AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF INCLUDING LEARNERS IN SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES:

" A CASE STUDY OF 4 HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE GRAHAMSTOWN DISTRICT, EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE"

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by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to assess the implications of including learners in School Governing Bodies. The promulgation of the South African Schools Act (1996) introduced a new model of school governance that had for the first time, learner participants. One of the objectives of this new innovation was to foster 'tolerance, rationale discussion and collective decision making' (Hunter Commission Report 1996:15). It was hoped that this would bring about the required rehabilitation of schools (Education White Paper I 1995:68). The introduction of the stakeholder participation paradigm in decision making was a radical shift from the norm. It became critical to examine its implications for both the system and especially, learners, who have never been exposed to school governance. One had to establish whether learners were making any meaningful contribution to these School Governing Bodies. The research also endeavoured to explore the 'fit' between policy imperatives and the actual practice on the ground.

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The observation strategy engaged was an explorative case study of four high schools in the Grahamstown district. Data collection was a combination of both the unobstructive interactive ethnographic and the intrusive ethnographic observation techniques.

This dissertation consists of five Chapters, namely, Background to Study, The Review of Literature, Research Design and Methodology, Data Analysis and Conclusions and Recommendations.

This research yielded some invaluable insights into what actually pertains at the micro-level of policy implementation.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND TO STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background

The South African education system has developed through periods of immense challenges, most of which have been linked to years of apartheid, a system of government, where the state actively sponsored social inequality. The apartheid legacy has left a fragmented society with huge inequalities in access to the country's resources as well as in the provision of public services. Elucidating the anomalies that prevailed under 17 education departments, with different management systems, Perold et al (1996:17) reports:

> In many cases one or two departments were responsible for schools in the same area, resulting in very inefficient management and use of resources.

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The absence of a co-ordinated approach resulted in corruption and mismanagement. This over the years led to a crisis of the legitimacy of the state and, in particular, the education system as a whole (Perold et al 1996:18). In the sphere of education, apartheid policies are perceived to have resulted in the breakdown of the culture of learning and teaching. In the black schools, this situation resulted in education management, principals, school inspectors and parents, losing their authority as they were regarded with suspicion. This posed some threats to the fibre of the entire society. Some schools became sites of struggle where many conventional education practices such as attendance, punctuality, etc. collapsed whilst others were seen as symbolising a rejected system, thereby facing destruction. There was a clear lack of a shared vision. In the 90's South Africa moved into a new phase of rapid political and social transformation.

A variety of policy initiatives were generated. During 1991 and 1992, the National Party led Department of Education, drawing on the research produced by the Human Sciences Research Council and Afrikaans academics, produced the Education Renewal Strategy and the Curriculum Model for South Africa (Smith et al 1997:24).

During the same period, the National Education Co-ordinating Committee convened the National Education Policy Initiative involving a number of educationists from the Mass Democratic Movement and the University Education Policy Units of the liberal universities. Amongst the topics covered by these numerous investigations, were education governance and administration. The outcome of these initiatives was the ANC's A Policy Framework for Education and Training (1994) and the Implementation Plan for Education and Training (1994) (Smith et al 1997:24).

In 1994 South Africa saw the inauguration of the first democratically elected government. The new government embarked on a reform strategy, which involved the transformation of the school system and society at large. The transformation agenda for the new Ministry of Education could be summed up as follows:

- strive for equity (both nationally and provincially)
- redress of the inequalities inherited from the former racially and ethnically organised education system.
- the provision of the same quality of learning opportunities for all the learners.
- to foster a democratic governance that would be anchored in school based negotiation and stakeholder participation.
- fostering a Human Rights Culture for all.

The Education White Papers, 1 and 2 of 1995 and 1996 formed the basis of the above objectives. White Paper 2 was based largely on the recommendations of the Review Committee on the organisation, governance and funding of schools chaired by Professor Peter Hunter. This Review Committee was appointed by the Minister of Education for the express purpose of advising on a strategy to embark on, in order that a unified, non-racial and a democratic national school system is achieved.

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The South African Schools Act of 1996, forms the legal framework within which School Governing Bodies in all South African public schools would be formulated and function.

According to sub-section 23 (2.d) of the South African Schools Act (1996:18), membership of the governing body of an ordinary public school, comprises, amongst other members:

> Learners in the eighth grade or higher at the school.

The promulgation of this Act, has introduced a new model of school governance, that has for the first time, learner participants. The function of this body is to engage in participatory decision making in order to effect change. It is further envisaged that this introduction will foster the principles of accountability, ownership and transparency that would bring about stability, especially, in black schooling. These new innovations had far reaching challenges for education governance and management. These are some of the challenges:

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- the creation of new structures out of older ones and the 'turning around' of the old institutional context, to enable it to facilitate transformation
- a shared vision and mission and a mission-driven type of governance versus a rule-driven one
- an open consultative participatory governance versus a secretive governance
- the extent of the preparedness of school heads for their new role as 'chief executives' instead of being autocrats (Perold et al 1996:18)
- the 'fit' between policy obligations and the actual practice.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Previously, education policy decisions were a preserve of the central government. These were imposed from the top down the lower levels of the education system.

The current education policy movement is towards 'self-managing' schools through a system of school-based decision making that includes learners amongst other stakeholders. In high schools learners are seen as important stakeholders who should participate in School Governing Body meetings.

The problem is that little is known about what contribution learners make in the democratic governance of the schools. In grappling with the question of learner participation, in school governance, there are a number of contextual variables, which need to be taken into account. These include, among others:

- the age gap between learners and other members of the School Governing Body.
- the culture of receiving instructions from above
- the skills capacity of the various stakeholders, especially learners
- professional obligations versus the 'will of the people'
- varying power basis of stakeholders
- the socio-cultural dimensions.

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Given the above issues, the core research question, therefore, is:

1.2.1 How meaningful is learner participation in decision making in South African Schools?

The above core research question can further be broken down into the following sub-questions:

i) Can learners contribute constructively to policy formulation?

ii) Can parents and teachers take learners seriously? (Attitudes and a possibility of manipulation).

iii) Can learner involvement contribute positively to the learning-teaching situation? How sustainable is that position?

iv) What impact does this kind of responsibility have on participating learners?

It will also be necessary to examine the extent to which there are any identifiable results, as defined by policy objectives, attributable to learner participation in decision making.

1.3 Aims

The ultimate aim of this research is to:

- determine how the stakeholder model of school governance works as seen through the SGB structure
- identify and document decision making process or processes in SGB's
- examine both the enabling and inhibiting factors in learner participation in decision making
- examine strategies that are used in promoting learner participation in decision making
- to generate information relating to the inclusion of learners in SGBs so as to establish a firm practical basis for their participation in these bodies
- test an integration between professional expertise and collective positional authority and attempt to provide a yardstick for policy development
- suggest definite roles that could be played by learners as stakeholders in the SGBs, so as to ease the tension that could be brought about by role ambiguity.

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1.4 The purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study would therefore, be threefold:

- establish different forms of learner participation and their role in the SGB
- differentiate between meaningful learner participation and meaningless learner participation
- establish factors that contribute towards meaningful or meaningless learner participation.

1.5 Objectives

The following activities will be pursued to assist in the realisation of the purpose of the study.

1.5.1 Establish different forms of learner participation and their role in the SGB

An assessment of how learners are engaged in SGBs will be undertaken. This will target learners, teachers and parents. The aim of this assessment will be to determine the following aspects:

- the areas in the SGB where learners are involved
- the extent of their involvement
- perceptions of the different stakeholders on learner participation.

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1.5.2 Differentiate between effective learner participation and ineffective learner participation

Two notions of effectiveness are to be employed, viz.

- the ideal, as espoused in the Policy. (The South African Schools Act of 1996).
- the norm, as observed from values and the actual practice.

Effective learner participation will be assessed through their involvement in the functions that have been designated for SGBs in the Act. This research will have to determine whether the learner's views are taken seriously by being accommodated in decisions that are taken by the SGB.

1.5.3 Determine the factors that contribute towards effective/ineffective learner participation

The factors that contribute towards learner effectiveness and ineffectiveness will be recorded and analysed. A number of variables that contribute to either state will be considered. For example, it would be of interest to measure how the following factors impact on learner participation:

- the different levels of conceptualisation
- the culture of protest and resistance
- the culture of receiving instructions from above
- the professional obligations vs. the will of the people

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1.6 The rationale

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Democratic school governance is a relatively new concept in historically black schools in South Africa. This research focuses on the role of one of the most important stakeholders in school governance, the learner. Given the historical and socio-cultural context in which the new policy initiative is being introduced, it is important to examine both the enabling and inhibiting factors in learner participation in the development of democratic school governance. If the government's democratisation efforts are to be steered towards the democratisation of all state organs, they must be informed by empirical evidence of what actually happens on the ground. The study will, therefore, provide insights into consistencies and inconsistencies between policy and practice as seen through the participation of learners in the School Governing Bodies of the four Grahamstown case study high schools.

1.7 The Conceptual Framework

This study will be lodged within the following conceptual framework:

- DECISION Theories (descriptive, normative and collective)
- the Three Categories of DOUBT
- stakeholder participation model of management
- collegial models of management

Collaborative decision making has been introduced in school governance with the aim of fostering transparency and responsiveness to the community. The inclusion of members of the community in school decisions has introduced a new dimension.
In participatory decision making, the power basis of the various stakeholders has an impact. Power relations between the social groupings are sometimes influenced by their own interests, which could be either conflicting or converging depending upon the issue at hand (Carron 1989:4).

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In South Africa, parents, learners and teachers are affiliated to a number of associations (political, professional, religious etc). It would be of interest to examine how the power relations influence decision making in School Governing Bodies.

Decision Theories make a distinction between three methods of decision making, these are, descriptive, normative and collective (Dunn 1994:80 and Dye 1992:39). While description theories are concerned with propositions that describe action, normative theories provide the basis for improving the consequences of action. Collective theories involve self-interested individuals who come together for their own mutual benefit. The assumption here is that, collective theories could foster unity and ownership among the stakeholders.

There is a need to validate this assumption. SGBs have to formulate policies around issues of admission, teacher recruitment, curriculum, school fees, codes of conduct for learners, etc.

For policy decisions to be relevant, these need to be informed by policy analysis. The process of policy analysis involves the three Decision theories. It is the descriptive method that provides information about the nature, the causes and the consequences of policy actions. It provides deeper insights into the problems. Normative theories are concerned with the solution of problems (Dye 1994:80). These decision skills are a significant aspect of governance. Governance implies the ability to select and implement proper strategies. The involvement of stakeholders (learners, teachers and parents) in school governance will enable them to understand the motivation behind certain policy positions.

It is assumed that this understanding will be taken into consideration when policy decisions are taken. This will bring the necessary stability in the schooling system. The assumption here is that parents and teachers will not use their position of power and impose decisions on the learners. It will be of interest to observe how decisions and policy positions are taken in the schools under investigation. This research will examine the contribution of learners in this regard. It will also assess whether the learner's views are taken seriously in policy issues.

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Other issues that need examination are the three 'categories of doubt' about educational reform, viz. ideals or ideas guiding reform, the interests promoting or affecting reform, and the institutional implementation of reform (Paris 1995:10). These three have implications for educational reform. Enunciating the significance of the role that could be played by these three categories, Ota (1997:3) says:

> Ideas, interests and institutions must mesh for reform to work. Bringing together the three I's is difficult not only because of the potential conflicts between and among them but also because each poses problems for reform.

The examination of the three categories is crucial for the research because the introduction of the new system of governance is one of the educational reform strategies of the new government. If then, the three could impact on reform, one needs to assess the kind of impact that these have on the transformation process.

1.7.1 Stakeholder participation

The 'stakeholder participation' paradigm is the educational management brand of the 'post-modern and post-bureaucratic' models of public administration.

It has been the choice because of the change of focus from administration procedures and routine to governance and decision-making. It is also the means through which schools are brought closer to the communities they are serving. The assumption is that this will enhance co-operation between the school and its clientele. In support of this view, Chisholm and Vally (1996:60) claim:

> Fragile and shattered relations between different school players are pivotal in explaining the deep sense of alienation, absence of working relationships, cohesive sense of ownership and forward planning.

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The inclusion of learners in decision making is an attempt to create a sense of ownership, which in turn, would create the necessary stability in the learning/teaching environment. It is through this stable environment that the culture of learning and teaching will be revitalised. In South Africa, the new emphasis on education management is on relationship building rather than on structure (Wooldridge and Cranko 1995:336).

This has been borne out of the experiences of the past. There is a close relationship between this model and 'Ubuntu' paradigm, which embraces humanness, warmth and the acknowledgement of the other person's worth. The assumption here is that, there is not a single person that can survive in isolation. Besides the collaborative and participative imperatives, the inclusion of stakeholders in decision making is an attempt to restore the lost credibility of education management. It is also perceived as a useful tool to facilitate communication.

1.7.2 Collegial models of management

Collaborative or stakeholder participation models of management and collegiality espouse the same basic management principles. Bacher and Kogan (1980:67) as quoted by Bush and West – Burnham (1994:38) describing the nature of the structure of these models claim:

> Collegium designates a structure or structures in which members have equal authority to participate in decisions which are binding on each of them.

Collaborating the above statement, Bush and West – Burnham (1994:38 – 39) enunciate the following main features of the collegial models:

- they assume an authority of expertise in contrast to the positional authority associated with the bureaucratic models
- they stress a common set of values shared by the members of the organisation
- common values are expected to lead to shared organisational objectives
- they assume that decisions are reached by a process of discussion leading to consensus.

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These models have often been regarded as the 'official models of good practice', perceived to be more appropriate for schools and colleges. The basis of this appropriateness is the fact that schools and colleges have a number of people whose professional expertise would be valued more than positional authority.

1.7.3 Implications of the two management paradigms for this research

In South Africa learners have been included in decision making bodies with the assumption that this would bring about co-operation and customer satisfaction among stakeholders.

It is believed that it is both this co-operation and satisfaction that would bring about change in the school situation. This research will explore the validity of this assumption.

Co-operative or collaborative models of management operate on the assumption that each and every member of the organisation:

- shares the same basic objectives and philosophy
- is on the same wavelength of understanding of issues and therefore does not take into consideration the distracters and slow thinkers.

If in collegial models of management professional expertise is valued more than positional authority, where does the balance of power lie? Should teachers, who are professionals, dominate the decision making process? If then this is the case, is there any point in involving parents and learners in these decision making bodies? Or does this mean that their involvement is mere tokenism?

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Another challenge for these collaborative models of management is the choice that has to be made between professional obligations and the will of 'the people', the majority.

Illustrating the parallel principles on which democracy and professional obligations operate, Ota (1997:23) claims that:

> Democracy rests on the notion that the elected people know what is best for the group while professionalism is based on the argument that lay people should not be making 'expert' decisions but should yield to the expertise of the trained specialists.

This is suggestive of the fact that 'organisational choices' are not necessarily 'professional choices'. These are some of the issues that have a potential of creating tension. Assuming that the general will is correct, and therefore should be implemented, could prove fatal to the organisation.

At the same time there is a need for a closer examination of the 'professional choices', whether these have the interests of the desires of the stakeholders at heart.

The involvement of learners as participants in decision making assumes that they, as customers, know what quality education is. The understanding here is that they are in a better position to know what their 'value for money' in education should be. There is an urgent need to verify this assumption.

This study will be undertaken in a township environment. It would be of interest to observe how the environmental variables such as socio-economic and cultural factors influence the research.

The concept, school, implies a particular philosophy or ideology. It has always had a tradition of a top-down kind of management style where decisions were imposed. The participatory decision making imperative is a radical shift from the norm. This model could easily be subjected to abuse. Co-operative models espouse freedom of expression and consultation.

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One needs to take cognisance of the fact that it is often management that initiates and creates space for discussion. Again, decisions are enforced and implemented at this level. Contrived collegiality or manipulation can easily play a role.

Another aspect that poses a challenge is that of accountability. While decision making is decentralised to the level of the school, it is the education department that pays the principal his/her salary.

He is therefore accountable to both the School Governing Body and the education department that pays him a salary. Allegiance can sometimes be compromised in such situations.

1.8 Limitations of the research

Limitation on this research could be brought about by a number of factors, e.g.

1.8.1. Bias

The researcher comes from the old school of thought that believed that pupils are to be led and guided by the teacher. The teacher and the parent know more because of their experience. The understanding of the bias that could flaw the research will assist in striving for objectivity by triangulation.

1.8.2 Role playing (some of the sources)

The knowledge that there is an observer in their midst might put some of the sources off or people might not be truthful in their responses as they might strive to appease the researcher. Some might be afraid of being perceived as politically irrelevant. Their responses would therefore not reflect their inner most feelings. The fact that the researcher would be perceived as a departmental official could pose some challenges on the process. Other sources, on their fear of being subjected to inspection, could develop a negative attitude.

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Records and the use of some members of the School Governing Bodies, as data collectors, might assist in ensuring the validity of the data. The position of being a departmental official will put the researcher in a better position to access the schools and their records.

1.8.3 Limited resources

The fact that learner participation is new, could pose some challenges on the accessibility of information.

In some areas, the election of the new governing bodies was delayed due to some problems with training and in some instances due to the lengthy process involved in the formulation of the necessary legislation by the various MEC's for Education. It won't be surprising to find that in some schools, these will not have been operationalised.

This research will assist in assessing the pace between the policy formation and practicalities on the ground. The fact that there are very few resources on learner participation in school governance, makes the study very exciting because it will be among the pioneer studies on the issue.

1.9 Definition of terms

In a study of this nature, it becomes imperative to define certain key terms.

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1.9.1 Governance

Van Zyl and Engelbrecht (1994:2) define governance as:

> To control, lay down policy and
> to guide and implement policy...

Buckland and Hofmeyr (1993:30) perceives it as:

> Not simply the system of administration and control of education in a country, but the whole process by which education policies are formulated, adopted, implemented and monitored.

Mc Lennan (1995:524) gives a South African perspective on governance.

> Governance in South Africa is broadly understood as a combination of political and institutional power to ensure the effective management of resources for development.

All the three definitions cited above highlight the relationship that exist between governance and policy formulation.

The assumption in this research is that governance implies authority to control. School Governing Bodies have been empowered to formulate, implement and monitor school policies.

It is also implied that policy formulation has accountability responsibilities that are attached to it. Effective management of resources and their development falls within this ambit.

1.9.2. Quality

There have been a number of attempts to define quality in Education. People have come to accept that quality depends on the norms and values recognised by the role players. Supporting this view, Glasser (1990) cited in Smith et al (1997:134) has this to say:

> It would be extremely difficult to come up with an exact definition of quality education that would apply to all situations.

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Quality is an elusive notion. In an endeavour to measure quality, people have come up with the system of quality indicators. Quality indicators are the cornerstones of any quality assurance system (Ota 1997:10).

For the purposes of this study, the notion, quality will be applied to mean values and norms that people have come to associate with good practice.

1.10 Summary

In conclusion, an outline of the subsequent Chapters is given.

1.10.1 Chapter 2

This will be the review of the literature pertaining to school governance both in the country and outside of this country. The motivation behind this approach is the conviction that this literature will throw some light on issues and themes related to school governance. This approach will assist in the contextualisation of the present research.

1.10.2 Chapter 3

This Chapter will outline the methodology and the design of this study. It will also serve as the motivation behind the choice of the methodology and design.

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1.10.3 Chapter 4

In this Chapter, an outline of the research findings will be given.

1.10.4 Chapter 5

This will be the final Chapter where the conclusions and some recommendations based on the research findings will be highlighted.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The review of literature is to be organized as follows:

- the review of educational policy documents with a view to elicit issues that are pertinent to policy.
- a review of other studies on school governance (with special reference to South Africa). This approach is motivated by the fact that the current study stands to benefit from the lessons and findings of these studies.
- the literature related to the critical questions and the theoretical framework within which this study is lodged will be considered. These are some of the variables to be examined:

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  - policy expectations versus the practice on the ground
  - collegial models of decision-making among colleagues and these models between non-colleagues. The question of professional obligations versus 'the will of the people' will be given special attention
  - levels of experience and exposure and how these impact on the decision making process and processes and the
  - participatory and representative system of decision making.

A summary of findings will be given. An attempt to show how the current enquiry relates to the other investigations and literature will be made.

These are some of the areas to be examined.

- trends and converging themes will be given special consideration and
- problems, inconsistencies and omissions will be highlighted in the summary.

2.2 Review of educational policy documents on school governance

The new system of school governance, that has for the first time, learner participants, has as its basis, the following sources:

- the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994)
- the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
- the Education White Papers 1 and 2 (1995 and 1996)
- the Hunter Commission Report (31 August 1996)
- the South African Schools Act (1996)

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The review of the sources cited above will provide some insights into the ideal school governance as envisaged in the government policy.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994:60) has identified the need to encourage the civil society to:

> play an active part in the provision of learning opportunities as part of the national human resources development strategy.

The active involvement of the civil society in this regard, is perceived as a strategy for capacity building.

The lack of capacity on school governance has been identified as one of the disparities that exist in the South African schooling system.

It is within this context that the Education White Paper 2 (1996:10), while insisting on a uniform and a coherent school governance system, is also advocating for flexibility because of the need to:

> take into account the wide range of school contexts, the significant contrasts in the material conditions of South African schools, the availability or absence of management skills, parents' experience or inexperience in school governance...

Elucidating the role that could be played by the state in the alleviation of the problem of the lack of capacity, the Education White Paper I (1995:21) commits all state organs to:

> provide advice and counselling on education services by all practical means...

The school governance of all public schools is vested in their governing bodies and these also stand in positions of trust towards their schools (The South African Schools Act 1996:14). It is for this reason that the empowerment of SGBs is of utmost importance. Their empowerment will enable them to play a meaningful role in school governance.

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The involvement of communities in decision-making bodies is perceived to be one of the cornerstones of democratic governance. Emphasizing the importance of community involvement in school governance, the Education White Paper I (1995:21) directs that:

> principle of democratic governance should increasingly be reflected in every level of the system, by the involvement in consultation and appropriate forms, decision-making of elected representatives of the main stake-holders, interests-groups and role players.

The impression that is created here is that of communities being in school governance for the purpose of consultation and collaboration in decision making. Consultation and collaboration will bring about the spirit of co-operation, partnership, ownership of decisions, transparency and accountability.

This in turn is hoped to create an environment for the restoration of the culture of teaching and learning (Education White Paper I 1995:22 and The Hunter Commission Report 1996:8). The ownership of decisions will result in the ownership of educational institutions by their communities. Communities will be afforded opportunity to influence the 'cultural ethos of their schools'. (Hunter Commission Report 1996:8). This will cement the partnership between the state and the local community (ibid. : 8). It is hoped that the participation of stakeholders in decision making will bring about the required rehabilitation of schools and that the quality of performance will be raised (Education White Paper I 1995:68).

The main education stakeholders have been identified to be the parents, teachers and learners. Although parents have the most stake in the education of their children (Education White Paper I 1995:70), their rights are not absolute or unlimited (Hunter Commission Report 1996:8). It is for this reason that their rights should be exercised within the context of the fundamental rights of all state organs. The implications here are for parents to avoid dominating the decision making process although the requirements are that, they should comprise one more than the combined total of the other members of the SGB (The South African Schools Act 1996:18). Emphasising the need for a shared decision making process among stakeholders, the Hunter Commission Report (1996:15) makes this recommendation:

> for democracy to work – requires school governance structures which involve all stakeholder groups in active and responsible roles, encourages tolerance, rationale discussion and collective decision-making.

The impression created here is that there is bound to be difference of opinion among the role players. This could be due to a number of variables like the different levels of conceptualisation of issues, experience, political affiliation and the resultant different ideologies embraced by the various political organisations. However, the driving principle in school governance should be to strive for harmony by giving each stakeholder group an opportunity to be heard. It is through this tolerance that the required consensus would be reached.

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The implications are for each member to be treated as an equal partner in the decision making process for the democratic principles to be said to have been realised.

Outlining the specific functions of the SGB, the South African Schools' Act (1996:22) has identified the need for an SGB to elect from its members office-bearers who must include a chairperson, a treasurer and a secretary.

> only a parent member of a governing body who is not employed at the public school may serve as the chairperson of the Governing body (ibid. :22)

By implication this means that other than being chairpersons, learners and teachers could be elected as either treasurers or secretaries of their SGBs. This research will test whether the rights of learners to be elected to these portfolios have not been infringed in one way or another.

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It would also be of interest to note the number of schools that have accommodated learners to these positions and if they have been accommodated, their ability to cope with these tasks will be assessed.

SGBs should determine policy around the following issues:

- curriculum issues (within the context of the national and provincial framework)
- admissions
- teacher Recruitment (recommendation of the appointment of teachers and non-teaching staff)
- funding (determination of school fees in consultation with the parents)
- code of conduct (for both learners and teachers)
- vision and the mission statement of the school

The nature of the policy issues on which decisions have to be taken, also poses some challenges on the SGBs, especially the learners, whose expertise and experience is limited. This research will have to assess the learners' capacity in coping with issues pertaining to the curriculum, admissions, etc. Of particular interest for the study will be the extent to which their voice is heard by other stakeholders who have always taken these decisions.

Of interests also is the fact that although learners should take an active part in the decision making process, as members of the SGB, they are not liable for any consequence of their membership of an SGB (South African Schools Act 1996:22). They are also not to enter into any contractual obligations. Another significant factor is their term of office which is only 1 year, whereas, for all the other role players, the term is 3 years (ibid.:22). These two factors have implications for the role that could be played by learners in the SGB.

This research will examine how these two aspects impact on the meaningful role of learners in SGBs.

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2.2.1 **Summary**

The motivation behind the introduction of this new system of school governance, that has learner participants, is the need for the restoration of the culture of learning and teaching and the rehabilitation of the school system. This new system is hoped to be able to restore stability in the school. There is a need to validate this assumption.

The policy documents make a distinction between governance and management. Governance which is the sphere of SGBs, is perceived to be policy determination, while management is viewed as the day to day organisation of the teaching/learning situation (Education White Paper 2 1996:16).

This research is to determine whether the same perception does hold among the various stakeholders, especially, around areas such as the 'provision of quality education for all' and 'the support of the staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions' (South African Schools Act 1996:16).

Although the Review Committee proposes that the composition of the SGB should reflect the diversity of the school community, they are opposed to political party representation. This position is informed, amongst other things, by the need for SGBs to put the interests of the learners and those of education first. This is a noble ideal. Although people are not elected to these SGBs as party representatives, one should take cognisance of the fact that they remain party members who have come to embrace the ideology of the party. Divorcing party loyalty from the interests of the school could pose some challenges especially for learners.

It would be of interest to observe how learners cope with this challenge. Other issues that would be examined are those of gender and racial representation.

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The policy stipulates that each member of the SGB should be treated as an equal partner as far as the decision making process is concerned. It remains to be seen whether this is what pertains practically.

On the whole this research will test whether the ideal as espoused by policy is practised.

2.3 A review of other studies on school governance

The South African Schools Act (1996) after being slightly adapted, has put the guiding principles set out in the NEPI report (1992), the Education White Papers 1 (1995) and 2 (1996) and the Hunter Commission's report (1996) into a legislative form (Smith et al 1997:24). It is for this reason that all these documents, especially, the NEPI report (1992) will form the basis of our discussion of this section.

The report of the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI) which was published in 1992, identifies some problems inherent in the apartheid system of education, viz.

- the education system of governance does not facilitate the participation of parents, teachers and learners in decision making.
- decision making and policy formulation have been left in the hands of non-neutral bureaucrats whose style is non-consultative, secretive and top-down.
- accountability is to bureaucratic authority rather than to the political groups at the local level.
- school circuits (at the district level) are purely administrative units who are not able to respond to the local policy issues.
- existing Advisory bodies lack legitimacy and therefore play a small role in policy determination.
- the alternative initiatives undertaken in other schools (especially EX-DET[1] schools) that involved parents, teachers and learners in school governance are non-statutory and therefore do not have any legal basis.

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In the light of the above cited problems, the NEPI report (1992:3-5) proposes the following issues for consideration by the new Education dispensation:

- a system of education governance that would embody the principles of non-sexism, non-racism, unity, democracy and historical redress of imbalances.
- an efficient system of education governance.
- a strategy for the optimal distribution of powers to the different levels of the education system.

[1]**Ex-DET – erstwhile Department of Education and Training for blacks in urban areas.**

- clarification of the nature of democracy that is envisaged. There has been evidence of tensions between representative and participatory conceptions of democracy.
- understanding of the fact that democratic participation although a necessity, is no sufficient condition for a democratic system of education governance.
- the interrelatedness of decisions about governance and those that are concerned with financing and resourcing and
- a statutory framework for education governance.

In addition to the issues that have been highlighted in the NEPI report and the frameworks for reform that are in existence, Chisholm et. al (2000:45) identify four prerequisites for effective implementation of change, viz:

> Political will and accountable leadership, greater capacity for governance and management at all levels of the system, a strengthened civil society and financial resources.

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The excerpt cited above creates the impression that the existence of a reform agenda and a conducive environment for change are not the only requirements insofar as the implementation of the envisaged change is concerned. Of utmost significance for effective implementation, are leaders and a society that have capacity to implement and manage the change process. Another major challenge for reform is that of the interests and the will of the implementers themselves. There are a number of factors that could impact on the will and interests of the implementers. The following are but a few of these factors:

- the power basis and the power relations between implementers.
- lack of capacity
- lack of direction and
- the fear borne out of suspicions surrounding any change process.

These factors need special consideration before undertaking any reform programme because an attempt to engage people who lack the will and interest in a particular change process is doomed to fail. The interests and the will of implementers could be generated by empowering them to such an extent that they own the envisaged reform. This could also guarantee the sustainability of the changed position.

The need to empower role-players is shared in the Education White Paper 1 and 2 of 1995 and 1996 respectively, the Hunter Commission report (1996) and Smith et al (1997) when all are advocating for vigorous capacity building programmes for the newly elected SGBs. Chisholm et al (2000:45) correctly highlights financial resources as priority for effective implementation of any reform. Halliday, as quoted in Coombe (1996:18) acknowledging the challenges that are posed by financial resources in a decentralised system, seems to share the same view when he says:

> decentralisation, while being a better way of managing the education system, is not cheap.

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The new policy on school governance as espoused in the South African Schools Act (1996) has steered the country towards a school-based system of education governance (Smith et al 1997:25). Coombe et al (1996:15), enunciating the implications of this position say:

> ... that decision making be entrenched at grassroots level, has apparently committed South Africa to a decentralised course in education

Needless to say, although, this policy has far reaching financial implications, South Africa has perceived it as the most suitable route to follow because it is through decentralisation that stakeholders are afforded opportunity to be actively involved in decision making processes.

Kgobe (2000:41) seems to be sharing the same sentiments when he says:

> South Africa, like other developing countries, emphasised decentralisation following democratisation

This gives the impression that the policy of decentralisation has been the norm, especially, with developing countries. This system is perceived to be having a potential (Coombe et al 1996:15-18) to:

- bring about equity and redress of past inequalities and thereby provide 'quality education for all' (Constitutional imperative).
- redress the imbalances of the past as far as the actual distribution of resources is concerned.
- improve quality and enhance partnerships that have been informally forged within the education arena.
- drive towards increased local autonomy in the South African education sphere.
- remedy the clogged decision making at higher levels.
- promote better co-ordination among local services and
- to spread the financial and professional responsibility for the education enterprise as broadly as is possible.

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For the above objectives to be realised, there is a need for more people that have the necessary skills and expertise to deliver the desired goals.

Halliday (1993:4) elaborating on the resource implications of decentralisation has this to say:

> it requires more people overall – fewer at the centre, but more at district and school level...

The involvement of more people has cost implications for the entire system. The cost involved raises a number of concerns, the funding of schools, the quality of education and its value for money which in itself, is a scarce commodity, especially, in the light of the other imbalances of the past that need redress, the demand for job creation initiatives, a unionised and an enlightened labour force that demands higher wages, the dwindling value of the rand, the globalisation imperative, the need to service the country's foreign debt, the skewed distribution of resources and the obligation for equity, to name but a few.

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Besides cost implications, the employment of more people poses some challenges for the management of the system, for example, the co-ordination and the consolidation of policy, monitoring, quality control and uniformity. A mammoth task is that of getting skilled personnel who is enabled to rise to the demands of the envisaged policy. Another critical question is that of striking the balance between the local needs and the overarching educational policies and the ability to handle the resultant conflict between the two forces. Coombe et al (1996:15) warning about these tensions, say:

> ... there will be significant tension between the agendas of local authorities and overaching concerns of the policy of education ministries – locally and provincially.

The South African Schools Act (1996) has provided the legal framework for the transformation agenda of school governance. The objectives and motivation behind the policy have been clearly articulated.

The critical question becomes the implementation of the policy and the realisation of the objectives espoused in the Act.

School governance as entailed in the Act is a new phenomenon in South Africa with the result that little research has been done on its applicability and impact on the school and the education system as the whole. A recent study on the issue has been produced by the Centre for Education Policy Development, Evaluation and Management (CEPD) in April 2000. This is a longitudinal study dubbed, Education 2000 Plus project, aiming to:

- track processes of policy development and implementation at macro and micro levels
- examine the links between education policy development and implementation
- track/monitor the shifts in policies of transformation over time and to
- evaluate the impact of policies of tranformation at macro – and micro – levels (Kgobe 2000:4).

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This research is still in process as it is hoped to stretch over a period of 3 years (with its first phase being the period 1998-1999). Two schools from each of the nine provinces were selected to participate in the project.

In the current round of Education 2000 plus research, the number of case study schools have been increased to 27, that is, 3 schools per province. The study is looking at a variety of policy issues like, the curriculum, school management, etc.

The variety of issues covered, places some limits on the depth in the analysis of some of the aspects covered (Kgobe 2000:6). Limitations put aside, this study has spear – headed the empirical investigation of education governance at the micro-level i.e., the school.

he other pioneer study that has been conducted by the University of Natal in 1998 i conjunction with the Joint Education Trust, has as its thrust, teacher development. 3oth studies examine the mis- or and match between the ideal as espoused in policy and practicalities at the micro-level. It is interesting to note that both studies have come to the realization that situations differ from school to school with each situation responding to its social dynamics. These studies, each in its own way, have formed the basis of this research. Since the focus of this research is on school governance, our attention would be on findings of the Education 2000 Plus project with regards to school governance. The findings of any research are relevant to the nature of the questions explored in the research. The research in question explored the following issues in relation to school governance:

- whether the SGBs have been established in line with the South African Schools Act (1996)
- the effectiveness of these bodies in carrying out their duties
- the extent to which SGBs are functioning as instruments of democracy and
- how the powers allocated to them have impacted on the schools (Kgobe 2000:114)

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The following are observations from the 18 case study schools around the country:

- all the 18 schools studied had established SGBs
- the effectiveness of these SGBs varied and the satisfaction of the other stakeholders with the functioning of these bodies differed considerably.
- all the SGBs were chiefly involved in fund-raising activities and less involved in other areas of responsibility.
- at some schools there appeared to be serious tensions between teachers and parents.

- there were also instances where parental capacity to function effectively is questioned (Kgobe 2000:114-115)

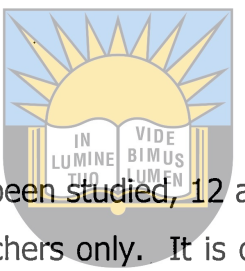
Finally, the research has come to the conclusion that:

- the decentralization of power to the school level has resulted in varied benefits within the different contexts of the schools.

- there is a need for ongoing development and capacity building for SGBs.

- attempts to implement national policy in schools without the necessary resources, capacity and support could be detrimental to the system (Kgobe 2000: 121-122)

2.3.1 Summary



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Of the 18 schools that have been studied, 12 are primary schools whose SGBs comprise of parents and teachers only. It is only in secondary schools (from Grades 10 – 12) where learners are allowed to participate in SGBs.
This may be one of the reasons why the study under discussion, is silent on the actual role that the learners play in the SGBs of the case study schools. In the policy making process, the need to distinguish between 'stakeholder' representation and meaningful involvement of constituencies have become apparent (Chisholm et al 2000:20). It is the researcher's considered view that each unit is obliged to play a meaningful role in the SGB for harmony to prevail. It is for this reason that this research is aiming at assessing the meaningfulness or otherwise of the role that the learners play in these bodies.

The 6 secondary schools that have been involved in the case study, span a very wide spectrum of the social divide (1 township, 2 rural, 1 ex-HOD[2], 1 farm, 1 ex-model C[3]).

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[2]Ex-HOD – erstwhile Department of Education, House of Delegates for Coloureds
[3]Ex-Model C – Model 'C' schools were the former White schools who opted for the private arrangement of involving School Governing Bodies in decision making in areas such as admission policies and finances. The state did subsidize these schools.

This situation makes it difficult to formulate general conclusions on the environmental factors that could have influenced the resultant scenarios. This research concentrates on township schools with a view to bring out common factors such as socio-economic (poverty, unemployment, etc) and cultural aspects that could influence policy implementation, especially, in the light of the 'varied benefits' that decentralization has brought to the schools, 'within their different contexts'. The limitation that has been identified in the report of the 2000 Plus Project is the lack of depth in the analysis of some of the aspects covered, because of the variety of the areas it covers. This research will attempt to bring out a more analytic view of one aspect of policy, which is school governance, with special emphasis on learners.

The review of other studies on school governance has revealed that although good theoretical foundations for democracy have been laid, the lack of the practical basis for these policies, is posing very serious challenges for implementation. There is therefore a need to unpack strategies to overcome them.

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2.4 Literature related to the theoretical Framework

Fullan (1996:14) expressing the new direction on school governance, says:

> a commitment to decentralized,
> school-based negotiation and stakeholder
> participation is part of the new direction
> and organization of education.

The involvement of stakeholders (learners, parents and teachers) in decision-making, implies a shifting school governance context. It also indicates the endeavours by the new department of education to respond to the constitutional imperatives of the country to:

> lay the foundations for a democratic
> and open society in which government
> is based on the will of the people...
> (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996:1)

Davidoff et al (1997:98) differentiate between two types of democracy, viz. the representative and the participatory types. In the representative type, all the relevant constituencies elect representatives who are mandated to represent the interests and the views of those who elected them, while participatory democracy emphasises the importance of participation of all constituencies in decision-making.

Fullan's assertion is in collaboration with the Hunter Commission Report, which puts emphasis on the need for the active involvement of stakeholder groupings in the governance of the school. The indications are that, the South African Schools Act (1996) has endorsed both types (participatory and representative) of democracy, in that learners are represented in SGBs through their own elected representatives and these are expected to play an active role in the life of the SGBs.

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The impression created here is that, the modus operandi, in the decision making process is, 'negotiation' and the consideration of the 'will of the people'. One should take cognisance of the fact that decision making has implications for power, control and responsibility (Davidoff et al 1997:92). The method of operation as reflected in the policy of the government, therefore, points to the shifting balance of power and the changing of power relations. Power is now shared between professionals, the civil society (parents) and those that are more than often affected by the decisions that are made (learners). McLennan (1997:35) detailing the focus of stakeholder participation paradigms, seems to concur with this view, when she says that these reflect:

> the devolution of powers ... and the
> shifting of power to elected officials

The power of the elected officials lies in the fact that they have been elected by the people and therefore their views are assumed to be the expression of the general 'will of the people', that have elected them.

In order to understand the context within which the stakeholders operate, one needs to explore their power basis. This position is informed by the reality that views are never neutral of the socio-political influences.

Carron (1989:24) elucidating the influences that shape decision, says these are:

> affected by the triple influence of the different organisations representing educational sub-system (teachers' union, parents' association, students' association), of the organisations belonging to the other subsystems (political, socio-economic, cultural and religious), and finally of external influences (technical and financial aid organisations, multi-national corporations).

The involvement of the civil society in school governance has compounded the decision making process.

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Stakeholders, as representatives of their constituencies, are bound to be responsive to the value judgements of their constituencies.

There is evidence that divergence from organisational positions has proved to be detrimental to the elected representatives.

Dawkins (1991:75) describing how the incorporation of the representatives of teachers and parents in decision making bodies have dented some teachers' image in their schools, says, this:

> has worked to the detriment of teachers in schools because it 'quietens' the more radical and oppositional discourses.

Deducing from the above excerpt, it is clear that the representatives have been given a specific mandate. It is, therefore, not expected that they could be 'absorbed' in the process, hence the dissatisfaction among those that elected them to these positions. This could result into a situation where each stakeholder grouping protects its own interests and turf.

The most powerful group could end up dominating the decision making process. This is the reason why there is a need to have some strategies to counter this situation.

The government is insisting on the principle of reaching some consensus among all stakeholders.

This all inclusive power sharing is a radical shift from the norm. It, therefore, calls for the transformation of the mindset, the development of 'the culture of collaboration' and the nurturing of the spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership (Fullan 1996:15).

This means that stakeholders are colleagues when it comes to issues of school governance. This brings us to the concept, collegiality. The collegial models of decision making are often utilised by colleagues.

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The utilisation of these modes of decision making encourages debate and participation among the colleagues. It is through this debate that the common values are shared.

Collegial models have often been regarded as the 'official models of good practice' especially for schools and colleagues. Explaining how these values came to be shared among colleagues, Bush and West-Burnham (1994:38-39) have this to say:

> these are thought to emanate from the socialisation which occurs during training and the early years of professional practice.

What is implied here is that, professionals are subjected to some kind of transformation as part of their training. Their world-view is determined by the transformed perspective that they have come to embrace. This position has also been entrenched through the experiences gathered in practice. This requires patience and tolerance in the search for consensus and compromise.

It is assumed that the involvement of the other stakeholders (learners in this case) will bring about some form of dynamism in these professional perspectives thereby steering them towards the 'will of the people'.

It is hoped that this influence will be brought about through the collective decision making by the various stakeholders.

The assumption is that this will be for their common good and therefore will result in the realisation of the ideal of a shared vision. Senge (1990:206) seems to support this assertion when he says:

> a shared vision must evolve through
> the dynamic interaction of organisational
> members and leaders.

Each and every stakeholder grouping should be given opportunity to express views. The fact that the stakeholders come from different orientations is bound to bring about more conflict and sometimes very robust discussions. This should not discourage debate because conflict is a healthy ingredient in any change situation.

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Fullan (1996:7) expressing the necessity of divergence of opinions in a change process, has this to say:

> heterogeneous or diverse cultures
> have more conflict but they contain
> greater seeds of breakthrough...

Pascale (1990:263) is alluding to the above statements when he claims:

> life doesn't follow straight-line logic,
> it conforms to a kind of logic that
> changes the nature of things and often
> turns them into their opposites.

The above extract is a reminder of the fact that the environment within which stakeholders have to operate is constantly changing. In the process of change, it affects the rationality that people have constructed of it.

Fullan (1993:42) advising learning organisations on survival strategies within the shifting contexts, says:

> the organisation must be dynamically plugged into its environment if it is to have any chance at all of surviving.

2.4.1 Summary

The review of literature has revealed the following trends and themes:

- democracy works best on the principle of inclusivity – hence the inclusion of parents, teachers and learners as active participants in school governance.
- the overarching ideals in this system are openness, equality, collaborative and co-operative partnerships among stakeholders.
- the involvement of professional and non-professional (learners and teachers) participants in decision-making, indicates the broadening and the changing school governance and management contexts.
- decision-making relates to power, control and responsibility. There are indications that the balance of power has shifted in favour of elected representatives.
- the broadening of the powers has brought about issues of the power basis of the various stakeholders and the challenges that these could pose on the process.
- the need for collective decision making cannot be overemphasised.
- there is definite evidence of systemic change in education governance.
- the transformation of mindsets has become urgent.

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2.5 Conclusion

The conclusion will attempt to highlight some of the problems and challenges originating from the literature that has been reviewed. Some of these will be taken up through the envisaged research.

The literature on education governance that has been reviewed reflects the trend towards school-based decision making processes and the commitment of the new government in meeting the demands of the time. This commitment is evident in the policies that have evolved since its inception. There is also a need to gauge the extent to which these policies are conceptualised at the grassroots levels.

This is very crucial in that interpretation and conceptualisation have implications for policy implementation, especially, within the context of the systemic shift, which has become evident in the sphere of education governance. Another issue that is to be explored by this research is the extent to which some of the aspects of school governance have been adjusted and adapted to suit the local conditions and thereby deviating from policy. This research is hoping to generate more information on school governance that has been informed by empirical evidence of the actual practice on the ground. The assumption is that this information will inform policy formulation, especially, with regards to learner participation in school governance. The inclusion of learners as active participants in open democratic school governance, raises a number of questions if one considers the kind of relationship that exists between the concepts, democracy and education. Morrow (1989) as quoted in Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:98), drawing the distinction between democracy and education, says:

> Schools are particular organisations,
> and education a particular kind of
> process that does not reflect equality.

The above statement brings in the issue of power bases of the teachers. The teacher's power is also determined by his experience and knowledge.

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By virtue of his/her profession, the teacher has to guide the learner. The same could be said of parents, who have to guide their children through adulthood.

One motivation for their involvement in school governance is the fact that they are believed to be knowing exactly what is 'good for their children'.

The assumption is that these two scenarios have an impact on the participation of learners in school governance especially around decision making process. The research will examine the kind of impact these have on the learners. Parents and teachers have always been conservative in approach. It has been proved that parents and teachers are not so well disposed towards learner participation in decision-making bodies. Watkins (1988:19) alluding to the same view says:

> While teachers claim their right to participate (or be represented) in decision-making in the positive sense, they often simultaneously offer to the students, the opposite.

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There is an urgent need to determine whether there are signs of transformation in this area. Another issue that needs close examination is the issue of transparency that goes together with openness. Professionalism demands confidentiality on certain issues. One has to assess the learners' ability to cope with this demand if one considers the fact that the learners are representatives of other learners. As representatives they have to be transparent to their constituency. Are they able to balance the two opposing forces? The nature of issues discussed at the meetings of SGBs could have an influence on the participation of learners because of the different levels of conceptualisation of issues within the stakeholders. There is a need to assess the kind of impact that this situation has on the learners.

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:92) enunciating the advantages of active participation in decision making, say:

> participation is a way of empowering people, of allowing them to participate actively in the control of their lives.

This may be true. There is a need to validate this statement with regards to learners. Meaningful engagement in SGBs, means the ability to cope with the stresses that go with responsibility and the capacity of making a difference, especially, for those that one is representing. The question is whether learners have been capacitated to play this very crucial role. This research will have to find out. The motivation behind the inclusion of learners (and parents) in school governance is to bring harmony and improvement to the learning/teaching situation. This research will determine if this is the case with the four case study schools.

The assessment of the issues raised here has become very crucial in that in all the literature reviewed mention is made of the involvement of learners in decision making processes. Of interest is the fact that no evidence could be found of their actual involvement and the benefits thereof. Fullan (1996:148) expression his alarm at the rate at which learners are sidelined by most educational research, say:

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> it is alarming how for the most part students remain at the periphery of most education and policy making endeavours.

Erickson and Schultz (1992:476) as quoted in Fullan (1996:148) go a step further and note research which takes into consideration the experiences of the students is non-existent. They say:

> ...virtually no research has been done that places student experience at the centre of attention

From the above views, it is evident that even the literature that we have at our disposal has limitations in that it is silent on the most important aspect of education – the students.

It is in the light of all the issues raised above that this study will be undertaken.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter is divided into the following sub-sections; the Research Approach, the Research Design and Summary.

3.1.1 The Research Approach

In this sub-section the rationale behind the choice of the qualitative approach as opposed to quantitative approaches is outlined with a view to provide some insights into the context of this research. Some philosophical and methodological issues pertaining to these approaches are also contrasted to highlight the different perspectives reflected within the two.

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3.1.2 The Research Design

Here the plan and the structure of the investigation strategy engaged in obtaining evidence to answer the research question is presented. Procedures utilized and the conditions under which the data was gathered are also outlined.

3.1.3 The Summary

3.2 The Research Approach

The general approach to this research had been qualitative. The choice of this approach was informed by the nature of the research question it sought to answer, the research methodology employed, the type of data and how that data was collected, analysed and presented. The ultimate purpose of this research was to explore the meaningfulness or otherwise of learner participation in SGBs. This could only be solicited through the observation and interpretation of the perceptions and the behaviour of the SGB participants (the learners, teachers and parents). The assumption in this research was that behaviour was sometimes influenced by the perceptions and the meaning that people attached to the world around them. Schumacher and McMillan (1993:14) distinguishing between qualitative and quantitative approaches, assert:

> qualitative research is based more on what is called naturalistic phenomenological philosophy, which assumes that multiple realities are socially constructed through individual and collective definitions of the situation.

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The above claim confirmed the assumption that perceptions as reflected in behaviour are an expression of the rationality that people have constructed of the world, both as individuals and members of a community or as members of a group. Of significance is the fact that their response to this rationality is informed by their interpretation of the situation that confronts them. In its examination of the meaningfulness or otherwise of learner participants in SGBs, this study had to understand the perceptions of the stakeholders in these bodies before any conclusions and generalizations could be made. The most suitable approach to the realization of this ideal was found in the qualitative approach.

This conviction was reinforced by Schumacher and McMillan (1993:14), when they say:

> qualitative research is concerned with understanding the social phenomena from the participants' perspective.

Another critical issue raised by McMillan and Schumacher (1993) is that of the 'naturalistic phenomenological' philosophy on which the qualitative approach is based. The meaningful learner role that this research sought to understand was meaning insofar as this was reflected in the participants' beliefs, thoughts, ideals, feelings and their own responses to these. It then became crucial that SGBs be observed within non-contrived conditions. This is unlike the quantitative approaches were observation is made within laboratory settings which have been pre-determined by the researcher. The crucial issue for this research had been the complexity and the dynamic nature of social phenomena. It was this realization that prompted the selection of an approach that would afford the researcher opportunity to observe the participants interacting with the dynamic nature of the social phenomena without them being manipulated.

The ultimate goal of this research was to explore the 'fit' between policy imperatives and the actual practice. Since this system of school governance, that had learner participants was a new phenomenon in South Africa, the approach was that of an emergent design. These emergent themes were then tested against the existing policy as pronounced in the South African Schools Act (1996). The motivation behind this approach was the fact that the researcher had opted for an explorative case study design. The choice of design was influenced by the realization that in South Africa, research on the effects of policy at the micro-level of the school and on learners was very little. The study was therefore treading on not so familiar ground. The micro-processes that were at play in policy implementation were probed.

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Issues of the relevance and the practicability of national policies and the state of readiness of the people directly involved to accept these, were explored. The rationale was to understand the context within which policy implementation was taking place.

The approach assisted the research in developing 'context-bound generalizations'.

The most critical outcome of this approach was basing grounded theories on tested realities rather than on hypotheses. Schumacher and McMillan (1993:15) explaining how this context is acquired, say:

> ... context is acquired by the ethnographer and the historian during data collection and analysis.

Since the issue of context was crucial in this study, in-depth ethnographic interviews and observation were used appropriately to allow for probing. In any piece of research, the role of the researcher becomes very critical. The ideal quantitative researcher should be detached from the situation to avoid bias. The impression one gets is that this researcher is in a position to exercise some objectivity. On the other hand the qualitative researchers 'become immersed' in the situation (ibid .15). The predicament in which these researchers find themselves, brings forth issues of subjectivity. Johnson (1994:7) expressing the difficulty of avoiding subjectivity in research, cautions:

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> ... no piece of social research can be entirely objective, since no researcher is value free.

In an attempt to exercise some 'disciplined subjectivity' the strategy was to build into the research instruments, some elements of triangulation to clear the data of any bias. Official school documents (Minutes of SGB meetings, Codes of Conduct, etc.) were analysed to verify information. In addition, the research allowed some elements of quantitative techniques that involved the formulation of graphs and percentages in the interpretation of data that required information about ratings and frequencies.

The use of some techniques associated with quantitative approaches in a qualitative research was based on the knowledge that one could combine these approaches in order to investigate a particular research problem (Schumacher and McMillan 1993:15). In order for any research work to have credibility, one needs, amongst, other things, to examine the research design.

3.3 The Research Design

Since this research was exploratory, the most appropriate research design for the type of information sought was the case study. This therefore was a case study of the SGBs of four high schools in the Grahamstown District.

The choice of this approach was influenced by a number of factors. The case study methods afford opportunity to observe, the 'characteristics of individual units' within their natural habitat (Cohen and Manion 1985:120). One of the main objectives of this study was to bring out an analytic phenomenological view of the actual role played by learners as one of the units involved in school governance. The case study approach therefore became appropriate. Cohen and Manion (1985:120) perceive the purpose of this type of observation as a means to:

> ... analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population to which the unit belongs.

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The express purpose of this research was to test whether learner participants were playing any meaningful role in SGBs.

The generalizations that were made therefore, were based on the close scrutiny of the many variables (like the learners' age, level of experience, etc) that came to play as learners interacted with the other role-players within the SGB structure.

Of particular significance, was that this interaction took place within the context of their natural environment. This investigation took place over a period of three months.

The length of the period of investigation was very crucial in that it provided some insights into the 'life cycle' of the units under observation. The investigation was done through the use of' multiple sources of evidence' (Johnson 1994:20). This allowed for the enlisting of other methods of enquiry in the collection of data.

While the focus of this study was on learner participation, for example, the other stakeholders (parents and teachers) were interviewed in an attempt to get a clear understanding of some of the issues pertinent to the study, like the operational relationships between the three stakeholder groupings. The engagement of the other stakeholders brought in an element of transparency insofar as the purpose of the study was concerned. The benefits of this openness were the removal of suspicions and anxieties associated with being the subject of enquiry. The enthusiasm that resulted out of this situation benefited the research, especially, in the area of accessibility to evidence. The use of a variety of enquiry methods and a multiplicity of sources of evidence should not be misconstrued to mean that case study designs are haphazardous. Johnson (1994:21) defining case study approaches, makes it clear that these methods entail:

> ... the systematic gathering of evidence but does not require an experimental situation.

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Another motivation behind the choice of this particular approach was the nature of the outcome of research in case study. Outlining the strength of the case study approaches, Johnson (1994:22) say:

> Case study based reports tend to be more readable, able to be understood by non-researchers, and hence a more widely accessible form of research outcome...

The purpose of this study, besides it being an academic piece of work to meet some academic requirements, was to highlight some of the realities between policy and its implementation.

The findings of this research therefore would be of benefit to all these parties. It was of necessity therefore that these findings be intelligible to all concerned. The purpose of policy research and analysis amongst, other things, is to make meaning of policy.

3.3.1 Site Selection

As has been indicated earlier, this study was an exploratory Case Study, aiming at discovering some information pertaining to policy implementation at the micro-level, the school. Schumacher and McMillan (1993:377) describing the usual focus of these particular studies, claim that these:

> ... frequently focus on the informal processes of policy formulation or implementation in different settings with diverse cultural values to explain public policy outcomes.

Although the focus of this research was on policy implementation at the level of the school, the issues of cultural diversity and different settings were not central in the selection criteria.

The rationale was that since this was a new policy, one needed to look at what entailed in settings that were more or less similar and embracing the same cultural values.

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The selection criteria was then as follows:

- high schools (public)
- same socio-economic and socio-politico factors
- accessibility

3.3.1.1 The Rationale

High schools were selected because the new system of school governance included learners from Grades 8 to 12 in all the public schools in the Republic of South Africa (South African Schools Act (1996). It was then assumed that high schools were the most probable places where SGB participants that were learners could be found, hence their selection.

Four case study high schools were chosen from the Grahamstown District. This district covered Grahamstown, Alexandria, Alicedale, Port Alfred and Paterson. It spanned township, ex-model C^3, rural and farm schools. Since the township schools were in the majority, the choice of the case study from these schools was appropriate in that the findings from this research would be a reflection of what to expect from the majority of schools in the Grahamstown District.

Another consideration was that of accessibility to all the four high schools. Access to these schools was made possible by their close proximity to one another, their tradition of close co-operation and sharing of resources. All four high schools were surrounded by informal settlements. They, therefore, shared a culture which was only particular to their surroundings. This was in addition to the socio-economic and socio-political factors associated with township life.

The fact that these schools had certain aspects that were common to all four made it possible to come to some general conclusions. This was after the peculiarities associated with each school were taken into consideration.

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These peculiarities were borne out of the fact that each school had its own way of doing things, which was determined by the interactions and the leadership that prevailed within each school's unique environment.

3.3.1.2 Accessibility

Since the issue of accessibility was crucial for the success of this study, this was negotiated with the schools prior to the beginning of the research (See Appendix 1). A meeting was held with the principals to clarify the purpose of the research. After issues of confidentiality were ensured, enthusiasm in the research was expressed.

3.3.1.3 Sampling

The key informants were selected from the members of the SGBs of the four schools. A sample of 3 parents, 2 teachers and 3 learners was selected from each of the four SGBs. The selection was based on the need to get the most knowledgeable informants about the situation that entailed in each SGB.

The approach therefore was to select, as far as was possible, from those that held portfolios or those that had served the longest period in their SGBs. Since one could not get a learner that fitted these criteria one had to use any two SGB learner participants.

The only compensation was the fact that the learners that were selected were either chairpersons or secretaries of their respective Learner Representative Councils. This meant that at least they had some credibility. It was also hoped that the other participants, through their experience in their SGBs, would be in a position to give rich information about learner participation in these SGBs.

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The purpose of focusing on a sample of few participants rather than the entire SGB structure, was to facilitate an in depth study that would yield more valuable insights. Another consideration was that of logistics involved in dealing with a big group of people.

The approach to sampling was also informed by the desire to find 'typical cases' that would reflect some of the variables (age, experience, culture, level of education and exposure) at play when decisions were taken. The idea was to use a 'combination of purposeful sampling' strategies that would yield the most reliable sources of information (Schumacher and McMillan 1993:380).

3.3.3 Data Collection and Analysis Strategies

Data collection was a combination of both the interactive fieldwork and non-interactive techniques. The interactive fieldwork adopted unobtrusive ethnographic observation and intrusive ethnographic interviews. With non-interactive techniques, the strategy was document analysis.

3.3.3.1 Unobstrusive Interactive Ethnographic Observation

The critical issue in the use of this technique was the role of the researcher because it could raise questions of reliability and authenticity of the data collected and thereby threaten the validity of the research findings. Schumacher and McMillan (1993:415) makes a distinction between two researcher roles, viz. the observer – participant and participant-observer.

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The 'observer-participant' is an 'outsider who is unknown at the site; while the participant-observer has a status within the group that is being observed' (ibid. 386). In situations where the researcher assumes the observer-participant status, his/her identity is disguised. This is assumed to minimize bias.

Participant observation limits reliability in that the status that is held by the researcher restricts the naturalistic phenomenological interaction needed.

In naturalistic interaction, the need for participants to act in typical fashion cannot be overemphasized. This was a reality that caused a dilemma for this study. These were the challenges that faced the researcher:

- the researcher was well-known at the site as she had been a principal of one of the best high schools in the district. There was no way that she could have hidden her identity

- her status as a Departmental official responsible for learning and teaching in all the schools in the Province had implications for her relationship with the participants, with obvious re-actions

- another limitation was that of time and distance. There was no way that a person could attend all the SGB meetings of all the four case study schools

- the experience as an SGB (when school principal) member of one of the schools gave her the advantage of having privileged information.

To overcome these limitations, a strategy that integrated both the observer-participant and the participant-observer stances was devised.

Since 'cover is not necessarily a prerequisite of participant-observation (Cohen and Manion 1994:122), teachers who were members of the SGBs in the four case study schools were engaged in the research. One teacher from each of the schools, played a participant observer role.

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Although these teachers had status within the group under observation, their status was unobtrusive and therefore could not affect the 'natural flow of events' since their researcher role was not disclosed to the other participants. The teachers were able to assume the role of observer-participant in their normal everyday duties as members of the SGBs without their cover being blown.

This approach required careful selection of these teachers in order that reliability could be ensured. The calibre of the teachers that participated in this research was as follows:

- all had experience of research methodologies, since all were university graduates who had been exposed to research. All had senior degrees.

- all were experienced members of their respective SGBs because they had been participating in these SGBs since their inception in 1997.

- the most valuable gain for the study was the fact that they all were secretaries of their SGBs.

- the fact that they had expressed enthusiasm for the research was an added value.

Their main task was to observe learner behaviour at SGB meetings. The critical issue became the definition of the context within which this observation had to take place. The definition of the context was crucial for ensuring a uniform conceptualization of the research premise. This was also important for purposes of assisting all the four ethnographers to focus on common observation areas. The strategy was to design an Ethnographic Observation Schedule that reformulated the research question.

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As experienced professionals and SGB participants it was easy to provide foreshadowed problems that would be incorporated in the Observation Schedule.

In addition to the definition of the observation context, this approach assisted in simplifying and interpreting the research problem. The following were the main focus areas:

- In which policy areas were learners usually involved in the decision-making processes?
- What kind of involvement? What effect did this have on the decision making process?
- How this involvement was perceived by other stakeholders?
- How consistent was their attendance of SGB meetings?
- What kind of contribution did learners make at these discussions?
- What kind of issues did they raise for discussion at the SGB meetings?
- How were they treated at these meetings?

Responses to the above questions provided the framework to the response to the core research question.

3.3.3.2 The Intrusive Ethnographic Observation

The intrusive ethnographic observation employed interactive interviews that were conducted by the researcher. The researcher role was that of interviewer. The purpose of these interviews was to both corroborate the obtrusive ethnographic observation and probing. Johnson (1994:44 – 51) enunciate three types of interviews, viz. structured, semi-structured and specialized interviews.

All three types are perceived to be' social encounters' that are initiated by the interviewer. For the purposes of this research, the semi-structured interviews were opted for to avoid interrogation of participants. A more flexible and conversational atmosphere was required if one strived for a naturalistic environment. This approach afforded opportunity to probe deeper on some aspects that would have been left vague in structured interviews. It also facilitated rapport between the researcher and the participants.

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A schedule of interview questions was designed in order to have a uniform approach towards areas that were to be probed. The interview questions had some elements of triangulation built into them. Three learners, three parents and two teachers from three of the case study schools participated in these interviews. The result was a total of 24 respondents.

3.3.3.3 The Non-Interactive Ethnographic Observation

In examining the four broad themes identified a number of tools for data collection were engaged for purposes of probing and triangulation. The strategies used involved document analysis, ethnographic observations and interview schedules followed by conversations.

3.3.3.4 Document Analysis

For document analysis, official documents like SGB minutes, codes of conduct, vision / mission statements and school programmes were perused.

3.3.3.5 SGB Minutes

The focus was on areas such as how resolutions were taken with special emphasis on the role of learners in both the formulation and the actual taking of those resolutions.

Their areas of interests in discussions and the nature of issues they often raised at meetings were also taken into consideration. The extent of their attendance of meetings, time of arrival at these meetings and their commitment to stay for the duration of these meetings was also tested. Of particular interest for this research, was how their views were taken by the other stakeholders (parents and teachers).

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3.3.3.6 Codes of Conduct

From these documents one had to examine the extent to which learners were involved in the formulation of these codes and the nature of responsibilities allocated to learners. Another focus area was how issues of human rights (especially of learners) were dealt with in these documents.

3.3.3.7 Vision/ Mission Statements

The examination here was on the evidence of the principles of democracy, accountability, transparency and open participation being upheld by the schools.

3.3.3.8 School Programmes

The focus was on the nature of programmes with special reference to learner capacity building programmes.

This was motivated by the assumption that learners had a new role to play in school governance as part of the school governance, therefore, there would be a need for a special effort to empower them in order to enable them to play a meaningful role in the new venture. Another critical issue was their commitment to attend these capacity building programmes if there were any.

3.3.3.9 Interview Schedules

The interview schedules tested the age and gender distribution of learner participants. The assumption was that the level of experience and maturity can influence a person's decision-making capabilities. Gender does also play a role in shaping a person's perspective.

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These schedules were also used to get information on the duration and regularity of SGB meetings and the extent to which learners attended these. These were also used as triangulation tools to check the level of learner involvement in policy formulation and discussions of policy issues. The semi-structured interviews offered a variety of questions like the dichotomous questions and those that required scaled responses. These were followed by ethnographic interviews that tested and triangulated the various responses. These were in-depth conversations that revealed more information. Some quantitative strategies of data interpretation will be utilised to assist in illustrating the observations.

3.3.3.10 Ethnographic Observation

These concentrated solely on SGB meetings. The learner behaviour, participation and commitment were observed over a period of three months. The purpose was to get inside information as to the workings of SGBs and the decision making processes involved.

3.5 Replication

Although this research focused on specific institutions, the issues raised were universal. Learners would always have distinctive characteristics that would be peculiar to them. It was these distinctive and unique features that would be utilised to formulate some grounded theories. The assumption being that these features had an impact on the overall behavioural patterns of high school learners (age 15 to 18 years). This assumption was not withstanding, the dynamism of any social activity.

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3.6 The Logical Framework

This research was designed to span the following time frames.

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME
Preparation of Research tools	Researcher	1 week
Soliciting Access to Schools	Researcher	1 day
Discussion of Research objectives	Researcher and principals of the 4 schools	1 day
Piloting of Research tools	Researcher and teachers involved with the research	1 day
Piloting of Research tools	To principals (Researcher)	1 day
Piloting of Research tools	To learners (Researcher)	1 day
Piloting of Research tools	To parents (Researcher)	1 day
Finalisation of the Research tools	Researcher	1 week
The case study (observation)	▪ Researcher ▪ Teachers / co-researchers	1 school term
Interviews	Researcher = learners, parents and teachers	2 weeks (at a time) * 3 = 6 weeks
Questionnaires	Researcher	1 week
Document analysis	Researcher	2 weeks
Data analysis (finalisation)	Researcher Co-researchers	2 weeks
TOTAL		**6 months**

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3.7 SUMMARY

The guiding principle in this study was confidentiality. It was with this view that names of the people and schools involved would not be disclosed. Code names had been used instead of the actual names in order to safeguard this principle.

The minutes of the SGB meetings were used as source material only. It also needs to be indicated that some of the activities happened simultaneously – hence the reduction of the research to 3 months.

Co-operation between the researcher and the other colleagues was central in all research activities. Field notes were compared for purposes of cross- referencing and the cleaning of data. This research took three months of intensive observations and interviews. Although it started with four case study schools, one school was lost along the way. All its official documents were made available to the researcher and it was also possible to conduct interviews with the principal. Problems were encountered when interviews with other stakeholders were organized. After many attempts to re-arrange appointments that were never honoured by the school, it was felt that pursuing the school any further was an exercise in futility. The data that was collected from this school will be used because it was made available through the consent of the school. The school was made aware of the research purpose and goals.

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For the purposes of confidentiality, the four case study schools are given fictitious names, viz. Progress High School, Action High School, Community High School and Success High School. All four high schools are in the Joza Township in the Grahamstown District.

The results and findings of this study are reported in the form of rich verbal expressions and statistical conversions in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter is divided into these sub-sections; the Overview, Data Analysis, Observations and the Summary.

4.1 The Overview

A brief summary of the previous Chapter is given to put the data analysis into perspective. The approach used for data analysis is also outlined.

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4.2 Data Analysis

The actual data analysis is resumed. Some background information on the learners is given with a view to shed light on the observed environment.

4.3 Observation and Findings

Each of the four themes is analysed to highlight the findings of the research. The strategies adopted and areas of focus are outlined.

4.4 Summary

An overview of some observations that were common in particular schools and those that were general for all four schools is outlined with a view to expose what actually pertained in the schools and also to test if there was a 'fit' between policy and actual practice.

4.1 Overview

In the previous Chapter, a detailed outline of the research methodology and design was given to provide some insights into the data collection strategies that were employed to gather in-depth information to enable an intelligent analysis of data. The main research approach was also highlighted with a view to put this study into perspective. A variety of methods used to collect data resulted in a myriad of data comprising of fieldnotes that were sometimes fragmented. These fragmented pieces of information had to undergo a series of processes to synthesize them. The regular interim data analysis that was done assisted in confirming emerging themes and recurring patterns.

The approach to data analysis would be the categorisation, comparison and the interpretation of a synthesized data. Schumacher and McMillan (1993:480) have confirmed this integrated approach in their description of qualitative data analysis.

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Another critical issue for qualitative data analysis is the classification and the categorisation of data. The sources that informed the classification and the categorisation of themes in this research were the core-research question and its sub-questions. The emergent themes from the data collected were constantly compared, contrasted and arranged around the four sub-questions. Even the foreshadowed problems anticipated were set in such a way that these enriched the sub-questions. The result was four major themes around which patterns were coded. These were as follows:

- Can learners contribute constructively to policy formulation?
- Can parents and teachers take learners seriously?
- Can learner involvement contribute positively to the learning / teaching situation? How sustainable is that position?
- What impact does this kind of responsibility have on participating learners?

The four broad themes identified were also considered against the conceptual framework within which this research was launched. While data was collected and analysed, it became crucial to observe how issues of stakeholder participation, collegiality and the 3 'I's (interests, ideals and institutions) 'meshed' to open the way for reform to take place.

4.2 Data Analysis

4.2.1 Background Information about the SGB Learner participants that were observed

Before any serious data analysis could be undertaken, one had to take into account the context within which perceptions could be reflected. The aim of this study was to establish whether the learners had any meaningful role to play in the various SGBs. A number of variables like age, experience, level of education, culture and gender determine a person's role in any situation. The strategy then was to establish the age, gender and the grade distribution of learners that served on the SGBs under observation. From that exercise one was able to glean the following information:

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Table 4.1

School	Gender		Age		Grade		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Progress High	2	1	20+20	19	12	12	3
Action High	1	2	20+	18 19	12	12	3
Community High	2	0	20 + 20	-	12	12	2
Success High	1	2	20	19 19	12	12	3
Total	**6**	**5**					**11**

Learner Distribution According to Age, Gender and Grades

The above observation revealed the following trends:

- there was a fair distribution of both sexes.
- the average age for male learners was 20 years, while that of females was 19 years.
- in all the four SGBs observed, learner participants were doing grade 12.

Further investigation into the reasons for the preference of grade 12 learners over the others revealed that the most senior learners were trusted to be the most articulate. They also had been at the school longer. They 'know the school' better (Action School – learner respondent).

Another important observation was the fact that not a single learner held a portfolio in the SGBs under examination. The learners were just ordinary members of their SGBs. Although no evidence could be gathered from all the official documents perused, it was learnt that they often played a role as sub-committee members, especially of the Fundraising Committees.

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It needs to be recorded that all the four case study schools had SGBs that were in line with the provisions of the South African Schools Act (1996).

4.3 Observations and Findings

Observations and findings are presented according to the four coded patterns as was discussed previously.

4.3.1 Can learners contribute constructively to policy formulation?

In establishing the above factor, the examination of the extent of learner commitment in attendance of SGB meetings became critical.

This was informed by the conviction that it was within the context of SGB meetings where one could make contributions in policy making because this is where policies are conceived, discussed and adopted. The time of arrival at these meetings was also tested. The strategy was to test how each gender fared in this area. The research interview schedule (in which respondents had to scale responses) applied to the three different stakeholder groupings of the four schools revealed a number of issues. The following revelations are from the three schools whose responses could be accessed. (See figures 1 (a) to 1 (d).

KEY TO SYMBOLS USED IN GRAPHS AND RATING SCALES

1. **Rating:1=very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = fair, 4 = good, 5 = very good**
2. **F : Female Learners**
3. **M : Male Learners**
4. **All : All Learners**
5. **% : Percentage**

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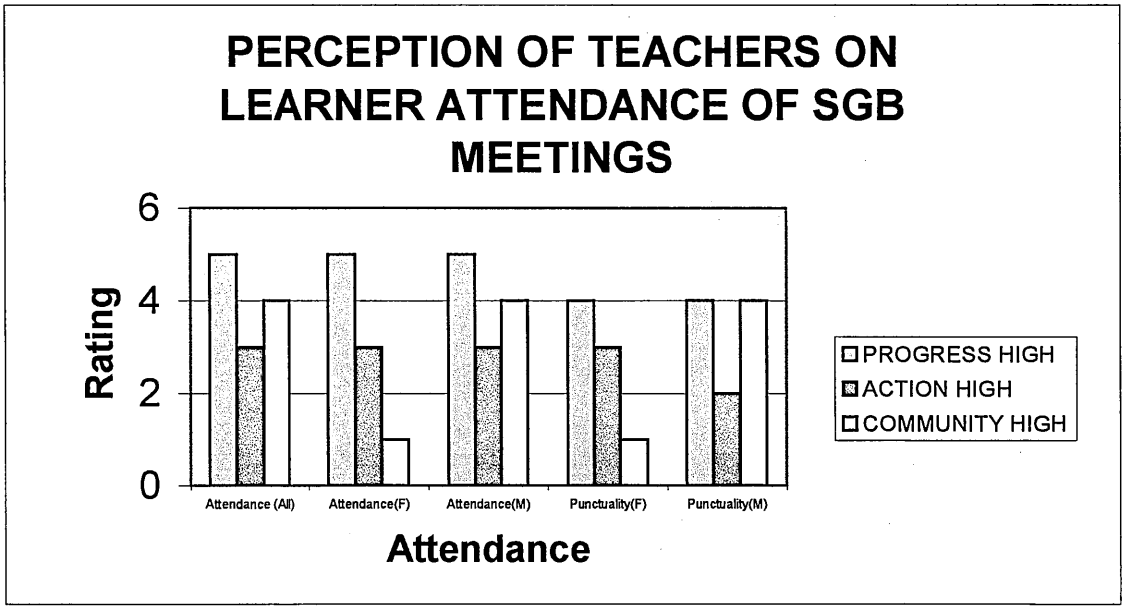
Fig 1 (a)



According to the above rating graph, learners were perceived to be very good as far as Progress High School was concerned. Punctuality of both sexes to meetings was rated as good. The situation was different for Action High School where learner attendance of SGB meetings was rated at 3, meaning that they perceived it as fair. This situation prevailed for both males and females. When it came to punctuality, teachers felt that female learners fared better because male learners were poor in this regard.

For Community High School, the teachers' perception was that the attendance of male learners was very poor. When it came to punctuality, female learners were perceived to be good.

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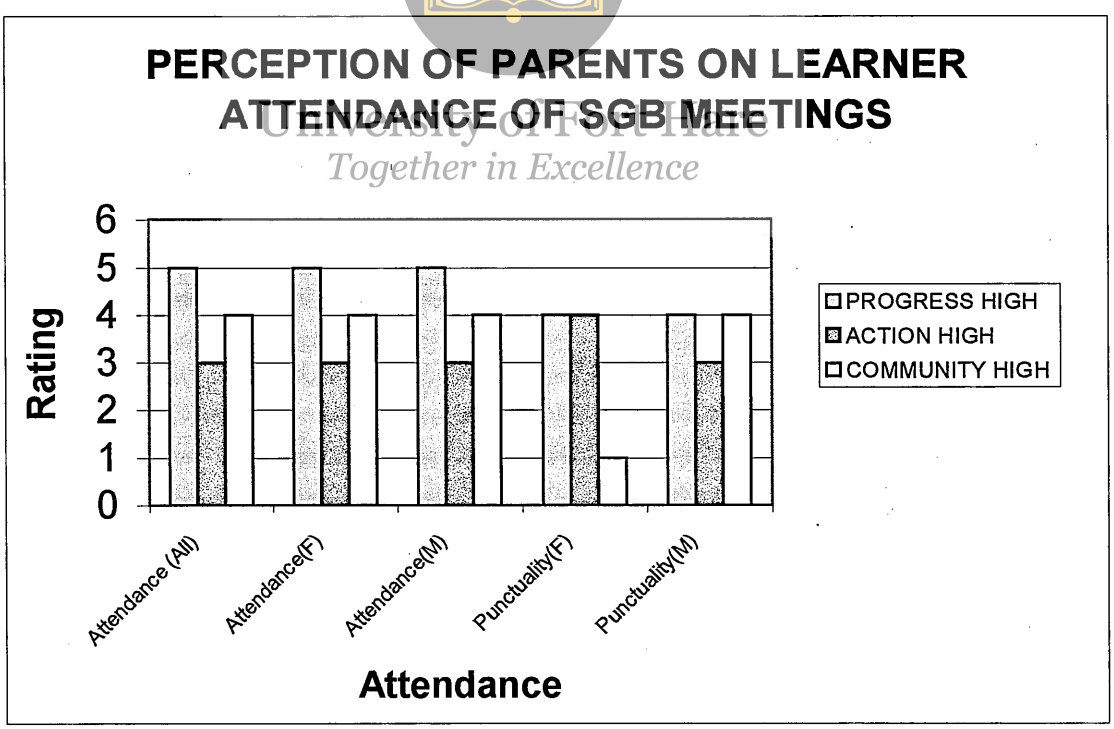
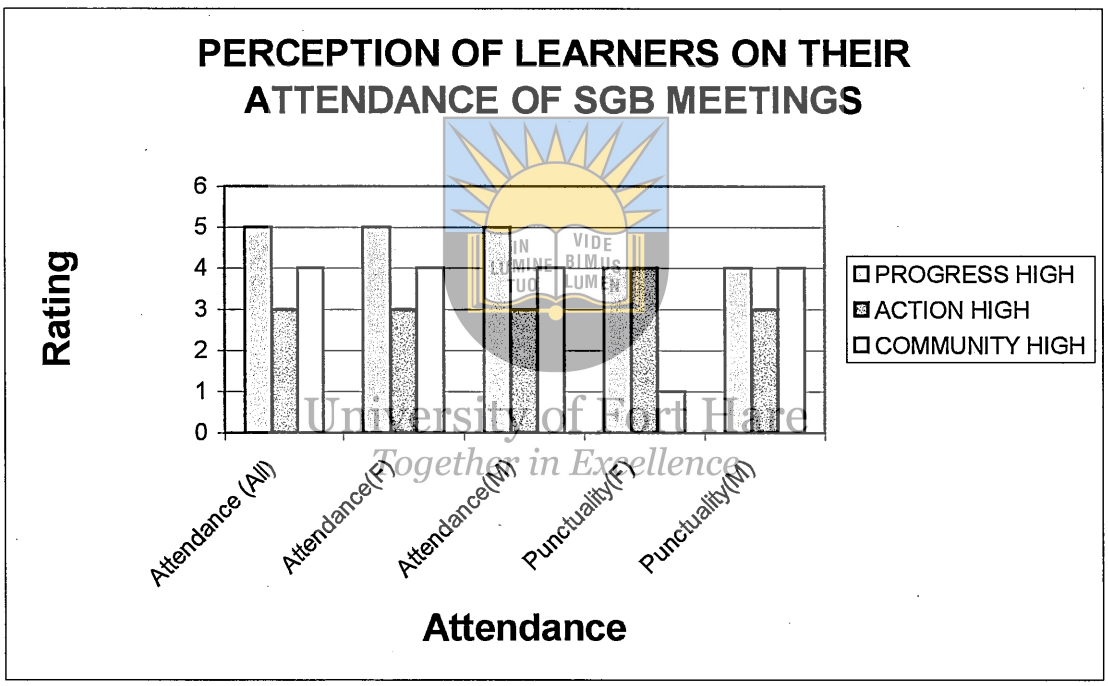
Fig 1 (b)



For Progress High School, parents perceived learner attendance at SGB Meetings to be very good. They also found their punctuality at these meetings to be good. This seemed to be the position for both male and female learners.

For Action High School, parents felt that learners attended fairly. This situation prevailed for both male and female learners. Parents from this school thought that female learners were good in punctuality for meetings. Of interest was the fact that male learners were found wanting in the area of punctuality. Learner attendance was found to be good in Community High School. Here female learners were found to be poor when it came to punctuality. Male learners were found to be good in this area.

Fig 1 (c)



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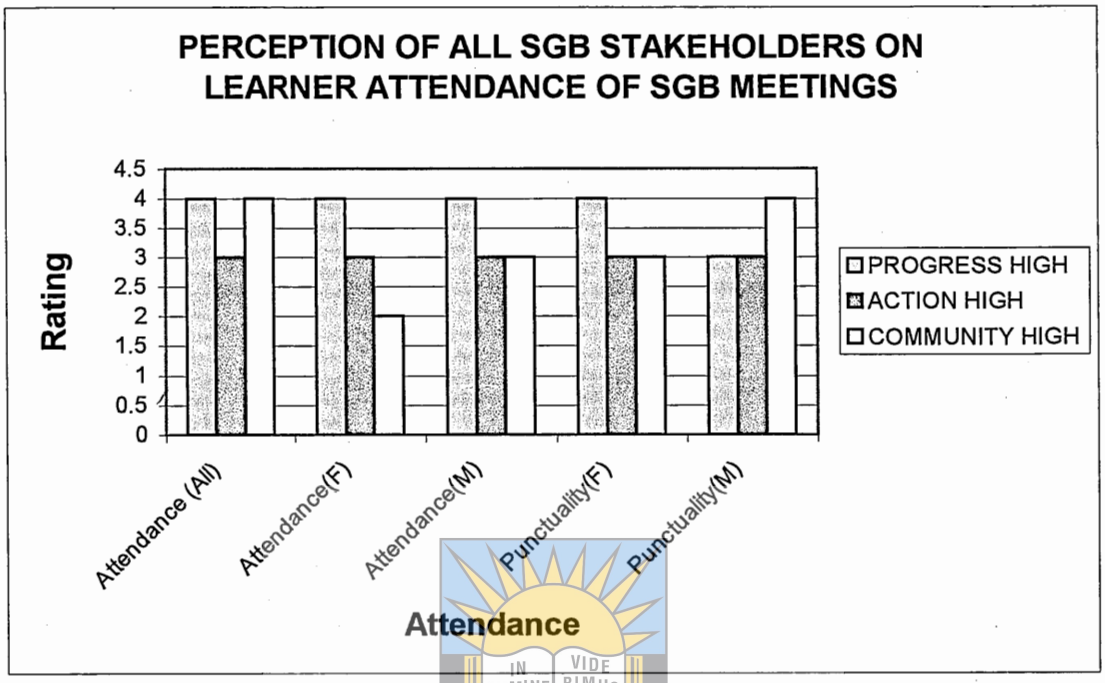
In Progress High School, learners felt very good about the way they attended SGB Meetings. This was the position for both sexes. Both female and male learners were good insofar as punctuality was concerned. For Action High School learners perceived their attendance of SGB Meetings as fair. Female learners were good when it came to punctuality. Male learners were fair in this regard.

Fig 1 (d)



The above figure is a reflection of all the stakeholders. For Progress High Scholl, all stakeholders perceived learner attendance of SGB Meetings to be good. All stakeholders found this to be the situation for both males and females. The only area that was found to be fair was the punctuality of male learners for meetings. Action High School perceived learner attendance to be fair. To them the situation was the same with regards to punctuality by both sexes. For Community High School attendance of SGB Meetings by learners was good except for female learners who were poor in this regard. Female learners were fair insofar as punctuality was concerned. Male learners were good when it came to punctuality.

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Comments:

- **Progress High School**

  It should be noted that the rating by the various stakeholders were corroborated by both the minutes of SGB Meetings and the ethnographic observations.

- **Action High School**

  From the minutes of the SGB meetings and the ethnographic observation, some concerns were raised about the learners' tendency to attend certain meetings to the total neglect of other meetings where they were anticipating some controversy that could lead to conflict (a teacher respondent – See Appendix 5).

- **Community High School**

  No evidence could be found from the other sources that contradicted the perceptions of the respondents.

Further investigation (through conversations and minutes) from all three schools revealed that there were factors that contributed either negatively or positively to learner attendance of SGB meetings.

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➢ **Positive contributory factors**

- A positive atmosphere that prevailed in the school. (Respondent from one school).
- Allowed to express their views at meetings.
- Pressure from their constituency to do report back (learner respondent).

➢ **Negative Contributory factors**

- Attitudes of other stakeholders (parents and teachers) that sometimes stifle debate in other areas discouraged learners from attending meetings. Learners were sometimes forced to toe the line because of their fear of being regarded disrespectful (Learner respondent from Action High School).

- The time when SGB meetings were held (in the evenings after 5pm) also posed some problems because these sometimes went through the night. (Learner respondent). This situation was dangerous especially for girls who had to travel long distances at night (Appendix 5).

- Examinations and tests affected attendance of SGB meetings. Generally students found it difficult to attend SGB meetings when preparing for examinations and tests. Evidence of this state of affairs could be found from the minutes of all the four schools observed.

- Learners sometimes avoided meetings where they had to account for their actions especially in times of conflict in the school. **Progress High School** (Minutes of the 11/02/98 and 19/3/98, 3/06/98, 30/7/98) **Success High School** (Minutes of 8/10/98, 5/11/98, undated minutes, and 3/12/98) **Action High School** (Minutes of 22/2/2000, not a single meeting attended by learners in 1999) Community **High School** (Minutes of 19/7/2000, 15/08/2000).

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This situation seemed to be a concern that was constantly raised throughout the minutes of the four case study schools. Another concern expressed was their preference of certain meetings over others. One ethnographer who claimed that learners were generally lazy to attend meetings corroborated this situation.
They only came when they thought that somebody had misappropriated funds. They were in most cases misinformed (Respondent from Action High School).

4.3.1.2 Capacity Building

The assumption is that capacity building could enhance the contribution of learners to matters of policy.

It became crucial to test the level of empowerment (with special reference to learners) that the SGBs had undergone. There was no evidence of this having taken place throughout the four case study schools.

Evidence of this creating some uneasiness was found from the minutes (**Progress High School** – Minutes of 19/3/98, 3/6/98, 30/7/98, 1/11/2000, 3/2/98, **Action High School** – 1/08/2000, 4/5/2000, 22/2/2000) and interviews with the respondents.

Progress High School, after having experienced some frustrations with the Department for failing to meet its obligations in this area, sought for some alternative organisations to assist them in this regard. Learners expressed their desire for this empowerment programme (Minutes of the 9/11/97 and of the 3/2/98 – Progress High School). One parent expressed his disappointment with the Department of Education for throwing them in the 'deep end'. The training of SGBs was inadequate and there was not enough support and yet they were expected to perform (Appendix 5).

Some issues were legalistic and complicated and these often hampered decision making (parent from Action High School). Attempts were made through the Grahamstown SGBs Forum to have some Capacity Building Programmes organised but this also failed through the lack of support and funds (parent from Action High School).

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The Departmental training programme was organised in a very haphazard manner and this resulted in it not reaching other areas (Community High School parent). From the school programmes there was no evidence of plans to embark on these enrichment programmes except for Progress High School, although they met some disappointments, as these did not materialise due to the failure of the Department to honour arrangements made with them (Appendix 5).

Some NGO's who had offered to assist in this regard did not avail their services and attempts to persuade them were futile.

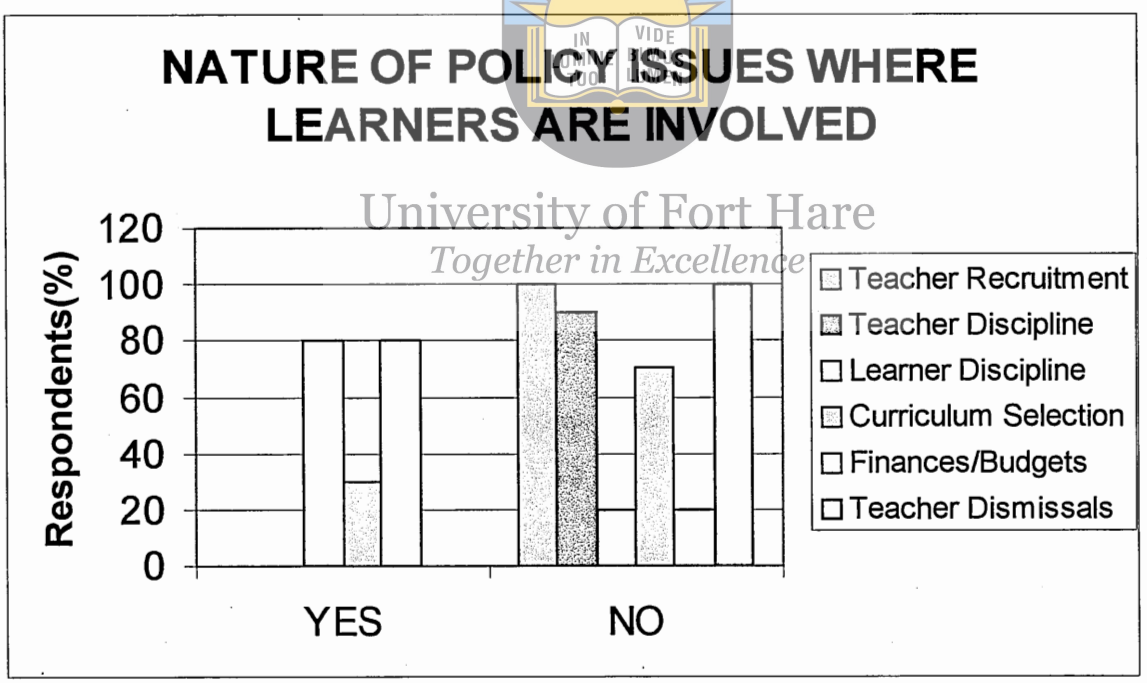
4.3.1.3 Learner Participation at Discussions

This was tested by the examination of the areas in which learners showed some active involvement in discussions, the nature of those issues, and the extent to which this was acceptable to the other stakeholders. An interview schedule that had dichotomous questions was applied to all the stakeholders to test first the policy issues in which learners were involved.

This test revealed the following information. (See figure 2)

Fig 2

DICHOTOMOUS QUESTION: YES/NO



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Judging from the responses of the majority of the stakeholders (80%), learners were involved in the discussions and decisions pertaining to learner discipline, finances and budgets. This is not withstanding the 20% of stakeholders who felt that their involvement in learner discipline was somewhat restricted by the law and the Constitution that has outlawed corporal punishment.

To this group of stakeholders, corporal punishment has been perceived to be the most effective kind of punishment. Insofar as finance and budgets were concerned, 20% felt that they were not fully involved, in that it was the principal who presented budgets and that they had to ratify whatever the principal had presented.

The second stage was to rate the extent to which the learners were involved in the identified policy issues.

(Policy issues that were tested were based on the functions of the SGBs according to the stipulations of the South African Schools Act (1996). An Interview Schedule that required respondents to scale their responses (1 – 5) was applied to all stakeholders of the case study schools. The following were the results of that investigation: (See figures 3(a) – 3(c).

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Fig 3 (a)

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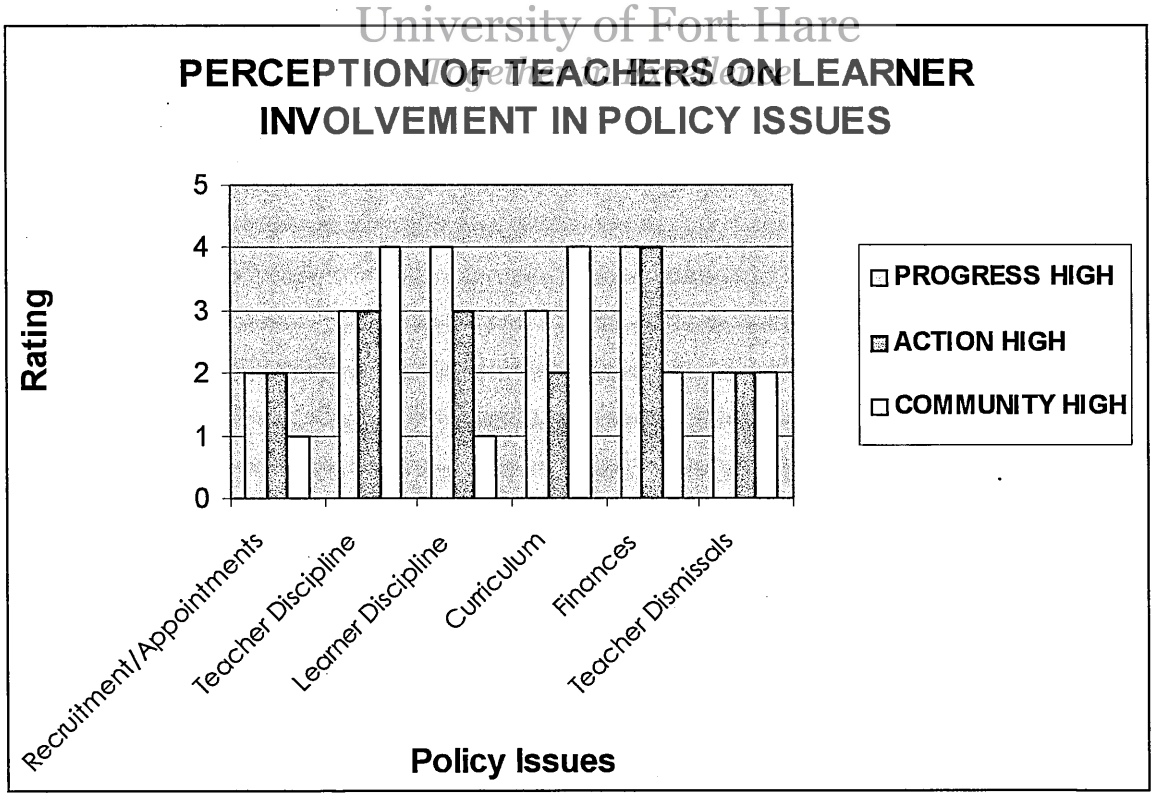

The involvement of learners in the recruitment of teachers was rated between poor and very poor by all the teacher respondents of all the high schools interviewed. Teachers from both Progress and Action high schools perceived a fair amount of learner involvement on issues pertaining to teacher discipline. Community High School recorded a good amount of this involvement. Progress High School teachers felt that there was a good amount of learner involvement in matters relating to learner discipline while teachers from Action and Community high schools rated this at fair and poor, respectively.

As far as Curriculum issues were concerned, teachers of Community School perceived learner involvement as good while Progress and Action perceived this to be fair and poor. There was a good level of learner involvement in financial matters as perceived by both Action and Progress high schools while teachers from Community school regarded learner involvement to be poor in this area. Teachers from all these high schools perceived learner involvement on matters pertaining to teacher dismissals to be poor.

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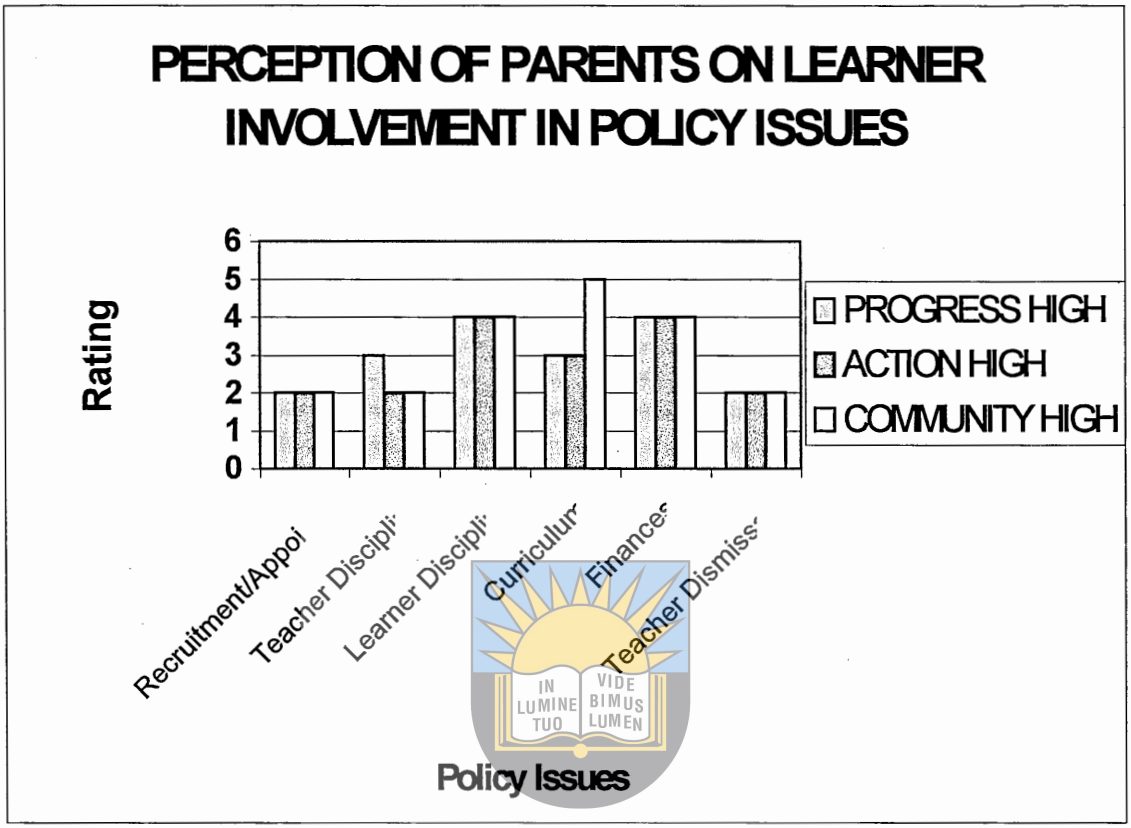
Fig 3 (b)



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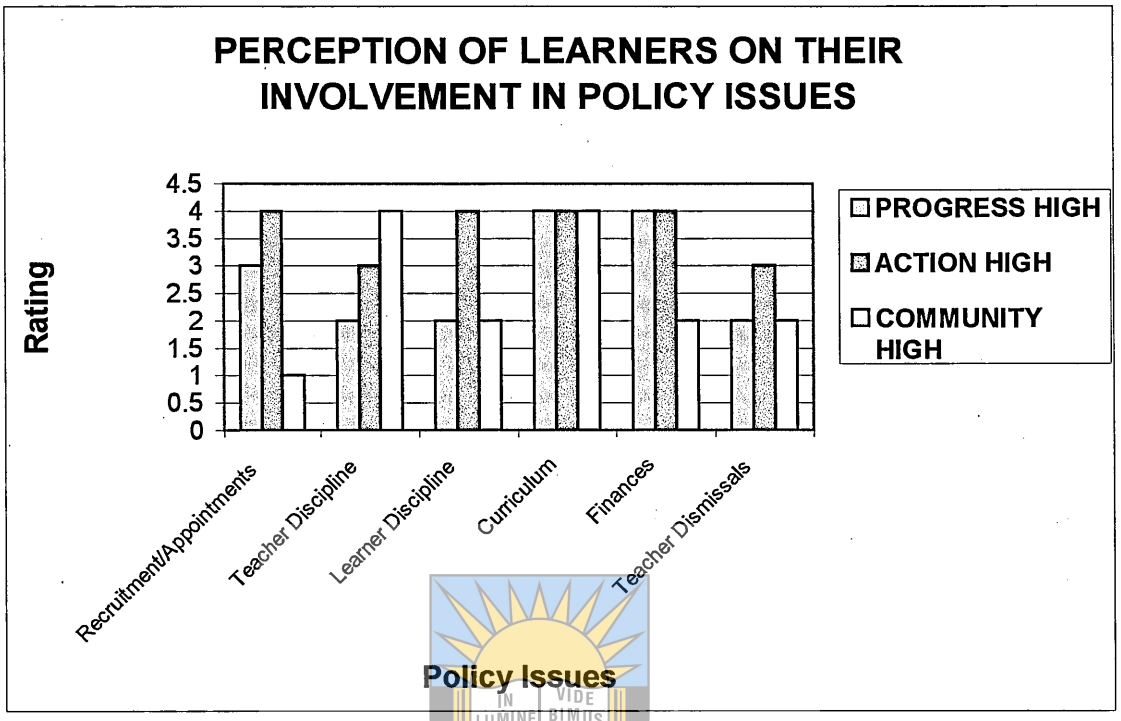
The parents of all the schools recorded poor involvement of learners on matters pertaining to teacher recruitment and the appointment of teachers. When it came to teacher discipline, parents felt that this was between fair and poor. It was of interest to note that the three schools were in agreement with the fact that there was a good level of learner involvement on issues relating to learner discipline. The same situation entailed with financial issues. Insofar as curricular issues were concerned, the situation differed from school to school. For both Progress and Action there was a fair amount of learner involvement in these issues while the Community school learners were perceived to be good in this area. Learner involvement in teacher dismissals was perceived to be poor by all schools.

Fig 3 (c)



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For Progress High Schools, learners felt that there was a fair amount of their involvement in teacher recruitments, while for Community High School the level of their involvement was perceived to be poor. Learner involvement in matters pertaining to teacher discipline differed from school to school. For Progress High School learner involvement in these issues was poor while it was fair for Action High School and good for Community High School. It was of interest to note that their level of involvement in issues pertaining to learner discipline was poor deducing from responses from both Community and Progress high schools. The learners from Action High School perceived a good level of learner involvement on issues relating to learner discipline. There was a good amount of involvement in Curriculum matters for all the high schools. For finances both Progress and Action high schools recorded a good level of learner involvement except for Community High School where learner involvement was perceived to be poor. On teacher dismissals, learners rated their involvement between poor and fair.

- **Progress High School**

Both teachers and parents perceived learner involvement in teacher recruitment to be poor while learners felt that their involvement in this area was fair. There was no evidence from the document analysis to corroborate the perceptions of the learners. A follow up conversational interview to verify their claim revealed that learners felt that the mere fact that they could express their dissatisfaction with a teacher's methods of teaching had implications for teacher recruitment hence the rating. Evidence of the readiness of the other stakeholders to listen to learners' grievances could be found from SGB meetings. When learners complained about one teacher's failure to do justice to his work, both the principal and the school governing body followed this up.

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- **Action High School**

Both parents and teachers thought that learner involvement in teacher recruitment was poor while learners perceived their involvement as good. There was no evidence that could be found to support the learners' claim. Conversations with the learners revealed that they misconstrued their power to contribute to teacher displacements as a reflection of their ability to select teachers.

- **Community High School**

All the stakeholders considered learner involvement in teacher recruitment to range between poor and very poor. The same was reflected in ethnographic observations.

In comparison, learner involvement in disciplinary matters other than their own ranged between poor and fair except for Community High School where it was rated good. This reflected the stakeholder perception that there was learner involvement in disciplinary matters. The ethnographic observation could not record any learner involvement in disciplinary issues other than those that involved other learners.

This was corroborated by the ratings that ranged between fair and good (both the ethnographic and individual stakeholder responses) and the document analysis. Learners in one school were concerned about the high incidence of pregnancy among schoolgirls, gangsterism and thieving (Progress High School – Meeting of 11/02/98, 19/3/98, 30/7/98 and 10/9/98). The undated minutes from Success High School reflected some concern about disciplinary matters. The difference here was that there was no evidence of learners taking an active role in addressing the issue except for them having to defend themselves as culprits. In Community High School all the stakeholders rated learner involvement in this area between poor and very poor.

The learner involvement in curriculum matters ranged between fair and very good. All the three stakeholder groupings from Community High School were in agreement that learner involvement in this area was very good. The ethnographic observation rated this between fair and good. This was evidence of the fact that there was to a certain extent learner involvement in curricular issues. This was done within the provincial and national framework. Learners were involved insofar as to select subjects from what was offered by the school.

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This to them was perceived to be satisfactory while others felt that it would have been better if they were given more say in this area. The rating therefore was affected by the premise from which each respondent moved.

Most stakeholders felt that the involvement of learners in financial issues was good except for teachers and learners of Community High School who felt that learner involvement was poor.

There was evidence of learner involvement in financial matters from the minutes of both Progress High School and Action High School. Learners were involved in suggestions on the fundraising efforts by the school. In all the four schools there was evidence of the existence of Fundraising Committees.

In Progress High School, learners had their own Learner Representative Council Fund which they operated themselves under the supervision of a teacher allocated to them specifically for this purpose. There was also a report of an L.R.C. treasurer who had misused these funds. The SGB had to take an appropriate action against this learner together with his parent.

This action averted a crisis that could have been activated by this incident. The stakeholders rated the learners' role in teacher dismissals poor except for Action School learners who rated this as fair. Further investigations showed that their role in teacher displacement was misconstrued as the power to dismiss. The ethnographic observation did not record any evidence of learner involvement in this area. Evidence at our disposal showed that there was not much learner involvement in the dismissal of teachers.

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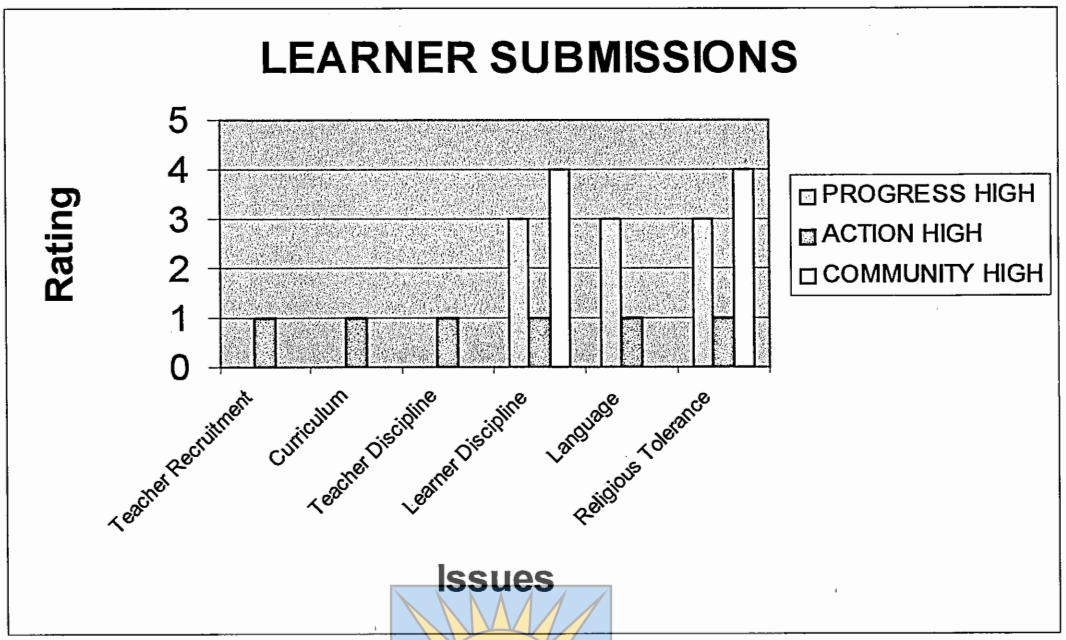
4.3.1.4 Agenda items submitted by learners

Another area where learner constructive contribution in policy issues could be tested was in the nature of the agenda items they submitted for discussion at SGB meetings. The interview schedule applied reflected the following (fig. 4):

Fig 4



In all the issues that were listed as reflected in figure 4, Action High School's submissions were perceived to be poor while Progress High School's submissions in areas like learner discipline, language issues and religious tolerance were regarded as fair. There was no evidence of submissions made in other areas. Community High School's submissions on both learner discipline and religious tolerance were rated good. There was to a certain extent evidence that learners did submit issues for discussion.

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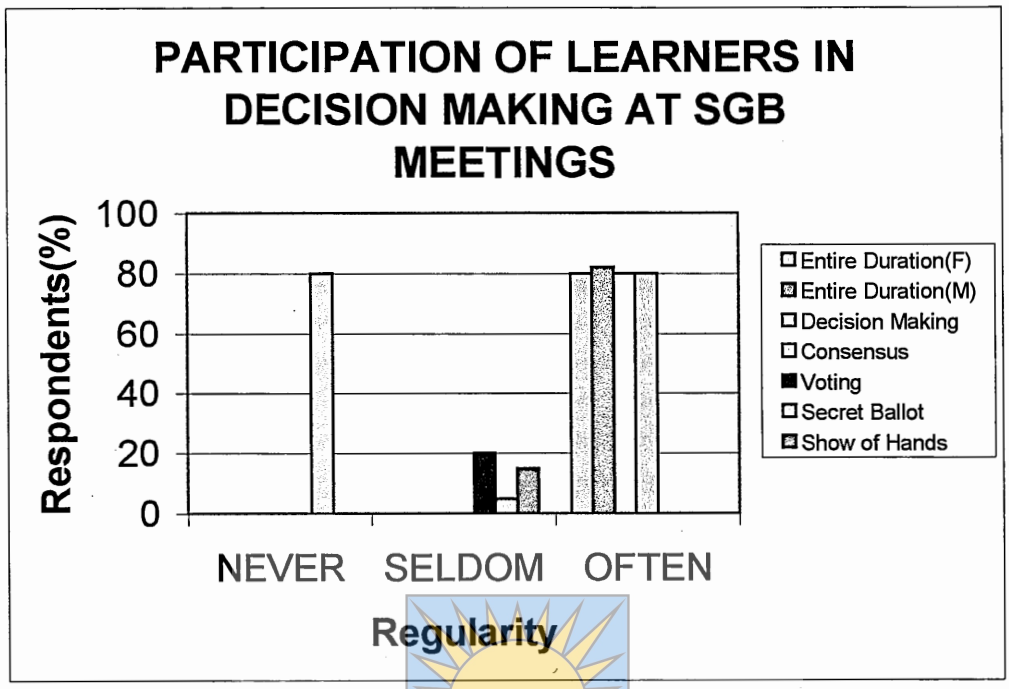
4.3.1.5 Nature of Decision making

The manner in which decisions are taken and their nature can either encourage or discourage learner contribution. The results of an interview reflected the following (Fig. 5)

Fig 5



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This meant that all the stakeholders interviewed thought that decisions were seldom taken by voting. These were often taken by consensus as is reflected by 80% of the respondents. Of interest also was the fact that 80% of the respondents felt that both female and male learners stayed for the entire duration of the meetings.

4.3.2 Can parents and teachers take learners seriously?

This was tested against the election and participation of learners in SGB sub-Committees. Interviews that sought to gauge the level of their tolerance by other stakeholders were also used. This was also one of the areas that the ethnographers observed.

4.3.2.1 Involvement in Sub-Committees

The Interviews and ethnographic observations provided the following information:

- **Progress High School**

There were three sub-committees in the school, viz.

1. Finance Committee – 1 learner out of 6 members.
2. Fundraising Committee – 2 learners out of 10 members.
3. Disciplinary Committee (which was not a standing committee – it was always constituted when there was a need. – 1 learner out of usually 5 members.

- **Success High School**

The following were the sub-Committees that could be identified through the perusal of SGB minutes:

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1. Renovations Committee - There was no evidence of learner members except for teachers and parents.
2. Disciplinary Committee – Evidence showed that (from undated minutes) this Committee existed in the School. – 4 learners out 10 members.
3. Finance Committee – No evidence of learner involvement.
4. Education Support Committee – No evidence of learner involvement.

- **Action High School**

Interviews and minutes reflected the existence of the following sub-Committees:

1. Curriculum Committee – 0 learners out of 5 members
2. Finance Committee – 2 learners out of 5 members
3. * Entertainment Committee

- From the information received from both the ethnographic observation and conversations, it was revealed that there were two Entertainment Committees in the school, one for learners and one for teachers. These Committees were a product of meetings of teachers and RCL meetings. This meant that these were not initiated by the SGB. The SGB then had no direct control of these Committees. The perusal of SGB minutes did not indicate the existence of the Entertainment Committee. The learners were actively involved in this Committee and they often organised shows like Miss Freshette.

The teachers were often involved with the organisation and the keeping of order in the shows. The only problem came with the declaration of the takings. The teachers were always in the dark when it came to this area. The learners 'were not clean when it came to takings and this often led to conflict' (ethnographer).

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- **Community High School**

The existence of the following Committee was confirmed from the interviews, minutes and ethnographic observation:

1.	Fundraising Committee	-	1 learner out of 5 members
2.	Education Committee	-	1 learner out of 4 members
3.	Sports Committee	-	2 learners out of 6 members

The Sports Committee was the most active from all the other Committees (ethnographer).

Further probing into the functioning and the contribution of the sub-committees from the various schools revealed the following:

- **Negative factors**

❖ Learners were lazy to attend meetings – their involvement in these Committees 'was mere formality' (ethnographer from Action High School).

❖ Their involvement in Fundraising Efforts had a potential to sometimes mislead the learners into believing that they could just force the school to abandon its plans for learner fundraising projects that were sometimes unplanned for (informant from one of the schools). This was corroborated by the SGB minutes where the school was held to ransom because of a 'Civvies Day' that the learners were pushing to have at all costs.

❖ Their having to run their own financial affairs was proved to create problems at times. For example, when the R.C.L. treasurer misused the learners' money, they found it difficult to handle him.

The matter was referred to the SGB and they had to involve the learners' parent because the learner could not be held responsible and that he had no assets (Minutes from Progress High School).

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- **Positive factors**

❖ Learners were exposed to finances, budget and accounting procedures. This resulted in them having 'a clear picture of how funds are appropriated'.

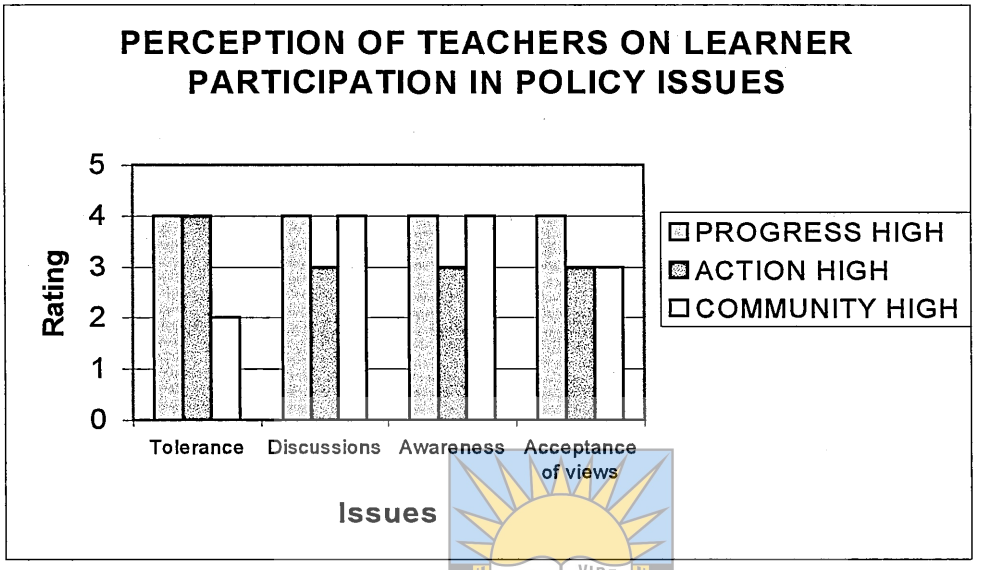
This assisted in averting tensions that could have resulted through ignorance and mis-information (principal from Progress High School).

4.3.2.2 Level of their tolerance by other stakeholders

As it has been mentioned earlier, interviews were conducted to test the above.

The following were the results [See fig. 6 (a) – 6 (c)]

Fig 6 (a)



For tolerance of other people's views and ideas both Progress High School and Action High Schools rated their learners at 4, meaning that they were good in this area. However, the teachers of Community High School felt that learners were poor in this area. At discussions that involved policy issues teachers of both Progress and Community High Schools felt that learners were good in this area. Action High School learners were perceived to be fair in this regard. For awareness of their responsibilities as SGB members, again Progress and Community High Schools were perceived to be good. Action High School learners were found to be fair. Progress High learners seemed to be good in accepting the views of the other stakeholders while the learners from both Action High and Community High School fairly accepted the views of the other stakeholders.

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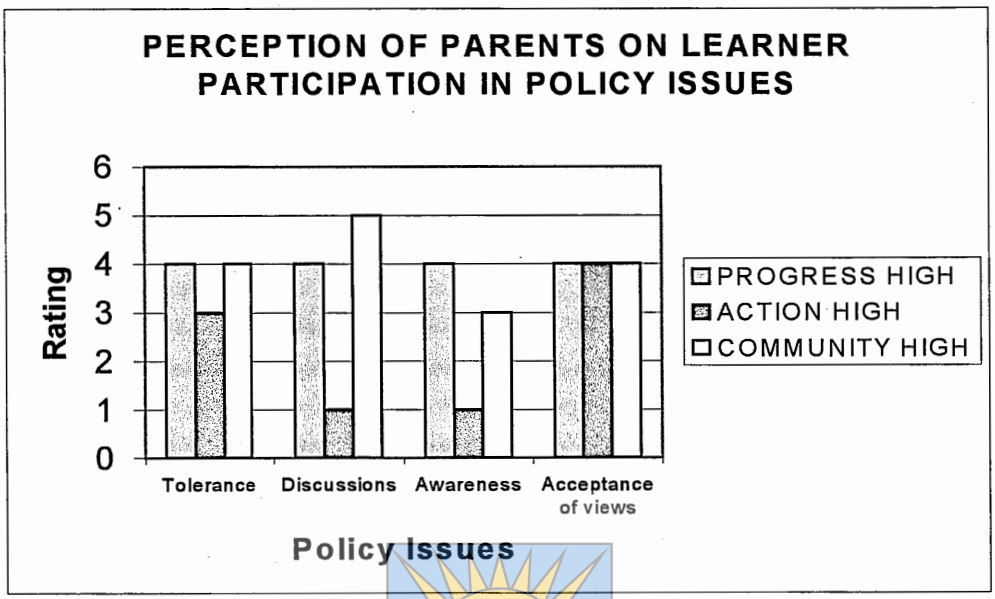
Fig 6(b)



For both Progress and Community High Schools, parents rated learner tolerance at 4, meaning that they felt good about the learners' level of tolerance. Action High School learners were perceived to be fair in this regard. Progress High School learners were good when it came to discussions of policy issues while Action High School learners were found to be very poor in this regard. It was impressive to find that parents found the Community High School learners to be very good at discussions. The level of awareness of policy matters was perceived to be good for Progress High School while it was fair for Community. For Action High School parents felt that learners were very poor in this regard. Parents from all the three High Schools perceived the learners' level of acceptance of views from the other stakeholders to be good.

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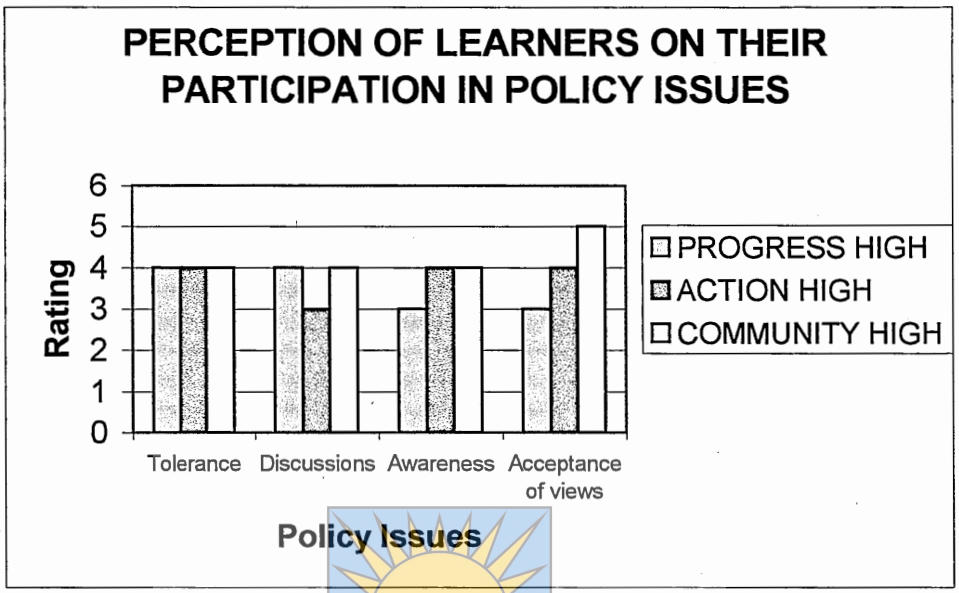
Fig 6 (c)



The learners from all the three high schools felt that their level of tolerance of differing views was good. Progress High and Community High Schools felt that they, as learners, were good at discussions while Action High School learners felt that they were fair in this regard. Progress High School learners felt that their level of awareness of policy issues was fair while Action High and Community High Schools felt good about their level of awareness of policy issues. Insofar as the learners' level of acceptance of the views from other stakeholders, learners rated this from fair, good and very good. Of interest was the fact that not a single school felt that they were poor or very poor in this regard.

University of Port Harcourt

Comments

❖ **Progress High School**

Further investigations revealed that the learners' awareness of their responsibilities was marred by the lack of empowerment programmes. This lack had implications for their confidence.

The results from this school were shared by the ethnographic observation. Learners also felt that the parents and teachers were sometimes perceived to be not taking learner views seriously. Learners had to be at pains trying to put their views across. This was found to be a tedious and a time consuming process. "You become impatient at times" (Learner informant).

❖ **Action High School**

Parents felt that learners did not have "a clear clue" as far as their responsibilities as SGB members were concerned (parent respondent). Learners felt that they had a good amount of awareness of their responsibilities." Kukho ukungaxoli ncam ngendima yabazali, ndlela abasithatha ngayo.___ There is a sense in which it is perceived that parents are not taking us seriously" (Learner respondent – See Appendix 5). The ethnographic observation shared the same sentiments.

❖ **Community High School**

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Further investigations revealed that the situation was the same with the other schools.

4.3.2.3 Some general observations

- There was generally a good amount of tolerance recorded by all the schools.

- Parents, teachers and learners seemed to differ as to the extent to which they took learner views seriously.

  A number of variables could be contributory to this state of affairs e.g. level of experience and maturity. To learners, being taken seriously meant that all their views should be accepted irrespective of the nature.
  Strong debates were sometimes perceived to be an indication of the rejection of their views (ethnographic observation).

- Parents and teachers were sometimes perceived to be "ooVumazonke – ja baases" who allowed themselves to be dominated by learners (one principal respondent).

As far as this informant was concerned, there was no problem if the learner contribution was positive. The challenge was "what if the learners' contribution was negative?" (See Appendix 5).

The above were some of the areas that were causing a lot of tension.

4.3.3 Can learner involvement contribute positively to the learning – teaching situation?

The above was observed through interviews, document analysis and observations.

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The principals that were interviewed felt that the involvement of learners in SGBs made the following contribution to their schools:

- It had contributed in eliminating conflict in their schools because the exposure that learners had received through their involvement in school governance had made them aware of some policy issues (Progress High School).

- Learners felt that there was co-operation and openness between the learners and the administration. Learners have first hand information about financial and other related problems (Progress High School).

This could be corroborated from the minutes of the SGB meeting where the R C L decided to use funds from their own coffers to subsidise the Matric Farewell to avert an eminent crisis.

- Learners contributed greatly in fundraising efforts to build a permanent school structure (informant from one of the schools). This reality was also expressed in the SGB meetings where learners were actively involved in discussions of strategies for fundraising.

- The involvement of learners had assisted in bringing stability and order in the school. They played a significant role in securing learner materials (respondent from one school).

- Involvement of parents in the school activities like Sport, Parents Days and Budget had enhanced the relationship between the school and the community. (Principal from Action School).

4.3.3.1 What impact does this kind of responsibility have on participating learners?

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This was tested through the use of interview schedules that sought to establish learner attendance of meetings and the extent of their ability to cope with their study commitments. Non-formal interviews or conversations followed this up. Another area that was examined was the extent to which learners were able to sustain the duration of the SGB meetings and their re-action to matters that affected their colleagues. Minutes of SGB meetings were also utilised both for triangulation and information purposes.

4.3.3.2 Learner attendance of SGB meetings

The general impression created by all respondents from the four case study schools was that learner attendance of these meetings was good. Examinations and tests were proved to pose some challenges on the learners who had to choose between their academic programmes and their SGB obligations.

Their responsibilities to their constituencies were sometimes compromised because of their academic priorities. This was a very critical issue (Evidence from SGB meetings of all the four schools and the ethnographic observations.)

There was also evidence of learners withdrawing from the SGB. About 80% of the schools observed, reflected incidences of learner withdrawal. One informant went so far as to report that, "we started with 3 learner members but we ended up with 1 male learner" (Action School ethnographer – Appendix 5).

Further investigations into the reasons for learner withdrawal revealed the following (this was in addition to examinations, tests and completing grade 12):

- The waning of interest because of lack of commitment. The perception was that learners were not serious in their choice of representatives.
- This was often regarded as a big joke as a result learners sidelined the people that could have been of benefit to the school and their cause. It is sometimes these people who failed to cope (learner from Progress High School (See Appendix 5).

- Learners often found that they could not cope with disagreeing with teachers and parents. For them the easier option was to withdraw from the SGB. If one differed from the adults one was regarded as a "bad influence". Rather than being treated as "isibi" - "an outcast" other learners chose to quietly withdraw from the SGB (Learner from Action High School – Appendix 5).

- The lack / absence of continuity often rendered learners ineffective. The issues that were discussed at the meetings were sometimes unfamiliar because these were a continuation of the previous years and "you were not a member of the SGB then. How can you cope?" (Learner from Action High School).

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- "You see wena ma'am", the attitude of some teachers should change (Learner from Action High School). The perception is that the attitudes of teachers had some negative impact.

- Another issue that was raised was that of the time of meetings, the length and distances that had to be traveled from the meeting venue to the homes of the learners. (Learner informant).

- Learners sometimes found it hard to be consistent in dealing with disciplinary issues that affected other learners (Minutes of Action High School – 19.03.98 and 30.07.98).

According to these minutes learners had previously committed themselves in taking an active role in trying to combat gangsterism and thieving in the school. When the situation became serious and when they were expected to report their attempts at the SGB meetings, they failed to attend SGB meetings. The one learner who attended one of these meetings did not want to make contributions on the attempts made by the other members because he did not want "to bind other learners because he had no mandate" to do this (Minutes of the 30.07.98).

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4.4 Summary

The analysis of data revealed a number of issues.

- More than often learners did not declare their intention to withdraw from the SGB. They just stopped attending meetings. This had serious implications for their constituencies.

- Their perception was that some adults needed to shift their mindset. The feeling was that the atmosphere in some instances was not conducive for their participation.

- Although the formulation of the SGBs in all the schools, was according to legislation, i.e. the South African Schools Act (1996), there were few instances where some did not adhere to the provisions of the Act with regards to certain functions, like for example, chairing of meetings and teacher recruitments.

- It was also noted that the conditions under which learners had to operate differed from school to school. Sometimes the institutional interests and ideals had an impact on their participation.

- The cry for empowerment programmes could not be overemphasized.

- The power bases of the various stakeholders especially of learners, had an effect on the decision making process. Learners sometimes found it difficult to balance between their role as governors and their role as learners.

- There was evidence of the tension that existed between variables of age, maturity, exposure and experience.

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The next Chapter expatiates on all the issues raised above.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Chapter V is divided into three broad sections, viz.

5.1 Conclusions

An overview of the conclusions that could be drawn from the observations and the analysis of data are given with a view to highlighting the implications of including learners in SGBs. These are highlighted for information purposes for the benefit of both managers and policy makers.

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5.2 Recommendations

A brief summary of recommendations is made. These recommendations are based on the experience of both the intrusive interactive fieldwork and the non-obstructive observations. A wealth of information collected indicated the need for further investigation.

5.3 Proposals for further Research

A suggestion of other areas that need further research is made. This is prompted by the realization of the vast available information on learner participation that still has to be tapped.

5.1 Conclusions

The conclusions that could be drawn from the analysis of data in relation to the core-research problem were based on the conceptual framework within which this research is based.

5.1.1 Decision Theories

One motivation behind decentralisation was to bring the decision making process closer to the people who were mostly affected by such decisions. The assumption was that as people, who were affected, they would be in a better position to know the impact of certain decisions. This knowledge would therefore enhance co-operation amongst stakeholders to ensure that decisions were a product of the collective. The policy of including learners in decision-making bodies aimed at making sure that they were part and parcel of all decisions made at the micro-level of the school. This would guarantee their being part of that collective. This was an endeavour to eliminate dissention. Collective decision theories create possibilities for people who have a common purpose to come together and make decisions that would be of mutual benefit to them (Dunn 1994 and Dye 1992).

Learners, teachers and parents share a common purpose, which is education. The SGB structure offers them opportunity to make decisions collectively. Throughout this research there was evidence of the three stakeholder groupings taking decisions that benefited them even if the motive behind some of the decisions was questionable at times. For example, when decisions were made to hold SGB meetings in the evening, after working hours, one could not help reflecting on who must have benefited from that decision. One argument would be that during the day teachers had to honour their constitutional and professional obligation to the learners by teaching them.

Parents had to work in order that they were enabled to provide for their children, the learners. The implications of that process were that the children, called learners, had to sacrifice their sleep (with the resultant repercussions) and compromise their study time and attend SGB meetings. Some of the benefits of collective decisions are transparency and openness that were perceived to be responsible for the "relative peace and calm" that is currently being experienced by the schools (Progress High School principal).

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There is no disputing the benefits of collective decision-making but there is a need to reflect on the extent to which this approach could be engaged if one considers the variables of age, maturity, experience and culture. Presently there are indications that although the learners have accepted their exclusion in certain policy issues, but they have questions about the status quo. They are used to be part of the collective decision process about which 'many struggles' were waged to achieve. Why should they be excluded at certain times? (Learner from Action High School).

Normative decision theories provide opportunity for the solution of problems. Looking through the minutes of the SGBs under observation one could experience the nature of some of the issues under discussion. There were issues that had a potential of creating crises and conflicts within the school. This was evident in the discussions and the number of special meetings held over one year. From the school plans and programmes the regularity of meetings is one meeting per term. This meant that there should have been at least four meetings per annum. The schools that were observed had on the average at least seven meetings a year. This could be one of the reasons why the learner numbers dwindled towards the end. Inspite of all that, the stakeholders reflected an ability to resolve their problems amicably.

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The RCL of one school averted a matric farewell crisis by utilizing funds from own coffers to subside this farewell. This was also an expression of the level of growth, development and maturity, which should be commended. The involvement of learners in SGBs afforded them training opportunities.

Descriptive decision theories afford opportunity to understand consequences of actions (Dye 1992:80). Their involvement in SGBs has empowered learners to adapt and adjust to the environment as they are in constant interaction with it. As they function within the context of the SGB they begin to understand the adult worldview, which put them in a better position to empathise with the elder members of the SGB. This was evident in their attempts to make interventions on behalf of the SGB.

It was pleasing to witness attempts by learners to play an active role in fighting against criminal offences. It is true that they failed to combat this on their own, but the endeavours to do something were encouraging.

5.1.2 Stakeholder Participation

Stakeholder participation as a management paradigm has the advantage of fostering unity and co-operation. This is due to the ownership of decisions by all the stakeholders. It also brings schools closer to the communities under their service. It is this closeness that builds positive relationships between the schools and their clientele. The inclusion of learners in decision-making bodies was an attempt to bring stability in the school system. A stable school environment ensured a harmonious learning and teaching context that would assist in the revitalization of the culture of learning and teaching. The school could be ensured of parental support.

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In all the SGBs that were examined the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes was perceived in a positive light. Relatively speaking there was no evidence of major upheavals reported. Instead there were indications that this had brought about harmony in the schools.

Learners were exposed to decision-making processes and debates. They were empowered to respect other people's viewpoints. They also learnt that co-existence is through common sufferance.

This was evidenced by the fact that throughout the SGB minutes one could see that there were times of struggle when each group wanted its voice to be heard. It must have been a humbling experience for learners of Success High School when they learnt that they had to take responsibility for damaging property belonging to the school principal. They also learnt that insolence does not pay (undated minute – Success High School).

Parents were seen taking an active role in the lives and the education of their children. Their involvement in sporting activities was perceived to be one of the achievements gained through this policy of participation. (Principal – Action High School).

5.1.3 Collegiality and stakeholder participation

There is a close link that exists between collegial and stakeholder participation paradigms in that both espouse almost the same basic principles of collaboration and openness. In stakeholder participation paradigms, the focus is on the participation of all stakeholders. Collegiality is often associated and designated the best 'official practice' among professionals, especially those that operate in schools and colleges. For collegial models, professional expertise is valued more than positional authority in decision making. Stakeholder participation espouses consensus as a means of decision making.

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The involvement of learners and parents who are not necessarily professionals and teachers who are professionals in school governance is assumed to have ushered in a new modus operandi in decision making.

It is on this basis that this research examined the impact that this new method had on the learners as stakeholders in decision making.

Another area of focus for our investigation was how variables of age, experience and culture impacted on the decision making process. Of particular significance for the purposes of this research was the level of tolerance expressed with regards to learners in particular. The assumption was that it was the level of tolerance exercised that could either encourage or discourage learners playing a meaningful role as part of decision making.

The data at our disposal revealed that decisions were often taken by consensus and never through vote. The indications were that the secret ballot vote was used for the election of members to participate in the SGBs. The data also reflected a general good level of tolerance among stakeholders. Although there were some indications of the effects of the variables of age, experience and maturity, as reflected by the impatience of the learners at times, this did not impact negatively on the decision making process. This was just part of growing up and development for learners. The level of acceptance of learner views rated from fair, good to very good. Of note was the realisation that not a single respondent perceived this to be very poor or poor. Instead learners rated this at "very good". It is therefore reasonable to conclude that this was an expression of the balance that was somehow in existence between the professional tensions that are borne out of professional obligations, and the perceptions of the stakeholders borne out of their own experience. There was also no evidence that could be found that indicated manipulation between stakeholder groupings. Instead the indications were the commitment of stakeholders to nurture the co-operation that has been fostered by collaboration and openness between them.

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Collegial models are also associated with good performance. One of the reasons why this new system of decision making was introduced, was for the improvement of the school situation. Besides the need to restore peace and harmony in schools, a pressing need was also to turn around the dysfunctionality of schools insofar as the actual learning and teaching situation was concerned. This is evident in the various campaigns aimed at the restoration of the culture of learning and teaching. Although there is evidence of the relevant "peace, harmony and calm" (Principal of Progress High School) that are perceived to have been the spin-offs achieved through this new policy, further investigations need to be undertaken to examine whether this policy has enhanced the overall performance of the schools, especially in the area of academic performance. Schools exist for the academic enhancement of learners amongst other things.

One of the human development strategies of this government was to involve the 'civil society in the provision of learning' (The Reconstruction and Development Programme 1994:60). All state organs were committed to provide counseling and advice (Education White Paper I 1995:21). This means that state organs are obliged to provide support. The evidence at our disposal reflected that the Grahamstown District Office did not play its part in ensuring that the stakeholders within the SGB structure were empowered to play a meaningful role in the SGB. Throughout the minutes of the SGBs, the problem of inadequate or non-existent capacity building strategy was expressed. One parent indicated his disappointment when he said that the government just threw them 'in the deep end'.

All the SGBs had codes of conduct. Learners participated in the formulation of these. Another area in which learners played a significant role was that of fundraising. In one school they were also instrumental in muting the change of 'track suits'.

There was no evidence of the other stakeholders having a problem with this proposal instead they facilitated arrangements for further consultations and research. There was very little evidence of learner involvement in other spheres of governance such as curricular, teacher dismissals and recruitment issues.

No evidence of the violation of learners' rights could be found in the data that was collected. There was also no evidence that could be found that indicated some gender stereotypes. The failure of learners to sit for the duration of meetings at times and their failure to attend certain meetings could not be associated with a particular gender. This affected both male and female learners. What came out clearly, was the fact that care, tolerance and understanding expressed by the other stakeholders, foster learner participation at SGB meetings.

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5.1.4 The Power bases of the various stakeholders

The inclusion of elected representatives in school governance had implications for power bases. The new policy insists on negotiation, collaboration, consensus and the consideration of the will of the majority in decision making. The implications are that the balance of power has shifted in favour of the elected expressly to represent the will of their constituency. Their power lies in the fact that they represent the general will of the people. The power of professionals lie in the fact that they possess specialised knowledge which the other stakeholders do not possess. As professionals they are obliged to meet their professional obligations which are not necessarily shared by the other stakeholders. Professionals, teachers in this instance, are always in the minority while learners are in the majority. Although parents are in the minority they represent the community. Their power lies in the fact that their views are perceived to be reflecting those of the civil society.

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This research, in search of the nature of learner contribution in SGBs, and the implications of involving them in school governance, examined the impact of these two opposing principles on the decision making process.

There was no evidence that could be found that indicated tension between stakeholders, that could be ascribed to power bases. Even the influences of the various organisations to which the various stakeholders were affiliated to, were not apparent. There were signs of co-operation between stakeholders.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Capacity Building

From the data analysed, it became evident that there was a need for capacity building programmes. The District Office needs to take the initiative in this regard. There is no way that this office could stay aloof and not take an active role in the support of the schools under its ambit.

Decentralisation was aimed at bringing services closer to the people. This means therefore that the district office represents the department at the local level. 'There is an urgent need to forge closer links between districts and schools. It is these links that would restore the lost credibility and the integrity of the department and its officials. The district office has a role of co-ordinating and monitoring of the activities of the schools within its jurisdiction. Lack of supervision and monitoring could lead to anomalies. One school had the principal chairing almost all SGB meetings.

This is not according to the provisions of the South African Schools Act (1996) which has legislated the operations of SGBs. Monitoring and supervision by the district office would have prevented the recurring of such unlawful actions. This also reflects the lack of empowerment on the part of the parents and teachers who should have alerted the principal of the stipulations of the Act. There is also a pressing need to seek for resources to undertake these programmes. The business world could be approached to assist in this regard. This they could do through their social outreach programmes.

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5.2.2 Stability and Continuity

The research revealed that in all the case study schools, grade 12 students were used as learner representatives in the various SGBs. The motivation behind this situation was the perception that they were articulate and that they had been at the school 'longer' than the other learners. Although this is a good argument, this approach was found to be having some problems. The grade 12's had to leave the school after passing this grade. This means that learners had to choose a new set of representatives. This puts learners at a disadvantage. This should be viewed against the background that the South African Schools Act (1996) stipulates that learners should serve a period of one year in the SGBs while the other people's period is three years. The learners were always in the position of starting afresh, thereby loosing continuity in the affairs of their SGBs. For purposes of continuity, the duration of service should be the same for all stakeholders.

Since three years seems reasonable, learners should also serve three years in their SGBs. The situation should be organised in such a way that learners below grade 12 were also included in the SGB for continuity. What should happen are annual by-elections to take care of the gaps that would have occurred due to the fact that grade 12's have left the school. This will ensure stability in the school governing bodies.

Although there were no indications of an evident crisis or conflict because of this state of affairs, there is a need to look into it. One learner expressed his frustration for having to cope with issues, which were unfamiliar to him, because these were a continuation of the previous year.

5.2.3 Improvement of Learner Participation

Again the issue of capacity building programmes becomes critical. Learners would be committed in their role as SGB members, only when they understand their centrality in these bodies. This understanding can only be nurtured and enhanced through conscious empowerment programmes. If they know and understand the provisions of the South African Schools Act (1996) and other related stipulation they will not question their exclusion when certain issues are under discussion.

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Another area that needs attention is that of attitudes. Clearly there is a need to change mindsets, especially amongst the adult members of the SGB. This also could only be achieved through empowerment programmes. SGBs should not be perceived or associated with an attempt to reduce adult powers but should be perceived as an attempt to foster harmony and co-operation within the school community. It has been proved that an open and an accommodating atmosphere does encourage learners to participate actively in their SGBs. This does not mean that learners should dominate. There is a need to strike the balance between active participation and domination. The perception that learners sometimes dominate SGB meetings is also indicative of the need for adequate training programmes.

Sometimes learners failed to attend meetings due to a number of factors, for example, the time when meetings were held and the distance they had to travel between their home and the venue of the meeting in the evening. There should be an attempt to plan meetings in such a way that they do not coincide with examinations or tests, except for emergencies. SGB meetings should also be used as platforms to reflect, review and evaluate SGB activities to confirm the pulse of the entire membership.

Learners should also be given opportunity to participate in other sub-committees other than the Fundraising Committee. These will provide learning opportunities for them.

5.2.4 Improvement of Control Systems

Authority and power is vested in the School Governing Body. This structure is in a position of trust because they are accountable to both the government and the community they serve. This has implications for control. It is therefore advisable that they take control of all the spheres of school governance to avoid a situation where teachers and learners take matters in their control. The existence of two separate Entertainment Committees (Action High School) in one school is an anomaly. The fact that these Committees were not sanctioned by the SGB is problematic because the SGB could encounter problems when they insist on making these accountable to them. Another danger could be a situation where conflict results between teachers and learners. The SGB would have to account and besides, this is creating a bad precedence. Sub-committees should be directly sanctioned by the SGB for them to be accountable to them.

Their adherence to the provisions of the South African Schools Act (1996) would assist greatly in enabling them to act against unlawful actions of principals and teachers who chair SGB meetings (Success High School). This action could have very serious repucurssions for the SGB. There should be clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities for peace and harmony to prevail.

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Failure to do this could result into a situation of conflict and tension between the various stakeholders.

5.2.5 Co-operation with other Local Governmental Structures

The government is now in the process of decentralising all its functions to the level of the districts.

This means that there are certain powers that are going to be delegated to this level. In the Eastern Cape, the various departments have been grouped into clusters depending on the nature of services rendered. The rationale behind this move is co-ordination and improved service delivery. The departments of education, health, welfare, sport, arts and culture have been grouped under the Social Services Cluster. The plan is to foster co-operation between the four departments since their function is to see to basic social needs. It is then advisable to foster and nurture these links at the micro-level in order to ensure transparency and openness. Education offices need to facilitate this link.

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5.3 Other Suggested Areas for Further Research

In pursuit of the actual contribution made by learner participation in SGBs these are some of the areas that need to be pursued.

- ❖ It would be of interest to investigate how the SGB responsibilities impact on the learners academic progress.
- ❖ There is a need to measure the actual School Improvement or otherwise that could be attributed to learner participation in SGBs. The new SGB structure was ushered in through the South African School Act (1996) in 1997. They have at least about three years of existence. A lot of information could now be gathered.

- There has been an indication, even though minimal, that learners have dominated parents in discussions. This is cause for concern. There is a need to investigate the extent and consistency of this situation. The contributory factors would have to be examined also.

It was pleasing to note that all the schools observed had School Governing Bodies that were in line with the South African Schools Act (1996).

It should be noted that although this was the case, schools differed in the way they interpreted and implemented the Act. This is due to the lack or the inadequacy of training. This is an area that needs special attention because it has implications for policy implementation. This research has provided very significant insights into what actually happens on the ground with regards to policy.

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Appendices

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Appendix 1

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(Letters from the case study schools)

NOMBULELO SECONDARY SCHOOL

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~~6140~~ 6143

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01 FEBRUARY 2001

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

*This serves to advise that **MRS F.S. NKWINTI** was granted permission by the **NOMBULELO GOVERNING COUNCIL** in 2000 to do research at the school regarding the functioning of the council and, in particular, the role of learners.*

In the course of her research she interviewed parents, teachers, the learners and the principal of the school.

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As the Governing Council we also have a keen interest in her findings. The involvement of learners in school Governance is a new phenomenon. There is still a lot of apprehension regarding its effectiveness and indeed the need to have learners as school governors. We believe, from her research, we shall be able to see what experiences the other institutions have had and possibly how they have dealt with associated problems.

***M.S. KOLITI** (MR)*
PRINCIPAL

NTSIKA SECONDARY SCHOOL

All Correspondence to be addressed to: "The Principal"

REF. No.:
ENQUIRIES:
TEL. No.:

P.O. BOX 378
GRAHAMSTOWN 6140
DATE:

05 FEBRUARY 2001

Ntsika SGB
P.O. Box 378
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Sir

RESEARCH: MRS NKWINTI F.S.

This is to certify that permission had been granted to Mrs Nkwinti F.S. in 2000 to conduct her research .

With best wwishes in her studies.

Thanking you in advance .

Yours in education

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NSSingata
N.S. SINGATA

KHUTLISO DANIELS
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The pursuit of Excellence

ef. No:

Date: **2001-02-05**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

IN LUMINE TUO VIDE BIMUS LUMEN
University of Fort Hare
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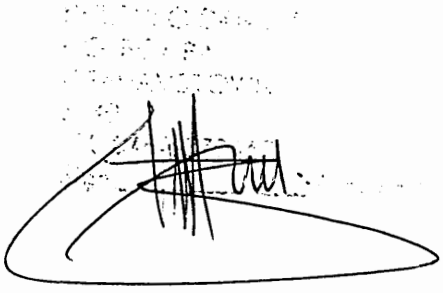
This is to certify that Mrs. NKWINTI FUNGIWE was officially granted a permission by the entire School's Governing Body (SGB) i.e. Parents, Teachers and Learners to conduct her research at the aforesaid school as part of her studies.

We sincerly wish her success in her studies.

Yours truly

ZR MCUBA (Principal)



T.E.M. MRWETYANA SEN. SEC SCH

MASIBAMBANE SIZOPHUMELELA

T.E.M Mrwetyana Secondary School

ENQUIRIES

P.O Box 137
GRAHAMSTOWN
6140

TEL.

23-02-2001

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

DEAR SIR/MADAM

RE:

THIS SERVES TO CONFIRM THAT MRS NKWINTI HAS BEEN PERMISSION BY THE SCHOOL-GOVERNING BODY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN OUR INSTITUTION.

SHE HAS CONDUCTED IT QUITE SUCCESSFULLY AND HAS BEEN VERY CO-OPERATIVE TO ALL THE STAKEHOLDERS. IT WAS QUITE A PLEASURE TO WORK WITH HER.

THANK YOU

YOURS IN EDUCATION

L.E. Ramokolo

L.E. RAMOKOLO

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Appendix 2

(Ethnographic Observation Schedule)

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OBSERVATION SCHEDULE OF SGB MEETINGS

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(ETHNOGRAPHERS)

Compiled by FS Nkwinti

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Name of School: ……

2. COMPOSITION OF THE SGB

FEMALE	MALE

2.1 Number of Learners serving on the SGB

2.2 Number of Teachers serving on the SGB

2.3 Number of Admin. staff serving on the SGB

2.4 Number of Parents serving on the SGB

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3. ACTIVITIES OF THE SGB (EMPHASIS ON THE LEARNERS)

3.1 Attendance at SGB meetings (rate of scale 1 – 5)

(>1=VERY POOR, 2=POOR, 3=FAIR, 4=GOOD, 5=VERY GOOD)

1	2	3	4	5

3.1.1 How do you rate learners' attendance?

3.1.2 How do you rate the female learners' attendance?

3.1.3 How do you rate the male learners' attendance?

3.2 How often do learners last for the entire duration of the SGB meeting?

(Rate of scale 1-3): (>1=NEVER, 2=SELDOM, 3=OFTEN)

1	2	3

3.2.1 How often do female learners last for the entire duration?

3.2.2 How often do male learners last for the entire duration?

3.2.3 How often do learners arrive on time?

3.2.4 How often do female learners arrive on time?

3.2.5 How often do male learners arrive on time?

3.3 Decision making in the SGB (scale: >1=never, 2=seldom, 3=often)

	1	2	3
3.3.1 How often are decisions taken through consensus?			
3.3.2 How often are decisions taken?			
3.3.3 How often is the secret ballot vote exercised?			
3.3.4 How often is the show of hands vote exercised?			

3.4 Learner Involvement (Policy Issues)

3.4.1 Are learners involved in discussions and decisions pertaining to the following policy issues:

	YES	NO
3.4.1.1 Teacher recruitment and appointment		
3.4.1.2 Teacher discipline		
3.4.1.3 Learner discipline		
3.4.1.4 Curriculum selection		
3.4.1.5 School finances and budgeting processes		
3.4.1.6 Teacher dismissals		

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3.5 If yes, how do you rate their participation in the following areas?
(scale 1 – 5: >1=VERY POOR, 2=POOR, 3=AVERAGE, 4=GOOD, 5=VERY GOOD)

	1	2	3	4	5
3.5.1 Teacher recruitment and appointments					
3.5.2 Teacher discipline					
3.5.3 Learner discipline					
3.5.4 Curriculum selection					
3.5.5 School finances and budgeting processes					
3.5.6 Teacher dismissals					

3.6 Rate the perfomance of the learners (in these policy issues) according to gender (same scale of 1 – 5)

FEMALES

1	2	3	4	5

3.5.7 Teacher recruitment and appointments

3.5.8 Teacher discipline

3.5.9 Learner discipline

3.5.10 Curriculum selection

3.5.11 School finances and budgeting processes

3.5.12 Teacher dismissals

3.6 Rate the performance of the learners according in these policy issues according to gender (same scale)

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MALES

1	2	3	4	5

3.6.1 Teacher recruitment and appointments

3.6.2 Teacher discipline

3.6.3 Learner discipline

3.6.4 Curriculum selection

3.6.5 School finances and budgeting processes

3.6.6 Teacher dismissals

4. PREPARATIONS FOR MEETINGS

		YES	NO
4.1	Agenda items		
4.1.1	Is there any agenda circulated before the meeting?		
4.1.2	If yes, do all stakeholders receive it on time?		
4.1.3	Are learners given opportunity to submit items for discussions?		

4.2 How often do learners submit items related to policy issues?

(scale 1 – 5: >1=VERY POOR, 2=POOR, 3=AVERAGE, 4=GOOD, 5=VERY GOOD)

		1	2	3	4	5
4.2.1	Teacher recruitment and appointments					
4.2.2	Teacher discipline					
4.2.3	Learner discipline					
4.2.4	Curriculum selection					
4.2.5	School finances and budgeting processes					
4.2.6	Language					
4.2.7	Religious tolerance					
4.2.8	Fundraising					
4.2.9	Schools ground					
4.2.10	School buildings					

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4.3 Rate Learners' regularity in contributing towards school policy

		1	2	3	4	5
4.3.1	Actual discussions					
4.3.2	Raising issues for discussions					
4.3.3	Level of awareness of policy issues					
4.3.4	Level of awareness of their responsibility in the SGB					
4.3.5	Level of the acceptance of their views by others					

EXPLANATORY NOTES ON RATING SCALES

ATTENDANCE REGISTER

1. Very poor > attended 10 – 19% of the SGB meetings
2. Poor > attended 20 – 40% of the SGB meetings
3. Fair > attended 50 – 79% of the SGB meetings
4. Good > attended 80 – 90% of the SGB meetings
5. Very good > attended 100% of the SGB meetings

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REGULARITY

1. Never > 0%
2. Seldom > 10 – 60%
3. Often > 70 – 100%

PARTICIPATION

1. Very poor > 10 – 19% of the time
2. Poor > 20 – 40% of the time
3. Fair > 40^{+} - 79% of the time
4. Good > 80 – 90% of the time
5. Very good > 90^{+} - 100% of the time

Appendix 3

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(Interview Schedules)

GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Name of School : .....

1.2 Gender : .....

2. COMPOSITION OF THE SGB

	Female	Male
2.1 No. of Learners serving on the SGB		
2.2 No. of Teachers serving on the SGB		
2.3 No. of Admin. staff serving on the SGB		
2.4 No. of Parents serving on the SGB		

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3. DISTRIBUTION OF LEARNERS ACCORDING TO AGE.

No that is:

	Females	Males
✈ 14 years		
✈ 15 years		
✈ 16 years		
✈ 17 years		
✈ 18 years		
✈ 19 years		
✈ 20 and above		

4. SERVICE DURATION

4.1.1. Learners	Females	Males
4.1.1.1. How many of the original Learners members still serving on the SGB?		
4.1.1.2. How many replacements (if applicable)?		

4.1.1.3. List the reasons (in order of importance) for Learners withdrawal from the SGB.

1. .....
2. .....
3. .....
4. .....

5. PROCEDURES FOR ELECTIONS

5.1 LEARNERS

i. Does an LRC exist in the School? YES / NO

ii. If YES – who elects it?

iii. Who elects Learners' representatives to the SGB?

iv. Criteria used?

I. .....

II. .....

III. .....

IV. .....

v. Who devised the Criteria?

.....

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6. PROCEDURES IN THE SCHOOL

6.1 REGULARITY OF MEETINGS

	Yes	No
I. Once a month		
II. Once every 2 months		

III. Once every 3 months

IV. Once every 6 months

V. Once every year

6.2 EXIXTENCE OF THE FOLLOWING

I. VISION – MISSION statement

II. CODE OF CONDUCT / Constitution

Yes	No

6.3 CONTRIBUTION OF THE SGB

6.3.1 We learners involved in the formulation of the VISION / MISSION statements?

6.3.2 Were they involved in the formulation of the Code of Conduct / Constitution.

Yes	No

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7. INFORMATION ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SGB (SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE LEARNERS)

7.1 Attendance at SGB meetings (rating should be at the scale 1 – 5 > 1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = fair, 4 = good, 5 = very good)

	V.Poor 1	Poor 2	Fair 3	Good 4	V.Good 5
7.1.1 How do you rate learner's attendance of SGB meetings?					
7.1.2 How do you rate the female learners attendance of SGB meetings					
7.1.3 How do you rate the male learners attendance of SGB meetings?					

7.1.4 How often do female learners arrive on time for SGB meetings.

7.1.5 How often do male learners arrive on time for SGB meetings.

7.2 How often do learners last for the entire duration of the SGB meetings? (Rate at the scale of 1 – 3 > 1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = often).

Never	Seldom	Often

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7.2.1 How often do female learners last for the entire duration of the SGB meetings?

7.2.2 How often do male learners last for the entire duration of the SGB meetings?

☐

7.3 ☐Decision making in SGB meetings

7.3.1 How often are decisions taken through consensus?

7.3.2 How often are decisions taken by vote?

7.3.3 How often is the secret ballot vote exercised?

7.3.4 How often is the show of hands vote exercised?

7.4 Learner Involvement (Policy Issues)

7.4.1 Are learners involved in discussions and decisions pertaining to the following policy issues:

	Yes	No
7.4.1.1 Teacher recruitment and appointment		
7.4.1.2 Teacher discipline		
7.4.1.3 Learner discipline		
7.4.1.4 Curriculum selection		
7.4.1.5 School finances and budgeting processes		
7.4.1.6 Teacher dismissals		

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7.5 If yes, how do you rate their participation in the following areas (Scale 1 – 5 > 1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = very good).

		V.Poor 1	Poor 2	Average 3	Good 4	V.Good 5
7.5.1	Teacher recruitment and appointments					
7.5.2	Teacher discipline					
7.5.3	Learner discipline					
7.5.4	☐Curriculum selection					
7.5.5	School finances and Budget					
7.5.6	Teacher dismissals					
7.5.7	Rate the performance of the learners in these policy issues according to gender (same scale) (female)					
7.5.7.1	Teacher recruitment and appointment					
7.5.7.2	Teacher discipline					
7.5.7.3	Learner discipline					
7.5.7.4	Curriculum selection					
7.5.7.5	School finances and budgeting					
7.5.7.6	Teacher dismissals					

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7.5.8 Rate the performance of Learners in these policy Issues according to Gender (male)

7.5.8.1 Teacher recruitment

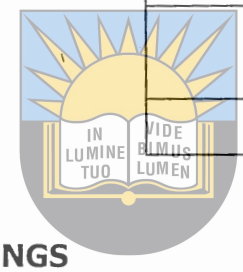
7.5.8.2 Teacher discipline

7.5.8.3 Learner discipline

7.5.8.4 Curriculum selection

7.5.8.5 School finances and budgeting

7.5.8.6 Teacher dismissals



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8. PREPARATIONS FOR MEETINGS

8.1 Agenda items

Yes	No

8.1.1 Is there any agenda circulated before the meeting?

8.1.2 If yes, do all stakeholders receive it on time?

8.1.3 Are learners given opportunity to submit items for discussion?

8.2 How often do learners submit items related to policy issues (Rate this a according to the scale 1. V.poor, 2. Poor, 3. Average, 4 good, 5. V. good)

V.Poor 1	Poor 2	Average 3	Good 4	V.Good 5

8.2.1 Teacher recruitment and Appointment

8.2.2 Curriculum

8.2.3	Teacher discipline				
8.2.4	Learner discipline				
8.2.5	LanguageReligious tolerance				
8.2.6	Finances (budget, school fees, etc.)				
8.2.7	Fundraising				
8.2.8	School grounds				
8.2.9	School buildings				
8.3	Rate learners' regularity in contributing towards school policy. (1-5)				
8.3.1	Actual discussions				
8.3.2	Raising issues for Discussion				
8.3.3	Level of awareness of policy issues and their responsibility as SGB members				
8.3.4	Level of the acceptance of their views by other parties				

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Appendix 4

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(Ethnographic Interviews: A sample)

* A follow-up on Interview Schedules

1. What (in your view) causes learners to or not to attend SGB meetings regularly?

2. What factors contribute to active participation of learners in SGB discussions?

3. In which areas are they (learners) at their most comfortable in discussions?

4. Do you feel that learners are free in discussions at SGB meetings (especially if they differ in views with the adult members)?

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5. Which achievements of the school can you specifically attribute to the existence of the new school governance structure?

6. Are there sub-committees in the school? Which are they?

7. What is the role of learners in these sub-committees?

8. Can you make comments about the learner's level of commitment in these sub-committees?

9. Did you undergo any capacity training for your duties as an SGB member?

10. Do you feel that the capacity building programmes that you attended was adequate? (This was for those who attended some training programmes).

11. Is there any reason/ motivation behind the choice of grade 12's as learner representatives in your SGBs?

12. Do you think that the involvement of learners in SGBs was of benefit to your school?

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13. Are there any areas you would like improved in your SGB? Which ones?

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(Field notes: A sample)

Interviews

1/2000. met the principals of the four Case Study Schools.
— Piloting the SGB Profile.

[redacted]

- fears

1 principal — when learners dominate SGB meetings ~~negative~~ positive?

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- need clear lines of demarcation especially vis-a-viz responsibilities.

- Children are children — they will always be.

5/2000 [redacted]. (Teacher)

- Attendance at meetings.
— depends on the interest of children.
— we started with 3 — we ended up with 1 learner.

11/11/2000 Parent (chairperson)

- training of SGBs very inadequate — thrown in the deep end and support is not enough and yet expected to perform.
- Some issues < legalistic / complicated — hampers decision making process = level of education of the parents + problem.

11/11/200

Interview with the Learner. (March 2000 withdrawal end 31/9/2000)

- distance and time of meetings 5 in the evening (2-3 hrs)

Procedure for Representation to the SGB

- gender representation.
-

Regularity

- One in 2 mths.
- Should have 5 per annum but 4 this year.

Senior 1 year only (std) 10

Attendance poor

- do not want to talk — afraid)
- parents, teachers (bad influence)

'isibi' — differ with — adults.

- parents attitude — ukunga + oli hiveala labazali.

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Show of hands vote.
no intimidation

own conviction (vote)

Curriculum – problem e.g Bio + Agric.

Ideal (own).
- Curriculum Input – imposed on us.
- improve – activity of all learners.
  – when ngabonakali nxaxa wanzi).
  – Attitude of some teachers.

– Learner at
– learners are not serious in their choice of representatives to the SGB.
– learners – who do not talk or express opinions at SGB meetings, get elected for no reason.

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11/11/2000 Parent (chairperson)

- training of SGBs very inadequate — thrown in the deep end and support is not enough and yet expected to perform.
- some issues ∠ legalistic complicated — hampers decision making process = level of education of the parents + problem.

11/4/200

Interview with the Learner. (march 2000 end 31/9/2000)

— withdrawal

- distance and time of meetings 5 in the evening (2-3 hrs)

Procedure for Representation to the SGB

- gender representation.
-

Regularity

One in 2 mths.

- should have 5 per annum but 4 this year.

Senior 1 year only (std) 10

Attendance poor

- do not want to talk — afraid)
- parents, teachers (bad influence)

'isibi' — differ with — adults.

- parents attitude — ukunga+ôi hui la 'isi..hi.

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Data Analysis - Documents (Minutes)

1. [redacted] 7 [redacted]

1.1 Issues under discussion + Learner Contribution

19/3/98, 3.6.98, 30.7.98, 1/11/2000.

- Training of the SGB - a need for this
  - Cuts across all their meetings
  - evidence of the Dept's failure to meet its obligation with regards to the capacity Building Programmes for SGB's = seeking DNTI other means for this purpose e.g. ECDAFF,
  - Learner participation = evident (9/11/97 3/2/98
- Fundraising Efforts ← hiring the School Hall to the Com. ... items to be run ... ities + the conflict this made ..
  - another main item on ~~their~~ the SGB deliberations
  - Fundraising Committee — no learner - elected to represent the SGB (parents + teachers only) 9/11/97).
    - Decision to incorporate 2 Learners on 19/3/98.
  - Finance Committee
    = no learner ; only teachers and parents elected by the SGB. (9/11/97).
- Learner Discipline
  - *Learners reported = aggrieved by the presence of pregnant girls on the school premises.
  - Learner who misappropriated S.R.C. funds (brought to the attention of the S.G.B by Learners
  - Learners tried to avoid conflict by refunding the R400 the misappropriated money to the Std. 10's
  - * Learners' participation = evidenced

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- Issue of change in the school track suit – raised by Learners themselves – committee to look into this [illegible] Learners [illegible]

- Learner discipline - Conflict in the School (11/02/98)

  - Learner attendance – very poor only 1 Learner attended.
    - diffinit to resolve the situation because the 1 learner could not bind the other Learners - feels that he did not have that mandate.
    - Thieving in the school by learners = Learners took it upon themselves to fight this criminal offence (19.3.9
    - Learner absenteeism – Learners commitment to look into this issue – (3.6.98)
    - Gangsterism – 30/7/98 = 1 Learner present .: couldn't bind other L
    - 10.9.98 = continuing – given up on Learners on the issue

- Teaching/Learning Issues.
  - Learners Complaints about a teacher who they felt was not doing justice to his work.
  - Teachers' boycott > Learners expressed concern about the schools learning/teaching programme.

- Learner attendance at SGB meetings.
  - 19/4/2000 – only 1 Learner present.
  - 11/2/98 = 1 Learner, 30.7.98 = 1 learner,
  - 10/9/98 – 1 Learner - arrived late for the meeting = seemed to be causing a lot of concern.
  - 29/10/98 – no Learner Rep = all absent.
  - 27/10/99 – no Learners. 13.1.2000 only 1 Learner

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- Disciplinary Committee — 1 Learner Rep — writing std 10 exams — so not available for meetings.

- Mission / Vision Statements — teachers, parents + Learners to serve on the Committee — to draft these.

Portfolios = .97 = Chairperson - parent, Deputy - parent
Treasurer - parent
Secretary - teacher

98. Chairperson - parent
Deputy - parent
Treasurer - parent
Secretary - teacher.

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99. Chairperson - parent
Dep. - parent
Treasurer - parent
Secretary - Teacher.

- Time of Arrival.
Late — 1 Learner who arrived late = 10/9/98
all " " = undated.

- Curriculum Issues — no Learner participation evident
- Teacher Vacancies — " "
but discussions happen in their presence.

- Dept. Provisioning e.g. electricity = student participation evident

- Merit Awards - Learners involved.

2000/2001 - SGB. / Chairperson - parent
Deputy - "
Secretary - "
Deputy - teacher
Treasurer - parent.

Finance Committee out 6 members = 1 Learner.

Fundraising - 2 Learners out 10.

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2. [redacted]

- Attendance by Learners - 0 = 24/2/98.
" = 0 1/4/~~200~~ 98
= 0 16/4/98
= 0 11/08/98

8/10/98 - 0
5/11/98 - 0
inundated - 0
3/12/98 - 0

- Sub-Committees
- Renovation = 2 teacher
(no evidence of Learners.

- Discussions - no evidence of Learner participation.

- Staffing issues - no evidence of Learner participation.
- 15/2/99 - evidence of Learners invitation to the SGB meeting but to no avail.

many meetings

- Sub-Committees

  - Disciplinary committee
  - Education Support Committee
  - Finance Committee

  } no evidence of membership.

- Disciplinary Issues — learners. (unolated meeting) (meeting unolated)
  - no evidence of learner participation except for them to defend themselves i.e. as culprits.
  - Conflict — all 3 learner reps present at the meeting.

Portfolio — unclear.

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Portfolio chair - parent
deputy - parent
secretary - [redacted]
assistant -
Treasurer.

3. [redacted] Document Analysis — [redacted]

- Learning / Teaching problems e.g. Eskom + electricity — learner participation = evident. 22/2/00
  - learner attendance of meetings = problematic - did not attend meetings 'last year' i.e 1999.
- RCL invited specially to the SGB meeting of 22/2/00.

Sub-committees

- Curriculum
- Finance
- Entertainment Committee -
- Teacher Transfers - 4/5/00 - no learner participation clear

'58

. Progress of Students — ~~no~~ evidence of Learner participation — asked for a special meeting with Management for eg. (1/08/2000).

---

4. [redacted]

Meetings
10.03.2000 - Learners
2.8.200 ✓
13.2.2000 ✓
[19.7.200 ?
15.08.2000 ?]

1 Issues

- Safety Policy

- Possible relocation of the School. Learner participation evident (10 & 00

- Possible relocation of the School. (2.05.200)

- Fundraising
  - no evidence of Learner participation Chairperson reported on the rental

Code of Conduct.

- Child centredness mentioned intention — all programmes to reflect this.

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7

Rules + Regulations

Learner contradness evident
- development issues
- academic issue - incentives given.

* no evidence of learners having been consulted in the formulation of the above.

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3. Pattern / Theme Coding

Sub-questions

4.2. • Can learners contribute constructively to policy formulation? — Interviews, document Analysis, Ethnographic Observation + interviews — fieldnotes.

4.2.1. Document Analysis (Minutes) — How Resolutions are taken (role of learners)
- adherence to resolutions
- Participation - extent
- Areas of interests
- Policy deliberations ← School rules, recruitment, attachments etc
- Submission of issues for discussion + nature of these issues

2. Codes
- Participation in its formulation
- Rights encapsulated
- Kind of responsibilities
- Discipline

3. Vision Mission Statements
- ~~What~~ principles of democracy
- accountability
- transparency
- participation

→ evidence of these — have these been captured?

4. School Programmes — kind of programmes?

5. Attendance — are they attending?

4.2.2. Interview Schedule
- Age Distribution — age groups + maturity, experience
- level of education, experience, duration of service in the SGB.
- Programmes — their existence

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- Participation

- which areas / issues
  - Rating ← Policy
    fundraising
    disciplinary issues

- Attendance at SGB Meetings
  - Commitment ← 100% attendance
    80% " Yes / No
    withdrawals —
  - Time of arrival.
  - AGENDA ITEMS
    - submission of issues for discussion
    - nature of issues — Policy ?, fundraising, Disciplin

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4.2.2 ~~SGB Profile~~ Ethnographic Observation.

- SGB Meetings
  - Participation ← nature of issues
    Level of participation rates
    Policy ?
  - Attendance ← time of arrival
    ~~an~~ commitment to stay the duration
    rates
    100% of meetings.
    Which group shows ← commitment
    ~~not~~ no commitment
  - Withdrawals ← which groups ?
    Reasons.
  - Submission of agenda items
    nature of issues — Policy, fundraising, discipline

4.2.4 Unstructured / Conversations

- to Corroborate the above (follow-up)
- minutes
- Responses to Schedules
-

4.3 Can parents and teachers take learners seriously? — Attitudes + possibility of manipulation.

4.3.1 Document Analysis

- Minutes

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- participation by learners ← Codes LRC – election
  ≠ consensus.

- Gender ~~refl~~ stereo-types – evidence / Poor attendance + absence (male).

- workings → decision making

- Extent of policy ~~informed~~ formulation.
- to be heard – receiving sympathy.

Research areas

- ~~raise~~ Rise level of performance → Strategies for participation

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- Capacity building – RSP document.

- learners testing themselves seriously
  attendance + withdrawal
- Continuity.

p:22 of research

Co-operation = Change in school professional expertise + the general will
-Whenism?

tension professionalism + elected people.
home based.

Socio-economic →
Cultural
Manipulation?
district office?

ownership – learning/teaching

unctions according to SASA.