, you are asking for their time when they are trying to make ends meet in farms.*" Participant 10 maintained that the unemployed attended SGB meetings, parents meetings and school activities infrequently. Unemployment and poverty impacted negatively on the

participation of parents in school governance. Parents who are unemployed and poor do not feel comfortable and are unlikely to participate in school activities, including school governance.

4.2.2.8 Transport (Location of the schools)

Participant 15 noted that a factor which added to the inconsistent attendance of parents in governance activities is that most parents in School E work on farms and finish their work late. They cannot be released earlier from work, hence meetings start late after 18:00 in most schools. "*By that time transport is a problem as there is no public transport where they stay in farms. Those who have cars can only help those nearby, the rest have a problem*" (Participant 15).

Participants 7 and 9 agreed that School C is far from where most parents stay and there is no public transport to the school. According to Participant 7, some parents in School C stay as far as 17 to 20 km from the school. Thus, transport becomes a problem. As a result, some parents from School C who stay on farms do not attend meetings or participate in school governance. Participant 7 explained that schools in the Breyten Circuit are mainly rural schools. Only in extreme cases did parents on farms ever come to school (Participant 7). Participant 9 said even parents who are SGB members in School C find it difficult to attend SGB meetings as the school is far from where they stay. If meetings are held in the evenings and parents failed to get transport to school, they did not attend the meetings (Participant 9).

4.2.2.9 Working hours for parents

Participant 4 indicated that in School B the parents who worked on farms found it difficult to get to the school since they left work late. Meetings were held at awkward hours. During the day it is impossible to attend meetings due to work on the farms. The working hours of the parents in School B made it very difficult for them to actively participate in school governance.

4.2.2.10 Mode of communication

The mode of communication between almost all the schools and parents are letters that are given to the learners to give to their parents. According to Participant 2 some parents in School A complained that the learners did not give the invitation letters to them. As a result some parents did not attend meetings. Learners feared that their parents might disclose poor behaviour in the meeting which would impact negatively on their studies.

4.2.3 The performance of the SGBs in the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit

4.2.3.1 Behaviour of SGB members

Participant 1 observed that some people agree to be elected because of the benefits to reputation and status, but afterwards "*begin to drag their feet*." Participant 1 further asserted that during elections, people canvas and mobilise and that indicates their motivation. However, after the SGB starts working in ways other than anticipated, the person ends up reluctant to participate. According to Participant 7 some parents in School C come to the SGB with their own agendas, but when they are needed the most, they are not available. "*Some parents in School C will always tell you about their commitments and their problems. Their expectation was that when they are in the SGB they would be compensated. Some of them only show up if there is a function at the school*." Participant 12 had a problem with certain people in School D who entertained their own ambitions. When the ambitions were unfulfilled, they withdrew.

Participant 10 found that SGBs usually start very well in the first term, but as time progresses, some parents in School D would stop coming to SGB meetings and numbers would drop. The principal of School D ended up with only the executive, that is, the chairperson, the secretary, the treasurer and one or two more people (Participant 10). This statement is supported by the following: *"My SGB is supposed to be 16, but now you find we are 5 to 7"* (Participant 10, School D).

Another issue that Participant 12 raised is that parents sometimes were intimidated and could not stand firm. For instance, if there was a serious allegation against an educator, the parents would not raise the issue for fear of being accused of attacking that particular individual. However, the SGB, especially the parent component, should protect the interests of the learners (Participant 12).

4.2.3.2 Capacity of the SGB to govern

Schools A, B and D conducted their own induction for newly elected SGB members to increase their capacity to govern schools. This is confirmed by the following statements;

Participant 10 said: *"During their induction, we went through all the policies that govern the SGBs, SASA 84 of 1996, and other documents that talk about the roles and functions of the SGB. We have inducted them about all of them. And I said initially they were very active, they were showing all this energy, but as time goes on, they are just people."*

Participant 1 added: *"And then what we also do we also conduct our own induction after the elections of the SGBs. We induct all the members, even those that were in the SGB before. We take each other through the functions of the SGB."*

Participant 1 said: *"It cannot be said that because they received training then everything is okay, we still have parents that are illiterate. Their overall contribution is not zero, they do participate, but their illiteracy limits their contribution to some extent.*"

Participant 4 agreed: *"If these people were trained by competent people, they would be competent, but since they were trained by incompetent people, they cannot be competent, but at least they are trying their best, yet their best may not be in the standard we are expecting, but at least they are trying.*"

Participant 1 argued that some parents do not attend the workshops and make excuses. In School D Participant 10 argued: *"My SGB only attended once, when they came back, it was like the person who was conducting the workshop was not "fit enough." According to them, the following workshops that were arranged they did not attend, thinking the same person would be doing the same thing."*

Participant 3 said that SGBs lack the capacity to govern the schools. Participant 3 explained that this was because some did not know exactly what they were supposed to since they did not grasp the functions of the SGB. Participant 15 shared the following: *"No I don't think they are ready for now. There are areas that are still lacking, mainly because of the level of literacy amongst other parents.*" (Participant 15, School E).

Participant 7 asserted that it was unfortunate that SGBs had not been trained. Participant 7 further explained that the SGB members in the secondary schools (Schools A to E) learn "*on the job*" as they work in the SGB. Participant 15 said: "*Even now that they are trying, it's because of the assistance they always get from the principals of the schools. If you were to take the principal out of the equation, then you have a very serious challenge.*"Participant 1 differed slightly and said: "*Yah, so in terms of capacity they do have capacity even though we can always do something to make it better.*"

Participant 5 felt if educators gave parents the recognition and respect they deserved, the SGB would gain more from the workshops. According to Participant 6, the SGBs would develop capacity if the principals were transparent and did not hide things from the SGB. Participant 9 said the SGB would govern the schools if principals accepted that they were not the only ones to make decisions. Participant 8 said, "*When SGBs begin to understand what they are supposed to do, the term of office comes to an end. So this hinders progress at schools because after every 3 years new people are elected, and the whole process of training the newly elected SGB members starts all over again.*" Participant 8 agreed: "*If the term of office could be extended to at least 5 years, maybe there could be an improvement in the performance of the SGBs, and their capacity to govern the schools.*"

4.2.3.3 Functions of the SGB

All the participants concurred that the SGB at a school is there to govern. Participant 3 pointed out that the SGB is responsible for managing the school finances, procurement, monitoring expenditure and adopting school policies. Participants 3 and 6 noted that the SGB forms part of the interviewing panel during interviews and recommends the appointment of staff members. Amongst other functions, the SGBs determines the vision and mission statement of the schools, decides on the school uniform, decides on the time of the school, the reporting time and the end time, the appointment of teachers, the curriculum issue, budgeting, fundraising, teachers' voluntary work and the co-option of people with the skills the school might need. Participant 4 mentioned that governance is a deep-rooted inter-disciplinary activity. Participant 4 further mentioned that the SGB has to govern the finances and the infrastructure, look after everything at the school, personnel, their employment and the security at the school.

Participant 1 elaborated saying: "The *SGB is there to support and to establish a culture of teaching and learning that is productive to support activities at the school to make sure that the vision of the school is being realised... The SGB is there to support the school, to support the management of the school, and to make it easy for the learners, parents and teachers to work as a unit. One of the functions of the SGB is to draw the school policies, including the learners' code of conduct, and the constitution of the SGB.*" According to Participant 1 and Participant 2, the SGB must ensure the smooth running of the school. Participant 2 emphasised working together with the SMT of the school. Participant 2 noted, "*The SGB is also responsible for maintenance, if there is broken furniture, the SGB must ensure that it is repaired.*"According to Participant 7 the parent component in the SGB speaks on behalf of the parents. Participant 7 further stated that if parents play a vital role in the SGB, the other parents recognise them and most of the information the school gets is through the SGB. "*The SGB has a mandate that is legislated by the Department of Basic Education that allows them to operate in schools for a period of 3 years. After 3 years their mandate must be renewed*" (Participant 4).

4.2.3.4 Governance versus management

Participants 5, 10 and 13 expressed strong views on the issues of management and governance. The following represent views of the participants on these issues and the relations between the principal and the SGB. The following comments were made by school-based participants (Participants 10 and 13) on governance compared to professional management.

> "*Usually I would guide them on some issues in terms of the acts, to say if we take this decision we may be against this act. And I would also help them separating the governance and the professional management. But we always argue, thinking I am doing their job, I am overpowering them, when I am trying to show them that issues like these are purely management, you cannot interfere, this one is governance, where your competency lies*" (Participant 10, School D).

"They would say okay do as you like, as if I was dictating to them whereas I was trying to say this is governance, and this is professional management" (Participant 10, School D).

"I have heard of one or two instances where SGB members came from the workshop with the impression that maybe now they will be managing the school. One of the SGB members tried to tell my teachers what to do" (Participant 13, School E).

Participants 5, 6, 8 and 12 revealed a slightly different perspective:

"The SGB manages the school." (Participant 8, School C)

"According to my knowledge the main function of the SGB is to monitor the school to establish if there is quality education or not. We monitor quality of learning and teaching, by checking the results on a quarterly basis. If there is underperformance we then try to establish if the problem is with the learners or with the educators. That is important because we have to emphasise to the teachers that they know what problem each child has" (Participant 8, School C).

"There is a lot that the SGB is supposed to do at the school. The SGB members are expected to come to the school just to check what is happening at the school, and how the learners are doing, even the educators." (Participant 5, School B).

"You don't have to wait to be told everything, like a parent, you must ensure that you check everything yourself, come to school to check if everything is in order, lessons are proceeding without any disturbances. You don't have to wait to be told by children that certain educators do not honour their classes, and that may be today there were no classes" (Participant 6, School B).

"There are other things that are the prerogative of the SGB, but the principal takes them as his, and want to do things his own way." (Participant 12, School D).

These comments highlight the challenges at the different schools on issues of school governance and professional management.

4.2.3.5 Relations

Participant 3 indicated that during SGB elections a parent said they needed "*men who will fight*" in the SGB. According to Participant 3 this statement was uttered at an SGB meeting where the office bearers were to be elected. It was decided that the chairperson, his deputy and the treasurer should be "*men*" and the secretary should be a female. They claimed that there were things that were not going well which should be fixed.

"They just elect those people who can talk, who can stand up against the principal, to them those people are elite, and they think they are good people"(School D, Participant 10)

"And when I tried to show them they resisted, and from there our relationship was not good, and of course they would come to school to do other things but their level of involvement is very poor to the point of dysfunctionality. This SGB like I said initially used to invite parents to meetings, and parents were responding, since our differences, no more parents meetings, and they are just dragging their feet" (School D, Participant 10).

Participant 10 said that young people initially were very energetic and helped the school a lot. Later they became resistant, opposed the principal and interested only in furthering their own agenda. Participants 11 and 12commented:

"There is a misunderstanding with the principal on some issues. In some of the issues we said to the principal he will see what to do on his own, and we know that is not the right thing to do. When it comes to the issue of the employment of educators, the principal instructs us, and the other members of the SGB get discouraged because whatever decision is taken, there should be agreement. Like other members who were in the sub committees are now reluctant to go to those subcommittee because of the issue of the recognition of the SGB at the school" (Participant 11, School D).

"Even if they can attend the meetings, they just sit there, keep quiet, and don't say anything. Even people you knew actively participated in discussions, now just sit passively in the meetings"(Participant 11, School D).

"We have been at loggerheads with the principal at our school. Many of the SGB members want to resign in the SGB, but we always try to discourage each other from doing that. The biggest problem is with the employment of educators, where the principal will just lay down the law" (Participant 12, School D).

These quotations demonstrate a near collapse of relations in certain schools between the principal and the SGB.

4.2.3.6 Performance of the SGB

In School A Participant 1 said:

"I would give them a satisfactory performance. It's not that good, it's not exceptional, but I think it is not very bad. It's satisfactory because it's not everything they are doing that I would love them to do. For some reasons you will find that parents will think that to be involved in school related activities it's a question of choice if you have time, if you don't have time it always comes not as a priority. So that is why I say it's not exceptional, but satisfactory, but at least we are able to do what we need to do, the basic things we are to do."

Participant 7 and Participant 8 evaluated the performance of the SGB of School C as average. Participant 3 felt that the SGBs did things haphazardly and did not follow what is stated in the SASA. Participant 3 said that members of the SGB did not know the contents of SASA so they could not implement it. The following comments illustrate this matter, *"What is that by the way? Eish...I do not know it well; I do not want to lie."* (Participant 5, School B)

This is response was common among participants when asked about SASA.

4.2.3.7 The South African Schools Act(84 of 1996)

Participant 1 explained that SASA was a framework to guide how education should be conducted in the country. Participant 2, although unsure, explained that SASA is the legislation which all South African schools should follow. Participant 4 said, "*It empowers management in schools in a way, it stipulates clearly what needs to happen in schools in terms of admissions, in terms of management and governance. It speaks in terms of the powers that are invested in the SGBs, what they should be able to do, how it must be done, in terms of governance.*" Participant 2 mentioned that it is legislation which all schools should follow. According to Participant 3 it dealt with how SGBs are elected; it gave guidelines on how to draft school policies and the code of conduct and who adopts it. It gave specific responsibilities to all the stakeholders. Participant 2 further indicated that SASA was a guide and specifies how schools are supposed to be run. Participant 1 added that norms and standards for school funding is also part of SASA. It is unfortunate that the majority of the parents, in their term of office, hardly understand SASA in its totality. "*Because the time is so limited, in 3years' time these people should learn the ABCs, some of them will even get off the office without having mastered the art, and the knowledge they were supposed to have mastered because it's a complicated matter*" (Participant 1).

Participant 3 observed that some SGB members in School A, especially the parents, do not even know what the SASA is and what it contains. Parent participants commented:

"*What is that by the way? Eish... I do not know it well; I do not want to lie.*" (Participant 5, School B).

"*I don't have a clue about the SASA 84 of 1996*" (Participant 9, School C).

"*I am not familiar with the SASA 84 of 1996*" (Participant 14, School E).

"*What I understand about the SASA 84 of 1996, I don't know, no I can't remember*" (Participant 12, School D).

"*I really do not know what is contained in the SASA 84 of 1996, except that it is legislation that governs schools*"(Participant 15, School E).

'That Act has many policies that we, as the SGB should implement. Those policies are so many" (Participant 8, School C).

These quotations demonstrate that some members of the SGBs do not know the contents of SASA which the SGBs should use to govern schools.

4.2.3.8 School Policies

School policies must be drawn up by the SGB (RSA, 1996b). According to Participants 1, 3 and 7 the SGB sub-committees should come up with the draft policies. Parents on the SGB form part of the SGB sub-committees. The parents should submit the drafts to the SGB for adoption in a special meeting of the SGB (Participant 3). Different schools use different approaches to draw up draft school policies as will be seen in the following paragraph.

Participant 2 said in School A the SGB takes the pro forma policies sent to all schools and adapts them to the needs of the school. In School A the SGB is the one that develops policies. Participants 4, 5 and 6 argued that in School B they use the SMT to start the process of drawing up school policies. Participant 10 agreed but added that in School D, the treasurer of the SGB is also involved in the process, *"guys that have the background."* Participant 10 further remarked, *"Usually teachers take a leading role in the development of policies, the teachers are divided into groups and say this group go and develop this policy, that other group go and develop another policy. When they have developed the policies they will be discussed in the SGB meeting, later on they would be taken to the teachers. The input from the parents at the moment comes from the executive, especially the SGB treasurer from School D, who seems to be the most educated amongst them"*(Participant 10).

Participant 10 said in School D, *"It's a parent who takes the initiative. He is the one with a lot of energy, and he is taking the lead in trying to consult, here and there, search for information, but the others are just ordinary people."*Participant 2 indicated that often school policies end up in a file for policies at the school. It would be more helpful if each SGB member had copies of all the policies because it is difficult to remember something not used on a daily basis.

In School A Participant 2 said parents played a minimal role in the development of policies. Participant 7 concurred that the contribution of parents in School C in the policy discussions was minimal. "*Some parents have an inferiority complex which is partly caused by the fact that some of them are illiterate, and that some of them are unable to control their children at home. There is very little contribution that can be expected from for instance a general worker at the school who is an SGB member*" (Participant 2). According to Participant 2 most the parents in School A shifted policy development to the principal and the educators because they are the ones who work with the children. This is evident from the following statement:

In School A Participant 2 said: "*For an example, when we grew up pregnant learners were removed from the school, if such a policy is discussed now, such parents would still support that the learners be removed from the school, not knowing that that is against the policy, they don't know, and you can't blame them.*"

Participant 2 rated the contribution of the parents in policy development low. Participant 2 even went further to say if it were possible, only committed people and literate people should elected to the SGB.

> "*Most of these things are brought to us 'developed,' we don't play a part in the development of those policies*" (Participant 9, School C).

> "*We have not yet had the opportunity to develop the other policies*" (Participant 14, School E).

> "*Some of the policies are there, but I don't know who made those policies*" (Participant 15, School E).

Participant 9 felt they could not ask too many questions about things that were happening in School C. He contended, "*If you work with people and you keep on asking many questions, it sounds as if you have suspicions of things not being done correctly, hence they end up keeping things to themselves.*" Participant 9claimed he was never involved in the development of any policy at the school in School C. Participant 5 claimed that the

SGB they came up with the draft policies. "*The whole SGB starts each policy from scratch.*" Participants 11 and 12 claimed that they had participated in the policies at School D. Participant 12 explained that he and the treasurer of the SGB in School D submitted the drafts to the SGB meeting for further discussion.

4.2.3.9 SGB elections

Participant 1 indicated that the schools have a guideline from the DBE in terms of how governing bodies should be elected. All the participants indicated that the correct procedures pertaining to SGB elections were followed at all the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit. Participant 1 further indicated that the process started with advocacy, where communities were made aware of the dates of the elections of SGB members and of all the processes to be followed in the course of electing new SGB members. Dates for the election of SGB members were determined at Circuit level by the circuit manager together with the principals of schools in the Breyten Circuit. Participant 2 and Participant 4 concurred with Participant 1 on processes followed for advocacy. The dates were then communicated to the different stakeholders through a circular from the circuit office. Participant 1 further alluded to the fact that each school was expected to compile a voter's roll where all the names of the parents who have children at the school appear.Later, a meeting was held with the parents to prepare them for their role and thereafter the elections were held (Participant 4).Participant 3 said meetings for the election of the different components to the SGB were called separately by the presiding or electoral officer, who is the principal of another school in the circuit.

Participant 3 argued that some parents do not attend the SGB if they are aware that SGB elections will be conducted because they do not want to be elected to the SGB. According to Participant 5 usually the first meeting for the election of parents in School B is cancelled because the parents do not form a quorum. The elective meeting would proceed the second time around even if the parents do not form the quorum. Parents do not want to be elected to the SGB because of lack of incentives (Participant 5). Some parents in School B who agreed to be elected just disappeared thereafter, without attending even a single SGB meeting (Participant 5). Others do not see the need to attend elective meetings because it was known who would be voted on to the SGB. In School A Participant 3 said that in their community a list of eligible people is circulated before the elections and

decided upon by some individuals in the community. If one of those identified people was not present when nominations were done, they would phone him to come. Participant 3 went on to say at School A the same people are voted time and again for the SGB and as a result parents know who will be voted for. Participant 1 asserted that invitations for nominees were made before the election dates where people could nominate their preferred candidates to represent them in the SGB even before the election date by completing nomination forms. Participant 1 added that the presiding officer would make sure that the nomination forms were made available to the school community before the election date.

The process of open democratic elections followed where the neutral presiding officer presided over the election process by secret ballot, ensuring that the processes followed were free and fair (Participant 1 and Participant 2). In school C, Participants 7, 8 and 9 all indicated that an agreement was reached that when elections for the parent component of the SGB were conducted, each of the 9 villages from where the learners were coming from should be represented. Participant 1 claimed that people, whom the different stake holders believed would represent them well, got elected to the SGB. When all the members of the SGB members were elected, meetings of the newly elected members were held to elect the office bearers. Participant 1 explained that open and democratic elections were conducted at his secondary school in the Breyten Circuit. He concluded by saying that after the election, the newly elected SGB members were inducted.

4.2.3.10 SGB meetings

All the secondary schools had a year programme and SGB meetings were included with meetings scheduled at least once per term. Urgent meetings were held over and above these. An exception within the circuit was School B which scheduled its SGB meetings every month (Participants 4, 5 and 6). Schools A and B confirmed that they manage to have their SGB meetings as scheduled, but schools C, D and E sometimes failed to meet for their scheduled SGB meetings. Participant 8 conceded that they were supposed to hold SGB meetings twice a term in School C but said that circumstances sometimes dictated that they held the meetings once a quarter.

This sentiment is echoed by Participant 10 in the following statement;

"During the first term they would come in numbers, from there they are no longer coming in numbers, I would end up having the executive only. By executive in this case I mean the chairperson, the secretary and the treasurer, and may be one or two people. My SGB is supposed to be 16, but now you find we are find 5 to 7, so there are meetings because the executive is still there, but having all of it they are no longer coming" (Participant 10, School D).

Participant 9 said that in School C they are supposed to have SGB meetings once a quarter, but sometimes a quarter passes without a meeting: the second term was nearing its end, but they had not had a meeting since the beginning of the year. *"When they have to have a meeting, you find that other parents are at work, you find that about 5 parents are at work."* Participant 7 said, *"All the SGB members have the programme for SGB meetings, but when they are expected to attend meetings, some are not available, even if transport is provided, they would make a lot of excuses as you try to pick them up, as a result the meeting is aborted. The chairperson would normally consult with the secretary to decide on the agenda, then the secretary would send letters inviting SGB members to the meeting. The chairpersons of the SGB, who are parents chair SGB meetings"* (Participant 7).

Participant 6 said issues were discussed and decisions were taken by agreement in the SGB meetings; decisions were not taken by just one individual, not even the principal took decisions for all the people. Participant 1 acknowledged, *"Decision making becomes a collective thing, though one cannot expect too much from most of the parents because they never received any training educationally. They do not have any formal training that would allow them to argue competently."* Participant 4 said all contributions from the parents must be appreciated and argued further that: *"Normally the parents are allowed decide on matters that are of their capacity, and when they do it, it is normally appreciated, and we normally stick with that decision to please them so that next time they are elected, then can still be cooperative."* Participant 7 said, *"If the parents are well conversant with an issue under discussion, they make decisions, if they arrive at the wrong decision, certain things are brought to their attention, after that they are then able to come to the right decision. In some issues it is difficult for them to make decisions because they are far from most educational issues, which is not supposed to be."*

Participant 1 acknowledged that issues are discussed in the meetings. The chairperson gave everyone a chance to speak although he tended to dominate discussions. The parents looked up to him because he was an ex-teacher and now a manager. Participant 1 further conceded, *"The chairperson does not become bossy all the time"* however he added that parents sometimes give the chairperson *"too much respect and end up not questioning some of the things he suggests, but because everybody is there in the meeting, he does not bulldoze everybody."*

According to Participant 4 the parents in the SGB make a contribution in the decision-making process, especially those employed in the private sector, School B has a few such parents. Parents in the SGBs in schools A, B, C, D and E participate fully in the decision-making process, although in some instances they become intimidated and fail to express themselves on the item under discussion (Participant 15). Participant 5 remarked, *"If we agree outright, a decision is taken. If we don't agree with something, we just keep quiet"* (Participant 5, School B).

Participant 3 said some parents in School A do not seem to want to be on the *"wrong side"* of the educators by expressing unpopular views. Participant 5 said they were more at liberty with the principal in private than in the company of educators. The reason Participant 5 gave was that if she expressed her opinion, she felt it might not be accepted.

In School A Participant 3 said parents were influenced to a large extent by the chairperson; they just supported everything he said. In some instances the parents would be *"briefed"* before the meetings started and told what decisions to take in the meeting. Participant 3 asserted that other parents in School A would come forward after the meeting, complaining about decisions taken in the meeting. According to Participant 3, these parents could not object to the decisions taken because the *die had been cast* prior to the start of the meeting. According to Participant 4, School A uses SGB meetings to give parents educational information. However, after 3 years new members are elected and the process of training starts all over again. Participant 13 said when a decision is taken, the parents in School E always rely on the principal. In School E Participant 13 concurred with this statement:

> *"They will find decision making by the SMT good, then they will just rubber stamp it, and go with that, they will not come with anything from their side."*

But Participant 12 from School D had a different view:

"I believe in that if you are in a meeting there should be a dialogue, not just to be told 'we are going to buy the children uniform' then people say 'yes,' without even one person asking why? What I am saying is that in a meeting there should be that little 'argument' until you reach that agreement."

According to Participant 7 the parents in School C are not decisive when it comes to decision-making. He alleged that they will agree with the principal, but *"they are supposed to use their minds to make a decision."* Participant 9 felt that the current SGB of School C, of which he is a member, does not have any power. Participant 9 felt that they took decisions in the SGB meetings, but that nothing was implemented. According to Participant 7, unavailability and a lack of capacity among the parents were serious issues.

4.2.3.11   Time for meetings

Participant 15 said meetings should be held late in the afternoon, from 18:00 when most of the parents have left work. *"You will be lucky if they do attend the meeting. On weekends most of the parents are not available, they usually don't form a quorum if a meeting is called on a weekend."*

4.3.2.12 Training of the SGBs

According to Participant 2 the training they received was on policy development, how to develop various policies to assist the SGB, the importance of policies in schools and how to conduct meetings. The MDoE through the Gert Sibande District Office, conducted the training on policy development, financial management, management of physical resources, how to conduct meetings, procurement, supply chain management and how to dispose of old equipment (Participant 6 and Participant 9). Participant 3 concurred that they received training on procurement and none on the other functions of the SGB. The workshop also touched on the importance of policies and the duties of the office bearers of the SGB (Participant 5). Participant 8 acknowledged that the workshops were *"eye openers in many ways."* After attending the workshops he said they became aware of mistakes they and principals had made. Participant 12 did not recall any training on the functions of the SGB. Training usually lasted for two days: Saturday and Sunday. There

was concern about the timing of the workshops, which were sometimes held towards the end of the term of the SGBs.

Participant 1 said:

> "*The rationale behind the workshops is always a noble one, a good one, but may be the problem is how they are being run, because these workshops are actually conducted such that the school managers like principals are also part of that with the parents who are in the SGB… you will always have a situation where the issues that are being discussed will not necessarily address the things, the problems that schools are may be encountering on a daily basis because they are addressed at the same level whereas the role of the principal and the role of the parents is not the same. So at the end of the day it becomes just a question of passing on information but not really addressing some of the key issues with the right people at the right platform.*

Participant 1 would have preferred a situation where parents were trained specifically on their role apart from the role of principals because parents had their own opinion on things, whereas the principal had other responsibilities. Participant 1 added:

> "*For example we do not separate governance related issues and professional related issues in these workshops, and that becomes a problem… they cloud these things. They make it look like one overlaps on the other. Sometimes when they conduct these meetings they don't give a clear distinction in terms of the roles of the SGB, where does it end, the parent, how far can he go, the principal how far can he go…at one stage they were talking about who was supposed to be involved in the case of a teacher misconduct, and then there were some parents saying he could not conduct a disciplinary hearing without inviting the SGB.*"

Participant 4 labeled SGB training as "*that pep kind of training.*" Participant 4 added, "*The MDoE wants to spend its money nicely because some of these things are just made for records. The kind of trainings that are given, they are too shallow. It's a ritual, if it's not done it, one will be seen as having not conformed.*" According to Participant 4 the problem is the short duration of training: two days and a number of months in between. Participant 4 concluded his argument by asserting that attendance by the SGB members was erratic: a SGB member who is available this week may not be available the other month. There are gaps of information because of the inconsistency of attendance by SGB

members in the workshops. According to Participant 8, not all SGB members attend these workshops; if 5 parents are invited, fewer parents from School C attend.

Participant 7 felt that even if the content of what is taught is good, some people are "untrainable" due to level of education or illiteracy.

> *"The training material is good, but some parents in School C cannot read and write. You still have older people in the SGBs, who do not have any form of formal education. These parents in School C cannot apply what has been taught in the workshop, they depend entirely on the principal, some of whom manipulate things and end up running the show, instead of all the stakeholders taking part."*

According to Participant 7 some principals take advantage because of the low level of education of some parents in their schools.

4.3   PRESENTING THE FINDINGS - DOCUMENT REVIEW

The following official school documents were reviewed: records of the election of the SGB members, the constitution of the SGB, minutes of SGB meetings and SGB sub-committees, school policies, records of training for the SGBs, reports on financial management, records of fund-raising projects and year plan of the school. Only School D provided the researcher with copies of sample policies. No reasons were given to the researcher by the schools for failing to make all the requested documents available when a follow-uprequest was made. The findings were captured in the ensuing sections.

4.3.1 Minutes of SGB meetings

The minutes of the meetings held for School A, School B and School C were made available as requested. For School A, two sets of minutes were in the file for the mid-year period. For one of those minutes for School A there was no attendance register attached but there is some evidence of parental involvement in both sets of minutes. According to their year plan, School B is supposed to have monthly SGB meetings. At the time of the interview 3 sets of minutes for SGB meetings were made available. Only one set of minutes was accompanied by the attendance register. Two sets of minutes were made available for School C. There was no attendance register for the second SGB meeting. It was, however, not easy to determine the level of parental involvement on the decision-

making process for School A, School B and School C because of the manner in which the minutes are taken: only the final decisions taken were captured, with little indication of the people who had contributed to the discussion. As indicated above, School D and School E did not furnish the researcher with the requested documents.

4.3.2 Minutes of SGB sub-committees meetings

School A, School B, School D and School E could not provide minutes of any of the sub-committees of the SGB. Only School C provided the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting for May. The attendance register for that meeting was not available. The role that parents played in the deliberations in the meeting could not be determined.

4.3.3 Reports of financial management

Only issues of purchases and payments were discussed in the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting for May of School C. There was no evidence of controlling the budget and the compilation of monthly financial reports for School C. No records of financial management or the minutes of the finance committee meetings were made available for School A, School B, School D and School E.

4.3.4 Record of SGB training at school level

No evidence of school-based training of the SGB could be found in the documents provided by all the secondary schools.

4.3.5 Records of fund-raising

No record of fund-raising was included in any of the documents reviewed from all the secondary schools.

4.3.6 Year Plan

The school year plan was available for School A, School B and School D. Finance Committee meetings appeared on the year plans for School A, School B and School D. SGB meetings also appeared on the year plan for School A, School B and School D.

School D did not provide the researcher with the copy of the year plan, instead the operational plan of a deputy principal was made available.

4.3.7 School Policies

In School A copies of draft working documents for some of the policies were available in the file for policies. There was no evidence of completed, signed policies. There was no copy of the Constitution of the SGB. In school B copies of all the draft school policies were available in the file for school policies. These draft policies were not signed by the SGB or the school principal. A copy of the Constitution of the SGB was amongst the draft policies. School C had the same copies of draft policies as School B. That suggested they might have gotten the draft policies from the same source. The draft policies had also not yet been signed. Unsigned policies are not yet official school policies. School C also had a copy of the Constitution of the SGB.

4.4   DISCUSSION

4.4.1 The level of parental involvement on the governance of secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit

4.4.1.1   Parent involvement

In Section 2.2, Epstein (in Gordon & Nocon, 2008:321) argues that the term parental involvement encompasses both the involvement of individual parents in their children's education and the collective involvement of parents in school decision making bodies. Gordon and Nocon (2008:322) argue that parental involvement in school-based shared decision making continues to be seen as having a democratising and legitimising function.In this study the main focus is on parental involvement in the SGB.

In spite of the expectation from the parents on their involvement in the education of their children, there are still some concerns on their current level of involvement. Participant 1 emphasised, "*Not all of the parents will understand and play that role up to the expected level. You will find that some of them will come in, agree to be elected, but once they are there, you will find them just disappearing, and their role becoming very minimal. Such parents would not come to school functions, even during parents meetings they would always have excuses.*" Participant 1 further mentioned, "*If something is organised for them*

for example you want to train them on certain things, you organise your own workshop, they will always have excuses" (Participant 1). What Participant 1 described here is in line with what was said in Section 2.2.1.

4.4.1.2 Parenting

The findings show that there are disciplinary challenges in the secondary schools. Schools need the support of the parents considering that in Section 10(1) of the SASA (RSA, 1996b), no person may administer corporal punishment to a learner at school. What Participant 4 highlighted in Section 4.2.1.1 was that even the parents failed to discipline their children from home. Parents need assistance in child rearing practises (see Section 2.2.2).

4.4.1.3 Procurement

Only two schools (School A and School B) seemed to follow the procurement procedures correctly. In School D there was a complaint from Participant 10 that they could not buy what was necessary because the chequebook was in the possession of SGB members due to the on-going rift between the principal and some members of the SGB. Participant 11 confirmed that they refrained from signing cheques and that this hampered the progress of the school.

4.4.1.4 School policies

According to the SASA (RSA, 1996b), one of the functions of the SGB is to develop school policies (see Section 2.3.1.3). The findings showed that parents in the different schools are part of the process of developing policies, but in different capacities (see Section 4.2.1.4). This finding is in line with the SASA in the sense that the SGB members must actually develop the policies (see Section 2.3.1.3).This shows the realities that the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit are faced with and highlights the low level of education of some parents (see Section 4.2.1.4).

4.4.1.5SGB meetings

Parents in the different secondary schools do take part in SGB meetings and the meetings of the different sub-committees of the SGB. The participation of some of the parents in these structures is not, however, satisfactory (see Section 4.2.1.5).

In order to sum up the level of parent participation, compliance with the 6 types of parental involvement identified by Epstein and published by the Michigan Department of Education (2002) as the National Standards for Parent and Family Involvement (See Section 2.2.2) are used. These are: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and community collaboration (Cf. Table 2.1).

With respect to communicating, the findings of this study show that there is room for improvement; the communication with parents is not optimal. Letters from the school to parents were not always received. Parenting is also an area where communication is not effective. Parents struggled with disciplining their children at home. Student learningis very difficult to attain due to the fact that most of the parents have poor levels of parental education. n the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit, little volunteering is taking place and parents are generally not involved in school activities. In Section2.5.2.1, it was shown that Reiter (2009:353) argues that parents with very low levels of education almost never influence decision-making and this is confirmed in the findings of this study. Moreover, school decision making and advocacy is elusive. Collaborating with communities remains a challenge considering that parent participation is low in the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit.

4.4.2 Factors that influence parental involvement on school governance

In Section 2.4, it was discussed that Michael et al. (2012:70) identified the following barriers to parental involvement: apathy, transportation issues, financial problems of school and families, the high level of working parents, low self-esteem of many parents and lack of knowledge of responsibilities. The findings of the study confirm that the following factors impede parental involvement in school governance: apathy and unrealistic expectations, unhelpful attitudes of the educators and the principal, financial management challenges, the lack of incentives, transportation problems, low levels of parental education, difficult management styles of the principals, low SES of parents, long

working hours and somewhat unsuccessful modes of communication with parents. The factors in common with the study of Michael et al. are: apathy, transportation and the SES of parents. Factors that are most pertinent to this study are the attitudes of the educators and the principal, incentives, management styles and the mode of communication with parents.

4.4.2.1 Apathy and expectations

The findings in Section 4.2.2.1 confirmed what was found in Section 2.4, namely that many parents are apathetic and do not seem to feel a need to become involved in their children's education (Michael et al., 2012:70).

4.4.2.2 Attitude of the educators and the principal

Parents believe that they are not welcome in schools and reported a high degree of alienation and hostility towards them (Gonzalez-DeHass, 2003:88, Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177). This was discussed in Section 4.2.2.2 and the assertion is confirmed by findings of this study.

These findings confirm the statement (see Section 2.5.2.1) made byReiter (2009:353) that decision-making always follows the recommendation of the principal and that, while parents act as active deliberators, they occupy secondary extra roles. The same findings contrast with what is expected from the principal of the school and what was comprehensively discussed in Chapter 2(see Section 2.2.2).

It is up to individual schools to deal with the parents' perceptions that they are not welcome in their children's schools. The principal and his educators must be seen to be making an effort to accept the responsibility to increase the level of parental involvement.

4.4.2.3 Financial management

The findings are that in some of the secondary schools, the practice of signing blank cheques still exists even through this is in total disregard of sound financial management norms. The signing of blank cheques coupled with the perception that the views of parents

on financial issues are not taken into consideration cause unnecessary tensions between the parents and the principal of the school (see Section 4.2.2.3).

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4.4.2.4 Incentives

In Section2.3.1.3, it was shown that the SASA (RSA, 1996b) makes 2 assumptions about parents:

- That they can all afford the personal time required to spend on school activities and which are not related to any form of remuneration, and
- That they have the resources to make choices about their children's education (Sayed & Soudien in Brown & Duku, 2008:414).

The findings of this study indicate a different picture to the assumptions of the above statement.The issue of incentives for members of the SGB came out very strongly. A number of participants recommended that a stipend be paid to members of the SGB, especially from the parents (see Sections 4.2.2.4 and 5.5.2).

4.4.2.5 Level of education

In Chapter 2 it was stated that Van Wyk (2002:137) asserts that another problem which besets parents in the previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa is the high level of illiteracy (see Section 2.5.2.1).This statement is confirmed by the findings discussed in Section 4.2.2.5.

4.4.2.6 Management style of the principal

It was indicated earlier in this chapter that it is of paramount importance that the principal of the school create a welcoming environment for all stakeholders to be able to function in cohesion. The finding of this study is that some of the principals encourage some of the parents to engage in unlawful activities (see Section 4.2.2.6).

4.4.2.7 Socio-Economic Status of Parents

In Chapter 2, Van Wyk (2002:137) was quoted as saying that parental involvement in poor communities is often difficult because many parents and caregivers are struggling to survive and have little or no energy left for social obligations, such as becoming involved

in school activities. The findings of this study are in line with this statement (see Section 4.2.2.6). Mestry and Grobler (2007:177) concur that parents who are among the poorest cross section of society are locked in a difficult struggle of survival; they live in inadequate housing, are badly paid, and work unsocial hours or are unemployed. With the increase in either one parent or both parents working in more than one job, the children are often left alone. In such a situation, the parents do not actively participate in the education of their children. They will also not be able to assist their children with their school work and they will not be able to attend parents' meetings at the school.

4.4.2.8   Transport(Location of the schools)

The findings of this study are that parents that stay and work in farms struggle with transport to be able to attend SGB activities (see Section 4.2.2.8). This is in line with what Michael et al. (2012:70; cf. Chapter 2) identified, namely that travelling distances to schools and the lack of transport have proven to be a problem in many South African schools.

4.4.2.9 Mode of communication

The findings are that communication between the secondary schools and the parents remain a challenge (see Section 4.2.2.10). Parents are not the sole reason for their lack of involvement (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:177). Mestry and Grobler (2007:177) say that hurdles to effective parental involvement are the negative communication from the schools and insufficient levels of training for teachers on how to reach out to parents (see Section 2.2.1).

4.4.3 The performance of the SGBs in the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit

4.4.3.1 Behaviour of SGB members

The findings indicate that some elected SGB members drop out or decrease their participation in the SGB over time. Some parents show signs of being intimidated by the presence of educators (see Section 4.2.3.1).

4.4.3.2 Capacity of the SGB to govern

The finding is that most of the participants feel that the SGBs do not have the capacity to govern schools (see Section 4.2.3.2). Unfortunately the findings confirm what Squelch (in Kidanemariam, see Section 2.3) said about the fact that despite the democratisation of the governance of schools, the decision making still rests with the principals of schools.

4.4.3.3 Functions of the SGB

Section 20(1) of the SASA (RSA, 1996b)specifies certain functions that all governing bodies are responsible for (see Section 2.3.1.3). All these are policy related which emphasises the fact that the SGB is responsible for the governance of the school. The finding is that most of the SGB members are not familiar with the document and do not know the functions of the SGB (see Section 4.2.3.3). A need for constant monitoring and control was also expressed (see Section 2.5.2.4).

4.4.3.4 Governance versus management

The professional management and governance of a public school was explained in Section2.3.The findings show that there are serious challenges still to be overcome at the different schools in the Breyten Circuit, especially with regard to the responsibility of the principal and SMT at the schools and the role of the SGB. The pervasive failure to separate governance and professional management functions is a cause for concern(see Section 4.2.3.4).

4.4.3.5 Relations

Relations between some of the SGBs and the principals are strained and they do not always get along well; a lot of misunderstanding exists (see Section 4.2.3.5). This finding concurs with what Heystek (in Maluleka, 2008:34) said, namely 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 (see Section 2.5.2.3).

4.4.3.6 The South African Schools Act (84 of 1996)

The finding is that some of the members of the SGBs in the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit do not know the contents of the SASA (RSA, 1996b) (see Section

4.2.3.6).The SGBs are supposed to be using the guidelines of the SASA to govern schools. If they do not know what it says, this becomes a problem.

4.4.3.7 School Policies

In almost all the secondary schools, educators or the SMT take the initiative of developing school policies because the level of education of some parents in the SGB (see Section 4.2.3.8) is not sufficient to enable them to undertake this task.

4.4.3.8 SGB meetings

Through membership of the SGB, parents potentially have a greater opportunity to have a say in the decision-making process and management of the school than ever before (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:184; Van Wyk, 2002:123). Lewis and Naidoo (2004) further argue that in almost every school, the decision-making process appears to be similar to that described by the principal of a township school –decisions are taken after consultation and decisions are taken by consensus. However, in practice the consultation process is managed by the principal, all stakeholders are not equal participants and consensus is often more illusory than real. Parents who are in the majority in the SGBs do not seem to be using that authority to make a difference in terms of the very important decisions they have to make on the SGB.

4.4.3.9 Time for meetings

The finding is that the scheduling of meeting remains a challenge with some parents who must work late on district farms. They miss most of the school activities because they finish work late and cannot find transportation at that time of the day or weekend (see Section 4.2.3.11).

4.4.3.10 Training of the SGBs

Maluleka (2008:35) argues that confusion exists over varying roles of governing bodies in different categories of schools. According to Looyen (in Van Wyk, 2002:138), training is the cornerstone of affirming governors in the execution of their roles and responsibility. Lekalakala (2006:100) adds that even if the DBE provides training, schools must also have established ways to train members further.

Van Wyk (2002:139) concludes that the lack of adequate training for SGBs could defeat the whole object of instituting governing bodies as it is unlikely that governing body members will be able to make informed judgments without adequate training. Further training is needed for the SGBs of the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit (see Section 4.2.3.12).

4.5 CONCLUSION

The findings of the research have been compiled from the sample as indicated in Section 3.5. The research has amplified the importance of the SASA (RSA, 1996b) in the governance of schools in South Africa. Most participants, who have had the opportunity to study the SASA agreed on its merit. However, most parents on the SGB did not know its contents and were disadvantaged in executing its ideals. This is also true of several educators. For the parents to contribute to the effective governance of secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit, they need to be familiar with the SASA as it contains everything the SGB needs to know about learners, public schools and the funding of public schools. The SGB should be familiar with the Section stipulating the functions of the SGB. If all the members of the SGB are familiar with its contents, many problems encountered would be avoided.

A problem mentioned in the above paragraph is the conflict between SGB members and school principals in relation to school governance and professional management. If the training of the SGB was rigorous, most problems could be avoided and that would result in effective school governance. At the moment, energy is spent in destructive conflicts that are playing out in some of the secondary schools.

Another problem is the low level of education of some parents appointed to the SGB. This impacts negatively on their ability to argue their case in SGB meetings. The inability to read and write limits their contribution, especially when it comes to the development of school policies. The pro-forma policies and the school policies are in English, which is another barrier which needs to be overcome.

The challenges which face parents on the SGB make it difficult for the SGB to govern schools without assistance from the professionals at the schools (i.e. the principal and the educators, including the SMT). Collaboration between the SGB and the SMT would enable schools to move forward even though the responsibility of school governance rests with the SGB. The parents are expected to play a major role in school governance as they are the majority stakeholder in the SGB. At the moment however, the parents in this study have a limited impact as a result of factors highlighted in the chapter.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This study set out to explore the impact of parental involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit of Mpumalanga. The study sought to answer the following main research question:

What is the impact of parental involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit?

In attempting to answer the main research question, the researcher employed the following sub-questions:

- What is the level of parental involvement on the governance of secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit?
- How can the factors that influence parental involvement on school governance be classified or categorised?
- How can the performance of the SGBs in the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit be determined?

The study took place as a result of the shift in school governance that gives the responsibility of school governance to the SGBs. The SASA requires that parents be in the majority on the SGB which indicates the influence parents are expected to have in the decision-making process as the majority stakeholder. In practice, however, serious challenges exist.

5.2   EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The findings of the study provided answers to the sub-questions stated in Section 1.3.2.

5.2.1 What is the level of parent involvement on the governance of secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit?

The study concludes that:

- Parents participate in decision-making in the SGB and they also take part in all the activities of the sub-committees. There are concerns on the level of parental

involvement currently, but some of these are allayed after members are elected and their roles diminish (see Section 4.4.1.1).

- Most parents fail to discipline their children at home and so basic parenting skills are a problem. The parents tend not to come to school when asked if it has to do with a disciplinary issue (see Section 4.4.1.2).
- Parents play a minimal role in the development of school policies. The reason given stems from the reality of the low level of education among the parents (see Section 4.4.1.4).
- Parents who work on farms struggle to attend SGB meetings because of their working hours (see Section 4.4.1.5).

5.2.2 How can the factors that influence parental involvement on school governance be classified and categorized?

The study concludes that the following identified factors influence parental involvement:

- Apathy and expectations: many parents are apathetic and do not see the need to be involved in school activities (see Section 4.4.2.1).
- Attitude of the educators and the principal: many parents feel unwelcome in schools because of the negative attitude of some educators and principals towards them (see Section 4.4.2.2).
- Financial management: general mistrust exists between the SGB and the principal on the use of money. Blank cheques are allegedly still signed in some schools and this leads to many potential complications (see Section 4.4.2.3).
- Incentives: the non-payment of SGB members deters parents from participating in the SGB (see Section 4.4.2.4).
- Level of education: the high level of illiteracy amongst the parents impacts negatively on their participation and contribution in the SGB (see Section 4.4.2.5).
- Management style of the principal: parents are not willing to participate in school activities if the principal is not transparent and open (see Section 4.4.2.6).
- Socio-economic status of the parents: parental involvement in poor communities is very low as parents are simply struggling to survive (see Section 4.4.2.7).
- Transport (location of the schools): parents stay far from schools and since there is no public transport, this results in inconsistent attendance of SGB activities (see Section 4.4.2.8).

- Mode of communication: parents do not attend some meetings because they do not get the invitations sent out; schools still use letters to invite parents to meetings (see Section 4.4.1.9).

5.2.3 How can the performance of the SGBs in the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit be determined?

The performance of the SGBs was determined by evaluating the following:

- The behaviour of SGB members: many parents stop attending SGB meetings before the end of their term of office because of lack of incentives (see Section 4.4.3.1).
- The capacity of the SGB to govern: at the moment the SGBs lack the capacity to govern the schools (see Section 4.4.3.2).
- The functions embraced by the SGB: the SGBs have limited knowledge of their legal functions (see Section 4.4.3.3).
- The ability to distinguish between governance and management: failure by the SGBs to differentiate between governance and professional management functions has an adverse effect on relations in many schools (see Section 4.4.3.4).
- Relationships between staff and parents: the lack of understanding of their individual roles puts the SGBs on a collision course with the principals of schools. SGBs are perceived as interfering in professional management functions (see Section 4.4.3.5).
- The SASA (RSA, 1996b): most SGB members are unfamiliar with the contents of the Act (see Section 4.4.3.6).
- School policies: in many schools, the SMT and educators still play a pivotal role in the development of school policies whilst parents play a very minimal role. Not even one school has a full complement of school policies and some only have the copies of the exemplar policies (see Section 4.4.3.7).
- SGB meetings: most schools fail to hold all their SGB meetings as planned. Schools blame the failure to hold meetings as planned on the non-availability of parents and the problem of transportation prohibits parents from attending SGB meetings (see Section 4.4.3.8).
- Time for meetings: parents who stay on farms cannot attend SGB meetings due to their long working hours (see Section 4.4.3.9).
- Training of the SGBs: time allocated for board member training is insufficient. Some facilitators lack the necessary knowledge and skills to facilitate the workshops. There

is also a lack of monitoring the performance of the SGBs on the side of the MDoE (see Section 4.4.3.10).

5.3   THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Theories pertinent to parental involvement in this study can be found in Section 2.2.4. The findings of this study are in line with the National Standards for Parent /Family Involvement, built upon Epstein's framework of 6 levels/types of parental involvement (see Section 2.2.2). Parents in the 5 secondary schools struggle with 2 of the 6 levels/types: Volunteering and Learning at home.

Education policies on school governance in this study can be found in Section 2.3.4. The SASA is the most relevant piece of legislation in the context of this study. Everything pertaining to the SGB is outlined in this Act, from its composition to the functions and responsibilities allocated to it.

5.4   POLICY IMPLICATIONS

If the recommendations of this study were to be taken into consideration, they would have significant implications for the realisation of the SASA (RSA, 1996b). The recommendations are centered around the following aspects:

- Eligibility (see Section 5.5.1).
- Term of office (see Section 5.5.4.)
- Incentives (see Section 5.5.2).
- Level of education (see Section 5.5.1).

5.5   RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

5.5.1 Eligibility

- 4 of the 7 parents in the SGB should be parents with children at the school, and the remaining 3 should be members of the community who have the requisite skills, even if they do not have children at the school;

- Some people who are unemployed should be made members of the SGB, so that they could get incentives, irrespective of whether they have children at the school or not;
- People who are members of the SGB should be able to read and write;
- Community members who have some expertise should be eligible for election even if they do not have children at that school.

5.5.2 Incentives

- The MDoE shouldissue certificates of attendance to SGB members who attend training for SGBs;
- SGB members should be given a stipend.

5.5.3 Mode of communication

- Schools should insist that parents sign the notices for meetings and return them to the school.
- Schools should consider using bulk messaging services to communicate with parents.

5.5.4 Term of office

- The term of office of the SGBs should be a minimum of5years.

5.5.5 Training of the SGB

- Parents should be trained specifically on issues of governance and principals should be trained on issues of professional management in dedicated training sessions.
- Workshops for SGBs should be held immediately after the SGB elections and not towards the end of their term of office.
- SGB members should undergo intensive training on matters dealing with the functions of the SGB for a reasonably long period. Different approaches could be used in clustering schools.
- Training should be based on challenges identified by the different schools over time.
- The MDoE should outsource the training and use private companies registered with SETA. The MDoE should also consider using unemployed or retired skilled professionals to conduct workshops.
- The parents need to be trained each financial year and require refresher courses.

5.6   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study focused on 5 of the 6 secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit. Not all the members of the SGBs in all the secondary schools were interviewed: only the principal, the chairperson of the SGB, the secretary of the SGB or any other available parent SGB member were involved. The sample was, however, representative of the population. The aim of the study was not to generalise, however, the study may be useful in similar contexts of further research.

5.7RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As far as could be established, a study of this nature has not yet been done in the Breyten Circuit.

- The researcher did not come across a study that seeks to address the lack of training programmes on parental involvement for teachers and principals of schools.
- An area that requires more research is the involvement of fathers in the education of their children.
- The development of a comprehensive training programme for members of SGBs focusing on their responsibilities in school governance is a worthwhile area for research.

5.8   CONCLUSION

The researcher used the findings of the study to address the main research question and sub-questions. The researcher also considered the theoretical implications of the study. Recommendations on a number of issues were made and the limitations of the study were highlighted. Finally, the researcher made recommendations for further research.

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APPENDIX A: Letter requesting consent: Mpumalanga Department of Education

Head of Department

Mpumalanga Department of Education

Building 5

Government Boulevard

Riverside Park

Nelspruit

1200

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

Dear Ms X

My name is Mzungezi Nelson Nhlabati, and I am an MEd (Education Management) student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The research I wish to conduct is for my Master's dissertation:

Title: The impact of parent involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit of Mpumalanga

.

The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of parent involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit.

This project will be conducted under the supervision of Prof MW Maila (UNISA).Ethical clearance will be granted by the Ethics Review Committee of UNISA guided by the UNISA Research Ethics Policy if the application for ethical clearance meets all the requirements as prescribed by the UNISA Research Ethics Policy.

I am hereby seeking your consent to approach School A, School B, School C, School D and School E in the Breyten Circuit of Gert Sibande District to provide participants for this project. The participants in this research would be the school Principal, the Chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) and the Secretary of the SGB. The participants will contribute to the study through answering questions in an interview individually. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time without reprisal. Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity will be upheld.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on the details provided on the letterheads. The researcher is a school principal at School F in the Breyten Circuit.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mzungezi Nelson Nhlabati

APPENDIX B: Letter requesting consent: Circuit Office

The Circuit Manager
Breyten Circuit
De Clerq Street
ERMELO
2351

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

Dear Mr Y

My name is Mzungezi Nelson Nhlabati, and I am an MEd (Educ Management) student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The research I wish to conduct is for my Master's dissertation:

Title: The impact of parent involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit of Mpumalanga Province.

The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of parent involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit.

This project will be conducted under the supervision of Prof MW Maila (UNISA).Ethical clearance will be granted by the Ethics Review Committee of UNISA guided by the UNISA Research Ethics Policy if the application for ethical clearance meets all the requirements as prescribed by the UNISA Research Ethics Policy.

I am hereby seeking your consent to approach School A, School B, School C, School D and School E in the Breyten Circuit of Gert Sibande District to provide participants for this project. The participants in this research would be the school Principal, the Chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) and the Secretary of the SGB. The participants will contribute to the study through answering questions in an interview individually. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time without reprisal. Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity will be upheld.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on the details provided on the letterheads. The researcher is a school principal at Warburton Combined School.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Mzungezi Nelson Nhlabati

APPENDIX C: **Letter requesting permission to conduct research study and consent letter: Principal**

The Principal
School A
P.O. Box 1234
ABCD
5678

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

Dear Mr Y

My name is Mzungezi Nelson Nhlabati, and I am an MEd (Education Management) student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The research I wish to conduct is for my Master's dissertation:

Title: The impact of parent involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit of Mpumalanga.

The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of parent involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit.

This project will be conducted under the supervision of Prof MW Maila (UNISA).

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research at your institution. I hope that the school administration will allow me to recruit three School Governing Body (SGB) members (Principal, Chairperson of the SGB and the Secretary of the SGB) from the school to be participants in the study. If approval is granted, the participants will contribute to the study through answering questions in an interview individually. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time without reprisal. Confidentiality and anonymity will be upheld. Participants who agree to participate in the research will be given consent forms to be signed and returned to the researcher.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I will follow up with a telephone call next week and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have at that time. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on the details provided on the letterheads.

If you agree, kindly sign below and return the signed form in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Alternatively, kindly submit a signed letter of permission on your institution's letterhead acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct the study at your institution.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Mzungezi Nelson Nhlabati

Approved by:

_____

Print your name and the title   Signature   Date

APPENDIX D: Letter requesting consent and consent letter:Participants

<u>INFORMED CONSENT LETTER</u>

Dear Participant

My name is Mzungezi Nelson Nhlabati, and I am an MEd (Educ Management) student at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: The impact of parent involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit of Mpumalanga.

The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of parent involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit.

This project will be conducted under the supervision of Prof MW Maila (UNISA).

Ethical clearance will be granted by the Ethics Review Committee of UNISA guided by the UNISA Research Ethics Policy if the application for ethical clearance meets all the requirements as prescribed by the UNISA Research Ethics Policy.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will contribute to the study through answering questions in an interview individually. The total number of participants is 15. This number include principals, educators and parents. The participants were selected because they are members of the School Governing Body (SGB), they are the best people to provide the information that is needed for the study. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. With your permission the interview will be recorded.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You will be free to withdraw from the study at any time and/or request that your transcript not be used. Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity will be upheld. No comments will be ascribed to you by name in any written document or verbal presentation, nor will any data be used from the interview that might identify you to a third party.

There will be no direct compensation or benefit to you for participation in this study. However, I hope that the information obtained from this study may benefit the secondary schools in the Breyten Circuit. There are no anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to help me with my research. Once the report is complete a brief report explaining the findings will be available to all the participants. If you have any queries concerning the nature of the research or are unclear about the extent of your involvement in it please contact me on the details provided on the letterheads.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mzungezi Nelson Nhlabati

By signing this consent form, I confirm that I have read and understood the information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Signed by:

_____

Print your name   Signature   Date

APPENDIX E: Informed consent letter: Mpumalanga Department of Education

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY: MR. M.N. NHLABATI

education
DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

Private Bag X 11341
Nelspruit 1200
Government Boulevard
Riverside Park
Building 5
Mpumalanga Province
Republic of South Africa

Litiko leTemfundvo   Umnyango weFundo   Departement van Onderwys   Umnyango weseMfundo
Enquiries: M.A. Baloyi (013) 766 5476

MR. M.N. NHLABATI
PO BOX 1586
ERMELO
2350

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MR. M.N. NHLABATI

Your application to conduct research was received on the 11 February 2014. The title of your study reads: "The impact of parental involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit.' The aims and the objectives and the overall design of your study reveal that your study will benefit the department and in particular the school governance section. Your request is approved subject to you observing the provisions of the departmental research manual which is attached. You are also requested to adhere to your University's research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics document.

In terms of the attached manual (2.2. bullet number 4 & 6) data or any research activity can only be conducted after school hours as per appointment. You are also requested to share your findings with the relevant sections of the department so that we may consider implementing your findings if that will be in the best interest of the department.

For more information kindly liaise with the department's research unit @ 013 766 5476 or a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za.

The department wishes you well in this important project and pledges to give you the necessary support you may need.

MPUMALANGA
A Pioneering Spirit

Sisonke Sifundzisa Sive

142

APPENDIX F: Informed consent letter:Circuit Office

education
DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

Breyten Circuit Office
PO Box 136
Ermelo   2350
01 Wedgewood Avenue
Ermelo   2350
Republic of South Africa
Telephone number: 017 801 6258/9
Fax number: 017 811 1650

Litiko leTemfundvo   Umnyango wefundo   Departement van Onderwys   Umnyango wezeMfundo

Enquiries: Mr. M.O. THELA/T.E MATYENI
0178016258/6259

TO   :   NHLABATHI M.N

FROM   :   THE CIRCUIT MANAGER

DATE   :   25 MARCH 2014

SUBJECT   :   CONCERN LETTER

1. Kindly be informed that permission has been granted for you to conduct your studies in the following schools as you requested i.e

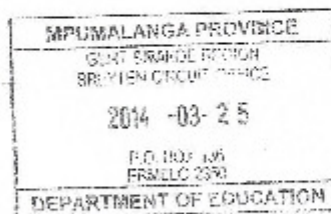- SCHOOL A
- SCHOOL B
- SCHOOL C
- SCHOOL D
- SCHOOL E

It is however expected of you to further laise up with School principals in order to secure an appointment.

You are further advised to abide by the ethical regulations or standard as you engage with all the relevant participants in these schools.

We are hoping your study will also help us as a circuit.

Thank you

CIRCUIT MANAGER

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
GERT SIBANDE REGION
BREYTEN CIRCUIT OFFICE
2014 -03- 2 5
P.O. BOX 136
ERMELO 2350
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

25 /03/14,
DATE

MPUMALANGA
A Pioneering Spirit

Together Educating the Nation

1

APPENDIX G: Semi-structured interview schedule

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduction of interviewer

Hello, my name is Mzungezi Nelson Nhlabati, and I am doing research on "The impact of parent involvement on effective secondary school governance in the Breyten Circuit of Mpumalanga Province."I am trying to explore this phenomenon. I am really interested in hearing what you have to say about this issue.

Biographical Data

1.   Age

2.   Gender

Male	
Female	

3.   Educational level

Never attended school	
Grade R – Grade 6	
Grade 7 – Grade 12	
College	
University	
Other, specify	

4.   Marital Status

Single	
Married	
Never married	
Divorced	
Widowed	
Other, specify	

Main questions	Additional questions	Clarifying questions
♦ Can you tell me everything you know about the SGB? ♦ Can you explain how the SGB elections were conducted? ♦ In your experience what isthe level of parent involvement at the school? ♦ Can you tell me about the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996? ♦ In your knowledge what are the functions of the SGB at the school? ♦ Can you tell me about training you have received on the functions of the SGB? ♦ Can you please tell me about the role that parents play in the SGB? ♦ Please tell me about the capacity of the SGB to govern the school. ♦ How would you say you are doing as the SGB of this school against what is expected of the functions of the SGB? ♦ Can you tell me about the SGB meetings? ♦ Can you tell me how youmake decisions in the SGB meetings? ♦ In your opinion what are the things that influence the participation of parents in the work of the SGB? ♦ Please explain to me how you go about drawing up school policies? ♦ Is there anything else you want to tell me?	♦ Why is this so? ♦ Why is that a problem? ♦ Why?	♦ Can you expand a little on this? ♦ Can you tell me anything else? ♦ Can you give me an example of that? ♦ What did you mean when you said ...?